



Local band Small Reactions Receives a Big Reaction and Review

By Abby Grizzard
Contributing Writer

Small Reactions is a punk-pop band based out of Kennesaw, Ga., who have integrated into the Atlanta punk scene since 2005. With strong post-punk roots, Small Reactions features Rossellini Politi, Scottie Hoffman and Sean Zearfoss. The band began playing in East Atlanta in 2009 and have grown as they maintain a presence in the Atlanta punk scene.

Small Reactions has signed with a record label upon the release of their third album, *New Age Soul*. Their collaboration with their record label has provided many promotional benefits.

“We have a small label we’re working with out of Kentucky called SofaBurn Records,” said Zearfoss. “They released and promoted our most recent record and are great to work with.”

“Having a label this time made things a lot easier,” continued Zearfoss. “There’s more hands for projects and more people with a vested interest.”

One of the band’s most important values is their belief and passion towards the music they create with one another. Despite recent declines in the punk scene itself, the band continues to chase this passion.

“Punk has a sense of community and going to these shows at a young age, I felt this feeling of kids that weren’t really being watched over because when you’re in school you don’t have that freedom,” said Politi. “And then you go to a punk show.”

“To me, Punk represents that freedom of a place where people could go who aren’t into sports or something,” continued Politi. “It becomes their outlet.”

The love of punk and freedom incites is reflected in the band’s journey and sound. Their connection to one another is what they believe creates the magic of their band.

“We believe in our music,” said Zearfoss. “We came into the

scene as a lot of people were leaving it, but we’ve been slow and steady, having the goal to grow more each year. The most important thing is that we enjoy playing together and believe in our music.”

The members of Small Reactions were greatly influenced from young ages by the eclectic nature of punk-pop and everything that goes along with it.

“When I was 14, I first heard Black Sabbath and the music almost scared me,” said Zearfoss. “But then I kept listening to it and realized that it was something kind of special and elicited a reaction.”

“I think music has this innate power to draw an emotion and reflect emotion while also connecting people, it’s art,” continued Zearfoss. “That art lives and breathes on stage and you build it every time you play a show.”

As the members of the band found their love for music, they began their journey of chasing the punk scene and sound. Not only was the music completely captivating to them but the connection between the audience and the musicians greatly appealed to their desires as artists.

“Punk blurs the line between the stage and the audience,” said Politi. “People would even be up on the stage and wouldn’t get kicked off.”

“Punk music to me is to have an outlet for a show that makes you think, wow I just went to an event, not like I just watched a movie,” continued Politi.

Small Reactions aims to captivate this energy and connection to the audience, not only through punk but by pushing the boundaries between the melodic tunes of pop and intensity of punk. This can be seen through the course of each of their albums as the different elements of music blend together to create their unique sound.

“I’ve always envisioned us as a punk band, but we try to push those ideas to this sort of edge,” said Zearfoss. “Almost like how far can

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we walk a pop melody in left field before it’s no longer punk music.

“We kind of hover over that line between a strong melody and chaos and noise,” continued Zearfoss. “We want our music to be catchy and melodic but we also want it to be interesting with nuanced melodies and complex structures.”

Small Reactions will be playing their next show at The Earl in Atlanta on Friday, August 27 at 8:00 p.m. EST. The concert will feature the release of their aforementioned third album, *New Age Soul*. Tickets can be purchased through The Earl’s website for viewers 21 and older.

