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Trump announces death of ISIS leader Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi in secret CIA raid

BY ELLYN FRITZ

Contributing Writer

Abū Bakr Al-Baghdadi was the world's most wanted terrorist chieftain, with a target of a twenty-five million dollar bounty offered by the American government. The Central Intelligence Agency and Special Operations commandos were zeroing in on a location for Al-Baghdadi when President Trump ordered American troops out of Syria earlier this month, forcing Pentagon officials to speed up their plan for a risky night raid.

The planning for the raid began this past summer when the C.I.A. found surprising information about the general location of Al-Baghdadi in a village deep inside a part of Northwest Syria. From there, the C.I.A. worked closely with Iraqi and Kurdish intelligence officials in Iraq and Syria to identify more precisely Mr. al-Baghdadi's whereabouts. Even after Trump removed American troops from Syria, the Kurds continued to provide the C.I.A. with information about Al-Baghdadi's location.

The Army's Delta Force commando unit began drawing up plans for the raid and rehearsing plans to conduct



Photo courtesy of Al-Furqan media.

This video from a militant website shows Al-Baghdadi speaking in April of 2019.

the dangerous mission to kill or capture the ISIS leader deep inside territory controlled by Al Qaeda. After the military called off the mission at least twice, Defense Secretary Mark T. Esper claimed on ABC's *This Week*, Mr. Trump "gave us the green light to proceed" in the days leading up to Al-Baghdadi's death.

Eight American helicopters took

off around midnight on October 27, flying 70 minutes towards the location of Al-Baghdadi. The helicopters and other warplanes then initiated firing on a compound of buildings before landing, providing cover for commandos with the Delta Force and their military dogs to descend into a landing zone. As the Delta Force commandos entered and addressed

the scene at hand, Al-Baghdadi fled into an underground escape tunnel, taking three children with him to, presumably, use as human shields against American fire. It was then that Al-Baghdadi detonated his suicide vest, killing himself, two children under the age of 12, and injuring an American military dog named Conon who cornered the Islamic State's leader in the dead-end tunnel.

Though Syria has had a history of tremendous violence and upheaval, the Islamic State brought a new form of daily terror to the lives of civilians within the territory of ISIS. Women were beaten for not covering their faces fully and men were detained and flogged for not growing their beards long enough by the religious morality police who patrolled the streets. This fall, mass graves discovered to the so-called caliphate bluntly testify to the mass executions that took place.

For the victims of the terrorist organization's brutality, the death of Al-Baghdadi will not be mourned. As seen in *The New York Times*, for Hussam Hammoud, 27, an activist from Raqqa, the onetime capital of

see ISIS, page 2

House votes to enter new public stage of impeachment inquiry, despite GOP protest

BY KATHERINE COBLE

News Editor

The House of Representatives took the dramatic step on Thursday to endorse the impeachment inquiry into President Donald Trump, marking the beginning of a new and more public stage in the investigation.

The House voted 232-196 in order to set rules for the impeachment inquiry. Every House Republican voted against the measure, and two Democrats joined them in the 'nay' vote. These were Collin Peterson of Minnesota and Jeff Van Drew of New Jersey, both of whom represent conservative districts.

Until now, the impeachment in-

quiry has been led entirely by Democrats and witnesses have been heard behind closed doors in private sessions. This has led to extreme dissatisfaction among House Republicans, who attempted to break into the hearing room on October 23. The new rules, as voted upon last week, establish proper procedures for the inquiry going forward. Evidence against Trump will be publicly presented and his legal team will be able to mount an official defense against the allegations.

The vote signals that Democrats are ready to move forward: willing to have their members publicly vote on the matter, and willing to share their findings with the public. It is

a gamble that is sure to impact the political landscape for the rest of the year and beyond. In a speech on the House floor on Thursday, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi pointed to the American flag and proclaimed that "what is at stake in all of this is nothing less than our democracy."

For their part, the Republican members of the House remain unimpressed with the vote and the progress Democrats are attempting to make. Despite their frustrations with the private nature of the inquiry, its newly-created publicness is still unpopular. Numerous GOP lawmakers described the inquiry and Thursday's vote as a politically-motivated "sham."

President Trump and his White House responded similarly, with the president taking to Twitter to declare the vote "The Greatest Witch Hunt In American History!"

The impeachment inquiry centers upon a phone call between President Trump and the newly elected Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky on June 25. During the call, Trump appeared to imply that both a White House meeting with Zelensky and the release of American military aid to Ukraine would be dependent on Zelensky opening an investigation into Joe Biden's son, Hunter, and his relationship to a Ukrainian energy company. The

see IMPEACHMENT, page 2

Inside this Issue...

Opinion & Editorial
Editor discusses "Journey to the West" with Carol Davis
page 6-7

Campus Life
Britney Piper speaks about rape culture on campus
page 9

Arts & Leisure
Student reviews Kanye West's new album "Jesus is King"
page 13

Sports
Washington Nationals win 2019 World Series
page 15

ISIS: Lanscape of extremism in the Middle East is shaken by the death of Al-Baghdadi

continued from page 1

the Islamic State, Al-Baghdadi’s death was a reminder of the suffering inflicted onto those who were forced to live under his uncompromising and extremist movement. “The victims of this organization are all over the place,” said Mr. Hammoud, who said that he fled to Turkey because the Syrian Army, which was his original enemy, was now advancing toward him. “We are happy that he was killed, but we do not think our misery will end because of that.”

For ISIS, “This is a devastating blow. This is not just their leader, its founder. He was an inspirational leader in many ways. He formed ISIS in 2014, he led to establishing the physical caliphate throughout the region, so this is a major blow to them, Esper told Jake Tapper Sunday on CNN’s *State of the Union*. ISIS did not lose much operational capacity with the death of Al-Baghdadi, but they did lose their symbolic

figurehead whose role was to rally people around the world to join ISIS. After the loss of territory in Iraq and Syria, along with the presence of Anti-ISIS coalition forces in that area, it will be nearly impossible for ISIS to reestablish themselves within that region; however, they are now looking to increase their presence in places like eastern Afghanistan and the southern desert of Libya. Al-Baghdadi’s death also came at a time when he was being hosted by hardline al-Qaida groups in Syria. Although in the past years, al-Qaida and ISIS have had a fierce rivalry and fought politically, the groups share similarly conservative ideologies. The death of Baghdadi is likely to turn some of the groups that have flown the ISIS flag towards al-Qaida onto the perspective that consolidating, rather than competing, is the best way forward

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Impeachment: Inquiry centers upon fateful conversation between Trump, Ukraine’s Zelensky

continued from page 1

aid had already been voted on and approved by Congress, but Trump asked Zelensky to do him a “favor” before it would be released. Ukraine has been at war with Russia over the highly contested and oil-rich region of Crimea since Russia forcefully annexed it in 2014. Consequently, the Ukrainian government relies heavily on

American support in its quest to take back Crimea from a major rival. Zelensky, a former comedian and actor who ran on an anti-corruption campaign, has made ending the war with Russia a major focus of his presidency. The investigation Trump seeks of Hunter Biden and his Ukrainian employer appears to be based entirely on conspiracy theories floated by people like the

President’s personal lawyer and major confidant, Rudy Giuliani. Congress is set to begin a week-long break following this latest vote, but committees and their staff members will continue to hold closed-door depositions of important figures in the Trump administration. Many of these, such as former national security adviser John Bolton, have indicated

that they will not testify unless a Congressional subpoena is upheld by a high court. Thus, the inquiry is destined to continue taking shape and making progress despite a hiatus from Congress itself.

Senior Katherine Coble is the news editor. Her email is kcoble@fandm.edu.

39 migrants found dead in truck in Grays, UK; multiple people arrested for trafficking

BY SHEN WANG
Contributing Writer

It began on October 23 when an emergency center in Grays, Essex received an anonymous call for help: a large red truck in a nearby industrial area required immediate medical attention. When the emergency personnel arrived at the scene and opened the door of the refrigerated container attached to the tractor, they saw a terrible scene. Several dozens of people - later determined to be 38 adults and one teenager - were squeezed into a pile, frozen to death. Police were immediately called to the scene and a troubling investigating began. After several days of uncertainty, the police announced last Friday that all 39 victims were Vietnamese, according to the New York Times. The police initially thought that the victims were Chinese, perhaps even carrying Chinese passports, but their investigation changed after multiple families in the rural Ha Tinh Province reported their family members missing. Many of the victims are yet to be identified - just a handful of the thousands of migrants who lose their lives



Photo courtesy of CBC Canada.

Police are still investigating the deaths of 39 migrants in a truck in Essex, UK.

every year attempting to find safety in Europe and North America. The exact route these migrants took until their fateful journey into England is unknown, but the cargo container they were stored in entered the UK from Zeebrugge in Belgium. The police investigation has determined that the tractor itself was registered in Bulgaria and entered the UK through Wales, but was not connected to the cargo until both reached the port of Purfleet in Essex. The cargo truck would have reached several degrees below freezing during its journey, and according to the Irish Mirror, many of the victims were found without clothes on. Sitting in the cockpit of the truck was Maurice Robinson, a 25-year-old driver from Northern Ireland. He has been charged with 39 counts of manslaughter and human trafficking by the Essex police. Robinson is a native of Portadown in Northern Ireland and has more than 5 years of driving experience in

large trucks. He often travels long distances to Denmark and Sweden. On Facebook, he at one point advertised his business as a “polar express.” These words have taken on a new darker meaning since dozens of migrants were found frozen in his shipment container. Robinson is not the only one accused of wrongdoing by the police following these deaths. Another truck driver, Eamon Harrison, 23, of County Down, Northern Ireland has also been charged with assault and criminal damage. On Friday the Essex police arrested a 38-year-old man and a 39-year-old woman from Warrington in northern England, currently unnamed according to the New York Times. Shortly afterward, they arrested a 48-year-old man from Northern Ireland on suspicion of conspiracy to traffic people and suspicion of manslaughter. It is becoming more clear that this is not an individual occurrence run by a small group of people, but rather a deadly consequence of the global trafficking trade.

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FULL STAFF OPINION

BY TCR EDITING STAFF

Last week, our True Blue weekend was filled with reunions between parents, alumni, and old friends. The various activities like the Hartman Green Tailgate and homecoming games brought lots of energy to our campus. Especially as we get into the “middle end” of the Fall semester, it is always refreshing to have new people on our campus.

