Welcome to the Duke's Best Entertainment of 2016 Special Edition. Our crack team of writers and editors have picked out their favorite pieces of entertainment from the past year across five categories: video games, music, books, TV shows and movies. Don't forget to check online at duqpm.com for our companion article, the Worst Entertainment of 2016.

**XCOM 2 - Brandon Addeo**

The second installation of the "XCOM" series, "XCOM 2," adds another fantastic entry in the turn-based, third person tactical shooter series historically known for being harsh and unforgiving in its difficulty.

The game takes place in 2035, 20 years after the events of "XCOM: Enemy Unknown," the reboot of the 1990s "X-COM" series by developer MicroProse.

"XCOM's" greatest strengths are in its difficulty, and "XCOM 2" is every bit as challenging as "Enemy Unknown." The two games are similar in structure, but "XCOM 2" improves some of the functions of its predecessor. For example, upgrades to armor and weaponry are now automatically distributed to all XCOM soldiers, whereas they previously had to be made individually for each troop.

Additionally, "XCOM 2" introduces the ability to customize the names, physical appearances and personalities of your soldiers. For myself at least, this customization aspect made the (unceremonious) deaths of your troops that much more cruel, but adds to the intensity of the game.

If you're looking for a challenge, grab a plasma rifle and help liberate planet Earth in "XCOM 2."

**Darkest Dungeon - Sean Ray**

"X-COM" is one of my favorite retro video games. H.P. Lovecraft is one of my favorite authors. So a game that combined the tough of nails, permadeath style gameplay of "X-COM" with the cosmic horror stories of Lovecraft was bound to be my favorite of the year.

"Darkest Dungeon" is a true sign of the strength indie studios have. No major publisher would be caught dead making a 2D game that doesn't show off intense graphical capabilities, nor would they make a game that's teeth grindingly hard. Luckily, Red Hook were able to fill that unique niche for people who love to bang their heads against a proverbial brick wall over and over again until they succeed.

The game will make you yell in frustration and cheer in success within the same play session. You'll find yourself becoming attached to your characters and mourning their deaths. And for the cherry on top, you'll find yourself absolutely captivated by the game's enchanting narrator, even as he mocks your failures.

"Pokémon Go - Zachary Landau"

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"Pokémon Go" may be a terrible game run by buffoons who have never heard of the word "retention," but it was also perhaps the biggest game to come out in a long time. Everywhere you went, people were flicking virtual balls at the titular monsters, and it was an amazing experience to just enjoy something with complete strangers. "Pokémon Go" was a great thing in a terrible year, and with the drip-feed of new content coming in December, there will be a reason to come back and relive those two weeks again. If anything, "Pokémon Go" is the closest I have ever been to experiencing the level of Pokémon fever when the series first debuted.

**Overwatch - Grant Stoner**

"Heroes never die!" the angelic Mercy announces, as she instantly revives five of her fallen comrades. With the full team assembled, the payload successfully reaches its final destination, awarding the attackers with a victory. Developed by Blizzard Entertainment, "Overwatch" is an objective-based shooter, requiring players to synchronize battle strategies, as well as team composition, to win the game. With 23 eclectic heroes, each with their own powerful abilities, 14 diverse maps and six unique game modes, "Overwatch" provides an incredible opportunity for gamers to explore varying play-styles within a single package.

"Overwatch" delivers one of the most engaging first-person shooter experiences of 2016. Despite the lack of a story, each multiplayer match evolves into an intense, often climactic struggle, forcing both teams to quickly react in order to secure a win. Whether on consoles or PC, "Overwatch" is an excellent gift for gamers this holiday season.

**Gone Home - Nicole Prieto**

An indie game originally released in 2013, Fullbright's "Gone Home" was temporarily released for free over the weekend following the results of the presidential election. The game received critical acclaim after it first came out — and for good reason.

The year is 1995. You take the first-person perspective of Katie Greenbriar, a college student who just arrived home after studying abroad in Europe. The Greenbriars recently moved into a deceased relative's house. Katie arrives to find it dark and abandoned, with only a mysterious note left to start off the game. Players must unlock secret passageways and discover new areas to try to determine what happened to Katie's now-missing sister, Sam. The narrative unfolds before you as you pick up items and Sam narrates what happened in her life since you left.

Though it received some flack for being a "walking simulator," "Gone Home" is a solid narrative whose unique characters and thoughtful voice acting easily make up for its weaknesses. The game inverts horror genre tropes to good effect. Instead of monsters or the inarticulate, what we receive is a hopeful, relatable story with high emotional payoff. This is definitely one LGBT-friendly game you will either want to pick back up again or try out for the first time.

**Gear of War 4 - Craig Taylor**

"Gears of War 4" is a big-budget, hammer video game that is completely self-aware. It accomplishes exactly what it sets out to do, and is just a well-rounded package for old fans and new fans alike.

Taking place 25 years after the end of "Gears of War 3," "Gears 4" follows Marcus Fenix's son JD and his outfit of outsider allies in a post-Locust world. But a new threat emerges, and it's up to JD and company to save the planet Sera as his father did before him.

"Gears of War 4" is a near-perfect soft-reboot. The story brings back some old favorites but is largely fresh, the co-op Horde mode is the best it's ever been, and the multiplayer, although a little tired, sticks to the series' roots to ensure that veteran players feel at home.

There are other games that are more provocative or innovative, but in terms of big-budget AAA games, "Gears 4" is so complete, that it'd be difficult to find a fuller game for $60.
Racism, horror and Bowie: Best songs of 2016

What It Means - Raymond Arke

The Drive-By Truckers, an alternative country rock band, tackle tough issues like racism in their politically-fueled album “American Band,” and their tone is highlighted in the song “What It Means.” The song details the police shootings that have captured America’s attention, specifically mentioning the killings of Michael Brown and Trayvon Martin. The lyrics question the purpose of shooting unarmed black young people. They wonder how, even though we have a black president and we have made so much progress, such systemic racism exists in America. They caution that we are “a nation of some people who attempt to explain away the deaths. One of the most potent lines addresses how there still is a racial gap, saying: “I mean Barack Obama won and you can choose where to eat, but you don’t see too many white kids laying in the street.” They challenge the idea that America has become a post-racial society.

It’s unusual to hear an all-white band singing in a country twang about the evils of racism. The song is fueled by a powerful, driving drum beat adding a serious tone to the music. In an unsettled and hostile political climate, The Drive-By Truckers call on people and think about “what it means” when “the outer edges move and dazzle us, but the core is something rotten.” This powerful and moving song from a band we rarely think about captures the mood of an uncertain and confused country.

A New Beginning – Sean Ray

I’ll be frank: The only reason I listened to this song in the first place is because of the “Friday the 13th” reference in it. Nonetheless, I’m glad I did, because I’ve ended up liking it. The song, titled “A New Beginning,” is from the album “They Fine,” headed by Canadian comedy musician Jon Lajoie. It’s a hauntingly beautiful part of the band’s debut album.

The song brings this listener back to childhood, as the narrator’s favorite pop horror movie is “Friday the 13th,” which I grew up watching. According to his family’s bleak expectations, “the unassuming kosher butcher just trying to live a normal life isn’t even good enough. The only looking for new music or who want to get into Bowie. Just Like Fire - Nicolas Jozefczyk

Pink’s fast-paced electronic music after a four year long hiatus. With her release of “Just Like Fire” for the movie “Alice Through the Looking Glass,” Pink’s no-hold-back vocals and songwriting prowess shine through. Using inspiration from Alice’s character in the feature film, she wrote an anthem about being a strong fighter who stands up for what she/she believes in and does not take no for an answer. This track has a catchy hook, a snappy bass line, a slight rap break and beautiful falsetto notes that culminate to create another stunning Pink song. The music video itself is also a work of art. The video featuring her husband, Carey Hart, her daughter, Willow Hart, and herself takes the viewer through the magical and crazy world of Wonderland. “Just Like Fire” is an amazing melody and holds its own, even if it was not tied to “Alice Through the Looking Glass.” This track is easily one of the best to come out of 2016.

