

THE OAKLAND POST

Oakland University's Independent Student Newspaper

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GOING ON THE OFFENSIVE

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PHOTO BY AYMAN ISHIMWE

THIS WEEK

PHOTO OF THE WEEK



HEADING FOR HOMEPLATE Jared Miller settles in on third base, looking to make it home for a score during the Golden Grizzlies' game against Purdue-Fort Wayne last Friday.
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Photo/@oaklandmgolf on IG

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EDITORIAL BOARD

Jeff Thomas
Editor-in-Chief
jdthomas2@oakland.edu

Lauren Karmo
Managing Editor
laurenkarmo@oakland.edu

Lauren Reid
Content Editor
lrreid@oakland.edu

EDITORS

Sophie Hume Photo Editor
sophiahume@oakland.edu

Matt Scheidel Sports Editor
mscheidel@oakland.edu

Bridget Janis Features Editor
bridgetjanis@oakland.edu

REPORTERS

Gabrielle Abdelmessih Reporter

Jess Orlando Reporter

Rachel Yim Reporter

COPY&VISUAL

Sarah Gudenau Graphic Designer

Noora Neiroukh Photographer

Maggie Willard Photographer

Ayman Ishimwe Photographer

DISTRIBUTION

Jaylon Johnson Distribution Director
jaylonjohnson@oakland.edu

Kimmy Guy Distribution Assistant
Erika Beechie Distributor

ADVERTISING

Autumn Page Marketing Director
apage2@oakland.edu

Madeline Parker Ads Director
mparker@oakland.edu
248.370.4269

Megan Dull Ads Assistant

ADVISING

Garry Gilbert Editorial Adviser
ggilber@oakland.edu
248.370.2105

Don Ritenburgh Business Adviser
ritenbur@oakland.edu
248.370.2533

VOTE AND CONNECT AT:
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POLL OF THE WEEK

WHERE WILL YOU BE THIS SUMMER?

- A) CHILLING AT THE BEACH
- B) HANGING OUT AT BONFIRES
- C) CONCERTS/SPORTING EVENTS
- D) AT OU FOR SUMMER CLASSES

LAST ISSUE'S POLL

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE OAKLAND POST SECTION?

33%
A) CAMPUS

19%
B) FEATURES

14%
C) SPORTS

34%
D) OPINION/SATIRE

CORRECTIONS CORNER: In our previous issue, we referred to Associate Professor of Human Resource Development Chaunda L. Scott as an assistant professor, which is incorrect.

The Oakland Post corrects all known errors of fact. If you know of an error, please email editor@oaklandpostonline.com.

Stepping out of the storm



JEFF THOMAS

Editor-in-Chief

I'll start this off by saying how grateful I am to be here. It is of course a privilege to have a platform and to be heard. In a time when many of us find ourselves alone and feeling like we're carrying the weight of this messed up world on our shoulders, I don't take my responsibilities as a writer for granted. With this letter I am reaching out to you. Whoever you are I'm glad to have this received by you. With that being said, I'll start my story.

Late April, 2020: I couldn't tell you the exact date. Days went longer back then. A year later it's a blur, like someone smudged the white board in my head. And hey, I'm not complaining, let the more mundane details fade away. Life was miserable though, I do remember that. The winter semester had fizzled out in email threads, Moodle forums and Google Meet sessions. COVID-19 had sunk its teeth in. I was unemployed and living in limbo, trying to pass the time.

I'd just spent a week up north in Presque Isle county. The weather wasn't worth a damn either. Funny how the year that we needed the sun's warmth to curb a virus, we ended up with a cold

spring. Sitting in the woods, the sound of a southwest wind combing through hardwood trees was a lot easier on the ears than the news stations and Twitter feed I'd been listening to back home.

I needed that quiet. I was reluctant to leave. The last thing I did the morning I left was go out into the forest to lay flat on the ground between an old cedar and a hemlock tree. Staring up at swaying tree tops and the grey sky I thought to myself, "what's next?"

I still haven't figured the answer to that one out. I'll be sure to get back to you people if I ever do. I hopped in my Ford Taurus, got on I-75, turned on some tunes and sang along. I played drums on the steering wheel the whole way home. Real wholesome stuff. This isn't much of a secret, but when you've got no place to be there's nothing quite like the open road.

That night, I fell asleep watching Netflix on a couch in my basement. I woke up the following afternoon. I'd propped the window open, rain was coming in sideways and splashing off my face. I'd slept wrong on my neck. I had the kind of headache that'd melt your eyebrows. I rolled off the couch and started walking, ankles popping the first few steps. In the basement dark, I moved towards the bathroom and caught my pinky toe on the edge of the

door. I was bleeding. The pinnacle of human health was standing in the mirror laughing back at me. I went upstairs and treated myself to a hot cup of Kroger brand coffee. The clock on the stove said 2:47 p.m., I'd slept for 15 hours.

Eventually I located my cell phone. No new text messages. I only had one notification, an email from Oakland University Professor of English Katie Hartsock. Turns out OU's Center for Public Humanities was planning to combat our collective quarantine blues with a community literary arts project called "Words For Resilience." As an English major, I was being asked to write a poem.

Now I like writing poems. I like it a whole-hell-of-a lot. The problem was the prompt. They wanted something optimistic and inspirational to help uplift people. I was not in a particularly optimistic or uplifting mood at the time. And so the internal struggle began.

I wasn't going to write something disingenuous. Life is too short for that kind of thing. I had to brainstorm how I could contribute to the project without blowing smoke. Sitting in an old recliner and watching the pouring rain run down the living room window, I thought to myself, "well at least the weather will be nicer soon." That thought was enough to light the spark.

I sat down and wrote about quarantine, about sitting alone in a room. I wrote about how I looked forward to warm breezes and my summer freckles coming in. I wrote about women in sundresses and the storm we were stuck living in. And then I ended the poem with the statement that we "will not wash away with the rain."

And you know what? We still haven't. If you're reading this, then that means you've survived the year from hell. You have weathered the storm. Congratulations, I'm glad to have you here. I know it's been hard and I know we've still got a long way to go, but you've gotta stick around. We need you.

May is Mental Health Awareness Month and your mental health has never been more important than it is right now. We are coming out of the worst year imaginable. COVID-19 has taken so much from us. I know how

taxing it's been. I've felt the weight. I've experienced the dread. I've seen it in my personal life, I've seen it in my classmates and I've seen it in my professors. Moving forward the OU community that I'm serving isn't going to be the same, so we might as well talk about it and be honest.

While there seems to be light at the end of the tunnel with this pandemic, the struggle continues. So make sure you're taking care of yourself. The OU Counseling Center is now waiving fees for counseling sessions for students. If you need help, go talk to somebody. I know it's not easy. I know progress isn't linear. I know the pain of the slow crawl out of the dark. The last thing I'm trying to do is preach to people, but I've been there and I hate seeing people have such a hard time.

I urge you, regardless of what you're going through, to remember that this is a short period in our lives. We're going to be around for a long time and there is always more to life. There is always something to look forward to. Find whatever it is that helps you get through this and hold onto it. Whether it's time with family or friends, music, television, hobbies, sports or whatever — go out and find it. Whatever you find, lean into it. I hope it feels good when you need it to.

And if that's not enough for you, then consider the science. Human beings are resilient. New research indicates the likelihood of not just recovery, but real positive change coming out of this pandemic. Through a phenomenon called Post-traumatic Growth, people bounce back from life-shattering events stronger than ever.

Be kind to yourself today, and give yourself a chance to grow back tomorrow. Remember that you're never alone, that people are going through this with you. I am with you too. People are the lifeblood of this university. We're going to need everybody we can get to help build back this campus community in the fall. I'm thankful to be here at the start of it all.

I'm Jeff Thomas, the editor-in-chief of The Oakland Post. This is the first one of these that letters I'm getting to write. Thanks for giving me your time.

'Parrots of the Caribbean': OU professor leads study

Gabrielle Abdelmessih
Staff Reporter



PHOTO COURTESY OF TARAS OLEKSYK, co-author of the study.

Dr. Taras K. Oleksyk, an assistant professor in the Department of Biological Sciences, is committed to conservation efforts and research regarding Amazon parrot species of the Caribbean.

Oleksyk is the corresponding author leading a team of 18 co-authors from across the globe on a recent paper published in the journal *Genes*.

During their study, they obtained DNA data from several parrot species and used full parrot mitochondrial genomes to reconstruct the story of how these species evolved. This data provided helpful information that will assist conservationists.

Six parrot species from the mainland of Central America, the islands of Jamaica, Hispaniola, Cuba and Puerto Rico and one from Brazil were included in the study. All of the species are at risk, but the Puerto Rican Parrot is listed as "critically endangered" on the Red List of the International Union for Conservation of Nature.

