



**THE
INTERNATIONAL
FESTIVAL:
IN LIVING COLOR**
TAYLOR BLESSETT
Contributing Writer

Photo Courtesy of UWG CSI

University of West Georgia hosted the 38th annual International Festival to showcase the unique cultures of UWG students and cultures globally. The event celebrated cultural experiences and enjoyed food trucks, henna art, international dance lessons, music demonstrations and performances.

“The purpose of the International Festival is to allow students to explore and experience the differences in cultures from around the world,” says Coordinator of Student Leadership and Volunteer Programs, Khalis Thomas. “The International Festival consists of various cultural displays, professional entertainment, food and more.

“Historically, the first UWG International Night was held in January 1984 by the International Student Office,” continues Thomas. “Students prepared and presented ethnic cuisines and entertainment from their country of origin, supported by the local community. The Multicultural/World Festival began in 2010 through the Center for Diversity and Inclusion.”

International Student Jubilee Ojibo is a student from Nigeria, currently in her junior year and also a member of the International Club. She appreciates the school for taking the time to put together the International Festival, allowing students to experience the different festivities. However, she expresses that the International Festival could have been more in depth with including the various types of different cultures and allows the International Students to be more involved with the experience, making it more personal for International Students and allowing them to properly pay homage to their heritages.

“I had the opportunity to experience UWG’s International Festival in 2019 when I started school and I compared it to the International Festival that has just passed,” says Ojibo. “It was very different. I would have

WHAT’S INSIDE

LIVING WEST

**The International Festival:
In Living Color**

By Taylor Blessett, pg. 1

**Alumni Spotlight: Dr.
Cristina Bunton-Young, ‘07**

By Amanda Clay, pg. 2

**UWG Students launch
Star Wars Club just in time
for “May the 4th Be With
You”**

By Janette Emmerick, pg. 3

**UWG Health Services Pro-
vide Free Allergy Medication
For Students**

By Alanna King, pg. 4

OPINION

**Let’s Talk About Elon Musk’s
Irresponsibility**

By Alex Amos, pg. 4

NEWS

**The Other Virus: Psychologi-
cal and Geopolitical Effects of
COVID-19**

By Taylor Blessett, pg. 5

ENTERTAINMENT

**“Disenchantment” is Back
With the Release of its Fourth
Season**

By Alex Amos, pg. 5

SPORTS

**The Atlanta Braves Open
Their 2022 Season**

By Trevor Gonzales, pg. 6

liked it if there were more of a variety of culture that was showcased. I would have liked to see different cultures including history and traditions.”

Although this event’s purpose was to serve UWG Students by allowing students to experience and explore different cultures but by allowing International Students to be involved with the experience would have created for a more truly authentic experience for students, faculty and staff. UWG strives to include their students’ opinions to better serve and support them.

“I would say I loved the setting for the International Festival, and I enjoyed the fact that everyone was out and able to attend,” says Ojibo. “I enjoyed seeing everyone come together, talk and eat food but I would have liked to see more of a true cultural showcase of the different heritages that attend UWG.”

LIVING WEST

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: DR. CRISTINA BUNTON-YOUNG, '07

AMANDA CLAY
Health Correspondent



Photo courtesy of UWG

It was 20 years ago that Dr. Cristina Bunton-Young graduated with a degree in biology at the University of West Georgia with the hopes of becoming either a physician or a veterinarian. After shadowing doctors during her time in college, she decided that the physician track was the right decision for her and she hasn't looked back.

Currently, Dr. Bunton-Young is an internal medicine physician in Pensacola, Florida working as a hospitalist.

"There are no other doctors in my family," said Dr. Bunton-Young. "I have always strived to push myself as far as I could with my studies. I decided that the medical path was best for me after I realized that I enjoyed talking to people more than dogs, so I went for it."

As a premedical student, Dr. Bunton-Young shadowed physicians and volunteered in a hospice facility to gain clinical experience for medical school admissions. She also tutored on campus and was on UWG's cheerleading team in addition to intramural softball and flag football.

She credits her pre-medical advisor and a physician that she knew as being instrumental in her success during the medical school preparation process. Following her graduation from UWG, she took a gap year to study for the MCAT and gain more clinical experience working in a doctor's office.

"For me it all worked out and I wouldn't do anything different," said Dr. Bunton-Young. "Everyone's path will look different. Few

paths are seamless but it's your unique path that shapes you into the person and physician you become."