Other People - Nicole Prieto

On the heels of her latest EP’s release, musician LP came to Pittsburgh’s Rex Theater in July. Her breakup song “Other People” perhaps lives in the shadow of her more well-known piece “Lost on You,” but it carries its own unique bite. “Other People” opens with LP’s signature whistling before vacillating from a somber reflection on days gone by to bits- terness about being left in the dust for something old.

Lyrics like “No more song, no more dance, no dance floor / We left it all to chance, no encore,” a handful of F-bombs and accusations of being unfaith- ful round out the song’s essence. “Other People” is an anthem for anyone coping with the recent sting of a breakup gone bad. LP’s melodic cynicism (“Thank you baby, thank you darling, / Don’t explain, don’t explain”) might inspire you to sing along, but do not let that deter you. You cannot quite replicate her whistling. The only thing better than listening to this satisfyingly harsh piece on repeat is getting the chance to see her perform it live on tour.

These Words - Josiah Martin

“These Words” by The Lemon Twigs was one of the strongest and most inter- esting songs of 2016, and it somehow speaks under most people’s radars. The Lemon Twigs are a group comprised of brothers Brian and Michael D’Addario and their backing band, who perform a late-60s infused baroque pop-rock. Their style stays true to their label, familiar and in- describable. Casual listeners may draw connections between songs, like “These Words” and the Beatles’ later songs such as “Sun King” and “Don’t Let Me Down,” but closer listening will show more con- nections to the punchy and intricate in- strumentation of “Yes” with the vocal harmonies and songwriting of groups like Big Star. Whatever their influences may be, the Lemon Twigs truly delivered an unforgettable song with “These Words,” pairing beautiful lyricism and vocals with a dynamic and, a rarity in modern pop-rock, competent, interesting instru- mental. This will be the Lemon Twigs’ first single, from “Do Hollywood,” their tech- nically second album being marketed as their debut. If this is just the start for the Lemon Twigs, they have a bright future ahead of them and, given that they’re only 19 and 17 years old, a long one at that.

I hate u, I love u - Lea"

What makes a great song is great emotion, and that’s exactly what “I hate u, love u” by all $u$h has. The sultry rap-pop ballad features 13 soothing piano melodies juxtaposed by desperate, flowing words exploring the painful feelings of unre- quited love.

The lyrics are probably the best part of this irresistible, heart-wrenching song. What makes it so great is that they don’t just rhyme well or have perfect harmonies and songwriting. They also make some incredibly profound conclusions that delve into losing love without being tacky or off-putting. This is due to the wonder- ful writing behind them that makes the details of what happened so specific and general enough that anyone can find a way to relate to them, thus making them listen over and over again.

The voices of the two singers — rapper ghazn and featured artist Olivia O’Brien — have never been so perfectly matched with each other. Their unique rawness emphasizing their anger and sadness. This gives the lyrics even more meaning than they normally would have, but only in the original ver- sion of the song. The radio edit is much less powerful, probably due to the remov- al of the intense explicatives. So if you’re looking for something different to listen to, you’re better off to check the original.

December 1, 2016 - YEAR IN REVIEW
Pittsburgh ioby hears Uptown neighbors’ concerns

Raymond Arke

Change might be coming to Uptown, the Pittsburgh neighborhood where Duquesne and many university students reside. Ioby: In Our Backyards (stylized as ioby), now has an office in Pittsburgh, which opened Nov. 15.

The Brooklyn-based nonprofit works to encourage and fund neighborhood improvements. Ioby will be based out of the NeighborWorks office on Fifth Avenue. One of the neighborhoods the group is looking at sparking revitalization in is Uptown.

Matt Sherman, a junior pharmacology major at Duquesne, lives in a house in Uptown. One of the perks Sherman enjoys is how close the neighborhood is to everything. "I like the convenience of Uptown. It’s close to PPG [Paints Arena], school, Downtown and South Side," he added.

"It’s Christmastime in the city"

KAILEY LOVER/PHOOTO EDITOR

A ranger sits in front of the fountain outside the Student Union. The Christmas break begins on Dec. 15 after finals end.

Brandon Addo

news editor

A female Duquesne student told Duquesne Police Tuesday she was sexually assaulted in her room in Duquesne Towers residence hall Nov. 28.

The suspect, who was not named, is a 22-year-old white male with brown hair, green eyes and reddish beard, who is possibly a student at another Pittsburgh university, according to Duquesne Public Safety Director Thomas Hart.

The victim first met the suspect on the social media app Yik Yak over the recent Thanksgiving break. They also communicated over Snapchat, and arranged a first date for Nov. 28.

When the suspect and the victim were inside the victim’s room, the suspect forced the victim to have sex with him, Hart said.

Duquesne Public Safety has handled the investigation of the case over to Pittsburgh Police.

"If you have ever flown on a plane, you probably know that the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) limits passengers to 3.4 ounces of liquid inside bottles.

A product created by a recent Duquesne graduate is designed to help travelers who want to take hair gel on their travels.

Nathan Failla, who graduated in 2016 with dual majors in entrepreneurship and legal studies, came up with the idea for Pocket-Gel, hair gel that comes in small containers — small enough to be taken onto planes. He decided to start his own business to produce and sell the portable hair gel.

During the first semester of his senior year, Failla came up with the idea during a marketing class, and in his second semester, he continued to develop it in another business school class.

Failla’s idea for the portable hair gel was inspired by a rainy walk to meet his family for dinner in September 2015.

“I told my roommate, ‘What’s the point of me doing my hair? By the time I get there it will be a mess anyway. I wish I could take some hair gel with me in, like, a packet,’” Failla said.

Failla first sought to market it as a men’s product, but when considering how convenient it could make travel, he saw the potential for PocketGel to be a unisex product.

According to The Bureau of Labor Statistics, 14 percent of Americans have, like Failla, started their own businesses.

Failla said he was a good fit for entrepreneurship, because he did not want to enter a conventional line of work. "I have always had the mindset of being a risk taker, and I never wanted a 9-to-5 job," Failla said.

A product created by a recent Duquesne graduate is designed to help travelers who want to take hair gel on their travels.

The relative peace and quiet is also a plus, according to Sherman. "It is kind of like a big residential area without all the noise of the city," he said.

However, there are some drawbacks to the neighborhood that Sherman would like changed in the near future.

"I dislike how [the neighborhood] is kept ... The Uptown area could use a good cleaning. I also think incorporating a few nice restaurants or places to enjoy would increase interest," he said.

Miriam Parson became the Action Strategist of the Pittsburgh ioby office in early November.

She described ioby’s purpose as "neighbor-driven projects that build the future that residents want for their neighborhood." According to Parson, her job is to be a guide for city residents with good ideas.

"We believe that neighbors know what’s best for their neighbors."
Annual Fair Trade Week returns to DU

ordinary employees help to bring awareness to the importance of fair trade. The Duke's "Fair Trade Week" is a campaign to raise awareness about the need for fair trade and to support the small farms and farmers who produce fair trade goods.

POLICE BRIEFS

As finals approach, Cousin PB want to remind ya'll to be respectful to other students in campus study spaces. Don't leave your stuff everywhere so people can't use tables — don't be that guy.

Last Wednesday, a vehicle drove onto Academic Walk and knocked over a Bollard light fixture.

On Monday, Duquesne Public Safety issued defiant trespass warnings to two men not affiliated with Duquesne at the request of a student who did not want further contact with them.

On Tuesday, a student struck an unoccupied vehicle with their car in the Locust Garage.

