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a student publication

The **Montgazette**

FREE

The Students' Voice

Issue 80

Serving Montgomery County Community College and the Surrounding Community

December 2019



Read “from the Editor”
on Page 2.

from the

Editor

Belonging at Montgomery County Community College

Josh Young
The Montgazette Editor-in-Chief

Hello again, everyone! I hope that your semester is going well as we approach the time for finals, the holidays and winter break.

At the beginning of the semester, Montgomery County Community College decided to embrace this academic year as the “year of belonging,” and in conjunction with the College, we here at The Montgazette decided to make the theme of this year’s paper about belonging. To meet this theme we have published stories ranging from immigration to students teaming up with faculty over the summer to create a film, to the creation of new teams that will not only bring students together in shared interests but will hopefully bring the larger community together as well.

On a personal level, I was very excited at the emphasis placed on fostering belonging. As I mentioned in past letters, I have struggled throughout my life to make friends. Because of this, I have felt like an outsider in many traditional life settings. It is for this reason that I am extraordinarily grateful to those at Montgomery County

Community College who have helped me to feel as though I belong. There are a multitude of people who helped me in that regard, but if I had to single out one person, it would be Professor Lauren Keatley.

I graduated from Perkiomen Valley High School in June 2018 and arrived on campus the following fall. When I first started, like most students, I did not know anybody and largely kept to myself. I knew that I wanted to do something that involved writing and considered joining the Montgazette, but I continually chickened out, feeling both unsure of my own ability and social anxiety at the prospect of meeting and interacting with new people.

However, I was lucky enough to have taken Professor Keatley’s Mass Media and Society class that semester. There are many things that Professor Keatley did during the course of that class that got me to open up, but there is one moment in particular that stands out for me. Early in the semester the class was given an assignment to interview a couple of students and then take those

interviews and craft them into a cohesive article. It was this assignment that prompted Professor Keatley to take a chance on me and urge me to join the school paper.

When I finally did join the Montgazette I gained a sense of purpose and connection to the larger Montgomery County Community College community. My membership also forced me to go to events that I would never have taken part in had I not joined. Along the way, I have gotten to meet a lot of great people, all of which helped me to feel like I belong. None of these things would have happened without Professor Keatley’s encouragement.

In closing, I would recommend to anyone who may read this and feel as if he or she does not belong, to get involved in any way possible at the College, whether that be talking to someone new or joining a club or activity. I assure you; you will not regret it.

Have a great rest of the semester and winter break. In case anyone is interested in joining The Montgazette, please email me at jyoung1551@students.mc3.edu.

Advertise!

To advertise in The Montgazette, please email montgazette@gmail.com.

All clubs chartered through the Student Life office may advertise in The Montgazette free of charge.

About The Montgazette

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A vision for the College: Interview with the College's Interim President

Loue Repsik
The Montgazette Contributor

Dr. Vicki Bastecki-Perez was appointed Montgomery County Community College's new Interim President in July. Since her designation as president, Dr. Bastecki-Perez has been committed to further improving services at Montgomery County Community College and is passionate about helping the students succeed.

Dr. Bastecki-Perez expressed that she became inspired to become an educator and to help students achieve success because of her personal experience as a student.

"I think, really, it began as being a student myself. I'm first-generation college educated, and I had the privilege of being afforded an opportunity to experience firsthand the power and the transformation of higher education," Dr. Bastecki Perez said.

Dr. Bastecki-Perez credits her alma mater, the University of Pittsburgh, for shaping her future in a positive way.

"When I began as a student, I aspired to get a certificate and go into the workforce. I was positively impacted my first semester by the

faculty at the University of Pittsburgh, who helped me to see my potential and really that changed the trajectory of my career path," Dr. Bastecki-Perez said. "I was very passionate about student teaching and at that time I knew I wanted to focus my career on teaching and learning."

Dr. Bastecki-Perez explained that she went on to become a faculty member at the University of Pittsburgh for nine years while she pursued her master's degree and doctorate in instructional design and technology. Through her experiences as a student and as an educator, she knew how education could change her life as well as her family and her community.

"I am honored and privileged to serve in a leadership role at Montgomery County Community College because this institution has a mission with values that are consistent with my own. I want to make sure that all students have the opportunity and the platform to succeed and fulfill their dreams. I would never have imagined more than 30 years ago that I would be an interim president at a

nationally recognized college," Dr. Bastecki-Perez elaborated.

"I'm very grateful to our board of trustees for having the confidence in me to lead this institution in this time of transition as we search for a permanent president," she said, adding that she would be applying for the permanent position as president.

Dr. Bastecki-Perez explained that when she first became interim president, one of her primary objectives was to make sure that she met with key stakeholders. These stakeholders include students, faculty, staff, the board of trustees, the foundation board, the alumni board, county commissioners, government officials, and various community partners.

"I wanted to make sure that

everyone knew about Montgomery County Community College. That they understood the mission, vision, and strategic agenda and heard firsthand from me that we are the community's college, and we are here to serve this community."

"Our Board of Trustees chair, Frank Custer, had very specific projects and initiatives for me this year, one of which is launching our eSports program, which will begin at both Central and West Campus in January. Another initiative is having a focus at our West Campus in Pottstown, and transforming the West Campus into a vibrant community," Dr. Bastecki-Perez said.

Continued on Page 9.

~ Weeks of Welcome ~

Reflect & Recharges

Stop by the library to recharge with a cup of coffee or hot chocolate, reflect on your fall semester, and reboot for the spring. Hosted by Libraries and Academic Support.

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Central Campus Library and West Campus Library

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The campus bookstore: A bittersweet closure

Shawnai DuBoise
MSP 111 The Montgazette Contributor

The Montgomery County Community College Bookstore shutdown is bittersweet for the campus community. Students and faculty are understanding about why it has shut down, but that does not mean they are happy about it.

Alison Weaver, who works at the eCampus virtual bookstore pickup location located in Parkhouse Hall, believes that in the past, the college bought more books than were being sold to students, resulting in

financial losses by the College's physical bookstore.

Moving to using only the virtual bookstore has been a painful but practical solution to that problem. The college will now only order books as requested by students, which saves money on overstock. In fact, according to the eCampus bookstore, "The eCampus.com virtual bookstore Program enables colleges, universities, and K-12 schools to streamline their textbook fulfillment processes and turn

them into profit centers."

