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THE DUQUESNE DUKE

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New students, no problems

What's Fizzin'?:
New social app hits the Bluff

EMMA POLEN
news editor

In today's digital world, it takes a lot for a social media platform to stand out. And Fizz, they know the biz.

Fizz is an app designed for students of a specific university community to share their thoughts anonymously through short messages alongside memes and GIFs.

The app launched at Duquesne on Jan. 5 with the start of classes, and already one week later it has at least 1,000 Duquesne student users.

What is it?

Fizz first launched at Stanford University by co-founders Ted Solomon and Ashton Cofer in summer of 2021.

The "founding story" from the official Fizz website stated the app came from a need for communication in 2020: "we...noticed a lack of connection and authenticity on a campus grappling with covid restrictions."

The app's original name was going to be "Buzz" for the instantaneous, anonymous communication that would happen between campus peers. While the initial name did not stick, the app's logo maintains its Bee mascot.

see FIZZ—page 2



ZACH PETROFF | OPINIONS EDITOR

On the eighth floor of the parking garage, there are several parking spaces reserved for incoming students. Ironically, there is talk of reinstating the pre-Covid policy that would deny parking passes to first-year students who live on campus.

ZACH PETROFF
opinions editor

According to the Duquesne University Office of Institutional Research, there were 8,128 undergraduate and graduate students in the fall.

And there were just over 3,000 parking spaces on campus.

Next fall, the parking situation might look a little different.

Duquesne is proposing revoking the ability for on-campus first-year students to purchase a university parking pass. This policy would return freshmen parking privileges to the university's pre-Covid rules. With this decision, Duquesne hopes to increase commuter parking and decrease traffic congestion.

As reported in the Duke on Dec. 1, Duquesne's 2021-2031 Institutional Masterplan covers topics such as increasing multimodal transportation options for students, faculty and staff in order to reduce use of single occupant vehicles (SOVs) for both employees and students.

The goal is to reduce employee SOVs from 80.2% to 60%, while reducing student SOVs from 39.9% to 30%.

While the topic of freshmen

parking passes was not discussed in the 150-page report, alternatives to SOVs who would not require the use of Duquesne's on-campus parking were prioritized in the report such as a further implementation of the city's public transit.

"The future implementation of the Bus Rapid Transit system will allow students to access new BRT stops on Forbes and Fifth to easily navigate between Duquesne, Downtown and Oakland for their retail shopping and entertainment needs," the report read.

Parking has remained a major concern for the university in past years.

"The parking office maintains a running record of occupancy in order to operate the parking facilities on campus. Full occupancy is exceedingly rare," said university spokesperson Gabriel Welsch. "Those times when we anticipate heavy parking use, the university has means to address demand, including special remote work options for the day."

In order to address demand, the university is considering the possibility of removing the ability of on-campus freshmen to purchase parking passes.

"The university is still exploring solutions regarding parking permits for first-year students living on campus; those first-year students who commute will be able to park, per existing policies," Welsch said.

Timothy Lewis, director of commuter affairs, said in an email that during the fall semester, 4,761 students — 59% of the university's total enrollment — were commuters. Of that number, 1,947 commuters were undergraduates, which accounts for 38% of the undergraduate population.

Students and staff seem to be eager to find any solution to alleviate parking issues going forward. The proposed initiative is being met with both skepticism and hope.

Lauren Zelnis, senior international relations student, commutes from her home 20 minutes from campus everyday.

"Is taking away parking passes really what needs revamped with the parking situation on campus?" she said.

The real issue, for Zelnis, is the cost of the parking pass.

"Just this semester was \$825 for me. I don't think it's fair to not allow freshmen to have their cars on campus; I lived on cam-

pus but still had my car for my freshman and sophomore years, and it was vital to me."

Abbey Wright, freshman in the nursing program, is a commuter student who thinks it is a bad idea to bump first year on campus students off the parking pass eligibility.

"They should just expand their parking," Wright said. "Why pay for expensive housing when you live close?"

Kim Sudgan, a senior and international relations major, believes that a change in the current parking pass rules would be beneficial to her overall experience with parking on campus.

"If they remain restricted to remaining in the dorms, I think going back to the pre-covid ways of not allowing them to obtain parking passes should be enforced, with exceptions obviously," Sudgan said. "I do feel it would help parking."

Anna Rutkowski, a graduate assistant for the Office of Commuter Affairs, thinks there could be benefits to the proposal.

see PARKING—page 2

POLICE BRIEFS

Monday, Jan. 9-

Graffiti vandalism was discovered mid-afternoon by campus police on the front entrance door of the Duquesne Ghana Building, 824 Fifth Avenue.

EMAIL TIPS

We want your input!

The Duke's news section would love 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 Editor-in-Chief Luke Henne at hennel@duq.edu.

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from FIZZ— page 1

Fizz's initial launch at Stanford University succeeded, and their website states that over 80% of the university's undergrads had signed up for Fizz.

"We observed how the community came together - events became more inclusive, real-time information was readily available, and relationships were born in the direct messages," the founding story said.

Since then, the app has spread to schools from coast to coast, and Duquesne is Fizz's latest addition to their growing list of universities.

According to a TechCrunch, an economic technology website, Fizz hopes for 1,000 campuses on their platform by the end of 2023.

How it works

Not just anyone can join Duquesne's Fizz community.

Fizz's design makes the app exclusive to each school it launches at. When it opens to a Twitter-like feed homepage, only Duquesne students can see the Duquesne Fizz posts, only Stanford students can see Stanford posts and so on.

Duquesne students must verify their student email before joining the app, restricting Fizz communities to their respective universities.

Before a user completes signing up for the app, Fizz prompts them with a message claiming no affiliation with the actual university.

The disclaimer reads, "You are always anonymous on Fizz, and nothing you post will be linked back to Duquesne."

The exclusivity of each Fizz community just makes sense, according to Duquesne Fizz ambassador, junior Kira Hutton. The Fizz posts and memes are almost entirely "specific to Duquesne," she said.

"If another student from another university were to log on, they wouldn't [understand]," Hutton said.

However, if a student finds something on the Fizz app exceptionally funny, there is a "share" option that allows their post to be reshared on other social media platforms that would be visible to all their followers—not just Duquesne students.

Once posted, a Fizz receives "Fizz-ups" or "Fizz-downs." Fizz-downs



EMMA POLEN | NEWS EDITOR

Alex Blunk (left) and Olivia Pezich (right) promote the Fizz app.

subtract from the total number of upvotes, which means some posts on the app have received a negative number of votes if there were more downvotes than upvotes.

So far, Duquesne students have had mixed responses to their newest social media stage.

"I'm enjoying it a lot," Sammi Heiser, sophomore business student, said. "I wasn't sure how much I would like it but it's actually really fun. I like how you can share memes on it."

Other students are less enthusiastic toward Duquesne's newest social media platform.

"I think it's stupid," said Hannah Goss, senior English major. "I don't think there's any use for it."

How did Fizz do it?

Fizz's successful launch at Duquesne is a result of a few key elements that began last semester.

First, the Fizz corporation reached out to Duquesne students through LinkedIn to look for potential moderators.

Lauren Terry, a junior digital marketing major, answered the LinkedIn message and was recruited as a Fizz app moderator before the app's January launch.

"As a moderator, they wanted me to...read through the app, making sure that things were filtered and not obscene," she said.

While other similar anonymous posting apps, like YikYak, may have 15 moderators for the whole app, Fizz has at least 15 moderators for Duquesne University alone, Terry said.

"Then, a couple of weeks ago, they started preparing us for the launch," Terry said. "They were

asking us to talk to our friends, to try and get them to join this one GroupMe."

This "word-of-mouth" marketing worked for Fizz, because by launch day, they had several ambassadors to slide pamphlets under students' dorm doors on campus.

Other ambassadors sat at a table in the Student Union handing out free donuts to students who downloaded the Fizz app. By reposting a Fizz on the app, students received a free bucket hat at the table.

Alex Blunk, junior health science major, promoted Fizz in the Union for six hours on launch day. "The app is really funny," she said.

Her position as a Duquesne Fizz ambassador came from a suggestion from a friend. Now, she is paid by the company for promoting the app during organized times like the table in the Union, or on social media.

Duquesne Fizz ambassador Kira Hutton called the Fizz app a "little community" where students can post about "anything and everything."

Hutton believes the draw of the Fizz app is the ability for students to post their thoughts freely.

"It's all anonymous," she said. "Sometimes you don't want people to know [it's you]."

Like any other organization that hopes to promote directly to students from campus, Fizz must follow university guidelines. And so far, Fizz has been questionable in this regard.

"Any student group asking to distribute flyers or information must have it approved in the Office of Residence Life," said Daniel Cognella, associate director of the Office of Residence Life.