EMAIL TIPS

We want your input!

The Duke's news section would like to hear from you about stories that you want to see in print. Know a talented professor or accomplished student? See something on campus that just doesn't make sense? You can send your tips and story ideas to News Editor Brandon Addo at addeob@duq.edu.

SBDC gets AARP grant to teach adults over 50

Lisa Zubick

The Small Business Development Center (SBDC) was awarded a grant from the AARP Foundation to teach adults over 50 how to start and run their own businesses.

AARP spokesperson, the aim of the program is to teach older citizens how to be their own bosses in carving out freelancing, micro businesses and social enterprises. Each workshop is designed to teach 15 participants how to start their own businesses later in their lives. Although it may not seem important for older people to start their own businesses, the SBDC believes people over the age of 50 have the perfect opportunity to begin new careers for themselves.

"Many people over 50 have the perfect opportunity to begin new careers for themselves," McKinney said. "Also, people are healthier now often.

times when they retire, and they really want to go to the next step in their careers."

The Work for Yourself@50+ workshops allow people over the age of 50 to "continue to contribute positively to society," McKinney added.

The first workshop was held on Nov. 30 at the Homewood Carnegie Library. This last upcoming workshop will be held on Jan. 23 at the Riverside Center for Innovation on the North Side and March 22 at the Energy Innovation Center.

Dunion said the program can help poorer adults.

The program helps low- and moderate-income older adults explore opportunities to work for themselves and take the right steps toward successful self-employment," Dunion said.

Another focus of the workshop is its financial advice, which work for participants of all income ranges, McKinney said.

McKinney said she hopes participants will leave the workshops with the knowledge of how to start their business with little money, and how to grow their future income.

"The most important part about running a business is to be committed and to love what you're doing because it's a lot of hard work," McKinney said.

You can send your tips and story ideas to News Editor Brandon Addo at adddeob@duq.edu.
**DU grad starts hair gel business**

PocketGel fits into pouches small enough to be taken on airplanes. Failla said he is considering launching other products.

**GEL — from page 1**

Failla said he did not have to take this risk alone. While some of his fellow students were skeptical, he said his professors were very supportive, and a few even offered their expertise.

One of those professors is Timothy Lightholder, an adjunct professor in Duquesne’s business school. Lightholder is also the vice president of technology and development without making a formal distress call. A female controller explained another plane that had been diverted with mechanical problems was already approaching the runway and had priority, instructing the pilot to wait seven minutes.

As the jetliner circled in a holding pattern, the pilot grew more desperate. “Complete electrical failure, without fuel,” he said in the tense final moments before the plane set off on a four-minute spiral that ended with it slamming into a mountainside Monday night.

By then the controller had gauged the seriousness of the situation and told the other plane to abandon its approach to make way for the charter jet. It was too late. Just before going silent, the pilot said he was flying at an altitude of 9,000 feet and made a final plea to land: “Vectors, seno, landing vectors.”

The recording, obtained Wednesday by Colombian media, appeared to confirm the accounts of a surviving flight attendant and a pilot flying nearby who overheard the frantic exchange. These, along with the lack of an explosion upon impact, point to a rare case of fuel running out as a cause of the crash of the jetliner, which experts said was flying at its maximum range.

For now, authorities are avoiding singling out any one cause of the crash, which killed all but six of the 77 people on board, including members of Brazil’s Chapecoense soccer team traveling to Medellin for the Copa Sudamericana finals — the culmination of a fairy tale season that had electrified soccer-crazed Brazil.

A full investigation is expected to take months and will review everything from the 17-year-old aircraft’s flight and maintenance history to the voice and instruments data in the black boxes recovered Tuesday at the crash site on a muddy hillside. The U.S. National Transportation Safety Board was taking part in the investigation because the plane’s engines were made by an American manufacturer.

As the probe continued, mourning soccer fans in Medellin and the southern Brazilian town of Chapeco, where the team is from, held simultaneous stadium tributes to the victims. The six survivors were recovering in hospitals, with three in critical but stable condition, while forensic specialists worked to identify the victims so they could be transferred to a waiting cargo plane sent by the Brazilian air force to repatriate the bodies.

Alfredo Bocanegra, head of Colombia’s aviation agency, said that while evidence initially pointed to an electrical problem, the crash was caused by lack of fuel has not been ruled out. Planes need to have enough extra fuel on board to fly at least 30 to 45 minutes to another airport in the case of an emergency, and rarely fly in a straight line because of turbulence or other reasons.

Before being taken offline, the website of LaMia, the Bolivian-based charter company, said the British Aerospace 146 Avro RJ85 jetliner’s maximum range was 2,965 kilometers (1,600 nautical miles) — just under the distance between Medellin and Santa Cruz, Bolivia, where the flight originated, and its full passenger capacity.

“If this is confirmed by the investigators it would be very painful because it is too much,” Bocanegra told Caracol Radio on Wednesday when asked whether the plane should not have attempted such a long haul.

One key piece to unlocking the mystery could come from Ximena Sanchez, a Bolivian flight attendant who was in the plane when it stopped. ... The controller’s voice starts to break up and she sounds really sad. ‘We’re in the plane and start to cry.’

No traces of fuel have been found at the crash site and the plane did not explode on impact, one of the reasons there were six survivors.

**THE DUQUESNE DUKE**

Plane carrying Brazilian soccer team crashes in Columbia

AP — The pilot of the chartered plane carrying a Brazilian soccer team told air traffic controllers he had run out of fuel and desperately pleaded for permission to land before crashing into a mountainside, according to a leaked recording of the final minutes of the doomed flight.

In the sometimes chaotic exchange with the air traffic tower, the pilot of the British-built jet requests permission to land because of “fuel problems” without making a formal distress call. A female controller explained another plane that had been diverted with mechanical problems was already approaching the runway and had priority, instructing the pilot to wait seven minutes.

As the jetliner circled in a holding pattern, the pilot grew more desperate. “Complete electrical failure, without fuel,” he said in the tense final moments before the plane set off on a four-minute spiral that ended with it slamming into a mountainside Monday night.

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**Ioby to work with Uptown community**

Ioby is a partner of ours ... We recently announced the creation of our Love Your Resilient Block funding program and are actively encouraging communities and students too to develop collaborative funding opportunities to foster community change,” he said.

Nationally, ioby has had a large presence. Its website touted that it has funded 756 different projects across the U.S. and has raised and given over $2.5 million to the neighborhood ideas.

Parson explained that ioby has done better than similar groups.

“Ioby’s projects have an 87 percent funding success rate, compared to a 33 percent peak in the crowdfunding industry, and ioby projects still get the funds that they do raise even if they were a 100 percent goal,” he said.

Parson wanted to encourage Duquesne campus groups to join in on the project a reality.”

“First the neighborhood ideas, Parson said. “My role is to listen to residents’ ideas, connect them with resources to solve questions, and then support them through ioby’s one-on-one coaching to crowdsourcing funding and materials to make the project a reality.”

Before launching the office this year, ioby had worked with Pittsburgh city officials and nonprofits on almost twenty projects.

Ioby said so far the Uptown neighborhood have been environmentally-oriented. Parson said suggestions like community gardens, more trees and better sidewalks have been brought up in neighborhood meetings.

The City of Pittsburgh has also been focused on improving Uptown. Grant Ervin, chief resilience officer for the City of Pittsburgh, said the city is “working alongside a host of partners including Duquesne University,” to develop the Ecovation District plan. This project is looking at redeveloping Uptown and parts of Oakland into a more environmentally sustainable area with a focus on creating better economic opportunities in the neighborhood.

Ervin said ioby will help with projects throughout the city.

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“Ioby is of course interested in offering our coaching to students who want to do projects for public benefit, Parson said.

