

Chinatown proposed as the
new 76ers arena, Page 11.

Jenkintown Festival of
the Arts, Page 8.

When home isn't
affordable, Page 7.

a student publication

The Montgazette

FREE

The Students' Voice

Issue 100

Serving Montgomery County Community College and the Surrounding Community

December 2024



Album cover for "5247" picturing TYE in front of his childhood home
in West Philadelphia, 2024. Read on Page 10.

(Photo / TYE)

The Staff

Desdemona Guerra
Editor-in-Chief

Melissa Ochabillo
Assistant Editor

Isabella Chesnes
Spencer Gee
Levi Hailey
Patrick Hennessy
Bill Murray
Cierra Parker
Megan Prendergast
Mercedes Rivera
Sheila Waples
December Contributors

Robin Bonner
Cherry Kivumbi
Advisors

Joshua Woodroffe
Design & Layout



The Montgazette
The Students' Voice

from the

Editor

More than I imagined:

A reflection on my time at MCCC

Melissa Ochabillo

The Montgazette Assistant Editor

As I sit here in my local café attempting to write my first editor’s letter about my time at MCCC, I am surprised by this wave of sadness that came over me. Throughout my two years at the College, I never realized how impactful my experience here has been on my life. As I approach the end of my final semester at MCCC, I reflect on how different life was when I first started in September 2022. I came in confused, undecided and nervous about the stigmas attached to community colleges. Truthfully, I was embarrassed as I watched everyone else move away to attend a university. These feelings and comparisons caused me to take on a mindset of rejection, negativity and resentment toward the College. I did not want to meet people or engage. Looking back, I wish I could tell my past self to get rid of my ego and embrace all the opportunities the College offers. There were so many memories to be made and people to meet, and unfortunately, time was fleeting.

The canon event that prompted the shift in my mindset was finding the media studies program. This is ironic because I used to look at the students walking around with the giant JVC cameras, thinking how silly they looked and wondering why they were filming on campus. Little did I know I would become one of those silly students lugging around equipment that was almost bigger than me.

After joining this program, I was introduced to a new version of myself that I had suppressed for so long. This version was centered around creativity. No idea was too big, and no concept too abstract. Through my classes, I found myself experimenting with new forms of expression, whether it was through film, writing or digital media, and realizing that my potential was not confined to what I had previously imagined. It was liberating to be in an environment where my imagination was encouraged. This new perspective opened up possibilities that I had once dismissed, teaching me to embrace uncertainty and trust in my ability to create something meaningful, no matter how daunting the challenge.

I still remember the day I discovered that one of my articles was featured in The Montgazette for the first time. I walked into my MSP 111 class, and Professor Aronson told me that I was a published author and dropped the paper on my desk. What makes this memory so unforgettable is that during my commute to school that day, I was overwhelmed with self-doubt, questioning my abilities and my future. I was brought to tears and consumed by uncertainty. Yet, in that instant, seeing my work in print, I was reassured that I was on the right path.

Ever since then, I have felt pride in all my accomplishments and experienced so many unthinkable things. I never would have

thought that I would become the assistant editor of The Montgazette, direct a short film alongside an incredible group of women and, most importantly, gain such clarity about my educational path.

As I sit here in my local café, finishing my first editor’s letter about my time at MCCC, I am overcome with gratitude, knowing that my experiences here have shaped me in ways I never anticipated. I will forever carry this foundation of passion, creativity and perseverance, which the College has instilled in me, especially as I step into this next chapter of my life.

Advertise!

To advertise in The Montgazette, please email themontgazette@mc3.edu

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

The heart and soul of Montco's Advanced Technology Center

Isabella "Bella" Chesnes
MSP 170 The Montgazette Contributor

"Be nice to everybody because you never know where the opportunity is coming from." This advice encapsulates the philosophy of Matthew Porter, the Senior Producer and Technical Services Manager at Montgomery County Community College. Porter's dedication to nurturing the next generation of media professionals has made him a cornerstone of the campus community.

With a rich background in media and a passion that began in childhood, Porter's journey reflects the power of mentorship and networking. From storyboard projects with his family to pivotal roles in his high school media club and in professional settings, he has cultivated a passion for media studies that he now imparts to the students enrolled in two Montco media programs: Media Studies and Production, and Sound Recording Technology. Porter aims to equip students with the skills and confidence they need to thrive in an ever-evolving industry, envisioning a future where their youthful energy will continue to inspire innovation

in the media landscape.

Porter's goals were nurtured from a young age by his parents, whom he would describe as mentors. Growing up, he remembers always being interested in media in all its forms, recounting times when he and his siblings storyboarded small projects that they filmed with their father. Porter served as a big contributor to his high school media club and moved on to a position at New York Camera, which gave him the ability to get his hands on equipment in a setting much like Montco's Technical Services Department, which supplies equipment for the Media Studies and Sound Recording Technology programs here. The opportunity solidified his interest in making his passion a career.

