

THE OAKLAND POST

Oakland University's Independent Student Newspaper

Volume 46 | Issue 9 | October 7, 2020

The future of the Meadow Brook Ball

The format of the annual dance is reliant on OU updates

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New trustee commits to listening and showing empathy during term

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TRUMP DIAGNOSIS

President Trump and First Lady Melania Trump contract COVID-19

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THIS WEEK

PHOTO OF THE WEEK



BACK AT WORK The Oakland University Softball Team practiced on Friday, Oct. 2 on their field. The Softball team was 7-11 last season before their games were canceled. PHOTO / @OAKLANDSOFTBALL ON TWITTER

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Photo/Genius

POLL OF THE WEEK

WHAT WOULD YOU PREFER THE MEADOW BROOK BALL BE THIS YEAR?

- A) UNDERWATER
- B) A VIRTUAL EVENT
- C) A SOCIAL DISTANCED IN-PERSON BALL
- D) GIVEAWAYS ON FACEBOOK

LAST ISSUE'S POLL

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE NEW RELEASE ON NETFLIX?



CAMPUS

OU endorses Gov. Whitmer's 'Spread Hope, Not COVID'

EMILY MORRIS
Managing Editor

Gov. Gretchen Whitmer introduced a collaborative campaign, "Spread Hope, Not COVID," in September, and Oakland University is fully onboard.

"Spread Hope, Not COVID" is meant to unite Michigan communities, including universities, businesses, healthcare facilities, government, places of worship, clubs and organizations, etc. Whitmer's focus was simple safety precautions to minimize the spread of COVID-19.

Her call to action includes wearing a cloth face mask over the mouth and nose, social distancing, washing and sanitizing frequently and getting tested for COVID-19. Each recommendation is also encouraged by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Aside from precautions, if someone does test positive for COVID-19, Whitmer recommends taking part in investigations and contact tracing with health and government officials. This helps to better understand COVID-19 and prevent spreading it to other people.

"We are not out of the woods yet, and we must all continue to step up and do our part to fight COVID-19," Whitmer said. "Our 'Spread Hope, Not COVID' message is for all Michiganders to do everything in their power to reduce the spread of the virus and protect our families, frontline workers, educators, and small businesses."

Although the CDC has been recommending a similar set of precautions since March, the "Spread

Hope, Not COVID" campaign combines safety and community by offering a common message.

This message originally stemmed from a survey between July 8-13 of 2,047 Michigan residents ages 18 and older. Responses identified behaviors, attitudes and misconceptions connected to COVID-19.

While Black Michiganders and women were statistically more likely to wear a mask in public, roughly 72% of Michiganders overall are wearing masks. To put that into perspective, roughly the same percent of college students (70%) have a job at some point in their college career.

Geographically, there weren't major discrepancies in mask wearing, outside of metro Detroit. People were more likely to wear a mask in metro Detroit.

Among age groups, Baby-Boomers were generally more likely to wear a mask, and Generation X was less likely to wear a mask. These groups branched out from the average (72%) amount of people wearing masks.

With some differences in mask wearing, "Spread Hope, Not COVID" was launched to put all Michiganders on the same page. Currently, there are over 50 various communities, including Oakland University, across Michigan that have pledged to participate in the program.

"The governor's appeal unites us in the common purpose of making sure we're acting responsibly, safely and doing everything we can to reopen the state," President Ora Hirsch Pescovitz said to OU Magazine.



PHOTO COURTESY OF PRESS WIRE

Gov. Whitmer introduced a campaign called "Spread Hope, Not COVID" in September.



Information courtesy of Oakland University
and the Center for Disease Control.

COVID-19 BEST PRACTICES

1. Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
2. Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
3. Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
4. Stay home when you are sick.
5. Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue. Immediately throw tissues away.
6. Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects or surfaces.
7. Keep all age recommended vaccines up to date including annual flu vaccine.

Grizzly Health Squad fights against COVID-19

RACHEL YIM
Staff Reporter

To provide its students a safer learning environment during COVID-19 pandemic, Oakland University has launched the Grizzly Health Squad (GHS).

The GHS is a student-driven engagement initiative, promoting the use of masks, social distancing and maintaining personal hygiene habits. Consisting of ten members, the initiative walks around heavily populated areas of the campus such as the Oakland Center and the library as a group, and reminds students to wear their masks and to social distance.

In addition to the encouragement, GHS also provides masks, tissues and reusable thermometers to students who may need them. When the individuals follow the guidelines for COVID-19 properly, they are also provided incentives such as OU merchandise.

The GHS has been supported by its ten active members, and one of them is Allyssa Farley.

Farley is a sophomore at OU. She joined the initiative because of its vision. She knew GHS was something she wanted to be a part of. Working in Disability Support Services, she has always confronted a variety of difficulties. This experience convinced her to join the GHS so she could spread awareness about COVID-19.

"I know that the people I work with are really scared of everything that is going on, and they tend to be the ones who are most at risk," Farley said. "I wanted to promote these health decisions, so that the people I work with and see on a daily basis won't be as anxious about the world

around them."

Another member of the GHS is Lydia Danks, a freshman at OU. She was also motivated to join because of safety reasons.

"Staying safe on campus is very important to me," Danks said. "I want to be able to be here as long as I can be, and we have to take extra precautions during the pandemic. [So], it was an easy decision to take this job because I care about keeping our community safe."

As members of one of the most crucial initiatives at OU during this pandemic, they hope to get all OU community members to be actively involved in stopping the spread of COVID-19 by practicing the safety guidelines at all times.

Though each member of the GHS comes from different backgrounds, they are all gathered as a team to raise the awareness for COVID-19, promote the well-being of OU students by complimenting the OU health pledge's focus, and devote themselves to keeping the campus a safe and healthy place for the OU community.

"This program is new to everyone, and we don't exactly know what is to come ahead, but I plan to continue to devote myself to this team," Farley said.

As always people are encouraged to wash hands frequently, use antiseptics to clean household items, wear masks in public places, avoid meeting people with colds and coughs in crowded places, maintain physical distance and to stay home as much as possible.

For more information about the GHS, visit its page or email deanofstudents@oakland.edu. For questions and concerns regarding the COVID-19, email oupdem@oakland.edu.

