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CMU expands its degree offerings

ESHAAN JOSHI
Sports Editor

Carnegie Mellon has done a lot of reshuffling and changing in their degree programs in the last few years, culminating in a degree landscape that can seem different for those who graduated a few years ago. The university has been expanding in an attempt to gather more students, or give students the ability to tailor their major for better information.

Firstly, some of the changes: Economics in the last few months has been fully transferred from Dietrich into Tepper, and the economics program seems to be fully integrated with the School of Business. It’s an interesting change, but has also helped keep the resources the program uses together in order to best serve students.

The most exciting change for many is the addition of the new Bachelor of Science in Robotics now offered by the Robotics Institute and the School of Computer Science. The degree seems distinct from the average CS degree, with requirements leaning away from the theoretical (there appears to be no requirement to take 15-150, 15-210, or 15-451) and toward the practical, with several IDEATe courses and other various coursework encouraged.

The program also encourages students to focus on design and

production of various different robotics systems. Considering Carnegie Mellon is part of the group that is about to put a rover on the Moon, this new degree program hopes to capture some of that interest and bring new robotics funding to the city and the university.

Also within the engineering department, an additional major called Engineering Design, Innovation, and Entrepreneurship has been introduced this year. This additional major seeks to create engineers who have the knowledge and skills to innovate products and become change makers. According to the major website, “EDIE students will have expertise in technology and the ability to design, develop, and deliver economically viable solutions to the real-world challenges of today and tomorrow.”

In graduate offerings, Carnegie Mellon appears to be experimenting with a new Masters of Statistics degree, which is being trial run right now. It’s another broad change, as Carnegie Mellon has only had a Ph.D. program for statistics and this could be a radical change offered to many stats undergraduates. (With Stat/ML being such a popular major, this could also lead to new five-year programs and the like for many people in Dietrich.)

See **DEGREES**, A2

Violins of Hope exhibit opens in Posner Center, brings community together

HAILEY COHEN
Lead Copy Editor

On Oct. 7, a new exhibit opened in the Posner Center. Violins of Hope: “Tuning Out Prejudice: Building Bridges that Last” showcases violins played by Jewish musicians before and during the Holocaust, highlighting the persistence of music as a form of culture and resistance throughout time.

Created through collaboration between the community organization Violins of Hope Pittsburgh and the Carnegie Mellon Libraries Special Collections team, this unique exhibit will run until Nov. 21. It is free and open to the public, part of extensive programming happening for the duration of the exhibit in the Pittsburgh community. Events like ballets, operas, and community discussions have been ongoing and are all part of the Violins of Hope mission.

Violins are used in the exhibit as modes of storytelling. Before the Holocaust, it was very common for boys in Jewish families to play the violin. A panel in the exhibit describes how one could tell how many Jewish boys were in a family by how many violins hung on the wall of the family’s home. The instruments were inexpensive and were a key part of Klezmer



Ire Alarape/Photo Editor

The Posner Center exhibit features a selection of Violins of Hope’s collection of over 80 violins, each of which has its own character and story.

music, a style of music traditional to Central and Eastern European Jewish culture.

Many of the instruments showcased are inscribed with a Star of David, a symbol of Judaism. Some are more intricate than others — one of the violins displayed features an inlay of glass diamonds on the body of the instrument. Meanwhile, other violins have little or no adornment.

“Every violin has a different story,” explained Sandy Rosen, Violins of Hope Pittsburgh chair. “They were all played by musicians but the musicians had different places in history. Some were more the victim and perished, some were more the savior. ... It speaks to survival and to resistance and to

defiance and ultimately, life.” The showcasing of these instruments used as tools of defiance in such tragic times brings back history in a visceral, tangible way.

Alongside the physical objects displayed in the exhibit were multimedia aspects. Walking through the Posner Center, two pieces of violin music play through the speakers. Both pieces were composed by people who were imprisoned by Nazis as they wrote the music. Choosing those pieces as ambient music that everyone must hear as they enter the exhibit attests to the transcendental of music and how it can survive even in an atmosphere of forced

See **VIOLINS**, A2

Nov. 7 PA elections: looking at candidate profiles

NINA MCCAMBRIDGE
Staffwriter

On Nov. 7, Pennsylvania will hold general elections. The ballot includes both statewide and municipal elements.

Pennsylvania Supreme Court

Pennsylvania Supreme Court Chief Justice Max Baer died last year, leaving a vacant seat in the seven-member Court. Voters are to decide between the Republican candidate, Carolyn Carluccio, and the Democrat candidate, Daniel McCaffery. Carluccio is president judge on the Montgomery County Court of Common Pleas, and McCaffery is a judge on the Pennsylvania Superior Court. Both candidates are highly recommended by the Pennsylvania Bar Association.

Carluccio says that she “will not legislate from the bench” and that “the American system of justice is exceptional as we are all equal under the law.” She has worked as a prosecutor, a chief public defender, and an HR professional and contract negotiator for Montgomery County. She became a judge in 2010. She has specialized in drug, money-laundering, and white-collar crime prosecution. She was formerly a realtor.

McCaffery states that he is a judge because “Democratic Institutions including the judiciary are under attack” and that he will prioritize non-partisanship. He admires U.S. Chief Justice John Roberts. He ranked himself somewhere between an originalist and a pragmatist. He began his career as a prosecutor before going into private practice — commercial and municipal litigation and personal injury. He became an appellate judge in 2013. He also owns and leases rental properties.

Pennsylvania Superior Court

There are two vacancies on the Pennsylvania Superior Court. Four candidates (two nominated from each party) are running to fill these seats.

The Democrats are attorney Jill Beck and judge Timika Lane. They are both highly recommended by the Pennsylvania Bar Association. Beck emphasizes non-partisanship, promising to “put adherence to the law above self-interest or partisan influences” and “to be an advocate for the underserved.” She has worked at the nonprofit KidsVoice, where she represented abused children. She then spent 10 years as a clerk in appellate court before becoming a civil litigator in 2019. She has served as a judge before.

Lane says that she is “committed to the fair application of the law and will protect [Pennsylvanians] rights.” She has been a judge in the Court of Common Pleas since 2013. She has presided over cases involving “family/ domestic violence, sexual assaults, attempted murder, robberies, carjackings, burglaries and investigative grand jury matters.” She was a middle school teacher before her legal career; she is now an adjunct professor at Harcum College. She worked in family law, became a public defender, and then became Chief Legal Council for State Senator Andy Williams before becoming a judge.

The Republicans are judge Harry Smail and attorney Maria Battista. Smail emphasizes his impact on policy, including helping “shape the application of the law regarding land use and energy development” and he presided over election fraud cases. He prides himself on finishing cases efficiently and being overturned on only one occasion. Before graduating law school, he was a parole officer. He has been a Court of Common Pleas judge since 2014. Before this, he was a sole practitioner who worked on a wide variety of cases. He is a member of the Federalist Society.

Battista plans “to establish an office that is efficient, accountable, and transparent.” She assures us that she “still [shows] compassion.” She worked in private practice before becoming an Assistant District Attorney in Venango County. She has a doctorate of education and was formerly an assistant professor at the

University of Pittsburgh-Titusville. She then went into healthcare law, afterwards becoming a contract specialist at the Department of Defense. Battista was recently hit by a car and hospitalized for minor injuries, causing her to miss some campaign events.

Two judges of the Superior Court, Jack Panella and Victor Stabile, are up for retention elections. If they are retained, they will stay another ten years before the next election; if they are voted out, there will be an election for their replacement. Judges are almost always retained. Both candidates are recommended by the Pennsylvania Bar Association. Panella is a Democrat and Stabile is a Republican. Neither candidate seems to have been involved in an extraordinary amount of controversy.

There are also six judges of the Allegheny County Court of Common Pleas up for retention. All of them are recommended by the Allegheny County Bar Association.

Allegheny County Executive

After a decade in office, County Executive Rich Fitzgerald is leaving. He will be replaced either by Sara Innamorato (the Democratic nominee) or Joe Rockey (the Republican nominee).

Innamorato is a progressive and a former member of the DSA (Democratic Socialists of America). She is endorsed by Bernie Sanders and other progressive politicians, environmental groups, and various labor unions. She is a former member of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives.

Innamorato has various plans for housing reform, such as creating a “Tenants’ Bill of Rights,” a document that would likely involve rent control of some form. (Rent control is recognized by most economists as having a negative impact on the quantity and quality of affordable housing.) Her plans are quite varied. She plans to bring clean energy-related manufacturing to the county, while also enforcing

wage standards and “making large corporations and large nonprofits pay their fair share” in taxes. She would also conduct a property value reassessment. To deal with pollution and other environmental hazards, she has a plan to use federal funds. She would expand the service of public transportation. On crime, Innamorato does not plan on investing in more police officers, and instead will pursue a restorative justice approach. She plans, for example, on integrating mental health professionals into 9-1-1 response, eliminating mandatory minimum sentences, making it more difficult to purchase firearms, creating diversion programs, appointing formerly jailed people to the Jail Oversight Board, and taking a great many other reforms.

Rockey is endorsed by the Fraternal Order of Police, the prison workers’ union, some other labor unions, Andrew Yang’s centrist Forward party, and the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, among others. On his website, he describes himself as a political moderate. Rockey is a former PNC bank executive, new to politics. He mainly emphasizes two categories of issue: promoting economic growth and discouraging crime. His economic growth plan involves maximizing the use of federal manufacturing subsidies, allowing companies to use local natural resources, simplifying industrial regulation, expanding jobs training programs, and advertising Allegheny county to potential new employers. He also wants to encourage a hydrogen industry in the County. On crime, he seeks to re-open the juvenile detention center, improve and fully staff the county jail, hire 20 more police officers, and improve Emergency Medical Services. Though this crime prevention program would be expensive, he plans on doing it without raising taxes (including not doing a property value reassessment). He instead plans on cutting unnecessary spending, taking federal grants, and growing revenue through growing the economy.

Allegheny County District Attorney

The long-time incumbent Allegheny County District Attorney, Stephen Zappala, is a Democrat but in May he lost the Democratic primary to Matt Dugan, a progressive. However, Zappala managed to get enough write-in votes from Republicans to win the Republican nomination. Now, he is facing Dugan again for the general election.

Despite running for DA, Dugan has never been a prosecutor. Instead, he has always been a public defender. Dugan focuses mainly on Downtown Pittsburgh. He plans on creating a Magisterial District Judge office specific to the region. He plans on targeting “open-air drug transactions, open-air use of needle-injected narcotics, threatening and assaultive behavior, [and] all violent crime.” On the other hand, he plans to “work with local law enforcement agencies to divert low level, nonviolent cases out of the criminal justice system” and to prevent prosecutors from stacking charges to gain leverage in plea deals. Dugan is opposed to cash bail in all cases. (Zappala is opposed to it in some cases: He reduced the use of cash bail in cases where defendants have committed minor crimes and are deemed unlikely to harm anyone or escape before their trial.) Dugan also favors sharing much more evidence with the defense. He also favors generally shortening probation. Zappala, on the other hand, favors a more standard approach to all of these issues, and his campaign platform is essentially a promise to keep prosecuting criminals.

In 2021, after defense attorney Milton Raiford’s client pleaded guilty in a stabbing case, Raiford gave a long, rambling speech in the courtroom during which he accused Zappala and others of racism. In retaliation, Zappala instructed his prosecutors (in an email) not to give Raiford’s clients any plea deals. This was, of course, a very controversial move.

See **PA ELECTIONS**, A2

PA Election Candidate Profiles

From **PA ELECTIONS**, A1

Allegheny County Controller

The County Controller conducts audits and identifies wasteful spending. Democrat Corey O'Connor was appointed as an interim controller, and now he is running against Republican Bob Howard. Both candidates state transparency as one of their goals: O'Connor highlights the data he has published on the Controller website, and Howard states that he would publish a periodic newsletter on County finances.

Howard is formerly a controller at PPG Industries, the company in the postmodern castle-like building downtown. He has not worked in politics before. He emphasizes the need to move on from special COVID measures and to benchmark projects against relevant peers in other cities.

O'Connor has previously served on the Pittsburgh City Council, representing District 5. As Controller, he is proud of increasing gun control, ensuring that developers built “affordable” units, and “increasing funding for early childhood education by millions of dollars.”

Allegheny County Treasurer

Candidates are also running for the position of Treasurer, the official who manages the collection of taxes, issuance of licenses, management of debt, and so on. The Democratic nominee is Erica Rocchi Brusselars (a Carnegie Mellon alumnus) and the Republican nominee is Herb Ohlinger. Both candidates have very similar platforms: They seek to increase transparency, allow more citizen-facing processes to be completed online, and fund

pensions more. Brusselars is an actuary who specializes in pensions. She has been involved in many Democratic campaigns, including the Biden campaign. She volunteered with the Abolitionist Law Center, an organization that seeks the abolition of prisons. Ohlinger is an information systems consultant (who works largely with the Department of Defense) and the chairman and treasurer of Firearm Owners Against Crime.

Allegheny County Ballot Question

Voters in Allegheny County will also be asked whether County Council members should receive a salary of \$10,939 rather than a salary plus per meeting stipends that could add up to a maximum of \$10,939. This could disincentivize Council members from showing up to meetings.

New CMU Degrees

From **DEGREES**, A1

Tepper will also be adding the new MS in Management this year. This 10-month program will be offered next fall and will focus on finance, operations, or marketing for high-potential graduate students. The program's development is meant to embrace flexibility and will synthesize different fields.

Carnegie Mellon has also added new certificate programs in AI, bioprinting and biofabrication, and computational data science,

three fields currently experiencing significant growth. The new AI program will include coursework on ML algorithms used in day-to-day modeling, while the biofabrication coursework will help students learn to convert a regular run-of-the-mill 3D printer into something capable of producing biological materials. The data science program will help prepare students to understand how to handle some of the complexities of a suite of tools used to deal with big data in the current environment.

Violins of Hope opens

From **VIOLINS**, A1

silence and destruction of Jewish creativity and culture.

In addition to the music playing throughout the exhibit, a few films enhance the story being told. One is a video of Violins of Hope co-founders Amnon and Avshalom Weinstein describing their work restoring historic violins and showing their impressive collection.

The other film originated in Nazi Germany. It portrays the concentration camp Theresienstadt, which was used as a model camp to fool Red Cross workers and the rest of the world about the massacres that were happening in the camps. The film shows people in the concentration camps watching a concert, presumably to convince the world that people there were happy and fulfilled. Supplemented with instruments that Jewish musicians did play in the face of tragedy and violence, this film puts the power of music, whether for good or bad purposes, into sharp focus.

Violins of Hope is a traveling exhibit that has been shown worldwide. Most of the content shown is licensed from the Maltz Museum of Jewish Heritage in Chicago. The Theresienstadt film and the musical pieces playing throughout the Posner Center, however, are unique to Carnegie Mellon's exhibit. Those aspects, as well as the design of the space, were curated by a team from Carnegie Mellon libraries including Sam Lemley, curator of special collections, Heidi Wiren Bartlett, creative director, and more.

Hosting the exhibit in the Posner Center posed a unique challenge for the Carnegie Mellon libraries team. The Posner Center is smaller than the space where the materials were originally shown, so some content decisions had to be made concerning which instruments to show.

“The collection itself has 70 or 80 violins, and each of them has a story associated with it,” explained Lemley. It came down to showing violins that fit into specific themes to make a cohesive story within the exhibit. “Resistance and defiance is a theme. Some of the violins in the collection were owned by, for instance, Jewish partisans who fought the Nazi regime and their allies.” According to Lemley, another theme was exploring what it meant “to have musical performances in one of the darkest settings of modern history.”

Adding the multimedia content was an intentional way of bringing history to life. “With exhibitions that deal with historical subject matter, you want to find a way to animate that subject matter. You want to bring it alive for the audience,” said Lemley. Making the exhibit engaging was especially important because of the wide range of audiences that were going to view it. People of all ages, including many school groups, were going to visit the exhibit, so accessibility was a key factor.

As much as the exhibit involved collaboration within the Carnegie Mellon community, it was also a large group effort from the greater Pittsburgh community. Lemley added that the exhibit is

“kind of unusual because usually when a university library puts on an exhibition, it's fairly inward-looking. All the content is developed in-house, etc. So this was, I think, a kind of unique and unusual example of a university working with a community organization to do something together.”

When Violins of Hope Pittsburgh came to Carnegie Mellon, they discussed the general vision for the exhibit. But once a common ground had been established, the design of the exhibit was mostly up to Carnegie Mellon Libraries creative director Heidi Wiren Bartlett.

“It was really an exercise in trust,” Bartlett explained. “Sam and I collaborated closely with the Violins of Hope project team and they allowed us to have creative control over the layout and design of this unique exhibition.” This was exciting to Bartlett because “our spaces are unique, our exhibits are unique — we even have a Shakespeare exhibition at The Frick Pittsburgh on display now — and by keeping a consistent and thoughtful presence on campus, the CMU Libraries Distinctive Collections hopes to build our reputation at the university and in the Pittsburgh community. As our exhibition programming grows we want to continue to reach beyond the limits of our spaces and engage with powerful and relevant content.”

From a design standpoint, the Posner Center is an unusual space. In the past, it has mostly been used as a meeting space. But it fit perfectly for the needs of the Violins of Hope exhibit. Bartlett explained that she had to consider questions like: “What can we do to really uplift the content? [...] What can we do to really make the objects be central with design, with lighting? What design elements could be found or fabricated to bring this content to life?”

Lemley expressed hope that the Posner Center will be used more for public-facing events in the future. “I'm hoping that this is the catalyst to make the Posner Center into a much more vibrant and dynamic space going forward,” he said. Violins of Hope happened to be a rich and informative exhibit that fit the space's capacities perfectly. In the future, it looks like the building will become more accessible to students and the community as a whole.

The message of Violins of Hope is particularly important to the Pittsburgh community, and especially at this time. Oct. 27, 2023 marks the fifth anniversary of the Pittsburgh synagogue shooting, the deadliest attack on Jewish people on American soil in history. The exhibit features a memorial to the victims, tying the themes of remembering atrocities, Jewish resilience, and fighting against hate and bigotry together in a local way.