On launch day, Jan. 5, many Duquesne students residing in campus dorms woke up to a Fizz pamphlet slid under their door.

"Fizz did not have permission to distribute their information in the Residence Halls," said Cognella.

In addition to their personable marketing tactics, Fizz offered all students \$15 on launch day for sharing a positive post about the app to their own social media.

A success in marketing

Dr. Sarah DeIuliis, a professor of integrated marketing communication at Duquesne, provided an inside perspective on what made Fizz's marketing tactics so successful—if a little unorthodox.

The personal touch with sliding pamphlets under students' doors and the "face-to-face" interaction in the Union on launch day helped get Fizz "in front of their audience," DeIuliis said, even though the app is based out of California.

Once the word spread about Fizz from one student to another, it didn't stop.

"We rely so much on word-of-mouth marketing because of that trust element," DeIuliis said. "If you have a good experience with the app, and you say that to somebody that you know and trust, then it's going to prompt them to at least try it out. And then it's the app's job to keep you there."

What the future holds

While their rule-following abilities are questionable, there is no doubt that Fizz has become a university sensation.

Terry shared how her friends have already admitted they're addicted to Fizz, some spending two hours on the app.

Fizz offers many options for students to join the conversation. A few of the categories they can choose to Fizz about are questions, confessions, and PSA's.

One way Terry is eager to see the app used is for invitations to campus and private events, especially for freshmen who might not yet be part of groups on campus.

"Freshman year, my friends and I would be hanging out in our dorm and we would want to go somewhere," she said. "This would have been so useful to actually know where to go on the weekends and know what to do."

Parking for freshmen causing questions

from PARKING— page 1

"I feel like [restricting the purchase of passes] could be a good thing for first-year resident students because it kind of forces them to get more involved," Rutkowski said. "So they don't just wake up, go to class, go to bed or leave school and do nothing, be-

cause by sophomore year you feel empty and unfulfilled."

Rutkowski also mentioned safety as another reason the university should consider limiting passes to first-year, on-campus students, citing how "messy it has been on [the] South Side recently."



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ZACH PETROFF | OPINIONS EDITOR

The Forbes Ave. parking garage parks many parking pass holders.

Great Scott! Back to the Foodture 3 travels through time to Uptown



PETER BOETTGER | LAYOUT/MULTIMEDIA EDITOR

Eddie and Chef Angel Magwood pose in front of the entrance to their second Back to the Foodture location at 1014 Fifth Ave. across from PPG Paints Arena.

ISABELLA ABBOTT
features editor

The DeLorean needs to take one last trip to the future for Fifth Avenue's newest restaurant, Back to the Foodture.

Located at 1014 Fifth Ave., the bright lights, movie posters, painted cartoon walls and retro games entice and welcome people in, as do the delightful and kind owners who treat every customer

with a smile.

Eddie and Chef Angel Magwood decided to open their second "Back to the Future" themed restaurant after success at their first location in the South Side, which opened back in May of 2021. Eddie says they originally opened because of his wife.

"I actually had to force her into this," Eddie said. "This restaurant is actually supposed to be for my wife, I'm just here as a background

but she actually runs everything, does all the work. This was her."

"I told her she comes from a long line of cooks...so I said, 'Hey listen, stop working with somebody, be an entrepreneur. You have a God-given talent, go for it,'" he said.

Although his wife had the idea, Eddie came up with the name and theme of the popular restaurant.

"I've always wanted to do a restaurant museum since I was probably 8 to 10 years old, and Back to the Future was one of my favorite movies so I did a play on words. I wanted to do Back To The Foodture," Eddie said. "Eventually we're going to get to the point where when you come in here it's going to look like the Carnegie museum, there's going to be statues everywhere—dinosaur bones and stuff like that."

And with help and inspiration from the movie, the two of them did just that by basing their menu items on characters and props from the classic science fiction film.

Some of these names include the McFly burger (pepper jack cheese, tomato, lettuce, sliced buffalo chips, ranch buffalo sauce), the Doc Brown burger (mozzarella, tomato, lettuce, salt & vinegar chips, honey mustard) and the Clocktower salad (lettuce, shredded parm and crou-

tons).

Not only do they have menu items based on the classic movie, but they also took ideas from their four children.

One of these ideas is from their youngest child in the Lil Bug grilled cheese burger. The Lil Bug is a massive burger that contains two grilled cheese sandwiches, one piece of Texas toast, two patties, two eggs, two pieces of bacon and two pieces of cheese with extra layers of tomatoes and lettuce and their mayo ketchup sauce.

"The baby always gives me the biggest ideas and his burger is probably right now since we opened the biggest seller," Angel said. "He came and said, 'Mom I want a burger with grilled cheese on it,' and that's his burger."

"Really we put our heart and our soul in this whole restaurant," Angel said. "So even the menu is us our family, our kids."

The family isn't seen just through the menu, but they are also visually represented on their timeline photo wall, which runs across the side of the restaurant above their booth tables. The timeline also includes pictures from different current events and movies from the years.

"The timeline goes from 1900 all the way to 2000," Angel said. "So my great-great-grandmother, she had a restaurant in the Hill District, her picture of her and the restaurant was there."

"And then we took pictures of Eddie and myself...like we were babies," Angel said. "When they get older and bring their kids, [they can say] 'This is what your mom used to look like, this is what your dad used to look like. We want to keep the whole family atmosphere. Our thing is food, family, fun so that's what we strive for.'"

Anyone wanting to relive their past or be introduced to brilliant movie references is encouraged to go in and enjoy an array of delicious burgers and wings paired with games like pinball and air hockey. Families can even bring their kids to the kid section for Nickelodeon cartoons and tons of coloring entertainment.

If there are any huge fans of "Back to the Future," don't worry. They run it on a big screen all day long.

During their visit, guests can meet Eddie and Angel and try their Angel's Revenge hot sauce and Angel Dust seasoning. The couple pledges to treat everyone who walks in like family.

"We come up with some crazy outrageous burger ideas, different salad ideas, we try to suit something for everyone," Angel said. "We want you to have a really good time and make this another home."

Back to the Foodture on Fifth is open Sunday to Saturday from 12 p.m. to 8 p.m. Follow their Instagram, Twitter or Facebook for menu and activity updates.



PETER BOETTGER | LAYOUT/MULTIMEDIA EDITOR

Back to the Foodture incorporates old games into their retro restaurant.



PETER BOETTGER | LAYOUT/MULTIMEDIA EDITOR

Back to the Foodture serves up delicious burgers, but also a variety of delectable sides, like these mozzarella sticks.



Writers & Photographers needed for the Duke

Contact our editor-in-chief hennel@duq.edu

WBB handles St. Bonaventure in A-10 win

LUKE HENNE
editor-in-chief

The Duquesne women's basketball team responded from Sunday's 16-point road loss at George Mason by holding St. Bonaventure to just 11 first-half points en route to a 69-38 win at UPMC Cooper Fieldhouse on Wednesday.

The Dukes never trailed in the 31-point

rebounds, said that the team was "really focusing" on playing consistently at the defensive end. She added that they were excited to have limited St. Bonaventure's offensive output, particularly in the game's first two quarters.

"I think our mindset was just, no matter how things are going on offense, our defense is the one thing that we can keep consistent," Hamilton said. "Playing hard,

she'd shot the ball over the last few games. She also credited her teammates for finding her wide open so frequently.

Hamilton, who dished out three of the team's 15 assists, stressed the importance of keeping the ball moving and getting it into Bernard's hands.

"I think that's one of the best parts about our offense, is that we can really get everyone involved," Hamilton said. "It's an equal-opportunity offense. Whoever's the hot hand that night, we're going to find them.

"Nae said she was disappointed in her last few games, but I think that she's been playing great. I think that it's really important for us down the stretch, in these conference games, to utilize Nae. She's our hidden weapon."

Duquesne Head Coach Dan Burt described Bernard as "arguably the hardest-working player" that he's ever coached.

"Nae is always here in the gym and working really hard on her game," Burt said. "She's incredibly skilled. Every time she shoots the ball, you think it's going to go in. Tonight, she's 50% from the 3-point line, 50% from the field.

"Teams are keying on Tess Myers so much that Nae is getting that second defender, and she's finding open looks. As we move forward, and she continues to shoot the ball well, it's going to be a situation where teams probably are going to have to pick their poison between Nae and Tess Myers."

Megan McConnell also posted a double-double with 12 points and 10 rebounds, while also posting game highs in both assists (five) and steals (four). Precious Johnson also grabbed 10 boards for the Dukes in the victory.

Burt also said that after Sunday's contest, he was happy to see the way in which his team responded, both during practice and during game action.

"What we were really challenging our team to do, more than anything, is to play with a sense of urgency, a sense of desperation," Burt said. "Today, and yesterday, after a very poor performance in our last game, our sense of urgency was much different in practice.

