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a student publication

The Montgazette

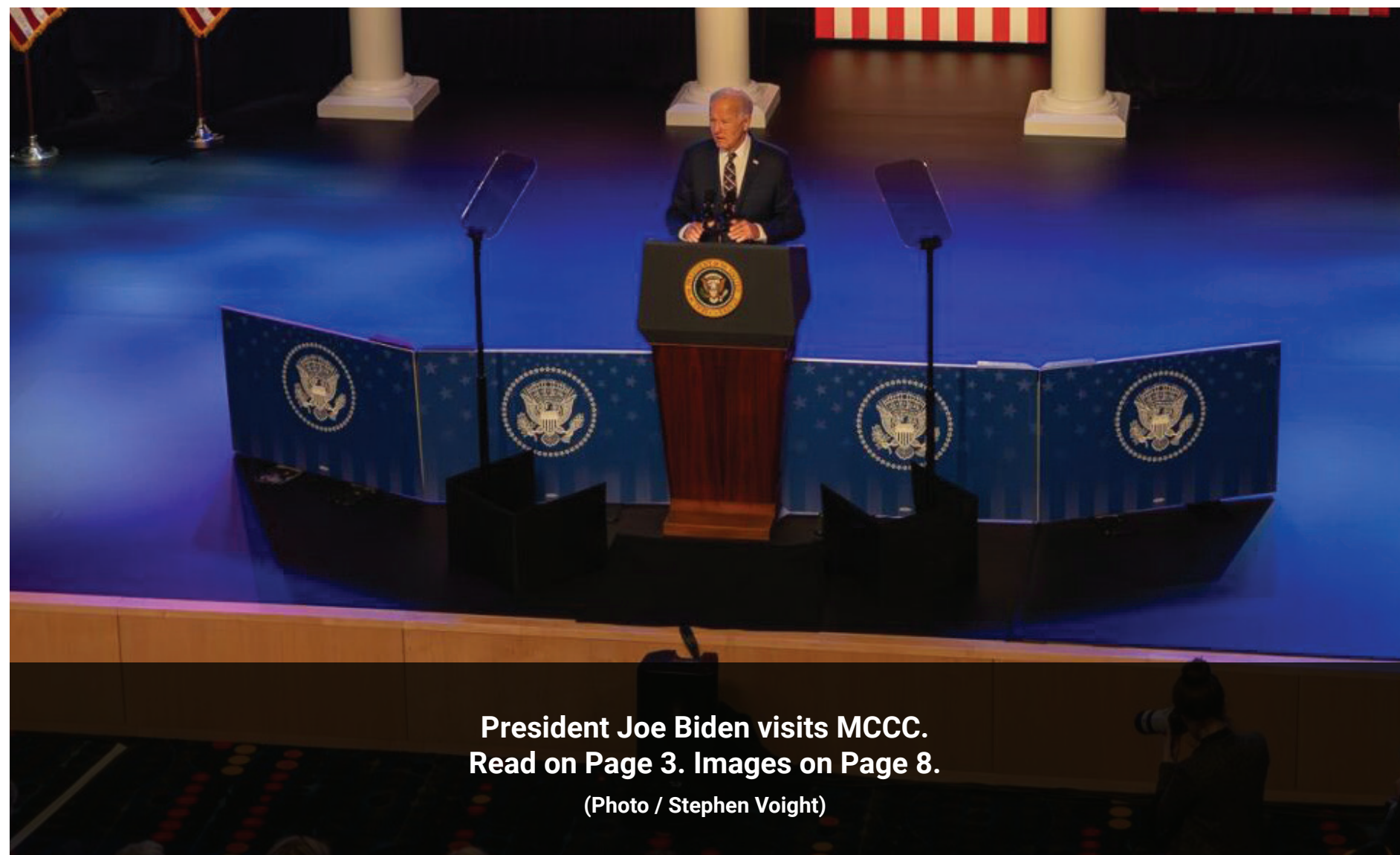
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The Students' Voice

Issue 97

Serving Montgomery County Community College and the Surrounding Community

March 2024



**President Joe Biden visits MCCC.
Read on Page 3. Images on Page 8.**

(Photo / Stephen Voight)

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The Montgazette
The Students' Voice

from the Editor

New semester! Who is this?

Desdemona Guerra
The Montgazette Editor-in-Chief

Welcome back, Montgazette readers! The new year and the new semester have brought many changes in our circle, so let me introduce myself. The show must go on. Last semester, we said our goodbyes to Steven Wicher Jr., former Editor-in-Chief of The Montgazette, who worked very hard to keep all of us updated on almost every single matter at The College and outside as well. For the next few semesters, you will have TJ Grumm, my Co-Editor-in-Chief, and myself, Desdemona Guerra, helping to make sure your voice is heard on campus through these pages.

I moved to the U.S. from Venezuela five years ago. Five years can sound like a long time, but it went by so quickly that I can remember the exact day I came here, waiting at the airport,

hoping to see more of the world. I am glad I moved here and took a chance on myself. I was so young, but adapting to a new country will never be easy for anybody, so I kept working every day to be the best version of myself.

