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a student publication

The Montgazette

FREE

The Students' Voice

Issue 91

Serving Montgomery County Community College and the Surrounding Community

October 2022



Don Shump answers questions as honeybees swarm his face to fashion a bee beard. Page 15.

(Photo / Josie Racz)

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The Montgazette
The Students' Voice

from the Editor

Face your Goliath this semester

Steven Wicher Jr.
The Montgazette Editor-in-Chief

A tsunami-sized wave of bad luck has hit my lifeboat recently. It is something we have all experienced, and we know the tides will eventually turn back in our favor. Yet, when riding out the violent waves in the midst of a dark ocean, it can seem like forever waiting for rescue.

Bad luck manifests itself in different ways. Some are mild annoyances and others are life-changing events. When I was participating in virtual class, every smoke detector in my house went off for no reason. An organization I am apart of lost its leader after a decade of service. I

lost progress on a major project, and a product I am not proud of was turned in. This misfortune builds up into a giant Goliath that must be faced in order to keep going forward. Yet, it is too often that we see people turn away from a challenge and put their attention towards unhealthy distractions.

Modern society has made it easier for these distractions to manifest. Instead of facing Goliath head on, devices are shoved in our face to hide us from his horrors. Social media and video games are an easier occupation of the mind than real-world problem-solving.

I have fallen victim to distractions as well. I can spend countless hours streaming "Friends" and "That '70s Show," yet, these are only short-term distractions. When I close my computer, I may have laughed a bit, but I still have problems to address that everyone's favorite friend, Joey Tribbiani, cannot help with in real life.

It is overwhelming to face Goliath alone. While it is possible, the fight will be long and there will be deep scars. Instead, I find it much more helpful to face him with a team of Davids. To know a group of friends or family have my back is the biggest relief in the world.

During my first semester, I learned of the many opportunities that the college has to offer, including writing for

The Montgazette. We have clubs that focus on different interests and industries. There are chances to meet new people, if only we all look up from our screens. No matter what, human connection will remain the ultimate cure for a rough patch of life. Even when we seem to be adrift in an ocean of bad luck, friends and family can offer the best rescue.

To all Montgomery County Community College students and staff, welcome back to another year. I hope you make the best of it. To do so, I recommend putting your phone away and meeting someone new, either in class or out in the courtyard. Build your family of Davids and help destroy each other's Goliaths. Good of luck to everyone and keep an eye out for the next issue of The Montgazette!

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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.

Burnout within the college community

Rose Padva

MSP 111 The Montgazette Contributor

Michelle Nguyen, a former student at Montgomery County Community College, said, “I felt burned out all the time, even while I was in school.” Nguyen studied Life Sciences for a couple of semesters before dropping out because of mental health and financial issues. Nguyen is not the only student who struggles with burn out.

What is burn out? Burn out is the feeling of stress and anxiety in daily life. According to the University of Virginia Department of Economics, students can begin feeling so helpless and depressed that they retreat into their shell, away from the people who care about them the most. They become frustrated, confused, and lonely, and do not know what to do. Eventually, with everything piling on top, one after the other, they snap. The article lists three reasons why students are burned out in college: social issues, academic pressures, and mental health.

Tommy Kelly, a current student at the College, studying Business Administration, has also had issues with burn out. He explained, “Last year during school I struggled with family health issues, [and] I got burned out.”