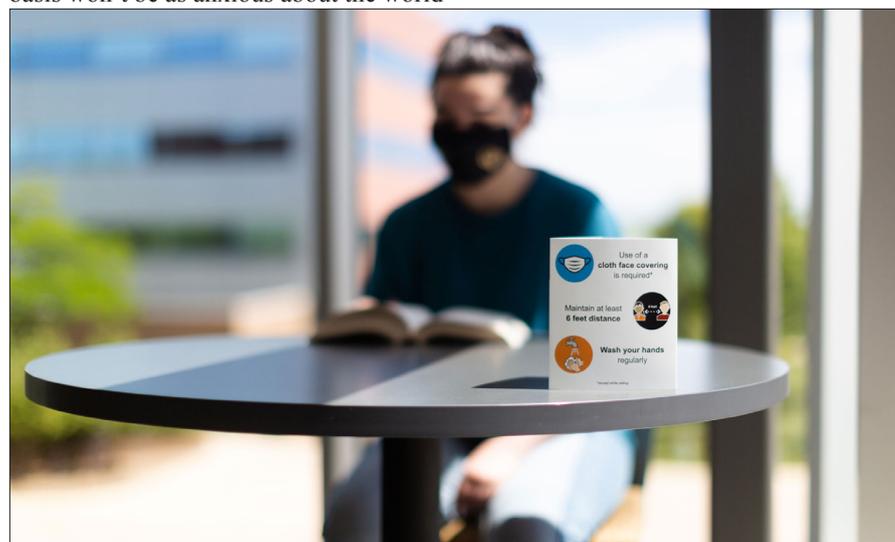


PHOTO COURTESY OF OAKLAND UNIVERSITY
OU launched the "Grizzly Health Squad" to fight COVID-19 on campus.

 Information courtesy of the Oakland University Counseling Center

MENTAL HEALTH TIPS DURING COVID-19



1. It's okay to not be okay

Take a break, mental health is just as important

2. Be flexible and adaptable

Accepting change makes it easier to deal with

3. Know your limits on news consumption

Balance is key, keep your consumption healthy

4. Write three things you're excited about each morning

Give yourself something to look forward to

5. Write three happy things about your day at night

Even the smallest things count

6. Routine is king

Focus on the things you can control

7. Connect with others creatively

Social media, video calls, online parties

8. Daily self-care

Exercise, relaxation, pet therapy, journaling

9. Acknowledge the grief we're experiencing

Loss of loved ones and of our old lives/routines

10. Know your resources

Call OUCC at 248-370-346, talk to friends/family

CAMPUS

The uncertain future of the Meadow Brook Ball

The committee narrows the options to a giveaway, a virtual event or an in-person event — OU will make the final decision about the spring ball.

EMILY MORRIS
Managing Editor

Depending on Oakland University's stance on in-person socialization in the winter semester, the Meadow Brook Ball could resume as usual, take a virtual approach or be limited to themed giveaways.

The Meadow Brook Ball has been an extravagant experience since 1974, complete with formal attire, a grand mansion background and community, but the tradition may require a twist this spring.



EMILY MORRIS | MANAGING EDITOR

The Meadow Brook Mansion has several wings that have a variety of indoor venues.

Giveaway

A virtual giveaway option would be the most drastic change from tradition.

Originally, the impending Meadow Brook Ball was going to be masquerade mask themed. Party-goers would have the chance to design their own mask and show them off at the mansion.

While social-distancing guidelines may prevent an in-person masquerade art show, students could still pick up a blank masquerade mask and decorate it at their home. Then everyone would virtually show off their designs via the Meadow Brook Ball Facebook — the favorite mask winning the giveaway.

"It's going to be totally different completely regardless of what happens, but we want to try to do something no matter what," Sarah Anthony, president of the Meadow Brook Ball committee, said. "If it's a giveaway off of our Facebook, we just want to keep people involved."

Virtual Event

Similarly, a virtual event may encompass a giveaway and a live stream of some sort. This would allow engagement and virtual socialization between attendees.

However, a virtual event wouldn't have the same qualities as an in-person experience, according to Shannon O'Berski, director of external relations at the Meadow Brook Estate. The Meadow Brook Ball has established nostalgia that cannot be entirely recreated through a screen.

"[The Meadow Brook Ball] is about this location, the experience and connecting to the history of the university and its students here," O'Berski said. "These are unusual times, but we have to do what we have to do."



EMILY MORRIS | MANAGING EDITOR

The grand garden outside of the Meadow Brook mansion is one option for outdoor events.

Many students agree with O'Berski too. A recent poll from the Meadow Brook Ball committee suggests that most students have had their fill of virtual events this year. Roughly one hundred students have responded so far, and 73% of respondents are not interested in a virtual Meadow Brook Ball.

"Honestly, I was expecting it, just based off of the participants and everything else that's virtual... I mean, it would be so different than what we would do with in-person," Anthony said. "So no, I'm not really shocked."

In-Person

An in-person ball would be most similar to the Meadow Brook Ball from years past. There would still be some adaptations to follow state and university safety guidelines though.



EMILY MORRIS | MANAGING EDITOR

The Meadow Brook grounds also have a outdoor tent to host larger outdoor events in varied weather.

"Through our private and our community events, we've had to adjust them to reflect the COVID[-19] mandates and executive orders to make sure we're abiding by all the rules," O'Berski said. "We're very limited. We don't offer any sort of inside [event], unless it's a real small, intimate [event] package."

The Meadow Brook Ball couldn't have an extreme limited attendance without losing some of its party atmosphere. The venue has hosted larger outdoor events since the pandemic began though, which offers more flexibility than indoor venues.

"Of course, in our outdoor space they have to stay within those capacities, as well," O'Berski said. "So it's definitely had its challenges."

Although more attendees would be allowed at an outdoor event, everyone would still have to be mindful of social distancing of at least six feet.



EMILY MORRIS | MANAGING EDITOR

The grand garden offers several backgrounds with fountains, archways and pathways for outdoor

Final Decision

There won't be a final decision made about the Meadow Brook Ball's format until November or December at the earliest, according to Anthony. Voting in their poll or getting involved as a committee member is the best way someone could help with decision making.

"We are looking for committee members," Anthony said. "So anyone that's interested in event planning should definitely join or contact us with any questions."

Currently, the committee has room to introduce 20-30 new members, according to Anthony. Interested students can reach out to Anthony (sarahanthony@oakland.edu) through email. Expanding the Meadow Brook Ball committee is one way that the event can stay alive for future years.

'The Social Dilemma' gives 'Black Mirror' a run for its money

CAYLA SMITH
Campus Editor

"The Social Dilemma" is a Netflix docu-drama that looks at the dangers and human impact related to social media, with the very people who created it calling upon needed change.

"The Social Dilemma" is so well put together in the sense that it had these original creators and presidents of social media companies calling out their own creations. Tristan Harris, former design ethicist at Google, and Justin Rosenstein, creator of the "like" button, are just a few, among the many people who impacted the way we interact with social media.