Five years here would never be enough to compensate for all the friendships and time spent in my hometown, where everything in the U.S. once seemed so far away. However, I must admit that I cannot sit still anywhere, and I enjoy jumping from one place to another, so staying in a country with few opportunities to grow would have led me to leave it eventually. I have a second chance at having a different life, a privilege many people from my country cannot even dream about. Blessed? Lucky?

Ill-fated? (My name does mean ill-fated, actually!) Maybe all of the above. I'll leave the story of my name for another letter, but in the meantime, please let me know how many girls named "Desdemona" you have ever met.

I found my way into The Montgazette because I wrote an article about the lack of sanitary products around campus. That is not an easy topic for anybody to write about because anything woman-related makes people feel uncomfortable, even other women (which I found weird). But journalism, even in this very small format, is supposed to make an audience uncomfortable — or create discourse around a topic. That is why I wrote that article. I never thought anything of it, but I did think about what

would happen if the right person read it, and they did. In that spirit, I want this space to be your voice, something you are proud of and excited about. I want to encourage everyone to write the stories we use to fill these pages.

I also want you to remember to step outside for a second and make time for yourself. A student's life can be filled with many responsibilities, but you should never leave yourself behind. Treat yourself as an assignment due at 11:59 p.m., and do not forget how far you've come. That's also a reminder for me, since I love to beat myself up over any inconvenience I might encounter. I wish you the best academic success in this and upcoming semesters! Remember to believe in yourself and be kind to the person known as you.

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Biden kicks off re-election campaign with College visit

TJ Grumm

The Montgazette Contributor

2024 is shaping up to be a vital year for politics in the United States, marking a Presidential election year and a familiar slate of candidates from which voters will once again choose. In his first re-election campaign stop of 2024, President Joe Biden made it a point to come to Montgomery County to visit Valley Forge National Park and to speak at Montgomery County Community College. In his remarks, he most notably highlighted the importance of a strong democracy and its meaning to the country's identity.

“This is the first national election since [the] January 6th insurrection placed a dagger at the throat of American democracy,” said Biden in his speech in front of 400 people inside the Science Center Theater on the Blue Bell campus of Montgomery County Community College. Biden's visit to Valley Forge National Historical Park on January 5 was nearly three years to the day of the January 6, 2021, Capitol Riot in Washington, D.C.

Among the 400 people attending the gathering to hear Biden's remarks was Conshohocken mayor and Mass Media Studies professor Yaniv Aronson. “What an honor it was to have President Biden on our campus,” said Aronson. “It's symbolic by showing that he considers our county a priority and that he sees the incredible value and importance of community colleges.”

Montgomery County continues to be an area of interest for the Biden family – First Lady Dr. Jill Biden was born and raised in Upper Moreland Township, and she made her home county a campaign stop in the previous presidential election cycle. The theme of community colleges runs strong in the Biden family, as Jill Biden is also a teacher at Northern Virginia Community College.

Democracy was an important theme of President Biden's speech. He spoke of it as a sacred cause, like the one George Washington fought for in 1777 as he passed

through Valley Forge. “The threat to our voting rights is real,” said Neil Makhija, Commissioner and Chair of the Montgomery County Board of Elections. Makhija would go on to explain the significance of voter rights, saying, “In the last presidential

election, fraudulent suits filed in Pennsylvania courts threatened to deprive our residents of the right to vote.”

President Biden closed his speech with a hopeful look at the future, saying, “I've never been more optimistic about our future,

and I've been doing this a hell of a long time ... I mean it. We're the only nation in the world that's come out of every crisis stronger than we went into that crisis. And that was true yesterday. It is true today. And I guarantee you it will be true tomorrow.”

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A busy Help Desk to start the academic year

Lauren Staffa, Terrell Pelham, and Mercedes Rivera
MSP 111 The Montgazette Contributors

With technology becoming a staple in most, if not all, modern college classrooms, technological issues are bound to arise. The Montgomery County Community College offers a Help Desk run by current students, alumni, and employees. It is utilized by students and faculty to solve the tech issues they may face throughout their school day.

Starting off this academic year, there were tech issues ranging from being unable to connect to the college's Wi-Fi to installing Microsoft 365 to college-loaned laptops breaking down. The recent switch from the Blackboard platform to Canvas created the challenge of navigating this new resource for students and teachers.

The Help Desk takes multiple steps to give their students coverage of these problems as conveniently as possible. One of the most extreme examples from the start of this semester may be when Graphic Design major Isaiah Washington's computer was shattered the first week of the semester. Washington went through a range of fixes, but eventually, the staff replaced the whole computer for him.

The Help Desk consists

of a web page on the College's official website and a physical help desk in the Advanced Technology Center on the Blue Bell Campus and in South Hall in Pottstown. The webpage has multiple resources students can use without direct, face-to-face contact. However, if students are looking for an actual human resource, they can call the help desk at 215-641-6495.

