

Blue Colt Vibe

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2022

**Tick,
Tick...
BOOM!**

**Taj
Mahal**

Marineland

**Kamila
Valieve**

**Kingdom
Hearts**

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Amanda loves to take on as much as she can, she is currently a managing editor, news editor, calendar editor, staff writer, section editor, head photographer, photo editor, photographer, illustrator, and page assignment editor for the school paper.

She enjoys being a part of the process to publish a newspaper to the public giving them the needed news.

When she had the opportunity to create and organize the Blue Colt Vibe magazine, Amanda didn't hesitate to take on a project that will only help her career grow.

Amanda aspires to be an author and pursue a career in journalism at a major news company.

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Travel

1-16

Taj Mahal
Amroha
Cape May
Hoboken
Seaside Heights
Jersey City
Princeton
Duke Farms
New Brunswick
Cornucopia Cruise Line
New Jersey's Las Vegas
Johnson Park
Monmouth

Profile

17-26

Megan Martinez
Jasmine Bundy
Julia Block
Franchesca Rodriguez
Rebecca Alfrey
Zachary O'Connor
Kathleen Morgan
Anna Maria Caquias

Review

27-60

Tick, Tick... BOOM!
DUNE
Only Murders In The Building
All To Well
Ghostbusters: Afterlife
Free Guy
Halloween Kills
Antlers
Spider-Man No Way Home
Scream
Nightmare Alley
Jackaby
The Dark Knight
Starship Trooper
Kingdom Hearts
Doctor Who
Top Gear
Pokémon
Sonix.ai
Nintendo
Wake Up, Sunshine
Bagel One
Glee
PlayStation
SHEIN
The Originals
BTS
Apple Watch Series Six

Short Stories

61-66

Vanilla Coffee
Leauge of Legends
Soccer
Morning Page
Shea
Second Life
Class
Cupcakes
Starbucks
The Universe
Electrical Toothbrush
Teen Magazine

67-84

East Coast COVID-19
Jared Almanzor
Modern News
Virtual YouTube
Teacher Appreciation
Voting
Pandemic Pen Pals
Lemon Water
Man's Best Friend
Kamila Valieva
Film Trailers
College Courses
Holiday Season
Gas Station Worker
Propaganda

85-92

North Brunswick
South Brunswick
Edison
Spotswood
Plainfield
Piscataway

93-104

Pharmacy Owner
Brian O'Sullivan
9/11 Recollection
Civil Rights
Michael Scibetta
Sketches
Natasha Pitt
Lorraine Rock

105-114

Family Road Trip
Thanksgiving Plans
Brain Surgery
Gym Reopens
Disney Happy Meals
Marineland
Lantern Festival
Time Management

Column

Hometown

Participatory

Slice Of Life

Travel

TAJ MAHAL

By Hina Naqvi

Coming from Pakistan, it is always hard to get an Indian visa because of India and Pakistan tensions. From the time I was married to an Indian national, I knew that one day I would visit my ancestor's hometown and explore some iconic and historical places, especially the Taj Mahal.

What I did not know then were the circumstances during which I would visit the Taj Mahal. With grief and sorrow, we said goodbye to all our relatives and my still sick mother-in-law. Her eyes were empty as if they were begging us not to go. I had a feeling that I wouldn't be able to see her again, but I couldn't do anything. We started our journey by road with a heavy heart; I had made plans for this specific road trip to the Taj Mahal, but because of my mother-in-law's deteriorating condition, it didn't materialize as I thought.

It was a nice sunny day and not chilly nor foggy during our stay at Amroha. Around 8:30 a.m., my husband, daughter and I started our road trip to Delhi, with a stop at the Taj Mahal. On the way to the Taj Mahal, fast food carts lined the streets, which made those roads special as they bind the soul. During our travels, we moved through some heavily populated areas; I could see different types of people: some feeling underprivileged and some wearing nice clothing as if they were going to work.

After almost a two-hour drive and located in a deserted area, we stopped for a lunch break in a quiet restaurant. Only three young adults were inside the restaurant and enjoying the food. I ordered a sandwich, my husband ordered vegetables and bread and my daughter ordered french fries and ice cream. After taking a short stopover, which was less than an hour, we started our journey again. It took us five hours to reach Agra (the city where the Taj Mahal is located).

Finally, we reached our destination: the most beautiful, iconic monument and a symbol of eternal love, the Taj Mahal. Built in the 16th century, King Shah Jahan created it in memory of his late wife, Mumtaz Mahal; the beauty was everlasting.

When we entered the building, we had to stand in a big long queue to get the entrance ticket. We hired a tour guide, and he helped us get a ticket a little quicker. He knew we were traveling from abroad, so he was looking for a good tip.

The long path to the main building was nearly 1 mile. The Taj Mahal's main gate was astonishingly beautiful; the carving was inspired by Persian, Islamic and Indian architecture. The white marble gave a spiritual feeling. The tomb is the centerpiece of a 17-hectare complex, including a mosque, guest house, garden, mausoleum, rest house and the main gateway. All three sides are covered with gardens with a crenelated wall.

The unique and most spectacular feature of the Taj Mahal is the white marble dome that is nearly 35 meters high. There are four minarets on each side, which are 137 meters in height to emphasize the beauty of the main dome. The main chamber houses the false sarcophagi of Mumtaz Mahal and Shah Jahan, but the actual graves are lower, where the general public is not allowed.

While I enjoyed the calligraphy's exceptional beauty on the walls, my 5-year-old daughter did not have an interest in any of it, and she kept pulling me to go outside the building. We came to the back of the Mahal in this tussle, and there we could see the River Yamuna behind the building.

I could easily see the river where some underprivileged children were taking baths. While standing on the iconic building, the people's plight made my heart feel like it was bleeding. I couldn't see any beautiful and upscale areas; I could only see the destitute and poverty-stricken people whose faces have moments of kindness and fleeting smiles. I could not understand why the surroundings were dilapidated.

Every year, millions of tourists visit the Taj Mahal, which generates money, but where does this money go? With these thoughts in my mind, we started our journey back home. During the flight, I was uncomfortable, as if I had left something precious.

AMROHA

By Hina Naqvi

Four years ago, my family and I returned from Amroha, a small town approximately 100 miles from Delhi. We had to take the Emirates flight to the U.S. It was a sad and surreal day because bidding goodbyes were always difficult for me, especially with international travel and leaving behind loved ones, as you never know when you could meet them again.

I was visiting my in-laws with my husband and daughter in India. My mother-in-law had taken ill and had to be moved from Lucknow to Amroha, her hometown. The distance was nearly 260 miles and approximately a nine-hour drive.

Amroha has a population of 198,471 people, roughly equal to Montgomery, Alabama. Located in Uttar Pradesh, the city boasts of a magnificent and spiritual past because of the presence of Sufi Saint Shah-wilayat's tomb.

The Saint's tomb has a special and unbelievable feature. The devotees believed that even a poisonous insect-like scorpion validated the sanctity of the Saint's tomb by refraining from attacking the followers. I witnessed this myself by keeping a scorpion in my hand, and it did not sting.

The real treasure of Amroha is the warmth, which bound me forever; I still remember my first visit to Amroha. As I first stepped into the Amroha train station, wading through its clustered neighborhoods and narrow by-lanes, gazing at the many shrines that adorn the land; the city soothes me with an unwavering faith that resonates through every aspect. The city is immersed in the spell of spirituality and upholds its age-old traditions with unflinching sincerity.

When I met my in-law's extended family, the love and warmth I got from them were immense. Though I couldn't find leisure, luxury and comfort, compared to my home, I found tranquility, acceptance and serenity. On the other hand, the amorphous houses in Amroha depict the government's inability to develop the place. The open sewage lines were why most people suffered from malaria or the dengue virus. The muddy and small streets were always packed with pedestrians, auto-rickshaws and cycle-rickshaws. Some streets in the city consist of clustered and narrow lanes, so it is best to explore the city on foot, and I really experienced this.

Both of the visits to Amroha were in winter, so I was not fortunate to gorge on the delicious mango, "Amawat." However, I enjoyed the fresh green vegetables of the season, which came daily from nearby orchards.

My husband's decision to renovate his ancestral home made everyone in the family happy; it was a clear sign that he would want to revisit Amroha. His mother left Amroha after she got married some thirty years ago, and, after the death of my father-in-law, it was hard for her to live alone in Lucknow with her only daughter, so she decided to move back.

When I saw the renovated house, I couldn't believe that it was the same house from two years ago; from the main entrance door to the interior design, everything was new. We replaced the broken wooden door with a big, black steel door. The front room used to have a cement floor, which was replaced by a mosaic floor with big black and white stones. The rooms were spacious with walk-in closets compared to the old ones. My husband's uncle had renovated the house with love and care and gave it a new and modern look. The original house had many childhood memories that my husband cherished, such as the noisy wildlife around the village, but even then, he decided to give a new look to the old memories.

Upon returning to the U.S., my mind was still in India, and just two days later, my mother-in-law passed away in peace; those eyes filled with hope closed forever.

CAPE MAY

By Gabrielle Igotis

When my mother suggested a day trip to Cape May with my cousin, I remember being extremely confused. Besides being a firm believer that Cape May was an overrated beach destination, I also thought that the 2-hour drive eliminated Cape May as an option for day trips.

After some debate, my family agreed to meet my cousin in Cape May. Despite my reservations, this ended up being one of my favorite adventures.

When the morning of our trip came around, we left our house at 9 a.m. We arrived in Cape May a little after 11 a.m.

Our first stop was the Ocean Club Hotel, where my cousin was staying overnight. The Ocean Club Hotel is a gorgeous establishment known for their beautiful poolside bar, stylish rooms and phenomenal hotel restaurant. When we went up to my cousin's room to drop off our bags, we were fascinated by the view from the room's balcony. The room overlooked both the gorgeous pool, equipped with lounge chairs, outdoor sofas and a tiki bar, and the hotel's section of the beach, which looked incredibly inviting.

While the Ocean Club Hotel is a stylish establishment, it is one of the most expensive in Cape May. Those looking to enjoy a fun weekend or overnight stay at the beach without the hefty price tag can try the Montreal Beach Resort, which is known for its iconic red roof and legacy as a family-owned business, or the Camelot motel, a casual location that boasts twin mermaid statues and a family-friendly atmosphere.

After we dropped off our bags, we headed toward the beach. The Ocean Club Hotel has a collection of brown wicker lounge chairs set up in their section, with corresponding orange towels hanging over the back of the chairs.

The Cape May beaches offer the same appeal as any other beach, but with slightly more style. The beaches are much cleaner, with no litter or garbage in sight. Several hotels provide outdoor furniture, such as lounge chairs, all of which are in great condition and clearly well-maintained.

After our time on the beach, we walked on Beach Avenue. Beach Avenue is home to several historical Cape May attractions, including multiple restaurants and specialty shops.

Harry's Ocean Bar and Grille is the perfect place to go for a casual atmosphere and superb home-cooked seafood. Besides their locally sourced oysters and clams, Harry's is best known for their rooftop live music and the wine and liquor store attached to the restaurant.

If you are looking for something more upscale, Hemingway's Steaks and Seafood Restaurant provides American cuisine within the luxurious Grand Hotel of Cape May. Hemingway's hosts breakfast, lunch and dinner every day and defines the atmosphere as "classically casual never stuffy".

Beach Avenue also boasts a specialty fudge shop, the Original Fudge Kitchen. This storefront is well known for their gourmet fudge and iconic saltwater taffy. The shop seems to always be packed to the brim with eager customers, so much so that just getting to the register to pay was a challenge.

For those interested in a souvenir to commemorate their trip, Sunrise Authentic Resortwear offers Cape May hoodies, long sleeve shirts, tee shirts and decals, as well as a variety of other beach necessities. I purchased a Cape May long sleeve from this store on my trip, and it continues to be one of my favorite articles of clothing.

Overall, I was pleasantly surprised with my experience in Cape May. I feared that this trip would be too similar to other beaches in New Jersey, but the collection of hotels, clean beaches and motley shops really set this area apart.

Whether you are planning a vacation, weekend trip or just a day at the beach, Cape May is the perfect fit.

HOBOKEN

By Caprice Benifield-Sanchez

Hoboken is a city aligned on the Hudson River, a place rich in activities for all ages. The city is a popular tourist area of Hudson County, as it is easily accessible to both New York and New Jersey residents. You do not need a car to experience everything this city has to offer. A walking tour from uptown Hoboken to downtown is doable in this one-square-mile city. As you walk down the old-world cobblestone of the side streets and backstreets, you can window shop various boutiques, gift shops and popular retail stores within walking distance. Look for Hoboken favorites pop-up shops, like Hudson Paperie, with a chance to write a thoughtful handwritten note about your day adventure at Hoboken. Stop by Peper and Parlor for some designer apparel, and strut your new shoes as you walk along Washington Street. A sweet snack from Carlo's Bakery, showcased in the hit series "Cake Boss," will satisfy your sweet tooth, but expect a line in waiting to see Carlo's massive confectionary creations.

The most popular way to get from New York City to Hoboken is by PATH subway, but this is only one of the many options to get here. Hoboken has a complete shuttle bus system, a train station and ferries that can transport tourists across the Hudson River from Manhattan or vice versa. There is limited parking space in this area. To overcome this challenge, you can rent a car from Enterprise to have a guaranteed parking space for your day trip in Hoboken, with prices as low as \$32, depending on your requirements.

The Hudson River stretches 18.5 miles and runs alongside multiple New Jersey towns such as Bayonne, Jersey City and West New York. Feel the warmth of the sun as the water glistens in all directions, departing from the Hoboken Ferry Terminal, almost as if you were walking on water. You don't have to be on a boat to experience the breeze of the river. Walk alongside the never-ending spread of crystal blue water, and watch the boats glide across the Hudson River as this painting brings the New York skyline to life. The wooden benches scattered across the black metal railing separates you from the gentle crashing of water beneath the Hudson River Waterfront Walkway. Trees and shrubs lie side by side to separate bikers from pedestrians, as they still experience passersby's interactions afoot on the sturdy checkered brown brick road. At night, the Hoboken Waterfront enraptures the panorama of lighting from the cascading skyscrapers of Manhattan, almost as if you were looking at a picture in travel magazines.

On your way towards Hoboken's south waterfront, visit one of the many public parks. Pier A Park's hundreds of large caliper trees creep into perspective when you step foot onto the green grass. The greenery of the pier extends several hundred feet out into the Hudson River. You are greeted with picnic blankets spread across the clear open space of grass, and families gathered flying kites captured by the river's breeze. Take a free yoga class at Pier A, and enjoy a relaxing stretch with a view closer to the New York skyline. Stay close to the southern walkway side; the road will split and guide you to a swiveling wooden bridge toward a floating oasis above the river. An urban vibe of the giant playground in Pier C Park satisfies all ages, separating into different activity sections. This main playground offers athletic challenges for older kids and adults and features a treehouse-like structure. Families prepare for the main attraction, the beach area, with shovels and buckets. The sandpits sit between the toddler's playground and the main playground.

Two rows of trees divide the walkway, bike lane and Frank Sinatra Drive, to ensure pedestrians and bikers' safety.

The wide variety of restaurants alongside Frank Sinatra Drive is guaranteed to satisfy your cravings. Hoboken proudly holds the title of "most bars per capita in America," with over 120 drinking establishments, from dives to bistro pubs, held in outdoor settings to abide by the coronavirus (COVID-19) guidelines. Pier 13, on North Sinatra Drive, took every advantage of the guidelines by enhancing their outdoor bar to soak in more of the view of the skyline with smaller crowds and a seating area for their food trucks. Tourists can take detailed tours with travel guides to get the most out of this day trip. The tours' prices are around \$60 per person, with the best highlights of the Empire State Building, Chrysler Building and Lower Manhattan.

The serenity of the Hudson River Waterfront Walkway is more than just a tourist spot. For some, it is a break away from the commercial offices in the area and a commonplace for workers to pass to and from work. The beautiful scenery of the river can melt away the daily stresses of many. There is more to a walk or jog with a never-ending panoramic view of the city. A piece of pedestrian heaven like this does not have a price tag; you will feel safe within the division of beautiful tree-lined paver pathways as you walk, jog or bike to your next destination.

SEASIDE

By Savanna Vazquez

HEIGHTS

Seaside Heights in New Jersey is home to many beautiful attractions, being one of the most popular destinations in the state. Within the township, there are countless arcades, rides and eateries that will keep you busy for the entirety of your stay. However, the best way to spend your time there is on the beach. There are many ways to have fun. From game booths to restaurants and clubs. Everyone in the family has something they can do while they visit.

Seaside Heights is home to over 2,900 residents who will tell you that you have to visit the beach. In 2012, Seaside Heights was hit hard by Hurricane Sandy, causing mass destruction. After closing for several months, the entire pier was transformed and is now better than ever. The pier offers classic rides such as bumper cars and go-karts but also unique roller coasters including the swinging SkyCoaster, the Shore Shot drop tower and Pirate's Plunge.

Relax on one of the town's public beaches for the day. Go fishing along the shore or experience some of the best swells with your surfboard. Tanners and relaxers can also rest easy on the beach because there are lifeguards on duty during the beach's open hours. There are plenty of fishing opportunities along the shore and fishing tackle stores in the area. The two latest hot spots are the New Dolphin and Betty and Nicks, which are both located on Route 35 Seaside Park. You can try your luck fishing off the end of the ocean pier. Fluke, Bluefish, Striped Bass, Kingfish and other fishes are regularly caught at the Casino Pier fishing access, which is only seasonal.

During the summer, entertainment revolves around the shorefront. Watch free movies on the beach or join a game of beach volleyball with your family. Seaside is a small town which means that you will see locals going for walks or riding their bikes along the community. Tourists can take a dinner cruise along the shoreline or charter a deep-sea fishing boat from the day to experience Seaside Heights from another perspective.

Seaside Heights was also the location of the popular MTV show, Jersey Shore. Seaside Heights is located on a long narrow barrier island Newark Liberty International Airport and Philadelphia International Airport. Both are about 70 miles from Seaside Heights. The destination is ideal to get to by car or bus but, has heavy traffic flow during the summer.

JERSEY CITY

By Tatwa Vaidya

Jersey City is the second largest city in New Jersey, and one of the most diverse cities in the U.S. It is one of the most populous towns in Hudson County with more than 200,000 residents. Jersey City is a popular tourist spot because of its diversity. It is situated on the banks of the Hudson River. PATH trains make transportation easier and accessible for travelers coming from Newark, Harrison, Hoboken and Manhattan.

Parking space is limited in the city. The minimum fee to get a parking space for a couple of hours is \$20. There are other transportation options like NJ Transit buses or the agency's Hudson-Bergen Light Rail that can take you anywhere along in the city. Tourists can also take ferries across the Hudson River from NYC or vice versa at the Harborside Ferry, Paulus Hook, Liberty Landing Ferry to World Financial Center and many more. Artists make this city look more promising as it is the 10 most artistic city in the country.

Many towns in New Jersey lie on the Hudson River banks, and they have Hudson Waterfront. Townships like Bayonne, Jersey City, Hoboken, Union City, Weehawken and West New York give you one of NYC skylines' best scenic views. Moreover, the park provides boating on the Hudson River, a picnic area, a playground, food concession and fishing. You can also enjoy dining and the view or plan your event at the Liberty House Restaurant and Events.

Similarly, Exchange Place gives you somewhere you can jog and feel safe. They also have a spot where you can skateboard and enjoy the beautiful view of the Hudson River. You can spend a night at the Hyatt Regency, which is on the Hudson River at the Exchange Place, and enjoy the beautiful view of NYC skylines. The basic rates of the rooms go from \$170 to \$200 per night during the non-winter holiday season.

India Square, also known as Little India, is a street in Jersey City that is an eating spot for Indians. The street is a perfect site to explore the culture and street food of India. Temples of different deities, celebrating festivals like Diwali (Festival Of Lights), Holi (Festival of Colors), mini-restaurants that can taste Indian cuisine and supermarkets like Patel Brothers can be a perfect hub for Indians.

The beauty of Jersey City, from giving the best views of NYC, to the artistic city, to its diversity becomes a hotspot for tourist attraction. Liberty State Park and Exchange Place can be a stress-reliever where you can unwind and spend time with your friends, family or by yourself.

PRINCETON

By Shakera Blakney

A great way to spend a day in New Jersey is to take in a play and enjoy delicious food. Traveling to Princeton is a great way to do that. The city is beautiful and rich with culture, with a college-town vibe to it.

Princeton borders Middlesex County to the south, and one way to get to Princeton from the county is by taking the Northeast Corridor line of New Jersey Transit in either Metuchen, Edison or New Brunswick. It does involve a short transfer of trains, but it beats sitting in traffic on Route 1. The train will cost \$7.75 for a one-way trip leaving New Brunswick, double that for a round-trip. Once you get off the train in Princeton Junction, take the Dinky into Princeton. The Dinky is a train similar to the Path train. It's a short five-minute ride on the Dinky train with stunning, picturesque visuals: tall beautiful trees in the backyards of beautiful homes.

Right outside of Princeton Train Station, there's a newly-renovated Wawa to grab something quick for your convenience. For those who want to dine in right before the show, The Dinky Bar & Kitchen is right across the street from McCarter Theatre Center.

The Dinky Bar & Kitchen doesn't take reservations, so just walk in and request a table. An interesting fact is the building that houses the Dinky Bar & Kitchen used to be the Dinky train station. They serve pub-style food like a soft pretzel with honey mustard dip for \$8. For those with dietary restrictions, there's a veggie burger option for \$14. It helps if you tell the waitstaff you have tickets to a matinee or evening show. They'll do what they can to make sure your food comes out on time so you're not late.

McCarter Theatre Center produces plays ranging from "A Christmas Carol" to "Baskerville: A Sherlock Holmes Mystery." It's important to note that McCarter has two separate theaters, the Matthews Theatre and the Berlind Theatre. Your tickets will have the name of the theatre the show will be held in.

There's also one American Sign Language (ASL) interpreted performance per show. It's quite fascinating to watch the interpreters sign as the performance is happening.

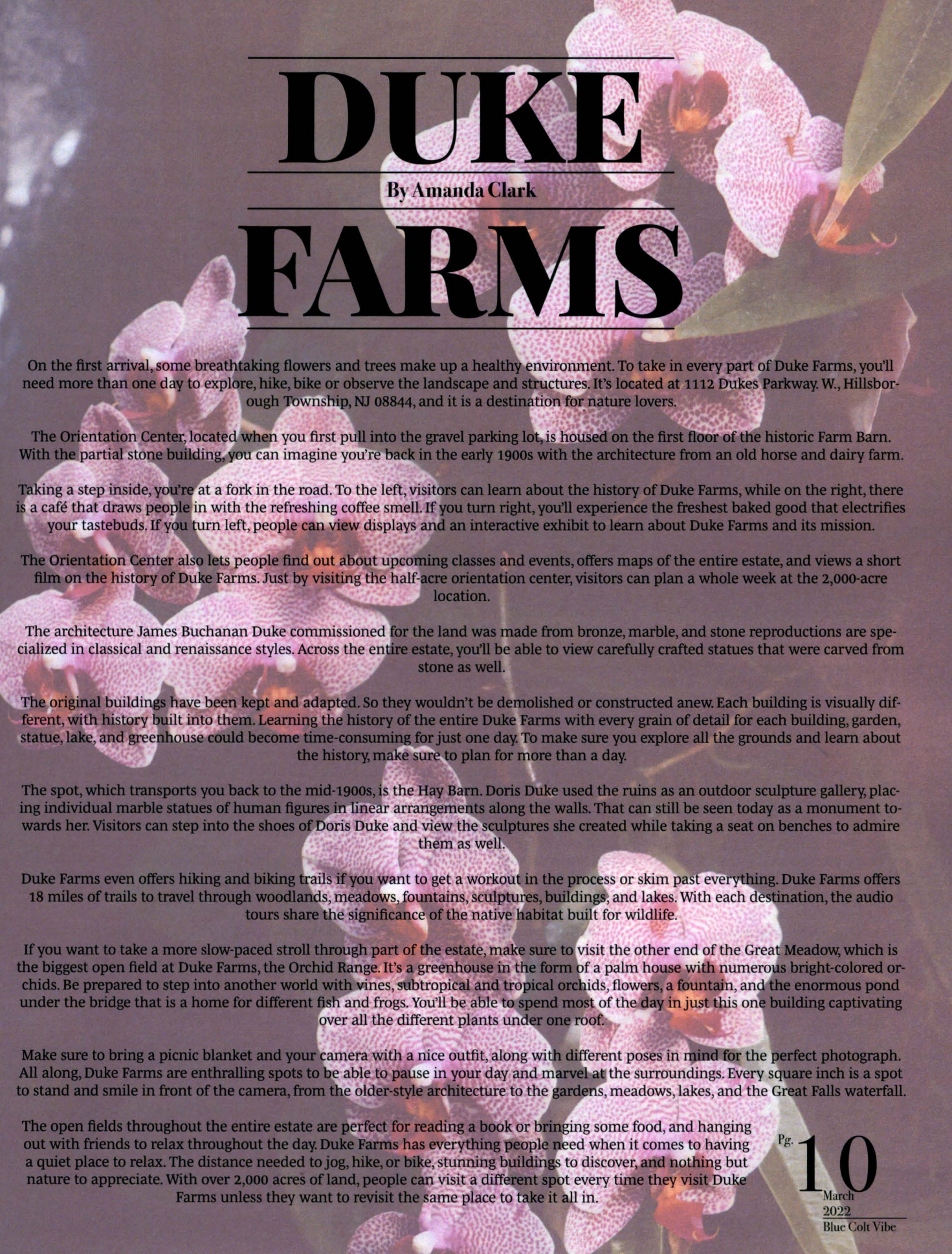
Tickets can cost up to \$75. It depends on the day of the week and time of the show. They do offer discounts; it would be a good idea to call the box office to see what they offer. Their shows run between 90 minutes without intermission and 2 hours and 15 minutes, including intermission. It does run a little cool in the theater, so bring a sweater just in case.

The concessions bar is open before the show and during intermission depending on the running time of the show. Their concessions bar serves snacks, such as chips, pretzels, trail mix, pastries, soft drinks and spirits. Be sure to get their travel cup, and you'll be able to take your drink into the theater with you. Concessions will cost \$2 to \$8 depending on the item.

After the show, take a walk through Princeton University's campus and head to Nassau Street. Nassau Street has a shop for practically everything. It's a great place to look for dinner after the show. Just off of Nassau Street is a Middle Eastern restaurant called Mamoun's. It's located on Witherspoon Street, a 10-minute walk from the theater. They serve items, such as falafel, shawarma (thinly sliced lamb) and lentil soup. The price ranges from \$2.50 to \$12, but save room for dessert.

Right around the corner is Thomas Sweets Creamery, serving several flavored milkshakes, beignets, and sweet and savory crepes. If you want a special treat, get the handmade whipped cream. It's worth the calories.

Spending the day in Princeton with friends is a memory you won't forget and can be done even on a budget.

A background image of several pink orchids with green leaves, some in sharp focus and others blurred, creating a soft, natural setting for the text.

DUKE FARMS

By Amanda Clark

On the first arrival, some breathtaking flowers and trees make up a healthy environment. To take in every part of Duke Farms, you'll need more than one day to explore, hike, bike or observe the landscape and structures. It's located at 1112 Dukes Parkway W., Hillsborough Township, NJ 08844, and it is a destination for nature lovers.

The Orientation Center, located when you first pull into the gravel parking lot, is housed on the first floor of the historic Farm Barn. With the partial stone building, you can imagine you're back in the early 1900s with the architecture from an old horse and dairy farm.

Taking a step inside, you're at a fork in the road. To the left, visitors can learn about the history of Duke Farms, while on the right, there is a café that draws people in with the refreshing coffee smell. If you turn right, you'll experience the freshest baked good that electrifies your tastebuds. If you turn left, people can view displays and an interactive exhibit to learn about Duke Farms and its mission.

The Orientation Center also lets people find out about upcoming classes and events, offers maps of the entire estate, and views a short film on the history of Duke Farms. Just by visiting the half-acre orientation center, visitors can plan a whole week at the 2,000-acre location.

The architecture James Buchanan Duke commissioned for the land was made from bronze, marble, and stone reproductions are specialized in classical and renaissance styles. Across the entire estate, you'll be able to view carefully crafted statues that were carved from stone as well.

The original buildings have been kept and adapted. So they wouldn't be demolished or constructed anew. Each building is visually different, with history built into them. Learning the history of the entire Duke Farms with every grain of detail for each building, garden, statue, lake, and greenhouse could become time-consuming for just one day. To make sure you explore all the grounds and learn about the history, make sure to plan for more than a day.

The spot, which transports you back to the mid-1900s, is the Hay Barn. Doris Duke used the ruins as an outdoor sculpture gallery, placing individual marble statues of human figures in linear arrangements along the walls. That can still be seen today as a monument towards her. Visitors can step into the shoes of Doris Duke and view the sculptures she created while taking a seat on benches to admire them as well.

Duke Farms even offers hiking and biking trails if you want to get a workout in the process or skim past everything. Duke Farms offers 18 miles of trails to travel through woodlands, meadows, fountains, sculptures, buildings, and lakes. With each destination, the audio tours share the significance of the native habitat built for wildlife.

If you want to take a more slow-paced stroll through part of the estate, make sure to visit the other end of the Great Meadow, which is the biggest open field at Duke Farms, the Orchid Range. It's a greenhouse in the form of a palm house with numerous bright-colored orchids. Be prepared to step into another world with vines, subtropical and tropical orchids, flowers, a fountain, and the enormous pond under the bridge that is a home for different fish and frogs. You'll be able to spend most of the day in just this one building captivating over all the different plants under one roof.

Make sure to bring a picnic blanket and your camera with a nice outfit, along with different poses in mind for the perfect photograph. All along, Duke Farms are enthralling spots to be able to pause in your day and marvel at the surroundings. Every square inch is a spot to stand and smile in front of the camera, from the older-style architecture to the gardens, meadows, lakes, and the Great Falls waterfall.

The open fields throughout the entire estate are perfect for reading a book or bringing some food, and hanging out with friends to relax throughout the day. Duke Farms has everything people need when it comes to having a quiet place to relax. The distance needed to jog, hike, or bike, stunning buildings to discover, and nothing but nature to appreciate. With over 2,000 acres of land, people can visit a different spot every time they visit Duke Farms unless they want to revisit the same place to take it all in.

NEW

By Cassandra Maisonet

BRUNSWICK

Don't mistake Rutgers for being the highlight of this location. New Brunswick is a city that is filled with ethnic diversity and everlasting entertainment. Downtown New Brunswick is where locals come to partake in special events and enjoy a myriad of restaurants and eateries. No matter what day of the week it is, the streets will be occupied by locals and out-of-town patrons.

Downtown New Brunswick has a train station and bus routes, thus making it easy to get there. The train stations serve Amtrak and NJ transit. The departing stop at North Brunswick's Walmart can get you to George Street within 15 minutes. Taking an Uber is a convenient option if you want to avoid looking for parking. If you're traveling by car, parking can be difficult to find, especially on the weekends. Almost every sidewalk has parking meters, but parking is free on Sundays.

At Monument Square Park, you'll see a sign of New Brunswick's sister cities: Debrecen in Hungary, Limerick in Ireland and Fukui and Tsuruoka in Japan.

Once you head down, you'll see various stores stretching along George Street which contains a plethora of dining options. Even better, George Street has adapted to outdoor dining by becoming a plaza for diners. The region between Albany and Bayard Streets is also closed for customers. The newly made plaza has ensured safety and enjoyment for the guests. While diners socialize, they can take pleasure in the live band that sets the relaxing ambiance of the street.

On George Street, you're bound to find anything you're craving. On one strip there is Rakkii Ramen, a modern Japanese restaurant with charming touches of traditional roots. There is also Chai Chenak, a friendly Pakistani restaurant that provides a colorful aura.

Accompanied on the same strip as Rakkii Ramen and Chai Chenak is Bagel Nosh. This deli is perfect if you need a quick bite. A bag of chips and an on-menu sandwich is an ideal pairing to go for. At Bagel Nosh, you're welcomed to explore by using bagels as the top and bottom of the sandwich. You can stuff your sandwich with various flavors or keep it simple with a delicious spread on a bagel. The menu has plenty of options that you're guaranteed to crave. The California Club Wrap on a bagel is filling and delicious enough to leave you satisfied.

For a fun night out, bring your friends to the Stress Factory. You'll have a night of laughs accompanied by dining. The line-up of comedians is spectacular. There are a variety of performers that range from college students who often do stand-up as a hobby to well-known comedians. The club dims the lights while the attention is focused on the stand-up act on stage. The special guest performers have two-hour time slots just for them to take the stage, and some performers have several time slots and have more than one day of performances. While you're spending time at the Stress Factory, don't buy only a few drinks. Stress Factory's menu doesn't lack in quality. This American styled menu contains build-your-own-burgers, salads, flatbreads and a decent amount of vegetarian options. You can also indulge in their desserts. The Brownie Bottom Sundae and the Peanut Butter Bomb Cake are gluten free, and of course, delicious.

On Bayard Street, Ramen Nagomi is a quiet and unassuming restaurant that is entered by a descending staircase. This tiny spot is packed on the weekends and for a good reason. Ramen Nagomi serves high-quality Japanese food. The menu contains fresh ramen, small plates, donburi and unique desserts. This cozy restaurant has a warm ambiance, and the kind waiters maintain that tone. The chicken karaage don is spicy yet flavorful and a side of the soft kakuni bao completes this meal. Try any of Ramen Nagomi's tasty desserts, it'll be hard to find them anywhere else.

If you're looking for other entertainment, you can walk down Morris Street to Above Art Studios or to Alfa Art Studios on Church Street. One of New Brunswick's parks, Boyd Park, is a couple of minutes away from George Street. This riverfront park serves relaxing views and local events. Boyd Park has paths and bridges with a pleasant view of the current season. During the warm seasons is when you'll be able to witness the

park's lucious nature. You'll also see captivating murals as you make your way around this spacious park. If you're at Boyd Park during sundown, relax as you watch the sky transform into beautiful colors before the moon comes out.

Downtown New Brunswick is the place to be if you're looking to try new foods. George Street especially excels in diverse taste. You can have Japanese desserts, vegetarian meals while watching entertainment and get creative with creating your own sandwiches all in one place. You can observe paintings at art studios or admire the night sky at Boyd Park The social scene of New Brunswick never dies, and a place like this is perfect for anyone to visit. You'll be in awe with what New Brunswick can do to help you unwind.

Don't mistake Rutgers for being the highlight of this location. New Brunswick is a city that is filled with ethnic diversity and everlasting entertainment. Downtown New Brunswick is where locals come to partake in special events and enjoy a myriad of restaurants and eateries. No matter what day of the week it is, the streets will be occupied by locals and out-of-town patrons.

Downtown New Brunswick has a train station and bus routes, thus making it easy to get there. The train stations serve Amtrack and NJ transit. The departing stop at North Brunswick's Walmart can get you to George Street within 15 minutes. Taking an Uber is a convenient option if you want to avoid looking for parking. If you're traveling by car, parking can be difficult to find, especially on the weekends. Almost every sidewalk has parking meters, but parking is free on Sundays.

At Monument Square Park, you'll see a sign of New Brunswick's sister cities: Debrecen in Hungary, Limerick in Ireland and Fukui and Tsuruoka in Japan.

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Cornucopia

By Julia Block

Cruise Line

As I was trying to come up with date ideas to celebrate my boyfriend's birthday, I came across the Cornucopia Cruise Line: a public and private cruise line which offers brunch, lunch and dinner cruises, as well as cruises for special events.

Some of these events include banquets, holiday cruises, and their foremost occasion, wedding cruises.

The cruise line has five boats that sail out of Perth Amboy or Hoboken, depending on the boat and one that is moored in Perth Amboy.

I decided to take my boyfriend on a public brunch cruise from noon to 2:30 p.m. out of Perth Amboy on Sunday, Sept. 29, on the ship called the "Cornucopia Princess."

I was able to purchase two tickets online in advance, one for each of us for \$132.77. The tickets were \$58.94 per person, with each having an additional \$8.99 administrative fee.

Sometimes tickets can be purchased for a cheaper price by using Groupon. The website often has deals that can get you tickets, out of Perth Amboy or Hoboken at a discounted value.

The cost of the trip covered an outstanding array of breakfast and lunch foods in the form of a buffet, dessert, and a DJ who played music throughout the cruise.

Certain beverages, especially alcoholic ones, are available while on the cruises for an extra cost.

Some breakfast options included bacon, bagels with cream cheese, butter or smoked salmon, fruits and an omelet station.

For lunch, there was chicken francese, cooked salmon, pasta, rice, and other delicious selections for everyone to enjoy.

For dessert, I had a cheesecake and my boyfriend had a chocolate cake. They also offered cookies, brownies, and other smaller desserts at the buffet.

Overall, all the food options were delectable.

The DJ played songs quietly during meal time to be sure not to interrupt conversations between guests but turned up the volume afterward to allow people to dance and have fun. He also played line-dances to get more people on their feet, coaxing them to the dance floor.

The cruises can be very relaxing by staying outside while taking in the views of the water, but also provide the option to party on the dance floor for some fun. These alternatives make it easy for the cruises to be enjoyable for anyone and everyone, regardless of their preferences and intentions.

The staff on the boat was also very attentive at making sure their guests had beverage refills and that they were getting adequate service while sailing.

For instance, while my boyfriend and I were outside taking in the views, an employee came to us offering more desserts for us to have outside the dining room. This wasn't a huge gesture, but little actions don't go unnoticed, as they truly add to the comfortable atmosphere of the cruises.

Views from the top deck of the boat make the trip worth it in itself.

The cruise out of Perth Amboy takes you all around the Raritan Bay and the cruise out of Hoboken takes you out on the Hudson River, both with delightful sights to see.

I would highly recommend taking a cruise with the Cornucopia Cruise Line for anyone looking for some fun in New Jersey, or who simply wants a short break from reality with some tasty food, fun, and captivating sights to see.

It honestly felt like I went on a vacation away for a few hours.

Book your cruise with Cornucopia Cruise Line at www.cornucopiacruise.com, and be sure to check Groupon for any reduced pricing available.

New Jersey's

By Madison Bara

Las Vegas

At first glance, the small city is unimpressive with its run-down stores and large condominiums that envelope the surrounding streets in darkness. However, upon further inspection, visitors will find that within this desolate exterior hides the entrance to New Jersey's party paradise, known as the Atlantic City Boardwalk.

Spanning over four miles, this is almost 150-year-old boardwalk is one of the longest in the world.

To many, it is known as Jersey's version of Las Vegas as countless casinos, bars, and music venues occupy the space.

In fact, upon entering the boardwalk, visitors will witness the Wild Wild West Bar and Casino. Here, visitors can choose between multiple different gambling options, including slot machines, arcade games, and a poker room. As for the decor, the interior of the building is reminiscent of a stereotypical midwestern town often depicted in television series such as *Gunsmoke* or *Maverick*. It also consists of a 12-foot water feature that allows guests to throw in coins to make wishes.

On the other hand, for more family fun, turn toward the right to experience the picturesque view of the white sandy beach that flows into the Atlantic Ocean. During the summer months, people of all ages gather to enjoy the warm water and scenic views of New Jersey's southernmost beach. With activities such as boogie boarding, kayaking, and windsurfing, this place offers many opportunities to have some wholesome family time. However, watch out for the seagulls as they will viciously steal any food brought onto the beach.

If you are hungry, Atlantic City has many five-star restaurants that line the boardwalk. For a more family-oriented atmosphere, stop at the Rainforest Cafe to experience the sights and sounds of the Amazon rainforest. As you eat, elephant, gorilla, and snake animatronics will consistently pop-out to make you feel like you are eating in the Amazon. In fact, every 30 minutes, the restaurant uses strobe lights and stereo speakers to mimic a thunderstorm. On your way out, be sure to stop at the gift shop to bring home some memorabilia.

For the more affluent guests, the newly opened Gordon Ramsey's Pub and Grill offers them a gourmet dining experience. The menu has a mixture of different cultural dishes, including beef wellington, fish and chips, and shepherd's pie, as well as a handful of specially crafted cocktails. The interior decor of the five-star

restaurant is reminiscent of a Roman palace as it includes marble columns, chandeliers, and a statue of Caesar. The average cost to dine here ranges from \$20-300, making this a place directed towards the more prosperous visitors.

Further up the boardwalk lays a place known as Ripley's Believe It or Not. Here, people from all over the world come to experience some one of a kind oddities that make them question the truth. The entrance portrays a large globe falling off the exterior of the building that is seemingly pulling the walls down to land on top of the guests. Upon entering the oddity museum exhibits such as the tomb of the pharaohs and the world of illusions transfix visitors to explore the unnatural. Some of these have interactive displays to occupy the children, so it's a great place to have fun with the whole family.

At the end of the boardwalk, visitors will stumble upon Atlantic City's most popular casino known as the Hard Rock. Formerly the Trump Taj Mahal, this 17-acre space holds over 1,000 lavish rooms, 16 restaurants, and 122,771 square feet of gaming space. The doors of the hotel open to a large entryway that has a magnificent 13-foot guitar hanging from the ceiling. On the lower level lay the casino with over 2,000 slot machines and 147 tables. Visitors should look around as the music-inspired place holds memorabilia of famous singers and songwriters, including Michael Jackson, Frank Sinatra, and Elvis Presley. In fact, a display hidden behind the elevators showcases Presley's Rolls Royce as well as Prince's guitar. The upper levels of the hotel have many luxurious shops that include jewelry, Hard Rock merch, and replicas of rock icons. As for family fun, this place will allow children into the hotel; however, I advise leaving the kids at home as the Hard Rock is an adult paradise.

At night, Atlantic City comes to life with hundreds of neon lights. It is a beautiful sight to witness all the intricate details of each casino as they are lit up in different colors. Make sure to bring a camera, as you will want to capture these breathtaking moments.

