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FIAT LUX NEWS



Prunty-Russo Media Lab Open to All Students and Faculty

Monica Nowik, Staff Writer

On September 27th, the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences hosted an open house for the Prunty-Russo Media Lab on the first floor of Powell. The Media Lab has recently undergone some renovations, including repainted walls and new equipment, making it more accessible for the students and faculty who use it; these changes were generously funded by Alfred University alumnus Dr. Anthony Russo and his partner, Brad Prunty. The suite of studios and offices, located between the Center for Advising (previously the Center for Student Involvement) and the mail room, is home to the three student-run media organizations: Fiat Lux, WALF, and AUTV. Other planned renovations for the Media Lab include a new door that leads directly into the lab from the main hallway; currently, students need to go around to the mailroom and enter through the back door marked “WALF.”

The Media Lab is not just open to communications majors, nor only CLAS students; this is a creative space where students and faculty alike from all over campus can create and produce projects, whether that takes the form of writing, video production, or going on air with the radio station. If you are interested in the Media Lab, contact any of the club presidents, listed below, or the director of the Media Lab, Dr. Peter Von Stackelberg.

Fiat Lux: Sam Sage, sks2@alfred.edu

WALF: Peter Iyayi, oi2@alfred.edu

AUTV: Hennessey Olivera, hdo2@alfred.edu

Dr. Von Stackelberg: vonstackelberg@alfred.edu



Credit: Sam Sage

Yemen: Where Cries Have Gone Unheard for Nearly a Decade

Mackenzie Jordan, Guest Writer

Currently, according to the United Nations and Human Rights Watch, one of the world’s worst humanitarian crises since the Holocaust is happening, and nobody is talking about it. Yemen is a country located in the Arabian Peninsula and is surrounded by Saudi Arabia. Most of the Middle East’s wealth has come from oil-rich countries, such as Saudi Arabia and Iran. Yet, these oil-based profits do not bring stability to poorer, neighboring countries such as Yemen. With wealth often comes neglected responsibility, and Yemen is suffering.

Saudi Arabia and Iran have gone head-to-head, over both oil dominance and growing religious tensions, in one of the poorest countries of the Middle East: Yemen.

Approximately 23.4 million Yemenis, 73% of the population, are in dire need of humanitarian assistance but are unable to receive it, due to the ongoing coalitions. These coalitions are made up of Saudi Arabia supporting the Yemeni government, and the Iranian government supporting the Houthi rebels. Both coalitions were formed based on religious views. Iran backs the Houthi rebels because they practice Shi’a Islam, while Saudi Arabia backs the Yemeni government because they are Sunni Muslims.

Yemen’s crisis began after the Arab Spring uprising in 2011. The intent was to overthrow governments, but it failed when Saudi forces came to aid the struggling Yemeni government. From 2014 until early this year, it has been estimated that 377,000 people have been killed. Less than half of the deaths

are estimated to have died from war conflict. The majority of this death toll is believed to be the result of hunger and disease. Saudi Arabia and Iran are not the only countries responsible for Yemenis’ deaths from famine and disease.

Previously, aid to Yemen had failed to reach those it was intended for due to both coalitions seizing it. Governments and bureaucracies spanning across the globe have delayed the process of traveling and movement of relief workers because access to conflict zones has been restricted by either coalition.

The purpose of the United Nations, defined by them, is a commitment towards international peace and security, developing friendly relationships among nations, protecting human rights, and promoting social progress and better living standards. Their slogan is, “peace, dignity, and equality on a healthy planet,” which has been criticized when looking at the Yemen conflict. A speaker from *Independent Think Tank* criticized the UN’s Security Council and international organizations for failing to ensure humanitarian aid has properly reached Yemenis in need.

The cries in Yemen have gone unheard for eight years, making the UN’s response to Yemen’s crisis the worst international response the world has seen since the Rwandan Genocide. Powerful organizations like the United Nations should continue to give unwavering support to Yemen. It’s a global responsibility to assist, and governments, all over the globe, must not turn a blind eye.

Fact or Fiction: Spooky Tales of AU

Matthew Shuttie, Staff Writer

Alfred provides a fantastic opportunity to see the stunning autumn colors of the area, with changing trees on the hillsides surrounding the college and a crispness in the air. But, beyond the beautiful nature of Alfred, is a mysterious one as well, with legends and mythos surrounding some well-known aspects of AU that many may not have heard of before.

I hate to kill your anticipation, but Alfred is relatively tame in legends and mythos. The one well-known building said to have ghosts and demons is the Brick, one of the residence halls. It served as an infirmary during World War I and II. This has led many to believe they have seen or heard the ghosts of dead soldiers and nurses. Another relatively unknown tale consists of a demon that may reside in the Brick. Still, the details of the said apparition are mostly left to speculation. In reality, the spooky season means using your imagination to create tales and stories of your own, maybe to scare friends or to create long-lasting traditions. While ultimately it does not matter if these tales are true or false, we wish they were real. Regardless, the spirit and atmosphere of Alfred make it truly worthwhile to be around when fall arrives.

Being There for Marilyn Hoyt

Sam Sage, Editor-in-Chief

Last semester, Alfred University received the devastating news that one of their own, Marilyn Hoyt, an AVI Foodsystems employee of 22 years, was diagnosed with terminal bone cancer. While some students mobilized in that short period of time to try and raise money for Hoyt's treatments through her PayPal, many were unable to help.