Ideas can also be submitted through their website at ioby.org/idea.
I don’t love studying. I hate studying. I like learning. Learning is beautiful.

Natalie Portman
You just read | Now tweet our thoughts | Us yours.
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If you’ve ever sat at home alone wondering why everyone else seems to be having so much more fun than you, are you aren’t alone. According to a 2014 study by Eventbrite, nearly 70 percent of millennials aged 18 to 34 experience “FOMO,” or the fear of missing out. It’s that nagging thought in the back of your head that says maybe you should be out with your friends at the concert in town or trying the trendy restaurant that just opened in another neighborhood instead of working or studying for an upcoming test. It’s the same voice that says you are a lesser person, magically knocked down a few pegs on the “coolness” scale, because you are not out where everyone else seems to be.

That’s even if your better judgment tells you that you are not, in fact, a loser.

Social media doesn’t help much with this, either. In actuality, it makes it nearly impossible to not feel some sort of anxiety about being holed up for hours in the library on a Friday night or waiting tables on the weekends while the rest of campus is seemingly stumbling through the South Side.

It’s easy to forget as we’re scrolling through Instagram in bed that the feeds we see are perfectly polished versions of our lives. Each picture is deliberately and meticulously chosen to represent our best angles. Of course we’re going to show off pictures of the parties we go to and the people we hang out with, instead of snapshots of us lying in bed, bingewing the “Gilmore Girls” series for the third time. Who wants to see those?

While this might seem harmless, these choices paint quite a different picture of our lives than the ones we actually lead on a daily basis. They’re out there in permanence on the internet, forever documented for whoever comes across them, and that’s dangerous. After all, when you stumble upon that girl from your management class’ account and all she has on there are fabulous pictures of her weekly adventures, won’t you wonder why she’s having a better time than you are? Won’t you wonder, even for a second, what you are doing wrong?

There is some actual reasoning behind the feeling of FOMO and why it affects so many of us, myself included. According to the same study, nearly 70 percent of millennials believe that attending live events makes them feel “more connected to other people, the community and the world.” Almost 80 percent say that participating in activities with other people also helps deepen their relationships.

Humans are social creatures. We crave interaction and acceptance from those around us. That feeling is what makes us happy, more often than not. So when we see or hear about others in our social circles going out and experiencing the more lighthearted parts of life while we are alone, the thought pops up again than maybe we are missing out.

But the difficult part about vanquishing FOMO as a college student is finding the last spring spot between doing what you are supposed to and doing what you actually want to. It’s hard not to feel left out when you are working multiple jobs or internships and are constantly studying to maintain a decent GPA. All of those hours dedicated in one area means that they aren’t being allocated to another.

Of course, we should be doing those things — the power internship that will help us get a job after graduation, the exam preparation that will boost us to the coveted 4.0 — because they will help us in the long run, the ironically-valuable future. But how do you figure all of that stuff out while still maintaining some semblance of a satisfying social life?

Unfortunately, I don’t know the answer. And I’m not sure if I ever will. But if you’re somehow figured out the secret formula over the years, please share. I know that a hefty portion of millennials and I am just dying to find out.

Rebekah Devorak is a senior journalism and advertising major and can be reached at devorakr@dpu.edu.
Cellphone conundrum: devices destroying lives

Leah Devorka layout editor

You know what I hate? Cellphones. Here’s why:

1. They shatter and break. They make you lose two years’ worth of memories in about three seconds when they fall five inches to the floor as you’re trying to put the Christmas presents you bought for your family on the coffee table without any one noticing. Unfair.

2. They also cost anywhere from $500 to $700 to replace if you want one that isn’t an indestructible flip phone from 2005. And it’ll be about $60 to $200 on top of that if it breaks before the contract with your phone carrier is up, and you try to trade it in to get one that actually works. (I know ‘cause I just went through this.) Dumb.

3. If you try getting it repaired, good luck, because most repair guys aren’t actually successful. That will suck when the parts fail just days after you finally thought they were fixed. And then you’re back to No. 2: You have to shell out hundreds of dollars extra to get a phone that will actually work. Stupid.

4. And once you get the new phone, you have to buy a new phone case, new screen protectors, extended insurance — ‘cause you’re sure as heck not gonna go without that again. And who knows? Maybe there’s a deal on virtual reality headgear or iPads that you just can’t resist, so you buy one of those, too. I mean, you’re already burning $1000, so what’s $50 more? And say goodbye to the $15 you just spent on the “Merry Christmoose” phone case with the picture of a mose adorned in Christmas lights on it, ‘cause that sure as heck won’t fit the new gadget. Uncool.

5. They’re money pits. I hate cellphone phones because they are nothing but money pits, even though they’re essentially just twisted metal encased in plastic and topped with glass, like some sort of technology cake. And while cakes are definitely more expensive than bread, it seems a little ridiculous that cellphone phones are $500 more than toastasters. They’re no longer some fancy technological evolution. Why hasn’t the price adjusted?

But the immense horror of the devices doesn’t stop there.

6. Cellphones are too big. I miss the days where my tiny blackberry Pearl could fit into any pocket or any purse on planet Earth without falling out, just because it was that small. Heck, I could even shove it in my shoe or bra and still be completely comfortable. Try showing an iPhone Plus in one of those places, and you’ll regret it fast. So now we have to hold our touch screen bricks because they don’t fit any anywhere except in our hands.

7. This takes me back to the money pit conundrum, because cellphone phones’ mammoth sizes now make them even more vulnerable than ever to being dropped and broken. (Not going to lie here: I’m pretty sure this was a conscious decision so that all the big phone companies can make a little extra money.)

8. Phone size also leads to social problems. People with tiny phones are picked on by everyone else even though that quality is no grounds for discrimination. All phones are created equal, and in order to finally eliminate the judging looks and “2004 wants its phone back” comments, we need to reconsider the emphasis society now puts on the largeness of cellular devices. All phone sizes are beautiful. Because of that, accept them all, and don’t say mean or spiteful things against anyone with one that isn’t common.

9. Phones are distracting. Sure, they’re fun for a few minutes when you first start stalking bae’s Twitter, but how much fun will you have when that attention causes you to have a fire hydrant or off of a bridge? Not much. It’s about time we call phones out for the health hazards they are.

10. On that last point, phones are consistently lowering the health of individuals everywhere by interrupting natural sleep patterns. You have a long day at work, so you go on your phone to relax. But before you know it, it’s 3 a.m., and you are just going to bed. And then as you’re entering your REM sleep: Ring, ring, it’s 5 a.m. and some dude in Mumbai wants you to buy his company’s computer software. This is unhealthy — dangerous, even. Why the government hasn’t cracked down yet, I don’t know.

11. And the final blow to the worth of cellphones: hand cancer. You know it’s just a matter of time until we all get it.

So that’s why I hate cellphones, and I shouldn’t be alone. Screw all the convenience, ingenuity, creativity, helpfulness, speed and fun that comes from the devices, and forget the fact that I wrote this entire article using one. Cellphones are stupid and need to be dealt with immediately.

Leah Devorka is a junior journalism major and can be reached at devorkak@duq.edu.

Gumberg should extend late-night hours to help students

Alison Caracciolo staff columnist

It’s that time of year again. The week of seemingly-endless sleep deprivation and countess anxiety-ridden finals. With each passing year, these nightmarish exams seem to creep upon us faster than we are able to endure.

But nevertheless, it is time to hit the grind once again.

Now is the time for students to actually look through all the notes they most likely forgot about from the beginning of the semester (or for others, now is the time to look frantically through your notebook for the notes you should have taken from the beginning of the semester). It’s the one time — besides midterms — the Gumberg Library becomes a hideout for most students on campus. With one year under my belt, I have learned that it is a scavenger hunt to surround yourself with as many of the electrical outlets as possible to do your work, and to create a maximum position for the innumerable tedious hours of studying to come.