Although this 150-year-old boardwalk has decreased in popularity in the last few years, it is still as impressive as it ever was. To get the full luxurious experience of being on the most infamous boardwalk in the world, visit Atlantic City. I guarantee it will be a vacation you will never forget.

pg. 14

March
2022
Blue Colt Vibe

Johnson

By Nathaniel Thompson

Park

Johnson Park is a state park in Piscataway that runs through Highland Park. It is on River Road and next to SHI Stadium, where the Rutgers Football team plays. There are plenty of activities to do in the park as well. The park has eight tennis courts, one baseball field and two softball fields. The park also has one soccer field, five reservable picnic groves, two open picnic groves, three playgrounds, Animal Haven, two ponds, East Jersey Old Town Village, a 2.5-mile bike/walkway and cricket pitches.

One of the more popular attractions at Johnson Park is Animal Haven. The park features a variety of farms and exotic animals. They are on display with fences around. Some of the animals you may see include pigs, goats, llamas, deer, horses and plenty more. It is one of the more exciting parts of the area. When I went to the Animal Haven, I had the most fun with the goats. I was allowed to feed them and somewhat pet them. Walking around was a great vibe.

Johnson Park is also used for many cookouts, and picnics. Growing up, I went to many cookouts at Johnson Park that were huge and packed. My family is from West Africa, so the menu was interesting whenever we went. There was rice, chicken, beef, stew, plantain and other great foods. Everyone is usually welcomed to these cookouts, so you should always feel comfortable to go and get a plate.

With all the other exciting activities that you can do at Johnson Park, one thing to keep in mind is that it is still a park. There are plenty of playgrounds that are family-friendly with multiple courts for various sports. Sometimes there are weekend leagues for the soccer field, and bystanders often stop by to watch.

The East Jersey Old Town Village is another fun activity you could do while you are at Johnson Park. Though I never participated, according to [Middlesex county.maps.arcgis.com](https://www.middlesexcounty.maps.arcgis.com), East Jersey Old Town Village consists of reconstructed and replica 18th and 19th-century structures that represent architecture typical of farm and merchant communities once found in the Raritan Valley. Buildings include a tavern, blacksmith shop, wheelwright shop, schoolhouse, barracks, church, the homes of early settlers and other outbuildings.

Overall, Johnson Park is a park that you can plan around for a day. Piscataway has a couple of spots all around. However, Johnson Park probably would gain a lot of interest amongst all age groups and families. I would recommend visiting.

Monmouth

By Luke Lombardi

Every summer, my family and I go to the Monmouth horse track. It is a fun experience where everyone involved has a chance to win some money. We have been doing this for almost 5 years now and every trip has been enjoyable. Obviously, gambling is an attraction that lures many to the horse races. However, parents should be careful about letting younger children gamble on horse races.

Horse racing isn't the only gambling opportunity at the Monmouth tracks. Inside the building, there is a room where you can bet on other sports. There are televisions set up which enables you to bet live on any of the games going on while paying

attention to the horse tracks. Inside the room, there are pamphlets with all the season's bets and their odds which help determine if you should place a bet or not.

Once you enter the main part of the building, you will see betting kiosks with televisions showing sports games and races, and a board showing the odds for the upcoming race. Monmouth also has some food establishments and a couple horse-racing based games to play to pass time in between the races. Once you head outside, you see the tracks and seats to watch the races in. All around the tracks are food stands so you can enjoy some food and drinks while you are there. There is also an

area where you can watch the horses walk around before you make your bets.

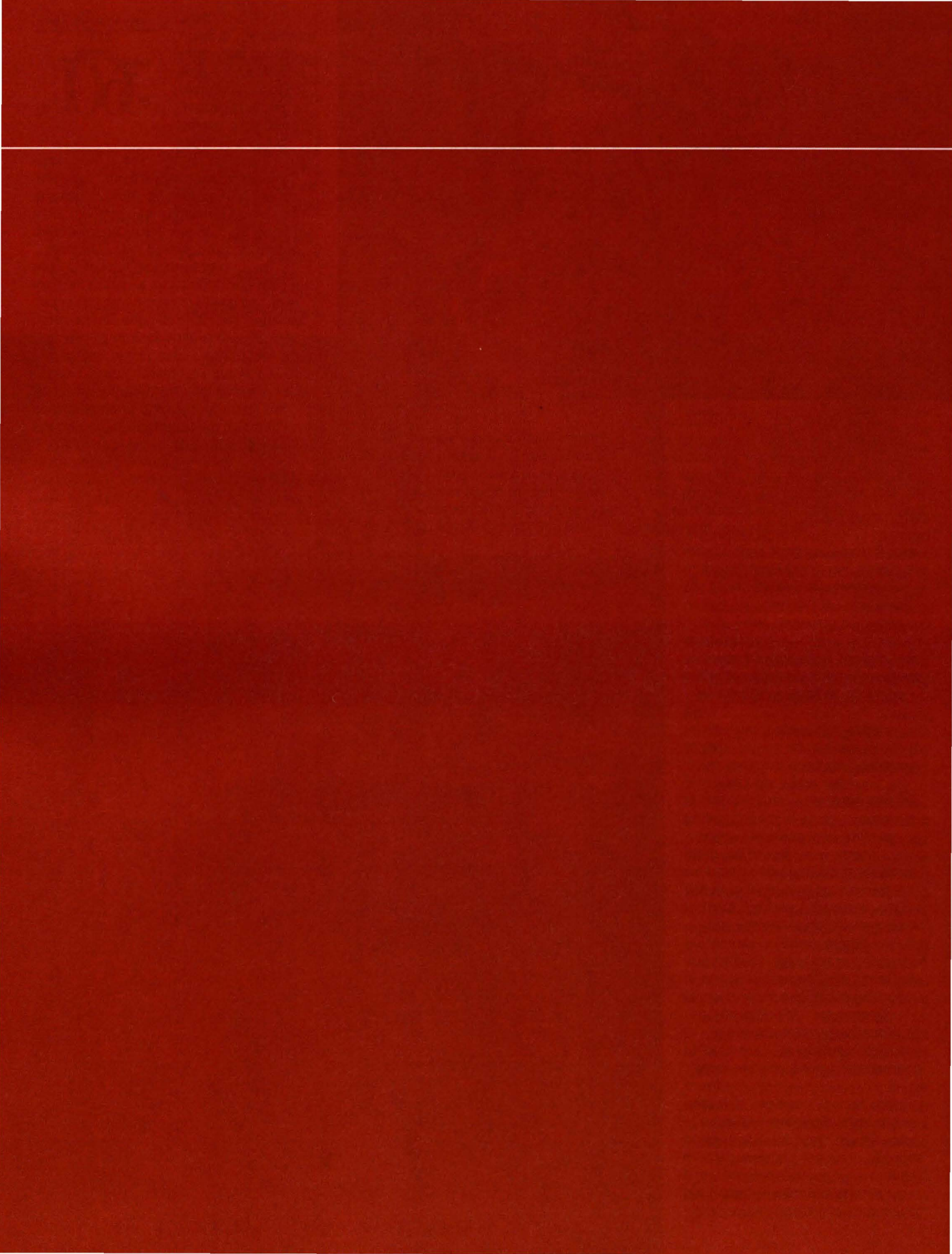
Every time I have gone to the track, it has been enjoyable. Even though I often fall short of winning money, it is still fun having an adrenaline rush as you watch the horse you picked come close to, or even win the race. Only once have I ever won big. On every race I bet on, I will place three or four dollars on the horse with the highest odds. This way, if I win, my profit would be astronomical compared to the other choices. It was the last race and my family and I were getting ready to leave.

The horses I placed money on both had odds of over 20:1. The horse with the highest odds came in second and the one after it came in first. I ended up winning \$110 on one race. That is more than I have won combined on every other visit. Part of the reason I bet like I do is my parents give us \$30 to spend. This lets us do some crazy bets to win money.

If you are into gambling and sports, I recommend going down to the Monmouth horse tracks. You get the fun of watching competition and might even leave with extra money in your pocket.

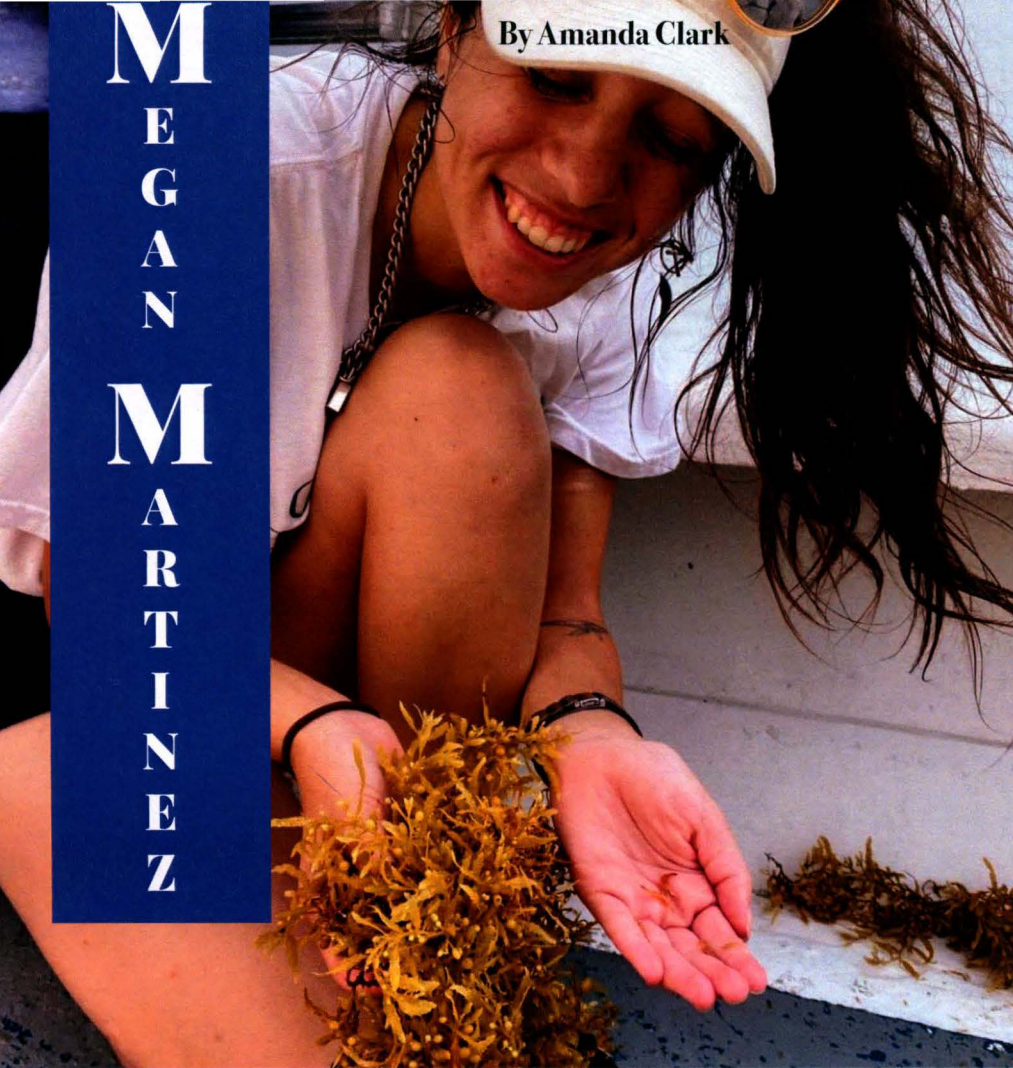


Profile



M E G A N M A R T I N E Z

By Amanda Clark



Middlesex College Ecology Alumna, Megan Martinez, lands an internship she loves with Cape May Whale Watcher & Research Center, documenting whales and dolphins while educating tourists.

The Cape May Whale Watcher & Research Center's mission is to promote the conservation of marine mammals and their environment through photo-identification research, education, and outreach.

"This has been the best experience I've ever had. Photographing whales and dolphins all day and learning their behavior and even their names. It's been the most exciting time I've ever had, I can't wait for future seasons," Martinez said.

Martinez takes photographs of marine mammals on whale and dolphin watching trips, GPS and data collection processing in Excel, Atlantic Bottlenose Dolphin fin matching, and analysis. Plus, passenger education, which includes leading a touch

tank, and whale baleen. Also, marine debris presentation, maintenance of collected local species tanks, and contributing to the research blog.

"A huge part of this is talking to passengers and explaining all the marine life in the ocean when we do the four different trips. It's a great chance to help you remember the information and express the passion I have towards marine life," Martinez said.

Each time Martinez is on the boat, her team photographs marine life while recording the GPS coordinates, data for weather and sea conditions, behaviors, group sizes, the presence of neonates, associations, surface intervals, and other specific case studies.

Martinez and her team have documented over 500 distinct individuals in the inshore coastal Bottlenose Dolphin catalog. In addition, it contributes to a more extensive database based out of Duke University and OBIS-SEAMAP, the Mid-Atlantic Bottlenose Dolphin Catalog.

After Middlesex College, she transferred to Rutgers University, New Brunswick Campus School of Environmental and Biological Sciences, majoring in Marine Science.

While there, Martinez applied for the Cape May Whale Watcher & Research Center internship and got accepted over a year ago.

Martinez works on the boat three to four times a week while working around her Rutgers University schedule.

By always showing up and working hard at the internship, Martinez received a job offer for the boat, and she accepted.

"I love this boat with my whole heart. The animals I get to see and the crew I get to work with are so amazing, and I got so lucky. I can't wait to start officially working here

in the fall," said Martinez.

"I encourage students to apply for internships that won't feel like work but feel like a vacation and when you get the position, give it your all. It could lead to a huge job opportunity that will let you have more experience in the field," Martinez said.



By Amanda Clark

Jasmine Bundy, a 2007 alumni, received an associate degree for Social and Rehabilitation Services.

“This major was the closest to a pre-social work program and being a part of the Democracy House program was the biggest impact Middlesex had on me,” Bundy said.

In October 2005, Bundy joined Democracy House, a campus organization dedicated to serving the local community. As a member, she helped single mothers learn creative writing at Mama’s Crossing, located next door to the Transitional Housing Unit for Women.

Bundy said, “It was very impactful in terms of making those connections. I think sometimes we think [because it’s] community college, we’re not going to make connections because it’s everyone you went to high school with, but it definitely made my experience.”

She was able to give speeches at different conferences during the Democracy House’s after-school program, as well as give back at Elijah’s Promise.

“It’s so much more than just an associate degree. That gave me the most in terms of soft skills, in terms of being able to go interview for a position,” Bundy said. “What I did with Democracy House definitely helped with that because we got to learn how to speak publicly, how to run meetings, how to work with directors at different organizations and be their support.”

Bundy applied to nonprofit organizations for different positions that involved working with the youth while attending Middlesex College. Her work with the community earned her part-time positions based on her experience.

“If you’re a traditional age student and you’re coming right out of high school, you think ‘I can’t do that because I just started or I’m too young,’” said Bundy. “I remember being 19-years-old and being a presenter at a conference to other students that were older than me and to their actual site supervisors. So, it forced me to take on leadership responsibilities very early on.”

“That really made it easier for me to embrace leadership with confidence as I got older, to start applying for positions in my own career. I am truly grateful for the leadership role that I was put into,” Bundy said.

After Middlesex College, Bundy transferred to Kean University to get to know the professors because of their small classes. She didn’t want to be one of many, she

wanted to get to know faculty members.

While at Kean University, Bundy continued to be involved in the campus and made many connections with the faculty.

“I found it easier from my experience at Middlesex [College] to connect with the faculty because I was not intimidated,” said Bundy.

After graduating from Kean in 2009 with a Bachelor of Arts in sociology, Bundy received her master’s degree in nonprofit management in higher education with a master’s in sociology.

Following her passion for teaching and helping people, Bundy emailed the person in charge for a teaching position. She

interviewed and did a demonstration of teaching.

Bundy said, “Since I was used to doing public speaking, it was fun. This is my third year teaching at Kean [University].”

“[The] biggest thing I would say is to put in the work and make connections. Your experience at Middlesex College is really what you make it. The more you can get involved, the better an opportunity [you’ll] have if you decide to go on in the workforce or transfer to another college,” said Bundy.

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Julia Block, a graduate of Middlesex College, has built a stellar resume of Internships that will help her flourish in a career in journalism.

While in MC's journalism program, she interned at TAPinto, a New Jersey-based local news and an online platform for her internships to get a foot in the journalism door.

Block interned at TAPinto New Brunswick as a local news writer and reporter from January to August 2020 while being a part of Middlesex College co-op for TAP.

Block graduated in the spring of 2020 with an associate degree in Liberal Arts - Journalism.

"Being involved in Quo Vadis and numerous internships helped me prepare and tap

into what the program at Rutgers would be like and prepared me for what lies ahead after graduation at Rutgers," Block said.

"In the moment I couldn't thank Professor Edwards because as a student or member of the Quo Vadis staff. She's very tough but is huge on learning through doing, and [that] makes you want to take on more than you want to initially by pushing you and bringing out the better of you by teaching new skills and letting you take control. This let me know I could take on all these internships and build my resume in order to have what it takes after graduation," Block said.

Knowing internships would help her understand what a journalism job would be like, Block continued being an intern while studying at Rutgers.

She returned to QV as an intern in the fall 2020 semester as the head copy editor.

Earlier this year, TAPinto at Raritan Bay offered Block an internship/freelance job position.

"This was exciting because it was my first paid gig, with me getting \$40 per freelanced piece. That offer continues now if I choose to write with them whenever I can," Block said.

May through August 2021, VUE New Jersey magazine and media group took Block on as an intern, which had her write digital features and posts, helping with social media a bit, and Block got to test the waters in marketing outreach as well.

Block writes for each of these when she can find time while a college senior at Rutgers University.

Block said, "I never told myself I was the college kid ready for the real world, I want to stress internships because they are the best way to learn and be prepared. You get more when you are hands-on but definitely focus in class because you can take away so much from your professors with their life lessons and previous jobs in the field."

"I am so grateful to be where I am now and couldn't have gotten it without Professor Edward's big bank [of journalism knowledge] and with the drive she had. Professor Edwards helped me not throw in the towel by teaching me how to juggle everything," said Block.

During her time at Middlesex, Block was a member of the Quo Vadis Newspaper Team as a staff writer, copy editor and section editor who wrote numerous profile stories.

At College, Block maintained a 4.0 GPA and joined the Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) Honor Society, earning a PTK Honor Society scholarship to continue her journalism studies at Rutgers University-New Brunswick for the School of Arts and Sciences.

The PTK Honor Society scholarship is only for Rutgers University, securing Block's decision on a four-year college.

After graduating, Block enrolled at Rutgers with the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society scholarship, and she earned the Frank M. Chambers award for maintaining a 4.0 GPA.

With these two awards, Block received more financial freedom to be able to not only major in journalism and media studies but also minor in digital communication, information, and media (DCIM) to broaden her studies and learn more.

Block plans to start applying for jobs and other opportunities in preparation for her May 2022 graduation date from Rutgers University.

By Amanda Clark

Franchesca Rodriguez, a recent Middlesex College alum, leads by example to show that students can become well-rounded with their education and career by being involved in their community.

Rodriguez wanted to be more than just a student here for the transfer credits; she knew Middlesex College could offer her amazing opportunities to further her in life by being a part of the college community.

As a student, Rodriguez decided to be involved on the campus by joining the National Honor Society Phi Theta Kappa Upsilon Gamma Chapter (PTK).

As the public relations secretary of PTK, Rodriguez would work with the organization's officers to plan and think of events for students and faculty; then she would manage posting information about the upcoming events.

The National Honor Society would also come up with donations for the members and students to participate in, Rodriguez would help and donate when she could.

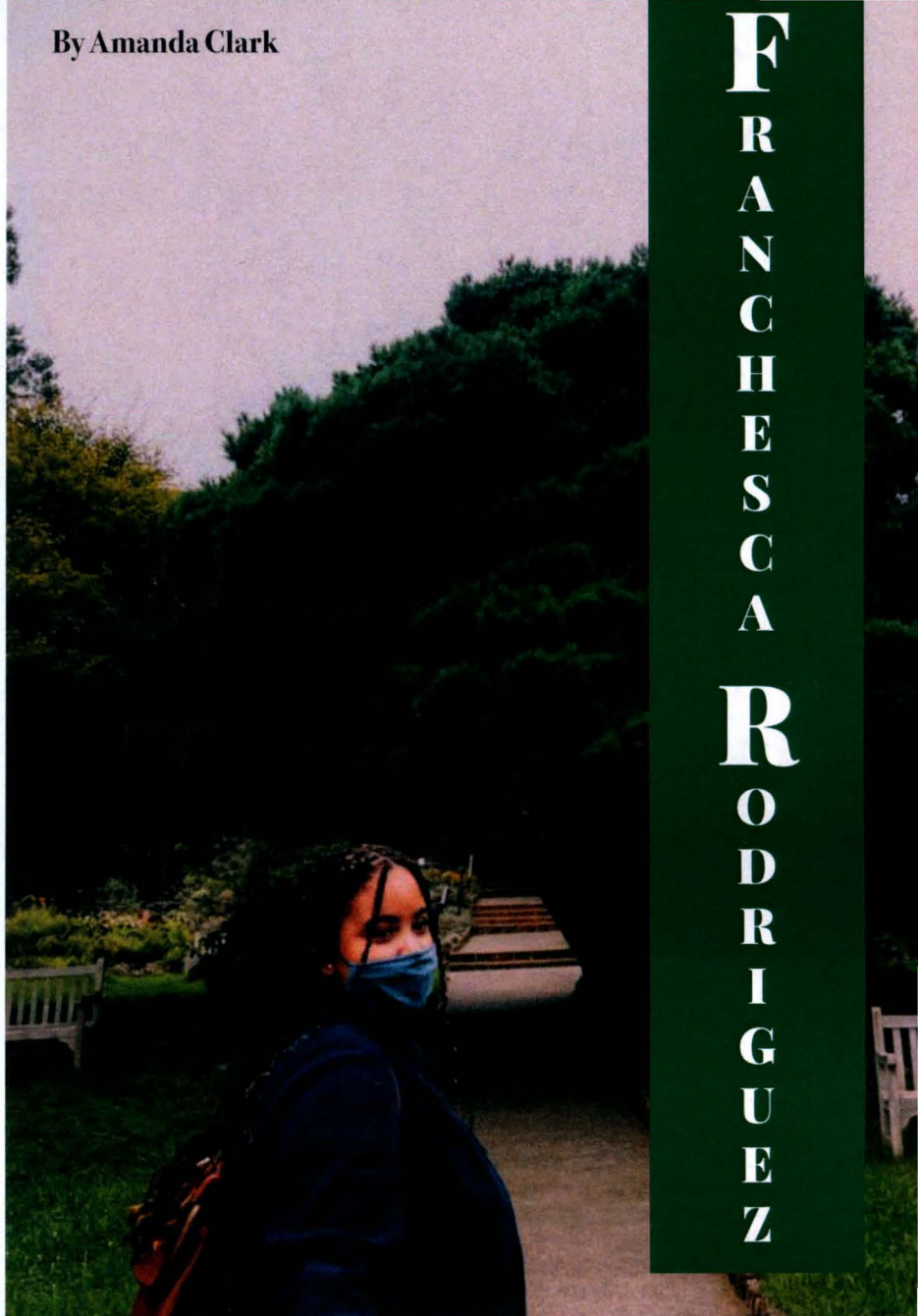
Understanding that campus life and socialization help bring students together to further their education, Rodriguez also joined the Educational Opportunity Fund Program (EOF) as a student member.

As a student member for EOF, Rodriguez discussed academic and career objectives with other student members to help plan and grow her academic future.

"I am so grateful to have been in the programs I was in. They really emphasized on helping students all things school and transferring related. They helped me grow not only as a student but as a person," Rodriguez said.

Not only did Rodriguez realize the importance of learning from and helping current students, but she also attended numerous panels and spoke to alumni to help her find the right fit and knowledge.

"I'm currently learning a new language for my own interest and that will also help me expand my studies later and I plan to



F R A N C H E S C A R O D R I G U E Z



keep taking classes that interest me and my curiosity to then join programs and jobs that help students," Rodriguez said.

Taking what she learned from Middlesex College, Rodriguez is currently attending Rutgers University continuing as a communications major and pursuing a global studies minor to broaden her learning experience.

"I really like the program at Rutgers and all the possibilities studying here could offer me. My life after community college has brought on new challenges and lessons that will guide me through the industry and opportunities," said Rodriguez.

By Amanda Clark

REBECCA ALFREY



the Disney College Program to work in the photo pass department or with the attractions.

Originally the program wasn't supposed to return for two years, but over the past summer with the country reopening, it surfaced that the Walt Disney Company was bringing the program back.

O'Connor became thrilled, knowing this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity would be coming back, reopening the doors to bringing his childhood dream to life.

O'Connor reapplied to the program to work at Walt Disney World this year; he was later accepted.

"I was gonna take online classes from Middlesex college, but they didn't have the ones I needed offered online, so I took a semester off for the program. Plus, Disney gives you college credit at the completion of the program," O'Connor said.

When Alfrey was about to go back to college to pursue her graphic design career, her mom passed away.

Alfrey said, "It took me some time to get my head straight with figuring out how to balance school and work and taking care of my younger brothers."

O'Connor currently works in the quick-service food and beverage in the Fort Wilderness Campground Resort at the P&J's Southern Takeout, Meadows Poolside Snack Bar and the food truck.

This past August, Alfrey visited Walt Disney World and Universal Studios in Orlando, Florida for a week to go on vacation and take some time to enjoy life.

"When I went back there, I instantly fell in love with everything. The way that Disney updated their policies makes everyone feel included and that they can express themselves. Universal and their atmo-

Middlesex College students Zachary O'Connor and Rebecca Alfrey find employment opportunities at Disney World with the Disney College Program or as a direct employee.

Last year, O'Connor applied for the Disney College Program since he figured this would look great on a resume if he became an education teacher.

Also dreaming of the Disney College Program, Alfrey, Middlesex College, graphic design major, said, "I always wanted to do the Disney College Program when I found out about it in high school."

The program allows students to receive on-the-job experience within the different Disney parks while participating in their college coursework.

Growing up as a Disney child, O'Connor always dreamed of working at one of the parks in the future to become a part of the company's magic.

"Disney is a reputable company, but also I grew up as a Disney child, so it was my dream to work for the company," O'Connor said.

When COVID-19 hit, the fall Disney College Program of 2020 was canceled, so O'Connor went back to studying as an education major at Middlesex College. Alfrey took

a break from college due to not being able to learn as well with online classes.

During the pandemic, Alfrey worked for Six Flags Great Adventure in the rides department working Kingda Ka, Superman, Nitro, Green Lantern, Batman and Bizzaro.

While working at Six Flags, she would constantly talk to her mom about doing



sphere are also very welcoming. It brought back the spark that I felt I had lost when I lost my mom," said Alfrey.

At that moment, Alfrey decided she was not going to wait another second to pursue her dream of working for the Walt Disney Company, the dream she talked about with her mom for so long.

"I decided to stop thinking about everything that is going wrong and to make things go right. I love making people happy and smiling. I love bringing joy to people and turning their bad days into slightly better days if I have the power to. I feel at Disney I have the power to do that no matter what position I work in," Alfrey said.

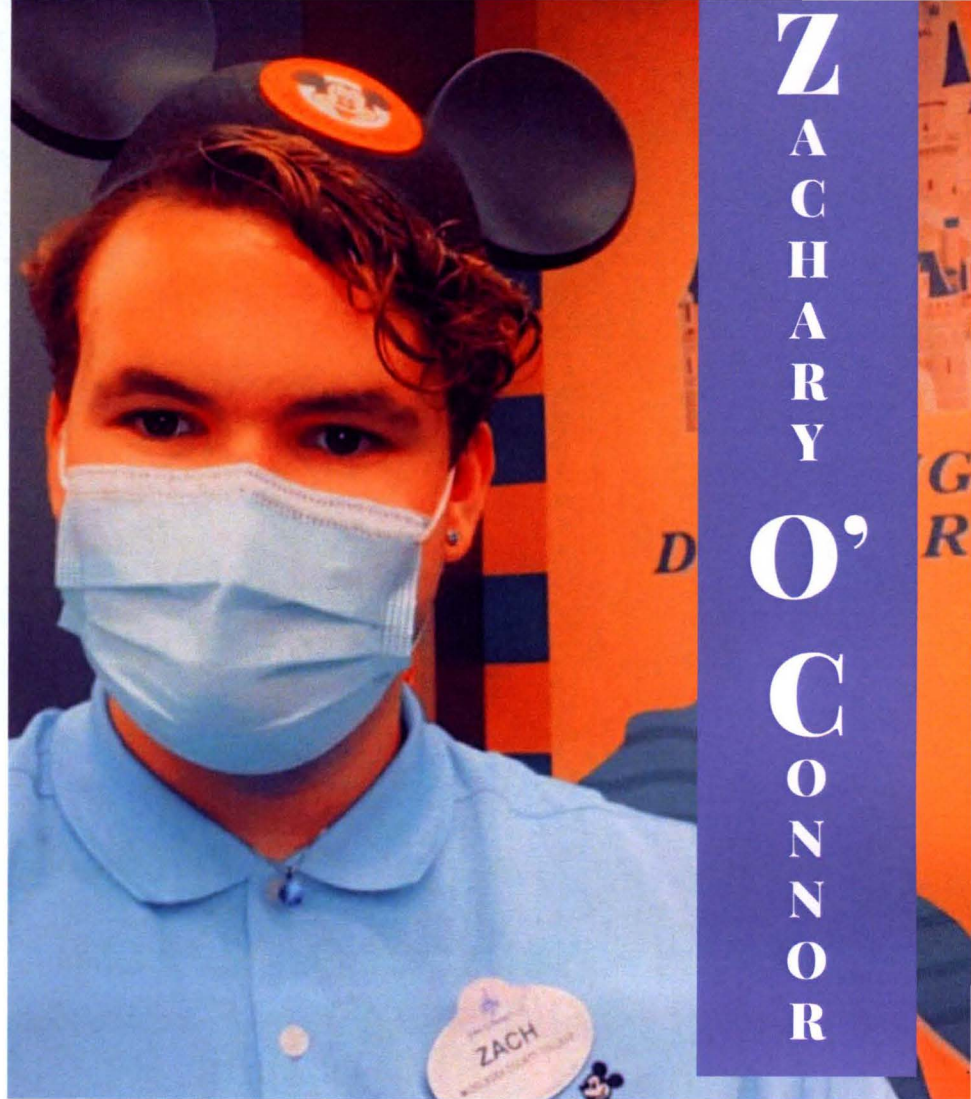
The program has provided O'Connor with magical memories that will last him a lifetime with incredible opportunities for his career to grow.

O'Connor said, "If I decide to stay with the company, I would like to work in customer service or an activity planner at one of the resorts since that would be my dream role. If not, I'll return to Middlesex College at the end of my program and finish my major and transfer to a four year."

Currently, Alfrey works at both Universal Studios and Walt Disney World. The Universal Studios attraction she works at is the Hollywood Rip Ride Rockit; while at Disney World, she works at Disney Food and Beverage, starting at Casey's Corner and moving to Port Orleans Riverside.

Alfrey said, "I hope that during my time there I can eventually work my way up into doing graphic design for the company. Working with that team and developing new ideas and designs for their posters, banners, park guides, signs for rides, the list goes on and on."

"I love that at Disney, it doesn't matter what age you are, there's something for



ZACHARY O'CONNOR

you and always will be. I never got to experience Disney growing up. The first time I went was when I was 17, but seeing that castle for the first time is definitely something else and meeting all the characters

just hits differently," said Alfrey.

"I mainly decided to pursue my dream because I know that's what my mom would have wanted for me. I just want to make her proud because I know she is watching from above. It was a constant thing we talked about and I might not be in the Disney College Program, but I'm a part-time, hopefully, full-time hire soon," said Alfrey.

After visiting Disney World, Alfrey knew she wanted to work there and be a part of the magic even though it is not through the Disney College Program.

Working at Disney has made Alfrey's dreams come true while making other people's dreams come true at the parks.

Alfrey said, "I actually have a favorite quote from Walt Disney, it goes, 'laughter is timeless, imagination has no age, and dreams are forever.' To me it means that no matter how old or how young you are, you can always pursue what you dream and enjoy every moment."



By Amanda Clark

K A T H L E E N M O R G A N

continued to give me tremendous opportunities,” Morgan said.

“I will always be grateful to Middlesex College. They were very understanding of adult students, especially those with families,” Morgan said.

Dr. Winifred Collins was the director of the dietetic program and strongly urged and encouraged Morgan to continue her education at Rutgers University.

“Being an adult student, she believed in me and told me that I could do it. I will forever be grateful for her encouragement to further my education,” Morgan said.

After graduating from Middlesex College, Morgan transferred to Rutgers University to the department of home economics.

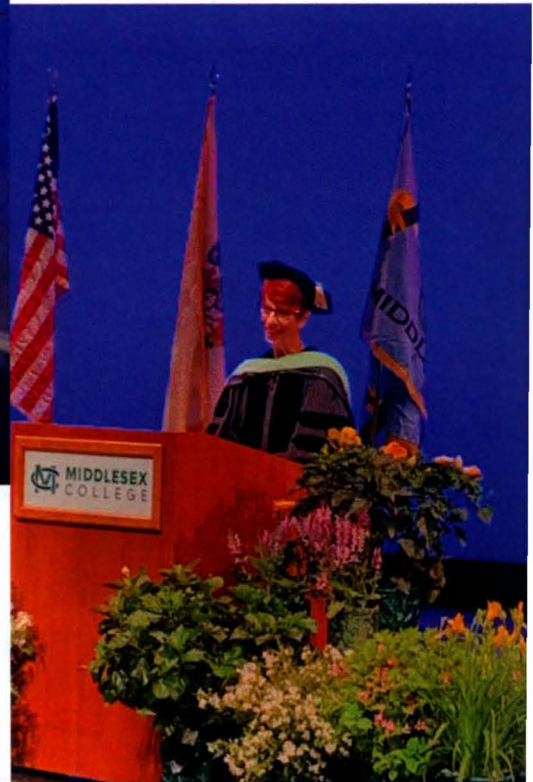
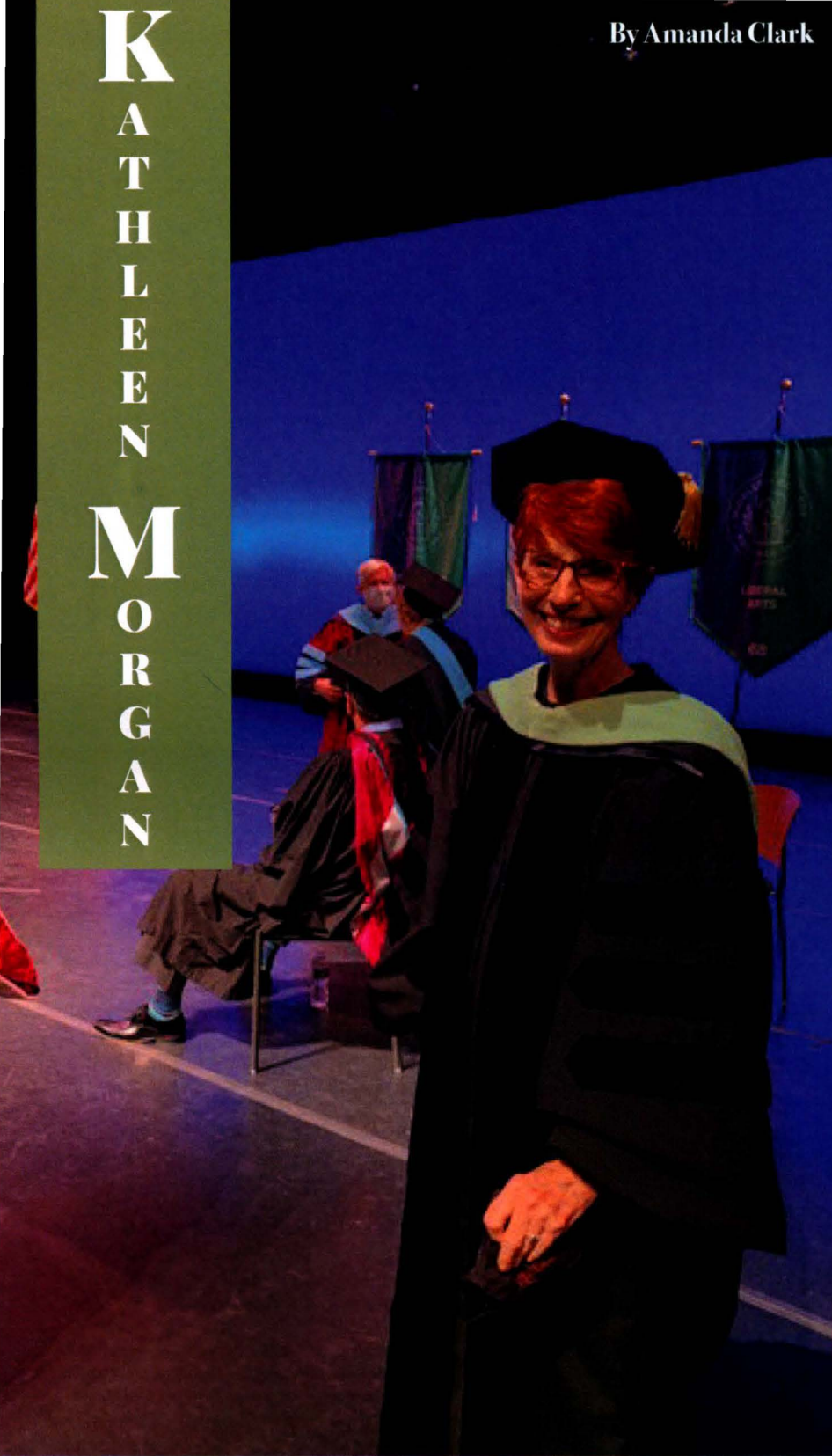
“I was fortunate that they had a program for women who were returning to college that was very beneficial to me,” Morgan said.

Once Morgan graduated from Rutgers University, she got a doctoral degree because she had the support she needed and learned that even though she was an adult student with children at home, she could get an education and a career.

“I worked in my career at Rutgers University for 28 years and retired June 1, 2020. I am grateful to have many fond memories,” Morgan said.

Morgan let nothing stop her from getting the degree she wanted and a successful job. She thinks anyone can do it and wishes them the best of luck in their endeavors.

“I strongly encourage women to work for that degree. Even though there might be challenges along the way, it can change their life for the best,” Morgan said.



Alumna Kathleen Morgan wants to encourage every woman, no matter their age, to put effort into their degree because it will help them in life.

Morgan majored in dietetic technology while raising two small children and graduated in 1985.

“I cherished my education at Middlesex College in the dietetic program, as it was the foundation of a lifetime to further education and a career that

By Amanda Clark, Harsh Godhani

Middlesex College appointed Ana Maria Caquias as the college's Alumni Representative on the Board of Trustees during the summer.

During her enrollment at Middlesex College, she was a College Assembly Academic Standards Task Force member for the 2020-2021 term. She graduated with an associate degree in Liberal Arts with a concentration in Political Science, the Director of Marketing Communications, Thomas Peterson, said.

Caquias said this fall she will pursue her bachelor's degree in Liberal Studies at Thomas Edison State University with a focus on public interest law and the future goal to attend law school.

She works as a pro bono coordinator for the Newark-based law firm McCarter & English, LLP, helping recruit and support the firm's attorneys who participate in the pro bono program; while serving as a language interpreter and translator for the firm and its clients, Caquias said.

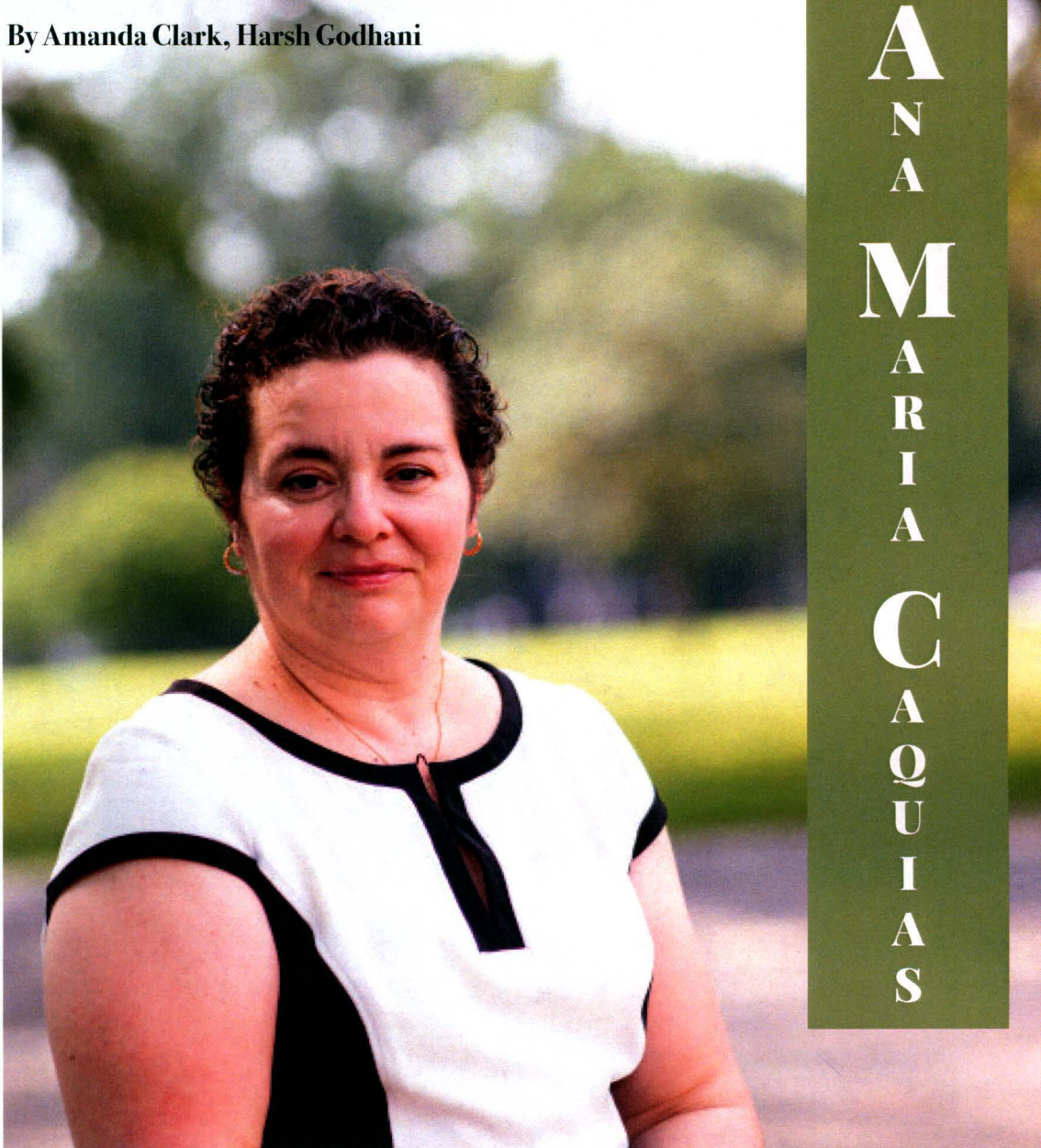
"I am honored to have been appointed as the Middlesex College Alumni Representative to the Board of Trustees, and hope to provide a voice that speaks to the needs, challenges and aspirations of the changing landscape that makeup Middlesex College students," said Caquias.