“The community embraced it,” said Rosen. “Not only did they embrace it, but they are working together, they're collaborating and making things much bigger than maybe they would have otherwise.” Rosen proclaimed that the main message of the exhibit and the organization was this: “We have to think. We have to talk to each other. We have to stop hating.”

Chatham faces financial issues

ESHAAN JOSHI
Sports Editor

Chatham University is facing a \$6 million deficit, something which has made the university's continued existence tenuous. Their response has included layoffs and other significant changes.

Chatham has restructured its staff, eliminating 20 jobs. The university's leadership team has also undergone changes. Four departments have been consolidated into a new Academic Success department. Additionally, the library has been integrated into the Information Technology department.

Employee benefits have been significantly reduced, with the maximum retirement match for faculty and staff dropping from eight percent to three percent, and spouses with employer-provided insurance no longer eligible for the university's self-insured plan starting in January. In August, the university's leadership team faced a 10 percent salary reduction, and there were scheduled reductions of five percent for faculty members earning more than \$100,000 annually, set to

begin on Oct. 1. However, as of mid-August, the implementation of salary cuts for faculty earning between \$50,000 and \$100,000 had not been confirmed. These salary modifications have had a substantial negative impact on faculty morale, as they are now more concerned about job security and potential future program cuts and layoffs.

Chatham's financial struggles have been attributed to multiple factors, including escalating costs, an outdated financial system, and shifting enrollment trends. While the undergraduate enrollment has increased significantly over the past decade, growing from 600 to 1,200 students, the graduate enrollment has declined. Between 2012 and 2021, full-time graduate students on campus decreased by nearly 20 percent, dropping from 856 students to 692, according to data from the U.S. Department of Education. With Chatham President Dr. Phillips at the helm and her commitment to reorganization, the university is working to rectify its financial situation and enhance its competitive position in the higher education sector.

The situation remains very dangerous for the university, as even the much smaller deficit of \$3 to \$4 million they hope to achieve is still going to be difficult to handle. With graduate enrollment declining, and also being the best source for many universities to get grants or other government funding, Chatham will need to start making changes to their model in order to deal with this deficit.

Another issue appears in the manner of budget-handling Chatham seemed to embrace. A number of current and former faculty members at Chatham have voiced their reservations about the university's financial dealings. Among their concerns were issues like receiving conflicting information and encountering limited oversight in the management of program budgets and grants. They also noted the institution's heavy reliance on Excel spreadsheets for financial management, which has raised fears of potential errors in financial handling. The university has responded to these claims by forming a new department specifically to handle the budget.

House elects Republican Mike Johnson as new Speaker

KYLE HYNES
Staffwriter

After rejecting four party leaders in the span of four days, House Republicans on Wednesday elected Rep. Mike Johnson, of Louisiana, to serve as Speaker of the House.

Johnson, who until Wednesday had lacked a national profile, spent his early years as an attorney with the Alliance Defending Freedom, a Christian legal fund classified as a hate group by the Southern Poverty Law Center. While there, he wrote an amicus brief defending the state of Texas prior to the Supreme Court's 2003 ruling decriminalizing gay sex in Lawrence v. Texas and spent considerable resources on restoring prayer to public school classrooms.

He first ran for elected office in 2014, being elected to the Louisiana House of Representatives, and was elected to Congress in 2016. Johnson represents the Fourth District, a wide swathe of northwestern Louisiana anchored by Shreveport. Once in Congress, he rose quickly through House Republican ranks. He was elected deputy whip, and then chairman of the Republican Study Committee, the largest internal caucus of House Republicans, in 2019. He stepped down in 2021 to become vice chair of the Republican Conference, a role in which he served until his election as Speaker.

While chair of the Study Committee, Johnson became best-known for leading the effort to overturn Joe Biden's victory in the 2020 presidential election. On Jan. 6, 2021, he was among the two-thirds of Republicans who ultimately voted not to certify Biden's win in Pennsylvania and Arizona; months later, he would

also vote against the creation of the Democratic-led January 6th committee.

Johnson's election comes after a remarkable and unprecedented period of infighting among House Republicans that prevented a Speaker from being elected for twenty-two days. After Speaker Kevin McCarthy struck an eleventh-hour compromise with Democrats to keep the government open through mid-November, Florida Rep. Matt Gaetz introduced a motion to vacate the chair on Oct. 2; it passed, with all Democrats and eight Republicans voting in favor the next day. The following week, Republicans nominated McCarthy's deputy and longtime rival, Rep. Steve Scalise, to the post; however, after it became clear that there was even more opposition to Scalise than there was to McCarthy, he dropped out the next day and was replaced as Republican nominee by former House Freedom Caucus ringleader Jim Jordan. Jordan took his case to the House floor, failing to be elected three times by increasingly large margins, and was ultimately ejected as the Republican nominee on Oct. 20.

On Monday, with Republicans increasingly desperate for a Speaker, Johnson threw his hat in the ring alongside Rep. Tom Emmer of Minnesota; the next morning, Emmer narrowly defeated Johnson in a secret ballot in the Republican conference. However, conservative opposition to Emmer — particularly thanks to his votes to legalize gay marriage and uphold the 2020 election results — was staunch, and he ultimately dropped out just a few hours later, after seeing no path to victory on the House floor. That night, Republicans nominated Johnson, the proverbial last man standing.

However, unlike McCarthy, Scalise, Jordan, and Emmer before him, there was no sizable group within the Conference that opposed him, and the party took the matter to the floor of the House on Wednesday. With all Republicans voting in favor, Johnson finally ended the impasse and claimed the gavel on Wednesday afternoon.

There remains, however, no guarantee that Johnson can escape the political forces which felled his predecessor. The Republican majority — just 221 seats to Democrats' 212 — is incredibly narrow, meaning that, for passage, Republicans can afford to lose only four votes on any particular matter, and likewise, a small band of just five Republicans can oust the Speaker if they have Democratic support. When the clock strikes midnight on Nov. 18, the federal government will run out of money and shut down unless some sort of spending legislation is passed by both chambers of Congress and signed by the president. Johnson, who has long opposed omnibus spending bills and supported passing individual appropriations to different Cabinet departments, has set a goal of passing slimmed-down appropriations legislation by January, and a continuing resolution in the meantime. However, any Republican spending measures that pass the House will almost certainly be dead on arrival in the Democratic-led Senate, meaning that — whenever the time finally comes to pass a budget — it will almost certainly be a compromise that leaves a lot of Republicans unhappy. It remains to be seen whether Johnson can do what McCarthy couldn't, and pass that necessary legislation — which he may have no choice but to do — and still keep his caucus from fracturing.

Corrections & Clarifications

On Pillbox page B2, “Kate Myer” should have been spelled “Kate Myers.”

If you would like to submit a correction or clarification, please email The Tartan at thetartan@andrew.cmu.edu with your inquiry, as well as the date of the issue and the name of the article. We will print the correction or clarification in the next print issue and publish it online.

Carnegie Mellon University

College of Engineering

SPRING 2023 DEAN’S LIST

FIRST-YEARS

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Todd Achuff
Manan Agarwal
Eisa Al Mazrouei
Misho Alexandrov
Manu Amundsen
Jan Andretta
Ellen Angwin
Carly Austin
Garima Bansal
T'sairus Beasley
Gabby Bell
Sophia Bernardo
Christopher Bernitsas
Sarah Bridgeman
Harry Burton
Teresa Cai
Lex Capestany
Justin Caputo
Liam Carden
Ciara Carter
Emily Cerchio
David Chan
Jaehyuk Chang
Gene Chang
Stephen Chien
Smriti Chopra
Nicholas Chung
Sarah Chung
Ema Cojerian
Reed Cooper
Rishabh Cowlagi
Irene Cui
Ronan Cunicelli
Lilly Das
Lucas Ding
Petros Emmanouilidis
Feya Epel
Namky Eun Llovet
Sena Flo
Autumn Franks
Sophia Fu
Aurora Fuchs
David Gelody
Enrique Gomez
Bennett Grace
Lucy Gunther
Jim Guo
Maxwell Guo
Vrinda Gupta
Hopewell Hawkes
Kai Herchenroether
Michelle Hobdari
JohnIrv Hollingshead
Ethan Hu
Manaen Hu
Jerry Hu
Ashley Hu
Kristina Huang
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Stella In
Shreeya Iyer
Jasper Jang
Belle Jiang
Even Jiang
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Akshay Joshi
Isaac Kaplan
Nikita Karnik
Nick Keck
Lillian Keith
Roma Kerby
Brian Kim
Em Kim
John Kim
Willia Knight
Sheng-zhu Kong
Jeremy Kovacs
Rhea Kripalani
Max Kulbida
Maya Kundakci
Sid Kunisetty
Andrew Kwak
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Charlotte Li
Iris Li
Robin Li
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Kody Liang
Jaehyun Lim
Aidan Lincke
John Liu
Tristan Liu
Ethan Livingston
DJ Lloyd
Alexa Lowe
Ellie Lowe
Ethan Lu
Yida Lu
Thomas Luo
Giovanni Maddalozzo
Aiden Magee
Maerah Mahmood
Grace Malingner
Brooklyn Mao
Felipe Marples
Rodriguez
Brooks McQueen
Anja Meaney
Tanisha Mehta

Michael Meng
Nate Miller
Arielle Min
Damian Molina
Zach Moore
Holden Neely
Jun Wei Neo
Kaitlyn Ng
Keenan Norton
Freya Oesterle
Chris Oh
Lauren Oh
Sachi Onishi
Nicholas Ortiz
Zeynep Orucu
Cemal Ozis
May Paek
Jordan Paglione
Eesha Palasamudrum
Jongsun Park
Justin Park
Simran Patibanda
Matteo Perillo
Adithi Phadke
Rosario Picone
Nicholas Pinon
Andrew Porco
William Privratsky
Katherine Qi
Samuel Radziwon
Michael Rapp
Diego Redondo Ruiz
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Jana Reiser
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Miguel Samos Rivas
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Froukje Schlingemann
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Serena Shih
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Aleena Siddiqui
Akul Singh
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Sutong Yao
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Andrew Yu
Victor Zayakov
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Nancy Anderson
Eladio Andujar Lugo
Julia Anitescu
Swati Anshu
Honora Armfield

Marianne Baiden
Gary Bailey
Sruti Bapatla
Sruti Bapatla
Elijah Baraw
Katie Barnes
Mary Juliette Billings
Huit Blackmon
Purva Bommireddy
Ale Bonacini
Charlie Bosnyak
Billy Boucuvalas
Amari Boxill
Elle Brough
Chloe Brown
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Samuel Chen
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Forum

FROM THE EDITORIAL BOARD

EdBoard: The need for civility and solidarity

Following the Oct. 7 attack by Hamas, the Fence was painted with the flag of Israel in memory and in mourning of those killed. The relevant post on the Instagram page, @cmufence, reads, “We stand united with the people of Israel as we mourn these stolen lives and yearn for lasting peace.”

The Fence was then painted by the Korean Students Association, and then by a group of students seeking to highlight the Palestinian perspective of the conflict.

An assortment of individuals, unaffiliated with any single organization, painted the Fence to read “Free Palestine, 75 years of occupation.” Though the group included students from both the Muslim Students Association (MSA) and the Middle Eastern and North African Students Association (MENASA), neither group was strictly in charge. The group included non-Muslim students and a few Pitt students.

The Tartan spoke with an individual who helped paint the Fence, who said the initial design was “very carefully chosen” to serve as “a reminder that the conflict didn’t start on Oct. 7.” Once the siege was placed on Gaza, it was understood “that the death toll and destruction was about to increase rapidly.” Those painting the Fence did not want this fact to be lost or ignored.

During the painting, a drone was seen flying overhead, presumably to record the individuals taking part. And the following day, those guarding the Fence faced confrontation, much of which was not civil. Though many people came to them to ask questions and talk in good faith, they also faced a litany of verbal abuse from students and adults. One student

recorded a video in which an unidentified adult man shouted “fuck you guys,” calling the students “baby murderers.”

The Fence was then handed off to the Chinese Student Association, which displayed a neutral message, followed by a message from the Graduate Student Association and the Student Senate simply reading “Compassion.”

As students came back from Fall Break, many involved in the first painting felt that the rising death toll in Gaza deserved attention. The second message, which read, “Stop the genocide,” was “meant to reflect the international recognition of what is happening in Gaza as genocide.” Historian and political scientist Ilan Pappé has argued that Israel’s actions in the Gaza strip meet the UN definition of a genocide.

This second painting was plagued with many of the same issues as the first. Plans had been made to transfer the Fence to another, non-affiliated group afterward. However, as members of this group guarded the Fence leading up to midnight, they faced repeated harassment and anti-Muslim hate speech from individuals believing them to be responsible for the existing message. The harassment was so severe that this group backed out, leaving the Fence open to be claimed by others.

The final message on the Fence once again read “Compassion,” with the phrase “End Antisemitism” on the reverse side. To quote again from @cmufence, the intent was to address that “antisemitism and other forms of hate have dramatically spiked both domestically and on campus.”

In the wake of violence and terrorism, we might feel drawn

to take a strong political stance. Seeing the immense loss of life that has been taking place in Israel and Gaza, many of us may feel compelled to assert our opinions for what we believe is right. However, one of the most impactful things we all can do as individuals is to do exactly what the Fence has said twice — show compassion for our peers.

Since Oct. 7, antisemitism in the U.S. has risen. Synagogues and mosques across the country, fearful of a terrorist attack, have begun locking their doors while congregating. On our campus, Jewish students have reported feeling unsafe, as they see antisemitic sentiments rise among their peers.

The willingness to listen and have a good-faith conversation is extremely important, as many of us simply don’t have the resources or context to know everything about the issue. A student involved with the pro-Palestine message on the Fence

claimed that after a while, one learned how to tell the difference between conversation and “hate disguised as a conversation.”

No student should feel unsafe on our campus. “I don’t want to have to worry about my safety,” the student who helped paint the Fence told The Tartan. “I also have homework to do.” Critical to fostering this safety is a mere willingness to listen and learn.

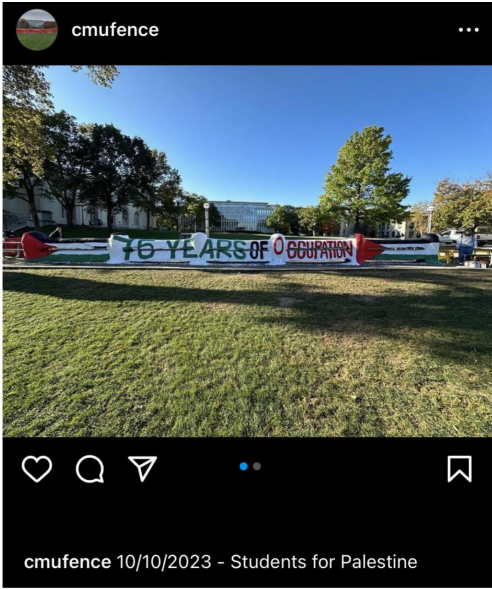
Every post on the CMU Fence Instagram page is rife with hostile comments, many of which don’t even appear to be from Carnegie Mellon students. Many of the individuals who harassed students at the Fence appeared to not even be affiliated with the school, yet felt bold enough to make their vitriol public and personal.

“The Fence is an outlet for student emotions and a transparent display in the hearts of CMU students,” the student said. “However, it can only start conversations — not carry them.

We need to work on building a culture where a message on the Fence is followed by constructive communication through other means.”

So go out and listen to what your peers are saying, and listen without the intent to respond or argue. Listen with the goal to internalize the perspectives and experiences of others.

Friday, Oct. 27 marked five years since a gunman killed 11 people at the Tree of Life synagogue, less than a mile from our campus. The brutality of such an attack is only possible when you cease to see the humanity of others, and the tragedy at Tree of Life shows us that the hatred required to commit such an atrocity exists in our community. The rising antisemitic and islamophobic sentiments have shown that this hatred still exists, and our responsibility is to ensure that we do not bring this hatred into our campus through our thoughts, actions, or conversations.



From cmufence via Instagram

The posts of the painting of the Israeli flag and the first painting of the Palestinian flag had over 300 comments each. A typical post of this page has few, if any comments.

Antisemitism on our own campus

ESHAAN JOSHI
Sports Editor

Author’s Note: Many of the students interviewed were not interested in their names being published in the Tartan. Many only spoke on the condition of anonymity.

It’s been a tumultuous few weeks for the Jewish community since Oct. 7, 2023. After what became the deadliest attack on Jewish civilians since the end of World War II, Jewish communities across the world came together, in solidarity and grief. “There aren’t really too many people who don’t know someone in Israel right now,” said one member of Carnegie Mellon’s Jewish community, pointing out that for many, the conflict had put friends or family in danger. If you’ve been a part of the community since then, it’s been one that is closer, and tighter, than before, they said.

For many, though, that support was not reflected

more broadly on campus. I interviewed eight Carnegie Mellon students and four friends from high school who attend ASU, Columbia, and NYU. Many people said that, outside of the Jewish community, it has been hard for them to find support.

Two weeks ago, Stanford suspended a lecturer after the instructor downplayed the Holocaust and targeted American Jewish students for an anti-Israel demonstration. It’s become a common refrain that people who are against Israel do not feel animosity toward the Jewish communities, especially American Jews distanced from the state itself, but it became difficult for many that I had spoken with to really identify the line. Many found they were being blamed or questioned for the actions of a state that they had never lived in. One student from Arizona State reported that he’d been asked about his opinion by many professors in an effort to spur class discussion. He’s never been to Israel, and his family has been in the United States since the 1920s.

Sentiments among the

Carnegie Mellon students with whom I spoke were more positive but plenty still had concerns about safety. Many felt like most of their peers didn’t have strong opinions about the war, and most of those who did were not hostile. There were incidents that made several students feel unsafe, but they were quick to point out that most Carnegie Mellon students have not been actively hostile.

As for the protests, the rallies, or the other pro-Palestine incidents that are occurring on campus, my conversations were less conclusive. Some students felt strongly that the people who supported Palestine were not antisemitic. Some said that while they didn’t agree with some of the statements made, people were entitled to believe what they did, and it wasn’t openly bigoted. But others pointed out that while the demonstrators were not antisemitic in their eyes, the cause they felt was being supported indirectly — Hamas — definitely was.

