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THE DUQUESNE DUKE

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Duquesne gains Tree Campus status for second consecutive year

Hacking 4 a cause: Students combat online hate

EMMA POLEN
news editor

“When we associate people with numbers, we forget that even one person who is affected by online hate is one too many.” These were the words of Natarat Mongkolsinh, a CMU student speaking at Hacking4Humanity.

Over seven days, Duquesne partnered with the University of Pittsburgh and Carnegie Mellon University to take focused action in technology and policy against current ethical issues in their collaborative hackathon event, “Hacking4Humanity: The Problem of Online Hate.”

John Slattery is the director of Duquesne’s Grefenstette Center for Ethics in Science, Technology and Law and is a professor of Artificial Intelligence in Ethics.

“We do a lot with...ethics of technology and with building technology for the human good,” Slattery said. “Going back to those Catholic roots, what does it mean to care for people, to care for humanity to work toward the common human good.”

The ethical component of the competition also brought in four other partnering organizations, including the Collaboratory Against Hate Research Group run through both Pitt and CMU.

Susan Baida, the executive director from the collaboratory,

see HACKING—page 2



BRENTARO YAMANE | LAYOUT/MULTIMEDIA EDITOR

Trees bloom on A-Walk this spring as Duquesne celebrates its second year as a tree campus.

ZACH PETROFF
opinions editor

With the start of spring last week, it will be a matter of time before students can bask in the shade of one of the many trees on campus. Even with Duquesne’s University urban environment, the campus has 530 trees on campus, with 37 more to be planted in 2023.

For the second year in a row, Duquesne received the annual Tree Campus Higher Education recognition from the Arbor Day Foundation. This award is part of the university’s commitment to establish several long-term environmental and sustainability goals.

“I think it shows that we care about the place where we are living and learning,” said executive member of Duquesne’s Evergreen Environmental Club, Rebecca Ulinski. “As students, we can help trees and all plants and wildlife around campus by not littering,

not pulling on branches and showing up to plantings and cleanups that are hosted around campus.”

In order to be recognized by the Arbor Day foundation, the university had to satisfy five criteria such as the establishment of a campus tree advisory committee, evidence of a campus tree care plan and creating a service-learning project aimed at engaging the student body.

“When I came in, I had been doing this for the past 10 years at my former university,” said Kristen Spirl, ground supervisor and major contributor to Duquesne’s tree campus status. “So when I got here, I already knew the previous ground supervisor. Everything was already done. I just pulled everything together into one nice shiny package and sent it over to the Arbor Day foundation for them to consider.”

The implementation of campus landscape and green infrastructure projects is part of the university’s master plan of sustainability initiatives, which include prioritizing and improving cam-

pus green spaces.

According to Spirl, the existing canopy of leaves, branches and stems of trees that cover the ground when viewed from above is at 10.5% and covers about 5.23 acres. The goal is, in 10 years, to have the canopy expand to 15.2% which would cover about 7.5 acres.

Due to the city’s requirements, a tree inventory on campus was needed to account for all trees and their quality on campus. In 2019, the university had 510 trees on campus.

There are 69 varieties of trees at Duquesne, ranging from the common white spruce to the endangered Japanese maple. With the wide variety of trees, the grounds crew are aware of the unique challenges that come with keeping the forestry healthy.

“The campus has a lot of mature trees that are 80 years old,” Spirl said. “We only have a few that are in very good health. Some of the other ones have started to decline.”

Many factors, such as the change in environment, can bring harmful elements that make it hard for

trees and plant life to adapt.

“When they are unable to adapt to flooding, they get sick and that makes it easier for different pathogens or bugs to make their way in,” Spirl said.

Not only do trees provide the oxygen that we breathe and a comfortable place for students to study, the university has been able to utilize some of the trees on campus for charitable purposes.

In October, Spiritan Campus Ministry’s program, All Hands for a Cause, picked apples from the trees next to Rangos.

The idea was inspired by one of the priests when he noticed how delicious the apple trees on campus were during a walk, recalled Deborah Kostosky, Spiritan campus minister.

“We came up with the idea to use them to make applesauce,” Kostosky said. “It was an easy, one-time service project we could offer to students which is the main idea behind All Hands for a Cause.”

see TREES—page 3

We're in!: Pittsburgh college students participate in Hacking4Humanity

POLICE BRIEFS

Friday, March 24-

Two students witnessed a yellow school bus with the no. 71 hit a parked vehicle on Stevenson Street.

Saturday, March 25-

An intoxicated student in St. Ann's Hall was transported to the hospital for evaluation after two calls about her wellbeing were made.

EMAIL TIPS

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.

Active shooter hoax shakes PGH schools

Wednesday, March 29

Active shooter threats had schools across the city of Pittsburgh in lockdown on Wednesday.

The threat appeared to be a computer-generated series of "swatting calls" made to local school buildings, according to state police.

Lockdowns began early in the morning at Central and Oakland Catholic, CMU, Pitt and Pittsburgh Public School buildings as well.

There were also lockdowns and police presence in response to similar threatening calls in New Castle, Hopewell and Laurel Highland school districts.

As of 6 p.m. on Wednesday, there were no reported injuries, and no active shooter was found after a thorough search was done inside Central and Oakland Catholic schools, said police chief Thomas Stangrecki at the scene.

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explained that the inspiration for their initiative came out of the Tree of Life tragedy.

Baida said students' role in the hackathon was just one step in the direction of addressing the issue of online hate.

"It's part of a growing sort of movement of doing hackathons for social good," Slattery said. "We're hoping that in this conversation, and in this work, they're able to learn a little bit about what it takes to really address a big societal problem and come out on the other side, having learned a little bit in the process and connecting with a lot of cool people along the way."

Hacking4Humanity began with a virtual kickoff on Saturday, March 18, at 1 p.m.

Students had the opportunity to compete individually or in groups of two to four. Two events occurred simultaneously during the week – a tech-focused competition and a policy-focused one, both centered around ethics in the tech world.

Tech teams were asked to build new tech, like websites, apps or plugins. With a two-page memo, the policy teams had to create new policies, improve on old ones or come up with new guidelines that address a real need in the tech policy space," Slattery said.

All participants had a week, until Friday, March 24, to put together their solutions on their own time.

Traditional hackathons typically are for just computer science students, and they will come together and have 24 hours to code. However, Hacking4Humanity chose a unique hybrid virtual and in-person model that brought all participants together after a week on their own, Slattery said.

The event wrapped up on Friday with student presentations in the Power Center ballroom on their tech and policy ideas, followed by awards.

"That's one of the parts of the hybrid piece," Slattery said, "presentations for the practice of presenting and so everyone can hear what the teams were working on."

While computer science coding experience was required, the

hackathon website specified that no special knowledge of "online hate" was needed.

"Not everyone needs to be a programmer or a policy wonk! Good tech requires people of lots of skills to come together—graphic designers, communicators, writers, scientists and more. We'll be providing lots of resources to help people develop great projects," said Hacking4Humanity's website.

A team of four students from CMU, PORK, chose the policy track and created the Hate Hygiene Index, a metric to assure all online platforms are held responsible for hate on their site. Their inspiration for the policy solution came from sustainability and the positive impact these universal policies have had on the environment.

Oravee Smithiphol and Pat-tamon Lelemanee are graduate students at CMU and members of PORK.

Facebook might say there are only two instances of online hate out of 10,000, Smithiphol said, but when they asked the consumer side, "there is a mismatch in the numbers."

"We never really know what is going on in the platform if the platform is not transparent on how they legally measure the situation in their platform. So we try to solve transparency as well as increase collaboration with external stakeholders not relying on just the platform itself," Smithiphol said.

Smithiphol was proud of their work over the past week, and she hoped to learn from other presenters.

PORK's members spoke with friends, conducted secondary research and used their own lived experiences to shape their policy.

Every online industry should have a benchmark that forces them to take action, Lelemanee said.

PORK was awarded the runner-up prize in the policy competition.

PORK was not the only team concerned with the proliferation of hate speech on social media. The Hater Deflators, a Duquesne student duo, were hoping to address a problem concerning empathy online.