Photo courtesy of Small Reactions



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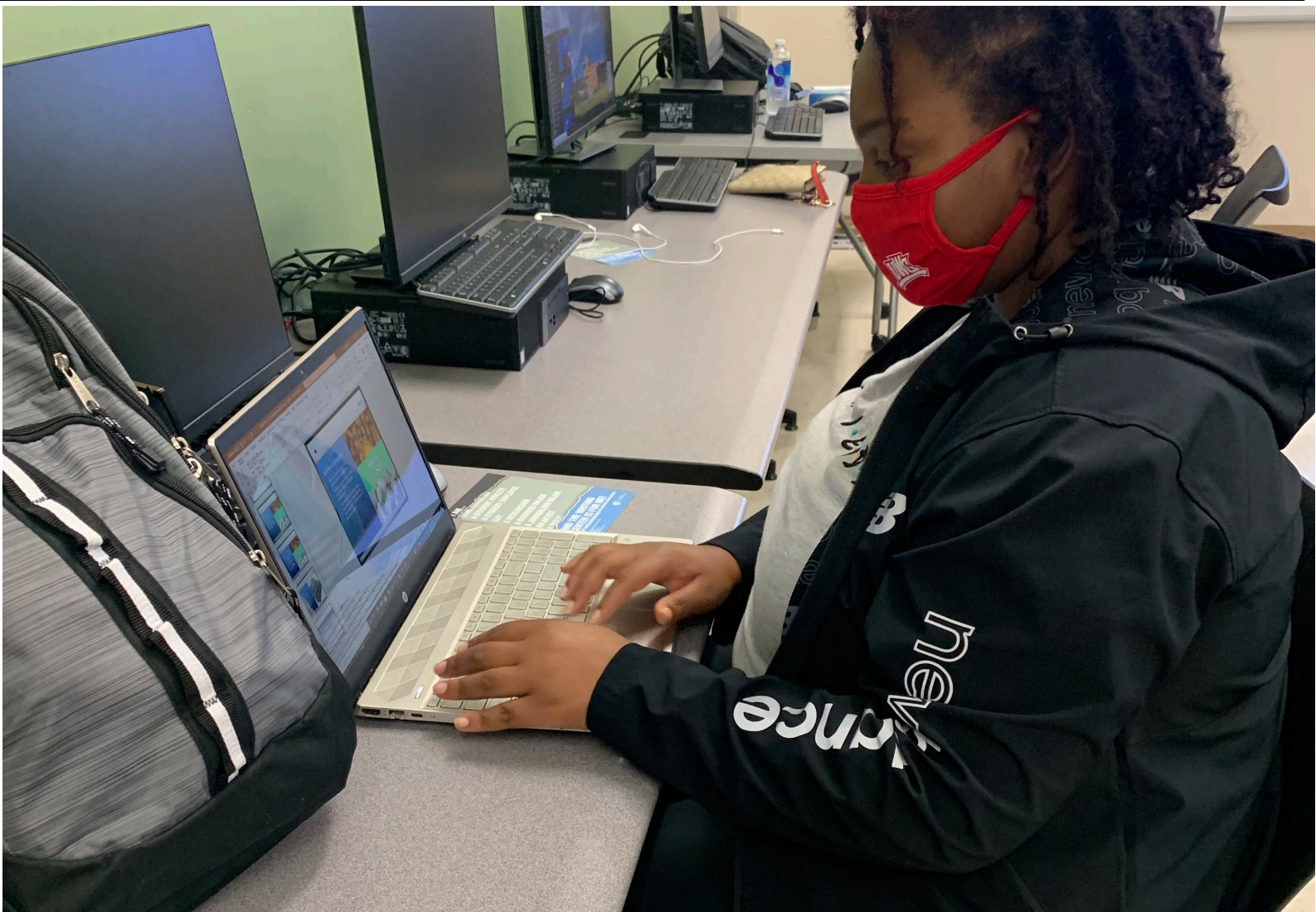


Photo: Amanda Clay, *The West Georgian*

MASKS: What’s the Deal?

By Amanda Clay
Contributing Writer

University System of Georgia (USG) Board of Regents drops the previous mask mandate for fall 2021 but insists that masks still remain an important part of COVID-19 control on campus.

The University of West Georgia will no longer require students and faculty to wear masks inside of campus facilities for fall 2021 in accordance with a decision by the USG Board of Regents. According to Dr. Eric Heine, Medical Director of Health Services at UWG, this decision was made prior to the recent surge in coronavirus cases in Georgia. In prior semesters, USG had ruled that masks were a requirement to enter buildings on campus. The Board of Regents has not yet made a decision to reconstitute the mask mandate.

Despite the decision from UWG, university officials are still attempting to stress that masking up and getting vaccinated are still an important part of preventing the spread of the surging Delta variant.

“CDC and DPH guidance states that masks do play a role in the mitigation of transmission and until this pandemic is truly under control, it is recommended that

they [masks] should be utilized to help prevent spread,” said Dr. Heine. “Per USG guidance, everyone is encouraged to wear a mask or face covering while inside campus facilities and all students, faculty, staff and visitors are urged to get vaccinated either on campus or with a local provider.”

This mask recommendation applies to everyone regardless of vaccination status, according to Dr. Heine. Newly released CDC data shows that vaccinated individuals carry similar viral loads as the unvaccinated when infected and can therefore easily spread the virus.

“It is the CDC and DPH’s recommendations that vaccinated individuals continue masking, especially indoors where social distancing is not feasible,” said Dr. Heine.

