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a student publication

The **Montgazette**

FREE

The Students' Voice

Issue 86

Serving Montgomery County Community College and the Surrounding Community

May 2021



Help end Asian hate
Read on Page 7.

Photo by Getty Images.

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Farewell and thank you for the memories

Josh Young
The Montgazette Editor-in-Chief

Hello, once again, everyone. I hope that you are all in a position to succeed and thrive as we approach the end of the semester and finals week. I wish everyone good luck and hope you have a restful summer break.

This will be my final semester here at Montgomery County Community College, as I will be graduating with a degree in psychology and transferring to Temple University to pursue a career in law. As such, I want to take the time and space to thank everyone who helped me along the way in this position as editor-in-chief and as a student at the College.

I came to the College as a recent high school graduate, unsure of myself, my own abilities and my direction in life. However, with the help of the College's faculty and resources, I was able to find my way. The first person I would like to thank is Professor Lauren Keatley who took a chance on me when I was only in my first

semester and helped me grow into my role as editor-in-chief of The Montgazette. Without her, I am not sure that I would have had the confidence to go for it and gain the valuable experience of being the head of an organization, and for that I will be eternally thankful.

Next, I would like to thank Professors Bonner and Aronson for all of the hard work they have put into helping the paper by serving as advisers. Without the time and advice that they offered me, this paper would not be as rich and full of life. They were always there to work through whatever issues we may have been having, and we were thus able to get them resolved quickly. Thank you for helping to improve the paper and thank you for all the work you put into recruiting new writers, who will now have crucial roles within the paper in the upcoming semesters.

Speaking of which, I would like to thank all of the writers we

have had over the past couple of years. During my time here, we published very few issues with a lack of articles. You guys always made meetings a lot of fun and something that I looked forward to. Most importantly, however, this paper would not be as well-off as it is without the talented writing that you consistently bring to the table, which makes the editing process a lot easier and allows students and others on campus to be heard. It was a pleasure to work with each and every one of you, and I wish you nothing but the best in your future endeavors, in whatever career field you choose.

I would also like to thank Tyler Steffy, Director of Student Life, for serving as a liaison between us and the administration and extending a helping hand whenever we needed it.

Finally, I would like to thank our readers because, at the end of the day, it is you who give The Montgazette its purpose. Without your continued support,

this paper, and the exploits of the people I have mentioned above would be for nothing, and The Montgazette would likely cease to exist. So, once again, thank you for reading and making all the work that The Montgazette staff does truly meaningful.

While I may be graduating, and leaving Montgomery County Community College and The Montgazette, I know that it will be left in good hands. My brother, Nick Young, will be assuming the role as editor-in-chief, and I know there are plenty of young, talented writers who will keep the publication's tradition strong. Knowing this, I find it much easier to leave, although I know that I will miss working with everyone and formulating our four issues each year. With all that being said, I want to wish everyone at Montgomery County Community College a very fond farewell and thank you for helping me become a better student and person.

A tribute to former Psychology student Brigette Barrow through the “Barrow Study”

Khushi Desai
The Montgazette Contributor

Many people have the basics covered: shelter, stable finances, food, and all the things that contribute toward living a comfortable existence. On the other hand, some people struggle just to survive every day. Despite the challenges they face, however, they persist, and Montgomery County Community College alum Brigette Barrow was one of those people.

Sadly, Barrow passed away at the young age of 24. Despite this tragic outcome, Barrow is recognized by her peers as being one of the strongest people they knew. Even though she faced challenges throughout her life, she fought for what she believed in every day. She frequently faced housing and food insecurity, but while she was at the College, Barrow earned national awards from the Phi Theta Kappa International Honor Society and was also President of the college’s chapter of Psi Beta, an honor society for Psychology majors.

“Brigette had to commute an hour each way on public transportation, and despite the long travel to school, she never asked to turn in an assignment late. Though frequently distressed by bureaucracy, she never gave up and, instead, put all her efforts into pursuing what was best for the students of Montgomery County Community College,” says

Dr. Barron, associate professor of Psychology at the College.

Upon completing her bachelor’s degree, Barrow planned to earn a graduate degree in Education and then pursue a law degree. She sought to help those who had no means and to improve the state of education in the U.S., primarily motivated by her own experiences, which she willingly shared at one of the College’s “Wellness Wednesdays.”

“During that dialogue, she and her friend shared that, as young black women, one of the most insulting issues they dealt with in education was teachers who would belittle them or placate them by suggesting that they would decrease the academic rigor knowing of their situation,” Dr. Barron said.

“It was one of the most honorable, dignified, mature statements I have ever heard,” Dr. Barron said.

Now, this statement is guiding Psi Beta’s “Barrow Study.” The Psychology Club is working toward creating a scenario-based survey to ascertain the mindsets and expectations that students bring to the College and the expectations teachers have, both of themselves and of their students. The Psychology Club will be collecting the data, analyzing it and providing the College with

recommendations.

“Though she [Barrow] will not directly see such efforts [come] to fruition, we hope to honor her by doing it for her. Her mother has also asked to participate, as it was clear she helped to shape Brigette’s character,” said Dr. Barron. “This is the biggest thing we will be doing in honoring Brigette, since she was so passionate about education. The Psychology Club’s presidency is now called the ‘Barrow Presidency,’ in honor of her,” says Jennifer Farris, President of Psi Beta.

Farris also said that for the entire year of 2021, the Psychology Club would be focusing on the ‘Barrow Study.’ “This is the biggest thing we will be doing [to honor] Brigette, since she was so passionate about education,” she says.

