


WHAT’S INSIDE?

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CONDITIONING COACH
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THE BRAVES ARE
BACK!
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The Collection: *Entropy* Release Tour Stops In Carrollton

Robert Moody
Editor-In-Chief

The Collection performed a live set at The AMP in Downtown Carrollton on Oct. 8 as they began to push through the early stages of their *Entropy* album release tour. The show was sponsored, organized and hosted by 4am Coffee Roasters and got underway shortly after 6:30 p.m. The concert was both a new and familiar experience to many in attendance as the open amphitheater was filled with both longtime fans of the headliners and with friends and family of the opening band, The Hope Arsenal, which features the talents of six Carrollton natives. The Hope Arsenal played a brief set flowing with ambient synthesizers, calm guitar strumming and uplifting choruses littered with sustained echoes that drew inspiration from a John Muir-esque view and admiration of nature. As they continued through their set a considerable number of passersby were drawn in and the Amp began to fill with listeners of all ages as their time onstage drew to an end. Following a brief intermission the overhead lights began to dim and The Collection’s seven touring members took the stage, immediately shifting the reserved tone of the amphitheater to one of energetic amusement that had both the band and much of the audience on their feet and moving. For over an hour the band jumped around the stage to the sounds of funky bass lines, an electric one-man horn section, exciting guitar licks, complex keyboard melodies, thunderous percussion and a wide array of vocals that included tight group harmonies and the uniquely bright voice of frontman David Wimbush. The set also saw much of the audience dancing and singing along as the band

performed songs from their two previous albums and their newest album, *Entropy*, which they released on Oct. 5, only three days before their show in Carrollton. The album itself is similar to their previous work in many ways, but *Entropy* certainly shows a clear difference from The Collection of the past. This can be partially attributed to the major shift in the band’s lineup that occurred when many members left the group in 2017. “A lot of these songs on that recording started out as a kind of solo record during the time when we had quite a few people move on from the band,” said Wimbush. “Originally when I started it all the songs were just acoustic and my voice and then I started adding on some stuff. At that time we filled it in with those pieces but at the time it was just the smallest iteration of the band and so the songs kind of reflected that.” Previous albums by the band also included relatively large layers of brass instrumentation placed around swaying vocals and deeply rooted guitar and violin. This sound has offered up the terms “orchestral-folk” and “big band-american” to describe the sound and style that have become synonymous with The Collection. *Entropy*, however, often takes a dive into a more stripped down direction on tracks such as “Carolina Coast”, “Bandages of Time” and “Entropy.” “In the past it has been really easy for me to approach arrangements out of nervousness and anxiousness in my voice and to throw a bunch of stuff on top of it so people wouldn’t notice,” said Wimbush. “In recording I wanted to leave some more of the stuff feeling a little more stripped down and not feeling like I just needed

to throw something on there. ‘Entropy’ is one of the more stripped down songs I’ve ever done and I kept trying to add more to it and every time I did it just felt like too much.” The early portions of the album also echo much of the band’s previous work while approaching levels of clarity and cohesiveness that the group had not achieved on their prior albums. Many of these tracks make use of light-hearted lyrics and bellowing brass lines to create an upbeat tone of positivity and self reflection. The majority of these tracks were also released as singles and they include “Left of Your Joy”, “Becoming My Own Home” and “Beautiful Life” which sets the tone for the hopeful record and holds a great deal of significance to Wimbush. “When we came together it was one of the first songs that I had some of the other guys singing on and that we had everyone come in and play,” said Wimbush. “That was the song that brought the record out of being a solo project and back into a band project and feels reflective of the tough place we had been in as a band and I had been in my life before. It felt like the way that it all came together and those things felt redeemed and hopeful was in that song.” In the end, The Collection have created not only an excellent record but a piece of work that reaches levels of depth and artistry they had previously only began to approach. Likewise, their style and energy during live performances will soon have not only brought excitement to Carrollton but numerous other cities across the nation as the *Entropy* album release tour heads out west in the coming weeks.



Going Further West: UWG Offers In-State Tuition to All Alabama Residents

Andy Hendricks

Contributing Writer

This year, UWG announced that all legal residents of Alabama are now eligible for in-state undergraduate tuition, opening the door to a new demographic of prospective students.