Sean Beard, college alumnus of 2016 and resident of Franklin township, said, "I saw the news on social media and I hope she proudly advocates for the college students and alumni."

Jada Davis, a recent alumna of the college from Colonia, said she hopes to see the future alumni representative continue to spread initiatives to help address equality and diversity on campus.

Caquias said, "The changing landscape not only includes recent high school graduates, but also older individuals returning to college to add to their education or looking to change careers."

Vikas Matta, an alumnus of 2019 from



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Piscataway, said students in leadership should certainly be aware of the demographics at the community college.

Matta said, "After reading her comments, I've high regards for her and hope the best for her. Her accomplishments as the representative will improve the college community and hopefully future students."

Caquias has advocated for marginalized and vulnerable individuals within her community and has volunteered with various religious and non-profit organizations that address the systemic harms suffered by low-income individuals and families, Peterson said.

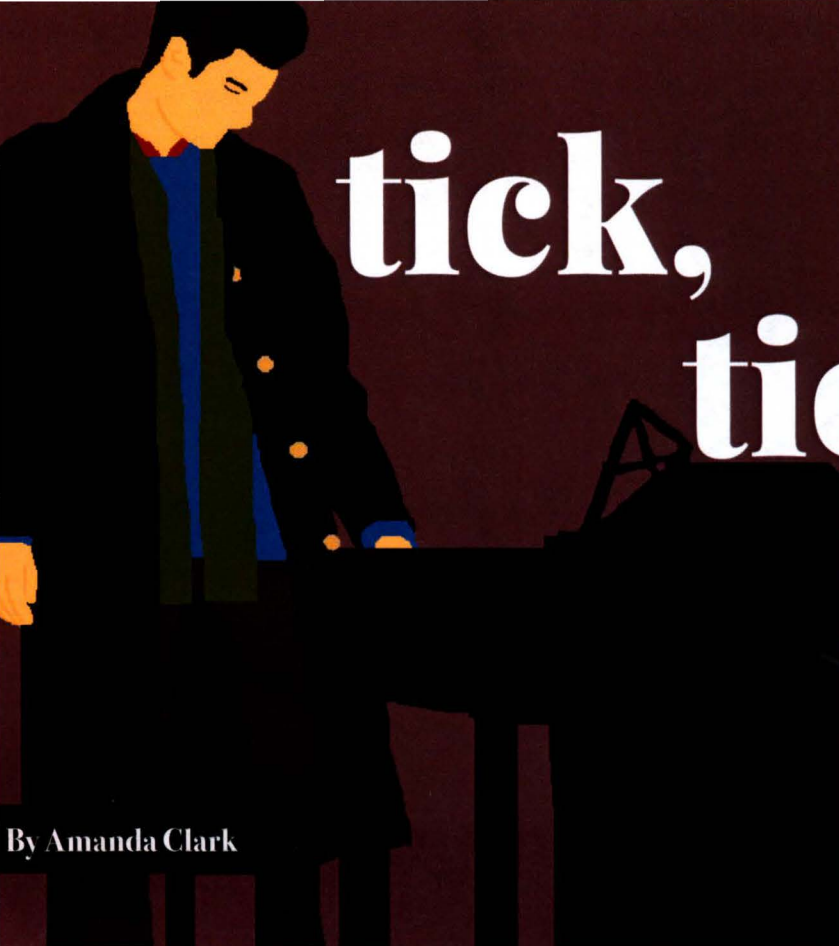
Advice for current students enrolled at Middlesex College, Caquias said, "Enjoy your time at Middlesex. I know that balancing life and studies can be very difficult at times and you will come up against some challenges, but take a moment to enjoy your time at Middlesex."

Caquias said she had the privilege of interacting with great professionals, professors and staff who were always helpful and understood her concerns. They showed that they too had a vested interest in her success at Middlesex and left her with very fond memories.

Caquias describes her election to the Middlesex College Board of Trustees as an honor and hopes to provide an important voice that speaks to the Middlesex College students' needs, challenges and aspirations.

"When it comes to leadership and advocacy, I'm often reminded of Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg's words: 'Fight for the things that you care about but do it in a way that will lead others to join you,'" Caquias said.

Review



tick, tick... BOOM!

By Amanda Clark

Lin-Manuel Miranda's "tick, tick...BOOM!" is a love letter to the late playwright Jonathan Larson and all Broadway musicals.

The Netflix original, "tick, tick...BOOM!" is a musical that follows Larson, played by Andrew Garfield, and his thought process on making his musical, 'Superbia.' It is based on Larson's autobiographical musical, "tick, tick...BOOM!," which was rewritten and released in 2001 by playwright David Auburn. Larson is about to turn 30 and is struggling to finish his futuristic musical he has been working on for eight years. It received its first workshop production; however, Larson hasn't written the crucial second-act solo for one of the character's turning points. Larson is trying to finish his musical while working at a diner and balancing his love life along with his friendships.

Throughout the film, it cuts back and forth from the present with Larson trying to finish his musical to Larson performing his "tick, tick...BOOM!" musical. Each time it cuts to Larson's future performance, you think it's what he is thinking at the moment due to it aligning with the timeline, and the song choice illuminates the scene beautifully. Having it cut back and forth isn't distracting; it actually helps the scenes and adds character to Larson's work. Garfield conveys Larson's feelings of urgency alongside the ambition and frustration of an artist who has so much to say but can't figure out how to say it or put it into words.

Fans of Larson will be able to see the film foreshadowing his iconic "RENT" musical. Also, those who appreciate the detail will adore the star-stunning Sunday diner scene. It has some of the original cast from "RENT" alongside some from "Hamilton."

This scene lets you see the world from his point of view in Larson's head. It also takes place in the famous Moondance Theater that closed in 2012, a workplace for many future Broadway stars.

The film is filled with numerous cameos everywhere you turn. It stars Robin de Jesús as Larson's best friend, Michael, in "RENT" in 1996. Vanessa Hudgens plays Karessa, the main character in "Superbia," in the film and has played

Mimi and Maureen in various productions, including "RENT Live." In the opening number "30/90," the two men sitting at the table are Roger Bart and James Nicola. Bart was a fellow waiter at the diner with Larson. He participated in the actual "Superbia" workshop. Nicola served as artistic director of the New York Theatre Workshop, where "RENT" debuted Off-Broadway. During the scene where Larson plays a piece in a writers workshop for a panel, Nick Blaemire appears as Larson in the 2016 Off-Broadway revival of "Tick, Tick...BOOM!" There are endless more cameos from people who impacted Larson's life and people from Broadway who have become loved by fans.

The run time is 1 hour and 55 minutes, and it's not enough. The beginning of the film shows footage of Garfield's Larson performing the "tick, tick...BOOM!" in a 3x3 format as if it was recorded on a camcorder. This ties in with the end of the film, where they show actual footage of Larson performing "tick, tick...BOOM!" which was originally titled '30/90.' To be able to watch Larson perform his autobiographical and see just how Garfield captured Larson's personality and performance was eye-opening. If Miranda creates a sequel with the same cast going into more of Larson's life would be something I'd give my money to see.

"tick, tick...BOOM!" is a masterpiece with storytelling through visuals and songs. Each song tells the story of what Larson portrayed each event as. Miranda created a world where everything comes alive with each stroke of creativity. There isn't a scene that went wrong or needed to be fixed. Miranda's "tick, tick...BOOM!" comes together in a way where it's an appreciation piece for not only Larson but all of Broadway.

Denis Villeneuve's version of Frank Herbert's 1965 novel, "Dune," opens with the title reading "Dune: Part One." You won't want to blink because it then cuts straight to the characters without much backstory. As if it isn't a film, the film begins with what the characters are currently dealing with. "Dune" reminds you that if someone walked into your life, they would only see what is currently going on, and they wouldn't get a backstory to understand the details. That makes the viewer need to think while watching the film; it is not something you put on in the background or not give your full attention.

The film is unpredictable, and the director doesn't rush the plot. Make sure to have your coffee beforehand. The film could feel slow for some people and tempt them to take a nap, but I insist you don't. If there's a moment you miss, the rest of the film will be confusing. Each scene is crucial to watch and understand to acknowledge what follows. "Dune" takes the fine details to make them an entire scene, causing the film to feel incomplete and long. However, the plot is not what makes this film a masterpiece.

"Dune" is filled with stunning visuals with a color palette worth seeing. Every person who watches "Dune" will be blessed with the color choice and cinematography it has to offer. The entire film follows the same palette, which is the reason it doesn't feel washed out with the color choice of beige, blue, orange and grey. Each scene compliments the next with the color adding character to the desert and the other stunningly detailed production designs. On top of the visual appreciation, the soundtrack will move you to feel the intensity of each moment and the emotion of some characters. It is a soundtrack that pulls you in and doesn't let go, only to have gone missing at the end.

Just as the film started, it ended the same way, out of nowhere. The powerful music that makes the viewer want to watch the film is inadequate. One of the biggest factors in a film is how it ends. There are two things a filmmaker can do: leave the viewer with a cliffhanger or provide a conclusion that they can follow. "Dune" failed to deliver. Since it is part one of a series, it leaves the viewer with a cliffhanger. Although it gave me the sense that I know what happens, but if it gets canceled, then I lose interest in assuming and imagining how the

re at a random scene with the least amount of the watch more; however, it leaves the audience feeling a film needs a satisfying ending that does not leave a cliffhanger and makes the viewer desperately need no further explanation. Unfortunately, "Dune" left the audience with a cliffhanger. If they release another film, then great, I'll watch it. I need not worry. The scene they chose to end with, which caused me to watch the next film will begin.

"Dune" is an extremely visually pleasing film that does not fully deliver on

film that deserves applause; nonetheless, any other aspect.



Only Murders In The Building

Martin Short, Steve Martin and Selena Gomez star in a Hulu comedy about the unlikely friends starting a murder mystery podcast in a New York luxury building.

Oliver Putnam, Charles-Haden Savage and Mabel Mora are all obsessed with true-crime podcasts, so when a fellow resident, Tim Kono, is murdered in his apartment, they come together to solve the case. They've created their own podcast titled "Only Murders in the Building." A new podcast episode releases each episode, getting one step closer to discovering the murderer.

"Only Murders in the Building" became obsessed with blindsiding not only the viewer but the characters as well. Each episode introduces new practical suspects and then leans toward a new one at the end. With each step of getting closer to solving the murder, we discover new details about not only Tim Kono's life but Oliver, Charles and Mabel's lives as well. Each new revealed piece of information lets the viewer and characters believe they know more to put together the missing aspects of the murder. It allows you to believe anyone can solve a mystery as long as you work together and look at the small details to follow every clue.

Any show can string together a suspenseful whodunnit, but "Only Murders In The Building" examines loneliness as an individual mystery between characters, creating a more captivating concept. The age difference of Mabel between Charles shows age does not need barrier in relationships. Their and love for murder podcasts together to show that anyone a healthy connection. The

Oliver and to be a loneliness pull them can make spaces

between people aren't as vast as they seem, revealing more about each character.

"Only Murders In The Building" is bold, calm and terrifying, comforting, empathetic and hilarious. This show has everything it needs to serve a masterpiece on a silver platter. Each episode begins with a new voiceover explaining the situation. It's a striking narrative approach that lets you get in the character's head talking and see it all from their point of view.

With each new plot twist, there comes the chance of the show becoming redundant, old or no longer interesting. We can thank Steve Martin and John Hoffman, the show's creators, for not letting the viewer down. Every moment of the show is a moment that draws you in, wanting more without the feeling of disappointment. The complexity of the plot with the whodunnit allows viewers to imagine the ending. Another interesting plot twist appears when we think we get the answers, throwing everyone off the original mindset. This causes them to be more cautious while looking closer to the little details.

"Only Murders In The show on a note of creating another dunnit. Season disappoint in any

Building" ends the satisfaction while obsession of who-one does not aspect. Viewers can only hope season two will give us the same impact.



All Too Well

An illustration of a man and a woman sitting in the front seats of a car. The man is on the left, wearing a blue and brown checkered shirt, looking towards the woman. The woman is on the right, wearing a black top and a red scarf, looking back at the man. The car's interior is brown, and the view through the windshield shows a blue sky and a building. A rearview mirror is visible in the center.

Swift's directorial debut, "All Too Well," stars Sadie Sink, as "her" and Dylan O'Brien as "him." Swift is known for leaving hidden messages in her album's notes, which she did throughout this short film. The most obvious visual references to her lyrical motifs were the male protagonist holding onto the red scarf after the breakup. It then goes into a montage of the happy couple going through the stages to become separated.

Through the montage, seven sequence subtitles were labeled the phases of the relationship. The situation was: "an upstate escape," "the first crack in the glass," "are you real?," "the breaking point," "the reeling," "the remembering" and "13 years gone." These sequence subtitles place a label on each part of the relationship. It allows the audience to read what

Swift thought them to be.

The first crack in the glass reveals O'Brien hosting a dinner party where Sink is uncomfortable. He drops her hand at dinner in front of his friends. The music pauses while they are cleaning at the end of the party, leading to a fight. The fight scene perfectly fits the song in the sense that O'Brien is the

one at fault, so there's no way you'd side with him. It felt like how someone would describe a fight to their friends later on.

"All Too Well" was shot on a 35mm film, giving the audience the scene of projecting a piece of Swift's history. Each scene, lets viewers see the way Swift looks back onto the relationship. It forms small snippets from the relation with a few scenes to form the montage. The film is a piece of work that draws you in with the storytelling, and the director filmed it. The 15-minute film is a cinematic marvel that captures all the emotions and body language each character has towards one another. Each scene is visually pleasing to the eye, with the browns, oranges, blues, and reds.

At the end of the montage, finally broken up, the film concludes with a flash-forward to 13 years in the future. Sink is now Swift, reading an excerpt of her first novel "All Too Well" to a crowd, while O'Brien stands outside in the snow wearing the red scarf.

By Amanda Clark

Pg. 32

March
2022
Blue Colt Vibe

Ghostbusters: Afterlife

The film, "Ghostbusters: Afterlife" takes place after "Ghostbusters II" which was 32 years ago. A single mother, Callie (Carrie Coon), and her two children, Trevor (Finn Wolfhard) and Phoebe (Mckenna Grace), move to a broken-down farmhouse in the middle of nowhere. Callie's father, Egon Spengler, passed and left her his house and everything he owned. Inside the house, Spengler left ghostbusting paraphernalia for Phoebe and Trevor to discover. There are moments of nostalgia spread through the entire film, perfect for fans of the franchise. Phoebe and Trevor are left to take over the 'Ghostbusters' legacy to prevent ghosts from taking over. This film has familiar characters who are the villains that the Ghostbusters need to go against.

"Ghostbusters: Afterlife" was directed by Jason Reitman, son of Ivan Reitman, who directed the first two movies in the 1980s. It is essentially a nostalgia trip and a generational hand-off like "Star Wars: The Force Awakens," but these new kids keep the legacy alive with taste. The movie is not only a homage to the first two films, but overall it's a touching tribute to Harold Ramis, the co-writer and co-star of "Ghostbusters I and II," who passed away in 2014.

The references are enjoyable and make any 'Ghostbusters' fan smile, even if it feels like the camera lingers for too long on some props from the original movies. In addition to the original film's props being used, Reitman gave a revamp on the car and that the original ghost fans love all too well. Seeing the original Ghostbusters appear in their uniforms and using the proton packs adds a golden touch to the film. Being able to see more of Raymond Stantz (Dan Aykroyd), Peter Venkman (Bill Murray), and Winston Zeddemore (Ernie Hudson) in action doing what they do best was the highlight of "Ghostbusters: Afterlife."

The only exception to the harmless references is at the end of the movie, where it sends the nostalgia over the cliff. The ghost of Spengler appears to help them all defeat the villain from the 1984 "Ghostbusters," the God of Destruction known as Gozer. At first, it was the scene "Ghostbusters" fans needed: Spengler's ghost assisting Phoebe with her proton blaster and holding it steady alongside Stantz, Venkman and Zeddemore. Then it transitions to him just nodding and standing there while everyone talks to him apologizing and saying their goodbyes. It felt awkward for Spengler to be there as long as he was and not speaking; however, it's better than if he did say anything. Having computer-generated imagery (CGI) face talk ruins how good the CGI comes out and the CGI for Ramis's character came out incredible. If you take "The Mandalorian," for example, when young Luke Skywalker (Mark Hamill) comes to rescue the characters and talks to them, you can notice his lips don't move properly with his pronuncia-

tion. With this situation, they at least had Mark Hamill to deage, which would make the idea of having young Luke easier than if Mark Hamill was

dead. Which leads us to the question, who would do the voice of Spengler?

The most admirable part of "Ghostbusters: Afterlife" is its structure and how little it looks like the original "Ghostbusters" film, even though the movies share numerous similarities. The film sets up a new path for the franchise to go forward while bringing everything from the original movies back, so fans get a touch of something new with the original qualities. There is no attempt to form a new Ghostbusters team or bring back the original characters as major roles. Instead, Reitman focuses on creating likable and strong characters into the Ghostbusters universe. Yet, Reitman set the film up for a sequel, which would likely form the kids into the new Ghostbusters.

There was a mid-credit scene and end credit scene. The mid-credit scene was there just to reminisce and enjoy. Dana Barrett (Sigourney Weaver) and Peter Venkman did his extrasensory perception (ESP) card test that he was doing before becoming a Ghostbuster in the original film. The end credit scene had Zeddemore and Janine Melnitz (Annie Potts) talking about how successful Zeddemore has become transitioning to him opening the doors of the original firehouse they used, with their iconic car driving into the building. Then the camera goes to the basement showing a red blinking light of the Containment Unit (also known as the Eco-to-Containment System, Storage Facility or Protection Grid). This lets fans believe there will be something wrong with it, which will let out the ghosts originally stored there for the Ghostbusters to re-catch.

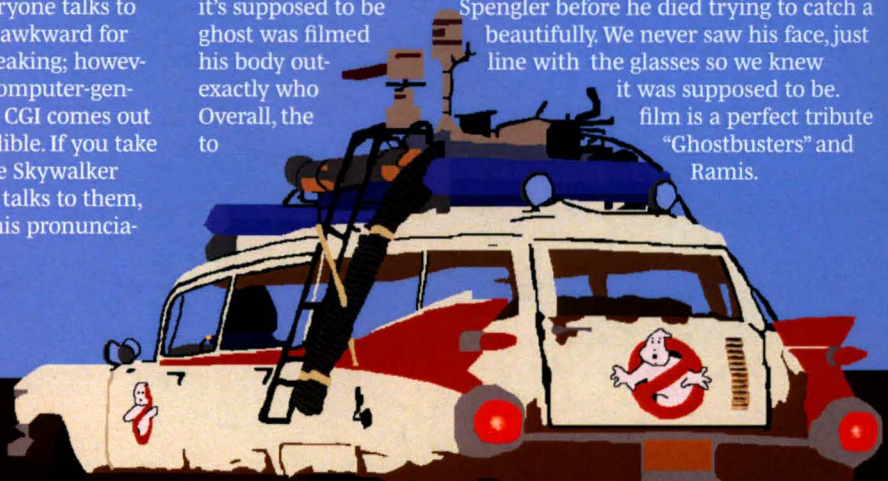
Paul Rudd's character, Mr. Grooberson, would be what a fan would do if we were in any 'Ghostbusters' film. He added a sense of humor towards the film that fans could relate to and wish they were his character at first.

It's something fans can repeatedly watch, with each viewing giving them chills when Stantz, Venkman, and Zeddemore appear on the screen. On top of seeing them again, the opening scene where it's supposed to be Spengler before he died trying to catch a ghost was filmed beautifully. We never saw his face, just his body outline with the glasses so we knew exactly who it was supposed to be. Overall, the film is a perfect tribute to "Ghostbusters" and Ramis.

Pg. 33

March
2022
Blue Colt Vibe

By Amanda Clark



Free Guy

By Amanda Clark

“Free Guy” is your friend who acts like a hyperactive child but always makes you laugh and want more.

When the bank teller, Guy, played by Ryan Reynolds, sees a woman with sunglasses, Millie, played by Jodie Comer, he immediately begins rethinking his everyday repetitive schedule. Breaking from being a background character in a game, Guy tries to impress her, only to team up with her to protect the game from outside forces.

Directed by Shawn Levy, the film hit theaters on Aug. 13. It's a movie filled with suspense, action, drama, and most of all, comedy at the right times in the movie. Despite the trailer, the film's comedy never made you think it was your overly cheesy uncle making the jokes. Instead, the film hits every comedic and gaming aspect on target. It was as if they had Reynolds write his lines and hire a gamer with a crush to do the rest.

“Free Guy” pulls many of its aspects from other films like “The Truman Show,” “Ready Player One,” “Wreck-It Ralph,” “The Matrix” and “They Live.” Yet, the film still maintains some individuality and has its own references while also incorporating these other films' imagery. Although it's not a knock-off or remake of any film, “Free Guy” has its own plot that makes you want to watch till the end and see if Guy and Millie accomplish their mission.

Of course, “Free Guy” is just like most movies that get released where the journey they take always leads to them finally reaching for what they wanted all along after a few obstacles; however, you believe that won't happen for a split second.

The cast was immaculate. Ronna Kress, Lisa Lobel and Angela Peri are the casting agents for a reason; they knew these great actors know what they're doing. Reynolds played his normal comedic role perfectly. Comer puts her emotion and skills beyond her limit and actually had me believe she was gaming all her life. Joe Keery had amazing growth as a character that almost had me talking to the screen at him. If Taika Waititi and the rest of the cast wanted to take the careers their character had and do it for a living, I can see them fitting in perfectly.

Overall, “Free Guy” is the type of movie to see if you want an enjoyable night and laugh with friends. You cheer for Guy to break free from being a background character while cheering

for Millie in the real world to reach what she's been after for a while. The movie pulls you in and gets you attached to the characters while hoping they get what they've been fighting for the whole movie.



Halloween Kills

The sequel to the 2018 "Halloween" film, "Halloween Kills," introduces a few new and old characters. They are familiar people from the John Carpenter films, and the new people from the David Green films.

Tommy Doyle, played by Anthony Michael Hall, the kid Laurie Strode, played by Jamie Lee Curtis, babysat in 1978, gets together with fellow survivors every year on Halloween. Lindsey Wallace, played by Kyle Richards, Marion Chambers, played by Nancy Stephens and Lonnie

Elam, played by Robert Longstreet, celebrate surviving 40 years of Micheal Myers. However, Myers never dies and kills people on Halloween, setting them up to be victims for another time.

The movie starts like most of the other films in this series, just a few seconds after the previous film. Strode is in the hospital with other victims. Doyle starts a rampage in the hospital, repeatedly shouting, "Evil dies tonight!" After the rampage cools down, everyone in the town gathers to kill Myers. This film is about the townspeople being angry and trying to hunt Myers down to kill him, only to end up dead. Myers just wanted to head home, but the people hunting him got in the way. As a serial killer, Myers feels it is right to slaughter them, then prop them up in a position that's meant to be scary, but you can't help but laugh.

This film has a lot more kills, more characters that it wants you to become attached to but don't, plus more references and more chaos overall. "Halloween Kills" is trying to be a darker film than the previous one. It is filled with blood squirting, spilling, and shooting everywhere that makes it look believable, but with a little extra blood than needed. You aren't supposed to laugh at a few scenes, but they do make you have a few giggles. Everyone in the film doesn't think, they just act idiotically. When everyone knows he's impossible to kill, they shouldn't go after him if they think stabbing him a few times or a few bullets will do the job.

When you think of the "Halloween" films, your first thought is Laurie huge disappointment when it comes to Myers trying to kill Strode time. They never step foot into the same room or even the same to see is Strode taking an ax to Myers and chopping his head off. kill him. Everyone else who wants to doesn't understand what and they aren't.

"Halloween Kills" is the film get the familiar characters watch the movies should theater with medi-over the plot,

to watch for horror from the original films consider another horror um to low expectations. this would be a good film to

Strode against Micheal Myers. This film is a while she is trying to kill Myers at the same scene in "Halloween Kills." What people need She is the one who can and will be able to it takes, which we see since Myers is alive

fans who love the "Halloween" series. You and news ones. People just starting to series to sit down and watch or go to the If you're someone who prefers action see on half-priced Tuesdays at AMC.





NTLERS

Antlens” is a film about literal, mental, and supernatural darkness.

Set in a dying rural town in Oregon, the film follows Lucas, played by Jeremy T. Thomas, a troubled 12-year-old boy who has a dark secret in his house. For the past three weeks, no one has seen his little brother or their father. Lucas’ father and little brother are in an attic while “poisoned” and need to be fed. Lucas feels like he’s the one who needs to do it and keeps it a secret from the town. His teacher, Julia, played by Keri Russell, notices signs of abuse on Lucas and takes matters into her own hands. Murders appear across town connecting to Lucas’ father. That brings Julia’s brother, the sheriff, played by Jesse Plemons, to look into the situation.

Throughout the entire film, there is a darkness that follows. The darkness of the low-lit filmmaking draws the viewer’s eye to what the filmmaker wants us to focus on. It also gives the sense that something is coming, making you wait on the edge of your seat. You don’t quite know what will jump out of the darkness until something moves, and makes your heart jump out of your body. With the low-lit aspect of the film, the color that appears on screen is dull. Dull in the way that gives goosebumps to the viewer, letting them know this is not a Hallmark movie.

Lucas carries mental and physical darkness around him throughout the whole film. With the wendigo monster taking over his father and brother, he feels like he must help them. That makes him carry darkness around him and mentally strips his sanity. He has become an adult taking care of his education and family at the

same time. Unfortunately, Lucas doesn’t completely understand what he is dealing with.

The story may not be as exciting or thrilling compared to other horror films, but “Antlers” is a dynamically constructed plot. It makes the viewers want to see how the situation plays out, and know if Lucas and Julia will fight their demons. Each detail shown about the characters or the situation is revealed at the right time, feeding the viewer only what they need to know when they need to know it. The film doesn’t rush any of the information, which leaves you with the satisfaction of knowing the director gave it the attention it deserves.

“Antlers” is a film to watch without younger kids. It shows nothing but darkness with an extensive production set up producing a visually pleasing and immersive film.

Spider-Man No Way Home

By Amanda Clark

Jon Watts' 'Spider-Man No Way Home' is the definition of a film that delivers what fans want.

With Spider-Man's identity now revealed, Peter Parker (Tom Holland) is no longer living two separate lives. It does, however, cause Parker's life to turn upside down. With Mysterio making the public believe Parker was the one at fault for the attack on London, he hires Matt Murdock (Charlie Cox) as his lawyer. With his cameo giving fans a reason to scream with joy in theaters, this wasn't going to be the loudest people would be. The press portrays Parker in a bad way, and he seeks help from Doctor Strange (Benedict Cumberbatch). Strange agrees to make the world forget that Parker is Spider-Man. However, Parker disrupts the spell causing it to bring the multiverse upon them. Fan-favorite villains, the Green Goblin (Willem Dafoe), Doc Ock (Alfred Molina), Electro (Jamie Foxx), Sandman (Thomas Haden Church) and The Lizard (Rhys Ifans) come back to pick up where they left off in their original films.

Parker tries to cure them of the powers that make them villains, but the Green Goblin turns them all in favor of the idea of taking over this new universe. With the multiverse collapsing and bringing the villains into Tom Holland's Spiderman's world, it brings a few other familiar characters as well. MJ (Zendaya) and Ned (Jacob Batalon) try to find Parker after the villains turn against them, but stumble upon two Spider-Men from different universes. Andrew Garfield and Tobey Maguire appearing on screen caused the viewers in theaters to scream with so much delight, it was hard to hear the next minute of the film. The three Spider-Men work together to bring balance to each universe, with help at the end from Strange.

Strange explains how the spell from the beginning of the movie backfired. Instead of people forgetting Parker is Spider-Man, everyone who knows Parker was Spider-Man in other universes were brought to Holland's Spider-Man's universe. However, Electro never found out Garfield's Parker was Spider-Man. Electro even made a comment at the end saying Garfield isn't what he thought Spider-Man looked like. This being the major plot hole the film has, fans can't complain about it because it brought Foxx back to the big screen as Electro. Despite the other plot holes and continuity errors the film contains, Spider-Man fans don't have any reason not to be obsessed with the film.

Another enjoyable scene is when all three Parkers are together in the lab creating the cures for the villains, interacting with each other. This reminds the viewer that all Parkers are geniuses when it comes to science, all while giving the fans the interaction they've been dying for.

Ned asks Maguire's Parker if his friend was his "guy in the chair" as well. Maguire's Parker tells Ned how Harry Osborn (James Franco) died in his arms after turning against him. Garfield refrains from telling Ned that his universe's Harry Osborn (Dane DeHaan) also turned against him. Ned then goes to Holland's Parker and promises to never turn evil and try to kill him. However, in the end, the entire universe does forget Parker is Spider-Man which means Ned doesn't remember that promise. This could be foreshadowing a future Tom Holland Spider-Man film where Ned becomes Hobgoblin.

Dafoe's iconic character quote, "I'm something of a scientist myself" makes its way into the film, which could have been the main reason to go watch the film if Garfield and Maguire didn't make an appearance. 'Spider-Man No Way Home' is filled with easter eggs from Garfield's and Maguire's films that only make the film even more outstanding. Aunt May's (Marisa Tomei) demise brings about another familiar line, "With great power comes great responsibility." This quote is what brings Holland's Parker to trust Garfield's and Maguire's Parker. They all received the same quote from their dying guardian who died because of them.

Fans had conspiracy theories that Garfield and Maguire would return in this film. However, most people, including myself, thought Maguire's Parker would be similar to Peter B. Parker from 'Spider-Man: Into The Spider-Verse.' Yet, Garfield's Parker was more like Peter B. Parker, while Maguire's Parker was more like Chris Pine's Peter Parker in 'Spider-Man: Into The Spider-Verse.' The film makes you want to cry and laugh at the same time. There are numerous twists and turns that can either be seen coming or ones that shock you.

With all three Spider-Man inclusions in the movie, every fan's dream comes true. We get to see them discuss the villains they fought, witness Garfield and Holland's Parkers be in awe of Maguire's Parker not needing an external web-shooter, watch them interact with their past villains again, and most importantly have all three of them swing in the air together. As the film progresses, each situation with the three Spider-Men gets better and better.

'Spider-Man No Way Home' is a film that can be watched over and over again with new and exciting things to be spotted. It's a film that listened to fans and delivered the much needed content in the Spider-Man universe.

be watched things to fans and Spider-Man



Scream

By Amanda Clark

Matt Bettinelli-Olpin and Tyler Gillett's 2022 "Scream" has provided a new generation of Ghostface victims alongside the beloved original Ghostface survivor trio. "Scream 5" is the fifth 'Scream' movie to deliver the needed Ghostface to the fans.

Every 'Scream' movie uses the knowledge of characters from other horror movies to navigate its plot. There's an unspoken rule that horror movies don't exist in horror movies, which is why characters act as if they've never seen one. The 'Scream' franchise toys with the idea that horror movies exist, which helps the victims figure out what will happen.

"Scream 5" picks up in Woodsboro 11 years after "Scream 4," with more Ghostface killings causing the town to be afraid. Sam (Melissa Barerra) returns to Woodsboro due to her sister, Tara (Jenna Ortega), being hospitalized by Ghostface, Billy Loomis, she (Skeet Ulrich), Sam and figure out who the killer is with Prescott (Neve Campbell) can and Dewey Riley (David Ar-Riley).

With each killing, the original house where Prescott. There we can Weathers where they've not trusting a 'victim.'

With the identity being Ghostfaces, the idea is to a fake franchise within the reason told for "Scream 5" and recreate the original Stab are fans in real life who act-up franchise too far, whether they send break and enter into actors' places, celebrity. These two Stab fans, who felt Stab movie, got it in their head to create (a made-up word from the film combining

Trying not to overkill the viewer with the new Stab franchise, there were many premier nods to the cast. One of the finest and most unexpected forms of the 1996 "Scream" was including a well-done de-ag-

Ulrich to take up his role as Billy Loomis. Since this scene happened in real life, it didn't have to be picture perfect. We saw Loomis' psychopath convince his daughter, Sam, time he appeared on screen,

years after "Scream 4," with more Ghostface killings causing the town to be afraid. Sam (Melissa Barerra) returns to Woodsboro due to her sister, Tara (Jenna Ortega), being hospitalized by Ghostface, Billy Loomis, she (Skeet Ulrich), Sam and figure out who the killer is with Prescott (Neve Campbell) can and Dewey Riley (David Ar-Riley).

killer's identity gets closer to being revealed. Ghostface lures the remaining people to the Loomis and Stu tried killing Prescott. There we can Weathers where they've not trusting a 'victim.'

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Ghostface gener- original "Scream" recognition of ing of Skeet Billy Loomis. in the form of a the need to the version side trying to to kill. Each it made me

Pg. 39

March
2022
Blue Colt Vibe

want to rewatch the first “Scream” film and then the entire franchise.

The ‘Scream’ franchise has always been self-aware, riffing on itself as well as the larger horror genre the films are a part of. Just like the first two films where Randy Meeks (Jamie Kennedy) was the film horror expert aiding self-awareness, “Scream 5” has Meeks’ niece doing the same exact thing. Mindy Meeks-Martin (Jasmin Savoy Brown) is the new generation’s horror expert who finds it thrilling yet knowledgeable to be caught up in this horror show. One of the preeminent scenes is when Meeks-Martin is watching the scene in Stab that is based on Meeks screaming at the TV, “Turn around he’s behind you.” She listens to the screen screaming but then realizes she’s being told to turn around.

With Meeks’ family being a part of the new generation to help fans not feel overwhelmed with the younger generation, his sister, Martha Meeks (Heather Matarazzo) from “Scream 3” makes an appearance. This helps the viewer realize that “Scream 5” isn’t trying to make a long stretch to create a connection to the original films.

With all of the details Matt Bettinelli-Olpin and Tyler Gillett have in “Scream 5,” they might’ve let viewers have an easier time predicting the Ghostface killer in this film. Sam’s boyfriend insists on coming with her to Woodsboro to make sure her sister is okay and safe from Ghostface, which is what a genuine guy would do. However, he claims to never have watched the Stab movies or been a horror fan, and this gets tested throughout the film. For someone who is not a horror fan, he keeps insisting the situation is just like the one in the ‘Halloween’ movies. Of course, he cannot appear to be obsessed with the Stab movies or he’ll not only be a subject of interest but will not have had the trust from the others. In addition to this, Riley tells Sam to suspect her boyfriend, also known as Kirsch, and he’s been through this to the point where he even admits that most of the time it’s the boyfriend. We can even see that the Ghostface veterans know what they’re doing when Prescott and Weathers don’t fall for the “help me” trap.

Since it’s a ‘Scream’ movie, we already know there are two killers. Otherwise, how would they be able to do all of the killings and convince the victims they aren’t the killers? The second killer isn’t as apparent; however, the opening scene lets killers question the tactical moves of Ghostface. The first mistake was texting Tara from her friend Amber Freeman’s (Mikey Madison) phone and sending a prerecorded video. If the Ghostface killer is trying to blackmail Tara into playing a game, why would he not just Facetime to show Freeman is about to die? A prerecorded video makes the viewer believe Freeman could be one of the Ghostface killers.

The movie does the complete opposite of letting the fans down. It delivers on every mark that a ‘Scream’ movie needs. Two Ghostface killers, check. The Ghostface killer being two different people obsessed with either the Stab movies or wanting to kill either Prescott, Weathers or Riley, check. Taking place in a familiar setting, check. Having the character who goes off horror films to survive this one who also makes the film self-aware, check. Having the quote, “What’s your favorite scary movie?” check. Some could argue it pushes the new generation victims more than necessary however, they make up for it with the perfect amount of ties to the older films.

Nightmare Alley

The phrase “show, don’t tell” must’ve been something taken to heart by Guillermo del Toro for “Nightmare Alley.”

Those first words of the film weren’t spoken until over 11 minutes in. It was said with hesitation and disgust towards a man dehumanized for entertainment that pays well. This film is nothing but psychological tunnels and downward spirals for Bradley Cooper’s character Stanton Carlisle.

It comes full circle.

The circular symbolism was imposed by the spins of the Circus’s Ferris wheel along with the foreshadowing connections. Carlisle’s end can not only be interpreted by him repeatedly saying he never drinks but also with Pete’s (David Strathairn) words of wisdom that are said to Carlisle. “People are desperate to be seen,” Pete says. “People are desperate to tell you who they are.” Carlisle takes this and turns it into what he sees as an opportunity.

With a sophisticated word code, Carlisle learns how to pretend to read minds and guess objects while being blindfolded. This trick draws Carlisle to a new calling that’ll only bring him to what he was disgusted with in the beginning.

With Carlisle being a man of few words at first, you feel a hesitation to trust him, especially seeing the opening scene of him burning a dead body in a house.

Once Carlisle begins to be more comfortable around the circus people he grew acquainted with, you feel this trust in him. It’s a trust where you know it won’t last long but he seems genuine.

Once Carlisle runs away with his love interest, Molly Cahill (Rooney Mara) to do a two-person show using the sophisticated word code to fool rich people, you can see his greed growing. With Carlisle talking not only more frequently but also quite confidently, all trust in him is gone. It’s amazing how his personality changes and grows to be unrecognizable.

He is so careful to become someone who not only sets himself up for success, but to take advantage of the emotionally wealthy. However, in a world where everyone relies on money and has a need to feel better than others, how could Carlisle not go down the path to find the perfect person to use?

Carlisle’s unscrupulous greed makes him come into contact with Dr. Ritter (Cate Blanchett), a psychologist with disdain for men like him who swindle the

emotionally weak. The viewer can instantly tell she is a woman who knows how to take care of herself and take advantage of people in a different way than Carlisle does. We see her do it in a subtle way

where it will come out in her favor, compared to Carlisle where we constantly see him inch closer to his circular downfall. You want to tell Carlisle to be careful of her and take notes to become a better scammer because, in a strange way, it’s easy to grow to care for him because there is a deep emotional reason for why he’s doing this. Yet, at the same time, you want to see him destroyed and become the very thing he was disgusted with.

With malevolence, Ritter manages to ruin Carlisle by getting him to drink, from him never having a drink in his life and being proud of it to alcoholism. This diminishes Carlisle, just like it diminished Pete. With him being an alcoholic, drunk on power, his circle starts to form.

Arriving at the circus, learning how they found someone to dehumanize, growing to fame and power, to only let it be destroyed by his own doing. It was Carlisle who got wrapped up with the tête-à-tête scenes with Ritter while ignoring the warnings.

The last scene of the film lets us interpret come him acknowledging how it has boss but full circle. Learning how the make real offers them a drink then a job take a insists how it’s temporary to only pause then say how he was born for the job while laughing, it’s a unique moment

where the sadness makes you feel pity for him.

Carlisle doesn’t deserve pity, he does deserve what came around for him, but seeing him realize what happened draws the emotion out of the viewer.

“Nightmare Alley” drags you down with its self-destructive character.



Jackaby

By Shakera Blakney

When my sister recommended “Jackaby” by William Ritter, I casually told her I’d add it to my list. She gave me a description, and I gave her the usual reply: “That sounds good!” After rereading the same books for months, I decided to give “Jackaby” a shot, and I’m glad I did.

“Jackaby” is a steampunk, historical fiction story taking place in the 1890s. Some have described this book as “Sherlock Holmes” meets “Doctor Who,” and some have described this as “Sherlock Holmes” meets “Buffy the Vampire Slayer.” I think this is a combination of all three, but you don’t need to be a fan of any of the three to appreciate this.

This book alludes to folklore, mythology and the supernatural, with phenomenal writing. “Jackaby” centers around two main characters, Abigail Rook and R.F. Jackaby. Abigail is the narrator of the story and provides a sense of being the voice of reason and showcases the reader’s curiosity. This is not a horror story by any means, but Abigail does describe things in such a way that it gives an eerie vibe to the story, and draws the reader in; for instance, her departure from the ship has dark undertones.

