



CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF HONORING THE ARTS

GIANNA WILCOX
Contributing Writer



Photo: Gianna Wilcox, *The West Georgian*

On Saturday, Oct. 14, and Sunday, Oct. 15, The Carrollton Center for the Arts presented its 20th annual Arts Festival of Carrollton. Although the festival's primary purpose was to allow both local and national artists to sell their artwork to the Carrollton community, it was so much more than that.

"In addition to our artists selling artwork, we have demonstration artists, educational art stops, three stages of entertainment and several food trucks that will be there both days," said Tim Chapman, Arts Manager for the Carrollton Center for the Arts. "So, it is a much larger event than just an arts festival."

In honor of the festival's 20th anniversary, the committee decided to include special demonstrations and activities they have not done before to commemorate this milestone.

"Some special things that we're doing this year include a chainsaw artist by the name of Chris Lantz," said Chapman. "He's going to do some demos in the morning and the afternoon on both days."

"We're doing a community weaving project that everyone who comes to the festival can participate in if they choose," Chapman continued.

The University of West Georgia also got involved this year. The Department of Art had a stop motion drawing activity where they digitized people's drawings and made videos of them. They also had an art education activity for the kids.

Although there were a lot of special demonstrations for the 20th anniversary, they

had a plethora of returning art techniques, including a glass-blowing demonstration.

"We select the artists based on their submissions to determine the quality of their work," said Chapman. "So, everybody that applies, which was well over a hundred, didn't get to come."

Out of the hundreds of applicants, only about 72 artists made it through the committee's jury process and came to the festival. However, no matter how many artists were at the festival, it was an excellent opportunity for the Carrollton community to appreciate, enjoy and purchase local and national artists' work.

There was also a Mardi Gras-themed parade to kick off the festival on Saturday.

"It'll start at 10 o'clock, and the parade will go through the festival grounds, so it's not on the street," said Chapman. "We're calling it 'Arti Gras,' and it'll just be a fun, celebratory thing in honor of our 20th anniversary."

They made the festival bigger and better than in past years to celebrate its 20th anniversary. However, this year's festival was significant for another reason besides the anniversary.

"There is a magazine sent out to artists all over the country that tells them about art festivals they can be a part of all over the United States," said Chapman. "Once a year, the magazine does a survey among the artists and asks them to rate the festivals across the country."

"This year, our festival was ranked number 14 out of thousands of festivals,"

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Chapman continued. "This means that artists rated our festival as being one of the top art festivals to come to."

The festival's ranking sets it apart from other art festivals, and it was a reward for all of the committee's hard work to make the festival so outstanding. The ranking also showed that artists all over the country recognize the Art Festival of Carrollton's as prestigious.

THE GENIUS OF BOYGENIUS

ABBIE KLEIN
Copy Editor

On Wednesday, Oct. 11, I had the pleasure of attending an early release listening party for Boygenius' new EP "the rest" that was set to release on the following Friday, Oct. 13. The listening party took place at Criminal Records in Atlanta, GA, and was open to all.

The all female supergroup consisting of singer-songwriters Julien Baker, Phoebe Bridgers and Lucy Dacus announced the release of "the rest" just a few weeks ago on Sept. 25.

"The rest" is a four song EP set to follow the supergroup's debut album "the record" that was released on March 31, 2023.

The tracklist starts with "Black Hole," a song that was inspired by a social media post Dacus shared with Baker about black holes creating stars instead of destroying them like scientists initially believed, hence the lyrics in the first verse, "You can see the stars, the ones the headlines said this morning were being spat out by what we thought was destroying everything for good".

The track starts with Baker's vocals in the first verse followed by Dacus' and Bridgers' harmonizing together in the second after an instrumental break.

Following "Black Hole" comes the Dacus-led track "Afraid of Heights." The song is about treading carefully through life due to holding high values for your future, and how it is to have a relationship with someone who feels the opposite about their life. It touches on ideas of risk-taking and how that can positively or negatively affect a person's life.

This track contains the most amount of storytelling with the lyrics. The imagery describes very specific settings and situations within a relationship, and what effect those situations had on Dacus.

The third track "Voyager" is my personal favorite and arguably one of the saddest songs the group has written. The track talks about the loss and destruction that comes along with being in a relationship with someone who doesn't love you as much as you love them.