However, although the virtual bookstore may solve the overstock issue for the College, students and faculty miss the convenience of the old bookstore. Lynn Foley, a College librarian and former student, said, "I miss having the Bookstore here."

The bookstore was not just a place to buy books but was also a place where students and faculty could purchase supplies, drinks and Montgomery County Community College apparel.

What's more, although the virtual bookstore is saving the College money, it also creates a potential inconvenience for students. Previously, students could just walk into the bookstore and get what they needed, whether it be books or school apparel. Now, they have to order online and wait for their purchase to be delivered.

The virtual bookstore also adds a practical problem for both professors and students as last-minute registrants often have to begin attending class without their textbooks. Foley also received several complaints in the library early in the semester about books on reserve not being available — there were too many students vying to use them. This situation has resulted in a number of students being unable to complete coursework because they do not have their books.

Julia Stengel, a student, stated, "This semester was my first time ordering textbooks from an online store. While it was convenient for the books to be shipped to the school, it took me a few weeks to eventually get one of the books that I was missing."



A look from outside the now defunct Montgomery County Community College Bookstore.

Photograph by Shawnai DuBoise

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ON CAMPUS



The Montgazette
The Students' Voice

Bookstore closure Continued from Page 4.

The College has free two-day business delivery of books through eCampus, but that is not always guaranteed. For example, students who ordered their books the Friday before Labor Day did not receive their orders until the end of the following week because deliveries are not processed on weekends or holidays.

Ivan Michaels, a student, said, "Overall, the process of ordering books is fairly simple. But the shipping process could use some work. I hope the school can work on this problem and bring students their books more swiftly."

That said, along with the college saving money, students using eCampus may save money as well. Having a virtual bookstore allows Montgomery County Community College students to earn rewards credits with the Textbook Rewards Program. eCampus Virtual Bookstore is also affiliated with Rakuten, a cash-back and shopping rewards company, so students who use Rakuten can receive cash back on their textbook purchases.

It is officially unknown what the old physical bookstore will be turned into. The administration will need to find a good use for it. An informal poll among a few college employees suggested a place to get "more good snacks on campus"!

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MONTGOMERY
COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE



eSports coming to the College: A conversation with Ryan Plummer

Josh Young
The Montgazette Editor-in-Chief

Attention, all student gamers: Montgomery County Community College is establishing an eSports team beginning in the 2020 spring semester.

The Montgazette sat down with Coordinator of eSports Ryan Plummer to discuss the status of the eSports team, the future of the eSports industry, and issues within the video game community.

Currently, interested students are making their way through the

eligibility process. To be considered eligible, students must pass a physical, be involved in an approved program or course at the College, maintain a GPA of 2.0, and also meet all of the College's entrance, enrollment, and accumulation requirements.

As of this writing, the eSports team has two official members with many more on the way. "We have 17 other students currently making their way through the eligibility process,

and it just takes a while for everyone to get through that process," Plummer said. "Our goal is to have about 20 student athletes on the team for the spring semester and I'm confident that we will meet that mark."

Once the team is together, members will begin participating in tournaments. Plummer and the team are working out their schedules to determine the days and times at which they can compete in gaming tournaments. An official competition schedule will then be set.

In their first season, the new Mustangs eSport team will be playing and competing solely in Rocket League tournaments. Rocket League is a game, rated E (for everyone) by the ESRB, and has up to four players assigned to two teams. Best described as soccer with cars, Rocket League forces players to work together and develop cohesive strategies to win.

"We chose Rocket League as our initial varsity eSport and are excited that it aligns with some of the sports that we currently offer, like soccer," Plummer stated. "It's possible that we could expand the number of games in the future."

With an increase in the number of games being played would come the creation of more teams. For example, if a Madden or FIFA team were to be created, the College's eSport team members would compete as separate teams in unique leagues for those games. According to Plummer, the

setup would be similar to how the College has a "men's soccer team and a men's basketball team, which are both under the Athletic Department," and how "people could definitely compete on multiple teams if they chose to do so."

The team would require a good level of commitment as well, with three to four practices a week, each one lasting about two hours. The first half of that time will be spent in the Central Campus eSports Pavilion set up across the hall from the Student Life Office in College Hall. The second half will be spent participating in exercises meant to strengthen skills essential to eSports, such as hand-eye coordination and reaction time. This exercise is part of a collaboration between the College and the local YMCA.

Ultimately, Plummer hopes that the upstart eSports program will serve as a pipeline for students to move on to four-year colleges. There is also a potential for scholarship offers in eSports. According to the Associated Press, in 2014 Robert Morris University Illinois became the first university to offer an eSports scholarship.

Shortly afterward, in 2016 the university played a role in the founding of the National Association of Collegiate Esports (NACE), which describes itself as a nonprofit membership association.

~ Weeks of Welcome ~

Employer Days

Meet and network with local employers and propel your potential. Sponsored by the Office of Career Services.

Tuesday, Jan. 28, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.
South Hall lobby, West Campus

Wednesday, Jan. 30, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Parkhouse Hall Atrium, Central Campus

Tuesday, Feb. 4, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.
South Hall Lobby, West Campus

Wednesday, Feb. 5, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Parkhouse Hall Atrium, Central Campus

Tuesday, Feb. 11, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.
South Hall Lobby, West Campus

Wednesday, Feb. 12, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Parkhouse Hall Atrium, Central Campus

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eSports

Continued from Page 6.

The NACE sets the rules and requirements for most varsity eSports colleges across the nation. According to their website, the organization serves more than 5,000 student athletes from more than 170 colleges. Notable colleges in the NACE include Albright College, Harrisburg University, and the University of California-Berkeley. According to the NACE, students of NACE-member schools have received \$16 million in eSports scholarships and aid between them.

However, Plummer does not anticipate many players who compete in eSports in college will go on to become professional eSports players. He cites his belief that the prime age for an eSports player is between 16 and 22, and thus many professionals simply skip the college life and go straight to the pros.

Plummer's belief appears to be well-founded. According to CNBC, in July 2019, Kyle Geirsdorf, a 16-year-old teenager from Pennsylvania, won \$3 million for his victory in a professional Fortnite tournament. Additionally, the average age of the 12-member South Korean Overwatch team, which is heavily favored to win their fourth straight international title, is only about 21 years old. The oldest member of the team is 23 years old, and all players have been competing professionally in one form or another since their early teens.

