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Training prepares students for active shooter situations.

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Pre-med student conducts cancer research for Bridges program.

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Survive ancient Egypt in "Assassin's Creed: Origins."

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Men's cross country team places first at regional meet.

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Comics record social history, reflect culture of today.

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## Calendar of Events

Nov. 13

Online registration opens for winter interim and spring semester.

Nov. 16

Symphonic band Fall concert.

Last day to drop.

Nov. 17

Miss Caprock pageant.

Nov. 22

Thanksgiving Holidays.

Nov. 27

Classes resume.

Nov. 30

Christmas Tree Lighting, Festival of Lights at 5:30 p.m.

50¢ lunch every Monday and Thursday at the BSM

Worship Service every Wednesday in the Sundown Room from 8 to 9 p.m.

# 'Between Earth and Sky' film depicts environmental damage to Last Frontier



[Editor's note: This story is the fifth part of the multi-part series "Climate Crisis" examining the causes and effects of climate change that begins with Issue #1 and concludes in Issue #6. Several staff members took it upon themselves to interview and conduct research. The results of their combined efforts follow.]

by NICOLE LOPEZ  
Sports Editor

Although Alaska is nicknamed the Last Frontier, the state has drastically

become the first frontier in climate change.

Jonathan Seaborn, production director at KTTZ-TV at Texas Tech

Alaska expedition to witness the climate changes in the area. Although they planned to film the expedition, he didn't know it

a scientist here at Texas Tech, about an expedition they go on every summer. He was curious if we wanted to film that trip,

it was like, 'Oh that's a story. It's a climate change story.'"

The "Between Earth and Sky" film crew went to Alaska twice. The first time was for 25 days. They flew in to Anchorage and traveled up to the Arctic Sea, went to Dead Horse and back down.

"Part of it was talking to locals, indigenous people and stuff like that, and scientists," Seaborn told the Plainsman Press in a recent interview. "What they've seen over the years, what they've learned. We went back the second time and spent a little over a week, and spent time with native villages. All this information went over the course for about a year and half. We started in 2015."

According to Seaborn, Alaska's vegetation is changing at a drastic rate. The natives are especially being the most affected by the climate.

"The villages are mostly along the coastline," explains Seaborn, "and the ability to fish and hunt their animals. Changes See "Permafrost" on page 2



Photo courtesy of Jonathan Seaborn.

## Recent graduate returns to college as campus officer

by BRANDI ORTIZ  
News Editor

Ivan Baeza is experiencing college from a different viewpoint.

Baeza, a 22-year-old Levelland native, recently graduated from SPC's summer Police Academy in July and returned to campus last month as the newest member of the South Plains College Campus Police Department.

"Campus has a different environment now than when I went to school," Baeza said. "The students, faculty, just being on campus is different. Different, but good."

According to Baeza, ever since she was a little girl, helping people and becoming an inspiration is all she has ever wanted to do. While in high school, Baeza said she hoped to enlist in the United States Marine Corps but decided to attend the police academy instead.

"I've always wanted to be a police officer," recalls Baeza. "Just knowing people can look up to you and ask for help is pretty cool."

Baeza said that she believes that her being so young and fresh out of school helps her create a greater bond with students on campus, especially the women.

"I've only been here for three weeks, and I've

University in Lubbock, recently had the opportunity, along with his boss, Paul Hunton, general manager for KTTZ-TV, to go on an

was going to turn into a film.

"We were approached by Dr. David Weindor," says Seaborn, "who is

and we did. But we were looking at, 'Well, will people be interested in watching about this trip?' As David was explaining to Paul and myself more and more about what they're seeing, the changing landscape, what's happening to the permafrost,

already had several girls come see me," said Baeza. "Sometimes there are times where they don't want to ask the male officers, so they ask me."

With Baeza being smaller in stature and the only female police officer, her family often worries that her new job could put her safety at risk.

"My mom and boyfriend's main concern is that I come home," said Baeza. "I have a 2-year-old little girl, and she needs me home."

Baeza said that even though they do not fully enjoy her long hours, the support from her family has helped her through the new experience. She said she believes it will benefit her in the future.

"I want to stay at SPC for about two or three more years," said Baeza. "Then I want to pursue my career with the Levelland Police Department. I would like to get a K-9."

As the only female campus police officer, Baeza said she hopes that she can inspire other women to accomplish their goals, even if they believe they cannot.

"I want to show them girls can do it too," said Baeza. "Tiny, little girls can do it too." It doesn't matter if you are big, tiny, little, tall, we can all do it if you set your mind to it."

bortiz1552@students.southplainscollege.edu



Ivan Baeza, a new campus police officer, hopes to become an inspiration for women.

BRANDI ORTIZ/PLAINSMAN PRESS

Even though she has only been a campus police officer for a few weeks, Baeza said the job so far is not giving her the action she was expecting but is just enough to practice her communication skills she learned while in the academy.

