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a student publication

The Montgazette

FREE

The Students' Voice

Issue 88 | Serving Montgomery County Community College and the Surrounding Community | January 2022

What happens when you test positive while on vacation in a foreign country? Read about one student's experience on Page 3.

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The Montgazette
The Students' Voice

from the **Editor**

To the readers of The Montgazette

Nina Lima
The Montgazette Co-Editor-in-Chief

Finally, the end of the semester! Congratulations to everyone for finishing out this semester strongly. The past few months have brought about many changes to classroom learning, from flex to hybrid classes. Every day, I find myself thankful for the teachers and resources available here at the College that help me excel in my classes. I feel as though our school has gracefully adapted in a time when so many things are uncertain. Many students are glad to be back in the classroom and many others are still thrilled to have the option to learn from home. Despite all the challenges, we made it through to a well-deserved break.

My name is Nina. I'm one of the editors-in-chief of The Montgazette, and I'm also a sophomore. I started my education here in August 2020, when classes were entirely online. Initially, I thought the reason I wasn't quite as engaged in classes as I expected was that I hadn't been in school for a few years. After getting back into the classroom, though, I could see how being surrounded by peers changes the learning experience. Because it made such a huge difference to me, I found myself attending my hybrid classes in person, with my teachers' permission.

I also got involved in the College community. This is my first semester as editor-in-chief, and what an amazing experience it has been so far. I love bolstering the voices of the student body. From movie reviews to sports opinion pieces, to updates on the economy, our writers have a lot to say. The Montgazette is always looking for new perspectives, so if you are ever interested in sharing your thoughts, ideas, or opinions and want to be part of this amazing newspaper, drop us a line! My email is vlima8792@students.mc3.edu and my co-editor Sufyan Davis-Arrington's email is sdavisarrington1151@students.mc3.edu.

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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.

The five words that changed my life: How COVID-19 affected me

Sufyan Davis-Arrington
The Montgazette Co-Editor and Contributor

"Your test came back positive."

These five words turned my vacation paradise into a living hell. At the end of August 2021, I traveled to Montego Bay, Jamaica, for vacation and to attend my cousin's wedding. Upon arrival, I knew something was off: I did not feel quite like myself. I figured since the weather was rainy and chilly and I did not have the clothing I needed to keep me dry and warm, hurricane season was to blame. To make matters worse, the temperature on the transportation to the resort was frigid as well.

Initially, I figured that I had a common cold because I was experiencing headaches, drowsiness, and slight wheezing due to my asthma. Like any person, I took Sudafed and Tylenol with hopes that my sickness would go away within a day or two. About two days into the trip, however, I found myself feeling extremely lethargic and sleeping a lot more than normal. By the third day, I was wishing that the six-day vacation would just end already.

According to the Center for Disease Control, vaccinated and nonvaccinated individuals must test negative for COVID-19 within 1-3 days before and after traveling in or out of the United States. I tested negative not only once but twice before traveling to Jamaica, but I tested positive four days later. At the resort, they would test guests 48 hours before their departure. Oddly enough, everyone I was around tested negative, as well as my brother, who was sharing a hotel room with me.

The day I tested positive was very leisurely. I slept on the deck all day since I had not felt well enough to go on an excursion with the rest of my family. Now looking back on that day, I realize that my entire breakfast had tasted the same and it was difficult to differentiate between the foods I was eating.

I was eating lunch roughly 15 minutes after the COVID test, and my stepfather called me down to the lobby. It was at that moment that they said those horrid words: "The test came back positive." My mother was distraught as she knew that I was going to be immediately transferred into the COVID ward on the resort, where I would be housed for 14 days. It was heartrending to know that my family had to leave me in a foreign country alone, but I assured them I would be fine.

Surprisingly, the psychological barrier of getting through quarantine was more abrasive than the physical isolation itself. I found myself nervous that I would have an asthmatic flare-up and have go to a third-world hospital. Also, I was worried at times that I would never return home. Time seemed to be at a standstill. Luckily, I was asymptomatic for the most part, only experiencing early headaches, loss of taste and smell, and muscle soreness in my legs.

I feel that this is something you typically read about online but do not think could happen to you. I was fully vaccinated at the time of the trip, but I do encourage those who are comfortable with getting the vaccine to get theirs, because it makes breakthrough cases like mine less severe.

Most understand by now that COVID-19 can be spread through inhalation and can affect the respiratory system. The CDC still recommends that we wear our masks while in public because it is a strong protection against the virus. These are trying times we live in, I do not encourage international travel until conditions improve worldwide. We will get there, but I would hate to see any of you trapped like I was.

View from my quarantine room in Jamaica.
Photo by Sufyan Davis-Arrington.