After graduating with a communications degree from Bucks County Community College, Porter finally landed here at Montgomery County Community College in 1998 as an adjunct faculty member. "It wasn't a traditional path by any means ... every good job that I had was really just because somebody had seen something

[in me], or knew who I was," said Porter, when asked about how he got into media and found his passion. Not only does Porter do his due diligence as the College's current Senior Producer and Technical Services Manager, but he's also a highly contributing administrator, and arguably the backbone of Montco Radio, with a passion for music and boosting the confidence of the upcoming generation.

Networking drives media careers, then and now: "It's really a lot of soft skills, like getting good at dealing with people, so that they give you the opportunity to work," says Porter. This advice is something Porter wishes to instill in the budding media professionals the College's environment breeds. In fact, it influences how he engages with members of Montco Radio, where he serves as a vital support system. His enthusiasm for music and media inspires students to explore their creativity and build confidence in their abilities.

By fostering an atmosphere where students can experiment and learn, he equips them with the skills

necessary to succeed in an ever-evolving industry. His commitment to their growth is palpable; he is not just an administrator but a mentor who invests in their future. Looking ahead, Porter envisions a future where he can further empower the next generation of media students. "The funny thing

about Montco is that the students kinda stay the same age ... you get that youthful energy from the new groups," he shares. Matthew Porter, a careful cocktail of passion, experience, and wisdom, who stands as a beacon of inspiration, is the heart and soul of Montco's Advanced Technology Center.



Matthew Porter, Senior Producer and Technical Services Manager, headshot taken in 2020.

(Photo / Matthew Porter)

Fashion Club Launches

Patrick Hennessy
The Montgazette Contributor

After initially struggling to find leadership, Montco's fashion club officially launched in 2023. The group's first meeting analyzed select garments from the Sleeping Beauties exhibition of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. This showing at The Met is known for its focus on nature's presence in fashion, showcasing how designers draw inspiration from the natural world to create intricate designs that evoke themes of beauty, growth, and transience. The exhibition beautifully highlights how nature, as a source of inspiration, influences patterns, textures, and silhouettes in various garments.

During meetings, the club will engage in group discussions and analyses of specific garments from the exhibition's catalog. These selected pieces will serve as case studies to examine the artistic and symbolic interpretations of nature in fashion design. Club members are encouraged to participate actively in discussions and share insights to further develop their understanding of fashion and design. The first club meetings will serve as a foundation for the club's upcoming Tote Bag Sewing Workshop, where members will get a chance to apply some of the nature-inspired design elements discussed in previous meetings.

Attendees will learn basic sewing techniques while designing tote bags that reflect motifs inspired by The Met's exhibition. This hands-on workshop is specifically designed to connect theory to practice, encouraging creativity and skill-building among participants.

For students who would like to join the Fashion Club but missed the first meeting, there's no need to worry. The club has an exciting lineup of events and activities scheduled for the rest of the semester. The first meeting was just the beginning: Looking ahead, the club plans to organize a series of engaging events and activities to inspire and involve students interested in fashion design, history, and culture. Future events aim to delve deeper into design techniques and explore the fascinating intersections of fashion and other artistic forms.

The Fashion Club joins the Montco family as one of its newest clubs. Students interested in attending meetings can join in person in FAC Room 119. The club members advertise ways to join the club by posting on Montco Connect and hallway flyers with dates and times for meetings. For those unable to attend in person, a Zoom option will also be available.

Students who wish to

get involved in Student Life activities on campus can choose from a selection of clubs and societies, including the Astro Club, Drama Club, Film Society, Honors Club, Musical Theatre

Club, Photography Club, The Montgazette, and more! However, for students specifically interested in the creative arts and design, the Fashion Club is definitely the right pick for you.



Fashion club flyer on November 11, 2024

(Photo / Patrick Hennessy)



mc3.edu/spring

SPRING SEMESTER AT

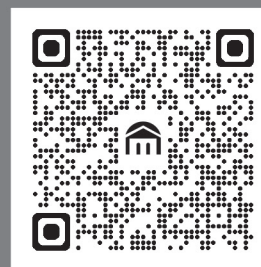
MONTGO



SPRING SCHEDULE

- 15-week session starts 1/15/25
- 7-week session I starts 1/15/25
- 7-week session II starts 3/17/25

ENROLL TODAY



Alfie Wilkes: Entrepreneurship in the renewable energy sector

Bill Murray
MSP 171 The Montgazette Contributor

Since 2006, Alfie Wilkes has been in the forefront of challenges and developments in the energy industry.

Wilkes' passion has always been the energy sector, and everything it touches. Discussing his path there, Wilkes said, "I've always had a hunger to work in the energy sector, be it in gas, where I started, or renewables and advanced energy technology, which I do now. I just have always loved the energy sector, every aspect of it. I love technology, business development, public policy, and multilateral institutional aspects, which fund energy projects globally. So yeah, I've always loved the energy sector."