Umar Kawu, a student who has been working with the Help Desk for a year, said, "I think the students would rate us very well; I'm very confident." Their efficiency became clearly important as he continued, "We have issues that we fix same day, and if it's a student, we try to get them done immediately."

Elliot Chiles, a Music major, is one of many students who needed help due to the transition to Canvas. He rated the desk "a solid eight out of 10." Other students, like Zach Henry, a Nursing major, stated, "They worked very fast" and "They were great [overall]."

The Help Desk is available in person Monday to Thursday from 7:30 a.m. to 9 p.m. and Fridays from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. A great benefit of the Help Desk is that it is also available online,

24 hours a day, seven days a week. With technology being used now more than ever in the classroom, the Help Desk is a

vital resource that all students at the College can utilize if ever faced with tech issues throughout the school year.



The College Help Desk helps students with their tech concerns on September 5, 2023.

(Photo / Lauren Staffa)

Meet Michael Harcum

Melissa Ammar Khodja, John Luis Grateaux Aquino, Fatima Bendahma, Rezak Chaib, Elham Gorgy, Salim Hamouni, Natalie Hernandez, Tien Hung Nguyen, Dulce Icep, Ngoc Thao Linh Nguyen, Nabila Ouksili, Veronica Perez, Maria Rivas, Nancy Vasani, Maha Yacoub
ESL 005 The Montgazette Contributors

Michael Harcum is the Director of Admissions at Montgomery County Community College. He has been working at the College for seven years. Before coming to the College, he worked at the University of Phoenix, and he also taught in Philadelphia. He first studied to be a teacher at Millersville University and then earned two MBAs. He is now completing his dissertation for his doctorate degree. He has 12 years of retail experience, including Radio Shack and Blockbuster.

On a normal day, Harcum arrives by 8:30 a.m. and leaves by 6 p.m. and attends three to five meetings each day. He describes his job as helping students to become students, and the best part of the job is talking to students. The one part of his job that he dislikes is giving bad news. For example, sometimes a student wants to add a class, but the class is full. To help combat this, he strongly recommends that all students register early.

When he describes his job, Harcum says that being honest is a

key characteristic. He also works hard and cares about people. He finds that working at Montgomery County Community College allows him to help people in an affordable, inclusive setting.

If someone is interested in his job, for example, he would advise them to be consistent and creative. His advice for students is to work with the professors. He thinks that is the most important thing to do. A second piece of advice is to use the College's resources such as tutoring and the

library. As he supports students, he tries to partner with colleagues, and he works with the international department. For support, he relies on his co-workers, family and friends.

When Harcum wants to relax, he enjoys watching NFL football and playing board games with his daughter. His future plans include writing a book about encouragement and the growth mindset. He feels that students need to believe in themselves and have a positive attitude to be successful.

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Hatfield Aquatic Center hosts a day for dogs to soak up some sun

Morgan Reyes

MSP 111 The Montgazette Contributor

Hatfield Township's Hatfield Aquatic Center hosted its 12th annual Dog-A-Poolooza on Saturday, September 16, 2023. This event allows families to bring their furry friends to swim and splash in the pools around the gated facility.

Originally, the posted date was September 9, 2023, but the township postponed the event to the following week with the expected incoming rain. Braydon Kohler, a maintenance employee, said, "One of the reasons it's at the end of the year is that the cleanup is a lot of work. So, we hold it then, so it doesn't affect the amount of business the pool gets."

Both staff and families enjoy this day, as it's the last day of the season, so guests and staff try to make the most of the warm

sun until the pool opens again in late May. Concession Manager Missy Haun said, "I think it is a wonderful event. It brings the community together to have fun with their pets for one last hurrah at the pool."

With the ability for people and dogs to swim, eat, and play for four hours, the cost is reasonable at only \$5 per person and \$10 per dog. These prices are compared to a regular day pass, which can be anywhere from \$15 to \$30 depending on age, day of the week, and resident status.

At the Dog-A-Poolooza, the pool also opens its doors to many small businesses to set up tents on the property, which can help the Aquatic Center gain new customers and some exposure.

Continued on page 7.



A collie, September 10, 2023.

(Photo / Morgan Reyes)

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LOCAL



The Montgazette
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Construction on Dekalb Pike

Mikai Fulmer
MSP 111 The Montgazette Contributor

Located right along the Montgomery County Community College campus, Dekalb Pike has been under construction since July 2020. During this time, people's opinions on the construction have varied and evolved. Some view it as a nuisance, while others see it as a temporary but worthwhile inconvenience.

According to East Norriton Township, this improvement project will provide many outcomes: It will reconstruct and widen U.S. 202 (Dekalb Pike) from the existing one lane to two lanes northbound; create one more lane southbound and a center turn lane from Johnson Highway to Township Line Road; install five-foot bicycle lanes in both directions along the entire project area; build new sidewalks at various locations; reconstruct one bridge and one box culvert; construct two sound walls and retaining walls; install new signals, and signing and pavement markings; perform drainage improvements; and integrate Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) to improve traffic flow.