Tessa Datte (junior) and Emily Brozeski (graduate student), in the User Experience Design



COURTESY OF SIENNE WATKINS

Tessa Datte (junior) and Emily Brozeski (graduate student) created a redesign of the comment button on social media at the hackathon.

program at Duquesne, faced the problem of online hate through a user experience redesign of the comment button on social media platforms.

Their technological innovation would redesign the way online platform users had to post a comment. Instead of tapping the "post" button, users would have to slide a button across the screen to the right. There would be a picture of the user's profile on the end of the screen where their finger started. On the other end would be a picture of the other person's profile picture, who would be receiving the comment.

"The hope behind this is that you would recognize that you are actively sending a message to someone...communicating with someone," Datte said during the team's presentation on Friday.

The action is less "instantaneous," Datte said. "We have been talking all week about...taking accountability online because there's so much divide but there's so much opportunity in it to connect with people that we don't ever want to stifle someone's speech," Datte said.

Following their presentation, Datte and Brozeski are hoping to team up with software engineers to program their redesign of the comment button. "This is a really

cool opportunity and conference to find people who might say, 'That's a really cool idea. Let's figure out how we might implement that,'" Datte said.

The Hater Deflators were the runners-up in the technology competition.

Cash prizes, as well as t-shirts and giveaways, followed presentations on Friday.

The grand prize award in the technology track went to Mihir Dhamankar from CMU for his project, "SpeechWatch Video Browser Extension."

The policy track's grand prize was awarded to a Pitt students' team, MERD NERDS, made up of Myles Cramer, Ryan Druffner, Emmaline Rial and Dan Rudy. Their project was titled, "Protecting Victims of Hateful, Non-consensual Deepfake Pornography (NDP)."

Hacking4Humanity plans to return next spring, as a way for students to consider ethics in their studies and to hone their tech skills, Slattery said.

The Grefenstette Center at Duquesne will continue to host events like the hackathon for just Duquesne students, as well as an Ethics in Algorithms fall symposium and a new health science and AI course.

"We're really just setting out," Slattery said.

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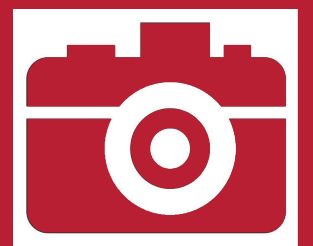
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WRITERS & PHOTOGRAPHERS NEEDED FOR THE DUKE



Come Visit Us
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Contact our
editor-in-chief
hennel@duq.edu



Duquesne officially considered a green, tree campus 3

from TREES— page 1

Supplementing with additional apples from a local farm, the students partnered with the Laval House kitchen to make applesauce and distribute it directly to the homeless population Downtown through Duquesne's chapter of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul.

Considering the future was a common theme among campus organizations concerned with the environment.

"There are endless opportunities for students to help the environment on campus," said Brynn Tripp, freshman Evergreen executive board member.

"Being involved with clubs and organizations that strive for a more sustainable community is a great way to put our care for the Earth into action. The simplest actions and ideas have a strong impact," she said. "Staying educated about current environmental issues around the globe sparks conversations about our world."



COURTESY OF KRISTEN SPIRL

The trees on the College Hall lawn counted toward the qualification Duquesne received as a Tree Campus.

Lenten journey through music

MAX MARCELLO
staff writer

Lent is a special time of reflection. It allows one to reorient attention toward self-care, self-reflection and self-expression. Traditionally, music has been a common way to satisfy all three.

On Tuesday, the Dukes ensemble put on a Music for Lent concert at the Mary Pappert School of Music.

Tuesday's show marked both the largest repertoire of music in the series' history and Music for Lent's 10-year anniversary. At the concert, the Dukes performed the music from the baroque era (1600-1750), which was a style of music that was popular during the lifetime of Marquis Michel-Ange Duquesne De Menneville (1700-1758), the university's namesake.

Orchestrating Tuesday's performance was Paul Miller, the director of the Dukes ensemble and professor of musicianship at Mary Pappert.

Baroque pieces consisting of a solemn tone were interwoven with lighter ones to give the solemnity a greater sense of depth.

Compositions included as Partita No. 7 from Harmonia artificiosa-arisoa by Heinrich Biber and Komm, as well as Jesu Komm by Johann Sebastian Bach.

Miller specifically selected these pieces to play to the ensemble's current strengths, primarily composed with recorders, string instruments and a harpsichord. However, the final two pieces, both written by Bach, featured a vocal soloist, Abigail Hill.

Hill, a junior vocal music education major, performed the final two pieces in their native German. A vocalist since childhood, she has since expanded into piano playing.

"I really hope this experience gave students their first taste of Baroque music and take away from the stylistic elements and just exposure to the music. I hope they appreciated some of the deep

emotional backgrounds, especially for this context, the season of Lent," said Hill after the performance.

Students resonated with the emotional, Lenten undertones of the performance.

Jenni Steele, a senior music therapy major came to support friends Michele Kenyon, a viola d'amore player, and Jared Wolf who played the recorder.

"I found the concert really interesting and especially liked the duet between the viola and the bass," Steele said.

In addition to ensuring that the selected pieces conveyed the somber Lenten tone, he also sought to accurately recreate a Baroque style concert through instrumental selection.

Miller swapped out the piano for a harpsichord. Metal violin strings were replaced with ones made of animal intestines, and musicians

used bows and resins that were used on baroque instruments.

The Mary Pappert School is currently undertaking a fundraising campaign to purchase the harpsichord featured in Tuesday's performance. So far, they have raised \$698 of their \$4,000 goal.

The reflective nature of the Lenten season gave the Dukes a unique opportunity to challenge the prevailing instant gratification and shortening attention spans.

"We live in a culture that is very focused on timescales of 15, 30, 60 seconds. Even heating up food in a microwave feels like a long time," Miller said. "But I believe that there really is something to be gained, in longer spans of time, and sitting with other people and listening with other people. The community is something we miss."

Integrity of Creation Conference tackles sustainability

NICHOLAS ZOTOS
social media/ads manager

In the spirit of recognizing the importance of sustainability, Duquesne University has emerged as a leading institution in acknowledging, educating and promoting related goals.

Tuesday and Wednesday this week, the Duquesne hosted the Integrity of Creation Conference

to provide the scholarly community an opportunity to engage in established and emerging research on sustainability. In their mission, speakers also hoped to enhance public awareness about environmentally conscious practices.

"As educators at Duquesne University, we seek to prepare young men and women to not only excel in their chosen careers...but we also want them to influence others for the better.

This conference will do just that," said President Ken Gormley in his opening remarks Tuesday evening.

The conference proceeded with academic speakers who reflected upon their own experience with sustainability and the challenges they faced in their respective education medium.

"Sustainability is about humans, it is not just about science," said guest speaker Kate Nelson, a founder of the University Sustainability Committee at the University of Minnesota. "Climate change, growing waste reserves and lack of clean water will impact all of us."

Preliminary presentations, like Nelson's, sought to educate students about ways they can begin eco-friendly practices right here at Duquesne.

"Students should be interested in pursuing sustainability goals," Nelson said. "We must educate others about our lack of sustainability. They [students] must understand that a stable world transcends political agenda."

Conference speakers also sought to reiterate the Catholic position on climate change – primarily that religion does not negate our responsibility to the environment.

"The current Pope Francis states that we have to be good stewards to the environment. Particularly, we must understand our role in influencing animals and resources," said speaker John Stolz, a senior professor in the biology department. "Students need to understand that science and religion coexist, especially in regards to sustainability."

"Sustainability is about humans, it is not just about science."

The conference continued with student and professional presentations reflecting on existing and future research about global sustainable objectives.

"Most students come to Duquesne because of the Spiritan mission. At the very core of that mission is the integrity of creation," said Gerard Magill, Center for Global Health Ethics professor and coordinator of the Integrity of Creation conference. "At a time where climate change has the ability to significantly impact our world, our mission to educate and mitigate the effects

of these changes is now more clear than ever."

In a specific effort to meet this mission, Duquesne has recently established a sustainability board with the purpose of reducing adverse environmental waste on campus and providing clean resources for its students.

"We must start thinking about sustainability in everything we do. With this in mind, we will emerge as a leading regional and national university," Magill said. The conference ended with remarks from a representative from a local leader in ethical environmental responsibility, Pittsburgh Plate Glass (PPG).