OPINION

The Montgazette The Students' Voice

Opinion:

Vaccines are crucial to public health

Amanda Hadad
MSP 171 The Montgazette Contributor

We know better.

In its young history, the United States has endured several deadly infectious disease outbreaks. The 1918 flu pandemic was the last major outbreak before COVID-19. Caused by the H1N1 virus, the initial strain surfaced in the U.S. in the spring of 1918. Mortality rates were low, but the virus continued to spread and mutate. When newer variants appeared in the fall, they proved far more dangerous. That pandemic claimed the lives of over 670,000 Americans. It infected over a third of the world's population and left many children orphaned. It also had significant social, economic, and political implications. Sound familiar?

Following years of sickness and death, the country was ready to embrace science for salvation and a way out of the flu pandemic. Medical experts asserted that vaccines could prevent or at least lessen the effects of a disease. The government worked with scientists because they understood that vaccines were crucial to maintaining public health. Vaccines can prevent and control infectious disease outbreaks and protect the nation's health care resources.

Poliomyelitis is another highly contagious disease that plagued the US for centuries. In severe cases, the infection affects the brain and spinal cord, which leads to paralysis and sometimes death. Between 1940 and 1950, polio outbreaks crippled an average of 35,000 people a year in the United States, most of them children. In 1955, the U.S. government licensed the first poliomyelitis vaccine, and soon mass inoculations began. By 1979, the U.S. was polio-free and remains that way due to childhood immunizations.

The eradication of the poliovirus is proof that vaccines are one of the top achievements of modern medicine and have vastly improved public health. Painful and potentially fatal diseases like polio are no longer a major, recurring threat to society.

The Pennsylvania Department of Health requires children entering public school to have a series of immunizations for viruses like measles and polio. Travelers might also require additional vaccines for viruses like yellow fever or typhoid, to maintain the public health of their communities and to reduce the risk of widespread infections.

Today, America must deal with a lingering public health crisis in its battle against COVID-19. Over the past 18 months, this highly contagious respiratory disease caused Americans to experience sickness and death, economic hardship, and social isolation. After nine months of quarantine and modified social lives finally came a beacon of hope: a vaccine.

On December 11, 2020, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration issued an emergency use authorization of the COVID-19 vaccination for individuals 16 and over. Three days later, Sandra Lindsay, a nurse from Long Island, became the first American to receive the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine. "First Vaccine administered," then-President Donald Trump tweeted.

But the vaccine immediately faced skepticism, and some Americans refused the jab despite scientists' and medical experts' reassurances. Opponents cite safety concerns, individual freedoms, and various unfounded conspiracies about government experiments. With a large pool of society unvaccinated, the highly contagious Delta strain formed, and cases began to surge again.

Continued on Page 5.

President Biden delivers remarks regarding COVID-19 vaccine mandates.
Photo by Amanda Hadad.

Vaccines

Continued from Page 4.

In efforts to stop the spread and further mutations, the newly elected Biden administration embraced vaccines in an official capacity and issued federal mandates for the COVID-19 vaccination. These mandates required that federal employees and health-care workers be vaccinated. They also required larger private employers to require vaccinations or weekly testing.

"We have the tools to combat COVID-19, and a distinct minority of Americans, supported by a distinct minority of elected officials, are keeping us from turning the corner," Biden said. The more people are protected against COVID-19, the less likely dangerous mutations and widespread cases are to occur.

Those vaccinated against COVID-19 see a boost in their immune system, and they are safe, reassures Gary Koretzky, a professor in the department of microbiology and immunology at Cornell University. "Most importantly, the vaccines are nearly 100% effective in preventing death and severe complications of COVID-19," he said. It is important to stay ahead of the more dangerous variants, which could affect more of the population and more often prove fatal. Vaccination also protects those who are immunocompromised.

Stopping the spread is crucial to ending the pandemic. Vaccinations protect people from getting the disease and help to decrease the chances of passing the virus on to someone else. "Not 100% [of the time], but really, really well," Koretzky explains. The reason past diseases, like polio and influenza, no longer plague society is vaccinations. And COVID-19 can and must be stopped using the same methods that have worked time and again.

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Opinion:

American roads are awful

James Tasker
MSP 111 The Montgazette Contributor

America is home to many wonderful feats of engineering. From peanut butter to smartphones, America has brought countless innovations to the modern era. Its roads, however, are a massive black mark on an otherwise stellar track record.

Roads in America are dangerous and inefficient. Being a pedestrian in America is genuinely life-threatening. A recently published study found that in 2018 pedestrian fatalities per kilometer in the U.S. were 5-10 times higher than in other countries. This is because high-speed roads are frequently built mere feet away from sidewalks and often intersect with many pedestrian crossing zones.