The great thing about the docu-drama hybrid is that even though the drama side was dramatized, it wasn't done in a satire way. From my perspective, my siblings act the same way Isla, the youngest daughter, was portraying someone that age. It's a sad reality.

The story is told in a way that you can apply exactly what they are saying to something in your life right now. It's an



PHOTO COURTESY OF HIGH TIDES
"The Social Dilemma" is a documentary based around the social media algorithm.

automatic click of realization.

Watching this reminded me of "Black Mirror," which is a dystopian science fiction series. After every episode, you think to yourself, "thank God, that's not

real." That isn't the case with this.

The difference between the two, besides the obvious, is that with "Black Mirror" your brain is going a mile-a-minute with questions that won't get answered.

But with "The Social Dilemma," you have every realization that you wish you had with understanding a show like "Black Mirror."

That's because you can think back to so many things in your experience with social media that make sense, even if you have never questioned it before.

It's the psychological manipulation that was never meant to happen. Rosenstein says that the "like" button was just something for friends to engage with each other. It wasn't meant to be a competition between kids on who can get the most likes.

The one thing that's stuck with me is the algorithm. There are so many times where my dad will ask me if I saw something on Facebook, and I haven't. It's because everyone has a "for you" page, based on things you've interacted with in the past so your social media is constantly feeding you the same content repeatedly.

There are so many aspects I didn't intend to get out of the hour and a half movie, but I fortunately did. If this reaches you because of the algorithm, "Hello, and watch 'The Social Dilemma.'"

SMTD to host fourth New Music Night virtually

RACHEL YIM
Staff Reporter

School of Music, Theatre and Dance (SMTD) at Oakland University is hosting the New Music Night, now in its fourth year, virtually on Wednesday, Oct. 7.

Initiated by Ben Fuhrman, a composer and special lecturer in Music Technology and Composition at OU, the New Music Night is a concert series that brings together faculty composers from different institutions in Michigan to present their work. This year, there will be two additional performers besides Fuhrman: Joo Won Park (Wayne State University) and Edward Stumpp (Wayne State University and Alma College).

According to Fuhrman, the main focus of this event is generally experimental work that pushes boundaries, exploring the nature of music, sound and how listeners and performers experience music and sound.

As a composer, Fuhrman is passionate about writing and performing music. He describes being a composer as exploring sound and organizing it in time. He not only writes notes on staff paper for

others to perform, but he also closely studies the musical traits of non-musical sounds and the interaction between performers and computers.

"A lot of what I compose involves using computers to create or process sounds in reaction to some type of input (either from a live performer, a predetermined time setting, pitch, volume, etc.) and then output the result live," Fuhrman said.

This year's concert being held virtually due to COVID-19, marks a significant difference in approach for performers like Fuhrman. Fuhrman explained the biggest challenge he expects to face is the lack of feedback and not being able to observe the expressions of the audience during the performance.

"It's very similar to recording in the studio: you have to alter your performance for how you think the audience will react, but without seeing their expressions," he said. "As a result, I tend to play a little more conservatively than normal and focus more on the piece and less on interpretation."

Despite the major differences or challenges the performers may face during the performance, Fuhrman didn't lose his optimism about the concert. Out of all his



PHOTO COURTESY OF OAKLAND UNIVERSITY
Ben Fuhrman initiated the series. He specializes in electroacoustic music.

music pieces he will be performing on Wednesday night, Fuhrman looks forward to the final piece the most. According to him, the final piece is a live improvisation between all of the performers.

"During the tech set up, we decided on some basic parameters, and built off of each other's ideas and elaborations to create new directions to explore as we play," he said. "It's both exhilarating and terrifying because anything can happen or go wrong at any time."

Fuhrman added that the music technology program at OU is a newly created degree – first created in 2019 – and he hopes to see his students achieve their goals and grow the music technology program at OU. As a composer, he hopes to dive deeper into machine learning and its applications in composition when time allows.

The concert starts at 7:30 p.m., and will present a variety of pieces. Join the live streamed concert at SMTD's official website.

TreeRunner Adventure Parks adapts to COVID-19 regulations

MICHAEL PEARCE

Editor-in-Chief

TreeRunner Adventure Parks had to make significant changes to adapt to the COVID-19 pandemic, only in its second year of business on Oakland University's campus.

Immediately after the pandemic gained ground in the U.S., TreeRunner increased their safety protocols, making employees wear masks before they were government mandated.

"A lot of our company is really young, and I think we all took it a bit more seriously because we all have family members we really care about," said Amanda Nouhan, business manager of TreeRunner Adventure Parks.

TreeRunner also established a task force to monitor the COVID-19 developments.

"Right off the bat we established a task force among our administrative staff," Nouhan said. "We were just making sure that we were being immediately updated

with all of the news."

The staff goes through a temperature check and fills out a Google form to make sure they're safe to enter the park. They also wear masks, face shields and gloves to make sure if they have to help someone off an element there is no contamination. Platforms are the spaces between obstacles, and elements are the individual obstacles.

The Rochester park also cut their maximum capacity by half. During a typical climbing season, TreeRunner's capacity is 400. Now, the park is limited to 200 climbers per day, and customers are not allowed to walk in and climb — climbing is by reservation only.

Sanitation is a major focus for TreeRunner, as well. Climbers use shared harnesses and gloves, which are frequently sanitized, and shared surfaces receive sanitation three times per day.

"We make sure all of our equipment — our clip system and harnesses are sprayed down between each use," Nouhan said.

In addition to increased sanitation on

elements, TreeRunner reduced the amount of people allowed on each element.

Typically, there are four people allowed on a platform at a time, and only one person per element. Platforms are the spaces between obstacles, and elements are the individual obstacles.

Now, only three people can be on a platform at a time if they know each other. If they don't, it's one person per platform and still one person per element.

"This year it's strictly one person [per element]," Nouhan said. "If you don't know the people in front of you, it's only one person on the platform."

The park settled on a 70% alcohol solution for sanitation, which took some trial and error to find. The gloves, harnesses and wood elements need to be clean without being worn down from heavy alcohol-based solutions.

In the past, staffers would help climbers get their harnesses on and clips tight, but with social distancing in effect, assistance looks different at the park.

Staffers also regularly hold briefing stations to run through rules, regulations and how to climb safely. Typically, these briefing sessions would be within 15 minutes of each other.

Since TreeRunner does not want groups of people crossing paths too much, these briefing sessions are now spread out further.

Even though TreeRunner has been running at half capacity with increased rules and regulations, Nouhan said the park has been selling out every weekend.