Nonetheless, Plummer does believe that eSports has a lot to offer college students. The most notable positive in Plummer's opinion is that it can break the isolating environment that video games can sometimes lead to for students.

"A major benefit of this eSports team is it will pull them out of that environment and force players

to communicate," Plummer said. "With that communication comes planning tactics, conflict resolution, and building teamwork. These are all things that employers want to see in prospective employees and it will benefit players in the future."

The conversation then turned to the meteoric rise of the eSports industry as a whole.

According to Annie Pei of CNBC, groups such as Statista and Newzoo are projecting that in 2019 the eSports industry will eclipse \$1 billion in annual revenue for the first time in its short history. Additionally, according to Pei, athletes such as Michael Jordan, and sports owners like the Dallas Mavericks' Mark Cuban and the New England Patriots' Robert Kraft, have bought ownership stakes in different eSports teams.

Many reasons have been given for the increasing interest in eSports, with experts citing technological advances made since the 1990s that have boosted connectivity between players. Plummer agrees with this claim but also believes that gaming companies embracing eSports have been an overlooked aspect of the industry's growth.

"If you look at a game like Overwatch, it was practically designed to be an eSport," Plummer claimed. "I also think that this generation is the first to grow up on video games and it acts as a sort of pastime."

Plummer also believes that there is a possibility that eSports could eclipse the popularity of some of the most entrenched sports in the world, like baseball, a sport that has been declining in popularity for decades.

"In countries like South Korea, video games are like a national sport and some eSport gamers have a bigger international pull than some MLB or NBA players," Plummer explained. "Domestically, that is not the case,

but it probably will reach that level as traditional sports are just embracing streaming [apps like MLB At-Bat that allow fans to stream games are rather new] while eSports has already adjusted."

Despite the potential positives of eSports and its incredible rise in popularity, not everyone is convinced that eSports is a beneficial activity, especially among youth. In Thailand, where eSports is incredibly popular, Dr. Yongyud Wongpiromsarn, a member of the government's Mental Health Department, said in an interview with "The Nation" in 2018 that he believes more children will become addicted to video games as eSports continues to grow.

Yongyud's concern about the potential for video game addiction as eSports becomes more popular does not appear to be unfounded. According to Vox, in 2018 the World Health Organization recognized "gaming disorder" for the first time in its 11th revision of the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11). The American Psychological Association (APA) similarly designated "internet

gaming disorder" as a topic worthy of more research in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) the same year. According to research cited by Vox, only 1 to 3 percent of gamers are at risk of addiction, but with the number of gamers rising into the billions, that small percentage consists of tens of millions of people.

Plummer was quick to emphasize that the eSports program at Montgomery County Community College will do everything in its power to make sure that players do not become addicted.

"Our eSport varsity program will follow the same requirements for eligibility as our traditional varsity sports programs," Plummer said. "By providing structure and educating team members on how to avoid these types of things, we hope to prevent that from occurring. We will also attempt to combat the development of a clique mentality among players, which is something we see in traditional sports as well."

Students who are interested in joining the eSports team should contact Ryan Plummer at rplummer@mc3.edu or call the number 215-619-7440.

~ Weeks of Welcome ~

Academic Affairs Meet & Greet Club Fairs Included

Connect with the Academic Affairs leadership team and Provost Office at an informal meet and greet.

Wednesday, Feb. 12

Parkhouse Hall Atrium, Central Campus

11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

South Hall lobby, West Campus

11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Thursday, Feb. 13

The Culinary Arts Institute

12:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

The International Club hits the road: Visits New York City

Khushi Desai
The Montgazette Contributor

Montgomery County Community College is very diverse. Its students are from all walks of life and from different cultural backgrounds. Perhaps nowhere is this better exemplified at the College than in the International Club, a social group where international students and local students get together to discuss their different cultures and customs.

“The International Club is where we learn about other students in the college community. We do presentations to learn about what other people do in their culture,” club Secretary Grace Lee said. “We also have our annual International Night where we celebrate and do fun activities.”

A major feature of the International Club are its field trips, which the club takes every year. In past years, the International Club has visited many places, such as Philadelphia, and this year New York City can be added to that list.

“Throughout the semester, we took a field trip as a group to New York and spent time with friends ... we will also be taking more fun field trips throughout the semester, which will be fun and exciting,” Lee said.

Lee was one member who accompanied the club on its trip to New York City, which took place on October 12, 2019. Members visited Ellis Island, where millions of immigrants were processed as they entered the United States in search of a better life and a new beginning.

The International Club also visited Battery Park, famously known as “The Battery,” which is actually an area named for the artillery batteries. Finally, the group visited and the famous Statue of Liberty, which garnered a reputation as a symbol for immigrants coming to the United States.

Lee explained the reasoning behind the club’s decision to go to NYC, saying, “We planned the New York trip because it would be lots of fun and (for many members) a chance to go somewhere they haven’t been before.

Lee reflected, “I thought the New York trip was a lot of fun because you got to spend time with friends and take lots of beautiful pictures. You also got to ride the shuttle bus to the city and get to know others in the club. It was very interesting to learn about the Statue of Liberty at a museum and get some facts about how it was created. We also got to have free time and wander where we wanted to go and look around.”

Lee said experience was quite wonderful overall. She met a lot of people in the club and even made friends with them. She feels that this trip has made those people close to her. Many students have also mentioned that while on the trip they found new friends, with whom they are now very close.



The International Club pose at the base of the Statue of Liberty.

Photograph by Kathleen Campbell

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Interim President Continued from Page 3.

She added that another goal was the renovation of the Science Center at Central Campus. Phase one of the renovations began this fall, including the revamped science laboratories and teaching classrooms. This year, phase two is in the works, which includes renovating the other wing of the Science Center. The Science Center theater will also be expanded and will include new sound systems, new lighting, and a capacity of 500 people so that Montgomery County Community College can have a greater number of shows in the future and better support student learning.