PPG, through innovation, has been able to provide coating on large cargo ships that allows for the vessels to last longer and sail smoothly through water, said PPG director of global customer sustainability, Jennifer Dodson. This in turn reduces oil usage, which reduces cost but also reduces material waste and Co2 emission.

"Sustainability for us, and for so many more, is more than just about profit. Sustainability is dynamic," Dodson said. "Lasting efforts require engagement and accountability across all sectors of our society to be impactful."



COURTESY OF DUQUESNE UNIVERSITY

Poster of the conference where sustainability goals and global engagement were discussed.

The mystique of baseball season is upon us

LUKE HENNE
editor-in-chief

The chilly, desolate winter is slowly moving out as warmer temperatures and sunnier days are becoming a more-common occurrence.

The transition from winter to spring is accompanied by one of the best times of the calendar year: baseball season.

For the next seven months, America's pastime will take center stage. Fans will flock to classic stadiums like Fenway Park and Wrigley Field. The country's summer holidays will be celebrated and commemorated by baseball. The fans of the sport's most bleak-looking teams will still have some shred of optimism, even if only for a few weeks or a month.

Baseball is the one sport where fans of every team can get sucked in and have at least the smallest bit of hope that this year is their team's year to win it all — Chicago Cubs fans did it for 108 years until finally winning another World Series in 2016.

There's a handful of baseball games that I've attended in my life where I thought to myself, "My goodness, this sport never ceases to amaze me."

The last game I went to in 2022 was a playoff game between the New York Yankees and Cleveland Guardians.

Cleveland trailed 5-3 going into the bottom of the ninth inning, and was in danger of being a game away from elimination with a loss.

Down 5-4 with two strikes and two outs, the Guardians' Oscar Gonzalez laced a walkoff, two-run single into center field. I had no dog in who won the game or the series, but I found myself jumping up and down as I screamed and hugged the random strangers to my left (to my right were two Yankees fans whom I was attending the game with).

That was one of those games where, after we got back to the hotel and emo-

tions cooled down, I thought to myself, "My goodness, this sport never ceases to amaze me."

Baseball is the one sport where, no matter how grim the situation looks, your team still has a shot to come back and win.

There's no clock that can halt your rally. Just a ball and a bat. Three strikes and three outs. That's a lot to work with.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF LUKE HENNE | EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
(Oct. 15, 2022) The Cleveland Guardians and New York Yankees line up during the national anthem at Progressive Field in Cleveland prior to Game 3 of the American League Division Series.

Baseball galvanizes fanbases and brings people from all walks of life together. When the country was reeling after the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, it was Mike Piazza's home run that uplifted the New York Mets and people all across the country.

Later that year, it was President George W. Bush who received a raucous applause after a successful first pitch during a World Series game between the Yankees and Arizona Diamondbacks.

In 2020, baseball was the first sport to return following the Covid-19 pandemic. It brought some sense of normalcy to a world that had been stripped of its regular routines.

I've had the fortune of seeing countless stadiums — both in Major League Baseball and Minor League Baseball — and the uniqueness and variety of stadiums, cities

Park, watching the Pittsburgh Pirates win their first postseason game since 1992.

That was the first meaningful Pirates victory of my lifetime, but it also exercised demons in my parents' relationship — they started dating in 1992, shortly before Pittsburgh's gut-wrenching postseason elimination at the hands of the Atlanta Braves.

You don't always realize it in the moment (sometimes you do), but these memories are ones that are, quite often, larger than life.

I attended my first baseball game the day after I turned 2 years old, and I've never looked back.

Baseball is a lifeblood to me. It is, at its core, who I am. I'm what they call, in the industry, a "for lifer." This is the sport that I've dedicated my life to, so if my excitement seems irrational, just remember how baseball has changed my life.

The MLB's season commences Thursday, while the minor league campaign will kick off a day later.

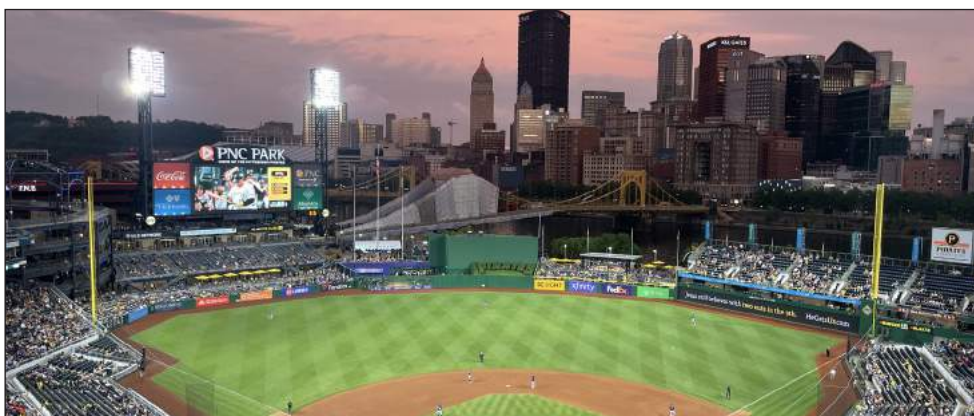
As someone set to graduate from college in just about a month, I often get asked what I want to do or where I want to be when I graduate. While I might not yet know the specific route I'd like to take, I have settled on where I want my office to be for the rest of my life — the baseball stadium.

I'll be glued to my television all day on Thursday, watching as handfuls of teams line up along the first and third base lines, national anthems are sung and flyovers are completed.

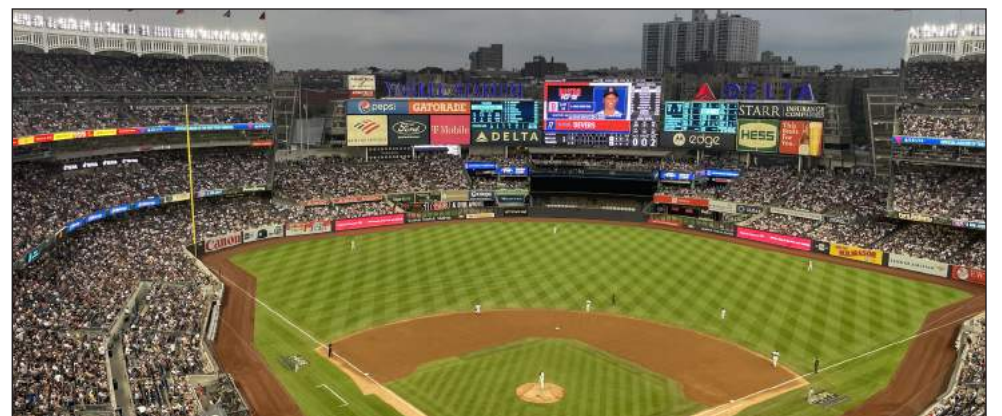
The nostalgia that comes with the start of any baseball season is unmatched by a lot of feelings as a sports fan.

For your favorite team, it might be the start of an unexpected ride you never saw coming. Or, you could be set up for unimaginable disappointment. Baseball can pull at your heartstrings more than you know.

To find out your team's fate, you'll just have to embrace the unique ride.



(June 22, 2022) A photogenic backdrop sets the scene for a game at PNC Park in Pittsburgh.



(July 16, 2022) Yankee Stadium in the Bronx, N.Y., sees the Yankees host the Boston Red Sox.



(July 15, 2022) Dunkin' Park in Hartford, Conn., opened in 2017 and is home of the Hartford Yard Goats.



(Aug. 7, 2022) Polar Park in Worcester, Mass., opened in 2021 and is home of the Worcester Red Sox.

WLAX drops seventh-straight contest

MATTHEW THEODROS
staff writer

The Duquesne women's lacrosse team lost its seventh-consecutive game in its final non-conference matchup of the season against UC Davis 20-13 at Rooney Field on Wednesday afternoon.

This was only the third all-time meeting between the Dukes and Aggies, and the first since April 15, 2005. Prior to Wednesday, Duquesne had won the previous two games.

Entering the game, UC Davis ranked ninth in all of NCAA Division I in scoring.

