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a student publication

The Montgazette

FREE

The Students' Voice

Issue 83

Serving Montgomery County Community College and the Surrounding Community

November 2020



The Mustangs eSports Rocket League team at practice.

Read on Page 13.

Photo by Diane VanDyke

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from the Editor

Welcome back: These challenges will make you stronger!

Josh Young
The Montgazette Editor-in-Chief

Dear Montgomery County Community College students,

Welcome back to those who have already braved their first semester at the College, and a hearty welcome to those of you who are just beginning your journey here at Montgomery County Community College. I wish that your semester was being conducted under normal circumstances. In any event, it is critically important that you continue your education, so thank you for braving this strange new world.

As I am sure you do not need to be told, our time here at the College has been significantly impacted by the international spread of COVID-19 and the necessary social distancing procedures and other health guidelines that have been implemented to fight it. However, while the pandemic does perhaps make it more difficult than in years past for you, as a student, to succeed, this

does not mean that your success is impossible or your attempts to achieve it are futile.

The College has done a tremendous job of finding ways around the COVID-19 pandemic and to offer students the same services and resources that have traditionally been available. One of the best examples of this is the Tutoring Center, which still maintains its normal hours (albeit virtually) and continues to fulfill its role of lifting students to their potential. Additionally, the College continues to offer events such as the Presidential Symposium on Diversity and other services commonly held at the College to enrich your education beyond just your classes.

Despite all of these challenges, however, the onus is still on you to perform, and to take advantage of the opportunities that have been provided to you. In fact, I believe that times such as these are truly a barometer that

measures your willingness and your drive to succeed. As my father always says, your true character always comes out when your back is against the wall and not everything is going your way. It is easy to handle winning and the success that comes with it, but it is hard to handle losing and being forced to pick yourself off the mat and keep going. However, those who want to succeed will adapt to the adverse circumstances, survive, and then thrive.

I hope all of you who read this take these uncertain times as a type of rite of passage, and these experiences of hardship and turn them into experiences of growth and achievement.

Finally, I wish all of you who are reading this, and even those who are not, a great semester, and, most importantly, a safe and healthy rest of your year.

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A school with no classrooms: Students thrive again in 2020

Joel DeFilippo

MSP 111 The Montgazette Contributor

As the year 2020 rages on, the Montgomery County Community College campuses remain closed to most attendees. However, students at the College have found various ways of adapting to learning without a classroom — and are even using it to their advantage.

Although most online classrooms generally lack the flexibility that face-to-face learning provides, students are generally finding that the online alternative to campus classrooms can still work in their favor. One of the biggest factors is that asynchronous online classes, which have no scheduled online meetings, allow students to remain on their own schedule while they complete their assignments, sometimes balancing out-of-school activities such as part- or full-time jobs, or caring for their children. (This would not be true of synchronous classes, where regular class sessions are still held, albeit online.)

One would think the social life of a college student at this time is virtually nonexistent. However, students continue to find new and innovative ways to meet new people and

keep in touch with friends. Student email appears to be the most common form of communication.

According to Olivia Schoenly, a History major and student at the College, “At this time, it’s mostly just emailing. Since the semester just started, most classes do introductions, with names, field of study and interests. So, I try to find people who have similar interests or are studying in the same program, and I try to start a conversation with them.” She added, “Most of the time, though, I ‘hang out’ with older friends. We either have an online game night, or we try to stream movies together, with, maybe, the rare meet-up in an outdoor park.”

Similar to how students continue to find ways to communicate, they have also found their own ways to pay for college, in spite of difficulty finding relatively safe jobs due to the COVID pandemic. Some students have taken out loans, have continued living at home an extra year instead of moving in with friends, or are finding relief through FAFSA (federal student aid) help to cover costs.

Perhaps it is not

talked about enough, but immunocompromised students are at a particularly high risk of contracting severe forms of COVID and have been unable to find jobs not directly on the front lines. These students need safe jobs, unlike waiting tables, or working in a nursing home or at their local supermarket. The situation forces them to depend heavily on financial aid for help getting from one semester to the next, despite the spectre of a large student loan bill after graduation.