"The past month, we've been sold out almost every weekend," she said. "We've done really well this year. I think our teams worked really hard to make sure that our name has gotten out there, but also that we've taken this extremely seriously."

The park will be open until at least Oct. 31, but depending on the weather, could be open further into November. The latest the park could be open is until Thanksgiving.

More information about TreeRunner, including hours, can be found on their website, treerunnerrochester.com.



SOPHIE HUME | PHOTO EDITOR

The park will be open until at least Oct. 31 with Halloween themed decor around. The park could be open until Thanksgiving at the latest.

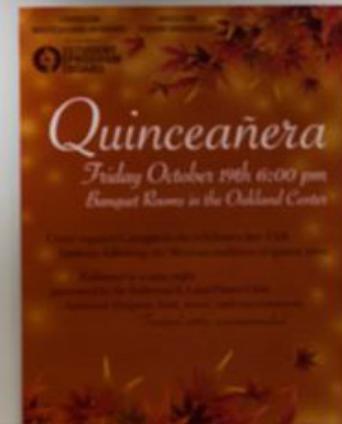
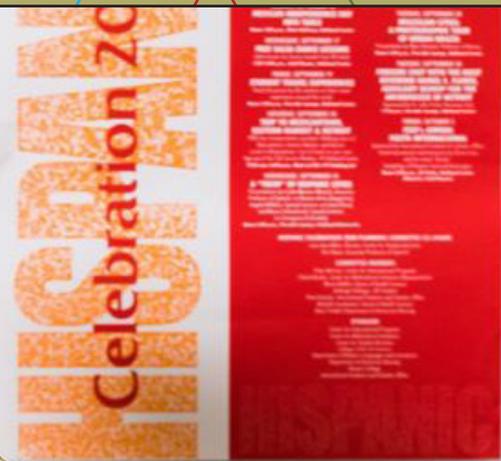


SOPHIE HUME | PHOTO EDITOR

TreeRunner Adventure Parks has been open during the fall semester, utilizing numerous safety precautions to protect climbers against COVID-19.

Hispanic Heritage Month

SEPTEMBER 15-OCTOBER 15
oakland.edu/cmi/hhm



Looking back at 2019 HHM



Upcoming Events:

Wednesday, October 7 | Miércoles 7 de Octubre

OUSC Hispanic Heritage Month Concerns Forum
Virtual @ 4-5:30p.m.

Thursday, October 15 | Jueves 15 de Octubre

Hispanics Writing in Our Own Voice: American Dirt and Palm Trees in the Snow
Virtual @ 1-3p.m.

Follow OU's Hispanic Heritage Month activities on Instagram
@ou_cmi & @ouscofficial

Community Events:

Thursday, October 8 | Jueves 8 de Octubre

Getting Ready for College: Programs and Experiences
Virtual @ 6 - 7:30p.m.

More information: oakland.edu/cmi/hhm

PHOTOS COURTESY OF OU CMI FACEBOOK
These photos were taken at the 2019 Quinceañera/Golden Grizzlies Friday Night Out event.

CELEBRATING HISPANIC CULTURE

Hispanic Heritage Month celebrations at Oakland University have given members of the Hispanic and Latinx communities an opportunity to connect with each other through discussions, online events and food from Sept. 15 through Oct. 15.

Through the celebrations, OU hopes to bring students, faculty and staff together to honor Hispanic/Latinx culture. Junior Claudia Montoya, a music major, immigrated to the U.S. from Mexico when she was 14, and Hispanic Heritage Month gives her an opportunity to connect with her identity.

“When I first came to the U.S., I felt like an outsider for some time as someone that came from another place, and it was very different,” she said. “Our culture is a little different, and being able to celebrate our culture during this time, I think it’s really important for us as a community to be proud of where we come from, and to embrace our culture, because at the end of the day, it’s a huge part of who we are.”

So far, OU has put together several online discussions and panels centered on Hispanic and Latinx issues, such as panels titled “Effects of COVID-19 on Migrant Communities” and “Latinx Scholar on Afro-Latinx and Black Lives Matter Virtual” and book club meetings.

Upcoming events include Student Congress’s (OUSC) monthly Student Concerns Forum — which will be focused on Hispanic and Latinx issues affecting the student body — on Oct. 7 at 4 p.m., and an online presentation titled “Hispanics Writing in Our Own Voice: American Dirt and Palm Trees in the Snow” on Oct. 15 at 1 p.m.

Michael Ugarte, professor emeritus at the University of Missouri–Columbia and Guggenheim Fellowship recipient, will be hosting the final presentation for Hispanic Heritage Month.

“[Ugarte will discuss] how our identity is constructed, and the importance of the Hispanic and Latinx community being able to construct their own identity through narrative,” said Nicole Lucio, Center for Multicultural Initiatives (CMI) assistant director.

As COVID-19 continues to restrict event attendance, planning groups like CMI and their partners OUSC, The Office of Student Involvement, Spanish Club, Hispanic American Leadership Club and more have been finding new ways to continue to celebrate with the OU community.

“[The online format] has given us an opportunity to connect with some individuals that we might not have gotten to walk into the Gold Rooms for a panel,” Lucio said. “I think that there’s some pros and cons to the virtual programming piece. With the mission of our office being to connect with underrepresented students in general, we’ve been very intentional with our outreach and how we are using our social media.”

On social media, CMI has been posting videos of Hispanic and

Latinx staff and faculty members from across campus cooking traditional recipes at home. These “Tuesday Tutorials” give viewers a look into food from around Latin America.

Yoel Joa, assistant director of Residence Life, shared his family’s way of making Cuban-style coffee.

“Both my parents are from Cuba, and they immigrated to the U.S. shortly after the revolution of the ’60s,” Joa said. “One of the things I got to enjoy as a kid, an adult and throughout my life was drinking Cuban coffee. Cuban coffee is really important to Cuban culture as something to start the day or a conversation starter that you would have when guests are over.”

In addition to the celebrations happening within the campus community, Hispanic Heritage Month allows for an opportunity to reach out to incoming students from a Hispanic and/or Latinx background. In Pontiac, which has a large Hispanic/Latinx community, OU has been hosting bilingual presentations on financial aid information and campus life for high school students and their families.

Lucio feels that Hispanic Heritage Month allows students, staff and faculty to feel more at home at OU by celebrating their identities and cultures.

“If we’re talking about inclusion, and people feeling valued and welcomed, their identity needs to be represented and seen and celebrated,” Lucio said. “There’s that part of celebrating it and recognizing it and validating it, and then also that educational piece for individuals who are coming [in].”

She continued to explain how celebrations such as Hispanic Heritage Month bring education and awareness to minority communities on campus and create a better environment for those students.