"I was expecting shooting, pulling people over, arresting people, but it's been good," said Baeza. "[Working as a campus police officer] gives you good training on how to talk to the students and faculty during a situation."

## Eighteen students competing in Miss Caprock Pageant

by AUTUMN BIPPERT  
Editorial Assistant

Most people think of the glitz and glam when thinking of pageants.

But the Miss Caprock Scholarship Pageant is more than that, focusing on academics and presentation.

The 60th Miss Caprock Pageant will be held at 7 p.m. on Nov. 17 in the Tom T. Hall Production Studio on the Levelland campus at SPC. There is no cost for admission.

Serving as mistress of ceremonies will be Sharon Race, assistant professor of English. Musical entertainment will be provided by students from the Creative Arts Department.

"I'm looking forward to seeing the backstage of everything," said Miranda English, who is in her first year as director of student life. "I've worked for two years as the auditor for the judges and tallying up the scores. So I'm familiar with the face of the pageant, but I'm excited to see what happens backstage, all the hustle and bustle."

Eighteen contestants will compete for the title, along with a \$750 scholarship for the winner and a \$500 scholarship for the runner-up.

The contestants were

selected as representatives for their student club or organization.

Those competing include:

Allyssa Almager, 18, a freshman Pre-Veterinary Medicine major from Levelland, is representing the Catholic Student Ministry. She is the daughter of Cynthia Camacho and Jose Almager, both of Levelland.

Madison Birchfield, 20, a sophomore Radiology major from Lubbock, is representing South Sue Residence Hall. She is the daughter of Kendra Birchfield of Lubbock.

Maria Isabel Botello, 19, a sophomore Computer Information Systems major from Ralls, is representing SPeCtra. She is the daughter of Claudia Botello and Juan Botello, both of Ralls. She is a member of SPeCtra, the STAR Center and Catholic Student Ministry.

Esmeralda Cabrera, 19, a sophomore Education major from Muleshoe, is representing Phi Theta Kappa. She is the daughter of Josefina Cabrera and Jose Luis of Muleshoe. She is a member of the Residence Hall Association, where she is a resident assistant, and also is

See "Scholarship" on page 3



November 13, 2017

Plainsman Press

# Permafrost melting forcing native villages to relocate

Continued from pg. 1

are happening, and they're noticing that quite a bit. The native villages are really the ones at risk to coastal erosion. The sea ice during the winter months build up, and during the storms it keeps it like a wall or a barrier to protect the villages. But they're coming later and later, and the sea ice isn't there, and the waves are ripping away the coast."

The native villages are moving more inward to land, because the villages keep falling into the coast. The reason why the villages are collapsing is because the permafrost is melting under the villages. According

to Seaborn, the natives are heading toward being potential climate refugees.

"If their homes go away, they're going to be forced to relocate,"

washed away in the sea. We talk about what the world is going to look like in 50 to 100 years, but it's happening now."

Seaborn and the crew

universities tours such as going to Harvard to talk about the film with many students.

"We did Q&A during the festivals," explains

other Wednesday. Before we started, I thought I did care about climate change but I wasn't doing anything about it."

Seaborn, a photojour-

is at Texas Tech they offer a recycling center. The money goes back into scholarships for kids. There are little things you can do. Turn the lights off

while you're not using them, or turn the water off when brushing your teeth. If we start making the move to change the environment now, it will also change the economy. If we don't start looking at alternative energy, our economy is

going to get left behind. I thought thinking that I cared was enough. You have to lead by example and hope people will follow."

"Between Earth and Sky" will be available on Amazon and iTunes in the next couple of weeks.

nlopez0806@students.southplainscollege.edu



Photos courtesy of Jonathan Seaborn



Seaborn, "and most of the time people asked what they can do to stop climate change. At the beginning, I wouldn't have been qualified to answer these questions. But we worked with some people who are well respected, like Dr. Katherine Hayhoe, who is a climate scientist. Me and her do a web series called "Global Weirding," which is uploaded every

time at SPC, says anyone can help reduce the changing of the climate by making small personal changes, such as carpooling, cutting back the amount of meat you eat, or even talking to government representatives about the climate.

"My wife and I recycle now," says Seaborn, "and the great thing in Lubbock

## Journalism students earn 16 awards in TCCJA competition

Current and former members of the Plainsman Press staff recently received 16 awards from the Texas Community College Journalism Association.

The awards, for material published during the fall 2016 and spring 2017 semesters, were announced during the annual TCCJA fall conference held at the University of Texas at Arlington in October. The 16 awards are the most won by South Plains College students in the TCCJA competition in the past 15 years.

Tovi Oyervidez, a sophomore photojournalism major from Lubbock who serves as the photo editor for the Plainsman Press, placed first in the category of News Photo for a photo she took at a Black Lives Matter event in Lubbock.

