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a student publication

The **Montgazette**

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The Students' Voice

Issue 84

Serving Montgomery County Community College and the Surrounding Community

December 2020



"Amy Coney Barrett"
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2020: A tumultuous year in review

Josh Young
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Hello again. I hope that everyone reading this is ending their semester and year on a positive note, especially after all the tumult and chaos that this year has thrown at us. I would like to say “Congratulations!” to all those students who are graduating after this semester, and I wish you continued success in your future endeavors, whatever they may be.

The year 2020 was certainly one where we came to expect the unexpected. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, in March our spring semester was suddenly thrown into a nearly unprecedented situation that consisted of a full switch to virtual learning. As of this writing, in the United States, 227,000 people have died of the virus, out of 13.4 million documented cases.

At the completion of the spring 2020 semester, we learned that the summer, and later the fall, semesters would also both be held completely online as a continuation of the policy established by the College in its attempts to protect students, faculty and staff from COVID-19. I, along with the many of you who are reading this, were thrown into a state of anxiety and uncertainty as a result of these developments. My grandmother

subsequently succumbed to cancer in April, which worsened my clinical depression. Because of COVID-19, I am sure that I am not the only one who experienced the loss of a family member, close friend, or loved one in the spring.

All of these issues, along with the regular stressors of our lives, were already upon us when on May 25, officer Derek Chauvin knelt on George Floyd’s neck for a period initially reported as 8 minutes and 46 seconds. Floyd, who was wanted for allegedly passing a counterfeit \$20 bill, eventually died at the scene, uttering the now famous words, “I can’t breathe.” In the wake of these tragic developments, protests against police misconduct, police brutality, and systemic racism erupted across the country.

Unfortunately, mixed in with these protests were a series of counterproductive and destructive riots that left areas of many cities burning. Independent journalists and media conglomerates like CNN swooped in and reported live from the scene of many of these riots, bringing the chaos into our living rooms, for all to see. Finally, 2020 gave us a U.S. General Election at a time when the country

and its two major political parties are heavily polarized, only adding further to the stress of 2020. All these things have helped to highlight the most inspiring and the most horrible aspects of ourselves and the nation.

So, now we are currently studying for our final exams, finishing up our end-of-the-semester projects, and looking ahead to the spring 2021 semester, whether it be here at Montgomery County Community College, at a four-year university or someplace else. However, despite these and all the other aforementioned pressures exerted on us this year, we have arrived at the other end of the tunnel more or less intact, even if the road was historically rocky from time to time.

I know on a personal level that this year was a period of tremendous personal growth for me, and I suspect that the same can be said for most of those reading this paper. Thus, I would like to say that if you were able to get through this year with any modicum of success, you are well-suited for your future plans, whatever they may be, and that the years ahead should be much easier.

Good luck on your finals and have a great winter break!

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The Montgazette is published twice a semester from October to May by the students and advisory staff of Montgomery County Community College.

Printed by Journal Register in Exton, PA.

 The Montgazette is printed on recycled paper.

Amy Coney Barrett:

Tipping the scales of the Supreme Court

Nick Young
The Montgazette Contributor

As the Joseph R. Biden Administration begins and the Donald J. Trump Administration comes to an end, there is one promise that President Trump unequivocally kept. Thanks to Trump nominating Amy Coney Barrett in the wake of Ruth Bader Ginsburg's death, and together with his earlier appointments of Neil Gorsuch and Brett Kavanaugh, the Supreme Court has a conservative majority.

Barrett's background is immaculate. She graduated first in her class at the University of Notre Dame and earned the position of Executive Editor of the Notre Dame Law Review. During her time teaching at Notre Dame, Barrett received the "Distinguished Professor of the Year" award three times, which recognizes faculty who exhibit excellence in leadership, friendship, legal knowledge, legal teaching, and professional ability. All the while, her articles were being published in the prestigious Columbia, Cornell, Virginia, Notre Dame, and Texas Law Reviews.