Damian Moser, a Mass Media Studies student at the College, said, "I honestly think it's dumb that they have spent all that time constructing this road and this whole area just to place it in a new bike lane. It is completely useless and only causes a problem to drivers currently."

However, Moser dislikes the road's current status, "I also see that when it's done, it will be an improvement over the torn-up pothole-ridden road we have right now."

Alex Brinton, a Grading Laborer for Allan Myers Construction Company, said, "I hate inconveniencing everyone as much as the people hate driving on it, but at the end of the day, when it's finished, it will benefit everyone."

Brinton's input gives a different perspective on the construction. Although there are many mixed emotions and opinions on the work on Dekalb Pike, most tend to see what the construction is working toward. Many hope it will improve their community and make it more accessible to

everyone. That said, the campus waiting until the construction near the community will have to continue College is completed.



Dekalb Pike on September 6, 2023.

(Photo / Mikai Fulmer)

Dogs

Continued from page 6.

Haun said, "It also brings in a lot of attention to some local businesses with pop-up tents highlighting what they sell and a chance for people to buy from them. It is just a fantastic day working there."

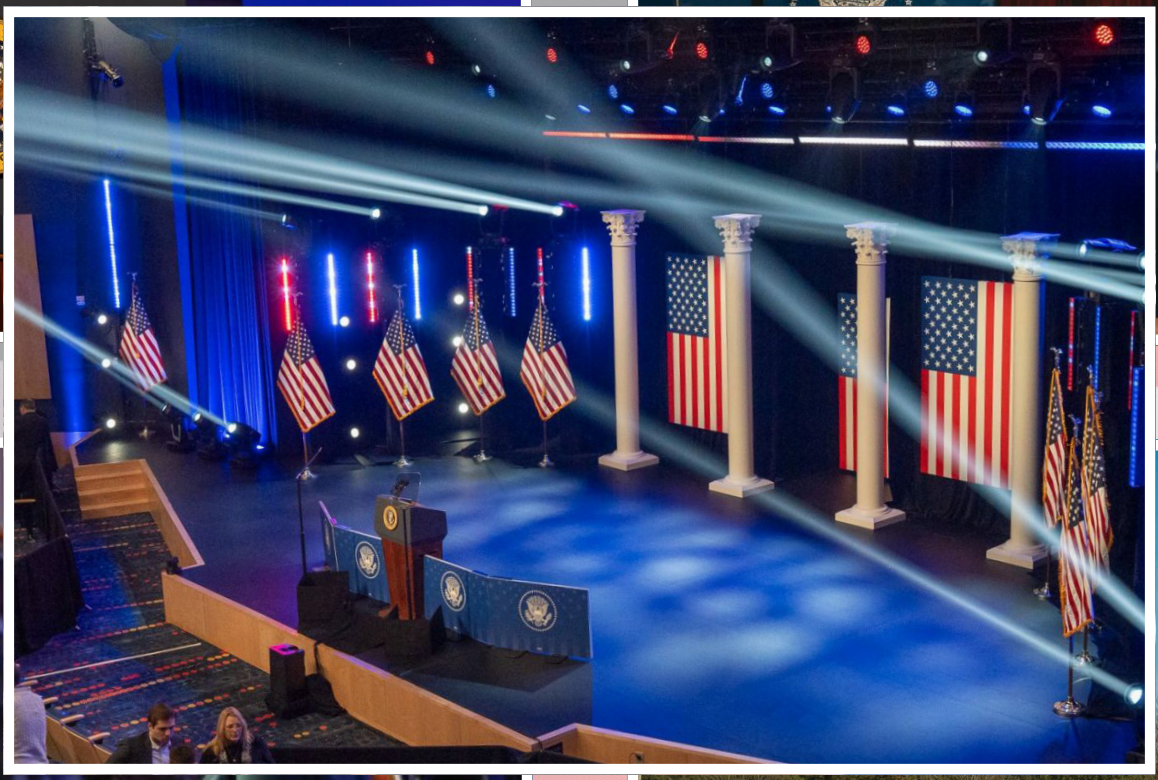
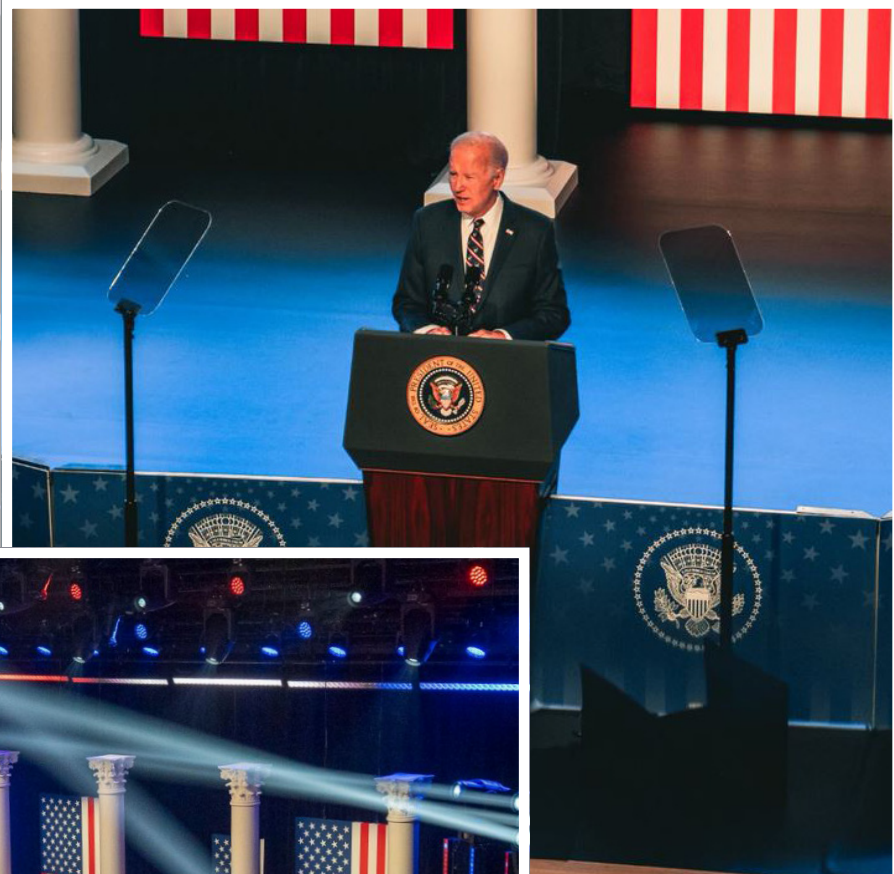
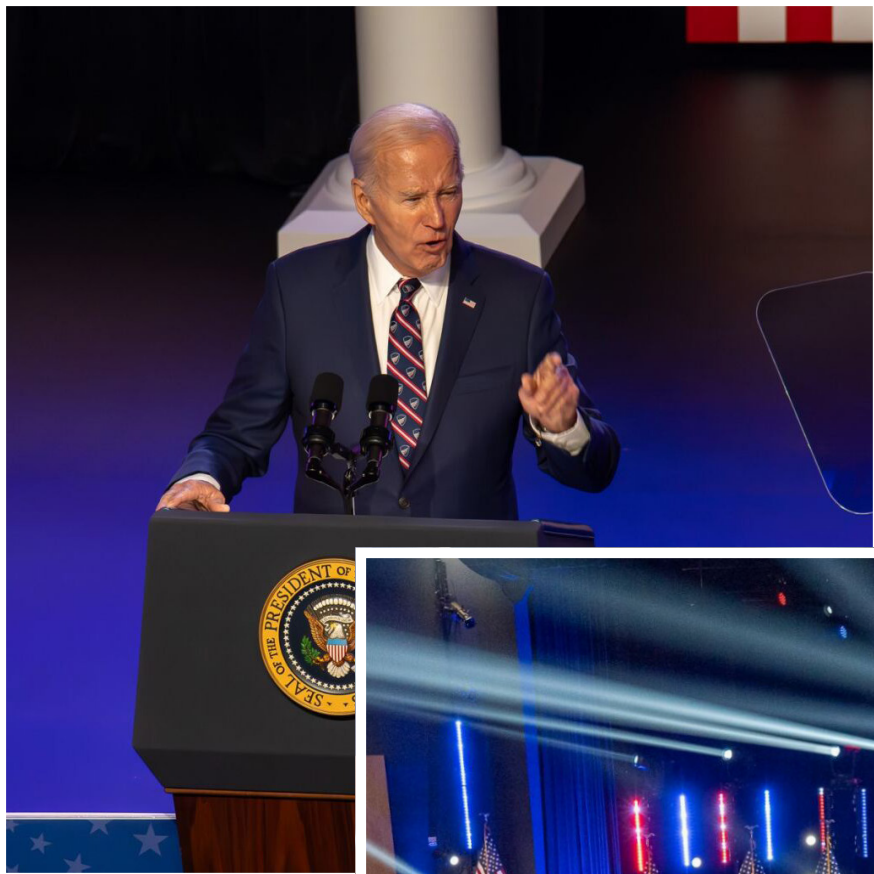
Since this day is different from most, with dogs running around, the lifeguards must be extra