This frustration prompted art student Kaz Taggart to create a fundraiser for Hoyt, which culminated in the small event held on September 30th, 2022, in Powell Campus Center. The second-floor lounge held some club-sponsored vending and games, overseen by Tyler Armak, while Taggart supervised the silent auction in the Kenyon-Allen room.

"As soon as I found out, I was just like I need to get this stuff together," said Taggart. "But we didn't have enough time at the end of last semester, so as soon as we got here, we started talking to Zupan immediately."

The turnout was smaller than they had hoped. The event, meant to involve the entire campus, was scheduled to begin at 4:30pm and go on until 7:30pm, and many of the attendees within the first hour were friends and family of Hoyt.

Marilyn Hoyt was present as well. Sitting beside Taggart in Kenyon-Allen, she had the chance to speak with those who dropped by the auction. Masked up, she mainly kept to herself.

"I just wish that it was a lot more organized, in the sense that the school gave us more time to collect things and would've let us advance into a bigger space in general, and part of the building that people actually know," said KJ Rauber, who was taking pictures of the event and helping Taggart run the silent auction.

Rauber echoed the same wish of Armak and Taggart. All three spoke at length about the disorganization and forced haste that Alfred University placed upon them. Despite the immense support of AVI Foodsystems, Center for Student Involvement, Student Activities Board, and President Mark Zupan, the fundraiser suffered from a lack of attendance and interest.

In response to a question about how the university could be better at taking care of its own, Tyler Armak said, "I think, number one, the university needs to fix middle administration. I think they need to get it together and coordi-

nate more. The biggest issue is that everyone talks and talks, but they don't do anything. The issue is a lot of people don't try."

He continued, shifting his focus to his peers, "There's a lot of lacking from students, as well. It doesn't matter how much we ask of administration if we don't do anything. Like, if we just ignore faculty and ignore fellow students, then it doesn't matter. Finally, I think there needs to be energy again. In the school, in society. Something that inspires us to a higher ideal."

Disappointment in accountability on the fronts of both administration and students colored much of the fundraiser. While the event managed to raise around \$800 for Hoyt's continued chemotherapy treatments, it did not come easily.

Taggart stated that it wasn't until the last day of donation drop-offs that they received any work from students, having to supply the silent auction with most of their own artwork. Similarly, they expressed dissatisfaction with some faculty involvement. Taggart and Armak dedicated themselves to hosting the event out of a feeling of appreciation and care for Marilyn Hoyt, their shared devastation equally split between her diagnosis and her treatment by the University.

When asked about what exactly drove him to co-host the event, Armak said, "I think, number one: lack of university response in regards to their staff. But second, I think just the kindness and generosity Marilyn showed me personally. I think as a community, we lack any sort of sense of actual community. And part of that is helping one another out when we're actually needing it."

The sentiment was shared by Rauber, who said that Hoyt is reportedly not receiving paid leave from Alfred University.

However, despite all the hitches that the fundraiser faced on September 30th, there was a shared desire to try this event again. Taggart and Armak wish to hold a similar event at the end of this fall semester, and/or during the spring semester. They hope to see a bigger turnout and encourage more students to donate their art for another auction.

Those interested in doing so, or in helping support Hoyt financially, should email Kaz Taggart at alt20@alfred.edu.

Fly on the Wall: Career Fair

Contributed by EQ alQtam, Staff Photographer

What's Happening?: Anthony sits at the IPD Booth, visted by a student.



Spotlight: Judson Leadership Center

Monica Nowik, Staff Writer

The Beth Robinson Judson Leadership Center offers student leadership programs, professional development assistance, and funding for projects, research, and trips. The JLC, located by Connors (formerly Openhym) and the Ford Street Apartments, is found by entering the building on the left side and turning right into the JLC lounge. The lounge is open to students and is perfect for homework and studying; it includes a small library and a coffee bar which is kept well stocked.

The JLC offers the Women’s Leadership Academy, which is part of the Women and Genders Studies program. The WLA is open to students of any gender identity from their sophomore year to their year of graduation; the leadership program takes one year (two semesters) to complete. Other programs include Alfred’s Newest Talent program, the LEAD Athletic program, a chapter of Omicron Delta Kappa, the Student Leadership Development Program, and the Women of Influence Lecture Series. The Center also offers the AKO Achievement Award and the Bernstein Award. Funding for research in women’s leadership and for students who cannot afford to attend conferences or pursue internships on their own is available. The JLC also promotes civic engagement, provides education on voting rights, and helps transport students to polls on voting days.

Currently running the JLC is Abby Hurley, a three-time graduate of AU. She oversees the JLC programs and works with the Alfred University Board. She has been involved in Student Experience and Student Activities, and in 2020, received her master’s in school counseling. To put it in her own words, “Alfred feels like home.”

Also working in the JLC is Aubrey Wilkins, a graduate student in the School of Counseling, who assists Abby, supports events, facilitates voter registration, and manages the Center’s social media @JudsonLeadershipCenter.



Credit: Aubrey Wilkins

Return to Stratford

Ashton Julian, Staff Writer

For the first time since 2019, the English division was able to make their annual trip to Stratford, Ontario. Ten students led Dr. Susan Mayberry, and her husband Tom, drove up to Stratford on October 6th to attend three plays: *Richard III*, *Chicago*, and *The Miser*. The plays were performed in the Tom Patterson and Festival Theatres and ranged in genre from Shakespeare, to a musical, to a modernized adaptation of a 17th-century comedy. Outside of the performances, students enjoyed exploring the vibrant city of Stratford until their return to campus on October 8th. As long as interest remains, the English division hopes to continue to sponsor the trip for years to come.