Gumberg does a great job at accommodating stressed students on campus, but it could do an even better job at meeting more students’ needs by staying open later in the week prior to finals. For many students, myself included, we try to get a jump-start on preparing for our papers or studying for our final exams the week before the mad rush to Gumberg.

Gumberg Library will be open 24 hours during finals week. On Dec. 7 at 7 a.m., the library will open and then will not close until Dec. 15 at 9 p.m. Instead of being open for 24 hours in the middle of the week, it will be the most beneficial for many students if the library was open Dec. 4 as well, which will provide a full week of maximizing all the studying preparation needed for finals.

“It’s nice that the library is open all night during finals week, but it would be nice to have it open all night the week before as well,” said Abby Zadrozny, a sophomore journalism major and can be reached at devorkak@duq.edu.

It’s natural to assume that the majority of students tend to begin their studying process, papers or projects early because it is nearly impossible to cram all five to seven course loads of work, and finish each with confidence, in a week’s time. On the contrary, though, many professors assign for their papers to be due before the actual cumulative final takes place during exam week.

It is up to us to trade in our expensive (I know that I have a lot of final projects and papers due before finals, which is stressful and frustrating) for the health hazards they are. It’s nice that the library is open all night during finals week, but it would be nice to have it open all night the week before as well,” said Abby Zadrozny, a sophomore journalism major and can be reached at devorkak@duq.edu.

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It is up to us to trade in our expensive (I know that I have a lot of final projects and papers due before finals, which is stressful and frustrating) for the health hazards they are.

Happy finals to week to all, and may the odds be ever in your favor.

Alison Caracciolo is a sophomore public relations major and can be reached at alisoncaracciolo@gmail.com.
FEATURES

HEALTHY HABITS: STAYING WELL WITHOUT MOM’S MAGIC

Seth Culp-Ressler
Features Editor

Welcome to the Continuing Misadventures of a Displaced Duquesne Student, a series in which Features Editor Seth Culp-Ressler grouses with his off-campus life off campus. For the veterans of apartment life, feel free to laugh at his incompetence. For non-veterans, perhaps the mistakes he chronicles are valuable lessons.

Chapter Four: The Health

I’m not sure if there’s anything quite as miserable as trudging up the South Side Steps with a full-blown cold. You think those things are bad enough on a normal day; I’ve got some news for you.

Such are the joys of commuting while sick, all part of that ever-difficult proposition of staying in good health. When you move off-campus for the first time, that task becomes a decidedly harder habit to keep up with.

Some of the reasons for that are readily apparent. Life off-campus is, of all of a life devoid of easy and quick access to Duquesne’s Health Services. Sure, you can still schedule an appointment for when you are on-campus for classes, but should you need some immediate help at an inopportune time, you’re out of luck.

Unfortunately, you aren’t living with mom anymore, so the road to re-covery from any malady is one constructed solely from your own abilities. In my case, let’s just say those skills aren’t as honed as they could be.

As with every fall semester, I’ve gotten a few colds—one of which is still kicking around. The change in weather never fails to send my body into haywire. Apparently, I hadn’t learned from past experiences, because the first time my throat turned to sandpaper and my nose to a fountain, my medicine stock was dry as a bone.

Well, aside from some old and mildly-effectual cough drops.

For some reason, however, the South Side is not rife with CVS locations like downtown is. It’s practically impossible to find a spot in the center of the city from which you can’t see those three big red letters staring back at you. Inexplicably, that wealth of drugstores has not spread down to my neck of the woods, where, you know, people actually live.

So, with my medicine cabinet dry and my head feeling like it was about to burst, I was left with the realization that the nearest place to stock up on DayQuil and some effective cough drops was downtown.

Instead, I just kind of...sucked it up.

That’s the strategy you quickly come to use for most illnesses, unless they’re some oddly serious condition. Wallow in your self-pity for a while, and things will pass.

Now, it should be said, living off-campus does provide some opportunities to be healthier than on-campus life allows. Dorms are notorious for being gigantic petri dishes, good for nothing other than fostering the growth and spread of infectious diseases. I, on the other hand, have a room all to my own, and I only need to worry about sharing a space with a single roommate.

Additionally, being somebody not exactly prone to exercise, the need to get myself across the river to school is certainly going to be good for me in the long run, even if it is unpleasant right now.

That said, any additional exercise you get from commuting can just as easily be canceled out in the kitchen. For as much as Duquesne’s students like to rag on Towers food, you can’t deny that it is a huge convenience to have constant access to healthy food if you want it.

When you’re cooking, for yourself, it’s far too easy to fall into a spiral of boxed mac ’n cheese and pizza, and not even the South Side Steps can balance out that damage. It takes effort to actually make healthy food—not to mention money for those groceries—and sometimes, I wish I could just go to a dining hall and have all the work done for me.

Overall, though, I’ve been lucky. Apart from a few scattered colds, I’ve been able to stay in good health. That’s a privilege that I think is increasingly rare. Still, it would probably be a good idea to buy some cold medicine, wouldn’t it?

Eh. Maybe tomorrow.

How a 19th century bluff-side incline met its fiery demise

Most Duquesne students are very familiar with the South Side Steps, officially called the City Steps, that lead to the 10th Street Bridge. What many may be surprised to know is that the steps used to be an incline, which probably would be preferred to the two engineers who had designed representative of the owners.

The incline was still wrecked from the latest incident and “had not been attractive for passengers for some time.” It was decided that no actions would be taken to either destroy or rebuild it.

According to the aforementioned 1903 Pittsburgh Gazette article, the vacant area became a hangout spot for “loafers,” who vandalised the cab car and stole brass from the machines. Several were convicted of minor charges earlier in the year, along with a man who was greatly annoyed by their shenanigans and set fire to the old waiting room in a fit of rage.

Finally, one day in late July 1903, the Fort Pitt Incline burned down once and for all. The cars, which were once used to carry steel cables midway between the stations despite years of disuse, came hurling down the tracks when the fire took hold of the incline’s structure.

The boiler room was believed to be the source of the fire, which then spread rapidly due to the abandoned, oil-soaked floors. The
Duquesne point guard Rene Castro dribbles past a defender in the Dukes’ loss on Nov. 30. Castro provided a spark as he led all Duquesne scorers with 15 points off of the bench on Wednesday.

David Borne
staff writer

The Duquesne Dukes were unable to slow down the quick, run-and-gun offense of the University of Maryland Baltimore County Retrievers on Wednesday night at the Palumbo Center, falling by an 81-72 score. Wednesday’s contest was just the fifth ever meeting between the two teams, and again you turn the ball over 17 times and our margin of error is very, very small and if we continue to turn the ball over like we do, it makes it even more difficult.

Duquesne started off strong as they lead 21-14 with 10:31 remaining in the game. However, the Retrievers three-point barrage carried over into the second half, and it seemed like Duquesne was unable to get anything going offensively in the final two minutes, and was forced foul and send UMBC to the free-throw line in a final effort to make a comeback. Again struggling to get points on the board, Duquesne’s last-minute comeback effort was unsuccessful, and UMBC took the win by a score of 81-72.

The Dukes consistently struggled to move the ball so quickly, and we couldn’t get anything going offensively in the final two minutes, and was forced foul and send UMBC to the free-throw line in a final effort to make a comeback. Again struggling to get points on the board, Duquesne’s last-minute comeback effort was unsuccessful, and UMBC took the win by a score of 81-72.

Turnovers plagued the Dukes throughout the entire game, and they ended the night down by a team from the America East Conference and will certainly lead to many more losses in the future if Ferry and his team can’t turn things around definitively.