“I’m also working on our Workforce Development area at the College, where we provide customized training and professional development for business and industry in the community,” Dr. Bastecki-Perez said. “We’re finishing a plan for our new branch, which will be called Workforce Solutions that will be solution-oriented and responsive in our main industry sectors in Montgomery County, such as health care, information technology, hospitality, and

culinary arts.”

Dr. Bastecki-Perez said that another key project is the relocation of the Culinary Arts Institute in Lansdale when the lease comes to maturity in two years. She will be giving recommendations for the relocation so that there is continuity of service, as well as the opportunity to expand culinary arts, baking and pastry arts, and hospitality.

Dr. Bastecki-Perez also offered her advice to students on how to achieve success. “My greatest advice to the students is to make friendships and look for mentors, formal and informal, whether that is faculty, staff, or administrators on campus. Also, students should take advantage of all that the College has to offer, inside and outside the classroom,” Dr. Bastecki-Perez said. “Our services provide students with tutoring, libraries, food pantries, and counseling services in order to help support students and their success.”

The interim president also spoke about how Montgomery County Community College is going to uphold its end of the bargain by providing services that are aimed at helping students succeed.

“I also want students to know that Montgomery County Community College is passionate about

teaching and learning. Our commitment to them is to provide innovation and creativity spaces so our students can stretch their thinking, be exposed to the global world around us, and to be able to navigate and be successful in whatever career path they are choosing,” Dr. Bastecki-Perez said.

The interim president concluded by stating that she is very proud of all the students and that they inspire her every day. She, herself, together with everyone at the college, is there to support them and their journey.

Welcome Tables

Stop by the welcome table and pick up your student handbook.

**Wednesday, Jan. 22
& Thursday, Jan. 23**

Central Campus & West Campus
7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Wanted: Photographers

Get your photos published!

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**The
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The Students' Voice

“Educated” by Tara Westover: A book review

Russell Magee
The Montgazette Contributor

It has spent 83 weeks on the New York Times Best-Sellers List. Former president Barack Obama called it one of his favorite books of 2018. And, it was a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award in Autobiography.

“Educated” is the heart-wrenching, searing, and unbelievable memoir and first book by author Tara Westover. “Educated” tells the rags-to-riches story of Westover’s life as she managed to escape an oppressive family through an insatiable hunger for education.

Tara Westover grew up the youngest of seven children in an extremely pious Mormon family in the mountains of rural Idaho. Her parents were fanatical survivalists who did not believe in many things that most people take for granted: doctors, medicine, hospitals, federal government, and most of all, schools. Throughout her childhood, Westover’s total perception of the world around her was limited and confined to her parents’ radical beliefs.

All of that changed when she began to see that she was missing something – that there was a vast world out there and an exponentially more extensive history than what she had been told. She began reading textbooks, eventually

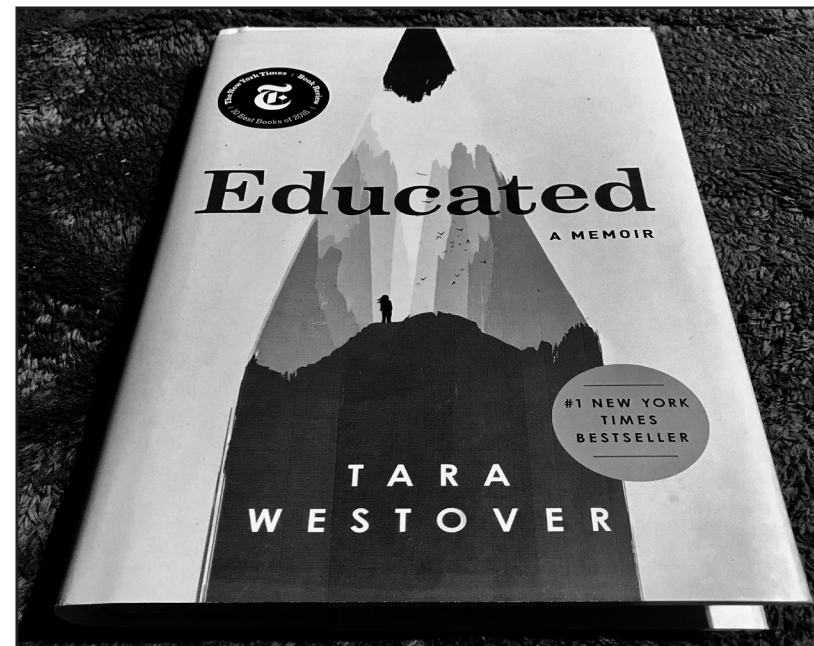
teaching herself algebra, and managed to pass the ACT at age 16. Against her family’s wishes, she applied to and was accepted by Brigham Young University. Because of gracious mentoring by several caring professors, who saw something unique in her, she had an opportunity to attend both Cambridge and Harvard, eventually attaining a Ph.D. in history from Cambridge University.

Westover’s story serves as a poignant statement about the power of belief, and how if that belief is wielded too forcefully, it can hurt the ones we love most. Westover’s family disowned her not for simply pursuing an education but for denouncing her family’s beliefs. She began to see that the beliefs she had grown up with were actually dangerous and constraining. Education gave her the strength to free herself from that oppression, but it ultimately led to her exile from her family.

The book is beautifully written, and the story incredibly moving. I was turning pages unwittingly, lingering on each word as her life flashed before my eyes like a movie. It was bewildering to think, as I read, that it was even possible for a person to live such a life, let alone to escape from it, and then to triumph and even succeed.

Tara Westover was the guest speaker at the Montgomery County College 2019 Presidential Symposium, on Nov. 12. Westover gave a 40-minute talk about her life and

work, answered questions from the audience, then signed books and posed for photos. More than 1,400 students, faculty, staff, and community members attended the event.



Russell Magee reviews Tara Westover’s “Educated,” which documents her rags-to-riches story.

Photograph by Russell Magee

~ Weeks of Welcome ~

Cocoa, Cookies and College

Enjoy refreshments and promotional items.

Wednesday, Jan. 22 & Thursday, Jan 23

Parkhouse Hall, Central Campus

& South Hall, West Campus

11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

“Villains”: A movie review

Joshua Nikerle

MSP 111 The Montgazette Contributor

“Villains” was released on September 20th to a generally warm reception from audiences. It currently sits at a Certified Fresh 84% on Rotten Tomatoes. “Villains” is a dark comedy about the characters Mickey (Bill Skarsgard) and Jules (Maika Monroe), who are on the run. When their car dies, they break into the wrong house, one that holds a dark secret and houses some dangerous homeowners.