Most roads are built exclusively with the drivers in mind. Navigating these roads with anything other than a car is akin to playing Russian roulette. Every town in America has long stretches of road with many places of business on both sides. These are simply not feasible to navigate on foot. These roads often don't even have sidewalks, leaving pedestrians to straddle an awkward mound of grass while cars fly past them.

American roads are also highly inefficient. The average American suburb is built entirely around large, multi-lane, high-speed roads that flow through the heart of the town. This seems like a perfectly fine idea, but the idea breaks down very quickly upon applying any reasonable amount of critical thought.

Many businesses will want to have storefronts on these major roads. However, people will want to live near these storefronts. It's only human, right? So, now there need to be separate roads to lead to the suburbs off these main roads. This is all well and good until it scales up.

Unless the major road that was initially laid down is an eight-lane highway, you're going to have a serious traffic problem crop up very quickly. The more popular a town is, the more people will want to live there, which means those roads need to scale up quickly. More than likely, however, whoever laid that initial road did not plan on the surrounding town scaling up to such heights. What the American people are left with is a road that was laid in 1950 needing to accommodate that same town's population in 2021.

So yes, American roads have a plethora of issues, many of which were not touched upon in this article because, quite frankly, there isn't enough space or time to break down why exactly American roads are so terrible in a student newspaper.

However, American roads are very useful for one thing and one thing only: cars and driving. Look, America is a big place. Many of the highways in America are extremely useful and downright mandatory. Multi-hour-long trips are the norm in America, whereas that same distance traveled in Europe could take you to an entirely new country while visiting dozens of towns along the way.

American roads are a huge issue, but at least there is finally a president in the White House who is taking this issue somewhat seriously. The younger generations of Americans also seem to be very in tune with these issues as well, and they'll be the ones making policy down the road. Hopefully, there is a bright future for the American road system. Hopefully, it comes sooner rather than later.

A typical American road.
Photo by James Tasker

Opinion:

The impact of inflation and rising prices

Ethan Montague
MSP 111 The Montgazette Contributor

As inflation strikes most regions across the country, many may wonder, "What even is 'inflation,' and why are my goods costing more?"

Inflation is defined as the rate of increase in prices over a given time. CNBC says some levels of inflation are normal and they tend to be around 2%. However, inflation surged to 6.2% in October, which is higher than anything we have seen in America since November of 1990. According to Steven Rattner and Larry Summers, counselor to the Treasury Secretary and Treasury Secretary in the Obama administration, respectively, Biden bears a good share of the responsibility for not listening to their advice. Biden's $1.9 trillion American Rescue plan was the "original sin" in Rattner's words that inflamed the inflation crisis.

Summers believes that the bill could "set off inflationary pressures of a kind we have not seen in a generation, with consequences for the value of the dollar and financial stability." Biden's package came on the heels of President Trump's prior distribution of stimulus payouts of over $2 trillion which was already considered too much by many Republicans.

Even President Biden himself has admitted some fault, saying "The irony is people have more money now because of the first major piece of legislation I passed. The public got checks for $1,400. The public got checks for a whole range of things. If you're a mom and you have kids under the age of 7, you get $300 a month and if it's over 7 to 17, you're getting $360 a month. It changes people's lives. But what happens if there's nothing to buy and there is more money to compete for getting goods? It creates a real problem."

Given this acknowledgment, it seems odd that he is continuing to push his Build Back Better program of stimulus and other social welfare payments to families instead of motivating citizens to work to solve the issue of a lack of goods.

With all the COVID-19 stimulus bills that have been passed over the last two years, the American public has been left with lots of extra cash to spend, which has led to a greater demand for goods and the suppliers unable to meet demand due to worker shortages and COVID-19 shutdowns over the past few years.

One of the main concerns associated with this rise in inflation is the impact this will have on those who have saved as inflation essentially decreases the value of their money. For example, if an investor earns 3% from their stock investments this year, but the inflation rate stays at 6.2%, then that investor realistically has lost 3.2% despite turning what should have been a profit off their investments.

Some hope for this high inflation being a temporary condition exists. President Biden's Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen says she expects improvement "by the middle to end of next year" because she believes that "labor supply is depressed by the pandemic" and will turn around once supply chains can hire more workers. This could occur if she is correct about more people joining the workforce, but it is unclear what could spur this as the vaccine has been available for about a year.

It is unclear what percentage of the 40% of unvaccinated American will choose to take the vaccine between now and then. COVID-19 is also not likely going anywhere, as it still ranks among the leading causes of death even after the vaccine was taken by over half the population, which suggests that the pandemic will continue well into the future.