"At the end of the shootaround today, which was our best practice that we've had in a couple of years, I said, 'You guys have achieved it. Now you have to bottle it and do it in a game.' Now, we have to do it again on Saturday, and going forward."

Wednesday's win was Duquesne's 12th of the season, surpassing the total of 11 wins from a season ago.

The Dukes will return to action on Saturday, when they travel to the Bronx borough of New York for a date with Fordham.



DYLAN FISTER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Duquesne's Naele Bernard (No. 11) guards St. Bonaventure's Kaitlyn Parker (No. 22) during Wednesday's contest at UPMC Cooper Fieldhouse. Bernard scored a game-high 26 points.

win, holding a 20-5 lead at the end of the first quarter and a 36-11 lead at halftime. The Bonnies shot just 4-of-34 (11.8%) from the field in the first half, digging themselves into a hole that they'd be unable to recover from.

Duquesne's Amaya Hamilton, who posted a double-double with 12 points and 13

playing smart, knowing the scout and playing together. When shots aren't falling, as long as our defense is consistent, that's what's going to help us win games."

Naele Bernard, who posted a career-high 26 points for Duquesne in the victory, said that her performance "means a lot," adding that she wasn't happy with the way



PETER BOETTGER | LAYOUT/MULTIMEDIA EDITOR
Tess Myers (right) scored 6 points and added six rebounds in Duquesne's 69-38 win.

MBB splits first two games of road trip

SPENCER THOMAS
staff writer

Having played just two road games all season, Duquesne entered a three-game road trip around the Atlantic 10 Conference by splitting contests with Richmond and Saint Joseph's, punctuated by RJ Gunn's two best performances in a Duquesne uniform.

On Saturday, the Dukes traveled to Richmond to face the Spiders, the reigning conference champions.

The two teams battled through a close contest for the first 10 minutes, but Duquesne was able to break the game open with a torrid shooting streak late in the first half. The team connected on 12-straight shots, as well as nine consecutive 3-pointers, leading by as many as 22 with just under 4 minutes until halftime.

Richmond liked to drift inside on defense, giving the Dukes plenty of uncontested shots from long range. Duquesne favored its odds against that game plan, particularly Gunn, who shot 4-of-8 from beyond the arc on the way to a season-best 16-point game.

However, Richmond was able to find its legs, and climb back to within 15 before halftime. The Spiders continued their momentum after the break, and were able to shut

down the Dukes' offense. Duquesne emerged from a 5-minute scoring drought with their lead down to just 2 points less than 10 minutes into the second half. Richmond leveled the game at 56 moments later, bringing the sellout crowd of over 7,000 fans to a frenzy.

Duquesne Head Coach Keith Dambrot was then able to reinvigorate his squad and, despite blowing a 25-point lead, they went blow-for-blow with the Spiders until the final horn.

Tevin Brewer connected on a close-range shot with 21 seconds remaining, giving the Dukes a 73-72 lead. Accompanying a season-high eight assists, Brewer had his best night as a Duke within his grasp.

But, on the ensuing possession, Richmond swung a pass to star guard Tyler Burton, who connected on a 3-pointer with 7 seconds to go.

Brewer and Kareem Rozier each missed shots at the buzzer, and the Dukes lost their tangle with the Spiders 75-73.

After a dramatic and disheartening loss in Richmond, Duquesne bounced back to beat Saint Joseph's 92-80 on Wednesday. Gunn was locked and loaded from the opening tip, and rode his hot hand to a perfect first-half performance. He shot 7-of-7 from the field, 4-of-4 from beyond the arc and entered the locker room at halftime having scored 19

points, already eclipsing the season-best performance he had achieved just four days prior.

The Dukes flew away from the Hawks with another offensive assault in the first half. They entered the second half with a 60-44 lead. They continued to pick the Hawks apart with rapid passing until an open look emerged. They carried a 16-12 advantage in the assist column into the half and finished with a 24-19 mark in the category.

The fast-paced and high-scoring game enabled Dambrot to employ the depth on his bench, with nine different players scoring. Brewer was the only scoreless Duke, but was tied with Rozier for a team-best six assists.

Duquesne once again slowed down in the second half, but was still able to disrupt Saint Joseph's offensive cohesiveness. Gunn finished with 26 points. Joe Reece added 18 points of his own, while Dae Dae Grant (17) and Jimmy Clark III (11) also scored in double figures for the Dukes.

Gunn's emergence has come in the wake of an empty slot in the starting lineup. Forward Tre Williams missed both games with an ankle injury, which he suffered last week in practice.

Duquesne will play one more road game Wednesday against St. Bonaventure before

returning to UPMC Cooper Fieldhouse to take on Fordham on Jan. 21.



PETER BOETTGER | LAYOUT/MULTIMEDIA EDITOR
Rodney Gunn Jr. — pictured here on Jan. 4 — scored 26 points in Wednesday's win, the highest mark of his Duquesne career.

NFL gears up for star-studded postseason

JACK MORGAN
staff writer

After a 2022 NFL regular season filled with storylines and drama, 14 teams remain alive in their pursuit of a Super Bowl title. Postseason action kicks off Saturday during the league's Super Wild Card Weekend, and there's plenty of reasons to watch the league's best teams and brightest stars over the course of the next month-plus.

American Football Conference

(5) *Los Angeles Chargers (10-7) at (4) Jacksonville Jaguars (9-8)*
(Saturday, 8:15 p.m.)



COURTESY OF WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Patrick Mahomes is looking to help the Chiefs win their second Super Bowl title in four seasons.

This game is a toss-up. The Chargers have looked very good to end the season. After being 6-6 at one point, they reeled off four-straight wins to secure a postseason berth for the first time since 2018. Justin Herbert has also come on strong to end the year. He finished the regular season with 4,739 passing yards, 25 touchdowns and only 10 interceptions. The anchor of Los Angeles' defense is Derwin James Jr. Across just 14 games, he had two intercep-



COURTESY OF WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Jalen Hurts led the 14-3 Philadelphia Eagles to the NFC's top seed in the 2022-23 postseason.

tions, four sacks and 115 total tackles. He will have to continue his amazing campaign this Saturday to give his team a chance at moving on.

As for the Jaguars, they will host this game as a result of being the AFC South winner. At 9-8, they have a worse record, but are one of the league's hottest teams. They've won five games in a row, including a thrilling victory over the Tennessee Titans in a win-and-in scenario last week. Jacksonville linebacker Josh Allen forced a fumble and ran it back for what would be the game-winning and division-clinching touchdown with just 2:51 left in the game. The Jaguars have tons of momentum, and the Chargers will have their hands full.

(7) *Miami Dolphins (9-8) at (2) Buffalo Bills (13-3)*
(Sunday, 1 p.m.)

The Dolphins are one of the most-talented teams in the NFL. That is, when they are healthy. Star quarterback Tua Tagovailoa is out in this contest. He came onto the scene in his third season, throwing for 3,548 yards and 25 touchdowns. However, he's also suffered a back injury and two concussions, all of which were scary to watch and have sparked a lively debate regarding the state of the league and how safe football is.

The Dolphins will have to rely on Teddy Bridgewater or Skylar Thompson in his place, and the Bills will surely be licking their chops. Quarterback Josh Allen has put together another superb season, throwing for 4,283 yards and 35 touchdowns. Buffalo's aerial attack is arguably the best in the entire league.

The Bills love to sling it across the field whenever they can. Stefon Diggs is a guy that seems to be on the receiving end of these long balls from Allen quite often. Diggs accumulated upward of 1,000 yards for the fifth-straight year, and Gabe Davis has also been a solid secondary receiver. The Bills defense has been solid, and will be inspired to win it all for teammate Damar Hamlin, who is still recovering after suffering from cardiac arrest Jan. 2. This is a team with a chip on its shoulder

after having been knocked out by the Kansas City Chiefs in back-to-back seasons.

(6) *Baltimore Ravens (10-7) at (3) Cincinnati Bengals (12-4)*
(Sunday, 8:15 p.m.)

Baltimore is at a crossroads right now. Quarterback Lamar Jackson is nearing the end of his contract, and tensions are high. He has been out for over a month while dealing with a sprained knee. His return was delayed this past week after his knee started swelling up again. Last week, they were bullied by the Bengals 27-16 at Paycor Stadium, which is where the two squads will meet again on Sunday. If the Ravens have any shot, they'll likely need their franchise quarterback to return in time for Sunday's game.

As for the Bengals, their AFC title defense begins at home. After a 4-4 start to the campaign, the Super Bowl runner-up has won eight games in a row, due in large part to the lethal offensive connection between quarterback Joe Burrow and wide receiver Ja'Marr Chase. Burrow threw for 4,475 yards, 35 touchdowns and achieved a 100.8 passer rating, while Chase snagged 87 passes for 1,046 yards and nine touchdowns. Cincinnati is shaping up to be a scary team to go against for the second-consecutive postseason.

