



Photo courtesy of Deborah Matthews

Tanner Health Systems announce Diversion as COVID cases rise

By Amanda Clay
Contributing Writer

Struggling with the rise in Delta variants of COVID-19, cases are sweeping across the state of Georgia. Tanner Health System local to Carrollton has a message to residents: they are running out of space for patients. The total hospital occupancy at the 176-bed facility in the Carrollton location (including 20 ICU) is currently at 121%. According to Deborah Matthews, Senior Vice President and Chief Nursing Officer for Tanner Health System, this current surge is worse than the surge at the beginning of the pandemic in 2020 due to vast age groups of people becoming very sick.

“It’s affecting a broader demographic of people, in greater numbers and with more acute illness,” said Matthews. “Generally, our patients are younger than they were during previous waves of the pandemic, and the number of children younger than 18 is climbing rapidly as well, although [no pediatric] patients are currently hospitalized at our facility.”

The pandemic has taken a tremendous toll on healthcare

providers who are working hard and long hours to meet the demands. There was a shortage of healthcare workers prior to the pandemic, including nurses, physicians and respiratory therapists. COVID-19 has compounded these needs, and Tanner Health System is doing everything they can to recruit more people to work.

“Many employees are working longer hours and agency nurses—nurses that work under contract, are helping to cover gaps,” said Matthews. “Our human resources team is doing a stellar job of recruiting and onboarding staff, but it’s hard, and the need is great. Our current staff is tired.”

Unvaccinated individuals make up the majority of patients severely ill with the disease. Across the three hospitals affiliated with Tanner Health System (located in Bremen, Carrollton and Villa Rica), 97% of those hospitalized with COVID-19 are unvaccinated, and 93% of COVID-19 deaths since February of 2021 have been among the unvaccinated. There are currently no vaccinated individuals on ventilators.

WHAT’S INSIDE

NEWS

PAGES 1-3

Tanner Health Systems announce Diversion as COVID cases rise

By Amanda Clay

UWG Alumni and Former West Georgian Reporter Reflects on Time at Paper 45 Years Later

By Kayla Henderson

Women and children fear what life will look like under Taliban Rule

By Emma Pence

ENTERTAINMENT

PAGES 4-6

Popular Television series All American releases a new season filled with thrilling drama

By Victoria Mitchell

Disney Presents: Cruella; the long awaited Prequel

By Emily Allen

‘Do The Right Thing’: 32 Years Later, It’s Still Relevant

By Kinadi Dill

Review: Rock Band Rise Against releases new album “Nowhere Generation”

By Brittany Mersfelder

The hospitalization data with the vaccinated and unvaccinated is clear—vaccines help prevent severe illness and hospitalization against COVID-19; yet vaccine distrust and online misinformation has had detrimental effects on its public perception. Tanner Health System wants to make it clear to local residents that the vaccine is safe and effective in the prevention of COVID-19. Many people have concerns about breakthrough cases among vaccinated individuals but Matthews says that the vaccine is doing its job in keeping those who get it safe, in addition to preventing strain on the hospital systems.

“Get vaccinated. Our facilities are crowded and our staff is stretched thin but we are trying to hold the line against this virus and help everyone we can,” she said. “Vaccination is safe and though breakout infections can occur—just as they can with any vaccine—your risk of severe illness, hospitalization and death are far lower. Vaccination is our best shot at saving lives and protecting health.”

NEWS



Photo courtesy of Nancy Lee Badertscher

UWG Alumni and Former West Georgian Reporter Reflects on Time at Paper 45 Years Later

By **Kayla Henderson**
Contributing Writer

If you were to look for the office of *The West Georgian* in 1973, you would have to walk down to the end of a dimly lit student center hallway to find a small room. Though the room was plain in itself, the bright and chatty staff always made up for any lack of space or dull appearances. The office had several desks facing a single chalkboard at the front of the room and a lone veteran typewriter that was shared among the college newspaper staff.