Bridgers' haunting voice is backed by a guitar and humming vocals, which add to the emotion and vulnerability of the lyrics. The song ends abruptly with a heartbreaking lyric that goes, "you took it from me but I would've given it to you" circling back to the idea of one-sided love.

The EP ends with "powers." The song featuring Baker's powerful vocals starts with a heavy guitar that follows the style of past Baker-led songs like "Anti-curse" and "Stay Down." Baker wonders about her own origin story by comparing it to those of superheroes from comic books and pop culture.

Overall the EP does a wonderful job of wrapping up "the record." It contains all of the elements that fans love about Boygenius' work. Everything from layered vocals, intense lyrics, gorgeous harmonies and melodies that you can't get out of your head appear in this EP. Although it's short, the songs greatly differ and there's something for everyone. "The rest" was a pleasant surprise for any fan of Boygenius and has now only added to the anticipation of what the group will come up with next.

REVVING UP THE SILVER SCREEN: NEILL BLOMKAMP'S 2023 GRAN TURISMO

LANCE GOINS
Contributing Writer

Few directors are as proficient at blending genres together as Neill Blomkamp is in the constantly changing world of film. Known for his bold explorations of science fiction and action genres, the famed director has now delved into uncharted terrain with the 2023 "Gran Turismo" film, taking on the highspeed world of motorsport. Fans of racing and film studies alike are on the edge of their seats as a result of this thrilling work of cinema.

The "Gran Turismo" movie immerses viewers in a visceral encounter right away. A drama that is all about speed and adrenaline is set in motion by the thunderous roars of engines and the pungent smell of burning rubber. Blomkamp's renowned ability to write gripping stories is on full display as we watch our protagonist's transformation from an aspirational underdog to a powerful competitor in the racing scene. The character's development gives the story depth and gives the audience something more to look at than just fast automobiles.

Blomkamp's direction in "Gran Turismo" is evidence of his skill as a craftsman. He skillfully combines cutting-edge CGI, gorgeous photography and realistic effects to provide a visual that surpasses even the highest expectations. The spectator is put right behind the wheel in the

thrilling racing scenes, allowing them to experience the thrill of the race firsthand. The movie has a level of authenticity that is unmatched because of the technologies used to shoot these sequences.

The film features a compelling and believable cast including Archie Madekwe, Orlando Bloom and David Harbour to bring life to the individuals living in this fast-paced reality. The group's chemistry gives the story more dimension and makes the relationships, rivalries and coalitions among the racers an essential component of the plot. The spectator can emotionally invest in the characters' outcomes because of the skillful weaving of their motivations and backstories.

This film stands out for its painstaking attention to detail. Featuring beautifully recreated and authentically brought to life legendary cars, the film pays tribute to the world of motorsport. These cars are tributes to the real racing experience in every way, from the corners to the engine roars and tire screeches.

A gifted genius wrote the film's score, which complemented the action and emotion on screen. The soundtrack amplifies the highs and lows of the film, heightens the intensity of the racing scenes, and highlights the director's commitment to creating a multi-sensory



Photo courtesy of IMDB

experience that creates a lasting impact.

There are several streaming services where you may watch the movie, such as Google Play, Apple TV, Amazon Prime Video, Vudu, and YouTube. In addition, Netflix will release the movie in December, so anyone who would rather spend a cozy movie night at home will have an easy way to relive the excitement without leaving their living room.

The thrilling motion picture "Gran Turismo" by Neill Blomkamp pushes the limits of the racing genre. The movie offers an unforgettable cinematic experience by fusing breathtaking sights, riveting acting and a story of perseverance. For fans of both movies and motorsports, it is a must-see because it is easily available on many streaming services and will soon be available on Netflix. Fasten your seatbelts; you won't want to miss this thrilling movie experience.

WHERE IS THE JETS' LANDING STRIP? NEVAEH BROWN

Contributing Writer

HBO chronicles underdogs team the New York Jets for this upcoming season of acclaimed docu-series "Hard Knocks."

This series gives much more than the Jets' social media team could give their fans, getting a front-row seat to camaraderie built between veterans and rookies and even tension. Seeing fights between their offense and defense on social media is entirely rivaled by HBO's cameras and mics.