It took a while to get there, however. After completing studies in environmental science and public affairs, Wilkes began work in the mortgage industry, which afforded him the chance to master the financial arena. Satisfied with his success, Wilkes had a hunger for more. He reentered academia and enrolled in the Grassroots Lobbying Program at American University's School of Public Administration. He became instrumental as a lobbyist in economic and political

development for South America and Africa, learning more about international relations and how public works projects get done.

It was during this period that Wilkes met the person who would inspire him to entrepreneurship. As Wilkes explained, it was a good fit with his desire for continuous learning: "My old boss inspired me to be an entrepreneur. He was an elderly gentleman and an attorney, Alexander Williams, in Washington, D.C. He had a company back in the early 2000s, and I worked for him. We did some oil and gas projects together, and he showed me how to get from A to B in the industry and how the entrepreneurial side of everything works. But he always stressed upon me that you're always going to be getting educated on the entrepreneurial side of it, because markets change, technologies change, policies change. You must learn to adapt as well."

With his current focus on renewables, Wilkes can provide the benefits of building a business while improving the environment and local communities. Explaining the advanced construction techniques, Wilkes says, "You get

more power to the rate payers, of course, for additional businesses or their residences. And it has a storm hardening component, to help protect during some natural disaster scenarios: hurricanes, tornadoes, blizzards, and things of that nature." This leads to a more resilient grid with higher capacity and lower costs.

While the market today is a challenging one, Wilkes' advice to new entrepreneurs remains constant: "You're never

going to achieve your goals or be happy with just trying to be comfortable. Get uncomfortable, try some new things and go for it. One of my mentors gave me the buying vs. renting scenario. He's said to go out and take some risks. You want to take a risk and buy a house? You can't afford it? You can always go back to renting. So, I tell people go out and try to do something. You can always go back to renting and then try again."



Alfie Wilkes October 10, 2024.

(Photo / Bill Murray)

When home isn't affordable

Sheila Waples
MSP 170 The Montgazette Contributor

At Haverford Court Apartments in the Overbrook section of Philadelphia, Sharon Waples, Community Director, waits for a prospective resident to drop off her Section 8 paperwork. To many, home is where the heart is. Unfortunately for some, their hearts have been broken by unaffordable rents. This is especially true in the Philadelphia area, where rents have gone up significantly, and fewer affordable apartments are available. According to Apartments.com, the average rent in Philadelphia is \$1,711 per month.

As a way of combatting housing unaffordability, Philadelphia City Council finalized Bill No. 240060. The bill would make it illegal to discriminate against housing choice voucher holders. Ms. Waples has seen an increase in applications since Haverford Court started to accept housing choice Section 8

vouchers. Managed and owned by Lindy Property Management, Haverford Court has more than 150 apartments, spread across two buildings. Lindy is one of the first management companies to accept housing choice vouchers in their Philadelphia communities.

Although this should be a good thing, Ms. Waples has not been able to move forward with some Section 8 applications. The rents at Haverford Court are higher than the rates set by the Philadelphia Housing Authority (PHA). The PHA sets maximum rents based on zip code, and voucher holders pay a portion of the rent, not exceeding 40 percent of their income.

Continued on Page 9.



The Crossings at Stanbridge in Lansdale,
on September 15, 2024.
(Photo / Sheila Waples)



EAST STROUDSBURG
UNIVERSITY

WHERE COURAGE FINDS CONFIDENCE

With a high-quality education, **50+ affordable majors** to choose from and **up to \$6,000 in transfer scholarships**, your future is within reach at ESU—right here in the Poconos.

[ESU.edu/visit](https://www.esu.edu/visit)



Jenkintown Festival of the Arts

Megan Prendergast
MSP 171 The Montgazette Contributor

Every September, in the heart of Jenkintown, Pennsylvania, arts, food and shopping are enjoyed and celebrated. The Jenkintown Festival of the Arts is hosted by the Jenkintown community and other local artists and eateries, and is free to attend. Residents and visitors can expect to see fabulous pieces of art, homemade treasures, and other goodies to bring home.

This year's festival began at 1 p.m. on Sunday, September 15, 2024, and ended at 6 p.m. Held rain or shine, the event is an annual tradition that promotes a strong bond throughout the community, and locals look forward to it each year. For this year's celebration, the Jenkintown Community Alliance organized more than 120 vendors, representing jewelry, candles, paintings, ceramics, drawings, pottery and more. There were about 15 food trucks and other culinary vendors that served pasta, pizza, sandwiches, cookies, cupcakes, popcorn and more.

Dating back to 2010, the Jenkintown Festival of the Arts has helped unite artists, small business owners, and food truck vendors with the community of Jenkintown and surrounding areas. Ceramic artist Sarah Brett has participated in the gala and had this to say about her experience: "The Jenkintown Arts Festival has always been one of the better festivals I've participated in. I have vended at many festivals and fairs over the years, and the Jenkintown staff just really has it figured it out. From set-up to break-down, it has always

been very well-organized and well-orchestrated. There are always several volunteers checking in and helping when they can." Jenkintown resident Nora Foster also had this to say: "My children and I look forward to coming to this event every year. There is a little something for everyone, which makes it a perfect family outing.