Friday was kicked off with Barbara Altmann commemorating events from 50 years ago that led to the change of the Franklin & Marshall campus and image. As this year is the anniversary of women being allowed to attend F&M, Altmann remarked on her profound pride and excitement of the past women attending and also the future of women who will return to F&M. She continued in discussing the 1969 African American student protest that was a common hour the previous Thursday. Friday night was then lit up by the acapella concert that had people standing in the aisles and on the sides of the Old Main chapel. The four groups performed, bringing in lots of laughter, cheer, and good music.

As we go into this final stretch of the semester, we can enjoy a breath of fresh air that Homecoming Weekend brought to our community. While we can reflect on the time spent with those who came back last weekend, we can also use this end of the semester to motivate us towards our futures.

Sincerely,
TCR Editing Staff

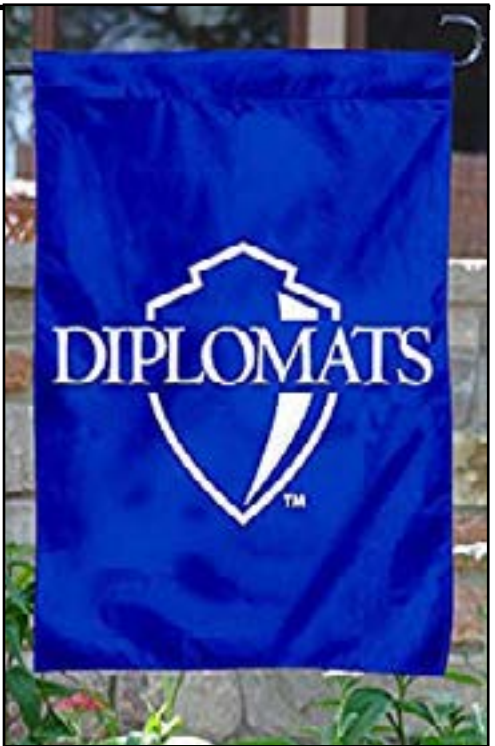


Photo courtesy of amazon.com

Turkey invades northern Syria following Trump’s withdrawal of U.S. troops



Photo courtesy of Delil Souleiman/AFP via Getty Images

Turkish-backed forces have invaded northern Syria to attack the Kurds, a stateless ethnic group and longtime American ally, following the removal of U.S. troops from the region.

BY ELLYN FRITZ
Contributing Writer

Last week, President Trump ordered American troops to step aside from the northern border in Syria, against the advice of his national security team. Trump no longer feels as though ISIS is an immediate threat, and has used this as an opportunity to fulfill one of his key campaign

promises - to get US troops out of long term engagements overseas where there was ‘no benefit’ to the USA. This executive decision effectively paved the way for Turkey to launch an offensive against previously US-backed Kurdish forces, a longtime ally of the United States in the region. Turkey has long felt threatened by the Syrian Kurds, due to their ethnic commonality with Kurdish

insurgent groups in Turkey, despite a lack of relationship between the two groups. This put the United States in a bind, with Turkey as an American ally and a member of NATO, and the Kurdish militia as an American ally in fighting ISIS. The United States remained involved in the precarious situation until President Trump ordered U.S. withdrawal on October 6.

Donald Trump’s decision created a vacuum in Syria. Abandoning the Kurds, America’s ally since 2014 in combating ISIS, created a feeling of betrayal among Kurdish fighters as America gave Turkey open access to Kurdish territory. On October 9th, Turkish troops and their Syrian Arab proxies began an invasion and the Kurds are now **see SYRIA, page 4**

Thousands of arrests following civil disobedience by the Extinction Rebellion movement

BY MIRA LERNER
Copy Editor

Last week the letters XR began popping up on news feeds accompanied by pictures of masked protestors being handcuffed by police. “XR” refers to the Extinction Rebellion. The international movement’s website defines its mission as grassroots, “non-violent civil disobedience in an attempt to halt mass extinction and minimise the risk of social collapse.” The promotion of non-violent civil disobedience is aimed at upsetting conventional systems and inciting political disruption

to combat climate change. The group’s number one demand is for people in power to “tell the truth” about the climate emergency. XR has been around for a year and is steadily becoming a globally unifying challenge against climate change inaction. According to The Intercept, the movement has expanded to encompass 485 groups in 72 countries. Starting on October 7th, the United Kingdom-based group challenged governments worldwide to declare a Climate and Ecological Emergency with peaceful occupations in 60 cities around the globe. By engaging in the XR, many

of the movement’s activists are facing legal prosecution. On October 7, The Intercept estimated that 700 people around the world had been arrested for participating in the protests. Last week in London alone, city police reported 1,300 arrests after people converged to block access to a fish market, camped in Trafalgar Square, and waited outside a fellow supporter’s trial, according to The Guardian. On October 10th CNN reported 60 arrests in New York of protestors who occupied a boat in the middle of Times Square. Following these events, police in London issued a ban on

XR protests in the city, but this does not seem to be slowing momentum, reported The Guardian. Perhaps this disregard for the law is because getting arrested is not a danger in the rebellion’s eyes- it’s a strategy. In detailing the movement’s history, The New York Times claims that the group urges supporters to use their arrests to force changes in judicial platforms, much in the manner of the civil rights movement. In stark contrast to civil rights activism, however, Extinction Rebellion has drawn criticism for **see REBELLION, page 4**

An interview with Professor Davis about Journey to the West

BY SOJIN SHIN
Op-Eds Editor

Journey to the West, a faculty directed TDF play based on a Chinese legend, was cancelled a week before its premiere due to controversies surrounding its casting and rehearsal process. First, the play was accused of cultural appropriation, especially with five out of six leads being Caucasian students. Second, in an attempt to initiate a talk addressing this issue, the director and a tenured professor Carol Davis segregated the cast into two groups: “American” and “international students.” However, many believe that this was a segregation based on race, because the “international” group included an Asian American student.

In an attempt the confirm everything, I interviewed students who participated in Journey to the West, both as actors and builders. All of them, with the exception of one builder (whose name I still choose to not include) wanted to remain anonymous. Apparently, they have heard that Professor Davis does not write letters of recommendation for people who have spoken against her.

As for the audition process, no consistent information was provided. Some said that a large number of international students auditioned. Some said that it was mostly Caucasian student, as auditions for theater at F&M usually goes. In terms of what Professor Davis is like, some spoke kindly of her, while some mentioned that Professor Davis was “viciously racist” and often took advantage of students of color to attain her visions. This student talked at length about Romeo and Juliet, in which Carol Davis was accused of tokenizing students of color and enforcing racial stereotypes. Then there were the quotes, which could only be characterized as incriminating.

However, while the general story stayed the same, there were inconsistencies or contradictions. Similar quotes were attributed at different times, and a single action was interpreted differently. A student reported that Professor Davis singled out international students, asking in patronizing tone if they “understood” what she was stating. An international student I interviewed, however, stated that Davis was always “checking in” with them to see if they comprehended her directions. Contexts and perspectives always shifted, and it was hard to verify exactly what happened.

After much thought, I decided I must talk to one more person before I wrote this article. To be very truthful, I wasn’t exactly expecting a response when I emailed her. However, Professor Davis got back to me only after

four hours after my initial email, asking what time I would like to conduct the interview.

I visited her office at 4pm on October 28th, the Monday immediately following the weekend the show was supposed to be performed. Her office, Meyran 201, was a surprisingly cozy room, with ample space and sunlight pouring in from the large windows on the right side of the room. In this particular autumn afternoon, the vermilion sun grazed the shelves of books (mainly on the topic of theatrical art) that filled an entire side of her office. Professor Davis, who was working on her computer, stood up when she saw me and shook my hand. “Thanks for coming,” she added, smiling. She offered me a seat on one of the couches or armchairs placed near the entrance.

Even though she greeted me courteously, there was something a little scattered in the way she spoke. I quickly got an explanation when she spoke, almost in an apologetic tone. “I have been attending the forums we have prepared all weekend—and I have been talking with, you know, advisees all day.”

Suddenly, I felt very uncomfortable. In my hand I was holding notes with some very ugly accusations about this woman who looked like she needed a midday nap. But I managed to explain to her that while some questions may offend her, they must be asked. She seemed a little hesitant but answered that it would be fine.

The first question I asked was why she chose this particular play. Some students have been saying that the choice itself was an example of cultural appropriation. She began by saying she was looking for a show with large cast. Moreover, she wanted to “break away” from a “Euro-centric program.” To wrap it up, she mentioned that she never felt that the production was solely her own. “Theater’s a communal art,” she added. “Everyone involved in the production of this play tells the story.”

I then asked her what the audition process was like. She explained that she had no rigid structure: no monologue, no scripts. “I looked at the ability and skills of each student, really.” These abilities varied from dancing to playing a musical instrument. I felt a little ambiguous about this answer. In a way, this choice made the audition accessible to students who never participated in theaters. At the same time, it also sounded like a rather subjective and arbitrary sets of standards.

I asked her how she felt about the issue of whitewashing, especially since it is said that 5 out of 6 leads were Caucasian. In a slightly more heightened voice she added, “Truthfully, I did not take race into consideration.” She frowned just slightly and spoke. “I am

not sure how you define ‘lead roles,’ but if I had to pick them, they would be the Jade emperor, Buddha, Guan Yan, Monkey King, and the Monk.” Among these five roles, two, not just one, role was to be played by a student of Eastern Asian heritage. Also, she mentioned later that, the play was like a “house of cards.” No single cast was more important than the other, and even one deduction would make the whole thing collapse.

I then asked her some more trivial questions which addressed some aspects of the play students found problematic:

Q: Can you respond to the quote “This is our China, not their China”? A couple of students I interviewed had mentioned that you’ve said this.

A: (looking perplexed, slightly frowning) I am not sure where it comes from.

Q: I was thinking, perhaps the quote refers to fictionality versus reality?

A: I don’t think that is the way I would have phrased it, but it could be. The goal of every production is to create a world that is unique. In a way, the script is like a blueprint without all the details, or a roadmap in contrast to the journey. Each production mustn’t be an exact copy of another, nor should really be a precise reflection of historical reality. We call that ‘dead art.’

Q: A student had told me that, on the first day of production, you went around saying “Namaste” to the cast members?