One of the goals in increasing the population of the Puerto Rican parrot

— a species that has been devastated by deforestation, hurricanes and illegal trade — is to improve genetic diversity within the population. The loss of genetic diversity leads to species having increased vulnerability to changing environments and disease. Oleksyk emphasized that if genetic diversity is preserved, Puerto Rican parrots "would have a potential to come back."

"We have to build our recovery strategy in the way of protecting genetic diversity inside [the population]," Oleksyk said. "Where there is enough diversity, they can mate and produce non-inbred offspring."

Efforts to increase the population of Puerto Rican parrots have been an ongoing project for Oleksyk. During his previous tenure as a professor at the University of Puerto Rico — Mayaguez, he collaborated with local artists, scientists, fashion designers and other community members to plan grassroots fundraiser events to raise money for the cause.

Oleksyk also gave a TedX Talk about the subject, and the display of community collaboration was even featured in a peer-

reviewed article in the journal *Science, Technology, & Human Values*. In the TedX Talk, Oleksyk also emphasized that "great ideas can come from small places."

"We blended it [fundraising] with arts and fashion shows and all kinds of other things, where we engaged with designers, painters, and artists," Oleksyk said. "This allowed the first genome of the Puerto Rican parrot to be published in 2012."

Genomic mapping assists in species preservation, and also contributes to the understanding of genetic variation among species and the origin of the species themselves.

"We were able to compare [species] to each other and look at the differences that exist between them," Oleksyk said. "The differences between species arise in the context of their evolutionary history and in the course of how the species came about."

The "Parrots of the Caribbean" project, as Oleksyk put it, is still ongoing. More research focusing on genomic mapping will be published in the future.

OU NafME chapter recognized with excellence award

Rachel Yim
Staff Reporter

Oakland University's chapter of the National Association for Music Education (NAfME) was selected as the 2020 NAfME Collegiate Chapter of Excellence Recognition recipient for the Professional Development category.

According to nafme.org, the professional development recognition acknowledges chapters that demonstrate a successful project to further the professional development of its members.

Last year, OU NAfME chapter mainly focused on confronting racial injustice and disparities.

From educating themselves about the topic to researching and presenting to each other about inequity in music education, the chapter has dedicated their year to developing music education programs.

Kasey Julian, the president of OU NAfME chapter, received the 2020 NAfME Collegiate Professional Achievement Award for her commitment and dedication to NAfME and excellence in music education.

"We are so honored and excited to accept these awards, and to continue the great work we have done," Julian said.

With over 60,000 members teaching millions of students nationwide, NAfME is one of the world's largest arts education organizations, it addresses all aspects of music education.

Although the organization is currently active in all 50 states, OU's chapter has an

emphasis on community involvement that sets it apart from other schools. All events are free and open to the public, according to Julian.

"This benefits us all as there is a greater variety of perspectives at our events and we all learn from each other," she said. "Because of our community involvement, we have been able to network and provide accessible [and much needed] conversations in our field."

During the summer of 2020, OU NAfME chapter created the NAfME media club that holds weekly meetings.

Over this summer, the 38 members of the chapter — including OU students and faculty across the country — worked on a project about racial injustice by utilizing a variety of media sources.

Not only did they research and educate themselves about injustice, but they also held discussion series with guests to share their passion for cultivating inclusivity in the classroom at OU.

Julian said that the series has been valuable for her and other members as they consider the needs of students and their responsibility to cultivate a safe, inclusive and equitable learning environment.

"I would credit a lot of our success to this committee structure that allows all members to have a title and responsibility," Julian said. "To me, this cultivated an environment that was inclusive to all members and filled with empowerment



PHOTO COURTESY OF OU MAGAZINE
Kasey Julian, president of the Oakland University chapter of the National Association for Music Education. OU's chapter of NAfME won an award for their project on racial injustice.

through responsibility. This grants everyone to take ownership over their roles and find a sense of belonging in the organization that fits their comfort level, taking into consideration their time constraints as music majors are already incredibly busy."

Starting in August, the new president of the chapter, Hannah Combs, will replace Julian. Combs said that their primary goal for the upcoming year will be to extend what they've learned into helping the local communities.

By expanding the media club and dividing into research, they plan on be able to address more aspects of inclusion and diversity.

Every year, OU NAfME chapter strives to take a forward step into achieving its mission — "to advance music education by promoting the understanding and making of music by all."

For more information about the OU NAfME chapter, follow them on Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat and Twitter @nafmeou.

Students demand justice for Ma'Khia Bryant



SOPHIE HUME | PHOTOGRAPHER

Students march toward Elliot Tower to protest injustice during the BLM OU demonstration for Ma'Khia Bryant.

LAUREN KARMO
Managing Editor

Sean King, dressed in a winter jacket and bracing against the wind, climbed on his car and rose his fist in the air as he spoke to students gathered to honor Ma'Khia Bryant in the parking lot of the Human Health Building. He prepped

the small crowd of 15 students for the march they were about to embark on, and chants of "say her name" and "Black women matter" rang through the otherwise quiet campus.

Ma'Khia Bryant was a young Black girl who was shot and killed by the Columbus Police Department on Tuesday, April 20. The 16-year-old was in an argument with another girl at her

foster house when things escalated. For defense, Bryant had a knife, which was in her right hand when the police arrived on scene.

Officer Nicholas Reardon fired four shots at Bryant almost immediately upon arriving at the scene. He has been suspended from the field pending investigation into the shooting.

Students marched through campus for the teen, as well as saying Breonna Taylor's name — a reminder that she has not gotten justice either.

"I came out [to march] today because as a Black woman, it's disheartening to see someone that could be my sister shot and killed in the street," said freshman Allison Thomas.

This shooting came just one day after the delivery of a guilty verdict for Derek Chauvin, the police officer who murdered George Floyd last May.

"I know it's tiring to constantly see Black death, and to come out in the cold during finals week," King, the president for the Association of Black Students, said. "You don't feel like doing this sometimes — I've been there myself, but at the same time ... Black women, Black girls, y'all are erased."

The Association of Black Students organized the march and gathering, which ended at Elliott Tower. Here, King gave another speech about the impact of the event and offered an opportunity for others to speak as well.

"This is something that calls near and dear to my heart, as somebody who wants to have a Black family, and I have little sisters," he said. "I want to make sure that I'm doing everything I can to make sure that I'm making a world for them to live in, and not a world where a grown ass man would want to take the life of a young girl."

James Nickel, a student from Columbus, Ohio, was glad to have the opportunity to come out for Bryant.

"It's just not safe," Nickel said. "The CPD have been terrorizing all Black and brown communities for the past year, essentially — I mean of course, forever, but the past year for really bad. The CPD are cowards, they don't know what they're doing. They're scared of everyone, and they're shooting before asking."

At the march, there were calls for justice for Bryant and urges to check in on loved ones. King and Omar Brown-El, the director of the Center for Multicultural Initiatives, reminded everyone to put in the work and not to give up.

"This is an opportunity," Brown-El said. "If you think about changes that have taken place in a society, it oftentimes comes from young people's energy. All the things that have taken place — the protests and marches — a lot of that is led by students who see an opportunity to make some change."

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Professor on becoming program director during COVID-19



PHOTO COURTESY OF OAKLAND UNIVERSITY.

JEFF THOMAS

Editor-in-Chief

2020: was it the worst year ever? Or the strangest? The most annoying or most difficult? Answers vary, and it's easy to understand why. We lived through COVID-19 collectively, but experienced it individually. Separated from our communities and the comfort of our day-to-day routines, we were left alone to pick up the pieces of our lives broken by the pandemic. While reconstructing his life during quarantine, Professor Jeff Chapman found himself making room for a new pieces.

Like so many professors, Chapman was thrust out into an ocean of pandemic restrictions and uncertainty. He began charting his course of socially-distanced learning, eventually reaching the unfamiliar shores of Zoom class sessions and Moodle interactive materials.

Unlike many professors though, Chapman was also beginning his new role as OU's program director for creative writing, taking over for Professor Annette Gilson after the

2020 winter semester. The opportunity was unexpected but welcome despite the less than ideal timing of the pandemic.

"The timing was imperfect, no one could have seen [COVID-19] coming," Chapman said. "It's difficult to take over a program, especially from someone who had done such a good job as Annie Gilson. [She] had guided the program really adeptly for a long time. I had been interim director for half a year while she was on sabbatical and really enjoyed running the program. I had that test run ... so it was time."

Chapman grew up in Utah. He completed his undergraduate degree and Ph.D. from University of Utah where his father David Chapman was a professor of geophysics and the dean of the Graduate School. Chapman continues to be influenced by his father's hard work as an academic.

"I think for [my dad], that idea of playing a part in administration in order to make the university better was really important," Chapman said. "I don't think I'm nearly as good at it as he is, but I love the idea of being able to use positions of leadership for good."

Driven to succeed, but in the position of having to adapt to the position during such an unprecedented time, Chapman is still learning exactly what it means to be program director. His focus during the 2020-2021 school year was making sure his people made it through.