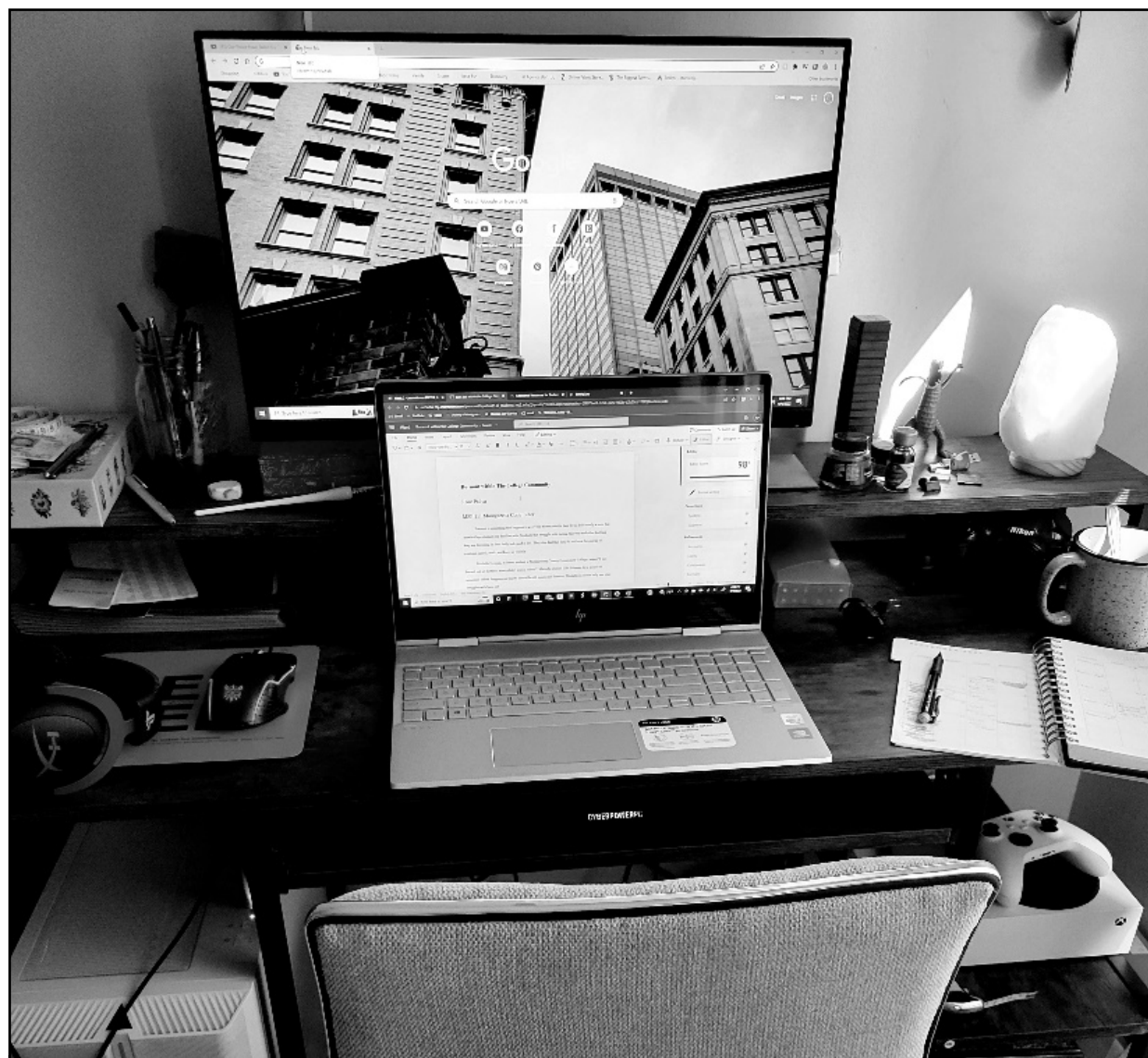
Many other students find it difficult how to tell their loved ones they are dealing with burn out. How can students recover? Kelly said, “Make sure to do things that pick you up, and not just things that are daily tasks. Let someone know how you are mentally.”

Nguyen suggested that “Hot showers after a long day have helped me.” Both of these students had a common solution: self-care.

Many resources are available to assist with burn out. If students need mental health help, [timelycare.com](https://www.timelycare.com) is a telehealth service that can provide professional help for free. Students can either use their app or go to their website to start their self-help journey. Other resources available include Montgomery County Mental and Behavioral Health and Montgomery County Adult Mental Health Services Guide.

If students feel that they want to change a situation, or need more specific resources for food, housing, education, and even LGBTQIA+ resources, information can also be found on the College’s website. Students can go to the health and wellness page at mc3.edu and click on any of

the resources listed. Some additional resources that are available are Montgomery County LGBTQ+ Health and Support at montcopa.org and the PA Housing Finance Agency at phfa.org. Students should not hesitate to get help from friends, family, and through college resources.



A MCCC Student's Desk.

(Photo / Rose Padva)

Opinion:

The debate over summer vs. fall

Anne Kastelein
The Montgazette Contributor

Everyone seems to have a love/hate relationship with the fall season. The weather starts to get cooler, schools welcome back students, and everything's changing.

Diving deep into the topic of the seasonal change, Pennsylvania residents had plenty to say. "It's not my favorite," former college student Lily Dibble says. "I like the summer more. You get good tans and go on vacations, and it's peaceful."

Dibble attended Mount Aloysius College, in central Pennsylvania. She says, "What I like more is that here, in Pennsburg, it's not totally cold yet. Sure, we have days where it's really windy and you might need a sweatshirt. But at Aloysius? I wouldn't be surprised if it already started snowing."

Taylor Augustin, a contributor to Sweetie High.com, says, "If we had to chose one season to live in year-round, it would be summer."

Augustin continues, "Days at the beach, summer fashion, family vacays, reading books, local fairs, and more, to take up most of our time, and we have no complaints." Take the "Frozen" character Olaf, the friendly snowman, for example. He is a snowman, yet summer is his favorite season.

Of course, some people are still looking forward to the fall season kicking off. "Are you kidding?" high school senior Kyle Knause says, "Fall is perfect. The food, the clothing, the holidays, the build-up to Christmas. How could you not like the season?"

It is said that fall brings in a very cozy atmosphere, and the changing weather makes it a solid candidate for best season. Knause agrees: "What I love most about fall is honestly the temperature dies down and its developmental change from summer."

Much like Knause, it appears that others

support this opinion. Dara Mathis, contributor to Romper.com, says, "Autumn is a time to fully embrace cozy clothes, colorful leaves, and basically everything else that's great about living in a place with four seasons."