A: It was an icebreaker for all students to do. On the first day, we said “Namaste, I am ____” to each other because India represents the “West” part of Journey to the West. On the second day, we said “Nihao, I am ____,” since the play starts in China.

There were a couple other verifications like these, but it all seemed rather pointless and even a little irrelevant to the main issues concerning the cancellation of the show. I wanted to talk about the day of separation, or segregation, as some students have phrased.

In order to bring up the topic, I explained the version I know: she had segregated the student based on race, rather than identities, as evidenced by one Asian American student who was included in the “international” group. Instantly, I could feel the air between us tensing up. She crossed her legs, and spoke, a little louder than before. “I didn’t know the history.”

I asked her what that meant. “With the tight schedule we had, we had no,” she paused, as if searching for words. “...luxury to get to know everyone in the cast.” I realized she was referring to the Asian American student. It seemed that she never really knew the girl, and she was beginning to sound upset. So I asked her

to retrace the day instead. She took a moment, and spoke on.

According to Professor Davis, the department chair was approached by a student who brought up the issue of marginalization of international students. Because of this, the chair suggested that she have a talk with the cast. “I was surprised and sad to hear this through someone else, rather than a member of the cast,” she added, in a more elevated pitch.

At this point, she suddenly diverted to tell me a story that seemed to have affected her decision to segregate the group. “A few days before the incident had happened, one of the American cast [members] had made a rude remark about the international students.” Even though she did not go in detail, I remembered hearing this from an international student, who reported that they were called “extras” by this one American lead. Professor Davis spoke on. “I was also noticing that during breaks students were sitting only with their language groups. I wanted to address these things.” Okay, so what did it have to do with segregation? Before I could ask, she continued.

“I felt that the international students may feel more sensitive if American students were in their presence. I thought I should let them talk privately.” I was still unable to properly understand why she would choose to have the discussions on the same day, when there were two issues that seem somewhat linked, but were in fact separate: the issue of “whitewashing” and a “rude comment made by a lead.” She herself sounded a little confused herself. Her stories surrounding this particular day was somewhat out of order, jumpy, and difficult to hold onto. When I asked for clarification, she responded.

“I wasn’t planning to do this. It wasn’t premeditated.” She emphasized several times while telling this story. I asked her what she discussed with with the “American” Group. Many of them had told me that Professor Davis seemed to avoid responsibility, or even that she delegated the blame upon the students for the marginalization issue. She could not recall exactly what was said, but told me she had said something along the lines of, let’s be “sensitive” to each other, or that it’s incumbent upon “you” who are not far away from home, to welcome them more warmly.

“I wasn’t trying to blame them. But some students may have felt that way.” “I understand.” I didn’t, not really. I tried to make sense of it. “So you are telling me that you were trying to address internal segregation, which may coincidentally aligned with the students’ race?”

continued from page 6

“Yes!”

“But what about the Asian American student?”

Her voice cracked a little bit here. She sounded defensive. “I really had no knowledge of her background. She has done translation for me from Chinese to English. She taught a Chinese chant.”

“Didn’t you still make an assumption?”

“I did, I guess. I made an assumption, as you said. I am responsible [for] that.”

I still found a couple things problematic. Based on what she said, it seemed that she addressed the issue of internal segregation among the students based on language. But that is not really what the department chair asked her to address. What she was supposed to discuss was “marginalization,” as she phrased, or, more curtly, “whitewashing.” There should have been a clear explanation as to how the leads were picked and what attitudes she had towards the play. Instead, she segregated the two groups to address issues that were linked but ultimately different. Internal or implicit segregation within group is purely about student dynamic. The issue at hand, the casting, was something that only she really had control over. Not only that, I found the act itself inappropriate, no matter the purpose. Even if the separation was done to facilitate the addressing of internal tension, and even if the segregation was not based on race, she had reinforced and formalised the implicit division among students by physically removing them from each other.

Professor Davis seemed abashed, a little fidgety. “I was not really addressing it racially, although other people thought I should have.” She spoke. “It wasn’t by design that I segregated them.” “In hindsight, rather than getting back to work, I wish we had a meeting as one big group. I would have asked if anyone wanted to talk about any issue.” She sounded sincere. Moreover, she seemed more distressed than she had been at any other time during my interview. Once again, I felt that discomfort and guilt, but verified a couple more quotes I have heard. A student I had talked to attributed the quote “it’s not like I asked you guys to paint your eyes smaller” to Professor Davis, on that day she was talking to the “American” group. When I told her, she backed out and shook her head in cartoonish motion. “No way.” I asked her if there was anything that she said that may have transformed into this quote. She could not think of anything. Understandably, she did not want to discuss the quote any further. We moved on.

I did bring up the phrase “American accent.” According to some people, she has said that she had no time to teach the international student “American accent,” which was an important part of acting. Upon hearing this, she frowned and shook her head. “Theater is a chorus of voices.” Was she possibly referring to diction but made bad word choices? “I believe an actor needs to be clear. But I don’t believe I used that phrasing. I don’t see in any way it could have been said.”

We briefly discussed Romeo and Juliet, a play that was set in “non-descript, war-torn, Middle-Eastern country,” as characterized by students who were in this play. Some of them even mentioned that this was how Professor Davis described it. The main controversy surrounding the play was tokenization. One student had even openly posted on social media that she felt she was cast based on her skin color, rather than talent. Many students told me that Juliet’s family members were played by students of color, whereas members of Romeo’s family was played by Caucasian students. Professor dismissed it by saying it simply did not happen (Also, Juliet’s mother was played by a Caucasian student, she added.) I referred to the SPOTs form that were supposedly filled out against her after this production, to see if she was aware of them. She shook her head. Here she seemed to show some genuine frustration about the issue of communication. “Years ago, our played carried .5 credits.” “People were more passionate.” she added. “The creative process was healthier. Now, people are too afraid to speak up against the authority.”

Journey to the West: Interview with Director

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I asked her if she was aware that students think she will not write recommendations to those who speak against her. She was surprised. “That’s not true.” She said. She raised her voice significantly. She sounded emotional, although I could see that she tried to stay articulate. “No one came directly up to me.” She said. “Not before it blew up. Other than the chair of the theater department, no one had told me what was simmering.” I asked her if she thought students were responsible for communicating with their professors. She was quick to respond. “I think communication is key. Art [I think she meant visual art] is a solo act, but theater needs communication from everyone.”

I decided to give her a momentary pause, under a pretense that I needed to retype some of things, straighten out typos. Then we began to discuss the day the show has been canceled. She said that moment she read the posters on the Protest tree, she felt a need to talk about this. She sat in a circle with the cast. They had a long discussion about whether they should “go on” with the play, which opened a “floodgate.” Some wanted to cancel the play immediately. According to her, some were “too afraid to perform” because of aftermath that will follow (as was the case for a student I have talked). It was a long and heated debate, until they finally decided to vote on the issue and asked her to leave the set. I asked her how she felt during the 12 minutes in which was in

a distant studio, a place she chose to make sure that the students were out of her earshot. “I was just sad. I was sad about the misunderstanding. I was sad about the work the students put in. I was sad about the resources the department put in, costumes and all.”

When she came back, it was decided that the show was canceled. After the cast said their goodbyes, she stayed extra 40 minutes to talk with the students who lingered. Most of them shared brief words of thanks with each other and gave hugs. She noted how two students acted. “There was someone sobbing.” She spoke. “Then there was a student who came up to me and said, I didn’t know it would turn out like this. It seemed like she admitted that she got the ball rolling, but I don’t think she wanted this to happen.” Then, as if to summarize, she spoke. “Still, I am more sensitive to now than I was before. I understand different points of views. I understand how the appearance of things look.” She did add, skeptically. “But some came up to me and said they voted because they were afraid of demonstrations that will happen, or being blamed for participating in this play.”

There was a quiet. In a way, the interview was done—it had covered all the timeline needed. But it sounded like there was more for her to say. When I probed, the anguish with which she spoke when talking about issue of communication surfaced again.

“When I came out,” she spoke. “It was plastered all over the campus and buildings, these huge, neon, handwritten signs saying that ‘Carol Davis and TDF is racist.’ ‘The theater program is racist.’” She sounded angry. “They were put up while everyone on the cast was on the stage. So it was signs made by people who do not know me, who have never interacted with me.” I remembered those signs. They were indeed neon, bright, although not huge. 8.5 by 11 inches, standard A4 size. But many of them were provocative. After all, students were angered by this issues—their rage was transferred directly on those posters, I recalled.

I collected myself and then we discussed forums that replaced the show. There were talks and discussions led by Asian actors and directors. Dr. Amanda Kemp came to discuss campus diversity. On Friday, Asian American Alliance was invited to host a forum, but they had declined. The attendance to these forums were very low, never exceeding more than 20 students per event. Professor Davis sounded bitter when mentioning the number, although when I asked about the experience, she had said, “I went through quite an education. I wish everyone had come.” And as a person who was interested in the controversy but did not attend these events, I didn’t really have a response.

(Having done some follow-ups, now I know that there were practical reasons as to why students did not

come, other than an unwillingness to communicate. Due to the urgency in which everything was prepared, the forums were not publicized enough. TDF contacted AAA only three days before the date forum was supposed to be held. Even the e-board members are students—it is practically impossible to juggle the school work and prepare a decent forum in three days.)

It was clear that she wanted communication, or some sort of dialogue. After all, she was sitting with this random student writer for two straight hours. I asked her if there was anything she wanted to say about the experience. “It was incredibly hurtful. I do not understand why we couldn’t talk about it in civil ways. I do not understand why people who did not know me wanted to destroy me so completely. No one will look up at me in the same way. I will never be the same.” She then added. “Nothing I did was intended to be mean. I understand how choices I made caused people to be frustrated. I understand that. And I am sorry for that.” She spoke quicker, louder, as her body tensed. “And I wish they have talked about it. I wish we had talked as soon as situation arose. The second I knew about it, it exploded—it was like a wildfire.” In my head, I recalled the neon posters, the black markers. I also remembered how bitter, betrayed, and just despondent my fellow Asian American students felt when they heard the news. I could see the broken, feverish expression on Professor Davis’ face overlap with theirs.

Professor Davis’ voice was becoming teary. She covered one eye with her right hand. “See, I don’t know what’s there.” She then removed the hand that covered the eye with her other hand. “If someone did that, I would go like, oh yeah, I didn’t know that.” She spoke on. “I truly wish that, someone came up to me, and that we talked about it.”