"It's harder to know exactly what [being director] means during a pandemic, because so many of the tools that you have are thrown out the door," Chapman said. "You're not seeing people ... you're not having readings. People aren't coming into

your office and everyone is exhausted. As a director, I think we've been in like emergency mode for the last year and a half. I think everyone's just trying to get through it."

The difficulty of this year gave Chapman a real appreciation for his staff. Moving forward, he hopes to take the program to new heights.

"The creative writing faculty are world class writers and teachers. They're heroes for what they've done during the pandemic," Chapman said. "We have the possibility for this program to be one of the best undergraduate creative writing programs in the country ... that's my goal. The writers we have [on staff are] so talented. Our nucleus is young. In the next five years, these writers are going to explode. There's no reason why we can't say that undergraduate students who are majoring in creative writing at [OU] are getting the best degree they can get in the United States."

Starting in 2009, Chapman has now been professing at OU for 12 years. His specialties include classical mythology and workshops in fiction. His professorial persona features a thoughtfully-deliberate cadence and the occasional shamelessly-corny dad joke during lectures.

While teaching over Zoom isn't his preference, he has learned to see some positives in his students as they worked remotely this past year.

"I like being in the classroom. That's why I teach, the energy that comes from having a conversation and being in there. But ... my worldview has changed somewhat," Chapman said. "A value that I've discovered with asynchronous classes is that it is more democratic. In the classroom, as much as I try to get everyone to talk, they rarely do. [When COVID-19 started and we switched to Moodle] there were some students who never spoke up during the semester, who all of a sudden we're writing the most amazing forum posts. That was really cool. That was, for me, a real

discovery. Asynchronous classes taught me that when everyone is writing their ideas down, it's amazing how thoughtful and interesting people are."

An author in his own right, Chapman specializes in short fiction and the visual-literary art of graphic novels. According to him, these genres allow him to mirror the strangeness of the real world with a touch of fantasy flare.

"One thing that fiction can do is make anything can happen," Chapman said. "The worlds of my stories might resemble the real world by 90%, but then a character gets transformed. It's one step away from the normal, but still [rooted] in the real world ... because at the end of the day, what I'm interested in is people. The human experience is so unknowable, and we're just all trying to get through it. We're all thrown into a pool to see who knows how to swim. No one's taught ... that's life. Man, it's interesting."

Chapman is optimistic about positive change in literature and society, specifically heightened social awareness and a new variety of voices being heard following the pandemic.

"My gut says that literature is constantly redefined by moments of great stress," Chapman said. "This is a huge, once in a lifetime event that is deeply traumatic. It seems like it has to come through in the literature. It's important ... there's all this other sort of interrelated stuff that has to do with social justice. We're seeing how important it is to have different voices that are heard."

His advice to his students and himself during these difficult times is to keep writing.

"The world is resistance. The challenge of being a writer is overcoming resistance," said Chapman. "Without a doubt the writers who make it are the ones who stick with it and write. It's really that simple. Go start writing. Life is better when you're writing."

Teaching award recipient reflects on personal journey



PHOTO COURTESY OF CHIAONING SU.
Public Relations professor Chiaoning Su earns the Excellence in Teaching award.

TORI COKER
Contributor

Hailing from Taiwan, professor Chiaoning Su is a lifelong storyteller and master of meaningful connections. These attributes have culminated in five successful years at Oakland University, and earned her the Excellence in Teaching award last month.

After receiving her undergraduate degree in Taiwan, an appreciation for American pop culture led Su to pursue her master's degree in the U.S. at Emerson College. She then returned home for several years of professional PR work before moving to the U.S. permanently in 2007, where she earned her doctorate in Media and Communication from Temple University.

Su recalls encountering various difficulties during her first semester as a PhD student — particularly due to language barriers.

"To be honest, I really struggled in the beginning," she said. "It took a few years for me to really build up that necessary vocabulary and confidence to believe I could finish the degree [and be] a teacher in an American classroom."

A support system of lifelong friends helped Su find the confidence to become the teacher she had longed to be. When an opportunity opened up at OU in 2016, she was eager to fill it, intrigued by the school's desire to develop a PR program.

"Most importantly, I want students to know that PR is not just about manipulation or a rhetorical spin," Su said. "I want them to know that if done

correctly, PR is a form of strategic communication that's very often guided by principles and integrity [and] plays a key role in advocacy and social change."

This ambition led Su to play a significant role in the debut of a robust public relations and strategic communications major launched in 2018 — a career highlight for the professor. Along with recruiting and mentoring students, she further advanced the program by pushing for the establishment of a Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA) chapter at the school.

Su also reflects proudly on her contribution to the 2017 and 2018 Taiwan Week celebrations where students were able to immerse themselves in Taiwanese culture. Su and her colleagues introduced the beauty of Taiwanese art to OU.

"To see my two worlds collide in this setting that I truly care about — I think that was one of the standout moments for myself," she said.

As the 2021 recipient of OU's Excellence in Teaching award, Su has come a long way from the timid student she once was. She prides herself on the hard work she has put forth and the adversity she has overcome.

"Of course [this is] a recognition of the hard work in the past few years, [but] it is also a confirmation that cultural differences are an asset rather than a limitation," she said, noting that receiving this award feels exceedingly special to her amid rising Anti-Asian sentiments. "I think to receive this award this year is particularly meaningful to me and to OU as well. It's a testament to the kind of environment we are."

Professor Paul Kubicek talks OU's model U.N.

TANNER TRAFELET
Contributor

On-campus involvement has never been more important to collegiate life than now. In a time dominated by Zoom calls and daily forum posts, becoming involved with student organizations can be a way to take a break from online learning. No one knows this better than Paul Kubicek, professor of political science, and faculty advisor to the Model United Nations club (MUN).

Kubicek has advised the MUN club since 2008. During his tenure, the club has won first place at an international MUN conference and participated in other competitions in Toronto, Washington D.C. and Chicago.

"Model United Nations is an interactive simulation-based exercise where students play the role of countries in a mock United Nations committee," Kubicek said. "They are representing the views of their countries and negotiating with others to hopefully reach a common solution to a given problem."

Within the last year, the MUN club made the difficult transition from in-person class meetings and simulations to a completely virtual experience.

Its members attended three online conferences. At these conferences, OU delegates researched current international political issues, became more familiar with the nation they represented and engaged diplomatically as they portrayed nations on the United Nations Security Council, the United Nations Disarmament and International Security Committee and even participated in the Egyptian Revolution of 2011.

"I think there are a lot of benefits [to being in] Model U.N.," Kubicek said. "Students can learn about international affairs, gain insight into different perspectives on international issues and improve their research, communication and negotiation skills. It offers something to a variety of students — whether they major in political science, international affairs or something else. Model U.N. is open to all students, and we've had a variety of majors do well in it."

Having been the Model U.N. club's adviser for 13 years, Kubicek has seen

the impact participation in the club has had on both increased political awareness and a developed worldview of multiple generations on students.

"I really enjoy doing Model U.N., I always have — I enjoy working with students in a more collaborative environment," Kubicek said. "[The role of the United Nations] has changed over time. I recognize the U.N. gets bad press from time to time on various issues, [but] you can't expect it to magically solve some of the major hot button issues in the world. I think if you do, you will often be disappointed. At the same time, the U.N. slowly has moved the bar in positive directions on human rights, womens' rights issues, global health and education to make improvements in those areas."

With the pandemic — and other issues — problem solving in the United Nations is a process. However, committing to that process that may meaningfully affect change for future generations.

This is similar to the commitment Kubicek makes to students in Model U.N. — guiding them to a better understanding of the world's foremost international organization. As COVID-19 vaccinations distributed by OU help in-person activities get back on track, Kubicek hopes to facilitate a better understanding of the United Nations and help students realize what he has come to value so dearly in his advising of MUN.



PHOTO COURTESY OF UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH PRESS.
Paul Kubicek has been the adviser to the Model U.N. for 13 years.

“We see it as an injustice”: OUSWC organizes

Jeff Thomas
Editor-in-Chief

The Oakland University Student Workers Coalition (OUSWC) has continued their advocacy for student jobs in the month of May with a pair of on-campus protests arguing for the return of the Bear Bus student shuttle program.

Wednesday, May 5 — on a chilly afternoon, students congregated in the northeast portion of the Human Health Building parking lot. Beside the hibernating Bear Buses now parked indefinitely in that lonely corner of the lot, the group hoisted their signs and began their march westward toward the intersection of North Squirrel road and East Walton Boulevard where the protest would take place.

During peak traffic, from the hours of 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., protesters waved signs that read “make OU accessible,” “support student workers” and “make OU sustainable.” All these sentiments reflect the OUSWC’s position on the value of the Bear Bus system and why they should be brought back. A similar protest has been announced on the group’s social media for May 28.

In the document stating their policy position, OUSWC argues that reimaging and reinstating the Bear Bus program is essential “to improve on-campus accessibility and sustainability.” OUSWC organizer Jeremy Johnson echoed these sentiments as reasons why the group is protesting.