Bye: (1) Kansas City Chiefs (14-3); will play lowest-remaining seed in Divisional Round

For the Chiefs, it's the same cast of main characters, minus wide receiver Tyreek Hill this time around. Head Coach Andy Reid, quarterback Patrick Mahomes and tight end Travis Kelce will look to grab their second Super Bowl title together.

National Football Conference

(7) *Seattle Seahawks (9-8) at (2) San Francisco 49ers (13-4)*
(Saturday, 4:30 p.m.)

The Seahawks came into this season with no expectations whatsoever. After trading away franchise quarterback Russell Wilson, they turned to Geno Smith to guide them through the 2022 campaign. Smith was the right man for the job, throwing for 4,282 yards and 30 touchdowns. Expected to be one of the league's worst teams entering this season, Seattle is clearly not a team that should be taken lightly.

The 49ers have been the hottest team in football since Week 8, winning 10-straight games to close out the regular season. They're led by quarterback Brock Purdy, a third-stringer filling in after season-ending injuries to both Trey Lance and Jimmy Garoppolo. Alongside Purdy are wide receiver Deebo Samuel and running back Christian McCaffrey, who have helped contribute to San Francisco's dominance. San Francisco has all the pieces to make a deep postseason run.

(6) *New York Giants (9-7-1) at (3) Minnesota Vikings (13-4)*
(Sunday, 4:30 p.m.)

The Giants went from one of the worst teams in the NFL in 2021 (4-13) to one of the best in 2022. Give first-year Head Coach Brian Daboll credit where it's due. New York played Minnesota on Christmas Eve, and it took a 61-yard field goal from Vikings kicker Greg Joseph as time expired to put the Giants away. New York is a sneaky opponent for any NFC contender.

The Vikings are one of the most-interesting teams in the league. Their offense is prolific, featuring Pro Bowlers like quarterback Kirk Cousins, wide receivers Justin Jefferson and Adam Thielen, running back Dalvin Cook and tight end T.J. Hockenson. While offensive talent is in abundance, Minnesota's defense allowed the second-most yards in the entire league this season. Since the defense can't be depended on, the Vikings' offense will need to show up in order for them to have a shot.

(5) *Dallas Cowboys (12-5) at (4) Tampa Bay Buccaneers (8-9)*
(Monday, 8:15 p.m.)

The Cowboys seem to do this so frequently. They look impressive in the regular season, only to have an early exit come postseason time. Will this year be different? Quarterback Dak Prescott boasts just a 1-3 postseason record in his career, and he threw a league-high-tying 15 interceptions this season. If Dallas has any shot, the tide will need to turn quickly.

For the Buccaneers, this was probably the worst matchup possible. The Giants and Seahawks pale in comparison to the Cowboys in terms of talent. However, everyone pales in comparison to the legend of Tom Brady. He owns the playoffs, and you can never count him out. Monday night could be the end of a storybook career, but Brady is someone that always gives his team a shot to win.

Bye: (1) Philadelphia Eagles (14-3); will play lowest-remaining seed in Divisional Round

The Eagles are one of the most-complete teams in the NFC, led by second-year Head Coach Nick Sirianni and MVP-caliber quarterback Jalen Hurts. Although Philadelphia lost back-to-back games in his absence during Week 16 and Week 17, they lost just one contest the entire season with Hurts under center.

Prediction

The Eagles are playing like the best team in the NFC. However, the playoffs are single-elimination, and anything can happen. The 49ers are the hottest team in football right now, and they look unstoppable. I think the Eagles and 49ers meet in the NFC Championship Game, where San Francisco narrowly edges Philadelphia on the road.

The Bills will represent the AFC in the Super Bowl. Buffalo will get its revenge on Kansas City in the AFC Championship Game.

In the title game, the Bills will get the best of the 49ers en route to lifting the Vince Lombardi Trophy for the first time in franchise history.

Disco Sunday Disco: ‘The hug we didn’t know we need’

EMILY FRITZ
a&e editor

The other side of the Bloomfield Bridge was bumping with groovy disco-funk this past Sunday at Trace Brewing, where they hosted their fourth outdoor “Disco Sunday Disco” dance party event. Patrons danced and jived with a hot drink or beer in hand, while they mingled around the glow of warm and inviting fire pits.

The idea originated from Trace regular, DJ Jarrett Tebbets. Head of Marketing & Guest Experience Aadam Soorma explained, “The vision for Disco Sunday Disco was basically a chill, welcoming, inclusive outdoor disco in our courtyard-style beer garden — that felt like a really nice fit to end the weekend on.”

With their three regular DJ’s booked out on Fridays and Saturdays, “Sunday jumped out at us as a great day to throw a free outdoor disco at Trace to mark the ‘end of the weekend with a life affirming, rejuvenating disco party.’”

“There’s always been a void when it comes to events on Sundays in Pittsburgh and it’s [a] rarity when you come across a good, consistent daytime open air dance party...and that’s where it all starts,” Tebbets said.

“For me, disco is the perfect vessel to carry us into a new week. It’s the hug we [don’t] know we need until it wraps itself around you and says thank you for being you.”

Tebbets, a DJ of over a decade, prefers his “Disco/Italo/Funk/Boogie/House/Synth/Rarities/Underground sound” as opposed to the mainstream pop of today.

Disco is a genre that doesn’t get enough attention, according to Tebbets, but when it does, “there’s a group of strangers dancing to music they’ve likely never heard before and loving life. For those five hours, everything just feels right. I joke sometimes that when it’s all clicking, I don’t pick the records, they pick me.”

From 3 p.m. until close, the beer garden was full of people who were enjoying the last bliss-



DJ Pretty Tony plays his set for an excited crowd during Sunday's outdoor disco dance event.

COURTESY OF JARRETT TEBBETS

ful hours of their weekend. New friends, old friends and four-legged dog friends were all gathered to enjoy the beer, the cocktails, the mocktails and the food from Los Gallitos’ food truck. The colder weather didn’t seem to turn anyone away, especially with enough special edition hot todies and Irish coffee to go around.

“When Jarrett proposed throwing the party in the colder months, we were like ‘Sure! Let’s give it a try!’ Our taproom manager, Katie Rado, worked with our head of coffee, Joe Burns, to come up with a couple of hot cocktail options...so we could offer some warm drinks to keep folks grooving outside in the cold, and we keep our fire pits ripping as well. We added a second fire pit, also thanks to Jarrett, and just try to keep enough firewood on hand so the fires are going strong all through the night.”

Trace Brewing is still a relatively young business, opening in

December of 2020 as a take-out only venue. It wasn’t until several months later that they were able to invite patrons into their space for full table, bar and cafe service.

Unlike the traditional brewery space, Trace offers cafe items between 8 a.m. and 3 p.m. in addition to non-alcoholic beverages in order to accommodate a wider variety of patrons.

“Folks under legal drinking age are welcome to enjoy Trace and order coffee, tea, soda, etc. Additionally, folks in the Muslim community, folks who are pregnant or folks who simply don’t drink alcohol can always come by and enjoy our space. The morning vibe here mimics a cafe or coffee shop.”

Inclusivity is a driving force in all aspects of the Trace brand. The staff is passionate about creating a safe space for members of the LGBTQ+, people of varying religions and all walks of life.

“The Disco Sunday Disco

crowd we attract has been really lovely — people of color, folks in the queer community, younger folks, nonbinary folks — honestly it feels different than what some might consider the more conventional ‘brewery crowd,’ and that’s perfectly fine with us.”

For those looking to join the fun, Trace Brewing is planning to release more details about their next Disco Sunday Disco in the coming weeks.

“It will most definitely be on a Sunday and likely in February. That’s all I can say for now,” Soorma said.

Until then, Trace will be hosting a free punk-rock show featuring [Expletive] yeah, Dinosaurs! this Saturday night at 8:30 p.m. as well as their usual festivals and parties in the warmer months like Slappers N Bangers, a monthly hip hop-RNB-trap party, and the annual Bloomfield Pride festival.

CAMPUS EVENTS

Back to School Poodle Bash!
Jan. 12 @ 9 p.m.

Join the ladies of SGRho for painting, food and music in the NiteSpot. Supplies limited.

Student Organization Appreciation Game: WHITEOUT!
Jan. 14 @ 6:15 p.m.

Watch the Dukes' club hockey team take on Oakland at the Alpha Ice Complex. Tickets are \$5 in the Res Life office and guarantees a free T-shirt.

Spring Expo
Jan. 17 & 18 @ 11 a.m.

Get Involved! Want to join a student organization? Stop by our table on the 2nd floor of the Union.

Movie Night
Jan. 18 @ 6 p.m.