When campus reopens, the Psychology Club also wants to have a plaque in Barrow’s honor hung in

the Psychology department, and Dr. Barron is working on the project personally. The Psychology Club has reached out to Brigette’s mother, looking to create a scholarship in her honor.

“Brigette was an extraordinary person; she was a force to be reckoned with. She understood that education was her way out. She was always brave and confident in her demeanor; she wasn’t ashamed to share her struggles. She and I had many similarities, and I am so committed to making sure that things she cared about come to fruition,” says Farris.

Brigette inspired many students and faculty members at Montgomery County Community College to make the world a better place. She was a loving, caring and inspirational person who persisted throughout her life, despite every hurdle that came toward her. And so, her legacy continues through the Psychology Club.

About The Montgazette

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

A vision for the future: Interview with Antonio Mejia

Emma Shainline
MSP 170 The Montgazette Contributor

In March 2014, Antonio Mejia started a new future for himself by moving to the United States of America. With a strong hope for the future, Antonio made his way to New York and enrolled in high school. As he ventured through his adoptive country, he decided to enroll in the United States Army when he turned 19.

Originally from Colombia, Mejia had to quickly learn English, so he could translate for his family members. To this day, his first language is Spanish, but English is a close second, and he is proud that hardly anyone can tell English is not his first language. The Army was quick to accept him, and he was soon on his way to gaining U.S. citizenship.

However, Mejia's dream of coming to the U.S. started long before he entered high school. When visiting the United States at five years old, Mejia realized this was where he wanted to be. "Over the years, I noticed that while there were some opportunities in my country, there was a ceiling that I would not be able to reach if I stayed there. That, coupled with learning a new language and gaining independence, made me decide to leave my family and my life in Colombia at the age of 12," said Mejia.

Mejia talks about not ever regretting his decision, but there were times when he did question whether it was the right call. If he had stayed in Colombia, what kind of person would he be now? "While I have left behind most of my Colombian self, much like a lot of immigrants, I hope to one day retire in my country, after making a life and name for myself here." Mejia says it is much cheaper to live and retire

in Colombia and loves that the climate and scenery are beautiful all year round.

When asked about the anti-immigrant rhetoric of former President Donald Trump, Mejia responded with ease, "The anti-immigrant policies and rhetoric of the former president were in all honesty fear inducing. When he was elected, I was in the process of becoming legalized, but was not a citizen just yet."

Because he was not yet legalized, the rhetoric instilled fear in not only him, but many other legal immigrants as well. "I was living in New York at the time and ICE was cracking down on illegal immigrants, making it scary to even go to the grocery store. After everything was settled and these sorts of things weren't happening as often, it was simply infuriating and confusing to see that a country built by immigrants was now so against them."

As Antonio makes his own way through life in the U.S., including being a new homeowner, he has also made the brave decision to be in the military. "I will be going into the military after my basic training as a combat medic, which is the equivalent of an advanced emergency medical technician for civilians. In the future, however, I hope to become an officer and have a career within the military."

Thankfully, he did not go through all of this alone. When moving to the U.S., his uncle accompanied him and helped him enroll in school. Now that Antonio is financially stable, his uncle has since moved back to Colombia. "For the moment, I only live with my mom. We are not the only ones

in my family who live in the U.S. I have a number of family members who live in Miami, North Carolina, New Jersey, and New York City."

It is clear that Mejia has had his struggles and triumphs throughout his life journey in the U.S., but there is hope and happiness in his future. He feels the country and its military have welcomed him with open arms and offered him the chance to achieve the American Dream.



Mejia at age 19.

Photo submitted by Antonio Mejia.

Opinion: Virtual classes may get students through school, but they do not get them educated

Anthony Sannicandro
MSP 111 The Montgazette Contributor

Over the past year, it has been a constant desire of mine to hear that I'll be having live class, and that virtual classes are over. At the beginning of "cyberschool," it was cool and different to try something new, where we did not have to wake up at 7:00 a.m. every day and go into school to listen to teachers' lectures. We could login and kind of doze off, and nobody really knew. Our assignments were due at midnight, not first thing in the morning, and we didn't even have to get up out of our beds and change out of pajamas. However, one year after it started, I feel completely differently when it comes to virtual classes vs. live classes.

Not too long ago, I saw a post on social media about how it has been 365 days since my school closed for "two weeks." The main reason that I'm fed up with virtual school and just want to go back to live classes is because I feel I'm not getting a lot out of it. Yes, there are minor issues that everyone can say they have, with distractions on the computer and procrastinating, since "it's not due until 11:59

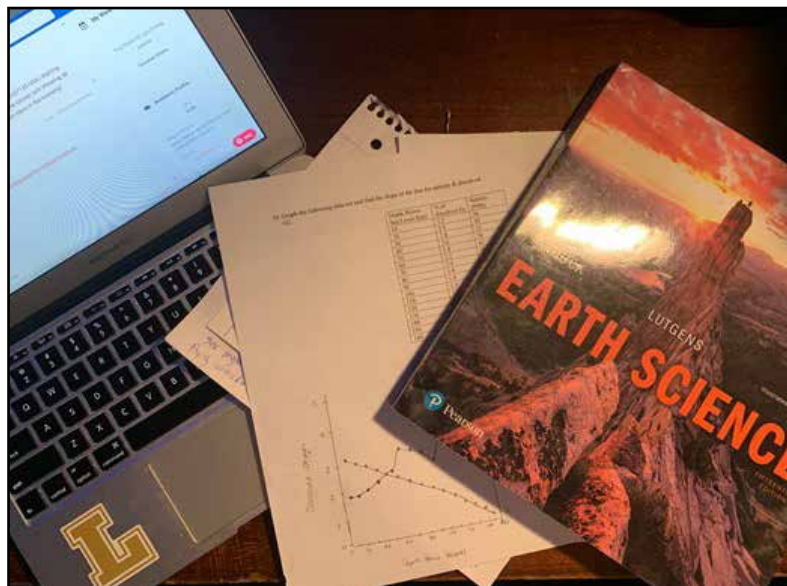
pm." But the most significant reason online classes will affect students my age negatively is because we're not actually learning and being educated as much as we would be if we were in the classroom.