In that very room, *The West Georgian* staff was hard at work over the next several decades, remaining the campus’ top source for news. The paper featured articles on the terrible parking situation and when students should register for classes.

Fresh out of her high school graduation in 1973, Nancy Lee Badertscher started at West Georgia College as an English major with ambition but was unsure if she had found her right fit. Her interest in writing eventually led her to connect to the journalism program at WGC.

She attributes much of her passion she found in journalism to one woman: her professor, Dora Byron.

“I also had a wonderful teacher, Dora Byron,” says Nancy. “She was a former journalist and the only professor of journalism at the school at the time. I don’t think I would’ve gone into journalism had it not been for my experiences at the paper, the yearbook and working with Dora.

“I think the best story I ever wrote was about a basketball game that I covered, knowing nothing

about the sport,” continues Nancy. “Dora Byron was editing the stories we all had written, and when she got to the end of mine, having never made a mark on it, she tossed it in the trash. She had little to say except she had higher expectations for me than that story delivered. I left in tears. 15 years later I was at a reunion of the old staff, and she told me she had always expected good things out of me.”

While at West Georgia College, Nancy worked on staff at the paper as a reporter, copy editor and associate editor. She would later become Editor-In-Chief of *The Chieftain*, the college yearbook, in 1976.

Determined, talented and dedicated is how Nancy best described the people who ran the behind-the-scenes of *The West Georgian* in the 70s.

“The people that I worked with at the newspaper were deeply invested,” says Nancy. “They worked long hours, dug deep and were deeply committed to getting the true story.

“All of us put in for more hours than we ever got paid for,” continues Nancy. “You could hardly go in the newspaper office where somebody wasn’t there talking about a story or working on an article. We were the post-Watergate generation, and we didn’t mind butting heads with the administration.”

Despite her love for the paper and yearbook, Nancy left WGC in 1976 to pursue her degree in journalism, at Georgia State University, as journalism was only offered as a minor at WGC during the time. Before transferring schools, Nancy worked for two years at the

Warner Robins Daily Sun, confirming her calling for journalism.

After graduating in 1980, Nancy went on to work for various papers in Warner Robins, Jesup, Statesboro, Gwinnett County, Macon and Atlanta. Her career with the *Atlanta-Journal Constitution* would last for over 15 years.

In 2016, she would begin her current career as a freelance journalist, writing for newspapers such as *The New York Times*.

“I was a reporter, political writer, PolitiFact writer and former Gwinnett bureau editor,” says Nancy. “I loved it all, from running the show in my old stomping ground of Gwinnett, covering state Sen.-turned-Gov. Sonny Perdue and putting the spotlight on local and state education issues.”

Within her career, Nancy has seen an abundance of awards showcasing her talents, winning over a dozen state and national awards. In 1989, she was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in General Reporting with the *Gwinnett Daily News* for “persistent reporting that revealed expense account abuses by members of the local County Board of Commissioners,” as stated in the awards description.

Nancy looks back on her career of 40 years and says she will always remember the stories and work she accomplished.

“The devil is in the details and that every person has a story to tell and an interesting one at that,” says Nancy. “Much is changing about the business and much of it is not good. I think it’s up to each journalist to be true to the craft, report with honesty, integrity and to be true to yourself.”



Kayla Henderson
Editor-in-Chief

Brittany Mersfelder
News Editor

Emily Allen
Copy Editor

Andrew Slay
Graphic Designer

Jada Carswell
Webmaster

Jackson Gamble
Social Media Manager

John Sewell, Ph.D.
Advisor

NEWS



Photo courtesy of Associated Press

Women and children fear what life will look like under Taliban Rule

By Emma Pence
Contributing Writer

After the fall of the Afghanistan government on August 15, women and children fear the regressive return to the way of life implemented by the Taliban during their last ruling.