Her previous experience with the late Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia as one of his law clerks places her squarely in the originalist and conservative realm of law. In addition, while working at a private law firm, she also provided research

to the George W. Bush administration for the consequential case of *Bush v. Gore*, which ended the 2000 president election in Bush's favor.

Because of all this history, there should be little doubt as to her ability to be on the court. She will make crucial decisions that will change the course of history, especially with upcoming cases about mail-in ballots and the Affordable Care Act, otherwise known as Obamacare. However, legal experts believe the most momentous decision in relation to her legacy on the High Court will involve *Roe v. Wade* and its constitutionality as it relates to the issue of abortion.

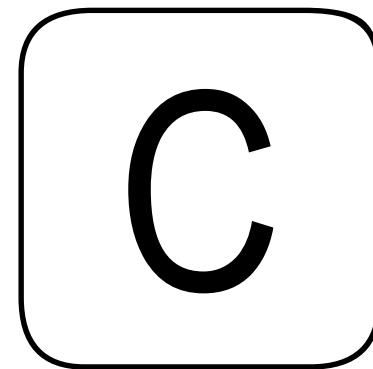
Her record on several issues shows her opposition to abortion and fetal death in general, which is heavily critiqued by Democrats. She concurred with Judge Frank Easterbrook about upholding a provision denying a person the ability to have an abortion based on fetus's sex, race, or disability. This law has been dubbed the "eugenics statute" by many conservatives and has been defended based on the idea that the court has never decided on the issue of whether to intervene in such a case.

Barrett's stance has been criticized by many Democrats, who say this shows her inability to be objective and not bring her Catholic

religious beliefs into her decision making. However, this charge seems misplaced since she also joined a unanimous panel to uphold an ordinance forcing protesters outside of abortion clinics to stay at least 8 feet away from the clinic during a protest. Many of the times

she has been involved in the realm of abortion it has been to rule on technicalities that would not hamper a person's right to an abortion in a universal way.

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Dak Prescott:

His struggles shine a light on media and mental illness

Josh Young
The Montgazette Editor-in-Chief

Football is a beautiful but dangerous game. This was never truer than on October 11, 2020, when the Dallas Cowboys defeated the New York Giants in a thriller with a score of 37-34, thanks to some late-game heroics from backup quarterback Andy Dalton. Dalton was playing because of a gruesome ankle injury suffered by Cowboys starter Dak Prescott in the third quarter that put him on Injured Reserve, indicating that he will not play again this season.

Prescott is one of the most well-liked players in the league among his teammates and opponents, as evidenced by the outpouring of support on social media after the injury. This injury is even more unfortunate considering the struggles that Prescott has experienced recently off the field and the issues the media have been reporting on regarding a problem that many American deal with every day: mental illness.

During the off-season, Prescott was very open about his family's battle with mental illness, as well as his own. Prescott's brother Jace committed suicide in April after a long battle with depression that was exacerbated by their mother's long battle with colon cancer, which she died of in 2013, while Prescott was playing at Mississippi State.

According to Insider.com, Prescott talked about this tragic development in an interview with Graham Bensinger, in which Prescott said, "I'll never get another hug in

my life like the ones he [Jace] gave." Prescott also said that his brother "didn't know how to be vulnerable about it [his battle with mental illness and depression]."

Prescott then encouraged others to reach out and talk about their issues with mental illness, saying, "It [Jace's suicide] showed me how vulnerable we have to be as humans, how open we have to be ... because our adversities, our struggles, what we go through is always gonna be too much for ourselves and maybe too much for one or two people, but never too much for a community or too much for people in the family you love. So, you have to share these things."

Prescott also said that during the off-season, he dealt with his own bouts of anxiety and depression due to the COVID-19 pandemic that made it hard for him to get out of bed. The situation was compounded by his brother's suicide.

Unfortunately, not everyone in sports media was supportive of Dak's comments.

Prominent sports pundit Skip Bayless was one such detractor. On his show "Undisputed" on FS1, Bayless said that he felt zero sympathy for Prescott. "He's the quarterback of America's team," Bayless said. "The sport that he plays is dog eat dog. It is no compassion, no quarter given on the football field. If you reveal publicly any little weakness, it can affect your team's ability to believe in you in the toughest spot."