Having to watch videos to learn the material (which for some classes is the bulk of the material or having to listen to a teacher over the screen can help with some stuff, but it is not nearly as effective as interacting with the teacher in

a classroom.

And it's not the teachers' fault. There is only so much you can do when given a Zoom link and material and need to teach to 20 to 30 students without actually interacting with them.

I think that the more we keep entertaining this idea that virtual classes are just as effective as live classes, the more it's going to affect the students in the long run, and not for the positive.

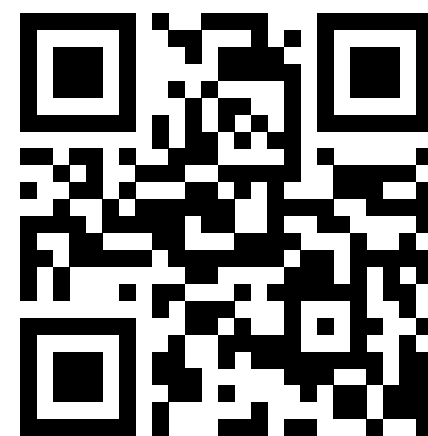


My books and work, and the computer
on which I take classes.

Photo by Anthony Sannicandro.



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Opinion: Don't throw the ball on the one-yard line; reopen with caution

Michael Chiodo
MSP 111 The Montgazette Contributor

Six years ago, in Super Bowl XLIX, the Seattle Seahawks were trailing the New England Patriots by four points with the ball on the one-yard line and just 26 seconds remaining. Rather than run it into the end-zone, Seattle decided to throw the ball. It was intercepted by New England, and the Seahawks lost a certain victory.

This is a great history lesson, but what does it have to do with COVID-19? It is important that as the U.S. starts to beat the virus, it does not throw an interception on the one-yard line. According to the CDC, there is finally a light at the end of the tunnel. Millions of Americans are getting vaccinated daily. After a year of a worldwide pandemic, President Biden says that all American adults will be vaccinated by the end of May.

However, this does not mean that governors around the country should jump the gun and act prematurely, as if the

pandemic is over. States such as Texas and Mississippi recently lifted their mask mandates and allowed businesses to operate at 100% capacity. This is incredibly reckless and could lead to a devastating spike in cases. Americans have worn masks for the last year; everyone can handle it a little longer.

Lifting mask mandates is purely political and is having the opposite effect of what governors were elected to do: protect and serve their citizens. It also sets a dangerous precedent and could create a trend nationwide, as other governors are pressured to do the same.

Although it is fair to begin loosening some restrictions, these should be done with proper health guidance and with an eye toward the bigger picture of eradicating COVID-19. Per the CDC, there are still more coronavirus cases per day today than there were when

restrictions were first put in place one year ago, with a 7-day average of 1,500 deaths in the United States. The pandemic is not over, despite the increasing number of people vaccinated. According to NPR, 10% of the U.S. population has been fully vaccinated at the time of this writing. While that number is encouraging, 90% of the country is still unvaccinated. So, caution must be used when reopening businesses.

Leadership starts at the

top. All of our leaders must continue to take the COVID-19 pandemic seriously and urge caution for their citizens. Leave mask mandates in place. Loosen restrictions slowly and cautiously in a data-driven manner. The end is near. In the coming months, the expectation is that all Americans will have the opportunity to be vaccinated, and that there will finally be a sense of normalcy again—but that can be reversed if we let up too soon.



As much as people crave normalcy,
there must be caution when reopening.

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OPINION



The Montgazette
The Students' Voice

Opinion: Eat at your favorite Ramen shop to help end Asian hate

Nina Lima
The Montgazette Contributor

Hate against the Asian American Pacific Islander community has soared in the past year. With tensions rising, in part because of the pandemic, and the former president calling COVID-19 “the Chinese Virus,” the number of attacks against the AAPI community rose by almost 150% from 2019 to 2020, according to CBS News. Most devastatingly, on March 16, in Atlanta, Ga., eight people, six of whom were AAPI, were killed where they worked.

Events like this are harrowing, both for members of the community involved and those who are now constantly shocked by the reality of ascendant racism in the U.S. If you are wondering what you, a college student, can do to support the AAPI community at this critical time, here

are a few simple things that can make a huge difference:

Check in. Ask your AAPI friends, coworkers and neighbors if they need help with any small tasks. Avoid asking how they are doing or how they reacted to events in the news. Instead, offer to bring them a meal, ask if they need a ride or help them weed their garden. A small act of kindness can go a long way to make others feel seen, valued and supported.