Join Psi Chi, psychology majors and psychology graduate students to watch a psych-related movie!

EMILY'S EPIPHANIES

Romanticize Winter

With the euphoria of the new semester winding down, it can feel like a drudge knowing that we have another round of 16-week coursework ahead of us.

If you find yourself struggling to enjoy your usual routine or to try something new, pretend you are the main character in your own coming-of-age film.

Dress up for yourself. Get your favorite warm drink and find your new favorite study nook. Cultivate a vibe that makes you feel like you again.

Settling into another semester doesn't have to feel so heavy. Romanticize studying like you're the next Elle Woods or training for your next race or match like you're Rocky Balboa.

Being cooped up in the same part of your dorm is really cozy but it's easy to fall into the trap of doom scrolling on social media or taking another nap after you've remade your blanket burrito.

Winter is a tricky season to overcome, but if you let it pass you by, you'll be upset when the spring brings bugs back and you'll wish for the cold again.
— Emily Fritz

Aquarius

Platform shoes and bell bottoms but also horned helmets and swords

Pisces

Why would I pitch a horse???
Why would I itch a horse???

Aries

I call it "hobo chic"

Taurus

I too mark my territory with tears.

Gemini

Are they a car? No
Are they a mouse? No
They're a frog!!!!

Cancer

Feminism might not hate men, but I sure do.

Leo

If you're a worm, you sleep in late.

Virgo

How does one even get bronchitis?

Libra

MILK DAY???
Oh, MLK day...

Scorpio

i want 50 spicy nuggets

Sagittarius

I'd like to shuffle off this mortal coil.

Capricorn

I was pretty turnt and didn't take many photos...#dang

Red Masquers trounces 24-hour playwriting challenge

NICHOLAS ZOTOS

social media/ads manager

Lights, camera, action! On Saturday, Jan. 7, the Red Masquers performed a series of one-act plays that were full of comedy and intrigue.

The Red Masquers, the oldest amateur theater company in Pittsburgh, is a student performing arts organization within Duquesne. Last weekend, the organization hosted its annual Play in a Day series where students are given 24 hours to write, create a soundtrack for, choreograph and even memorize short performances based on a random prop and setting given to each writer at the start of the 24-hour period.

"This is a tradition we have within the organization. The performers were given their assignments at 8 p.m. on Friday, and their plays began the next day. Having the students compose an entire act is extremely difficult," said Susan Betten, the vice president and stage manager of the Red Masquers.

Despite the time constraint, the performers rose to the challenge. Each act was about 20 minutes in length, and the students spent most of the day extensively preparing for their acts with memorization and staging.

"I wanted to do Play in a Day last

semester. This was so fun. I enjoy performing and having fun while doing improv," said Ethan Nafus, a junior psychology major.

What made Play in a Day especially unique from other productions put on by the theater group was not just the time constraint, but also the prompts assigned to each student writer.

"On Friday, each director pulled out two words from a hat and paired them together," explained Morgan Sandzimier, the assistant stage manager. "Each group received two unique words to base their acts on."

"The play is difficult. However, it is a cool way to get involved without being a theater major."

By pairing random words, students had to think outside the box to create their one-act plays. For example, graduate media student Travis Barkefelt's "Richard and Harry's Regular, Uneventful Hiking Trip" play featured a scooter (the random prop) and an airport (the random setting). These themes do not readily pair, but writers used their talents to create unique comedy based on their random words.

On Saturday at 8 p.m., 24 hours from the beginning of Play in a Day, the Red Masquers' writers, directors and actors were ready to perform their one-act plays.

The show lasted for approximately 45 minutes and over 30



The Red Masquers put on another set of successful one-act productions.

NICHOLAS ZOTOS | SOCIAL MEDIA/ADS MANAGER

people were in attendance.

"This is my 5th time producing, and I think this went really well," said Red Masquer alumna Jillian Lesaca, director of the one-act "A Nice Testament."

"The actors have been working really hard to learn their lines. As always, the show went great."

Peter Scarpino, senior history major, played Peter in the one-act "The Final Show." He reflect-

ed on his experience after the 24 hours was up.

"I am very tired. I had to wake up early. But this was worth it. This is my first time acting, and I really enjoyed the experience. I hope others become involved in the future," he said.

The Red Masquers have additional upcoming events. The next production this semester will be Mud, a three-person show with

themes of toxic relationships and underprivileged communities. "It opens Jan. 25th, so make sure to attend," Betten said.

Students are encouraged to join the Red Masquers. The organization is open to all undergraduates who are interested in theater arts. Interested students can join the organization by inquiring within the Mary Pappert School of Music.

'Emily in Paris' drops a season full of triangles and change

EMILY FRITZ

a&e editor

Warning: This article contains spoilers for viewers who are not up-to-date with the show.

Netflix's "Emily in Paris" has once again generated buzz, both good and bad, since its season 3 debut on Dec. 21. The show is well loved for its eccentric fashion, intertwining subplots, and the dreamy, romanticized French lifestyle that main character Emily Cooper (Lily Collins) has adopted.

Season 3 played out as a transitional narrative full of uncertainty and slow, but dynamic changes. At the end of the former season, **[SPOILERS]** Emily was faced with the decision to either stay loyal to her original boss and mentor Madeline (Kate Walsh), or to join the coup that her French coworkers had staged when they seceded from Emily's parent company to start their own firm.

As the name implies, she stays in Paris, but the tug-of-war over Emily's alignments remained as a stressful plot point for almost half of the season. The very pregnant and very American Madeline, was a perfect but insufferable foil for the posh and very French Sylvie (Philippine Leroy-

Beaulieu). What may have felt like an easy decision for viewers, was far drawn out by our leading lady, as she struggled between the moral obligations to stay true to her roots and the sexy and exciting allure of Paris as her new permanent home.

Abandoning the idea of returning to the States, Emily began to make more intentional and stereotypically French decisions, like prioritizing leisure over work and committing to a more serious romantic relationship.

In the past, the show has received backlash surrounding Emily's ignorance while navigating a foreign culture. Outside of the well-placed social faux-pas, she hadn't learned a lot of the French language or put it into practice in seasons 1 or 2. In season 3, the show begins to repair and integrate more successfully, despite their largely American, monolingual audience. This was a refreshing and much needed add-on as the show continues to build the notion that Emily may strive for dual citizenship in future seasons.

Although her residency seems to be more set in stone, her relationships in the season prove to be ever-evolving and increasingly chaotic.

The season 2 finale **[SPOILERS]** revealed love-interest Gabriel (Lucas Bravo) and his on-again-off-again girlfriend Camille (Camille Razat) had just moved in together, following a high stakes love triangle with Emily.

Although her relationship with Alfie (Lucien Laviscount) seemed to be developing naturally and positively, there was some tension and turmoil in their relationship during the early parts of the season. While the conflicts were a direct result of Emily's occupational obsession and less to do with Alfie himself, he was noticeably moved to the show's back burner.

His purposeful underdevelopment was a bit of a let down, as there was no obvious reason why they couldn't end up together and Gabriel had decided that he would be staying with Camille and focusing on his developing career. A new suitor arrived to Gabriel and Camille's relationship, which created an opening for Emily to express renewed interest for another slow-boil romance with Gabriel.

While the romantic tensions stayed consistent with seasons past, the Gabriel-Camille-Emily drama needs some time out of

the spotlight in order to stay interesting. A big driving point for former seasons was the idea of the French having secret (and not-so-secret) love affairs that allowed them to express their romantic and sexual needs more openly, as was shown with Sylvie.

Since the start of the show, audiences have gained new insight and deeper character development for roles like Sylvie, Mindy (Ashley Park), Luc (Bruno Gourey), and Julian (Samuel Arnold). While Emily receives a lot of love from viewers, sometimes she can come across as selfish, micromanaging or unaware of others. These characters help to drive her story along but also give us a break from the American marketer in Paris.

Park received more well-deserved recognition for her vocal talents this season in addition to finding Mindy in a love triangle of her own. Unfortunately for Emily, Mindy's romantic subplot took some shots at their coveted friendship.

Following season 2, the show received criticism for allowing a love interest to come between an otherwise very positive and strong female friendship. By the end of the season though,

[SPOILERS] Mindy and Emily are able to make amends and Mindy is able to set distinct boundaries with her partner about how he is expected to treat her loved ones. This was a fresh twist on typical and exhausting girl versus girl competition over something so silly as a romantic interest.

While the beginning of the season was almost painfully slow, the second half seemed to catch fire. **[SPOILERS]** The ghost of the Emily-Gabriel-Camille love triangle that had been drifting restlessly in the background became a raging poltergeist as Gabriel and Camille announce their engagement, Emily assertively confronts Camille about an affair and a shot-gun wedding is on the horizon.

