



Asian Hate Crimes Addressed at UWG Diversity Panel

By Abby Grizzard
Contributing Writer

UWG’s Center for Diversity and Inclusion hosted a panel, “Stop Asian Hate: Healing and Action After Atlanta Shooting,” on March 25, responding to the recent shooting perpetuating Asian discrimination and hate. The event was held live through Zoom and was available to all of the university’s students and faculty. The panel featured a plethora of speakers, including Stephanie Chalifoux, Steve Goodsen, Mai Mills, Yan Yang, Taimyr Strachan-Louider, Nisha Gupta and Sharmistha Basu-Dutt.

The event started with each panelist providing a short synopsis in their particular field of specialization or study to reflect on the events of the Atlanta shooting. The panelists covered an array of topics such as Asian hate crimes, Asian American case studies, Asian stereotypes, university counseling services and more. Throughout the course of the event, attendees were given allotted time to ask questions from the panelists.

Stephanie Chalifoux, a UWG Associate History Professor, covered stereotypes regarding hypersexualization of Asian American women in the United States and how these stereotypes coincide with the Atlanta shootings.

“Asian American women or women of Asian descent are both somewhat hypersexualized and also submissive and we need to understand where this is forming,” said Chalifoux. “It’s formed through these laws, through these acts, these legal codes, but it’s also forming in this notion of what is cultural difference in the United States and what is immigration.

“The fetishization of Asian Women and sexual desire for Asian Women, it is not an addiction,” continued Chalifoux. “But it’s a stereotype that’s constantly sort of reinforcing this notion of Asian Women being sort of sexually available, sort of for the taking. So I think it’s important for

us to kind of understand some of this context, so we can understand what happened in Atlanta or make sense of what happened in Atlanta.”

Other panelists such as Mai Naito Mills, an Associate Professor of Criminology at UWG, comparatively utilized narrative anecdotes to communicate the unrightful crimes being perpetrated against Asian Americans. In his speech, Mills references a specific instance in which an Asian American was unjustly represented within the criminal justice system.

“As we have had many tragic incidents of violent attacks of Asians in recent times, one of the cases that really stuck out to me was the killing of Vincent Chin who was beaten to death by two white men in Detroit back in 1982,” said Mills. “The perpetrators were charged with second degree murder, but ultimately they both played, to a lesser charge of manslaughter. They were sentenced to three years probation and a \$3,000 fine. Neither of them served any prison time.”

While numerous injustices and discriminatory acts performed against Asian Americans were discussed throughout the panel in order to address the Atlanta hate crime, panelists such as UWG Professor Dr. Yan Yang described a hopeful future for Asian Americans. She expressed to event participants that acts such as these are inspiring unity and strength in the Asian community.

“This is a very difficult time, with so many crimes, so much hatred, so much violence, but I find Asians are more united than ever,” said Yang. “I feel like this minority group is finally waking up. We’re no longer the silent ones that just put our heads down and work hard. We unite together and make our voices heard, and this is manifesting throughout the nation in the national demonstration against anti-Asian violence.”

Dr. Taimyr Strachan-Louider, a Marriage and Family Therapist at the University Counseling Center, also spoke at the event to remind students

and faculty of their available resources of support through the campus.

“I realize that in this virtual time many students may not know that we are still here and we are still sources of support for them, and so at the Counseling Center, you will find licensed professional counselors who work with an array of presenting issues,” said Strachan-Louider. “I have heard concerns about whether or not counselors are able to address cultural issues, and I would like to say that we do receive that type of training to meet the needs of each of our students here.”

While discriminatory hate crimes against minorities are prevalent within the American culture, several of the panelists expressed the hope that can result from such tragedies.

“I think I see a lot of hope and a lot of light, and more importantly, I see a lot of social awareness and that’s why we’re here today. I see all this attendance, and I’m very encouraged,” said Yang. “Even this panel is a manifestation of how we’re all coming together, regardless of our skin color, to combat racism to raise awareness of the hardships the Asian population is going through in this country and as an education initiative.”