Some people I spoke to felt that the campus had gotten

less welcoming and safe for Jewish people. Many reported that there had been a rise in antisemitic conspiracy speech in the weeks following Oct. 7. Some pointed to the @cmufence Instagram account, and it doesn’t take much to scroll down there and see significant antisemitism. These include comments that say, “if you kill you should be killed back.”

In addition, they had also had more aggressive interactions with those who disagreed politically. Some voices raised concerns that Jewish spaces were being pushed into by those who had an agenda, and others pointed out that people had become far less willing to engage positively with the community after Oct. 7. To many, they were watching people they knew begin to support and justify horrific actions in the name of “anti-colonialism,” something which many people saw in the protests and rallies on campus. Signs that both justified or minimized the actions taken by Hamas were easily identifiable, and some felt those were part of a more hostile campus

environment. Moreover, many people shared stories of seeing their friends start spreading conspiracy theories about Israel, the Israel Defense Force (IDF), or the Jewish people, condemning the entirety of the Jewish community for actions made by the IDF, or doubting the atrocities. Many felt as if it was difficult to feel safe and secure on a campus where their peers were harboring antisemitic conspiracies. And while a majority of content being spread was broadly fine, it was easy to find people who had fallen down the rabbit hole, posting conspiracies, antisemitism claims, or full support of a terrorist organization due to some perceived “resistance.”

Many Jewish students I spoke with feel like antisemitism has gotten worse on campus, and while they feel that the administration has definitely taken great steps forward in keeping the Jewish community of Carnegie Mellon safe, it seems to many that the community is under increased stress from antisemites on campus.

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I have had writer’s block for over a year

SUJAY UTKARSH
Tartan Alumnus

I have talked about writing a letter to the lovely editors at The Tartan for all of last year and then never actually gave it to them. I would write entire articles ready for publication but then never send them. In fact, for more than a year, I haven’t really been compelled to actually write much except for whatever my job needs me to write. I know all the reasons why I wasn’t able to, but I really just want to focus on the main one:

Life is soul-crushing and getting churned into the capitalist meat grinder sucks.

This isn’t a joke to scare people or make you dread whatever is coming. It’s just reality. Since the audience for this piece is primarily college students, I am going to talk about all this as a Carnegie Mellon graduate and relate it to my experience and understanding. This is not universal, so don’t take this as gospel.

College is already soul-crushing, but there’s a certain bubble of innocence that still remains at the undergraduate level. While in college, some of you may think to yourselves “I won’t let myself get churned into the meat grinder.” But you’re already deep in the churn at this point. The bubble primes you to accept the dogma of brand-name degrees and “prestigious” corporate jobs even if you can see through the ruse.

With the cost of living in relatively livable American

cities becoming more absurd, the churn is more obvious. You liked what you studied and want to do research? That’s cool! Will you do it for unlivable wages, overpriced substandard rentals, and no benefits? That’s unfortunate, but luckily for you the private sector is booming! Just don’t look at the jobs that are 50+ hours per week with no overtime and a barely livable salary for the current cost of living. Instead, get yourself a competitive private sector job that the world values at six figures and can help you afford an overpriced rental in a gentrified neighborhood. You spent the money on this degree so you may as well reap the rewards that are promised. If salary dictates the actual value of the job, then that job has to be something good right? Well it turns out that you’re still working over 40 hours per week with no overtime and won’t have energy to do much else when the day ends, but at least the apartment is nice.

I was frankly depressed by this, and I really let it get to me. In my case, my current job is government consulting. After years of railing against corporations and the system in opinion articles and my political science/economics courses, I “sold out” as one would say. However, it is hard to admit just how much the government is reliant on consultants to do many of the tasks that one would think the government should do themselves (there are various reasons for this, some of which are out of

the government’s control and some of which are by design, but that’s a separate discussion).

This depression was compounded by the state of affairs. Workers across the country are fed up, rights are being taken away, fascism is overt and is holding our legislative branch hostage, everyone is numb to violence, the media is unreliable, consumerism is a dystopian parody of itself, and economic divides are more sharply present. It’s hard to wake up and feel motivated to do anything when the weight of the world is unavoidable at every corner. It’s even harder to stomach all these problems knowing that the government does have a lot of money and can actually fix things if politicians tried.

I let these thoughts swim in my head and paralyze me. I had a lot of opinions about things, but I felt it was useless to say them anymore. What good would it do apart from feed my ego? I am benefitting from the system now, so I no longer had any right to complain. I spiraled a lot, and I felt a certain resentment towards my life path. I honestly thought a lot about how to get out of the corporate track the fastest I possibly could when I was struggling to find work I liked. My creative and artistic spirit felt dead, as I couldn’t even see a track for that to help pay my bills. I also didn’t want art to become another thing that crushed my soul. On top of that, my desire for happiness couldn’t overcome my obligation to my overpriced degree, which

my parents spent their money paying for. I could hear the voices of boomers in my head saying “just work and die like the rest of us.” I wasn’t ready to accept that, but I couldn’t think of alternatives to that philosophy to ease my existential horror.

Having said all that, I knew I had to learn to accept the fortunate outcomes that my path does bring in a healthy way. I became close friends with people who don’t have lucrative jobs or a brand-name degree, and some of them have to choose between rent and food during the month. It is messed up that people who have such physically and emotionally demanding jobs are forced to struggle with basic living costs. Complaining about my job where I get to sit at a desk in my apartment is extremely privileged. Simultaneously, many of them tell me how they would never want to work the kind of job I have, so showing pity is also privileged and condescending of me to do. The pity doesn’t help anyone.

As kids, we were raised in an industrialized world that inherently pits us against each other and forces us to put our happiness last. There are many of you in college right now who are staring down the barrel of graduation and job hunting, wondering whether life will be kind to you. I personally know or knew of a lot of Carnegie Mellon graduates who have been affected by layoffs in tech, which was once considered a safe career track. It’s a rapidly changing world and almost all of us are helpless in some way, trapped in whatever we need

to do to survive and fueled by fumes of the hope that we will eventually thrive.

However, it’s easy to forget that none of us are alone in feeling crushed by the world. A job is just a job. Sometimes you do need to look out for yourself. It’s not your fault. You have to be the one to make the choices that are good for your well-being. You have to improvise your way through life to actually get somewhere you like and you have your whole life to do that. It’s daunting, but it’s a lot easier when you’re able to accept that it’s ok to do what you need to do for your practical well-being.

The takeaway from all this is that I am fine now. I had to stop letting life get to me and start taking care of myself. I found a project at work that I do like, and it turns out many people who work at my company and in the government have similar outlooks on life and the state of affairs I do. I make art for the sake of art when I can, and now I am writing again for the sake of writing. Your energy in this world is better channeled if you do the things you like for the sake of doing, take care of yourself, and most importantly, do things for others. The most punk thing you can do is unconditionally support your community without flaunting your altruism or making a big deal out of your privilege. At the end of the day, we need each other and our communities need us to do the right thing. Just don’t feel bad when you have to put yourself first sometimes because life gets in the way.

Why aren’t we Carnegie Mellon Dietrich University?

NANCY ZUO
Junior Staffwriter

In 2011, William Dietrich II (also known as “Uncle Bill”) made one of the 10 largest donations of a private donor to a private university in U.S history by gifting \$265 million to Carnegie Mellon. Two weeks later, he gave the largest private donation in Pitt’s history by gifting \$125 million the school. Instead of naming the colleges after himself, Dietrich asked to name the Dietrich in honor of his father, Kenneth P. Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences, and the Dietrich at CMU in honor of his mother, Marianna Brown Dietrich College of Humanities and Social Sciences.

He passed away two weeks later.

Dietrich himself didn’t go to Carnegie Mellon. He went to the University of Pittsburgh for his master’s and Ph.D. in Political Science. He made his wealth by taking over and expanding Dietrich Industries, a steel framing manufacturing company, from his father. He dedicated the rest of his life to helping the western Pennsylvania community by serving on the Board of Trustees at Carnegie Mellon University, the Carnegie Museum of Art, the Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre, the UPMC Health System, and the University of Pittsburgh.

Adjusted for inflation, Dietrich’s gift is about 10 times the amount Andrew Carnegie himself gave the university to start the school. Andrew Carnegie gave \$1 million in 1900, which is worth about \$26.7 million in 2011. His donations are also greater than the donations from the Mellon Foundation, whose relationship sparked CMU to change its name from Carnegie Tech to Carnegie Mellon in 1967.

If the university could change its name 67 years after its founding, it can change it again another 56 years after later. Andrew Carnegie and Andrew Mellon may have the same first name, but that doesn’t mean William isn’t cut out to be part of it. Since Dietrich donated more than both Andrew Carnegie and Andrew Mellon, he should be acknowledged at the same capacity, if not even more for his contributions.

His generous gift to the university comes from a place of goodwill and a strong call to bring Pittsburgh back to the days of the ‘golden age’ which he refers to as the time period between the 1870 and 1910.

He named the college in remembrance of his mother, who passed away at 50 years old, and left a significant impact on him. In Carnegie Mellon’s official announcement of his gift on September 8, 2011, he ends in his speech:

“My mother would be thrilled to have her name associated with this wonderful school. My hope is that by naming this college for her, we remember some of the values that made her life so meaningful. I note that we often refer to our university as our alma mater, [which in Latin means] our mother school. There is wisdom in that idea. Sometimes in the strive to compete and the struggle we forget that underpinning all our achievement and accomplishment is a simple sense of being loved. It’s that feeling of security that allows us to take the risks, dream the dream, and dare to live life with the courage that is forged by nurturing and abiding care. With Marianna Brown college, we will now have a constant reminder of this wisdom.”

Halloween Novel-tea: Why we love our ghost stories

Jennifer Bortner

JENNIFER BORTNER
Publisher

Novel-tea is The Tartan’s literary and language opinion column, so if you like hot takes and reading about cool ideas in the literary community then this is the place for you!! If you have your own hot take to add to this column, do not hesitate to contact us.

It’s Halloween time here in Pittsburgh, so I’ve been thinking a lot about the literary aspects of Halloween. Growing up in New York, teachers loved to tell the “Legend of Sleepy Hollow,” a ghost story that took place in the nearby village of Sleepy Hollow. The story is considered one of America’s first ghost stories. Written by Washington Irving in 1820, “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow” features a headless horseman who haunts the village of Sleepy Hollow. National University professor Franz Potter describes, “The horseman, like the past, still seeks answers, still seeks retribution, and can’t rest. We are haunted by the past which stalks us so that we never forget it.” Ghost stories, like “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow,” are rife with cultural artifacts. Not only are they a fun part of Halloween, but they are also a vital part of history.

In fact, ghost stories are surprisingly ancient. In 2021, “The Smithsonian Magazine” reported about a 3,500-year-old Babylonian clay tablet containing what may be the oldest known ghost rendering. The tablet is part of a guide for exorcising ghosts and warns readers to “not look behind you!”. The tablet specifically provides instructions on having a young woman lead an older male ghost into the underworld.

The Ancient Greeks and Romans, too, had their own slew of ghost stories. In the first century, Pliny the Younger wrote a letter describing a mysterious house in Athens. He explains that the house was allegedly haunted, with reports of the sounds of rattling chains getting closer and closer. Eventually, the ghost of a skeletal old man chained at his arms and legs would appear, a vision that drove the house to be abandoned. That is until Athenodorus, a Greek philosopher, decided to purchase the house anyway. There, he was haunted by the ghost until he persuaded authorities to investigate the area where they found its body and could finally give it a proper burial. Many ancient ghost stories from Greece, Rome, and Mesopotamia include similar messages, emphasizing the importance of proper burial.

However, the most famous age of ghost stories was the Gothic era in the 18th and 19th centuries. The birth of Gothic fiction is largely attributed to English author Horace Walpole’s 1764 novel “The Castle of Otranto” which describes the story of the ruler of Otranto, Manfred, haunted

by a past ruler Alfonso who questions Manfred’s nobility and reveals the true heir to Otranto. This, too, brings up important social questions about “noble blood” present in Gothic England.

More than simply posing cultural questions, ghost stories also served as a way to subvert the cultural status quo. In the 19th century (the height of the genre), women contributed 70 percent of ghost stories in American and British magazines. Women were able to express frustration with society through ghost stories, as Hephzibah Anderson at BBC writes, “The ghost is the ultimate outsider — an absent presence, all-seeing and yet unable to partake of life in any meaningful way.”

Ghost stories remain an important avenue for expression, as they continue to be a popular form. The Booker Prizes recently featured a list of “The best ghost stories nominated for the Booker and International Booker Prizes.” In the spirit of Halloween, I encourage you all to check them out as they may reveal something unexpected about today’s culture, as ghost stories are a compelling genre that deserves all the love it receives.



Media literacy, i.e., why you should be quiet sometimes

Esshaan Joshi
ESHAAN JOSHI
Sports Editor

It’s really, really easy to get news these days. There’s a billion different independent news sites, Instagram posts, Twitter journalists and open source intelligence organizations telling you everything you want to know about every single conflict and incident and interaction you could imagine. You can get real-time updates on how many freckles are on Cillian Murphy’s perfect face, and the fastest possible response time on whether Iran has decided to nuke the U.S. yet (spoiler, they really, really want to). And with all this information, misinformation, half-truths, and straight-up lies, people forget the one fundamental rule of dealing with massive information dumps: Sometimes — just maybe — you should shut up.

Seriously. Stop your habit of looking at something for ten seconds, concluding that it’s enough to produce an informed decision, and running with it. Stop looking at tweets from “CockslayerBoobman12345XX” as if they have nuanced takes on the state of politics or the economy.

You are one person. Most of us aren’t experts in anything, let alone the intricacies of topics that often take Ph.D.s to even understand at a high level. And it’s a problem.

This article was really inspired by the Israel-Hamas war, but it’s been brewing since the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

It became evident in the early days of both conflicts that there was so much happening that people didn’t really know what was and wasn’t true. Someone would declare something, and then three hours later people would recognize that it hadn’t happened, or that the person who had apparently declared it was off their rocker.

And that’s not to claim

conspiracy. It was more just the reality that conflict puts people into danger, and it makes it a lot harder to get a straight story. The knowledge of one small subgroup is not going to be broadly applicable to the conflict as a whole, and that’s something that can be incredibly important to recognize.

What’s terrifying is when people start echoing or pushing these snippets as if they’re gospel. It’s easy to get swept up in a hail of “reported” and “awaiting confirmation” and imagine what things could be like if those things were true.

That drives people to start talking about it, and people who don’t really pay attention are going to see people talk about and start accepting information as broadly true. Because if “everyone” is talking about it, it must be common knowledge. That’s sort of how a rumor spreads, and that’s also how false reporting spreads.

It means people think they know what’s happening. They see a piece of media and think that have an intuitive grasp of the biases, claims, and underlying information associated with it. Because of course, it would be really hard to analyze or do media critique on the things we read.

It’s easy to draw conclusions from things that just happened based on a post or a headline. It’s significantly harder to understand that sometimes, it’s alright to not know what happened, or to just not draw conclusions the second it occurs.

Media literacy is something that is really important, now more than ever. Headlines often don’t contain the entire story — they’re missing crucial information or important clarifications. Breaking news isn’t ever going to be vetted in a meaningful way when the situation is unfolding, and in this day and age where information is supposed to come out as soon as possible, it’s important to understand that immediate reporting isn’t always going to give people the best possible picture of what

happens.

So what can we do, as people, to be a literate audience for the media?

Well first, it’s all right to not have a public-facing opinion on things when a situation is developing. A situation can change radically as more information flows in, and as further reporting is done. During that time, it’s always best to reserve judgment until reputable third parties make claims. On top of that, it’s necessary, especially with how absolutely saturated we are with media, to take a second and focus more on multiple sources and their claims and claimants, as opposed to just reading headlines or posts. A Reuters headline might be full of buzzwords, but a couple seconds of reading can be insanely enlightening. A few quick Google searches are going to make a world of difference in understanding the quoted sources and their biases, and hell, that’s going to be incredibly informative. If you want to know what’s actually going on, all it takes is just a little more interacting with the sources out there. The Associated Press, the New York Times, Washington Post, all of these outlets have capable, well-trained journalists across the world, and they’re doing their best — but in times of crisis, it pays to just take a breath. Take a moment, synthesize what you can and feel confident that sometimes you won’t know what really happened until the dust has settled.

It’s not fun seeing something and spending ten minutes trying to figure out if there’s some corroborating reporting. It’s not fun waiting and seeing what develops as things progress. It sucks, but it’s important if you want to have well-formed opinions on things. It’s hard to spend that time, get invested, and do the deep dives. We’re faced with biased sources, strange reporting, and open-ended or unfolding situations. I find incredibly important give those events the care and attention they deserve.

Why I don’t miss my meal plan

Savannah Milam
SAVANNAH MILAM
Assistant News Editor

When I was a freshman, I ate at The Underground almost every single day. This had nothing to do with the food, but everything to do with it being the closest dining location to my dorm. Living in Stever, if I wanted to eat at some point, my options were The Underground or walking 20ish minutes to the next closest option.

With The Underground closed for the first half of the semester, I’m led to wonder what these poor freshmen living on Morewood ave are supposed to do. Even Scotty’s Market is still a decent walk from the first years living on Morewood or in Res on Fifth. What happens if when it starts to snow? Or when the rain and wind become more regular? Maybe I was just lazy, but if this was the case my freshman year I probably wouldn’t have eaten. I never particularly enjoyed campus food anyways, so why go out of my way to get something that would just make me feel bad after eating?

Additionally, there are not enough gluten-free options on campus. I had been gluten-free since eighth grade, but upon coming to Carnegie Mellon it wasn’t really feasible to maintain that. Luckily, my gluten allergy wasn’t anything severe so I could get away with eating a little gluten, but I know several people who have celiac disease who literally could not eat on campus. I knew that Nourish is the place to go for dietary restrictions, but I didn’t know how to get food from there and they seemed rarely open.

It was also difficult for me to find places on campus that were open. I would look at the hours posted on

Carnegie Mellon’s website and then go to the place that I was told would be open, only to discover that it was not in fact open. I don’t know if that was the website’s fault or dining’s fault, but nonetheless the hours on the website were pretty often wrong.