Support local businesses. Now is the time to splurge on your favorite takeout! Experiment with ingredients from an AAPI-owned supermarket. Treat yourself to a mani-pedi at an AAPI-owned nail salon. The pandemic hit Asian-owned businesses especially hard this past year, so one of the easiest and best ways to support

the AAPI community is by giving them your business.

Donate. Give to AAPI communities to help them build community networks. One reliable site to donate to is stopaapihate.org. This organization works to end all forms of structural racism in America by offering multilingual resources for people who need them, supporting community justice, and advocating for policy change. The website also has more than 40 links to other reliable places that accept donations.

Educate yourself. Taking the time to learn about AAPI history in America may sound like a daunting task. However, it can be as easy as diving into a documentary on Netflix or following a few AAPI social media accounts. On their website, PBS

offers access to a bingeable five-part documentary series called “Asian Americans” that shares the history of Asians in America. (See pbs.org.) The hashtag #StopAAPIHate on Instagram, Twitter and YouTube can lead you to AAPI influencers, streamers and other content creators that can help you diversify your feed.

The road to ending hate against the AAPI community is a long and arduous one, but these simple actions can make a difference. Although this list is a good place to start, there is still a lot of work to be done, from calling legislators, to attending AAPI demonstrations, to petitioning for change. However, as the Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu famously said, “The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.”

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Opinion: Will the Eagles continue to disappoint?

Sufyan Davis-Arrington
The Montgazette Contributor

At the beginning of the 2021 NFL offseason, the Philadelphia Eagles made the questionable decision to fire head coach Doug Pederson after a five-year tenure. In that time, Pederson amassed a career record of 46-39-1, and coached the team to its first and only Super Bowl victory in 2017. Yet, three years later, the organization decided to move on.

It has been reported that Eagles' owner Jefferey Lurie and Pederson had differing views on the direction of the franchise, especially regarding the quarterback position, as franchise quarterback Carson Wentz had struggled mightily during the previous season. Pederson comes from the Andy Reid coaching tree, though, and thus is thought to be a quarterback whisperer, much like Reid, so Wentz's regression became all the more troubling.

Then, on January 21, Nick Sirianni was hired as the Eagles' new head coach, to replace Pederson. Sirianni had worked under former Eagles coordinator Frank Reich, the current head coach of the Indianapolis Colts, as an offensive coordinator. During Reich's tenure in Philadelphia, he was considered instrumental to the success of the offense, particularly during the team's run to the Super Bowl. Wentz reportedly had a strong relationship with Reich, and this seemed to indicate he would stay with the Eagles despite his poor play.

Then, Wentz was benched in the second half of Week 13 against the Green Bay Packers, after a dreadful season. According to Pro Football Reference, at the time of his benching, Wentz led the league in interceptions, with 15, and turnovers, with 19. Wentz also led the league in sacks by a wide margin, with 50, which is a sign of a quarterback not seeing the field and holding

onto the ball for too long.

Additionally, according to NFL.com, Wentz was ranked 35th out of the 59 quarterbacks who started in the 2020-2021 season. Finally, it had been reported by multiple outlets that Pederson's and Wentz's relationship had deteriorated, meaning one had to go. Thus, it was thought by many that Wentz would stay after Pederson's firing, especially with the Eagles hiring someone from Reich's staff.

However, Wentz was then traded to the Colts, and Reich, for a 2021 3rd-round pick and a conditional 2022 2nd-round pick. The return on the trade is remarkably low for a player who is a former second overall pick and who was considered a prime MVP candidate less than four years ago. Additionally, this made the decision to fire Pederson that much more baffling, since Wentz was assumed to be the main reason for his firing.

Now, the Eagles are left with an unproven quarterback project in Jalen Hurts and a washed-up Joe Flacco, who they signed to a one-year contract, presumably to back up Hurts. We still do not know if Hurts is truly an NFL starter, which he will need to be if the team wishes to improve this year or at least show promise for the future.

While quarterback is the most important position in the sport, this Eagles team still has other massive holes to fill. However, the franchise is hurting financially, as they are running up against the cap, in large part due to the \$33.8 million in dead money being paid to Carson Wentz, according to Eagles Wire. This price tag has hampered the team's search for potential starters at wide receiver, offensive line, defensive back and linebacker. The result is an aging, oft injured, and depleted team with a multitude of overpaid

players at key positions.

To be fair, though, General Manager Howie Roseman is trying to massage the cap for the upcoming season. He managed to restructure the contracts of cornerback Darius Slay, offensive guard Brandon Brooks, offensive center Jason Kelce, offensive tackle Isaac Seumalo, safety Rodney McLeod, kicker Jake Elliot and defensive lineman Javon Hargrave. These moves provided relief from cap purgatory, and the team is now \$3.34 million under the salary cap.

Continued on Page 10.



The Philadelphia Eagles mascot.

Photo by Pexels.com.

SPORTS



The Montgazette
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Here we go again: Flyers lack consistency

Nicholas Young
The Montgazette Contributor

This is without a doubt the most disappointing season in recent Flyers' history. The seemingly eternal cycle of being in the playoffs one year and then out the next feels inevitable. The main difference between this year and the last five years, however, is that it is usually one step forward and then one step back, but now it is two steps forward and then four steps back.

Before the COVID-19 pause last season, the Flyers were objectively one of the best teams in the league. Not only did they pass the eye test by making creative plays and smart decisions, but they were dominating teams statistically in February and March. The Flyers were 10-3 in February, beating great teams like the Colorado Avalanche and Washington Capitals, and started March 4-1, before the NHL shut down.