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NEWS

Local Non-Profit Gives Babies DriButts

By Samara Marshall
Contributing Writer

ReThread Thrift is a local store that uses its funds to support their non-profit organization called DriButts that helps locals in need. “I started DriButts in 2013,” said Michael Wahl, one of the co-founders of DriButts. “Through my church I started working in Haiti, and I realized the extreme need for water and toilets. A lot of people do not realize that 2 billion people live without access to a toilet. “So I started to work building toilets and latrines in Haiti, and I saw the next step for us was when I saw a mom pick up a naked baby and on cue the baby poops all on the mom and she just rushes out of the house and keeps going,” continued Wahl. “They didn’t understand the concept of what bacteria is and why it makes them sick.” While in Haiti, Wahl asked questions about the sanitation efforts there. He then found out that not a lot of babies had diapers. If they did have diapers it was just a few to go to doctor’s appointments, but when they got home the parents would take the diapers off. “At night when everyone is in the house, that is the most important time for a baby to have a diaper on,” said Wahl. “If you are living in a little hut and seven or so people are living in it, it’s hard to stay safe, especially if the baby is moving and crawling. It can be completely unsanitary. That is why we started this idea of how we can help them not only diaper their children but educate themselves.” When Wahl started to work and educate people about proper sanitation efforts in Haiti he saw a reduction in diarrhea in the area. They knew that regular diapers probably

The Wolf Internet Radio Recognized for Production Achievements

By Samara Marshall
Contributing Writer

The Wolf Internet Radio recently received many awards this past year, including the Bret Micheals Spirit of College Radio Day Award with Honorable Mention in the BEA’s Dr. Marjorie Yambor Signature Station and three awards in the Intercollegiate Broadcast System Media and Management Awards. “The Intercollegiate Broadcast System Media and Management Awards are two different awards,” said Shawn Issac, General Manager of the Wolf Internet Radio. “The media awards are all of the on-air work, productions, promotions and more that we do here at the station and the management awards are your opportunity to nominate student leaders for outstanding work in their roles. We submit everything in October and the announced finalists in January and in the first week of March they announce the winners.” The Wolf Internet Radio was able to submit 77 pieces of material/nominees from student leaders for awards. The students’ work was then judged against multiple schools who submitted material for these awards as well. The Wolf won Best TV Station Promotion, Best Promotion Director and Michel Tucker was awarded Best College Media Advisor. “The Best Promotion Director is a student award and the Best College Media Advisor went to Michel Tucker,” said Issac. “So it’s both staff and students that were able to be nominated and win.” The Wolf Internet Radio also earned the Bret Micheals Spirit of College Radio Day Award with Honorable Mention in the BEA’s Dr. Marjorie Yambor Signature Station this past December. “Yes, this is the tenth year or so that was founded by Dr. Rob Quip at Williams Paterson University to have an event to show the importance of college radio because many universities and colleges do not want to fund college radio,” said Issac. “They don’t want to fund specifically those who broadcast over FM and AM frequencies because of the cost

were not the answer and that making cloth diapers would be of more long term use and help aid in proper sanitation. “Right now we make diapers in the countries we work in and we have five ladies who sew for us in Haiti,” said Wahl. “The diapers are made out of high quality and unique products where you can wash them in a bucket of soap and water and the inside will dry in two hours and the outside will dry in about 30 minutes. They will last for four years. Each family gets around eight to nine diapers and they are good to go.” This organization has assisted families in Haiti through teaching people about the importance of proper sanitation and distributing diapers. As the organization continues to make diapers, there are a few challenges to solve. “COVID-19 has been interesting because the main way we fund and do distribution is through trips, churches and conferences and all three of them have shut down,” said Wahl. “We are lucky to still have the thrift store because we were able to still fund DriButts when nothing else could. We have not stopped what we are doing but just slowed it down.”

Photo: Samara Marshall, *The West Georgian*



that is associated with keeping them where they are at. Overall, It was the way to garner support of university administration from all over the county and show the importance of college radio.” College Radio Day allows individuals to celebrate and support college radio stations world-wide. After the first year of having College Radio Day international, universities started to participate as well. With more and more universities participating over the years the competition can seem quite tough. “We were able to put together a program where students were on-air all day, and then we did a socially distant alumni reunion,” said Issac. “So the university stations that participated were able to submit to the Spirit of College Radio Day award and basically tell the committee what you did and why it was important to you as a college station. So we submitted and were selected one out of ten international college stations.” The faculty and staff at the Wolf Internet Radio have to put in many hours to make content for their listeners each semester. When asked about their work ethic and what makes them stand out from other radio stations, Issac explains that it’s about dedication and continuing to try your hardest. “From the general manager perspective, we constitute to make our operations and our content better than the year before,” said Issac. “We don’t settle for what we got but continue to seek for more.”