Growing up I heard all about the “freshman fifteen,” how freshmen in college typically gain weight because they don’t lean toward healthy options. However, I feel like the freshman fifteen affected me because there simply were not healthy options easily available on campus. Again, I don’t know if I just missed something, but it seemed like all my options were sandwiches, cheeseburgers, pasta, fried chicken, or soup. I remember being super jealous of my friends whose schools had a salad bar in their dining hall, when the only salad I could get was prepackaged and covered with enough preservatives to make it last several months.

Now I don’t want to sound completely negative. There are a couple places on campus that I do genuinely enjoy, like The Exchange. I seriously ate there at least once a day, and I still go from time to time. I also felt like all the campus dining workers were very friendly and helpful. And hey, if you enjoy fried chicken, cheeseburgers and pasta for every single meal, then there are certainly some decent options on campus. I was just not used to eating like that every day and missed the healthy food that I had grown up with.

So, needless to say, I did not really enjoy eating on campus as a freshman. When it came time to choose housing for my sophomore year I knew that I needed a kitchen so I could control my meals. I have to say that so far, I don’t miss my meal plan at all.

Affirmative action: a web of jurisprudence

NINA McCAMBRIDGE
Staffwriter

On Nov. 1, high school seniors will submit Early Decision applications (to Carnegie Mellon, hopefully). That means it’s time for yet another affirmative action Forum piece.

In June, the Supreme Court decided against the affirmative action college admissions policies of Harvard and the University of North Carolina. Students for Fair Admissions, a legal advocacy group, had sued the two universities for racial discrimination against Asian people. The fact that they and other selective universities had been discriminating against Asian students was, to the plaintiffs, open and obvious.

The Supreme Court opinion describes how Harvard and UNC considered an applicant’s race through various parts of the review process, both implicitly and explicitly. In the last step of the process, for example, “[a]pplicants that Harvard considers cutting at this stage are placed on the ‘lop list,’ which contains only four pieces of information: legacy status, recruited athlete status, financial aid eligibility, and race.” (Note that, by considering financial aid eligibility, they are also discriminating based on income — and presumably not in the progressive direction.)

Both Harvard and UNC took into account the overall racial makeup of the school. Though it is illegal (by Regents of

the University of California v. Bakke) for universities to set specific racial quotas, prior to this year, they had been allowed to set soft, unofficial quotas in this way. Universities must also have a non-racist practical rationale for the discrimination. Bakke allowed universities to consider someone’s race as a “plus.” However, given the limited number of seats in any university, this implies that for others their race was a minus. (Subsequent Supreme Court decisions expressed that explicitly negative race consideration was not allowed in college admissions.) The Supreme Court has now overturned Bakke, finding the rationales adopted by universities to be vague and unquantifiable, and with no clear endpoints.

Keep in mind that the Court ruling does not ban affirmative action as a whole. In fact, private universities are still practicing affirmative action above-the-board in hiring decisions. According to a university policy, “Carnegie Mellon University is committed to Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action.” It is also stated that “[t]he university does not discriminate and is required not to discriminate in employment.” It is not clear, however, that this is true — at least in a colloquial sense.

According to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, “affirmative action under the Guidelines is not a type of discrimination but a justification for a policy

or practice based on race, sex, or national origin.” It is not a discriminatory policy, then, but a “justification for a policy,” in the sense that it must be planned and not directed at specific individuals. Executive Order 1146 established that federal contractors could not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, and so on, and it also established that companies should “take affirmative action” not to discriminate. From the text of the executive order, one would not expect that this very same affirmative action is now taken to justify the actions it is associated with today.

According to today’s Equal Employment Opportunity

Commission (EEOC), “the Supreme Court has recently recognized that voluntary compliance may involve voluntary affirmative action designed to eliminate racial imbalances in traditionally segregated job categories.” The fact is that in the case of racial discrimination, the United States has parallel and contradictory laws: it is illegal to discriminate intentionally, but because disparate impact is also illegal, organizations who end up with a racial imbalance are often legally encouraged to conduct some form of racial discrimination in hiring in order to correct the disparities.

In the case of Griggs v. Duke Power Co., it was decided that ostensibly race-neutral

policies were not allowed if they had the end result of racial disparity in hiring or promotion. In an effort to mitigate this, companies might enact counter-tests to protect against emergent racial disparities, which might nevertheless still be found to constitute racial discrimination (as in Ricci v. DeStephano).

Government contractors face more requirements in this area; they are actually required to use affirmative action in hiring. Contradictory laws allow judges to decide against whoever they politically disagree with, and such contradictions should be resolved if we ever hope to move towards a more fair and liberal law.



From EllenSeptember via Wikimedia commons

Harvard, along with the University of North Carolina, was one of the defendants in the suit filed by Students for Fair Admissions for allegedly using race-based affirmative action to discriminate against Asian applicants.

Science & Technology

‘How to Build the Universe Using Only Math’: a recap

ZACHARY GELMAN
pillbox Editor

On Thursday, I had the pleasure of sitting in on Carnegie Mellon alumnus Manil Suri’s “thesis defense.” Well, it wasn’t exactly a thesis defense; that’s more of a pun. Manil Suri’s new book, “The Big Bang of Numbers: How to Build the Universe Using Only Math,” is centered upon the idea of building the universe with math, hence the lecture title “Victor M. Bearg Lecture: What if We Built the Universe Using Only Math?” Dr. Suri thus “defended” the thesis of his book with a presentation, and by answering questions from

his “thesis committee” of Carnegie Mellon professors Jeremy Avigad, James Wynn, and Tiziana Di Matteo.

His presentation prior to their questions was equal parts interesting and hilarious. With a mastery of Powerpoint animations and sound effects that would make Bill Gates blush, he explained why he wrote the book and, biblically, explained what would need to be created each day (arithmetic, geometry, physics...) to get our Universe by the seventh.

Manil Suri is very successful. He wrote three well-regarded novels prior to this most recent book. He’s got a Ph.D. in mathematics. And

he’s written many articles for the New York Times, including one titled “How to Fall in Love with Math” that was the number two article of the week! (Number one was about the controversial actions of the Pope. More on this later.) For this lecture, Suri started with a quote from Leopold Kronecker: “God gave us integers, all else is the work of man.” He segued from here into a story about the magic trick his teacher Dr. Huzurbazar showed him. For the numbers to start ex nihilo, Huzurbazar started with nothing (the empty set {}).

This represented the number 0. Then he made a set containing this empty set ({}), denoting it as 1. This is

a set containing 0. Then he created the set containing the empty set and the set containing the empty set ({} , {}), denoting it as 2. This is a set containing 0 and 1. From here, all numbers can be created, and so this magic trick creates numbers “out of nothing.” Perhaps you could call it the “big bang of numbers.”

I won’t get into the whole lecture shebang here (for that you’re gonna need a time machine, or just buy his book), but I will mention the spinning symmetrical Mona Lisa. In a discussion on the ideas of beauty, which symmetry is often associated with, Dr. Suri gave the Mona Lisa more and more lines of symmetry, and then spun her. He also talked

about the questions on the origins of math. Is it something that we develop, or does it just naturally exist? In short, are mathematics discovered or invented? And are we here for a purpose? The “thesis committee” made some good points as well, comparing Suri to Descartes, and asking whether we should think of mathematics leading to the universe as Suri describes, or instead the opposite, the universe leading to mathematics. Dr. Suri passed this thesis defense with flying colors, and got to keep his doctorate.

Anyway, he sent his book to the Pope, and the Pope replied positively!

Dava Newman talks Mars exploration and communication

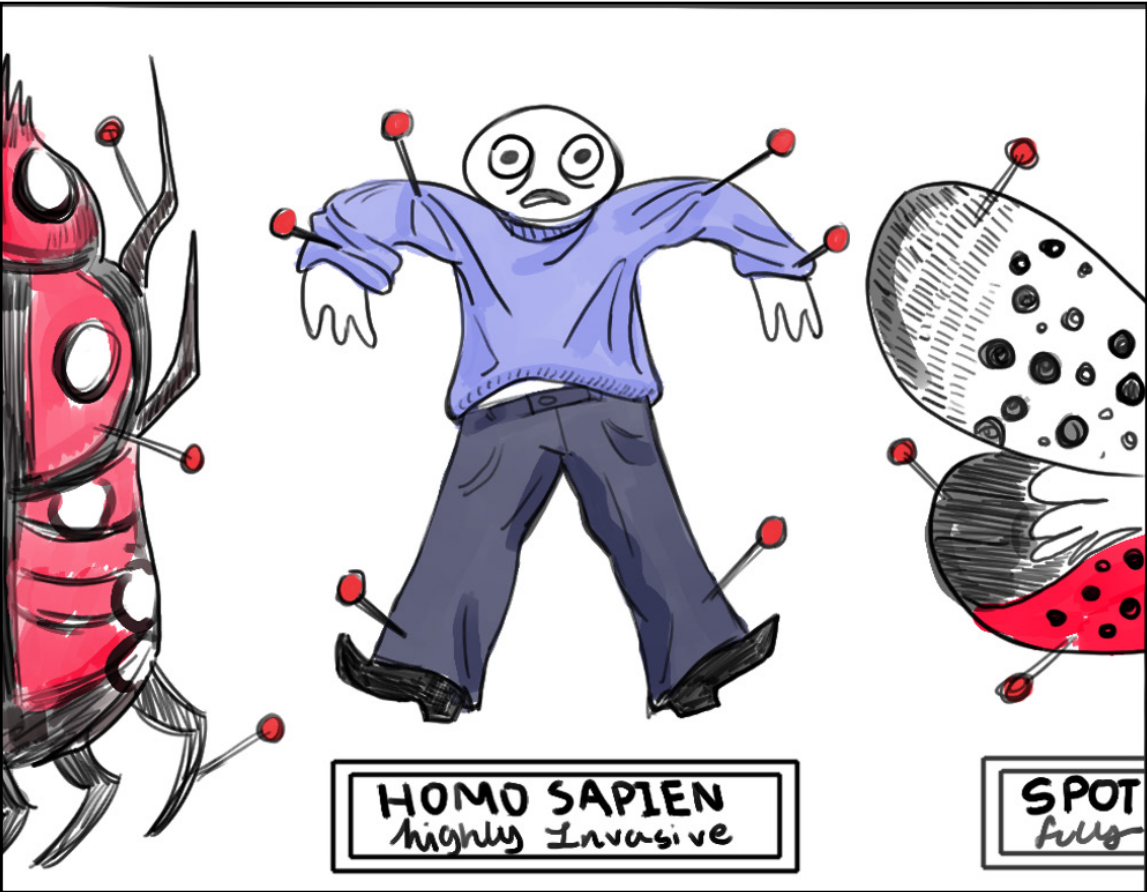
EMMA ROGERS
News Editor

In a recent talk for the Center for Arts and Society and their Planetary Hospitality mission, Dr. Dava Newman visited Carnegie Mellon. Dr. Newman’s contributions to this field are wide-spanning, with her current roles as an Apollo Program Professor of Astronautics and the Director of MIT Media Lab, as well as her history as the NASA deputy director under President Obama. During this talk, she discusses both the current state of and her contributions to space exploration, and how this sets up humanity for the future.

To start, Dr. Newman highlighted the top three questions that humans have regarding exploration: Are we alone? Are there other habitable planets? And is there life? Among these questions, she noted, scientists believe we will find the answer in the next decade, with potential sources like fossil evidence on Mars providing options for that answer.

When looking beyond our solar system, though, Dr. Newman noted that at our current state, human exploration is infeasible due to our fragile bodies and lack of adequate life support technologies. Instead, she said, we want to send our brain out there, highlighting the successes of various spacecraft launches in collecting data, as well as our telescope missions like Webb, which has given us information dating back 13.4 billion years.

Despite recent focus on returning to the moon (with Dr. Newman recognizing Carnegie Mellon’s journey in December as well as her own MIT media lab on a following mission), Newman’s focus has largely been on Mars — it offers the best medium to focus on



Talking about climate change and planet stewardship, Dr. Newman joked that humans, like spotted lanternflies, are invasive species.

becoming “interplanetary” and has a lot to teach us about taking care of our own planet. Her previous design work has focused on the former of these goals with BioSuit MCP — a new type of spacesuit that aims to reduce the bulkiness of current space suits with new designs. She described it as “shrink wrapping people,” based on the idea of a “second skin suit” with materials and design that work as well as skin does but is able to pressurize a person to a third of an atmosphere. New advancements like 3D knitting machines and radiation-protective materials have helped with her design work.

She similarly notes that the

recent trend for privatizing space has done a lot for the innovation space. While she pushes back on the assertion that space exploration has pivoted to private industry (noting that government support is ongoing and has provided billions to get to where we are now), the private sector has helped “democratize space and democratize accessibility.” With her own research, she’s been able to send versions of her suit to the International Space Station with private astronauts, giving her team a chance to test them earlier as opposed to years down the line. A similar benefit is seen with launching our astronauts —

because this innovation is centered in the US, we now have other options besides Russia to send our astronauts to the International Space Station and beyond. Such recent advancements have meant “everyone has access to space to inspire them.”

On this subject of inspiration and learning from Mars, Dr. Newman noted the importance of telling the story of the work scientists are doing. “We’re the real martians. We’re exploring Mars every single day,” she said. Through the rover programs, people can listen to the wind on Mars, immersing themselves in the environment that scientists

are studying. Through initiatives like OnSight, people can virtually visit Mars through technology like augmented reality, offering a chance not just for people to experience this environment, but for scientists to virtually study the rocks in the path of the rover. Dr. Newman’s current work with the MIT Media Lab focuses on telling the stories of the artists and designers working with engineers and scientists, focusing on the fact that such advancements are truly “multi- and interdisciplinary.” Such communication has been particularly effective with regards to data visualization of climate change here on Earth.

In emphasizing this point, Dr. Newman noted the importance of humanities in these conversations — “we need everyone” because it “fundamentally starts with the stories.” Her big emphasis is that if people can’t imagine it, or see it, they won’t see how it impacts them. She highlights the importance for diversity at the table when it comes to “really hard societal problems.”

At the end of her event, Dr. Newman leaves the audience with a call to action. When representing scientific issues, scientists and researchers are often drowning in data, with social scientists understanding more of how to communicate these problems to the public. For her, the best approach is to recognize the importance of personalized solutions and empowering people to take their own small steps to solving big problems in society. There needs to be an emphasis on paying it forward to the next seven generations, and everyone can be called to action every day, even if it’s something small.

After all, at NASA the “first thing you learn is not to forget the future.”



Courtesy of Skyler Sawyer via Unsplash

How to get yourself a real mummy for Halloween

ANNA CAPPELLA
pillbox Editor

This past Fall Break, I made a visit to New York’s Metropolitan Museum, which is home to a massive collection of ancient Egyptian archeological artifacts, including mummies and the containers that held them. As I wandered through the Egyptian exhibit, I found myself wondering: why mummify? And how?

In ancient Egypt particularly,

mummification was also a religious ritual, involving symbols and steps to honor specific beliefs. From a purely surgical standpoint, though, the process of mummification in ancient Egypt was very standardized. The first step was to remove the brain, always through the nose. Some sources say that the brain was removed in chunks, while others explain that a metal hook was used to liquefy it while it was still in the skull, and then it was drained

out of the nose. In either case, the brain was not saved in any way, and the integrity of the face was prioritized during the procedures. Then, all internal organs were removed through a cut in the side of the body, and some, like the gut and the liver, were stored in what were called canopic jars that were buried alongside the mummy. The heart was never removed, as it was believed that it was the seat of the soul and should stay with the person into the afterlife.

The body, now hollow, was dried using a salt called natron. The goal was to desiccate the body completely so that no moisture would remain. The importance of this step can be explained by more detailed biology, which the Egyptians may or may not have known about. It has been hypothesized that their desert climate helped clue them in to the importance of dryness in burials.

The body is made up of cells, which are essentially tiny bags

of water that contain proteins, enzymes, and DNA helping your body do all the amazing things it does while it’s alive and keeps it soft and in motion. The catch is that cells need oxygen to do their jobs, and when they don’t have oxygen, there are evolutionary mechanisms that kick in to help return all that good but unused biological matter back to the earth. Namely, when carbon dioxide

A multitude of methods for mummification

MUMMIFICATION, *from A7*

accumulates in tissues of the body (since it is not being breathed out by the person who is dead), it causes a pH change that triggers the cells to burst open, releasing all the enzymes inside of them out into the world.

This is where our problem begins. The enzymes can start to snack on the tissue around them, opening up new areas to the air, including bacteria that was previously stored in the body, which creates a bad smell. As the enzymes do their job, they are able to slowly break down all the tissues and cells in the body to their original components, liquefying the entire body. This is decay.

If we seek to avoid decay, then we must ensure that we preserve

all of the things that make up cells except for the water inside of them. Without water, the cells will not be able to undergo the pH change or “notice” that there is no oxygen; therefore, they will not be able to burst open because there will be no water inside of them to carry the enzymes out. However, all of the other tissue and basic structural matter will be left behind, resulting in a well-preserved body. This same principle applies in many ways to embalming, where the water in a body is replaced with other chemicals to temporarily prevent it from decaying while funeral services are happening.

The Egyptians, whether they knew it or not, lived in perfect conditions to dry out such a large amount of tissue, and they were

skilled at the process. After drying was complete, they wrapped mummies in large quantities of linen. They sometimes used resin over the body itself or between the linens. They would then place the mummy in some combination of a mask, sarcophagus, coffin, and burial chamber decorated with important symbols for transportation into the afterlife.

Egyptians were not the only group to perform mummification on their dead. Mummies have been found on every continent, and throughout many periods of time. The methods of mummification seem to rely partially on the location and climate of the people. Some of the oldest mummies have been found in Chile, where they removed the organs and brains from a body, dried it, stuffed it with

plants and sticks, and adorned it with masks, wigs, and paint — almost 7000 years ago. However, in China, a mummy from the Han dynasty was found entombed in embalming fluid, meaning that the tissue and hair was still completely soft. Occasionally, “accidental” mummies have been found — dead bodies that were buried naturally under just the right environmental conditions to preserve their remains for a millenia, like the famous Otzi the Iceman who was preserved in a glacier from the Alps in Italy. There have even been records of living mummies; in Japan Yamagata monks started the process of their own mummification by eating a diet of only tree matter to remove the fat from their bodies. They then stopped eating and drank

only salt water until they were weak enough to be buried alive. After they died and a period of time had passed, their tomb would be opened to check for signs of decay and an exorcism would be performed if decay was found.