While the ease of success, whether through marketing or Michelin stars, present in "Emily in Paris" remains questionable, for entertainment purposes, the show has put out another successful season. Overall, the newest installment wasn't a bust, but it was a long slow-burn that sets up a very interesting season 4. The debut date has not been released yet, but it is speculated to hit Netflix around Dec. of this year.

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“Life is trying
things to see
if they
work.”

RAY BRADBURY

You just read | Now tweet
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EDITORIAL
POLICY

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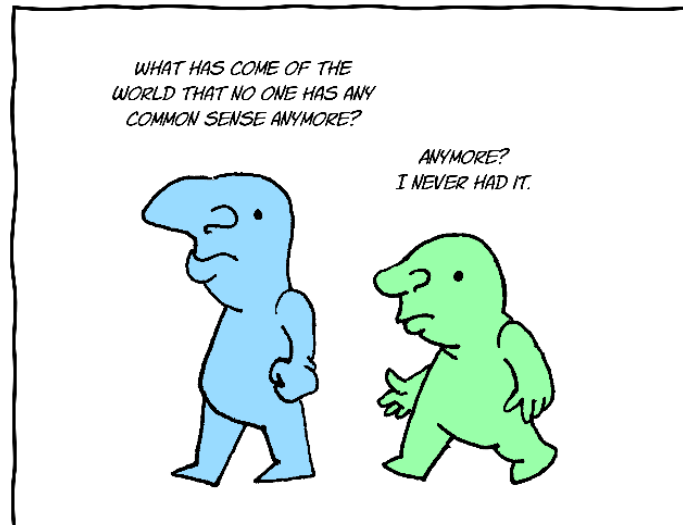
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BENJAMIN CRAWFORD | STAFF COMIC ARTIST

McCarthyism to take on whole
new meaning in 2023

“You just wait, Petroff, we’ll make a Republican out of you yet.”

Most of my adult life has been spent in fields dominated by conservative men. The military and car sales industry seem to lean so far right, they just may fall over from all that small government. So when the topic of politics comes up, my political ideology tends to go over as smoothly as Forbes Avenue outside of campus.

“You’ll grow out of it” “Wait until you’re in my tax bracket,” or my personal favorite “Why do you hate America?” would be hurled at me as if my political beliefs were some kind of avoidable but treatable medical condition.

It was not unusual for a person of influence or power to try to “talk some sense into me.” I once had a boss, who happened to be the owner of a multimillion-dollar company, tell me that Hillary Clinton killed over 100 people during her rise to political power.

That’s a lot of bloodshed for someone whose political power would plateau as Secretary of State.

When you hear something often enough, from so many people, you begin to believe it. Deep in my consciousness, I’ve waited for the moment where I shed my liberal skin and transform into a gun-loving-small-government-wanting-tax-evading phoenix.

However, these feeble-minded ideologues were not completely wrong. My political ideology, while not changed, has shifted. I have always respected leadership that reached across the aisle, believed in compromise and treated their political adversaries with a level of professional respect.

That was before the tea party and the alt-right burrowed itself in the Republican party.

My views on bipartisan efforts have soured. I no longer look at collaborative efforts as a sound strategy.

My naïveté has blinded me long enough, to not realize the

one concept that defines American politics.

It is only about winning.

It’s about dominating your opponent, whether it’s an election, fundraising or passing legislation. Politics is a ruthless war that few, in good conscience, can stomach.

It would be wise for the Democrats, especially the progressives, to take note of the recent events that occurred during the unprecedented 15 attempts Re-

against one another like a geriatric version of *Lord of the Flies*.

Unfamiliar with power, these alt-right politicians were able to fly close to the sun without getting burned and now they operate like they are fireproof.

And while they may not be fireproof, they sure are flame retardant.

While many see this as a republican party drifting apart and spiraling out of control, I see it as an uncompromising sect that will ignore precedent and modern decorum if it means they win.

And by win, I mean get whatever they want.

They don’t play by the rules because they don’t have to. They are rarely held accountable, often given a slap on the wrist and removed from committees that they weren’t going to have any pull in anyway. They are spoiled rich kids whose narcissistic personalities demand that they win.

They would be perfect as reality show stars, instead they’re doing the next closest thing.

They’re in D.C.

This, like the insurrection, should come as a surprise to no one. The writing wasn’t just on the wall, it was plastered on the ceiling and floor as well.

The opposing party will not play by the rules. They will do whatever it takes to win. These next two years will be filled with unrealistic debt ceiling demands, ridiculous defense budget negotiations, unrelenting investigations, constant hearings and government shutdowns.

They will burn the capitol down if it means a political victory. Literally.

Democrats should not be gloating. They should be sharpening their blades of war, using this time to prepare for an unruly house majority coupled with a right-leaning supreme court that will be pushing the upcoming agenda of the alt-right republicans.



ZACH PETROFF
opinions editor

publicans needed to choose a house majority leader.

I am not afforded the word count or the type of language I would like to use to describe the “Alt-right” members in congress. From Jim Jordan to Matt Gaetz, opportunists that if it were not for their influence and wealth, would likely be facing serious charges.

They are the worst type of people. They are loud, dumb and most importantly wrong.

Yet here they are, winning the political war.

Democrats can sit back and laugh at the ridiculousness that is going on as the Republicans, a party that has specialized in uniting on talking points since the Reagan administration, turn

STAFF
EDITORIALTwitter makes Brazil riots
look awfully familiar

Two years ago, the Jan. 6 insurrection took place at the U.S. Capitol following former president Donald Trump’s false accusations of widespread fraudulent votes that resulted in the Democratic win in 2020.

Just over two years later, Brazilian politics faced the same type of uprising after an election that left many supporters of the previous one-term, far-right president resentful.

The similarities between these two violent marches on government property are alarming, but one similarity in particular led the former presidents’ supporters to action: the digital platforms for the presidents themselves.

As soon as the Brazilian election results were revealed on Oct. 3, naming Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva president of Brazil, former president Bolsonaro took to his digital platforms to claim voting fraud and conspiracy claims that have been disproven.

However, despite the lack of evidence to justify Bolsonaro’s claims, his followers listened to his words, and they turned on a government they believed was the result of a stolen election.

This type of violent protest shows the power of a leader’s words. Even when Bolsonaro had lost the ability to speak to the entire nation through his presidential actions, he managed to reach those who had an ear for his words anyways.

Bolsonaro’s Twitter posts have been primarily hateful words and claims of fraud against the new government for the last few months.

While the world watched, Bolsonaro tweeted his disapproval of his supporters following the Sunday riots. Then, he tweeted his disapproval for the officials who claimed he had anything to do with the attack.

This same pattern occurred on Jan. 6, 2021. Trump began the day tweeting about voter fraud, then tweeted in support of Capitol law enforcement, calling for peace. He finished the day by calling the Jan. 6 Capitol rioters “great patriots.” This final tweet was removed from the platform, and the former president was banned from Twitter officially two days later.

There is not yet evidence to prove Bolsonaro was directly responsible for renting the 40 buses that took supporters to the Congress buildings and presidential offices on Sunday, or for providing them with a police escort. Still, there is no doubt his actions leading up to Jan. 8 were a catalyst for supporters’ violence.

President Lula da Silva called protestors fascists and promised punishment for those involved. According to Brazilian officials, 1,500 people have been arrested already. While they acted of their own free will, rioters surely took note of their leader Bolsonaro’s reactions to losing the election on social media.

The Steelers were never playoff-worthy

LUKE HENNE
editor-in-chief

By some miracle that still is hard to grasp with, the Pittsburgh Steelers entered the final week of the 2022 NFL's regular season with a shot at a playoff berth.

The same Steelers that started 2-6 and lost by a combined 73-16 mark to the two best teams (Buffalo Bills, Philadelphia Eagles) on the schedule needed just three things to go their way this past Sunday in order to secure their third-consecutive postseason berth, and their 10th in 16 seasons under Head Coach Mike Tomlin.

While Pittsburgh took care of the Cleveland Browns, and the Bills dispatched the New England Patriots, the fate of the Steelers' postseason hopes would depend on whether the New York Jets could travel south and take down the Miami Dolphins.

Unfortunately for Pittsburgh, those Jets fell 11-6 to a Dolphins squad led by kicker Jason Sanders, who knocked in three field goals, including the go-ahead one with under 30 seconds to play in the game.

Miami secured the seventh and final playoff spot in the AFC, and Pittsburgh was left on the outside looking in.

Although a 7-2 finish to the season helped the Steelers finish at 9-8, and subsequently extending Tomlin's streak of never having a sub-.500 season, that wasn't enough.

Let's get real for a second. The Steelers were never a playoff team to begin with. Despite having a schedule in which Pittsburgh never left the Eastern Time Zone, the team couldn't take advantage of such a unique circumstance.

Of the team's nine wins, three of them came against teams that qualified for the postseason. And even those three wins were not the sharpest.