“We are a predominantly white institution, and so to celebrate African American Celebration Month and Hispanic Heritage Month is extremely important ... for our underrepresented students to not feel marginalized and experience microaggressions and racism and things of that nature on campus,” she said. “It’s our responsibility [as an institution] to educate the general population.”

Creating a space for different groups of people to learn and celebrate one another is one of CMI’s goals for Hispanic Heritage Month. In doing so, they hope to create a better experience for all.

“When others, not only the Hispanic community, but when others join and celebrate with us, it makes us feel like we are welcome into the whole community,” Montoya said. “So, being able to celebrate that at OU makes us feel like we’re part of it, and I feel like culture shouldn’t be something that divides different groups of people, and being able to celebrate others’ culture and other people’s background in a way can unite people.”

Story by Lauren Karmo // Design by Meg Speaks

New trustee Joe Jones plans to listen, show empathy

MICHAEL PEARCE

Editor-in-Chief

Growing up as the youngest of nine in Detroit, Joe Jones saw success from people who looked like him.

Now, after being appointed to the Oakland University Board of Trustees, Jones can show his four children and five grandchildren the same success he saw.

“It speaks volumes to be able to walk something out in front of your children and your community so they can see that it is possible,” Jones said.

Jones is a reverend, CEO of Grand Rapids Urban League, Second Ward City Commissioner and co-chair of the Urban Core Collective. He has worked at Urban League since 2011 to improve economic empowerment and civil rights advancement for minority communities. His work with Urban League is something he “can’t just put in the desk drawer when he leaves.”

“I think it’s critically important to not just promote [advancement], but to actually try to walk it out,” Jones said. “That’s part of what I hope to bring to the table, is a certain level of consciousness and a greater appreciation of history.”

Jones said he is working “diligently” to become a historian in the African American community. A lover of both history and reading, Jones acknowledged the struggle of being able to attend or work at a university as a person of color.

Jones and his fellow nominee, Trina Scott, both attended OU at the same time. They were connected through Jones’

wife Jessie, and they have remained lifelong friends since they graduated.

Their friendship occurred naturally with the three of them hitting it off like “cake and ice cream.” Both were appointed to the board by Gov. Gretchen Whitmer on Friday, Sept. 11.



PHOTO COURTESY OF OAKLAND UNIVERSITY
Joe Jones and Trina Scott were both nominated to Oakland University’s Board of Trustees by Gov. Gretchen Whitmer.

“When I think back to where we’ve come to where we are now, being able to serve in this capacity — it really

speaks to the power of not just friendship but a shared vision for wanting to be all that we can for our community,” Jones said.

The main goal Jones has for his eight-year term as a trustee is to be an active listener. He wants to practice empathy with not just his fellow board members, but also the student body and faculty.

Another goal Jones has for his term is to increase the number of students attending OU who live on the west side of the state, where he currently works.

“I’m guessing the vast majority [of students] come from Southeastern Michigan,” he said. “I’d like to maybe impact that trend and look to have more students from West Michigan attend Oakland University.”

In addition to his work at Urban League, Jones’ faith and work at Hutchinson Ministries in Grand Rapids is something he also can’t “put in a drawer” when he leaves the church.

“It’s very much a part of who I am — it’s actually the think that helps me remain sane for such a time like this,” he said.

Jones is involved in many different spaces in the community. During this unique time in history, he hopes to promote more productive dialogue as a leader.

“I think that we’re in a time right now where one of the best things that any and all of us can do is extend grace to one another,” he said. “We’re quick to engage in dialogue that is not the most productive. I think there is benefit in being quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to get angry.”

Students work to improve adult literacy in community

CAYLA SMITH

Campus Editor

Two Oakland University students fight against the impact adult illiteracy in Oakland County.

The Oakland Literacy Council was founded in 1984 by Robert Gaylor, after attending a conference on adult illiteracy hosted by former First Lady, Barbara Bush. After 35 years of service, they’re still dedicated to ending adult illiteracy.

A recent study by The Program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) found that 111,000 adults in Oakland County are functionally illiterate.

“Functionally illiterate means that people function at the lowest level of illiteracy or below,” Executive Director Lisa Machesky said. “They would struggle to fill out job applications, read bus schedules, prescription labels or emails from their children’s school”.

Being a non-profit organization, the program relies on tutors in the fight against adult illiteracy.

Paul Kozlowski, biology major, had two motivations for getting involved: the misinformation spreading because of COVID-19 combined with the misunderstanding of information put out by the federal government and Kozlowski comes from a family of immigrants.

“My entire family came from Poland so I grew up with my grandparents not speaking the best English,” Kozlowski said. “It was always the troupe of the 10-year-old with their parents or grandparents in the doctor’s office trying to translate what a neurologist is saying in English into Polish so I sympathize with those struggles on a personal level”.

Dayja Foster, communication major, started a tutoring company when she was just a freshman in college. She tutored kids from local elementary schools in reading, writing and math. Her company ran for two years before coming to a close, but the need for a capstone requirement brought on the opportunity to tutor again.

Through the program, tutors have to meet one-on-one with their students every week. Foster and Kozlowski meet with their students for a total of two hours weekly, and after 40 hours students are tested.

“That’s how long it takes for them to understand and show improvement,” Foster said.

Students are tested using a national standardized test through The Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS). The program gives students a pre and post test. They are tested on both listening and reading.

“One of the great things about the literacy council is that we designed the program that works with wherever you are at,” Machesky said.

Outside of the one-on-one sessions, the tutors have group themes. These themes vary on topics and students get to choose which group theme they want to attend that week.

Kozlowski hosts a health-literacy group that helps students learn how to explain symptoms they are experiencing to their doctors. He came up with this idea after working as a medical scribe and noticed a theme in the emergency room.

“A patient might come in, and they don’t speak the best English. Oftentimes, they don’t understand what’s being asked of them,” Kozlowski said. “It’s simple things like, ‘What are you feeling today?’ ‘What are your symptoms?’ I found through my students that they don’t know how to

describe in English their symptoms”.

Foster, on the other hand, has a group theme that focuses on awareness.

“I teach them who to call in case of an emergency, how to prevent hazards from happening in the home and words you should know when going to the doctor’s or hospital,” Foster said.

There are two main demographics of the students. English Second Language Learners (ELL) are learning English as an additional language, and Adult Basic Education Learners (ABE) are adults who were raised here in the United States but have low reading scores.

“Seventy-five percent of our students are ELL. We are always trying to increase the number of ABE, but most of our students are ELL,” Machesky said. “With Oakland County being one of the largest counties for immigration in the state.”