We always make sure to bring home cupcakes from Jenkintown's very own Velvet Sky Bakery, home of my children's favorite baked goods."

This zestful festival also has live music from local musicians that will have you dancing down the street as you enjoy your shopping and delicious food. Families with

children are encouraged to attend, as there will be a children's section with bounce houses and games for them to play. Whether you are attending this festival with your spouse and children, friends, coworkers or even going solo, you are sure to have a splendid time walking around Jenkintown Town Square enjoying the sights.



Jenkintown Festival of the Arts on September 15, 2024

(Photo / Megan Prendergast)

The Little Gym of Hatfield's Helpful Hand to the Community

Mercedes Rivera
MSP 170 The Montgazette Contributor

Hatfield, Pennsylvania, is home to one of the many Little Gyms around the country. In this community, it's Carrie Godshalk's goal to help families with their little ones as best as she can and to be a helpful hand to those in need. Carrie Godshalk, director of The Little Gym of Hatfield, is one of the leads when it comes to event planning. Throughout the year, The Little Gym of Hatfield hosts events like a Halloween Boo Bash, Spring Prom, Fire Safety Day, and Mommy Market. While the Boo Bash and Prom are events for the kids, the annual fire safety day and mommy market are for parents in need of new clothes and baby supplies, and guidance on emergency safety for their little ones.

The Little Gym of Hatfield is a gymnastics center that isn't just centered around the sport but also focuses on helping kids learn and grow as they get older. The Little Gym teaches children from 4 months all the way up to 12 years old. Along with classes, they host many events throughout the year that are both helpful and fun for everyone.

Godshalk says, "There is nothing better than being able to help parents in need. I've been there myself, so it's nice to give back to the community." Carrie Godshalk, starting off as a daycare teacher, found herself in the position of taking a lead role at a newly opened Little Gym and has grown through the program ever since. "There is no better job than this one ... being able to watch kids grow and learn new things is so incredible, and being a part of the journey is the best," she adds.

Every August, TLG collects donations of baby supplies to help families in need. Each year they get more and more boxes of diapers, clothes, furniture, and formula to give back to the community. Tiara Godshalk, Carrie's daughter, also has a big part in planning these events and says, "This is the place to be when it comes to community events. The relationships you build during these events are unlike any other ... It's one of my favorite times of

the year."

To prepare for these events, both Carrie and Tiara Godshalk put hours of effort into decorating and promoting TLG throughout the town, and they always make sure there's food available for those who stop by. The idea of the mommy market stemmed from mothers in Carrie Godshalk's class who expressed their struggles at home. From there, Carrie Godshalk made sure to host this event once, if not twice, a year to help those around her. "In the future, I hope this event reaches communities outside of ours. Everyone needs a little help sometimes, so why can't we be that help," she says.

With the continuous growth in attendance, Carrie Godshalk is certain the Mommy Market and The Little Gym will grow larger and larger each year, giving more opportunities to help those in need.



Carrie Godshalk at The Little Gym of Hatfield, on October 9, 2024.

(Photo / Mercedes Rivera)

Unaffordable Housing

Continued from Page 7.

Because the market rent is higher than PHA's calculations, and Section 8 voucher recipients are not allowed to pay the difference between the stated rent and what their vouchers will pay, Ms. Waples has had to tell an applicant that she could not continue with their application. The applicant did not take the news well and contacted Lindy's corporate office. "They make it seem like it's a magic bullet, accepting Section 8, but there's a whole process," says Ms. Waples. Inspections by PHA and their rent analysis add to an already time-consuming rental process.

The Crossings at Stanbridge in Lansdale is another Lindy-owned-and-managed community, with 150 apartments, like Haverford Court. Besides differences in location and layout, the biggest difference between the two is that the Crossings at Stanbridge does not accept Section 8 vouchers. Unlike in Philadelphia, landlords in Montgomery County do not have to take housing choice vouchers.

While that's not a concern for Community Director Billie Schott-Schwartz, apartments sitting vacant is a problem. With rents increasing and more luxury apartments being built in the area, it's getting more difficult to attract prospective renters. The least expensive one-bedroom unit (with a total area of 581 square feet), is going for \$1,492 per month. Like many apartment communities, the Crossings at Stanbridge requires applicants to have an income of at least three times the monthly rent. So, a prospective applicant interested in this small one-bedroom apartment would have to make almost \$4,500 per month before taxes — by themselves or combined with a roommate.

When asked how she would solve the rent affordability issue, Ms. Schott-Schwartz said, "Well I can't solve the issue, but I would recommend making it easier for people to obtain housing by lowering income requirements, since many don't qualify with the standard requirement of three times the monthly rent — especially since market rents are so high."