Once we missed, Jim Ferry said. “This game was all about you know, to extend that lead,” head coach of the Dukes. “Our urgency to get back in conversion, its lack of discipline on defense and its failure to guard the perimeter led to a big turnover on both ends of the floor in the first half and a 53 percent (8-15) from behind the 3-point arc. “I thought we got shredded in the first half on defense,” Ferry said. “They just moved the ball so quickly, and we couldn’t get out to the 3-point shooting. If you look at the statistics, we shot 64 percent from the field, 45 percent from 3 and 100 percent from the free-throw line, and we were down 9 — so that’s defense.”

In the paint against an undersized UMBC squad, the Red & Blue still surrendered 22 points in the paint and registered just three blocks in the opening half. Disciplined defense is nearly the exact opposite of how Duquesne’s defense would be described. Th Dukes fall for nearly every shot fake, they don’t obstruct passing lanes and they are lackadadasical in the rebound department.

Not only did Duquesne lose the turnover battle 17-10, it also scored just nine fast break points. Ferry’s team could desperately use those easy baskets, seeing that their big men are unreliable on the inside and the team shoots just 31 percent from behind the arc. But instead, Duquesne is forced to play all of its offense in a half-court set because it has limited opportunities on the break.

Entering last night’s contest, Duquesne had been allowing opponents to score 75 points per game — a high rate considering the only noteworthy team on Duquesne’s schedule so far was No. 1 Kentucky.

Duquesne’s inability to force turnovers, in the latter half even with an improved defensive effort.

Duquesne proved that it is not ready to face an ACC school like Pittsburgh on Friday and the Dukes are certainly not ready for the grueling Atlantic 10 conference season. But whether the Dukes are ready or not, the season will go on, and the Dukes will be forced to adapt quickly if they have any hope of avoiding this season once A-10 play rolls around.

Defense surrenders 52 first half points, Dukes fall to UMBC

Andrew Holman
sports editor

Last year when the Duquesne Dukes hosted the UMBC Retrievers and defeated them 89-70, it gave Duquesne its best start since 1979-80 at 7-2. After an 81-72 loss to the Retrievers (5-1), things feel much differently as Duquesne sits at just 3-5 with the Retrievers (5-1), things feel much differently as Duquesne sits at just 3-5 with the Retrievers (5-1).

Both graduate transfer Emile Blackman and junior Rene Castro acknowledged that the team must do a better job keeping possession in order to win ball games in the future.

Blackman mentioned that the opposing teams aren’t forcing a good number of the turnovers, but a lack of on-court chemistry on roster that has played very few minutes together is creating some issues.

Blackman finished the game with 12 points, shooting 5-9 from the field, and 2-3 from three-point range.

Castro, who came off the bench and led the Retrievers in scoring with 15 points, also spoke on the topic of turnovers and the team’s performance.

“We’ve been working on that every day,” Castro said. “Little turnovers that we don’t need, it’s really affecting us.”

Mike Lewis II ended the game with 11 points, while sophomore Tarin Smith added 10 points and three assists. Junior Jordan Robinson scored eight points in just 9 minutes of action.

Ferry was impressed by Robinson’s performance against the Retrievers and even spoke on the possibility of increasing his minutes.

“Jordan’s done a good job for us,” Ferry said. “Again, it was a little funky when they went with those four and fives that can shoot threes, so it’s hard to play Jordan and it is hard to play Darius [Lewis] in that game.” Ferry said. The loss dropped Duquesne’s record to 3-5 on the season. The Red & Blue must now shift their focus to their crosstown rival, the Pittsburgh Panthers, and the annual City Game at PPG Paints Arena on Friday. The Dukes have lost 15 straight games, and 18 of the last 20, against the Panthers and hope to break their losing streak and re-claim city bragging rights. Ferry and his team will have to put forth a better effort in order to accomplish that.

Retrievers rout Dukes 81-72 at Palumbo Center

KAILEY LOVE / Photo Editor

Nakye Sanders, left, Darius Lewis, middle, and Eric James, right, watch on as the Dukes fall to UMBC.
Who's in? Who's out? The college football world has been waiting to find out since the season kicked off on Aug. 26 and that time is rapidly approaching.

The penultimate CFP Rankings have been released and they feature No. 1 Alabama Crimson Tide, No. 2 the Ohio State Buckeyes, No. 3 Clemson Tigers and No. 4 Washington Huskies. Who’s in? Who’s out?

Barring a stunning loss at the hands of the Florida Gators, the Alabama Crimson Tide seems to be the only sure lock in the CFP field. Even if the Tide lost to the Gators, it would still be tough for the selection committee to keep it out. The Crimson Tide has spent every week at No. 1 since the CFP Rankings were first released in Week 1.

The SEC had a down year this season, and it's wide open as to which team claims that fifth spot. With Washington out of the mix, the door is rapidly approaching.

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Nintendo snubs fan works at video game awards

Zachary Landau  
staff writer

L ast week, The Video Game Awards released their nominations, and two games that caught people’s attention were Nintendo-based. These games; “Another Metroid 2 Remake (AM2R)” and “Pokémon Uranium,” were nominated for the Best Fan Creation category alongside “Brutal Doom 64” and “Enderal: The Shards of Albion” and “Pokémon Uranium” were immensely popular with fans of the franchises and received universal acclaim from the press. “Pokémon Uranium” itself garnered 1.5 million downloads in the week after its release, according to its development team.

Some did not share this sentiment, however, and soon after the nomination list went up, the two projects were stricken from the ballot.

The immediate speculation was that Nintendo of America President Reggie Fils-Aime’s presence as a chair for the VGAs’ board may have strongly discouraged games that used his employer’s intellectual property without their permission from being nominated.

However, it was later revealed by the founder of the VGAs, Geoff Keighley, that the real reason why the games were removed was because of how games receive nominations.

During a Twitch stream this past week, Keighley explained that the VGAs “could not obtain the clearance” for “AM2R” and “Pokémon Uranium” to appear on the show. This is because the show seeks permission from publishers to give awards to games. Since Nintendo has a strict policy against fan-made games and mods, there was no way it would permit them to appear in the show.

Those games hadn’t been, I think, issued takedowns, Keighley said in the same stream, “and if [The VGAs] include those in the show, then the show is potentially at risk for takedown as well.”

Both games were, in fact, issued takedown notices from Nintendo.

This nomination process stands in contrast to the ones used for other major awards. To be nominated for the Oscars, for example, producers or distributors must submit forms in order to have their works considered for nomination. Then, the Academy chooses which submitted films should deserve nomination.

The VGA process, however, involves the press voting in both the nomination and winner rounds. Selected outlets, like Edge, IGN and USA Today, decide which games deserve to be voted for, and then the same outlets vote for the winners in each of the categories. (There is a separate panel created to vote for esports categories, though the overall process remains the same.)

If publishers control which games can appear at the show, however, then the nomination process is entirely pointless. What this means is that The Video Game Awards are, in essence, an

AM2R
RETURN OF SAMUS

COURTESY OF DOCTORM84

Winter fun in Pittsburgh: events not to miss

Madison Pastrick  
staff writer

D ecember is one of the busiest times of the year, and with less than three weeks until break and finals to think about, the holiday season can seem to come and go too quickly to enjoy. That’s why it’s important to put some time aside from cramming to take advantage of the many activities happening all around the city. Here are just a few easy and cheap ways of getting into the holiday spirit that you won’t want to miss.

People’s Gas Holiday Market

From now until Dec. 23, Market Square will be the home of a European shopping village, filled with artisan booths representing countries from all around the world. This holiday tradition was brought to Pittsburgh five years ago, adding cultural diversity to local art and, along with it, daily live performances by a variety of local musicians.

Santa Claus himself will also be in his village workshop and open for visitors of all ages. Shops open at 11 a.m., so make sure to stop and check out these unique crafts, guaranteed to please anyone on your Christmas list.