The team tried to run from the selection, but they had one of the biggest stories out of any other team: Aaron Rodgers was finally their quarterback. Once HBO's presence is embraced, the beauty of crafting a roster is captured.

The excitement of Rodgers' arrival brought on constant attempts of his approval on players' performances on both sides of the ball. The bottom line is that he's new; he's learning Jets football, not vice versa, because it's a team.

On the flip side, Rodgers' presence created a tutor for second year quarterback Zach Wilson, giving him space to improve from the first two subpar years he had under center.

This team is home to last season's offensive and defensive rookies of the year, receiver Garrett Wilson and cornerback Ahmad 'Sauce' Gardner, and many comparable off-season acquisitions in all positions.

Not only are they followed around on the field, but viewers also get to see and hear about players' personal lives. Like Gardner, who was preparing for his graduation ceremony, being awarded his Bachelor's Degree from the University of Cincinnati this past summer. Seeing existing friendships taken to the pro level and relationships formed via the coaching staff creates wins.

Injuries were sustained during the preseason. It's a dogfight to make any of these teams, but that's what's coming from this series: the good, bad and ugly of preseason.

Plenty of rookies made an impression in their preseason game against Bryce Young and the Carolina Panthers. Defensive

end William McDonald IV earned his first sack, Tight End Zach Kuntz earned a touchdown, and veterans called it 'the rookie show.'

But the ugly part of this business is that all acquisitions cannot be kept by the first week or so of the regular season. The roster has to be cut down to 53 men. This is the time they have to prove themselves.

The preseason was otherworldly for this Jets squad, and it is forever enshrined through this series. On Sept. 11, their season opened, only four plays into the regular season. Rodgers after being sacked, was injured with a season-ending achilles tear putting Zach Wilson back at his position of starting quarterback.

However, there was a glass ceiling on both the team's past, the show's reputation. Even with their superstar quarterback gone, the docu-series shows how the Jets under Zach Wilson are beating the odds and cracking that ceiling.



Photo courtesy of Max

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BOX OFFICE HIT “NOWHERE” PROVES WHERE THERE’S A WILL, THERE’S A WAY

CINDY MARTINEZ
Contributing Writer

On Sept. 29, 2023 Netflix released the survival thriller “Nowhere.” The film was an international film spoken in Spanish dialect with English subtitles. The film held a number one spot at the top of Netflix’s trending films. The movie had over 30 million views in the first two weeks. The story takes viewers on a journey with a pregnant woman named Mia trapped in a shipping container in the middle of the ocean with all odds against her.

The film “Nowhere” starts out with Mia and her husband distraught and awakened by gunfire in their village. Her husband soon realizes that he must help his family escape from a totalitarian government where she and her baby are the main targets.

In the midst of escaping chaos of their entire country being overthrown by terrorist parties Mia and her husband are separated with him being shot and killed. She then climbs aboard a cargo ship into a shipping container in hope of escaping. She soon is awakened by a violent storm where she is then thrown off the boat into the ocean while being in labor with her baby.

The story then continues with Mia’s voyage in the middle of the ocean fighting day by day to stay alive. After failed attempts for her SOS signals to be seen and heard she is on the verge of insanity from hallucinating from lack of hunger. However despite her mental exhaustion her survival instincts are stronger.

Mia survives multiple days on end with minimal supplies within the cargo container. Despite all the odds against her, Mia finally gets the salvation she had longed for in the most heartwarming way.

Although the movie was a low budget film and was thought to have never made the charts considering the language barrier, “Nowhere” shook critics when the movie hit the box office making 14.2 million dollars the first weekend. It also surpassed films like “Indiana Jones and the Dial of Destiny.” The drop of this film was also in the month of Hispanic Heritage Month in honor of Hispanic contributions to the film industry.

The Story that “Nowhere” portrays in the movie gives readers a feeling of suspense, yet keeps the viewers interested by having the watchers emotionally involved. This movie is an example of the ultimate sacrifice in life and death as well as being selfless by staying alive for her baby.

“Nowhere” is a thriller that puts viewers on a roller coaster of feelings but against all odds Mia survives on the hope that “Where there’s a will, there’s a way.”