A game-winning field goal from Chris Boswell as time expired in overtime helped Pittsburgh secure a 23-20 victory over Joe Burrow and the Cincinnati Bengals, who finished 12-4, in Week 1.

In that game, Burrow threw four interceptions and fumbled once, yet Pittsburgh needed a missed extra point in regulation and a missed field goal in overtime from Cincinnati kicker Evan McPherson to squeak out what should've been a double-digit win.

In Week 6, Pittsburgh defeated Tom Brady's Tampa Bay Buccaneers who, at 8-9, only made the playoffs by winning an extremely weak NFC South by just 2 points. In Week 17, the Steelers narrowly beat a Baltimore Ravens squad that limped its way to a 10-7 finish after a 9-4 start.

Pittsburgh's six other victories came over the New Orleans Saints (7-10), Indianapolis Colts (4-12-1), Atlanta Falcons (7-10), Carolina Panthers (7-10), Las Vegas Raiders (6-11) and Cleveland Browns (7-10).

Of the team's nine victories, only the ones over the Saints and Browns were by more than 8 points (or one possession).

The team played with fire by playing close games all season long — with the exception of the losses to the Bills and Eagles — and it cost them.

The Steelers allowed just 17 points to the Patriots in Week 2, yet could only muster 14 of their own. They blew a 10-point lead in the fourth quarter to the Jets in a Week 4 loss. During Week 7, they came within 6 points of the Dolphins and had multiple attempts to take the lead in the game's final minutes, but Kenny Pickett threw two interceptions, preventing that from happening.

All three of those teams had some say in the Steelers' postseason fate come Week 18, but that wouldn't have been the case had they just defeated one of those teams, let alone two or three.

When a team is counting on other teams to help secure a postseason berth, that team probably didn't belong in the playoffs to begin with.

Yes, it should always be the goal to win as many games as possible. However, if the Steelers would've clinched the AFC's seventh and final playoff spot, they would've been going to Western New York to take on a Bills team that manhandled them from start to finish in Week 5.

There will be no playoff wins in Pittsburgh for the sixth-straight season, but no one can say that the team didn't have

the opportunity right in front of them.

Aside from the defeats at the hands of Buffalo and Philadelphia, only one of Pittsburgh's losses was by more than 6 points (a 29-17 loss to the Browns in Week 3). Five games that were right there for the taking, but were squandered in one way or another.

There are still positives to take away from this season. The Steelers look like they've found a dangerous offensive tandem in Pickett and wide receiver George Pickens. The defense had a league-high-tying 20 interceptions and allowed 17 points or fewer in eight of the final nine contests.

Sure, it would've been nice to see the Jets take down the Dolphins and have Pittsburgh sneak its way into the postseason despite all the odds. However, the odds might've never been that slim had the Steelers just taken care of business from the beginning.



COURTESY OF WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

The Pittsburgh Steelers were never a playoff-caliber team, argues Luke Henne.

Blue Face: Hollywood's newest appropriation

EMILY FRITZ
a&e editor

For those unfamiliar with the socially-banned and outdated practices of Old Hollywood, blackface is the practice of allowing a white or non-Black actor or actress into a role that is designed for or portrayed as a person of color. For example, Egyptian characters are often portrayed as having fair or white-passing skin tones, when in reality, many Egyptians do not.

The newest variation of cultural appropriation, coined as "blue face," is present in James Cameron's second installment of the "Avatar" franchise, "Way of Water." The original outcry emerged on Twitter from Asdzáa Tléé honaa éí, and has since been made available only to her followers.

In a 2010 interview with Guardian, Cameron admitted he used Indigenous histories as a heavy influence in the "Avatar" movies, and went as far as to say that had the Lakota Sioux known the result of their plights, "they would have fought a lot harder." As if they didn't put their full heart and soul into fighting against the overpowering imperialism from European nations.

Not only did Cameron let his white-savior complex show during the interview with Guardian, but he also inserted it directly into his films. The main character, former Marine Jake Sully (Sam Worthington), is the Na'vi equivalent of Kevin Cosner in the 1990 film "Dances with Wolves."

Having seen the film before the controversy became widely-known, it was an effective sequel, but it was a tired plot. The script didn't add anything new, life-altering or thought-provoking that wasn't already present in the original.

The technology is respectable and perhaps revolutionary, but within the context of CGI, it was easy to forget that real-life actors were performing in underwater spaces. Similarly, it was easy to forget that the actors and actresses did not fairly represent the people or culture that it borrowed so heavily from. This is where the concept of "blue face" comes into play.

Although the settings, peoples and creatures in the "Avatar" sequel are fictional, it draws strongly on real-life culture and painful pasts, thus making it inappropriate to mask non-Indigenous casting with a blue computer-generated complexion. Where the original film plays off of the Lakota Sioux as the inspiration for the Na'vi people, "Avatar: Way of Water" goes so far as to introduce and rip off a second group of people, as the Metkayina appear to draw inspiration from Polynesians as well.

And again, the characters who were Indigenous-inspired, like Neytiri and Ronal, are played by actresses Zoe Saldana and Kate Winslet respectively, neither of whom are Indigenous.

Ironically, the other Avatar franchise, "Avatar: The Last Airbender," received overwhelming ridicule from fans after casting white actors and actresses to portray Asian and Indigenous characters, among many other plot inconsistencies, in their first attempt at producing a live-action adaptation in 2010. Netflix is now taking a second stab at the Nickelodeon series as a live-action, purpose-

fully casting individuals with the appropriate racial background.

So the real questions we need to ask are: How does Cameron fix this? Is the franchise salvageable during the next three installments? Will this controversy affect how the general public critiques future movies that show lack of diversity or false inclusion?

Unlike "Avatar: The Last Airbender," I believe that it is too late for Cameron to start over with his casting. He's presented with the unique opportunity to try a clean state because the CGI that he uses can make any actor or actress fit the likeness of an already established character. Legally though, this sounds very messy. Contractually, this cast is signed on for the entire franchise and their likeness is likely to be protected should they be recast and then pursue damages against Cameron.

Moving forward, I can't say what the right decision is. I would think Cameron should seek counsel from the Indigenous groups that he's wrongfully stolen from, try to make amends and proceed more cautiously and respectfully. Or, perhaps Cameron could donate a portion of the box-office earnings to helping Indigenous groups restore their lands or take a strong stance against discriminatory and divisive laws that separate Indigenous communities at the federal level, like the blood quantum laws.

Within a western, or even a global audience, it is clear that Cameron has done a great disservice to the groups that inspired him. While cancel culture is still relevant today, I do not foresee this pain point for Indigenous peoples being taken seriously or having last-

ing impact in Hollywood right now. The erasure of this group is deeply embedded in our society. It is shameful and unjust.

The original advocates against this movie have restricted their platforms to people that they trust, and they've closed themselves off. Is it right to ask them to open themselves back up to conversation that seems to be for our educational benefit and their emotional detriment?

While I believe Cameron's intentions were to do good, he missed the mark. He is acclaimed in the film industry for implementing new technology and creating lasting culture-influencing films, like "Titanic," "Terminator" and "Aliens," but as of now he will not be remembered for his part in making Hollywood a more inclusive and equitable place for diversity in film or storytelling.



COURTESY OF WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

James Cameron faces online backlash for cultural appropriation of Indigenous people.

DUQ students present at California conference

ISABELLA ABBOTT
features editor

Last November, two Duquesne biology students attended the Annual Biomedical Research Conference For Minorized Students (ABRCMS) in Anaheim, Calif., after their many successes that came from summer research projects.

The conference was held for four days and was originally created to encourage first-generation, minority, veteran and disabled students to pursue higher education in STEM. Now, it's one of the biggest professional conferences for underrepresented scientists in their educational passage.

Both Jessica Wellmann and Austin Summers were encouraged to present at this year's conference after being emailed information and travel awards that would cover expenses.

Wellmann accepted her award from a combination of the biology department and the dean of the Bayer School of Natural and Environmental Sciences here at Duquesne. Although Summers is a student at Duquesne, he received his award from a professor at the University of Rochester, where he conducted his research.

While they both worked on different projects at different locations this summer, they were able to come together to represent Duquesne.

Wellmann's research focused on trying to halt the spread of malaria, a serious disease in which a parasite is transmitted by the bite of infected mosquitos.

"In simple terms, the lab focuses on ways to prevent the spread of malaria that is spread by the bite of infected females," Wellmann said. "We were just trying to figure out ways to either directly or indirectly kill the parasite before it can even be transmitted to a human."

Summers' research was focused on making different biomaterials that can be used in the human body for benefit.

"My project was trying to generate different compounds for easier delivery," Summers said.