Dr. Bunton-Young attended Howard University for Medical School, which she says challenged her significantly. The workload was more intense than she was used to in undergraduate.

"It [medical school] requires a lot of time, focus, dedication, sacrifice but it is all worth it in the end," said Dr. Bunton-Young. "You're with a group of likeminded students all pushing through it together and the students can support each other. Medical school consists of 2 years of straight studies then 2 years of clinicals. It is fun to get to the clinical portion because you can start to put what you have learned into action and see what you've learned firsthand."

Following four years of medical school, she graduated and attended University of Miami for her three-year internal medicine residency.

"It seems like a long time, but it is an adventure and it goes by quickly," said Dr. Bunton-Young. "I learned so much and it now amazes me how much I know and understand, even though of course I am still always learning."

"Residency was lots of fun," continued Dr. Bunton-Young. "This is the first time you get paid to learn and it starts to feel like you are taking on the role of a doctor."

Despite the fun, residency also came with its hardships.

Dr. Bunton-Young says that she has always struggled with stan-

dardized testing and had to work through challenges to do well on the many major exams presented to physicians in training, including the USMLE STEP exams (the official physician medical licensure tests) and her post-residency board exams. However, she was able to navigate these challenges successfully and wants pre-medical students to know that if she could do it, anyone can.

The most important thing, according to Dr. Bunton-Young, is to know and understand your specific path and recognize that there is no one size fits all on the road to becoming a doctor.

"The need is out there for physicians and if you're a good candidate there is always a way to make it happen," said Dr. Bunton-Young. "The majority [of medical students] go to U.S. schools for allopathic medicine, which is the most typical route. However, some will attempt an Osteopathic medicine route as an alternative, less competitive route. Others will choose to go internationally to schools like Ross on the Dominica island as a path to make their dreams of becoming a doctor still come true. I work with physicians from all these paths, and we are all at the same level."

"I love my job and my life," continued Dr. Bunton-Young. "If you have a care for people and are interested in science, students should consider this career path. It is not easy but I feel it was so worth it. It pays well and you can support your family with confidence and pride."



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LIVING WEST



UWG STUDENTS LAUNCH STAR WARS CLUB JUST IN TIME FOR “MAY THE 4TH BE WITH YOU”
JANNETTE EMMERICK
Feature Editor

Photo courtesy of Coy Pruett

Star Wars Club prepares to end the semester by celebrating on the official ‘Star Wars’ Day on May 4, a tradition upheld by fans since 1977.

The club held their first meeting on March 31 but, despite the late creation, the membership peaks at around 20 to 25 students.

“We went to dinner one night and thought: we should make a club together,” says Coy Pruett, the club’s secretary and one of the five founders. “What do we all have in common? Star Wars.”

Pruett founded the club with fellow UWG students Zoe Harris, Rae Harris, Kelli Breed and Kai Morgan. To officiate their first meeting day and solidify their extracurricular, they hosted Jameelah McMillian, the voice actor of Halle Burtoni and other characters in the animated “Star Wars: Clone Wars.”

“It was very interesting to get her professional background and what she went through to get where she is,” says Pruett. “Right now, we are just trying to get people to join so that later we can do bigger things like [inviting more guests to talk].”

The club plans to meet on April 28 and May 4 with

plans for a possible summer meeting and more activities in the coming semester.

“It’s fun just being able to get out of reality by imagining heroes and stuff, which is why people love superhero movies because they don’t have to imagine the reality that they’re in,” says Pruett. “I like Star Wars because there’s so many abnormal people in ‘Star Wars’. You can go to a totally different planet and meet someone who’s a completely different species or you can pick up a blaster and become a bounty hunter.”

Fans of the series keep the worlds alive not just through enjoying the canon movies, T.V. series and games but also by creating their own storylines and inserting themselves into the galaxy far, far away.

Even if someone knows nothing about the cosmic space epics, anyone is welcome to drop by the club just to make connections and hang out.

“We have people that don’t even know ‘Star Wars’ and they show up,” says Pruett. “It’s pretty funny but they keep coming back. Maybe we can convince them to watch [Star Wars] eventually but I don’t know.”

Even so, with so many video games and films it’s possible that there’s a way for anyone to appreciate the cultural phenomena.

From the “LEGO Star Wars” video games to the very popular Disney Plus show “The Mandalorian” following a space bounty hunter, the “Star Wars” community flourishes and continues to grow. Fans can be drawn to the intergalactic odysseys through the stories and characters.