Steven Gehegan, a former sports editor and print journalism major from Wolfforth, placed first in the category of Sports News Story for his story on the SPC Livestock Judging Team winning a national championship. Now a junior at Texas Tech University, Gehegan also received an Honorable Mention Award in the same category for his story on the SPC men's basketball team placing third at the NJCAA National Tournament.

Sara Marshall, former

editor-in-chief and a print journalism major from Andrews, placed first in the category of General Column for an opinion story she wrote on concerns rising from the election of President Donald Trump.

Marshall, now a junior at Texas Tech University, also placed second in the category of Feature Writing for a story she wrote about a former SWAT team member who wrote a book about his career. Marshall also placed third in the same category for a feature story she wrote about local wineries, including Trilogy of Levelland.

In addition, Marshall placed third in the category of In-Depth Series/Investigative Reporting for a series on the United States Border Patrol and training center under the direction of Chief Dan Harris Jr., a former student, faculty member and Distinguished Alum of SPC. She also earned an Honorable Mention award in the News Writing category for a story about a student who hung a banner from a building in downtown Lubbock.

Matt Molinar, who currently serves as editor-in-chief of the Plainsman Press, earned an Honorable Mention award in the category of In-Depth Series/Investigative Reporting for a series on pros-

went to environmental film festivals to showcase their climate change film. They shared it at Washington, D.C., where there is the largest environmental film festival in the country. They also did

titution called "Risque Business." A sophomore public relations major from Levelland, Molinar also earned an Honorable Mention award for News Writing for his story on a Black Lives Matter march in Lubbock.

Hannah Nelson, a public relations major from Seagraves, placed second in the Editorial category for her opinion story on "13 Reasons Why." Now a junior at West Texas A&M University, Nelson also placed third in the Feature Photo category for a photo she took at the "I Prevail" concert in Lubbock.

Shelby Morgan, a print journalism major from Andrews, placed second in the category of General Column for a story she wrote about baseball and what it has meant to her life.

Alex Perez, a sophomore public relations major from Lubbock, earned an Honorable Mention award in the category of Sports Feature for a story she wrote on Bruce Wang, and SPC student who competes in martial arts.

The Plainsman Press staff also placed second in the category of Website and third in the category of Headline Writing.

Members of the Plainsman Press staff have won 108 awards in the TCCJA competition since 2005.

## Livestock Judging Team earns Reserve Champion at American Royal Show

by RANDI JINES  
Editorial Assistant

The South Plains College Livestock Judging Team continued a pattern of placing in the top three at their most recent competition.

The team competed on Oct. 26 and Oct. 27 in Kansas City at the American Royal Livestock Show. They placed

second in sheep and goat judging, and fifth in swine judging.

Individually, Drew Lamle finished as the third high individual overall, while also placing third in Oral Reasons, and sixth in sheep and goat judging. Madison Shults placed ninth overall in Oral Reasons and 13<sup>th</sup> in sheep and goat judging. Tanner Keeton placed 17<sup>th</sup> in Oral

ing and preparing for the event.

The Livestock Judging Team has placed in the top three in each of their competitions this year. Newsom said the reason for the success is, "hard work, dedication, and commitment. Those three things encompass, and a little bit of luck, as much as anything help us fall right."



Photo courtesy of the Livestock Judging Team

second overall and earned Reserve Champion out of 32 teams, scoring 4,555 out of a possible 5,000 points.

Four SPC students placed in the top 25 out of 150 competitors.

As a team, they placed second in Oral Reasons,

Reasons and second in sheep and goat judging. Conner Cross placed 18<sup>th</sup> in Oral Reasons.

Conner Newsom, coach of the SPC Livestock Judging Team, said his team spends "30 to 40 hours the week before competition" practicing

The SPC Livestock Judging Team will be competing next at the North American International Livestock Exposition on Nov. 14 in Louisville, Kentucky.

rjines4851@students.southplainscollege.edu

### PUBLICATION STATEMENT

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### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR POLICY

The Plainsman Press encourages signed letters to the editor. Published letters are subject to editing. Letters should be brought to CM 130 or mailed to our address at the college.



### Editorial Staff

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Brandi Ortiz / News Editor  
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Tyler York / Online Editor  
Annie Golden / Editorial Assistant  
Randi Jines / Editorial Assistant  
Autumn Bippert/Editorial Assistant  
Rebecca Ruiz / Editorial Assistant

### Staff Writers & Photographers

Dominick Puente  
Adán Rubio

Plainsman Press  
South Plains College  
1401 S. College Ave.  
Levelland, TX 79336

PHONE: (806) 894-9611 ext. 2435  
EMAIL: ppress@southplainscollege.edu



Students learn active shooter survival techniques

by AUTUMN BIPPERT  
Editorial Assistant

Many students don't know what they would do if someone entered their classroom and began shooting a gun.