Fly on the Wall: Class Life

Contributed by EQ alQtam, Staff Photographer

What’s Happening?: Professor Julia Langdal-Sittu’s Introduction to Psychology class touch brains during a lesson!

History of Halloween

Alina Zabihailo, Staff Writer

Well-known for its “spooky vibe,” Halloween is becoming more popular each year. People of all ages dress up, carve pumpkins, go to parties, and decorate houses. Everybody has heard of this day, but do you know how everything started? Are there any reasons for the celebration?

People still argue over the history behind Halloween. The most popular theory suggests that Halloween, “can be traced back to an ancient Celtic festival known as Samhain, which took place in England and Ireland roughly 2,000 years ago,” according to an article by *Fox News*. They believed that the souls of those who had died return to visit home the day before the new year begins (on November 1 on the modern calendar.) People wore masks to hide their faces from ghosts and set bonfires to scare evil, otherworldly spirits. These traditions have possibly laid the foundation for modern celebrations.

In the 7th century, Pope Boniface IV moved All Hallows’ Day, a day of remembrance of all Saints from the Church who reached Heaven, from May 13 to November 1. The day before became a holy evening, or eve, according to *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Most believe this is where the name, All Hallows’ Eve or Halloween, has come from.

A common association with Halloween is *Día de los Muertos*. People usually confuse this day with All Saints’ Day, even though the Mexican celebration tends to be more festive. Although both holidays intend to remember the dead, traditions differ considerably. During this celebration, people honor the members of their family who have died by, “building home altars called *ofrendas* with the favorite foods and beverages of the departed, and visiting graves with these items as gifts for the deceased.” The famous sugar human skulls are called *calavera* and came from the same tradition.

The celebration of Halloween became a part of American culture due to immigrants coming from around the world. After all these years, everyone still wears scary outfits, not to scare evil souls, but for parties. People came up with a bunch of activities, including trick-or-treating and pumpkin carving; companies started selling Halloween decorations, costumes, and candies, which generate around \$10 billion each year in the USA, as The National Retail Federation reports.

So, how can you lift your Halloween spirit?



Credit: Jason Crocker, Staff Photographer

Movies will do it. You may find something in the list below:

Comedy

1. *Hocus Pocus* (1993)
2. *The Addams Family* (1991, 1993)
3. *Ghostbusters* (1984)
4. *Son of the Mask* (2005)
5. *Night at the Museum* (2006)
6. *The Witches* (2020)

Horror

1. *A Nightmare on Elm Street* (1985)
2. *Friday the 13th* (1980)
3. *The Shining* (1980)
4. *It* (2016)
5. *Halloween* (2018)
6. *Us* (2019)
7. *The Invisible Man* (2020)

Family-Friendly

1. *Edward Scissorhands* (1990)
2. *Casper* (1995)
3. *Harry Potter* (2001-2011)
4. *Frankenweenie* (2012)
5. *Maleficent* (2014)

Animated

1. *Scooby Doo & The Ghoul School* (1988)
2. *The Nightmare Before Christmas* (1993)
3. *Hotel Transylvania* (2012)
4. *The Addams Family* (2019)

Music is an important part of the atmosphere of the celebration, so here is a list of spooky mood songs:

1. ‘Doctor’ by Loic Nottet
2. ‘Heathens’ by Twenty-One Pilots
3. ‘Thriller’ by Michael Jackson
4. ‘Unholy’ by Sam Smith & Kim Petras
5. ‘Bury a Friend’ by Billie Eilish
6. ‘Inferno’ by Bella Poarch & Sub Urban
7. ‘Bring Me to Life’ by Evanescence
8. ‘Psycho’ by Anne-Marie & Aitch
9. ‘Disturbia’ by Rihanna
10. ‘Ghost Town’ by Adam Lambert
11. ‘Somebody’s Watching Me’ by Rockwell

Behind the Scenes: Hopes & Plans for Festifall

Sam Sage, Editor-in-Chief

New students to AU will have a different experience with Festifall this year, thanks to Eliza Ordway and Maggie Weiss, compared to students of the past.

Ordway and Weiss, the tag-team of the Center for Student Involvement, are dedicated to making sure that Festifall remains an anticipated event. Their plates are quite full, trying to rebuild the CSI and student interest, but they believe that they will be successful in their ventures.

“We’re really just trying to bring that sense of fun back to campus. Take students out of their club bubble, their comfort zone,” said Ordway. “The energy we put out will come back to us. I think students have enjoyed the

things we’ve been doing.”

Ordway and the SAB have been busy trying to prepare for Festifall, changing it from a one-day event into a whole week of activities. From pumpkin carving to showing Rocky Horror Picture Show, they’re hoping that students will see this as an opportunity to socialize.

“The interest in the programming is there,” said Ordway, “but we really need students to help us run that programming. We’re still looking for music people, comedy people...just people with ideas. We can help put together an activity or an event, if it’s in our realm and in our budget.”

Like the rest of campus, the CSI and SAB have been going through

changes. The recent increase in event advertising going through AU Connect and various posters across campus have been beneficial for spreading information.

Ordway is proud to say that involvement in activities seems to have increased since they started promoting events through the sticky note tablet, and she hopes to keep that energy going even in the slower months of the year.

“We’re always open for suggestions and anyone who wants to join SAB is very welcome. If you ever say you’re bored, you need to come and see us,” said Ordway. “CSI really should be where clubs, organizations, and students are able to come and find their

thing to do. We can help facilitate and feed those interests.”