Growing up in Florida, Mathis has had a personal experience living with a never-ending summer season. Since moving to

Maryland, she says she's "kicking summer lovin' to the curb."

So, yes, fall inspires a never-ending love/hate relationship for those who live for the summer life. Some may love the endless beach days and summer playlists. Others will stick to warm coffee and fuzzy socks by a fire. It is all a matter of personal preference.



The Outdoors.
(Photo / Anne Kastelein)

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Opinion:

Fast fashion is bad for a sustainable society

Sophia Liberato

MSP 111 The Montgazette Contributor

“Fast fashion” is a term for new clothes that are made with cheap material from companies that outsource to developing countries. These companies pay workers less than minimum wage for the mass amount of clothing they produce. Unfortunately, this trend has grown in popularity. These fast fashion clothes are easier to tear or will fall out of style as soon as a new line comes out, forcing consumers to then buy newer disposable clothes.

How can consumers combat this and shop more sustainably? One way is to shop at a thrift store, for several reasons: First, fast fashion companies use unsustainable production methods. In addition, fast fashion has been known to dry up and pollute water sources, while 85% of these clothes end up in landfills. Washing these clothes alone releases 500,000 tons of microfibers into the ocean each year.

Bella Maldonado, a young adult who attempts to shop sustainably, said, “Thrift stores and recycled clothing” are examples of how she has tried to reduce the carbon footprint that fast fashion creates. Maldonado also stated that these companies have a responsibility to “reuse waste in the factories ... [and] use fabric that is organic.”

Fast fashion uses synthetic fabrics for a reason.

This fabric is cheaper and can be quickly mass produced. For many people, it is difficult to stop buying a product they enjoy for the sole reason that it came from a fast fashion brand.

Grace Liberato works in retail and understands the effect some companies have on their target audience. Liberato says, “People should start buying from local stores.”

Shopping at small businesses is another method that consumers have used to slow down the negative effects of big brands. Small businesses also have more unique pieces that can be tailored to the buyer, unlike chain companies that mass produce the same article of clothing.

These local shops sell clothes made to last longer, not just a single season. A common practice these businesses have is producing and creating clothes themselves. They may even work with other local businesses to obtain materials that will ensure a more sustainable production experience.

Shopping sustainably, while potentially inconvenient and more expensive, is possible to achieve. It can help slow the rise of fast fashion brands and in turn help reduce waste and the negative effects these brands have on the environment.



Local thrift store, Liberty Thrift.

(Photo / Sophia Liberato)

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Backyard beekeeping: Beneficial or blameworthy?

Gavriel Yehezkel
MSP 111 The Montgazette Contributor

At a time when environmental concern for pollinators has spiked, and support for local businesses has grown, local beekeepers have been making the best of a complicated situation.

Over the past few years, many have heard about the “Save the Bees” campaign. This campaign is based on the statistics that show that several bee species have become endangered. It caught the attention of many newfound beekeepers worldwide, who have begun efforts to increase the amount of flora and fauna in their area to attract more bees.

Five years ago, Ofer and Rachel Yehezkel noticed a severe lack of pollinators on a walk during what used to be the busiest time of year for bees in their area. The married couple both dreamed of owning a farm one day, so they decided to take their first step by backyard beekeeping.

“We’d always wanted to try beekeeping but didn’t think it’d be for a long while. Later on, we looked into the environmental benefits, as well as the financial benefits, and decided it’d be a great idea to try our hand at the beekeeping business,” said Rachel Yehezkel.

Soon after, business was booming as the two set up stands in various local farmer’s markets. From Horsham to Abington to Glenside, they quickly became one of the biggest bee product businesses in the Philadelphia area.

“The bees do a lot for us,” Ofer Yehezkel says, “not just with making honey and beeswax but also with pollination. Having bees in your backyard makes it easy to grow fruit trees and vegetable gardens.”

Even though it seems like there is no bigger benefit than cultivating a pollination powerhouse, could honeybees be over-pollinating? Although many types of bees are under threat of endangerment, honeybees are not one. In fact, there are more honeybees today than ever. It begs the question, are honeybees pushing out other pollinators?

The answer: It depends. Beekeeping, as a hobby, usually does not require enough hives to effect pollinator competition. However, large food corporations often hire beekeepers to move beehives into their orchards for a more fruitful blossom. This usually ends up pushing natural pollinators out of their native environment.

There are remedies. Growing a garden or planting simple lawn flowers can encourage the growth of native pollinators, such as bumblebees or butterflies, which can thrive in these local areas.

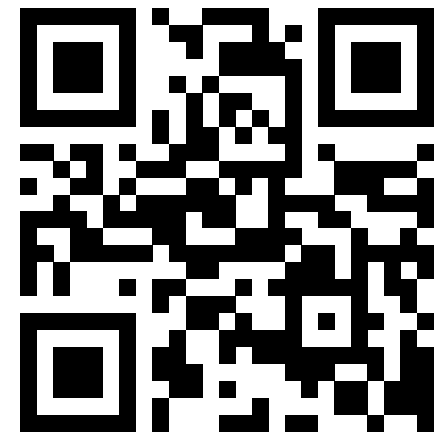
Overall, supporting local honey businesses is not a disservice, but an incentive to appreciate nature’s lasting bounty.