Duquesne assistant coach Leah Fazio spoke on how this particular matchup between the programs — separated by over 2,500 miles — came to be.

"They were here on their spring break, and they were already playing [Robert Morris]," Fazio said. It was a good game to get in our schedule and prepare for the harder part of our conference."

The Aggies' duo of Grace Gebhardt (two goals) and Alex Agnew (assists on both goals) teamed up to give UC Davis a 2-0 edge just 55 seconds into the game, but Duquesne responded with four-straight goals.

The Dukes would then surrender four-straight goals of their own to UC Davis, who closed the opening quarter with a 6-4 advantage, including Gebhardt's third score of the quarter.

Duquesne and UC Davis traded blows in the second quarter, with each team scoring six goals in the quarter. Duquesne's Delaney Rodriguez-Shaw scored three of her team-high-tying five goals in the quarter.

Mackenzie Leszczynski also netted one of her five goals on the afternoon during the quarter.

Rodriguez-Shaw has been on an offensive tear this season. After Wednesday's performance, her season goal total is at 39, putting her in the top 10 among Division I players in scoring.

After UC Davis scored the second of back-to-back goals to give itself a 10-8 lead with 4:46 in the second quarter, Duquesne goalie Mady Piersielak subbed in for Megan LaBorne. Fazio spoke on LaBorne's performance, especially given that it was her first-

goal, but a gut-punching score from the Aggies' Alannah Scott with three seconds remaining in the half allowed UC Davis to take a multi-goal lead (12-10) into the break.

Scott had herself a day, dominating the Dukes with a game-high and career-high seven goals. Prior to Wednesday's game, she'd never scored more than three goals in a game.

The third quarter was stale for both teams. It was an offensive dry spell that saw teams fail to score until the 4:07 mark, when Leszczynski scored an unassisted goal. That was the

possession and being able to take care of the ball on our side," Fazio said.

UC Davis entered the final quarter leading 15-11, and would outscore the Dukes 5-2 in the final frame en route to a seven-goal victory. The 20 goals allowed were the most Duquesne has surrendered to an opponent this season.

However, there were plenty of positives from the defensive end, including a shot-clock violation for UC Davis which stemmed from the Dukes tenacious defense. They only allowed one free-position score, which is a season low.

Game to game, Duquesne's defense has switched from a variation of man to zone.

"Today we played a new man defense, which was great for us to try out," Fazio said. "The zone was something we were playing with in the past games, but there were parts we wanted to take away from it."

One of the biggest takeaways from the game for Duquesne was turnovers. They finished the day with 19 combined turnovers.

LaBorne spoke on the turnovers and attributed them to the flow of the game.

"Some of them were unlucky," LaBorne said. "Some of them were forced, [others] were unforced. It's just the controllables, things we can affect. We will definitely be working on it more."

The Dukes return to Atlantic 10 Conference action on Saturday, when they host VCU. Duquesne has not defeated the Rams since April 8, 2016, having dropped five in a row to VCU.



DYLAN FISTER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Duquesne goaltender Megan LaBorne made her first-career start in Wednesday afternoon's 20-13 loss to UC Davis at Rooney Field. She made three saves.

career start.

"I was proud of Meg," Fazio said. "She did a good job stepping up to the plate, and that's hard for a freshman to do."

Duquesne cut the deficit to one

Dukes' lone goal of the quarter, while UC Davis scored three times.

Fazio spoke on the team's mindset on offense, especially regarding offensive struggles and long scoring droughts.

"We obviously have to work on

Football holds annual spring scrimmage

MATTHEW THEODROS
staff writer

The Duquesne football team suited up for its annual spring scrimmage Saturday afternoon at Rooney Field, as friends, family and students came together to watch a duel between the white and blue teams.

Duquesne Head Coach Jerry Schmitt spoke after the game about the importance of holding the scrimmage.

"Made a lot of good strides," Schmitt said. "Saw a lot of things our guys can do, and what we need to work on moving into the summer."

"I thought we did a really good job coordinating and organizing progression, from the weightlifting to the on-field work. We've got to continue working that way. I thought it was a very-positive spring."

The offense was not the story of this game with defense triumphing for both squads. The game's lone points came on a field goal from Joey Corado, the white team's kicker.

One standout was defensive back Malichi Lowery. He forced

the lone turnover of the game with a high-flying interception in the first quarter.

"I know the offense, it was a little bit rough, but when you draft teams and you're working with guys that you haven't as much through the spring, that's going to happen," Schmitt said. "But it was very competitive. I thought the defense did really well. I thought I saw a lot of teamwork plays."

Another Duke who showed his talents on the field was running back JaMario Clements, who made his mark by using his size to get multiple pickups throughout the game.

Quarterback Darius Perrantes was not able to find many targets in the first half. However, his mobility and foot-work were elite, as he was able to evade defenders to pick up a 10-yard gain, which set up Corado's field goal.

The game's second half showcased some noteworthy performances from younger players and new roster additions.

Subbing in for Perrantes on the white team was Jordan Heisey, who put the defense on a platter with

phenomenal footwork on a broken play. On a desperation 3rd-and-15, Heisey scrambled for a 20-yard run.

Red zone mishaps and a missed field goal opportunity for the white team gave the blue team a chance to come back.

Quarterback Jalen Morrison continued the trend of explosive runs from the lead playmakers. His foot was on the gas at all times, gaining some chunks of yardage with his feet.

Despite the athletic feats from Morrison, the offense stagnated from this point on for both sides. Empty possessions and a missed field goal kept the blue team off the scoreboard, and helped the white team secure a narrow win.

Schmitt said that, regardless of the outcome, the spring game is an important yearly event, particularly when it comes to attendance from alumni and potential recruits.

"It's a great day," Schmitt said. "The weather was kind to us today. Lot of former players, parents [were in attendance]. We had a whole bunch of recruits and their parents."

"They toured the campus this morning, and our facilities. Got to

see the Dukes play, and got to see everything that we're about here on this campus and this beautiful Rooney Field. So I thought it was a very positive day all around."

As the spring season comes to an end, the focus shifts now toward regular-season preparation. The Dukes will open the season at home against Edinboro on Sept. 2. They'll also host Northeast Conference foes Central Connecticut on Oct. 14, St. Francis (Pa.) on Oct. 21 and Stonehill on Nov. 11.



COURTESY OF DUQUESNE ATHLETICS

Members of the Duquesne football team huddle during Saturday's spring scrimmage at Rooney Field.

Not the March Madness we're accustomed to

The NCAA Division I Men's Basketball Tournament captures the attention of millions of American — avid fan or not — for a few weeks during every March and April.

People live for the historic upsets, the horribly inaccurate brackets and the thrill of almost every game.

This year has been different, but don't mistake the importance of this year's Final Four. It's about time that the "little guys" are running the show.

On Saturday, four teams — San Diego State, Florida Atlantic, Miami (Florida) and Connecticut will take the court at NRG Stadium in Houston, seeking to make it to Monday night's national title game.

Connecticut has won four national championships and will be making its sixth Final Four appearance in the last 25 seasons. However, the other three programs will all be making their first trip to the Final Four in school history.

Florida Atlantic — a member of Conference USA — is making just its second-ever NCAA Tournament appearance, and plays in a gym with a capacity of less than 3,000 people.

San Diego State is the first Mountain West Conference team to ever make it to the Final Four.

While Miami is a member of the reputable Atlantic Coast Conference and Connecticut is a part of the always-vaunted Big East Conference, it's clear the tides are turning.

This year's tournament has proved that the gap between power programs and mid-major programs is quickly tightening.

That was also evidenced in this year's tournament when Furman stunned Virginia and when Fairleigh Dickinson shocked Purdue.

Florida Atlantic and San Diego State will square off in the first national semifinal, meaning that a non-Gonzaga mid-major will be in the national title game for the first time since Butler (then in the Horizon League) in 2011.

Even if Miami or Connecticut hoists the trophy on Monday, it's clear that David and Goliath are not as far apart as they used to be.

-Luke Henne, Editor-in-Chief

Three-time U.S. Poet Laureate visits Pittsburgh

EMMA POLEN
news editor

Joy Harjo, a celebrated poet, shared her work and life advice to a crowd of hundreds in the Carnegie Music Hall on Monday evening.