Weiss and Ordway made it clear that they can only do so much regarding event planning. They wish for students to educate them and talk to them about what people are interested in seeing done on campus. Whether it’s about the latest trends or an event from the past you want to happen again, they want conversations in the CSI.

Finally, Ordway extended a hand to faculty about how they can help make events more inviting and accessible for students.

One-in-Three: The Hunger Among Us

Knox VanRenselaar, Guest Writer



A bag of flour, three eggs, half a cup of cheese, and a fridge door full of condiments. That is all I had in my kitchen one day in the summer of 2019. I stood there for close to an hour trying to figure out how to make dinner, when I finally realized that I could use the last little bit of ingredients I had to make homemade tortellini. Had I ever made pasta before? No. Did it matter? No. Objectively it was the worst pasta I had ever eaten, but at that moment I'll be damned if it wasn't the best thing I had ever eaten.

Food insecurity affects about 1 of every 3 college students, according to *Swipe Out Hunger* (a national program aimed at stopping food insecurity on college campuses.) I am here to tell you what it is like to be in the 30%.

My family has been poor for as long as I can remember. At four years old, my mom, younger sister, and I were unhoused. We slept in my mom's Ford Taurus, took baths in the mechanic's sink at the oil and lube center she managed, and relied on food stamps and the generosity of others to stay fed. Eventually, we were able to find an apartment that would take us as tenants, but the struggle for enough food was always there.

I have a vivid memory from high school of being so excited that we had enough food in the house for my mom to pack me a lunch rather than me getting a school lunch. I was especially excited because the food pantry had gotten a large shipment of the really soft sugar cookies that I love, and I knew my mom had packed some for me. When I finished my lunch I pulled out the cookies for dessert and a person sitting across from me loudly laughed and

asked why I was eating Christmas cookies in May. I wanted to shrink inside myself. I knew that the cookies were still perfectly good because they had been frozen, but at that moment, I realized none of the other kids at my table had ever had to get food from a food pantry. Facing food insecurity is an anxiety that consumes you from the inside out.

When I know that I don't have enough food for the week, on Monday I obsessively plan out my meals and portions, triple checking to make sure I am going to eke out seven days of food. By Tuesday I have bargained with myself to allow for an extra helping of something because I am hungry. Wednesday, I am feeling guilty for the "extra" helpings from Tuesday. Thursday, I am nauseous all day, all my chronic health conditions are flaring, and I am having mood swings. Friday, I ache all over from tensing my whole body by worrying about food, I am exhausted and have little-to-no energy. Saturday is the worst. Saturday is when time stops and all the generational trauma, anxiety about food and money, the guilt of being poor in a society that places blame on the individual and not the systems, and frustration with my body for needing to eat comes crashing over my head in a wave of depression. This cycle repeats every few weeks.

When I finally made it to college, I expected to no longer deal with food insecurity, but the struggle was still there—it just took a different form. For the first couple of semesters here I had a meal plan, but it wasn't enough. The hours of Ade didn't always match up with my classes, I had to watch my Saxon Swipes and Dining Dollars closely and if I stayed up too late or had to go to class early, I didn't have access to food in my room. I felt so isolated seeing my suitemates have snacks in the common area or eat breakfast early on a Saturday. I had nothing to offer when I wanted people to come over or when I was invited over somewhere else. My work-study paychecks barely covered my car insurance and supplies for my cat. I was so worried about being able to afford gas and food leading up to Thanksgiving break one year, that I had a panic attack on my way to class and had to cry it out in a library study room.

I love Alfred because we truly are a community, and as a community, we work to make life more sustainable for each other. What I didn't know during my first few semesters at college was that I had access to a wonderful food pantry. Now, I'm an intern that helps run the Alfred University Food Pantry and I do everything in my power to make sure new students don't have to worry about their next meal.

If you want more information, email us at foodpantry@alfred.edu or follow us on Instagram @AlfredFoodPantry

Zupan and the President Precedence

Concerned Student

Whether the general population of AU knows this or not, presidents of Alfred University are under contract. The Board of Trustees oversees and handles this contract, choosing whether to extend or end it. Zupan has been under contract for six years total, and despite his shortcomings, he has been possibly renewed for another three.

This information is word of mouth, and possibly not true—however, Zupan is meant to retire from his presidential position in June 2023 and, as of yet, there has been no call from the Board to Alfred University for reviews on Zupan's performance. This only furthers the reported "truth" that AU is meant to be under Zupan's management until 2026.

Whether he is meant to continue as our university's president is unknown—the Trustees have not been forthcoming on this process that faculty and students are supposed to be a part of. What is known, though, is that things need to change. The process of selecting a president, keeping them under contract, and all of the rest of it, is not what this university needs. We need to reform this process to be more democratic.

Search committees for professors are fundamentally different than a search committee for the university's president—there needs to be significantly more accountability in finding someone that is not only meant to represent our school at conventions and business meetings but someone that is supposed to have a heavy hand in what happens to this campus. We want someone that represents us, not someone that represents the Board.

Direct Letter to Alfred University

Dear Alfred University,

At the core of the Center for Academic Success, you say, “Alfred University is dedicated to providing all students with full access to its facilities, student programs, activities, and services, as well as providing academic accommodations for students with disabilities.” This is simply not true.

Every step of the way, and we will go through some of the more pertinent steps here, you have tried and failed to make this campus ADA compliant. Access to all facilities, programs, activities, and services, as well as academic accommodations, have been marred by hardship on behalf of all disabled bodies on campus.