Fans thought the defense might dip in effectiveness with the loss of Matt Niskanen to retirement in October. Apparently, fans underappreciated that Niskanen was likely the greatest defenseman in the history of the franchise.

To say that the team's defense has been horrible since then is an understatement. The number of seamless cross-ice passes that resulted in easy potshots at goalies Carter Hart or Brian Elliot in the month of March must be some kind

of record. The goaltender's save percentage, the number of goals allowed in relation to the number of shots faced, has taken a serious dive since 2020. According to Hockey Reference, the save percentage through the season so far is an eye-gouging .876, worse than the pitiful Ottawa Senators and Buffalo Sabres. Whereas it is true Hart and Elliot have allowed some awful goals, they have seen so many two-on-ones and breakaways from offensive turnovers, combined with an infinite number of defensive breakdowns, that it is almost impossible to not allow at least three or four goals, no matter who is the goalie.

In addition, the regression of the team's young defensemen, Ivan Provorov, Travis Sanheim, and Philippe Myers, is incredibly alarming. Granted, some have been worse than others — we're looking at you, Myers — but since Provorov was supposed to become a true number-one defenseman this season, in the mold of a Roman Josi or Victor Hedman, his step back is incredibly depressing. He will probably never have the offensive production of a Victor Hedman or Drew Doughty, but his elite defense was going to help the team dominate, like they did last year. Instead, he is being placed on the power play when the other defensemen, Shayne Gostisbehere

or Travis Sanheim, would be more effective, and his dropping effectiveness in the defensive zone is apparent.

Of course, the defense is not the only part of the team, or upper management, for that matter, to blame. The young forwards, with the tremendous exception of Joel Farabee, have regressed, as well, Travis Konecny being the most surprising. He appears to disappear for a stretch and then will dominate like his former self for one game. Whatever the reason for this inconsistency, it needs to be reversed. Likewise, whereas Nolan Patrick and Oskar Lindblom can legitimately claim recoveries from injury, from a migraine disorder and bone cancer, respectively, it is now time that they start producing more. Lindblom can definitely be given more leeway, since he has had a long road back to NHL form, but Patrick, a recent second overall pick, needs to prove his value to the team, or the Flyers must move on.

While the players will take the lion's share of the blame for the season's poor results, the front office and the coaching staff should see some of our ire. General Manager Chuck Fletcher's complete and utter failure to find a replacement for Niskanen, and not keeping Tyler Pitlick or finding a suitable replacement, shows a poor

feel for the team. At least he admitted as such in his press conference, stating, "I think the makeup of the team is not right."

Railing aside, I believe this team can right the ship, with Fletcher's help, of course. Finding capable defenders, while moving bad contracts, is paramount to moving toward contending. If Head Coach Alain Vigneault is going to inexplicably keep Gostisbehere out of the lineup in favor of Nate Prosser or someone else, he should just be traded for scraps, which seems inevitable, since he was put on waivers making him available to every team in the league.

However, Fletcher could try and work a trade that involves sending Gostisbehere with a decent prospect and a second- or third-round pick for Marc Savard and a fourth-round pick in the upcoming NHL draft. Columbus is going to force the Flyers to keep a good amount of his salary, so they will probably have to send a depth forward their way, Nicolas Aube-Kubel or Raffl would fit the bill. A shut-down defender like Savard, much in the same vein as Niskanen, would be well worth it.

The sad truth is that if the team is going to make the playoffs, a thought almost unthinkable to most before the season, the Flyers must look themselves in the mirror and find some type of consistency.

Disappointing Eagles

Continued from Page 8.

The situation is certainly better than being over but still does not afford a lot of flexibility in free agency. Players who refused to restructure their contract, such as wide receivers Desean Jackson and Alshon Jeffery, were released. That said, both were inefficient on the field and tended to get injured, and so were shoo-ins to provide more cap space. In fact, according to ESPN, the Eagles are also looking to trade tight-end Zach Ertz. He is another cap casualty, despite playing for the organization since being drafted by them in 2013 and breaking the record for most receptions by a tight end in a single season two seasons ago.

Aside from restructuring these contracts, thus far in free agency the

Eagles have been relatively quiet. They signed a pair of safeties, including Anthony Harris from Minnesota, who is arguably the best safety in free agency this year, to a one-year \$5 million deal, former Buccaneers safety, Andrew Adams, and the aforementioned quarterback Flacco. This lack of action in free agency for a struggling team shows just how strapped for cash the Eagles are right now.

Currently, the Eagles are weakest at the wide receiver position, as Greg Ward and Jalen Reagor, two underperforming and unspectacular players, are the best receivers on the roster. According to ESPN, Ward and Reagor posted a combined total of 815 receiving yards. Ward's position as one of the best receivers on the team is perhaps more alarming because he is an undrafted

free agent who played quarterback at the University of Houston. Thus, one of the Eagles' best receivers is not really a receiver at all! Reagor should be one of the best receivers on the team, as he was selected 21st overall in the 2020 NFL Draft and was expected to have an immediate impact. However, Reagor only played in 11 games and registered a measly 396 yards receiving, according to Pro Football Reference. Also, Reagor only caught 57.4 percent of the passes he was targeted with, which is well below league average.

Luckily for the Eagles, this year's draft is filled with talent at the wide receiver position. With the understanding that Hurts will be the starter heading into the 2021 NFL season, it would be smart for the Eagles to target wide receivers such as

the athletic Jamarr Chase, the reigning Heisman Trophy winner Devonta Smith, or the lightning-quick Jaylen Waddle. Eagles owner Jeffrey Lurie has publicly declared his support for Hurts and his future with the franchise. Therefore, Roseman is not expected to draft a quarterback this year.