Affordable housing continues to be elusive in the Philadelphia area. While it has become easier for Section 8 housing choice voucher holders to find rentals in Philadelphia, for some housing providers, the program is not working as intended. Despite these problems, it is a step in the right direction to getting more people housed. Will this spread to counties like Montgomery? Only time will tell.

MCCC eSports

Levi Hailey

MSP 171 The Montgazette Contributor

Asher Hailey and Sal Sutera, first-year students at Montgomery County Community College, are making waves in the competitive esports scene. Hailey, a member of MCCC's varsity Valorant team, and Sutera, a standout player on the varsity Overwatch squad, are both competing in the National Junior College Athletic Association Esports league. Their shared goal is to break into the professional gaming industry.

Hailey has long dreamed of turning his passion for video games into a career. "I always wanted to play for a professional team," he said during a recent interview. As a member of MCCC's Valorant team, Hailey views this as the perfect steppingstone toward his dream job. Valorant, a tactical first-person shooter developed by Riot Games, has become one of the top esports' titles globally. Hailey is determined to make his mark in this highly competitive field.

In contrast, Sutera has built a strong reputation in Overwatch, a fast-paced, team-based shooter by Blizzard Entertainment. Having played competitively for most of his life, Sutera has honed his skills to become a "top 200" player in the NJCAA league. His ability to adapt quickly and lead his team through complex in-game situations has earned him a respected position. "Joining the esports league is a great way to get your name out there in the

professional gaming community," Sutera said, expressing his excitement about the opportunities MCCC provides.

Both Hailey and Sutera are using the NJCAA league to highlight their talents and gain exposure in the professional esports' world. For Hailey, the strategic demands of Valorant make it the ideal game to test his skills. He relishes the camaraderie and teamwork that comes with being part of MCCC's esports program. His team has consistently performed well, holding their own against teams from larger schools, which has enhanced their reputation within the league.

Sutera's success in Overwatch has drawn attention from scouts and may lead to future scholarship opportunities or spots on professional teams. His leadership and dedication are key to his success, making him a standout in both individual performance and team coordination.

MCCC's esports program has quickly become a hub for aspiring professional gamers like Hailey and Sutera, providing a structured environment where students can balance academic responsibilities with their gaming goals. The NJCAA league offers a crucial platform for student gamers to compete at an elevated level, gain exposure, and pursue

career opportunities in the rapidly growing esports industry.

Looking forward, both Hailey and Sutera remain optimistic about their future in esports. Hailey is focused on improving his skills and hopes to one day join a professional Valorant team. "This is just the beginning," he says. "I'm excited to see where this journey takes me." Sutera, with his eyes set

on the Overwatch scene, sees endless opportunities ahead. "Being part of this league opens so many doors for the future," he said, acknowledging the potential scholarships and professional team spots awaiting him.

With their passion, dedication, and MCCC's expanding esports program behind them, Hailey and Sutera are well on their way to turning their dreams into reality.



Asher Hailey starting up a practice game of Valorant.

(Photo / Levi Hailey)

Chinatown proposed as the new 76ers Philly arena

Cierra Parker
MSP 170 The Montgazette Contributor

As tensions between the Chinatown community in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and the 76ers organization intensify over the location of a new arena, the future of this historic neighborhood hangs in the balance. Chinatown has always been more than just a geographic area — it is a vital cultural and social hub that reflects the history, struggles and resilience of generations of Asian immigrants. Since its establishment by Cantonese immigrants in the mid-19th century, the neighborhood has withstood numerous challenges, from periods of urban decay to city development projects that have threatened its existence. Today, Chinatown remains a place where immigrants and their descendants can celebrate their heritage, find support and build a sense of belonging. The looming construction of 76 Place, however, has many fearing that this vibrant and close-knit community could face irreversible damage.

The concerns surrounding the proposed arena go beyond the immediate disruptions it may cause, such as traffic congestion, parking shortages, and competition with local businesses. Many residents worry about the long-term consequences of what some call “stadium-driven gentrification.” In similar cases, large-scale developments like sports arenas have been known to drive up property

values and rents, pushing out long-time residents and small businesses who can no longer afford to stay. For Chinatown, this could mean the loss of family-owned restaurants, grocery stores, cultural centers and other small enterprises that are the lifeblood of the neighborhood.

These fears are not unfounded. Across the U.S., other ethnic enclaves have faced similar threats from urban development projects. The construction of stadiums and entertainment districts has often resulted in the displacement of low-income and immigrant communities, with little regard for the cultural heritage that these neighborhoods represent. In Chinatown, there is deep anxiety that the same could happen here. If the 76ers’ arena is built, the neighborhood could lose not only its businesses but also its unique cultural identity — a critical space where language, traditions and community bonds are passed down to future generations.

Community advocates have also pointed out that Chinatown has historically been marginalized in city planning decisions. In the past, projects like the Vine Street Expressway, in the 1990s, cut through the neighborhood, dividing it and reducing its space. Many residents see the proposal for 76 Place as yet another example of how their voices are ignored in favor of commercial

interests. They argue that the city often prioritizes big developments that cater to wealthier or more influential sectors, while sidelining minority and immigrant communities like Chinatown.