“This is something we’re focusing on, because we think it’s an issue of

accessibility, sustainability and campus equitability,” said Johnson. “[Bear Buses were] vital for a lot of communities on campus. It’s especially important for college students, those that may not have access to cars or licenses, students with physical disabilities, international students, low income students, commuter students ... it’s an issue that we want to continue advocating for.”

The Bear Bus service was discontinued after ten years of service in the summer of 2020. Reasons given at the time for the decision included: declining ridership, aging buses and increased operating costs. Director of University Housing Jim Zentmeyer reiterated those factors in a statement responding to the protests made last week.

“We have learned that a group of students have voiced their concerns about the discontinuation of the Bear Bus,” Zentmeyer said. “We also know that a group of students benefited from the service. However, when you look at the declining ridership numbers over the past several years and the costs associated with bus maintenance and operations, it became clear that this was the fiscally responsible course of action for the university to take.”

OUSWC is aware of the financial implications and why the shuttle system was shut down. Protesters contest that the impact of what the service offered to the campus community is worth the costs. Jacob Eckelson, a student and former Bear Bus driver, had this to say on the matter.

“I [hate] to admit it, but yeah, we had pretty low ridership, [especially in

comparison to] the heyday of Bear Bus in like 2013 or 2014,” Eckelson said. “The decline over the years also goes with all the housing jobs and kind of the housing communities that were cut. [And now] there’s that lack of community. People maybe don’t realize ... Bear Bus would do special drives for various student groups on campus, whether it was clubs or classes, or housing employees too, there would be special drives to events ... it was a good way to bring communities together for special occasions.”

Along those lines, Johnson also acknowledges the finances while making his case about the value the shuttle service had for the campus community and student jobs.

“We definitely understand that when it comes to finances ... you got to make ends meet somehow,” Johnson said. “Although budget cuts will have to happen, they shouldn’t come at the expense of students [or] student workers. We see it as an injustice that students are having an essential service taken from them as budget cuts.”

One of the students directly affected by the end of the Bear Buses is junior engineering student Mia Lewis. For students like Lewis, the shuttles were a lifeline of accessibility that allowed them to participate in the campus community. She has joined in the protests to speak up for people like her and other students who benefited from the buses.

“[The Bear Buses] would also be incredibly helpful during the fall and spring when it is raining,” Lewis said. “I cannot hold an umbrella and wheel myself at the same time so without the

Bear Bus, I would be showing up to class absolutely drenched. [Using] the Bear Bus on my own creates more of a sense of independence, responsibility and freedom. Having the opportunity to go to any of the bus stops and take a trip ... on my own, with little to no help — it makes me feel less reliant on other people. A fair share of these talking points are personal, as a disabled individual, but I believe all these points would benefit every student. Not just myself, not just other disabled students. Every student.”

While COVID-19 still hangs a cloud of uncertainty over what the campus will look like in the fall, the OUSWC feels a strong urgency that now is the right time to reinstate the buses.

“At this point, when we’re hopefully coming out of the pandemic, I think it’s a perfect chance to start thinking about reinstating the Bear Bus and giving that program back to students,” Johnson said. “I [want to add that] none of what we are trying to do, or what this coalition has ever done, is ever meant to be anti-OU. Everything we’ve advocated for has been pro-OU, we’re trying to fight for the students. Sometimes we can be a bit sharp with our rhetoric, but it’s always because we’re trying to improve the community ... we think that the Bear Bus falls directly in line with [those] values.”

At this time, OU’s administration maintains their position on the Bear Buses, with Zentmeyer ending his statement saying “There are no plans to bring back the Bear Bus as a campus transportation system operated through University Housing.”



PHOTO BY MAGGIE WILLARD

Organizes protests to reinstate Bear Buses

DESIGN BY BRIDGET JANIS



PHOTO BY AYMAN ISHIMWE

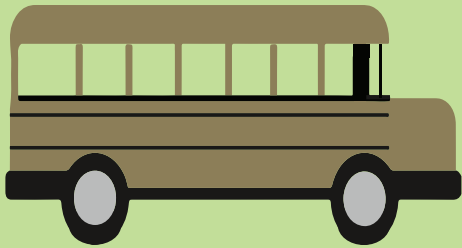
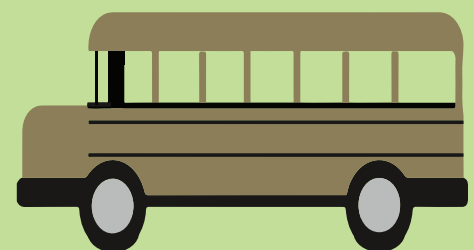


PHOTO BY MAGGIE WILLARD



PHOTO BY AYMAN ISHIMWE



OU freshman awarded full-ride scholarship by the US Department of Defense

Rachel Yim
Staff Reporter

One of the awardees of the U.S. Department of Defense's annual National Science, Mathematics and Research for Transformation scholarship (SMART) is Bianca Vitale, freshman at Oakland University.

"I feel on top of the world receiving this award," Vitale said. "It is an honor to just be considered for it."

SMART scholarship-for-service program provides students a unique opportunity with a full scholarship for up to five years, internships and guarantees employment at Department of Defense labs or facilities. There are over 200 Department of Defense labs or facilities across the Army, Navy, Air Force where students will continue on after graduation.

Through this opportunity, recipients of SMART scholarship award will be able to pursue complex research to further the mission of the Department of Defense. During summer internships, SMART Scholars work directly with an experienced mentor, gaining valuable technical skills.

Since 2012, OU has had ten students that received SMART scholarships,

including Vitale. Vitale's recognition continues a nine-year streak of at least one OU student being an awardee of the SMART scholarship.

As an upcoming sophomore at OU, Vitale is majoring in mechanical engineering with a specialty in automotive engineering and is a part of the Honors College. Her dream and passion for working in the automotive industry started in high school.

"Throughout high school, I always envisioned myself working at one of the major three automotive companies in Michigan," Vitale said. "It never crossed my mind that I could work for the Department of Defense, and when I was first introduced to the idea, it seemed impossible."

Having her close family members in the automotive industry, Vitale has always been surrounded by the field. She was also a part of the engineering program at her high school.

"I'd really like to work on the ground vehicles," Vitale said during her interview with the Civic CenterTV. "Just because automotive is what I want to go into, working in that field would definitely be beneficial to me."

As a young woman pursuing a career in a male-dominated engineering field,

Vitale was concerned about the challenges often faced by women. However, as time progressed, she realized she could help bridge the gap between the two genders in the field.

She also expressed her gratitude for her professors at OU this past semester for their understanding of the difficulties students have been facing during the pandemic.

Moving forward, Vitale hopes to earn a permanent job at the Department of Defense and return to school to pursue further education in the field.

"I plan on returning to school to pursue both my master's degree in either mechanical engineering or mechatronic systems engineering and eventually my doctorates in those same categories," she said.

With that vision to create "a highly skilled Department of Defense STEM workforce that competes with the dynamic trends in technology and innovation to protect national security," the SMART program provides a variety of opportunities to more than 200 students annually.

For more information on the SMART Scholarship-for-Service Program or to learn how students can apply, visit www.smartscholarship.org.



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE OAKLAND PRESS

Bianca Vitale received the SMART scholarship.

Introducing our new Editor-in-Chief Jeff Thomas

Bridget Janis
Features Editor

With a passion for writing and a lot of life experience, Jeff Thomas takes on the role as the 2021-2022 editor-in-chief of The Oakland Post.

Thomas grew up in Capac, Michigan. A nontraditional senior at Oakland University, he graduated high school in 2012. He migrated to South Hamlin Hall, though he never quite settled down.

A man with a variety of experience and talents, after his freshman year at OU in 2012-2013, he spent several years working in the skilled trades, retail and as a DJ before returning to pursue his passion for writing.

Having spent some time away from school, he is happier with the decisions he can make now than the ones he figures he would have made when he first graduated high school.

"Having the life experience has certainly helped me," Thomas said. "You come to realize things happen when they happen and you shouldn't compare your life or what you've got going on to other people."

Thomas joined The Post as Features Editor in August of 2020 after a bit of



PHOTO COURTESY OF JEFF THOMAS
Thomas (center), the new Editor-in-Chief and his two younger brothers.

a nudge from Professor of Journalism Holly Shreve Gilbert. Gilbert pushed Thomas to improve as a journalist in the summer of 2020 during her features writing course. A class which, had it not been for COVID-19, he would have never had the time to take.

"Had it not been for the pandemic, I would have spent the entire summer working my day job installing fences,"

Thomas said. "Like a lot of people at the beginning of COVID-19, I was unemployed with nothing much to do. I took that class to stay busy and it ended up being a game changer."

After being on staff as a section editor, Thomas first considered becoming editor-in-chief after a discussion with Michael Pearce, the former editor-in-chief. The support from his predecessors at The Post and The Post's board made Thomas believe that he could thrive in an elevated role, even though pursuing the position wasn't something he had planned on.