Pruett’s favorite character is Kylo Ren. However, the general “Star Wars” community is torn on the acceptance of the most recent trilogy featuring Rei, a female Jedi as the main protagonist. Still, no matter what series or gateway into the franchise, fans find ways to keep their appreciation for the series alive and relate to characters in any series.

No matter the community wars over favorite characters and their character arcs, the community can all agree to dislike one character in particular who has become a universal meme and received universal pushback.

“We don’t talk about Jar Jar Binks,” says Pruett. “That’s a controversy we can’t get into.”

LIVING WEST

UWG HEALTH SERVICES PROVIDE FREE ALLERGY MEDICATION FOR STUDENTS

ALANNA KING
Contributing Writer

Spring has sprung! This time of year is beautiful in Georgia, with the weather getting warmer unfortunately brings pollen.

Seasonal allergies come with many symptoms including itching, congested sinuses, sneezing and a runny nose. It can be very disruptive while trying to enjoy the new season.

“With the blooming of trees, grass as well as the emergence of various flowers in spring, many various types of pollen are released in the air that we breathe,” says Dr. Eric Heine, M.D.

“Although many people blame the yellow pollen from pine trees, this rarely is a source of the allergy symptoms people experience secondary to its larger size and relative lack of allergenic proteins. However, there are many other trees in our area that can cause allergic symptoms such as maple, birch,

oak, walnut, ash and hickory.” Spring allergy season can start as early as February and run through late May as different plants bloom and release their pollen. Heavy rains can cause molds to grow in shaded areas, triggering allergies in certain people.

There are several things allergy sufferers can do to decrease their symptoms.

“If you are sensitive to certain pollen, then monitor the pollen count and avoid excessive outdoor activity if the count is high, if you can,” says Dr. Heine. “Staying in air conditioning where the air is often filtered can also decrease the amount of pollen you inhale. If you have access to a portable air filter with a HEPA filter, using this at night in your bedroom also aids in clearing the pollen.

“Pollen also likes to cling to clothing and pets, so washing clothes and animals often can help decrease the pollen count in your environment,” continues Heine. “Some people also recommend rinsing the nasal passages with a Neti Pot to clear them of attached pollen.”

Fortunately, UWG Health Services has affordable options for students who suffer from allergy symptoms.

“UWG Student Health Services have an array of medications that can help mitigate the irritation of seasonal allergies,” says Dr. Heine. “Many of them are free of charge at the pharmacy but a consultation with a provider may be best to tailor the therapy to your particular situation.”

Dr. Heine also recommends starting allergy medicine at the onset of the season to help minimize symptoms instead of after they have become prominent.

While seasonal allergies are quite the burden, Dr. Heine wants to remind students there is hope.

“Although not usually life-threatening, seasonal allergies can really disrupt your quality of life and ability to focus on your studies and extracurricular activities,” says Dr. Heine. “It is very hard to avoid contact with allergens but with appropriate preventative measures and medical treatment, these symptoms can at least be controlled to make allergy season more tolerable.”



LET'S TALK ABOUT ELON MUSK'S IRRESPONSIBILITY

ALEX AMOS
Contributing Writer

One of the world’s richest men, Elon Musk, has a net worth of 264.6 billion USD, giving him abundant power. Even with his massive amount of wealth, Musk has managed to make several poor decisions that affected him and the people around him. Musk has dug a hole for himself and proved that he is nothing more than another irresponsible and manipulative billionaire. Musk’s track record ranges from sending out Tweets that resulted in significant legal battles to issuing empty promises to investors to finally having multiple allegations of maltreatment to employees.

Musk has made himself infamous for his regretfully poor tweets. An example of his adverse history with Twitter was from a series of misleading tweets that Musk made in 2018, where he falsely claimed that he was able to take Tesla private for \$420 a share. The Securities and Exchange Commission took Musk to court for fraud charges against Tesla according to SEC.gov. The tweets were used in court against Musk, ultimately forcing the Tesla owner to settle for \$40 million.

In another instance, in July 2018, Musk Tweeted a passage calling a British diver who rescued a boy from a cave a “pedo.” The tweet received backlash for its distasteful approach to a problematic situation and Musk was retaken to court

for defamation of the diver. Though Musk won the case, he still received an abundant amount of criticism for the mistake. Aside from the tweets that ended up in court cases, Musk has tweeted other poorly written tweets such as homophobic tweets.

“I absolutely support trans but all these pronouns are an aesthetic nightmare,” Musk said in a tweet from Dec. 2020.