PPG Place

PPG Place is a prime spot during the holidays, home to the newly-erected ice skating rink that surrounds a traditional 60-foot Christmas tree. But even if ice skating isn’t for you, inside the PPG Wintergarden are three free exhibits: a display of Santas around the world, an overwhelming variety of gingerbread houses and a classic tradition that surrounds yet another beautifully-decorated Christmas tree. The rink will be open until Feb. 26. However the displays within the Wintergarden will be taken down Jan. 7.

PPG Place is a close location for anyone looking to celebrate the season or explore some of the many cultures that enjoy this holiday.

Duquesne’s 36th Annual Christmas Ball

The Duquesne Program Council is hosting its annual holiday dance at the Sheraton in Station Square on Dec. 6. This event is semi-formal and has been a part of the Duquesne holiday tradition for 36 years. Ticket prices are $25 for individuals or $50 for a table of 10.

This cost includes transportation, entry for the ball and dinner. Join your fellow students for this holiday event sure to start the season off right.

Phipps Winter Flower Show and Light Garden: Days of Snow and Nights Aglow

Though December may bring chilly air and bare trees, there are still ways of enjoying nature’s most colorful features all year round. Phipps Conservatory not only provides this service but also debuts a special exhibit this time of year. The Winter Flower Show and Light Garden are beautiful exhibits, featuring holiday-decorated trees, colorful poinsettias, an interactive, outdoor light exhibit and more. Admission for students is $16.95, and the exhibits are available until Jan. 8.

Pittsburgh’s Cultural District Shows

Pittsburgh’s Cultural District is always busy this time of year, providing the public with a variety of shows filled with holiday spirit. This season’s highlights include the Pittsburgh Ballet Theater’s “The Nutcracker,” at the Benedum Theater from Dec. 9 to 18, Pittsburgh CLO’s “A Musical Christmas Carol,” at the Byham Theater from Dec. 9 to 23 and the Trans-Siberian Orchestra, which will be performing at the PPG Paints Arena Dec. 27. For more shows or information, visit www.culturaldistrict.org.

Highmark First Night

There’s no better way to spend New Year’s in Pittsburgh than downtown on Dec. 31, for the free Highmark First Night. This event features music, light displays and family activities, all free. You can also enjoy ice skating for only $6. For more information, visit www.downtownpgh.com and make sure to arrive early, as rides fill up quickly.

UPCOMING RELEASES

“Office Christmas Party”  
Dec. 8

With a cast that includes “SNL” and “Ghostbusters” star Kate McKinnon, Olivia Munn and Vanessa Bayer, this R-rated holiday comedy tells the story of employees that host an office Christmas party to save their jobs, only to run out of control.

“Dead Rising 4”  
Dec. 6

This next installment in the “Dead Rising” franchise is set in a zombie-infested, Christmas-themed town in Colorado. The story again follows photojournalist Frank West from the first game, but players will note the absence of a timer system and story co-op options. The game will be released for Microsoft Windows and Xbox One for $59.99.

WEEK’S EVENTS

Straight No Chaser  
Dec. 8, 8 p.m.

This all-male a cappella group, famous for their Christmas medleys, will perform at the Benedum Center in the Cultural District. Tickets start at $158, and it looks like the concert will sell out soon.

Andy Grammer  
Dec. 4, 4 p.m.

The pop artist, whose single “Fresh Eyes” is performing at No. 3 on Billboard’s Top Forty list, will perform Christmas music with We The Kings and Chris Jamison at Carnegie Music Hall. Tickets start at $22.50. For more information to all-ages event, please visit drukeyentertainment.com.

“Gilmore Girls: A Year in the Life”  
Dec. 4, 4 p.m.

“Netflix’s “Gilmore Girls: A Year in the Life” was a satisfying look at what happened to the town of Stars Hollow a decade after we last saw it. The show was charming and quirky, like Lorelai and Rory themselves, even though it ventured on being cheesy at times. Because, though, as the infamous last four words will definitely leave you fuming.”

— Rebekah Devorak
Duquesne-born band Uptown Woods releases new album

SEAN ARMSTRONG

T
he Uptown Woods, a Jazz-Hip Hop fusion band that formed here at Duquesne University released an album called “Close Quarters” on Nov. 18. The band consists of Supplant, Garrett Shafer and Kassam Zaghub.

When asked about how the trio came together, Shafer explained that it largely stemmed from where the three were living at the time, “[T]he Uptown part of Pittsburgh.”

Shafer elaborated on how the individual band members actually met. “Kind of how our group came about was all of us meeting up through different ways. Whether it was in class or extracurricular activities; we didn’t all live in the uptown,” Shafer said. “But there was actually a pretty heavy population of kids from the music school at Duquesne, Mary Pappert School, who lived in Uptown Pittsburgh, and there were constantly ... gatherings any night of the week. ... [T]here were just jam parties and gatherings where you could have anybody.”

According to Shafer, this would become crucial in the band’s name. “Before we actually became the Uptown Woods — probably a year, a year or two back now figuring out our name, figuring out our voice — we were called just The Woods. We ended up just deciding to call it Uptown just because of where our vibes came from.”

The name has taken on a more personal meaning to the group since then, however. They explained that being in The Uptown part of Pittsburgh allowed them to meet various musicians at these larger venues. “The woods has really meant two things for us specifically. Not just the obvious — being in nature and just being away from civilization, being away from the woods, not around people, not around society. But also, being in the Uptown of Pittsburgh, we were constantly finding ourselves jamming outside, jamming on the rooftop at the house we were at, at Van Bram. The woods kind of became this other meaning, other than the nature of being in this concrete — type jungle.

Finding ourselves in tough situations where you might find yourself in the woods without resources, without money, just basic living essentials.”

The Uptown Woods still wouldn’t start to make music for awhile after that, Shafer said. “We all started hanging on Van Bram at this one house. We were just hanging’ just playing music, jammin’ every night and it went from myself, Garrett, making instrumentals for Jim Supplant and ... we just started getting all the musicians together, and we just started playing music and having the hip-hop and the rap on top of it.”

On their brand new album “Close Quarters,” Supplant talked about the specific meaning behind it and how it relates to the identity of The Uptown Woods: “The main inspiration behind that was when we all met up in Uptown, it was definitely a difficult time and everyone just knew the struggle. Uptown wasn’t the prettiest area, so it was kind of this sense of confinement, being locked into a spot and trying to break out of that conformist view ... [T]he song, ‘If I May,’ one of the lyrics I wrote, it says, ‘Sometimes the tightest spaces make you find true greatness,’ and, like, that for me really sets the tone of the album.”

When asked about the group’s biggest inspiration, Shafer said, “There’s definitely a lot of people. It’s tough to really tie down one because regardless of what people say, and [with]...
Robots, Kings, Prisoners and Presidents: Best shows of 2016

Westworld - Sean Armstrong

“Westworld” is something different. While it is your classic science fiction robot uprising TV show, there’s a bit of nuance to it.

For once, it is not about robots taking over the planet because they are the superior race. They still are in many facets of the superior lifeform, but the reason for their uprising is more realistic. Just like in every war or uprising, the initial spark is oppression.

The robots are part of a western theme park that aims to serve humans. The humans murder, rape and enslave the robots. The only thing that keeps the robots from revolting sooner, is that their memories are erased every time they are killed, so they forget the atrocities committed to them almost daily. However, their memories start to come back in the first few episodes.

This leads to the inevitable rebellion in the theme park that was obvious from episode one. That is not to say that’s the entire plot line, that is just the tip of the iceberg in this show.

Many viewers would agree “Westworld” is a thought provoking series with questions about our own humanity. Do humans have free will?

Good Girls Revolt - Raymond Arke

Amazon Prime has been trying to develop original content that can compete with the extremely popular Netflix originals. With “Good Girls Revolt,” Amazon has found a winning formula in their partly realistic, 1969-set drama.