THE ERAS TOUR: NOW PLAYING IN A THEATRE NEAR YOU

ABBIE KLEIN
Contributing Writer

It goes without saying that Taylor Swift is currently one of the most influential celebrities. It’s been almost a year since she announced the record breaking Eras Tour, a three and a half hour long show with 146 dates across five different continents. Now fans of the infamous singer can re-experience the night from the comfort of their own home with the new film, “Taylor Swift: The Eras Tour.”

The film, directed by Sam Wrench, was recorded at the first night of the Los Angeles dates at Sofi Stadium on Aug. 3. After cuts, the movie runs for two hours and 48 minutes. It takes fans across each era starting from “Lover,” then to “Fearless,” “evermore,” “reputation,” “Speak Now,” “Red,” “folklore,” “1989” and finishing with Swift’s newest album “Midnights.”

The screen opened with the same visual that opened the concert, a clock counting down from Swift’s iconic number 13. After the countdown, the anticipation of Swift’s entrance is built up with the tour intro that layers the names of all the different eras over the lyric “it’s been a long time coming” from “Miss Americana and the Heartbreak Prince.” From there Swift immediately begins her hit song “Cruel Summer” parading around the stage in a gorgeous pink and blue Versace bodysuit. The “Lover” era continues with “The Man,” “You Need to Calm Down,” and “Lover,” before transitioning into the “Fearless” era.

“Fearless” was definitely one of the crowd’s favorite parts of the show as fans sang along to award winning songs “You

Belong With Me” and “Love Story” as if they were at the real concert.

Swift opens the “evermore” era with a haunting performance of “willow.” The camera men have so far done an excellent job of keeping Swift and her dancers in focus, and capturing her in detail that no phone camera would have been capable of.

“Evermore” continues on with a beautiful rendition of “marjorie” which is about Swift’s grandmother who passed away in 2003. The film captures tears falling from Swift’s face while fans fill Sofi Stadium with their phone flashlights in respect for her grandmother.

The set continues on with “reputation,” “Speak Now,” “Red” and “folklore” with multiple different angles of Swift and her dancers in order to see the full effect of every aspect on the stage. The lighting and images on the screen changes with each song and adds for a totally different show depending on where you are viewing it from. The different close up and far shots immerse the viewer in the stadium experience.

The “1989” set was super exciting due to the anticipation of “1989 (Taylor’s Version)” set to release later this month on Oct. 27.

The performances of “Style,” “Blank Space,” “Shake it Off” and “Bad Blood” harnessed the fun, coming of age themes the album holds and was a party for longtime fans of Swift.

The next part of the show was the acoustic set that featured another intimate moment between Swift and her fans. Each night two songs that weren’t on the setlist were randomly chosen to be performed with

only Swift’s vocals and her guitar or piano.

The songs chosen for the recording of the film were “Our Song” from Swift’s self-titled debut album and a beautiful rendition of “You’re on Your Own Kid” on the piano.

The show finished with seven songs from her newest album “Midnights.” “Midnights” is definitely one of Swift’s most diverse works containing fun pop songs like “Bejeweled” and more mature tracks like “Vigilante Sh*t” in which Swift and her dancers performed on chairs. This part of the set did a wonderful job showcasing the diversity of the different tracks starting with “Lavender Haze” and ending with “Karma.”

The film did a great job of capturing the best moments of the concert in an up close view that would have otherwise never been possible to see. However, some of the editing in the transitions I found to be tacky. In between each era the film had done things like edit red balloons floating up from the crowd or a wave splashing over the screen to mark the beginning of a new era. I found this to be incredibly cheap looking and it took away from the idea of being at the actual show.

Of course, there was also the fact that the film cut 5 songs from the original concert including the award winning “cardigan” but the cuts were seamless, and unless the viewer had been to the real show you would have never known.

The film was of course made for Swift’s fans and she made that obvious by displaying the message “Thank you to the most generous, thoughtful, loving fans on the planet. This is all because of you and for you” at the end of the credits.

Even though the editing was bad at times and some songs were cut, any fan of Swift’s will have an amazing time getting to sing and dance to their favorite song with Taylor Swift on the big screen.

LIVING WEST

INTERNATIONAL HORROR SHORTS RETURNS TO SHOWCASE HORROR FILMS WORLDWIDE

CAROLYN MONCRIEFFE
Contributing Writer

UWG’s International Film Committee partners with the Department of International Languages and Culture for the third time to present a night of International Horror Film Shorts on Tuesday, Oct. 24.