Photo courtesy of The Wolf Internet Radio



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NEWS

Local Band Virginia Ave. Finds Growing Success

By Kayla Henderson
Contributing Writer

2020 was a whirlwind year of confusion and boredom for many people. A lockdown that was predicted to only last two weeks turned into months of sitting behind phone screens and waiting for the world to come back to life. Separated from the normal routine of everyday life, time seemed to sit still.

Yet, Will Roberts used the free time as an opportunity to create. He began to strum chords on his guitar and knew what he was making needed a bigger outlet than just the melodies stuck in his head. After a FaceTime call between friends in Athens, GA, a newly found band was formed... Virginia Ave.

The band has five members: Katie Crabtree, Garen Griffin, Zach Keung, Andreas Marsh and Will Roberts. Because of lockdown, the creative process looked a little different than it usually would for the beginning stages of a band. Long calls, voice memos and sending song lyrics through group chats was how the band spent the first few months.

“Virginia Ave. would not exist, in a weird way, without the pandemic. It gave all of us more free time in lockdown to start to have that creative process,” says Will, Lead Guitarist for Virginia Ave. “I set up a recording studio in my room where I would record on my guitar and send it to the rest of the band in Athens. That is how we made a lot of our music.”

Will had labeled song samples “Virginia Ave.,” named after the street he lived on in La-Grange, GA. The name stuck, and the band had its name.

Growing up Will had always had a strong relationship with music. Much of the style he plays today he attributes to the music he was surrounded by when he was younger.

“I think that music is so intertwined with emotion and our everyday lives,” says Will. “There is hardly a time where I don’t have headphones in listening to something.

“My dad always had music playing in the house. It was a little bit of everything from gospel to Al Green. We listened to it all,” continues Will. “A lot of that led to me begging my dad to teach me to play guitar. He taught me what he knew and in freshman year of high school, and then I started taking lessons.”

Virginia Ave. falls under the umbrella of the alternative genre, written with hints of soul, folk

and bluegrass. The band’s *Outside* EP was released in late 2020 featuring four tracks, including the group’s first single, “Time Rolls On.” The EP came together through the process of collective songwriting. Each band member helped to write and create the lyrics in each of the songs.

“We have taken a big workshop approach to writing within the band, which I learned a lot from my own creative writing classes,” says Will. “One of the most important lessons I’ve learned is that any critique is valid when we all are coming together to write.

“We never come down on each other’s ideas,” Will continues. “At first, it can be really uncomfortable when saying how to improve on something, but we all have been able to have constructive conversations about how to create the best piece we can for our sound.”

Will admits he feels the band will continuously work to figure out exactly what Virginia Ave.’s sound is. Despite all of the band members returning back to their college classes, the band has been working hard to continue to create content together.

“Moving forward we want to release more singles this year and eventually an album,” says Will. “Soon we would like to start doing more covers while in the process of writing.”

Aside from their own work, Virginia Ave. hopes that they can cover other artists and add their own Virginia Ave. spin to the songs they cover.

“There are a lot of unwritten rules about covering like justifying how you want to cover it and making it different and your own,” says Will. “We’ve tossed around some ideas like Paul Simon or The Velvet Underground. Whatever we choose to cover, we want to make it our own and have our own spin on it.”

March will mark one year since the creation of Virginia Ave. The band hopes that they will continue to do what they love. Over the past year the band’s fanbase has grown to more than 5,000 streams of their EP “*Outside*” on Spotify. Last year, they were also able to play their first COVID-19 safe live show in Athens, GA.

“Working with your friends is so rewarding. I am so thankful we get to do what we do,” says Will. “We do not have a belief that we will ever get famous, but in the end, it’s about how much fun we had while doing it.”

Photo courtesy of Will Roberts



NEWS

CCA Encourages the Arts with Annual Art Takeover

By **Brittany Shadix**

Contributing Writer

Many local artists and musicians gathered in the Carrollton Center for the Arts (CCA) last Thursday evening for the city's annual Art Takeover event.