Some of the biggest areas inflation has impacted from October 2020 to October 2021 are fuel and oil, which has gone up 59.1% (although only up 24.2% since October 2019, prior to COVID-19 lowering the need to travel); energy prices, which are up 30%; used vehicles, up 26.4%; food, up 5.3%; and fish and meat, up 11.9%.

Biden campaigned on making things easier for lower- and middle-class Americans;however, this rise in prices disproportionately affects them because they spend a larger percentage of their total income on fuel, energy, and food than upper class Americans spend on these items.

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Opinion:

It's past time for real corporate responsibility

Daniel Johnson
MSP 171 The Montgazette Contributor

Hurricane Ida was a tragedy that struck large areas of the country and produced more havoc than anyone had seen locally in many years. Although it started in the southern part of the U.S., a historic level of destruction was felt in the northern states, even as the storm had weakened.

According to 6abc Action News, Upper Dublin, a place not known for tornadoes, got battered by an F2 tornado. Massive trees lay on the ground or on top of houses, and roofs of homes were entirely ripped off. Even Upper Dublin High School sustained major damage.

Nobody thought a tornado could ever tear into a small suburb outside of Philadelphia, which only magnified the utter destruction and feeling of shock by residents. This event should make it evident now that the world is changing, and not for the better. While the common person could do more for our planet, a large onus lies on corporations whose inaction has now started to affect all of us.

The change most needed is the transition to using renewable energy sources, as opposed to burning fossil fuels, which produces carbon dioxide and spews it into the atmosphere. According to National Geographic, global warming is real and poses many threats that could alter our planet devastatingly, including an increase in the Earth's temperature from 3 to 5 degrees Celsius by 2100, radically changing the amount and frequency of precipitation and triggering an uptick in natural disasters.

The consequences can be severe, like extreme flooding in places not built to sustain higher water levels, such as parts of China and European countries like Germany and Austria. Climate change can also lead to prolonged droughts in places that need crops to survive, like South Sudan, Paraguay, and Bolivia. The effects can also be seen in the record forest fires that often rage for weeks in the western regions of the U.S.

National Geographic author Christina Nunez wrote, "We're adding energy to the atmosphere that is trapping heat through greenhouse gases, and tornadoes are the very picture of terrifying atmospheric energy." Moreover, the heat trapped in the atmosphere can also cause more frequent and intense thunderstorms and hurricanes.

Make no mistake, while the average person does burn fossil fuels by driving a car, or may not recycle effectively, big corporations are the main culprit in driving our planet to catastrophe. Tess Riley, a journalist for The Guardian, detailed how 100 of the world's largest companies account for 71% of greenhouse gas (carbon dioxide) emissions into the atmosphere since 1988. For decades, these companies have been defacing and destroying our planet because doing otherwise is simply not profitable for their bottom line.

Some companies do care about our planet, though, and attempt to make strides to fix what has been damaged. For example, IKEA has pledged to build more than 400 wind turbines and has already installed over 750,000 solar panels on IKEA buildings, investing about 2 billion dollars in renewable energy sources. Car companies like Tesla, Jaguar and Volvo have moved to start only producing electric-powered vehicles, instead of traditional carbon-dioxide-emitting, gas-powered vehicles.

However, some companies will act like they care about going green but show their true colors when profits are on the line. Big companies like Amazon, Apple and Google have lobbied hard to oppose the new U.S. climate bill, which would propose to produce zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2040.

At the end of the day, big corporations must realize that the days of this planet may be numbered, and they have no one to blame but themselves.

The wreckage of an F-2 tornado in Fort Washington, PA.
Photo by Daniel Johnson.

Opinion:

Pit bulls make perfect pets

Mya Gelet
MSP 111 The Montgazette Contributor

Some people avoid adopting pit bulls because of the misconception that they are "killer dogs," when in fact they are more likely to "kill" you with kisses.

Having rescued three pit bulls, I can tell you they each have their own unique personality, with one thing in common: they love to be loved. Pit bulls are intelligent, strong, agile, trainable, and, above all, super affectionate.

My family rescued our first pit bull a year before I was born. She was four weeks old and found in a dumpster with the rest of her litter. They were warned that it was dangerous to have a breed like that around children. Based on the experience they had raising dogs, and the temperament of our first pit bull, Booey, though, my parents believed that she would be a best friend and not a threat to their baby. They were right.

From the time my mother was pregnant, Booey never left her side, and when I was born, she never left mine. Booey slept next to my crib. She also followed me wherever I went when I began to walk. She was a guardian to me, and she taught me how to run around like a dog in my walker. She always kept me safe in the backyard and was by my side every step of the way.