Our first step: Center for Academic Success. Those at CAS welcome disabled students with open arms and encourage them to seek out adventure, and to go “outside of ordinary,” despite the students’ disabilities. They can do so by creating Letters of Accommodation (LOAs) alongside the student, which help with academic accommodations. This is not the problem, *per se*. Where we begin to see an issue is in CAS occasionally failing to place disabled students in accessible classrooms. Alfred is an old campus, not all the buildings are so easily fixed to become compliant, but there are ways to make sure a disabled student doesn’t have to get creative and/or push through the pain when trying to reach their class on time. Though, when this does manage to happen, it begets another form of anxiety. If you are visibly disabled, students will know why their classes have shifted rooms. It’s uncomfortable to be the reason why some students or faculty complain about changes in locations, preferring one room over another, and looking at your mobility aid as they do so. On this same line, requiring a key to access elevators is dismissive of students with invisible disabilities and increases exhaustion toward the system in having to request a key from CAS, when it would be simpler to allow all students access.

Next, we find ourselves looking broadly over campus. As this is an old campus, modern updates have been made to accommodate past blueprints. In recent years, we have seen changes to everything from residence halls to walkways. They are not always good changes. For example, the smooth, granite-like concrete walkways down to Powell’s second floor from the Quad. These walkways, although aesthetically pleasing to some, can become extreme hazards for even able-bodied students on overcast, rainy, and snowy days. Say you are injured on these walkways, or even any other location on campus, you would immediately look for assistance from the Wellness Center. This building is conveniently placed as far from all other campus buildings as possible, which is not helpful to students who are chronically ill or freshly injured. The care that can be gotten varies, but it all depends on whether the Wellness Center is even open at that time. In Powell, there are two push buttons for doors, and they are both only on the first floor. There are none on the well-used third and second-floor entrances. This requires disabled students to give up ease and autonomy, forcing them to either have an aide that can hold the door open or to go all the way to the first floor and then carry on. Most of the campus is like this, creating time-consuming detours and alternate routes for disabled students.

The bathrooms on campus are where we find a glaring issue in ADA compliance. Unless their friend is willing to help, many disabled students will find it difficult to navigate the bathrooms across campus. For example, a wheelchair user. In some locations, such as Kanakadea, the doors are too heavy to push open with ease. In others, like the Science Center, the bathrooms are way too small and have no space for a wheelchair or an aide to assist. The only disabled stall that is adequate in terms of space, location, and ease of access is in the women’s bathroom on the third floor of Powell.

Onto housing, an issue that has been brought up in the past are the LLCs. While these communities are good in theory, the execution left much to be desired. Namely, cutting off access to climate-controlled and accessible buildings to specific years. Moskowitz and Openhym (now Connors) are two of the most accessible dorm halls on campus, and they are prioritizing freshman and sophomore tenants. This requires disabled students or students that need climate control, to fight for their place in these dorms with ResLife. This is not the way to go about creating healthy, expansive learning environments.

Connected to this issue is that of upperclassman housing. Ann’s House, Joel’s

House, off-campus apartments, and Pine Hill and Ford Street apartments are too far away and too steep to be considered remotely close to accessible. Bathrooms, laundry, kitchens, and location are important aspects to keep in mind when planning out housing options that include disabled bodies. Following the stricter advent of LLCs, many disabled upperclassmen were trying to find out where they can live. If they are allowed to live in Connors, or Moskowitz, they would find themselves separated from their peers. The other option of Ford Street, which rests behind Connors, would seem like an adequate choice—save for the fact that laundry is to be done in the Judson Leadership Center, which even able-bodied students find taxing (borderline dangerous at times.)

Now, there had been a change that seemed promising. Ade Dining Hall implemented a disabled entrance, using the ramp that connects to the dining section as a safer way for disabled students to move about the space. However, while it’s obvious you were trying to be helpful, this change has been anything but. It has instead fostered a considerable amount of anxiety, borne from watching people accidentally (or purposefully) set off the alarm and consequently drawing attention and laughter. In order to counteract this anxiety, we choose to haul ourselves up the stairs instead. Yes, now you have put the check-in stand at the top of the stairs, making it easier for disabled students to scan in as opposed to relying on the honor system of a clipboard and pen. Unfortunately, there has been a distinct lack of communication on how one knows if they can use this backdoor entrance—if it is even unlocked, accessible, or open for all.

At the end of the day, the campus is fundamentally inaccessible. The failure to consider the multitude of ways to make it easier is a downfall that only disabled students, and their peers, have noticed. Putting money where your mouth is, is a fundamental part of being a caring institution, and yet there has been little of that advocacy. Do better, be better.

Sincerely,
Anonymous



Credit: Sam Sage



Credit: Wikimedia Commons

Decoding *Psychodrama*: Act 1 - Environment

Alpha Bah, Staff Writer

“What’s an album that has changed your outlook on life?”

This question probes the profound effect that music can have on us. Whether it is connected to fond memories or a reminder of past struggles, it’s a question that I could not answer until recently. In 2019, British rapper Dave released *Psychodrama*. *Psychodrama* is a concept album that tells its story through a series of therapy sessions. Touching on themes like mental health, criminal justice, racial inequality, poverty, capitalism, isolation, and gendered violence, the album is a journey from Dave’s tough upbringing to his rise to fame. *Psychodrama* is split into three acts: environment, relationships, and social compass. Thus, my analysis of the album will be split into three parts. I hope to not only share Dave’s story—his struggles, pains, triumphs, dreams, and ambitions—but also my own story.