In response, the Chinatown community has mobilized, holding protests, town hall meetings and

discussions to raise awareness about the potential impact of the arena. They have called for a more transparent and inclusive planning process, demanding that their concerns be taken seriously before any decisions are made.

Continued on Page 15.



Friendship Arch at the entrance of Chinatown on May 3, 2013.

(Photo / Beyond my Ken)

5247: The release of “TYE’s” most personal project

Isabella “Bella” Chesnes
MSP 170 The Montgazette Contributor

Born and bred in West Philadelphia, rap artist TYE has unveiled his latest project, “5247,” an incredibly intimate, poignant exploration of grief, family and resilience that pays tribute to his late grandmother, Ruth Hall. With this release, TYE brings his talent and unique lyricism to the forefront of audiences’ minds, as they take an autobiographical journey into TYE’s upbringing and success. As he reflects upon the hardships and blessings of his life, listeners are invited to immerse themselves in a world of heartbreak and hope, through music’s compelling ability to express the complexities of the human experience.

Making its debut on August 29, 2024, “5247” features 15 uniquely crafted tracks that weave tangible emotions into a humble, well-paced story. Named after the street address of the Halls’s residence, a cornerstone of TYE’s youth, the album heavily reflects upon themes of grief and spirituality, with notable tracks like “Ruth Hall” and “Michael & Kyle” emphasizing the importance of family and the emotions that come with profound loss. Although the project has only been in public view for about a month, its success and potential are palpable. As TYE continues to drive home his messages of hope and faith through a lyrically superior lens, he sets the stage to rise to the top of the charts.

Head sound engineer at Sounds Like Soma, Gage Bingham, said, “It was a long process, but a very quick process all at the same time.” The album, which began

recording in 2021, was given its name early in the recording process, and as the project continued to develop, “5247” was the only clear choice for the title of a collection that focused so heavily on growing up. “F.O.E., family over everything, is how I would describe the project in three words,” said TYE.

Getting into the meat of the album and the naked expression of hardship, track 14, titled “Ruth Hall,” describes TYE’s grandmother’s life and her grand importance, while also painting a picture of the grieving process after her passing in November 2020. TYE said, “One of the unfortunate parts of growing up is we think we have an abundance of time.” Each lyric of this track and the album as a whole share relatability and hope, an overarching theme carried from the interview with TYE’s mother at the start of the album, to the final track, “Malcolm X Park.” Gage Bingham, head engineer on the project said, “Every word mattered. I mean every word.”

Track 7, titled “Michael & Kyle,” discusses the life and loss of his cousins, further touching on themes of grief, while reminding listeners of the importance of family and spirituality. TYE said, “Our existence is just extremely fleeting, so those two songs [“Michael & Kyle” and “Ruth Hall”] were probably the hardest to record and definitely the two most personal songs.” TYE shows his vulnerability in these two tracks, in particular – something to be

admired by both critics and audiences. Other tracks on the album, while still also extremely important to the artist and his story, may be more digestible and focus less on grief and hardship. “I understand some people use music as a level of escapism,” said TYE. Thus, the track “Stay Together,” featuring artist Amir Ali, has a more upbeat vibe, while it focuses on the vast importance of family, making it more favorable to a larger audience.

Bingham said, “TYE’s imagination is just crazy. His versatility in hip-hop, RnB, and anything in that realm is phenomenal ... and he knows what he wants.” Audiences and critics alike should be prepared for more incredible lyricism behind thoughtfully crafted beats in the future, as TYE continues to climb the ladder of the Philadelphia music scene to the very top and beyond, reaching far and wide with a level of talent and uniqueness currently absent in the music industry.

Love the
ARTs?

Visit:

mc3.edu/livelyarts

Montco Concert Band performs in White's Road Park

Bill Murray
MSP 171 The Montgazette Contributor

The Montgomery County Concert Band, conducted by Charles H. Neidhardt, performed at the North Penn Rotary Centennial Band Shell in White's Road Park on Tuesday, September 10. The performance was well attended, as local music lovers flocked to the venue with their blankets and lawn chairs on the warm, late summer evening to enjoy food and drink from local vendors and the free live music.

Founded in April 1995, the band's repertoire ranges from standard and contemporary music for bands to Broadway show tunes,

marches, classical transcriptions, and patriotic medleys. Given the proximity of the concert to 9/11, a centerpiece of their performance was the song "Flight of Valor," which is a musical piece written as a memorial for the victims of United Airlines Flight 93 by composer James Swearingen. The performance marked the end of the 2024 White's Road Park Summer Concert Series. Dating back to 1982, this had been the annual Lansdale tradition's 42nd season and, as always, featured a wide range of musical genres.

The annual concert series took

place on Tuesday evenings from June 25 to September 10, at the White's Road Park Band Shell. According to the Lansdale Parks and Recreation website, the series is funded in part by a grant from The Pharo Family Fund of the Lehigh Valley Community Foundation.