A bee pollinating a tree blossom.
(Photo / Rachel Yehezkel)



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Opinion: “Come and See” is the most anti-war war movie

Gabriel Gibboni
MSP 111 The Montgazette Contributor

There is a very unfortunate trend within the war genre in cinema. Oftentimes, viewers follow one main character throughout a period of war. They watch as the main character struggles in his endeavors but faithfully comes out victorious in the end. This depiction turns war from the greatest of human tragedies into the classic “hero’s journey” tale.

“Come and See” is a 1985 film by Soviet director Elem Klimov. Set in 1943 Belarus, it follows a young boy named Florya returning home from a camp of resistance fighters, only to find his family and other villagers slaughtered. From here, he wanders around his native country attempting to survive numerous Nazi atrocities. These horrors peak when a village that Florya is hiding in comes under Nazi siege. The Germans burn down every structure and, along with it, its inhabitants. The few who physically survive are forever scarred.

In the final scene,

Florya rejoins the resistance fighters and marches on to defend everything he knows. While the audience could view this as another survivor living on, the film paints this ending in a different light: The combatants are not heroes marching, but a group of human shells walking toward their impending doom.

In his review of “Come and See,” critic Roger Ebert writes, “It’s said that you can’t make an effective anti-war film because war by its nature is exciting, and the end of the film belongs to the survivors.” This is why movies like “Hacksaw Ridge” and “American Sniper” fail in their messaging. The end is about heroes who live on, not those who have fallen.

Granted, some viewers may completely disagree about the impact of “American Sniper.” However, a review by Richard Brody of the New Yorker stated, “Its story of war contains valor and horror—the destructive

and self-destructive conflicts that are intrinsic to a person endowed with a warrior’s noble nature.” The valor within can be a good thing and dealing with the regret of killing in war is certainly a needed message for society.

While there is a repulsive horror in the number of lives taken in these films, there is no value in the glorification of the main character’s killings.

Some say these films may be a ploy to draw more young people into a violent mindset. As a result, they view joining the military as a way to release pent up aggression in exchange for a shot at heroism.

“Come and See” paints a clear picture of all the death, pain, and destruction that occurs in war. It offers a glimpse of the real atrocities many fighters face. Although Florya is one of the few survivors, he is just another human shell moving along. He will never truly live again.

How “Come and

See” tackles this idea of “surviving” war is unique. The amazing acting, harrowing score, and nightmarish depiction of events makes the viewer pray that something so

atrocious never occurs again. Hopefully, future films will show war for the grim reality it is, rather than exploiting nationalism and glorifying violence.



The poster for “Come and See”

(Credit / netflixmovies.com)

Opinion:

Keep your eyes open for rising star Aisha Dee

Marc Regen
The Montgazette Contributor

There will always be a bright-eyed rising star who will stop at nothing to be the next face of Hollywood. In that tough town, it is rare to get any recognition if one is not an A-list celebrity. Therefore, every issue of The Montgazette this year will present a rising star who has earned the spotlight, raking in millions at the box office, putting out a new album or single, releasing the hottest clothing collection, and so on.

This issue's spotlight shines on 29-year-old Australian actress and singer Aisha Dee. Her career began in 2008 on the short-lived television show, "The Saddle Club." Following its cancellation, she earned starring roles in "I Hate My Teenage Daughter" and "Chasing Life." As a musician, she released an EP in 2015 with her band, Dee Dee & the Beagles. Five years later, she released a solo EP right before the pandemic.

Aisha Dee recently co-starred alongside Lili Reinhart in Netflix's "Look Both Ways." The film follows Reinhart's character, Natalie, whose life is shown diverging on two potential paths. In one life, she learns the joys of being a mom. In the other life, she's childless and moves to Los Angeles to pursue her dream job. In the film, Dee plays Natalie's best friend, Cara.

According to Elite Daily, Dee feels the film resonates on a spiritual level. Dee said, "Maybe I'm a bit of a hippie, but I really believe in this

idea that we're living multiple lives at once," Dee says. "Sometimes things happen that are so out of our control that we have to take a different path — that's a pretty universal feeling of looking back and wondering what could have been if just one thing had been different."

For Dee, the friendship she developed with Reinhart is especially inspiring. "She's producing her own stuff and has gone on to create such a wonderful career for herself, not just in terms of what she's doing alone, but also in advocating for other people and other films."

Representation in Hollywood is very important to Dee. In 2020, she took to Instagram to speak out about the lack of diversity behind the scenes and shared her experiences as a biracial woman in the industry. She was apprehensive at first, fearing she would lose her role as Kat Edison on Freeform's "The Bold Type." After she spoke out, however, the show took the character of Kat in many directions and gave her representation that Dee felt was lacking both on and off screen.