Mask wearing has been a particularly controversial topic in recent months in Georgia, as many are suffering from “pandemic fatigue” and frustration at the need to continue taking precautions. Despite these desires to return to a post-pandemic era, UWG is attempting to make it clear to students and faculty that the first step to a more normal university is to mask up in campus facilities in tandem with getting vaccinated.



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NEWS

Cuomo is “No Mo” as he resigns his position as Governor of New York amidst sexual assault allegations

By Brittany Mersfelder

Contributing Writer

The resignation of New York State governor, Andrew Cuomo, was received August 10 following multiple sexual harassment allegations and other unlawful violations. Cuomo was accused by 11 different women who spoke up about the unwarranted advances, groping and comments made by Cuomo. These women were inspired by the “Me Too” movement; this movement involves bringing awareness to the bouts of sexual assault many women have endured by the same or different male figure. The Attorney General for the state of New York, Letitia James, found these allegations to be legitimate. As powerful as Cuomo was, these women speaking together about similar experiences with Cuomo brought about his resignation and loss of ability to run for governor again.

The “Me Too” movement began in 2006 but began to go viral in 2017. The hashtag “#MeToo” was trending on Twitter for months since it became a viral sensation. This movement has since been active, allowing thousands of women across the United States, who were affected in some way to take back their lives. This

organization aides in the changing of laws and policies, awareness of sexual assault and ensures the media will cover major allegations such as those with Cuomo. This movement has also provided insight as to how many women are truly affected by sexual assault.

If asking any woman how she feels about sexual assault, there will most likely be the same or similar answer: sexual assault scars women for life. It is the worst possible event a woman can experience and it creates a fear of men that follows you for the rest of your life. There are more statements that could be made about sexual assault, but each will lead to the same result.

As a woman who has never personally experienced sexual assault, the experience is unknown. There are many women who have experienced sexual assault and shared their stories outside of the “Me Too” hashtag. The stories are not happy to hear and are truly terrifying.

What happened with Cuomo was going to happen at some point in his career, albeit, in the middle of a pandemic where stress is already high. The Me Too movement creates the environment to

allow these women to face men like Cuomo; men in power who should know right from wrong. We should all know what consent is and how to use it properly. Cuomo got what he deserved. It comes as no surprise that Cuomo resigned as more allegations, not necessarily sexual, were coming out and ruining his reputation.

The Me Too organization has offered so many women the help that they needed and the push for legal action against these men. There are women who will, unfortunately, abuse the system to get good men locked away. Cuomo was one of those good men, however, these 11 women have solid proof to back up their claims of sexual assault and harassment. The public should be repulsed by those women who have used the movement for selfish reasons.

In short, the Me Too movement has helped many women to realize they are not alone; so many women across the country have experienced this in one way or another. Women can come together through this movement and bring justice to the men who think they are above the law.

Photo courtesy of Associated Press



NEWS

Health Services providing free COVID-19 Vaccines to UWG Community

By Emma Pence
Contributing Writer

The COVID-19 vaccine is available now at the University of West Georgia through the Health Services on the Carrollton Campus. UWG’s students and faculty can make an appointment through Health Services which will be available Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Not only is the vaccine available to students and faculty but it is also available to immediate family members of employees that are over the age of 12 years old. The Manager of Media Relations, Sam Gentry, was unavailable to comment in regards to

questions about the vaccine and its availability. According to the University Health Center, students and employees are not required to get the vaccine; those who choose not to get vaccinated are encouraged to continue wearing a mask and practicing social distancing. UWG’s Health Services offers the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine. Pfizer-BioNTech is a two-dose series that is given two weeks apart. Those who have received their first dose at another location are welcome to get their second dose at Health Services by appointment only. Getting the vaccine has

been made easy by allowing employees to get vaccinated during work hours and having a simple process to make appointments over the phone. There are zero costs associated with the COVID-19 vaccine. According to the CDC, getting vaccinated prevents severe symptoms such as possible hospitalization, death and helps reduce the spread of the virus in the community. Although the vaccine cannot prevent people from getting COVID-19, it can still be contracted and transmitted. As of August 23, 3,952 COVID-19 vaccinations have been given by UWG. Photo courtesy of Associated Press



NEWS

UWG Graduate leads Carrollton High School as Principal

By Kayla Henderson

Editor-in-Chief

Ian Lyle is proud to call Carrollton his home. The former Carrollton High School and University of West Georgia football player and alumnus, is now serving as principal of CHS this fall following the retirement of former CHS principal David Brooks. With over 13 years of education experience behind him, Lyle is ready to tackle his new role head on.