Dating back to 1982, the series was founded by the late Carl Saldutti, who led Lansdale Parks and Recreation for decades. The series featured a wide range of acts throughout the years, bringing an eclectic menu of musical styles to audiences. From jazz to world beat, classical to classic rock and the great American songbook, the series has tried to feature something for everyone.

This season's acts included De Tierra Caliente - a Latin Fusion band, Zydeco-A-Go-Go - a Creole and Cajun rhythm and blues ensemble, and Elastic Karma - a Beatles and classic rock tribute band.

Concert goer and Lansdale resident Carol Bove said, "This is the first year I've come to this, but I'm sure to be back. It's a really nice time." Longtime attendee Kathleen Murray said, "It's a great way to unwind with my husband in the summer, [with] something new every week. We try not to miss it." While the Lansdale Parks and Recreation Department did not

respond to a request for comment, Lansdale music lovers are looking forward to the lineup they'll be bringing them in 2025.

What's going on at MCCC?

Just visit the Active Data Calendar





Montgomery County Concert Band, Sept 10, 2024.

(Photo / Bill Murray)

Review:

“Joker Folie à Deux” – I am not laughing

Spencer Gee
The Montgazette Contributor

When I went to see “Joker Folie à Deux” last month, it was mostly out of a morbid curiosity. I had been a fan of the first Joker film, since director Todd Phillips gave us a fascinating interpretation of one of the most iconic supervillains of all time. The film touched on themes of mental health and class struggles. “Joker” was a hit, but it was clearly written as a standalone story, and there was no need for a sequel to follow it. So, when a second film starring the “clown prince of crime” was announced, I could not help but feel cynical about it. Still, I decided to give it a fair chance. Alas, I think that this movie fails to justify its existence.

The film starts off well, opening with an offbeat Loony Toons homage that recaps the first film’s climax before we catch up with Arthur Fleck, played by Joaquin Phoenix, who is still confined within Arkham Asylum. It’s there that he meets Harleen “Lee” Quinzel, played by Lady Gaga. It’s love at first sight for the two psychos, and Arthur makes it his mission to get out and create a new life for himself and Lee. The two leads definitely have chemistry, and the performances are excellent. Plus, the cinematography of this movie is gorgeous. Once we get past the first act, however, the cracks in the narrative start to form. Arthur goes to court, and things just sort of happen: The court scenes are often nonsensical, and while I would expect some weird stuff to occur, given the insane and theatrical nature of the

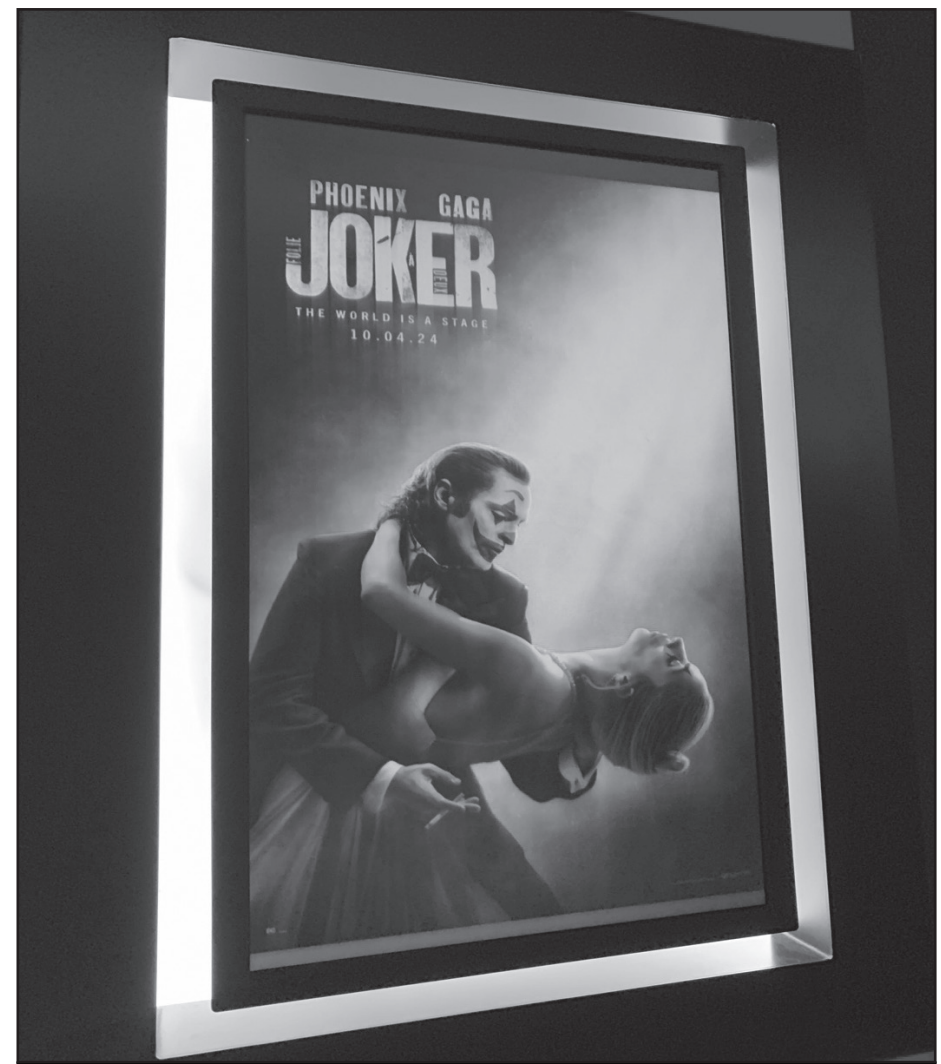
character, I also would have expected the movie to take the setting seriously enough to provide a half decent case in the trial. Instead, Joker just acts like a maniac at the stand for a while, as the judge repeatedly tells him to stop.