In "The Bold Type," Dee was able to portray an empowering character in Kat Edison. She is the youngest manager in Scarlet Magazine's social media department, where she works with her best friends. Kat has gotten to this point in her career by being current and aware of who she is. Kat is bold in every sense of the word. She is not afraid to

speaking her mind in this position of power.

Today, many television shows are including characters that represent the LGBTQ+ community. These shows include storylines where characters become aware of their identity. "The Bold Type" did this in a big way by having Kat explore her bisexuality, which she never tapped into nor knew existed. Up until this point, she had spent her entire life attracted to men.

In the show, Kat meets lesbian artist Adena El-Amin, played to perfection by Nikohl Boosheri. Sparks flew from the moment they met, and Kat became confused by her feelings. The next few episodes built up Kat's confusion, yet the other characters continued to support her. In the episode titled "If You Can't Do It with Feeling," Kat finally got to explore her feelings with a kiss from Adena.

This character arc is so important because it shows viewers that it is okay not to have their sexuality figured out early in life. The show encourages viewers, who may have struggles like Kat's, to be just as supportive as Kat's friends. Most importantly, Dee got to use her acting talents to change people's minds about how to handle these difficult decisions.

With all these accomplishments, it is no wonder why viewers should keep their eyes open for Aisha Dee. Be sure to check out "Look Both Ways," currently streaming on Netflix.



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Opinion:

The world loves the legend of Elvis Presley, not the man

Steven Wicher Jr.
The Montgazette Editor-in-Chief

Over the summer, among the high-flying jets of “Top Gun: Maverick” and yellow simple-minded servants in “Minions: The Rise of Gru,” the King of Rock and Roll made his triumphant return to the big screen. In “Elvis,” Baz Luhrmann delivers a high-energy, well-acted rollercoaster of emotions paired beautifully with the powerful beats of Presley’s greatest hits.

Spearheading this film is the phenomenal performance of Austin Butler as Elvis Presley. According to Deadline, when casting first began, some of the young actors fighting for the role included Miles Teller and Harry Styles (a baffling option thankfully avoided). Butler landed the spot after submitting a recording of him singing “Unchained Melody.” This recording even earned him a recommendation from Denzel Washington.

Luhrmann made the right decision. From the first frame, Butler ceases to exist, as he disappears under the bedazzled jumpsuit and sideburns. One of the film’s best aspects is how the director chose to mix real footage of the King with Butler’s recreated scenes. By the end, the two men become indistinguishable from each other. It is not too early to predict that Butler will take home the Oscar for Best Actor. At the very least, he has earned himself more than a nomination, securing the respect of Elvis fans across generations.

Just as Butler was perfect to star, Baz Luhrmann was perfect for the director’s chair. Although his peculiar, flamboyant directorial style does not work every time, it really enhances the story here. A Presley biopic needs to be just as big as Presley’s commanding personality, and Luhrmann delivers. Every edit and transition is a grand gesture that demands the viewer’s attention. Every action and

line of dialogue was chosen to enhance how the audience reacts during a scene. Luhrmann has complete control over how the audience feels, using

it to tell this tragic tale.

Alongside Butler is Tom Hanks, who is both a positive and negative addition to the film. On the one hand, Hanks elevates the material in bringing the despicable Colonel Tom Parker, Presley’s manager, to life in a rare villainous role. Perhaps audiences were not prepared for this Hanks, since he typically portrays the good guy or hero with a heart of gold. None of those positive traits seep through in his twisted performance, however. Not once does he phone in his performance here (the same cannot be said about his version of Geppetto in Disney’s recent “Pinocchio” remake).

However, the weakest part of Hanks’ performance comes from his attempt to replicate the Colonel’s Eastern European accent. It would not be such a distraction, except he provides the film’s overall narration, so every scene is accompanied with this strange sound. The film could have benefitted from using multiple narrations to tell the story. Characters like Presley’s wife, Priscilla, or his father, Vernon, could have provided alternative versions to counter the Colonel’s narcissistic view of history.

Beside Hanks’ narration, the film falls victim to the same mistake of many biopics. Luhrmann explores what impact Presley had on American culture. At times the audience is overtaken by feelings of nostalgia as Butler magically replicates Elvis’ voice and moves to the music. However, the film could have increased the emotional stakes by exploring how this new fame and image impacted Elvis himself.



Original Elvis Presley outfit
displayed in Atlantic City.

(Photo / Steven Wicher Jr.)

Continued on Page 12.

Opinion:

“The Hunger Games” is still relevant 10 years later

Dalaya Richardson
The Montgazette Contributor

It is hard to fathom how much American culture has changed in the past 10 years. In 2012, voters were deciding whether to elect Barack Obama for a second term. In pop culture, the Nintendo Wii was the dominant gaming system, and the “Twilight” franchise was ending.

However, a new movie franchise would fill that void on March 23, 2012: a film franchise, based on a young adult book series, that produced four movies and a new prequel that comes to theaters next year. That franchise is “The Hunger Games,” and although it is already a decade old, it remains relevant today.