This wasn't just true for Booey. When I was nine, we adopted our next pit bull, Prince. Prince is my best friend and has been with me through everything. He used to ride with me in my little battery-powered Jeep and run around with me every day.

Our third rescue, Rage, is a huge love bug and loves to sleep and cuddle. Rage and Prince are best friends and are inseparable. None of my pit bulls have ever been aggressive and always want to be loved.

People see pit bulls as aggressive because of dogfighting. Pit bulls are easy to train and will follow their owner's every command. Pit bulls can also gain a lot of muscle easily, so they are immensely strong. However, pit bulls are not naturally mean or aggressive. This type of behavior is trained into them by dangerously misguided owners, who are sometimes even nefarious with their intentions.

More people need to give pit bulls a chance. Labeling and stereotyping only gets them killed in shelters. More research into pit bulls will show they are sweethearts and wouldn't hurt anyone unless trained to do so.

Two pit bulls (Rage and Prince) in outfits.
Photo by Mya Gelet.

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The Montgazette The Students' Voice

The return of Philadelphia's Thanksgiving Day parade

Ashley Cushnie
The Montgazette Contributor

A Philadelphia tradition, the 6abc Dunkin' Thanksgiving Day Parade was officially back from its COVID-19 hiatus this year, after 2020's virtual celebration. The parade already marked its 100th run, back in 2019.

This year, those of us who were seeing the parade live had to follow COVID-19 safety guidelines. The City of Philadelphia regulations required masks at all times except while eating or drinking, even in the public viewing areas, to ensure COVID-19 didn't spread throughout the event.

The 102nd parade was memorable. This year's theme, "Brand New Day," shows how far we've come since COVID-19 has impacted us and shows how we can stay strong during tough times. While it is true that we have lost so many close friends, family members, and loved ones along the long way, "Brand New Day" reminds us that life isn't permanent and that we need to embrace what we have now before it is gone.

As always, the balloons and floats in the parade were amazing. New balloons included Pac-Man, Jerold the Bookworm, Bumble the Abominable Snowman, and Gingersnap.

Rick Williams, Cecily Tynan, Karen Rogers, Adam Joseph, and Alicia Vitarelli hosted the event for the 6abc Action News team.

Special guests included Ginger Zee (from Good Morning America), Tamron Hall (from tThe Tamron Hall Show), Carson Kressley (a TV personality), Sheryl Lee Ralph (from Abbott Elementary), Quinta Brunson (also from Abbott Elementary), and the Philadelphia Team Mascots (Swoop, Franklin the Dog, and Gritty).

This year's 6abc Dunkin' Thanksgiving Day Parade featured headline acts: Oleta Adams (singer and pianist), Cam Anthony (Winner of The Voice), Freddie Jackson (singer and songwriter), Taylor Dayne (singer, songwriter, and actress), Capella, Disney Princess – The Concert, The Singing Surgeons (Dr. Will Robinson & Dr. Elvis Francois), Amy Grant (recording artist), Kool & the Gang, Hugh Panaro (actor), Michael James Scott (from Disney Broadway's Aladdin), Sharpe Family Singers, Sheléa (singer, songwriter, pianist, and producer), Willie Spence (American Idol's runner-up), Lindsey Stirling (violinist, songwriter, and dancer), and Tag Team (DC the Brain Supreme & Steve Rolln).

We parade-goers also enjoyed performances by the Kimmel Cultural Campus Broadway series, Anastasia and Beautiful: The Carole King Musical.

From Philadelphia Jerry Blavat aka The Geator with the Heater to the Parade of Unity, the Philadelphia Eagles cheerleaders and drumline, Walnut Street Theatre's Disney's The Little Mermaid, a Pennsylvania School for Deaf segment, and Philadelphia's Ballet, it appeared that everyone was having a wonderful time.

Finally, special guest stars Mickey and Minnie Mouse wowed the crowd. As if all of this were not enough, three lucky winners received Dunkin' Coffee for a Year, Dunkin' Breakfast for 10, and Disney on Ice front row tickets. The rest of us were sorry not to win anything.

In the final moments of the parade, Santa Claus and Mrs. Claus made their way up to the top steps of the Philadelphia Museum of Art to kick off the Christmas season.

My favorite part of this year's 6abc Dunkin' Thanksgiving Day Parade was the opening number, where the performers were singing to Brand New Day from the movie The Wiz. They got everyone to sing along, which lifted their spirits, too. I also enjoyed Willie Spence singing "This Christmas;" it was very relaxing. Another of my favorites was watching Dunkin dancers, along with singer Davonda Simmons, perform "Get On Your Feet" on the Parkway. I had so much fun singing along with it.