Dorian Burnell, a Psychology major and student at the college, said, “Actually, I don’t currently work. I’m on disability right now due to this pandemic, which has made it harder for me to go into work because of a compromised immune system. So, I haven’t really been able to look for jobs at this point. Otherwise, I’ve gotten a few scholarships to help pay for this semester and next semester, but yeah, I’ve been cutting it close paying tuition between last semester and the semester coming up.”

Despite the difficulties brought on by the year 2020, Montgomery County Community College Students continue to find new ways to

thrive in a changing world, where virtual schools allow students to take classes at their convenience, now literally with the push of a button.

Sometimes, however, the low-tech advice for staying sane and focused is the one most overlooked by students. As Olivia Schoenly suggests, “Go outside, get some fresh air. It’s better than sitting inside all day.”

For more information on getting help during COVID visit Montgomery County Community College Disability Services at mc3.edu/choosing-montco/academic-support/disability-services and Montgomery County Community College Health & Wellness at mc3.edu/choosing-montco/resources-for-students/health-and-wellness.



Pottstown campus, closed.

Photo by Joel DeFilippo

Making the best of it: Campuses adjusting to online instruction

Daniel Shields
The Montgazette Contributor

The usually vibrant area around College Hall, at Montgomery County Community College, in Blue Bell, Pa., looks like a ghost town.

Montgomery County Community College serves 10,451 students, with a combination of full- and part-time students attending all campuses. Usually, the buildings and grounds are alive with activity, but in the fall of 2020, they are essentially dead. With the exception of a small number offered on campus, the majority of classes are virtual. This situation presents challenges for staff and students, but it also offers some benefits.

Shawn Sealer, the Technical Services Assistant in the equipment room station at Montgomery County Community College's Advanced Technology Center, returned to work in the tech department for the fall 2020 semester. Sealer explains how the campus closure has adversely affected the students he works with, which includes students majoring in Mass Media Production and Sound Recording and Technology.

"I had to adapt and find new ways ... to continue working, since tech services were closed until recently," says Sealer.

Sealer explains the challenges the students face without direct access to the resources they had when they were on campus.

"It is hard to show a student how to work a camera through a webcam or how to edit in (Adobe) Premiere," says Sealer.

Although Sealer says that it is nice to be back on campus, he sees very few students. For Sealer and the professors, the challenge remains as to how to teach remotely the necessary concepts of using equipment.

Professor Gerald Collom is a Mass Media and Sound Production Instructor at

Montgomery County Community College.

"There have been big changes to my work at Montco," says Collom.

Collom explains that the domain of Mass Media and Sound Production requires hands-on instruction. Like Sealer, Collom laments the difficulties of doing camera demonstrations without meeting students face to face.

"The whole process slows to a crawl," Collom says.

Collom explains that the downside of

having online classes is the lack of interaction with students and "the ability to work in teams to create media."

However, Collom acknowledges, "The positives include a much shorter commute. It has gone from about 18 miles to about 6 feet, and I am saving money on gas and Wawa Sizzlies."

While the pandemic drags on, people continue to adjust by overcoming challenges and reimagining the concept of home. And, school.



The usually vibrant area around College Hall at the Blue Bell Campus looks like a ghost town because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Photo by Danny Shields

In college during COVID-19: Life with online classes during the Pandemic

Richard Gray
MSP 111 The Montgazette Contributor

Amidst the crisis of the global pandemic, many schools, like Montgomery County Community College, have opted to hold classes almost exclusively virtually, requiring students to complete their schoolwork online with or without regular meeting times. Students and teachers are discovering the strengths and the weaknesses of being in a completely remote learning environment, learning lessons from course to course, even day to day.

Jodi Kaiser, a freshman Education major, echoes the feeling of many that online classes seem suitable for the introverted student, but it can

be frustrating for an extrovert, like herself, to be unable to interact with other students in her classes.