Dr. Karen Dollinger, Ph.D. has been associated with the International Horror Shorts series since its inception in October 2021. She became involved when Dr. Robert Kilpatrick, Chair of the Department of English, Film,

Languages, and Performing Arts drew upon her knowledge and interest in genre films and asked her to head the horror short presentations of UWG.

“I love genre films and genre literature, which includes fantasy, science fiction and horror,” says Dollinger.

She has also taught a class titled, Hispanic Science Fiction and Horror Films. During the spring semester the International Film Series showcases romantic shorts under the heading, Languages of Love. The spring

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presentation is headed by Dr. Anca Koczkas, Ph.D. Associate Professor of Spanish.

UWG's third year of International Horror Shorts is free of charge and will showcase films from Argentina, France, Germany, Mexico and Spain. The French films were selected by French language arts students, films from Germany were recommended by Dr. Felix Tweraser, Professor of German, and Dollinger chose the Spanish films.

"The horror shorts run from two minutes to a half-hour and highlight the genre from the very scary to the very funny," says Dollinger. "The films touch on every topic and this year includes an animated horror short.

"The purpose of the International Horror Short Film series is to expose and educate the university community to what goes on in the rest of the world regarding the horror genre," continues Dollinger.

"Horror speaks to something in the human experience and transcends culture," continues Dollinger. "Good horror films border on the unexpected as well teaching the viewing audience compassion. Really good horror makes the viewer feel for the characters.

"Though not of the international horror genre, is a perfect example of teaching the viewer compassion,"



Photo: Carolyn Moncrieffe, *The West Georgian*

continues Dollinger. "The basic premise of the film is scary but serves to reveal how people need to come together to survive."

If past attendance is an indication of community interest, Dr. Dollinger expresses excitement regarding this presentation and expects a healthy turnout. The viewing consists of an hour

and a half of film shorts and concludes with a half hour of audience Q&A.

"The Q&A is usually very, very lively," says Dollinger.

The 2023 installment of the International Horror Short series will be held Tuesday, 7 p.m. - 9 p.m. in TLC Room 1301. The viewer is warned, prepare to be scared!

HARLEM GLOBETROTTERS TO RETURN TO UWG FOR THIRD-STRAIGHT YEAR

TUCKER COLE
Contributing Writer

For the third year in a row, the world-famous Harlem Globetrotters will bring their unique, entertainment-focused brand of basketball to the University of West Georgia's Coliseum in December. Tickets are now available and on sale since Oct. 6.

The Globetrotters have performed in over 124 countries and territories across six continents since 1926. According to Matt Cooke — assistant athletic director for Events, Marketing, and Media Services — this will be the fifth time that the Globetrotters have performed at the Coliseum in its full history, and there are several reasons why the group has begun to consistently choose this local venue.

"The Coliseum is a great location. It's the largest facility between Birmingham and Atlanta. It's really, really accessible to a lot of people," Cooke said. "I think there's four-hundred thousand people they can pull from within the Carroll County area."

Cooke said they have had positive feedback from the Globetrotters about the venue in the past.

"It's really well laid out for them to

be able to bring all of their equipment," Cooke said of the Coliseum. "They enjoy coming to Carrollton. Carrollton is a very strong economic area and a place where there's a lot of people with a lot of money to spend, and, I mean, that's the name of the game for the Globetrotters."

Cooke said UWG does not stand to make any profit from the event outside of renting out the facility, but nonetheless, the partnership is mutually beneficial.

"They're wanting to sell tickets, and we want to help them sell tickets, so it's a great partnership," said Cooke.

Cooke was especially excited for the Globetrotters to return to UWG this year because of his personal experience seeing the group when he was younger.

"I grew up in North Carolina, and my mother was in charge of events at the Smith Center at the University of North Carolina. I actually got to see the Globetrotters there when I was a kid," said Cooke. "When you've grown up with that and you've seen how they've been over the years, it's just so cool to have them in

your facility."

The Globetrotters have several different teams that they take on their tours, but UWG will get to see the number-one squad this December. Each Globetrotter has an iconic nickname they are referred to as, and team members coming to UWG include Hammer, TNT, Bulldog, Cheese, Torch, Hot Shot, Jet, Wham and Thunder.