No matter what happens in the draft, the Eagles are coming off a 4-11-1 season, falling to dead last in the NFC East division. Currently, the team is lacking talent at a lot of key positions. It would be a surprise if the Eagles fielded a competitive team next season without drastic changes. Philadelphia Eagles players, staff and fans can only hope that Roseman, Sirianni and Hurts will lead the organization to another championship sometime in the near future.

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Opinion: Free Britney

Audrey Schippnick
MSP 111 The Montgazette Contributor

In a widely reported loss of free will, pop sensation Britney Spears has been trapped in a conservatorship for over a decade, as her father, Jaime Spears, has taken full legal control of her life. A new documentary on Hulu, "The New York Times Presents Framing Britney Spears," has increased public awareness of Spears' situation since its release.

Starting in 2008, Spears entered a conservatorship, a legal practice which leads to the full loss of control over one's financial or personal decisions. Conservatorships are usually used for elderly people or severely injured individuals as a protection against manipulation from those who might take advantage of them. This is not the case with Spears. Her father has taken over his daughter's life and reportedly abuses his power. A social media movement to end this conservatorship, "Free Britney," has gathered support since the documentary's release.

Spears has always been a talented singer. She sang in her church choir, and her enormous stage presence was clear from an early age. Spears appeared on the famous "Mickey Mouse Club" on the Disney Channel, where she initially made a name for herself. She was only 11 at the time and it proved to be the start of her reign as a pop star.

Spears then released her debut single "Baby One More Time," at 16. The song was an instant hit. Now, 23 years after its release, the song has gone multiplatinum, sitting at 10.6 million copies sold. Spears is an undeniable icon in the music industry. She rose to fame rapidly and was at the height of her career in the early 2000s. To fans, she seemed genuinely approachable and friendly.

The world thought they knew her.

It was not until 2007 when Spears seemingly lost control. At the time, mental health was a taboo topic and to the public, it looked like just another pop star gone rouge. Spears entered a custody battle with her ex-husband, Kevin Federline, which greatly affected her mental health and image in the media. There were accusations from the courts and from the public that Spears was an unfit mother. She was photographed driving with her baby in her lap, something the public scrutinized greatly. Spears shaved her head and, suddenly, the whole world was watching. She had claimed she did not want anyone touching her and this was her symbolic way of saying that the sweet innocent Britney they all made her out to be, was gone.

To the press, it was simply a tabloid-selling headline. As her breakdown became more intense, paparazzi increasingly capitalized on her suffering. They continued to bombard her, with no remorse.

The movement "Free Britney" started when fans grew progressively concerned with the content Spears was posting online, and the group drew more attention to the matter. Fans were worried that the artist was held captive, attempting to send subliminal messages through social media posts. Questions arose as Spears posted manic, disconnected images. Dedicated fans attempted to interpret the irrational online behavior, claiming that the posts were an encrypted plea for help.

Some have viewed Spears as an unfit mother, especially when the conservatorship initially started, marking her as unstable legally. After the media made Spears out to be the villain, the public saw this action

as justified. The public felt it had a right to have an opinion on what privileges Spears should and should not have, just because she was a celebrity.

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Britney Spears on the red carpet in '99.

Photo by Shutterstock.com.

Britney Spears

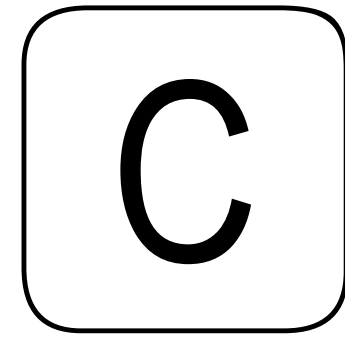
Continued from Page 11.

Spears has personally come out in support of the “Free Britney” movement. In the documentary, Spears says, “I appreciate the informed support of my fans,” while also addressing that the conservatorship itself is voluntary. The issue is not the protection she is provided with; it is who controls her affairs. Spears has appealed to have her father removed from the role as guardian, specifically over her financial affairs. Spears has also stated that she will not perform as long as her father is in control of her life.

It is clear who is benefiting more from this conservatorship. As Spears is considered a high-functioning adult, many fans question how much her father is abusing his control. According to Forbes.com, Spears is worth \$60 million.

A large sum goes toward supporting her children and paying her legal fees to deal with the matters at hand, but her father is otherwise still in almost total control of her finances.

Despite any previous mental health issues Spears has faced and could presently be facing, there is no denying the loss of control over her life is concerning. Spears has asked for the bare minimum: the ability to choose who controls her life, specifically, with regards to her finances. She has asked to change her conservator. Considering how hard Spears has worked nearly her whole life, she should be granted the respect to make this decision. The lack of authority she holds over her life for such an extended period of time must be torture. Free Britney!



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Larry King: The loss of an icon

Audrey Schippnick
MSP170 The Montgazette Contributor

A colorful map of the globe sits behind the interview desk of the famous Larry King. On January 23, 2021, that same map, which many around the world know and love, was retired. King was an icon in the world of journalism, and his interviews will forever be an important part of media history.