The film is based on the 2008 Suzanne Collins novel of the same name. It showcases a future of what society could become if the government has complete power — a future where only the elite have access to advanced technology and all the food they can eat. Meanwhile, the government threatens and manipulates its lower-class citizens. Sound familiar?

In the story, every year 12 young men and women from different districts of the country are randomly chosen to fight to the death. Should they survive, the winners are rewarded with a life of riches and food for their district. Portrayed by Jennifer Lawrence, 16-year-old Katniss Everdeen, from District 12, volunteers to enter the 74th Hunger Games to take her little sister’s place. Throughout the film, Everdeen uses her archery skills

to survive and better the life of her mother and sister.

Portrayed by Josh Hutcherson, 16-year-old Peeta Mellark also gets drawn at random to fight beside Everdeen. From the start of the games, Everdeen, Mellark, and their competitors begin to lose their humanity as they battle for riches. The main antagonist, President Snow, is played by Donald Sutherland. He oversees the vicious games and brutality toward his lower-class citizens.

The ending leaves the winners of the Hunger Games pondering their options. Do they embrace the winners they have become? Or do they bring the fight back to the capital and encourage citizens to challenge Snow’s authority? The film not only reflects on current American society, but it also demands that the audience answers these essential questions.

At the time of the film’s release, America was dealing with the death of Trayvon Martin. He was a 17-year-old African American, shot due to a disagreement with George Zimmerman while walking home from the store. The incident sparked outrage not only on how Zimmerman handled the situation, but also on how the state of Florida handled Martin’s death, with the police and media saying it was justified self-defense. They would not discuss Martin’s side of the story.

How the U.S. media and authorities portrayed the incident is the same way the government

treats lower-class citizens in “The Hunger Games.” It was later revealed that Zimmerman had called the police before, about other African Americans walking in the neighborhood. The film connects with America’s harsh reality by

showing how the elite harm and perceive the lower class. When people have had enough of the manipulation and trauma, they push back against the powers that cause it.

Continued on Page 15.

The Graphic Novel
Spring 2023 / ENG 285 / Parkhouse / MWF: 9:05 - 10 AM

The course presents a survey of the graphic novel from the late 1970s to now. Topics will include literary graphic novels, memoirs, traditional and revisionist superheroes, and science fiction and fantasy narratives. Students will gain a critical perspective of sequential storytelling as a means of addressing cultural issues.

For more information, contact Dr. Tom Powers: tpowers@mc3.edu

Opinion:

Indiana Jones set to return in 2023, but should he?

William Norris

MSP 111 The Montgazette Contributor

Harrison Ford first donned his signature brown fedora and leather jacket 40 years ago in “Raiders of the Lost Ark.” For the first time since 2008’s flop, “Kingdom of the Crystal Skull,” Ford will once again play Indiana Jones, the iconic archaeologist afraid of snakes. The new film is set to release in July 2023 and follows an older Jones in his final chapters. A surprise trailer was shown exclusively at Disney’s D23 Expo in September, but it has yet to be publicly released.

The “Indiana Jones” movies were groundbreaking achievements in the art of cinema. They remain popular due to the lovable heroes, heart-stopping action, and treacherous villains. The movies were also a collaboration between two legendary filmmakers, Steven Spielberg and George Lucas. While many fans await the fifth, and supposedly final, installment with excitement, some worry.

When “Kingdom of the Crystal Skull” was released, audiences left theaters disappointed. It was

the first film since 1989’s “The Last Crusade,” but they felt it failed to capture the tone of the original trilogy. Other complaints focused on a bland villain and the excessive use of CGI.

One cause of concern for the new movie is that Steven Spielberg will not be sitting in the director’s chair. He will instead act as an executive producer and creative consultant. Helming the fifth film is director James Mangold. He rose to fame for his R-rated X-men swansong “Logan,” as well as Johnny Cash’s biopic, “Walk the Line,” both critical hits and well received by audiences.

While it is understandable that fans may be nervous, it is important to remember that Spielberg is still involved in the process. He brought moviegoers some of the biggest films ever to play in theaters, like “Jaws” and “Poltergeist.” He understands what makes “Indiana Jones” great.

Also, according to producer Frank Marshall, Mangold loves the franchise, and was the best

person to take over for Spielberg. His directing style, along with Spielberg’s insight, could bring fans an exciting film that captures the essence of the original “Indiana Jones.”

For those who may be wary of the new movie, it should be noted that Ford seems to be excited to return. He has always put forth a great performance. Ford even became teary-eyed while announcing the film at the D23 Expo, explaining that, “Indiana Jones movies are about mystery and adventure, but they’re also about heart, and I’m really, really happy that we have a really human story to tell, as well as a movie that will kick your ass.”

If a film has enough heart to make Ford emotional, then it should not be immediately cast aside. No matter how it turns out in the end, hopefully fans will go out to support Ford as Indy one last time. If nothing else, audiences should recognize all that Ford and Spielberg have given them through the years.

Elvis

Continued from Page 10.