Created through the independent company Gunpowder & Sky, the indie film held a lot of promise, and for the most part, it delivered.

The movie is not anything new for the genre. Home invasion movies have been done to death in every conceivable way possible and “Villains” does not bring a new, groundbreaking perspective. In fact, “Villains” can be easily deemed as the comedy version of “Don’t Breathe”.

Where the film differs is its lighthearted and comedic tone, and this is where the film truly shines.

The lead performances stand out. Bill Skarsgard has been type-cast as the creepy horror villain through

roles such as Pennywise in “It” and The Kid in “Castle Rock”. But here, Skarsgard plays a regular guy in a “cutesy” relationship, so it is nice to see him get the opportunity to play against type. Skarsgard and Maika Monroe have great on-screen chemistry and make the comedic aspect of the movie believable and fun to watch.

The comedy is what holds the movie afloat (get it?). “Villains” goes into the realm of not only witty dialogue, but also some slapstick as well. That does not mean the movie does not have more serious moments. The movie asks questions about morality throughout the film and tackles the issue of loss outright during the third act.

“Villains” offers moviegoers a very enjoyable viewing experience. The performances from the leads are great, and the film has a sense of claustrophobia which makes a small movie like this work really well. It may not be that original, but the likable characters and comedic tone the movie solidly embraces makes the trip to the theater worth it. This movie gets a solid 7.5/10.

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**Meeting are Wednesdays starting September 11th 2019
From 12:20pm – 1:20pm in Parkhouse Hall room 343
Contact info: dgray@mc3.edu**

Bandana (2019) Album Review: Freddie Gibbs delivers some of his best work

Shane Friel

MSP 111 The Montgazette Contributor

Freddie Gibbs, a rapper from Gary, Indiana, released his sixth studio album, "Bandana," in 2019, in his second collaboration with renowned producer Madlib.

The album peaked at number 21 on the U.S. Top 200 and sat at 13th on the U.S. top rhythm and blues/hip-hop albums of 2019.

Freddie Gibbs and Madlib had previously come together for Gibbs's first album, "Piñata," which was critically acclaimed and brought Gibbs out of the underground hip-hop scene.

"Bandana," like "Piñata," focuses on Freddie's experience growing up in Indiana and his life on the street. "Piñata" and "Bandana" both focus on the sale of cocaine and the effect it has on communities, users, and sellers.

Gibbs's ability as a wordsmith has evolved as evidenced by his use of unique words, which also encapsulates his growing

skill as a writer. Unique words are only counted once, so the words "cat" and "cats" are two unique words. Unique words are essentially a statistic that reflects a rapper's word vocabulary. According to Hip Hop by the Numbers, Gibbs had 23 verses, with 5,006 words in total, 1,657 unique words, and 6,575 syllables in total. With those statistics, 31% of Gibbs's words are unique.

The rapper constantly bounces back and forth from spurts of alliteration to outbursts of internal rhyme. His metaphors reach levels unknown to Indiana wordsmiths. With lines like "Real Gs move in silence like lasagna," and "Dream team legal, I never take an L, Courtroom, funeral fresh, Givenchy my lapel" in reference to his wrongful imprisonment in Vienna, Austria, while he was on tour in 2015. He also states that "Most of my dawgs

got live in prison from conversations on the phone, bought my first mansion my mama told me leave that dope alone," in reference to his come up from one of the most crime infested cities in America to now living in the Hollywood Hills.

"Bandana" is composed of six CD's worth of beats used by Kanye West during the recording of "Life of Pablo." Madlib's production is as wild as ever, with no one song tied to one beat.

Most of the tracks diverge from the original sound. For example, the song "Cataracts" starts as a reminiscent beat, reflecting on past days where the troubles of the industry, adulthood, and fame were nonexistent. The production starts melodically and repetitively, but halfway through the track it slows down and darkens to show the pain behind the pleasure of being young

and free again.

On this same track, Gibbs shows his growing dexterity, saying "F*** generation next this generation genocide, seems like my actions was devil sin I can't sympathize."

Freddie flows in and out of the tracks with his cadence dropping to new highs and lows to match the riveting production and samples provided by Madlib's genius.

The whole album is a work of art. The cover shows Freddie Gibbs and Madlib as cartoon characters representative of what they are tied to as both of their

characters look like common Piñata designs but with ties to the content of their music.

Madlib is on a zebra in connection to his previous work with Freddie, since the cover's border was Piñata striped in connection to the topic of cocaine and African American culture that he speaks about constantly.

Although Gibbs has made leaps and bounds as a writer and artist, his work is not yet complete. Gibbs and Madlib plan to continue their work together by releasing a third installment in the series.

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It's overrated: Rap music can do better

Peter Lee

MSP 111 The Montgazette Contributor

Music is one of the most defining aspects of a society. There is a vast selection of music in all cultures with some of the most popular Western genres including pop, rock, jazz, classical, gospel, industrial ... and rap.

According to EBSCO database, music is, "the sound that is produced by vibrating strings, reeds, the human vocal chords, and other instruments. To most enthusiasts and professionals, however, music is a language."

Music should be an adventure. Classical performances can span several hours, filling concert halls with rich and fulfilling symphonies. Gospel and cultural music expose people to different lifestyles and philosophies from all around the world. Jazz music excites with its constant improvisation, like riding an unfinished rollercoaster while having the tracks built at the same time: uncertain, daring, and complex! Pop and Rock music connect the larger listening segments of society together while still encapsulating emotion, passion, and fervor of the instruments. — Thank you, Imagine Dragons.

And, last and definitely least, there is rap music.

Traditionally, the word "RAP" actually stood for the acronym "Rhythm and Poetry." This meant that, unlike every other genres of music, rap music originated from language itself rather than the typical "music that was invented from music."

The problem is that mainstream rappers will often use this as an excuse to not iterate further into the genre or to forge new musical ground. This often leads to modern rap that is stripped down to only its core beat,

bass, and vocal making the whole song feel monotonous and repetitive.

Mainstream examples of this happening include Kanye West and Lil Pump, featuring Adele Givens, "I Love It"; Lil Pump, "Gucci Gang"; and Drake, "In My Feelings."