“Since UWG is so close to the border of Alabama, we were able to get permission from the University System of Georgia to offer in state tuition for Alabama,” said Emily Wurst, Alabama Admissions Representative. “It’s definitely not just me. It’s Justin Barlow, our Director of Admissions, being able to work with the University System of Georgia and get that permission that allows us to extend opportunities to Alabama students.”

This new offer was made available to Alabama residents in the Spring semester of 2018.

“We’re pretty competitive with the price of Alabama four-year universities,” said Wurst. “So, we are able to offer students to come to us for the same cost or less to go to school in their own state.”

Though this offer is still young, promising results are already beginning to be seen.

“As of about the middle of September, our inquiry numbers and enrollment numbers, basically students that have shown interest from Alabama in some way, shape or from, are up about 60 percent from last year,” said Wurst.

“So, we’re seeing a little of an inflection already.”

Marketing for Alabama students is in full swing, with many prospective students reporting that they’ve heard of UWG from advertisements on various platforms, including television and social media. However, the Office of Admissions is making an effort to take a step further and add a personal touch.

“There are organizations that put together big college fairs for each county in Alabama, so we’re essentially going and trying to attend as many of these college fairs as we can to give West Georgia a physical presence in Alabama,” said Wurst. “We want to have somebody Alabama students can talk to and answer their questions. We will also be on the road, having a couple of UWG-hosted events in Alabama this fall. We’ll be bringing representatives from Admissions, as well as being sure that we have all the information and representation we need from Financial Aid and Housing and Residence Life, and other departments that students have questions about.”

With UWG now open to this new pool of prospective students, the Office of Admissions has a new opportunity to make UWG stand out against Alabama schools with a home-field advantage.

“Students are looking for what’s new, for

what’s their own, for what their parents didn’t do, for what their friends five years ago didn’t do,” said Wurst. “So, UWG opens the door to the possibility of Alabama students going out of state when they didn’t think that was possible before.”



Photo Credits: Emily Wurst

New Certification in UWG English Department

Anne Holmes

Contributing Writer

UWG’s Department of English is offering a new certification program in Publishing and Editing. Three of the courses will be available for students to register for starting Oct. 22.

There are four courses in the 12-hour certification program. These include Technology for Editors and Writers, Studies in English Language—Grammar, Internship, and the Publishing and Editing Capstone.

“I was the person who, with a group of instructors and faculty, consulted and designed the certificate, then sent it through all of the committees as well as the senate to be ratified,” said Dr. Emily Hipchen, an English professor at UWG who spearheaded the certification program. “The first course was run while it was being approved three semesters ago in the fall of 2017.”

Although a certificate is different than a minor anyone can go through the process to get this certificate on their transcript.

“You can have a major, a minor and a

certificate. None of these excludes the others,” said Hipchen. “Anyone in any major can take any of these courses and get a certificate, so long as he or she completes the prerequisites for the courses.”

One course stands out from the rest—the capstone. The Publishing and Editing Capstone is a course designed around the skills students will need in order to enter the workforce with applicable knowledge. They will learn to hone in on their writing, copy-editing and designing content for publishing platforms.

“Once you get through the capstone course you can decide whether or not you want the certificate to appear on your transcript,” said Hipchen. “The registrar manually enters the certificate, so when you call for your transcript to give to your future employer, it will show that you have this particular certificate.”

Although anyone could potentially get this certificate, it becomes unavailable for students to enroll in post-graduation.

“The certificate is right now just for undergraduates, but you can do a master’s degree in English with a focus in this area,” said Hipchen.

Luke Barnwell, a student currently taking the capstone course, chose to get certified in order to gain experience and attract future employers in his field of study.

“Apart from the writing aspect, we’ve learned an interesting amount of branding and marketing lessons, which ended up landing me a new job,” said Barnwell. “Dr. Hipchen has taught a number of invaluable lessons ranging from salary negotiation, general editing tips and the power of language precision. The capstone is far more than you’d expect.”

Students can begin looking towards gaining the certification when registration opens on Oct. 22

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Wolves Against Domestic Violence: What UWG Has to Offer

Tiffany Maynard

Contributing Writer

According to the National Domestic Violence Hotline 38 percent of college students say they would not know how to get help if they ever found themselves being abused by an intimate partner. UWG is helping combat this statistic with programs offered through Health Services.