Along with the overall spectacle of having the Harlem Globetrotters in Carrollton, there will also be several new features added to their visit, one of which is a newly added halftime skills showcase that will allow fans to go out on the court and show some of their own basketball prowess.

The Globetrotters have also newly partnered with basketball manufacturer Spalding, and starting this December, Spalding will be joining the team at every arena destination. This means fans will have the opportunity to take home an official Spalding Harlem Globetrotters basketball or the newly designed Harlem Globetrotters Marble Series ball on game day.

The Globetrotters will make their way to Carrollton for their show on Saturday, Dec. 16 at 7 p.m. Tickets for the event are still currently available as of Oct. 15.

Those interested in purchasing tickets for the event may go to harlemglobetrotters.com.

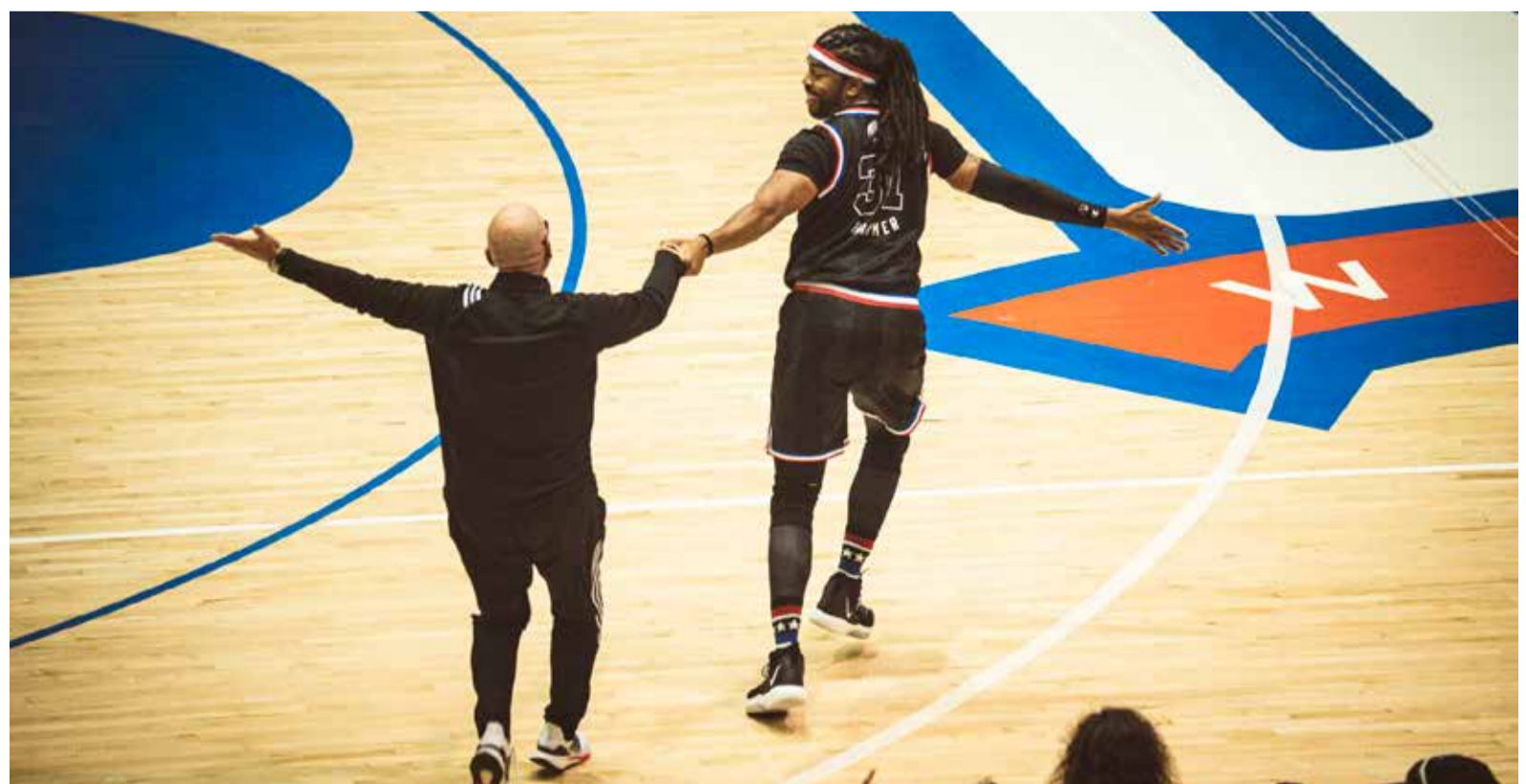


Photo: Josh Cato, *The West Georgian*

BREAKING THE STIGMA: UWG'S MEN'S MENTAL HEALTH PANEL

ALEX DUCOULMBIER
Contributing Writer

On Friday, Oct. 13th, the University of West Georgia chapter of the National Society of Collegiate Scholars held its first official Men's Mental Health Panel.

At a time when men's mental health is heavily stigmatized, the mental health panel offered male students the opportunity to have their questions answered and to be heard by others going through the same thing.

The panel began with an icebreaker to ease the nerves of the audience of about 20. This involved asking questions to get to know the audience, such as: what do you hope to gain from this, what makes you happy and what are your greatest strengths?

From there, one of the organizers began introducing the panelists. The panel consisted of three students and four professionals with varying degrees of experience on the topic of mental health.

Of the non-student panelists, there was one licensed therapist, a campus police officer, an associate director of career

services and a man recovering from various mental health struggles.

The organizers then began to ask questions for the panelists to answer. The list of topics included therapy, childhood, stigmas in society and mental health resources.

As the panelists gave insightful stories and advice for young men struggling with their mental health, one could feel the heaviness of the room.

Some organizers and audience members were on the verge of tears as they listened to what the panelists had to say.

As time went on, one could quickly realize that men have much more in common with one another than one might assume when it comes to struggling with their mental health.

Another topic that the panelists and audience were able to relate to was the subject of racism in America.

One panelist began by sharing his encounters with racism as a black man growing up in predominantly white