The Taliban ruled Afghanistan from 1996-2001 before the United States seized the country due to the 9/11 attack on the twin towers. Women were treated poorly and had no rights to help defend themselves. They were not allowed to work or go to school and if they planned to leave the house, they had to be escorted by a male family member.

During the last 20 years, the U.S. has dedicated over \$780 million according to a report found by Dan Bilesfky of the New York Times. This money was spent to better Afghan women's rights including encouraging them to work, join military and police forces, join politics and even compete in the Olympics. All of these factors seemed to be nothing but a dream for women under the Taliban two decades prior.

On August 17 after the Taliban seized the capital, a news conference was held with Taliban rulers to answer questions regarding the takeover. When asked about women and if they will return to the strict

rules they were once made to follow, the Taliban assured that it will be different this time. Women will still be allowed to work, study and participate in government as long as they follow the Islamic law but they promised to have no prejudice against women.

The women are not confident of these claims considering there have been multiple Taliban associated attacks against women and girls through the years. During the last rule, a woman wearing nail polish had the finger that was painted cut off, women accused of adultery were killed and anyone who was a homosexual was punished by death. May 9, 2021, there was an attack involving a car bomb along with two other explosions at a school that ran on a shift schedule rotating the girls and boys. Of course, this explosion was timed perfectly to target women. Over 80 people died that day, the majority being women and high school girls. The Taliban denied any involvement in the attack just as they are denying the attack on the Kabul airport last week.

The actions of the Taliban before the fall of the Afghanistan government is not the only reason Afghan women are weary of these claims considering in some areas of the country, there are signs of old habits from the

Taliban rule emerging.

In Herat, a West Afghan city, Taliban gunmen were seen guarding University gates preventing women, both teachers and students, from entering. Another University in Kabul is not allowing female students to leave their dorm rooms without being escorted by a male relative. Many students travel from out of town to attend school and have no male relatives around. Those girls are essentially trapped in their dorm rooms. In Mazar-i-Sharif, Aliya Kazimy, a female professor, said she and other women were being turned away from shops if they were alone.

Kazimy, like other Afghan women, express their concern for the younger generation who have grown up learning about their country being under Taliban rule. They face the fear that they deemed unimaginable of returning to life under those circumstances. Those who did not follow the behavior, dress, and movement was enforced by morality police who would drive around publicly humiliating, torturing and killing them.

As we watch their world unfold from overseas, the women and children brace themselves as they grasp onto hope for the best as their lives are altered in ways we cannot imagine to be true and only the future will tell.

ENTERTAINMENT



Photo courtesy of Netflix

Popular Television series All American releases a new season filled with thrilling drama

By Victoria Mitchell
Contributing Writer

The popular new television series *All American* was written and directed by April Blair. Blair is a well known American film writer and producer. She has produced popular films such as *Christmas Caper*, *Private Valentine: Blonde and Dangerous* and *Lemonade Mouth*. She has also co produced movies like *The Monte Carlo* featuring Selena Gomez. *All American* was released on October 10, 2018 and can be seen on Netflix. There have been many new seasons added since the release date.

All American is a television series based around football player Spencer Brown, who attends South Crenshaw High school. The setting is based in Beverly Hills and South Crenshaw. South Crenshaw is a low income area compared to Beverly Hills, a high income area. Spencer Brown in the first season is recruited to leave South Crenshaw and play for the Beverly Hills

high school football team. He has to leave his mother and his younger brother to be eligible to play.

In season three, Blair and her co-writers showed the characters standing up for organizations such as Black Lives Matter. Tamika, an African American female, was asleep in her car when an officer approached her. Tamika complied with the officer, however, the officer ended up shooting her. The district attorney's office covered up the incident by saying she was not complying. Olivia, the daughter of the attorney on Tamika's case, uncovers the body cam footage of Tamika's unlawful death. Olivia released the footage on her podcast and this sparks uproar among the community.

Overall, season three tops the other two seasons with the changes in the storyline. It is filled with drama and will leave the viewer wanting to watch more.