The film’s musical elements are entertaining, and the more elaborate musical numbers are my favorite parts of the movie, especially the sequence in which Joker hallucinates in the courtroom. But many of the songs feel shoved into the screenplay with little reason other than a few minutes have gone by with no one singing. Despite the flaws, however, the movie was enjoyable for most of the runtime, and I thought as I watched it that maybe I could at least call it a fun watch. But the ending of the movie ultimately shoots the whole story in the foot. Seeing it, I immediately questioned why I had wasted my time with the film. Honestly, I cannot help but think that I was meant to hate the ending.

A few scenes seem to hint at the idea that this film may be Todd Phillips rejecting this whole franchise, out of spite. Several characters mention that the first film’s events were adapted into a TV movie, and Joker is very concerned about its quality. In a scene in which Joker dreams of performing on a stage with Lee, she sees him showing concern that they are not “giving the people what they want,” to which Lee responds by shooting him. And then there is the dialogue in the film’s final scenes, which I would not spoil here.

But all of this makes me think that Todd Phillips resented the need to continue the Joker series with a sequel in the first place, and so made a movie that rejects everything that

made the first one interesting. You could say that “Joker Folie à Deux” is a practical joke on both the studio and the audience. But it is not funny, and I am not laughing. I give it a 3/10.



Joker: Folie à Deux poster at Regal Cinemas
in Warrington, on October 25, 2024.

(Photo / Spencer Gee)

Chinatown

Continued from Page 11.

Some have even suggested alternatives to the proposed site, hoping that a compromise can be reached that would allow the arena to be built elsewhere without jeopardizing the neighborhood's future.

As the debate unfolds, the conflict has drawn attention not only from local residents but also from broader advocacy groups and city planners, who see this issue as a test of Philadelphia's commitment to preserving its diverse heritage. The city's leaders are now faced with a difficult choice: Should they prioritize economic development and the potential revenue a new arena could bring, or should they focus on protecting one of the city's most cherished cultural enclaves? The decision will have far-reaching consequences, not only for Chinatown but also for how the city navigates its future growth while respecting its past.

With the construction of the 76ers' arena set for 2031, time is running out for Chinatown to secure its future. Many fear that once the arena breaks ground, the process of gentrification will be unstoppable, reshaping the neighborhood into something unrecognizable. The battle over Chinatown's fate has become a broader conversation about who benefits from urban development and who is left behind. For now, the community remains determined to fight for its survival, holding onto hope that the people there can preserve the cultural sanctuary they have nurtured for over a century.

THE ADMISSIONS TEAM IS HIRING!



ACTIVELY SEEKING FEDERAL WORK STUDY STUDENTS

POSITION INFORMATION

- No experience needed
- Must be in good academic standing
- Must be a recipient of financial aid
- Build useful job skills
- Resume-building position
- Must have a positive attitude and be friendly!

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

- Complete application
- Submit your resume
- In-person interview in the Admissions Office

APPLY NOW!

Scan the QR code or navigate to Student Employment Opportunities on Montco Connect.



MONTGOMERY
COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

QUESTIONS?

Email Coordinator of Admissions and Recruitment, Riley Morton at rmorton@mc3.edu

SAVE THE DATE

2025 PRESIDENTIAL SYMPOSIUM ON DIVERSITY

LEAD BY EXAMPLE: OPPORTUNITY & ACCESS

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

ROBERTO CLEMENTE, JR.



"You have one thing that makes you very unique in this world, and that is your fingerprint. Use it wisely, and use it to make a difference in this world."

— ROBERTO CLEMENTE, JR.

Universally respected philanthropist, humanitarian, entrepreneur, producer, former broadcaster, and professional baseball player

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2025 – 11:00 AM

MONTCO CULTURAL CENTER THEATER, BLUE BELL CAMPUS

IN-PERSON & LIVESTREAMED

THE EVENT IS FREE, BUT TICKETS ARE REQUIRED.

Visit mc3.edu/Symposium for details and tickets.