"This is very much out of my comfort zone, it's very unusual," Thomas said. "You can't predict anything like this is going to happen."

As editor-in-chief, Thomas hopes to meet the moment and help rebuild the campus community after a year of COVID-19 separating everyone. With goals to influence the upcoming year's staff and guide them on their pathway through The Post, he wants to facilitate a positive experience for everyone that he is working with.

"I would just like to leave The Post better off than it was when I came here," he said. "I look at the people and

the personnel we have and I want to encourage people. I want people to be able to succeed on their own and succeed for The Post."

After graduation next spring, Thomas hopes to be accepted into an MFA program for poetry. If that doesn't happen, he'll be happy to pursue more opportunities in journalism.

Thomas' real passion is poetry, which stems from his love for music. He's been singing and playing guitar for years. While he wasn't ever that good, he always enjoyed the song writing aspect and became attracted poetry's inherent musicality.

Since finding writing through other talents, he felt that being an English major with a double minor in Journalism and Creative Writing was the best way for him to improve as a writer. Ultimately, Thomas wants to write and publish books with the long term goal being to work as a college professor. For now though he's living in the moment and taking it one day at a time.

"I believe in what I'm doing. I believe in journalism and certainly The Post, and certainly the people I'm around at OU as far as my classmates and my professors," Thomas said.

Tina Biggar's killer granted parole hearing

Autumn Page

Marketing Director

Kenneth Tranchida, who pled guilty in 1996 to murdering Oakland University student Tina Biggar, was granted a parole hearing after serving 25 years out of his life sentence.

The hearing started with the assistant attorney general, Alicia Lane, being sworn in by Jerome Warfield, a Michigan parole board member.

Lane began the hearing by asking Tranchida some basic questions about his background, including what he was doing at the time of Biggar's murder. He had been living in Southfield with two jobs, no kids and once married. Tranchida proceeded to describe his upbringing and the process of finding out he was adopted.

"As for growing up, I never knew that I was adopted," he said. "When I was 27 I found out I was adopted. Growing up and living at home, I got treated worse than my brothers and sisters — once I found out I was adopted I realized that I wasn't my dad's son, and I got treated differently from everybody else."

Tranchida found out he was adopted when applying for a passport and none of his family members wanted to confirm. He described his home as

abusive, saying his father would throw hammers at him and beat him if he did something wrong.

Lane continued on, asking Tranchida to recall the first he remembered about the day he murdered Biggar.

Tranchida described how she called him and asked if he wanted to come with her to OU. They ended up getting breakfast at Big Boy, hanging out at the mall and going to a few different car dealerships. After dinner, Tranchida and Biggar went back to the room Tranchida had been renting.

Each had been drinking and using drugs, they ended up getting into a verbal argument about money and Tranchida's desire for Biggar to stop being an escort.

"Eventually I ended up pushing her and she fell and hit her head on the safe," he said. "I thought she was playing at first. She didn't answer me, and I [ended] up shaking her [and] couldn't get her to wake up."

Tranchida then panicked, left the room in her car and drove around for a while — realizing she was dead. He ended up putting Biggar's body in the trunk of her car and driving to his aunt's house, which was vacant, putting Biggar's body along the fence.

The two had known each other for around four months — having met at the

gas station Tranchida worked at. Biggar was under the impression Tranchida was a wealthy man and could afford to buy a car for her.

Lane continued questioning Tranchida about the argument, asking why Biggar would willingly go into the room in the midst of an argument.

Tranchida admitted he was trying to stop Biggar from leaving. Once she found out he didn't have the money, the situation escalated and he pushed her. He then went on to describe what really killed Biggar.

"I smothered her with my hand," Tranchida said. "I covered her mouth and nose with my hand."

Lane and Warfield took turns asking Tranchida questions about his lengthy record and why he previously lied to authorities. He was also asked why he should be released from prison.

"I'm not the same person I was 25 years ago," he said. "I've taken as many classes as I could take."

Those classes include anger management, substance and alcohol abuse and Bible studies.

Tranchida also apologized to the family of Biggar.

"I'm sorry I ruined your life, but first I ruined your daughter's life — I took her life away from who she could've been,"

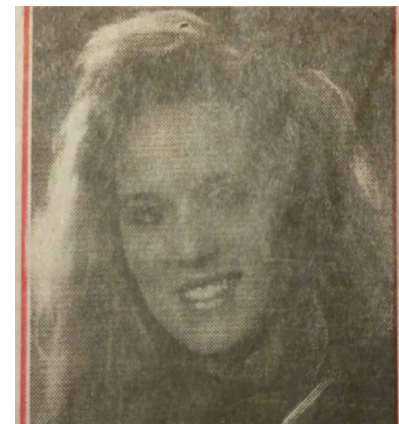


PHOTO COURTESY OF THE OAKLAND POST ARCHIVES

Biggar's death was one of the most shocking in OU history, her murderer is seeking parole.

he said. "No parents should have to bury their children."

If he is granted release, Tranchida said he needs "a monitor" to evade temptations.

"This way it will help me stay away from everything that is not good for me," he said.

A majority of the Michigan Parole Board has to vote to parole an inmate. The board has 10 members.

Find a home with HOMES

Sarah Gudenau

Graphic Designer

Healthy, Optimistic, Mindfulness, Education, Stability (HOMES), an Oakland University mental health student organization, has remained active despite challenges related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

HOMES advocates for a balance between body, mind and social aspects of life. The group works to educate students about health and connect them to related resources on and off campus.

"Our mission is just to let everyone be themselves and talk about things they don't normally get the chance to talk about," said Hannah Brendle, vice president of HOMES.

Weekly meetings are safe spaces for members to share their thoughts and connect with one another — discussing topics such as stress management, mental illness, healthy relationships, boundaries, productivity, allyship and racial discrimination.

Meetings typically consist of a

powerpoint presented by the executive board, followed by interactive activities for the members such as Kahoot games or worksheets to keep them engaged with the topic.

Prior to COVID-19, meetings were held in Kresge library, but have since moved to Google Hangouts. Group meetings still took place online every Thursday during the fall 2020 and winter 2021 semesters

"I think that with COVID-19 and mental health being more serious, we've definitely gained more people, which is really great," said HOMES President Megan Savel. "Because it's a smaller organization, we get to know everybody quickly and we get to know everyone's background — I feel we're really close."

Despite weekly meetings changing to an online format, the organization was still able to have in-person events during the 2020-2021 school year. HOMES hosted an outdoor tie dye event, a Valentine's Day dinner, a "Destress with Bob Ross" painting event and a yoga event.

The group also held a "Chalk Walk" in September where they wrote positive messages around campus, spread awareness about mental health statistics and shared resources such as phone numbers for the Graham Health Center.

"One of our members came up to me [at the Chalk Walk] and said, 'my therapist actually recommended that I reach out to a mental health organization on campus to try to find a support group or good close-knit friends' and she's been coming back ever since," Savel said.

As for the upcoming school year, Savel and Brendle plan to reach out to more people. They also hope to have more in-person events.

"It always makes me excited because I never thought I was going to join a group when I came to Oakland — when I found this community, I was so glad I did," Brendle said. "My goal is to hopefully make people feel more welcome — especially since COVID-19 has made interacting with people harder — I want to give people the opportunity to make friends and learn about these

important topics but in a chill way."

HOMES welcomes all interested OU students. To stay updated, follow their Instagram @homes.org.ou or sign up to be a member on Campus Labs for email blasts about meetings and events.



PHOTO COURTESY OF MEGHAN SAVEL
Eboard members enjoying themselves while attending HOMES painting event "Distress with Bob Ross."

‘Saw’ movie franchise revived with ‘Spiral’

BRIDGET JANIS

Features Editor

The “Saw” franchise is on its ninth film, and the plot is still going strong with new plot lines and twists around every corner. “Spiral: From the Book of Saw” finally had its long awaited theatrical release on May 13.

With the movie being from the book of “Saw,” we are beginning to stray away from the originals and bring some new ideas to the big screen.

“Spiral” is set several years later, as tapes are now USBs and another Jigsaw copycat is on the loose.

The film follows Zeke Banks (Chris Rock), who is usually a lone wolf, and his new partner, William Schenk (Max Minghella) as they investigate the new Jigsaw copycat.

This time the copycat is targeting cops, but not just any cops — the bad cops. The ones the copycat feels have served an injustice. As Banks tries to solve the case, he realizes he might just be chasing his own tail.

“Saw” is known for the games in the movies, giving people the motives to live or die, in “Spiral” there were traps but not exactly games. The games and traps felt as though they were lacking, the players weren’t even trying and there was no suspense. While the complexity of traps seemed high, the scenes happened so fast that the desperation

and edge-of-your-seat anxiety the series is known for wasn’t there.

There was one trap about fingers, and it was shown so fast that I didn’t even understand how the trap worked before it was over. Usually the players have time to figure out what to do and to make a move, creating more of a game atmosphere. These were just plain and fast traps.