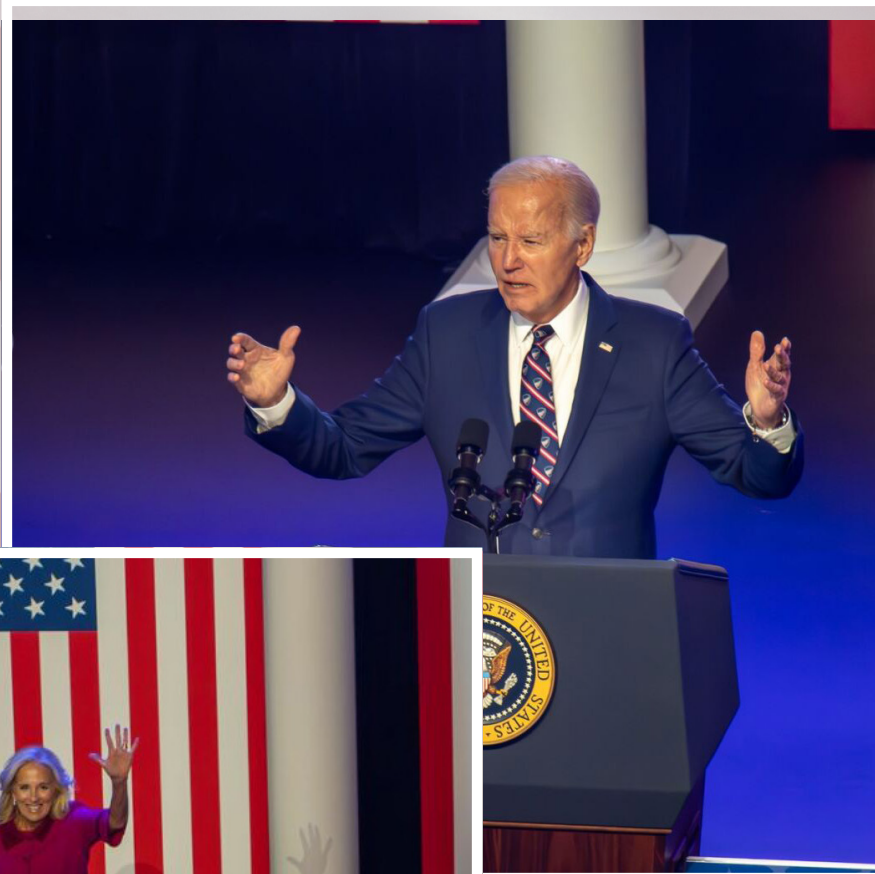
careful watching the pool. Mary Forbes, a sub-guard and concessions assistant manager, said, "Personally, I think it would be harder to watch all the dogs. They move fast and often play with each other. Although is fun to see the dogs, it can be stressful to guards."

The 2024 season will start again in late May;

a 2024 season membership for a Hatfield resident can cost \$100 to \$650, depending on the age and size of the family. A non-resident can pay \$100 to \$1,435, depending on age and family size.

For more information about the upcoming season and Hatfield Township events, follow the township on Facebook or at www.hatfield.org.





(Photos/Steven Voight and Ismil Ward)

Opinion:

Why is HBO Max winning the streaming wars?

Dalaya Richardson
The Montgazette Contributor

Being the top dog of platforms is not an easy task. When promoting all their content, making relatable television, and winning Emmys, HBO Max knocks it out of the park. Before becoming a streaming service in the new millennium, HBO Max was known as “HBO” on premium cable television.

HBO, created in the 1970s, stands

for “Home Box Office.” It became the first national cable channel known for its adult language and occasional nudity in its programming. Before airing and creating television shows in the 1990s, HBO presented sporting events such as boxing matches and National Hockey League games. Then, in 1999 and the early 2000s, creator David Chase’s drama series

“The Sopranos” put HBO on the map.

“The Sopranos” won numerous Emmys and Golden Globes and saw moderate growth in its ratings throughout every season. Many people adored the show, as it was seen as a television version of the 1972 film “The Godfather” and the 1990 film “Goodfellas.” Most films and TV shows before the early 2000s were

produced in California or New York. HBO became one of the first networks to create and air a show in a different environment. “The Sopranos” ended in 2007, and the network aired another trendy hit, “Entourage.”

Continued on page 11.



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HBO Max

Continued from page 10.

“Entourage” is loosely based on actor Mark Wahlberg’s rise into Hollywood with his friends (he also served as an executive producer on the series). The series aired three years before “The Sopranos” ended. The comedy and drama series plot revolves around actor Vincent Chase balancing friendship, love, and his career in Hollywood.

“Entourage” also shows the struggles of women in the entertainment industry and does not make them seem superficial. The show’s audience witnesses how many of the women who work for Vincent’s agent, Ari Gold, and some of his clients, stand up to him when he makes sexist and uncalled-for comments. “The Sopranos” put HBO on the map for its cloudiness, and “Entourage” put the network on the map for its colorfulness.

Even before releasing and creating the streaming service HBO Max, the network had more prestige content than networks and streamers, such as ABC or Netflix. What HBO has been amazing at for decades is knowing not to have a show last forever, making

sure it keeps its spark, unlike networks such as ABC and CW, which are still airing shows like “Grey’s Anatomy” and “Riverdale” — past their due dates. HBO knows how to start and end a show with a bang, leaving the viewers engaged enough to keep talking about it as the years go by.

HBO’s biggest competitors are Netflix and Paramount Plus. People only see those streaming services promoting one or two of their shows: With Netflix it is “Stranger Things,” and with Paramount Plus it is the “iCarly” reboot. Netflix spent nearly \$30 million on the hit series, while it canceled, and did not promote, other shows. HBO Max created even more relatable content: “Succession,” “The White Lotus,” “Big Little Lies,” and the list goes on.