Essentially, Bayless insinuated that Prescott's discussion of depression was a sign of weakness, which implies the behavior should be discouraged. This is a disgusting statement that hinders addressing a critical issue that, in the eyes of many experts, already faces stigmatization by the media.

One of these experts is Dr. Taylor Alexander, CEO of the Canadian Mental Health Association, who says that in the media there is an emphasis on people with mental illness as the "other," or separate from the general fabric of society, which results in their disassociation from society. These

effects are detrimental to the millions of Americans who struggle every day with mental illness or who are already fearful of speaking out about the issue, with depression being one of the most prominent conditions.

This development is also one of the important reasons why so many cases go unreported or undiagnosed. In fact, according to the Mental Illness Policy Organization, half of all individuals with severe psychiatric disorders, about 3.5 million people, receive no treatment.

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Let Your Voice Be Heard!

Dak Prescott and media, mental illness

Continued from Page 4.

Experts believe that the best course of action is to encourage and praise people for speaking up about their experience — about what it's like living with mental illness. Hopefully, this encouragement will give people who are reluctant to come forward an opportunity to do so and receive the treatment they need.

According to the National Institute of Mental Health, 46.6 million people in the United States, or one in five, suffer from a mental illness. Depression is one of the most common, with 7.1 percent of all U.S. adults experiencing a major depressive episode every year. Research also suggests that such an episode, or being diagnosed with clinical depression, puts people at an increased risk for suicide and substance abuse.

Additionally, thousands of other cases go unreported to families and mental health professionals, in part because of the stigma surrounding depressive disorder and mental illness in society.

With the suicide rate rising by 35 percent

between 1999 and 2018, according to NIMH, it is even more important that we as a society do our best to destigmatize and talk about our own mental health issues. No matter what some people might say, having clinical depression or any other kind of mental illness and wanting to talk about it does not make one weak.

If you or anyone you know is struggling with a mental illness and wants to talk about it and/or seek treatment, please know that there are a multitude of services available. Montgomery County Community College is currently partnering with Talkspace, an online therapy site. The website can be reached at <https://www.talkspace.com/montco>. If you or anyone you know is contemplating suicide, or you fear may be contemplating suicide, please call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 800-273-8255.

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Opinion: Colleges should be free

Elissa Odeh

MSP 111 The Montgazette Contributor

The debate has been going on for a long time: Should college education be free? While many disapprove of the idea, others strongly embrace it, pushing policymakers to finally talk about making colleges in America tuition-free for all students.

Several studies, like one done by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, have shown that free education is beneficial not only for students, but for society as a whole.

Tuition-free education will allow more students to go to college, encouraging those with lower incomes to finish their education and get a degree. Data by The Hechinger Report showed that nearly 4 million undergraduate students dropped out of college between 2014 and 2016 due to their federal student debt. Therefore, many experts believe that making colleges free will eliminate student debt and financial struggles, opening new doors for the younger generation, especially lower-income students, allowing them to enter society with a degree.

Free college will also benefit the economy by widening the workforce in America. According to Economic for Inclusive Prosperity, free college would increase graduation rates, which will expand the workforce, and

therefore boost the economy. If more people graduate from college, this will create more jobs in the workforce, which in turn will benefit the economy.

The idea for free college is not impossible; many countries around the world give college students a free education. In fact, German universities that offer a free education for their students have witnessed a 22% increase in enrollment according to the Ministry of Education and Research. Furthermore, many other developed countries like Denmark, Sweden, and Norway are among those that provide free college by having higher taxes for education and health.

Some politicians and institutions who are against free college claim that tuition-free education would negatively affect the economy. According to several Republican politicians like Chris Christie, eliminating college tuition would only slow and devastate the economy by increasing the government's financial burden. However, according to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the difficulty to access education as well as high college tuitions prevented economic growth and prosperity in many developed countries between 1990 and 2010, which

means that free college can boost economic growth as more people can join the workforce.