Harjo visited Pittsburgh this week as part of Pittsburgh Arts & Lectures' Ten Evenings series hosting celebrated authors. Her evening talk centered specifically around her 2022 work, "Weaving Sundown in a Scarlet Light," a collection of 50 poems to celebrate her then-50 years of writing poems.

Harjo made her published poetry debut in 1972, and since then she has gained various awards and titles, not least of which was 23rd U.S. Poet Laureate. She was the first Native American to hold the honor and only the second Poet Laureate Consultant in Poetry to serve in the position for three terms.

Her success did not come without difficulties, but "there would be no stories if there were not challenges," Harjo said at the event.

Harjo has been part of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation since childhood, but she saw very little representation of Native Americans in poetry writing at an early age.

Growing up in Tulsa, Okla., Harjo said she loved poetry because of her mother and music because of her father. The rhythm and phrasing spoke to her from an early age, as did their oral storytelling capabilities.

Now, Harjo is recognized as a poet, musician, playwright and author who brings duality about the human and natural worlds into her work.

"How in the world," Harjo asked during her lecture, "do you find a meeting place between...a system in which everything was given to a group of people and therefore...there's a hierarchy, versus a place where...everyone – the animal, people – have a place?"

While there may not be a "meeting place," Harjo said that she came to poetry because she wanted a "sacred language," one that could express what was sometimes unspeakable, even impossible.

"They [poems] are carriers of essential, of meeting," Harjo said, comparing poetry to a transmission station's purpose.

After a bit of backstory about herself and her work, Harjo read four selections from various works she has published in the past 50 years. The first was a poem from her early writings, titled "Remember," that Harjo said has since been used at funerals, weddings and even made its way onto the Lucy spacecraft.

"Remember" described memories carried on through both human and natural life. The poem called for readers to talk to the life around them, but also to listen.

The first reading played well with the following talk Harjo gave about her writing process.

The author needs quiet to



COURTESY OF WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Joy Harjo is a well-decorated poet with publications dating back to the 1970s. Harjo is the first Native American woman to be recognized as the U.S. Poet Laureate.

write, she said, in order to listen for a work to come to her.

"I just take in sometimes even just the feel of it, and then I write the form," Harjo said. "I'm convinced ["Remember"] was given to me because I needed it."

"Remember" was followed by an excerpt from Harjo's "A Map to the Next World" book. A unique device in the work, which Harjo read to the audience, was "saxophone licks" of words between forms of poetry divided up in the collection, almost like a band of musicians warming up between sets.

Then, Harjo read one of her most beloved poems, titled, "Perhaps the World Ends Here."

The poem, while it is an ode to the kitchen table, takes the reader over years of memories shared around, above and below an ordinary kitchen table.

"Perhaps the world will end at the kitchen table, while we are laughing and crying, eating of the last / sweet bite," the poem finishes.

The timeless nature of the table's story strikes at something

Harjo believes is a major element of poems. Like consciousness, poetry writing can be in many places at once, she said.

Harjo completed her lecture with a reading from one of her prose pieces, "Dreams." The work discussed dreams as a sort of memoir of memories, bringing hope for future generations but also lessons from the past.

Duquesne students from the English department had the opportunity to visit Harjo's lecture.

"It was really nice to hear her talk about creative cycles...allowing yourself to have bad moments in writing," said Kaitlyn Nicholson, senior English major.

Harjo's lecture was the Pittsburgh Arts & Lectures' biggest event since bringing the in-person option back after the pandemic, said Stephanie Flom, the executive director of Pittsburgh Arts & Lectures.

"It was really great to hear she didn't set out to do poetry," said Jayda Benson, senior English major. "It was something that found her...Inspiration doesn't strike magically."



EMMA POLEN | NEWS EDITOR

Harjo's recent works, "Weaving Sundown in a Scarlet Night," "Poet Warrior" and "Catching the Light" were available for purchase at the Carnegie Music Hall.

Aquarius ♒

So cute!
And combative (:

Pisces ♓

Can't talk right now, busy toppling the economic system.

Aries ♈

I can find a funky colored face mask in solidarity.

Taurus ♉

Made with love, not with skill.

Gemini ♊

Obsessed with Jimmy Carter updates.

Cancer ♋

Where's the milk?

Leo ♌

They're going places in a hippity hoppity manner.

Virgo ♍

Wait, are those Dolly Parton tacos?

Libra ♎

God gives his tightest pickle jars to his strongest soldiers

Scorpio ♏

What's it like on the moon?

Sagittarius ♐

Snug as a bug in a blanket

Capricorn ♑

Jealous of some ducks swimming around.

CAMPUS
EVENTS

- Create a Terrarium Night
March 30 @ 7 p.m.
- Make a terrarium with the RHA in Towers MPR. Sign up at the Office of Residence Life to reserve your spot. The cost of attendance is \$5 .
- Easter Egg Hunt
March 31 @ 6 p.m.
- Join the Role Play Games Society for an Easter Egg Hunt in Fisher Hall! Entry is \$2. Please bring your own bag for egg collection.
- SASV Art Exhibit
April 3 @ 6:30 p.m.
- Head to the Africa Room for a night of art, food and community! Prizes will be raffled for art submissions and for attendees.
- Taco Tuesday Trivia
April 11 @ 9 p.m.
- Join the Latin American Student Association in the NiteSpot for walking tacos and Song Trivia.

EMILY'S
EPIPHANIES

- Easter Wellness
- We're finally to the last break of the year. Use this time to soak up some rest and reset for the final weeks of the semester.
- Surround yourself with loved ones and practice self-compassion.
- Whether you're just looking forward to the summer or you're closing this chapter of life, be sure to take time to smell the flowers and check in with yourself.
- Feeling tired? Take a nap.
Feeling irritable? Have a snack.
Feeling lonely? Phone a friend.
Relax and rejuvenate.
Call your grandparents.
- Go back to the basics and allow this time to bring you peace and joy.
- Wrap yourself in love and share that light-heartedness with someone who needs it. Spring has a funny way of healing things and allowing us to begin anew again.
- Emily Fritz

So Much (for) Stardust: FOB's Refreshing Return

BUNNY SCHAAF
staff writer

"So Much (for) Stardust" is a nostalgic yet refreshing return to the golden years of Fall Out Boy, released during a time when the alternative revival has a stronger pulse than ever before.

Fall Out Boy, an essential band of the pop punk era, is best exemplified by their work in early releases "Folie à Deux," "Infinity On High" and "From Under The Cork Tree." However, into the 2010s, the band began to fall into pop clichés with heavy synth sounds and a general departure from rock and roll inspiration, largely due to the musical culture of the time.

"We were just trying to survive," Pete Wentz, the band's bassist, said in an interview with *Variety*.

Before the band's four year period of dormancy, they released "MANIA," an album saturated in noise and frustration, followed by a second volume of "Believers Never Die," a revised greatest hits compilation. It almost seemed to be a goodbye.

Between then and now, Fall Out Boy resigned with the label of their glory days – Fueled By

Ramen – and reconnected with a producer from the same time, Neal Avron. While "So Much (for) Stardust" is by no means a carbon copy of the group's original sound, it takes the growth and stylistic choices they made during their time 'trying to survive,' and applies that to the sentiment of their early works.

"So Much (for) Stardust," is operatic, near-grandiose and most certainly an explosive return.

One of the most standout tracks, "Love From The Other Side" leads the record. It begins with a soft orchestral, reminiscent of iconic composers like Ralph Vaughan Williams or Leonard Bernstein.

It doesn't take long for this instrumental to erupt into guitars and drums, and the sequence calls back to the soft introductions of tracks from "Infinity On High," but does so with much more confidence and maturity. Within the first minute of their long-awaited return, Fall Out Boy has already resecured their glory.