And that was the end of our interview. I closed up my laptop, and we thanked each other. “Thank you for your interest, and thank you for making an effort to verify,” she said.

“It’s not an issue. I feel that many things were taken out of context, and I don’t think it’s fair that you had a chance to speak.” I responded, but inside I felt the same discomfort I had when I first entered the room. But now it was more like emptiness, or even deep hunger.

We chatted for a bit afterwards, for which I did not take notes. I learned that her dissertation was on Shakespeare plays, that she started a theater organization in Nepal that promotes sanitation and education of girls, and, lastly, that she once studied in a country that I call home, South Korea. She had almost taught theater in college only 45 minutes away from where I used to live. She spoke of temples she had been too, and then try to say in slightly awkward but oddly familiar way, “Hangumgal,” or Ko

continued from page 7

rean. She spoke some short Korean phrases. I couldn't help but laugh a little. And in that moment, I felt that there was something between us that transcended my disapproval of her actions. In that brief moment, I felt faith in my ability to talk to her. Meaning, I guess, I found her personable.

Student offers advice about balancing coursework with leisure

BY AMANI DOBSON
Layout Assistant

It's Friday night. You're at a party dancing and having fun, and all of a sudden a thought crosses your mind: "I have a paper due tomorrow that I haven't started". You are immediately drenched in worry and panic. It's past midnight, and there's no way you can start it now. You have to wait for your friends to leave with you anyways. For the rest of the party, you're stressed. Your dance moves become a bit more stiff and your carefree smile from a few minutes ago shifts into a frown causing your forehead to wrinkle quite a bit. Your night out just turned awfully sour.

College is time consuming. Between classes, electives, and work study for some, it can be difficult to fit in time for yourself. Students often look forward to the weekends because they want to finally let loose, but it does not always work out that way. The single greatest flaw in the structure of college life is the lack

Elephant encroachments on human habitats, lift of hunting ban

BY OLIVIA CAPASSO
Junior Editor

The current political climate in Southern African countries is centralized around the issue of wildlife encroachment on human habitats, particularly that of elephants in countries such as Zimbabwe, Botswana, and Namibia. The countries argue that elephants have posed such a threat to communities with their sizable population and potential for violence recently that lifts on the ivory trade and hunting ban would not only be beneficial for their economies, but necessary in order to contain the damage caused by the animal. They are collectively appealing to Cites, the global watchdog overseeing the prohibited trade of raw ivory, at their next conference in order to lift the ban. Zimbabwe argues that its stockpile of ivory alone is worth upwards of \$300 million, which, if sold, could fund the improvement of conservation habitats and the maintenance of surrounding wildlife. Since the country cannot reasonably contain all of the elephants currently within the conservation boundar-

Journey to the West: Interview with Director

As I left Meyran, I felt uneasy. There were just too many loose ends, unresolved questions for both parties. Many Asian (American) students who encountered the stories were shocked and hurt. Professor Davis who faced the burst of anger is left with unanswered questions and frustration. But they never had

of delayed gratification. Delayed gratification is the ability to put off something that is fun or pleasing right now in order to gain something more fun or pleasing later on. Take the famous marshmallow test. Children were told to avoid eating one marshmallow in order to get the ability to eat more marshmallows later on. College can be just like this. Going to a party on a Friday night could be fun, but not if you don't have any of your homework done. The entire night and the following day could be a rush hour of thoughts and stressors bouncing around your head. Instead, you could stay home Friday, finish that assignment, and go out on Saturday. That way you'll truly be able to let loose without thoughts of assignments lingering over you like the grim reaper.

It's definitely important to give yourself time for leisure activities, which is why college students especially should dedicate more time to organizing their days. Instead of going to sleep after class or going out,

a chance to properly communicate. That bothered me. Because I knew that the bitterness never really disappears. Instead, it only gets pushed to the side, because one cannot live past it otherwise. I have had that experience too many times. Because of that, I knew that this bitterness will resurface in one way or another, per-

try to use the momentum your brain still has to just crank out your homework for the following day. Really sitting down and doing exactly what needs to be done can make your relaxation time that much sweeter. It can be tough to gather that energy after class, but think about it this way: if you wait you'll probably end up staying awake very late to rush and finish assignments causing you to be tired the next day. The cycle of procrastination will only repeat itself and your leisure time will never be completely luxuriate. Everyone deserves to nap, to go out and party, and to get time for themselves. However, with the amount of activities going on in college, it is difficult to get that time without risking losing sleep later on or being stressed while having a "day off" unless you exercise delayed gratification. Make the hard decision to actually spend time early in the day doing homework so that during the weekend or even in the evening you can truly kick back and relax with no intruding thoughts

happening in more violent ways. I found no resolution, unlike I hoped, as I went back to sleep that day. But moments before I fell asleep, I thought, "I hope we can talk."

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ruining your time.

There are so many great leisure activities you can indulge in once you're free of other stressors. Reread one of your favorite books, do a face mask, dance in your room, or even sleep. Though college can be a great experience, it can also have negative impacts on your mental health if you do not take care of yourself. Overloading yourself with last minute assignments can develop serious stress related issues. According to the National Sleep Foundation, those who are under a considerable amount of stress can find themselves with insomnia or sleep deprivation. Those two things could then impact your immune system.

Overall, it is important to make sure you structure your day in productive ways to maximize your leisure time and stay mentally healthy throughout college.

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own livelihood and that of its kin, and it would never even take into consideration the potential of an encroachment on another species' territory in order to do so.

Not only is it crucial to consider the human aspect of this conflict, but also how the reaction of lifting the trade and hunting ban is, as a result, wildly out of line and massively detrimental to the wildlife in Southern Africa. The species is currently ranked in the International Union for Conservation of Nature's "red list" of particular animals that pose a great risk to extinction in the near fu-



Photo courtesy scmp.com.
Violent elephant encroachments on human habitats calls for lift of hunting ban.

Brittany Piper highlights pervasiveness of Rape Culture, need for change

BY ALEX PINSK
Editor-in-Chief

On October 23rd, the Sexual Assault & Violence Elimination (SAVE) club on campus welcomed Brittany Piper, professional speaker and sexual assault prevention expert to F&M. Brittany Piper speaks about her own experience as a victim of sexual violence, about rape culture on college campuses, and about how pain can actually transform people's lives. Her talk at F&M was entitled "Rape Culture: A Survivor's Perspective."

Piper began by identifying the population affected by sexual assault and violence and defining rape culture. According to Piper, before stepping foot on a college campus, one of four women and one of six men will have already experienced sexual assault. When students were asked to stand if they knew of someone who had been the victim of sexual violence, almost the entire room stood up; when asked in how many of these cases incidents were reported, about half the room sat down. This is telling of how rape is viewed on college campuses. Rape culture is the message that rape and sexual assault are just a part of life and that that is okay. Because it is so commonplace on college campuses, many do not see it as an issue, nor do they act as allies. Much of this comes from a lack of understanding of consent. Consent is "permission that is verbal, conscious, willingly given, enthusi-

astic, and revocable," it is something that is "voluntary and mutual and can be withdrawn at any point; consent is mandatory" (Piper). If someone does not consent to a given sexual activity or cannot consent to that activity, it is rape.

Sex education in schools does not help the issue. Only 24 states require sex education. 70% of those states promote abstinence, and even schools that talk about sex, focus on safe sex measures including STI prevention, the reproductive process, and contraceptive options. They do not teach about the nature of interpersonal sexual relationships, pleasure, or consent. We tend to get all of that information from the media—from TV shows which often glamorize rape scenes, video games which often go unmonitored by parents, music which uses language that indicates that sexual assault is okay and is normal. With today's technology, we have access to all of this information from a young age and are desensitized to issues such as sexual violence. There is a level of dehumanization that goes on and leads to rape culture on college campuses.

Piper explains that we should not have to know a survivor of sexual assault—although most of us do even if we don't know it—to care about the issue and be an ally. Sexual assault should not be the only crime for which we should have to prove we are victims (Piper). Sexual assault is an

issue that needs to be addressed regularly and thoroughly because of its pervasive nature. In fact, resensitizing people to the issue may be the first step. Piper discusses the importance of empathy and of believing people's stories. Too often the victims of rape and sexual assault are blamed because of how much they were drinking or what they were wearing, or their poor judgment. People have this skewed vision of sexual assault that the assailant is always a stranger from a dark alleyway.

When in reality, usually cases of rape are not initiated by a stranger. It is usually a friend or a partner—someone well-known to the victim.

Piper told her own story and explains how all of the pain that she has experienced has driven her to act and change lives. She says that "[w]hen we allow our pain to [transform] us, that empathy and compassion that are rooted from our experiences become profound weapons of SO-MUCH-GOOD. Now, for the past eight years, [she has] found that [her] greatest purposes have been rooted in [her] deepest pains" (brittanypiper.com). She believes that others may feel the same.

In order to change the persistent rape culture that is ever-present on all college campuses, F&M included, it is essential that every single student create a safe environment and educate themselves on how to be an ally. This comes from teaching each other,

learning from each other, and exercising empathy. If we are silent, we are complicit (Piper).

In order to get involved directly, students may join SAVE which hosts biweekly meetings with the purpose of addressing major issues surrounding sexual violence and assault. Information for SAVE can be found on the F&M website: <https://www.fandm.edu/campus-life/clubs/save> and Instagram: @fandm_save. Feel free to also reach out to Katherine Coble, kcoble@fandm.edu and Riley Belden, rbelden@fandm.edu, co-presidents of the club for more information. Additionally, the Title IX Office and Title IX Coordinator, Kate Snider are located in College Square in the Office of Student Affairs. Find more information on reporting and available resources here: <https://www.fandm.edu/campus-life/title-ix>.

Finally, if you are interested in engaging with Brittany Piper directly, you can find information on her website: <http://brittanypiper.com/> and Instagram @thebrittpiper.

We would like to sincerely thank Brittany Piper for her visit to F&M and the thoughtful story she told and advice she gave. If anyone has any further opinions or thoughts you would like to share, please do not hesitate to contact reporter@fandm.edu to contribute to the conversation.