On Nov. 7 in the Sundown Room at the Student Center on the Levelland campus, Nickolis Castillo, chief of the Campus Police Department, held ALICE training for students. ALICE training prepares students and faculty on different ways to respond in case of an active shooter.

"We have quite a large student population, so we want to get as many people trained as possible," said Chief Castillo. "So just having the staff (trained) doesn't really accomplish that. The students are really what this place is about, so we really want to make the students know how to take their survival into their own hands."

Chief Castillo taught students and some staff members the steps in ALICE, which are Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, and Evacuate. Each step is used in whatever order works in a given situation. Students were taught how

doing something is better than nothing in an active shooter situation and what a difference it can make.

"Just hearing a lot of the scenarios where because someone acted, or because multiple people acted, they did end up stopping the person," said Jeremiah Patterson, an SPC student who participated in the training. "To know that if the people around me can take action, then other people can make it out is a comforting thought."

Students were also informed about how fast situations can occur and why police can't always get to the shooter in time.

"I learned how quickly things could happen," said Mark Tiptoe, an SPC student who also attended

posed to hide in the corner and lock the door."

To show students what

mandated to go through ALICE certification.

"I would love to see



Students learned techniques such as how to barricade a doorway and evacuation safety during the ALICE training on Nov. 7 at the Sundown Room in the Student Center on the Levelland campus.

AUTUMN BIPPERT/PLAINSMAN PRESS

it is like to be in an active shooter situation, Chief Castillo put students in different scenarios.

Castillo was the active shooter and the students had to either go into lock-down or run. This helped show the best option for dealing with whatever situation you are in. He also taught students how to take down a shooter with a mass-to-limb maneuver, which is when a person uses all of their weight to hold down one of the shooter's limbs. This can be done for each limb on the shooter's body.

Chief Castillo said that he hopes to see ALICE training become mandatory. Some states currently mandate ALICE, while certain states also have specific jobs

Texas do that," said Chief Castillo, "because this is training that everybody needs. It doesn't take long

and really ranges from the full course. This didn't cost anything for me to do. I wanted to endow people with knowledge for free, because why not?"

Student Alexis De La Garza thought the training was really handy and useful to go through.

"It's a basic helpful thing that if you didn't know anything about it, then you definitely will now," said De La Garza. "It was good to get a refresher, because it's been a long time. An active shooter is not something I think

about, but the possibility does lurk in my mind every now and then, and if

it comes into mind, I just look around and see what can be used."

Active shooters are a major concern for Chief Castillo and many students on campus.

"We live in a relatively safe community," Chief Castillo said. "We have great students and community members. But just like you saw with the church shooting, it can happen here. Sometimes there's a political motive, religious motive, mental health issue, or sometimes it's just evil. There's no pattern really, and we can't predict where or how. So it's good to prepare. That's all we can do is prepare."

abippert0518@students.southplainscollege.edu



the training session. "I also learned that there are other options besides locking down, because I was one of the ones that was taught we're sup-

posed to take down a shooter with a mass-to-limb maneuver, which is when a person uses all of their weight to hold down one of the shooter's limbs. This can be done for each limb on the shooter's body.

Arrive Alive teaches students that distractions can kill

by TYLER YORK  
Online Editor

A South Plains College student entered an SUV parked on campus and proceeded to intoxicate himself before driving away, running a red light, and slamming the vehicle into a tree.

Then he exited the vehicle so another student could try.

This drunk and distracted driving simulator came to SPC on Nov. 6 for an event called the Arrive Alive Tour, organized by health and wellness group UNITE.

The organization has been around for nearly 12 years, making stops at places such as college campuses, high schools, and even corporate events such as factory safety demonstrations. Their mission has always been to develop educational programs to demonstrate the hazards associated with all forms of distraction behind the wheel, including drunk driving, distracted driving and texting while driving.

In a report released by the Department of Transportation and the National Highway Safety Administration in 2014, it is mentioned that 28 people in the United States die in motor vehicle crashes that involve an alcohol-impaired driver each day, averaging around one death every 51 minutes. It also was reported that the annual cost of accidents involving alcohol totals more than \$44 billion.

It is safe to say that education on this subject is vastly important to public safety, and, for students, that's where the Arrive Alive Tour comes in.

The simulator uses an actual SUV, complete with some electronic modifications to make the recreation possible in the computer software.

A Bluetooth sensor under the steering wheel tracks tire movement, with the front wheels propped up on rotating discs to allow them to move freely. Another Bluetooth sensor under the pedals responds to the gas and brake, and all the signals are transmitted to the computer running the simulation program.

hicle and obeying the speed limit.

Both modes, with each of their unique impairments, can quickly cause a dangerous situation on the road, resulting in swerving into other lanes, and even leading to a collision with other vehicles or obstacles.

According to UNITE, the program is a great way



South Plains College students experienced simulations of hazardous driving during the Arrive Alive Tour on the Levelland campus on Nov. 6.