While much of this seems unthinkable in our times, mummification was an important cultural process in many contexts and represents a unified attitude towards death that is uncommon now. However, mummification is still practiced in some places; even Lenin was mummified. So, next time you think about pulling out a spare roll of toilet paper to make your mummy Halloween costume, consider the rich historical diversity of mummification — maybe you could even dress up as a person trapped in ice!

The truth behind Halloween candy horror stories

CHRISTOPHER LESSLER
Junior Staffwriter

Every Halloween, the same questions surface: Is eating Halloween candy safe? Should I be checking Halloween candy for signs of tampering? If so, how? The prevalence of these questions is in large part the result of historical and continuing fears about Halloween candy safety. The FDA, for example, recommends only accepting commercially wrapped candies and then searching childrens’ candy for discoloration, pinholes, and tears. To ensure this is possible with all candy, the FDA tells parents no to allow their children to eat candy until coming back home, and to feed children beforehand so they are less tempted. Otherwise, children might eat candy before parents get a chance to check it.

Caution around Halloween candy is decades old. A New York Times article from 1970 details the risks of Halloween candy, using some hypothetical examples of candy tampering but also referencing allegedly real anecdotes of apples with sewing needles or razor blades



Courtesy of Evan-Amos via Wikimedia Commons

hidden inside, along with other incidences of tampering. This article caused widespread concern for the safety of children trick-or-treating. Additionally, in 1974 the first and, to this day, only case of a child dying from Halloween candy occurred: eight-year-old

Timothy O’Bryan passed away after ingesting poisoned candy. A subsequent investigation and criminal trial revealed the child’s own father had poisoned him in a case of life insurance fraud. The father also handed poison candy out to at least four others,

including strangers, in an attempt to cover up his tracks. No children are known to have been killed from Halloween candy given by a stranger, and this remains the only known attempt by a family member.

Recent news stories have furthered fears of Halloween candy tampering, including a 2022 case in Eugene, Oregon of three separate children being given candy items hiding a small razor blade. At least one parent found the blade by checking candy before allowing the child to begin eating. Even if the risk is non-lethal, checking Halloween candy certainly could prevent a child from eating altered candies, as in this case. Also in 2022, on Oct. 20, authorities at Los Angeles International Airport seized roughly 12,000 suspected fentanyl pills within candy boxes. Although the boxes were disguised most likely for the sole purpose of hiding the pills for smuggling, many worried this was a sign children could be given fentanyl on Halloween. After this incident, the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department told parents to examine candy before

letting children begin eating. No Halloween candy incidents involving fentanyl were ultimately reported in 2022.

Sometimes, these sorts of stories about Halloween candy tampering result in media frenzies and ultimately paranoia, especially when details of these stories are misrepresented. This has been happening recently but is by no means the fault of the internet: Halloween candy paranoia has been spreading since far before the internet was made public. And the simple fact is, there have been cases of dangerous Halloween candy, including recently. Yes, these cases are exceedingly rare. No children have ever died after ingesting candy given by a complete stranger. But that hasn’t stopped one person from trying and succeeding to kill his son via candy. Double-checking Halloween candy — although children are most likely safe nevertheless — may have some merit, depending on your personal risk tolerance. Plus, if you’re the one doing the checking, you can always turn it into an excuse to loot some candy from the young ones.

The spectral problem haunting America: ghosts

JIMMY BARACIA
Assistant SciTech Editor

Do you believe in ghosts? Several polls and surveys done by a variety of sources reveal that the majority of Americans do.

We are surrounded by a handful of television shows, one of which being Ghost Hunters, who make it their mission to explore the most haunted places in the nation. Another is the Conjuring Universe, sharing the stories inspired by the real tales of Ed and Lorraine Warren. And how could we forget about Sam and Colby, the YouTubers who investigate all the most haunted sites the country has to offer, garnering just over 10 million subscribers. When we take

this into account, it is no shock why Americans love ghost stories.

In fact, Barry Markovsky explains in a University of South Carolina article that, “In a 2021 poll of 1,000 American adults, 41% said they believe in ghosts, and 20% said they had personally experienced them. If they’re right, that’s more than 50 million spirit encounters in the U.S. alone.”

In “The Science of Ghosts,” Kathryn Hulick notes that, in a study done by Chapman University, 58 percent of pollers believe that haunted places exist. In another survey, Hulick adds, administered by the Pew Research Center, one in five Americans claim to have seen a ghost. This fascination with ghosts is solidified in American culture.

With a majority of Americans claiming to have seen or been around a ghost — how feasible is it that ghosts are real? Scientists find it not very.

There are a handful of explanations of Americans crediting spirits to things that actually come out to be very mundane and boring. Brit Trogen, a scientist and author, advises that anybody who sees a ghost should, “call the fire department because one common cause of perceived ghost sightings is carbon monoxide poisoning.” Other explanations, Trogen lists, include infrasound, Earth’s geomagnetic fields, and even “accidentally ingesting ergot, a fungal precursor of LSD.”

On the other hand, Hulick

notes that some people experience hallucinations. The difference is that most people just ignore them; however, some turn to using ghosts as an explanation for them. It is part of human nature to search for reasoning.

Markovsky discredits the idea of ghosts entirely. Ghosts are supposed to have the ability to glow, throw around objects, or make strange noises, thus requiring matter. They cannot have matter, though, when they disappear without a trace of fly through walls. Markovsky argues, “Centuries of physics research have found nothing like this exists, which is why physicists say ghosts can’t exist.”

However, do these explanations placate the millions of ghost stories

that circulate the nation? The works of Ed and Lorraine Warren and the cases of possession that they dealt with? The brutal illness-like symptoms suffered by people after taking a photograph of the Robert doll without asking him first? The strange ability of mediums to pinpoint exact relatives of yours and list unknowable facts without having met you before in their life? All of the evidence presented by a variety of professional ghost hunting equipment?

Maybe ghosts do exist. Maybe they don’t. What we do know is that ghost stories are fun. Go out and enjoy them this Halloween... and don’t worry too much because they’re all made up anyway, right? Right?

Mind-controlling fungus and the creation of zombie ants

ABE JAMES
Junior Staffwriter

Imagine this: a parasite has wormed its way into your body, making you a puppet. After several days of torture, you climb up the stem of a plant and are forced to hang on for dear life as the parasite sprouts from your head, killing you.

This is the reality for ants under the spell of Ophiocordyceps and Cordyceps, genres of parasitic fungi whose spores infect insects, arthropods and even other fungi. These fungi typically live in warm and humid environments such as jungles or tropical rainforests. Ants alone, however, face the horrors of zombification and are Cordyceps’ and Ophiocordyceps’ most common victims. Cordyceps recently became well-known from the television and video game series, “The Last of Us,” which features a zombie-making mutated Cordyceps fungus. Luckily for fans of the show, these fungi

don’t actually feast on humans.

Another well-known type of parasitic fungus is the Zombie Ant Fungus (Ophiocordyceps unilateralis), which targets carpenter ants — not humans. The first written account of this fungus was in 1859 by Alfred Russell Wallace, but fossils of other similar ant-parasitizing fungi from 48 million years ago have been uncovered, as revealed in a 2010 ScienceDaily article. Although, it’s not really a zombifying fungus taking over the mind. A 2017 study published in Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences found that this fungus actually controls the ant’s body rather than its mind after scientists discovered fungal cells inside the ant but not in its brain.

Zombie Ant Fungus is special because it can make the ants act naturally and continue living their lives, unlike Cordyceps. This allows for the ant to stay within the colony

and decreases the likelihood of death before the fungus is ready. When the spores fall down onto the ants, they break through the exoskeleton of an ant and infect its body, puppeting the ant for days, even weeks. When the optimal time arises, the ant finds the perfect conditions and death grips onto a leaf. The perfect conditions are the underside of leaf or twig, 25-30 centimeters above ground, the north side of a plant, 30 degrees Celsius, or on a plant vein. It can take three weeks for the fungi to grow and when it is ready, the spores flutter from the original and onto more unsuspecting ants, starting the cycle all over again. This can wipe out entire ant colonies as the infected ants are almost always still on their previous colony’s territory.

So, what does this mean for us? Will humans become the next fungus target? For Cordyceps and Ophiocordyceps, it is not likely because our body temperature

is warmer than their ideal type, according to Dr. George Thompson, Professor of Infectious Diseases at UC Davis, School of Medicine. Dr. Thomas also states that because we are far more complex than insects and arthropods, it is unlikely that

those fungi can infect us. But due to factors like global warming and climate change, fungi such as Candida auris and Coccidioides have evolved to infect humans. But, at least we’re not ants infected by zombie fungus.



Courtesy of David P. Hughes, Maj-Britt Pontoppidan via Wikimedia Commons

CMU football tops W&J 35-14

CMU ROUNDUP, from A10

just under four minutes left. As the clock hit zero for the last time, the scoreboard read 35-14 in favor of the Tartans.

This win put the Tartans at 7-1 for the season, and for their next game, the team will be traveling to Westminster College for a 1:00 p.m. kickoff.

Men’s Soccer

Over fall break, the men’s soccer played two games at home. The first was against Washington University on Friday, Oct. 20. The first half was scoreless on both sides, with the Tartans getting four shots (none on goal) and the Bears getting one of five shots on goal. During the second half, however, the Bears were able to get three past the Tartan goalkeeper between the 75th and 89th minutes. As a result, the Tartans recorded a 3-0 loss.

Looking for a rebound, the Tartans hosted the 24th-ranked University of Chicago on Sunday, Oct. 22. Chicago took

the lead first with a goal in the 10th minute, but the Tartans responded in the 27th minute thanks to a goal from junior Jake Slackman, tying the score at 1-1. Just over five minutes later, Chicago put another one in the Tartan goal and took the lead back, making it 2-1. In the second half, Chicago furthered their lead by another three goals, but the Tartans made a last-ditch effort, and junior Chris Lee scored the second Tartan goal of the game in the 78th minute. The Tartans weren’t able to get any more in the Chicago goal, ending the game behind three goals, 5-2.

These losses have moved the men’s soccer team to 7-5-3 on the season and 0-3-2 in conference play. They are currently on a four-game losing streak prior to their Oct. 29 game against New York University, which will be covered in the next issue of The Tartan.

Women’s Soccer

The third-ranked Carnegie Mellon women’s soccer team

hosted Washington University and the University of Chicago over Fall Break. Their game against third-ranked Washington University was on Friday, Oct. 20. The Tartans earned the first shot on the frame in the 14th minute, but non-scoring shots would be the story for the rest of the game. Though Washington had five shots (two on goal) and the Tartans had six shots (three on goal), neither team was able to score. As such, the game ended in a 0-0 tie.

Their next game against the University of Chicago was a similar story, but much more one-sided. Chicago was able to get off five shots with one on goal while the Tartans recorded 20 shots with nine on goal. Despite their nine shots on goal, the Tartans weren’t able to score, meaning another 0-0 tie.

These ties moved the women’s soccer team to 11-0-4 on the season and 1-0-4 in conference play with a four-game tying streak prior to their Oct. 29 game against 19th-ranked New York University. That game will be covered in the next issue of the Tartan.

Foul Play: Rock Chalk Jayhawk and the Michigan Man

ESHAAN JOSHI

NO STEP ON SNEK, Sports Editor

OH MY GOD KANSAS JUST BEAT OKLAHOMA IN FOOTBALL

In what appears to be the lil’ ol’ hawks revenge tour, the state of Kansas has deigned to give the rest of the Big 12 a goddamned ass—whoopin before OU and UT get the chance to leave. After beating Texas in overtime a couple years back, the Jayhawks decided they weren’t done and gave an undefeated Oklahoma University their first loss of the season, a 38-33 drubbing this Saturday. It was cathartic watching the fans of a team that has spent most of the last decade in the gutter rush the field and tear down the goal posts. The Big 12, those damn nerds, will probably scream about unsportsmanlike conduct and throw out a fine, but power to Kansas.

It’s part of a broader improvement in the quality of Kansas football since Lance Leipold (pbuh) took over. Bringing one of the winningest D2 coaches in the history of the sport to Kansas was probably one of the most successful things the AD has done. Leipold took Kansas to a bowl game in his second year there, losing a squeaker to Arkansas in the Bowl

game. The team is already Bowl eligible this year, with only two losses against OK State and Texas. Beating an undefeated OU to secure bowl eligibility is probably the most stylish way Leipold could have done it, and it was probably the most beautiful thing I’ve seen in a long time.

Hold on, I’m being informed there’s another undefeated team mired in scandal.

Yep, the University of Michigan managed to lose the goddamned bye week this year, when allegations of sign stealing were levied by the NCAA. Apparently, a Michigan staffer named Connor Stallions, the most stripper name I’ve ever heard, was apparently buying tickets and watching various BIG 10 games to help give Michigan an undue advantage over their opponents.

The scandal is, to be honest, really, really bad. Trying to pay someone to steal signs from other games is a huge backstabbing of the coaching philosophy, something which many former and current coaches have been speaking out about since the scandal broke. The situation has continued to get worse as more and more information gets out. At this point, I don’t know what the NCAA could do except vacate

a lot of Michigan’s wins in the last couple years. That’s a huge deal, and would basically put the entirety of the Harbaugh tenure into question. How much of their ability to win has come from coaching and playing, and how much is coming from just knowing what the other guy is gonna do before he does it?

With Harbaugh already subject to constant scrutiny from the NCAA for recruiting violations, many believe this is another nail in the coffin for his tenure there. If he’s slammed for this, we’re talking about the vacating of the only two wins against OSU in years as well as playoff appearances and BIG 10 championships .

More than that, this is just a constant amount of bullshit with Harbaugh in charge. He’s a good coach, I’m sure, but he is genuinely incapable of running a program that doesn’t get constantly hit with various allegations, and this is just another in the revolving door of things that keep happening. Michigan just spent most of the last two years cheating, and Harbaugh couldn’t win a single bowl game from it anyway. That’s quite possibly the worst part of it all.

So obviously, the NCAA has just announced the death penalty for Mizzou and took Reggie’s Heisman.

Please, Penguins, play pleasingly

HALEY WILLIAMS

Social Media Manager

Gee whiz, it sure has been a while, hasn’t it, gang? The Penguins have played so many games! I haven’t even seen you since the beginning of the season! We have so much to cover, let’s get down to business.

We’re currently eight games into the season, and by golly do I wish I had picked a different team right now! The Pens aren’t doing like… terrible. But they’re really not doing great either. I have been reluctant to tune into games because they’ve just been stressing me out. Currently, Pittsburgh is sitting at a cute little 3-5-0 record, the actual worst in the Metropolitan division. We’re seventh from the bottom of the entire league right now. I know it’s early. I don’t care. I’m malding. But hey, my pookie bear Jarry has two shutouts in eight games! I don’t want to fully recap eight games, so how about a score speed round?

On October 10, in the season opener against the Chicago Blackhawks (and the NHL’s shiny new toy, Connor Bedard), Brian Rust opened scoring for the Pens in the first, and was followed by a goal from Cap’n Crosby in the second. However, our luck would not continue, as the Blackhawks proceeded to score four unanswered goals in the remaining 30 minutes. In their home opener, the Penguins fell to the Blackhawks, 4-2.

After their embarrassing defeat, the Pens went to Washington to face off against the Capitals on October 13. The first period ended scoreless, but by God did we go crazy in the second! We got a Geno goal, and

two goals from Crosby, plus a bonus fourth goal from Reilly Smith in the third. The Capitals seem to have been plagued by bad luck on this Friday the 13th, and would be shut out by the Penguins, 4-0.

On October 14, the Penguins returned to their home ice to go up against the Flames. After another scoreless first, the Flames would open scoring in the second. However, their lead would be short-lived. In the third, Pittsburgh came out strong with goals from Rust and Smith, Jake Guentzel’s first goal of the season, and one more from Malkin. Calgary tried to come back with a goal in the third, but the Pens were not having it, and Rust closed the door on them with another goal right at the end of the game. A beautiful Peng-win, 5-2.

On the 18th, the Penguins traveled to dreaded Detroit. Geno opened scoring the first, but was promptly answered by a Wings goal. Detroit would dominate the second with three more goals, and despite two more points from Erik Karlsson and Rust in the third, the Red Wings kept their healthy lead alive with two more of their own. The Pens would once again fall to the Red Wings, 6-3.

On the 21st, the Penguins waddled over to St. Louis. After the Blues opened scoring in the first, Malkin put the Pens on the board before the period was out. Unfortunately, the Blues would record two unanswered goals in the second. In the third, another St. Louis goal widened their lead, and Pittsburgh was unable to recover despite one more point from Radim Zohorna. The Penguins would leave singing the blues, having lost 4-2.

Back in Pittsburgh, the Penguins hosted the Stars on the 24th. Things looked hopeful when Rust opened scoring for the Pens in the first, but it would all be downhill from there. Dallas scored four unanswered goals and Pittsburgh would once again suffer defeat 4-1.

On the 26th, Colorado came to Pittsburgh. After two Penguin goals from Smith in the first, and one from Lars Eller in the second, the Pens went into the third period up 3-0 on the Avs. Despite a strong showing from Colorado, their fate was sealed when Crosby scored point number four for the Pens in the third. In what is arguably their best game this season, the Penguins would shut out the Avalanche, 4-0.

Once again on home ice, the Penguins faced off against the Senators on the 28th. Ottawa would open scoring with two goals in the first, and another in the second. Crosby finally put Pittsburgh on the board before the second was out, but two more Senators goals in the third did not leave Penguins fans hopeful. Despite a last minute goal from Guentzel, the Penguins would fall once more, 5-2.

Overall, I think this season is just lacking consistency so far. I almost wish they didn’t have those few excellent games, because it makes the games where they’re mid suck so much more, knowing what they’re capable of. However, there is still a whole lot of season left. I’ll argue that they’re still settling in—we’ve got a lot of new guys this season! I’m holding out hope that our beloved flightless birds will take off soon. You can do this, Penguins! Don’t let me down!