Jill Hendricks, Associate Director of Health Services, coordinates the Advocacy Services offered by UWG, which serves students who have been impacted by domestic violence situations.

“There are two places on campus a student can go and seek services confidentially; one is the counseling center, and the other one is the Health Center,” said Hendricks. “When students access care there, [the student] is in charge, and we guide them through their rights and connect them with the resources they want.”

The departments assist victims in learning their legal rights and creating safety plans.

“Safety planning varies from case to case, but it’s basically us making sure we have offered [the victim] every resource available,” said Hendricks. “We will have them download the LiveSafe app, we make sure they have programmed police contact information in their phone and we will talk to them about the possibility of getting a temporary protective order against someone.”

UWG also has a Care Team which assists in these cases. The Care Team is an interdisciplinary board, consisting of members from campus police, housing and the Dean of Students.

“When we have cases, [we] cannot reveal confidential information, but we can [explain the situation]... and have brainstorming sessions there to try to think of other ways to support the person.”

Some of these methods may be relocating a student into a different apartment or residence hall, changing their course schedule and helping the student

temporarily withdraw from the university. Whatever the method, it is ensured that confidentiality is kept and the will of the victim is followed.

It is not as simple as just reporting the incident, however. There are a lot of psychological preparations that a victim must take before they are ready to report and leave their abuser.

“This is a process, not an event,” said Hendricks. “During that process, the victim loses that sense of self. They lose a lot of their friends, they often lose relationships with family member. They become isolated. They don’t know what resources are out there and the person that is controlling them has more power- in their eyes, they really see that person as more powerful. It’s a journey, to develop that autonomy again, do develop the strength and it takes tremendous courage to move away from relationships that have become controlling.

“Remember, the person that is hurting the individual is someone they’ve nurtured, someone they’ve loved, someone they’ve tried to support and you can’t flick those feeling off,” Hendricks continued. “Most people I meet are initially at least in a stage of self blame. It’s a journey. Counseling can be so helpful. We have one counselor in our counseling center [and] 100 percent of her time is to serve victims of violence. We’ve got tremendous resources.”

Hendricks suggests being patient with the victim, but also staying cautious. Many victims do not realize the amount of danger they are in, so it is important that if imminent danger is suspected that the authorities are contacted immediately. Although it is a necessary step, leaving can be the most dangerous step in the process.

“In a violent relationship, the anxiety is going to go up and the dominant partner will be more likely to hurt this individual,” said Hendricks. “We are very careful about guiding someone, and if a student has a friend in a violent relationship, be very careful about

giving advice.”

Hendricks suggests finding resources for the victim and leaving them with them in a safe manner.

“If you are trying to get someone to separate from a violent partner, be careful with how you try to send them information,” said Hendricks. “Their abuser may be monitoring their computer, their phone, their GPS... we have to be very careful with how we deliver information as not to elevate their risk.”

Hendricks says there are many ways for students to help their friends and loved ones out of a violent situation, but it is important for them to know their boundaries to help keep themselves and others safe.

“We have a 24 hour crisis line,” said Hendricks. “if they want to talk to someone about the process of getting help or if they want to talk about their options, we are trained to guide them and get them the resources of their choice.

“If you reach a point and you realize that they are in danger and they can not see it, there are several things students can do,” continued Hendricks. “One, they can go to our website, UWGCares, and make an anonymous referral. One of the advocates would then reach out to that student and let them know someone cared enough that they contacted us and asked us to reach out and offer resources. They can call the advocates themselves and ask how they can be supportive of their friend.”

Domestic violence is a topic that makes many uncomfortable to discuss. It is important to remember that violence among intimate partners is a serious offense, and that UWG has services available to help its students. If you or someone you know are experiencing domestic violence, please contact UWG’s 24 hour domestic violence hotline at (678) 839 - 6452, or make an anonymous report at www.westga.edu/UWGCares.

COSS STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL TO THE DEAN

Rebekah Brinkley

Contributing Writer

Those in the College of Social Sciences (COSS) now have a way to voice student concerns through an advisory council to the Dean.