HBO Max also offers competitive deals to watch their content. One such offer is free HBO Max, if someone has AT&T phone service. Unlike many of the other networks and streaming services, many HBO Max shows will be forever adored. As their slogan says, “It’s not TV, It’s HBO.”

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Opinion:

Outrage over Taylor Swift and Travis Kelce relationship

Morgan Reyes

MSP111 The Montgazette Contributor

Many have speculated about the romance between 12-time Grammy winner Taylor Swift and two-time Super Bowl winner Travis Kelce. Photos and videos leaked from the pairs' outings leave many questioning whether this is a good or dreadful thing for both fandoms. Good things can come out of relationships, as can bad things; this relationship is no different. But the hate football fans are pushing onto Swift fans made this new relationship toxic before it was even officially announced.

Football fans online can be seen attacking Swift fans because they did not know who Kelce was before Swift entered the scene. For many, it might be true, since Kelce and the NFL are mostly American sports, while Taylor Swift has had concerts on multiple continents, branching out to far more than the U.S.

According to one TikTok user, @pardonmytake, "Swifties, I think are acting like Taylor Swift is above Travis Kelce ... They (Swifties) do not want to see her in a real relationship because then what is she gonna sing about."

Swift fans clapped back and showed a multitude of information comparing Swift's numbers and followings to the NFL's and Kelce's, for which they just received more hate. According to another TikTok user, @sparksvicky, "You want to say Swifties don't root for Taylor Swift. Are you high? There's nothing we do but root for this girl!" She said in a response video.

Swift has often spoken out about how she strongly dislikes people talking about her dating history and using/making jokes about it. Swift addresses these comments often, and in 2021, she shared a post on X stating, "How about we stop degrading hard-working women by defining this horse s**t as funny" when speaking out against Netflix and their season-one-finale joke in the series "Ginny & Georgia."

Many people worldwide know who Taylor Swift is for many reasons, whether it be because of her 12 Grammy wins or her "You Belong with Me" music video with over 1.5 billion views on YouTube.

With American football being as popular as it is in the U.S., it is easy to forget it is not a worldwide thing. Many get caught up in the idea that everyone watches it because Americans see it as one of the best, if not THE best, sport to watch. It is easy to forget that not everyone knows the sport and who plays it.

According to the Sports Business Journal, the NFL had an average of 17.1 million viewers for its 2021 regular season games. In 2021, Swift re-released her album Red (Taylor's Version), and in one year that album already had 1.5 billion U.S. on-demand streams. That is 1,482,900 more than the NFL had.

If people stopped comparing the two very different categories, there wouldn't be this war online about who is better, or who is more well-known because one is a nationwide

sport and the other is a musical artist.

If people want to watch football, watch football. If they want to listen to Swift, listen to her. But attacking the other side's fans doesn't make one better than the other.



Taylor Swift "Speak Now"
poster on bed.

(Photo / Morgan Reyes)

Opinion: Ricky Starks is AEW's next star, or else

TJ Grumm
MSP 111 The Montgazette Contributor

All Elite Wrestling has been a lightning rod of discussion in professional wrestling since its inception in 2019. From worries about its status as an alternative to the industry-standard World Wrestling Entertainment, to the leadership of its owner, Tony Khan, AEW has come through it all to become an undeniable success.

One such discussion point has been if AEW could truly create a star — not just present someone better than their previous employer did, such as they have with Jon Moxley, the former Dean Ambrose in WWE, or how WWE presented “Stone Cold” Steve Austin to mainstream popularity, a far more successful presentation than World Championship Wrestling’s “Stunning” Steve Austin.

No, the discussion is, can AEW create their own star the way that WWE created stars like The Rock, Bianca Belair, and Roman Reigns, talents that made their industry debut on WWE’s bright stage with no prior association? While almost everyone agrees that the extent of developing such talent is likely years and years away for AEW, they have successfully created their own associated stars.

Enter “Absolute” Ricky Starks whose appearance reminds many of “The Rock” on his rise to wrestling stardom. As the latest in a line of wrestlers getting their first run on TV in AEW, Starks may end up being the next “miss” for AEW. Despite a gift of gab and impressive in-ring skills, Starks’s potential has been largely ignored until recent months.

Some will point to the critique of Starks being too similar to “The Rock” in 1999, going as far as calling Ricky “The Pebble” on social media, as to why Ricky has not reached the level of his peers in AEW. Some will cite injury history as to why Khan has hesitated with Starks. Some will point out AEW’s larger problem with representation, specifically of Black performers. Whatever the reason, it’s no surprise that people wonder if Ricky will be the next to leave AEW for WWE.

Starks, a friend of AEW founder and WWE superstar Cody Rhodes, is using all the time he is getting now on AEW’s “Wednesday Night Dynamite” and “Saturday Night Collison” to show his entire toolkit as wrestling’s next megastar. Whether his next move is to leave AEW for WWE’s stage, much like Rhodes and newest WWE signee Jade Cargill, or

to stay with the company that gave him his chance, there is no doubt that Ricky Starks absolutely is wrestling’s next top star.