Ritter’s writing has a dark humor touch like a U.K. sitcom, even though he’s from Oregon. Although not every page is action-packed, there is humor and banter between Jackaby and practically every character, making the story feel like the pages are turning themselves.

One aspect that Ritter did exceptionally well was how he wrote Abigail’s character. At the time where there were such rigid gender roles, she was fiercely independent and robust. Abigail is a multilayered character who’s a mixture of rough-and-tough and femininity. She is probably the first female protagonist that I didn’t hate. Abigail is intelligent, practical and witty. She has a genuine interest in Jackaby’s work.

I understand the comparisons with Jackaby and Sherlock Holmes and the 11th Doctor from “Doctor Who.” His power of observation allows Jackaby to see things others would ignore. He has moments of lacking emotions, therefore lacking tact, which leads to most of the humor, in comparison to Sherlock. There are a few tender moments, which shows the comparison to the 11th Doctor. Seeing that duality within Jackaby makes him an intriguing character.

While I didn’t think the mystery was too hard to figure out, many twists and turns, and secondary characters made this story exciting. “Jackaby” is a laugh-out-loud story that will continuously have you wondering what will happen next.

The Dark Knight

By Hina Naqvi

I first watched "The Dark Knight" in 2009. At that time, I watched it as a normal action movie. After almost twelve years, my perspective of watching this movie has totally changed. Perhaps I am more mature and my analysis is based on which lens I am wearing. There are a number of factors which I noticed and I want to highlight.

Firstly, it is important to understand what ideology is? And how we believe it? "Ideology is a belief system that underpins a political or economic theory." Such as, liberalism, conservatism, socialism, theocracy, totalitarianism, democracy, colonialism and globalism. Dominant ideologies include beliefs about gender roles, economic and social systems.

In the movie Dark Night, we see many dominant ideologies such as the characters Batman, Gordon, Harvey Dent, Lucius Fox, Rachel, they all were trying to prevent the systems. Batman tries to make Gotham city safe and while doing so, he is dominating justice, order, safety and security. He also advances ideologies such as wealth, capitalism, whiteness, masculinity and fascist ideas such as his batman costume. Batman does not challenge the status quo, instead he does whatever he wants to save Gotham city.

On the other hand, we see the criminals want their money to be safe and they are very clear in their motivation. Joker has portrayed alternative ideology, he is totally opposite and believes in the ideology of chaos. He is an anarchist who believes in the destruction of society. The director of the movie Christopher Nolan described Joker as "a psychologically credible anarchist."

In Nolan's imagination, Joker's ideology threatened post 9/11 ethical, moral, conceptual and political perspective. When we examine this through the lens of post 9/11, Joker's character fits as a terrorist who has no rules and who is very unpredictable. A bank robbery scene, a pencil scene, Joker's conversation with gang members and their leader sitting in Hongkong scene. All refers to his chaotic nature. However, he wanted to dissolve the unjust hegemonic structure of the society by threatening the establishment's rules.

Similarly, other characters such as Harvey Dent who said, "You either die a hero or live long enough to see yourself become the villain." Harvey Dent was a district attorney of Gotham city. Whose ideology was to work for the government. Towards the end of the movie, we saw that he became a villain Two-Face. By comparing him with then (9/11) U.S. attorney for Southern District of New York, Rudolph W. Giuliani, he was a hero and pronounced as "America's mayor." If we see him today he is a two-faced person. He ignited people on Jan. 6 capitol riots in which he stated that Trump could still win.

Secondly, we saw inequalities that the hegemonic order strived to claim as normal and healthy such as the character Batman. He does everything but he was not answerable to anyone. His character shows the concept of masculinity as he was shown as a tall,



strong man who has extraordinary power. A man who has so much power, who is strong in his appearance can do anything if needs to get the work done. We as a nation allow this to happen because we think it is normal and we don't want to question authorities.

Similarly, Rachel character, who was an assistant District Attorney. She was a childhood friend of Bruce Wayne (Batman). In one scene when Batman was about to reveal his identity, Harvey realized the importance of Batman and he himself turned him as a Batman in order to keep Batman's identity safe. Later Rachel confronted Alfred about the lie. Then Alfred told Rachel that Batman is not a normal man but he represented something very special for the city of Gotham. So, here, we see the hierarchical body saved by Alfred by simply saying that it's okay if Batman's identity can be hidden. It is normal and healthy.

In my personal opinion, I see it as an inequality sidelining gender role. For example, Rachel died. She could have saved but all power went to "men" similarly Gordon's assistant role was also not very impressive. Though I waited for something special to be done by her, I did not find anything special. Judge Surrillo was also murdered by Joker.

Third, we see some characters coping with the hegemonic structure. After 9/11 we as a nation, who were so angry at the terrorist, gave consent to use our privacy. According to American Civil Liberties Union, "Hastily passed 45 days after 9/11 in the name of national security, the Patriot Act was the first of many changes to surveillance laws that made it easier for the government to spy on ordinary Americans by expanding the authority to monitor phone and email communications, collect bank and credit reporting records, and track the activity of innocent Americans on the Internet. While most Americans think it was created to catch terrorists, the Patriot Act actually turns regular citizens into suspects."

Nearly after 20 years, the executive branch still has power and discretion to exercise massive surveillance when needed. Congress should've acted to stop mass spying or but they never did. What the Bush administration started with mass surveillance, it was continued in the Obama administration. Additionally, in 2008, Congress added Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, which allows warrantless surveillance of Americans' communication which includes our phone calls, emails, chats and web activities.

We as a citizen, all know about the 2013 revelations of Edward Snowden in which he gave details of the U.S. government's surveillance. The shocking revelations of the National Security Agency's PRISM and Upstream programs showed how closely the NSA worked with Facebook, Google, AT&T and Verizon. They conducted wide reaching surveillance of Americans' international communications such as, who has made a call to pastor or an abortion provider or a suicide hotline.

We know how it affected people's lives-especially people of color such as Muslims, Black and Brown People. It is a continuous torture while someone is watching you all the time.

The movie Dark Knight implicitly criticized the policies of the Bush Administration or in other words the system. Christopher Nolan had unfolded the brutal realities and lies of the American system. It revolves around post 9/11 decisions where we saw how the Bush administration had led the War on Terror on lies. The movie shows the frustration of Batman when he was dealing with his enemy (Joker), which ultimately resonated with the American viewer. Nolan has clearly stated, "Welcome to a World Without Rules."

It is easy to fight or war with a country but it is very difficult to fight with an ideology. Sadly, the War on Terror did not have any boundaries and therefore, the consequences were obvious.

Here I want to make a point that after killing Osama Bin Laden and Saddam Hussein, is world free from ISIS terror or global terrorism? Can we say that we don't witness terror after 9/11? Is the world safe now?

The answer to all the above questions is "No." The system which was shown in the movie that the surveillance is okay, even though the character Lucius Fox said that it is not right but he did not do much. Thus, the Batman is going after an enemy who is impalpable and cannot be identified easily which left him sightless and vulnerable.

The people of Gotham city are living in delusion on both sides. The joker is tired of Batman and he wants to kill Batman but in reality, he wants chaos. He lied to his people in the opening scene of bank robbery that they will get more money if they kill their partners.

As an immigrant, I see these policies are a trap for a common man and we are bound to obey these policies. For example, the whole system is based on credit which means even if you don't have money you can buy the luxuries of life. While doing so, some people cross the line and don't realize the ugliness of the society such as when they won't be able to afford what will happen next? The bandwagon in which everyone is riding is forcing us to do what the other person is doing without questioning the authorities. If I begin the list; from little purchases such as getting breakfast from Dunkin Donuts to buying houses, there is a long list of luxuries in our system that leave us indebted.

Moreover, we can see how social media is ruining our generations. Who has given that power to Facebook, and other social media outlets? Isn't our system to be blamed? It can be a long debate but part of the problem is our system which allows the rich to become richer. It is similar to the character of Harvey Vent in the movie when he had two-faced and when he died, his lies were not publicly condemned instead he became a hero.

Lastly, as Harvey Dent gave a speech to Gotham's people and said, "I Promise you, The Dawn Is Coming." But he lied and tried to protect Bruce. Similarly, we see lies of our elected officials in administration. But we see a hope and optimism because Joker's experiment went wrong and therefore, faith in humanity is reinstated.

Starship Trooper

By Hina Naqvi

Just recently, someone recommended watching Starship Trooper. Usually, I do not like to watch Sci-Fi movies, but I was in a different mood, so I started to watch.

While I was watching the first scene, I was skeptical of whether the movie was a comedy or serious. But there was something that kept me glued to the screen. Perhaps I liked the way director portrayed the female protagonist as a solid and intelligent recruit, or maybe the story was going very smoothly. Whatever was the reason I finished watching it in two days as I can't afford to watch a two-hour movie in one sitting.

After watching the entire movie, I had mixed feeling about the genre of the movie. So, I was right. It was a military satire film that focused on nationalism and xenophobia. It had a comprehensive meaning inside. It reminds me of a review written by Susan Sontag in 1974 where she talked about Leni Riefenstahl's "fascist aesthetics" "portrayal of Nazis in her film "Triumph of the Will. The movie Starship Trooper has a clear depiction of masculinity. The mise-en-scene of the film was designed to look fascist. However, there are many scenes where we see fascism, but I am going to discuss a little.

That scene is full of satire and camera focused on the logo, massive army in uniform is an example of Germany Nazi images in an artistic way. The troopers and their uniforms were identical to SS at the Nuremberg, Germany rallies.

Most of the dialogues sound fascist, as when sky Marshal Denise (Bruse Gray) stands at a podium and says, "We must... ensure that human civilization, not insect, dominates this galaxy now and always." It was an unmistakable resemblance to Hitler when he addressed the Reichstag.

Similarly, in one scene, we can see Neil Patrick Harris arrived on the set in an SS uniform that is a clear contrast from the Nazi imagery. Most of the dialogues were a clear comparison of how Nazi leaders used to give speeches. And masses used to obey them. It also translates the totalitarian regime when the young generation is vulnerable and unable to understand what the leader is saying. Still, they have to follow as told by Jonny Rico when Raszak asked, "Tell me the moral difference, if any, between the citizen and the civilian?" Jonny replied, "The difference lies in the field of civic virtue. A citizen accepts personal responsibility for the safety of the body politic, of which he is a member, defending it, if need be, with his life. The civilian does not." Raszak replied, "The exact words of the text. But do you understand it? Do you believe it?" Jonny replied, "Uh, I don't know."

In the scene mentioned above, we can see the vulnerable soldiers who can't even think about what they are doing but -just obeying.

Then the shower scene was the most subversive, orgiastic, fascist, and exalt mindlessness. During the conversation in the setting, no recruit cares about the mission of the Mobile Infantry. Such as, one suggested that he wanted to go to Harvard, other recruits explained that she was going to make a difference in politics. One girl said, "I wanna have babies. It's a lot easier to get a license if you've served." Even the protagonist joined only because of his girlfriend. In a span of the two-minute scene, we saw a 90s-style portrayal of Mobile Infantry trainees who (including both men and women) live together where they eat, sleep, and even bath together.

The director of the film Verhoeven told Empire in 2012 that, "The idea I wanted to express was that these so-called advanced people are without libido. "Here they are talking about war and their careers and not looking at each other at all! It is sublimated because they are fascists." In a democratic rule, the state controls daily life in the military (volunteer) and prison. But the movie showed state-owned everything in everyday life. If anyone wants to get personal freedom, one needs to serve in the military.

Lastly, Sontag says, "fascist art glorifies surrender, it exalts mindlessness, it glamorizes death." At the end of the movie, we saw that military men captured the leader of the bug, and it showed that all the bugs now killed glorifies death, and the main bug was afraid. Moreover, we saw the military occupied the bug planet, and United Citizen Federation's soldiers proudly cheered. That is precisely what shows the military brutality and propaganda.

Kingdom Hearts

By Jared Almanzor

Kingdom Hearts is one of the most beloved franchises of all time, with original characters including Sora, Kairi and Riku.

Kingdom Hearts is one of the most beloved franchises in role playing history, though I won't be covering the versions seen on the PlayStation consoles. I'll be covering the version that was released on the Nintendo Switch on Feb. 10, 2022.

The franchise as a whole was developed by Square Enix in collaboration with Disney, which means that if Square Enix wants to include characters from the Final Fantasy franchise, they can.

Kingdom Hearts has characters from a multitude of classic Disney animated movies that are mostly from various eras of its history. This includes characters such as Cinderella, Aladdin, Alice in Wonderland and Aurora.

The Switch version at its current state has its flaws which are massive if you're a Kingdom Hearts fan.

Square Enix has decided to port different collections of Kingdom Hearts onto the Nintendo Switch as cloud versions.

A cloud version means that you need to have a really good internet connection to be able to play Kingdom Hearts at all times.

This is unfortunate for when you want to play a franchise this big anywhere at any time, mostly because not all internet connection speeds are made equal.

If I want to play the games on the go at a loved one's place, I won't be able to. This is because they could be having a party which causes the internet speed to be slowed down drastically due to the amount of devices connected to it. It would render me unable to play any of the Kingdom Hearts games on my Nintendo Switch.

I can't even play the cloud versions of Kingdom Hearts outside of North America since the Square Enix headquarters have their servers in California, and they've locked the Kingdom Hearts cloud versions to North America. That renders me unable to play these versions while on another continent.

Another thing I've noticed with the cloud versions of the Kingdom Hearts games is that you can play the games in handheld or tabletop mode while at home.

Being able to play the Kingdom Hearts games in this fashion isn't bad but it defeats the purpose of having a Nintendo Switch.

When I tried playing any game of the cloud versions of Kingdom Hearts docked on my TV, I ended up with an error message on my Switch. It an-

noyed me, and I was disappointed that I couldn't enjoy playing these games hooked up on my TV.

The gameplay is still faithful to the Kingdom Hearts games that you can see on the PlayStation 2 through PlayStation 4. The controls, however, have been adapted to the Nintendo Switch Joy Cons and Pro Controller. Albeit, there are some lag spikes in terms of frame rate speed depending on how fast or slow your internet is.

The music and characters in Kingdom Hearts are memorable to the point where you begin loving them. I love the characters and the world, and I can see why it took so long for them to appear on the Nintendo Switch.

When the gameplay lags on the cloud versions of the games on the Nintendo Switch, the voices of the characters lag along with the music in the background. That ruins the immersive experience.

I don't think the cloud versions alone justify the \$90 bundle in which you get all the games together in one package off the Nintendo eShop. Neither do they justify getting the three games separately for \$110.

The cloud versions of the Kingdom Hearts games feel inferior to the counterparts of the games you can see on the PlayStation 4 as an all-in-one collection. You can get the all-in-one version as a physical copy for \$30 and not have to worry about having internet connection all the time.

All in all, I don't recommend that you get the cloud versions of Kingdom Hearts on the Nintendo Switch. I recommend you get the all-in-one collection of the Kingdom Hearts games on the PlayStation 4. The PlayStation 4 versions

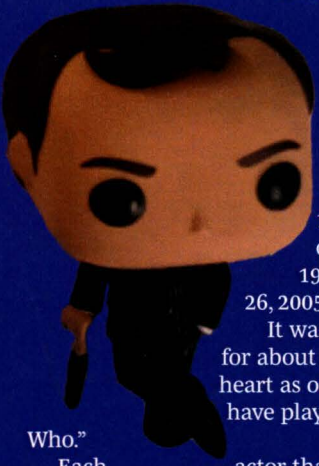
are superior in every way with the current state of the Nintendo Switch versions. I wanted to like the Nintendo Switch versions of this beloved franchise, but it's not worth the price I bought them at. If you've been interested in Kingdom Hearts for a while, I recommend you get the games on the PlayStation 4 rather

than on the Nintendo Switch.



Doctor Who

By Jared Almanzor



“Doctor Who” is a television sci-fi show that was created on Nov. 23, 1963, then canceled on Dec 6, 1989, only to have a television movie in 1996 and come back to TV on March 26, 2005.

It was one of my all-time favorite shows for about a decade, but it hasn't been in my heart as of late. There have been 13 actors who have played the role of the Doctor in “Doctor

Who.”

Each actor that played the Doctor put their own twist on the role, such as making the Doctor an angry Scotsman, someone that loves cricket, a person that's a lovestruck hero, or a woman, which was groundbreaking.

There is also a companion or companions to the show who are supposed to represent the audience. The companion can range from a person to an alien to a tin dog. It's super diverse, and I love the concept of the Doctor and companion so much.

Some “Doctor Who” actors and actresses have also appeared in other franchises such as “Harry Potter” and the Marvel Cinematic Universe. An actress you might know named Karen Gillan, who plays Nebula in “Guardians of the Galaxy,” got her breakout role in “Doctor Who” as Amelia Pond.

The Doctor and his/her companions travel in a blue box called the TARDIS, which stands for Time and Relative Dimension in Space. Thus, they're able to see the entirety of time and space, so the events of the episodes vary.

One week, there could be an episode of “Doctor Who” that parodies “A

Christmas Carol,” the next week, there could be an episode where the Doctor and his/her companions meet Rosa Parks and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

The soundtrack in the show is amazing, and I used to listen to it when I was into the show, from 2013-2017. I listened to the soundtrack the most when Murray Gold was the lead composer for the show.

There are two eras of “Doctor Who.” One is called Classic Who, which took place from 1963-1989, and the era called New Who, which takes place from 2005-present day.

Classic Who has a more serialized approach and the episodes are shorter, as each story is split into six to eight

parts in format.

New serialized has the storytelling, length is

To find “Doctor Who,” these episodes for Eleventh Hour,” Woman Who Fell

Classic Who could be more difficult to get into for newer “Doctor Who” fans, if they don't like due to episode length time. For someone that wants to get

into Classic Who, I recommend that they start from the Third Doctor to the Seventh Doctor as they feel the closest to the Doctors you see in New Who.

When it comes to the time travel and space travel seen in “Doctor Who,” don't question it, as it will just make you confused.

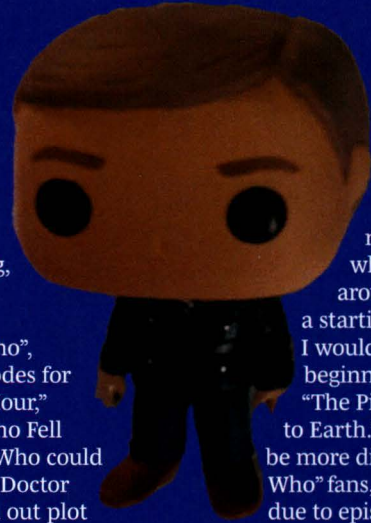
“Doctor Who” also has a thing called regeneration where the lead actor changes to a different actor for a variety of reasons such as poisoning from radiation, old age or falling off a building. The companions seen in the show usually leave the Doctor, get left behind by the Doctor or die at some point during an adventure with the Doctor.

If you are interested in learning more about the show, there are “Doctor Who” audiobooks that are produced by a company called “Big Finish” that covers the extended universe seen in the show and the characters that haven't appeared on screen in years or that didn't get enough screen time.

“Doctor Who” also has novels and video games that you might want to get, if you want to get more into the extended universe canon. There is merchandise for the show too such as getting a model TARDIS or a device called a sonic screwdriver.

Overall, “Doctor Who” is an amazing, timeless show that you have to watch if you haven't already. I've been a fan of it for years and have mixed feelings about some of the storylines that were covered. Even so, I can't help but have a glimmer of hope that the show is able to recover from its fallouts. You should watch it when you have the chance; all of the episodes are on HBO Max.

You can also watch the spin-offs of “Doctor Who” called “Torchwood,” “The Sarah Jane Adventures” and “Class.” However, “Torchwood” is a show made for adults, “the Sarah Jane Adventures” is a show made for kids, and “Class” is a show made for teenagers and young adults.



a 20-30 minute

Who is a approach but modern format of where each episode around 45 minutes.

a starting point for I would recommend beginners: “Rose,” “The “The Pilot” and “The to Earth.”

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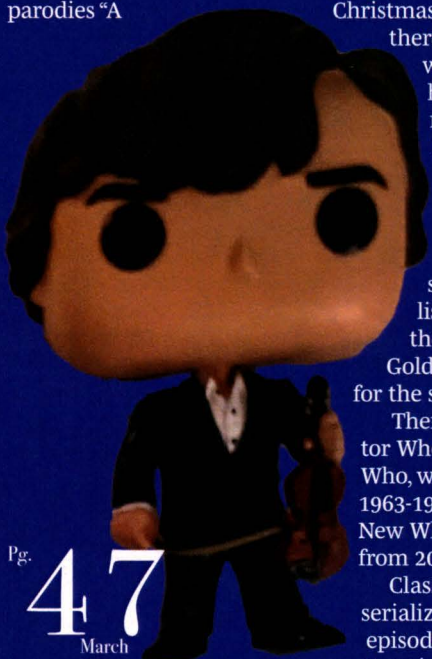
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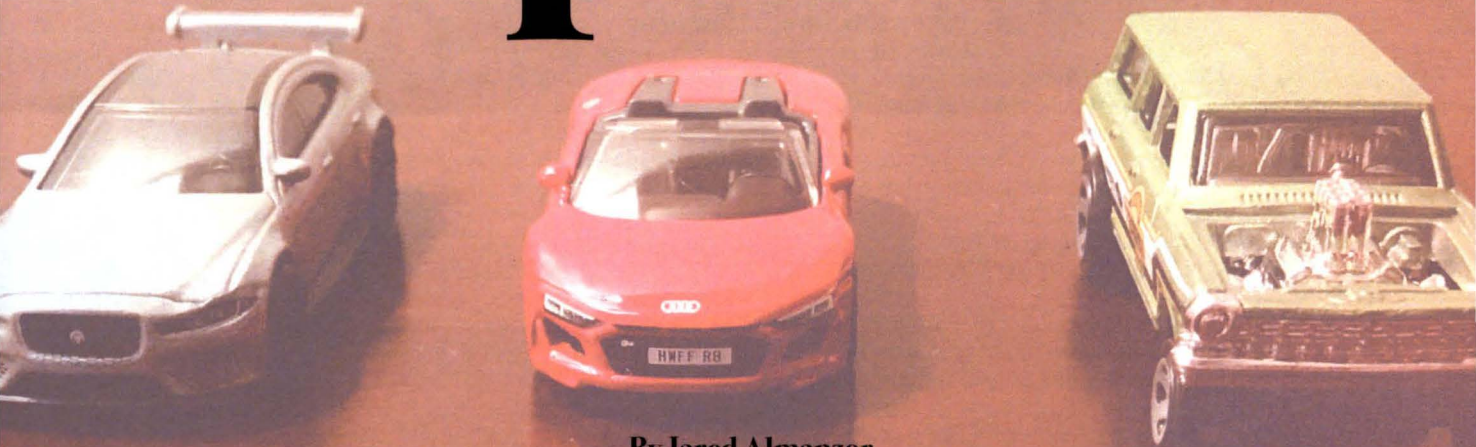
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Top Gear



By Jared Almanzor

The second season to the twenty-second season of “Top Gear” spanned from 2003-2014 and included “the Grand Tour,” which started from 2016 to present day.

What these two shows have in common are hosts: Jeremy Clarkson, James May and Richard Hammond.

They’re essentially car journalists that present “Top Gear” and “the Grand Tour” for the mainstream media, who are consumers, to help them decide on what car they want to get.

These three do car reviews mostly to show off the elegance of cars they’ve been asked to review, especially if the car was new when the episode came out.

What Clarkson, Hammond and May do on the side are races around the world. They need to get from point A to point B for a certain race in a specific country.

One of the races I’ve enjoyed by those three was the race when Clarkson was using a Ford GT while May and Hammond had to use public transportation to get to Niagara Falls.

The other race I enjoyed from those three was when they were doing a cross-transportation race with one of their race car drivers, the Stig, around London. Clarkson was using a boat to go around the River Thames, Hammond was riding a bicycle, May was driving a car, and the Stig was using the London Underground.

Clarkson likes his speed and power when it comes to any form of vehicle, whether it’s by car or boat, to win a race against May and Hammond.

Hammond likes American muscle cars like the Dodge Challenger, camping in the middle of nowhere when May and Clarkson don’t want to, and he loves American pickup trucks.

May likes to take his time on his adventures with Hammond and Clarkson and tries to be as precise and perfect as possible when building things or driving a car. This is why Clarkson calls May “Captain Slow.”

One of my favorite adventures by this trio was when they were going on to find the source of the Nile River. Clarkson, May and Hammond had to steal car parts from each other as well as ruin the conditions of each other’s station wagons that

they were living in.

Another one of my favorite adventures from them was when they used muscle cars to go across a couple states in the U.S. and make it to the Bonneville Salt Flats. There was a moment in that adventure when the theme song of “Top Gear” was playing on the radio, and I was laughing along with Clarkson when that happened.

The guys also interview celebrities on their show about what was going on during the time of an episode’s filming. The two celebrities that go on either show race each other and try to compete with other celebrities that have previously been on the show to see who got the better time on the racetrack. That didn’t happen during the first season of “the Grand Tour” due to copyright disputes with the British Broadcasting Company at the time.

They also have a race car driver use a certain car around a test track to test how fast it goes, new or old. One of the Stigs, which was played by Ben Collins, had unmatched speed to the other race car drivers Clarkson, Hammond and May hired for their car show.

What Clarkson, Hammond and May like to make fun of a country in a comedic way, but some people in some countries took their jokes seriously and banned them from visiting for a while. Once the lawsuit cases are settled, the trio might or will be able to visit the country again.

I love Clarkson, Hammond and May. They’ve been British icons and global celebrities for two decades now, and they’re still going on, as long as their bodies can handle the hijinks that happen on “Top Gear” and “the Grand Tour.” Both shows are primarily car shows where the three of them travel around the world, goof off and have some fun on the side. You should watch both shows with these three hosts when you have the chance if you love British humor.

You can find both “Top Gear” and “the Grand Tour” on Amazon Prime Video.

Pokémon

By Jared Almanzor

“Pokémon” is one of my favorite franchises of all time and one that has changed a lot within the last decade. I loved it a lot, the whole franchise, but I felt like it’s changed ever since “Pokémon Shuffle,” “Pokémon Sun” and “Pokémon Moon” were released.

At this point, I don’t even know what format I prefer with “Pokémon.” Nowadays, I feel like it’s for me, but at the same time, I feel like it’s not because of the changes the franchise has had.

When “Pokémon Shuffle” launched on February 18, 2015, the change in the franchise didn’t feel that impact. Mostly because the game was also released that year was “Pokémon Super Mystery Dungeon” on September 17, 2015.

“Pokémon Shuffle” was a puzzle game, and “Pokémon: Super Mystery Dungeon” was a dungeon crawler game with a narrative. “Pokémon: Super Mystery Dungeon” was released on the 3DS, while “Pokémon Shuffle” was released on 3DS and mobile. That was where the change started in the franchise, but there wasn’t much of an impact overall yet.

In 2016, the change started to take effect in terms of the “Pokémon” franchise as a whole. Although “Pokémon Go” came out on July 6, 2016 for smartphones, it was a worldwide phenomenon that brought people together by spending a lot of time outdoors.

That phenomenon didn’t last long as there is so much you could do when flicking Poké balls, taking over gyms and participating in raid battles. When fall 2016 came around, “Pokémon Sun” and “Pokémon Moon” were released on November 18th, 2016, on the Nintendo 3DS.

“Pokémon Go” along with “Pokémon Sun” and “Pokémon Moon” was where I felt like the franchise started to change as a whole due to the success of “Go” being a mobile game. Mobile games are what people carry with them daily, and Game Freak, the company behind “Pokémon”, wanted to capitalize on it.

I felt like this was a good year for “Pokémon” for both the mobile and the console game market. “Pokémon Go” had people start working out, and “Pokémon Sun” and “Pokémon Moon” brought changes to the franchise with the introduction of trials, Totem Pokémon, and Z Moves that replaced the features that came in the previous Pokémon games. Those features are gyms and Mega Evolution.

2017 involved releasing a mobile game called “Pokémon Duel,” essentially a “Pokémon” board game. Released on January 24, 2017, it felt like it was a game of Monopoly to me. Unfortunately, “Pokémon Duel” had its server shut down on October 31, 2019, and I didn’t play that mobile game that much in general.

The main Pokémon games released on the 3DS were “Pokémon Ultra Sun” and “Pokémon Ultra Moon.” These two games came out on November 17, 2017, and there was another shift for the mobile game and console game market again. That shift occurred when the Nintendo Switch came out on March 3, 2017.

When Game Freak saw the popularity of the Nintendo Switch in 2017, they wanted to capitalize on it at some point. They first thought the Nintendo Switch would flop and end up like another Wii U at first. It made sense since third-party companies didn’t know how to develop their games for the Switch’s predecessor, and the Wii U lasted from 2012-2017.

The Wii U’s marketing campaign was bad for consumers to get interested, and Game Freak didn’t want it to be a “bad” idea. So they decided to test the waters of the Nintendo Switch by having Bandai Namco port a game called “Pokkén Tournament” to the console by calling it “Pokkén Tournament DX.” That idea had turned out well by getting over a million copies sold by March 2018.

2018 was when Game Freak decided to have games developed in-house for the Nintendo Switch, and it was a worldwide phenomenon. I felt like it was a good idea with the idea of “Pokémon Quest,” which was released on May 29, 2018, on both the Nintendo Switch and mobile.

In my mind, Game Freak found the perfect balance in bringing mobile games to the console format, even if it wasn’t perfect at first. “Pokémon Quest” was an action-adventure game with an art style similar to “Minecraft.” That mobile game had over 7.5 million downloads within its first week of launch.

Later in 2018, the game to capitalize on the success of “Pokémon Go” was called “Pokémon: Let’s Go, Pikachu!” and “Pokémon: Let’s Go Eevee!” was released on November 16, 2018, on the Nintendo Switch. That game had you explore the Kanto region, catch “Pokémon” in the “Pokémon Go” format and battle gyms. I liked the idea of these two “Pokémon” games as they felt a little different from what fans were used to, and you were still in a familiar setting if you grew up playing “Pokémon Red” and “Pokémon Blue.”

In 2019, I felt happy to be a fan of the franchise “Pokémon” in general. And the changes to it made me content despite other fans being against it. In terms of mobile games, there were two that were released that year. One was “Pokémon Rumble Rush,” which had a Nintendo Wii game called “Pokémon Rumble.” “Pokémon Rumble Rush” was released on May 15, 2019, before the servers were shut down on July 22, 2020. I loved the art style and gameplay as I had nostalgic memories of “Pokémon Rumble.”

The other “Pokémon” mobile game released in 2019 was called “Pokémon Masters” and released on August 28th, 2019. “Pokémon Masters” played like a role-playing game with Gacha game mechanics built into it. In simple terms, it’s gambling combined with role-playing game elements and fan service in the form of “Pokémon.” The effort put into the 3D model clothing for the “Pokémon” trainers in “Pokémon Masters” was amazing, and the game is still going on today. I loved how “Pokémon Masters” expanded on the franchise’s lore, in general, and had characters that never interacted before interacting with each other.

The only “Pokémon” game released on the Nintendo Switch in 2019 was “Pokémon Sword” and “Pokémon Shield,” released on November 15, 2019. Unfortunately, it felt a bit lackluster despite it being part of a new generation of the franchise. I liked it for the music, but the gameplay felt the same for me. At least I’m finally able to play the game on my TV or on the go due to the capabilities of the Nintendo Switch.

A lot happened in 2020 in terms of releases for Pokémon in general. And this is where I felt like where the home console and mobile releases merged completely. February 12, 2020, was the release of “Pokémon Home.” That service is available on the Nintendo Switch and mobile, which allows you to move Pokémon over from a storage system on the Nintendo 3DS called “Pokémon Bank” to “Pokémon Home” before being able to send those “Pokémon” to “Pokémon Sword” and “Pokémon Shield.” I love that service a lot as it meant that I could see the “Pokémon” I’ve had over the years on my phone now.

A “Pokémon Mystery Dungeon” game remake called “Pokémon Mystery Dungeon: Rescue Team DX” was released on March 6, 2020. It was a complete reimagining of the original “Pokémon: Red Rescue Team” released on the Nintendo GameBoy Advance and “Pokémon: Blue Rescue Team” released on the Nintendo DS. “Pokémon Mystery Dungeon: Rescue Team DX” played like a dungeon crawler and filled me with a lot of nostalgia and made me cry a lot. It is a spin-off series that gives me a lot of sentimentalities.

Two DLC packs were released for “Pokémon Sword” and “Pokémon Shield” called “The Isle of Armor” and “The Crown Tundra.” “The Isle of Armor” was a more story-based DLC released on June 17, 2020. And “The Crown Tundra” was a more exploration-based DLC released on October 22, 2020.

This finally brings us to 2021 with the release of “Pokémon Unite” and “New Pokémon Snap.” Again, two games with different mechanics and are a lot of fun in general, gameplay-wise.

“New Pokémon Snap” was released on April 30, 2021, a remake of the original for the Nintendo 64, and is a game where you take photos of “Pokémon.” It’s pretty relaxing, and being able to see your favorite Pokémon up close in high definition on the Nintendo Switch is amazing.

The “Pokémon Unite” game was released on July 21, 2021, on the Nintendo Switch and later released on mobile on September 22, 2021. The game as a whole played similarly to a game called “League of Legends.” A fellow managing editor, Delaila Aguilar, talked about this game in-depth in a review on the fifth issue of the paper released this semester.

Regarding the stuff I don’t like about “Pokémon” taking this route for home console and mobile gaming, I’m not happy with how things are locked behind paywalls with microtransactions for you to access everything. It wasn’t too prevalent for the “Pokémon” games released on the Nintendo 3DS, but it became prevalent on the games released on the Switch and mobile.

The gameplay for each “Pokémon” game is unique, but it can be tedious at times, depending on the mechanics of each game. Another thing I felt doesn’t work having everything for the Switch “Pokémon” games locked behind paywalls to get all the content for the full game experience.

I don’t like how greedy Game Freak has gotten with “Pokémon,” but I get that the franchise has gotten so popular where they have to be that way to outsource their assets to other companies. Game Freak gives companies their assets to allow “Pokémon” fans like me to get fun spin-off game experiences.

In short, I may not like the route “Pokémon” games take now and again. It may frustrate me as a long-time fan of the franchise, but I am excited for the release of “Pokémon Brilliant Diamond” and “Pokémon Shining Pearl” on November 19, 2021 on the Nintendo Switch. These games allow me to go full circle and explore my first “Pokémon” region, the Sinnoh region. I am hopeful too that things might change for “Pokémon” in the future.

Sonix.ai

By Caprice Benifield-Sanchez

Transcribing and editing video and audio files are the most torturous tasks for me with my Processing Disorder (PD), but Sonix.ai, a website app and leaving room for time to write. “Wait, what?” is a repetitive something I have asked the speaker ever since I was a child the words that are said, causing a delay to what I hear and was said was being heard correctly has made checking for a four-hour job. The anxiety for receiving backlash from a with Sonix, my PD won’t stop me listening to others the best way I

Sonix is a tool for anyone that word-for-word, making closed and translating videos/audio into automatically converts audio/video if the converted text is accurate reassures its accuracy by giving you confidence levels of each said word. timestamps on the interface, so than what is needed. The generator will highlight what is being said as individually separated, depending can edit accordingly and review blindly rewinding and wasting spot of your choice with a click of a name to each speaker without remember who is speaking. Transcription to learn and prepare for writing highlight, strikethrough, add notes dictionary.

Of course, a gem like this is not like myself knows how to milk the trial without shame. That was not a hint to create multiple exactly how many hours you need for an audio transcription plan offers 40 plus languages, in-browser transcript editor, commenting, text exports (MS Word, DOCX, TXT, PDF), sub-30 plus languages, automated subtitles, the ability to share an added search feature to top it all.

Comparing to other transcription applications like Dragon Speech Recognition Software, Otter.ai and Verbit, I am grateful Sonix offered a free trial. The other transcription apps require you to request a quote depending on your credentials and business, and “college student” is not a significant credential, nor a profession for which they offer a price range. Unlike competitors, Sonix offers custom payment plans.

The Premium Subscription includes all of the Standard Subscription features plus multi-user access, automated timecode realignment, multi-language subtitle compare, side-by-side translation compare, customizable media player and social media sharing. This subscription’s features are geared for team collaboration and multimedia. Honestly, I was content with finding a program that won’t auto-reject my budget after hooking me in with a free trial.

The proof of my capabilities is written in the transcript entailed by Sonix; in other words, tell me what I heard was wrong and I won’t obsess over it for hours. PD will not stop me from success and if that means purchasing an application to ensure my sanity and build confidence lost from the daily struggles of living with this disorder, so be it.

painful part of being a journalism student with Auditory Processing Disorder, has shortened the time of ensuring “accuracy” itive hiccup of not being able to understand speech and living with this disorder. My brain cannot process all understanding speech. Not knowing or believing what accuracy while transcribing a 15-minute interview into misinterpreted direct quote is something I face daily, but from doing what I love most: can.

dreads copying verbal speech captioning (CC) for videos, other languages. This website to text with haste. Understanding is not a problem; the program the option of seeing the Content From there, you can adjust you don’t have to rewind more ated timestamp of the audio it is playing. The speakers are on the quality of the file. You what is being said without time by playing audio from any a button. You can also appoint playing over the timestamp to scribing becomes an easier way the story with the ability to or pile up words in a custom

free; a poor college student most out of a 30-minute free email accounts. For only \$10 an hour, you can choose tion with extra essentials. The Standard “pay-as-you-go” word-for-word timestamps, speaker labeling, notes and title exports (SRT, VTT), custom dictionary, translation to clips and transcript links, customize folders and files and



Nintendo

By Caprice Benifield-Sanchez

Comparing the Nintendo Switch (Switch) to the previous long-standing gaming console, the Nintendo 3DS, would not be an equitable match. Throughout the years, Nintendo, the world's largest video game company by revenue, had a few attempts on trying to create the perfect portable gaming console. The closest thing possible to that image was the handheld system, the Nintendo 3DS, but the sales alone were not enough to satisfy the developers. The next attempt was the Nintendo Wii U, which was a bulky handheld remote pad in addition to the console that is connected to the TV; the confluence of issues and technicalities officially made the Wii U Nintendo's worst selling console, with only 13.5 million units sold. The last try was the Switch, a hybrid console that you can port to the TV and take on the go, like the handheld 3DS that came with its own set of problems through the will to make more money with newer mechanics.

The original version of the Switch came out on March 3, 2017, for around \$300. The handheld console is about 4 inches by 9 inches in size, which is two times wider than the Nintendo 3DS and one inch smaller than the Wii U's length and width. Both the Switch and the Wii U have the same screen size, at 6.2 inches, but the Switch isn't as heavy and thick, weighing approximately 0.88 pounds when Joy-Con controllers are attached. Playing active games with motion controls, and weight-lifting an extra pound of plastic, makes a big difference for children and adults alike. In a non-gamer light, just think about the same comparison of heaviness from the original iPhone to the newer models; you shouldn't have to lift weights to call someone on the phone. There is a skinny kickstand on the left corner behind the Switch to prop the console on a table, but with slight movements the kickstand can collapse, causing the standing Switch to fall backwards.

The original version showcased faulty mechanics, such as a fast battery drain, microSD cards being unreadable, defective Joy-Cons that drift or the undetectable Switch Dock, which charges and ports the Switch to the TV.

Out of all the consoles Nintendo has produced, this is the first one that a paid membership is needed to play with friends online. The Switch online subscription is basically Nintendo's replica of Xbox Live, PlayStation Plus, Google's Play Pass, Apple's Apple Arcade and, honestly, the list goes on because paid subscriptions are becoming popular for larger industries. The Switch online includes the ability to play any games that require you to connect to online servers; if only they would mention that majority of the games produced on the Switch incorporate online play to enhance the game's storyline, the gameplay itself or gives necessary perks of being able to connect to the internet for popular games, such as Pokémon Sword and Shield, Splatoon 2 and Animal Crossing New Horizons. More than 4,600 other games are Switch online compatible out of 7,000 listed in the Nintendo game store. The individual membership is \$20 every 12 months, and for the family membership, which can include up to eight Nintendo account holders, it is \$34.99; it is a cheap price for a membership in comparison to other gaming console industries, but is it really necessary? Unlike the companies who make the subscription optional for specific games, Nintendo gives you no other choice but to purchase the ability to access the most crucial parts of gameplay for the majority of the \$60 Switch games in the store.

The Switch online also includes a library of 70 plus classic Super NES and NES games that I have not touched yet, but it is the sole reason why my mom bought her own Switch and membership. A surprising feature that is included in the membership, but not in the overall purchase of the Switch, is the save data cloud. The cloud allows you to back up saved game data; essentially, it is like paying for Google Drive.

Sadly, I am stuck with the superficial hiccups of the original version, until I take the time to contact Nintendo's customer support. My controllers are unusable due to the manufacturing problem, and I refuse to pay \$70 for additional Joy-Cons.

Wake Up, Sunshine

When the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic first began, I heavily relied on music to keep me calm and balanced.

I was fortunate enough that one of my favorite bands, All Time Low, released a new album, titled “Wake Up, Sunshine”, amid the pandemic. These tracks saw me through 4 weeks in quarantine, a rushed remote semester, my return to work and a masked summer.

Now, as we start to take a few tentative steps toward reopening, “Wake Up, Sunshine” continues to provide unique and meaningful tunes. The album’s ability to apply to both the hopelessness of the pandemic and the hopefulness of potentially reopening highlights how versatile this compilation truly is.

The first track, “Some Kind of Disaster”, was the first to be released in a teaser in late January. The song begins with lead singer, Alex Garaskath’s, breathy vocals. The echoing vocals quickly give way to a stronger more upbeat voice, guitar riffs and accompanying beats. Lyrics like “I woke up from a never-ending dream/ I shut my eyes at seventeen,” and “You gotta hurt sometimes to learn to heal/ You gotta get back up and learn to deal,” make this song memorable and meaningful.