Larry King was best known for his interviews of actors, political figures, musical artists, and other celebrities. He was a prominent figure in the entertainment world and had been in the business for the past 70 years. To be interviewed by King was seen as a privilege. However, King quietly passed away from sepsis earlier this year. Therefore, the long list of figures who have been interviewed by him will, sadly, no longer grow. King was a natural at interviewing: Simply put, “Work. It’s the easiest thing I do,” King once said.

King passed away at the age of 87. He was most recently married to Shawn King and is survived by three of his five children: Andy King (65), Larry King, Jr. (59) and Chaia King (51). King’s other two children, Chance King and Cannon King, sorrowfully passed away in 2020.

King started his career at Florida radio station WMBM. Born Lawrence Harvey Zeiger, he originally used Zeiger as his stage name. According to apnews.com, the station was not very fond of the name, claiming it was too hard to remember and it sounded

“too Jewish.” At the last minute, he chose the name King after seeing an advertisement for King’s Wholesale Liquor. After some dabbling in writing and radio shows, King, fortunately, met Jackie Gleason. He credited Gleason with becoming his mentor and providing him with knowledge about television production. This influence was the water to King’s seed, which later bloomed as he hosted “Larry King Live” for 25 years before retiring in 2010.

The show was the first international call-in show, which later became the highest ranked talk show on the air. King became a fan favorite and gathered loyal supporters as his list of interviewees grew larger and more exclusive. Frank Sinatra, an icon in the music industry and notoriously invisible to the public eye, was interviewed by his long-term friend, King, in 1988. When presented with the question “Why are you here?” Sinatra responded, “Because you asked me to come, and I hadn’t seen you in a long time. . . . I thought we ought to get together and chat, just talk about a lot of things.”

King completed more than 30,000 interviews, including every U.S. president, from Richard Nixon to Donald Trump (in 1999). King was ever present in politics. Other notable interviews done by King include Nelson Mandela, Rosa Parks, and O. J. Simpson. His approach was considered fair and

well rounded: He was never too shy to ask what was on the public’s mind and to push boundaries, but he was still non-confrontational and non-threatening toward his guests. King was perceived as casual because of his physical demeanor, always leaning in and speaking softly. He was also persistently respectful of his guests, as he rarely, if ever, interrupted them while they spoke. Following his death, King’s Twitter account posted the following message: “Whether he was interviewing a U.S. president, foreign leader, celebrity, scandal-

ridden personage, or an everyman, Larry liked to ask short, direct, and uncomplicated questions; he believed concise questions usually provided the best answers, and he was not wrong in that belief.”

Larry King was an icon in the industry. His interviews will forever be a prominent part of history. His voice is universally recognized, as is his famous background. The art King provided the world is completely unique. Always humble, he once said, “Those who have succeeded at anything and don’t mention luck are kidding themselves.”



Larry King's star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

Photo by Pixabay.com.

Film review: “Nomadland”

Nicholas Young
The Montgazette Contributor

The lasting impact of the pandemic on our culture is yet to be fully seen, but the consequences of a previous substantial, but less lethal, crisis still remain. The 2008 “Great Recession” left thousands without jobs and homes, and companies defunct, and “Nomadland” is not afraid to confront its aftermath.

The manufacturing sector at that time took a massive hit and left lower-middle-class people like Fern, the film’s protagonist, played by the always underrated Frances McDormand, with almost no safety net to fall back on, especially in the flat and spread-out Midwest and Southwest United States. As a result, a new culture of van-dwelling nomads formed. These people travel around the country, taking arduous seasonal jobs to get by.

Fern begins her journey after the gypsum plant where she worked closes and her husband dies. As she moves around and settles on an Amazon floor job, she meets people who share in her experience. Many of them are, like Fern, struggling to find some sense of tranquility after working all their lives in slavish corporate jobs but no means to retire. Every character is interesting and memorable, especially her friend Dave, played by David Strathairn, who, despite having his own extended family, maintains the nomad lifestyle and develops a connection with Fern. They keep a

tightknit friendship, even though they may not see each other for months or even years at a time. Bob Wells, played by himself, is an organizer for the nomads and a real-life advocate for van dwelling.

I do not hesitate to say that if McDormand were not the lead, this movie would not be nearly as good. The cinematography is fantastic and there is expert direction by Chloe Zhao, but McDormand uses her incredible talent to prove that great acting does not need to use words to show a full range of emotions. Zhao herself takes a more documentarian

approach, which makes the film feel different, while also hiding the production’s incredibly small budget. An interaction between Fern and Wells that imparts Wells’ philosophy of life feels more like something out of a news interview rather than a feature film script, yet it still holds emotional weight with the sincerity of Wells’ thoughts and feelings. The only issue with this style is when Fern is working small-time jobs, the switch between feature film and documentary can be jarring, but it was certainly necessary and still works within the context of the film.

What McDormand and Zhao want at the forefront of the audience’s mind is the tremendous loneliness inherent in the nomad lifestyle. This includes attending sporadic communal meetings, needing to find whatever low-paying job is available, traveling across half the country to do so, and eating lots of fast-food dinners. All of the nomads are trying to find a certain peace of mind in their lives by surrounding themselves with nature and embracing solitude, but, in Fern’s case, the absence of her husband and longtime home may be too big a hole to fill.

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Opinion: Rotten Tomatoes is not accurate

Sheridan Hamill
MSP 111 The Montgazette Contributor

Rotten Tomatoes has grown increasingly popular since its launch in 1998. How many times have you seen a movie ad saying, “Certified Fresh on Rotten Tomatoes!”? Why should that matter? There are no ads saying “85/100 on Metacritic — YAY!” According to The Ringer, scores on Rotten Tomatoes have a direct correlation with box office performance. If a movie is deemed bad by the site, then that film usually does not do well at the box office. This brings up the question, “How accurate is Rotten Tomatoes, really?”