While the plot of the “Saw” movies towards the end of the original franchise was getting kind of diluted, since this film is from the book of “Saw” and way in the future, the plot is able to be refreshed. This film was clearly designed for building up new plot lines and there are some tweaks that need to be worked out in any upcoming films.

While the twist ending was predictable from early on, the ending is left open for the opportunity to pick up the story lines and make more films. The ending cinematography was well done and the parallel made with a message from earlier in the film really brought it full circle.

While I am the biggest “Saw” fan, I love them so much because of the connections they all have within each other — how the first “Saw” connects all the way to “Saw 7.” With Spiral, this was nonexistent. The film is completely on its own with just some of the basic outlines of what makes a “Saw” movie a “Saw” movie.



PHOTO COURTESY OF IMDB.COM

Zeke Banks (Chris Rock), and his partner, William Schenk (Max Minghella) investigate one of the murders happening in “Spiral: From the Book of Saw”.

Chris Rock has taken an already established franchise and gave it that push to continue on in a new direction. Rock performed way better than expected in this film because sometimes the only thing I hear when I hear his voice is the zebra, Marty from Madagascar. But, if Rock can revive my favorite franchise, I’m all for it.

There are a lot of metaphors and imagery placed throughout the film, but the “Saw”

movie doesn’t have that. Compared to the original series, the messages here are very different and more directive. It’s the conversational piece we need today.

While I am looking forward to the next film, I hope that it wraps up loose ends from past “Saw” movies such as Dr. Gordon. This film is not my least favorite “Saw” movie, but it definitely isn’t in the top three.

Rating: 3/5 stars

Olivia Rodrigo drops highly anticipated ‘SOOR’

LAUREN KARMO

Managing Editor

Many have been waiting for 18-year-old Olivia Rodrigo to release her debut album “SOOR,” and it did not disappoint.

Rivaling industry powerhouses like Ariana Grande and Taylor Swift, the “drivers license” singer has seen the most success a female artist has ever had with her first three singles — which also include “deja vu” and “good 4 u”. With just 35 minutes of music, Rodrigo has landed all 11 of her tracks in the top 20 Global, U.S. and U.K. Spotify charts. A feat which has only been accomplished by one other female artist.

Aside from the numbers, Rodrigo’s music speaks for itself. The Disney star got to showcase her voice on “High School Musical: The Musical: The Series,” but her fans aren’t just the 9-16-year-olds the show is marketed to — she’s managed to become a household name in a matter of months.

While her marketing team is genius between “SOOR”-themed Sour Patch and getting her singles viral on TikTok, it’s undeniable that Rodrigo has real talent. Her live performances are indistinguishable from her produced ones, and she stuns her fans with fresh

music videos — including one with strong references to one of my favorite horror movies, “Jennifer’s Body.”

Opening with arguably the best song on the album, “brutal,” makes the listener excited for what’s to come. Taking strong influence from “Cherry Bomb” and ’90s grunge, this track makes me feel like I’m 16 and I hate the world. Her verses are so genius in this song, including the lines “I’m not cool, and I’m not smart/And I can’t even parallel park.” Me neither, bestie.

The track list follows Olivia through the stages of a breakup — infamously suspected to be about costar Joshua Bassett — and does so with honesty. The second track “traitor” puts me back to that sick, sick sadness that follows any breakup. While it might be overshadowed by the following track — “drivers license,” which put her on everyone’s radar — “traitor” is worth a listen.

While all three singles were some of the best songs on the album, “good 4 u” is by far the best. While “drivers license” was so relatable and sad, it was nothing we hadn’t seen from Lorde or Taylor — “good 4 u” is one of the first pop songs in a while that took a page from the punk scene, and I predict that it along with “brutal” will push mainstream pop into something more

pop punk with those teen-angst vibes.

The seventh track “enough for you” cites the same influence from another young artist, Gracie Abrams, that we see in previous tracks “traitor” and “drivers license” with exposed, powerful vocals and in her cord progressions. This, along with the other ballads on the album, displays the real, raw talent behind Rodrigo.

“happier,” the best ballad on the album, following “enough for you,” is the one perfect song on this album and exactly what I was expecting from her. In all her songs, she directs her anger from the breakup to the ex she’s singing about, and while she had the opportunity to trash the girl who is the subject of this song, she can’t help but compliment her. The maturity, both in the concept and in her voice, is what makes this track so compelling and honest.

We get another upbeat track with “jealousy, jealousy,” and it comes at just the right time. I can see this as the kind of song you play while driving around in the summer, windows down, sunglasses on. It doesn’t feel out of place with some of the sadder, slower songs despite it’s change of pace.

The final two songs of the album, “favorite crime” and “hope ur ok” are the most mature of the album and

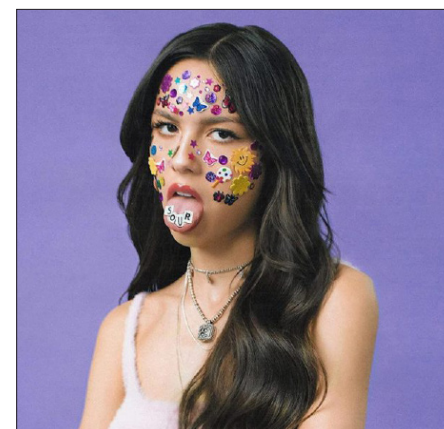


PHOTO COURTESY OF GENIUS.COM

Olivia Rodrigo’s “SOOR” had instant success following its release on May 21.

hint toward closure. These two both experiment more with layering and harmonies and demonstrate some of her genius songwriting — reminding us that Rodrigo wrote the majority of these songs by herself or with the help of one other songwriter.

With just her first album, Rodrigo has rocked the music industry and leaves fans wanting more. This album was exactly what we needed from a young new voice, and I’m not the only one watching to see what she will do next.

Rating: 5/5

OPINION

As we reopen from COVID-19, let's not forget about children

GABRIELLE ABDELMESSIH

Staff Reporter

Last week, in a significant step in the progression toward normalcy, the CDC announced that “fully vaccinated people can resume activities without wearing a mask or physically distancing, except where required by federal, state, local, tribal or territorial laws, rules and regulations, including local business and workplace guidance.”

The number of COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations and deaths in the U.S. are decreasing, and 37.8% of the population have been vaccinated, according to CDC data. However, as adults take this step, they also need to consider a group of our population that does not yet have the protection of vaccination: young children.

While not as many children have gotten sick with COVID-19 in comparison to adults, and they usually experience mild symptoms, the risk for severe disease, hospitalization and death is not nonexistent — especially in regard to a virus deadlier and more contagious than the flu.

Long-term effects of the virus remain largely unknown, and although rare, there have been pediatric cases of a multi-system inflammatory syndrome (MIS-C), a COVID-19 complication that causes inflammation of the heart, lungs, kidneys, brain, skin, eyes and/or gastrointestinal organs.



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE WALL STREET JOURNAL
Elementary school students navigating the hallways of their school in their facemasks.

Dr. Leana Wen, an op-ed columnist with The Washington Post and a CNN medical analyst, wrote that going forward, fully vaccinated people should consider three things when resuming pre-pandemic activities: “medical risk of your household; personal risk tolerance; and circumstances involved.”

Wen also noted that as a mother of two young children, “If a social gathering won’t have masks or [social distancing], I’d go if it’s outdoors or requires proof of vaccination, but would still avoid indoor,

unmasked, unvaccinated get-togethers.”

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has issued an expansion of their emergency use authorization for the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine to include adolescents 12 through 15 years of age. Additionally, clinical trials for the Pfizer, Moderna and Johnson & Johnson are also underway to test the safety and efficacy of COVID-19 vaccines for younger children.

On Wednesday, Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the U.S. National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases and the chief medical advisor to President Biden, said the children at least as young as four “would likely be able to get vaccinated by the time we reach the end of calendar year 2021 and at the latest, into the first quarter of 2022.”

When asked if children should be vaccinated, Dr. James Shaya of Premiere Pediatrics in Clarkston replied with an adamant “yes.”

“There are a lot of unknown factors with this virus [COVID-19], and we should err on the side of caution,” Dr. Shaya said.

CDC guidelines recommend that unvaccinated children continue to take precautionary measures like washing their hands and wearing masks in crowded indoor and outdoor public spaces.

As the older sister of a child who is not yet eligible for vaccination, my hope is that everyone will continue to take precautionary measures so that the spread of COVID-19 is mitigated and all people can remain healthy and safe.

“Bojack Horseman” influenced me as a writer

SARAH GUDENAU

Graphic Designer

Netflix’s “Bojack Horseman” may have ended in January of 2020, but its pressing social commentary on modern issues keeps it relevant. As I begin my path as a reporter, I can’t help but reflect on the show’s media commentary.