Ricky Starks shirt from All Elite Wrestling.

(Photo / TJ Grumm)

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Opinion: Trea Turner, a superhero story

Charles Montalbano
 MSP 111 The Montgazette Contributor

It was the World Baseball Classic Quarterfinals. Team USA was away against a red-hot Venezuelan team. It was the top of the eighth inning, with Venezuela leading USA 7-5. The bases were loaded, and there was a chance to take the lead — and the momentum from Venezuela.

Trea Turner, a stone-cold batter, walked up to the plate with the tournament going well. USA fans were happy he was hitting at this moment, the big star from the Los Angeles Dodgers. However, he went down in the count with two strikes on him. Then, the pitcher made a big mistake and threw him an inside cutter, which Turner launched into left field. He changed the momentum of the game and led his team to the win in the next inning. Team USA fans were so glad they had Turner on their team, or their hopes and dreams to play in the tournament finals could have been crushed. Team USA was led by some of MLB's top stars, with the likes of Mike Trout, Mookie Betts, Nolan Arenado, Paul Goldschmidt, Clayton Kershaw, and the new addition to the Philadelphia Phillies, Turner.

Turner exploded during the World Baseball Classic, winning him the nickname "Captain America." According to MLB, Turner played in six games and had a batting average of .391 with 11 RBIs, nine hits and five home runs. The USA came second in the tournament, but things were looking bright for Turner.

As a new MLB season began, many Philadelphia fans had eyes on the new 11-year, \$300-million contract just signed by Turner. Many fans thought the start of the season would be smooth sailing, as the Phillies just came off their magical post-

season run to the World Series the year prior. But as many Philadelphia fans know, their sports teams love to let their fans down.

The start of the season was rough for the Phillies, especially for one player: Turner. He could not find his stride adjusting to his new team. He only had two home runs and six RBIs in April, with a batting average of .261, according to MLB; in May, however, Turner's average dropped to .208, with only three home runs and eight RBIs.

As summer rolled around, Turner's play

did not improve. In July, he had only five RBIs and two home runs, with a batting average of .218. As July rolled around, Phillies fans were frustrated with Turner. Fans booed him with every at-bat and could not get behind him because he played so poorly. People were questioning his contract and wondering if it was worth the \$300 million.

Continued on page 15.



Phillies baseball gear and two baseballs, September 26, 2023.

(Photo / Charles Montalbano)

Turner

Continued from page 14.

After the All-Star break, fans hoped Turner could turn his season around so the Phillies could play for a spot in the postseason. Many fans expressed themselves on social media platforms as the Phillies came home for a 10-game home stand. Fans commented on how Turner needed the city to back him up. Others went further, calling on fans to give Turner a standing ovation every time he came up to bat.

On August 4, everything changed. Every at-bat that Turner

had, the fans gave him a standing ovation. Then, as quickly as the slump started, Turner sky-rocketed a home run into left field. Citizens Bank Park erupted in cheers, happy for Turner and still hoping his season would turn around. The fan's hope would soon become a reality.

As the fans kept cheering on Turner passionately, he played at an elite level. In August, Turner's batting average was .333. He had 26 RBIs, nine home runs, and 36 hits. He heard the call from the city

and delivered the expected all-star player performance. Turner did not just stop in August. His fire rolled into September, where he achieved a batting average of .279, 16 RBIs, seven home runs, and 24 hits. He began to play outstandingly once he knew the city had his back.

With the regular season ending and the 2023 postseason upon him, Turner achieved a batting average of .347 with 17 hits, 3 home runs, 5 RBIs, and 9 runs scored in 49 at-bats. It is safe to say that Turner

was worth the \$300 million spent on his contract. He improved his play greatly as the season progressed. Turner had his slumps, but he turned it around over the last few months.

Turner got fiery at the right time, before the playoffs. He began to see the baseball better and to hit at an elite level. In every at-bat, it seemed like he would accomplish great things again, again, and again. Turner's stats prove that he will win and that he has even more room to get better.



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Deadline for Entries: 2:00 pm on March 22, 2024

Email Dr. Patti McEnergy for rules: pmcenery@mc3.edu

What's going on at MCCC?



Just visit the
**Active Data
Calendar**

JOIN US FOR AN OPEN HOUSE



Explore our 100+ degree and certificate program offerings and start your education on your schedule. How will you Montco?

Prospective students will have the opportunity to:

- **Connect with program faculty and student support services**
- **Tour the Campus**
- **Learn about admissions, enrollment, and paying for College**
- **Enjoy giveaways and snacks!**

REGISTER NOW!
mc3.edu/openhouse



Pottstown Campus
(in-person)
Saturday, April 13
from 10am-12pm

Blue Bell Campus
(in-person)
Saturday, April 27
from 10am-12pm

Online Open House
Thursday, May 2
from 6-7pm