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Broadway returns post-pandemic

Caitlyn McCrork
The Montgazette Contributor

After 551 dark days, the stage lights on Broadway finally came back on. On March 12, 2020, former New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo closed all 41 Broadway theaters due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Originally, the closures were planned to last 30 days, with hopes to reopen on April 12. The rise in cases and deaths caused Broadway to delay its reopening even further when New York City surpassed 1,000 COVID-19 deaths on March 31, 2020. No one knew when, or if, Broadway would reopen.

The pandemic caused Broadway to lose millions of dollars. Thousands of theater workers lost their jobs. Many Broadway shows were either postponed or closed. The producers of "Mean Girls," as well as the producers of Disney's "Frozen," announced that neither show, along with many other famous titles, would be returning to Broadway when theaters reopened. The new Michael Jackson musical, "MJ," which was set to open for previews in July 2020, was postponed until 2021. Previews for "MJ" are now set to begin on December 6, and the show officially opens on February 22, 2022. Due to the pandemic, some productions decided to release live recordings of the shows. Lin-Manuel Miranda, creator of "Hamilton," planned to release the original cast recording of "Hamilton" in late 2021; however, due to the pandemic, the recording was released to Disney+ in early July 2020.

In May 2021, Cuomo announced that Broadway would be able to resume productions at full capacity in September 2021. The first show to reopen was Bruce Springsteen's one-man show, "Springsteen on Broadway," on June 26, nearly three months before Cuomo's announced opening date. "Waitress" and "Hadestown" opened soon after.

The big reopening of Broadway finally arrived on September 14th, when four major shows resumed: "Chicago," "Wicked," "Hamilton," and "The Lion King." These shows made their opening nights one to remember, and audiences gathered in the streets to partake in the celebration. The longest-running Broadway show, "The Phantom of the Opera," reopened on October 22. The cast and guests celebrated with a pre-show party, a red carpet and gifts for opening night audience members. Many special guests came to experience the re-opening nights of Broadway shows.

To prevent further shutdowns, Broadway has enacted strict COVID-19 protocols. All cast, crew, staff, and members of the audience must be fully vaccinated and wear a mask for the entirety of the shows. Current New York Gov. Kathy Hochul attended the reopening. In an interview with Spectrum News NY1, Hochul stated, "[Broadway was] truly the hardest hit. They were the first to close and the last to reopen. That's a lot of people — the costume designers, the set people, the production people, the carpenters as well as the performers and actors and actresses. It's been really brutal." Even with protocols, the reopening has been hard. The September 29 showing of "Aladdin" was canceled due to COVID-19 cases within the cast and staff, even with testing and strict protocols. Luckily, the show was only closed for one day.

Along with the reopening of Broadway theaters, the TKTs booth reopened as well. At the TKTs booth, theatergoers can purchase discounted same-day tickets to Broadway and off-Broadway shows. According to Miranda, "It's one thing to see something on the screen. And I'm thrilled 'Hamilton' was available on a screen in a time when we couldn't go to a theater. But I'm even more thrilled that now it can be experienced the way it was meant to be, live in front of an audience, the final collaborator every night."

After its longest shutdown ever, audience members and theater workers are flooding the streets of Broadway. No one knows how long it will take for live theater to return to normal, but for the time being Broadway is doing all it can for audiences to once again experience to joys of live theater.

"Hamilton," at Richard Rodgers Theater, after the reopening of Broadway.
Photo by Caitlyn McCrork.

The Montgazette The Students' Voice

Opinion: Flyers' offseason moves make them a contender for the Stanley Cup

William Ketner
MSP 111 The Montgazette Contributor

The Philadelphia Flyers are coming off a very disappointing campaign during the 2020-21 NHL season, though one affected by COVID-19. However, the Flyers made all the proper moves in the offseason and are now a true contender to be the 2022 Stanley Cup champions.

Last season, goalie Carter Hart struggled mightily. However, all of that did not fall on his shoulders. The team's defense was absolutely abysmal to play behind as they continuously allowed teams up the ice on odd-man rushes shift after shift.

There are many additions the Flyers made that will allow them to have a bounce-back year this season. The first move they made was acquiring defenseman Ryan Ellis from the Nashville Predators. Adding Ellis to the team should provide what the Flyers lost when Matt Niskanen surprisingly retired following the 2019-20 season: someone who plays defense next to Ivan Provorov, which allow him to play his offensive style of a game.

Two other additions made on defense for the Flyers were Keith Yandle and Rasmus Ristolainen. Yandle has proved to be a great quarterback for the first power-play unit, and Ristolainen is providing toughness that was desperately needed last year.

The biggest addition made to the Flyers from a forward standpoint is Cam Atkinson. He gives the team a much needed "shoot first, answer questions later" mentality that the Flyers have been lacking for years. According to NHL.com, Atkinson has piled up six goals in seven games this season, which is an incredible pace.