Jodi states, "I feel like I'm missing out on the whole college lifestyle, being at home and doing schoolwork around my family instead of being on campus with other students."

The problem with online classes does not seem to lie with the teaching, or the students' willingness to learn. The problem seems to concern the lack of physical interaction that would normally be experienced in an average day on campus.

In short, the learning experience is made harder, as there is less allowance

for real-time interaction. Forming a strong connection to a course, students and teachers is a huge component of the learning process, which is inherently lost in some online classes.

Tracy Kaiser-Goebel, a Public Speaking professor at Montgomery County Community College, however, thinks that online classes are not much different for her, as she had been teaching online before the outbreak of COVID-19. "Incoming freshmen certainly are not able to experience the opportunities and programs that they would normally have if they had been on campus. I have been teaching online for a long

time. Online courses can be a double-edged sword. It is convenient to work at your own pace and balance family with school and work. On the other hand, the whole experience would be much better for many subjects to be in a face-to-face classroom."

Although online classes may be the appropriate decision to make at the present time for the health of students, staff and faculty, many students and teachers long to be back on campus and interacting with the college as a true community. With time and patience, schools intend to open publicly again at some point in the not-so-distant future.

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Student resources: Still available despite the pandemic

Khushi Desai
The Montgazette Contributor

According to Yahoo News, COVID-19 is now the second worst pandemic in U.S. history, behind the Spanish Flu pandemic of 1918. Millions of people are dying worldwide, and cases are still rising daily at the time of this writing.

Many people are also jobless and struggling with financial problems, which can lead to anything from chronic stress to homelessness. Schools and colleges are continuing classes online for the fall and are already making similar plans for the spring semester, as Montgomery County Community College announced in September.

COVID-19 can impact anyone, but sometimes lost in the conversation is its impact on college students — financially, academically, and mentally.

Montgomery County Community College has many resources to help students who are struggling during this tough time. Patricia Abdalla, Montgomery County Community College's Director of Academic Support, offers information regarding the resources available for students who are struggling academically.

"The service we are currently providing for our students is individual tutoring, which is done by both Montgomery County Community College and Tutor.com tutors, and [these tutors] are being offered to all registered students via Tutor.com," Abdalla said. "The College's tutors are available to work with students during our regular tutoring hours."

The College's tutors are available 7 days a week, during the following hours:

- Monday – Thursday, 8 a.m. – 7 p.m.
- Friday, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.
- Saturday, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.
- Sunday, 1 p.m. – 5 p.m.

Outside of the College's tutoring hours, students can contact [Tutor.com](https://www.tutor.com) for tutoring support by a Tutor.com tutor at any time they choose, and on any day.

Students can also drop off their essays at any time and on any day, to be reviewed by one of the College's tutors, or by a tutor from Tutor.com. Essays are returned within 12 hours.

However, according to Abdalla, "Students typically receive them back long before that!" If students need feedback more quickly, they can always connect with a writing tutor live to receive feedback on a paper at any time of day.

"Students are also able to receive study skills support from both our College's and Tutor.com's tutors, through Tutor.com, which can help them with their study strategies, time management, organizing their material and a host of other study skills strategies," Abdallah said. "Our tutors have also created very helpful and short success strategy videos for students to check out tips, from avoiding procrastination and improving memory skills. There are even three videos on how to write essays with unity, support and coherence!" The videos can be viewed on Montgomery County Community College's YouTube page.

Group tutoring

[Group tutoring sessions](#) are also offered for some popular classes with which students often struggle — such as Chemistry, Math and CIS — using Blackboard Collaborate Ultra. To get the link on how to attend one of those sessions, students can simply go on the College's Tutoring Website and check out the section "Find a Montco Tutor or Group Session." There is also Supplemental Instruction, which is for students in courses such as Anatomy & Physiology.

According to Abdallah, "Students have support from a Supplemental Instruction Assistant at the College,

who attends their classes. They also offer several support sessions for students each week in which they review strategies to better learn material, ultimately helping them succeed in the course."