AUTUMN BIPPERT/PLAINSMAN PRESS

Scholarship pageant set for Nov. 17

Continued from pg. 1

a Campus Ambassador and a member of the Art Club.

Lizeth Elvira Doblado, 19, a freshman Forensic Science major from Pharr, is representing North Sue Hall. She is the daughter of Lidia Hernandez of Pharr. She is a member of the Residence Hall Association and Criminal Justice Club.

Erin Farrell, 18, a freshman Video Production Technology major from Homer, Alaska, is representing Tubb Hall. She is the daughter of Vicki Farrell and Bob Farrell of Fritz Creek, Alaska.

Nicole Glenn, 21, a sophomore General Studies major from Ropesville, is representing Baptist Student Ministry. She is the daughter of Gail Glenn and Calvin Glenn of Ropesville.

Tina Gonzalez, 18, a freshman Public Relations major from Lubbock, is representing the Plainsman Press and Press club. She is the daughter of Silvia Gonzalez and Ralph Gonzalez of Lubbock.

Miah Hernandez, 19, a sophomore Pre-Nursing major from Lamesa, is representing the Biology

Club. She is the daughter of Stella Hernandez and Michael Hernandez of Lamesa. She also is a member of Phi Theta Kappa, SPC Cheerleaders and a Campus Ambassador.

Destiny Lyon, 18, a freshman Education major from Lenorah, is representing the SPC Cheerleaders.

She is the daughter

sophomore Government major from Lubbock, is representing the Student Government Association. She is the daughter of Rita Reyes and Abel Reyes of Lubbock. She also is a member of SGA, the SPC Cheerleaders, Campus Ambassador and Phi Theta Kappa.

Imelda Salcido, 19, a freshman General Studies and Surgical Technology major from Muleshoe, is representing the Residence Hall Association.

She is the daughter of Maria Salcido and Jesus Salcido of Muleshoe.

Jessica Sanders, 23, a sophomore Biology major from Lubbock, is representing Campus Ambassadors. She is the daughter of Jenny Sanders and Michael Sanders of Lubbock. She is the president of the Biology Club.

Kaitlyn Walden, 19, a sophomore Accounting major from Post, is representing the Geology Club. She is the daughter of Angie Walden of Post. She is a Campus Ambassador and serves as vice president of the Geology Club. She is a member of the Residence Hall Association and the SPC Band.

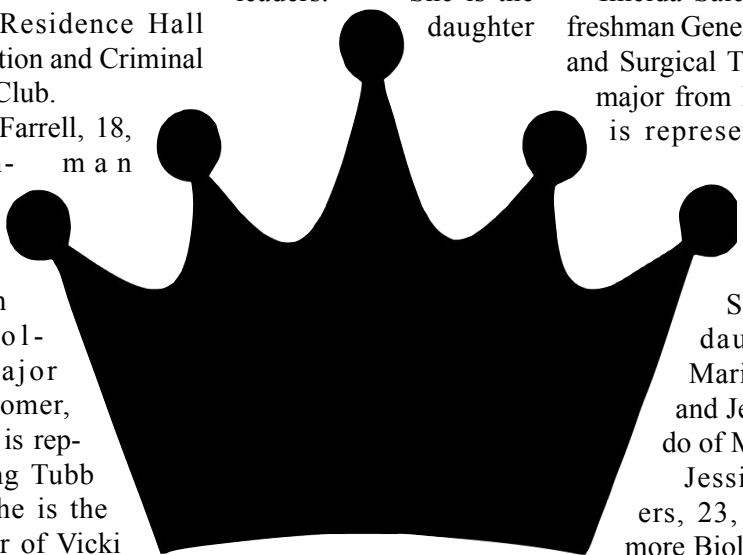
abippert0518@students.southplainscollege.edu

of Suzanna Hewtty and Christopher Hewtty of Lenorah.

Ambrosia Pollard, 27, a freshman Cosmetology Major from Lubbock, is representing the Cosmetology Club. She is the daughter of Etta Pollard and Charles Pollard of Lubbock.

Jaynearose Quisenberry, 18, a freshman Pre-Veterinary Medicine major from Seminole, is representing the STAR Center. She is the daughter Rosetta Quisenberry and Randy Quisenberry of Seminole.

Rita N. Reyes, 20, a



for students to learn about the dangers of impaired driving in a safe environment that can "impact your entire campus with positive messages that will last a lifetime."

"It was pretty scary, honestly," said Evelyn Daniels, a student who attempted the drinking and driving simulation. "I think if more people could do this before they go out and have a problem, it would make a big difference, and there would be less DUIs and people dying."

Jeff Peterson, another student who tried the texting and driving mode, thinks it could be a great way to bring these issues to light for those getting ready to drive for the first time.