Dr. Jane McCandless, Dean of the College of Social Science, asked UWG student Tara Wood to form an advisory council for the students of the department last year. Wood accepted this challenge knowing that it would impact her fellow students within COSS. Wood oversees the council as a founding member and the President while advocating for other students to join.

“I started the council because Dr. McCandless presented me with this awesome opportunity, which I gladly took to have a voice because while Student Government does have voice for the students, it is for the general student body,” says Wood. “This is specifically for our College of Social Science.”

Wood has served as a member of the Student Government Association for several years, which has helped her understand the importance of hearing the students’ voices. However, Wood is looking to focus on those within the COSS by working closely with the Dean and students.

“The College of Social Science Student Advisory Council to the Dean is

a council that provides a voice for the students within the College of Social Sciences,” says Wood. “We report up to our department heads or we report up to Dean McCandless if it’s an issue that goes above our department heads.”

Through general body and executive council meetings students from all majors within the COSS are able to bring their concerns to the appropriate people. The executive council is comprised of Wood and one representative from each major within the COSS. These representatives then hear the concerns of the general body of students and report those concerns in their executive meetings.

“We meet with the department heads and we voice concerns, whether it’s about classes or organizations within the College of Social Sciences to make a difference,” says Wood. “We are giving them input from the students that they wouldn’t necessarily get because most students won’t tell their professors what’s going on, but they will tell us since we’re in the classes with them.”

Though the Student Advisory Council has only been present on campus for one year they are already working to make a mark on the UWG campus and within the COSS. They actively make an effort to hear out what the students have to

say about things within the COSS, their classes and the faculty.

“Our biggest accomplishment so far is just that we’ve gotten established,” says Wood. “We’re having that open communication with students and faculty members. We’re the student’s voice to get out information that they may not pay attention to from emails or flyers.”

The council meets every other Monday at 5 p.m. in the Pafford building and is open for all students to attend. Even students not within the COSS can come by and voice anything about the COSS to the council. The goal of this council is to provide communication between the faculty and students as they work to succeed in college.

“Students can get involved by coming and sitting in on our meetings,” said Wood. “Applications are open at the beginning of each semester, but they’re welcome to come join us at events throughout the semester.”

Any student with questions or concerns regarding the COSS can start by contacting the Student Advisory Council. The members within the council will work to make sure those comments are heard and the questions are answered.



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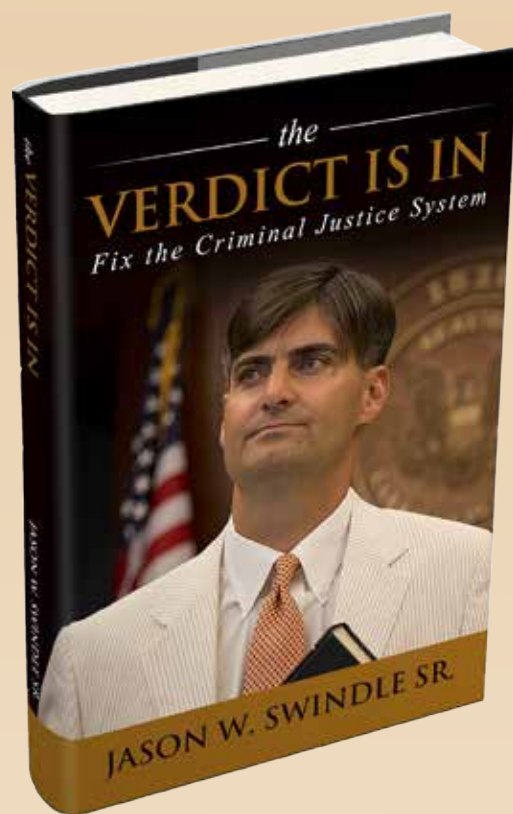
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How Fake News is Benefiting From Technology

Kelli Holloway-Billison

Contributing Writer

With technology advancing at rapid rates each year, we find ourselves closer to artificial intelligence. Although the development of artificial intelligence is to help improve human lives, it can also impact the growing trend of fake news.

A video created by comedian Jordan Peele and online news outlet BuzzFeed demonstrates how the advancement of AI can challenge the authenticity of news reporting. The video appears to show former president Barack Obama giving a one-minute speech in which he calls U.S. President Donald Trump “a total and complete dipshit”.