TEAS test

Abdallah said that, for students who are planning to take the TEAS test, "We offer group tutoring sessions each week to help students learn effective reading and test strategies." Tutorial services offers a new support service to aid students who are working on their writing.

Continued on page 11.

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A student-parent's struggle: Adapting to a virtual environment

Jackie Stong

MSP 111 The Montgazette Contributor

The alarm goes off and it is 6 a.m., and as much as I want to sleep longer or just lay in bed for 15 more minutes, I know that I only have 3 hours to get myself ready, make breakfast for my entire family, and get the kids up and ready. Even though kindergarten is being held virtually, we still treat it like a normal school day.

At 8:45 a.m. I log into my son's virtual classroom and test the links to make sure we are good for the day. But that can change in an instant: The internet can drop out, a password could be required to enter the Zoom room, or there can be an unknown error out of my control, like no sound coming from the iPad.

At 9 a.m., when my kindergartener starts his first session, I get the Legos out for my two-year-old to play with, so I can log on myself and start combing through the list of assignments for my own class. I only have 45 minutes to get some school work done before my son is finished his first session and he is on break. This is a revolving cycle until 3:25 p.m. that only allows me 45 minutes at a time to work on my own schoolwork.

With so many uncertainties in today's society, the new virtual world for students has added more pressure on parents, especially those who are also attending college. For student-parents, the stresses can be particularly high, and the only thing to do is to adapt to the new normal.

Jones, a mother of two and also a teacher in the Quakertown School District, believes the new virtual learning dynamic has forced her to be extremely organized, not only for her family, but for her students, as well.

Jones stated that "when the announcement was made that my children's school and my school district were going virtual again, after four months of virtual this past spring, I thought, there is no way that I can do this. There is no way that we all can be on Zoom calls at the same time and get all

the work and assignments done."

As a majority of parents learn to adapt to these new changes, it seems to be slightly less stressful for those who have older children. High schoolers tend to be more structured and can follow directions more easily than can those children of elementary school age.

"If Zoom were to crash or have an unexpected error, younger children cannot read the pop-up window and will need help from their parents, so this necessitates constant involvement from the parents," said Jones.

In other cases, where the parent is the student

and has younger, virtual learners at home, the stress level dramatically increases. Bernadette Pigeon, a mother of two and also a full-time college student at Colorado University, worries that she feels that she is drowning in her own life due to the demands of both her virtual school situation and her child's.

"Trying to juggle my own personal schooling towards my doctorate degree and trying to help my first-grader with his schooling makes it nearly impossible to do both at the same time."

Continued on page 15.



Jackie Stong assisting her son with his online kindergarten class.

Photo by Jackie Stong

Montco nursing home staff frustrated with COVID-19: A vibrant community has gone silent

Reuben Soto

MSP 111 The Montgazette Contributor

Brightview Senior Living, located in East Norriton, Pa., is a community that focuses on creating an environment where residents want to live, where they have fun, and where they enjoy life. I had the privilege of working in this community for 2 years as the Department Director of Personal Care. During my time with the company, I worked with some of the most caring individuals I ever met. I witnessed first-hand how much the staff really cared for the residents and treated them as family.

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, fear and uncertainty filled the community. We as a team had a feeling that life at Brightview would no longer be the same: We watched our community shut down and the fun-filled events we once enjoyed together cancelled to ensure social distancing.

Although we were scared, my coworkers and I made a commitment to stay strong and show up every day to ensure that our residents received the quality care they deserve. I worked side by side with these wonderful individuals until the end of June 2020, when I resigned my position to pursue my passion in media.

When I was given this opportunity to tell a story about COVID-19 and its effect on individuals, I wanted to give a few of these caring individuals an opportunity to share their stories.

The Covid-19 pandemic has taken a significant toll on people around the world. Although our country and most of the world has started to reopen, and all have been trying to get back

to some kind of normalcy, front-line health-care workers are still living in this nightmare every day they show up to work.