Two other additions made at the forward position were Derrick Brassard and Nate Thompson. Brassard supplies offensive production, while Thompson, like Ristolainen, is providing much needed toughness.

Finally, the Flyers acquired Martin Jones to be the backup goalie behind Carter Hart, and so far, he is proving to be reliable. According to NHL.com, in two starts he is 2-0 with a goals-against-average of 2.01 and a save percentage of .940.

Some think that the flyers just don't have the firepower to keep up with other teams like the Edmonton Oilers or the Colorado Avalanche due to the fact they are two of the best offensive teams in the league, but the truth is that with the new faces and a culture change, the Flyers could win the Cup as early as this season.

If the Flyers can ride the new leadership they have in the locker room and continue to play as well as they have since the beginning of the season, they have as good of a chance to win the Stanley Cup as any team in the NHL.

A Philadelphia Flyers jersey.

Photo by William Ketner.

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Opinion:

The (possible) return of Ben Simmons

Isaiah Gouldey
MSP 171 Montgazette Contributor

In the 2016 NBA draft, the Philadelphia 76ers convinced me they had the beginnings of a dynasty when they drafted point guard Ben Simmons with the first pick. Simmons had been judged by many to be the second coming of LeBron James, but he has failed to live up to those high expectations. Simmons' lack of three-point attempts over the course of his career in Philadelphia had started to drive a wedge between himself and the Sixers' fan base, and his awful performance in the 2021 NBA playoffs and absence from the team during the past offseason only added more fuel to the fire.

After what seemed to me like the end of "The Process" era between Simmons and all-star teammate Joel Embiid, Ben Simmons shocked the basketball world when he made his return to Philadelphia in October. Prior to his return, all the previous reprehensible actions by the all-star point guard seemed to spell the end of his time as a Sixer, and his return leaves me puzzled. While some are willing to forgive and forget, hoping his talent will once again give this team a run for the NBA Finals, personally, I can't wait to boo him out of the Wells Fargo Center if he ever takes the court again.

The drama started this past summer, but the postseason is really where things got hot between Simmons and the fan base. Over the years, fans, radio personalities, and past greats of the NBA advocated that Simmons should start shooting more during games. The story was the same every year: Simmons would attempt one or two shots during games, miss them both, and would then show his offseason workouts on social media, never missing a shot, on a wide-open court with no defense. The 76ers were getting the wrong side of Simmons, and I along with many others were finally done making excuses.

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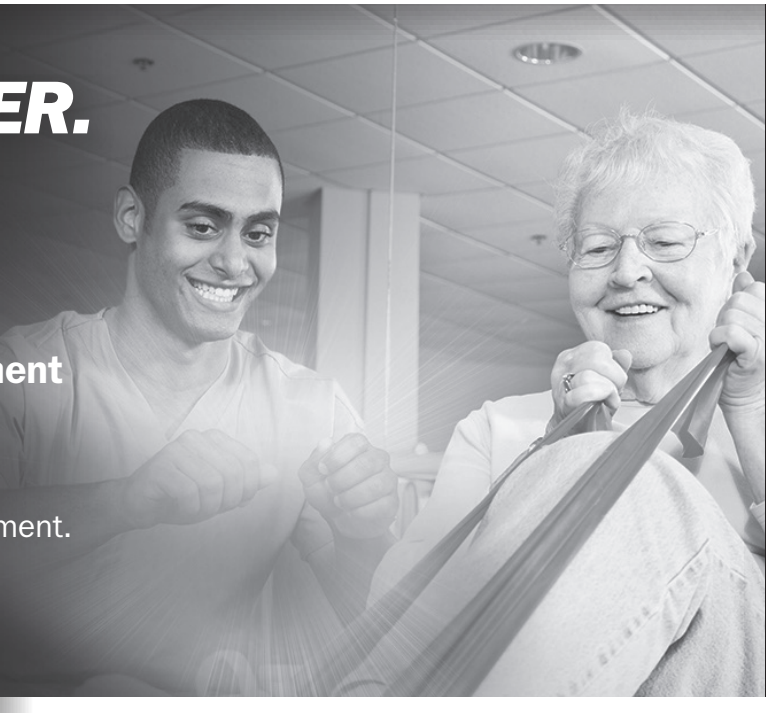

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Opinion:

NBA expansion teams

Pedro Machado
MSP 111 The Montgazette Contributor

It is no secret that the National Basketball Association has been looking to add more teams. In fact, the expansion talk has been heating up once again, with NBA commissioner Adam Silver stating that "it is sort of the manifest destiny of the league that it expands at some point."