Set at the end of the hippie era and the beginning of the women’s liberation movement, “Good Girls Revolt” follows the lives of three women who work for the fictional News of the Week magazine. At that time, women were only allowed to work as researchers, meaning that while they did much of the hard work of researching stories, the all-male staff of writers got to put their name on the women’s work.

After one of the women quits, the main three characters, with the encouragement of an ACLU attorney, begin to wrestle with the idea of suing News of the Week for gender discrimination.

The captivating and inspiring series alternates between the brewing struggle at work and the clashes the newly empowered women begin to feel at home. The show acts as a reverse-criminal.

But “Scream” is the rare exception. It may not have a big budget. It may not have major name actors. It may never be the beloved “Game of Thrones” or “Game of Thrones.” But the show’s lovable characters, surprisingly good directing and great script completely stole my attention this year.

BoJack Horseman - Zachary Landau

I was hugely skeptical when I went into “BoJack Horseman.” With everybody praising it to be the best TV show ever. I assumed it was more likely a good, but only good, show that maybe dealt with some issue pretty well. And I was dead wrong.

“BoJack Horseman” is the best show out there, out a lot of crap. But “Scream” is the rare exception.

Siblings Alicia and Nick Clark are expertly portrayed by Alycia Debnam-Carey and Frank Dillane. Recovering drug addict Nick convincingly becomes a respected figure in La Colonia, using his one questionable skillset for the benefit of others. Alycia’s Nick shoulders the burden of her mother’s emotional absence — borne from Nick and Travis’ unknown whereabouts — while continuing to grow into her own character.

For once, you won’t watch a TV show and characters that does not feel burdened by source material the same way that TWD does. As long as neither Madison nor Travis becomes the new Rick Grimes in Season 3, FTWD looks to have a bright future ahead of it.
Beasts, superheroes and amnesiac fish: Best movies of 2016

I have to start by (shamefully) admitting that I did not grow up reading the Harry Potter series or watching the movie adaptations. I only watched the movie series within the past three years — although, I think this gives me a unique lens to look at “Fantastic Beasts.”

“Fantastic Beasts” takes place in the 1920s and follows the story of Newt Scamander (Eddie Redmayne), a collector and caretaker of magical creatures who travels to New York City to search for magical creatures.

The film calls back the fun and whimsical nature of the early “Harry Potter” movies, though “Fantastic Beasts” does have some serious, darker undertones. Scamander’s sidekick-by-chance, a No-Maj, an American term for Muggle, named Jacob Kowalski (Dan Fogler), adds a great deal of humor to the film.

I highly recommend seeing “Fantastic Beasts,” whether you’re a die-hard “Harry Potter” fan or not.

**Shin Godzilla - Sean Ray**

Sixty-one years after the original movie, and the “Godzilla” franchise is still finding ways to totally reinvent itself in fresh and interesting ways. Amazingly, it does this by going back to the original masterpiece. Once more the giant atomic-fire-breathing lizard is treated as terrifying, with a new design that looks like something out of a nightmare.

Director Hideaki Anno’s unique vision elevates the giant monster genre into something of beauty, mixing political satire with epic scenes of grand spectacle. And for a guy mostly known for his animation work, Anno sure has an eye for how to work a camera. Several shots look like beautiful paintings, full of subtle imagery and symbolism.

It’s very rare that a movie feels absolutely perfect for me. Being a critic, I can usually nitpick even the smallest thing from an otherwise great movie. “Shin Godzilla” is one of the few films that can match me. Even the usually boring human scenes manage to be entertaining, using fast-paced editing to ensure nothing drags out too long.

I could go on forever about how great “Shin Godzilla” turned out. The music is legendary, the special effects are breathtaking and for the 31st entry in the series, it easily jumped up as one of my top three of the franchise.

**Finding Dory - Zachary Landau**

I feel an almost moral obligation to include this in a “Best of” list if only because the original is such an integral part of my childhood. While the animation was occasionally bizarre (particularly with characters looking almost like plastic at times) and the plot is a bit contrived, I have to give the movie props for making people burst into veritable tears within minutes. Funny and emotional, “Finding Dory” is worth a watch if only for its nostalgic value.

**Bad Moms - Nicolas Jozefczyk**

“Bad Moms” is a fantastic movie highlighting the struggles of three completely different mothers all learning how to parent their children. Starring Mila Kunis, Kathryn Hahn and Kristen Bell, this film uses comedy to feature the trials and tribulations of being a mother. Kunis’ character, Amy, is a married mother who struggles with juggling her home life, work and involvement in the PTSA. Through a series of horrible events like having hot coffee spilled on her, to being fired from her job, she comes home to find her husband cheating on her with a woman over the internet. This leaves Amy, a now jobless, divorced mother to figure out her life. Throughout this motion picture, Amy becomes friends with Hahn’s character, Carla, and Bell’s character, Kiki. The three women go through motherhood struggles together and learn that being a “bad” mom is okay sometimes. The main demographic for this movie is mothers, but it is funny enough for any teenager or adult to appreciate.

**Moana - Madison Pastrick**

Disney has finally mastered the perfect genre with its newest movie “Moana,” emphasizing values of bravery, family and individualism. The movie follows a young Polynesian girl whose greatest desire is to sail over the vast ocean that separates her small island, Motunui, even though her father, the chief, forbids such exploration. However, when the island begins to die due to an ancient curse, Moana, voiced by Auli’i Cravalho, decides to set sail on a mission to save her people.

Throughout this journey, Moana displays characteristics unique to the average Disney heroine, refusing the term ‘princess,’ and instead discovering her purpose as a leader and voyager for her people.

Complementing this empowering storyline is the cheerful soundtrack, courtesy of Lin-Manuel Miranda, allowing this to be the most satisfying movie of the year, and perhaps Disney history.

**Doctor Strange** was a welcome and fresh addition to Marvel’s movie universe, offering a fresh and different take on the traditional superhero backstory movies. As usual, Marvel delivered a film that had heart, with Dr. Stephen Strange, a cold arrogant character who somehow manages to gain your sympathy. This is undoubtedly due to the casting of Benedict Cumberbatch, who, despite an oft-criticized American accent, nailed the role perfectly. As with most recent Marvel pictures, the film also has its share of humor, with Dr. Strange often noting the ludicrousness of his own situation.

Thanks to this film’s personality, its mind bending plot involving time travel, teleportation and astral forms of being don’t become boring or confusing. “Doctor Strange” certainly met the bar of quality Marvel has set in their recent years, and excels past its Marvel Universe counterparts in many aspects. The film has a more spiritual and intriguing driving force than the “Iron Man” or “Captain America” films. While those films are also entertaining in their own right, “Doctor Strange’s” themes of supernatural forces of good and evil give the film an overwhelming sense that something bigger is at stake than the main conflict of the film. For these reasons, “Doctor Strange” was my favorite film of 2016.

One of the most disturbing, gut-wrenching movies of the escape subgenre, “Green Room” is an engrossing crime thriller/horror hybrid. A no-name punk rock band struggling along their cross-country tour, desperate for money, is forced to play a last-resort show at a skinhead biker bar. On their way out, they witness a murder, and are locked inside a green room until the skinheads determine their fate. The group is forced to come up with an escape plan to outwit the owner of the bar, played by Patrick Stewart, before he can eliminate them.

The band members make some smart (and pretty stupid) decisions as their situation gets increasingly desperate. Their missteps are promptly punished by some genuinely disgusting, gruesome, and the solid acting supplied by Stewart and the rest of the cast adds to the movie’s unsettling tone.

Rather than a dumb, popcorn movie, “Green Room” engages the audience on a level most blockbusters fail to. It pulls the audience into its sick story, kneads their feelings and expectations, and slams them back to reality.

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