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NCAA Researcher Lydia Bell discusses implications of stress on student-athletes

BY ISABEL PARIS
Campus Life Editor

This week's common hour discussed the importance and the unspoken aspects of mental health regarding student-athletes. Lydia Bell, an associate director of research at the NCAA headquarters, discussed her recent research on the mental health of student-athletes in comparison to non-athletes as well as their willingness to share their concerns. Her talk was titled "Optimizing Performance: Using Data to Maximize Student-Athlete Wellness," and she used many different forms of data that explored the varying ways in which athletes deal with pressures from all around them. She began with a poll to keep the audience engaged, and she used different questions in order to either shock or reinforce the ideas that were already assumed with the pressures that student-athletes face today.

Bell began with the fact that students enter college already feeling overwhelmed. In fact, 39% of students are already stressed when they

first come to college by all of the possible things that they will have to do. Bell explained that this type of research has been going since 1986, and every year more and more students enter college stressed. However, Bell emphasizes that while most students are stressed, student-athletes are less likely to report mental health concerns than normal students. She expanded on the idea that maybe student-athletes feel apprehensive to open up because they are supposed to feel comfortable in their sports.

When students first enter college sports they are immediately brought into a group and community. Also, physical exercise should be enough for someone to not be stressed if they do something every day, like playing sports. But Bell explained that it is because of these stigmas that athletes are nervous and afraid to report any mental health concerns.

A few of the factors that Bell discussed are the identity of a student-athlete as well as their time demands that can result in mental health issues. Student-athletes,

specifically in Division III sports, have pretty equal devotion to their sports and academics. They spend 28.5 hours a week devoted to their sports and 40.5 hours a week devoted to their schoolwork. However, student-athletes are only getting 6.27 hours nightly of sleep and 17.5 hours a week for socializing and relaxing. This lack of alone time and rest leads to worse physical performance which then makes the athlete go into a spiral of stress and pressure that they place on themselves.

Most of these athletes have devoted their lives to their sports since they were 12 years old. Many sports, at a certain level, call or require that the athlete make that specific sport their main focus. Student-athletes lead their lives in terms of their academics and their sports teams. This duality in their lives helps them create a drive; however, it can create permanence in someone's life. As a result of this intense focus and identity in a sport, the poor performance that manifests through this lack of energy and sleep can create mental health issues for athletes.

Lydia Bell concluded her talk by

referring to the different resources that the NCAA provides through its organization and their website. These resources spoke to different types of stress, societal pressure, and, more specifically, mental health issues that arise out of athletics.

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Photo courtesy of fandm.edu
Lydia Bell discusses the stress that is placed on to student-athletes.

Campus Life

Common Hour speakers combat college hazing norms in Greek organizations

BY SAMANTHA MILOWITZ
Staff Writer

This week’s common hour featured the Gruver family: parents, Rae Anne Gruver and Stephen Gruver, who lost their eldest son, Max Gruver, due to hazing just two years ago. The two now travel and speak with various college campuses, high schools, and organizations across the nation, telling Max’s story and trying to end hazing so that no other person has to experience the horror that they have. At each school, they sell wristbands, printed with statements such as “#StopTheHazing” and “Fly-HighMax,” so that others can spread awareness and always keep in mind that if they see something they should say something. The Max Gruver Foundation has sold 35,000 wristbands in the past year. The Gruvers have also helped to make a new Felony Hazing Law in Louisiana, as it has been deemed “The Max Gruver Act.”

Rae Anne Gruver began the common hour by letting us get to know who Max Gruver was. She spoke of his interest in political journalism, his kindness towards his family and friends, and why he wanted to join a fraternity in the first place. She spoke about how he wanted to make friends, to have a home away from

home. The fraternity, Phi Delta Theta, was one that Max liked a lot because of the people that were apart of it. She spoke about his excitement for the fraternity and even stated how he was up for pledge class president.

Rae Anne then described the incident that took away her son’s life. While she did not know the details until after receiving the call of his death, the events that took place were soon revealed by fraternity brothers who came confessed after being questioned about the night. The pledges, including Max, had been summoned to the house for “Bible Study,” a ritual hazing practice in Phi Delta Theta.

She described how the pledges were first doused with chili sauce and then placed in a single file line. They were then forced to stand against the wall, their toes and nose touching the wall. The pledges were then asked questions about the brotherhood if the pledges answered incorrectly, they had to drink a type of alcohol called Diesel until told to stop. This alcohol was different than most as it is 190 proof, 2.5 times stronger than rum or vodka. She described how Max answered pretty much every question wrong, and how the more he drank, the more questions he got wrong. At one point, the brothers had to wrap a puke bag around his neck, and even

after that, he was forced to drink 5-6 more pulls of Diesel. The brothers then left Max to “sleep it off,” causing him to choke on his own vomit in the middle of the night, causing his death. Rae Anne described how the pledges, then, were forced to carry Max’s dead body to the back seat of a car, where he was taken to the hospital even though there was nothing more a doctor could do. 10 fraternity brothers were arrested following Max’s death, one facing up to 10 years in prison.

As Rae Anne read the details of her son’s murder, she broke down, muttering into the microphone for a moment to say, “sorry,” as she wiped her tears and continued. There has never been a more quiet Mayser gymnasium.

Then it was time for the father to speak, Stephen Gruver. Stephen spoke about the actual word “hazing,” and what it means to haze. He asked students in the crowd to ask themselves the following questions as the first sign to be able to take note if they are being hazed: is this causing emotional or physical distress? Is this illegal? Am I being asked to keep this a secret? Would I do this to myself or my own sibling? He then spoke about how hazing is not just physical abuse, not just forced drinking, but falls under many categories: mental

abuse, physical abuse, financial extortion, sleep-deprivation. He spoke to the crowd with pleading words, emphasizing that if there are students here being hazed, that they should not just sit by but stand up because you never know when someone can take it a step too far. He ended by equivocating hazing to something we are all familiar with: drunk driving. While we might think we have our driving and our drinking under control, we don’t. It is important to acknowledge that even something small can eventually turn into something bigger, worse.

This common hour was brought to F&M by senior, Anna Gombar. Anna Gombar is a member of the organization Alpha Delta Pi and Rae Anne Gruver is an alumnus of Alpha Delta Pi, as they met each other through the mutual organization.

The Gruver family encourages students to speak up if they are being hazed and report any and all hazing to the Department of Public Safety or your house dean. They did not expect it to happen to their son, so why would you expect it to happen to you? See something, say something. End hazing once and for all.

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Writer promotes Fall Dance Concert through her long dedication towards dance

BY SHEN WANG
Contributing Writer

Driven by a desire for me to follow in her footsteps, my mother always dreamed of me being a dancer. The day I lost my first tooth—a sign that bones are strong enough to begin dancing—was the first day I walked into the dance room. Not inspired by a story in a movie, I chose to dance, simply pushed by my mother.

Facing the task of mastering the age-long movements of traditional Chinese dance, I struggled at first. I still remember the early years of this practice vividly, my teacher often talking privately with my mother after class. Although I could not hear what they said, I could sense it was a criticism of my talent on dance, as a forced smile on my mother’s face showed. My heart ached, young though I was. There was a strong impulse that made me want to prove that I could dance well. In eight years, I perseveringly locked myself in the dance studio and started repeating the same arm movement or circle over and over, sweating heavily on the floor. I lacked rhythm, so I practiced the piano for two straight years to prove that I could teach myself musical timing. I was weak in control, so I have practiced

to handstand, pirouette, and cartwheel for four years just to complete all the tricks perfectly. Around my 10 grade, I had even won national traditional dance competitions, heard thunderous applause, and spotted my mother with emotional tears and genuine smiles.

But I was more confused inside. Although audiences spoke highly of my dancing skills, I felt my dance lacked a soul or a spirit because I was dancing less from what I really love. I had been practicing the nuances of classical dance for so many years, simply eager to prove myself to others, circumscribed myself in a frame, and washed away all the unique characteristics my dance used to have. I gradually found out that I was experiencing what is called “pao fan” in Chinese; it literally means your style has run away. After realizing this, I start to reflect on the meaning of dancing for me and pursue the actual enthusiasm and joy in dance.

In the year I searched for an answer, suddenly, Isadora Duncan came into my life. I was “shocked” by her La Marseillaise: she dressed in a gown, barefoot, moving like the seas churning. She transcends the traditions to show the beauty of freedom unexpectedly. I subconsciously imitated

her to start dancing. I felt love for life from her moves and lights in her eyes. Written in water, I caught that the soul of dance should come from my own spirit, and every movement was born from my heart, instead of the applause of audiences. I realized through dance how to express the beauty of life, apart from perfect skills. A huge power from my heart drove me to be avant-garde like her, abandon shackles on my heart and body, and mature emotionally and spiritually.

I never understood until that moment. I used to prove myself to people around, and prove my mom’s choice is correct. My dance is just to get the audience’s approval, not to dance out of the beauty I want to show. But from that time on, I started dancing for myself.

When I rekindled my love for dance, I broke my knees. I fell from the stage when I was performing in Edinburgh. The doctor once said, “Without the accident, you can never go back to the stage again.” My dream seemed to be broken completely at that moment. Even if I can walk or even run later, my former dance group never want me anymore. With despair, I went to college. I saw the audition of the dance company in Gmail. I clearly



Photo courtesy of fandm.edu
Shen Wang discusses her personal connection to dance and how it has brought her towards self-discovery. She will be in the Dance Company’s Fall Dance Concert.

knew that this was my chance. Fortunately, I succeeded.

I have always been running on the road of self discovery and pursuing dreams through the ups and downs. I am always full of power as long as I am seeking something I love inside.

In November, our dance company will have a Fall Dance Concert, all are welcome to see it!

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Arts & Leisure

Tastefully twisted, Todd Philips’ film *Joker* defies viewers’ expectations

BY CONNOR MIRABELLA
Staff Writer

“My mother always tells me to smile and put on a happy face. She told me I had a purpose: to bring laughter and joy to the world.” Not exactly the words you expect to hear from DC’s most famous villain in a career defining performance by Joaquin Phoenix. Todd Philips’ *Joker* may not bring you laughter, but it will leave you yearning for more. Given the mysterious and uninformative nature of the previews, it’s difficult to know what to expect walking into the theater. This was done deliberately and spectacularly; every moment of the film is engaging. Love it or hate it, this movie was engaging from start to finish and reveals how truly broken our system of dealing with mental health patients is. Initially a skeptic, I have always been a big believer in Heath Ledger’s rendition of the joker. No other version of this character has ever come close to Ledger’s in quality or originality - until now.