Track 1: “Psycho”

Psychodrama begins with a therapy session, as brooding atmospheric organ chords play in the background. When prompted to begin, Dave responds, “How do you stop all the pain, huh?” It’s a sobering start for an album that delves deep into Dave’s life and it’s a question that remains salient throughout the rest of the album. Dave is confused, grappling with deep emotions he cannot process. He’s trying to get a grip on who he is and all the things that have led to this moment of crisis. Underneath it all is a deep depression coupled with skepticism toward therapy. In crafting this intro, Dave uses the music to illustrate his conflicted mind state. The first half of the song is much more upbeat. He’s confident, displaying his playboy personality with quick and decisive bars. But this self-aggrandizement is slowly chipped away by insecurities until it all comes crashing down, “*Brother I’m a careful, humble, reckless, arrogant, extravagant/N**** probably battling’ with manic depression/Man, I think I’m going mad again/It’s like I’m happy for a second then I’m sad again*”

The instrumental changes to a slow melodic piano, showing that no matter what he does or how great things might appear, he is still depressed and haunted by the past. The album art captures this mood. It’s an image of Dave’s head in a plume of blue flames, symbolizing a mind overwhelmed with intrusive thoughts and emotions, representing both rage and sadness.

By the end of the track, Dave admits that he needs therapy. His father getting deported for visa issues, growing up alone with his mother around gang violence in Streatham, and his brother Christopher being sentenced to life in prison for murder are all traumatic things to go through as a young man. Far more profound is the message that suicide is not the answer to stopping all of the pain. Taking your own life only brings more pain to your loved ones. The solution is to make peace with all of his emotions and reconcile the two warring sides of himself that are echoed in the track.

Hearing this for the first time, I could relate to struggling with uncomfortable emotions—that inexorable feeling of being in conflict with yourself. 2020 was a truly terrible year for me. I started in the fall of 2020 on my living room couch, on an extended leave of absence, contemplating how my first year at college had gone so terribly wrong. The well-mannered and affable young teenager my family once knew, turned into an angry and irritable individual sulking in self-pity. I did not have the capacity to express my emotions. They were buried under months of guilt and stress over my poor grades. I couldn’t hold it in anymore, I couldn’t keep pretending that I was all right and that things were fine. I was sure that I was done, that there was no way I could get myself out of it. So, I settled into anger, sadness, and then, apathy. *Psychodrama* became a way for me to process my emotions and my past struggles in college. I almost dropped out, but when my leave of absence ended in December 2020, I came back the following spring semester. I switched my major to history and, crucially, I signed up for counseling.

Track 2: “Streatham”

“Wind like a snake through traffic. Look up; old money in the fading architecture, new money in the million-pound townhouses, and off the Strip, the alleyways that lead into estates, a hidden world within a world. Welcome to Streatham.”

- Kayo Chingonyi (Spotify’s *Decode Podcast*)

Track two paints a darker picture of the London we see in tourist guides or Instagram travel posts. Dave’s conflicted environment, like many cities around the world, bears a stark divide between rich and poor. For underfunded and neglected neighborhoods like Streatham, opportunities are limited, and violence is never far away. For Dave, life in Streatham was caught between school on one hand and, on the other, testers that drug dealers pass out to their “customers.” So, when Dave says, “*19, I put 19 on an Audi*,” it’s a celebration of making it out of this harsh environment. He went from stealing Vespas with his friends to a driving a luxury car at just 19 years old! Cars have, for a long time, been a symbol of mobility and with that comes an avenue to, not only explore the wider

world but, get a fresh perspective away from the claustrophobic alleyways of Streatham. Yet even with this newfound success, Dave still knows friends caught up in the streets and he can’t totally distance himself from the place that shaped him.

In just three verses, Dave brings these ideas about transport, and friends caught up in crime and drugs into sharp relief, “*My young G done draws and eights/ Now he’s cuttin’ through bricks like the 1-1-8.*”

According to Kayo Chingonyi, Bricks refers to three things: narcotics, Brix or Brixton, and a piece of local history. In 2018, a 1-1-8 double-decker bus heading to Brixton crashed through a brick house in Streatham; you could say it cut through bricks. That danger of moving around the city is ever present and it sets the stage for a formative moment in Dave’s life, when his brother was sentenced to life in prison after being involved in a fatal stabbing at a train station.

Track 3: “Black”

Track three brings together the struggles with mental health in track one and the conflicted environment of Streatham in track two, and filters them through the prism of race. This “track is my experience...Me being south London, Black, Nigerian, that’s what I’m mainly basing it on.” says Dave in an interview with *The Guardian*.

“Black” begins, before anything else, with celebration: “*Black is beautiful, Black is excellent /Black is pain, Black is joy, Black is evident.*” Throughout the track, Dave speaks about slavery, colonization, police brutality, and the systems in the present that continue to oppress Black people. He mentions these things as a way to capture the expansive nature of what it means to be Black. To achieve a sense of wholeness means coming to grips with this painful history while celebrating the diversity within the Black diaspora. Dave uses hair to illustrate how there are different expressions of Blackness. While some Black people have curly hair, others have a different texture.

To tie the past to the present, Dave also references *The Blacker the Berry*, a novel by Harlem Renaissance author Wallace Thurman, “The blacker the berry the sweeter the juice /A kid dies, the blacker the killer, the sweeter the news.”