Luhmann begins to develop this idea at multiple points but never deep enough to be satisfying. Presley feels like a puppet for everyone else and fears all his triumphs will amount to nothing, but these scenes just barely scratch the surface before moving onto the next major life event.

Unfortunately, in real life, Presley was seen as nothing but a money-printing machine by those

around him. According to Priscilla in her autobiography “Elvis & Me,” this was the same man required by his managers to hold a press conference after his wedding ceremony. She also states that upon Presley’s death, Parker flew to Manhattan to discuss merchandising opportunities.

Elvis Presley was an individual bullied by his friends, family, and management. The same people, who

did not care about the repercussions, killed their cash cow at the age of 42. Yet, this image is not portrayed to the public. Instead, society remembers him as the bright-eyed small-town star with the voice of an angel who starred in more than 30 movies. Elvis is a cautionary tale of fame and fortune, but the truth is hard to see through the loud music and flashy lights.

Thanks to the film’s success,

Luhmann has kicked off another Presley comeback tour. Soon after its release, production company A24 announced they are working on a Priscilla Presley biopic. It will be directed by Sofia Coppola and star Cailee Spaeny. Taking over the bedazzled jumpsuit from Austin Butler will be Jacob Elordi from HBO’s “Euphoria.” As of now, this film has no release date.

The Philly emo band rising through the underground

Gabriel Gibboni and Malaika Ashanti
MSP 111 The Montgazette Contributors

At Philadelphia's of house shows, where new bands are being formed and found every weekend. Among these new bands taking over the city's underground scene is Bubblewrap Princess.

Bubblewrap Princess comprises three members: drummer Shalen Farahi, bassist Josh Wurz and Jack Galardi, who is both lead guitarist and singer.

After meeting at a program in Boston's Berklee College of Music last summer, Wurz, Farahi and Galardi decided the fit between their personalities and musicianship was so strong that they would start a band when they returned home to Philadelphia.

Regarding the band's name, Farahi said, "We were eating dinner in the cafeteria, and Jack asked me, 'What do you think about Bubblewrap Princess?' I said, 'I haven't heard of them, are they any good?' Jack said, 'Oh no, for our band.' So, it was the first try and it was just kind of lucky."

While Galardi and Wurz are from Doylestown and Perkasio, respectively, Farahi is a Montgomery County resident who lives in Blue Bell. However, their musical beginnings are in Philadelphia, where they now regularly perform at various venues. In September, they took a big step forward, expanding to concerts in both New York and New Jersey.

The band is fresh from their first release, an extended-play record titled "Life of the Party." This EP

skyrocketed the band's listenership. Wurz said, "Honestly, I was proud of how well received it was. It's very niche music, and I'm surprised it reached such a broad audience."

Speaking of niche music, Wurz and Farahi would consider themselves to be a part of the emo genre, with tones of math rock as well. This is reflected through some of their musical inspirations, as math rock is typically thought of as highly technical. Farahi said, "In the context of the music and the drum parts, I take the most inspiration from bands like Brave Little Abacus and Black MIDI, because for both of those projects I think their sound is chaotic in the way that Bubblewrap Princess is chaotic."

Wurz's garage is where most of the recording is done, which is in the true style and spirit of the underground music scene. Building on this energy, and the group's inspirations and abilities, Farahi said, "The heart of Bubblewrap Princess kind of comes down to rhythm, and being drummers ourselves, we try to incorporate neat rhythms and rhythm changes in our songs. It's that combination of rhythm, explosive passages, and ridiculous twinkling guitars that always blow my mind."

With thousands of new followers, upcoming shows on the horizon, and a new song in the works, Bubblewrap Princess is set up to be a musical force

in the local area for a long while.

Readers can find the band's music on most mainstream streaming

services. Updates on Bubblewrap Princess appear on Instagram under the handle @bwp_phi.



Rex Royal acoustic guitar.

(Photo / Gabe Gibboni)

Opinion:

R&B never will be dead

Kimberly Pessoa
MSP 111 The Montgazette Contributor

In August 2022, renowned music mogul Diddy made the statement “R&B is dead.” His declaration bothered R&B fans all around the world because they have sustained the genre for decades. While his comment may be from a desire to see a mainstream resurgence, it is more a marketing master plan for his upcoming R&B album.

With each era, R&B has undergone many transformations, but its relevance remained. Take The Whispers as an example. They are a group that had chart-topping hits throughout the '70s, '80s, and '90s. Now, they are still touring and performing for crowds of up to 10,000 people.

Later, American Music Award winner Keith Sweat dominated the '90s. He was among many artists bringing New Jack Swing, a contemporary blend of R&B and hip-hop, to the masses. This was an R&B sub-genre pushing the music forward and keeping it relevant.

As the 2010s ended, fans noticed an increase in classic R&B songs being sampled in hip-hop songs. In 2019, producer London On Da Track was responsible for the Top 50 Billboard hit “Come Thru.” This is significant because the song samples Usher’s “Make Me Wanna...,” which was a number two Billboard hit from 1997.