Besides creating his lousy reputation on Twitter, Musk has also earned an infamous reputation for his empty promises for his company, Tesla. According to the website elonsbrokenpromises.com, Musk promised to create over 500,000 Model 3 Teslas in 2018. Tesla had only completed approximately 34,000 cars by the end of the year. Another promise Musk made was the “fully self-driving car” in 2017. Musk aimed to have the production done within six months.

Over four years later, in 2021, Tesla began allowing select customers to buy the new model. According to the Washington Post, Musk promised to found Neuralink and provide the ability to connect minds to computers. Musk projected that the mind chips would be implanted into humans by 2020 but in 2021 the chips were still being tested on monkeys and pigs. Another broken promise was the Tesla Semi Truck, which was projected to be introduced

Photo Courtesy of Associated Press to customers in 2019. The trucks are still in production with a few orders expected to be released in 2023.

In addition to his various controversies, Musk’s companies have also fallen into several disputes. In Dec. of 2021, six women filed lawsuits against Tesla, according to the media site, Quartz. The women claimed to experience sexual harassment within the company’s walls. Employees from SpaceX had also come forward about their past troubles with Musk’s company. The employees complained of Musk’s Twitter enabling the harassment through his joking manner. Musk’s jokes would include sexist humor, such as proposing to create the Texas Institute of Technology and Science. Musk’s stunt was behind the school’s inappropriate acronym (TITS). Again, Musk’s tweets had caused trouble but in this case his employees were harmed because of his reckless actions.

Musk has made horrible decisions throughout his career. Musk has created a negative reputation for himself through suggestive Twitter posts. Musk has also proven to lack motivation and drive to finish his major projects, leaving investors worried. Musk has been given a bad name for the questionable treatment of his employees. He has proved that he is nothing more than an irresponsible and manipulative billionaire.

NEWS

THE OTHER VIRUS: PSYCHOLOGICAL AND GEOPOLITICAL EFFECTS OF COVID-19
TAYLOR BLESSETT
Contributing Writer

“The Other Virus: Psychological and Geopolitical Effects of COVID-19” lecture allows people to have a conversation within the community about the effects of COVID-19. The conference explored the psychological effects that people may have as a result of COVID-19. Dr. Rosella Traversa, Assistant Professor of Psychology (Gender, Culture and Body), believed this conversation needed to be had and arranged for other professionals based in Italy to talk about this subject with the students of UWG. “This event was truly inspired by the effects of the pandemic and as a result, I wanted to look closer into the social implications

that were surrounding the pandemic,” says Traversa. “I was specifically interested in the psychology aspect of what has happened post COVID-19 with little to no research out there because this is a new epidemic. Initially, it was the geopolitical side of it that sparked my attention starting from an Italian geological journal called ‘Limes’, therefore, we are going to discuss naming the psychological effects of COVID-19, the other Virus.” There is little to no known research on COVID-19 and the actual effects that it could have on society long-term. It is important that these conversations that Dr. Traversa has put together to be had and the research following the conversations to be conducted. As a society, we know COVID-19 comes with a lot of risk factors. What we can’t see is that COVID-19 has a psychological effect on our minds moving forward. This will shape how we choose to build back our society. “Limes” is an Italian geopolitical journal that has been published in Rome since 1993. This journal has pushed for conversation to analyze conflicts politically, socially or culturally and how effects of power, free will and more come into play within our society. “The journal ‘Limes’ allowed me to see that COVID-19 is affecting others in different ways; therefore, we are going to discuss just how much of this idea is authentic. The virus has been producing the same consequences everywhere to everyone,” says Traversa. “We want to know if that is true.” “I am interested in having this conversation because it could further research about the in-between biological and political effects of widespread health issues,” continued Traversa. “How people feel as a reality when people encounter something that is unseen and invisible, how they react. COVID-19 has had a lot of concrete effects, but the uncertainty is the psychological issues that may develop as a result of the virus.”