schools, which led to an audience member giving a heartfelt speech about how ostracized black men are in our country.

This opened up the conversation for the audience and other panelists to discuss their experiences with race-based discrimination.

On the same note, an audience member gave his story of discrimination by police in Carrollton. This invited the police officer panelist to give his insight into the topic, which eventually led to them finding common ground on the subject.

The discussion then moved to talking about the societal stigmas placed on men's mental health. Namely, how many men feel that it isn't acceptable to speak up about struggling mentally. The therapist discussed how common this is with men and that we must work to break this cycle.

The panel ended with the organizers and panelists discussing the numerous resources that are available to students at UWG.

If you or someone you know is struggling with mental health issues of any kind, you are not alone. Do not hesitate to set up an appointment at the campus counseling center, or call anytime at 678-839-6428.

GREEK GRIND 2023: THE GREEKS THROWBACK TO SOME CHILDHOOD FAVORITES

DOUGLAS SALTER
News Editor

Greek Grind is back at UWG and better than ever. The popular Homecoming event took place Tuesday, Oct. 17 in the Campus Center Ballroom. As always fraternities and sororities were paired together and instructed to choreograph a dance based on their given theme. All teams were given almost a month and a half to prepare. Greek Grind is still being run by the Greek Programming Board (GPB). GPB is a UWG organization run by students from fraternities and sororities. Their main goal is to bring fraternities and sororities together to unite and have fun.

Greek Grind this year was "Rewind the Grind" because the theme was 2000's artists. The average current college student was born between 2001-2005, so the theme was something everyone could relate to and enjoy. The theme was decided on by the entire GPB staff. The artists selected were Eminem, Taylor Swift, Usher, Justin Bieber, Lady Gaga, Pitbull and Katy Perry. The artists were also assigned to the teams

by GPB versus the teams picking an artist of their choice.

"We looked at the top Artists of the 2000s," said Greek Programming Board Staff Member Jackson Warren. "We then decided that the seven we picked were the most popular and relatable ones."

Greek Grind was open to all students and faculty regardless of Greek life affiliation. Hundreds packed the Campus Center Ballroom to be entertained by the different teams. The crowd played a huge effect on the enjoyment of the show. As each team took the stage, fans of each team screamed their hearts out ready for a show. Then as each team performed, the screams got louder and louder as pretty much every team was being cheered on by the whole audience.