Sarah Greenstein, the Director of the Dementia Care Unit at Brightview Senior Living, finds herself burned out, stressed, and overworked after months of working with the virus. Greenstein loves her job and the residents, but the presence of the virus has caused her to feel less eager when waking up for work in the morning. Several things run through her mind as she feels a great amount of pressure and responsibility when it comes to her residents' care. Greenstein said, "I have lost a number of residents to this virus and I can't take losing anymore."

The senior living community has implemented strict cleaning and sanitation practices as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Montgomery County Office of Public Health.

The senior living community has also restricted visitation. Only essential personnel were allowed to visit the community up until the end of June 2020, as all residents were quarantined to their apartments. The community was forced to cancel communal dining and regularly scheduled group activities, per the restrictions put in place by the state shutdown. Greenstein feels the community is doing an amazing job at accommodating the residents during this incredibly challenging time.

The community went to great lengths to put processes in place to

ensure that residents received all three meals in their apartments, and staff has gone door to door to engage residents in one-on-one activities. Greenstein said, "My coworkers and I understand these steps are being taken to protect the staff and the elderly population we care for, but seeing the residents confined to their apartments and not being able to have visitors has been so heartbreaking."

Jessica Wunder, a caregiver in the community said, "I love my job and my residents, but the joyful and vibrant environment I once worked in has become very strange and less vibrant."

Wunder described the residence this way: "Hallways are dead silent and have an eerie feeling at times." Wunder gets through her day by spending one-on-one time with her residents when she has downtime. She even goes out to purchase little keepsake items to help lift the residents' spirits.

Sarah Greenstein and Jessica Wunder, along with thousands of health-care workers throughout Montgomery County, know the risks they are taking by working in the field, but they keep pushing forward to care for their patients anyway.



Brightview Senior Living in Montgomery County, Pa., is fighting some up-hill battles due to COVID-19 pandemic.

Photo by Reuben Soto

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Special needs education: Elusive success amid a global pandemic

Aaron DeHelian

MSP 111 The Montgazette Contributor

While most students are getting their schooling through one online platform or another, this is not possible for everyone. Special needs students require a more hands-on approach to education.

Charlotte Frederick, a 19-year-old student at Upper Perkiomen High School, was diagnosed with autism when she was 2 years old. She is considered non-verbal, though she can communicate.

Charlotte is currently doing hybrid schooling. She goes into school Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday for half days. Special needs classrooms are outfitted according to CDC guidelines and include plexiglass shield barriers between desks, hand sanitizer in each classroom, a mask requirement at all times and rotating daily and weekly schedules that allow for fewer of the usual number of students per room. Wednesdays Charlotte is at home and works on an online program that teaches vocational skills.

Evelyn Frederick (Ev), mother of special needs student Charlotte, said “She benefits from face-to-face versus online schooling. The one-on-one [experience] is much better than the overwhelming

Zoom meetings. You have 8 to 10 different faces on the screen, and that is just way too much stimulation.”

Frederick also notes how important it is for Charlotte to keep a consistent schedule. So, while the initial change was hard to manage in the beginning, it has been getting easier as Charlotte adjusts to this new way of doing things.

When asked what the biggest challenge for Charlotte might be, Frederick responded, “Differentiating between schooling and leisure browsing.” Charlotte loves to browse on the web in her free time. She even notes that Charlotte will often know the names of animals, one of her favorite subjects, animals that Frederick or her husband have never even heard of before — for example, the okapi, an African forest giraffe. This makes online schooling challenging, since Charlotte has gotten used to doing what she likes when on the computer.

Christina Willett, a teacher of 25 plus years with 11 years’ experience in special needs education, has been at Upper Perkiomen High School for five years. She said her biggest challenge through the coronavirus pandemic was “the initial online-only

schooling, where I had to basically teach eight different classes all at once, as each student has individual needs.”