Many of the concepts of this track connect to ideas birthed during the Harlem Renaissance. There’s Dubois’ theory of double consciousness, the idea of, “always looking at one’s self through the eyes,” of a racist white society. Or the ideas of Langston Hughes, as expressed in *The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain*. The racial mountain is the ideology that Black people must conform to the scripts made by white society and the Black elite. Hughes argues that Black artists should celebrate their Blackness and emphasize self-expression. Finally, there’s the work of Alain Locke which heralded the birth of the New Negro. It was a celebration of African-Americans finally being human (whole) and experiencing a level of spiritual emancipation denied them for centuries because of slavery. Dave ends with a similar bittersweet note, “Black is like the sweetest fuckin’ flavour, here’s a taste of it, / But Black is all I know, there ain’t a thing that I would change in it.”



Must-Read Books That Have Autumn Feels and One That You Should Avoid

Piper Lilley, Staff Photographer

A Secret History of Witches by Louisa Morgan

The fictional story of five generations of young witches who escape persecution and find their magic along with themselves. The generations range from the early 19th century to World War II. I read this during my first semester at Alfred and it was perfect for the autumn season. Witches, Halloween, and changing leaves always go well together, especially since the majority of this book takes place in the English countryside. It's full of romance, heartbreak, magic, determination, and incredible mother-daughter relationships that span decades.

Little Women by Louisa May Alcott

I'd assume that many of you looking at this have already read, watched, or heard of *Little Women*. But, if you haven't gotten the chance to read it yet, I highly recommend it. It's so perfect for the end of the year, especially Thanksgiving and Christmas. It's incredibly family-oriented while also preaching independence. I had already seen two of the movie adaptations before I read the book, so I knew of all the spoilers, but it was still worth it. Alcott's language and description of sisterhood is engaging and heartwarming.

American Psycho by Bret Easton Ellis

(Book Content Warning: Incredibly Graphic and Violent)

This is more of a book that feels like Halloween instead of autumn, but the two really go hand-in-hand. It is incredibly vile, vulgar, and captivating. Like *Little Women*, this novel has a movie adaptation. The book is told from Patrick Bateman's perspective, which progressively becomes warped and irrational. Shockingly, I found myself fascinated by Patrick's vivid descriptions of every meal he ate and every outfit he wore, as well as every other meal and outfit around him. You'll find yourself as delusional as he is when paragraphs are cut off mid-sentence and names are constantly mixed up.

The Secret History by Donna Tartt

A beautiful college in Vermont...oh, and murder. Spooky and intellectual, the story follows Richard who becomes acquainted with five other students who are interested in Latin and the classics. However, their philosophical ideas evolve and dangerously affect themselves and those around them. Themes and plot lines that will make your head spin, this book is perfect for those who love dark academia and suspenseful mysteries.

The Witches of New York by Ami McKay

Surprise, surprise! I'm very interested in books revolving around witches, mostly because they remind me of Halloween. I'm currently halfway through this book now and it is just perfect. The story follows three young witches and their lives in New York City in 1880. There is also some sapphic representation that I wasn't expecting. The dialogue is excellent and the book in general is hard to put down. The book also takes place in September and October which is just the cherry on top for me.

Now, here is a book you should avoid, no matter how much it feels like an autumn book:

Dead Poets Society by N.H. Kleinbaum

The 1989 movie is a different story. You should absolutely watch that masterpiece and enjoy the autumn months. However, the book, unusually, was adapted from the movie's screenplay, and it reads like a bad fan fiction. There's barely any new information that a book could easily supply. The dialogue is juvenile and awkward. The character, Knox, who is already a bit creepy in the movie, is made ten times creepier in the book. It really was just an awful read and I highly recommend you not waste your time and just watch the movie instead.

Bodily Autonomy and *Rosemary's Baby*

Monica Nowik, Staff Writer

If you're looking for something less gory than *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* (1974) but more thrilling than *Insidious* (2010), you might want to check out *Rosemary's Baby* (1968). Although directed by our least-favorite guy, Roman Polanski (charged with sexual assault of a minor, among other things), somehow, *Rosemary's Baby* manages to be one of the most chilling commentaries on pregnancy and loss of control.

Rosemary's Baby follows newlyweds Rosemary and Guy as they move into an apartment in New York City next to a volatile elderly couple, the Casteveys. Early on in the film, Rosemary and Guy hear rumors of Satanic rituals taking place in their apartment building and discover a door in their flat that leads into the Casteveys' apartment next door. It isn't long before strange and unusual things start happening; meanwhile, Rosemary and Guy discuss starting a family.

After eating a chocolate mousse made by Mrs. Castevet, Rosemary gets dizzy and falls unconscious. While she sleeps, Guy sexually assaults her, resulting in Rosemary becoming pregnant.

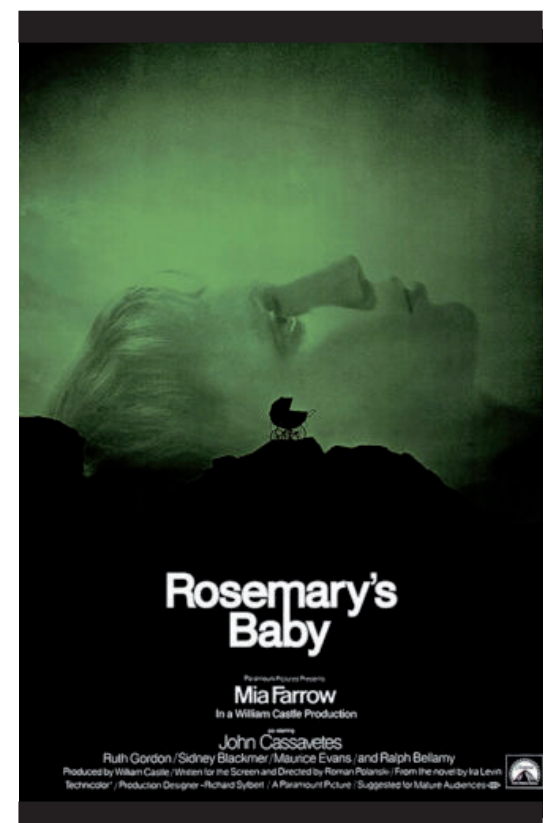
Rosemary's pregnancy is the focal point of the film (as the title clearly suggests.) As the months go on, the Casteveys next door become continuously more obsessed with their young neighbors' lives and try to assert control over Rosemary. Her husband and the Casteveys pressure her into seeing a doctor of their choice, who is more old-fashioned than the younger and more modern doctor that Rosemary initially wants, and Mrs. Castevet gives Rosemary a "special