Arthur Fleck is a man who likes to make people laugh and smile (which is why he works as a clown), but he is also downtrodden and lacks connections and purpose. At

one point he tells his government assigned therapist that “through my whole life, I didn’t even know if I really existed.” This film has been criticized by some for being cynical and making audiences uncomfortable, but that is a critical element of this work of art. The realism is so well played out that one leaves the theater wondering who around them could be the next joker. One of the best ways to describe Arthur Fleck during the majority of this film is as a person that nobody cares about. Not a person who is hated, but somebody who is not loved and may have never been. The character unravels throughout the film in such a way that leads viewers to root for Fleck in achieving any form of confidence and satisfaction in an exceedingly cruel world.

Phoenix’s ability to delve into the role physically added a crucial aspect to the performance. The body movements communicate more than just the importance of the scene but also the position Arthur Fleck is in, typically lacking power, influence, and importance. Joaquin Phoenix had to meet with a nutritionist to achieve the desired slender build and ate close to 500 calories a day for much of



Photo courtesy of collider.com
Joaquin Phoenix stars as the Joker in psychological thriller that follows the formation of the famous DC Comic villain.

the filming. The awkward body stance of Arthur Fleck further reflects his misshapen mind and crumpled sense of self. When he is alone, there’s a visible freedom in his movements as he dances in the mirror. When he’s in his clown makeup? Perfectly controlled body movements reveal coordination and confidence. But in every other scene, Arthur Fleck moves around like he’s never quite sure how to use his limbs; where to stand, walk, sit, or be. He sods around a Gotham that feels like it could be New York City in the 1970’s and falls almost

entirely outside of the DC Universe. The personal decomposition of a mentally ill man that has been in the shadows of society all his life is more than just an explanation of why the joker exists, but a possible explanation for why senseless evil exists in this world at all. “What do you get when you cross a mentally ill loner with a society who abandons him and treats him like crap? — What you deserve.”

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News Editor suggests three true crime podcasts to put you in Halloween spirit

BY KATHERINE COBLE
News Editor

It’s almost Spooky Season, which means you may be pulling out the Halloween decor and scanning horror movies on Netflix. But if all those typical festivities have been accomplished and you still want to get into the spooky spirit, try checking out these three true crime podcasts. Some of them may have flown under your radar before - but you’re sure to find at least one podcast on this list that will send chills down your spine.

1. Criminal

Criminal comes from the studios of WUNC North Carolina Public Radio in Durham, North Carolina. It’s one of the oldest true crime podcasts in the game, as well as one of the best produced. Host Phoebe Judge always provides soothing narration and sound engineering by NPR’s Rob Byers completes the vibe. Criminal describes its content as “stories of people who’ve done wrong, been wronged, or gotten caught somewhere in the middle.” It’s not a cut-and-dry murder show - instead, it explores the fringes of morality and the kookiness which can emerge. Prior subjects have included stowaways, hijackers, thieves, sex workers, and criminal investiga-

tors.

Every episode of Criminal is a standalone story, so feel free to jump around and listen to what interests you most. Good places to start? “Money Tree” (about identity theft with a twist), and “Vanish” (about how to fake your own death), are sure to please. But my personal favorite is Criminal’s first-ever episode, “Animal Instincts” which dares to ask the question - was a man put away for the murder of his wife by an owl?

2. True Crime Bullsh**

True Crime Bullsh** is, perhaps, one of the most underrated podcasts of all time. Hosted and researched by Josh Hallmark, this “serialized story of Israel Keyes” will leave you constantly checking behind your back. Israel Keyes is one of THE scariest true-crime figures out there: a serial killer responsible for an unknown number of murders, whose M.O. was truly to make people disappear. He died by suicide in 2012 while awaiting trial, but Josh Hallmark is on a noble mission to discover the true extent of his crimes.

True Crime Bullsh** stands out because of Hallmark’s impeccable and detailed research and record-hunting. He lines up Keyes’ travel records, cell phone pings, diaries, and FBI in-



Photo courtesy of carolinatheatre.org
Criminal is one of the original true crime podcasts, with standalone crime stories that walk the line between right and wrong.

terviews to piece together what he can - and investigate what he can’t. If you want to sit with uncomfortable details and end up down a million rabbit holes, True Crime Bullsh** is the podcast for you. Just be warned: you’ll never look at true crime the same.

3. Bear Brook

Bear Brook, the brainchild of New Hampshire Public Radio, tackles one of the creepiest true crime cases of all time. It begins in the isolated woods of New Hampshire and four bodies - three children and one adult woman - found inside barrels at Bear Brook State Park. The creepy part? They went unidentified for decades. In fact, when the podcast opens, they are still unidentified. Bear Brook masterfully

uses eyewitness testimony, scientific expertise, and existing police work to investigate what happened to these four Jane Does.

In most true crime podcasts, particularly those centered upon unsolved crimes or unidentified victims, closure is impossible. Bear Brook is special because it is different. Police have a strong suspect for the murders and in 2019 three of the victims were identified. Bear Brook is thus an interesting case of narrative media that collides with its real-world subject at exactly the right time. It’s definitely worth a listen.

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Arts & Leisure

Writer reviews *Midsommar*: a spooky season must-watch for thrill seekers

BY MATILDA STOLTE
Contributing Writer

For Halloween, I urge you to step out of the boring bubble of the same three Halloween movies into the world of *Midsommar*. It successfully accomplishes the task of overlapping the horrifying and the beautiful. Over the summer, I was peer pressured to go see it by my friend Kendra. We absentmindedly watched the two minute trailer, not really understanding what we were in for since neither of us has seen Ari Aster's first film *Hereditary*. We had only heard that *Midsommar* consisted of the two things we were seeking: ook and spook.

The film didn't even attempt to ease the audience into the craziness that is an Ari Aster movie. The lead character Dani is played by a relatively newcomer: Florence Pugh. I've previously seen her in the unexpected film *Lady McBeth* and the BBC limited series *The Little Drummer Girl*. After watching both, I made a promise to watch everything she is in. Pugh will play Amy in Greta Gerwig's upcoming *Little Women*. Alcott's Amy is the foil of Dani. Dani is quiet, codependent, and trapped in this light-hearted, easy-going personality that doesn't fit after tragedy strikes.

In *Midsommar*, we see Dani stuck in a loveless relationship with boyfriend Christian, played by Jack Reynor. Within the first five minutes, we witness Dani's sister

murder her parents and commits suicide through the unique torturous manipulation of exhaust pipes. Through devastation, we are able to closely examine the rocky relationship between Dani and Christian by their inability to properly communicate. Christian's core group of friends planned this trip to Sweden months prior each attending for various reasons. Pelle wants to show his friends his hometown. Actor William Jackson Harper of NBC's *The Good Place* plays Josh who is attempting to finish his thesis on the Midsommar festival they are all attending. Harper's Chidi from *The Good Place* and Josh are very similar: anxious, unsure, and a tad pedantic. Josh, the intellectually motivated juxtaposes both Christian and other friend Mark played by Will Poulter of *We're the Millers* and *Black Mirror: Bandersnatch*. Both Christian and Mark are there for leisure and do not put in any effort to learn the Harga culture they've been submerged into.

In an attempt to include the mourner, Dani is invited to this previously deemed boys trip. The group, led by Swedish friend Pelle, is introduced to all the peculiar elements of the festival along with the audience. Ari Aster plays with this potent sense of unfamiliarity and not belonging on multiple levels: through the eyes of trip crasher Dani and as outsiders of a traditional Swedish festival. We are slowly initiated into the Harga cul-

ture through awkward, extended dinners set at these oblong white tables bizarrely placed where everybody wears white smocks except the outsiders, including two newcomers from the UK. At the first dinner, they stand and honor two elders who sit at the head of the most important table. After the meal Dani and her friends barely touched, they follow the elders towards a large cliff. Questions and confusion mumbles within the group, but the leader Pelle assures them quietly. Possibly the most jarring scene is when the elders climb this rock, stutter something incoherent, and jump off separately. If you looked away like I did, you are reminded by the loud moans of pain from the second jumper who survives the fall. His leg being twisted to his torso forces the other leaders in white to end his life for him. As this is going on, the Americans force Pelle to explain the events that just transpired. This is the beginning of Dani's confusion and the absurdity that is Midsommar.

In a slight attempt of not completely ruining the film for you, let's fast forward to the end. The outsiders at the table decrease while Dani slowly assimilates to the Harga culture. The British couple is the first to go. As an audience, we believe the couple successfully escapes after suicide of the two elders, but their death is revealed to us at the end. The Harga people are shown fertilizing their dead bodies. Their mur-

der is followed with the killing of Mark who completely disrespects the sacred elder tree by peeing on it. Josh, the one who is most unlikely to disrespect the culture, pulls an academia Icarus, and attempts to read their most sacred text. Most deaths are off-screen, but the climax of the movie comes in the form of Dani winning the festival's prized honor: the May Queen. The festival celebrates their tradition where nine people get killed as sacrifices. Four outsiders (British Couple, Josh, and Mark) and four of their own are killed. As the May Queen, she gets to choose the ninth sacrifice. The honor of May Queen is representative of the fact that Dani was the only outsider who had proven loyalty and shown respect to the Harga culture. As part of her journey to freedom and self-discovery, she chooses the only outsider left to sacrifice: her boyfriend Christian.

Ari Aster successfully confuses and shocks the audience. There wasn't a single second in the movie where I felt like I could predict the next scene. *Midsommar* is the first horror movie I've seen where the scariest, thrilling scenes happen in broad daylight. The realization that the worst events occur right under your nose, refusing to be hidden, is possible the scariest part of *Midsommar*.

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Luca Italian Kitchen: the accidental brunch that I will never regret or forget

BY DIANA LICHTENSTEIN
Contributing Writer

Luca, the highly regarded Italian restaurant located on 436 West James Street, has recently expanded its menu to include brunch items.

Luca's appeal is rooted in its dedication to only sourcing the finest local ingredients and its emphasis on making customers feel right at home. The dinner menu is comprised mainly of Neapolitan inspired pizzas and handmade pasta dishes. In addition, Luca has great small plates, salads, and entrees such as steak and fish. Some of my personal favorite dishes are the Piccante pizza which has a spicy tomato sauce, garlic, soppressata, mozzarella, and hot honey, and the Gem Lettuces salad which has homemade croutons, a lemon-garlic dressing, and Grana Padano cheese to top it off. The dinner menu is not what I am here

to discuss, however. We are here to talk about brunch.