"Fundamentally, it's good education," said Peterson. "Maybe it needs to go to more of these younger students and not just colleges."

tyork0243@students.southplainscollege.edu



# Passion for biology leads Mendóza to cancer research

by **NICOLE LOPEZ**  
Sports Editor

**O**ne student at South Plains College is trying to change the world one cell at a time.

Roberto Mendóza grew up in Denver City, Texas and is enrolled in his second year at SPC.

Coming to SPC, his initial major was pre-law. But Mendóza found his calling when he took his first biology class.

“Something about [the class] made me want to switch entirely,” says Mendóza. “That’s been my driving passion.”

Mendóza’s major is cell molecular biology for pre-medicine, which is the study of molecules and how the cell works. He is currently part of the Plains Bridges to the Baccalaureate Program through Texas Tech and applies his knowledge of cell molecules through his current research.

“Right now, through the Bridges program I’m doing cancer research and it implements a lot of the cell molecular side,” explains Mendóza. “Some of the research I’ve been doing is on breast cancer and seeing some motility and shifts inside skeletal proteins to see how that cell metastasizes through the whole body, and see if we can mathematically predict that.”

Mendóza has been part of the program for five months. He heard about the program through one of his professors Dr. Laci Alexander.

“I took her chemistry class,” says Mendóza. “and we typed out one of these papers talking about ourselves and I said I wanted to do medicine and she wrote, ‘You should really consider being part of the Bridges program.’”

Mendóza became interested in the program, so he looked further into it, applied, and was accepted. The Bridges program accepts on average 10 to 15 students who do research during the summer.

“Essentially, they set interviews with professors or physicians over at the Health Science Center or the Texas Tech campus,” explains Mendóza, “and you get interviewed to see what you’re interested in, what kind of research you’ll be interested in that might related to your field. Depending on the professor, you might be more on the writing side or you might be contributing to the project.”

Mendóza interviewed with multiple professors and initially wanted to do something with neuroscience, which was leading him to join a professor’s lab that was working on Alzheimer’s Disease.

“When I was interviewed by Dr. Lauren

Gollahon with cancer research,” says Mendóza, “something sparked. I liked it when she was

butt and read a lot. I had stacks of scientific papers and try to catch up and try to get a lot of knowledge



Roberto Mendóza utilizes his knowlege in biology through the Bridges Program at Texas Tech University.  
**TOVI OYERVIDEZ/PLAINSMAN PRESS**

explaining it to me. It was a lot of work because you’re working with grad students and doctors. I personally had to bust my

they already had before I could really contribute anything to the overall project and conduct my own research.”

According to Mendóza, his part of the overall research was mathematically predicting the spread of cancer when the skeletal proteins in the cancer cell change.

“[The research] is part of a bigger project that they’re working on with a compound called NI-07,” says Mendóza, “which comes from a natural herb and it’s known to be causing apoptosis, which means just killing the cells. If we can somehow predict when that cell is going to metastasize and then just put the medicine on there and stop it from doing that.”

Mendóza says the program did their research during the summer and they presented at two conferences this semester. They presented their research at the SACNAS conference in Salt Lake City, Utah and at the ABRCMS conference in Phoenix, Arizona.

“You just present your research, get judged, and

you get to win awards,” explains Mendóza. “But the main purpose of it is networking. Because there are so many professionals over there, senior scientists, doctors, all kinds of people over there and you want to socialize and network to see what available Ph.D or MD programs that are available, whatever it might be. Just to learn more of other people’s research to see if you can implement some of that into your own. There was ton of cancer research and there were some methods I could implement into my own.”

Mendóza plans to transfer to Texas Tech after earning his associates at SPC after this semester. His involvement with the Bridges program has challenged him with managing his time and making sure to not procrastinate.

“For anyone who is interested in pursuing a career in STEM,” says Mendóza, “one of the biggest challenges is sticking to it because...it’s hard. It’s hard discipline whatever it is such as engineering, to science, to mathematics, whatever it is. You have to stick it through and find ways to make yourself unique in order to be competitive in that field and the Bridges program is one of those ways.”

nlopez0806@students.southplainscollege.edu

# Nursing instructor recalls past struggles, immigrating to America

by **ADÁN RUBIO**  
Staff Writer

Working toward a career in nursing is an endeavor that requires a lot of hard work, perseverance, and a willingness to attempt any daunting task.

These fundamentals are apparent in the journey of Mia Acebedo, instructor in vocational nursing at the Allied Health Building on the Levelland campus of South Plains College. Acebedo has encountered many of the difficulties that a typical nursing student faces while also having experienced the hardships of moving to a new country and adapting to the countless changes.

Acebedo was born in the city of Salug in the province of Zamboanga, which is located in the Philippines on the island of Mindanao. When she was 1 year old, Acebedo moved with her family to Manila, the capital of the Philippines, before moving to the province of Tacloban in the city of Leyte, where she spent most of her childhood as an only child.