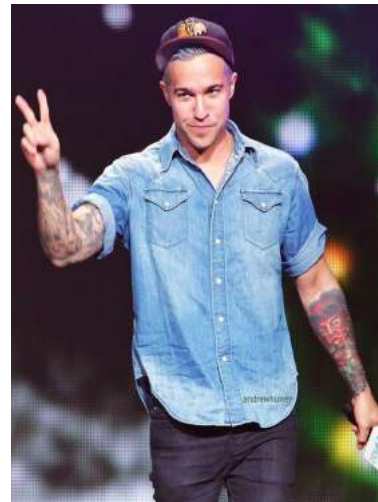
Some songs, like "Hold Me Like a Grudge" and "What a Time To Be Alive," retain the identity of "MANIA," though they do so almost ironically. They focus on

desperation and loneliness, with the lyrics certainly being more comprehensive and thoughtful than they were in the 2018 album the sounds emanate from.

The synths and electronic elements that evolved into Fall Out Boy's music prior to this release are certainly still there. However, they're handled masterfully rather than cluelessly. They amplify choruses, guitars and orchestral like they hadn't in older records.

"So Good Right Now," "The Kintsugi Kid (Ten Years)" and "Heartbreak Feels So Good," do the best jobs of mixing new and old sounds of pop punk and Fall Out Boy. They're refreshing and clean. They maintain the urgency of "Folie à Deux," the lyricism of "From Under The Cork Tree" and the stylistic choices of "MANIA."

On the other hand, "Heaven, Iowa" and "Flu Game" exemplify most of the elements of the earlier, freshly discovered band that Fall Out Boy once was. It clearly has musical roots in the underground emo scenes of the early 2000s. These are up there with some of the best songs on the album, as Patrick Stump's vocals and the performances of Wentz, Andy Hurley and Joe Trohman,



COURTESY OF WIKIMEDIA COMMONS
Pete Wentz has been an active member of the pop punk scene since 1993.

are all much more refined and retrospective.

The most palpable tracks, and potentially best, of the record, that hopefully predict the future of Fall Out Boy's sound, are "Love From The Other Side," "I Am My Own Muse," "Fake Out" and title track, "So Much (For) Stardust."

"I Am My Own Muse" and "Fake Out" are certainly impressive, being more than just filler tracks and obviously are deliberate in their placement. They are

complimented by two interludes, "Baby Annihilation" and "The Pink Seashell," that carry their sound and the sentiments of a resurrected band.

"Love From The Other Side" and "So Much (For) Stardust" are beautiful. The lyricism is impressive and poetic, and both songs burst with euphoria with a near-perfect balance of heavy and delicate performance. While "I Am My Own Muse" and "Fake Out" carry the same sound and intention as they do, they pale in comparison. The "Love From The Other Side" and "So Much (For) Stardust" make for the perfect introduction and exposition to the album.

"We thought we had it all," Stump sings, "So much for stardust."

While "So Much (for) Stardust" is certainly not a perfect album, and maintains a few tracks that could be considered filler, it is objectively one of Fall Out Boy's best releases and certainly worth the five year wait.

Each of the 13 songs is full of boldness and is suited for the band's now-matured audience. It is certainly a record to appreciate, and thus far could contest as one of the best mainstream album releases of this year.

Pittsburgh Improv boasts a line-up of stardom in Homestead

EMILY FRITZ
a&e editor

Stand-up comedy has been alive and well since its start in 1963, yet there is still a surrealism to seeing a celebrity comedian live and in the flesh.

Pittsburgh Improv in Homestead is well-respected for hosting a variety of high-profile com-

ics, including T.J. Miller from March 23 to March 25.

Miller, who is known for his acting roles in the "Deadpool" franchise alongside numerous voice acting roles in movies like "How to Train Your Dragon" and "Big Hero 6," is described as "one of the most sought after comedians in the world, certainly the northern part of the west-

ern hemisphere," according to his bio on <https://improv.com/pittsburgh/comic/t.j.+miller/>.

During his hour-long stand-up set, Miller interacted with several audience members and strategically handled light heckling from the audience.

With a love for Pittsburgh, Miller touched upon the history of I.C. Light, Primant Bros. and Polish history in the area, using each as a jumping off point for new material and seamlessly connecting each subject to the next.

Miller delivers his comedy act under the philosophy that "life is fundamentally tragic and the best thing he can do is provide an ephemeral escapism from that tragedy by doing comedy."

Through his connections with audience members, Miller created a space that allowed for crude humor without offense and manufactured a casual atmosphere, despite his fame.

In a shameless plug for Miller's peanut butter and hot sauce products, a rowdy audience offered various dollar amounts to interact with the star.

Miller agreed to meet with fans but successfully deflected inappropriate remarks.

Toward the end Friday's show, Miller encouraged attendees to tip wait staff well and had two shots delivered to him.

In an unplanned act, the actor invited one of his hecklers onstage to share a drink with him after baptizing him with "Protestant bourbon."

The comedy act was self-described as "Smooth Like Fire, Hip Like Lincoln," and Miller did not disappoint.

Traveling with Miller as an opening act was CJ Sullivan, who has previously written for A&E network, Comedy Central, Robert Smigel and XM/Sirius radio.

Sullivan has also gained popularity for his stand-up comedy album, "What am I Complaining About?" on iTunes.

The pair will continue "TJ Miller: The Gentle Giant Tour" in the U.S. before taking on a European theater in May.

Alongside the celebrity lineup, Pittsburgh Improv also invites a number of local comedians to perform.

Senneca Stone, local Pittsburgher and comedian, acted as the master of ceremonies, delivering a short set of his own before introducing the visiting stars.

Pittsburgh Improv strictly prohibits photography and recording of any kind, with a no-warning ejection policy.

The venue also practices a two-item minimum in addition to ticket prices. Small plates include bar appetizers, burgers,

pizzas and salads.

While food and drink items are available to purchase, patrons are required to be of drinking age or older to attend shows unless otherwise noted.

The next comedian to visit will be Corey Holcomb from March 31 through April 1, followed by Brad Upton on April 2 and Kevin Farley on April 6.

Visit <https://improv.com/> for show dates and ticket pricing at Pittsburgh Improv, or visit <https://tjmillerdoesnothaveawebsite.com/> for future shows featuring Miller.

COURTESY OF WIKIMEDIA COMMONS
Miller is well-known for stand-up comedy in addition to numerous acting roles.



EMILY FRITZ | A&E EDITOR

Pittsburgh Improv is a hot-spot for comedic talent, hosting stars such as Brad Williams, Craig Robinson, Chelsea Handler and Matt Rife.

THE DUQUESNE DUKE

113 College Hall
600 Forbes Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15282

editorial staff

editor-in-chief Luke Henne
news editor Emma Polen
opinions editor Zach Petroff
features editor Isabella Abbott
a&e editor Emily Fritz
sports editor Luke Henne
layout/multimedia Brentaro Yamane
social media & ads Nicholas Zotos

administrative staff

adviser Paula Reed Ward

email us: theduqduke@gmail.com

"We are all formed of
frailty and error; let us
pardon reciprocally each
other's folly - that is the
first law of nature."

VOLITARE

You just read | Now tweet
our thoughts. | us yours.

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EDITORIAL
POLICY

The Duquesne Duke is the student-written, student-managed newspaper of Duquesne University. It is published every Thursday during the academic year except during semester breaks and holidays, and prior to final exams. The Staff Editorial is based upon the opinions of the editors of *The Duke* and does not necessarily reflect the views of the students, faculty, administration, student government or the University publications board. Op-ed columns do not reflect the opinions of *The Duke*, but rather are the sole opinions of the columnists themselves.

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THOUSANDS OF HOURS OF LECTURE RECORDINGS
WAITING TO BE DELETED

BENJAMIN CRAWFORD | STAFF COMIC ARTIST

Combattling hate with mercy

I remember where I was when the Tree of Life shooting happened. I was in the Taylor Allerdice marching band. We were going to play at a football game in the afternoon.

Before I left to go rehearse and prep my drum, my mother stopped me. She told me to be careful. The news reported that shots had been fired at the Tree of Life Synagogue, a 5-minute drive from my house. I wasn't worried.

Squirrel Hill was one of the safest neighborhoods in the city. I thought it was just some folks in the community being overly concerned. Maybe they heard fireworks nearby. I was 17 years old and naive.

Twenty-or-so minutes after I arrived the school went into full lockdown. Everyone in the drum line was told to go into the choir room where we rehearsed, turn all the lights off and hide.

My drum instructor was incredibly concerned about our safety. To make sure we were all safe (and perhaps out of morbid curiosity) he had a police scanner app playing from his phone. He sat on a chair listening to what was happening in case any danger came toward us.