The brunch at Luca was an unknown entity to me until very recently. I had completely dropped the ball in terms of dinner reservations for parents weekend, and as it was approaching, a lot of my friends were saying that they had Luca reservations. Any student that is intelligent and strategic (clearly not I) knows to book Luca early. Like I said before, Luca is very highly regarded, especially among students, and for good reason; the food is ridiculously delicious. Anyways, I attempted to make a dinner reservation but to no avail as there were no time slots available except for on Sunday during the day. In all honesty, at first, I was a tad disappointed because I believed nothing could compare to the Piccante pizza that is only offered on the dinner menu. Boy, was I incorrect.

When my parents and I innocently walked into Luca on that Sunday

morning, we had no knowledge of the treat we were in for. Firstly, walking in, I was reminded of the last time I had been at Luca and all of the sweet memories associated with that. The interior is so aesthetically pleasing with its rustic yet charming feel and two-tier seating arrangement. Once we were seated, we all glanced over the menu which had an array of small plates, egg dishes, and flatbreads. To start, my family and I shared the Gem Lettuces salad, which was luckily still included in the brunch menu, followed with a sticky bun. This sticky bun was like no other. It was gooey and delectable, loaded with pecans and currants. For the main course, I decided to get the Porchetta flatbread which had roasted pork, cheddar, broccoli rabe, garlic aioli, and a sunny-side-up egg. The pork was succulent and the flatbread was crisp. In addition, I ordered a malted mocha which included espresso, steamed milk,

chocolate ganache, malt, and sea salt. It definitely hit the spot. My dad ordered the same entree and also thoroughly enjoyed it. My mom, on the other hand, ordered the soft scramble which included black truffle and Parmigiano. The prices were pretty reasonable and significantly lower than the dinner menu prices.

After my amazing brunch experience, while conversing about my parent's weekend with some friends, I was amazed to see how many people other than me did not know that Luca brunch existed. In writing this article, I am attempting to shed some light on the existence of this phenomenon and to those who did not know that Luca Brunch is a thing: yes it exists, and yes it is one-hundred percent worth it.

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Arts & Leisure

Staff Writer reviews *Taxi Driver*, film released in 1976 starring Robert DeNiro

BY CONNOR MIRABELLA
Staff Writer

Released in 1976, *Taxi Driver* is one of both Martin Scorsese and Robert DeNiro's most famous projects before either innovator was nearly as well known or as established talents as they are now. This was not the first time these two future stars had worked together either as they joined forces in "Mean Streets" just three years prior for a raucous picture about the rough side of life in New York City during the '70's. The pair take viewers on an oddly subtle yet auspicious whirlwind of the internal struggle for purpose that seems to define the inner city modern experience with *Taxi Driver*, and it is no surprise that it's been a cult classic ever since.

DeNiro makes use of his slow narration style to lay out the setting of Travis Bickle's life. Vietnam veteran and insomniac, Bickle (played by DeNiro) begins driving taxis at night to make use of his time while unable to sleep. He isolates himself and is a bit of a loner, but far from being a tormented character as much as he seems a wanderer. Frequenting the city's porn theaters at night and often having grandiose thoughts of pre-

scribed meaning, Bickle narrates parts of this movie as if he were writing it in a letter. The words are said slowly and deliberately, as if they have been carefully chosen whether or not there is actually anything significant about what is being said. Bickle's insomnia inflates his search for purpose, resulting in a desire to take action rather than frustration, as it would in most. Travis Bickle becomes consumed with the concept of carrying out a grand mission and doing something important in the world, not only to give his own existence meaning and his life importance but also to respond to the horrifying things he witnesses driving his cab.

Bickle is all consumed by his thoughts, which reflect his off-color perspective and disconnect from reality. Is an insomniac cab driver to blame for being cynical in some of the worst neighborhoods of New York City during the 1970s? He witnesses abuse, violence, and disgusting behavior that's often meant to be disrespectful towards him if not by coincidence. Cab drivers fade into the background for some, especially those in big cities. This happens today with cabs, Lyft, and Uber but there's a difference when people order rides on

their phone and have an app connect them. Living in a crowded city with nothing but cabs that are frequently the best way to get around leads to this becoming a normal facet of life that does not require any change in one going about their business. As a result, many people go about their business in the back of the cab, but Travis Bickle never quite blinks an eye. He has opinions on these things but he seems unfrustrated and unphased by the behavior in front of him during the moment. The culmination of this experience for Bickle results in an ending that feels like the free fall of a ride after you've been climbing steadily but don't know what is actually coming at the end of the ledge. The score, written by the late Bernard Herrmann, is absolutely crucial to the meaning and prolonged engaging features of this film. The music is not only beautifully composed but it is also very specifically controlled in how dramatically it sets the mood. The more times I watch this film, the more I see half of the plot carefully laid out in a beautiful score that I still have saved on my phone. This film is the perfect cocktail of original and deliberate directing with intensely researched acting and one of the



Photo courtesy of indiewire.com

Taxi Driver was released in 1976 and stars Robert DeNiro as the lead, Travis Bickle.

most superb movie scores I have ever heard. This particular motion picture took me some time after my initial viewing to fully understand because of the subtlety in Scorsese's directing that combines with his graphically realistic style, but it is a thriller worth recommending to anybody who has the patience to enjoy this incredibly relevant masterpiece in our day and age of American violence, weapons, and frustration.

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Kanye West's new album *Jesus is King* features Chick-fil-A, gospel music

BY AHMED ABUKWAIK
Contributing Writer

"Closed on Sunday, you my chick fil a..." Did Kanye really just refer to church as being his Chick-fil-A? Because if he did then, damn, he's right! I'm joking, obviously, but that goes to indicate his new album, *Jesus Is King*. There are a lot of moving parts to it, so I figured the best way to address it is by grouping each album into different categories: church vibes, mainstream, personal, and other tracks that are so different that they will be addressed individually.

I deemed the following as mainstream and good for mass consumption: "Follow god," "On God," and "Closed on Sunday." As of October 31st, "Follow God" ranked number two on Spotify's *United States Top 50*, "On God" ranked number nine, and "Closed on Sunday" ranked number eleven. Interestingly "Follow God" also had 1.7 million daily plays. To me personally, these songs have remnants of old Kanye in their beats and pace which I believe is the reason for how highly they rank on the charts.

A song I believe should be addressed individually is "Water." Maybe I listen to too much Frank Ocean, but the lyrics aside this song remind me of him. Two points that are ever

present in almost every Frank Ocean song are the far away sounding voice and the beats.

The "Church vibe" songs are as follows: "Every Hour," "Selah," and "Jesus is Lord." One of the features on "Every Hour" is a Sunday Service Choir, which gives you an idea of why the song fits this category. "Selah" made this category for both the beat (use of a piano), and more importantly, its lyrics. Kanye makes a clear reference to Noah, and "the strong start on Sunday." Lastly, "Jesus is Lord" is 49 seconds of Kanye talking about how Jesus is Lord.

The song that I found most interesting was "Hands On" because it reminds me of how he justifies his support for the current president. In an interview with David Letterman, Kanye constantly mentioned that people hated on him for supporting Trump. Some might think that Kanye supports Trump solely because he feels that black men are told not to support him. The same conclusion can be reached from this song. Kanye says, "Said I'm finna do a gospel album, what have you been hearin from the Christians? They'll be the first one to judge me, Make it feel like nobody love."

The last three songs on the album are, "Use This Gospel," "God Is," and "Everything We Need." "Use This



Photo courtesy of gq.com

Kanye West released *Jesus is King* on September 27, 2019, and several songs have already ranked highly on the charts. The album has a strong religious theme throughout the songs.

Gospel" is my favorite song on the album. That "uhhhh... uhhhh" in the background is actually fire. Pusha T's verse is super real. He's very raw and honest. "God Is" sounds like a track that would be used at the end of a 90s and 2000s movie. "Everything We Need" is the only song that fits my predictions of what kind of album Kanye was going to put out. The mix of rap, Ty Dolla Sign, and actual religious talk about being humble is what everyone expected. It's a pretty good

song, too. All in all, I really liked the album. Kanye is in the midst of getting a lot of heat for criticizing other rappers for what they talk about. However, if you listen to "Selah" one more time, maybe you will understand a little more how he's turning over a new leaf. Keep it going Kanye.

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Katherine Coble provides an update on the ambiguity of Tyler Skaggs' death. Read more below...



Two marathon runners from Kenya shocked the world with two historic runs. Read more below...

The College Reporter

November 4, 2019

Franklin & Marshall Sports

Tyler Skaggs update, new information sheds light on nature of death

BY KATHERINE COBLE
News Editor

Disturbing allegations have emerged in the investigation of Tyler Skaggs' death. Skaggs was just 27 when he died from a fatal combination of opioids and alcohol on July 1, 2019, in the middle of the MLB season. The U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency has been investigating the death ever since, and new allegations from an Angels employee have raised a plethora of questions about the Los Angeles Angels organization and opioid use in the MLB more broadly.

The allegations center around long-time Angels public relations employee Eric Kay, who served as the team's director of communications until his recent admittance into an opioid addiction treatment facility. Kay told the D.E.A. investigators that he had been abusing opioids with Skaggs for years, and multiple members of the Angels' administration were aware of Skaggs' addiction. He also named at least five MLB players who used opioids with him during their time with the Angels.

According to Kay, he and Skaggs arranged a deal in which Kay would secure the drugs and Skaggs would pay for them. Kay and his family have released Venmo screenshots which show Skaggs sending over more than \$2,000 to Kay over a period of several years, typically in \$400 or \$500 chunks, accompanied by emojis like a heart or a recharging battery. They claim this is just a fraction of the money Skaggs sent to Kay in order to fuel both of their addictions.

In the days immediately preceding Skaggs' death, Kay says he purchased six oxycontin pills and gave three to Skaggs, although it cannot be determined whether these were the same pills he took on the night of his death. According to an ESPN investigation, Kay told D.E.A. investigators that he entered Skaggs' hotel room on the night of his death and saw him snort two lines of crushed oxycontin and one line of an unknown substance, which Kay did not recognize. Skaggs offered Kay some opioids, which he declined. Later that night Skaggs choked to death on his own vomit. A combination of oxycontin, fentanyl, and alcohol was found in his system.