Acebedo described how her childhood consisted of playing with other kids during the week-

ends while working hard during the rest of the week to get a good education.

“I went to a Catholic school for most of my elementary and high school education,” said Acebedo. “Then, in college, I studied nursing.”

Becoming a nurse was something that Acebedo always dreamed of doing. Since her mother was a physician and a single parent, Acebedo spent a majority of her time at the hospital where her mother worked.

She described how she would go to the hospital after school and do a variety of things

while her mother was on duty, such as doing her school work and sleeping. Constantly being at

“It was my world, so I didn’t see myself doing anything else that wasn’t hospital related.”

Acebedo graduated from high school in 1987 and later attended the College of Nursing at Remedios Trinidad Romualdez Medical Foundation in Tacloban City in the same year. In 1991, she graduated with her bachelor’s degree in nursing, which was a feat that included many hardships.

Acebedo says her journey in becoming a nurse was very difficult. Her classes were demanding, and her opportunities to utilize high-quality nursing equipment and training were limited in the Philippines.

College is something that Acebedo says is very important for people in the Philippines. Most students, especially medical students, spend a majority of their time at school, where they would start early in the morning and end late in the afternoon.

“We strictly go to

school,” said Acebedo. “We are not expected to work part time. I didn’t have to work, so I was really concentrating on my school work.”

Despite being punctual and studious, Acebedo still struggled with learning to be a nurse in the Philippines. One of the main differences in studying to be a nurse in the Philippines than the United States is the lack of supplies and good quality equipment Acebedo was exposed to in college.

This difference in a learning environment is something Acebedo noticed once she moved to America. Having gained most of her hands-on experience at a government hospital helped her realize the efficiency of better tools and supplies.

“The hospitals here are very equipped and modern,” said Acebedo, referring to her work experience in America. “Back home, it was a different experience; it was a challenge.”

Obtaining the opportunity to utilize everything that American hospitals have to offer was also difficult.

For nurses immigrating to the United States, getting a job can be very difficult, time consuming, and a little heartbreaking. Acebedo described how she had to leave her three kids back home for the first couple of years while she and a group of nurses were recruited by nursing agencies.

Acebedo came to America in 2005 when she was recruited by University Medical Center in Lubbock, which was a long process. Taking nursing exams, English tests, and doing video interviews were just a few of the things Acebedo listed that were necessary to obtain a job in America.

“I interviewed for probably four different hospitals here in the United States,” said Acebedo. “UMC finally hired me.”

Acebedo continued to work for UMC, before getting a job at Covenant Hospital in Lubbock for a few years. About three years ago, she got an opportunity to work at SPC as a part-time clinical instructor for the ADN program. It was not until last summer that Acebedo got a job as a full-time instructor at SPC.

Acebedo’s journey throughout her education in the Philippines and experience in the United States displays the struggles and the amount of work some immigrants must endure to succeed. For Acebedo, moving to America offered her a worthwhile experience that she worked hard to obtain.


“It has changed my life so much,” Acebedo said of her move to America. “I am thankful for the opportunity.”

arubio2831@students.southplainscollege.edu



Mia Acebedo immigrated to the United States from the Phillipines to pursue her career in nursing.

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# Dream to work with NASA inspires alum to achieve goal

[Editor's note: This story is part of an ongoing project in conjunction with the South Plains College Alumni Association. The project highlights former SPC students and their achievements.]

by MATT MOLINAR  
Editor-in-Chief

From directing plays, to designing the space vessels of the future, to designing tools used in deep sea exploration is how one South Plains College alum expressed his creativity.

Raised in Quinland, Easton Day started his career at SPC with a major in theatre, an area that was familiar to him after having been part of the SPC theatre program since he was 12 years old.

"When we were just visiting West Texas, I would be part of the theatre program in the summers with my dad and step-mom," Day said. "Growing up, I've always been kind of right-brained and more creative than anything. And I've always loved theatre."

During his senior year of high school, Easton's step mother, Janna Holt-Day, began teaching at SPC, moving their family to Levelland, Texas where Day finished high school.

Nearing completion of his associate's degree

at SPC, Day took time away from school to handle financial problems. During his time away from school, while working full time, he began to realize that he had developed different interests.

"I realized that I was not really missing theatre," he said. "I missed certain aspects of it. Whenever I was out of school, I started developing interests in astrophysics and engineering, which is something that I love. I realized that with those interests, and a nice paycheck, engineering was the way to go."

Day says that when he was not attending college, he realized that he had a dream to work for NASA. When he returned, he talked to the then head of the Math and Engineering Department for advice and discussed SPC's connections to NASA.

"There definitely was a way that I could create this route to get there," Day recalls. "He gave me his opinion and how I could use SPC's connections. I



Easton Day standing in front of an Orion Cockpit.  
MATT MOLINAR/ PLAINSMAN PRESS

enrolled in school again and started in engineering and set those goals for myself to complete."