ENTERTAINMENT

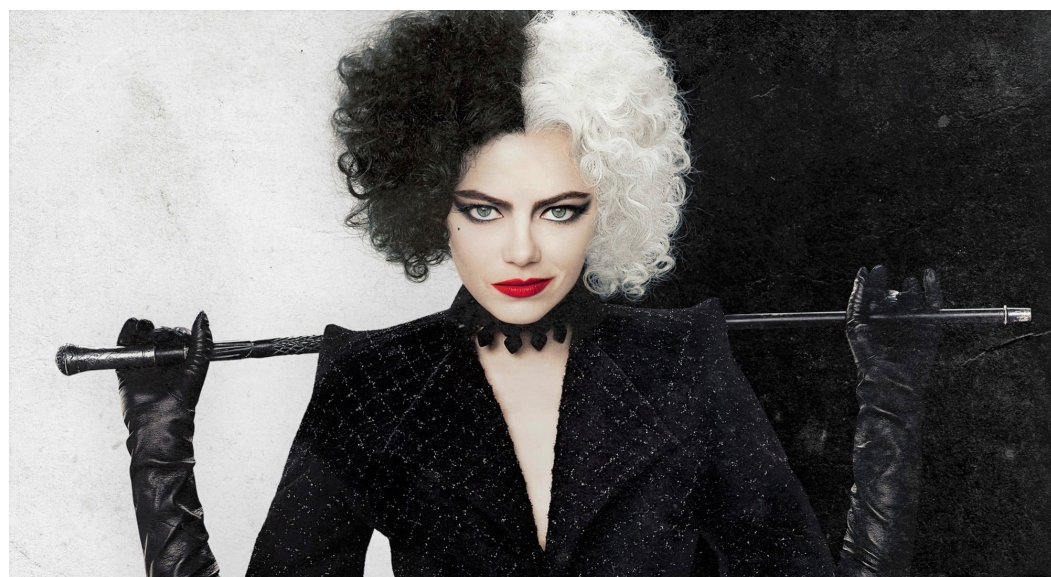


Photo courtesy of The Walt Disney Company

Disney Presents: Cruella; the long awaited Prequel

By **Emily Allen**
Contributing Writer

Cruella is a live-action prequel feature film that was set to be released December 2020 but was delayed to May 2021 due to COVID-19 precautions. This feature film was released in theaters and on Disney+ Premier Access on May 27 of this year but users had to purchase a fee to access the film. Viewers are now able to stream *Cruella* for free on Disney+ starting August 27.

This feature film follows a young girl named Estella who has a dream of becoming a fashion designer when a freak accident kills her mother. She then found two orphaned boys who she went on many heists and adventures with. Estella then got her “dream job” working at the most favored fashion place in town. This leads to Estella, later known as Cruella, to get involved in one of the biggest heists of their lives, leading to a major twist in the film.

When Estella was born, she had black and white hair which made her different from everyone else. She was creative and had a love for dogs, especially the stray dog she picked up off the street named Buddy. Her mother, Catherine, pulled her from school when she was little because she was being bullied and they moved to London. On the way to London, her mother stops at a party that was hosted by Baroness von Hellman where her mother gave Estella her necklace and told her to wait in the car. Buddy escaped the car and Estella went to chase after him where they ran into the Baroness’ Dalmatians. Estella ran outside and saw her mother speaking with the Baroness when the Dalmatians ran Catherine off a cliff leading to her death. Estella grabs Buddy, forgetting her necklace, and takes off into the city meeting two orphaned boys who become her friends.

Years had passed and she was given a gift for her birthday from her two friends, Jasper and Horace, for an entry level position as a janitor at the Liberty fashion store run by the world-famous Baroness. Her manager ignored her even after she pleaded for him to take a chance on her. When staying late one night, Estella “fixes” the window display which was later seen by the Baroness the next morning. The Baroness liked the window display asking Estella to join her elite team. Estella worked very hard and was now the supervisor for the Baron-

ess when she noticed the necklace that she was wearing around neck.