Democrats are pushing for tuition-free education, calling for the cancellation of student debt. Senator Bernie Sanders' College for All Act encourages providing about \$48 billion each year in order to make colleges tuition-free. The plan also plans to eliminate all federal and private student loans by imposing a financial-transaction tax on Wall Street.

President-elect Joseph R. Biden also plans to make colleges free for families whose annual income is less than \$125,000, as well as making community

colleges free for everyone despite their income. According to a report by Georgetown University, Biden's plan would eventually pay for itself within 10 years due to the increase in income and tax revenue.

High tuitions are affecting not only students, but the economy as well. Tuition-free education will increase graduation rates, solve the problem of student debt, and boost the economy by expanding the workforce. It is time for the U.S government to follow the example of other developed nations and offer tuition-free education for college students.



A student graduate protests for tuition-free schooling.

Photo by Elissa Odeh

OPINION



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Opinion: Flu vaccines should be mandatory

Rebecca Martin
MSP 111 The Montgazette Contributor

Each year, advertisements encourage people to get the influenza vaccination, so they can avoid fever, sore throat, muscle aches, cough, diarrhea, shortness of breath and chills. Despite these annual warnings, however, individuals choose to not vaccinate themselves or their children. This is a big mistake for several reasons.

First, although many people may not see the importance of being vaccinated, studies have shown the flu to be highly contagious and, in some cases, deadly. Because of the risks, the influenza vaccination should be mandatory.

Second, influenza, which can cause some individuals to experience severe inflammation in their lungs and can become life threatening, is one of the most preventable illnesses in the United States — if a person is vaccinated. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention confirms this statement with statistics: In the 2018-2019 flu season, the flu vaccination prevented an estimated 4.4 million influenza illnesses, 2.3 million influenza-associated medical visits, 58,000 influenza-associated hospitalizations, and 3,500 influenza-associated deaths.

Here's one more plug for the vaccine: If you get vaccinated, you could still get infected, but your chances are greatly reduced. The flu

is highly contagious and can still be transmitted to those who choose to be vaccinated. According to the CDC, it is still possible to contract the flu, even if you have been vaccinated. However, that scenario is much less likely. And, if you are exposed to someone with the flu, and you are not vaccinated, the outcome, depending on the person, and the virus strain, can be deadly.

Even with indisputable evidence showing that the flu vaccine is effective, though, many people are still strongly against vaccination. According to the CDC, "The current influenza vaccine has been 45% effective overall against 2019-2020 seasonal influenza A and B viruses. Specifically, the flu vaccine has been 50% effective against influenza B/Victoria viruses and 37% effective against influenza A(H1N1)pdm09." However, almost half of Americans still do not get a flu shot. Why?

Most of those who do not get the flu shot, as well as other vaccinations, is related to a conspiracy theory that vaccines cause autism. This theory has even gotten support from some celebrities such as Jenny McCarthy. However, no scientific studies have found a link between the two. These conspiracy theories tend to arise out of a mistrust or a misunderstanding of science. Another, but less common, reason that people do not get vaccines is that their religion forbids them from

doing so. However, most mainstream religions do not espouse such a view.

Though the influenza vaccine seems low risk, some individuals experience negative effects, such as still getting the flu, severe allergic reactions, and Guillain-Barré syndrome. Healthline states, "Some people may have a negative reaction to the flu shot. If you have a negative reaction to the vaccine, symptoms usually occur within minutes to hours after receiving the vaccine. Symptoms may include difficulty breathing, wheezing, rapid heartbeat, rash or hives, swelling around the eyes and mouth, feeling weak or dizzy." Therefore, there is no guaranteed way to avoid the flu, though the vaccine is a proven way to dramatically reduce your risk.

Influenza can be fatal, but the vaccine should be mandatory because the benefits are real, and the drawbacks are statistically slim. The only method effective in preventing the spread of influenza to others is getting a vaccination and staying away from others when you are sick. In our new, post-COVID-19 world, it is more important than ever for medical expertise to be taken seriously. It is imperative that we take these medical recommendations to heart as a method of saving the lives of our friends, neighbors and families — and ourselves.