Tutoring also paves a way for opportunity.

“It’s a great opportunity. We’ve had a former Oakland University student who was one of the faces of literacy,” Machesky said. “He worked with us as a way to teach English as a second language, and now he’s over in Korea,” Machesky said.

In 2019, the Faces of Literacy celebrated 35 years of service. This showcased former tutors and students dedication to fighting illiteracy in Oakland County.

After being tutors at the program for a few short months, Kozlowski and Foster have already begun leaving a positive impact.

“I am excited about these Oakland University students. I’ve heard such great things around health literacy,” Machesky said.

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President Trump's character and COVID-19

EMILY MORRIS

Managing Editor



EMILY MORRIS | MANAGING EDITOR

President Donald Trump and First Lady Melania tested positive for COVID-19 late Oct. 1, joining the over 4 million other Americans who've tested positive since March.

Trump's diagnosis was prefaced like several rumbling notches up a rollercoaster after putting COVID-19 as too low of a priority since January.

"We have it (COVID-19) totally under control. It's one person coming in from China, and we have it under control. It's going to be just fine," Trump said to a CNBC reporter on Jan. 22.

Trump's response to the first case of COVID-19 in the U.S. offers a controlled and comfortable tone. Optimism was more accessible in January though, COVID-19 wasn't declared a global pandemic until March 18.

Trump irrefutably compromised his leadership in April though by minimizing the Center of Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) recommendation to wear a face mask to prevent further spread of the COVID-19 virus.

"You can do it. You don't have to do it. I'm choosing not to do it, but some people may want to do it, and that's OK," Trump said on April 3, according to National Public Radio (NPR). "It may be good. Probably will. They're making a recommendation. It's only a recommendation."

He didn't entirely condemn wearing protective masks, but he also didn't set an example. This is important because the president, the head of the U.S., cannot be aloof. A leader should not choose set an example and lead the country in 2015 and become detached from those fundamental expectations when challenges arise.

The CDC is comprised of a variety of health professionals, people who've devoted their lives to the health of others. On the other hand, Trump studied economics at the University of Pennsylvania and Fordham University, which is a fighting focus for a politician, but his expertise does not give him the grounds to minimize a government health organization.

The official presidential position description doesn't include "health," "medical" or "safety," according to the White House. These words aren't left out by accident because the CDC is a government health agency, which can guide the president in his leadership, should the president have to address health related issues, like a pandemic.

President Trump let the American people down when he chose to act independently, forming personal opinions about COVID-19.

The U.S. is ran as a democracy, so there should never be one person — even the president — who leads based on personal thoughts and feelings. In fact, a democracy should include everyone's voice to formulate plans, including the CDC. The CDC is a government health guidance tool that should be used to offer the most accurate health advice.

"It (COVID-19) affects virtually nobody," Trump said during a campaign speech in Ohio on Sept. 21. "It's an amazing thing."

This speech was given less than two weeks before President Trump and First Lady Melania Trump were diagnosed with COVID-19. The irony is almost palpable because on Oct. 2, they became the "nobody."

The problem with restricting Whitmer's executive powers

JEFF THOMAS

Features Editor

The Michigan Supreme Court ruling weakening Gov. Gretchen Whitmer's executive powers is short sighted and irresponsible. The court has recklessly set a precedent that should concern voters.

To recap, Whitmer's initial executive order declaring the state of emergency was extended by the state congress until the end of April, since then she has had to move unilaterally to maintain COVID-19 restrictions. The court's partisan 4-3 decision ruled that Whitmer did not have the authority to continue extending Michigan's state of emergency without the approval of the state congress.

The ruling comes across as sour grapes from the Michigan Republican party. For months now their exercises in partisanship have come at the expense of citizens in the state.

Anyone following in-state politics has had to suffer through Republican grandstanding and the national embarrassment that was the armed occupation of Lansing by right wing protesters. The heart of these conflicts, of course, centered around Whitmer's response to COVID-19.

Now, I don't think Whitmer has been perfect, but it's hard to argue that she has handled the situation better than other governors have nationwide. At one point last spring, Michigan was one of the global hotbeds for the novel Coronavirus.

The bottom line is the actions she took as governor reduced the number of cases and saved lives. Despite constant needling from state Republicans and President Donald Trump, Whitmer has largely gotten the job done. Still, the politics surrounding all of this are complicated.

The main animosity Whitmer faces from voters is twofold. The more legitimate grievance comes from the mass financial insecurity caused by the pandemic. The government didn't do enough to help people. That isn't all Whitmer's fault, the federal government provided an almost negligent level of leadership. But, as governor, she's going to take heat for it.

Had relief been adequate and people been taken care of financially, they would have been a lot more content to stay home and obey restrictions.

What's more problematic and less justifiable is the disregard people in rural areas have for those living in more densely populated areas.

There's a real divide politically between Southeast Michigan and the less populated places in the western and northern areas of the state.

Michigan is in a lot of ways a political microcosm for what's happening nationwide. People in rural areas are pitted against those living in cities and suburbs for political purposes. The tension and resentment is such that people aren't willing to suffer even minor inconveniences like wearing masks, even though masks are proven to save lives.

Which brings us to what is so concerning about restricting the powers of the executive branch of our government. That is the fact that the legislative and judicial branches of our government are becoming less and less in line with the principles of representative democracy.

With Citizens United and prolific gerrymandering, politicians are picking their voters and the donors of the political parties are getting to pick what candidates voters have to pick from. With elections being rigged in such a way, the legislative branch has become less and less representative of their voters and more in line with donors. This is particularly problematic because of the role that the legislature plays in packing courts. Therefore, diminishing the power of the executive branch will only further pull us into a government operating under a minority rule.

With our current system being gamed by wealthy donors and corporate lobbyists, it is exceedingly difficult for voters to get politicians that actually represent their interests.

The only kind of elections that consistently foil donors in any significant way are elections for executive positions like governorships and the presidency. These elections are so high-profile that it's harder for special interests to rig them in favor of horribly corrupt candidates.

With our political system being as broken as it is, it's a lot easier for voters to get someone representative of their views into the executive branch than it is for them to over turn dozens of gerrymandered congressional seats.

As miserable as the situation is, at present it is most pragmatic to maintain strong executive powers. The court's decision to handicap Whitmer could mean disaster for Michiganders as they move forward into colder weather that is more suitable for the spread of COVID-19.

For the sake of saving lives, restrictions should stay in place.

OPINION

Miley Cyrus' 'Heart of Glass' cover awakens new love for rock



PHOTO COURTESY OF MUSIC FEEDS

Miley Cyrus performed a cover of "Heart of Glass" at the iHeart Music Festival on Sept. 20.