Willett also commented on the fact that there were barriers in place with online schooling. She says that teachers lose the “fidelity of instruction” when they have someone else in the room as well. A parent overseeing a child’s education while the educator is also teaching can take away from the process of teaching the students independence.

Another way special needs students lose out with

online schooling is they are not getting to go out into the community and participate on job sites. This sort of teaching is fundamental to prepare them for the world, once they graduate.

Willett notes she is thankful the Upper Perkiomen School District is allowing face-to-face classes this fall because she believes a positive student outcome would not have been possible otherwise. She said, “The March through June experience showed it was impossible.” Instead of helping these students progress toward fulfilling lives, it was causing

them to regress.

Looking forward, Ev Frederick and Christina Willett noted that, with Covid-19 forcing classes online, at first things were hectic. However, with special needs students now back into physical one-on-one classes, things have gotten easier. They both feel for the families and teachers who do not have the luxury of being face to face. They hope more school districts will take a closer look at how they can provide for students who need a more individualized education.



Upper Perkiomen High School in Pennsburg, Pa.

Photo by Aaron DeHelian

Student resources

Continued from page 6.

It is called the “Writing Study Room” and is open three days each week. Students can find more information on how to join the room by visiting the “Find a Montco Tutor or Group Session” section of the College’s website. For students who are struggling with test anxiety, there is also a plethora of tips for helping them in their courses, as they are navigating their tutoring session.

Mental health resources

For students struggling with mental health during this time, the College has many resources on and off campus. One of the services is Talkspace, which is a free online therapy service that connects students to a dedicated, licensed therapist. Clients can send their therapists a text, voice message or a video message, anytime and from anywhere.

Montgomery County Community College students can also receive online, asynchronous

therapy at no cost. MindWise Mental Health Screening is an interactive, quick and anonymous online health screening tool. Students can find an overview of signs and symptoms of treatable disorders and resources for local treatment options. Screenings are also available for the current well-being of students and their families. This assessment screens for anxiety, depression, bipolar disorder, PTSD, eating disorders, psychosis, alcohol and drug/substance abuse, opioid misuse, gambling, and general well-being. To find out more about on- and off-campus therapy services, visit the College’s health and wellness website: mc3.edu/choosing-montco/resources-for-students/health-and-wellness.

Financial resources

For students who struggle financially, there is emergency financial assistance. The Higher

Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF), which falls under the federal CARES Act, provides money to colleges and universities for emergency grants for students, in accordance with the guidelines provided by the U.S. Department of Education. The college has signed and returned the certification and agreement form and has received \$2,045,052 from the Department of Education under the HEERF student portion. To see eligibility requirements, visit the website: mc3.edu/choosing-montco/resources-for-students/health-and-wellness/coronavirus/cares-act. Montgomery County Community College has many resources available for every student’s needs, so no student is left out. Visit mc3.edu/choosing-montco/resources-for-students for more information regarding financial, mental health and academic support.

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Mustangs Basketball: The next chapter

Ryan Bigelow

MSP 111 The Montgazette Contributor

In a time before the pandemic changed the landscape of college athletics, the Montgomery County Community College Mustangs men's basketball team finished their season with 22 wins and 4 losses. Although there were aspects of the game they wanted to improve upon, this was still a giant step in the right direction for head coach Nyere Miller, as the Mustangs ended the previous year with a record of 15 wins and 10 losses.

Coming off a 10-loss season in 2019, the Mustangs were at a crossroads, and they played a balancing act on the line of relevancy. As the level of play in the junior college ranks continues to rise, wins are incredibly important, especially in terms of recruiting.

Going into 2020, Miller's squad was up for the challenge. En route to a 20+ win season, Miller himself was named Eastern Pennsylvania Athletic Conference Coach of the Year and NJCAA Coach of the Year for the North Atlantic District of Division III Basketball.

Marc Poust, a resident of Montgomery County and a follower of the Mustangs' team for the past few years, is optimistic of Miller's coaching mindset: "[Miller] brings the juice anytime the guys hit the hardwood; if I were looking to take the JUCO route, not many coaches excite me more than Coach M.," Poust said.