After binging Netflix at home during quarantine, the five-season-long animation “Bojack Horseman” has got to be my favorite series. The story follows the life and mistakes of its titular antihero, a half-man half-horse (think opposite of a centaur) actor who’s stuck in his ’90s glory days when he starred on the sitcom ‘Horsin’ Around.’

The show does not steer away from controversy as it tackles many hot topic social issues — ranging from the problems of abuse by men in power, celebrity culture and mental health. Who knew a show about an anthropomorphic horse would be so thought-provoking?

One recurring facet of the show is its representation of the media, its power and the role of journalism, particularly in the star-splashed Hollywood(d). This media-centered narrative is largely propelled by character: Diane Nguyen.

Diane is a realistic, thoughtful, contradicting, progressive feminist and she’s also a writer. She enters the scene when she’s hired to be the ghostwriter for Bojack’s memoir “One Trick Pony,” which later wins him a Golden Globe for Best Comedy or Musical, despite being neither...and also it’s not even a movie (uhh, oops?).

Diane has a pretty varied career following “One Trick Pony.” She writes celebrity Tweets, articles for “Girl Croosh” and later lands a job as executive producer for a movie called “Philbert” in season five.

She’s constantly searching to make meaningful stories in her roles, i.e. her watchdog stories uncovering “the ugly underbelly of American capitalism,” as her boss Stefani Stilton calls them, for the feel-good Girl Croosh. Her work doesn’t get many clicks though on the clickbait-central website. I guess they weren’t ready for that conversation.

While Diane maintains that there’s no such thing as unbiased journalism, she’s guided by truth in her strife to make something that really matters, and we see her passion for truth manifest itself again in season two.

In the episode “Hank After Dark”

(the Bill Cosby episode), Diane takes a stand against the beloved Hank “Uncle Hanky” Hippopopolous, the nation’s favorite long-time show host, who has eight allegations of sexual assault from former assistants. She goes on MSNBSea, where she’s challenged by news anchor Tom Jumbo-Grumbo, who asks all the wrong, highly inappropriate questions.

Tom lazily concludes, “We don’t know the facts” and Diane argues, “See, this is part of the problem. You’re supposed to be a journalist, and you won’t even tell your audience what he’s accused of.”

That’s just like Tom Jumbo-Grumbo to dance around serious news. His rhyming headlines have a tendency to focus on celebrity news and gossip as the biggest stories, while the tickers crawl past with more pressing news. But perhaps that’s just what keeps people watching the news here in Hollywood, and perhaps why people aren’t ready to digest Diane’s attempts at honest journalism.

Diane was one of my favorite characters. She’s a cause for many mixed feelings among “Bojack Horseman” stans largely because she’s

hypocritical, but that’s a whole other topic to unpack.

Still, I appreciate her endless vault of passion and the way her cynicism pushes her to at least try to do some good through her work. Maybe I mostly relate to her crazy bouts of writer’s block with sides of zero motivation.

Rating: 4.5/5 stars



PHOTO COURTESY OF VULTURE.COM
“Bojack Horseman” character Diane Nguyen.

Baseball closes season on high note, takes series vs PFW

MATTHEW SCHEIDEL
Sports Editor

The baseball team finished off their season with a series victory over the Purdue-Fort Wayne Mastodons.

Friday's first game was a bit of a clunker. The Golden Grizzlies fell behind 4-0 early but were able to rally back with three runs in the third inning. That wouldn't be enough though, as the Mastodons kept pouring it on — led by a five-run fifth inning. PFW took game one, 12-4. Infielder Michael Stygles had an RBI single in the loss.

Head Coach Jordon Banfield said he didn't like anything about game one.

"We came out on Friday and had a competitive game early and then we really let it get away from us," Banfield said. "I didn't like how we prepared for that game, didn't like how we played that game. I didn't like anything about it."

Game two was a slugfest right from the get-go. PFW put up three runs in the second inning, then Oakland would tie it up with a run in the third and two in the fourth. The Mastodons responded with two in the fifth, but the Golden Grizzlies exploded with a whopping eight runs in the fifth inning to make it an 11-5 game.

After OU put up four more runs in the sixth, the Mastodons made a comeback attempt. They scored seven runs in the seventh inning to make it a 15-13 ballgame. That's as close as it would get though, as the Golden Grizzlies tacked on a couple more and took game two 17-13, splitting Friday's doubleheader. Outfielder Cam Post went

3-for-5 with a double and home run in the win.

Banfield said the team had to keep scoring late in order to win games.

"We're certainly short-handed on the mound right now," Banfield said. "We've had to put runs on the board. Our offense has really gotten to a good place in the second half of the year, and we feel like our offense can hang with anybody in the league, outside of Wright State who's been [beating] everyone recently. I was really excited about that. It was a good way to salvage a split on Friday, for sure."

Saturday was senior day at the Oakland Baseball Field, and fittingly, it was the seniors that shined the brightest. Post started off game three with a two-run homer in the first inning. After PFW scored five unanswered runs, the Grizzlies stormed back in the sixth inning with four of their own, led by a three-run shot by Stygles, another senior. Oakland took game three with a score of 6-5.

Banfield called game three a "quality close game the entire way."

"We felt like if we could keep them at five, we would be able to come back and take the lead," Banfield said. "Their game three starter, [Jacob Myers], is really good in my opinion. We were able to get a couple runners on, and the wind was blowing out so we knew it was going to be an offensive day. We just had to hit the ball in the air and Stygles was able to do that to put us down one. Then we really manufactured the last couple runs. Worked a couple walks, then we had some nice two-strike hitting and baserunning from Brooks Asher, a senior, and Drew Collins,



AYMAN ISHIMWE | PHOTOGRAPHER
The Golden Grizzlies huddle around their dugout.

a freshman, made a really heads-up play on the bags to come around and give us the lead and were able to shut it down. So that was certainly one of the cleaner games both ways in the weekend, probably the cleanest game."

The senior day festivities took place in between games three and four. Infielder Blake Griffith, infielder/pitcher Tyler Tronvinger, infielder Lorenzo Elion, catcher Brooks Asher, and pitchers Dan Rutan and Justyn Schoening were all recognized before the game.

Game four was another slugfest. The scoring didn't start until the third, when the Golden Grizzlies plated two runs. Rutan started on the mound for OU, pitching three scoreless frames before allowing two runs in the fourth.

The teams went back and forth, leading to a 9-9 tie after six innings. But the Golden Grizzlies broke the game open in the seventh with five runs, highlighted by a grand slam by Post, his third home run of the series. Outfielder Seth Tucker, another senior, added a three-run shot of his own in the eighth to seal the victory. Oakland took the game 17-10, sweeping Saturday's senior day doubleheader and taking the series.

Banfield talked about the impact of his seniors after the game.

"As guys who have been here for three or four years, it'd been easy for them to just say 'we want to do things the way it's been, our way.' That hasn't been the case at all," Banfield said. "I definitely thank them for that. They know how much I appreciate it and I've really communicated that."

Oakland finishes the season with a record of 18-29, 12-24 in Horizon League play. Banfield described his first year at the helm of the Oakland baseball program as "not what he expected with everything else going on."

"We couldn't even have team meetings or recruiting visits or meals or anything like that for most of the year, really all year," Banfield said. "The thing I liked about the last couple weeks, besides winning three of the last four series in the league, we had a sense of normalcy. Now with less rules outside there's all kinds of stuff we get to do more, more team-type stuff. We had an actual team meal this week for the first time this year, all of us together, so that's definitely something that I look forward to really getting back to normal life."

Banfield talked about the future of the program, noting that several seniors will be taking advantage of their extra year of eligibility.

"I definitely see the progress on the field," Banfield said. "Not as much as I want but when you look at the production, it's certainly there. But more than anything I think we have the direction headed the right way with the culture and the guys we continue to bring in and the guys that we bring back next year. We won't be losing a lot of production. Guys like Cam Post, [Michael] Stygles, those guys will all be back. We're excited about what we bring back. The staff and I are ready to get to work. We're finally allowed to recruit on June 7 in person, which will be awesome. We like the guys we have coming in and we are looking to add to that even more."



AYMAN ISHIMWE | PHOTOGRAPHER
Cam Post squares up on a ball against the Purdue-Fort Wayne Mastodons. OU took the game and finished the season with a series victory.

SPORTS

Oakland softball falls in Horizon League Finals

MATTHEW SCHEIDEL

Sports Editor

The softball team lost in the Horizon League Finals to the University of Illinois-Chicago Flames last weekend. The Golden Grizzlies were the two-seed in the tournament.

They faced the same UIC squad in the first round, where they lost 5-1. Head Coach Lauren Karn said the team “let the game get away from them.”

“We made some mistakes, didn’t really play like ourselves,” Karn said. “I think the atmosphere of the game got to some of us, not all of us. For some players who maybe hadn’t been there before, it was a pretty big moment.”

The Golden Grizzlies faced elimination in their next game against Robert Morris. They were able to escape with a 5-4 victory, advancing to the semifinals against No. 1 seed Youngstown State, who had swept them in four games in the regular season.