Netflix released season four of “Disenchantment” in early February with three prior successful seasons. The show was created by Matt Groening and released its first season in 2018. Groening is also the developer of the famed shows, “The Simpsons” and “Futurama.” Groening had tackled the future and present with his previous shows but he had never created content for the past. The show’s plot is set in the medieval period. Bean, the princess over the Kingdom of Dreamland, must find herself in a world set against her every move. Along the way, she finds two friends, Elfo and Lucy, to help her through her harrowing journey of becoming a better version of herself and saving her kingdom and father. Jumping into the fourth season, “Disenchantment” reintroduces the audience to the utter chaos from the previous season, with Bean in hell preparing to become the Devil’s wife and Bean’s mother, Queen Dagmar, eagerly waiting for the final “I do.” Dagmar had to fulfill a prophecy with Hell by marrying Bean off to the Devil himself. While there is little information about the prophecy, Dagmar was adamant about proceeding with the wedding with

her several attempts to recapture Bean whenever she ran away. Bean eventually escapes, taking Elfo, Lucy and newly turned-protagonist Jerry, Dagmar’s younger brother. The four barely escape from Hell with their lives all within the first episode while tricking Dagmar to marry the Devil. The season takes various twists and turns, with Elfo finding his long-lost parents, Bean connecting with her darker inner self, and Bean’s father, King Zog, finding his past bear-woman lover and having a son. Looking into the show’s characters, “Disenchantment” has quite a bit of diversity. The audience is given a slew of fun and mystical creatures in every episode, with season four introducing more creatures with the birth of Zog and his bear-wife Ursula’s son, Bear Boy. Zog and his new offspring form a close relationship as Zog passes his way of life to the boy. Bear Boy’s character eventually develops over time as he tries to fit into his new life in the castle, meeting his step-siblings along the way. Another race introduced in the season is the race of sea trogs. Though the sea trogs are primarily given one episode, their storyline is incredibly intense, with Bean and her team visiting the creatures

only to find out that the trogs trap and kill outsiders with their maturing rituals. Eventually, the crew makes it out of their underwater death trap by the skin of their teeth. Bean’s character develops the most throughout the season, with her exploring her sexuality and whether or not she wants to become the Queen of Dreamland. Bean also battles her inner-self for the majority of the season, leaving audience members with quite a lot to think about what her character truly desires. Elfo also had an excellent development because of the rediscovery of his family. Elfo is forced to address his past trauma after reuniting with his family by finding out what caused them to split up in the first place. Eventually, Elfo is again able to find peace with his long-lost family members after a deadly battle with his now-blind brother. In summary, season four of “Disenchantment” was adventurous and explorative. Amidst the criticism, the season still managed to please many audience members in the end with its fun characters and plot. Unfortunately for viewers, there is uncertainty about another season as Netflix has not yet renewed the show. Viewers will likely have to rally Netflix to earn the last season of “Disenchantment”.

SPORTS



**THE ATLANTA
BRAVES OPEN
THEIR 2022 SEASON**
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Contributing Writer

Photo Courtesy of Associated Press

The Atlanta Braves have entered the 2022 campaign with a few new faces but the same goal- to go back to back. The defending World Series champions had a special “Champion’s Week” homestead to start the season.

They split their first series of the year against the Cincinnati Reds followed by losing two of three to their division rival Washington Nationals.

The Braves would then begin their first road trip of the season, heading out west for a four game series with the San Diego Padres before meeting the Dodgers on April 14.

In the series versus the Padres, the Braves would lose 12-1 in the first game followed by back-to-back 5-2 victories before falling 2-1 in ESPN’s prime time Sunday Night Baseball.

Atlanta has familiar faces as star infielders Ozzie Albies and Dansby Swanson are the everyday second

baseman and shortstop. Power hitting right hander Marcel Ozuna returns to the team after missing the 2020 and 2021 season due to a domestic violence dispute.

Joining Ozuna in the outfield is the hard hitting Adam Duvall, who the Braves traded for last season before the trade deadline and free agent acquisition Alex Dickerson.

Star player Ronald Acuña is still recovering and rehabbing from a torn ACL. The lineup will gain an extra boost once he returns.

Braves legend and future Hall of Famer Freddie Freeman did not return to the team this year as he signed with the Los Angeles Dodgers during off-season free agency.

The Braves front office would make some moves however, trading for all-star first basemen Matt Olson from the Oakland Athletics. Olsen has been a lifelong Braves

fan his entire life and has big shoes to fill.

The pitching staff for the Braves is as solid as they come. Returning starters from last year’s World Series championship roster include Max Fried, Charlie Morton, Ian Anderson, and Kyle Wright.

The bullpen was a question all season long last year before coming in clutch during the postseason.

The Braves went all out on relief pitcher Kenley Jansen, known for his time as the closer with the LA Dodgers.

It is too early to tell how successful this team will be in the first few months of the season. However, as we enter the dog days of summer, the Braves will be contending for a division title against the Mets and Nationals.

Will they repeat last year? History is not on the side of the Braves but if you watch baseball, you know one thing: anything can happen.