The second song, “Sleeping In”, has a calm, yet upbeat style that makes it an immediate favorite. Garaskath’s vocals shine here, allowing the band to present a vintage love song with an alternative twist.

The third track, “Getaway Green”, also presents a nostalgic style, although it lacks the calmness of the previous track. Steady beats and punk guitar riffs make this song an alternative masterpiece.

The following song, “Melancholy Kaleidoscope”, is an enigma. The introductory guitar riff and vocals make listeners expect a fast-paced song. But during the chorus, Garaskath’s voice slows and deepens slightly. Later in the song, Garaskath’s voice grows even quieter, making the louder moments in the song even more powerful.

The next track, “Trouble Is...”, has a slower beginning, but the chorus is catchy and relatable. Lyrics like “All that I know is I just can’t say no to you/ Funny how things never change,” are slightly unimaginative, but still meaningful.

The title track, “Wake Up, Sunshine”, is one of my personal favorites. The introduction is energetic and lives up to the band’s alternative image. Later in the song, Garaskath’s vocals slow and grow fainter, highlighting this portion of the track. Lyrics like “Wake up, sunshine/ Somebody loves you for yourself,” set this song apart. Overall, this song is inspirational.

The following song, “Monsters”, topped Billboard’s “Alternative Airplay” chart for weeks, marking the band’s first number one song. This track has a heavy alternative style and a fast-paced rap from collaborating artist, blackbear. “Monsters” has become a fan-favorite in every sense of the word.

The next track, “Pretty Venom (Interlude)”, marks an interesting change in the band’s discography. This song has a slow, acoustic introduction and a slower pace. Garaskath’s voice adopts a smooth, echoing and soft tone. Overall, I like “Pretty Venom (Interlude)”, but I need to be in a certain mood to listen to it. Considering the rest of the songs on this album, “Pretty Venom (Interlude)” pales in comparison.

“Favorite Place” is the next song on this album. A collaboration with The Band Camino, this track relies on heavy beats to complement Garaskath’s varied vocals. This song adopts the nostalgic tone seen in earlier tracks, like “Sleeping In.”

The following track, “Safe”, has a haltering introduction that I dislike. However, the later portion of the song features phenomenal vocals and drum work. Lyrics like “Just put the car in drive/ And chase the county lines/ You’ll never know how far you’ll go,” make this song an instant hit.

The additional songs on this album, “January Gloom (Seasons Pt. 1)”, “Clumsy”, “Glitter & Crimson”, “Summer Daze (Seasons Pt. 2)” and “Basement Noise”, are relatively unmemorable, but they carry on the same upbeat drums, powerful vocals and guitar riffs that make “Wake Up, Sunshine” such an extraordinary album.

Overall, this album provided a meaningful distraction both from life at home and from the anxiety of reopening society. Although I do not agree with all the artistic decisions made in this album, I appreciate the final product and the amount of work All Time Low put into it. I would recommend this album to any budding alternative music fan or anyone looking to branch out into new genres.

Bagel One

By Gabrielle Ignotis

As I enter the shop, the familiar scent of fresh bread, something cooking on the griddle and coffee flood my senses. Bagel One, a small café right off Summerhill road, is my home away from home, so much so that most of the small staff knows me by name.

A small shop in between the local nail salon and Chinese restaurant, Bagel One invokes the feeling of an old deli or bodega shop. Old subway tile walls and glass display cases make it seem like the shop wouldn't be out of place in the middle of Brooklyn. Small orange wooden booths, pine tables and the ancient cappuccino machine only add to the aesthetic. There is an older television set mounted above the coffee machine, which always plays news or morning talk shows.

The owner, who will often lounge in the booths when not serving customers, alternates between watching these shows and chatting with his regular patrons.

Up until recently, the menu had been displayed in neon writing on a blackboard, surrounded by colorful illustrations of bagels, eggs and sandwiches. Now three new TV's take up space above the register, displaying the same menu the shop has had for as long as I can remember.

As for the food itself, it is a longstanding agreement among my family that they have the best bagels in New Jersey. We get half a dozen for every Mother's Day, Father's Day, birthday or anniversary. I also have an unfortunate habit of stopping in to grab a bagel on my way to classes or work. As a result, I'm at Bagel One at least twice a week.

My favorite item on the menu is the salt bagel with plain cream cheese. Several chain breakfast places, like Dunkin Donuts or Manhattan Bagel, don't offer the classic salt bagel anymore. Bagel One is the only place I know that still serves this staple.

The bagels themselves are perfect; they are never soggy, stale or tough. The cream cheese is always refrigerated and fresh.

The shop offers flavored cream cheeses, like vegetable cream cheese, and additional toppings, like lox. They also specialize in breakfast sandwiches and lunch wraps. My father swears by their pork roll, although I prefer the bacon, egg and cheese on a plain bagel.

The prices are reasonable. A bagel with cream cheese costs about \$2.50, while a breakfast sandwich can cost up to \$5.25. These breakfast sandwiches may cost a little more than similar items at chain breakfast places, but they taste much better.

Since these meals are cooked on the spot, they also tend to take longer than Dunkin Donuts or Manhattan Bagel. I wouldn't recommend ordering a breakfast sandwich if you are in a hurry, but if you have time to spare, they are worth the wait.

While I could probably spend countless hours at Bagel One drinking coffee and doing homework in a booth by the front window, I never do, because there are only a handful of seats. These seats are often occupied by employees from the nearby grocery store or nail salon. The social distancing requirements set due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic have only made finding seating harder. Bagel One has a charming ambience, but I would love to see them add additional seating or expand their business further.

Despite this oversight, I love Bagel One. I recommend this shop to anyone who wants a good, old-fashioned bagel in a fantastic atmosphere.

Glee

By Anish Patel

"Glee" is a well-written comedy-drama depicting high schoolers' lives in their high school Glee Club. I remember my older sister watching this show, created by Ryan Murphy and Brad Falchuk and originally debuted in 2009, and thinking this would be one of those snooze-fest teen dramas I wouldn't enjoy. Ten years later, the show ended back up on my TV. From an elementary schooler when it first came out to a college sophomore now, I thought I'd give the show a try as I love music and just recently graduated high school. To my surprise, the show's excellent cast and interesting storylines led to an enjoyable binge-watching experience.

Lea Michele and the late Cory Monteith do a great job playing the two main characters, the nerdy loner girl, Rachel Berry, and the star quarterback, Finn Hudson. The show takes place in William McKinley High School in Lima, Ohio. It follows the lives of Rachel, Finn, and other students and characters played by the late Naya Rivera, Chris Colfer, Matthew Morrison, and others in their high school Glee Club. Even guest stars like Ricky Martin, Gweneth Paltrow, and John Stamos make multiple appearances throughout the show. Although all characters were interesting in their own way, my favorite character has to be Sue Sylvester, played by the humorous Jane Lynch.

Sylvester coached McKinley High's cheerleading squad to multiple national championships and is one who would do anything to get her way. She believed she belonged at the very top and was not afraid to step on anyone who got in her way. However, we also get to see the more humane side to Sylvester through quite a few incredibly written episodes. For example, we learn that she is very protective of her special needs sister, as their parents were never around, Sue was the one who had to act as the parent. This detail later explains why Sylvester took such a liking to Becky Jackson, a high school student with Down syndrome, the same disability affecting her sister. Normally, the show portrays Sylvester as this hateful, bitter, cold-hearted person that only wants what's best for her. Her actions and opinions are ones you probably wouldn't find on TV today. However, these special glimpses into her personal life show how everyone has their own story, which is viewed differently depending on their perspective.

The show's reaction to Cory Monteith's death was handled appropriately, paying respect to him as a character and as an actor. "Glee" also does an amazing job at addressing serious topics in the real world. With multiple gay and bisexual characters in the show, homosexuality issues play a huge role in the show. This, along with an episode on school shooting awareness and the representation of disabled characters in the main and support casts, show how "Glee" was a show truly created to make a change.

Not to ignore the most important aspect of the show, the music "Glee" boasts an incredible soundtrack across its six-season span. From classic music in different languages, "Glee" does an excellent job using a wide array of music and genres. From Rachel Berry chasing her dream of a Broadway star to Sue Sylvester's fall, and subsequent rise again, "Glee" is a show that anyone can relate to; those who have been an outcast or even just a plain old high schooler. All those reasons, along with the amazing songs that get sung each episode, are the reason this show deserves everyone's attention.

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By Anish Patel

PlayStation

Sony released the long awaited PlayStation 5 on Thursday, November 12, 2020. A whopping seven years after the release of its predecessor, the Playstation 4 in 2013, it is clear to see why the PS5 is such a step up from the PS4. Aesthetically, the new generation console raised a lot of eyebrows. Playstation decided to sack the primary black color that the PS4 sported, and went with a white casing instead, as well as changing its accessories from white to black. These accessories include but are not limited to the DualSense wireless controllers, the Pulse 3D wireless headset, and the HD camera. All sporting the new, sleek, white look. There are two versions of the PS5, the digital version and the standard version. I was lucky enough to purchase the digital version of the console on release day. The standard edition costs \$499 plus tax and allows for the ability to insert disks into the console. This means players can buy the game physically and insert them into the console, as well as insert Blu-ray discs into the console to watch movies. On the other hand, the digital edition costs \$399. It does not allow for discs to be inserted, so all games, movies, etc must be downloaded. For \$100 less, you lose the ability to watch Blu-ray movies as well. This for me was not a big deal, so I went for the more affordable option.

The basic digital edition of the Playstation 5 comes with the console itself, a DualSense controller, a stand for the console, and the appropriate wiring needed for installation. Starting with the controller, there is a clear difference compared to the old generation console. Besides the obvious color change, the DualSense controller is a little more sturdy than the PS4's DualShock. It more closely resembles the Xbox controllers which tend to be a little larger, and easier to hold by people with larger hands. This controller is the perfect size, allowing my fingers to reach every button comfortably. The stand is just a simple stand that allows the PS5 to be placed vertically and horizontally.

Now onto the main attraction, the console itself. Coming in at an impressive size, the PS5 is the biggest home console ever made. Its dimensions are 15.4 inches tall, 10.24 inches deep and 4.09 inches wide. Having owned the PS4, one of the blaring issues that Sony faced was the fan inside the console making a lot of noise and struggling to keep the PS4 cool. With the PS5, even the most technologically demanding games don't seem to affect the mechanisms of the console. This is no surprise as the Playstation 5 boasts incredible numbers when it comes to performance, visuals, and all around experience. While the PS4 contained an impressive storage space of 500 gigabytes, the PS5 completely raises the bar, coming with 825GB. After everything is up and running, you are roughly left with around 667GB as some space is needed for the Playstation to run functionally. The PS5, just like the PS4 runs games at 60 frames-per-second quite comfortably. However, Sony has stated that its next-gen console will support 120 frames-per-second. Such a large boost in framerate only allows the PS5 to break more boundaries when it comes to graphics, experience, and enjoyment. If you are looking for a gaming console that is a decent upgrade from the Playstation 4, runs smoothly, and has incredible graphics, then I highly recommend the Playstation 5.

SHEIN

By Simran Belani

Since a young age, I have dreaded going to malls. I would never enjoy aimlessly going through clothes that were overpriced and often not of great quality. I made it a point to go shopping only when I knew exactly what I was looking for.

Online shopping seemed like the way to go for me, pandemic or not. To me, it was so much easier to scroll through a catalog in the comfort of my home, where I could even filter out the clothes I didn't want.

Recently, I was introduced to Shein, an online store filled with quite literally everything one could possibly be searching for. Bags, shades, clothes, accessories and more- they have it all. After hearing my friends rave about the site, I decided to give it a try.

At first glance, I was a little confused. The clothes were extremely cheap, and if my friends hadn't already ordered from the website, I would have been afraid it was a scam. Clothing prices range from \$1 to \$60, a range incredibly lower than those found in stores at the mall or elsewhere.

The site itself was a little hard to maneuver through because there was such a vast variety of items scattered through the different tabs presented at the top of the website. I felt as though it would take days to look through everything they had to offer.

One commendable factor of the site was the amount of reviews. Shein has a reward system for posting reviews, and so the review section was filled with honest opinions on every item. This helped me greatly in choosing my size as well as determining the quality of the item.

Finally, after a few days of scouring the site, I put together a shopping cart that I was content with and placed the order. I was not done looking through all the items they had, but I felt the items I ordered were enough to first test the quality of clothes delivered. In addition to the cheap prices, Shein also had an ongoing sale, taking another 20% off my total cost.

Although the site stated the shipping would come in 2 weeks, my package arrived, to my pleasure, in just 5 days. I immediately was in awe of the careful packaging of my order. Every article of clothing was in its own zipped bag, and the same went for the jewelry I ordered. Compared to other stores that wrap up the entire order, this was very organized and well thought out.

After trying on all my clothes, I realized the quality of every single item I ordered was actually great. Nothing seemed of "cheap quality" at all and I was very pleased that everything fit perfectly as well. Even the leggings I ordered, which I usually struggle to find a comfy pair of, fit perfect and were so comfortable. Although I was very confused as to how such clothes were so cheap in comparison to mall prices, I decided not to question it.

The jewelry on the other hand, I would not order again. The anklets I bought seemed to break the day I would wear them, meaning they were made very poorly. I have not had the opportunity to wear my body chain yet, but that also seemed very fragile, as the chains were very thin and delicate. I also ordered a pair of sunglasses, and these came in a little black case. Although the sunglasses did not look good on me, they were of good quality.

Overall, I would recommend Shein to any girl searching for a way to order cheap, fashionable clothes in the comfort of her home.

The Originals

After watching the show “The Vampire Diaries”, vampires stole my heart and I could not get enough of them. I decided to move on to the sister show, “The Originals,” which depicts a storyline relating to minor characters of the “The Vampire Diaries.”

The show, which originally aired on the network The CW, is now available on the streaming platform, Netflix. The Originals consists of 5 seasons, with 13 to 22 45-minute episodes. Before this scares you off, let me explain why each and every episode is worth the watch.

The main storyline centers around Klaus, Elijah, and Rebekah Mikaelson, the first vampires in history, created more than 1,000 years ago. Klaus happens to be a vampire-werewolf hybrid, the only hybrid to exist at the time. Another important main character is Haley Marshall, who is pregnant with Klaus’ child after a drunken one-night stand. For those groaning at this intro of a supernatural show, I must say that this is not your regular supernatural show filled with action and gore. Instead, the series of events in this series portrays family, heartbreak, love, and betrayal, all in one.

The Original Family settles in the French Quarter in New Orleans, home to witches, werewolves, and vampires. Previously, Marcellus Gerard, who was adopted by Klaus a century ago, ruled the city after the Originals were forced to flee. In full control, he created a list of rules about how the factions must behave, and how tourists would be kept safe, while also satisfying the hunger of the vampires. However, now with the Originals back in town, chaos entails the city Marcel worked to build.

Wherever the Originals go, enemies, and betrayal follows. A lifetime of Klaus, a short-tempered hybrid, creating enemies causes many problems for the family, often putting the safety of his family at

stake, pun intended (the white oak stake is the only weapon that can kill an Original). Still, he is loved and supported by the entire family, as they uphold their century old vow, “Always and forever.”

Eventually, the storyline shifts to the idea of keeping Klaus’ unborn daughter safe from those going after her with the belief that she will be the end of the city. Without giving away any spoilers for those who want to watch the show, all I can say is the turn of events are truly mind-blowing.

What I enjoy about ‘The Originals’ is that it is so unpredictable. What you might think will happen, definitely does not happen, and that mystery is enough to have you biting your fingernails as you binge-watch the show.

Personally, and with the risk of sounding a little crazy, I can say that this show has made me cry multiple times, but has also just as often brought a smile to my face. Even while watching the final episode of the series, tears rolled down my cheeks as I watched the last touching moments the family endured.

Lastly, I would definitely recommend this show to everyone. Along with the marvelous storyline, the acting and the actual quality of the show is up to par. No scene seems to have been amateurly edited, and the show will leave you believing that this supernatural world resides among us.



B T S

BTS gifted their fans, army, with an eight-track album titled "BE" on November 20. "BE" has a lowkey and cozy aesthetic that envisions the familiar emotions and lifestyle in the coronavirus pandemic. "Dynamite" was a successful song released back in August, which has intrigued army, music critics and pop-hit listeners upon hearing the group's new album.

The lead single "Life Goes On" has a bittersweet sentiment. The track offers comfort to the listeners living through the pandemic. The song has a mixture of acoustics, low-tone vocals and addictive background beats of claps and synths. J-Hope's singing rap and V's husky voice is satisfying to hear. Jimin and Jungkook's dreamy harmonies can be heard in the background vocals. In one portion of the music video, Jin was the focus of this song. Jin's sweet singing tugs at heartstrings with a subtle reminder of his military enlistment date being close.

The track "Fly to My Room" is sung by Jimin and V with a rap feature of J-Hope and Suga. The song has an early 2000s pop sound with keyboards and synths. The lyrics tell the relatable frustration and boredom of not being able to leave one's home during the stay-at-home order. The members sing about losing the concept of time, the boredom of repeating routines and becoming numb. It's easy to understand how the members feel in this song. I related to Suga's raps about his room being small and the only place to turn to, and J-Hope, who tries to have better days in quarantine.

The melancholic "Blue & Grey" expresses depression as an artist. The slow ballad is accompanied by a soft guitar, dreamy piano and other string instruments. The lyrics are most heartbreaking when they sing "I just wanna be happier," followed by the singing members' vocal cries. The members feel blue while they perceive their loneliness as grey. RM mentions how he is sickened by color, which is a genius note to how the members have been feeling blue and grey for a long time.

"Skit" isn't a song,

but this spoken piece is nothing new to the army. In the past, BTS has released other skits onto their albums. In this three-minute conversation, the group discusses their single "Dynamite," reaching number one on Billboard Hot 100. The members reflect on the single hitting number

one on Jungkook's birthday, what they were doing while finding out the news and their feelings about the achievement.

"Telepathy" is a funky, upbeat tune that lightens the mood from the previously wistful tracks. The song contains nostalgic funk and modern electro-pop. The auto-tune is recognized throughout the song, and it's fun to hear whenever a member slurs on their words, which creates an amusing lyrical distortion. The group dedicates the song to their army as they sing about missing them. The tune is heartwarming and uplifting for BTS and army.

The old-school hip-hop track "Dis-ease" is rap heavy with verses that deal with artists who struggle during the pandemic. The lyrics start with self-doubt and feeling sick. The latter half of the song has a confident message of hope and continuing forward in life. The song consists of DJ

scratching and funky guitar. The intense bridge is followed by the last chorus filled with a band of drums and brass instruments. J-Hope stands out in this song, and the track itself has a tone that is similar to the beginning of "Ego," which was sung entirely by J-Hope in BTS' previous album.

"Stay" begins slowly with future house elements. Light guitar chords play throughout the track. Jin and Jungkook sing while RM raps an adorable song that will have the listeners think of someone who's there for them which is how they feel about their fans. The build-up repeats the catchy mantra "Stay," and the word carries into the chorus that bursts into a dance anthem. The song is overall an EDM track and eventually fades with an enchanting piano that slows as Jungkook sings the last lyrics.

In August, BTS released the retro pre-release single "Dynamite" entirely in English. Like "Telepathy," this feel-good song has a fun and optimistic vibe with disco-pop inspirations and funk. This single appealed to the western market and was a huge success as a summer anthem. The lines are catchy, making the entire song hard not to sing. The song has several pop culture references and party-going lyrics. "Dynamite" is a joyful and perfect conclusion to "BE." There's no better way to end the album with an energetic song that hit number 1 on Billboard.

On this 28-minute album, every BTS member contributed to writing the tracks. "BE" has a mature sound and realistic outlook on the complications of being in quarantine. BTS utilized their talents to create a feel-good album. I enjoyed this album for how authentic it is. Every song has a special quirk that I connect to. I have a special attachment to "Fly to My Room," and "Life Goes On." I love the musical arrangement of "Dis-ease," "Stay" and "Dynamite." "Telepathy" and "Blue & Grey" can't be ignored. "Telepathy" is fun and "Blue & Grey" is raw; those two songs complete the album. I enjoyed the experimentation of music styles in other eras, like the old-school hip-hop and funk. The album inspired me with the overall message of hope and made me feel warm. It's as simple as a message of saying "Life Goes On" that's comforting in times like these.

Apple Watch Series Six

By Tatwa Vaidya

Apple Watch Series 6 is a gadget that can help see who is calling you, which can GPS tracking gadget.

This new watch is an improvement over finishes, and colors. I bought my Apple was in love with that gadget. I bought it for body-color with a grey belt. It comes with different materials of cases, and there are

Every time, you do not have time or not in the notifications or see who is calling you. An it so flexible that you can see everything on out of your pocket.

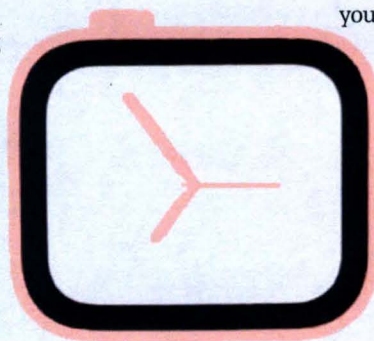
My Apple Watch is working so flawlessly and it is so helpful in many ways. It is my support system whenever I go to the gym, and it gives me perfect statistics about how many calories I burned and my heartbeat ratings. Moreover, it notifies me when my heart is in rhythm or not, it gives an exact number of calories I burnt in 24 hours, and also notifies when my heartbeat rate goes up while I am working out.

Whenever I am driving, I can easily call anyone without touching my phone and talk to the person via Apple Watch. Also, I can see the messages that I am getting. One of the best features about this watch is if I pay an additional \$20 extra per month then I don't need my cell phone near me to operate or use my Apple Watch. It can work as an individual phone and the amount they are asking for that feature is nothing.

I also love the feature of Turn-by-Turn navigation on my Apple Watch. It helps when walking around in a city. Thus, I just have to look into my watch, follow the direction while walking, and not need to touch my phone.

Last but not least, the best and the most common thing about my Apple Watch is the Siri Commands. You can easily command Siri which is a built-in voice-controlled personal assistant for the apple users for setting up alarms, timers, reminders, calling someone, and many more.

In summation. This series of Apple Watch is a must-have as it makes your life easier with its flawless features.



you easily access your text and notification, of workouts, and many more: all in one

other Apple Watches with new features, Watch in the first week of October and I \$425 and I chose a space grey aluminum the choice of various colors of cases, also different types of belts available.

a situation to check your phone to see Apple Watch does it all for you and makes your wrist rather than taking your phone

Short Stories

By Simran Belani

Vanilla Coffee

I insert a little French vanilla coffee pod into my brand new Keurig coffee machine. I hear the little click, ensuring the pod was set in place, and close the lid. After filling the water tank with a cup of water, I press a large circular silver button to start brewing my coffee. After a few seconds, I watch as a brown liquid starts dripping into my mug. I smile at the glorious sight. Steam leaves the mug, proving my coffee is hot, and the strong smell of vanilla-laced coffee fills my kitchen. What a marvelous machine, I think to myself. Once the coffee is done brewing, I add a splash of caramel creamer, causing the dark brown liquid to become light brown. After a spoon of coconut sugar and a quick mix, my morning coffee is ready. I grab my mug and make my way to my living room, where my laptop is propped on my years-old wooden table. I take a deep breath, preparing myself for the assignments I must complete. I am now ready to begin my day.

My body tensed as I hear a creaking from underneath me. The haggard, faded-pink plastic lifted me throughout the years, enduring the intense movements of losing multiple games of League of Legends in a row to being a 'spoon' to my sweat during the hot summer days. I wanted our final moments together to be memorable; my butt will be the last to sit on my beloved chair. Three cracks were visible to where the metal touches the plastic; my body was hanging on by a thread. I have prepared my body for "the great fall" for a while now, I knew our day was near. The creak turned into a glimpse of reality; it was a zap of thoughts that came together on my way down to the floor as every muscle in my body prepared itself for a tragic ending. A thump was heard and once again my little brother came in running, "I told you to throw out the chair," he snarled in annoyance.

By Caprice Benifield-Sanchez

League of Legends

By Anish Patel

Soccer

Pg. 63

March
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Blue Colt Vibe

All the pressure in the world is on my shoulders. After a tournament final soccer match that lasted 120+ minutes, the fate of the game lays in my hands as normal and extra time rolled to an end. 9 other players, all with their own goals and desires, stepped up in an attempt to make their mark in this competition's history. With a miss from the last player, the score on penalties at the moment was 4-4 as I stepped up to finish the game. The light breeze had vanished, leaving only the static, humid air created in 90 degree weather. In my mind, there was only 1 thing I could focus on, putting the ball in the back of the net. With more or less 50 spectators watching, probably all family of the players, the tension was so thick you could cut through it with a knife. 19 years of training led me up to this one moment, where I was the only one who could control what happened from here. (Well me and the other team's goalkeeper of course.) After a moment or two of mind games with the keeper, I placed the ball on the penalty spot which was placed about 12 yards away from goal. Standing about 4 or 5 feet away from the ball, I took in a deep breath. As if the world had frozen around me in that second, I slowly ran up to the ball. The next thing I feel is the ball leaving my foot and curling past the flailing goalkeeper into the back of the net. Ecstasy is the only word that describes the emotions that came afterwards.

By Shakera Blakney

Morning Page

My brother and I were both upstairs wondering what was going on. It was spring break during the third grade, and we were told by our mom we could stay up late that night. My dad was out of town, so I assumed he was coming home. What I didn't expect was him coming home with a brand new puppy. My mom called us down and once we turned the corner from the stairs, I saw the cutest dog I had ever seen in my life. He was the size of my dad's hand and had two black spots on his forehead. The rest of his body was tan and white with the occasional black patches.

My brother came down right behind me and asked, "What is that dog doing here?" I was elated. Not only did we have a new puppy, but my dad was also home from his trip. He had been gone for almost a week which was the longest he had ever been away from us. He ended up confessing that it wasn't for work, and he had gone to South Carolina to transport eight dogs to their new owners in New Jersey and the surrounding area. I spent the rest of the night playing with my new puppy who we had named Shea after the baseball stadium.

By Julia Block

Second Life

While observing the Mitchell-Innes and Nash Gallery in Chelsea, New York, I was intrigued by the "Second Life" exhibit by the artist known as Brent Wadden.

The room was filled with multiple woven panels covered in colored fibers.

Each wall had more than one of the colorful panels, some larger than others.

The panels were similar to one another with repetitive shapes and alike textures from the weaving patterns used to create each.

However, the panels contrasted one another through the artist's selection of colors used on each of the panels.

One panel consisted of multiple shades of pink, while a different panel consisted of yellow, green, and blue.

Up close, the details of the woven fibers make the seemingly simple artwork more intricate than what one would see if observing from a distance.

I was fascinated by the idea that something so simple from far away could be so complex with less distance.

I wondered how long it must have taken for Wadden to create such panels, each fiber woven to one another to create each triangle or rectangle on every board.

The exhibit was really interesting because each panel was unique in their own way, but all were connected to one another because of a common formatting and medium.

As I lie awake in bed on this chilly, rainy day, I check the time on my watch to see that it reads 7:05 a.m. I realize I have two more hours until my alarm goes off. As I drift back into sleep, I contemplate skipping class, my bed is exceptionally comfortable and it's the perfect sleeping temperature in my room, chilly. It's not so cold that I can see my breath, but it's just cool enough to need a comforter. I snuggled further into my bed and said, "Screw it, I'll miss class today. It's just one day." I rolled over and tugged the comforter up to my chin but made sure one leg wasn't underneath the comforter. It felt like I was asleep for five minutes until my alarm went off. I thought about turning the alarm off and going back to sleep until I realized, I didn't do my Morning Page.

By Luke Lombardi

Shea

Pg. 64

March
2022
Blue Colt Vibe

By Julia Block

Class

The entire kitchen smelled of sweet sugary goodness.

Sitting at the kitchen table, my sister and I filled more cupcake wrappers with the whisked Pillsbury Funfetti cake batter.

The batter was off-white with a bunch of rainbow sprinkles mixed into the thick, runny mixture.

Each of the 24 cupcake wrappers became filled with delicious pudding-like batter, and we still had some left over in the large plastic bowl.

I opened the oven, which was set to 350 degrees, to place the filled tin into the extreme heat.

While we waited for this batch to bake, we licked the sweet batter off the metal whisks initially used to stir the bowl of ingredients and then worked on cleaning up the kitchen.

We used remaining baking time to begin icing cupcakes that had already cooled to room temperature.

The white whipped icing was neatly spread across the top layer of each of the cupcakes, and we topped each of them off with red and green sugar crystal sprinkles to complete the delightful dessert treats.

By Julia Block

Starbucks

Pg. 65

March
2022
Blue Colt Vibe

As I sit in the last row of the classroom, I shopped on my computer tuning out the professor's lecture.

My eyes wandered the room to find other students having side conversations, doing other work on their computers, and zoning out into oblivion.

The effort to participate in class and understand the lesson cascaded more and more for each row of students sitting farther away from the professor.

Occasionally, I looked up at the professor with a smile and nod to fake the fact that I was not paying attention to anything in our lesson on the projector screen.

Meanwhile, I opened a new tab on my web browser to check how much torture I had left to endure for this week's slideshow; I sighed from the pain of seeing another 23 slides left in the monotonous presentation.

Class had only been in session for one hour, which meant I still had to suffer through another two hours of rambling regarding topics I didn't care to learn.

This being the case, I reclined further into my desk chair, made myself comfortable, and let my brain shut down as class time ticked away.

By Julia Block

Cup-cakes

On Nov. 15, I left my house at 9:45 a.m. to drive to school, but I had to make a quick stop at Starbucks off Route 18 on the way to get my first taste of the Christmas season beverages.

On that day, Starbucks did a promotion which allowed customers to get a free refillable cup if they ordered one of the few holiday drinks.

My hot chestnut praline latte was in a bright red plastic cup with the words "merry coffee" in green and white letters.

I sipped the fresh espresso drink and enjoyed my first taste of the seasonal praline chips on top of the whipped cream swirl on the latte.

The coffee had a caramel-like sweetness, but was not overly sweet.

Getting my holiday beverage and free reusable cup helped get me into the spirit of the holiday season.

By Madison Bara

The Universe

I sat next to my mom at the kitchen table. The ambiance was quiet. "Hi, Mrs. Maisonet," a teacher chirped. I watch the two converse over Zoom. I hear a sharp noise coming from behind me. I instinctively turned around to see my dad opening an Amazon package. "Go somewhere else," I whispered aggressively. He takes his package and continues to open it merely feet three away. I glanced over to check my phone notifications. My dad comes back and presents the electrical toothbrush he purchased. I look up from my phone and stare at his motioning for my attention. "\$17," he grinned smugly. He turned on the toothbrush which hissed at a high volume. I attempted to hold in my laughter as my mom tried to motion him to stop off-screen.

By Cassandra Maisonet

Teen Magazine

On a cold night in the dead of winter, I was awake contemplating the astronomical size of the Universe. Thoughts of planets floating millions of light-years away danced in my conscious as I felt myself sink deeper into the warm sheets of my bed. I closed my eyes as I pictured the large mass of Jupiter swirling endlessly in the desolate black sky and pretended to drift from planet to planet. My worries started to fade as I pondered on how trivial my life seems compared to the endless galaxies that reside in the phenomena known as the Universe. Transfixed over the idea of the cosmos, I decided to look up a picture of the Earth from outside our solar system. Upon looking at the Earth as a speck in the dark sky, it seemed silly to feel so worried over problems like school and chores. In a way, it was comforting to know that the Universe is so vast as the constant strife of life floated away in the endless stream of my thoughts.

By Cassandra Maisonet

Electrical Toothbrush

I walked into Barnes & Nobles accompanied by fear. I walked over to the aisles of magazines. I quickly found one of the magazines I was looking for. I intently stared at the magazines before me. An older man with a coffee cup in his hand walked over to observe the magazines. My face felt hot. I held my magazine close to me, attempting to obscure the cover. I tried to not look awkward as I moved further away from him. I moved into another aisle and immediately found the other magazine I was looking for. While in line, I rehearsed my explanation of buying a teen magazine and an anime magazine. As it was my turn to pay, I was prepared to let the cashier know that I was not buying these magazines for fun. I would be lying if I did. She scanned the magazines and stated, "13.98 is your total." Internally, I let out a sigh of relief. All that anxiety for nothing.

Column

East Coast

By Jared Almanzor

COVID-19

I've lived on the east coast for my entire life, so I know what that side of the country is like from Maine to Florida.

These days, I want to see how three different parts of the east coast handle the mask and social distancing situation during the pandemic.

The three areas are Atlantic City, New Jersey, Charlotte, North Carolina and Miami, Florida. I find that this is enough of a narrowed approach in terms of states in reach that people can travel to, if possible.

I went to Atlantic City during the summer of 2020. I recall no one wore masks or socially distanced on the Atlantic City Boardwalk.

I felt a bit uncomfortable walking around Atlantic City, as I didn't know who had COVID or not. However, I was happy during the fall and winter as the boardwalk became empty because it got colder.

I didn't know what to do at the time because Gov. Phil Murphy wanted the state to wear masks and social distance, but people rebelled against those rules.

I was in Charlotte, North Carolina, a month after the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) said it was ok for fully vaccinated people not to wear masks and those who weren't vaccinated to wear masks.

I felt safe seeing the people in Charlotte who were not vaccinated yet wearing masks and following the rules and guidelines the CDC set in place. However, I'm well aware that some people could have been lying about being fully vaccinated. Some are scared about getting COVID-19, but they want to get back to normal life.

I mostly spent my time with family members on my dad's side of the family in Miami. I looked at people at Matheson Park in the beach areas, and they weren't wearing masks or socially distanced.

It made sense that people at that beach weren't following the CDC guidelines because wearing masks wouldn't make any sense as sweat would appear on the masks over time. It would make the people uncomfortable as they were either lying down to get the sunlight or have a nice day at the beach.

I noticed in downtown Miami, people were either wearing masks or they weren't. So some people were socially distant and others weren't, which made it bad for other people.

You couldn't even tell who was fully vaccinated or not, along with people who were anti-mask wearers or anti-vaccinators. I didn't like that since people were pretty laid back about masks and social distance in Miami.

One year later into COVID, when I visited Atlantic City, the mask and social distancing mandates weren't followed (for those that are fully vaccinated or not) due to it being in the summer months. I looked down at the Atlantic City Boardwalk in the morning and it was packed with people at the beach. It felt like pre-COVID-19 levels but on an even bigger scale compared to last year.

Overall, from what I've noticed between these three locations, is that they're actually pretty similar a little over a year into the pandemic. You can't tell who's fully vaccinated or if they're stubborn about masks and getting the vaccine. Would I want things to go back to normal in terms of things before the pandemic? Yes, but it would take a lot of cooperation to do so.

JARED ALMANZOR

By Jared Almanzor



Virtual YouTuber Assists Studying

By Jared Almanzor, Staff Writer

After completing a year of college, I decided to take a break from my studies and work for a newspaper. I was looking for a job that would allow me to continue my education while also giving me a chance to write. I found a position at Quo Vadis, a newspaper in New York City. The job was perfect for me as it allowed me to work from home and write about topics I was interested in. I was excited to start my new job and to be able to continue my education while also working for a newspaper.

During my first month of work, I was assigned to write an article about virtual YouTubers. I was interested in the topic and decided to write about how they were helping students study. I found that many students were using virtual YouTubers to help them understand difficult concepts. I was excited to write about this and to help other students who were struggling with their studies.

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The YouTuber studio control room

March was a hectic month for me this year. I was busy with my studies at my grandparents' condominium in Atlantic City when my dad got the news that my grandfather had a tumor and cancer. My guilt and past mistakes sunk in during this time. One incident I feel guilty for is my dog's death. My dog died due to my family and I not taking care of her properly between March-July 2020. She passed while I was far away from her as well, so I couldn't be there to say goodbye. My mom had to put her to sleep and cremate her body while I was away from them. I had to find distractions after losing my dog, so I decided to join the Quo Vadis Newspaper in August 2020; writing differ-

ent types of reviews and articles kept me occupied. I also had an English class with Professor Markowicz and a history class with Professor Pakela, and had to write multiple essays for both classes. However, even though I was so busy, I was still filled with guilt and regrets. Writing all of the reviews didn't stop me from losing interest in some of my favorite activities, like playing video games. Thus, I discovered I have a passion for writing. Whether it be writing fanfiction for my own enjoyment or writing articles for Quo Vadis, which will help me become a journalist in the future, I love to write. This lasted from September 2020, and I'm still constantly reminded of mistakes I made that I wish I could change.

I had not broken out of my shell yet before starting to write for Quo Vadis, and I was still mourning my loss, so I didn't know what to do when I first became a part of the newspaper staff. However, Quo Vadis saved me from myself and my despair as I found the club when I was having suicidal thoughts, and only knew that I had to keep writing to have my voice heard. Being a part of Quo Vadis with a phenomenal staff showed me a brighter future as a journalist. The people behind the paper became my light and gave me the strength to write confidently. However, finding out about my grandfather resurfaced my guilt and regrets. While writing the Hololive review articles throughout last month, I was able to break free my guilt and fear and decided to go to New York City and Jersey City to be there for my grandparents. My grandfather was having his surgery at a hospital in New York City, and my grandmother was staying at my uncle's condominium in Jersey City. I spent the last week of March with my grandmother, keeping her company, and going around New York City. I've also been listening to the song "Palette" by Tokoyami Towa to help me cope. I visited my grandfather in the hospital on March 30th, and I unintentionally got a fever that day. Knowing I was pushing myself so far to be there for my grandparents showed me the passion I never knew had before to be there for others. After joining Quo Vadis and being there for my grandparents, I finally found myself, which is something I was pondering for years. I used to ask questions such as: do I want to become a journalist or not? Will I accept the struggles as an ally of justice for trying to get my voice and others heard in the future? Will I accept the losses of my loved ones if their deaths ever come my way? I used to say no to all of these questions, but I can finally say yes to them, since I dared to pursue journalism and to help my grandparents. I know that it will take me a while to develop new ideas and inspiration for future articles I may submit and write, but I know that I won't give up. All I can say to the people reading this is thank you. Thank you for reading each and every article I've written for Quo Vadis thus far, and I hope you're ready for the future ones I may write.

Modern News

The news industry has changed a lot since the 2010s from printed in physical form or as electronic papers. Am I against the change? Not really, I'm 22 years old, so I watched the news industry evolve around me, especially when watching and reading the news online.

The Quo Vadis, Middlesex College's newspaper, had this change too, and I watched it change within a year or two. In addition, it's fascinating for me to be a part of that experience too.

I was a reader, and now I'm a part of the managing editor team. That is something I've always admired back then, putting out information and informing others of them. I like researching various topics whenever I want to let other people know the latest around the school or the country. I also like telling them about stuff they might know, might not know about, or want to know.

I've written many articles and columns within the last year in the digital format for Quo Vadis. I've been able to write the articles on my phone, do the budgets on my phone or tablet as a section editor, and make mockup images for the layout artists on my tablet too.

It is fascinating how convenient things have gotten as a journalist, which is something I've wanted to do for ages now. In addition, we tell people the content for a newspaper has changed too and the ways people see them. You upload the content to the paper's website, and the subscribers can read the articles from the paper.

One of the big newspapers out there in the United States is the New York Times. The Times follows a similar format to the Quo Vadis in terms of informing others about the issues of the paper, which is convenient to the readers.

Depending on the country and your living situation, newspapers might still have physical papers around if you want them or nostalgic ones and want to collect them physically. For example, the Quo Vadis was primarily a physical paper before the COVID-19 pandemic, which is understandable since people loved filling out crossword puzzles or word pages. But the paper had to adapt and go to horoscopes and adapt its Fun Page too.

To let people become aware of your paper and the website for your paper, you must use social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter or Instagram. Not using those platforms would make those potential readers unaware of what is going on in your community or world.

Using a YouTube channel is good because that would mean that readers would get

to see what is going on in person for a specific

issue out there. However, having words and not being able to visualize it could create some doubt for your readers and subscribers out there.

Before all the social media and video sharing platforms, people would rely on old methods to get their information. Whether it was through books, listening to news programs on the radio, watching news channels on the television, reading physical magazines, newspapers, or talking with others in person by doing small talk.

I understand that they made people more connected, but they also made humanity more apart than ever. Since it's harder to convey how they feel through text, it comes off as serious or rude to others. I am not against this way of thinking, people leave their opinions as replies on Twitter and YouTube, but it could lead to political debates on serious and real-world situations.

The COVID-19 pandemic alone has caused a lot of confusion online. It got to the point of newspapers either disabling comments on YouTube videos, blocking words on comments sections, responding to sections on Twitter, or making it so you can only reply if the person you're following lets you on Twitter.

It has gotten out of control with people being so opinionated through social media and video streaming platforms, but I see that also as a good thing as the journalist or reporter could use that feedback to improve their articles or columns.

The Quo Vadis has become more accessible by using Facebook, Twitter and Instagram to engage its readers. That is a good thing for that paper that I'm a part of, that being the Quo Vadis.

Overall, the changes within the last two decades were good, technologically with phones, tablets, and laptops even if they split up the world at times because of politics. But I'm not mad with how far things have changed either. It has made it easier for people to access information out there, especially from reliable sources.

I like the world I live in now, and it's gotten better as a whole to access the information you need without having to search too hard. The only downside to that approach is that people can be easily influenced by whatever you hear.

I wouldn't want to change what's out there for media consumption, and if the internet ever goes out worldwide, going back to physical newspapers isn't a bad idea either. You can read the news there. Whether they're outdated or not, you'll still have information to read. You'll still be well-informed of what happened before things go grim. You'll still have other ways of getting information such as the news and television too, besides physical newspapers, so that's good at the end of it all too.