The threat for severe weather did not keep the historic city from celebrating the talents of its residents. Instead of gathering on Adamson Square per tradition, most exhibits were moved inside the CCA. The event gave guests the opportunity to admire a variety of art showcases and listen to live musical performances.

"We have local artists set up displays of their work downtown around businesses on and near the Carrollton square—thus the title Art Takeover," said Visual Arts Coordinator for CCA, Marcella Kuykendall. "The weather affected some of our plans since most aspects of the event were planned for the outdoors. This year these artists were located in the art center due to the rain."

From 5 to 8 p.m., more than 100 visitors walked through the center to see a variety of artistic pieces including paintings, pottery, woodwork and stitchwork. Many artist vendors had their work available for purchase while other demonstration artists showed their creative process of painting on canvas or making clay pottery.

"Our main goal is to support the arts and connect the wider community to local artists and downtown businesses," said Kuykendall. "We want to show that art is a vibrant and integral part of Carrollton. We want to inspire people to become patrons or artists themselves."

CCA has served as a catalyst for the arts since opening in 2002, and it continues to expand that influence with the annual Art Takeover. In addition to the local artist showcase that is a recurring part of the event, CCA works alongside

Photo: Brittany Shadix, *The West Georgian*

the university's art program each year to foster the growth of student artists through the UWG Student Exhibit. To enter, students submit images of their artwork, and a judge selects which pieces of art will be displayed at the Depot on Bradley from March 17 through the evening of the Art Takeover.

"Students who are selected for the show hopefully feel encouraged to keep producing artwork and showcasing their piece," said Kuykendall. "Applying for the show, getting artwork ready and communicating with the show's installers is good practice should they want to continue entering exhibitions. The show can also appear on their resume, which is especially nice for young artists just starting their careers."

An awards reception was held the night of the Art Takeover to announce the top five artists. Those students will receive a months-long group exhibition at the art center this fall. Apart from these fixed sub-events, CCA offers other experiences that vary year to year. Special to this year, the center unveiled its Peace Pole and Post-it note exhibit. On each side of the pole are the words "May Peace Prevail on Earth" written in different languages. Students in elementary school added to the exhibit by sharing what peace means to them on a Post-it note. CCA also unveiled a new sculpture on display at the New Lomason Memorial Library and a temporary mural to be installed on the outside wall of the art center.

"Each year, we try to do something special," said Kuykendall. "Since we had to cancel the event last year due to COVID-19, we wanted to make this year bigger and better."

"The introduction of the sculpture at the library, mural and peace pole are all part of this," continued Kuykendall. "The center is excited to get back to holding events like this and being a part of supporting the creative community."



NEWS

UWG Hosts Paws to Relax on National Puppy Day

By Madison Creech
Contributing Writer

In the United States, National Puppy Day is March 23. To celebrate, the UWG bookstore hosted Paws to Relax, an event for students and professors alike to relax and have some classic dog therapy.

Many students came to get puppy love along with time to put their minds at ease before the stress that comes with the end of the semester. With finals just around the corner, students’ stress levels tend to rise as it fastly approaches. Paws to Relax provided an outlet for students to release their stress and calm their minds before they had to stress over exams and projects. UWG students along with professors attended the event and enjoyed the company of the multiple therapy dogs provided by Therapy Pups.

The dogs and puppies present seemed to enjoy their human time as well. Rosie laid out on the ground for some “good girl” belly rubs by multiple students. Luna jumped for joy for all the love she was receiving from students and teachers. All three of the pups at the event received many yummy treats within the two hours that the event took place. The dogs also had many toys with them, so students and teachers had the opportunity to play with the dogs. Many human faces were licked during the event that day and those licks were traded for pets on the dogs backs, heads and of course bellies.

“Seeing sweet puppies made me forget about all the post spring break stress for a minute, and I even got to give them treats,” said UWG student, Jordyn Meeks. “Paws to Re-

Editorial: The Election Integrity Act Does Not Suppress Voter Rights

By Madeline Wilbanks
News Editor

Delta and Coca-Cola, both major Atlanta companies have joined many others in raising their voices against the recently passed Election Integrity Act. Governor Brian Kemp, signed the new bill into law on March 25, which has started a string of debates that has continued for the last few days. Many individuals have nicknamed the bill the ‘Jim Crow’ because of the belief that it encourages voter suppression and limits people’s right to vote. President Joe Biden, as well as Atlanta public figures such as Tyler Perry have called it by its new nickname.