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Opinion: The importance of Sunday dinner

Jackie Stong

MSP 111 The Montgazette Contributor

Many families have gotten away from doing dinner together, but these gatherings are more important now than ever. The traditional family dinner needs to make a comeback to help people deal with our changing world and declining economy.

Family dinners allow everyone to take a break from their busy everyday life and enjoy time with one another. The time spent together allows for stronger bonds to develop among family members and for memories to be made for the younger generation, so they can pass these stories and traditions to their children.

Even though it can be hard to coordinate everyone's busy schedules, it is something that "can be" done and "needs to be" done. One day we are not going to have certain family members with us anymore. No matter how hard the struggle of coordinating a day, time is something that we will never get back, and so we need to act on our time together today.

The family dinner tradition began in England as a large meal that was eaten after church. But as time passed, the tradition changed with each generation. No matter what food was served, or what day of the week family dinner was eaten, families were sharing a meal together. However, this practice has been lost for a variety of reasons, such as social media and the Internet making it possible for people to work from anywhere.

The importance of sharing a meal together is more than just the meal itself.

It is about the tradition that is being established. In some families, multiple generations come together, offering a prime time for the younger generation to learn from the older generation. Youngsters can learn core values from their elders. They can also learn about history through the elders' jokes, stories, worries, hopes, and personalities.

According to the Family Dinner Project, gathering around the dinner table offers many different benefits, for all age groups. Children can develop larger vocabularies, which could help them do better in school. They are also more likely to have better cardiovascular health; lower obesity rates; and lower rates of depression, anxiety, and eating disorders, as well as fewer behavioral problems in school.

Family dinners are not so much about the food itself but are about being able to physically spend an afternoon with loved ones. The atmosphere should be laid back and casual, especially since for most people Sundays fall right before a new work week. These family dinners should not have the feel of a Saturday night dinner party but more of a relaxing afternoon or evening.

Another simple idea is for families to get together for football Sundays! This is a very laid-back afternoon that a family can share together, and the meal can be either something simple like pizza or take-out, or just appetizers. So, no matter what type of meal is being served, it should be more about spending time

together and not so much about an extravagant dinner menu.

If people are worried about the stress of making a meal to feed a large crowd, there are options to help ease this worry. When the family dinner is planned, the host can ask the guests to bring a side dish, and then the host only has to worry about the main entrée. Also, there is no harm in ordering take-out for a Sunday dinner. Sundays are about resting and preparing for the work-and-school week ahead, so there is no shame in taking the easy way out!

If there is one thing that this

pandemic has taught us, it's the importance of time. All families are busy, and since people are trying to limit their time spent outside of the home, there is no better time than the present to reinstitute family dinner. It is all about prioritizing. Spending time with loved ones and laughing is something we can never get back, and there will never be a regret about going to or hosting a family dinner.

Families will always look back on the fun that was had and the memories that were made during a Sunday family dinner.



Sunday dinner meal preparation.

Photo by Jackie Stong

Opinion: Make Juneteenth a federal holiday; remove Columbus Day

Kyla Richardson
MSP 111 The Montgazette Contributor

Juneteenth is an important day for African Americans in the United States. The holiday is nationally known and holds tremendous importance for many Americans, but it has not been given the historical and symbolic importance of becoming a federal holiday.

July 4, 1776, is the day America officially declared its freedom and independence from Great Britain. Although U.S. citizens had finally lived in a free country, this privilege did not apply to enslaved African Americans until nearly a century later.

After 89 long years, on June 19, 1865, all enslaved African Americans were finally free. This day is also known as Freedom Day, Jubilee Day, Liberation Day, and Emancipation Day.

Although Juneteenth is not recognized as a federal holiday nationally, it is a state holiday in Texas, the last state to abolish slavery.

Many people across social media have demanded that Columbus Day be removed as a federal holiday and that the United States celebrate Juneteenth instead. This demand has been popular with Black Lives Matter protestors. These demonstrations started after the murder of George Floyd and gained worldwide

attention, making the movement one of the largest civil rights movements in U.S. history.

According to the Crowd Sourcing Consortium, 15 to 26 million people have joined Black Lives Matter protests since May 2020.