By Jared Almanzor

Virtual YouTubers

By Jared Almanzor

It has been a year since I first got into virtual YouTubers (VTubers) as a whole, and a lot has changed in the landscape since then.

Kiryu Coco, a popular VTuber, was a part of “HoloLive’s” fourth generation graduated, also known as moved on, on July 1st, 2021.

I’ve also gotten myself into the Nijisanji branch of VTubers and indie VTubers. Nijisanji is another VTuber company adjacent to HoloLive Production, consisting of VTuber groups owned by a company called COVER Corp.

There is something popular as VTuber companies themselves called independent VTubers, virtual YouTubers that work outside of a company.

Nijisanji got two groups that debuted and are part of their English branch called LazuLight and OBSYDIA.

I’ve been watching LazuLight and OBSYDIA between May and July of 2021 and they are fun to watch.

A lot hasn’t changed within the VTuber space, but I definitely felt a change as I’ve gotten more used to everyone there.

I use a website called “HoloDex” to watch VTubers on and it’s convenient for you to use on there.

You favorite the VTubers you watch under the channels tab, and then you watch multiple VTubers you favorited on the MultiView tab if they’re live.

There was one VTuber that I love watching that hit 3 million YouTube subscribers in July 2021, and her name is Gawr Gura.

Gawr Gura surpassed the “first” VTuber called Kizuna Ai who had the most subscribers around that time frame.

VTubers create original songs as promotion and there have been many good songs that they have made that came out within the

last year.

A VTuber calls leaving their job as one whether it’s independent or part of a company, in one simple word, “graduation.” Think of it as high school graduation in a sense, when you feel like it’s time to move on to have a better opportunity somewhere in life.

As one virtual YouTuber leaves a VTuber company, another VTuber comes into the scene that’s part of the same company that gets people enamored just by looking at them.

There will always be a good chance that a new virtual YouTuber or a new group of virtual YouTubers will enter the scene.

A VTuber group that is part of HoloLive called the HoloLive English Council debuted in August 2021, and they had their debuts a week or two before Lyrica graduated.

VTubers come and go. You don’t know when they’ll graduate and you’ll be upset at one of your favorites graduating at first, whether they’re independent or part of a company. If you wait a tiny while, a new independent virtual YouTuber or a group that’s part of the company will come into the scene, and you’ll be enamored by them like you have with all the other virtual YouTubers.

This is like a rinse and repeat process in a way, you meet an independent VTuber or a group of VTubers that are part of a company, you get to know them and watch their streams, and then you get upset as they graduate.

I love this process as I know things don’t last forever. Even my time at the Quo Vadis might end at some point. As one door closes, another door opens. This world will always have opportunities for you even if they’re a form of escapism or you need a new or another job.

One year later, I still love watching virtual YouTubers and being a part of the Quo Vadis. Both have kept me sane during these uncertain times of COVID-19.

Teacher Appreciation

By Hina Naqvi

The word "teacher" to me is a combination of two words, "teach" and "ER." Teachers are important people in my life. It feels as though I am in the emergency room and need continuous attention from them. It sounds cliché, but a phrase that perfectly describes my feelings about teachers was written by Socrates; he said, "I cannot teach anybody anything, I can only make them think." There are many who have taught me life lessons and made me think. In the last 45 years, learning has been continuous and will be until I start my eternal journey.

My first lesson started when I came into this world and my parents held me. Their laps were my first school. Growing up, we are always told that our teachers are just like our parents, since they help us in every aspect of our life. Thus, we should respect them.

My first vivid memory of preschool is a program I participated in which I had a part in a play and gave a small speech. My parents and teachers gave me the confidence to perform.

autograph by Miss Najma Amir

Nice Hina,

Confidence is the first-step
of Success.

With Love

From Miss Najma

I saw my principal from my preschool in our community center and mosque a few years ago. She was older, but I recognized her and told her that I used to be a student in her school. I saw a bright light in her eyes when I spoke to her. Sadly, last year, she passed away, but I feel fortunate to have met her here in the U.S., after 40 years.

After preschool, I attended primary and secondary school from 1981-1991. I made countless memories in those schools, but the most important one is from sixth grade. My teachers helped me get good grades when I was struggling to become a good student that year.

My sister, cousin and I had the same seventh-grade chemistry teacher. She was also helpful and later became our friend. We invited her to our home, used to exchange conversation over the phone and later attended her wedding. She left the school since she moved to Nairobi, but she used to write letters to us. She even shared some of her recipes with me, and I still use some of them.

This was a unique journey and every year, I became close to one or two teachers, who later became family friends.

I do not have any pleasant high school memories sadly, since I was disheartened with the way some of the teachers treated me. I did not excel in high school as it was different from my previous schools (primary grades 1-5, secondary grade 6-10). Those two years of high school could have been beautiful if the teachers were not strict and were helpful. However, that's how life is, you cannot get good teachers every time. They play an important role in our lives and can potentially make or break student's lives.

My remarkable journey continued when I started studying business management. I had some brilliant professors, who were professionals working in some big multinational companies, such as Shell Pakistan, Unilever, etc. I learned many new things from them.

When I entered my professional life, I couldn't continue my job in marketing, so I ended up becoming a teacher myself. Though it wasn't my dream job, I indulged in it and finished my business degree later. I preferred to teach in a school as well as Karachi University Business School. This was the time I tried to play my part in society. I tried not to repeat the things that used to bother me while I was a student. I tried to help my students as best I could; some of them are still in touch with me on social media.

I am a student once again at Middlesex College, and I am blessed to have some of the best professors, who have the knowledge and manner of teaching that helped reshape me. Professors Virve Lane, Richard Roy, Gary Abbot, Wilson Class, Louis Dell'Omo, Raymond Dademo, Christine Wathen, Jack Moskowitz and Mirian Curry are the ones who helped me the most. They are all wonderful souls, and they taught me to start thinking critically and to see the world from a different angle.

While I am thankful for all of the teachers who have paved my way to make my life easier, I want to acknowledge that there are many who taught me life-long lessons, who were not actual teachers. This includes my family, friends and people I met randomly.

For example, I was driving to the University of Karachi Business School one day, and I noticed that I had a flat tire. I could not change it myself as I was a new driver, and I did not know how to fix it. Suddenly, a boy came over to me and said, "Baji (sister), I can do it." He fixed it in almost five minutes. I tried to give him some money, but he replied, "Nahi baji aap meri behan jaisi ho," (No, you are like my sister). When he was finished, he walked away. This encounter made me realize that there are still some good people in the world. I also felt thankful for him, and wanted to pay his kindness forward by helping others.

I learned from my daughters also, since they have taught me patience and introduced me to a different world of knowledge. I remember when my eldest daughter was only two years old, and she said the word, "Paleontologist." I didn't know the meaning of that word, which she learned from Sesame Street. Similarly, her curiosity helps me learn new things.

As life brings new challenges every day, we continue to learn. Without teachers we could not achieve our desired goals. They are the light in our lives. I thank all of my teachers who taught me new lessons daily.

By Gabrielle Ignotis



This year, the focus is on voting. Every news outlet website in the world has banners on their homepages showing users how to register to vote. Businesses are encouraging shoppers to vote via commercials, advertisements and displays. The internet is abuzz with tips, notices and continuous reminders to vote, vote, vote.

Voting has always been a cornerstone of democracy. Many Americans have worn their “I Voted” stickers every four years like clockwork. Yet, the recent influx in voting advocacy represents a shift in our nation’s psyche.

This is because many of these messages are aimed at younger voters.

In the past, young adults may not have voted due to uncertainty over the process or the candidates. Now, many companies, websites and businesses are encouraging younger voters to utilize their rights as residents of this country — regardless of who they end up voting for in the end.

On one hand, introducing the idea that young adults should vote, even if they aren’t completely sure of their decision, is revolutionary. Young adults are a major part of our nation’s population and their opinions should be considered, even if they are not as confident in their beliefs when compared to older voters.

However, encouraging young people to vote when they are not completely sure comes with consequences.

Many younger voters may reach out to family, friends or other advisory figures to determine if they made the “right” decision. Many younger voters may be subject to the

influences of older voters. Sometimes it may be as innocent as receiving information about the candidates from a trusted but potentially biased source.

When this directly influences how a young voter casts their ballot, younger voters do not actually have a say. They are merely parroting the opinions of the previous generation without thinking critically about what they want from our nation’s leader.

Therefore, I encourage all new voters to take advice from family and friends with a grain of salt.

It is important to consider the opinions of those close to you when making a major decision. However, it is also important to remember that everyone around you has individual experiences or goals. This may have led them to make a different decision or prioritize different aspects of leadership.

Instead of deciding to simply vote for whomever your parents or friends are voting for, make a conscious effort to form your own opinions. Watch news segments from multiple sources. Research the issues that are important to you. Watch the presidential and vice presidential debates with and without commentary. Research the political processes of other nations and determine what you like and dislike about those countries. Read books, listen to podcasts and watch shows from commentators that claim to be unbiased. Do the same for clearly biased commentators and analyze their arguments.

As voters, we owe it to our nation to make this decision to the best of our ability, free of outside influence.

So, regardless of who you vote for come Nov. 3, remember to make that decision wholeheartedly, based solely on your own convictions.

Pandemic Pen Pals

By Cassandra Maisonet

I don't socialize much in text messaging. The beginning of the pandemic only worsened that habit. I began to miss in-person communication. Not being able to meet up in person was miserable, but isolating myself from my friends didn't help me. I'd have occasional contact with a few friends, but eventually, I would make new friends in an unexpected way.

I found an app called Slowly that matched strangers. They could write letters to each other. You had the option to be given a random pen pal or you could manually search within a set of criteria.

Scrolling through countless profiles, I came across a quirky account. His bio read: "I'm not good with bios like these, but I swear I'm friendly. I'm down to talk about anything that isn't math or economics related!"

I chuckled at such a silly, yet relatable, biography. Without hesitation, I sent my first letter to Xavier from Singapore. He was the first pen pal to respond, and receiving his letter made me feel warm.

At the time, the U.S. was in a sensitive state, and he was asking how I was doing. I was embarrassed that he was well informed about my country, even though I barely knew his. I was not only interested in getting to know Xavier, but also in learning what his culture is like. I never stopped asking questions, and I am grateful that he had the patience to answer all of them in thorough detail and anecdotes. He also loved telling me random fun facts. I noticed that Xavier seemed to be holding back a part of him. He spoke in a formal and polite tone, but I felt that Xavier was a much sillier person than he led me to believe.

Knowing that Xavier is an English literature major, I wrote

a comical story for him. I hoped that this story could break the formalities between us. I didn't think it helped until he sent a letter that continued the story. Eventually, Xavier and I developed a close bond, and we felt comfortable saying whatever was on our minds to each other. After a month of sending letters, we opened another line of communication via Discord. We're still pen pals, in fact, I'll occasionally still write letters to his address.

My second pen pal is Eunice from the Philippines. To be frank, Eunice scared me at first. Initially, I had mistaken her tone as someone who was a stickler for seriousness. As I got to know her, I found myself admiring her because of her hard-working attitude. Eunice has a passion for painting and poetry, and it broke my heart whenever she felt unconfident in her work. I loved receiving photos of her paintings and reading her poetry. It was motivating to see her watercolor progress. She has taught me historical and recreational facts about the Philippines. Eunice also shares fascinating stories about her life. It took a few letters, but once she opened up to me, it was rewarding. I'll never forget when she asked me if she could call me "Cass" because that moment made me realize the build-up of our friendship. I look back and laugh at myself for being scared of someone who, in reality, is strong, genuine and good-natured.

A couple of days after meeting Xavier and Eunice, I received a letter from Stephanie from the West Coast. She reached out to me

first. Her first letter was sweet and bubbly. She told me that we had several common interests and that my bio appeared friendly. I was delighted for someone to reach out to me for the first time. Our letters were written as if Stephanie and I were two long-lost friends who found each other. Besides our interests, Stephanie and I had striking similarities when it came to our personal lives. We're the same age, we attended a community college, our parents spoke Spanish at home, we were both former history majors and at the time, we were English majors. Given our similarities, I loved talking to Stephanie since I knew she would relate to whatever I was feeling. I enjoyed having heavy discussions with a bit of humor sprinkled in our letters.

I met my first three pen pals within days of each other back in June, and I'm grateful for getting to know them. Being a pen pal is a hobby that I took up during the summer because of my loneliness. I didn't expect to make such strong bonds and become acquainted with the cultures of my penpals. I appreciate having authentic conversations with my friends across the world. I didn't realize how developing friendships from far away brought joy into my life until school began, and my letters became sporadic. Although I haven't been in touch with Eunice and Steph in a while, I think about them often and plan to send them letters soon. As for Xavier, we're dating now, therefore we talk every day. Even though I have never met Xavier, Eunice and Stephanie in person, I consider them people who have impacted my life and going through this pandemic wouldn't have been manageable without them.

Lemon

Water

By Simran Belani

“Excuse me, but there’s been a mistake.

They say everyone is here for a reason, but I can’t seem to find mine.

I ran all around the world, searched all the cracks and corners, I couldn’t find my reason.

I went to school, I went to work,

I couldn’t find my reason.

I even tried to look in my dreams,

I couldn’t find my reason.

They say the stars take you when it’s time to go.

I look up at the stars and think, perhaps they have my reason.”

This fairly dark poem was written by me, a little over a year ago. The end of the poem is up for interpretation. All I will say is that I was not in a good place. A little more than a year ago, I had fallen into a dark void, finding myself in a major existential crisis and left with no faith in myself. I was previously afraid to say this word that comes with stigma and uneasiness, but I can finally admit that I was depressed. Not in the way teenagers now throw the word around like confetti to express their reaction to minor disappointments such as disappointing food but actually, truly depressed. Today, I am sharing this with you, to show you a glimpse into the accepting world of change, in the least uncomfortable way possible.

To me, depression felt like deep diving in the middle of the ocean with no shore in sight. Also, I was drowning. Repeatedly. I would come to the surface of water every once in a while for two seconds, as an epiphany entered my brain, before succumbing back to the cold water.

Speaking less metaphorically, I was unable to find permanent happiness despite looking everywhere for it. I would go out with my friends in hopes the positive energy and good vibes would linger, but I found myself simply pretending to enjoy myself. The moment I was alone again, I would begin to cry, and I had no idea why. All I could think to myself was, “Why am I even here?” Depression had convinced me that I was quite literally a waste of space. I would look in the mirror and find myself upset with the reflection staring back at me. I found no enjoyment in watching movies or the television, and the only thing that ever helped was music, because the words of the song would wash away the voice in my head. I also still enjoyed coloring, although I don’t believe there is a deeper meaning there.

One night, I found myself silently crying to

myself, with tears rolling down my cheeks, when my mom barged into my room. I don’t have locks and made a mental note to take it up with the architect of the house. She saw me and fell into a state of confusion. She had no idea what I was going through because I would always mask my emotions in front of others. She approached me and as soon as she hugged me, I fell into a fit of uncontrollable sobs. I didn’t know what to do at that moment, and in fear of scaring her, I told her I was feeling a little hormonal that week. She brought me some strange lemon water mixture. I drank it and, oddly enough, felt a little better. Thanks mom, for finding the cure to depression: Lemon water.

In all seriousness, she did say a few cliché phrases to me that actually stuck, and I found myself forming a theory. Happiness is not something that can be found at that party with your girls, or in that pizza pie you just ate. Happiness is something only you can create for yourself. Nobody can transfer those feelings into you. With this in mind, I embarked on my new journey to create my own happiness.

With the guidance of some self help books, I started doing activities that brought me peace: meditation, yoga, self care, and anything like that seemed to make me feel good. I also started working out and found that I was slowly regaining my confidence. Of course, things weren’t always perfect and every once in a while my mind drifted back into negativity. But by staying true to myself and keeping the bigger picture in mind, I stayed persistent with my routine.

Months later, as the perfect circle ending, I wrote another poem:

“Today I felt this feeling.
It felt like the first sip of hot coffee,
The first sight of the sun after a storm.
I think they call it, happy.”

While I am in no place to give anyone advice, nor am I a psychology major, I will say this: everyone functions uniquely in this world. But one thing is constant, desire. We all yearn for something or the other, and some of us have the simple desire for happiness. Luckily for us, we were born with the right to be happy, each and every one of us. It’s just up to ourselves to create it, through whatever means necessary — self love, therapy and music. While my piece might have a light-hearted tone, my message is very serious. I hope everyone suffering from anxiety, depression or anything like that is able to rise above its chains of captivity. From here, there’s nowhere to go but up. You deserve it.

Man's

By Anish Patel

Best

Friend

If there was one piece of advice I would give to anyone who asked, it would be to adopt a dog at some point in their life. The term "man's best friend" doesn't begin to describe the bond that an owner has with their dog.

By no means am I saying that everyone should go and get a dog right now. However, I strongly recommend getting a dog if you have the ability to. Money aside, a lot of time, energy, and patience must be put into owning a dog. You see the upsides of owning a dog, but there are downsides as well. A dog is like a child and must be treated like one as well. They have to be trained with the rights and wrongs of day to day life early. Having to pick up your dog's poop, cleaning up anytime the dog gets sick, and making sure the dog's general hygiene are only a few of the things that must be looked at when looking at how to maintain a dog. All of this is in addition to the financial impact having a dog can have. Veterinarian visits, medication, immunizations, as well as treats, toys, food, and any accessories are examples of the types of investments needed for maintaining a dog. Having done it for over 10 years, I can assure you that every minute, dollar, and occasional tear, was worth it.

The companionship you get from a dog cannot be compared to anything like another human's. One of the main reasons I'm such a dog owning advocate is because of the additional benefits a dog can have for it's owner. The constant playing, runs, and walking that an owner does with their dog is great for both of their health. I can't speak for cats, as I've never owned one but a dog never fails to make you smile. They increase the amount of serotonin your body releases when seeing them. Serotonin being the feel-good feeling that you get, sort of like a shot of happiness. There is a dog out there for everybody, as all dogs come in different shapes, sizes, colors, and personalities. There is no wonder why dogs make good service animals, they are incredibly loyal and caring. They also love you just as much as you love them. Growing up with a dog teaches a child something they can never know otherwise. There is a sense of responsibility that can be gained through having to care for another living being, especially at such a young age. Looking back I've realized that I've actually had my dog, longer than I have not had him if that makes any sense. And looking back on those years, my life could have been drastically different if I didn't have my dog, Harley, shedding, slobbering, snoring, farting, barking, and licking right by my side.

By Amanda Clark

Kamila Valieva

Russian skater Kamila Valieva is allowed to compete at the Winter 2022 Olympics even though she tested positive for a banned heart drug back in December.

This is a very controversial situation.

Valieva is a 15-year-old girl competing for Russia with one of the most brutal coaches, Eteri Tutberidze. Of course, if her coach told her to take a drug, she wouldn't go against her coach or country. A 15-year-old is still a child and will do anything their mentor/coach tells them to do to succeed, especially if she is unaware of it being banned.

Nonetheless, Valieva is facing the consequences and will have this follow her throughout her skating career, not her coach's. If she was aware that one of the drugs she was taking was banned, she wouldn't have wanted to take it, but with the pressure from her country and coach, she still would've.

Since she tested positive for a banned drug, Valieva should have been stripped of the first-place finish in the figure skating team event. Having a gold medal while possibly having drugs in her system shouldn't be allowed. She tested positive back in December and could have retaken them after the test.

Not only should Valieva be stripped of the medal and not allowed to have performed after the positive test, her coach should be banned from the Olympics. Tutberidze is known to be a harsh and brutal coach with no mercy. There is no way that she didn't know Valieva was on drugs. If anything, she encouraged it.

In other instances when this happened in the Olympics, the committee didn't let the athlete compete. For example, American sprinter Sha'Carri Richardson tested positive for marijuana in the Tokyo Summer Olympics and was barred from competing. She smoked marijuana after learning that her mother died a few days before the US Olympic Team Trials, and this was her coping method. She didn't get a second chance, unlike Valieva.

Valieva did a flawless performance on Feb. 15 for the first part of the women's single skating.

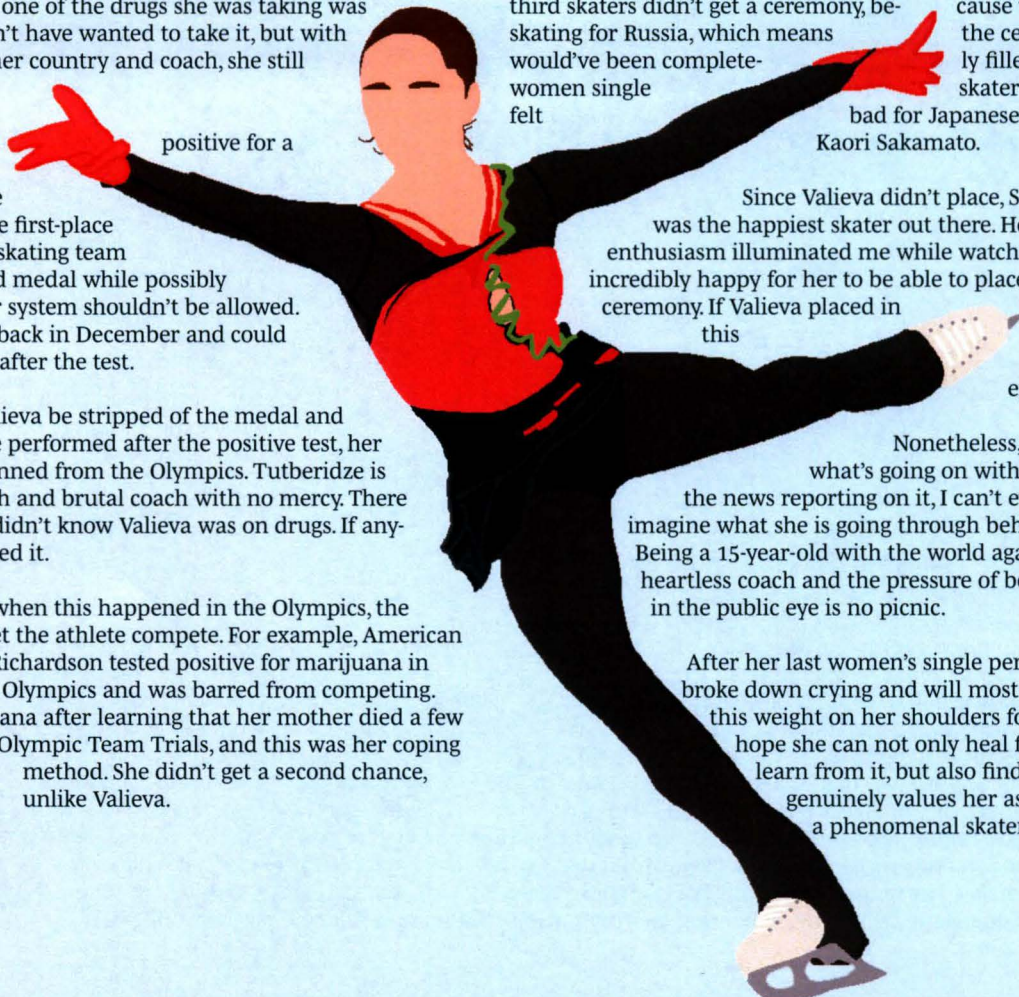
Due to Valieva's situation, the International Olympic Committee ruled there wouldn't be a medal ceremony if she placed first, second or third. Since her Feb. 15 performance was stunningly perfect, I thought there wouldn't be a medal ceremony for the single women's performance. Especially since there won't be a medal ceremony for the team figure skating since her team placed gold.

However, her last women's single on Feb. 17 was a complete disaster. Valieva fell multiple times and couldn't pull through to place in the top three, which was a relief for those who did place. However, I wouldn't feel bad if she placed and the second and third skaters didn't get a ceremony, because they were also the ceremony ly filled with Russia's skaters. I would've felt bad for Japanese figure skater Kaori Sakamoto.

Since Valieva didn't place, Sakamoto was the happiest skater out there. Her smile and enthusiasm illuminated me while watching. I felt incredibly happy for her to be able to place and get a ceremony. If Valieva placed in this the top three, moment would've never happened.

Nonetheless, with all of what's going on with Valieva and the news reporting on it, I can't even begin to imagine what she is going through behind the scenes. Being a 15-year-old with the world against her, a heartless coach and the pressure of being a teenager in the public eye is no picnic.

After her last women's single performance she broke down crying and will most likely have this weight on her shoulders for a while. I hope she can not only heal from this and learn from it, but also find a coach who genuinely values her as a person and a phenomenal skater.



Film Trailers

By Amanda Clark

Every year new movies get released in the theaters for viewers to enjoy. There has not been one theatrical release that didn't provide people with a trailer for the film. A film trailer should give the viewer an idea of what the film is about without giving away any major details. Nonetheless, film trailers have often misled people about how the film will play out. Due to film trailers mainly trying to draw people to the theater and spend their money instead of portraying a general overview of the first few acts of the film, people should stop watching trailers and just go to the viewing without knowing more than what the poster reveals.

A film trailer leads to disappointment, which then leads to a lower audience score. A trailer either spoils the ending, leads you to believe it has a different plot, leads you to believe a character has a bigger role than they have, or shows deleted scenes or portrays a different tone.

'Cast Away' directed by Robert Zemeckis released a trailer that revealed Chuck Noland (Tom Hanks) was rescued from the island he crashed on. When all hope seemed lost, I already knew he wouldn't die on the island and would be able to see his loved ones again. No matter how much I enjoyed the film, it was two hours and 23 minutes I will never get back.

'Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings' directed by Destin Daniel Cretton misleads viewers about the plot of the film. The trailer makes the plot seem as if Shang-Chi (Simu Liu) doesn't want to take over his father, Xu Wenu's (Tony Chiu-Wai Leung) kingdom, but does in the end. The real plot of the story is that Shang-Chi and his sister join their late mother's kingdom to fight and prevent Xu Wenwu from releasing a dangerous mystical creature. Then Shang-Chi fulfills his father's legacy, while his sister takes over their father's kingdom. [M1] Even though the film was an exciting origin story with impressive choreographed action sequences, I felt as though I was watching a completely different film.

'Dune' directed by Denis Villeneuve allowed people to believe the character Chani (Zendaya) had an impactful part of the film. In reality, Zendaya was paid and received the role to stand there

and look pretty. [M2] The marketing team of 'Dune' used the popularity of Zendaya to reel in the money for movie ticket purchases along with more HBO Max subscriptions. If someone was solely seeing the film for Zendaya, they would feel like they could see more of her in anything else she starred in.

'Rogue One: A Star Wars Story' directed by Gareth Edwards showed numerous scenes in the trailer that were not in the film, such as Jyn Erso (Felicity Jones) turning around dramatically in the Imperial corridor as the lights come up, Erso being ambushed face-to-face by a TIE Fighter, and Saw Gerrera's (Forest Whitaker) voice-over asking: "What will you become?" Being a huge 'Star Wars' fan, I enjoy seeing the snippets of scenes shown in trailers as an entire scene to see the action and drama play out.

'Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice' directed by Zack Snyder gave fans the impression that the tone of the film would be about them being rivals with numerous fights between them. However, the film felt like a chess game. Each player would move a piece to become one step closer to what they were after and end victorious, which happened to be both Batman/Bruce Wayne (Ben Affleck) and Superman/Clark Kent (Henry Cavill) instead of one or the other.

Film trailers have time after time after time let down the audience and led them into something they weren't expecting. People should stop watching trailers for films to prevent the high expectations from being ruined. Going into a theater to watch a film with an open mind will allow viewers to enjoy the film more and not feel as though they were missing something from the trailer. To have an open mind when entering the movie theater, people need to want to watch the film based on its name, genre and if it's a part of a film universe they enjoy.

Recently, I haven't watched the film trailer for a few films before going to see them in theaters. Later, I watched the trailers to see how it compared to the film's contents and I instantly knew I wouldn't have enjoyed the film as much if I watched the trailer prior to the film. I would have been expecting something else.

Movie trailers have created a sense of unsuitableness for their films.

THE FOLLOWING **PREVIEW** HAS BEEN APPROVED FOR
APPROPRIATE AUDIENCES

THE MOTION PICTURE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA, INC.

THE FILM ADVERTISED HAS BEEN RATED

	RESTRICTED	80
	REQUIRES ACCOMPANYING ADULT	
	STRONG SEXUALITY, AND LANGUAGE	

March
2022
Blue Colt Vibe

By Nathaniel Thompson

College Courses

You have to make a big decision of what to do once you've graduated from high school. I, like many others, went the route of going to college. It was a big decision on what college I wanted to go to. I always wanted to go to William Paterson University at first, then COVID-19 hit. It left me with a decision that had to be made and that decision was saving money and going to Middlesex College. A big thing about Middlesex College is you're saving money and getting the same, if not better education.

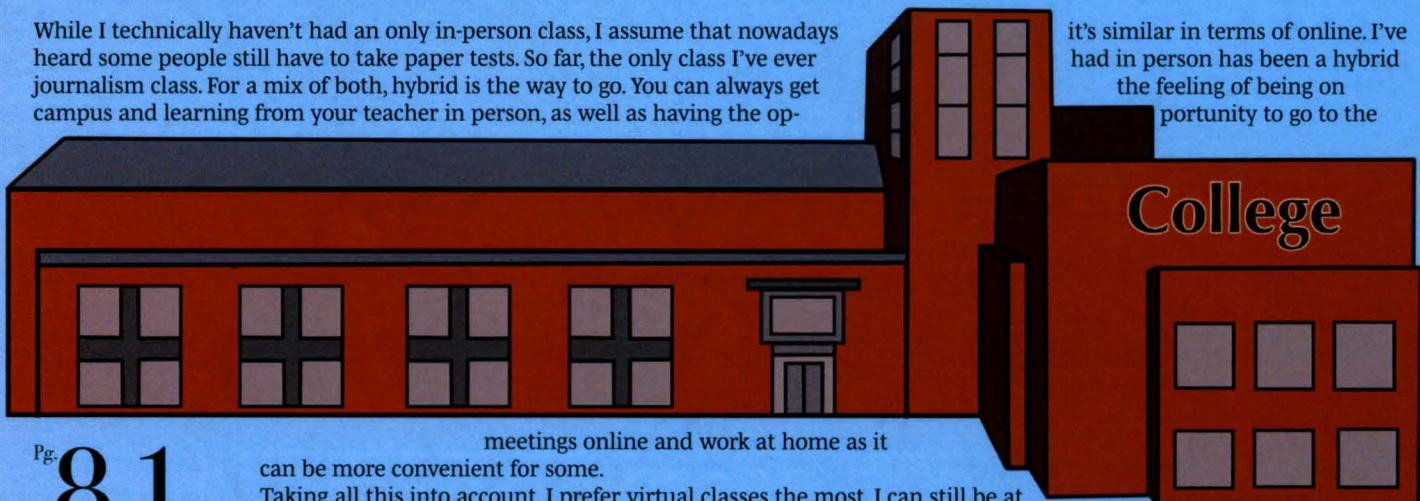
One thing to consider when you're going to college is what type of classes you need to take. There are 4 types of classes to choose from: virtual (or remote-live), hybrid, asynchronous and in-person. Virtual classes meet online, typically via Zoom, but it can be through other applications. Middlesex College uses Zoom for its virtual classes while asynchronous courses are strictly online. These courses don't have virtual meetings for the most part. The work is just assigned through Canvas. Though the teachers sometimes have office hours to meet them, there is no meeting. Hybrid courses require you to go in person for some of the classes, and the other meetings will be virtual online; these courses are used by a lot of people. Finally, in-person classes are self-explanatory; they are just classes you attend in person.

I like asynchronous courses because I get to do the work on my own time while just following the deadlines. The teachers give me the materials I need and it leaves it up to me to be independent. It's bad to an extent if you are a lazy person like me at times. Overall, I appreciate the concept of this. I had classes, like psychology, online and it was helpful. I've used the office hours a couple of times, but other than that, I was able to get the work done on my own. Also, you won't need transportation to campus. With no requirements of Zoom meetings, it allows for you to go on with your day without having to miss any classes. Online courses are a strong resource.

Virtual courses and in-person courses are the opposite, with hybrids being a mix of the two. In virtual classes, all the work is done online, and you meet online. I like virtual classes because I get to sit in the comfort of my own home and still learn. In-person also has its pros because you get to be face-to-face with the professor, and some people learn better that way. Also, you get to walk around the campus, which can also be a cool atmosphere.

While I technically haven't had an only in-person class, I assume that nowadays heard some people still have to take paper tests. So far, the only class I've ever journalism class. For a mix of both, hybrid is the way to go. You can always get campus and learning from your teacher in person, as well as having the op-

it's similar in terms of online. I've had in person has been a hybrid the feeling of being on opportunity to go to the



meetings online and work at home as it can be more convenient for some. Taking all this into account, I prefer virtual classes the most. I can still be at home and not have to worry about traveling. Also, I still have the option to meet with my teacher and ask for help whenever. To me, it is a win-win situation.

By Nathaniel Thompson

Holiday Season



The holidays are something everyone looks forward to, regardless of

what you celebrate. Breaks from school, time off work, moments for celebration and spending time with family. What is interesting is getting more into what some of these holidays mean and the significance it has for people. I am specifically talking about winter holidays. Some winter holidays include Hanukkah, Christmas, Kwanzaa and New Year's Day.

Starting off with Hanukkah, a Jewish holiday that is celebrated throughout eight days. The dates range from Nov. 28, 2021 through Dec. 6, 2021. According to history.com, commemorates the rededication during the second century B.C. of the Second Temple in Jerusalem, where according to legend, Jewish people had risen up against their Greek-Syrian oppressors in the Maccabean Revolt. Hanukkah means dedication in Hebrew and I like how the meaning ties to what the holiday is all about. The date begins on the 25th of Kislev in the Hebrew calendar which is different from the standard calendar Americans tend to use. The day usually falls in either November or December. The games are my favorite part of Hanukkah. There is this one game called the Gelt challenge. For this game, you would get a chocolate coin and place it on your forehead. Then try to work it down into your mouth without dropping it. I am not quite sure if this originated from Jewish people, but that is who I got it from and the game is just very fun to play.

One of the most famous holidays known to all in America is Christmas. Christmas falls on Dec. 25 every single year and this is supposed to be the birth of Jesus.

This is one of those holidays that is celebrated by a lot of different people, regardless of their religion at times too. Christmas has now turned into a day of gifting and helping out others.

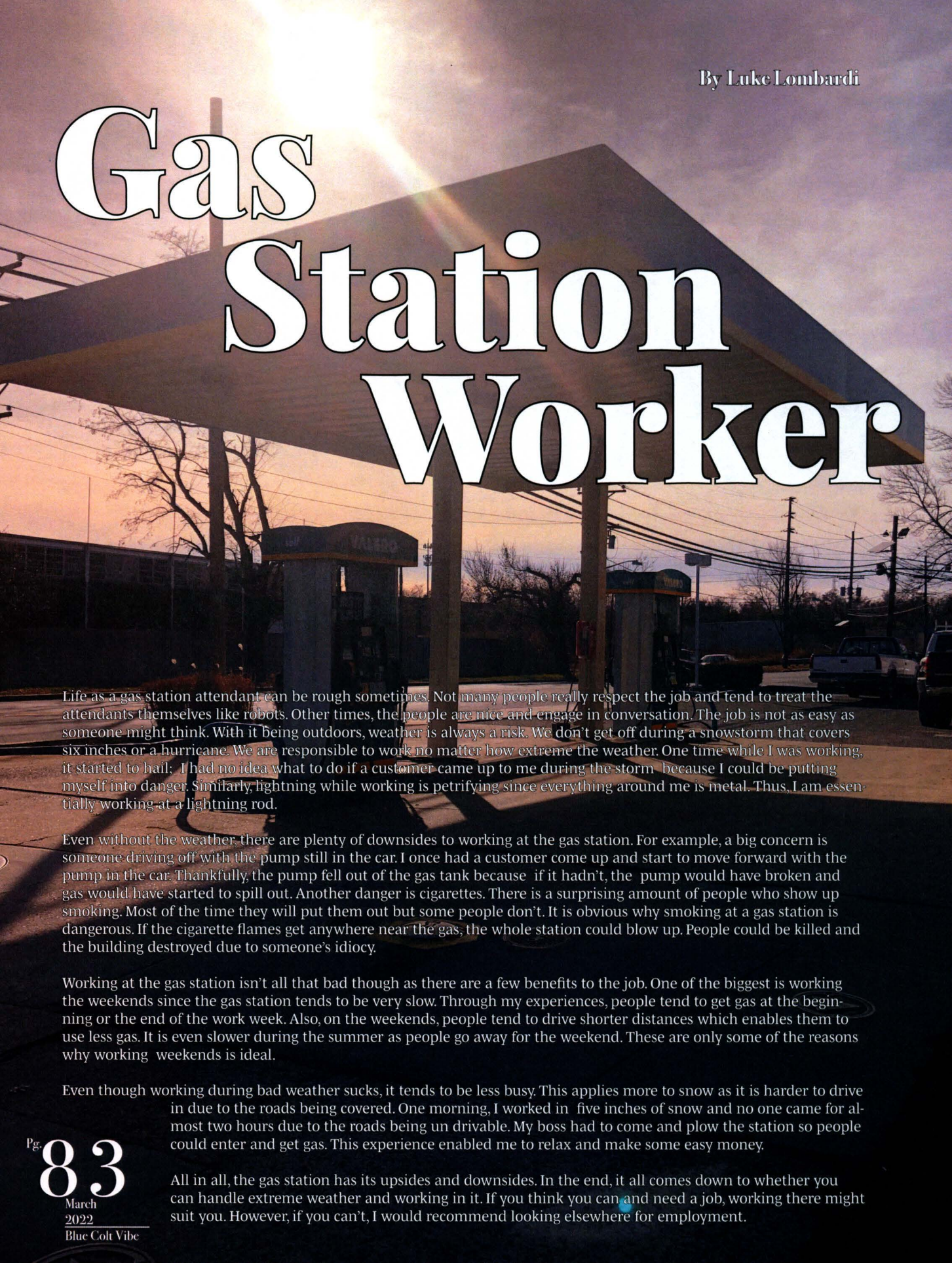
Waking up every single day as a kid

on Christmas was great. There was always a new game, console, clothes and many items that I have always wished for. I never had a Christmas tree in my house before, so usually the gifts were just gift wrapped. Christmas was just one of those days where everyone seemed happy. Everyone was always helping each other out and I love this holiday the most because of that.

Kwanzaa is a holiday that is celebrated by African American people. The holiday is used to celebrate life. The dates range from Dec. 26 to Jan. 1. In some ways, you can say it is somewhat like Christmas. I have only celebrated Kwanzaa once, but the time that I had was great. I went with my friend's family to a Kwanzaa event and it was a fun experience. They all had gifts for each other, even a couple days after Christmas. We also had a big feast and the soul food that they cooked was great. It is a holiday that I could see myself celebrating soon.

New Year's Day is a holiday celebrated by almost everyone. Some countries and religions follow different calendars, but celebrating the new year is something we all do. There isn't much to be said about the New Year. It's just a time to party and celebrate going into the next chapter for most people. One thing I can say is I wish I was around for the new year going from 1999 to the year 2000. That would've been awesome to see.

Gas Station Worker



Life as a gas station attendant can be rough sometimes. Not many people really respect the job and tend to treat the attendants themselves like robots. Other times, the people are nice and engage in conversation. The job is not as easy as someone might think. With it being outdoors, weather is always a risk. We don't get off during a snowstorm that covers six inches or a hurricane. We are responsible to work no matter how extreme the weather. One time while I was working, it started to hail. I had no idea what to do if a customer came up to me during the storm because I could be putting myself into danger. Similarly, lightning while working is petrifying since everything around me is metal. Thus, I am essentially working at a lightning rod.

Even without the weather, there are plenty of downsides to working at the gas station. For example, a big concern is someone driving off with the pump still in the car. I once had a customer come up and start to move forward with the pump in the car. Thankfully, the pump fell out of the gas tank because if it hadn't, the pump would have broken and gas would have started to spill out. Another danger is cigarettes. There is a surprising amount of people who show up smoking. Most of the time they will put them out but some people don't. It is obvious why smoking at a gas station is dangerous. If the cigarette flames get anywhere near the gas, the whole station could blow up. People could be killed and the building destroyed due to someone's idiocy.

Working at the gas station isn't all that bad though as there are a few benefits to the job. One of the biggest is working the weekends since the gas station tends to be very slow. Through my experiences, people tend to get gas at the beginning or the end of the work week. Also, on the weekends, people tend to drive shorter distances which enables them to use less gas. It is even slower during the summer as people go away for the weekend. These are only some of the reasons why working weekends is ideal.

Even though working during bad weather sucks, it tends to be less busy. This applies more to snow as it is harder to drive in due to the roads being covered. One morning, I worked in five inches of snow and no one came for almost two hours due to the roads being un drivable. My boss had to come and plow the station so people could enter and get gas. This experience enabled me to relax and make some easy money.

All in all, the gas station has its upsides and downsides. In the end, it all comes down to whether you can handle extreme weather and working in it. If you think you can and need a job, working there might suit you. However, if you can't, I would recommend looking elsewhere for employment.

Propaganda



I remember two days before Halloween, I went to the mall and saw Christmas decorations hung up. I was shocked and honestly a little annoyed. This happens every year, people forget about Halloween and Thanksgiving and go straight to Christmas.

Then you start to see commercials about Christmas, like buying presents or lifetime seasonal movies. Christmas has become so commercialized, it's not even about spending time with your family anymore. It's all about what's under the Christmas tree. And honestly, I'm fed up with the holiday.