I was terrified. I didn't go to Tree of Life but I knew a lot of people who did. Then I heard a police officer on the scanner paraphrase what the shooter had said during his rampage,

"All Jews must die."

I would always hear from people in my community and from the media that anti-semitism was on the rise in the United States. Before the shooting I was dismissive of the reports. After the shooting I had no choice but to acknowledge that I was not as safe as I thought.

I was around to see my neighborhood hold a vigil in the heart of Squirrel Hill. I started to see the crochet Star of Davids hung up in the neighborhood's business district. It was surreal to know that a community I thought was safe grieved the senseless deaths of 11 of its members killed while praying.

Now, nearly five years later, the man accused, Robert Bowers, is

set to go on trial. He is facing a 63 federal charges and may receive the death penalty.

I don't think the death penalty is fair to the community or the perpetrator. I don't think any of us have the right to decide who should die.

Bowers is a product of far-right and neo-Nazi propaganda and rhetoric. He is an unfortunate person with a troubled life that made him susceptible to



ELIYAHU GASSON

staff writer

hateful ideas; ideas that turned him into a terminally online far-right white nationalist.

According to the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, Bowers suffered a life of trauma and neglect. His father was an accused rapist who killed himself when Bowers was only 7 years old. He was raised by his grandparents because his mother was ill. He dropped out of high school and worked as a truck driver.

Bowers is a sad person who let his social isolation give way to anger and violence. He saw himself as the victim of a system broken by powers that had it out for him.

His background, by no means, justifies killing 11 innocent people. It does, however, give some explanation into why he did it.

We should show Bowers mercy

for his crimes. We should lock him up--sentence him to life in prison. We should let him live to think about what he has done and we should give him the opportunity to apologize to us for what he did.

We have a duty to the victims, the survivors and the community to make things right.

Letting Bowers live provides an opportunity for apology.

The president of Dor Hadash, one of the congregations worshipping at Tree of Life, Bruce Herschlag, wrote to the U.S. Attorney General Merrick Garland: "We are desirous of seeing justice meted out in a manner that is both consistent with our religious values and that spares us from the painful ordeal of prolonged legal maneuvering."

An eye for an eye does mean that a punishment should match the severity of the crime, but it does not mean the results need to be the same.

We need to be better than those who hate us. We need to think about how we would want to be treated if we committed a severe crime.

As a Jewish student at Duquesne I have faced challenges from students. I have seen a classmate raise a Nazi salute. I have been told to my face that Judaism is an offshoot of Christianity and that Jews killed Jesus.

I heard a story from my girlfriend about how she was called abnormal for buying a menorah in her hometown. I have heard horror stories about other minorities facing discrimination on campus.

I do not hate these people who attack me or my girlfriend or my family who attend the university, nor do I hate Robert Bowers for what he did to my community.

I do not like him, don't get me wrong. Nor do I forgive him because he has not yet apologized.

I do believe he deserves to be treated as a human being. He needs to be given the opportunity to repent.

Allowing the government to execute him does not provide him with such an opportunity. All the death penalty would do is prolong the suffering of both the people he has harmed and himself.

STAFF
EDITORIAL

What Ramadan can teach us all

Ramadan is being celebrated for the next month, and with it comes a reminder of the unequal levels of religious tolerance in this country.

While on paper, the U.S. is free from religious preference, in reality, the U.S. tends to hold Christian holidays culturally more significant.

Current social issues where Christian beliefs pervade include what is acceptable to teach about creation and homosexuality in public education.

Almost exactly a year ago, Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis signed the "Don't Say Gay" bill into law.

The Parental Rights in Education, as it was officially called, banned public school teachers from teaching about gender identity and sexual orientation to elementary students.

DeSantis considered himself a proud Christian and American patriot, often blending these identities in his position of authority.

And rumor has it, DeSantis is considering the 2024 U.S. presidential race next.

DeSantis would not be the first Christian president. From Catholicism to Episcopalianism, nearly every one of the 46 U.S. presidents have claimed religious affiliation to a branch of Christianity. Meanwhile, not a single president has been Muslim, Hindu or Buddhist, the three other leading religious populations in the world.

In the rest of the federal government, only four Muslims have ever been elected to Congress as of this year.

The mosque-to-church ratio in Pennsylvania, and in Pittsburgh alone, represents an overwhelming majority of Catholic and Protestant practitioners across the state.

Major Christian denominations might take for granted the convenience of religious communities in the U.S. that allow them the freedom to speak up about their beliefs. Yet, for other religions, these spaces are not as available.

Minorities still exist, even if their representation is not equally seen in American leadership.

Major holidays like Ramadan provide an excellent time for all citizens, not just Muslim Americans, to reflect on their beliefs.

By considering the viewpoints and cultural practices of others, we move closer to creating an inclusive community here on campus, but in the wider world of American politics as well.

Our gun culture is getting out of control

ZACH PETROFF
opinions editor

I knew at the start of the semester that I wanted to write about the prominence of gun culture in the United States.

I also knew, given our nation's history, that it would just be a matter of time before some senseless massacre would make national headlines.

On Monday, a shooter walked into a Nashville school and killed six people. Three of the victims were children.

I am not going to pretend to know how to fix the gun violence issue that is plaguing this country. Whether it is a school, a movie theater or an amusement park, these needless and violent acts keep occurring.

Whatever we're doing now, which is a lot of nothing, is not the answer. Americans are familiar with the script. We sensationalize, hyper-focus on minor details then politicize the suggested solutions until the matter is replaced with the next pressing issue.

Americans have also grown accustomed to the two reactionary and extreme proposals that often follows mass shootings with either a call to ban guns or the call to provide more guns to more people, like teachers.

Neither seems likely nor an

effective measure to stop these horrific actions.

The solution, like many complex issues, is going to require a level of nuance, outside the box thinking and empathy from both sides.

I don't have the slightest idea on how to severely curve gun violence without infringing on constitutional rights.

I do think that instead of rallying for quick fixes, we should perhaps take a deeper look at the road that led us to this unique situation where children are being murdered in cold blood on a near regular basis.

Let's stop with the political talking points, take a few steps back and look at the entirety of the situation. We now, more than ever, need to have honest conversations about this phenomenon that has claimed as of Wednesday, according to the Gun Violence Archive, 57 lives in the U.S. this month.

It's time we acknowledge that the gun culture in this country is just plain weird.

I am not referring to millions of people that own firearms, who use them to hunt or even collect them as a hobby. I am also not inferring that those who transform their personality around firearms are the reason for the increase in gun violence.

I am stating that the increased

obsession around guns is bizarre and deserves exploring.

The fascination with guns has always puzzled me. As someone who was (poorly) compensated to master several different weapon systems ranging from fire-to-forget missiles to fully automatic machine guns, it's hard for me to fully grasp the obsession that has taken hold of people across this country.

Guns are tools, used to cause varying degrees of destruction. Just like a hammer or a wrench, these weapons are designed for a very specific use to best obtain the desired result. Like any good carpenter knows, safety and knowledge are absolute paramount when working with any tool.

However, not a lot of people feel the need to have their Christmas photos with their family holding circular saws.

There is a fine line between a hobby and an obsession that is being blurred by the increasingly loud rhetoric from rabid gun owners who are quick to anger when any talk about the slightest regulation to guns is brought up.

We have allowed these pieces of metal to integrate themselves into our culture so much. The tools whose only use is to cause destruction have become such a mainstay in so many people's

lives that it feels like we're closer to classifying guns as a utility rather than weapons of war.

To understand where we are going, we need to understand how we got here.

We need to understand how we created a society that is convinced that their second amendment is constantly in danger.

We need to understand how people can swoon over the right to bear arms, transforming into constitutional experts but couldn't name five amendments in the Bill of Rights.

We need to understand why people feel the need to carry a weapon with them all the time. What kind of society do they think we live in if you need a firearm when you go to the local grocery store?

We need to understand why people feel so comfortable with these deadly weapons that they accessorize their firearms like they are part of a trendy wardrobe.

We need to understand why people have become so willing to quickly engage in deadly force.