On the other hand, Columbus Day is known and celebrated for the “discovery” of America by Christopher Columbus, or so this is what has been taught in school curriculums for decades. What has not been taught is how Columbus landed on an island and committed genocide against the Native people, and how he raped their women and made the Native people his slaves to find gold.

Despite this being a time of horrors, Columbus Day remains a federal holiday. Petitions have been created across social media to remove Columbus Day and make Juneteenth a national federal holiday.

In a recent 2020 petition created by 93-year-old Opal Lee of Texas and posted on Change.org, 1,455,450 people out of a 3,000,000 goal have signed to make Juneteenth a federal holiday. Many other petitions like this one have been created in effort to remove Columbus Day once and for all, and to make Juneteenth official.

Though Juneteenth has yet to be made a national holiday, Governor Tom Wolf signed the 2019 Act 9 law (formally known as House Bill 619), on June 19, 2019, which declared June 19 to be “Juneteenth National Freedom Day” in the state of Pennsylvania.

More efforts from other states attempting to make Juneteenth an official federal holiday would take

the country closer to solidarity and to unanimous celebration of abolishment of slavery.

Making Juneteenth a federal holiday in the U.S. will not just honor and recognize the Black community, but it will also allow the country to remember and reflect upon America’s original promise: bringing us all one more step toward building a more perfect union.



Juneteenth celebration illustration.

Photo by Kyla Richardson

Flyers offseason moves: Still in limbo?

Nick Young

The Montgazette Contributor

The Philadelphia Flyers' disappointing end to the New York Islanders in the second round, in 7 games of last year's Stanley Cup Playoffs, has left a bitter taste in the mouths of many Philadelphia fans. Our powerplay was a joke in the playoffs, going a miserable 7.7 percent. This indicated the biggest problems for the Flyers in the postseason, namely, our stars dramatically underperformed, and our coaches made mindboggling decisions, especially when it came to challenges.

The only net positive of the playoffs was young goalie Carter Hart's consistent play, despite two terrible games versus the Canadiens in round 1. If Hart can duplicate that kind of performance in the postseason, and get help from his teammates, the Flyers may have solved the goalie issue that has pestered this team since the retirement of Ron Hextall in 1999. However, after witnessing this postseason debacle, the Flyers have surprisingly done little in free agency.

The only serious addition to the team has been Erik Gustafsson, with the rest of the cap being used for retaining current players. Winger Nicolas

Aubé-Kubel signed a \$1.08 million deal to keep a physical presence, while blueliners Robert Hagg and Justin Braun got \$1.60 million and \$1.8 million, respectively, every one of them on 2-year deals. Goaltender Brian Elliot received \$1.5 million to optimistically be a competent backup to Hart.

However, these signings do not fill the glaring holes in the offense or defense. Aubé-Kubel is known for his physicality and forechecking, not his scoring touch. The lack of a true number three center makes it impossible to compete with Tampa Bay or the Boston Bruins, the class teams of the East. Presumably, the Flyers are going to rely on the 2017 number two overall pick in Nolan Patrick to a "prove-it deal." If Patrick cannot put it together because of consistent injury problems or poor play, prospect Morgan Frost will certainly have his opportunity. He struggled when called up but showed flashes of brilliance that could allow him to become an impact player for the team. If both options fail, Scott Laughton will have to fill the void.

Of more concern is the defense, where the Flyers have serious problems. Veteran Matt

Niskanen was instrumental in helping Ivan Provorov achieve a bounce-back season, and he surprised everyone by retiring at the end of last season. That leaves a massive hole for a number one right shot defensemen. Young defenseman Phillippe Myers still needs a deal and is likely to take at least \$3.5 million out of the \$4.8 million of cap space left. He could fill the role, but it is unlikely he will be as productive as Niskanen. This leaves Gustafsson to play alongside Travis Sanheim, with Hagg and Braun as the third pairing. This situation makes the right side incredibly suspect, with tons of speculation and no certainty.