There are also times when the rapper is speaking too quickly or talking about a vague topic. These two reasons contribute to the message becoming unclear and difficult to interpret, destroying the entire point of rap.

Perhaps the most interesting example is in Vin Jay's "Mumble Rapper vs Lyricist." Within the song he hits every previously mentioned point and even demonstrates a few of them mid-song.

Granted, there are rap songs with none of these downsides; they have a clear message, an interesting background groove, and a strong sense of identity separating them from other rap songs.

Looking at NF and his song "The Search," one can see that it features a dramatic orchestra and choir that accommodates his angered and tired tone. His message is completely down to earth and casual. This song is a perfect example of what rap music should strive to become: powerful, sharp, and clear.

A creative way to use rap in music is to infuse it together with a song, like Sena Kana, Kang "GARY" Hee-gun, and the video game company, Riot Games, have.

In Sena Kana's "Up," featuring Wiz Khalifa and Sheppard, Wiz ends off the song beautifully with a final rap verse that is backed with traditional

EDM/Pop music.

An example from Korean rapper Kang "Gary" Hee-gun is from his song "Lonely Night." The song successfully combines both rap and pop into one satisfying result.

In Riot Games's example, they remade their own original song, "RISE," and had it voiced over by Korean rapper Kim "Bobby" Ji-won. His rapping significantly reinforced the montage/uplifting feeling that was already present in the original song.

A last, and more experimental, style of rap is found in Prince Ea's "Everybody Dies, but Not Everybody Lives" where he uses rhythm and poetry throughout his speech to add even more power and emphasis.

These creative utilizations of rap, however, come few and far between, and with music becoming increasingly more accessible, the industry demands quantity over quality. This development will lead to many producers continuing to follow

the trend of lackluster bass, beat, and voice rather than truly expanding the world of rap.

In the end, what is and is not music is all within the eye of the beholder. There will always be people who enjoy the monotonous, repetitive, and overall depressing messages that modern rap is filled with, and more power to them. However, if rap continues to manifest these lackluster lyrics, beats, and song constructions, then the genre will remain commercially and artistically unappealing.

Rap has the potential to be much more than what it is now. Its ability to communicate using a literal language as opposed to notes and pitches is something unique. Rappers must transform, develop, and enhance their beloved genre of music, or else the genre will run itself into a lifeless, cold, staccato rhythm with nothing but ramblings of sad, lost souls wandering in an eternal limbo.



In this article, Peter Lee makes the case that rap music has lost its way.

Photograph by Jan Strecha via unsplash.com

Death and the grieving process: My personal experience

Max Selby-Rinehart

MSP 111 The Montgazette Contributor

Losing a loved one is like having the rug swept out from under you. We make plans for the day and do not think twice about how those plans can be taken away in the blink of an eye.

The loss of a family member or friend is one of the hardest emotional experiences an individual can endure and comes with its own unique set of thoughts, questions and feelings.

While death does eventually happen to everyone, it does not make it any easier when it hits close to home. People can become very depressed, stressed and withdrawn from society.

Untimely death occurs all over the world. It could happen to anybody. A sudden accident, poisoning, health issue, murder, suicide, and so on, may cause death. The first thing that happens afterward, though, is for those who are left behind to recall the memories that they and their loved one(s) shared together.

Grief impacts people in various ways. There's not a moment to think or even breathe. It takes time to adapt to death and feel like yourself again. Letting yourself grieve in your own way is necessary. This may involve spending time alone as part of coming to grips with death, but it's also good to talk to others and rely on their support.

Many emotions are commonly described by others during grief, but your own experience may be unique. Feeling emotionally unpredictable is natural and it may

be difficult to pin down exactly how you feel. Intense feelings may be frightening but over time they usually ease.

October 29, 2017, was the day my sister passed away after a sudden accident. Ever since that day my family and I have not been the same. We have been broken since the passing of my sister. My mother was even diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder.

Death is an uncommon occurrence for one so young. The emotions my sister's death brought out of me would either spill like a running faucet or, unbeknownst to me, would build up as if stuck inside a bent hose.

Normally, the release of it all comes as we understand the extent of tragedy in one's life. The people with whom you interact are interlaced with the cognitive levels on which you develop and ascend. These losses are the most critical and can hurt the most. Some people cry, while others hide.

I think the hardest thing about death is that it is so final; when your life is over, it's over. You don't get a last goodbye or one last phone call.

All you get are questions — you get to wonder if you should have said something to them or remind them of how much you care. You never know what will happen so ask the people you love how they are, or perhaps ask them for forgiveness.

Being only 21 it saddens me to know how much death I have

seen thus far in my life, which has led me to cherish my loved ones each and every day.

There are some commonalities in response to loss; however, there is no universally predictable emotional trajectory, or range of experienced effects, as thoughts and behaviors are quite malleable. It is important

to consider the person embedded within the family, the family embedded within the culture, and the community embedded within social and cultural structures— all of this is needed to understand the processes following loss, the dialogue of loss and development, and the meanings one gives to the experience of loss.



Max Selby-Rinehart (left) and Charliee Selby-Perry (right).

Photograph by Max Selby-Rinehart

~ Weeks of Welcome ~

Vision Boards

Join a vision board activity program with a focus on personal and career goals.

Monday, Jan. 27, 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.
South Hall lobby, West Campus

Wednesday, Jan. 30, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Parkhouse Hall Atrium, Central Campus

EDITORIAL



The Montgazette
The Students' Voice

The Columbus Day controversy: How much do Americans owe Christopher Columbus?

Chris Gotwals
The Montgazette Contributor

For years, Columbus Day has been held in high esteem as a day to celebrate one of the greatest figures in history, and for kids, as a day off from school. But now that has changed. The truth about Christopher Columbus, the first man from modern Europe to discover America, has been unearthed and his holiday has been scorned.

One of the most remarkable aspects of this issue is how quickly it has risen into the mainstream. No more than 10 years ago, Columbus Day was just another holiday, just like Martin Luther King Day or the Fourth of July. Now many cities and states across America have renamed the holiday Indigenous People's Day or some other variant. According to CNN, the cities of Denver, Los Angeles, Phoenix, Seattle and San Francisco, as well as the states of Alaska, South Dakota, Hawaii, Minnesota, Oregon and Vermont have all done so.