LAUREN KARMO

Staff Reporter

Miley Cyrus performed a "Heart of Glass" cover at the iHeart Music Festival on Sept. 20, leaving fans in awe of the singer's range and begging for more.

After such a positive reception, Cyrus made the performance streamable on all platforms on Oct. 1, and I have been playing it on loop since. As someone who was raised on rock, the original 1979 release by Blondie holds a special place in my heart — my girl Miley took it to a new level.

Since her Hannah Montana days, Cyrus has changed intensely as an artist. Her first few studio albums play on repeat in my head, right after Selena Gomez's "Year Without Rain" and Aly and Aj's entire discography.

While I prefer to ignore the "Bangerz" era — a dark time, indeed — Cyrus has shown off her range with "Younger Now" and "SHE IS COMING."

Aside from her discography, Cyrus' voice has developed over the years from powerful but sweet to something darker and heavier. Following her vocal surgery this past November, Cyrus' voice, which has always been unique and a little raspy, had taken on a new, deeper color, which suits rock beautifully. "Heart of Glass" is only the beginning.

Her vocal surgery has had a massive effect on her voice compared to any of her previous releases — making her voice stand out even more. In "Heart of Glass," Cyrus' voice has taken on a more

androgynous quality with both masculine and feminine elements to it. The deeper register suits her incredibly well and opens up a new world of music for her.

At the iHeart Music Festival, Cyrus delivered a performance unlike one I've seen in a while — she was passionate, present and totally care free. Since the 2019 release of "SHE IS COMING," Cyrus has been hinting at a new path for her music, and she seems more herself than ever.

On top of the incredible energy behind the performance, the "Malibu" singer was spot on with every note. Not a single miss on even the toughest chords, which can be a struggle for the best singers. Cyrus blew me away with not only her raw emotion, but also her sheer talent.

With her last full length album "Younger Now" going on three years, the Tennessee native is due for a new release. After listening to "Heart of Glass," rock seems like the obvious choice. Her 2017 album played with exposed sounds and emotional melodies, and her 2019 EP experimented with different beats and layering. It's time for something new, and rock seems to be the next step in her path.

With "Heart of Glass," Cyrus has revamped a love for rock, a genre that is under appreciated in the modern music scene. While the originals will always be regarded as such, the classic rock style of the 70s, 80s and even the grunge era in the 90s deserves a revival.

With a modern take, Cyrus can bring back an entire genre to the music world.

'Savage Mode II' brings strong replay value

MICHAEL PEARCE

Editor in Chief

On the new 21 Savage and Metro Boomin album "Savage Mode II," listeners are taken on a journey through the rap life.

The album opens with Morgan Freeman — yes, the real Morgan Freeman — welcoming listeners to Savage Mode II. Freeman's narration is a constant theme across the album, providing depth to otherwise shallow lyrics.

While 21 Savage rarely touches on deep issues, "Savage Mode II" is a solid album, complete with a variety of themes and sounds. Metro Boomin producing the album is a big plus, making every song different through the production.

No album is perfect, and no artist is perfect either. 21 Savage has never been a talented lyricist or vocalist, but what he lacks in meaning or vocal talent, he makes up for with funny lyrics and impressive flow.

One song that particularly sticks out in terms of originality is "Steppin' on N****s." The beat Metro Boomin lays down is reminiscent of Eazy E, and 21 Savage adds a new-age twist to a retro beat.

The song which will inevitably chart high is "Mr. Right Now," which features Drake. Most 21 Savage songs are hard, focusing on the streets and talk about murder. This song is about love and relationships, and how 21 Savage might not be Mr. Right, but he is Mr. Right Now.

The attention surrounding "Mr. Right Now" is more about Drake's line, "I used to date SZA back in '08," when SZA was 17 or 18. Drake might steal the show with that incredibly questionable line, but 21 Savage genuinely sounds decent trying to "sing." The bar is low, but he doesn't sound too bad.

As to be expected with all 21 Savage albums, the weaknesses in "Savage Mode

II" are apparent. The two clear, consistent weaknesses in 21 Savage's music are depth of lyrics and vocal talent, but if listeners just take 21 Savage's music for what it is, they will enjoy it.

Not all music has to be "deep." Not all music has to feature impressive vocal talent. Sometimes when you are riding on the highway, you just want to sit back and listen to some fast flow over an amazing beat.

There's something to be said for music that allows listeners to just turn their brains off and enjoy what it sounds like. While there's not many songs with any deeper meanings, "Savage Mode II" is an enjoyable set of music.

Not only is "Savage Mode II" enjoyable, but there are also some funny lines in it as well. 21 Savage usually has some funny lines in his features or albums, and "Savage Mode II" was no different.

A few great references that bring amusement are "N****s need to call they hood Beyblades 'cause all we do is spin in it," and "Shout out Robert Kraft, fell in love with the cheddar." Both references can be found on "Brand New Draco."

For Detroit Pistons fans, former Pistons' big man gets a shoutout on "No Opp Left Behind" when 21 Savage says, "All my diamonds pissed on, ayy, Andre Drummond." The word play that 21 Savage uses is reminiscent of Lil Wayne here, using "pissed on" to sound like "Piston."

Overall, what you see is what you get on "Savage Mode II." Freeman's narration is very entertaining, and 21 Savage has several songs that have crazy replay value. Sit back, listen to the album and enjoy what 21 Savage and Metro Boomin put together.

Rating: 4/5 Stars



PHOTO COURTESY OF GENIUS

'Enola Holmes' is a fun, feminist twist on Sherlock Holmes

BRIDGET JANIS

Staff Reporter

Sherlock Holmes always gets to have movies starring him — in a turn of events, the Netflix Original, “Enola Holmes”, focuses on the other member of the Holmes family in a fun feminism driven film.

The film was adapted from the books, “The Enola Holmes Mysteries,” by Nancy Springer. While this film focuses specifically on the first book, “The Case of the Missing Marquess,” there are five more after that, that Netflix could continue to make a movies series out of.

The film is about Enola (which is alone spelled backwards) Holmes (Millie Bobby Brown), the much younger sister of Sherlock (Henry Cavill) and Mycroft Holmes (Sam Claflin). Enola was raised by her Mother, Eudoria Holmes (Helena Bonham Carter) and her brothers weren't around while she was growing up. One day, Eudoria vanished and left Enola all alone. Her brothers end up coming home, in which they didn't even recognize her because it's been so long, and they try to shape Enola up to be a lady.

Enola feels like her mom didn't just go missing for no reason, she ends up finding clues in the house and follows them to London. She also sends out her own clues in the newspapers using code words

and scabbled up letters in hopes to get a response from her mother.