Football Community

PENN STATE, from A10

not great, but good. After winning five straight to start the season, the Lions went to Ann Arbor, ready to make some noise. Instead, they got the crap beat out of them. Sean Clifford completed seven passes all day. The Nittany Lions allowed 563 yards. Had the ball for eighteen minutes, and so on, and so on. The final score was an embarrassing 41-17, but it never really felt that close. Yet the team recovered, and invited Ohio State to town as the thirteenth-ranked team in the country.

I pay particular mind to the 2022 game only because I remember watching it so vividly. My computer had broken earlier in the year, and I hadn’t been able to get it fixed yet, meaning that I was reliant on the big, bulky machines that filled the computer labs in Baker Hall to do my homework. When the Buckeyes descended on my hometown to play our beloved Nittany Lions, there was no question in my mind that I would watch it, so I woke up on Saturday morning and caught the bus to campus, logged into the computers, and sat down to watch a six-year curse finally break.

It was a tight game. With nine minutes left, the Nits were on top, 21-16, and I could feel the stadium pulsating even across the hundred-odd miles of my self-imposed exile. Despite the Michigan loss, I knew the same thing that everyone in the stadium knew, namely, that nobody was all that good this year. With a win against Ohio State, Penn State could end up 11-1, with a great, quality win to balance out the Michigan loss, and slip into the playoffs. We were nine minutes away from pandemonium. And though dampened, my spirits remained high when TreVeyon Henderson broke through the Penn State lines and scampered forty-one yards for a touchdown, putting Ohio State back in the driver’s seat by a pair of points.

But then, Sean Clifford was strip-sacked by Ohio State defensive end J.T. Tuimolou; the next play, C.J. Stroud hit Cade Stover for a long touchdown to extend the lead to nine. Penn State marched down the field to kick a field goal with five minutes to play, making it 30-24, and meaning, if they could get a stop, the game wasn’t over. They did not get a stop. And finally, down thirteen and in desperation mode as he tried to march down the field, Clifford heaved it to the only man he could see. Unfortunately, it was Tuimolou. And to put it nicely, things spiraled from there.

I sat in a state of shock for what could have been ten minutes, or could have been four hours. I’m not sure. All I know is that, when the dust settled, two things had happened. One, Penn State had been stymied again, and wound up taking it out on Utah in the Rose Bowl. And two, Ohio State — the perpetual pain in our collective asshole — was back in the playoff.

Last weekend, we lost again. And this football team has done too good a job burning me out for me to write about it. Ohio State 20, Penn State 12, final.

This year’s loss to the Buckeyes was particularly sad, as 2023 is the last season of college football as we know it. Next year, as a consequence (or a stimulus) of the collapse of the Pac-12, the Big Ten will add four teams on the West Coast, expanding from fourteen teams to eighteen and doing away with divisions in the process. As a result, after thirty-three straight years, Penn State’s annual faceoffs against Ohio State and Michigan will be no more. There will still be tough games every season, but it won’t be a consistent gauntlet — it’ll be against Oregon, or USC, or Washington. And second, the College Football Playoff will expand in 2024 from four teams to twelve, meaning that two-loss teams will be viable in the playoffs for the first time. So say hi to 2022 Penn State, 2019 Penn State, 2017 Penn State. Lost to the Buckeyes? Check. In anyway? You betcha.

This deserves an article of its own at some point, so I won’t go into any great detail here. But under the current format — where Penn State probably needs to run the Big Ten to make the playoff, and needs to beat Ohio State and Michigan to run the Big Ten — the season every year is the same formidable gauntlet. They’ve

become familiar adversaries, hated, sure, but respected. It’s why we always knew it would feel so sweet when we finally did it. And it’s why it’s saddening to know that, thanks to these massive changes, we never will. The new system will be cool, don’t get me wrong. But I really wish we could’ve solved the old one just once first.

But I don’t want to lose sight of the broader context here. Ever since the nauseating revelations of child sex abuse in the early 2010s, Penn State football and the Borough of State College are inextricably linked. We cannot tell the story of one without the other. In the immediate aftermath of the restoration of Penn State’s bowl privileges in 2014, still sickened, a huge portion of the town was adamantly against the Nittany Lions — cheering losses, and rooting for the program’s complete collapse. When Penn State beat Ohio State in 2016, and went on to win the Big Ten, an outpouring of emotional young people flooded College Avenue, capping a night they’ll never forget. Livid, many residents — even those unaffected who lived far from downtown, or at least as far as you can get in a town our size — complained to the Borough Council about it. In my mind, the root of the feeling was a total disgust that anyone would feel joy at the success of a team which, just a few years previously, had been proven to have partaken in a massive coverup to protect a coach who was molesting children. And who can blame them? To the students, most of whom had only the faintest knowledge of the horror, it was just a party because their team won. But the gross feeling, to those who knew the history, was undeniable.

Yet over the next seven years, something changed. I don’t know what, and I don’t know when, but this year, the town seems to be almost united behind the Nittany Lions. Of course, I don’t want to stretch the truth too far. Many are apathetic, and there are still, I’m sure, a few who are rooting against the team on principle. But the signs in the windows and that ugly culture war of the early 2010s are gone. And by and large, if Penn State beats Michigan in two weeks and finds a way to sneak into the playoff, there will be hardly a soul in town — even those who couldn’t care less about football — who doesn’t feel just the softest tinge of hometown pride.

At the end of the day, we haven’t had a whole lot to be proud of lately. It’s still a wonderful place to live, with great schools, kind people, and a plethora of natural beauty. I was raised by New York expats, surrounded by drunk college students and Amish horse-and-buggies, and I wouldn’t trade it for the world. But I would dare you, if you ever feel the urge to drive out to Happy Valley, to find a single person who will call themselves proud to be from State College. It’s not that people are ashamed of it, or even that people don’t like living there, because neither of those things are true. There’s just not much people can point to that makes them swell with pride, and not shrug their shoulders, when asked where they’re from.

Now, I know that this article has been about two different topics — the seven-year curse against Ohio State, and the scar left on my community by the thirty-five year rampage of a sexual predator. And yes, I know. One of those topics is significantly more important than the other. But they aren’t as distinct as you might think. Penn State football has been — reliably — the only thing that can land State College in the spotlight. The last time it happened, it was for reasons that we all wish, in vain, we could forget. But if the pieces all finally came together, we’d be back in the spotlight, and this time, it would be all smiles.

But that can’t happen. Not without beating those damned Buckeyes. I don’t know how much it’ll do for the kids whose personal hell was smeared all over national news, but it might, just might, be what it takes to put the finishing touches on patching a divided community back together.

We Are.

(Author’s Note: Yes, I will be writing something more fun next week.)

Sports

#5 CMU men’s cross country are UAA champs

COLE SKUSE
Editor-in-Chief
Men’s Cross Country

The fifth-ranked Carnegie Mellon men’s cross country team headed to the University Athletic Association (UAA) Championships on Saturday, Oct. 28 at Hunting Valley, Ohio.

The first Tartan to finish was graduate student Matthew Porter, who finished second with a time of 25:10.48. Right behind him was junior Matthew Coyle, who finished third with a time of 25:10.48. In fifth place was sophomore Ryan Podnar, who crossed the finish line with a time of 25:23.1. Sixth place went to senior Jacob Hsu, who had a time of 25:25.7, while junior Colin McLaughlin placed seventh with a time of 25:29.1. Junior Aleksei Seletskiy placed tenth, finishing in 25:24.1 while senior Charlie Murphy finished 13th with a time of 25:40.5. Junior Eamon Brady finished 16th with a time of 25:42.7. These finishes earned the Tartans 23 points, giving them the UAA Championship title.

The team will next be heading to Lock Haven, Pa. to compete in the NCAA Mid-Atlantic Regional on Saturday, Nov. 11.



Courtesy of CMU Athletics

#5 Carnegie Mellon Cross Country won it all this in Hunting, putting together an excellent performance and clinching the UAA Championship.

Women’s Cross Country

The Carnegie Mellon women’s cross country team competed in the UAA Championships on Saturday, Oct. 28 in Cleveland, Ohio.

Sophomore Orit Shiang was the first Tartan to finish with a time of 23:02.9, earning 23rd. The next Tartan to finish was sophomore Margaret Ann Healy, crossing the finish line 37th with a time of 23:39.5. Next to finish were senior Isabella Rhee and freshman Maya Ducker, who finished 40th and 41st with times of 23:41.8 and 23:42.7,

respectively. Junior Alyssa Hoffman finished 45th with a time of 24:01.3. The top five finishers earned a total of 164 points, placing the Tartans fifth overall out of eight competitors.

The team will next be heading to Lock Haven, Pa. to compete in the NCAA Mid-Atlantic Regional on Saturday, Nov. 11.

Men’s Football

The Carnegie Mellon men’s football team took on the Washington & Jefferson College Presidents at Gesling Stadium on Oct. 21.

The Tartans were the first on the board when sophomore Willem Bouma put a one-yard rush past the goal line after a 19-yard interception from senior Aryan Hegde. They missed the point-after, giving the Tartans a 6-0 lead. Just over two minutes later, Bouma put another one in the end zone after a 55-yard run. After a bad snap on a point-after attempt, the Tartans held a 12-0 lead. It didn’t take W&J long to respond; on their first play of their next possession, the Presidents connected on a 67-yard pass for a touchdown, making the score 12-

7. Before the end of the quarter, though, the Tartans put one more in the endzone with a Bouma one-yard rush touchdown. After a failed rush attempt, the score was 18-7 in favor of the Tartans.

With one minute left in the first quarter, senior Adrian Williams intercepted a W&J pass, giving the Tartans possession on the Washing 7 Jefferson 17. It took into the start of the second quarter for the Tartans to get it into the end zone. With their first successful point-after attempt of the game, the scoreboard now read 25-7 Tartans. Before the end of the

first half, the Tartans scored one more touchdown — Bouma’s fifth of the game — making the score 32-7.

Coming back from halftime, neither team managed to score during the third quarter. However, with 12 minutes left in the game, Washington & Jefferson was able to get another long-distance touchdown — this time 51 yards — to make the score 32-14. However, the Tartans weren’t done yet and put one through the posts with

See **CMU ROUNDUP**, A9

When college football matters Trash-tros or philLies

KYLE HYNES
Penn State’s Best Fan,
Staffwriter

As both regular Tartan readers might know, I hail from the small Appalachian college town of State College, Pennsylvania, and have spent my life as an avid Penn State football fan. But ten years ago, Penn State football — and State College more generally — was a powder keg.

A few years prior, the biggest story in the history of college athletics, and certainly the biggest story in the history of our quiet little town, had exploded, as it emerged that a former defensive coordinator and current retiree — a trusted member of the community who spent his time volunteering in schools and working with foster and at-risk youth — had been running what can only be described as a personal child molestation ring since at least 1976. He would go on to be convicted of 45 counts, but the real number was, beyond a shadow of a doubt, orders of magnitude higher. He was thrown in prison and an investigation was quickly launched into what turned out to be a passive, but massive, cover-up by the university. It engulfed everyone from assistants in the football program to the athletic director to the president, and even the beloved head coach of forty-five years, Joe Paterno. The head coach was fired, and then died; the athletic director, a senior vice president, and even the university president himself all wound up in prison, and Penn State was handed down the harshest penalty in NCAA history, banning scholarships and bowl games for four years and effectively neutering the team.

We responded to trauma the only way humankind knows how — by turning inwards, deepening our bonds as a community, and pledging to get through it together while caring for the hundreds or even thousands of young adults and children who had been harmed by this monster of a man.

Just kidding. The town fractured bitterly in two. Signs went up in windows across town, loyally declaring themselves “PROUD TO SUPPORT PENN STATE FOOTBALL.” Professors, angry that

the focus was on sports and not on the top-notch academic institute to which they gave their careers, responded with a barrage of signs reading “PROUD TO SUPPORT PENN STATE ACADEMICS.” The blame game escalated, with the adults in the town roping themselves to an institution of their choosing and hurling barbs at all comers, in a discussion that became less about the abuse scandal and more about the priorities of the town and university. Lost in the shuffle was the massive population of damaged children, the ones this was all supposedly about. Not once, in all the years of this dogfight, did a sign reading “PROUD TO SUPPORT STATE COLLEGE MIDDLE SCHOOLERS” adorn a window.

In late 2014, the NCAA lifted Penn State’s bowl ban, and the program began a slow return to relevance, playing in low-level postseason games both that year and in 2015. 2016, which was supposed to be the first year that Penn State was once again eligible for bowl games, turned out to be a breakout season. Under new coach James Franklin, the team won ten games, including a huge victory over Ohio State that brought down the house so loud that thirteen-year-old me could hear the roar of the crowd from my bedroom on the other side of town. The Nittany Lions won the Big Ten but barely missed the playoff that year, and all eyes turned to 2017, with a strengthened roster and newly emboldened hopes.

That year, 7-0 Penn State, ranked second in the country, had the College Football Playoff within sight; the only remaining tough games were on the road against Ohio State and Michigan State. A single win in those two games would all but ensure Penn State an 11-1 regular season and a chance to play for the Big Ten title, punching their ticket to the playoffs. And indeed, it started out well, and with ten minutes to go, Penn State had a fifteen-point lead and the ball. How did that end? I bet you can imagine. The doom and gloom from the near-win continued to the next week, and a 27-24 loss in East Lansing; that year, the Nits finished third in the Big Ten East and missed the playoffs, ranked #8 by season’s end.

In 2018, 4-0 and ranked ninth, Penn State invited Ohio State to town; for most of the day, the Buckeyes imploded on Beaver Stadium’s finely cut grass. With seven minutes left, the good guys were on top by a 26-14 margin. And how did that one end? Yep. For the second straight year, Penn State lost by a single point. This time, it was followed up by two more losses to wrap up a rough season, going 9-3 and then losing the Citrus Bowl to Kentucky.

In 2019, ninth-ranked Penn State, with just one loss, went to Columbus knowing that a win would, in all likelihood, take them to the playoffs. They proceeded to soil themselves in front of a hundred thousand screaming Ohioans, and returned to State College, hat in hand, the next day. Second in the Big Ten East. Put up fifty-three in the Cotton Bowl. All great. But by this point, it was becoming clear that the road to the playoffs ran through Ohio, and that this team may well be cursed.

2020 was the first year in four that a brutal loss to Ohio State wasn’t what kept the Nittany Lions from the playoffs. No, that year, a 38-25 loss to the Buckeyes at home was only one of the many, many reasons that Penn State did not make the playoffs. They lost their first five games, the worst start in program history, and finished 4-5. After the season, the university’s athletic director announced that the school was removing itself from consideration for bowl games out of concern for the health of players during the pandemic. Cute, but ultimately unnecessary. Who was going to invite a four-win laughingstock to a respectable game?

I will not be discussing the 2021 season. If you want to learn about Penn State’s year, just Google “crazy psu choke vs iowa” or “longest college football game ever” and you’ll get a sense for the pain we endured that year. I will just mention that the Nittany Lions started 5-0 and ranked fourth in the country, and wrapped up by losing for the sixth time in the Outback Bowl.

But last year — 2022 — there was hope. Penn State was good —

See **PENN STATE**, A9

ESHAAN JOSHI
Is not stepping on snek,
Sports Editor

America won last week, when the Houston Astros were unable to beat the Texas Rangers in the ALCS. After what had at some point seemed like an inevitable rematch of the Phillies-Astros World Series last year, both teams crashed spectacularly after at some point having 3-2 series leads at home. The Astros just needed to clinch one of two home games to punch in their pennant win and couldn’t put it together, and the Rangers are going back to the World Series.

Like Sun Tzu said in the Art of War, when the Astros lose, the world wins.

The series was definitely headlined by Adolis Garcia showing the Astros what a real parental figure looks like, clowning on the team and putting together an ALCS MVP performance. He did real good at this whole hitting the ball thing, putting together a multi-homer Game 7 where the Rangers won 11-4, a performance which made him the darling of baseball for a long time.

On the other side, the NLCS also saw a team go up 2-0, and choke it away, then go up 3-2 and choke that away at home. I’m of course talking about the Philadelphia Phillies, a team that deserves nothing but pain and whose fans should continue to feel bad about supporting the second worst team in the NL. The Arizona Diamondbacks, who I am absolutely biased in favor of, put together a spectacular two game stand in the city of Brotherly Love, winning the two games they absolutely needed to put the series away. Philly never had experienced a Game 7 before, but man they’re not good at dealing with them huh.

The Phillies managed to make the entirety of the state of Arizona hate them in seven games, which was honestly the craziest thing to happen. I didn’t know it was possible to piss off a state of retirees and

golfers by just being assholes but apparently that’s all Philly knows. Bryce Harper is back on my shit list, and he deserves it with how much he really thought he was gonna win that series. The absolute disrespect.

The best part almost certainly for Arizona has been knocking off their hated rivals and protecting the pool at the Stadium. Sweeping the Dodgers, the Brewers, and beating the Phillies has been nothing but pure ecstasy.

Arizona’s underdog campaign, when paired with the Rangers has made this one of the best seasons of Cinderella stories of all time. It’s been incredibly rare to see both the ALCS and NLCS go to seven games, it’s rare to see a 84-win team in the World Series, and for many, it’s wild that two Wild Card Teams that in all honesty shouldn’t even have made the postseason are going to be the ones playing for all the marbles.

That was probably the best week of baseball in my life, and my heart cannot handle anything else like that ever again. Please let this series be d’backs in five.