However, the greatest issue is that there is no player of superstar caliber on the team. Giroux has the talent to be that player, but at 32 going on 33, it is unlikely that he will replicate his 102-point 17-18 season. The Flyers' front office is trying to fix this problem, however, as they are rumored to be going after the Winnipeg Jets' Patrik Laine. Laine absolutely has the talent to be the superstar the Flyers need to boost their powerplay and offense, yet the price might be too much. The Jets will undoubtedly ask for at least two NHL-ready players,

one being a defenseman, and a second- or first-round pick. Luckily, Laine has not been happy in Winnipeg and has been underutilized, possibly making his stats look worse than they are. He was never a good defensive player, but last year was his best overall, thanks to significantly improved passing, which led to 35 assists, the most since his rookie season.

The issue with getting Laine now is the fact that the Jets traded for Paul Statsny from the Vegas Golden Knights. When Statsny was with the Jets as a rental in 2018, Laine and he had great chemistry and helped the team reach the Western Conference Finals. Statsny will most likely stay on the team when the next season starts, if it starts. If the two players maintain the same chemistry, prying Laine away from the Jets becomes much harder for the Flyers, leaving them with no options other than hoping Giroux regains his superstar ability or Konecny somehow builds on his career season.

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SPORTS



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World Series 2020: A tale of two bank accounts

Nick Young
The Montgazette Contributor

The tumultuous end to three different sports seasons has brought only two cities championships. After the Tampa Bay Lightning handled the Dallas Stars to win the Stanley Cup, the Los Angeles Lakers fought a tough series against Jimmy Butler and the Miami Heat to win the NBA championship. To end the unique summer sports saga, the Los Angeles Dodgers and Tampa Rays faced off in the newly built Globe Life Field in Arlington, Texas, for the 2020 World Series.

Not only was this a competition to bring a second championship to their respective cities, but it was also a face-off that would prove small-market teams can compete with large-market teams, and beat them. The Dodgers won in 6 games, however, and proved that large-market teams can buy commodities that small-teams cannot: pitching and bats.

Cody Bellinger, Mookie Betts, and Corey Seager were all productive hitters for the Dodgers, driving in a total of 11 RBIs, amounting to more than a 1/3 of the total runs the Dodgers scored. Seager won the World Series MVP award for his .400 batting average in the Series, together with his stellar fielding.

To contrast, the Rays only had one hot bat — in rookie sensation Randy Arozarena. He had a historic postseason campaign with 10 home runs, 29 total hits and 64 total bases, yet his fellow teammates' poor hitting was too much for him to overcome alone. The Rays' best hitter in the regular season, Brandon Lowe, struggled for most of the postseason. Austin Meadows and Mike Zunino, two key power hitters, hit below .200, and Zunino had one hit the entire Series. It does not take a baseball junkie to know that those are pitiful stats.

Another thing is painfully obvious: The Dodgers' top hitters are stars, whereas the Rays' top hitters are role players on other teams. The salaries of each demonstrate this tremendous disparity.

According to sporttrac.com, the three most important hitters for the Dodgers had a combined adjusted salary of \$17, 074, 074 for the 2020 season. The Rays, on the other hand, spent a total of \$23, 621, 315 for their entire 28-man roster. Twenty percent of the Rays' total payroll went to starting pitcher Charlie Morton alone, with the expensive hitter being Kevin Kiermaier, who earned \$3,870,370. The total salary for every hitter on the roster was \$11,549,851; this means that the Rays' entire lineup was being paid close to 2/3 of three of the Dodgers' players.

This analysis does not even consider the payrolls of other Dodgers stars, like Clayton Kershaw, David Price, Justin Turner, Max Muncy, A. J. Pollock and Kenley Jansen. All these players make \$7.5 million, with five getting in excess of \$15 million. The Rays had one player make \$15 million, Charlie Morton, but he is now a free agent. Currently, the Rays have a grand total of two players with salaries of \$10 million or more. This discrepancy also belies the differences in team philosophy. The Dodgers win with talent, whereas the Rays are forced to rely on fundamentals and a creative lineup. Both were on display in this series from the outset.