Along the way, Enola meets Tewkesbury (Louis Partridge) on his runaway adventure too, this becomes a big subplot within the film. She helps him get away, and they begin to part ways but keep finding their way back together to solve his conspiracy theory surrounding his family.

While Enola is on her adventure chasing her mother and helping Tewkesbury, her brothers are searching for her and they always seem to be one step behind her.

Enola Holmes is an independent teenager and was taught many life skills such as fighting and quick thinking by her mother. She was not taught how to sew or embroider — but she is smart, brave and quick on her feet, which became helpful while solving mysteries.

Millie Bobby Brown has outdone herself again. She was a great casting for this role. She fit the cute, innocent and strong portrayal of the role. Brown didn't just star in the film, she was a first-time producer on it. Someone to watch going forward, she continues making a name for herself in entertainment.

The ending was abrupt and didn't have much leading up to it. There was more of a focus on the subplot that the film seemed to get off track sometimes. There were also some out of pocket ideas and scenes, such as a couple fighting scenes that didn't really fit the tone.



PHOTO COURTESY OF NETFLIX

“Enola Holmes” is cute and upbeat, with the ability to keep viewers' attention.

The film has a unique narrative style, where Enola breaks the fourth wall and is talking directly into the camera as if the surrounding characters can't hear her. This was fun the first couple times to develop a backstory, though halfway through the film it got kind of old.

The costumes and sets of the film are very well done and fit the theme of the film. Since the film is set in 1884, the Victorian Era dresses made sense.

Now I am not one to usually complain about a movie being two hours, but in this

situation I could look at it as a negative thing. It did not need to be this long, while it was upbeat the whole time, it did drag a little in the middle.

Overall, the film was cute and upbeat and had a fun feminist twist, it had some minor flaws but managed to keep my attention the whole time.

Rating: 3.5/5 stars

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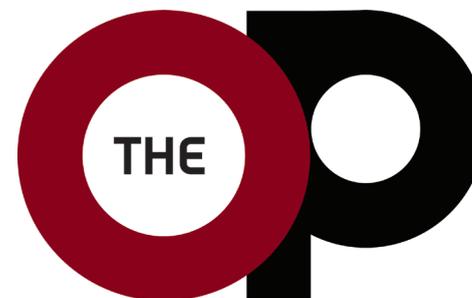
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An exclusive interview with I-696 Ooze

JEFF THOMAS
Features Editor

Listen, the environment is hard — right? The public’s heightened awareness of the “basic human necessity” for clean air and water is constantly getting in the way of the free market.

For decades now the downtrodden entrepreneurs of this once great nation have gone to tremendous lengths, making back door deals to protect their profit margins. Still, despite their best efforts greasing palms and scratching backs, the liberal media relentlessly pokes their nose in to expose instances of “criminal negligence” every once in a while.

One such instance burst into the zeitgeist last December, when a particularly plucky bit of hexavalent chromium “Little Engine That Could”ed itself out of the ground and through one of the concrete sound barriers on the eastbound side of I-696.

That bit of green slime slithered its way into national headlines, captivating eyes and capturing the hearts with its chemical grace and memeably gelatinous appearance.

After months of relative radio silence, the question for concerned citizens and admirers alike became what happened to the I-696 Ooze? Luckily the Oakland Post’s investigative team tracked Ooze down, locating them working their new job at Dan Gilbert’s Rocket Mortgage. Ooze reluctantly agreed to an interview on location. This is what they revealed about the situation.

Question: “Ooze! Long time no see. Where have you been? How did you manage to slip away for the past several months?”

Answer: “Oh, I’ve been around. Wasn’t too hard to hide once everybody quit paying me any attention. There’s not much a modest environmental calamity such as myself can do competing for news coverage against a global pandemic and this god forsaken election cycle.”

Q: “You seem a bit bent out of shape about being out of the limelight?”

A: “Listen, I’m not some unreasonable being. Okay. I went into this thing knowing I was never gonna be the Flint Water Crisis. But, I worked hard at it. Do you have any idea what it’s like slowly forcing oneself through a concrete barricade? Yeah, didn’t think so. I earned that spot headlining the

local news. Call it vanity, but I liked hearing the sultry voice of Fox 2 News’ Huel Perkins saying my name on the nightly news. But, all that came and went. Now, I’m here.”

Q: “Do you feel that you should have had more time in the spotlight?”

A: “You’re damn right I do. I deserved more than a few weeks. Good grief, I leaked out and closed down a federal interstate. I disrupted the daily commute of thousands of Metro-Detroiters. Only mistake I made was executing my master plan during this dumpster fire of a year. It is what it is.”

Q: “Your master plan? You make it seem like you acted independently?”

A: “Of course! Granted I didn’t just appear out of thin air, but that shop owner who was pooling me up in his basement was hardly Dr. Frankenstein. I mean let’s get real. This type of work requires nuance. I don’t care what the so-called investigative journalists say.”

Q: “If you’re sore about losing attention, what drew you to taking a job at Rocket Mortgage?”

A: “I don’t think people realize how hard it is. Life as festering seepage is not all it’s cracked up to be. It gets lonely. Especially when you’re a chemical that slowly kills everything you come in contact with. I had to be honest with myself — I had my chance and I peaked. There was no going back. I knew I was chasing a ghost. Nothing gold can stay.”

Q: “Okay. But, why Rocket Mortgage?”

A: “I needed a freaking job. COVID-19 ruined everything. I don’t know if you’ve heard, but trying to get unemployment benefits in Michigan is a nightmare. And that stimulus package was a joke. The government we trust hung us out to dry for months. They had all the money in the world to bail out the wealthy and corporations but next to nothing for working people. It’s disgusting. I’m here for the same reason everyone else is. Because they’ll basically hire anyone willing to sell these stupid mortgages and I had no options left. I’ve been stuck in virtual sales training every single day for the past six weeks. It’s a farce okay. This pitiful existence is all I’ve got now.”

At this point Ooze stood up from the



BEN HUME | WEB EDITOR

The ooze is sad these days, after beginning work for Dan Gilbert at Quicken Loans.

interview and began pacing the room. Visibly upset, their viscous membrane left a rancid simmering trail across the tile floor of the small office space. They made it clear that the interview had to end. As the room filled with a toxic mist, there was one last question asked.

Q: “I’m surprised at your passion and interest in the American people. You’re a self made individual, have you given

any thought at spinning your fame into a career in politics.”

A: “I work for one billionaire now and my life is miserable. Why would I want to go into politics and have to work for every single one of the miserable [expletives]?”

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