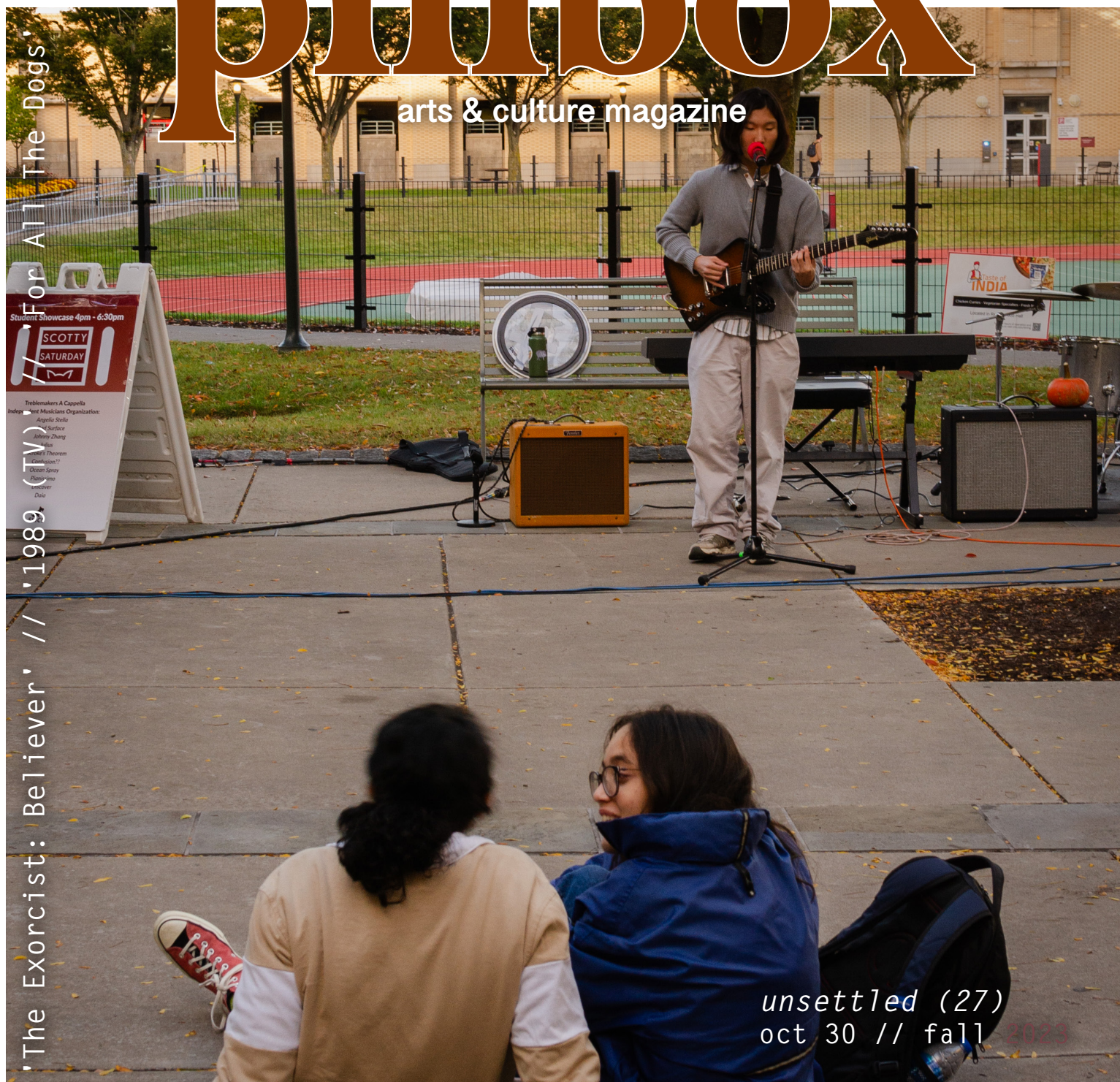
The first couple games of the World Series have also been absolutely gorgeous. Garcia walked off the D’backs in the eleventh in Game 1 after Corey Seager tied it up in the bottom of the ninth. It was probably the greatest game of baseball ever, and I say that having watched all of baseball, ever played. There’s probably some stat nerd who can explain how this was the first game of its kind but all I’m saying is Adolis Garcia is a god and I want to be him.

Game 2 was an absolute blowout, with Arizona putting together a 9-1 win over Texas in a game entirely based on small ball. I wasn’t expecting to see a team score nine runs off of one homer and a bunch of little dinky hits, but it was glorious and I am having a blast. Hopefully ‘Zona can keep doing that for the next four games, but I could see this series also going to seven. Honestly, that’s fine by me, more baseball is more good, always.

pillbox

arts & culture magazine

'The Exorcist: Believer' // '1989 (TV)' // 'For All The Dogs'



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letter from the editors

Dear readers,

According to Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms, hiatus (from the Latin "hiare," meaning "gape") is

A break in pronunciation between two adjacent vowels, either within a word (forming two distinct syllables, as in "doing," rather than a diphthong such as "joint") or between the end of one word and the beginning of the next (e.g. "the expense" rather than the elision of "th'expense").

But according to pillbox, it's a wonderful time where we get to sit back, relax, and not publish anything! We didn't rest on our laurels ("a small evergreen tree that has shiny, dark green leaves and black berries," according to the Cambridge Academic Content Dictionary); we strived to keep pillbox ever improving. From now on, every page from one to 20 has the official pillbox editor quality guaranteed perfection seal ("a fish-eating aquatic mammal with a streamlined body and feet developed as flippers, that returns to land to breed or rest," according to google.com).

Lovingly,
Your pillbox editors

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Return of a Horror Classic

Fifty years after the original scare show brought fear and revulsion to worldwide cinema goers, "The Exorcist" is back with one question: is belief enough to cast out true evil?

Fans of the 1973 original, a horror phenomenon that revolutionized the genre, will be satisfied by this direct sequel, which brings classic Exorcist elements to a modern-day setting. The film features a compelling performance by Leslie Odom Jr. (of 'Hamilton' fame) and will surely quench viewers' thirst for a good ol' demon-ousting.

Led by a stellar Odom in his prime as a single dad in the fight of his life to save his only daughter, "The Exorcist: Believer" pits not one but two teen girls against the angry demon possessing them. "Believer" is the latest Blumhouse chiller from director David Gordon Green (behind 2018's "Halloween" slasher and subsequent reboot trilogy) who effectively ratchets up the tension with sharp and punctuated editing.

The film centers on two young girls living in the same Georgia neighborhood but with opposite families. The focal character, Victor Fielding (Odom), is closely protective of his daughter Angela (Lidya Jewett) after the death of her mother in Haiti during the destructive 2010 earthquake. Pregnant with Angela, Victor's wife is struck by rubble, suffering injuries too great for her to survive.

Twelve years later, Angela is a teenager living in a quiet Georgia suburb under her father's careful eye. Angela's friend Katherine (Olivia O'Neill) lives a different life, in a devout and church-going family, but the two keep up a strong relationship. After the girls stroll jauntily into the woods to experiment with spiritual hypnosis, attempting contact with Angela's late mother, they vanish for three days before reappearing, bloodied and cowed in a goat barn.

They're alive, but something is off. With off-the-chart fevers, burns on their feet, and increasingly erratic behaviors, the girls are not themselves, and it becomes ever more clear that what tortures them is not of the human world. Victor pairs up with Katherine's begrudging parents to find whatever solution might bring them back to normalcy.

The film is ripe with allusion, fun for fans of cinematic analysis. Even a blockbuster horror movie can be deep if you read into it. The girls' disappearance is taken as a trip through Hell and back, returning on the third day akin to Jesus' biblical descent to the underworld. Sometimes subtle, sometimes overt, the religious symbolism is a hallmark of the franchise and a fan touchstone.

Although the first act starts off strong with growing unease and excellent character-building between Victor and his daughter Angela, the movie loses some momentum when it goes on a tangent to reintroduce Chris MacNeil (Ellen Burstyn) who makes her return to the franchise after starring in the 1973 original.

The reference is a nice nod, but overall, Burstyn's performance underwhelms. She's given a lot of screen time, probably as a crowd pleaser, but her presence doesn't add much when the focus should continue to be on Fiedling's family struggle and a new generation of demonic possession.

The exorcism itself in the third act, although hitting all the notes of epic ritual made popular by the groundbreaking original, feels somewhat rushed and underdeveloped. The characters seem to jump to the conclusion without much of the exquisite tension-building that the first film did so well. In that movie, it takes half the film for Chris to convince anyone that an exorcism is the only thing to save her daughter, but the eerie drawing-out makes the action that much more enjoyable. The frustration ratchets up and up, the devil gets more ludicrous and relentless, until a daring pair of Fathers eventually exorcize the inexorable.

In "Believer," most of the cast isn't fleshed out enough, and the ritual comes without much lead-in, but the movie still delivers thrills as advertised, with enough hints of symbolism to excite the keen viewer. Much of the film's strength relies on Odom's acting might, without which the film would have fallen far flatter. Odom brings a level of depth and Carnegie Mellon-honed dramatic gravitas to the film that elevates it above the average trite horror flick.

The film does well with both creeping dread and shaking horror, achieving the frights it's after. It does, however, have that particular Universal blockbuster feel of contemporary movies and is thus left wanting the misty autumn gloom aesthetic of the original movie. The 1973 "Exorcist" was grounded in the particular sense of place which makes it an enduringly

special movie. Leaves falling in a foggy Georgetown neighborhood of red brick townhomes and the university's gothic architecture set a delightfully spooky tone and make it an ideal Halloween treat. The new film is driven well by Odom but lacks the same ambience, and of course the iconic Exorcist steps.

As the title suggests, the idea of belief is at the heart of the film's tensions. Characters struggle to come to terms with their belief, finding what's in front of them hard to reconcile with the principles they hold. Belief may not be what will save the families in the end.

Will faith and religion be enough to rescue the excruciated girls? Will the power of the cross be enough to repel the repugnant demon? A malevolence beyond compare is at the door; the band of saviors will have to open it, or risk losing the girls forever.





'LIMITLESS' VS.

I consider myself to be blessed. I was blessed to be born in the position I was. I have been blessed with professors who give generous late submission deadlines. And I have been blessed in my collection of friends, one of whom has parents that pay for a Max | The One To Watch (née HBO Max) subscription. Thanks to these Magi-esque blessings, I was able to watch “Limitless” (2011) and “Lucy” (2014) on back to back nights as I gorged on Beef Pad Thai, sticky rice, and “Diet Cokes.”

To be clear, neither movie is a masterpiece, or even particularly good. But here I am writing about them anyways.

“Limitless” shines as a turn-your-brain-off thriller, ironic considering its conceit. Starring Bradley Cooper as a lame writer unable to finish his book, we witness his experience with NZT-48, a drug that unlocks your brain, depicted in the movie as giving you a perfect memory, incredible analytical ability, the ability to read people, perfect environmental awareness, fighting skills, etc... This is the power of your brain at 100% efficiency. Obviously this is stupid, but it’s compelling stupidity. “Limitless” is incredibly

entertaining, although I wouldn’t go so far as to call it good. With an under two-hour runtime that would make us consider it short nowadays, it is simultaneously bloated in the middle and undercooks its premise. It may be the most early 2010s American movie ever. Bradley Cooper is a big chiller who actually is mad swaggy once you get to know him. He uses his incredible intelligence to become a businessman. It’s directed by Neil BURGER.

The soundtrack has a great electronic sound, though the variations on the main theme start to get samey. This music, along with the extremely strange camerawork, are vital in adding a punch to the scenes where characters get on NZT-48. Though speaking of the camerawork, there is one specific shot they do a few times, apparently known as a fractal zoom, that legitimately made me nauseous every time I saw it. Imagine watching a zoom in for three minutes straight, but the camera is zooming forwards, so objects are getting closer but also staying the same size.

I love the “Limitless scene” (first result on Google), and think it should have been used as a blueprint for the rest of the kinographic experience, but

VS. 'LUCY'



when taken as a whole, we are left with a vapid feel-good film (the most enjoyable kind), a “Flowers for Algernon” if Charlie Gordon never got re-dumbified and Algernon the mouse ran for president, dying at the age of seven (114 in mouse years). I’m an unabashed ‘Ocean’s Eleven’ through Thirteen + 8 fan, so I appreciate feel-good stupidity masquerading as intelligence.

As @jackinthebox1993 said two years ago: “When I was in high school I used to think taking this pill would get any woman to sleep with me. Now I watch it and realize it simply opened his eyes and let him know he had the tools to sleep with her all along.”

“Lucy” is about a drug mule who gets punched so hard she unlocks 100% of her brain and becomes a USB charger. “Lucy” is an incredibly stupid movie. And most of all, “Lucy” is way too French. I can appreciate it first and foremost as a perspective shift. As an American, it can be difficult to understand how others perceive the American cultural hegemony, where everything is made for Americans, and all the aliens land on the East Coast. Lucy is an American student in Taiwan who gets involved with the Korean

mob, yet almost half of the film takes place in Paris with a generic French-looking French cop doing French things. What a bore. The extended absurdities that “Lucy” goes to are laughable, but the movie isn’t entertaining enough to fully laugh at. It’s no “La Machine à découdre.” All tension is deflated once Lucy gets her superpowers 30 minutes in, and we are left waiting out the clock as pointless scenes and also a compilation of animals having sex are shown on screen.

As @varunsahk1123 said one year ago: “‘Lucy’ is basically on the concept of Hinduism and Bhagavad Gita how to open the potential of human mind and finally reach the state of enlightenment when u become one with the universe.”

So if you’re held at gunpoint, and forced to watch a ‘10s movie about using drugs to unlock your full brain potential, and you aren’t allowed to kill yourself, then I’d recommend swiftly grabbing the gun while dodging the shot, turning it against your captor, and saying a cool one-liner like “looks like I just ‘uncapped’ your brain.” But if you aren’t built as differently as myself, just watch “Limitless.”

//photos//

photos by Natalie Koch



Scotty Saturday





"1989"

(TARTAN'S VERSION)

JIMMY BARACIA: Where do we even start?

LILY STERN: I really don't know.

JB: I say let's just go with the re-records and we'll make our way to the vault tracks. That probably makes the most sense.

LS: I was incredibly happy with the entire album. I grew up religiously listening to "1989," so all the songs are hugely nostalgic for me. I'm also a bit of a production nerd, so I did notice all the differences in the sound. It felt like a much more polished version, somewhat a la "Midnights," but that's not a bad thing at all. It's definitely more grown-up. You can clearly hear the influence from the producers she's now been working with for years — Jack Antonoff, I'm looking at you.

JB: I completely agree. There is a definite difference in the quality of the music itself, not to mention the maturity of her voice, as well. I usually cannot tell the difference between Taylor's Version and the original — I am by no means musically — inclined but in "1989 (Taylor's Version)" I found the difference to be pretty clear.

LS: Absolutely. I think the development in her voice even improved some of the songs. I noticed it most on "You Are In Love (Taylor's Version)" and multiple other tracks with layered harmonies like "Welcome to New York." She sounds amazing as always, but I also think that was a big adjustment for me personally as a longtime listener. The original "1989" had so much youthful energy that's hard to replicate almost a decade later, especially vocally.

JB: Definitely. I think she did a fantastic job with the entire album but I couldn't help but find there was a rift between the original "New Romantics" and Taylor's Version. The entire song felt almost too polished — which I think worked well for the majority of the album, especially in songs like "All You Had To Do Was Stay," "I Wish You Would," and "How You Get The Girl," which all stuck out to me. However, in "New Romantics," it just felt too clean and I would say even toned down.

LS: I'd say that was my only gripe with a few of the re-recorded songs. Some of them just needed a little more grit and a little less polish. Bringing her voice more to the forefront is a great choice, and it really tightens up the production quality of all the songs you

mentioned, but I also miss the overuse of ugly 2010's reverb. I might be illicitly streaming the original "Style" more than the rest of the album combined.

JB: Truthfully, that was the only problem I had with the album, which not everybody else can say, as many took to the internet complaining about the vault tracks. However, I really enjoyed them! Especially "Now That We Don't Talk," which I have been streaming constantly. I saw a few people comment that they were too slow which I completely disagree with. Yes, they had calmer and slower parts, but overall that pop aspect of "1989" is still very much present.

LS: I personally love the vault. I've been checking social media the past few days and seeing many comparisons between the vault tracks and her last pop album "Midnights"; surprisingly, plenty of them are critical. My favorites are probably "Suburban Legends," which sounds at home on "Midnights," and "Is It Over Now?," which I'd say also leans less "1989," but you don't notice a huge difference from the rest of the album. It still feels like a cohesive body of work. I think Swifties are being a little melodramatic about it, given that they're all good songs.

JB: Overall, these have got to be some of my favorite vault tracks that we have gotten so far. I feel like in the other albums there are certain vault tracks that I listen to religiously and then the other ones I will hardly touch. I really found the ones here to all be pretty solid and I can see myself listening to each and every one of them. The "Midnights" influence on these tracks are pretty present throughout, which I'm not mad about. "Midnights" is a great album!

LS: There's only so much variety the same producers and artists can add to their discography, so I'm not surprised by the production similarities. However, I refuse to agree with people claiming these songs were written recently, or even that they could be "Midnights" rejects. You can tell it's just an older, wiser Taylor singing her younger, more emotional thoughts and lyrics, even if "Suburban Legends" sounds like a cousin of "Mastermind." I love the fusion of "old" pop Taylor and "new" pop Taylor.

JB: I cannot believe we haven't mentioned "Say Don't Go" yet. Personally, I found it sounding exactly like the original "1989" tracks and fits among them perfectly. And "Slut!" too! Everybody was theorizing about what exactly the track would be about, whether it would be calling someone a slut or being called one, but she took a really cool twist on it and made it a powerful love ballad.

LS: I was so glad "Slut!" took a more introspective route, and I was surprised at how sweet the song ended up being, even if it was tamer than fans expected. "1989" in 2014 was just mainstream pop perfection, and I think all these new bonus tracks play right into that instead of crossing any new boundaries. If it ain't broke, don't fix it — this sound works perfectly for her, and these tracks are my favorite vault collection. Lyrically, and also sonically, they're her strongest yet. I will be constantly streaming the entire album.

JB: I can definitely say the same. Go out and listen to "1989 (Taylor's Version)" and just about all the other albums and stand-alones she has released. I doubt I need to tell you that, though.

"For All The Dogs" marks the fourth Drake album to be released in the past four years. Putting out albums so frequently, Drake has achieved an iron grip on the modern music industry, which has allowed him to pursue otherwise-unprofitable artistic directions. Whether this has made him a better artist is subjective. What is true is that due to Drake's image being the largest it's ever been, all publicity feeds back into guaranteed profits, with quality control being secondary to what he personally wishes to put out for himself.