The question is raised, is the bill really as bad as everyone thinks it is? In a world full of reading the news, and agreeing with the arguments, it’s especially hard to do your own research on the topic... especially when it comes to an almost 100-page document about election laws. But no worries, I read it for you, and so did UWG Political Science professor, Karen Owen.

“The media along with many groups want to paint this entire bill as hindering the rights of certain voters and suppressing the votes of people of color,” said Owen. “I believe that this narrative is misleading and not accurate. There are changes and reforms to the current state laws, but these new laws and provisions do not suppress voters’ rights.”

The new law does a number of things. One of the major sources of controversy is how the law deals with absentee ballots. Per the bill, absentee ballot boxes will now be placed inside secure polling locations, allowing for it to be in a safe location from being tampered with. However, changes have been put on the absentee ballots also, requiring all voters to provide their drivers license number or ID number, something you already had to do if you choose to vote in person.

“The state carefully through the lawmaking process worked to include better measures after hearing from many constituents of the state that had concerns,” said Owen. “The final act reforms the election law but does so with providing measures that give greater access to early voting on the week-ends and ensures that those voting cannot commit any type of fraud. Almost 75% of Americans sup-

lax was the best event UWG has had all year.”

Some students brought their own dogs as well, which filled the front entrance of the UWG bookstore with many happy humans and furry friends.

“The woman that had Rosie said that it was their first event since COVID-19 even started,” said UWG student Anna Roberts. “I think it was really nice for them and for us. It was definitely a nice break from studying, especially since we’re hitting the part of the semester where everything feels so stressful. The dogs were adorable, ten out of ten cutest things I’ve ever seen.”

Many students at the event have asked if the bookstore will have another event like Paws and Relax in the future. Some students brought their own dogs as well, which filled the front entrance of the UWG bookstore with many happy humans and furry friends. The owners of the Therapy Pups said they would be happy to visit UWG again in the future, and that their happy go lucky companions would be happy to return.

Photo courtesy of @uwestga on Instagram



port showing a photo ID for voting, and these new changes make sure that all Georgians voting whether in person on Election Day or by absentee show an ID proving they are indeed registered to vote and legally allowed to cast a ballot.”

The new law also allows for early voting days. Meaning that there will now be two Saturdays available for early voting, as well as two optional Sundays. This allows for more opportunities to vote beforehand and hopefully limits the amount of people voting on election day. However, because of the presumed shorter lines that the bill will provide, there are still debates as the bill no longer allows for voters to be handed water or any food related items while standing in line.

“The media has stated that food and water cannot be provided to those standing in line,” said Owen. “The law does state that no person can provide materials including food and water within 150 feet of a precinct or polling location. Thus, if a voter is in line within that 150 feet an outside person or group could not give him or her water or food – seen as electioneering. But, the county can provide water stations for voters, and at 150 feet and 1 inch any one can give voters food and water. I think this issue was perhaps a bit overblown.”

Despite the controversy over the bill, there are still many good things that it provides. It creates an even more secure foundation for elections, and should limit any worries that an individual’s vote was tampered with. It allows for more voting opportunities, clearly marked sample ballots, and continual reportage of ballots cast and long lines.

“This act is important to Georgia’s election laws,” said Owen. “I think that at times the state legislature must respond to constituents’ concerns about the security, fairness, and access to the ballot box. It is important for all Georgians to have confidence in the voting process and that their votes are counted properly. I believe the state experienced new challenges with the Covid pandemic which brought to light the importance of updating the voting laws, especially such a measure as the security of drop boxes.

“The act will restore confidence, and it will encourage those who have concerns about the bill to vote,” continued Owen. “Georgia will not see a decline in voter turnout. People are interested and they will vote.”