The 2020 season was not a one-man band, however. A trio of Mustangs played well enough to lead the team to the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) championship tournament. Ryan Black, a 6'1" combo forward from Horsham, Pa., committed to continue his basketball

career at Delaware Valley University, shared Poust's optimism when talking about Miller's impact on his game.

"I have had some great coaches throughout my basketball career, but I can tell you that I have never had more fun playing the game of basketball than this year. Coach was a massive part of our success and a great role model for all of us," Black said with a smile on his face. "Whenever we see Miller on game day, and the hyped-up music

is bouncing off the walls in Blue Bell, we are on a mission."

Along with Black, two other Mustangs will be looking to make an impact at the next level, as Cameron Reid, the versatile 6'6" center from Royersford, Pa., will travel to New Orleans and continue his basketball career with Dillard University. Seth Compas, a 6'3" shooting guard from Wissahickon High School, will move on to Union College (Ky.).



The 2019-2020 Mustangs Men's Basketball Team.

Photo by Mustangs Athletics

Mustangs Rocket League Team: The connection problem isn't just the Internet.

Mike Morasco
MSP 111 The Montgazette Contributor

The Montgomery County Community College eSports Rocket League team isn't just battling with the Internet connection. Now it is also experiencing a lack of real-life connection due to the pandemic.

The team's captain Daeqwon Wise-Brunson, a Computer Science major, emphasized how it is important to grow as a team, not just through the game but by spending time with one another.

He stated, "Last year we really connected as a team. We went bowling, we went out to eat, we drove to tournaments together, which made us more than just a Rocket League team."

Wise-Brunson sees a need for the

team to feel more like a family than anything else, saying it was weird playing with someone he barely knew or could not even really get to know, since all they had were each other's virtual selves.

Additionally, when the team plays together in the same room, as they did last season, there's a greater chance for a group celebration. More importantly, working together can help boost the overall morale of the team. Seeing each other smile and having fun makes the team want to spend even more time together, an important factor for any team during a long season.

Teammate Tyler O'Donnell, a

Liberal Studies major, further explains the frustrations of not being face to face with the team. He said, "When we are in the same room, talking to each other and communicating, it improves our mentality for our matches and allows us to keep each other on track, improving our gameplay."

With the lack of in-person practices, the pandemic also presents another problem, which involves the Internet connection of some of the players. O'Donnell explained that not everyone is going to have the best Wi-Fi, so when the team logs on to play, some players are left glitching all over the screen, making it hard to really get in a good rhythm, and disrupting practice.

As always, the players hope to work through these obstacles and keep improving their gameplay. They see the pandemic in the same way they see another team trying to take them down.

COVID-19 has made 2020 a year none of us will forget. It has impacted so many lives and organizations. All we can do is hope that one day everything can get back to normal. Meanwhile, the Mustangs eSports team hopes these challenges strengthen their bonds as friends and as a team, helping them through the pandemic and back to making a name for themselves in the eSports Rocket League.

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“Tenet”: Another Nolan mind bender

Nick Young
The Montgazette Contributor

Mother Nature has been rough on us this year. Not only is a virus killing thousands of people around the world, but political life has also become incredibly toxic, the economy has tanked and some industries have been hit so hard that closings are imminent. The movie industry is perhaps the poster child for this occurrence, as Christopher Nolan’s “Tenet” has not gotten people to go to theaters in America, which is a shame, not only because of the death of the movie theater and the advent of at-home streaming of movies, but because “Tenet” is a good film. It is not Nolan’s best film by any means, but it is a competent blockbuster that is still an enjoyable experience.