Sydney Campbell would go on to pitch a four-hit shutout as the Golden Grizzlies ran past the Penguins 3-0 to advance to the Horizon League Finals. Karn said the team was “hungry to win” after their first-round loss to UIC.

“The next few games, we came out and played totally like ourselves,” Karn said. “We were excited to actually get the opportunity to play Youngstown State again, knowing they beat us four times in the regular season. [The] girls were really pumped up for that.”

In the first game of the Horizon League Finals, the



PHOTO COURTESY OF @OAKLANDSOFTBALL ON TWITTER.
Sydney Campbell winding up to pitch against Youngstown State in the Horizon League Softball Semifinals.

Golden Grizzlies ran out of gas. Down 4-0 in the fifth inning, Lauren Griffith delivered a two-run single. In the seventh, Cammie Brummitt homered to make it a one run game — but it wasn’t enough.

Because this was a double-elimination tournament, and the Golden Grizzlies already lost to UIC in the first round, the Flames clinched the Horizon League title with a 4-3 victory.

Karn said errors and lack of clutch hitting led to the team’s downfall.

“Those first two innings when we had a runner in scoring position with less than two outs, not being able to push a run across there, I think that’s where the

biggest shift was for us,” Karn said. “Not that we can’t produce offensively as the game goes on, but to be able to score first [and] put pressure on them first would have helped us a little bit.”

Karn mentioned the team did a pretty good job defensively.

“Defensively, [we had] one throw here or there, an errant throw, but other than that I thought we did a pretty good job,” she said. “Most of our lineup did what they normally do and defensively we played pretty well — except for those few key errors. We’re right there, we just need more experience in that arena to win. I’m hopeful for next year for sure.”

Of course, this season wasn’t without its accomplishments. The Golden Grizzlies set school records for both conference wins [23] and home wins [18]. Karn was proud of the team for setting those records.

“It’s all because of the girls,” Karn said. “They’re out there playing the game — I’m proud of them. It’s their records that they’re breaking, the records they’re holding now, not really mine. So I’m just proud of them, they deserve that. They’ve worked hard for that. They’re hungry to get to the championship every year and know what they have to do. [Part] of that is winning almost every series we play, and they took care of business.”

Karn said the team is going to continue to strive to win championships in the future.

“It’s on [the team’s] mind quite a bit,” Karn said. “We talk about it quite a bit. They have that goal and then once we hit that goal we want to maintain that.”

Men’s golf wins Horizon League Championship

MATTHEW SCHEIDEL

Sports Editor

The men’s golf team won the Horizon League Championship on April 27, 2021 for the first time in program history.

Thomas Giroux was the medalist with a score of 214 (-2). He credited his putting skills for his strong play.

“It feels really good being the medalist for the championship, [especially since it was] my first collegiate win,” Giroux said. “I’ve played well all year and it was nice to finally get a win. I was consistent all week with the putter and felt really good on the greens. The team was able to have some positive vibes on the course and kept our momentum going throughout the entire tournament, which was a key to our success.”

Head Coach Nick Pumford thought the team would come out rusty.

“We had not played in a tournament for over a month,” Pumford said. “We had done a lot of qualifying and a lot of playing leading up to it, but nothing in competition. So, to be honest I expected the guys to be a little bit rusty, but they came out firing and ready to go.”

The golf team had come in second place in the Horizon League tournament in each of the previous four years. Pumford said it was nice to “finally get the monkey off our backs.”

“Sometimes as a coach when you keep finishing runner up [you start] questioning if what you’re doing is working correctly,” Pumford said. “[But] kudos to the guys, we talked about culture a lot with our team

and sticking with the process and we were very process oriented coming in and the results take care of themselves.”

Pumford said the difference this year compared to the previous four was that they weren’t the top-ranked team, which took some of the pressure off them.

“We were definitely the underdog, and we took that underdog approach,” Pumford said. “So I think that [helped clear our minds] a little bit. [The thought process became] ‘Hey, we got nothing to lose. Let’s just go out and play good golf,’ and they did it.”

The team’s No. 3 ranked player, Cameron Lippoldt, had to miss the tournament due to COVID-19 contact tracing. Pumford said he was more upset for him than anything.

“He’s obviously one of our top players, but he’s an awesome kid that does all the right things all the time,” Pumford said. “So I was really heartbroken for him that he put in all the time and effort and [was] adhering to all our protocols and all of that and unfortunately it was a close contact with somebody. But then after that it’s, ‘alright next man up.’ That’s one of the things we talked about all year was situations like that — you just never know. [You] never know who’s gonna be a close contact. The message throughout the whole year [was] ‘be ready.’ Be ready and you never know when your number is gonna be called.”

Pumford would like to play in either the Florida or New Mexico regions because of his familiarity with the golf courses.

“They’re big, wide open golf courses which suit our game,” Pumford said. “We’re a team that hits [the ball]

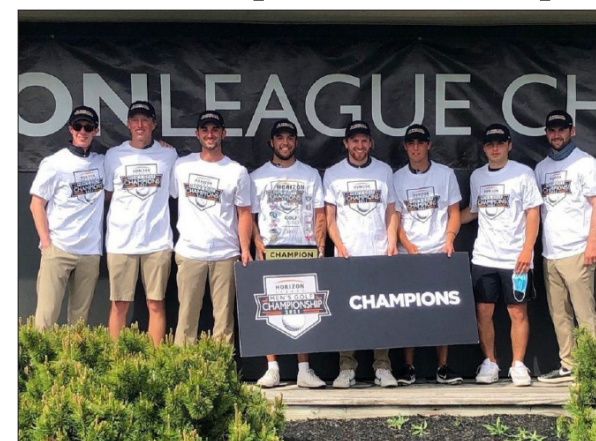


PHOTO COURTESY OF @GOLDEN_GRIZZLIES ON INSTAGRAM.

The team holding their new Horizon League Championship trophy. After finishing in second place the past four years, the team finally earned their first Horizon League Championship in program history.

pretty long and when you have speed on the golf ball, sometimes it can go right or left pretty long. So anytime we can get a golf course that is more wide open and then put some emphasis on tee shots and putting, we’re going to do better. But honestly, we’ll take wherever we get and we’ll compete our butts off.”

The 2021 NCAA Division I Women’s and Men’s Golf Championships selection show took place on Wednesday, May 5. It was broadcast on the Golf Channel.

Songs that are better than “Castaways”

LAUREN REID

Content Editor

If you’ve been on TikTok in the last month, there’s no way you haven’t heard the app’s most recent banger — “Castaways” by The Backyardigans. There’s just something about that song.

I genuinely respect the hype surrounding “Castaways” — I do. But I think there’s some other hidden jams we don’t talk about enough, so what better time than the present?

“Trudge, Trudge, Trudge” by The Backyardigans

If you like “Castaways,” you better buckle up, because “Trudge, Trudge, Trudge” is a million times better. This song is so fire it physically hurts me. I always tell my friends this — saxophones elevate any song they’re thrown into — and of course this Grammy-deserving bop features some spectacular saxophone moments. Also, the key change near the end is absolutely impeccable.

Move over, “Castaways,” this song is your worst nightmare.

The “Max and Ruby” Theme Song

Sure, the song just repeats the words “Max and Ruby,” but I really couldn’t care less when it sounds this good. It’s easy to remember, it sticks with you and it gets the point across. The show is about Max and Ruby, right? So what more do you need to know? It’s not lazy writing, it’s smart writing.

Randomly anything by Pitbull.

Mr. Worldwide immediately transports me back to middle school dances, but I’m totally cool with it. Seventh grade me was living it up — trading Silly Bandz, getting dropped

off at Menchie’s, going to classes that were just named after the subject (English 7, social studies 6) — how cute. From “Fireball” to “Timber,” there’s nothing this man can’t do. I also know all the lyrics to “Time of Our Lives” and have no clue when or why that happened.

“Ain’t Got Rhythm” from “Phineas and Ferb”

Indie pop meets summer camp in this masterpiece, and I’m here for it. Everyone always talks about “Squirrels in my Pants,” which is a mistake. The slamming library books, tapping pencils and Phineas’ iconic little voice come together to make the most elite song on Earth.

“I Just Can’t Wait to be King” from “The Lion King”

Simba’s vocals are truly superb in this one. The jungle vibes are everything you’ll need this summer on your way to the beach. Honestly, this movie’s entire soundtrack cannot be topped — this song has been in my Top 100 on Spotify for five years straight, and I am honored.

“Stayin Alive” by the Bee Gees

I could spend the rest of my life listening to this for literally no reason at all — I feel like I’m flying when I hear this song. I remember the first time I heard it, too. My dance teacher turned it on for warmups and all the other kids were unphased, but not me. I know greatness when I hear it. Props to the Bee Gees.

Well, there you go. I’ve named five songs and Mr. 305’s entire career, and they’re all better than “Castaways.” No hard feelings, just facts.

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