After graduating in 2008 with his bachelor's degree in History Education from UWG, Lyle would continue his education at Georgia Southern to receive his Masters in Curriculum & Instruction, then returning West to complete two certifications at UWG.

"I discovered that I wanted to go into education during my second year at UWG," says Lyle. "I always knew that I wanted a career that allowed me to help people."

Whether it was in the library or University Stadium, Lyle learned les-

sons both in the classroom and on the football field at UWG as number 72 for the Wolves during the entirety of his college career. Never leaving his love of sports behind, Lyle has continued coaching several sports during his career.

"I learned about the value of leadership, perseverance, and teamwork while playing football at UWG and I apply those lessons daily in my current role," says Lyle. "My time on the football team at UWG showed me that I could positively impact the lives of young people through coaching and teaching."

Lyle has been at CHS since 2017 and had been serving as assistant principal of CHS until last spring.

"I will leverage the strengths of many different people in order to build on the positive school culture and climate that already exists at Carrollton High School," says Lyle. "I am passionate about what I do because education is the most power-

ful and important tool in the growth and development of young people."

Lyle is still in his pursuit of learning more, he is currently working towards his doctoral degree in school improvement.

"I chose UWG for my undergraduate degree because it allowed me to play sports as well as be a student. I was drawn back to UWG because of the reputation of the University as well as the strength of the graduate degree programs," says Lyle. "I have appreciated that the faculty are accessible and are invested in the success of the students. I also appreciate that I have been able to tailor the programs to my professional role."

Lyle is thankful for the foundation that UWG paved for him and the opportunities it has provided him for the future.

"Use your time at UWG to discover what you are passionate about."

Photo courtesy of Ian Lyle



ENTERTAINMENT

HBO MAX Presents: Betty

By Kinadi Dill

Contributing Writer

Skateboarding meets five young women in the American television series *Betty*, a spinoff of the independent film *Skate Kitchen* that highlights female skateboarding culture in New York City through the lens of an all-girl skate group.

Crystal Moselle, the highly respected creator and director of both the film and television series, brought together the movie's main characters again for the spinoff, which produced two seasons with a total of 12 episodes filmed between 2020 and 2021. The show was a tremendous success and received excellent ratings with its first season. HBO has since approved the show for a second season. The show can also be streamed on other platforms such as Amazon Prime and Hulu.

The show, set and filmed in New York City, centers on an all-girl group of skateboarders who are extremely passionate about recreation and are determined to pave a way for female skateboarders within the predominantly male skateboarding scene in New York. Each character presents qualities that make them very distinct from one another; the way each of them dress, to the way they land tricks. This sense of individuality that is captured within each cast member is what sets the tone for the show and naturally ties them together as a group. The show has such a natural, laid-back approach that at times it feels less like a fictional series and more like watching the everyday lives of these young women take place.

Similar to the film's indie style of cinematography, the show has a particular way of capturing light, composition and angles during scenes with certain characters. All-natural lighting is a

major part of the way the show was filmed. Most scenes take place outside during daylight and which serves as a useful tool because of the constant motion. Behind the scenes, camera operators caught a lot of the series skateboarding on skateboards themselves to really focus on stunts. Filming with this technique offers the audience a real point of view into the practice that goes into skateboarding and the injuries that may follow. This makes for a visually authentic experience as a viewer of the show.

The show delivers a variety of tracks that mesh well with the overall charisma, energy of the characters and events that are featured in the soundtrack. Popular mainstream artists such as A\$AP Rocky, Doja Cat, Kendrick Lamar and Drake guest star on the show. There is use of Lo-fi inspired instrumentals and music from various underground indie artists. There are also different tracks that are used when certain characters get screen time and the use of these tracks create tension between characters.

Betty appeals to a younger audience, especially those who skateboard and are familiar with skateboarding culture. That doesn't mean that those who find themselves outside of those parameters won't find something in the show that they find interesting or even relatable. There is a lot to laugh at and even more to appreciate about the way this show was constructed by the director and writers. The authenticity of the characters and events that take place, the cinematography, soundtrack and the storyline of the show is enjoyable and simplistic. This is the kind of show that doesn't require a heavy plot to get the viewers' attention. It's lighthearted, fun and amusing.

Photo courtesy of the Associated Press