Kay and his family allege that multiple members of the Angels organization were aware of Skaggs' drug use at the time of his death. In one incident, while Kay was hospitalized for a drug overdose, Skaggs frantically texted Kay asking for more drugs. Kay's mother informed Tim Mead, then Kay's supervisor at the Angels who was visiting him in the hospital at the time, that Skaggs was a user and "the team needed to intervene," according to ESPN. Mead is now the president of the Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum. Kay has also implicated the Angels' traveling secretary, Tom Taylor, as someone who knew about the issue. Both men deny any knowledge of Skaggs' drug abuse.

According to Sports Illustrated, the D.E.A. does not consider Kay to be a dangerous criminal, and it is unclear whether he will face any criminal charges for his relationship to Skaggs. Kay is currently on paid leave while attending an outpatient facility for his own opioid addiction. The D.E.A.'s investigation remains active, and it is still possible others will be criminally charged for Skaggs' death, despite the accidental nature of his overdose. The Skaggs family has hired a Houston-based defense attorney to represent them, and a civil case is likely regardless of the D.E.A.'s findings.

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Photo courtesy of nbclosangeles.com.

Two marathon milestones achieved, only one recognized as world record

BY JAMIE BELFER
Sports Editor

In a single weekend, two major marathon milestones were achieved by two astounding athletes from Kenya. On Saturday, October 12, Eliud Kipchoge finished his marathon with a time of 1:59:40. The following day in Chicago, Brigid Kosgei broke the women's world record with a time of 2:14:04.

Before Vienna, Kipchoge (age 34) was an already accomplished marathon runner as he medaled in the Olympics three times, and he has won eight major marathons. Kipchoge made an attempt to beat the two-hour marathon mark in 2017 in Italy, coming close with a time of 2:00:25. While this time broke the men's world record at the time, it was not counted as it was not run under normal conditions. However, Kipchoge did achieve the world record in 2018, where he ran with a time of 2:01:39 in Berlin. This record broke marathoner Dennis Kimetto from Kenya who held a time of 2:02:57 (npr).

Kipchoge trained for four months with his coach, Partrick Sang, to prepare for his second attempt to run a marathon in under two hours. Kipchoge used many tools during the running of his race to help him accomplish this once unthinkable task. In front of Kipchoge, an electric car rode at a speed that would allow to keep him on pace. Additionally, Kipchoge had 41 professional runners that would rotate running alongside him to help him keep his pace. Among those professional runners were Olympic gold medalists. Parts of the course were marked to signify the path that would lead him to the fastest time. A person also rode behind him to provide him with gels and fluids when needed. Due to all this extra help that runners would not have in a traditional marathon, Kipchoge's time did not become the new record.

Kipchoge did not mind that his time was not a new record. According to the New York Times, Kipchoge stated, "Vienna is about running and breaking history, like the first man on the moon." Nothing could get better than breaking

history and having his family to embrace at the finish line, it being the first time they had seen him in person (NY Times).

The following day, Brigid Kosgei competed in the Chicago Marathon, hoping to having a record-breaking day of her own. In addition to breaking a record, Kosgei (age 25) looked to defend her title as she had won the Chicago Marathon the previous year. Kosgei demolished her competitors, finishing with a time of 2:14:04, over six minutes faster than any of her competitors. This time also broke the Brooke Radcliffe's record of 2:15:25, which she achieved in the 2003 London Marathon (npr)(NY Times). At only 25 years of age, it may not be too long before Kosgei may break her own record.

It was an astounding weekend for runners around the world, that showed how athletes can conquer seemingly humanly impossible tasks and achieve greatness.

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Photo courtesy of outsideonline.com.

The Washington Nationals, World Series underdog, defeat the Astros to become champions. Read more below...

The College Reporter

November 4, 2019

F&M Sports continued...

Nationals win a close game 7 to become World Series Champions

BY KATHERINE COBLE
News Editor

The Washington Nationals made franchise history late Wednesday evening, pulling off the first World Series win for their team since its move from Montreal, Quebec in 2005. It is also the first World Series win for a Washington, D.C. team since the Washington Senators (an unrelated franchise) won the title in 1924. They defeated the Houston Astros in Texas during a tense game seven, becoming the sixth consecutive World Series winners to complete their series win during an away game. Nationals pitcher Stephen Strasburg, the Nationals first pick in the 2009 MLB draft more than a decade ago, was named the World Series' Most Valuable Player.

Few would have predicted the Nationals' level of success at the beginning of the season. The team won just 19 of their first 50 games, struggling to adapt to the loss of their star hitter Bryce Harper to a division rival, the Philadelphia Phillies. At that time, few would have predicted the Nationals qualifying for the playoffs, let alone winning the World Series. But the Washington Nationals were able to rally. They rallied for the rest of the regular season to slip into a wild card slot, and eventually rallied their way into the World Series itself.

In more ways than one, the Nationals were the true underdogs of this World Series playoff season. They had the oldest regular-season roster, peppered with strong players in their 30s in a sport that seems to become younger and younger every season. They have stuck to their stereotype as a traditional team, shying away from new-fangled analytics. And they found themselves up against the formidable Houston Astros, the 2017 World Series champions and a team which has won at least 100 games in the past three regular seasons. Through grit, persistence, and perhaps some luck, the Washington Nationals were able to quiet the naysayers and fight their way to the championship.

This World Series was one in which home-field advantage seemed to matter very little - or, in fact, not at all. 2019 marks the first year that every single World Series game was won by the away team. The Nationals were able to deftly win the first two games of the series, leaving Houston emotionally and offensively stressed. But the Astros came back to defeat the Nationals on their home turf three games in a row. They entered game six with a 3-2 lead at Minute Maid Park in Houston, but the Nationals battled back to make the series tied. The World Series headed to game seven for the fortieth time in its MLB history.

Game seven started slow - a pitcher's game. Both Zack Greinke of Houston and Max Scherzer of Washington pitched strong games, with the score stuck at 2-0 Houston after six innings. It was during the top of the seventh that Washington pulled ahead - beginning with a solo home run by Anthony Rendon and a two-run homer by Howie Kendrick shortly afterward. Rising star Juan Soto, who turned 21 just days before his World Series win, was able to propel the Nationals to a 4-2 lead. They sealed the deal in the ninth inning and took the series with a 6-2 win to the disappointment of the home crowd.

The win is sure to be remembered by the Washington Nationals - and all of their fans in the Nation's Capital - for many years to come. As catcher Kurt Suzuki told The New York Times, "We couldn't have scripted it any better."

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Photo courtesy of ncnews.com.

F&M Field Hockey, Women's Soccer defeat Bryn Mawr on Senior Day

BY JAMIE BELFER
Sports Editor

The past weekend of October 25th through October 27th marked F&M's annual homecoming weekend. Many Diplomat teams competed both home and away in their final games of the season. In addition to reconnecting with, and honoring alumni, the women's soccer and field hockey teams honored their respective seniors prior to each game. Both teams fought with determination and tenacity to secure a victory on this special day.

The Diplomat Field Hockey team competed in the first home game of Homecoming Weekend on Tylus Field against the Bryn Mawr Owls. The entrance of the field was decorated with colorful posters celebrating each of the seven seniors, Erin Coverdale, Melissa Gula, Colleen Francis, Caitlin Morissey, Michaela Nicholas, Katie O'Loughlin, and Claire Murphy. Many families filled the stands, sporting t-shirts with pictures of the seniors' faces on them. Friends and former players chipped in the stands, cheering their friends on and occasionally screaming out "Don't worry that was unlucky!" (This was their nice way of heckling the umpire who they thought had missed a foul).

The Diplomats entered the game looking to maintain their undefeated record in the conference. However, Bryn Mawr was a tough opponent, as they held a 6-1 record in the conference. In the first period, the Diplomats quickly took control and forced two quick penalty corners. Within the first two minutes of the game, Lily Mynott scored the first goal for the Diplomats, putting F&M up 1-0. In the next five minutes, the Diplomats took four more shots, each one closer than the next, but they were ultimately unsuccessful. However at the 12:36 mark, Addie Peters scored F&M's second goal of the game, assisted by Ellie Paige. F&M finished the first period with two additional, but unsuccessful shots on goal.

Franklin & Marshall continued to dominate the rest of the game, outshooting the Owls 38-0. F&M's ability to prevent the Owls from scoring, let alone taking a shot on goal, shows the true strength of F&M's impressive defense and team as a whole. To cap off a great senior day, senior captain Michaela Nicholas scored F&M's final goal and her first goal of the season, with one minute left in the game and secured a 3-0 Diplomat victory.

The women's soccer team competed in the second game of the day against the Bryn Mawr Owls on Tylus field. This was a must win victory for the Diplomats in order to have a chance at the Centennial Conference playoffs. The fences were lined with posters of the team's four seniors: Gabby Goowin, Nicolette Runko, Sam Springer, and Hannah Robertson. The seniors had big smiles as their families walked onto the field and gave them flowers, big hugs, and lots of love. Similar to field hockey, the bleachers were filled with family and friends cheering on the Diplomats.

The beginning of the game was action-packed as Franklin & Marshall had three close shots in the first nine minutes of the game. F&M scored the first goal of the game at the 23:04 mark when Emilee Adami knocked in a sweet shot into the left corner of the goal, assisted by Emily Cleary. The remainder of the first half was dominated by Franklin & Marshall as they were able to get eight shots on goal compared to Bryn Mawr's one. F&M scored its second goal ten minutes into the second half as Meg O'Callahan squeezed in a goal, assisted by Nicolette Runko. Just as Michaela Nicholas capped off the field hockey game with an exciting goal, senior Nicolette Runko scored F&M's final goal of the game and her ninth goal for the season, assisted by Emily Cleary. While Bryn Mawr was able to get off two shots at the end of the game, they were ultimately wide, securing a Diplomat 3-0 victory.

Both, the field hockey and soccer teams showed high levels of performance and therefore proved Franklin and Marshall's strength and excellence once again, and provided for some great True Blue experience. This past weekend was a successful Homecoming for the Diplomats as it was filled with great games, wonderful weather, relaxing reunions, and superb support from friends and family.

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Photo courtesy of godiplomats.com.