I never really liked Christmas to

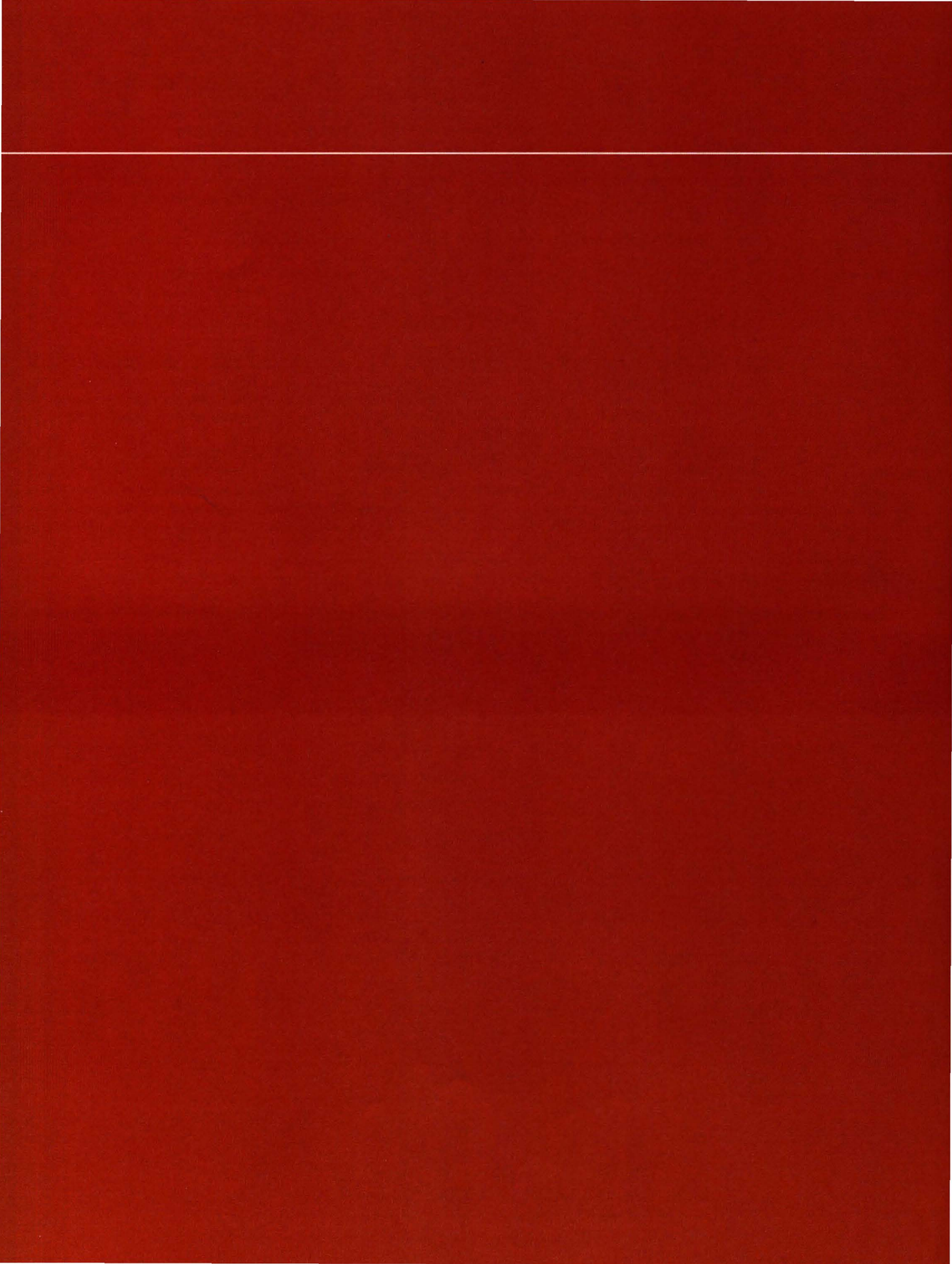
begin with, because trauma I've dealt with over the years of seeing my parents struggle with money. So, I've never enjoyed it, and I can imagine so many other people struggling with the same problem. I mean we're so excited for Halloween and Thanksgiving, our joy is stripped right out of us when people start to celebrating Christmas when it's not even their turn.

It makes you feel sad when you can't afford a tree or some decorations, those things people say that get you into the holiday spirit. And how about when you see Target commercials about all the things you can get your family that's on their wish list. Why does Christmas even have to be about giving gifts, I don't think anyone should get gifts. It should be strictly about family time and having a nice dinner together.

My favorite holiday is Halloween because it brings people together with money not being involved only if you want to. You could have a scary movie night with your friends and family, could make your Halloween costume out of the things you have at home, go to a Halloween party, and go to a haunted house.

These things make you spend time with people and will cost you nothing, to a couple bucks. It's the best time of the year!

Hometown



NORTH

By Cassandra Maisonet

BRUNSWICK

Out of all the “Brunswicks” in Middlesex County, North Brunswick is severely overlooked for their lifestyle and culture. This quiet town is occupied by popular chains such as Regal Cinemas, Bowlero, Trader Joe’s and numerous Dunkin Donuts. These chains can be commonly found anywhere in New Jersey. The unique locations of North Brunswick have shaped the town with more personality. In just a quick NJ Transit bus ride or a short car drive from New Brunswick, you’ll experience an unexpected amount of enjoyment from North Brunswick.

Off Route 1 there is a classic American eatery called Omega Diner. The diner is well-known for their all-day breakfast, but their lunch and dinners are just as satisfying. Omega Diner has a variety of breakfast meals such as breakfast sandwiches, pancakes, french toast, waffles, coffee beverages and a vast array of sweet and savory sides. Besides their breakfast selection, other popular buys are their specialty sandwiches, wraps, paninis and Italian sodas. The decor is set up for upcoming holidays which will put you in a festive mood. Don’t forget to purchase a delectable dessert at the payment counter; you will be missing out if you do.

The North Brunswick Community Park can hold numerous activities all at once. This large stretch of land is the home of sports and relaxation. You can enjoy playing recreational games, go for a run or host a picnic here. The open fields will welcome you to play just about any sport and unwind with friends. There is also a children’s playground and a dog park. The park commonly hosts community events that liven up the spirit. If you are looking to have lunch in nature, this park will be an ideal spot. You can find several picnic tables around the park, and enjoy the bright skies while having a bite.

The Youth Sports Festival is a hotspot for locals and residents of nearby towns. This festival is held on warm, summer days in June. For North Brunswick residents, it’s frequent to hear the question, “Are you going to the fair?” from friends and family during the weeks of the fair’s opening. There is always a deal of the day that will suit anyone’s budget. At the fair, there are thrills for those who love a good scream, rides that will have you dizzy, family-friendly attractions and carnival games of tested strengths. If you’re looking to catch a break from the adrenaline rush, head on over to catch the sights of caged motorcyclists, circus acts and live bands. The sugary desserts and fair food from small-business vendors are mouthwatering. After watching the fireworks show, you will likely end your day with a prize and leave with a large bag of cotton candy in your hands.

What is also to be noted in North Brunswick is the people. The diversity of North Brunswick is remarkable. There is an abundance of local businesses run by people of color. You can find yourself enjoying authentic food cooked by people who are passionate about their cultures. There are clothing stores and supermarkets catered to specific needs. There are also heritage festivals and events held for everyone to enjoy. If you have a religious affiliation, there are numerous religious communities that are tight-knit yet easy to be accepted in. The tolerant lifestyle of North Brunswick provides openness to everyone. The people of North Brunswick set the vibe for everything else in the town. American goalkeeper and North Brunswick’s pride, Tim Howard, had humble beginnings in this town and never forgot where he came from. In a community like North Brunswick, you won’t forget this town either.

SOUTH

By Amanda Clark

BRUNSWICK

Driving through South Brunswick Township, New Jersey, there isn't much you can see to differentiate it from other towns. Chain restaurants, grocery stores, banks and retail stores surround major roads in town. If you were to drive through on your way to a friend's house, nothing would stand out to make you think this town is unique. However, once you take some back roads for a closer look at your surroundings, the garden part of "the garden state" starts to show.

From the spring to fall on 505 Ridge Rd., Von Thun Farms is the fifth-generation family farm filled with "u-pick" apples, berries, enormous pumpkins, spring greenhouse flowers and a farm market with homegrown Angus beef and Jersey fresh produce. With two apple orchards, there are golden delicious, Mutsu, Gala, Cameo, Nittany, Sun Crisp, Stayman and Fuji apples to pick. They have the apple trees lined up in rows so far you need to squint to see the other side. Their strawberries are as red as a rose, and you can fill buckets of blueberries in as little as 10 minutes from the beautifully grown berry bushes. Not only do the blueberries melt in your mouth the second you take a bite, but the variety of blackberries do as well.

You'll want to make sure you don't skip arm day at the gym because Von Thun Farms has lumpy pumpkins, oval pumpkins and round pumpkins that all need help to carry. They always make fantastically carved pumpkins come Halloween time. You get to pick them right out of the field or grab one in front of their farmer's market. If you get one in front of the market, make sure to head in to grab yourself the town's best apple cider donuts with a glass of apple cider. The farmers market has more than you can imagine, from local honey, jams, jellies, handmade soaps and lotions, fruit, vegetables, homegrown grass-fed beef and delicious freshly baked pies. Von Thun Farms has everything you need to stock your house with fresh Jersey food.

If Von Thun Farms is too far on the other side of town, and you want a closer market for all the fresh food, head over to A&C Farmers Market off NJ-27. No matter the time or day of the week, this market will never let you down by providing fresh fruit, vegetables, flowers and drinks. Plus, the owners love to decorate for each holiday, as when you walk in, it's as if you walked through a portal to the holiday's birthplace. If you thought fresh products and a decorated store couldn't get better, you thought wrong. The owners are always extremely kind and always help you out if needed.

A&C Farmers Market sells stunning flower bouquets, but if you're someone who is looking to plant a breathtaking garden, head over to Georges Road to visit Crossroads Nursery & Garden Center. Crossroads Nursery is family-owned, providing everything you need to turn your landscape into a masterpiece. Crossroads Nursery has everything you can think of, from expertise in landscape construction, an abundance of plants, a huge variety of stones, pavers, mulch, and not to mention the staff treats you like family. There are always vibrant flowers, trees, and shrubs on display for you to choose from, and a Christmas tree wholesale lot come the holiday season.

If you're a busy person, then Crossroads Nursery & Garden Center offers numerous landscaping services to leave your lawn exquisite. There are planting services, masonry work, ponds, grading and leveling, landscaping beds, landscaping lighting and removing trees or shrubs. The Crossroads Nursery family puts all of their hard work and details into everything they do for you to receive the best care possible. You can have patios, walkways, driveways, steps, light columns, tiny or large ponds with waterfalls, stoning and mulch put in for your needs to be finished.

South Brunswick Township connects to the residents to bring them the Garden State right to their front door. Whether you want a few fresh products or you want to redo your lawn, this town has everything you'll want. Make sure you leave plenty of room in your stomach for the Jersey-grown fresh produce.

EDISON

By Simran Belani

A melting pot. A mixed bowl. There truly is no other way to describe the home of a myriad of cultures and backgrounds – Edison. From Little India that is Oak Tree Road, to temples and churches that represent all religions, and parades celebrating ethnicity – Edison does not lack diversity. Although Edison is no city that never sleeps (the nightlife is quite nonexistent), it has its own features that make it quite enjoyable and allow me to feel proud when calling it my hometown.

I would say Edison is most known for being a tight-knit town. Although Edison is the fifth largest municipality in New Jersey, it is not hard for anyone's voice to be heard in this town, which is something I admire deeply. The Township Council, Board of Education, the Police Department, and other departments all make themselves available to the public regularly – even outside of the workplace. Elected officials and other authorities, canvas and go door to door to make themselves known, and even host events such as Coffee with a Cop, to reach out and show their support to the community. Residents and officials work together to sustain harmony amongst the community.

The Edison Township was named after Thomas Alva Edison, who is famous for his contributions to science. In 1938, the Thomas Alva Edison Memorial Tower was gifted to Edison; the tower is a monumental replica of Edison's first practical iridescent light bulb. The tower still stands today, decades later, in Edison, and is a beautiful sight that often hosts events on holidays including the annual Christmas tree lighting, Harvest Fun Festival, Trail of Terror and more. Tours can be taken of The Thomas Edison Center at Menlo Park and features a walk-through Edison's office filled with photos, artifacts, and machines, and also of the tower. The spot is a popular site for field trips as well.

Tourists often visit Oak Tree Road – the go-to street when looking for Indian cultural food, clothes, jewelry or anything of the sort to get a taste of this "Little India," – a nickname for the lively street. During the day it might seem like a regular crowded street, but in the evening, the bright lights of the stores and the smell of Indian food makes it seem like a street from India. It's on this street that the India Day Parade and Pakistan Day Parade are held as well; local celebrities and artists from India and Pakistan come as featured guests to take part in the festivities. Residents step outside of their stores to get a glance of the marvelous floats making their way down the street. Of course, there is a ton of food, dancing, music, and games to bring more life to the celebrations.

Edison also has a vast variety of parks; one of the better-known ones is Roosevelt Park by Menlo Park Mall. The park is a great place to just walk, get some fresh air, and enjoy time by the 8-acre Roosevelt Park Lake. Here, there are always events being held including walks and runs for foundations, cultural picnics, and even "Plays-in-the-Park" located at the park theater- Stephen J. Capestro Theater. In the wintertime, the site also offers ice skating. One can grab hot chocolate and food and enjoy their time on the ice rink. My personal favorite activity is the occasional free concerts that bring the community together to enjoy music, food and fun. There is nothing that compares singing along and enjoying the fresh air with friends and family right in your hometown.

Roosevelt Park, however, is not the only open space in Edison. There are more than 10 parks in our town, although none as large as Roosevelt Park, and are constantly being improved. Regular community clean-ups are held to protect the beauty of the town – something that residents care deeply about. That's another thing to take note of – the commitment residents have to the town. We are constantly looking for ways to improve in all aspects and protect our home. All residents of our town value the appearance and cleanliness of our town in addition to the inner workings.

It's safe to say there is no one individual factor that makes Edison as great as it is. The community works to make Edison a place that is diverse in literally everything. Here in Edison, we take care of our town and people – working together to make the town a harmonious living space for all.

SPOTSWOOD

By Gabrielle Ignotis

There is nothing marking the various entrances into the town. In most areas, there is no sign signifying the movement across town lines. As a result, many people, even some town residents, don't know where other towns end and where Spotswood begins.

With a town area of only 2 miles, it's common to refer to the small municipality as being "less than a mile long." Compared to sprawling suburbs like East Brunswick or Old Bridge, Spotswood is merely a blip on the radar.

Yet, what Spotswood lacks in size, it more than makes up for in good, old-fashioned, small-town character.

Spotswood residents may no longer invite their neighbors in for lemonade or cookies on a Sunday afternoon, but waving to neighbors and having a friendly chat is still encouraged. It's not unheard of to have a conversation on opposite sides of the street, and drivers passing through will often pull over and turn their hazard lights on to join in. Every winter, younger residents trek to retired neighbors' homes and offer to shovel snow or clear driveways.

It's common to run into at least one of these residents at any of the local eateries.

Genarro's Restaurant on Summerhill Road, specializing in gourmet pizza and homemade Italian food, is a favorite among all generations. Fan-favorites, like the eggplant rollatini pizza and penne vodka pasta pizza, are just a few of the dishes that make this restaurant one of a kind.

Spotswood is also home to the Main Street Diner. Residents have long since given up disputing whether the property is actually located in Spotswood or East Brunswick. Google Maps claims the latter, but most residents swear that the Main Street Diner is a Spotswood staple. The iconic red and white sign, wood-paneled walls and paisley booths have become synonymous with home-cooked brunch and comfort food.

"The Main Street Diner is really nice. They have good home fries, and the waitstaff is always really polite," Spotswood resident, Virginia Nason, said.

Many residents head to the Main Street Diner for brunch on Sundays after church services. Spotswood is home to five churches despite its small size.

One of these churches, Saint Peter's Episcopal Church on Main Street, publicly celebrated their 260th anniversary in 2016. The church is proud to be known as one of the oldest continuously operating churches in New Jersey. Saint Peter's hosts a popular town event, Wednesday Night Suppers, where church patrons, town residents and anyone in need of a warm meal gather for dinner.

The Spotswood Reformed Church on Main Street is also a familiar beacon. This church is well known among residents for its work in a hurricane relief program and its donation drives for the nearby Alice's CUP Food Pantry.

The Church of the Immaculate, deemed just "Immaculate" by neighbors, amazes residents and patrons every winter with their Christmas decorations, which includes a full-size nativity scene.

Spotswood resident, Connor Jaedicke, said "They [the churches] are very historical. I've worked on some areas nearby, and they're always being improved."

Spotswood is also home to idyllic tennis courts and wooded areas directly off Summerhill Road. This area also hosts a picturesque monument to veterans, including a painted sign, a constellation of flagpoles, a small fountain and wooden benches. Local students and residents of all ages often patrol the area, watching any tennis games that may occur and enjoying the nearby activity from Summerhill Road and Main Street.

"People like to take pictures by the monument. It's really pretty," Spotswood resident, Emily Michaels, said.

It's comforting to know that Spotswood keeps the small-town spirit alive with its friendly residents, small local restaurants, historical churches and scenic areas.



PLAINFIELD

By Shakera Blakney

Plainfield is nowhere special, but it's special to those who are from there. To visit my family in the "Queen City" means taking two trains, including a transfer in Newark. It's not ideal, but it's worth it. Getting off the train in Plainfield, looking at the mid to late 19th century architecture gives a sense of history. One step off the train, and one of the six historic districts Plainfield takes over.

Each of the businesses facing the train station still has the original look, although as definitely seen years of wear and tear. To the left is a street many cities have: Park Avenue. In Plainfield, Park Avenue is the city divider of the East End and West End. It's just a matter of crossing the street. Fun fact: Casanova's on Park Avenue and East Front Street is home to the best pizza in Plainfield. The best thing to do is grab a slice and head to the Plainfield Public Library.

Located on the borderline of the West End, Plainfield Public Library is a more modern building in comparison to some of the homes in the surrounding area. The building is surrounded by glass and spacious enough to pick up a book and read in the stacks. It's always a bit chilly in the library, so a jacket is suggested. One of the best events the library has is their book sale. Filling up a brown paper bag of books for just \$2 is enough to make anybody's day.

Every direction from the library leads you somewhere different, yet just as much of a sight to see. To the west, is the most beautiful historic homes in the Van Wyck Brooks District, with most homes surrounded by either beautiful shrubbery or tall trees. Just down the street from the library is the French School of Music, with the duCret School of the Arts within walking distance.

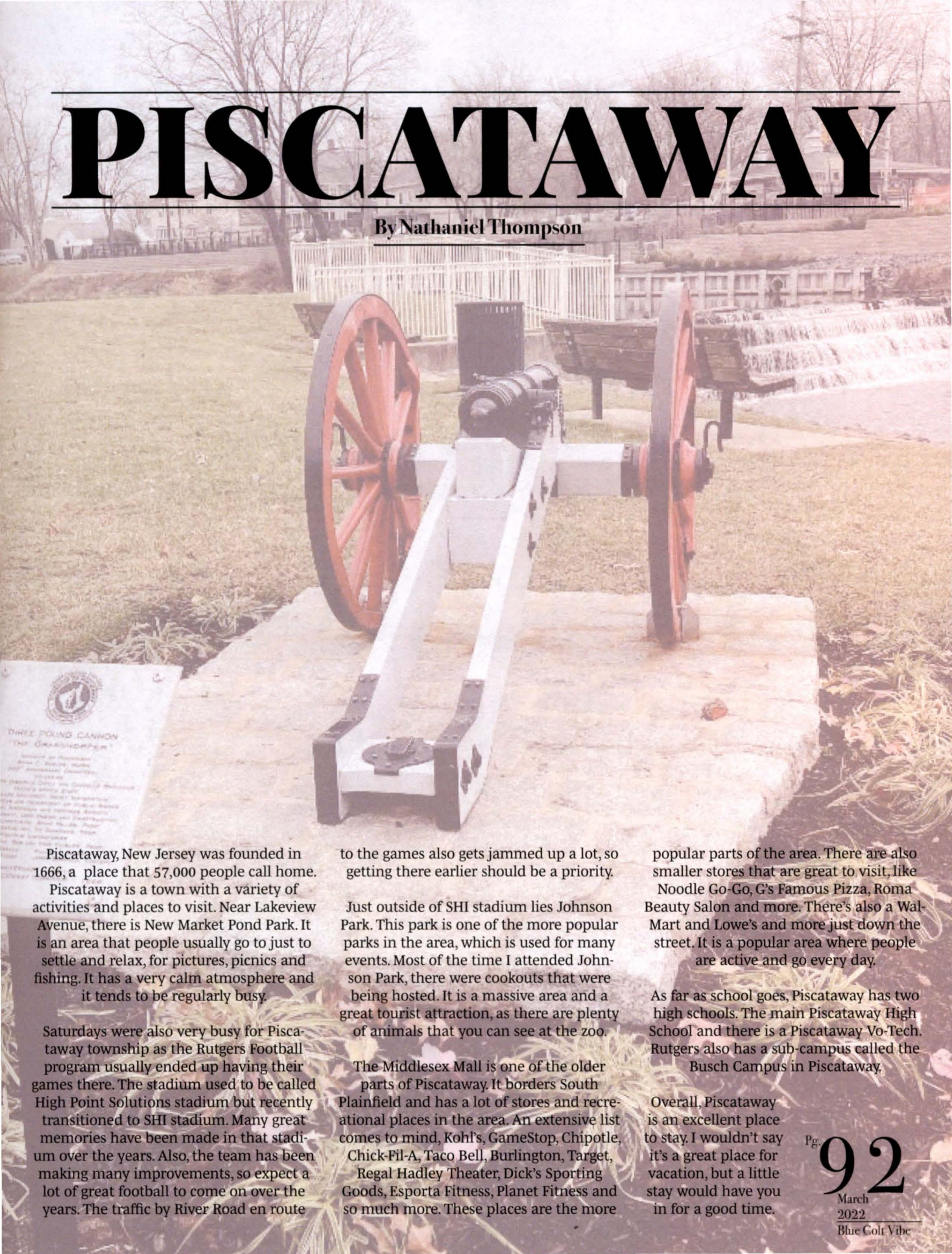
To the east of the library is another historic district, Crescent Area, which houses Swain Galleries. Owned by the fourth generation of Swains, Swain Galleries is one of Plainfield's oldest businesses. Swain Galleries is Victorian building, colored a deep mauve. Across the street is another historic district, Plainfield Civic which houses City Hall.

To the south of the library leads to Cedarbrook Park, a beautiful park where Plainfield High School's girl softball team plays their home games. There's a small section of the park dedicated to the Shakespeare Garden, with the occasional Shakespeare in the park. It's also a great place to see the fireworks on the Fourth of July.

Plainfield is nowhere special, but it's special.

PISCATAWAY

By Nathaniel Thompson




THREE POUND CANNON
"THE GRASSHOPPER"
Presented by the Piscataway Historical Society
to the town of Piscataway, New Jersey
in 1966. This cannon was used by the British
in 1776 during the Battle of Red Bank.
It is now on display at the Piscataway
Historical Society.

Piscataway, New Jersey was founded in 1666, a place that 57,000 people call home.

Piscataway is a town with a variety of activities and places to visit. Near Lakeview Avenue, there is New Market Pond Park. It is an area that people usually go to just to settle and relax, for pictures, picnics and fishing. It has a very calm atmosphere and it tends to be regularly busy.

Saturdays were also very busy for Piscataway township as the Rutgers Football program usually ended up having their games there. The stadium used to be called High Point Solutions stadium but recently transitioned to SHI stadium. Many great memories have been made in that stadium over the years. Also, the team has been making many improvements, so expect a lot of great football to come on over the years. The traffic by River Road en route

to the games also gets jammed up a lot, so getting there earlier should be a priority.

Just outside of SHI stadium lies Johnson Park. This park is one of the more popular parks in the area, which is used for many events. Most of the time I attended Johnson Park, there were cookouts that were being hosted. It is a massive area and a great tourist attraction, as there are plenty of animals that you can see at the zoo.

The Middlesex Mall is one of the older parts of Piscataway. It borders South Plainfield and has a lot of stores and recreational places in the area. An extensive list comes to mind, Kohl's, GameStop, Chipotle, Chick-Fil-A, Taco Bell, Burlington, Target, Regal Hadley Theater, Dick's Sporting Goods, Esporta Fitness, Planet Fitness and so much more. These places are the more

popular parts of the area. There are also smaller stores that are great to visit, like Noodle Go-Go, G's Famous Pizza, Roma Beauty Salon and more. There's also a Wal-Mart and Lowe's and more just down the street. It is a popular area where people are active and go every day.

As far as school goes, Piscataway has two high schools. The main Piscataway High School and there is a Piscataway Vo-Tech. Rutgers also has a sub-campus called the Busch Campus in Piscataway.

Overall, Piscataway is an excellent place to stay. I wouldn't say it's a great place for vacation, but a little stay would have you in for a good time.

Participatory

Pharmacy

By Tatwa Vaidya

Owner

For 15 years, Anil Datwani has been running the Ar-Ex Pharmacy in Fords, New Jersey. He is the fifth owner of this pharmacy, which has been serving patients since 1950.

Before owning this pharmacy, he worked as a pharmacy technician, and he was a pharmaceutical major in college.

"My first job was at Burger King, and I was declared as the employee of the month after my second month of working there. Soon, I became the manager of the store. From that, I came to know that I have qualities of hardworking and leadership," said Anil.

Anil said, "Medicine is my passion, and I wanted to make my career in that."

This year, COVID-19 became a threat to every country. In early March, Gov. Phil Murphy announced a stay at home order and declared New Jersey's public health emergency. Anil has never faced a situation like this before in the 15 years of owning the pharmacy. It was difficult for him to handle his pharmacy during the time of lockdown and when every nonessential business was shut down. We conducted the interview in his office; I was nervous because my boss and I were taking his interview, but Anil made me feel comfortable during the interview.

Anil said, "There were a lot of angry people who did not accept the closing of small nonessential businesses, and I knew that I have to do crowd control by that point of time. So, we started curbside pickup."

He started telling me the stories of the customers complaining about coming inside the store to shop. I also started thinking about the same thing, as I was working on those days. He shared a couple of stories, and we both had a pleasant smile on our faces, as we both knew that the customers were making a big deal about almost nothing.

"We decided to do curbside pickup for their (customer) and our safety purposes only," he said.

He explained how busy the pharmacy was, but the business was not doing well. He had cut down his regular hours and opened the pharmacy for just 9 hours a day and 6 hours on the weekends. There was a shortage of inventories. Due to curbside pickup, the busi-

ness/profit that he was receiving over the counter was zero.

He said, "I was also struggling wealth wise. I had to pay payroll to my employees and also try to pay my suppliers. I was getting items like PPE (personal protective equipment) and plexiglass for safety purposes which cost me more money."

On the other side, sales were going low as the patients were not going to the doctor and getting enough prescriptions filled.

He said, "There was a significant drop in our business, as people were scared to buy or even touch the products. Daily things like newspapers, lottery tickets and milk selling counts were zero, and there was fear of getting this virus by buying this product in our customers."

Lastly, he proudly said that the employees working at the pharmacy with me during that time worked as they were working in their own store, not as employees. They all worked every day for eight to nine hours straight without any breaks and tried to serve our community with the best service.

He said, "There were some employees that did not want to work, as everyone has their own situation, and some wanted to collect their unemployment. Though, there were some of my core employees who understood what I was going through and caring for the pharmacy. They also had the mentality of 'keep going and serving our patients no matter what happens.'"

He felt proud of his staff, who he saw as heroes as they cared for his store. They dealt with arguments with people who had COVID-19 as they were also coming to pick up medication sometimes, and 85% of his staff did a great job.

At last, he gave the information knowing about this virus spread throughout this country. Since January, he knew that this virus would be a big problem, as he was constantly looking at the number of cases that were increasing in China.

He said, "I believe that the spreading of this virus happened after the Chinese New Year, as millions of Chinese tourists visited New York City at that time, and it became an epicenter for spreading this virus in America."

As the interview concluded, there was a moment of silence in the room as we both started thinking about this deadly virus. We both prayed and hoped that America and the rest of the world would be in a better place soon.

Brian

By Caprice Benifield-Sanchez

O'Sullivan

"Writing is like my refuge," said Brian O'Sullivan, a successful self-published author from the San Francisco Bay Area. Being underrepresented as a Hollywood screenwriter did not stop O'Sullivan from leaving his mark on the world.

He was a college student at the University of California, Santa Barbara, unsure of what career path he wanted to pursue and facing a slight distraction from the endless options of entertainment within the city.

Brian said, "I often think, what if I started writing novels then? I am in my 40s now and I could have 30 novels if I really started at 21."

As a college student myself, I found that having the passion to write is on an odd level with having the discipline to commit, especially through something so tedious as writing a book. Self-publishing is a reachable goal for college students or anyone who wants to get their voice out.

O'Sullivan's failure to sell his screenplays did not discourage him from finding a way to do what he loves.

He said, "I was probably one of a million. We had local bars we would go to and the waiters, waitresses and the bartenders were all either trying to become actors or had written something."

"So, I decided to write a novel knowing that, you know, people buy novels. People don't buy screenplays. You have to get hired by a production company, Hollywood. There's a long, long process. And so I started writing my first book about seven or eight years ago. I finished it, but I didn't think it was quite good enough," said Brian.

O'Sullivan said he never published his first book, but his political disposition during the 2016 presidential campaign was a successful idea for a novel.

O'Sullivan said, "When Trump started running, I started writing a novel and it kind of just went the way of becoming a political novel and stuff. I finished that one in 2016, and it was released then."

"The Puppeteer," is a political thriller about Frankie and Evie, two down-to-earth young adults, who, on a search to uncover a mystery, stumble across the dark side of politics, murder and mayhem. It was the start to O'Sullivan's suspenseful novels, as his second novel, "The Patsy" was a sequel with

the same hair-raising vibrato.

He became his own publisher on Amazon, after a long battle to find a literary agent.

O'Sullivan has a following of almost 100,000 followers on Twitter, and when I received a message from him promoting a book that I would read, I felt pretty good that he at least read my Twitter bio to come to this conclusion.

"When I decided to self-publish, I knew that I was going to have to be my own marketer and promoter. I mean, I send out probably 200 of those direct messages a day with links to the novel. I've got like 50 ads right now through Amazon that if you go to Amazon, you're looking for books that are similar to mine. I have to pay per click, and then if people click on it and buy, I get paid," said O'Sullivan.

Be-

coming a self-published author was a challenge for O'Sullivan, but knowing what his goals were led him to succeed in this competitive atmosphere.

O'Sullivan said, "It's almost like running a full-on business. It's not just writing. So in that regard, I wish I had a publisher, but unless you're like Christian or Stephen King it is tough to get a publisher these days, and they actually take a high percentage. I get 70% of every sale from Amazon. You get like 10% of every sale if you have a publisher. Now, they can get you in The New York Times, at the front of Barnes and Noble and stuff. There are obviously advantages, but just per sale and stuff, you make more publishing."

His determination showed through his five-star thriller novels on Amazon.

"Now, I am about to finish up my fifth novel and I'm pretty successful for a self-published author. I'm not Stephen King, I'm not John Grisham... but there's a million different ways to advertise for a first published author these days, obviously. Follow me on Twitter, and I have a big following," he said.

9/11

By Amanda Clark

Recollection

Robert Hoffman worked at Thomson Reuters Corporation in New York during 2001, right across from the World Trade Center's Twin Towers.

Living in New Jersey, Hoffman would travel on the NJ Transit then transfer onto the PATH to get to his office.

Sept. 11, the PATH Hoffman took got diverted north of the World Financial Center without any reason why.

When the PATH doors opened, a guy came running and screamed, "Everybody get out! They hit the towers!" This announcement caused everyone who got off the PATH to look up and see the World Trade Center's North Tower smoking.

At first, Hoffman didn't realize what happened, so he started walking toward his office until he saw the second plane hit the World Trade Center's South Tower. At this moment, he knew they were under attack.

"A lot goes through your mind when you see something like this, especially since I previously worked at the South Tower. A part of you wants to leave and take safety, and then another part of you wants to help where you can," said Hoffman.

Hoffman and some other civilians were scrambling to see what they could do to help. It wasn't until they talked to a fireman did they realize most of them were in the way and needed to let the professionals do their job.

Once they started walking away to let the firemen rescue people, the South Tower came down. A huge plume of smoke came down the street that looked like an Egyptian biblical sandstorm.

Hoffman had friends in the city who owned a catering company. On his way there, most of the streets became empty and reminded him of a post-apocalyptic movie. Everything was grey with ash. People were in a rush to get inside where it would be safe from the smoke. On his way to the catering company, Hoffman tripped over a person's shoe that was left on the street.

While being outside, Hoffman saw people jumping out of the

towers to die rather than burn to death.

After a while, Hoffman made his way up north to the Hudson Street satellite office who kept people there to be safe. Because of the attack, most cell towers were down, so he borrowed someone's cell phone to call his wife.

The satellite office fed everybody inside and gave them water while New York was shut down. The tunnels, subway and trains were all down to prevent anyone from traveling. No one knew if that was going to be the last attack or not, so Hoffman had to wait for New York to reopen before being able to go home.

Once the city reopened, Hoffman took a subway to New York Penn train station to get back to his family. It was such a traumatic day; no one cared if people had train tickets or not. They just let him on the train to get out of the city. Once he was back in New Jersey, Hoffman shared a cab with four people to get to where he parked his car.

"Once I got back to New Jersey, there were kids playing in parks as if nothing happened. Not a lot of people worked in the city and everything seemed normal back here."

Hoffman still had ash, soot and dust in the clothes he was wearing.

His entire company was off the next day, but when he finally went back into the city, there was an enormous pile of pieces from the tower. When Hoffman went into his office to get his laptop, the windows were smashed and the office was covered in soot.

"It destroyed a lot of things aside from the city I love; it destroyed a sense of security, a lot was taken away from that day. I have a burnt piece of paper from that day to remember the people we lost," Hoffman said.

His company lost 10 people - some were in their location in the tower and some were on the plane that got hijacked. Hoffman is still on anxiety medications because of PTSD from that day.

Pg. 97

March
2022
Blue Colt Vibe

Civil

By Shakera Blakney

Rights

Dr. Penelope Lattimer finished high school in Red Bank, NJ, just in time for the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to become law.

Dr. Lattimer was 13-years-old when the Civil Rights Movement was in full swing in 1960, a 16-year-old senior in high school when the March on Washington occurred and graduated high school about a month before the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was signed. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 was signed that July.

She looked like the perfect student as she sat behind her desk with her hands folded in front of her on her desk and her back straight. Her posture gave insight to what kind of student she was. She obtained her B.A. in French and M.A. in Student Personnel Services from Montclair State.

Her first job was as an Educational Opportunity Fund (EOF) counselor at Montclair State University in 1967. She became the Assistant Director of EOF for two years at Georgian Court University. There, she was counselor to 10 Black girls and eventually Dr. Lattimer became the counselor to all 12 Black students at 20-years-old.

In 1968, student uprisings on college campuses made its way to New Jersey. "The campuses, they had to go through an adjustment because most of these campuses, Montclair included, and certainly Georgian Court, are the ones I knew the best, they had never had so many students of color on campus. And so, both sides had to adjust," she said. "In places like Montclair, you had a little more aggression going on where there was a challenge to establish Black Student Unions. That was pretty normal across the United States, this emphasis on wanting Black Student Unions, wanting to have more Black professors, more Black dorms, more Black floors in dormitories, those kinds of challenges. Also, of course, this is the time when Black students at Rutgers, Montclair, and all the state schools for sure, and places like Georgian Court, were asking for Black literature. This is the time where Nikki Giovanni, Toni Cade Bambara, Sonia Sanchez, these women in particular, and others were gaining prominence," said Penelope.

Black students wanted to study Black literature. She listed names like Richard

Wright, Langston Hughes, and turned to her bookcase, which looked like it couldn't fit one more book and gave the name Ralph Ellison. She said she encourages Black students to be more willing to study a world language.

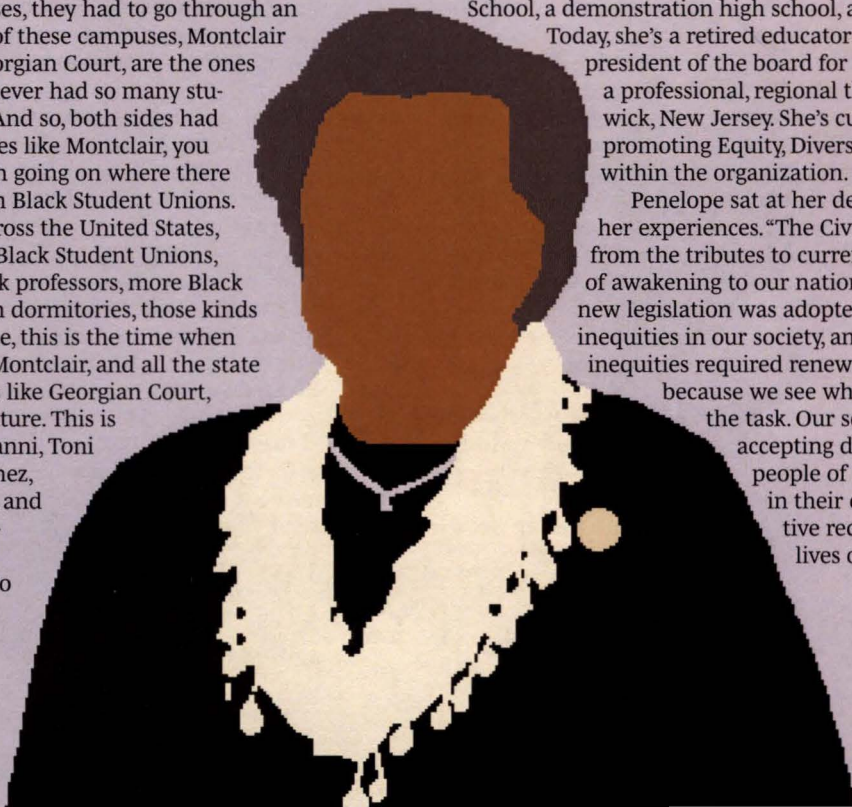
"It makes you so much more marketable, and it makes you more sensitive when you're studying another group's culture and language," said Penelope.

Her parents were active members in their local branch of the NAACP chapter and her mother, also an educator, made sure Penelope and her siblings understood what was happening. "My mother (who taught American History and Civics) REQUIRED my brother and myself to read the daily newspaper reports as well as historical accounts and biographies of the leaders of the Movement - people such as Bayard Rustin, John Hope Franklin, Samuel DeWitt Proctor, Shirley Chisholm and others ... more than simply reading about Martin Luther King, Jr."

Dr. Lattimer received her Ph.D. in Education from Union Graduate School in Cincinnati, Ohio in 1975 at the age of 25. In 1974, she designed and was the first director of the Gibbons School, a demonstration high school, at Rutgers University.

Today, she's a retired educator and is currently the president of the board for George Street Playhouse, a professional, regional theater in New Brunswick, New Jersey. She's currently working on promoting Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) within the organization.

Penelope sat at her desk and reflected on her experiences. "The Civil Rights Era, as we see from the tributes to current events, was a time of awakening to our nation, and of a time when new legislation was adopted in order to address inequities in our society, and unfortunately those inequities required renewed attention today because we see where we did not complete the task. Our society still struggles with accepting diversity and inclusion of people of color as decision-makers in their own lives and the legislative records that impact on the lives of all Americans."



Michael

By Julia Block

Scibetta

It was December of 1995 when Michael Scibetta was visiting the Magic Kingdom with his wife for Mickey's Very Merry Christmas Party.

The couple was sitting in traffic waiting to get into the park when Scibetta's wife suggested an extraordinary idea that changed his life forever.

She asked him, "Why don't you just get a part-time job here? You've always worked part-time jobs."

Coincidentally, it was the same morning before his wife unveiled this proposal that Scibetta found an advertisement in the weekend section of the "Orlando Sentinel." Disney was opening a new place called the "Disney Institute" and was looking to hire people to be ushers for performances.

Scibetta pointed out that the "Disney Institute was not what it is today. It was a resort that was turned into a teaching facility for guests. The idea was that they would have classes during the day: cooking classes, animation classes, history of animation classes, all different classes that a guest can take (...) and at night, Disney was going to have performances of some sort."

Scibetta and his wife originally moved to Florida on August 1, 1993, due to his job transferring him from Edison, New Jersey, to Orlando. The couple rented a house just five miles away from Disney.

Scibetta described how they lived "so close [to Disney] that when they walked the dog at night, [they] could hear the train whistle [and] the fireworks."

It was during this period that he fell in love with Disney World.

The hiring process for Disney is much different than any other amusement park. Scibetta explained that his resume to work as an

usher had to go through the entertainment department. Despite the intensity of the hiring process, Scibetta was one of the first seven ushers to be hired to work at Disney's newest attraction.

He began working part-time at Disney on January 2, 1996.

"It was a great experience, but it was not successful. We found that anybody who attended it [and] tried it, loved it, but it was that hurdle of getting people to try something different and not go to the parks," Scibetta said regarding his experience at the Disney Institute.

During our interview, Scibetta went on to illustrate how the institute would be so empty during their evening performances that he would bring in his family members to fill seats. The fewer people that would come, the fewer hours cast members were offered to work.

In December of 1998, Scibetta was offered another part-time job at Disney as a host at Yachtsman Steakhouse. He worked both part-time jobs and his full-time job simultaneously up until the Disney Institute eventually closed its doors. His fellow cast members from the institute ended up working in Epcot as "people who hold the flashlights."

Lucky for Scibetta, the manager at the Yachtsman Steakhouse helped him work his way up the ranks at the restaurant and kept him working there for eight years. However, Scibetta's hours started being reduced as a result of the effects related to 9/11.