Although modern R&B listeners notice a decline in mainstream promotion, its impact is undeniable.

For instance, Kehlani recently sold out the Oakland Arena, which boasts a 20,000-person capacity. According to Billboard, the singer has never had a top-10 hit, nor does she have a single currently on radio rotation. To sell out a major arena is an accomplishment.

Popular act Silk Sonic took '70s funk style and aesthetic to make their 2021 album, “An Evening with Silk Sonic.” Funk music is dance music deeply rooted in R&B, jazz and gospel. The album debuted at the number two spot on the Billboard charts.

Perhaps Diddy’s claim about the state of R&B stems from his frustration with an increase in toxic love songs. A common theme among new artists is to brag about using, cheating, and misleading romantic partners. However, this is just one section of R&B love ballads. One could say it is a rebuttal to the many decades singing about unrequited love. In the past, artists’ lyrics begged for love, whereas newer music begged to be left alone. Both messages have their place.

Listeners can find R&B music on any streaming service, but Soundcloud is a great platform because artists have more freedom. They can upload music in real time as opposed to a major platform like Apple Music. Another great resource for finding artists is through small R&B blogs on Instagram like RNBonly. These accounts highlight lesser-known artists who do not normally get the spotlight.

R&B has remained prevalent

in American music history over the last 80 years. No matter the decade, it influences social media trends. The

genre is widespread in American culture and even reaches worldwide audiences. Music that impactful is hardly dead.



“Heart on My Sleeve” by R&B artist Ella Mai, album cover.

(Photo / Kimberly Pessoa)

The 2022 Philadelphia Honey Festival

Josie Racz

MSP 111 The Montgazette Contributor

The Philadelphia Beekeeper's Guild returns to Bartram's Garden with the 2022 Philadelphia Honey Festival, known as Honey Fest, a weekend event dedicated to educating, promoting, and entertaining the public about bees.

Under the Eastwick Pavilion, vendors sell their products: essential oils, soaps, jewelry, and, of course, honey. Small children run around with bee wings, while many attendees wear all yellow, some with black stripes. Others wear t-shirts that have fun sayings, like "bee different."

The festival offers a variety of activities, such as hive demonstrations, honey extractions, and bicycling around the grounds. For the big finale, Don Shump's Bee Bearding takes the stage. Shump is a local beekeeper and the owner of the Philadelphia Bee Co. He has been performing with his bee beard at Honey Fest for nine years.

He puts the queen of the colony into a clip and ties it with string around his head. With the audience merely six feet away, he releases between 5,000-10,000 bees into the air. The honeybees detect the queen and land all over Shump's face, fashioning a beard made of bees.

"I was a web developer in a former life," Shump says, "and I knew I was getting tired of it. But I didn't know what else to do, so I just started taking up weird hobbies and told myself I'd figure it out."

Shump's Philadelphia Bee Co. puts on educational programming in many different locations, including the Academy of Natural Sciences, classrooms, and synagogues during the Jewish holidays.

Shump's hope is that people come away from his programming and bee beard knowing that "bees aren't scary." He continues, "If you see a bee on a flower, you can literally pet them, right on the thorax between the wings, and the worst they'll do is fly away."

James Romanchek, a fellow beekeeper and friend of Shump, is the treasurer for the Philadelphia Beekeeper's Guild. Romanchek has been involved with Honey Fest for 13 years. He stands at a big booth with three or four other beekeepers and has people try a variety of honeys, all with different tastes, attributable to the hives' location. He gives out little spoons with different honeys, knowing the Fest-goers will eventually land on the one they wish

to purchase.

Honey Fest is a staple in this city's culture, and it seems that the Philadelphia Beekeeper's Guild intends to keep it that way. Shump says, "There is literally no better opportunity to eat honey and potentially get stung by hordes of bees than at Honey Fest." Students interested in attending can do so every September. More information on Facebook @phillybeeguild

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"The Hunger Games"

Continued from Page 11.

Yet, 10 years after the film's release, the message of "The Hunger Games" is still not clear to the audience. Tragedies like Trayvon Martin's death continue to occur, and even more rapidly, on urban streets. The most recent upheaval in society followed the death of George Floyd in 2020. While it sparked conversations and protests across the nation, there are no signs that the authorities or elite are listening to demands for change.

A four-film franchise prequel, titled "The

Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes," is set to release in theaters on November 17, 2023. Set 64 years before the 74th Hunger Games, it follows Snow's life before becoming President of his twisted dystopia. The film stars Tom Blyth as Snow, with Viola Davis and Hunter Schafer in supporting roles.

Even though Hollywood is producing the film to make money from the series' established fanbase, they failed to ask themselves a very important question: With the January

6 capital riots in the United States, and the former administration accused of spreading disinformation and hate, does the country need a franchise film from the villain's point of view? Since the first film, the world has evolved, using platforms like the #MeToo Movement to expose real villains in our society.

Will this new prequel help spread the important messages of our time? Or will it miss the mark and ruin the legacy of "The Hunger Games"?

The audience will decide at the box office.

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