The real Obama didn’t say those thing-Peele did. Peele used the latest AI technology to create visual data resembling the real Obama speaking but used his own voice to make it look like Obama was saying those comments in the Youtube video. It was basically a virtual representation of Obama.

Technological programs allow a person to type anything, and an AI version of someone else can repeat back what was typed. The ones specifically used for this PSA were Adobe After Effect and FakeApp. This demonstrates how easy it is for anyone to access this type of technology that can lead to deception.

“We have evolved to where technology is making us question even

our most reliable sources with the rise of fake news,” said Mason Dallise, a UWG graduate who runs his own blog dedicated to sharing the challenges of technology. “To ensure that our information is concrete and true we should take the time to research sources in order to move forward. It’s imperative that people take it upon themselves to question everything in the news and media.”

Peele’s video demonstrates how easy it is to produce and send out misinformation to the masses. As shown in the video, the continuation of this can lead to a world of people being manipulated by technology.

“This is a dangerous time, moving forward, we need to be more vigilant with what we trust from the internet. It’s a time when we need to rely on trusted news sources,” said Peele at the end of the video. “It may sound basic, but how we move forward in an age of information is going to be the difference between whether we survive or we become some kind of fucked-up dystopia.”

Peele’s overall message from the video suggests this new age of fake news can become disastrous if source research is not conducted intensively.

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

UWG Center of the Arts holds UWG Art Exhibition

Chelsea Newton

Contributing Writer

The UWG Department of Art holds an art exhibition every six weeks. The art exhibits are a part of UWG faculty presenting work from professional artists of different backgrounds and curriculum.

Professional showcases are displayed in the Humanities Building. The art exhibits are changed every few weeks to give students and faculty a diverse amount of artwork on display, to discuss, photograph, write about, and enjoy. Some of these artists are even international and have been booked up to a year in advance.

The artworks include paintings, sculptures, and imagery.

Currently, the exhibition that was last seen in the humanities building for professional artwork was by Keith W. Smith, who is known for his sculptures of hands and other body parts. The next exhibition will feature an international artist. The schedule of exhibitions can be found on the UWG Department of Art’s Facebook page.

“We have four galleries total,” said Stephanie Smith, the UWG Department of the Art’s Gallery Coordinator. “The gallery in the Humanities Building on the bottom floor is our professional artist gallery, then there are two more in the building.”

These three galleries are reserved for students’ display of artwork. The gallery on the third floor in particular, is for graduating seniors during their capstone project in their last two semesters of undergrad.

Each student receiving a B.A. in Art is required to put their artwork on display for their last semesters of undergrad as part of the art curriculum.



Photo credits: Kaitlin Green

“We have even had students who have studied abroad during their senior year to places such as France or England and they use their explorations to create art for the exhibition,” said Smith. “Experience helps create high-crafted technique and strong concept.”

The art exhibits when on display are open every day during normal school hours.

There is even a jury exhibition that begins in the Spring of every year where the Department of Art selects an outside Juror to be a part of the exhibition. The jurors can be artists from different

media, gallery owners, and even visual artists themselves.

“This is an opportunity for students who are not a part of the Department of Art to be allowed to enter their artwork,” said Smith.

The Juror will choose anonymous artwork submitted digitally by the students. Students have the opportunity to receive awards, acknowledgements, a chance to attend a reception in their honor, and even an opportunity to have have their artwork published and purchased by the University or outside bidders.

Students who are interested in being a part of the jury exhibition must submit their artwork in early December before the art exhibition begins in January. More detailed Information can be found on the UWG Art Department’s Facebook page and additional events.

“We encourage students to get involved,” said Smith. “We host many events throughout the year, have a group called Art Student Union and even professional speakers that come in and teach students during demonstrations. There are endless opportunities.”



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HIGHLIGHT ON UWG’S NEWEST STRENGTH & CONDITIONING COACH

Jordan England

Contributing Writer

Troy Johnson is the newest addition to UWG’s Strength and Conditioning staff.

Within his first two months at UWG, Johnson has already made a lasting impact in the weight room with his energetic spirit and willingness to push athletes to their limits.