In the field, the Rays were the better team on paper; they made no errors in the field compared to the Dodgers, who had four. In fact, the Dodgers' lack of focus on fundamentals actually cost them game 4, with two terrible errors leading to a wild walk-off loss. The issue for the Rays was not being able to capitalize on the errors and create runs, in part because of a lack of star power. In game 5, with a 1-run deficit, Chris Taylor committed an error, allowing Manuel Margot to reach third base. They decided to steal home, which backfired, ending the inning. The decision to steal home was bold, yet Kiermaier still had a 1-1 count, and one cannot help but wonder whether it was the right

call. The best baserunner in the Series was clearly Betts; he had four stolen bases and helped score the first run in the Series. The rest of the Dodgers kept mistakes to a minimum and played good baseball on the base path.

Because the Rays could not splurge on big-name starters like Clayton Kershaw or Gerrit Cole, they have had to patch together a bullpen with castoffs and low-salary relievers. This means they have no true roles in the bullpen, such as a closer or set-up man, and this manifested itself in the postseason. Giving the Astros 3 wins after taking an assertive 3-0 lead in the American League Championship Series undoubtedly demonstrates the shakiness of the Rays' bullpen.

The Dodgers' most impressive feat was not only building through free agency and big spending but also through the draft and farm system. Cody Bellinger, Corey Seager, Will Smith, Julio Urias, Tony Gonsolin, and Dustin May are all integral and young parts of the team who were developed in the minors and then brought to the majors. On the other hand, the Rays created their squad primarily through trades; for instance, Austin Meadows and Tyler Glasnow came from the Pirates, Randy Arozarena came from St Louis, Ryan Yarbrough was traded from Seattle, and countless other roster additions have the same story. The only issue for the Rays is being able to pay these players when their inevitable payday is due, an issue the Dodgers almost never have.

In the end, the Dodgers' large bankroll gave them the upper hand by giving them the capability to keep expensive stars, a luxury the Rays do not have. The Rays' nifty work maximizing every player's individual bright spots, especially those of their pitchers, gave them the opportunity to almost win it all. Bitterly, however, the Dodgers continue to prove that, in sports, money does buy happiness.

Justice Amy Coney Barrett

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In fact, she stated to the Senate Judiciary Committee during the hearing for her nomination to the Supreme Court that it was never okay for a judge to put personal beliefs and convictions above the law.

Criminal justice reform is another issue of public concern evidenced by the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement and the protests that erupted in 2020. However, when the Fourth Amendment (regarding search and seizure) was in question, she typically decided for the defendant.

In one example, she used *Navarette v. California*, to dismiss police officer's justification for stopping and seizing people after an anonymous tip indicated people were "playing with guns." Many other decisions show that she is more than willing to uphold rights for citizens and stop dubious police officers from infringing on those rights.

Barrett's record on other issues is minimal, mainly because she has ruled strictly through Supreme Court precedent, another clear look at her judicial philosophy. One issue in analyzing her views then, is that she has never participated in judicial activism. Knowing where exactly she will decide on the Supreme Court is a mystery to many Supreme Court experts. Yet, her record seems to show a justice that will decide the law without bias and will ultimately ensure the constitution is upheld.

Flyers offseason

Continued from Page 11.

The sad fact that the salary cap situation hinders the Flyers considerably should not be used as an excuse, since almost every team faces the same situation. The only teams that have lots of cap space to utilize are teams that were horrific last season like the Ottawa Senators, New Jersey Devils, and New York Rangers. Now that the Rangers drafted Alexis Lafrenière with the number one overall pick and have tons of young talent to give them a boost, they will surely be threats next season. With the Penguins and Capitals being sure things, and the

Islanders and Carolina Hurricanes already arriving with their young talent, the Flyers could easily be pushed out of a playoff, especially because the Flyers have alternated in and out of the playoffs for the past six seasons.

Overall, the lack of a true star addition with the absence of defensive reliability leaves the Flyers in another season of limbo. If the young prospects come through, though, then they will certainly have a chance, yet the Flyers have not given us much reason to hope after the past decade of mediocrity.

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