drink" every day that she insists contains nutrients, as well as forcing a "tannis root" charm upon her. Rosemary begins to experience intense pain but her doctor, Dr. Sapirstein, refuses to prescribe her medication.

Everyone around Rosemary, except for her friend Hutch, seems as interested in Rosemary and her unborn child as if they were the ones pregnant. Rosemary feels out of control and is unable to make the decisions that concern her body. Nobody listens to her theories that the Casteveys might be witches (a theory that becomes more and more plausible as the film goes on), or her protests that Dr. Sapirstein isn't taking care of her. In one pivotal moment of the movie, Rosemary tells Guy she wants to get a second opinion on the pain she's experiencing. Guy says, "It's not fair to Sapirstein," to which Rosemary responds, "What are you talking about? What about what's fair to me?"

At a time in which women were often forced into the societal role of wife and mother, this movie's real fear comes from that loss of agency. Rosemary is the only one in the movie who doesn't get a say in what happens to her body, from the conception of her baby to his birth at the end. Throughout the movie Rosemary talks to her unborn child and promises little "Andy or Jenny" that she will find a safe place for both of them; she fights for the claim to her own life and the life she wants for her and her child (a life that after a certain point, she no longer wants Guy included in), but all the while, we can feel how

trapped she is in this position—a position that others have decided for her. The theme of bodily autonomy or lack thereof is one that resonated with audiences in the '60s and one that resonates now; horror is a particularly wonderful way to explore this theme and since *Rosemary's Baby*, there are few movies that have done it as well.





The Internet is a Horrible Judge of Popularity

Alpha Bah, Staff Writer

“The most interesting thing about *Game of Thrones* is the way that — despite all its noise and thunder — it faded so swiftly from the collective memory.”

This and similar sentiments about *Game of Thrones* were pretty prevalent online after the final season. Naturally, this led to skepticism once HBO announced *House of the Dragon*. To many of the season 8 haters, *House of the Dragon* would be a massive flop because the ending for the main series was just that damn awful. There couldn't possibly be any interest in this prequel show. Yet, as of episode 5, *House of the Dragon* is averaging 29 million viewers per episode according to *Variety*. By any metric, *House of the Dragon* has been a bona fide hit with both critics and fans. What gives? Well, in my opinion, the hatred for season 8 was massively overblown. Internet fandom, online media criticism, and incessant hot takes/outrage fundamentally distort people's perception of the media they consume. Far from nuanced and open conversations, the internet allows fans to myopically validate their own feelings and opinions. So, the same opinions get regurgitated over and over until a false consensus is built up.

Media criticism for most people is dominated by Twitter, YouTube, and other social media platforms. In theory, these platforms are supposed to be democratic spaces where one can gauge some sort of general consensus, but only 6.1% of all people on Earth use Twitter and 80% of tweets are created by only 10% of active users. This makes it all the more ironic, as “nobody cared” about *Game of Thrones* so much that it ended up being one of the most discussed shows on the platform in 2020.

Similar things can be said for YouTube, the number one video platform in the world. It's quite easy to disregard the small sample size when basing all your pop culture takes on social media discourse because it's where the entertain-

ment media, YouTube pundits, and chronically online nerds who bicker about the smallest minutia all congregate. So, while these online communities are relatively small, they are usually the loudest and most vehement in their criticisms.

A poll from the *Hollywood Reporter*, taken days after the finale aired, paints a much more complicated picture than the internet would have you believe. The vast majority were not angry about the finale and while the audience was split in the middle when asked if “happy” described their feelings towards season 8, most were “satisfied” with the season overall. When you include HBO's own analytics during the pandemic, which showed a massive spike in viewership, it's clear the outrage was exaggerated. Interest in the franchise did not just vanish overnight, what a shocker.

This is not to dismiss fans that hated the show. Millions signed a petition to have the season remade. These fans are real, and their opinions are valid even if they express them in the most childish ways imaginable. The point is that internet fandom is not the final arbiter of anything. Basing your opinion on platforms run by algorithms that prioritize engagement (emotionally charged content) will always result in missing the forest for the trees. The analysis is thrown out for quick takes, pedantic complaints about unfaithfulness to lore, and asinine “debates” about all the “errors” in a film. It's not enough to be lukewarm about something, you either must vehemently hate it or sing its praises. Hindsight notwithstanding, it is shocking how utterly delusional some of the online takes were about *House of the Dragon*. This is all to say that the internet is not reality, but a hall of mirrors. The next time you see someone bemoaning the death of this or that franchise, just know they are probably full of it.

MONSTERS GO TRICK OR TREATING



by Franmy Mateo-Tapia, Staff Illustrator

Art Submissions




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