As an enrolled graduate student and in charge of in-season and off-season workouts for UWG’s athletic teams Johnson’s weekdays are undoubtedly demanding, but his passion for coaching prevails. Johnson is in charge of the strength and conditioning programs for UWG’s volleyball, tennis and track & field teams. He also assists with the workout programs for UWG’s baseball and football teams.

“It certainly requires me putting in a lot of time to get all of this accomplished, but the time I spend in the weight room with the athletes is the most enjoyable and rewarding part of my job,” said Johnson.

Johnson states that his ability to build relationships with athletes and willingness to modify workout programs to meet an athlete’s specific needs, sets him apart from the average trainer. This is what makes him an effective and productive strength and conditioning coach for athletes at UWG.

“This helps my athletes know that I care about what is best for them which, as a result, gets them to truly listen to what I say in order to understand the importance behind everything they do in the weight room,” said Johnson.

Johnson has high expectations of every athlete he works with at UWG. He holds daily, monthly and yearly goals for himself when it comes to coaching athletic teams in strength and conditioning.

“My goal while being a strength and conditioning coach here at UWG is to first and foremost help every athlete that I work with reach their highest potential in a safe and smart manner,” said Johnson. “In this line of work, you need to carry many different characteristics such as selflessness, understanding and patience while also instilling positive mindsets within each athlete through staying disciplined and employing a hard work ethic.”

Johnson gives credit to Head Strength and Conditioning Coach, Monte Curtis and Assistant Strength and Conditioning Coach, Chase Tripp, for their vast knowledge in the field within his first two months at UWG.

“Personally, I want to learn everything I can from these two coaches about strength and conditioning to help me become the

best possible coach and grow in knowledge of this field of work,” said Johnson.

Johnson is a native of Munster, Indiana, about 30 minutes outside of Chicago, Illinois. He attended Quincy University, located in Quincy, Illinois, where he played football for five years and studied Exercise Science. His love for sports grew his eventual passion for weight lifting and conditioning.

“I fell in love with the weight room at a very young age. I was passionate about playing baseball and football growing up and knew that getting bigger and stronger would only help me improve in these sports,” said Johnson.

Johnson’s short-term career goals include being a full-time strength and conditioning coach at a university, either Division I or Division II. He sees himself working 15 years from now for a big football program as head of strength and conditioning, or working with professional athletes in the NFL or MLB.

“I have extremely high hopes for myself in this field going forward and think that UWG is the perfect stepping-stone to get me to where I want to get,” said Johnson.

Johnson is excited for this opportunity to expand his knowledge in the classroom as a graduate student, as well as in the weight room coaching UWG athletes to their full potential. He has high expectations for his athletes in the weight room this year and believes their hard work and dedication from the strength and conditioning programs will show on the court or field in season.



Photo Credits: Jordan England

The Life of a Volunteer Trainer

Sahmir Short

Contributing Writer

Hannah Braxton, a volunteer trainer for the UWG football team, spends nearly 40 hours a week working with the football team. She attends six-hour practices three times a week along with her 10-hour days during game day, and has done so for the past four years.

Braxton, an athlete herself in track and field, was reluctant when first presented with the opportunity. It wasn’t too long, however, before she realized it was something she wanted to do.

“It started at orientation,” said Braxton. “The sports administrative staff had a table to sign up to volunteer and I signed up. I didn’t jump right into it because I was originally on the track team. About two games into the football season I decided to go to the training room and ask about it; and I began from there.”

Though the job is strictly voluntary, student trainers serve an important role to the football program. They help hydrate the players, assist with wrist and ankle taping and help with smaller injuries. Each student trainer has a specific task assigned to them before the game, to make sure that the team is assisted with anything they need.



Photo Credits: Sahmir Short

“When we all work together as a group, it makes everything easier,” said Braxton.

Though the job is not always stressful Braxton still takes classes on top of her 30-40 hour weeks working with the team. Her and her colleagues put in the same hours as college athletes while going to practices and balancing schoolwork; making the work far from simple.

“I wish people didn’t just see us as water girls,” said Braxton. “We spend more time at the athletics building than some of the players at times; and there’s a lot of behind the scenes stuff that we do as well that isn’t seen on the practice and game field.”