ENTERTAINMENT

The Prince of Zamunda Is Back: ‘Coming 2 America’

By **Brittany Hall**
Contributing Writer

Just like *Coming to America*, *Coming 2*

It has been 33 years since *Coming to America* was displayed on the big screen. Now Eddie Murphy is back as the King of Zamunda in the sequel *Coming 2 America* which is being displayed on Amazon Prime Video and in theaters.

Coming 2 America shows the story of Akeem's current life after he went to America to find love. He married Lisa McDowell and now has three beautiful daughters. After the death of his father, King Jaffe Joffer, he is now the King of Zamunda, and since he and his wife did not bear a son there is nobody to take the throne after him. However, it is revealed to him that he has a son in America named Lavelle Junson who was conceived after he was drugged during his first visit to Queens, NY. Now Akeem needs to travel back to America to retrieve his son and bring him back to Zamunda so he can train to be a Prince. If not, Zamunda could face a hostile takeover by Zamunda's militaristic neighbor nation Nexdoria, whose dictator, General Izzi has been pushing Akeem's eldest daughter Meeka into marrying his son. Akeem has not been to America ever since he found love and married Lisa. Therefore, there are a lot of questions and suspicions that come with going to America to find his son. Will Akeem find his son and convince him to come back to Zamunda with him, train him to be a Prince and soon to be King?

America shows the problems that women face today. For example, a woman not being able to be the ruler of a country without a man by her side. The film also addresses arranged marriages and the woman's presumed role to simply be whatever the man wants her to be. However, *Coming 2 America* tried to break that stigma by having the women become more independent throughout the movie.

Fans were excited that there was a sequel to *Coming to America* to finally see what happened after Akeem and Lisa got married in Zamunda at the end of the movie. *Coming 2 America* did a good job at giving the fans closure of their love story and their development after the first movie. The sequel did a good job of connecting the characters from the first movie to the second movie. Then the sequel also provided a couple of flashbacks throughout the movie for fans to remember what occurred in the first movie which was helpful to the audience.

The film was executed well by making sure the characters stayed the same as the first, with the same culture, dance breaks and concepts as the first movie. Most importantly, *Coming 2 America* had the same theme as the first *Coming to America* which is following your heart and being your own person and not who someone tells you to be.

Photo courtesy of Amazon Studios



ENTERTAINMENT

When Serious Tones Meet Comedic Wit in ‘Good Girls’

By Taylor Blessett
Contributing Writer

Looking for a thrilling, but hilarious show that will keep you on your toes and at the edge of your seat? *Good Girls* is the best bet for you. Filled with witty comedy and a good number of action-packed scenes, *Good Girls* is about three very different women all trying to make ends meet for their families.

This is tested by what the three women are willing to do in order to get the money that they need. Unknown to them, the deeper they get sucked into the grand scheme of things by their decisions, the harder it is to live the innocent lives that they once had lived.

The show follows Beth, the perfect homemaker and mother, who is married to a cheating car salesman that spent all of their money on his mistress. It also follows Beth's younger sister Annie, who is a single mother and is dealing with a difficult custody battle with her ex and has one child that is in search of finding her gender identity. Lastly, it follows their best friend Ruby, who is married to a police officer but is struggling due to their daughter's medical issues.

The show follows how these women make the decision to rob their local grocery store to make ends meet for themselves. Later, these women find out that the grocery store was just a business ploy used by a secret corporation and its owner, Rio, to cover up a bigger, more illegal operation. They then find themselves in

great trouble with not only their own financial burdens, but with Rio's as well.

Good Girls has a tendency to have a serious tone, but a comedic flow. These three characters flow so well with each other and all three bring something different to the table. Beth serves more as a leader when negotiating with Rio and planning. Annie is more like the inside man that is good with logistics and making the plan come alive. Ruby serves more as moral ethics and is a great person when backup is necessary, but of course, how moral could they all be if they planned to rob a grocery store to solve their financial problems?

Overall, the show is fantastically put together and will have you at the end of your seat the entire time wondering what will happen next. The irony of the title *Good Girls* brings such a great mix with these good women actually just living day by day when their lives change because of a decision that they made to support themselves.

So what? The decision was bad... but in the end, I believe it provokes the question of if you believe that you were a highly moral person suffering with unbearable financial burdens, what would you do in order to solve the problem? With that being said, if you are looking for a show that will make you laugh, make you cry, and make you shout, then *Good Girls* is it.

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