Summers and Wellmann presented for about an hour each during the confer-

More than 5,500 individuals were in attendance this November, including more than 900 exhibitors, 1,084 program directors, researchers and administrators, 667 graduate students and postdoctoral scientists and just under 3,000 community college, undergraduate and post baccalaureate students.

ly since it's very competitive.

"It was definitely a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity," Wellmann said. "Most people don't even go to conferences until they're in their graduate programs, so it was really nice that we got to be able to show the work we've done with our labs. You also meet students from other universities, so that was really cool."

Not only were they able to showcase their research to others, but during the event, they were able to attend different seminars focused on career development and Ph.D. application advice.

They received lots of information from those who were once in their shoes, trying to apply for Ph.D. opportunities and programs.

"Some of the seminars were career-development based, and some helped you decide what you want to do," Wellmann said. "Then, there are representatives who came and talked about their work within it."

"There were also seminars from professors of other universities that covered basically every field within science, and a lot within biology."

Summers said he saw and participated in various seminars focused on general research.

"Other seminars were general research-based seminars ... Kind of giving students a spiel of what their research is in their lab," Summers said.

Summers and Wellmann gave advice to any students looking to present their research at the ABRCMS in the future.

"Start early," Summers said. "Don't do the application last minute like I did."

"Apply to as many things as you possibly can," Wellmann said. "I mean, we were really lucky that we got the first thing we applied to, but usually it's a lot of trial-and-error."



PHOTOS COURTESY OF JESSICA WELLMANN

Jessica Wellmann and Austin Summers, students at Duquesne, presented research projects at the Annual Biomedical Research Conference for Minorized Students in November.

ence's final days, allowing them to showcase their summer projects to many researchers, young and old.

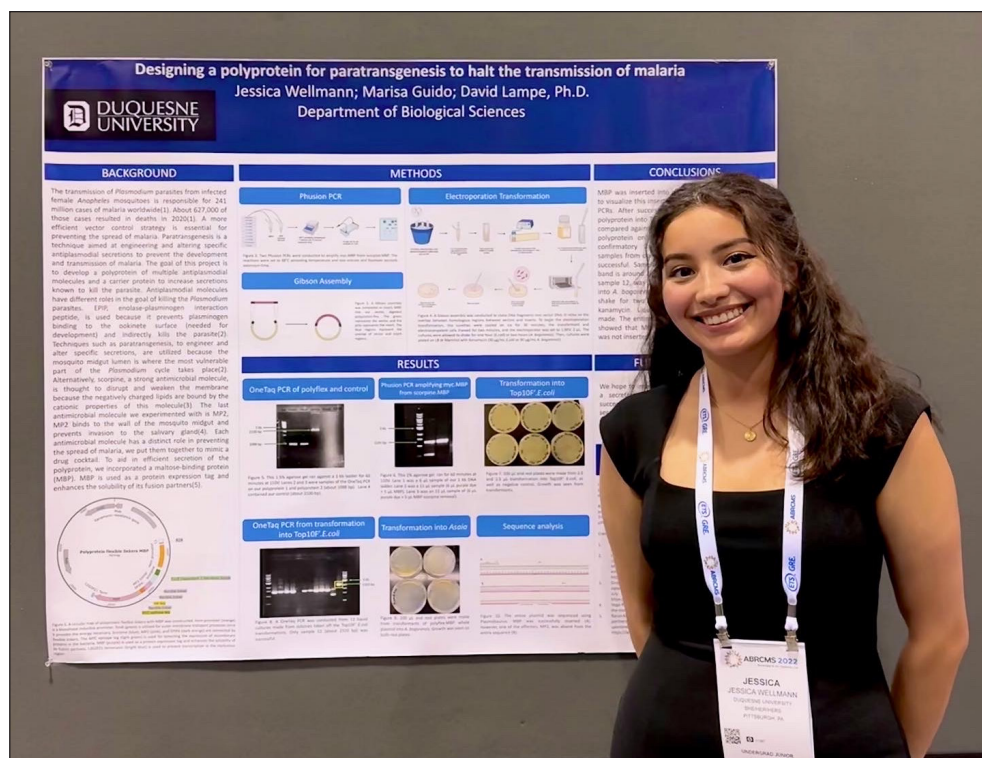
"People would come up to your poster and ask you questions," Wellmann said. "So either graduate students in their fifth or sixth year, and then research professors from other universities, so it was a really good networking opportunity."

They were both more than appreciative to be there with the thousands of other students, researchers and professors.

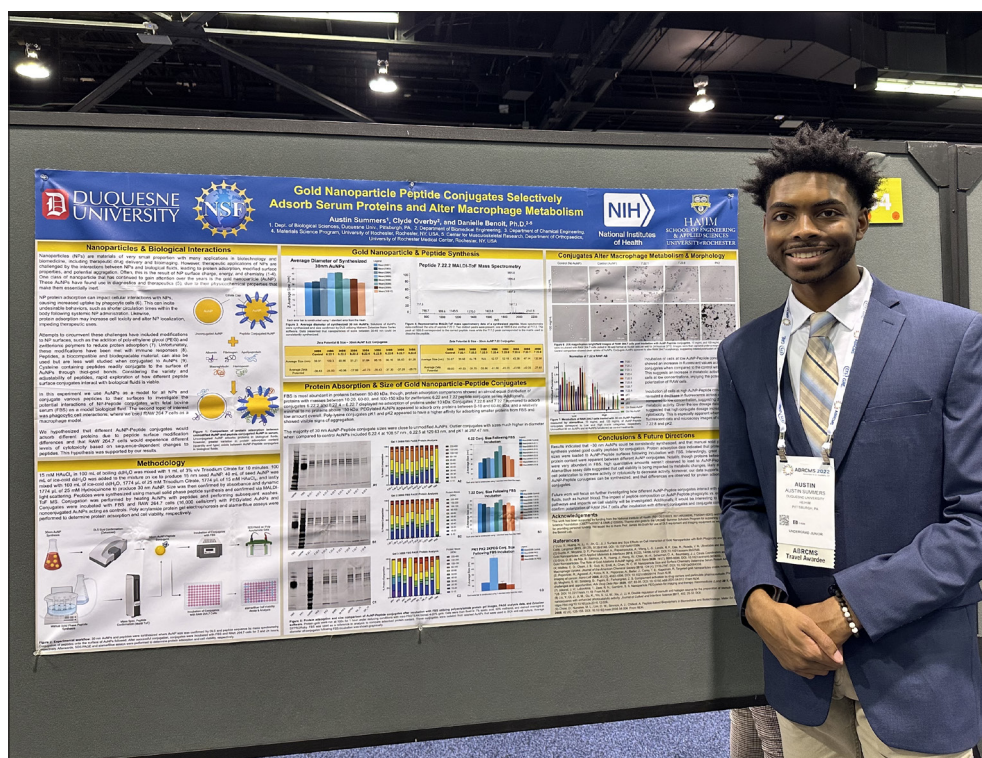
"It was really fun getting to meet new people and different professors, also, having them talk about their own research," Summers said.

Wellmann agreed and said they were lucky to have been chosen to go, especial-

MORE PICTURES FROM ABRCMS PRESENTATIONS IN ANAHEIM



Jessica Wellmann's research centered around an attempt to stop the progressive spread of malaria.



Austin Summers' research was oriented around creating different biomaterials for human body benefit.

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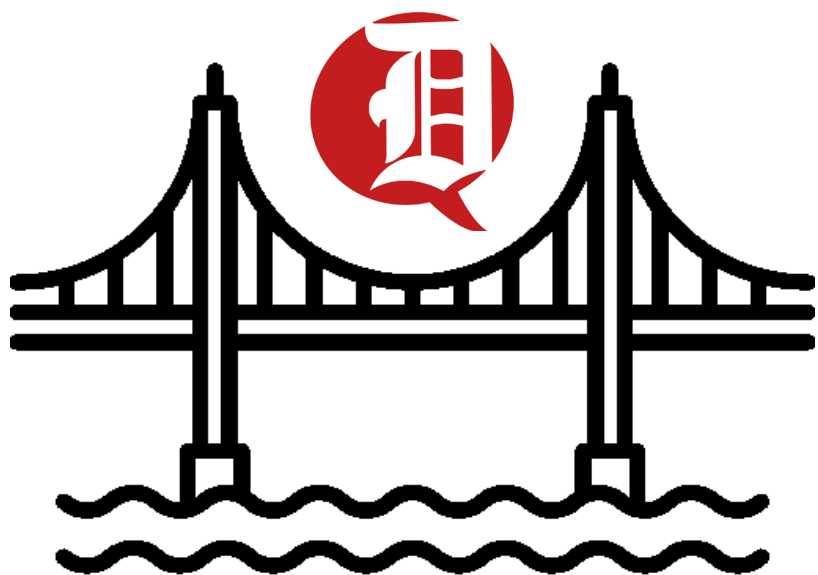
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