“Tenet” features John David Washington, of “BlacKkKlansman” fame, and Robert Pattinson in the starring roles. Both give an above-average performance and add a lot of physicality to their perspective roles. When they need to pull off stunts and fight in hand-to-hand combat, they really shine, as there are no punches being held back. For example, in the beginning of the film, there is a standard fighting sequence where the forcefulness of Washington’s punches and slams is so convincing that the viewer flinches at the impacts. When action is put aside for exposition and dialogue, however, the performances are not Oscar worthy, but they are still good, nonetheless — the most interesting scene being Kenneth Branagh’s performance as a ruthless Russian arms dealer, a nice bit of counter-type casting for the Shakespearian thespian.

Behind the scenes, Christopher Nolan helms the film fantastically, as usual, although what takes the cake is the sound editing and mixing by the acclaimed Richard King, known for other Nolan films, such as

“Dunkirk” and “The Dark Knight.” Every gunshot, car crash and piece of broken glass sounds amazing in this movie, especially when viewed in IMAX.

When firefights and car chases happen, viewers are hard pressed not to feel like the cars have just rushed past their ears. If King does not win his fifth Oscar for sound editing, I will be shocked.

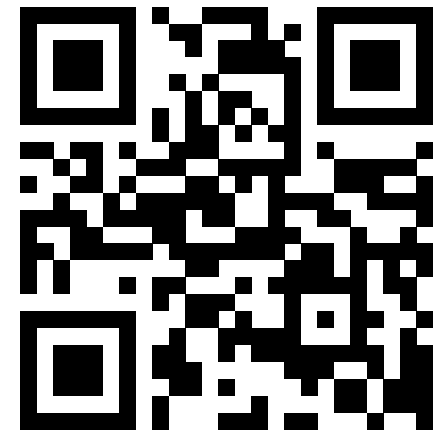
My only gripe with “Tenet” is the story and how it is executed; if you thought “Inception” was hard to understand, then this may not be the movie for you because it will take multiple viewings to grasp everything fully. Nolan has always been in love with focusing on concepts of time and how the mind perceives it. “Interstellar” and “Inception” are obvious examples, but even Nolan’s first film, “Memento,” plays with time and memory to a certain extent.

The concepts are so complicated that sections of the film are dedicated almost entirely to explanation, which places the individuals in the background, ensuring they do not connect with the viewer personally. Elizabeth Debicki, as Kat, is the most emotionally relatable person in the film; beyond that, the other characters, such as Pattinson and Washington, are enjoyable and have some good chemistry, but they do not strike one as particularly memorable.

“Tenet” overall is still a fun film to watch, for people willing to dive into the rabbit hole that is this movie. The story’s shortcomings do not ruin the spectacular spectacle of the shoot-outs and chases, and the acting is accomplished enough to keep the viewer entertained. Nolan has crafted another blockbuster hit — if only people had the desire to go out to the theaters to see it.



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A parent's struggle

Continued from page 7.

Parents who are also students themselves face a greater challenge during these times. Before the pandemic, student-parents were able to schedule their classes at the same time their child would be attending school. But now, parents face the difficulties of having their own class at the same time as their child. Some student-parents often work later in the day to be able to attend school during the day, leaving little to no time to do their own work, as they assist and monitor their own child's schooling needs. This has caused a major disruption in their own schooling, and, in some cases, grades were jeopardized during the last school year.

What is the solution to all of this added pressure of virtual schooling? Well, the saying we all know so well is starting to have a new meaning these days: "It takes a village to raise a child!" During these times, parents are reaching out to family members and friends for assistance. Bernadette has numerous family members come

help out during the week. Some family members are able to dedicate an hour of their time to assist, and, currently, any amount of time will help.

Those family members and friends are lifesavers in a pinch, and most parent-students are so grateful to have someone willing to help them. Deb Daley, a grandmother from Montgomery County who is assisting with her grandchildren's virtual school, states, "As long as you can figure out Zoom, you should be able to assist the child for the most part. My 7-year-old grandson is getting really good in a Zoom classroom; he can show me how to use it."

Nobody is certain how long virtual schooling will be enforced, and many schools plan to reevaluate their situation after the first semester. But even though this new lifestyle has caused many headaches and stress in the home, one day everyone will look back on how much time they spent with each other and how strong their families really were.

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