The necklace that the Baroness was wearing was the one that her mother gave her the night of her mothers’ death. In an attempt to steal the necklace back, Estella turns into Cruella crashing the Baroness’ party while her two friends try to steal the necklace. Once Estella makes her appearance, she realizes the Baroness is wearing the necklace that her friends are trying to steal. The Baroness uses a dog whistle to command her Dalmatians when Estella realizes that is the same whistle that she used to direct her dogs to kill her mother. Later, Cruella taunts the Baroness by attracting the public by showing off her outfits at her parties. Estella then kidnaps her three Dalmatians until the Baroness gives her the necklace back.

The film takes a dark turn when the Baroness discovers that Cruella was Estella. The Baroness goes to her house and ties Estella up while she begins to set her house on fire and blames her two friends for her death. Jasper and Horace are then arrested for murder of Estella and put in jail. Estella was rescued by John, the Baroness’ valet, who had received the necklace which is a key to a box containing her birth records. Shockingly, John explains to Estella that the Baroness is her real mother. After coming up with a plan to defeat the Baroness, Estella breaks her two friends out of jail. They send invitations out to each guest attending an upcoming party to trick them into wearing Cruella wigs so when Estella shows up at the party, no one will know it is her. At the party John, Jasper and Horace have everyone go outside where they witness the Baroness pushing Estella over the cliff. Police arrive and the Baroness is then arrested. Cruella uses a parachute and adopts her full name of Cruella De Vil, becoming a villain.

Cruella appeals to a much older audience compared to the original animated movie, *101 Dalmatians*. Even though some may think this film is for children, it contains some frightening dark scenes. It captures the attention of many older children and adults which can be seen as a family film with a dark twist. London. On the way to London, her mother stops at a party that was hosted by Baroness von Hellman where her mother gave Estella her necklace and told her to wait in the car. Buddy escaped the

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ENTERTAINMENT

‘Do The Right Thing’: 32 Years Later, It’s Still Relevant

By Kinadi Dill
Contributing Writer

It has officially been 32 years since the classic film *Do The Right Thing* played on big screens at movie theaters all across America and it is still culturally relevant in our present day. Released in 1989, the film was written by actor and director Spike Lee who is primarily known in the industry for his contentious films that touch up on racial injustice, violence and politics. The movie focuses on the lives of ethnically diverse people who live in a lower-class neighborhood in Brooklyn, New York. Today, the film can be streamed on various platforms such as Amazon Prime, Apple TV and Peacock services.

The movie begins in an urban neighborhood in Brooklyn, New York and brings the audience along for the duration of the day. Almost immediately, the audience is made to feel a sense of community as the characters naturally interact with each other despite how ethnically diverse things are in the area. Viewers get a first hand depiction of how the Italian community socially integrates with the pre-

dominant African-American community and the tension that arises from cultural differences between the two groups. This tension highlights how racial discrimination, social injustice and police brutality impact different characters based on their racial backgrounds. Over three decades later, these are the same issues that are still being tirelessly addressed within American society. Taking initiative and creating a platform to address these issues, especially back then is essentially what brought Lee to prominence as a director and filmmaker.

Throughout the film Lee uses a method of taking stereotypical occurrences to ultimately bring up unconventional topics that society typically shies away from. This method added to the controversy upon its release. The audience is continuously encouraged to think about the events that take place from the lens of different racially-oppressed groups in the community. “Fight the Power” by Public Enemy also served as the main soundtrack on the film and its overall mantra due to its social and political lyrics.

With the production and cinematography aspects of the film, the setting invokes response and involvement from the audience. The film was shot in the Bedford-Stuyvesant neighborhood of Brooklyn, New York. Naturally, this added to the legitimacy of the scenes. The Italian



Photo courtesy of Associated Press

pizza shop and Korean grocery store that are featured in the movie were built from scratch on two empty lots; both were fully functional by the time filming began. The film starts off with a heatwave, giving the filmmakers the ability to use heavy amounts of saturated oranges and reds. These color choices emphasize that it was very hot. Lee and his production team also included dramatic camera angles, such as filming characters from low ground levels or zooming in on their faces, which is a common filming style used by the director.