The way Rotten Tomatoes is scored is if a reviewer says the movie is a 5.9/10

or under, the film is rotten. Anything 6/10 and above is fresh. But, let’s be real, a 6/10 movie is still not a great film. Sure, there isn’t necessarily anything technically wrong with a movie that is deemed 60 out of 100, but there isn’t anything special about it, either. For example, the 2021 film “Our Friend” has a score of 57% on Metacritic which uses a weighted average system instead of a fresh or not-fresh rating system. I saw the movie and thought it was fine. The performances were great, but the movie dragged on a bit too long. However, since most of the reviews were around a 6/10, Rotten Tomatoes has the score at

85% because 85% of critics rated the film as “fresh.” That changes the film from an F to a B. Now, people will go watch that movie because they see how highly it is rated, and then wonder why it was rated so high. Well, you see, it is because even a “just okay” movie it can get a great grade on Rotten Tomatoes because a 6/10 is considered fresh.

However, there are some films that explode at the box office, even with reviews that are not very favorable. For instance, the 2019 film “Joker”

has a 59% on Metacritic. On Rotten Tomatoes, though, it jumps up to 68%. The difference is not as drastic as some other films, but the rating does change from an F to a D+. That said, “Joker” ended up making over a billion dollars at the box office and getting nominated for 11 Academy Awards, including best picture. That said, this film did have the advantage of being a movie about a character a lot of people love, so I think it was going to do well at the box office even if it had a 10%

on Rotten Tomatoes.

The takeaway is this: Audiences should go ahead and watch movies, even if the grade isn’t that great. Don’t use Rotten Tomatoes as your guide to see if you’ll love a movie or not. Movies are an art, and if art is subjective, a bad review may have just been the outcome of a bad day for the reviewer, or a matter of taste. Don’t base your choices on Rotten Tomatoes: If the film interests you, watch it!



Spilled tomatoes.

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Chadwick Boseman: An icon gone too soon

Daniel Johnson
MSP 170 The Montgazette Contributor

With the highly successful movie “Black Panther,” Chadwick Boseman, in the eyes of many, transformed from a star into a full-fledged icon. On August 28, 2020, the revered actor, writer, and director passed away at the age of 43, after a long-standing battle with colon cancer.

Boseman’s death was a tragedy felt around the world, with many celebrities, colleagues and fans shocked to find out he had cancer at all. After being diagnosed in 2016, Boseman fought for four years as the illness progressed to stage IV. The actor bore numerous surgeries and chemotherapy sessions during and in-between ongoing Hollywood roles, while doing many of his own stunts as a trained martial artist, according to Men’s Journal.

A statement from Boseman’s family read, “A true fighter, Chadwick persevered through it all, and brought you many of the films you have come to love so much, from ‘Marshall’ to ‘Da 5 Bloods,’ August Wilson’s ‘Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom’ and several more — all filmed during and between countless surgeries and chemotherapy. It was the honor of his career to bring King T’Challa to life in ‘Black Panther.’ He died in his home, with his wife and family by his side.”

Boseman started his professional journey after graduating from Howard University with a bachelor’s degree in Fine Arts for directing and went on to

the British American Drama Academy in Oxford, England. With early, immense success as a stage actor, Boseman won an AUDELCO award for his remarkable stage performances and even became the director of various stage productions. Later, Boseman found various guest roles on network television shows, appearing in crime and drama shows such as “CSI: NY” and “All My Children.” He finally landed a recurring role on “Lincoln Heights,” an ABC family drama. His role as Nathaniel Ray on the ABC hit helped propel Boseman to a prodigious film career.

Boseman was most known for his iconic, memorable portrayals of prominent African American figures. Starting with “42,” where Boseman portrayed Jackie Robinson, the first black baseball player since Moses Fleetwood Walker in 1884, an athlete who broke the barrier for black men in professional sports. Along with substantial praise for his performance from fans and critics alike, Boseman truly felt honored with the opportunity to play such an important role. He told online publication Madame Noire, “It’s just a huge responsibility. I wake up every morning, been working and prepping on it, and I’m having the time of my life, playing baseball ... studying footage. It’s the opportunity of a lifetime to just do what I love.”

Boseman then received the opportunity to play another African

American icon, James Brown, in a movie produced in 2014 by Brian Glazer, “Get on Up.” The role required Boseman to spend hours mastering the footwork and dance routines of the soul legend. Boseman detailed how difficult the challenge was but also stated that it was an “intense and rewarding experience.”

Just two years later, Boseman was diagnosed with colon cancer but decided to keep the news private, even from his own industry. During his diagnosis and treatment, Boseman saw a meteoric rise to fame for his role in “Black Panther,” as well as his parts in numerous “Avengers” films. “Black

Panther” shattered box-office records in 2018 and earned an Academy Award nomination for best picture. The cultural impact Boseman’s performance had on many Black children around the world was immense, bringing the comic book character to life for an audience with few other African American superheroes.

“His is a gutting, inexplicably grievous loss as a young and talented actor who deserved so many more years than he was given. But the sheer magnitude of what he did with the years he had will perpetuate the fondness of his memory,” said Haley Arnold, editor of Arts & Life Magazine.



An action figure of Boseman’s iconic character,
the “Black Panther.”

Photo by Pixabay.com.