The last expansion team to emerge was the Charlotte Hornets in 2004. Some suitors say they really want a team in the future. But is there a reason to expand the league right now? And if so, what cities should get the chance to have a team of their own?

Of course, there are people around the NBA who do not seem to like the possibility of adding more teams to the league. As of right now, there are 30 teams in the NBA, so lots of league executives and players believe the schedule would be even more exhausting with more teams. With more teams come more games, more traveling, and more injuries.

But the truth is that Adam Silver as well as most people running the NBA think it is of vital importance to expand. Due to the league's massive financial losses taken during the COVID-19 pandemic, the economic benefits of having two (or maybe even more) teams added to the association will be huge. "It is an economic issue and it is a competitive issue for us. So, it is one that we'll continue to study, but we are spending a little bit more time on it than we were pre-pandemic," Silver said, indicating how the pandemic is indeed part of the decision thought process.

What teams would make sense to join? The number one favorite is (not surprisingly) Seattle, Washington. Seattle would be a smart move for the league. It is one of the biggest cities in the country and has one of the most passionate fan bases. The city has the money and the interest, so the Seattle Supersonics (or a new name Seattle team) should be back in the league as soon as possible. Besides, there is no problem regarding an arena, since their new NHL team, the Seattle Kraken, have a brand new one that could perfectly be shared with a basketball team.

The number two favorite should be Sin City… Las Vegas, Nevada. Vegas already is the entertainment capital of the world and its popularity, and population, are only growing. Their two teams, the Golden Knights and the Raiders, have proven that the city has the potential to host another team, so Vegas should be a priority.

Two other cities that should be considered, and always come to mind, are located in the state of Missouri. They are St. Louis and Kansas City. Yes, they are both relatively small, but that does not mean they cannot have a team. Citizens of these two cities already love their major sports teams; maybe it would not be such a bad idea to consider them for the expansion.

There are a few more options that are my personal favorites. None of them is very likely to be part of the expansion, but there is a chance it can happen: Pittsburgh, San Diego, and two major Canadian cities — Montreal and Vancouver. Pittsburgh and San Diego would instantly become two awesome rivals in the east and west, especially Pittsburgh because of how their fans love their teams to the death and also their natural competition with Philadelphia.

Expanding further into Canada is a very intriguing idea as well. Montreal and Vancouver are two big cities that would love to have a team in the NBA. In fact, Vancouver already had that experience when they were home of the Grizzlies in the past, but Montreal would be a novel option as well.

The NBA should expand. They have the power to create at least two more teams, so why not do it? It would (likely) put an end to their economic issues and it would bring more competitiveness to the entire league, so it could be a great idea for everyone. Although Seattle and Las Vegas should be the two cities that receive an NBA team in the near future, Silver and the rest of the league's organization should also look at some other options.

Just about every city in America would love to have a basketball team, but as of right now, it seems that only two will have that chance.

Philadelphia 76ers and Washington Wizards jerseys.

Photo by Pedro Machado.

The 76ers

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Things went from bad to worse during the 2021 NBA playoffs, especially during the Conference Semifinals series against the Atlanta Hawks, which the 76ers would go on to lose three games to four. I remember going into the series expecting an easy five game series win, especially after beating the Washington Wizards with ease in the opening round. Yet, easily corrected mistakes destroyed the 76ers' chances of getting past the Hawks to advance to the Eastern Conference Finals. Furthermore, Ben Simmons' abysmal play was glaring.

Not only did Simmons only manage to score nine points per game in that series (five points less than his 14-points-per-game season average), but his in-game decision-making was also bringing his value to the team into question. In game 7, with a chance to change the momentum in his team's favor, Ben Simmons had an easy route to the net, which I thought would result in an easy dunk for two points and could have tied the game in the final minutes.

However, instead of a feeling of temporary satisfaction, all I felt was rage when I saw Simmons pass up on an easy dunk. Rather than taking the shot, he decided to pass the ball to teammate Matisse Thybulle, who got bullied by two Hawks defenders, resulting in a turnover.

I was shocked. The 76ers ended up losing a heartbreaker, 103-96 when the clock hit double zeros. I was hoping this would be the last of Simmons' 76ers drama in Philly, but that was only the beginning of something much bigger.

Simmons would go on to request a trade, but due to his poor play, no one was willing to give the all-star value that Sixers President Daryl Morey was looking for in the offseason. After the failed trade demand, Simmons would go on to return to the Sixers in order to avoid fines, but his attitude still hasn't changed, which has already led to him being kicked out of a team practice.

So, what exactly is the future of the Simmons-Sixers drama? To be honest, I'd rather not think about it, but I have a sinking feeling that we haven't seen the worst of it yet.

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