Do the Right Thing is a debatable film that allows the viewers to contemplate the desired message and its relevance to the world. The film courageously touched up on violence, racial injustice and politics and because of that, it is still able to exist in these important conversations today. It is considered a classic with powerful and relatable concepts that prove to still be incredibly relevant.

Review: Rock Band Rise Against releases new album “Nowhere Generation”

By Brittany Mersfelder
Contributing Writer

Popular rock band Rise Against released their twelfth album on June 4. The album is consistent with the style they have kept since their first album in 2005.

The album opens with “The Numbers”, a song about the starting of a rebellion against the rich. The song is your typical Rise Against rock song that is catchy and will get stuck in your head. The song was one of the first released before the album was released in June. Many Rise Against fans love the nostalgic feel the song gives off. The end of the song states “We will continue to be what we know.” This is a powerful quote overall because we, as people, will only be what we have known and are accustomed to.

The third song is one of the honorable mentions. This song has been on repeat since the release. “Nowhere Generation” is about how the current generation of young people is nothing

like our older, preceding generation. While this is true in more ways than one, Rise Against captures the variety this generation has to offer very well in the song itself. There is an acoustic version of this song that was released after the album was dropped and it is not a style typically reached for by the band.

The next song that was a fan favorite was “Talking to Ourselves”. It is a song about how it seems no one listens to anyone in this day and age and pushes to be heard. It defines the radio silence that we feel when we are unheard. It has an upbeat tempo and that solid rock feel Rise Against is always pushing for. The bridge of this song is not quite their normal style; it changes by losing the lead guitar with the same quick tempo from the beginning.

The song “Broken Dreams, Inc.” is a song that you would expect from the band. It was also one of the singles first released. It has all the typical and expected themes from Rise Against, us-

ing the old school rock sound and fast tempo. The song is about how many Americans lose out on their dreams and how many do not have access to the resources as other Americans.

One song that sounds nothing like Rise Against is “Forfeit”, the sixth song on the album. Forfeit is an acoustic song featuring a full orchestra. Rise Against is not a band that often records acoustic songs, so this song comes as a surprise to the audience. The song has a positive sound aside from being a depressing song about giving up. The song turns around at the end with lyrics of “I will not give up” which sends a motivating message for the audience.

Overall this album rocks. The songs listed above are only a handful of the songs released on the album. Rise Against has always been a band that delivers the same or similar style to their fans. It is an album worth listening to if rock soothes the soul.

UWG THEATRE COMPANY ANNOUNCES UPCOMING SHOWS

THE THEATER COMPANY IS KICKING OFF THE 2021-2022 SEASON THIS FALL WITH A GRAND THEME: “CELEBRATE WOMEN!”

Link to calendar events: <https://www.westga.edu/academics/coah/sota/calendar.php>

FALL 2021:

School Girls; Or, the African Mean Girls Play

By Jocelyn Bioh

Directed by Jonathan Kitt

When: September 29 – October 3

Where: Townsend Center Mainstage

Miss Bennet: Christmas at Pemberley

By Lauren Gunderson and Margot Melcon

Directed by Amy Cuomo

When: November 10-19

Where: Townsend Center Dangle Theatre

SPRING 2022:

Holly Down in Heaven

By Kara Lee Corthron

Directed by Jonathan Kitt

When: February 16-20

Where: Townsend Center Dangle Theatre

Episodes 2022

Director TBA

When: March 3-5

Where: Townsend Center Dangle Theatre

Heathers: The Musical

Music, Lyrics, and Book by Kevin Murphy and Laurence O’Keefe

Based on the film written by Daniel Waters

Directed by Amy Cuomo

When: April 20-24