"I worked that night, and I worked that following weekend, and of course, there were a lot of people in Florida that couldn't get back home because the planes weren't flying. (...) Basically, after that weekend, because I was part-time, I no longer got any hours," Scibetta recounted.

He was unable to work at Disney for two months after 9/11 occurred, but continued to work his full-time job during that period.

He said, "I was going crazy. I was at home missing Disney. I would call and say, 'You're sure you don't need me this weekend?'"

Fast-forward to the weekend after Thanksgiving in 2001, Scibetta's daughter, also a Disney cast member who worked as a coordinator at Wilderness Lodge, calls her dad midafternoon:

"Dad, what are you doing? I need a big favor. I need you to come in and drive a fireworks cruise. (...) They're easy to do. It's a pontoon boat. They're very easy to drive. Can you help me out?"

Scibetta was taught how to drive the pontoon boat really quickly. He then took his assigned family out for their Magic Kingdom fireworks cruise and discovered that he really enjoyed doing it. He loved it so much that he had his daughter put his name on the list of people who could do the cruises when needed.

He did fireworks cruises on-and-off for a while, and after about eight months of learning his ways, he began training another cast member, who worked Epcot, to do the cruises for the Magic Kingdom fireworks out of Wilderness Lodge.

The cast member he was training recognized how well Scibetta ran his cruises. Consequently, the cast member from the other park offered Scibetta a position driving another boat for guests to see Epcot's fireworks show, "Illuminations."

Scibetta mentioned excitedly, "I was doing fireworks cruises for the Magic Kingdom, [cruises] for Epcot's 'Illuminations', and working [at] Yachtsman Steakhouse all at the same time, and having a blast doing it."

Eventually, Scibetta ended up leaving his job at the Yachtsman Steakhouse. Shortly after, he had yet another job offer, this one a bigger deal than all the rest prior to this request: "Hey Mike, how would you like to learn how to drive 'Breathless?'"

For those who don't know, Breathless was a 27-foot Chris Craft wooden boat replica made around the 1930s. The boat was made of mahogany wood, had a huge engine and was used for tours, fireworks cruises, and occasional speedy joyrides. Disney bought one of the 18 Chris Craft Company speed boat replicas that were created strictly because they knew the boat would fit in with the theme of the Yacht and Beach Club Resort. The boat has since been retired, and has been replaced with what is known as "Breathless II."

Breathless II is a 37-foot hacker craft. It is a faster boat and it has a bigger engine than Breathless.

"There came a point in time where I was the driver of [Breathless] every Sunday. I had it from 2 o'clock to 10:30 at night. I had an eight-hour shift, and it was heaven," expressed Scibetta.

Scibetta also mentioned that he was one of the few people who got to drive Breathless and Breathless II.

Unfortunately, it was during all these promotions as a part-time worker at Disney World that Scibetta was laid off from his full-time job of 32 years. He said it was a horrible time in his life; he lost his full-time job right before Thanksgiving and continued to be unemployed in a full-time job come Christmas time.

Scibetta recalled, "I said to my wife, 'Don't worry, honey. I've been in the industry for 32 years. I shouldn't have a problem finding another job.' Boy, was I wrong; it was a whole different world. (...) Back in the day, whenever you would look for a job, you open up the newspaper and circled a few things. You made a few phone calls, you took a few interviews, and you were working the following week. In this day and age, everything's online, and no one wants to talk to you. You don't get the opportunity to go face-to-face or even talk to anybody. It's horrible."

Once again, Scibetta's wife made a helpful suggestion: "Why don't you see what Disney has to offer?"

Scibetta understood that the pay would not be great, but the benefits would be if he could secure a full-time job in Disney World on top of his part-time gigs.

While celebrating his 15 years at Disney, he asked the resort manager at the Yacht Club if she could help him get a full-time job working the front desk. Being employed for 15 years is considered a big deal, especially for cast members at Disney. The resort manager told Scibetta to consider it done.

Long story short, Scibetta worked his way up the ranks in his full-time Disney job as well. He recently retired from working in Club Level Concierge at Disney's BoardWalk Inn on this special date: the anniversary of the Magic Kingdom and Epcot Center.

Scibetta said, "[Disney is] a great place to work, except you basically have to start at the bottom. (...) If you stick around and work hard to move up, you will succeed."

While Scibetta's ideology is great advice to those interested in working the magic that takes place behind the scenes, his message also resonates with one of Walt Disney's most famous quotes: "Keep moving forward." It would appear that Scibetta gets it.

Sketches

By Gabrielle Ignotis

"I always had an interest in sketching and drawing things," Madelene Hatt, born Madelene Milo, begins, settling more comfortably on the chocolate-colored leather coach in the center of the room, "In junior high school, they made me do all the backgrounds for the plays."

Surrounded by replications of renaissance paintings, dark wood, muted hardcover books, ornate picture frames and intricately patterned furniture, Hatt does not look out of place amid the baroque décor. Her neat bob, pressed clothes and streamlined posture fit in well with the environment and with her carefully cultivated image as a cultured and intelligent member of the fashion industry.

"I started doing sketching of (things) from the New York Times. They used to have charcoal and pen and ink fashion models, all with beautiful poses and beautiful clothes back in the day. So, I started duplicating theirs," Hatt says, a smile gracing her face as she recalls the illustrations she loved so dearly.

Growing up in Brooklyn in the 1950s, Hatt attended public school for the first decade of her life. When she reached high school, she applied and was accepted to the Art and Design High School. Even though this event occurred almost 50 years ago, Hatt still recounts the memory of her acceptance with a tinge of pride.

After a promising career at the Art and Design High School, Hatt decided to apply to the Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT). Her work was promising enough for her to secure both an acceptance and a scholarship to the prestigious school.

"FIT, at that point, was academics first," Hatt revealed, "And then art classes. I had textile design, some architectural classes, teaching us how to use a slide rule, which is absolutely obsolete now."

Hatt smirks conspiratorially after the last part of her statement, almost as if we are sharing a secret about how much the world has changed since her time in college.

"I took fashion illustration, which was the sketching of the fashion models. Then I took textile design because that was related to fashion design versus fashion illustration. I took draping classes and stuff. So, they taught you how to make a pattern... They taught you then, from that, how to make your muslin master plan, up from the paper pattern to the muslin. And then you use that on those mannequins," Hatt explains, "At the end of whatever that class was, your teacher would come in, and they would check your original design, like what did you want to do? I made a cape that would be [made] of, let's say, a tweed with suede trim. Whatever the design was, they would compare it and how you made it reality."

Hatt said that after her stint at FIT, she planned to become a designer.

"I took my sketches and made my portfolio, what my ideas were, and I pounded the street, which was Manhattan's 14 or seven Broadway 1411. Those big buildings had all of the major companies that mass-produced clothing, you know like Levi's," Hatt states, "I would walk in and meet the people that were involved in the designing sector... I would show them my designs or whatever, and some people would want to buy this concept from me."

Eventually, Hatt left designing and became an assistant to a buyer within the industry. She worked with Peck & Peck, a company like Sacs Fifth Avenue.

"I would make the appointments with the houses that she [the buyer] would go to. And now I was on the other side [of the industry]. Basically, the buyer and assistant would go to, let's say Ellen Tracy or whatever. And we walk in, and they would sit us down, and they would show us the designs, that maybe originally I had brought them, and that they were interpreted," Hatt explains.

"The buyer that I was with... she would explain a lot of things to me like, 'This is very beautiful but I don't think we could sell it... but this is a knockoff of that, and it has less detail and a little less labor, so this is less money. Let's buy 100 of these and put one or two in the top stores to see how they go. And if it goes, we'll order more of them.' And that's how I learned that procedure," she says.

Hatt later became a buyer in her own right. Upon announcing this proudly, Hatt rises from the sofa and heads toward a desk in the adjoining room. She searches for the article written about her promotion in Peck & Peck's newspaper, "Women's Wear Daily".

Although she doesn't find it, we end up perusing photographs from her various vacations, family events and adventures. Hatt grins and laughs as she scrutinizes the faded prints that depict her unique life.

Natasha

By Adonis Jones

Pitt

It was Oct 28, 2004 on an early Wednesday morning. Natasha Pitt was awakened by a sharp pain in her stomach that felt like someone was pinching her. She sat on the edge of the bed, grabbing her enlarged stomach, perplexed. Her baby wasn't due for another three weeks. She informed her husband of the pain, and he told her to take some pain medication in hopes it would relieve her pain. After taking some pain medication, the pain subsided as Natasha hopped out of bed en route to her routine before work.

It was 8 a.m. when Natasha administered quizzes to her students, as she often did. As she handed the quizzes out, she felt more pain in her stomach that felt worse and worse. The student she was administering the quiz to looked at her quizzically, wondering if she was in pain. Natasha shrugged it off and walked over to her chair, thinking she just needed to rest. Just then, the pain intensified, and at that moment, she told one of her students to, "call the dean." The dean came to the door, and Natasha walked slowly over and said, "I need to get to the hospital, I'm feeling labor pains."

One of Natasha's colleagues drove her to the hospital. When she arrived she was asked, "Do you want a wheelchair? No, I can walk, she said." As Natasha began to walk to the elevator, her feet started to drag as the pain became almost unbearable. When Natasha got upstairs, she saw a friendly face. "Hi Dr. Spruiell," she said. Dr. Spruiell said, "Climb up on the elongated table." He examined Natasha and explained, "Where have you been? His leg is hanging down your birth canal. Call your husband now, you're going to have a baby."

Natasha then called her husband and informed him of what was happening. Sean, her husband, was working when Natasha called him about the exciting news. He informed his boss of what was happening and was permitted to leave. Natasha went into labor, and at 1:25 a.m. the following day, Tyler Pitt was born in a hospital in Queens, New York. Tyler became one of my best friends, and his mother has become a second mom to me.

Lorraine

By Madison Bara

Rock

At the ripe age of 19, Lorraine Rock, found herself needing a sponsor for her local Girl Scout Troop.

Bepuzzled, the young Girl Scout leader started to look for organizations who would be willing to offer a helping hand to the innocent girls so ready to learn about life.

After searching for many days, a fellow Girl Scout leader suggested she check out a local organization dedicated to assisting veterans and soldiers of foreign wars.

"I ended up joining the organization for the Girl Scouts," said Lorraine. "However, it didn't take long for me to start loving the fellowship."

Lorraine was able to become a member of the government-run association under her father, Loren Hummell's name as he was an infantry soldier in War World II.

"They only recruited people who have personally been in a war overseas or had a family member enlisted in one," said Lor-

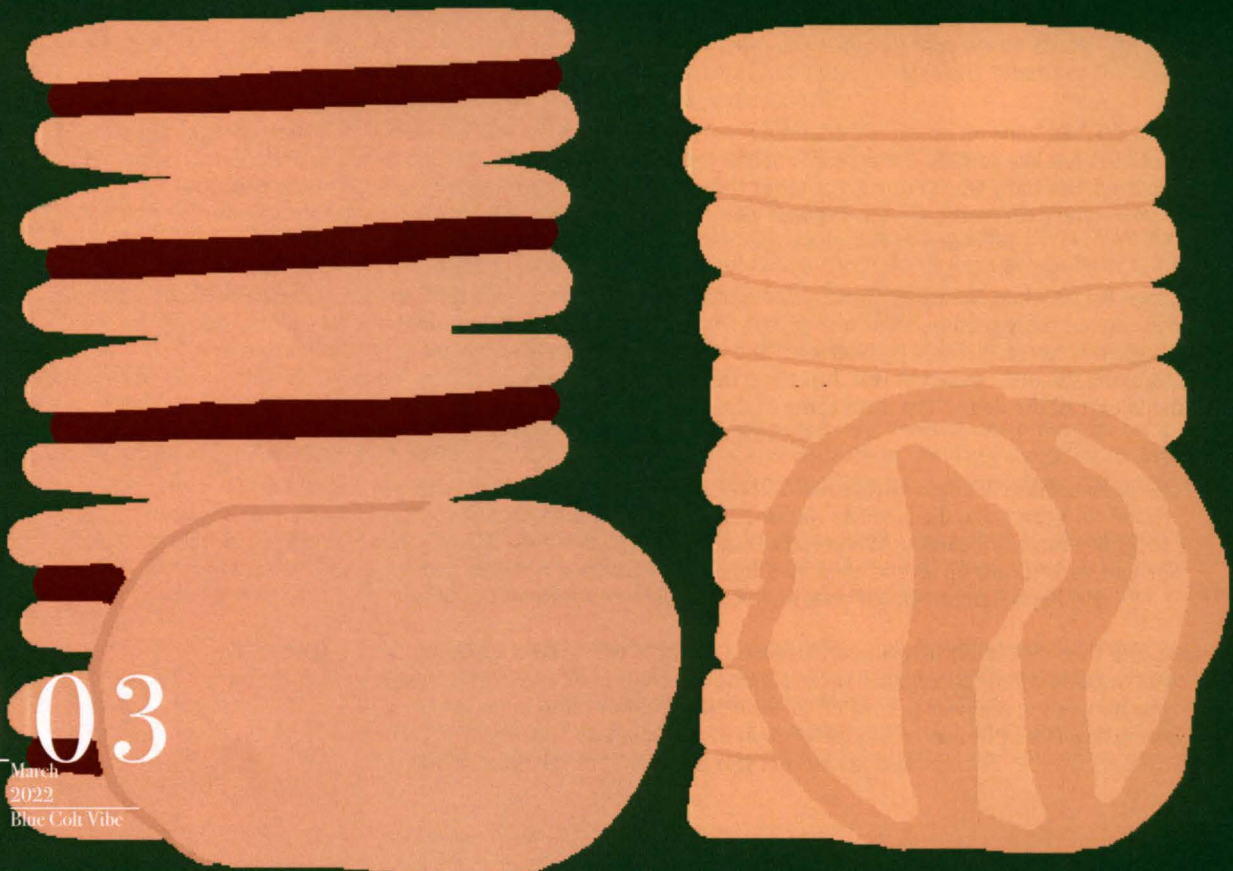
raine.

Upon joining, Lorraine started to work her way through the chairs, or positions, in the local organization. She quickly went from being a guard for the door during meetings to a trustee and then onto a secretary.

Finally, in the spring of 1971, she was able to secure the coveted spot of president at her local post in Sayreville and was put in charge of a committee of 150 or more women, at the young age of 21. Some of the duties that came with the position were visiting veteran hospitals, organizing events for clubs such as Girl Scouts, and keeping fellow members up to date on issues or affairs.

Although it was a lot to handle, Lorraine was overjoyed knowing she would lead her fellow members to success.

After about a year of being in a leadership position at Sayreville Post 4699, she decided to give it up, but was still very active as a member.



"I participated in all different kinds of services and programs including veteran's day, Memorial Day, and POW/MIA events the organization holds every year," said Lorraine.

With the help of the organization, she has also given care packages to soldiers which include deodorant, toothpaste, toothbrushes, and soap.

As she explained to me all the different programs that aid veterans, soldiers, and their families; I wondered if many people had heard about these opportunities. I know that any time I mention services related to veterans, nobody seems to know about them.

"A lot of these veterans don't know a lot of this stuff is here for them because nobody is handing it out," said Lorraine. "I give pamphlets to schools to hand out to the children, and they don't pass them out."

I hear the sorrow in her voice as she recollects the various veterans, she has encountered that did not get the respect and help that they deserve. It hurts to know that there are so many that get disregarded after coming home from battle, permanently scarred. I, too, have witnessed many veterans and soldiers struggle to make ends meet as well as get disrespected, and it is awful.

"I think we should take care of the people who are trying to keep us free and do the best we can for them because soldiers sacrifice their lives and their homes for us," said Lorraine.

In the year 2000, at the age of 52, Lorraine was reinstated as the president of the Sayreville post and spent the next ten years devoted to leading her members in aiding veterans and soldiers of foreign wars. She even inducted many members of her family, including her sister, children, nieces, and nephews.

"My kids, basically, grew up in Wildwood because I went to the big convention the organization holds in June, every year," Lorraine said.

This convention lasts about two to three days, and each post in New Jersey is expected to attend. At this convention, the posts can win prizes for categories such as top 10 presidents and best poppy display, which showcases the signature flower of the veterans. Lorraine has won 20 awards in her time as a member; she even won

first place in the top 10 presidents' category.

In recent years, she had become the district president which meant she held authority over 26 different posts located throughout New Jersey. However, she has since retired from that position.

Lorraine, being 71 this year, still actively attends meetings and participates in programs. She is still just as dedicated as when she first started, maybe even more.

After she described all that she had done, with this organization, to aid the veterans and soldiers; I wondered what made her continue to do it.

"I do it because my Dad was in the service and because I like helping the veterans in any way I can, since they sacrifice so much for us," said Lorraine.

She showed me a black and white picture of her father Loren Hummell, at 15-years-old, dressed in his WWII uniform. She explained to me that he had forged his documents to enlist early.

As she showed me some more information on the organization, including pamphlets, program sheets, and the history of the association printed out; I reflected on what I had done to help those in need. Although I have done a few things in my life to aid the less fortunate; I can't say that I have devoted my life to it. More importantly, I cannot remember the last time I thanked a veteran, let alone helped one.

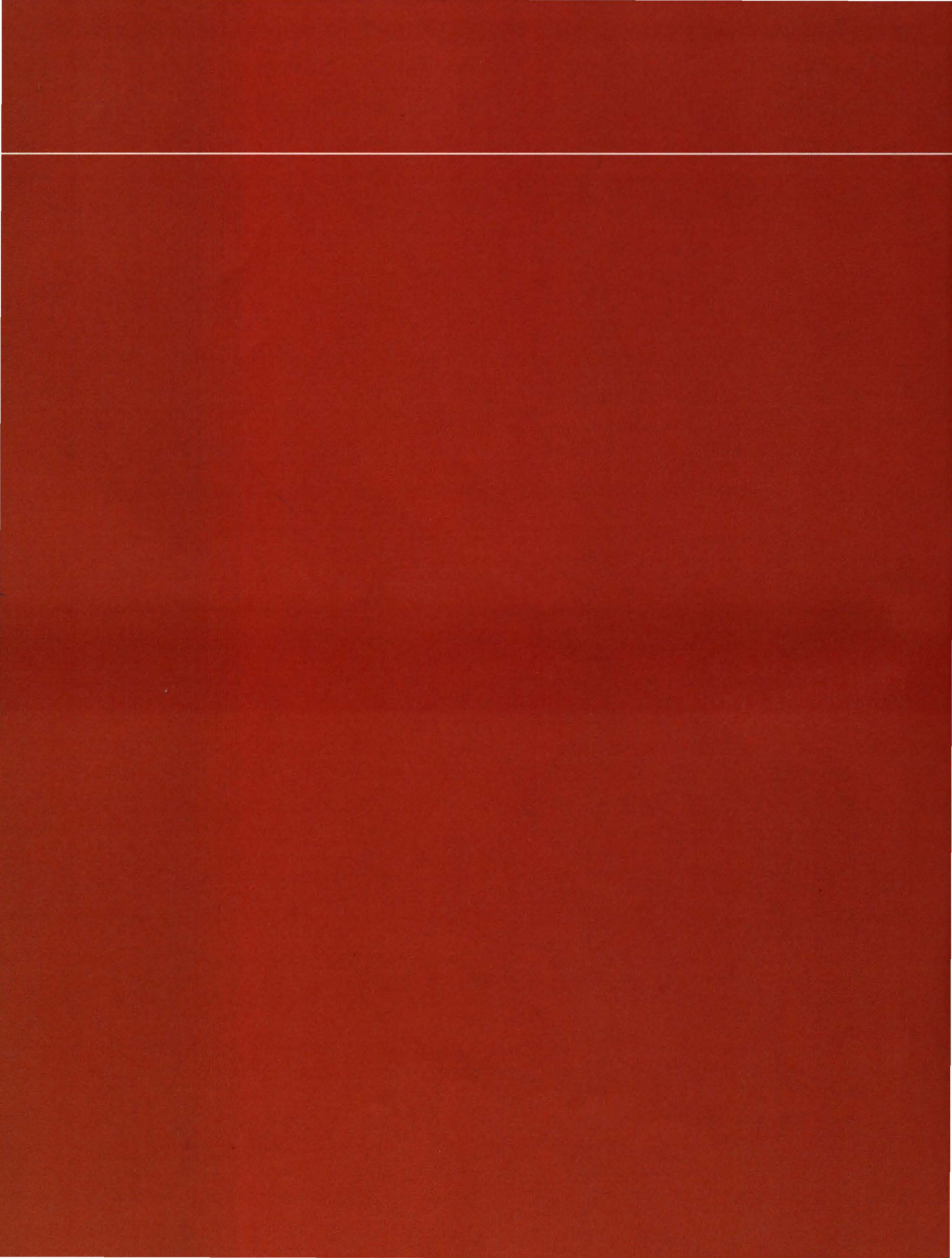
Hearing Lorraine's stories about her time in the VFW Auxiliary and experiencing her passion for providing care to the soldiers, firsthand, warmed my heart. She has made so many incredible contributions to the veterans and soldiers of foreign wars as well as to their families that it almost seems unreal. She spent most of her life doing this and continues to help when needed; I could only hope to be as considerate as her in my life.

I feel sorry that I, along with many others, have not given soldiers and veterans the admiration they deserve. Now that I know I have taken them for granted; I will make more of an effort to show them I care.

Thousands of men and women sacrifice their lives each day for our freedom, and I express my gratitude towards them. I can only hope that one day, every American will be able to do the same.



Slice Of Life



Family

By Shakera Blakney

Road Trip

On a hot July day in 2019, my family and I decided to take a trip to South Carolina to visit our relatives. My mother and aunt wanted to visit cousins they had not seen in many years, while my sister and I wanted to get an oral history of our family.

Setting out at 6:30 in the morning, we piled into the shiny red Subaru rental that's more modern than I ever remember a Subaru being. Everyone is dressed for comfort; however, I'm the only one wearing incredibly comfortable clothes. I'm wearing a sky blue, ¾ sleeve shirt, a gray sweatshirt over it with burgundy sweat-pants. It felt like the epitome of comfortable and practical, but not very stylish. My mother and aunt are wearing leggings and long-sleeved shirts; my sister has on floral printed yoga pants with a black t-shirt and a sweatshirt for her arms for if it gets chilly in the car.

Driving down I-95, my mother, aunt, sister and I are enveloped by Lisa Stansfield's "All Around the World" playing from the Bluetooth at an insanely high level. I sang along to the song at the top of my lungs as if I wrote it and was going through a troubled relationship. We're all in surprisingly high spirits and wide-eye as we enter Washington D.C. Going with the flow of traffic, I point out monuments to my mother and aunt as my sister is driving.

As we run out of monuments to point out, Patti LaBelle's "On My Own" starts to play over the speaker. As the beat begins to play, we become silent. Patti's voice comes through the speaker, "So many times, said it was forever." My aunt, sitting behind my sister, starts to sing along. She starts to harmonize with Patti, "Said our love would always be true. Something in my heart always knew..." I look across to my sister as she's driving, and she's smiling. She joins in with my aunt singing, "I'd be lying here beside you. On my own..." My mother is sitting behind me, and she slowly starts to sing. Before I know it, I'm joining in.

As the landscape passes us by, we are singing "On My Own" at the top of our lungs. I chuckled to myself as I realize there are two sets of sisters in the car. The older sisters are sitting on the driver side, singing the parts of Patti, my mother and I, on the passenger side, singing the parts of Michael McDonald.

As we are singing, it brought me back to a childhood moment of the cousins sitting around the stereo and the adults playing cards as this song plays. As the music plays, it dawns on me how many memories this song brings back to me. We all realize there's only one verse left in this song, and it felt like the atmosphere became electrified. The song comes to an end and we laugh almost uncontrollably. We're more excited about this trip as I-95 stretches for miles in front and behind us.

For 4 minutes and 33 seconds, time felt suspended and the only thing that mattered was the four of us having a blast, driving down I-95.

Thanksgiving

By Shakera Blakney

Plans

My sister and I are sitting in my living room with the “Great British Bake Off” playing in the background. It’s typically around this time of year, we start to plan our Thanksgiving menu, and today is no exception. As we started to discuss dishes, I zoned out thinking back to last Thanksgiving, and how we were late with solidifying our plans. Typically, we would go home for the holiday; however, we decided we would stay home and have a movie day. We decided to have a completely different Thanksgiving menu as well.

It was always difficult to celebrate holidays with our family because of the menu. It’s not typically vegan-friendly, leaving me to either transport my own food, which is highly inconvenient or shop for ingredients when I get to my family’s home. I learned the hard way: Do not go food shopping on the day before or on the day of Thanksgiving. What better way to solve this problem than to stay home and have a stress-free Thanksgiving?

We spent the day becoming more enthusiastic about the mere thought of doing something so different for us that we were deciding to plan a three-day Thanksgiving event. My sister and I agreed on having a marathon of Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU) films and set up a taco bar instead of the “normal” Thanksgiving dinner. We quickly realized to pull this off, I needed one more day off. So, I quickly submitted a vacation request and proceeded to plan as if that request was approved.

We wrote our shopping list, which included taco shells, tortilla chips, lettuce, tomatoes, ground beef, vegan beef crumbles, dairy and non-dairy cheese and other toppings. We also decided if we’re going to have a taco bar, why not have margaritas with it. We spent the day mapping out where to go first to get the supplies we would need. We decided a trial run was necessary to make sure what we planned to do was possible. This only added to our excitement.

With my vacation request approved, I needed to decide if we are watching these films in order of their release or in order of their storyline. Once I decided to view the storyline in order, our plans were complete. We were one day away from having to put our plans into action, and I can barely sleep. I couldn’t decide if I was more excited about having a different way of celebrating or if I was more excited about having days off where I didn’t have to do anything at all. Perhaps, I was excited for both.

It was the day before Thanksgiving, and we started with “Captain America.” As the day progressed and we made our way through the films, I marveled at the thought of doing something because I want to, and not because I have to. As we made our way to “Avengers: Endgame,” we realized our time of relaxation was coming to an end, just as our movie marathon. The span of these three days showed me the importance of planning, but also the importance of taking a break. While Thanksgiving passed and I returned to work and school, I felt rejuvenated and ready to get back to work.

Brain

By Caprice Benifield-Sanchez

Surgery

Darkness surrounded me as the feeling of eternal emptiness swallowed my entire being. Feeling like I am under a pile of rocks, my body is weighed down, unable to move. I am alone. I am scared. The silence within the moment echoed off the walls in a surreal world bordering reality. Thoughts filled my head. "Where am I, and why can't I move my body? Is this Purgatory? How could someone like me die so fast?" I feel the vibrations of drilling, almost as if I were getting a cavity filled at the dentist, but the drilling is faint, and it was not my teeth getting the vibrations.

"Caprice," a voice echoed in the abyss. The voice became more apparent, and a symphony of heated exchanges between the persons became present and clearer, as I can make out some of it. "Successful... Tylenol after a craniotomy? ... Morphine... She is waking up now!" My response never left my lips, and a bulge down my esophagus became present to my senses, and I started to gag. Agony is what I felt as I came out of my altered state; the bleak vibrations turned into a constant feeling of a hammer slamming into my skull. The pain was unbearable. A burning sensation shot down my right arm, and after a few seconds, I was at peace; the darkness came back. I was alone.

I woke up in a hospital bed, Pediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU) room 1. My mind was still there as I was able to read the bolded black letters above the television at a slant; my body was laid on a 150-degree angle. From the corner of my left eye, I was able to see a distorted view of my mother, grandmother and my math home-instruction teacher. I was homeschooled for almost three years; the familiar faces kept me calm.

The tube was removed, but my throat felt like nails scratching from the inside. In reaction to their presence I tried to speak. A raspy sound filtered through my lips, but not a coherent word was said. As I tried to open my mouth more to announce, my jaw stopped widening and pain stretched across my temples as I tried to pry my mouth open by force. My jaw was locked; the muscle was tight. The second reaction toward seeing my family was to see them fully. I raised my head from the bed abruptly and immediately felt the world spinning around me. Darkness surrounded me again, but the dizziness, stiffness and pain were still present.

After two weeks of searching to find a source of my two years' worth of insufferable headaches, dizziness and nausea, as an effect of a traumatic brain injury that refused to heal, I was given a choice that would change my life forever: the minimally invasive procedure, with a high chance of completely losing the hearing in my left ear; or, a Middle Fossa Craniotomy, the total repairment of the bone in my semicircular canal through brain surgery.

Gym

By Tatwa Vaidya

Reopens

It was a pleasant evening of Aug. 27 when I was home watching the sixth part of Harry Potter with some thinking and boredom. My phone vibrated and I got a text message from an unknown number. I was curious to open the text. I saw a link and clicked it. It took me to the NJ.com website. There was a sudden strike in my mind that I subscribed to this website for sending me any important/emergency news on my phone.

I saw something that could change my boredom into the excitement that Governor Murphy Signs Executive Order Allowing Gyms and Indoor Amusement and Water Parks to Reopen Effective Tuesday, September 1. I set an alarm for 5 p.m on sept. 1 so that I can remember to go to the gym after a long break of almost 6 months. The passing of those two days felt like I had to pass two years. Finally, it was time and I was too excited to go to the gym. On the morning of Sept. 1, I called my gym which is Planet Fitness to make sure that they are re-opened today. The answer from the associate was yes and I took a deep breath of satisfaction.

It was noon and I was staring at the clock. The time was going very slow and I felt nothing to do other than wait to go to the gym. Suddenly, An idea passed through my mind and that was to go to the gym early rather than waiting till 5 p.m. I got dressed and grabbed my essentials for the gym which is Gatorade, AirPods, and water. I was really excited but something happened.

A phone call! A phone call from my mom saying, "Can you please pick me up from work because your dad is stuck somewhere?" For that time, the world wasn't the same for me. I felt to be the unluckiest person in the world. "I can't say no to my mom", I said in my brain and I told her that I am coming to pick you. It took to be about an hour to pick her and drop her back home. I was holding my excitement and anger at the same time which was not a piece of cake.

I was at the door of my gym by 2:32 p.m. and yes, I still remembered the exact time. I went inside and showed my I'd through my phone and the associate threw too many questions to me regarding COVID-19. I got scared. He was asking me questions about me having any symptoms or having been in contact with someone who had COVID-19. I answered with a low tone voice and with nervousness. He approved me and told me to proceed into the gym.

I felt like I was somewhere in a new place that I never been to but I have been working out at the same gym for about 10 months before. I didn't know where to start. I felt like I was some new random kid in a High School who got starred by everyone. I called a bicep day and started with dumbbells. Slowly, I started to gain confidence in myself but couldn't lift the same weight that I use to lift. I did a couple of sets of hammer and I felt that my shoulders giving up but I didn't stop. After that, I did a couple of sets of Seated Alternating Hammer Curl, Standing Reverse Barbell Curl, Seated Alternating, Dumbbell Curl, and Standing Cable Curl.

After that felt like I was a new person and felt a positive vibe around me after doing all that.

Last but not least, I walked for about a half a mile on a treadmill at normal speed just to cool down my body and then call out the day. The first breath that I took after coming out of the gym just felt amazed. I went home, took shower, and took a good nap thinking about what I am going to do in the gym tomorrow.

Disney

By Amanda Clark

Happy Meals

On Sept. 14, McDonald's released Disney's 50th anniversary Happy Meal toys. Ever since I was a little kid, I have been obsessed with Disney. Disney allowed me to imagine the impossible and think anything is magically possible. Not only do I love Disney products, but McDonald's also serves delicious fries.

I wasn't originally planning to collect them all, especially since eating 50 Happy Meals would make me sick. Nonetheless, once I got the character Lady from "Lady and the Tramp," from a late-night McDonald's run, I needed to collect Tramp to go with Lady.

Each toy has a lenticular printing background reflecting five different locations from day to night. For the 26 characters on a peach-colored stand, the background is of Cinderella's castle in Magic Kingdom. The eight characters on a yellow stand have either Hollywood Studios street or Toy Story's Slinky ride. All nine characters are on a blue stand with a backdrop of Epcot Spaceship Earth ball. Lastly, the remaining seven characters on a green stand have the Animal Kingdom's tree of life.

Every character you buy is paired with someone but sold separately. While I was going to multiple McDonald's, thankfully, I learned you could buy just the toy without a Happy Meal. There was no longer the need to be hungry while toy hunting. Unable to find Tramp to pair with Lady, I began to start collecting them all. I bought any character they had either by itself or with a Happy Meal if I were hungry.

Sometimes the McDonald's I went to wouldn't know who they had, so I would gamble to see if it was a new character or not. More often than not, it would be someone I already have on my shelf. Each time I received a character I didn't have, I'd still be smiling from ear to ear. I'm aware of six groups on Facebook that buy, trade or sell McDonald's toys. Whenever I bought a double, the Facebook groups never let me down, as long as I was quick to reply and comment. Before you could blink twice, people would swoop down and beat you to a trade.

Trading around 23 characters, I was able to help someone else in the country get one toy closer to finishing their collection. Every time someone needed a character I had, and I needed someone they had, I was flooded with euphoria.

When I got more than halfway to obtaining all 50, it didn't matter how much gas was being used, how much I was spending on shipping labels or how much I was spending from my paycheck at this point. They became more than Happy Meal toys; they were a journey of hunting down the rarest of them all. All I could think about was to gather them all.

With all the spare time I had, I'd do one of two things: arrange a trade through Facebook or drive to a McDonald's in Central New Jersey. When I didn't have any extra characters but saw some people didn't want, I'd buy them. On top of feeling ecstatic when getting handed the Disney-themed Happy Meal box, I would rush to the mailbox every day to receive the traded toy.

Each day I got closer and closer to the finish line. The one thing I didn't account for was how they were going to be displayed. Currently, they are all spread throughout the house, waiting for their acrylic risers to come in the mail. This way, they can be organized together without taking up every shelf in the house.

Over a month has gone by since the release of the toys meant for children, yet every person I've traded with or bought from was collecting for their collection as a Disney-loving adult. I've managed to collect all 50 Disney characters on my shelf.

I experienced the feelings of ecstasy on my face when all 50 McDonald's Disney Happy Meal toys were in my possession. Collecting them all has been worth every penny.

Marineland

By Gabrielle Ignotis

I awoken to the sound of my cell phone vibrating against the heavy wooden nightstand. I open my eyes and take a moment to acclimate myself to the unfamiliar territory.

I scan the sky-blue walls and graying wooden floorboards, briefly inspecting the black and white print of palm trees that is hung on the wall across from me. I can't see the digital clock from my bed, but I know it must be early.

I carefully lift the slate gray quilt and stark white sheets before sliding out of bed. I move softly towards my suitcase, careful not to disturb the rest of my family. My bag remains unpacked: I didn't see the need when we would only be spending two days in St. Augustine anyway. I gather up a bathing suit, denim shorts, sunscreen and a light sweater, before heading towards the bathroom.

By the time I have showered, gotten dressed, applied sunscreen and thrown my hair back in a messy ponytail, the rest of my family is beginning to arise. I scroll through my phone absentmindedly as they go about their morning routines. Luckily, we don't take too long.

We leave the inn shortly before 8 a.m. We stop for coffee and bagels from a nearby shop before heading towards our destination.

The drive only takes about 20 minutes, but the fact that we are traveling over a narrow strip of land makes it seem longer. I spend most of the ride gazing at the ocean while listening to music, my cheek resting firmly on my fist the entire time.

Marineland Dolphin Adventure is small. If it weren't for the GPS, I wouldn't have recognized the squat collection of white-washed buildings as an aquarium or as a museum. The only thing that distinguishes this facility is a neat, painted sign and a small yellow arch over the entrance.

We walk through the entrance. There is a gift shop near the front, which we make plans to attend later.

We pick our way through the grounds, reading plaques and studying exhibits. Marineland prides itself on being part of an immersive experience, half aquarium and half museum. They host over 80 years of St. Augustine history and a collection of information about marine life.

We move a little quicker when we realize what time it is, making our way to a large pool near the back of the facility.

When we arrive, one of the Marineland staff members introduces herself and takes us into the back with a few other individuals. There, we are fitted for life vests, which are unfortunately neon-colored, and given basic instructions.

After what feels like an hour, but is probably only about 15 minutes, we can get into the water. We stand in the shallow end, where the water just barely comes up to our waists. The other end is much deeper, likely more than 30 feet.

After a few additional instructions, the trainer whistles. A gray shape approaches under the water, its rounded fin breaching the surface right before it stops at the edge of the shallow end. The trainer walks over, lightly grasping the fin as she pulls the creature into the shallow end carefully.

"This," the trainer announces, "Is Zach."

I gasp softly as I gaze down at the dolphin. He is almost eight feet long, light gray and energetic. His black eyes twinkle mischievously, although he obeys the trainer every step of the way.

The trainer provides facts and information about Zach, as well as the care Marineland provides for him, as she leads him through a collection of tricks. Zach performs jumps, makes various noises and shakes hands (or fins, I suppose). At one point, the trainer invites Zach to kiss my cheek, which he does.

The trainer also allows us to pet Zach. My family and I each put one hand on him and rub him gently. He feels like clean, smooth, wet rubber. The Marineland photographer snaps a photo. My grin is so wide, it eclipses half of my face.

Eventually, our session ends. We dry off and bid goodbye to the trainer and Zach, who performs a few more tricks for us before returning to the deeper end of the pool.

After, we stroll the wooden boardwalk that borders one side of the pool. On one side, Marineland's historical and scientific attractions begin to come to life in the late morning. On the other, the peaceful waves lap against the beach as the wind softly plays with the picturesque tall grass.

It's still chilly for a morning in Florida, so I pull my sweater a little closer as I take in the sight with my family, content and at peace.

Lantern

By Julia Block

Festival

This past September, my boyfriend took me to a water lantern festival to celebrate my 19th birthday.

The festival took place on Sept. 14 from 4:30 to 10 p.m. at Liberty State Park in Jersey City.

My birthday was the day before.

The park had large amounts of grass fields, beautiful cobblestone streets and tons of open space to walk around and explore. Visitors could also see views of the New York City skyline and Ellis Island.

When it came time to enter the actual event, we gave the workers our tickets and were given sling bags with our lanterns, a permanent marker, and a mandala throw blanket to use when watching the lanterns glow on the water. We purchased all our things in advance, but other people who wanted to participate were able to wait in line and purchase materials in a similar fashion.

A handful of tables were grouped behind the admission tents for guests to decorate their lanterns. The tables had more markers for everyone to use, and people gathered to decorate around the tables writing positive notes, hopeful messages, and meaningful drawings that were connected to them and/or others.

Each lantern had four sides. My boyfriend and I made drawings on one side, messages to each other on the second side, designs regarding my birthday on the third side and we each included a heart with our initials on the last side.

Food trucks had long lines of people waiting to purchase all different kinds of foods, and vendors had tents and tables set up for people to buy various souvenirs.

My boyfriend and I visited the Cousins Maine Lobster truck and shared a Connecticut-style lobster roll. The lobster was warm with butter and lemon on the small, soft roll. Despite their lobster roll being delicious, the small roll cost around \$17 and change and was not big enough to share and fill our stomachs.

outstanding, and we got all our food for about \$26 and change.

After eating dinner from the main-course food trucks, I had shaved ice and my boyfriend had a milkshake for dessert.

The number of food options and the quality of the food and services from the food trucks was unbelievable.

As it started to get dark, we found a space to put our mandala blanket in the field of grass near the lantern launch point, and then began to walk across the bridge to release our lanterns.

By now, the skyline was all lit up and everyone's lanterns were glowing at the launch site.

We each used the ramps and watched our lanterns slide into the water to float with all the others.

After returning to our mandala blanket, the view was absolutely breathtaking.

It felt magical like I had entered the Disney movie, "Tangled."

There had to be a few hundred lanterns floating in the harbor, each special to their respective individuals.

My boyfriend and I stuck around to watch the floating lanterns illuminate the dark, night sky until almost 10 p.m.

I couldn't have asked for a better birthday celebration, and hope that we can experience more moments like this in times to come.

Pg. **113**

March
2022

Blue Colt Vibe

We also bought food from the Empanada Monster food truck. I had a chicken arepa, and my boyfriend has a pork roll arepa. We shared one "monster" beef empanada. Their food was also

Time

By Julia Block

Management

Since I've started college, it's been difficult to manage my time and get everything done by its deadline. Apart from my classes, I also need time for clubs, homework, work, tutoring and a little time to rest after all the running around. Although I am far from perfect, I believe I have found a few ways that help me manage my time to complete all that must be done.

My primary method of managing my time is to write everything down in the order the tasks need to be completed. If I had eight assignments to complete, I would write each assignment with their due date in chronological order to keep myself organized and to see which assignment should be completed first. It helps to approximate how much time each task will take. If I know it will take me longer to complete my art project than it will to finish my math homework, I know I can allot more time for the harder or more time-consuming subjects.

By estimating the amount of time everything will take, planning when to work on things becomes less complicated. For instance, if I have work from 6-10 p.m. on Saturday, I plan to wake up earlier or stay up later to work on some of my homework that can't be done during the four hours I am working. The same approach is applied for when I have to tutor, be at club meetings, or whatever else I end up doing in the course of my busy life.

One of the harder, but equally important time management tactics I live by is having to stick to the routine that you set for yourself. It can be hard to turn down offers from family or friends to go out and have a good time, but straying from your task schedule can muddle tasks that get pushed until a later time where other tasks were priorly set in place.

However, it is also essential to make time for other things outside the list of responsibilities and commitments. It is OK to take a break and enjoy yourself from time to time; without that, the stress from a constant grind can become overwhelming and irritating. I try to give myself a few short breaks each day, and one longer break at the end of a week or during a weekend to recuperate from my demanding schedule and to reward myself for all I've gotten done. Additionally, it helps to have breaks before other duties that lay ahead for later.

In the end, there has to be a balance between getting stuff done and having time for yourself, and there are numerous ways to manage your time to allow for this balance to exist.