Montgomery County Community College has taken the same view, agreeing to rename the occasion Indigenous People's Day. The Archaeology and Anthropology Club has taken the lead on the issue.

Club president Gerrome Campbell argues that Columbus does not deserve to have a holiday named after him. "Columbus did not discover America because there had been inhabitants long before he arrived." He goes even further when he says that Columbus brought a genocide upon the Native Americans.

It should be noted that many indigenous Americans were wiped out by disease, which cannot be attributed specifically to Columbus. However, he was indirectly implicated because he paved the way for other explorers to exploit Native Americans by knowingly trading disease-laden blankets with them. Nevertheless, Columbus still can be regarded as one of the most detestable figures in history. If any one man is to be blamed for the creation and popularization of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, it is Christopher Columbus. He reported to his fellow Europeans that the "Indians" were ripe for slave labor. He himself participated in moving and selling some of the very first slaves in the Americas.

Interestingly, Columbus' own life declined after his discovery. Settlers under his governorship complained of his mishandling of the colonies. According to History.com, this eventually caused the Spanish monarchs to remove him from his position. He died a publicly disgraced man.

But let us not forget the counter argument, the one with all the traditional history behind it. To ignore the year 1492 as an obvious turning point in history would be a folly. Columbus did indirectly alert Europeans of a faraway land of opportunity; an opportunity to escape the oppression they were currently facing. Many of these Europeans took that opportunity to come to America and experiment with freedom on a level never before seen. This day of the year might still deserve some celebration. But what kind of celebration? This is a difficult question to answer, and one that deserves discussion as our society continues to evolve.

The Archaeology and Anthropology Club at Montgomery County Community College is standing firm on one side of the debate, making sure the indigenous people Columbus so horribly mistreated are not forgotten. The club meets on Mondays, twice monthly, in Parkhouse Hall Room 301, 12:20-1:20 p.m.



Christopher Columbus Day, celebrating one of history's most famous explorers, has come under scrutiny in recent years.

Photograph via Pixabay



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What's going on at MCCC?

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Student Leadership Symposium

Students must be nominated by faculty and staff. A nomination email will be sent out on Nov. 25. Nominations will close on Feb 2.

NBA prediction time: The 76ers and their chances at a championship

Matt Seibelich

MSP 111 The Montgazette Contributor

As the NBA's 2019-2020 season begins to unfold, fans and commentators are casting their predictions for who might come out on top in this new era of basketball.

This all started when Toronto Raptors star, and reigning NBA Finals MVP, Kawhi Leonard left in free agency to pair up with Oklahoma City Thunder power forward Paul George in Los Angeles to play for the underrated Clippers and 2008 NBA champion coach Doc Rivers.

This move spurred a league-wide shake-up that left many NBA teams ditching the Big Three Super Team formula of the past decade for dynamic duos and greater depth off the bench.

In the case of the Philadelphia 76ers, their roster is stacked with talent this season, putting them in prime position to win the Larry O'Brien Trophy in 2020.

Despite such optimism, the 76ers' 2019 offseason wasn't without its own drama. The team's point guard Ben Simmons faced a heavy load of scrutiny for not taking shots during the previous season and for his seeming inability to hit jump shots, and many questioned his All-Star status. Joel Embiid, the franchise's center and most popular player, was criticized for not being healthy enough during the previous season to be impactful in the playoffs.

In contrast, the 2019 off

season has seen Embiid adopt a much healthier diet. The franchise also signed the remarkable power forward Tobias Harris to a max salary contract for the next four years. Along with Harris, the 76ers secured veteran two-way big man, as well as Embiid's on-court nemesis, Al Horford, away from their historic rivals the Boston Celtics. They also found a rising star in small forward Josh Richardson. The addition of Richardson was necessitated by the loss of Jimmy Butler in free agency to the Miami Heat.

All of this has contributed to the 76ers being the most talented team currently in the NBA, according to the staff at Sports Illustrated. Even basketball analyst, NBA Hall of Famer, and former 76er Charles Barkley has admitted that they are his favorite to win the championship, the Philadelphia Inquirer divulges. Barkley says, "I love the addition of Al Horford. I love the addition of Josh Richardson. So, the Sixers have everything in place."

The Sixers still have their detractors, many of whom believe that the pairing of future Hall of Famers Anthony Davis and LeBron James, on the Los Angeles Lakers, is the real force to be reckoned with. Many believe that this pairing could lead to a possible NBA Finals featuring the Lakers and Sixers.

However, the Lakers have more competition due

to a typically strong Western Conference. For the Lakers to get out on top in the Western Conference, they will have to duel other pairings, such as the previously mentioned Clippers' duo of Leonard and George, or even the Houston Rockets' pairing of James Harden and Russell Westbrook. The latter two were paired together in the wake of Paul George abandoning Westbrook in Oklahoma, which led to Westbrook being traded to Houston for aging point guard Chris Paul — as I said, making for a dramatic and exciting offseason.

It is important to remember that Harden and Westbrook won the Western Conference as teammates back in 2011 with the Oklahoma City Thunder, though they were unsuccessful in securing

an NBA championship — losing to LeBron James and the Miami Heat in five games. However, this time the two will not have Kevin Durant on the team and will not need to rely on themselves.

Finally, the Western Conference cannot be discussed without mentioning the Bay Area Golden State Warriors who, despite losing Kevin Durant in free agency to the Brooklyn Nets, were able to retain most of the core squad that led them to two NBA Finals appearances, one NBA championship, and a near-perfect season several years ago. They could remain a force to be reckoned with in the Western Conference as the season progresses.

Continued on Page 18.

~ Weeks of Welcome ~

Mustang Madness

Learn about athletics and student involvement opportunities. Enjoy a free breakfast and fun promotional items. This Event is hosted by the Athletics Department.