"The crowd was way bigger than I thought it would be," said Warren. "I thought it would be a decent crowd, but the ballroom was almost full. It was awesome to see all the

fun and engagement."

Greek Grind is not just a concert, it's also a competition. A panel of judges was selected to sit in the front row and afterwards determine the winner.

"The judges were professors or other staff, and we simply asked if they wanted to help judge the event," said Warren. "The judges were given a scoresheet that addressed items such as choreography, group execution and overall effect."

Every team danced their hearts out, but in the end there could only be one winner. After all teams performed, the judges voted and GPB announced the top 3. Each team in the top 3 received a trophy (With the trophies getting bigger the higher a team finished). In third place was Team Justin Bieber by Alpha Xi Delta and Kappa Alpha. In second place was Team Pitbull by Kappa Sigma, Phi Delta Theta and Phi Mu. Finally, the winner of Greek Grind 2023 was Team Usher by Kappa Delta and Tau Kappa Epsilon. Overall, Greek Grind 2023 was a huge success.

"I thought it was a fun experience all around," said Warren. "This was my first Greek Grind. It was cool seeing the large crowds, and how everyone was having a great time. There were no fights and every team got along. In terms of next year, I would say there's not too much to improve on besides little things."



Photo: Douglas Salter, *The West Georgian*

FEATURE

THE CHILDREN CONNECT MUSEUM: WHERE CREATIVITY AND LEARNING MEET

MICAH NOEL
Contributing Writer

On the corner where Temple Avenue and College Street meet lies a place for learning and wonder. The historic building now houses the Children Connect Museum, preparing for one of its biggest events.

Like all great things, Children Connect started as an idea. In 2014, Pamela Prange, a known local, wanted to create a museum for Newnan's younger residents. Development started that same year with the help of a supportive committee and partners.

"She and some members of the historical society had the vision to have more of an extension of the historical society but focused on just children," says Board President of Children Connect Tori Hansen.

Upon admission, four rooms prioritize different types of play. The Connecting Room focuses on tactile play with LEGOS, fossils and the popular building system K'NEX. The Your World room imitates places in the real world, including a grocery store, costume play and a bank. For younger visitors, the Pre-K Room is the place to go, with foam mats and toddler toys. The Imagination Lab provides a more coordinated way of play, using a classroom structure

where crafts are created based on a STEM curriculum. A Drop-In craft is included with admission using recycled and donated materials.

"We really try to have educational play options for them so they're learning, but they don't realize they're learning," says Torres.

Children Connect has been on a steady incline since reopening shortly after the completion of the pandemic. Before the virus, the museum provided more programs focusing on ages 8-12. Builder's Club and Creator's Club were among the popular programs for the age range, but due to the amount of in-person involvement was cut short. Knowing that this sector of its audience is being underserved, the museum is currently developing new programs focused on them. The recently launched program LEGO Hour takes place every Wednesday. The program is included with admission and promotes healthy competition and teamwork through special projects.

"You know how kids love something for a week or two, and they're over it, and Mom and Dad have all this clutter in their house," says Hansen. "You can check toys in and out as

much as you want. So, you can take it home, enjoy it, play with it, bring it back and swap it out for something new."

One of the most popular events is right around the corner, and the best part is that it's free to the public. The Trick-or-Treat Glow Forest event is only two years old but has given the museum great exposure. Happening every year on Halloween, the historic house is turned into a glow-in-the-dark forest that families can walk through, snagging candy along the way.

"College Street, everyone does Halloween big, so we are a stop on the trick-or-treat route," says Torres. Preparation for the event takes roughly two workdays as volunteers decorate the building with donated tapestries and glow-in-the-dark effects. All the candy is donated but had to be quadrupled last year due to the heavy traffic.

"They almost had 2,500 people through last year," says Hansen. "Yes, we are taking candy donations."

The museum hopes that the attention received will transfer to more volunteers, programs, memberships and funds. The museum only has one part-time employee, Cara Torres, who heads the current agenda.

"Hopefully someday we can get there," says Hansen. "Bring this space to the most potential it can be and get that support from the community."

The Children Connect Museum is open Tuesday-Friday. For more information, check out their website.



Photo: Micah Noel, *The West Georgian*