Braxton has also expressed that this job has given her a greater love for the sports world. Upon graduation she would love to either be a personal trainer or an athletic director. Upon experience, Braxton has also expressed that being a volunteer trainer has given her great memories and friends.

“I think it’s important to me because I have been a part of the group for going on four seasons,” said Braxton. “They were my first group of friends when I came to school here. I value the friendships I have gained from being a volunteer.”

FROM NOTHIN' TO SOMETHIN': THE ATLANTA BRAVES ARE BACK

Justin Hodges

Sports Editor

In the Atlanta Braves' four year absence from the MLB postseason they managed to build one of the most heralded collection of young players in the league. Patience has been the keyword throughout the rebuild.

The Braves suffered through abysmal seasons during the process, losing at least 90 games in three consecutive seasons from 2014-2017. As Atlanta's young talent continued to develop and show its legitimacy fans could feel the tide slowly turning and the clock began ticking a little faster for the Braves to get back to relevancy.

The 2018 season was expected to be a big step forward towards relevancy after the 2017 season saw several of Atlanta's notable prospects begin to flourish. They were not expected to compete or win many games. The general consensus: the Braves are still a year away from competing for the playoffs. The Braves had other plans.

"This season was a jumping off point for the Braves," said Sam Meredith, Braves writer for TalkingChop. "A lot of rebuilding teams struggle with the trek back to the playoffs (see Phillies), so for Atlanta to get back just four years after they started rebuilding is a credit to how good the team will be moving forward in my opinion. The significance of this season is that it will be remembered as the opening of the Braves contention window."

The Braves went 90-72 this season, becoming the first National League team to win 90 games after losing at least 90 games in three consecutive seasons since 1991; which was also done by the Atlanta Braves. The immaculate turnaround took incredible efforts from one of the youngest teams in the MLB. Youngsters Ozzie Albies and Mike Foltynewicz emerged as All Stars, while veterans Freddie Freeman and Nick Markakis asserted themselves to stardom as two of the best hitters in the NL. However, the real buzz of this Braves team came from one of the biggest sensations that the Atlanta sports scene has ever witnessed: Ronald Acuña Jr.

"Ronald Acuña Jr. has a chance to be the best player in all of baseball and that's not an exaggeration," said Meredith. "He's got a unique personality and he's a marketing team's dream. For a sport trying to revive its fandom amongst the younger patrons he's the perfect guy. Superstar is an understatement, he's going to be a megastar."

Acuña, the frontrunner for National League Rookie of the

Year, batted .293 with 26 home runs playing 111 out of 162 games, including one of the most prolific stretches of hitting that the league has ever seen from a 20 year old player.

Over a stretch of eight games in the month of August Acuña accomplished the following: eight home runs, five straight games with a home run (youngest player ever to do so), three straight games hitting a leadoff home run (the longest streak by anyone since 1996), five home runs in six games (the youngest to do so since 1955).

The Braves' young phenom did not stop setting history there either; in game three of the National League Divisional Series against the Los Angeles Dodgers Acuña became the youngest player ever to hit a grand slam in a playoff game.

The incredible part of what the Braves accomplished this season, despite losing 3-1 in the NLDS, is the fact that this team will only get better. Speculation has suggested that this offseason the Braves will be going all in on adding elite free agents and making potential blockbuster trades to try and pair more superstar-level players with this incredible young core.

"The Braves have the chance for one of the best off-seasons ever," said Meredith. "They have a rare combination of young talent mixed with an already established superstar (Freddie Freeman) along with one of, if not the, best farm systems in baseball. Match all of that up with a competent general manager and the payroll room the Braves are expected to have and you could see an absolute monster team next season in Atlanta."

The significance of the Braves' newfound success this season reaches far past the clubhouse. The Braves are the staple of the Atlanta sports spectrum.

"Seeing as how the Braves are the only professional sports team in Atlanta history to win a title, the significance of them being good again brings a huge boost to the city," said Meredith. "It isn't absurd to think that the Braves are the most popular team in Atlanta and now that they're good again the city has something to rally behind as they showed with their ridiculous turnout for the playoffs."

Simply put, the Atlanta Braves are back. The 2018 season was the introduction to what is likely to be a dynasty, a taste of greater things that are to come. The future is now.



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