We need to understand how we let aggrandizing self-serving politicians drive us to a frenzy that people are coming to take our guns.

It is heartbreaking to think that we have cultivated a society where weapons have become so prevalent. There is plenty of evil

in the world, and it's a natural feeling to want to protect yourself and the ones you love, but this dramatic calling from a growing population for everyone to be armed to the teeth at all times appears to be stemming from an underlying fear.

A fear that has managed to grip our country and blind us from any movement to stop allowing our children to be murdered.

When a tragedy occurs, it is part of the coping process to search for something or someone to blame.

There have times in my life felt that human depravity knows no bounds, yet I am reminded on a daily basis that the good vastly outweighs the evil in the world.



COURTESY OF Pxfuel
Mass shootings have claimed 57 lives in the U.S. this month alone.

President Biden, tear down this wall

MAX MARCELLO
staff writer

The date Jan. 6, 2021 will be remembered by all those who witnessed the events on that infamous day.

The scene of a ravenous mob forcing its way into the halls of Congress, is forever etched into our national consciousness. Americans watched as a group of alleged domestic terrorists tried to bring down our democracy by forcing themselves into our nation's capital.

Following this ugly moment came an equally ugly government response. Rather than confront the underlying issues leading to Jan. 6, Congress and the Biden administration have turned the "people's house" into a scene resembling a military occupation.

Gone are the days where American citizens could peace-

fully enjoy the government facilities for which they pay. Today Congress now sits atop a fortress with a prominent metal fence accompanied by police treating each and every passerby as if they were suspects concealing criminal intent.

It would be unfair and unreasonable for me to lay the blame at the feet of the construction workers and officers doing their jobs.

Biden announced that the central tenet of his presidency was going to be working toward "restoring the soul of America". If the Biden administration's intention was to convey unity and restore confidence to the American people it failed miserably.

Rather it pursued a series of initiatives including building fences, and publicly displaying police in militarized gear with fully automatic weapons and armored vehicles. These project another image, the image of fear.

Policymakers have erected the great Washington Wall, visibly separating state from citizen creating an uneasy feeling. While defenders of the administration's policy to increase security and surveillance argue it is a necessary defense measure to protect these buildings and those who work there, I vehemently disagree.

It has cost the U.S. taxpayers, according to citizensforethics.org, \$1.5 million for the fencing and associated equipment to put up the barrier.

Unrest and violence directed against government buildings is nothing new.

D.C. experienced a similar wave of increased security measures during the Vietnam war protests of the late 1960s, the Oklahoma City Bombing and 9/11 yet always returned to normal afterward.

It has been two years since

Jan. 6 and still our government has not made this transition. On the contrary, Washington has doubled down on militarizing. The mere presence of overly militarized officers and the ominous steel fences on the Capitol ground, clash with American values of democracy and government of the people.

Even members of Congress quietly admits the security measures are not a good look for the institution as a whole. If you visit the Capitol's official website there are no images of the building with the post Jan. 6 walls.

How can this be?

It is because even the people who work there quietly admit through their actions or lack thereof that the Capitol building fundamentally belongs to the American people just as its members are beholden to them.

It is the taxpayer that expends the necessary financial burden of

running Congress. Therefore it is not unreasonable to demand that the Capitol be enjoyed by the citizens paying for its upkeep.

Should calls to demilitarize the Capitol go unanswered then the situation in our country should best be characterized as We vs. the People of the United States.



COURTESY OF WIKIMEDIA COMMONS
A metal fence still surrounds the Capitol building.



WRITERS & PHOTOGRAPHERS NEEDED FOR THE DUKE

Contact
hennel@duq.edu

Death metal band announces July tour

ISABELLA ABBOTT
features editor

Pittsburgh-based death metal band FALL OF BABYLON recently announced tour dates and locations for their summer tour, starting on July 10. Their album, titled "War on the Existent," will be played throughout their six shows in different locations.

Although the band started like so many others, the three active members found each other and have been active since 2021.

Guitarist Tad Logero said he originally started the band because he's always wanted to play death metal music.

"So why I made the band is because I love that kind of music, and I've always wanted to play it, but I've never had anyone to play with," Logero said. "Then I spent a while looking for people, and I think I found the perfect people for the band."

"So I kind of started from the beginning, and then Evan (Weston) came along next, and it was just me and him, and then Logan (Cussen) came after that."

Logero also created the band's name.

"I came up with the name, and there really was no process behind it," Logero said. "It just kind of came on my brain one day, so I kind of stuck with it."

Cussen, the group's vocalist, said the band uses all capitals in the name so that they could "separate ourselves" from other bands with similar names.

The album title, however, came from Weston, the group's bassist from Duquesne's Mary Pappert School of Music. He said he came upon it randomly while on a walk.

"So I was walking to Oakland, and there was graffiti on the side of one of the bridges, and it said, 'war on the existent,' and I said, 'That's cool.'" Weston said. "I

mean, call it divine intervention."

"War on the Existent," the band's 29-minute, eight-song album features hits like "Blunt Force Trauma," "Addicted to Violence" and "A World to Come." All three members are excited to play these hits for a bigger crowd in a different environment.

"We've played a total of nine shows,"

they've had a great turnout for each performance.

"We really press hard with ticket sales," Logero said. "We make sure the shows that we take are openers for touring bands, so those are bringing people out and we try to sell a lot of tickets."

Weston said the band "sold out The Funhouse at Mr. Smalls before the doors

never think you'll actually ever do it because you're like, 'Oh, that sounds really cool, I'd really like to do that,' and then you're in the thick of it," Weston said. "Then you're like, 'How am I going to have the money to eat today?'"

Cussen also said he's excited and ready to finally tour with the band's new album.

"Honestly, it really is surreal," Cussen said. "I'm pretty stoked, pretty excited. I mean, like everyone was saying, though, it won't really hit until the closer we get to it. That first night in Pittsburgh is going to be crazy."

"After all the hard work we've put in getting to this point, it feels really surreal, and we're doing it."

From first starting a band to now having tour dates, Fall of Babylon gave their advice to anyone looking to start their own band.

"Push ticket sales as hard as you possibly can," Weston said. "For our first couple of shows, we were just standing around in Oakland and handing out flyers."

"Don't put anything out there unless you're confident that it's the best you can possibly do," Logero said. "Because I think a reason a lot of local bands don't go anywhere at all is because they kind of put out whatever ... instead of taking their time to write quality songs or record music that sounds good."

"Play shows that are worth your time, because it does take a lot of time and effort to play a show, and I think putting your best foot forward and showing everyone the best you can do is a really good way for people to take you seriously."

"Keep working," Cussen said. "Don't give up, keep working at it. You never know what can happen."

For more information on tour dates and ticket prices, go to <https://www.fallofbabylon.net/>.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF FALL OF BABYLON

FALL OF BABYLON recently announced tour dates for their first-ever tour. Although they've played in Pittsburgh, they're ready to perform at other locations during their July road trip.

Logero said. "We started last year, but we don't want to play too much in the same area because that kind of wears people out."

Other than Pittsburgh, the band will be touring in Morgantown, W.Va.; Roanoke, Va.; Charlotte, N.C.; Richmond, Va., and Johnson City, Tenn.

Although they've only had nine shows,

even opened" back when they performed in the venue in January (see *The Duke's* Jan. 19 issue).

"They let us sell over capacity that night," Cussen said.

Each member said the tour nerves haven't hit them quite yet. They think it'll kick in in July when the tour begins.

"You hear that bands do it, but you



FALL OF BABYLON's album, "War on the Existent," features eight songs in the span of 29 minutes. This album will be played during their July tour, and was released in January.



The band can be seen here performing their death metal set in front of an audience. Although they started writing music three years ago, everything has finally come together.



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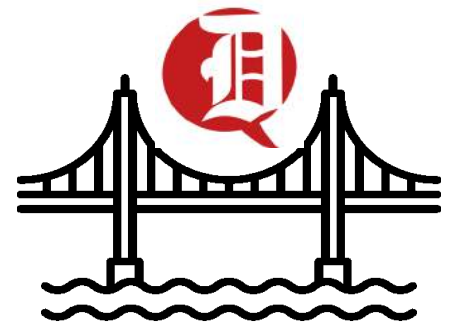
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