Tuesday, Feb. 4, 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.
Parkhouse Hall Atrium, Central Campus

Wednesday, Feb. 5, 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.
South Hall Lobby, West Campus

SPORTS



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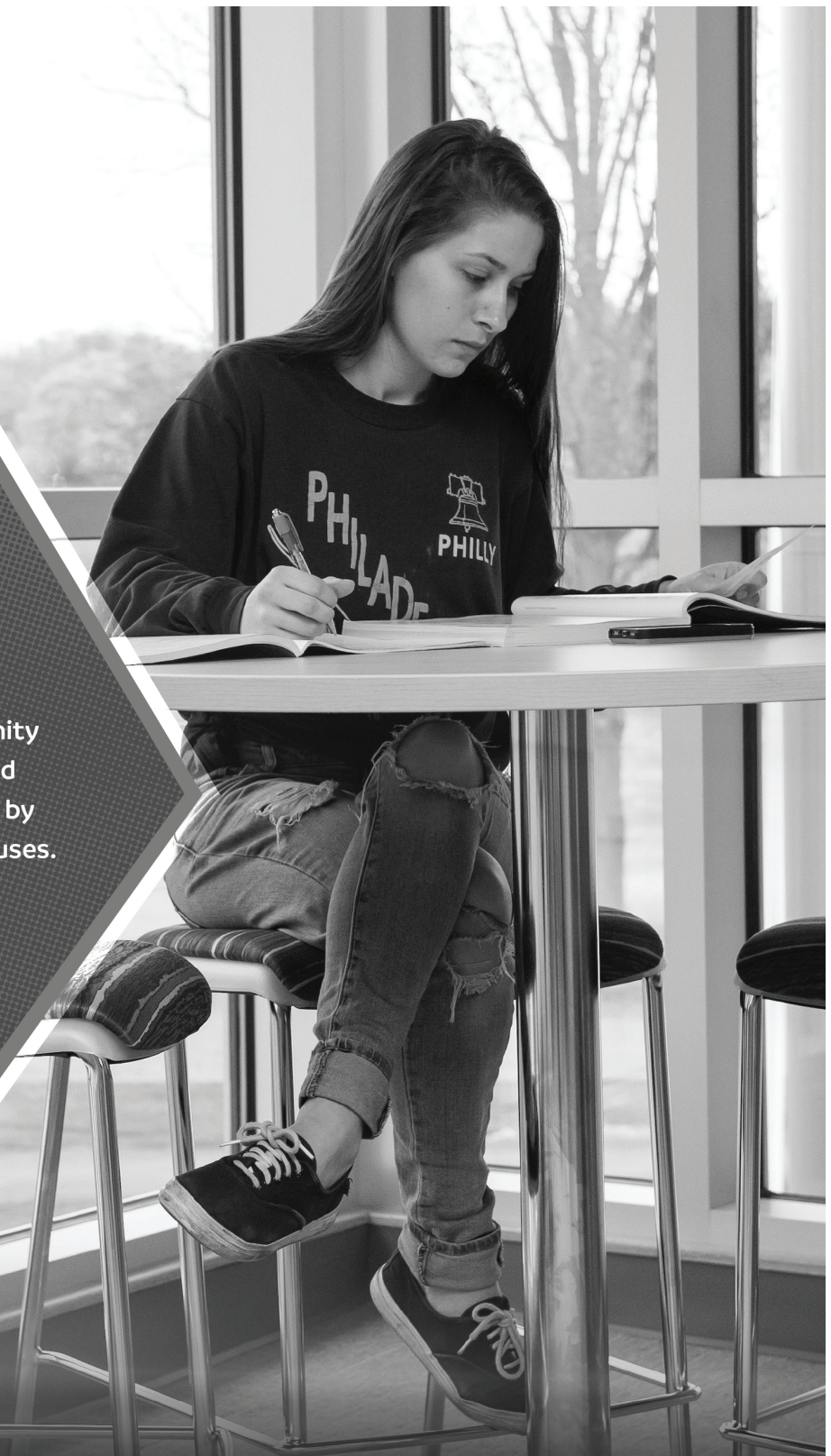


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NBA Predictions Continued from Page 16.

In the wake of one of the wildest off seasons in NBA history, many of the teams mentioned above will need time to build chemistry and recruit more depth for their squads coming off the bench.

This is the case not only for Western Conference teams. Eastern Conference teams like the Milwaukee Bucks and the Brooklyn Nets will also pose a threat. However, both of these teams have a fatal flaw: They lack critical role players like Richardson and Horford.

Both teams have All-Star-caliber players in reigning regular-season MVP Giannis Antetokounmpo and Khris Middleton of the Bucks, and Kyrie

Irving and Kevin Durant of the Nets. All of these players are great scorers. But the lack of critical role players who can be impactful will allow the 76ers a distinct advantage when those players must sit on the bench for short periods of time in the playoffs.

In addition to the lack of depth for the Nets, Kevin Durant is predicted to be out for the entire season due to an Achilles injury suffered at the end of the last game of the Finals last season between the Warriors and the Raptors.

Most of the 76ers' harshest competition will come from the West Coast, then, leaving the Sixers wide open to a path to the Finals through the Eastern Conference and possibly the first NBA Finals championship the franchise has seen since 1983.

~ Weeks of Welcome ~

Mustangs Basketball Spirit Night

Come out and root for the men's and women's basketball teams as they take on the Community College of Philadelphia.

Tuesday, Jan. 28, 5 p.m. to 9 p.m.
Health Sciences Center. Main Gym. Central Campus

International Club Continued from Page 8.

Students also learned a great deal during the trip. Mis Champa, a computer science major, and the President of the club stated, "I learned a lot during this trip. Immigration was one of them, this was my first time visiting the Statue of Liberty, even though I have been to New York a lot.

Emilie Edgard, the Vice President of the club, echoed Champa's sentiments, saying, "I came to America because of the social politics of my country. Back in my country, it was hard for me to study. My dad wanted me to get a good education in America. That's why this trip was a good

experience for me."

Edgard concluded by saying, "It was a nice experience. It was my first time seeing the Statue of Liberty. I learned a lot about immigration; I myself am an immigrant, so I could really be in their shoes and feel how they are feeling."

Students seemed to have had a rewarding time on the trip. If you are interested in learning about different cultures, consider joining the International Club. Meetings are held every Monday, at 12:15-1:30 pm, in Parkhouse Hall, Room 126. For more information regarding the club, you can visit: www.mc3.campuslabs.com/engage/organization/international-club

~ Weeks of Welcome ~

Painting for Peace

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Tuesday, Jan. 28, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Parkhouse Hall Atrium, Central Campus



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