"For All The Dogs" comes as a continuation on the trilogy of albums Drake released throughout the past two years, with the best parts of those albums reflected in the best parts of this one. If you're interested in listening to songs on the subject of past-soured relationships that ended without closure, Drake provides a wider selection than Taylor Swift. Now, it is not all negative, as this 23-track behemoth will occasionally deliver that musical shine that Drake is known for. The production on this album is fun and varied enough to enjoy thoroughly. The lyricism does sometimes fall into the "I-can't-believe-it's-not-satire" area (especially with the track "Rich Baby Daddy"), but Drake, alongside his many features, manages to stay afloat throughout the piece.

One of the lines off the premiere track sums up the first third of this album: "pretty but rough." Starting immediately and never waning throughout, Drake sings about his issues with relationships. Unfortunately, the delivery of the topic comes off as a petty squabble, one that never reaches a point of finality, and one that doesn't give the ideally relating listener any insight. Just as fast as we are subjected to hearing about flings that never bloomed in The Bahamas, we move on to lyrics ideally sucking up said lovers. "He gon' find out

that it's on-site like W-W-W / On site like dot-com / put a baby in you, you a hot mom" and "Feel like I'm bi 'cause you're one of the guys, girl" are just two pieces of lyrical magnificence that echo throughout this entire 85-minute album.

Corniness aside, the album does give a few gems.

"First Person Shooter" hits hard on cadence and rhythm as it unfolds this powerful raw noise mostly through J. Cole's primary verse. Upon ending that song, we get "IDGAF featuring Yeat" which also goes into this rage rap noise that Drake has been trying out, especially in the beat.



Drake's "For All The Dogs" album review

Unfortunately, though subjective, the chemistry between Drake and Yeat does not transfer over well like J. Cole's verse. The most interesting thing about the song, however, is its jazzy ambience Paul Desmond/Chick Corea-type intro that

soars the listener into an operatic space epic feeling, before harshly

If you're interested in listening to songs on the subject of past-soured relationships that ended without closure, Drake provides a wider selection than Taylor Swift.

throwing us back into the brash. The song doesn't ring right for some reason.

The following tracks "7969 Santa" and "Slime You Out featuring SZA" both give way to this very cathartic road that allows us to breathe from the punkish sounds of the first quarter

of the album. SZA is frankly a saving grace that probably contained the latter track from Drake's incessant urges to bring up past relationships. Perhaps this is what makes Drake digestible for some people, but to the extent that it is throughout this album gets old by the second half. Knowing the history of Drake's relation to Rihanna, who is referenced indirectly every so often, it's almost that Drake is making himself a case study on a man who has everything. All the women, success, money, and all else that is garnered reaching the top of an industry, yet he's miserable because there is a woman who he had a connection with many years ago that he let get away.

One might call it "Male Fragility." Whatever it is, it obviously borders on obsession, especially when considering that Rihanna already has a number of children with her husband, and Drake also has a child (who adorably is featured in "Daylight"). What makes a man who has been seemingly given comfort beyond anyone's wildest dreams the trepidation that makes him constantly bring up an ex-lover? We are never given an answer in "For All the Dogs," I'm afraid.

Before any serious headway can be made into this question we are hit with an interlude which gives a series of filler tracks, mostly about popping opposition, drugs, and sex drives. Also there's a lyric: "They say love's like a BBL, you won't know if it's real until you feel one / Can I feel it?" Perhaps the lowest point of the album is here with "Rich Baby Daddy," which is a very real song that had to get past quality control. Sexyy Red's chorus that separates SZA's verse from Drake's kills all the momentum this album had coming to its conclusion. And yes, not even SZA can save that.

//album review//

written by Cole Skuse

HUNNY's "New Planet Heaven" was one of my most anticipated albums of the year, this being their third album after 2019's "Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes." and 2022's "Homesick." If you've never heard of HUNNY, you'd probably like them if you enjoy COIN or Hippo Campus, but your results may vary.

As part of their promotion of "New Planet Heaven," HUNNY bought naming rights for a star. Not sure I can name another band that did something like that, but it gives a unique marketing for "New Planet Heaven."

But anyways, enough about the background, let's talk about the album. I want to start with "bothering," the album's opener. "bothering" starts with some plucking notes and quiet vocals and scattered piano that quickly changes to something much bigger. "bothering" is such a perfect example of how HUNNY can change into many different styles and sound good doing it, as the rest of "New Planet Heaven" shows. It also thematically sets up the rest of the album with its discussion of anxiety and relationships with others, which many of the other songs focus on.

Next is one of my personal favorites on the album, "sixteen stitches." Like "bothering," it has a quiet start that quickly evolves into something much louder. The song is constantly second-guessing itself and accepts that there's

not much they can do about it, like "Dizzy and dark is just my default/Or maybe I'm not very smart or highly evolved." "sixteen stitches" also has a great beat and it was definitely an unexpected favorite.

The third song on HUNNY's "New Planet Heaven" is "action --> reaction," which was also the first solo release

of the album and what made me so excited for what was to come. The opening is a short blurb from a broadcasted game L.A. football club game, and somehow perfectly sets the stage for the song. It's a song about wanting to reach agreements in arguments and how the little things can snowball. It speaks about the insecurities of arguing with someone who means a lot to you (the focus on "Afraid you'll run away") and the anxieties you get when you're in a relationship. Overall, a great song that also has a great music video.

"big star" is up next and doesn't disappoint. It's about getting into your own

head too much and trying to get out of it. I think just waking up and not feeling up to whatever is ahead is a universal experience, and "big star" puts that feeling to words. The drums in this song are a highlight, but I also want to know what specific shade of green the song refers to...

"89cc" is up next, and it's my other favorite on the album. I am asking you to please stop reading this article for a moment and look up the music video for "89cc" to see





- an oddly sweet love story that answers the question, “Would you still love me if I was a worm?” It’s ridiculous and makes me like this song so much more. The saxophone and clarinet solo just adds to the enjoyment of the song and the lyrics equally match, my favorite being, “You say the world is too big and you’re too small/But I think you’re just my size.”

“my own age” is such a departure from the rest of the album (especially after “89cc”) that it was a bit shocking the first time I was listening to the album. However, I believe it’s perfect on this album. “my own age” focuses on the moodier aspects of “New Planet Heaven,” and doesn’t have many lyrics, but that’s because it knows exactly what it is: it’s a reflection on your younger years and accepting that you can’t change your past, but you can accept it. It also highlights how dynamic HUNNY’s music can be, which I feel is one of the overall strengths of “New Planet Heaven.”

“ring in ur ear” is next and features Motion City Soundtrack, a partnership that I’ve never considered yet makes perfect sense in hindsight. Like “my own age,” it’s a reflection on the past, but it’s in a completely different style, as it’s much more rocking than the quietness of “my own age.” It’s a song about the good things that shaped us as people and how we reflect upon them. Not sure I have much else to say about it besides I like it!

“solo” takes us back to the love themes of “89cc” and focuses more on the wanting aspect of relationships, whether you want one or you’re already in one. There’s something about the line “Don’t call me crazy/Just call me back” that I like so much; you don’t care how you’re going to be perceived by the other person, you just have such a need to talk to them, and I think that’s so sweet. Whether you take the song to be smothering or needy, “solo” focuses on our need for connection and how we express that to other people.



- I’m not sure how to describe “nothing amazing happens” without missing something, so I encourage you to look more into it. At surface value, it’s a song about focusing on day-to-day life and ignoring all the bad things happening around you, but it’s more about how we deal with our reality, especially when we get confronted by the part of reality that we may not normally interact with (hence the repeated “Class division”).

While I don’t have it on repeat like some of the other songs, I still enjoy it.

“all my luck” can be described as just having a good time being in love. It’s a song about recognizing how lucky you are to have someone else in your life that you care about that cares about you in the same way (see “Every moment that I spend is with you/I’d be a fool to forget all my luck”). It’s a good listen and while it might be more laid-back than some of the other songs on the album, it still feels right at home.

“kick ur teeth in” has somehow become one of, if not my favorite songs on “New Planet Heaven,” and I can’t exactly say why. “kick ur teeth in” focuses more on piano than the other songs on the album. It’s another song about insecurities and anxieties and how we constantly trick ourselves into thinking the worst of situations we’re in (“This could be another one of your tricks/I’ll bet it and it’s so pathetic/Last night, kicking your teeth in, I wanted to be friends”). The song also mentions “apophenia,” which is “the tendency to perceive a connection or meaningful pattern between unrelated or random things,” which I thought was interesting.

And finally, we are at the last song of the album: “palm reader.” I’ll be honest and say I wasn’t a fan of “palm reader” the first time I heard it. While some of the other songs could be perceived as being out of place, this one felt out of place to me, though in hindsight, I’m not too sure why. Since its release, it’s definitely grown on me and feels a lot more cohesive with the rest of the album. My favorite part of “palm reader” is definitely the chorus (“How many versions of me write/Songs about astronauts and high beams?/Rock me back to sleep”). The song as a whole is solid, and it’s one to return to if you aren’t a huge fan on first listen.



As a whole, “New Planet Heaven” is one of my favorite albums of the year (HUNNY is now my top artists for the last six months despite the album being out for less than a month and every song from the album is in my top 20 most-listed-to songs in the past month). Even if HUNNY’s music isn’t your thing, I’m positive there’s something on the album you’ll like, so give it a listen!



THE VILLAIN IN THE FAMILY



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ooking up at the boy about to kill me I realized something. I wasn't the hero in this story — I was the villain. And no one would mourn me when I was gone. No one mourns the wicked.

I had never intended for it to go this far. It was supposed to be a joke. We were so close when we were younger, before they got powers, I just wanted it to be like that again. I should have known better. Word of advice: If your older siblings get superpowers and become superheroes, don't expect them to spend any time with you. And if you think to yourself, "Hey, maybe they'll hang out with me if I become a super villain..." Well, think again. Because after building and launching satellites that had the sole purpose of enslaving the minds of the human race, here I was, standing on

the edge of the Eiffel Tower, my older brother choking me with his super strength. I had to get out of this somehow. I just needed to explain to them why I did all of this. I twisted my leg out from under my brother and kicked him hard in the face. He fell backwards onto the landing of the tower. I quickly caught my breath and scrambled up to face my siblings. Jessica, with her super speed, Austin, with his x-ray vision and laser eyes, and Adam, super strength, the leader, the oldest sibling. Then there was me, Davy, scrawny runt of the family with a brain two times the size of the rest. I might not have any "superpowers," but I do have one hell of a brain. "Guys, before you say anything. Let me explain. Please."

"The time for explaining is done, Davy. Surrender, brother, and we'll go easy on you," Jessica responded.

"But I was never going to activate the satellites!"

"You would say anything to escape. There's three of us and only one of you," Adam replied.

"And you don't even have powers," Austin added. I was in quite a pickle. They NEVER listen to me. Why would they start after I tried to enslave the brains of the world?

"Please, just listen to me! You don't know the whole story!" I tried one last time.

"We know enough. You are evil, little bro. You let your jealousy get the better of you. It's not our fault that we have powers and you don't," Adam responded. Well, that's it. I'm done. He just had to bring it up, didn't he. Never mind that I haven't even seen my siblings in two years because they've been off flying around the world. Never mind that I was constantly picked on at school for having super siblings while I was just a weak little nobody. Never mind that nothing I ever do is good enough in my parents' eyes compared to that of Jessica, Adam and Austin. Nope, I'm just a powerless loser with no hope of a family or future. My one attempt at

connecting with my siblings is probably going to end in my death or arrest. "You have one more chance. Surrender to the authorities, or we'll have to do this the hard way."

"Uuummm....is there a third option?" I asked with a smirk.

"Okay, hard way it is." Adam replied. Austin whipped off his black sunglasses and prepared to stop me with his laser. Jessica began to run towards me and grab me. I expected all of this and activated my new rocket shoes. As Jessica ran and Austin lasered, I hovered above the edge of the tower. Unfortunately Jessica didn't realize I had flown above the tower as she ran straight toward the edge. She barreled off the side and began to fall down, down, down towards her death. Adam and Austin yelled as I turned off my rocket shoes and plummeted down after her.

The city of Paris became a blur all around me as I spiraled down the side of the tower. Wind ripping cold air through me like tiny knives stabbing my chest over and over again. But I didn't turn on my shoes. I needed to save her. I couldn't live with myself if she died because of my stupid plan to spend time with them. So I continued falling, the world turning to slow motion as I fell faster and faster. She began to get closer, to me and the ground. I willed myself to move faster and I did. Before I knew it, the collar of her shirt was in my hands. I turned my shoes back on and tried to slow us down as much as I could. We were too close to the ground though, so rather than landing smoothly and gracefully, we both tumbled onto the grass in a manner that was quite painful, I must say. It makes sense though as I had just fallen from the freakin Eiffel Tower.

Shortly after we landed, Austin and Adam made it to the bottom of the tower. "Are you guys okay?!" Austin asked, concerned.

"Yeah," Jessica began, "Davy saved my life. I had gotten too far away from the tower to just run down the side of it. I would've gone splat if it wasn't for him." She looked at me with

an expression that was something I didn't recognize. Was it...pride? Could she actually be proud of me? I put her life in danger in the first place, but I saved her too, so... what now?

"Well... if that's all then I guess I'll be on my way. These satellites aren't gonna demolish themselves."

"Wait," Adam said. "Come here." I turned around to Adam and slowly took a step forward, but every fiber in my body was telling me to just turn and run away. I mean what was he going to do? Punch me? Throw me into outer space where'd I suffocate until I froze to death? What would he tell our parents? That I'm some insane villain who wanted to enslave humanity? I mean I am and I did, but still...it was for a good reason. Since it was taking me so long to move, Adam closed the gap himself. Rather than punch me or throw me into the depths of space, he just wrapped his arms around me and gave me the tightest hug that I think anyone has ever been given. I must admit, hugs aren't really my thing, so I probably remained pretty stiff, but still. Eventually, Austin and Jessica joined in and it was just one big Miller family hug fest. "Come on, little bro. Let's go home." I must admit, those were the words I've been waiting to hear for a long, long time.

So what have I learned through all of this? Just talk to your siblings about how you're feeling? Simply expressing that you miss them and would like to spend time with them can work wonders? That you don't need to become a super villain to get what you want?...Nah. Becoming a super villain is definitely the way to go. I mean look at it this way; I became famous, got my siblings back AND almost turned the entire world into my own personal army. Oh! And I'm not even going to prison for anything because my siblings are superheroes. So yeah, supervillainy is definitely the way to go. It is important to note though that some things are more important. So choose your moments of supervillainy wisely and your life could really take a turn for the better. Thank you and goodnight.

//short story//

written by Abe James
layout by Madison Kwo

The Roommate

I used to have a roommate, that is until I killed her. Now she's unrecognizable with her skin melting off her bones and muscles, only tufts of hair left on her head, and her pose losing its shape. Her eyes, however, taunt me, reminding me of her previous humanity. Once big and bright hazel doe eyes are now dull and ugly puke to me.

Before Fall Break, she was perfectly fine, unconventional hobbies and interests but kind and chatty. However, when I returned to campus after the Fall Break, she was a completely different person. Upon coming back, I opened our door to find the lights off, her stuff strewn across the floor, and spiderwebs and flies everywhere. There was rotten fruit on the window sill, on her bed, and one on the floor. She was bent over, eating the rotten apple on the floor, covered in fruit flies like a dog eating steak, foaming at the mouth and drooling. She didn't notice me looming over her so I ran out of there to puke in the nearby toilet. Over the following days, she became even more disturbing — the hallowing of her body, the smell, the lack of any motor skills. I tried desperately to get rid of the

flies, the fruit, and the spiderwebs, but every time they came back even worse. Friends had texted me to ask what was going on, she barely talked to anyone and she stopped going to classes. I didn't know what to say. How could I explain what was going on? How could I explain how unhuman she was?

One night, under a spell of lucid dreaming, I dreamt that my roommate loomed over my body, her hot breath against my face. I heard her hiss, a click.

She grabbed my arm and my face in her cold bony hands, dragging her nails across my skin. She spat out spider silk from her mouth and threaded it on top of me, trying to hold me to the bed. I felt the cool fibers over me as well as a gurgling sound as she spat more silk out. My throat ached. I rubbed my eyes and opened my eyes in abject horror as my dream was actually a reality. I knew something bad would have happened to me if I didn't do something quick, so I kicked her off my bed and struggled out of the web she tried to trap me in. She weighed nothing, skin and bones, tumbling right out of my bed with a thump and a crack. As I freed myself, I grabbed something nearby on my nightstand: a hefty textbook on insects. I felt my vision blur as I began to hit her against the head with it. I threw her against the wall and I heard a blood-curdling scream as well as a crack. She let out a final gurgle before she slumped against the wall, blood dripping everywhere and coating everything. After a last convulsion, I turned away but still I saw, from her eye socket, a large black spider crawled out and onto her head.

I realized then that my roommate was dead, and had been dead for a while, since Fall Break. Yet I was the one to truly kill her, kill her body in the eyes of everyone around me and the law. As it came toward me I slammed my textbook against it, angry at what it had done to me. Afterwards, I dug its body into the carpet with a slippered foot.

I kept her body where it lay and didn't bother to clean or dispose of it or the blood. The rotten fruit, the webs — they are here too. It all haunts me, the spider and what happened to Sara.



comic

RETURN OF THE LIVING-DEAD



Kate Myers
10/23



PLAYLIST

Searching

Created by: Cole Skuse

Sometimes we have to look around and find some meaning,
even if we already have it



TITLE	ARTIST	ALBUM
All We Ever Do Is Talk	Del Water Gap	I Miss You Already + I Haven't Left Yet
Wish We Could Be Friends	Krooked Kings	All Out of Good Days
Leave That Town	Joe Vann	For Everyone
dizzy eyes	Surf Rock Is Dead	drama ~ but chill
Dark Days	Local Natives	Sunlit Youth
Darling	Real Estate	In Mind
Whales	flipturn	Shadowglow
Superglue	Michigander	It Will Never Be The Same
Dare Me	Beach Fossils	Bunny
Blink	The Moss	Blink
Sofa King	Royel Otis	Sofa Kings
Trashcan Heart	Jive Talk	Trashcan Heart
LOVE FANG	MOTO BANDIT	LOVE FANG
forever, with you	Paradise Blossom	forever, with you

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