One of the connections that Day was told about was Community College Aerospace Scholars, or CCAS. He explained that it would be the initial connection he needed to make with NASA.

"I worked very hard to be invited to that trip," Day said. "Once I was accepted, my next goal was to win the competition [building a unique robot used for planetary exploration]. We killed it. Not only did we win the competition, but we outscored any other previous teams at any competition that they've had."

Day had completed his goal to get the attention from NASA that he and his teammate needed.

"If I set my mind to it, 99 percent of the time,

I'm going to achieve it," Day said. "The competition was something that I set my mind to. I had no doubt that I would be invited for the internship. Dr. Anderson, the director, loved to say that I always reminded him of a bull dog. If I sank my teeth into something, I'm never letting go."

Day spent a total of five years at South Plains College, figuring out what exactly he wanted want to do for the rest of his life. He also says that his favorite part about attending SPC was the relationships he was able to develop with professors.

"They are there for you," Day said. "This isn't always true outside of SPC. For that reason, it's easy to have respect. If you're willing to learn and you're willing to ask for help, there's no chance that they are not going

to do what they can do to help you succeed."

Following the semester he graduated from South Plains College, Day began a sixth-month internship with NASA's Orion Cockpit Working Group at the Johnson Space Center.

During his internship, he contributed to the design of the interface of NASA's newest developing space capsule, Orion.

"I worked designing some of the components of the cockpit," Day said. "There are many Orions across the states right now. They are all used for different testing purposes. The one I worked in was for astronaut training."

The Orion spacecraft is currently being designed as a new means of transportation for astronauts, and is on track to take humans to Mars within the next 20 years.

Day says that the experience he was able to receive at the Space Center was rewarding in many ways.

"The best part about it is going to be when I see Orion fly," he explained. "I'll finally get that feeling of 'I helped get man to space.' If it lands on Mars, that will be the first time

humans have landed on Mars, and I've been able to contribute to that."

Currently, Day works for Oceaneering International Incorporated, designing Remotely Operated Vehicles that are used in deep-sea exploration, surveying for the oil industry, and even for entertainment.

After graduating from Texas Tech University with a degree in Mechanical Engineering, Day utilized the connections he had made to begin working with Oceaneering as a sub-sea engineer.

"With my personality, there's really only two types of work I would enjoy doing and can stick with," Day said. "It's either space, or sub-sea. I like the two extreme environments."

Day says his current goal is to learn as much as he can and continue building his resume by exposing himself to more opportunities.

"To succeed in school and to succeed in the workplace, it requires drive," he said. "Just to get the engineering degree itself is no easy accomplishment. You have to be dedicated, and it has to become your life. If you want it that much and it's something you're passionate about, it can be easy."

emolinar0541@students.  
southplainscollege.edu

# Art Club creates relaxed environment for students

by TINA GONZALEZ  
Editorial Assistant

Art is a way for many students to express their ideas, release their thoughts, and just be themselves.

Art Club recently was added to the to their list of organizations and clubs at South Plains College. Just in its first semester, Art Club already has held different events involving painting pumpkins, painting bowls and making their own Christmas ornaments.

Art Club provides a calm and welcoming environment for students, whether they are art majors or non-art majors.

"I wanted a way for students to meet other artists that are on campus," says Kristy Kristinek, Art Club sponsor and instructor of art in the Fine Arts Department.

At the beginning of every month, the students meet in the Painting Lab in the Fine Arts Building to discuss their next events and talk about what is new in their lives. Art Club provides a safe place for students to just relax and do what they love.

According to Kristinek, the purpose for starting the Art Club was to create a sense of community for art and non-

art majors.

For many of the club members, art has been a part of their life for years, some beginning at the age of 5 and some discovering their passion in high school. For Kristinek, her art career began at the age of 5.

Kristinek didn't know she wanted to expand her art career into teaching until she was an undergraduate student. Professors she had inspired her to be a teacher.

"Art influenced my life in a positive way," says Kristinek. "It helped me finally find where I belong."

Kristinek, said she hopes that the club affects the students in a positive way, just like it has for her. Art Club has done that for many of the members. Just by attending one meeting, the students fell in love with art and what the club offers.

"My instructor at the time began talking to me about it," said Jessica

Marshall, a sophomore art major from Andrews. "Then I went to the first meeting and fell in love. It just makes me happy."

For Marshall, art has always been a part of her life.

"I plan on owning my own art studio and being an art teacher there," Marshall says. Art has helped Marshall find her place and what she loves to do.

"Where hasn't it impacted my life?" says Marshall. "I love how creative and expressive someone can be with just the simplest things."

According to Marshall, art has shown her a lot about other cultures, as well about her own.

"Art is one of the many devices we can use to understand others," says Marshall.

The Art Club has recruited non-art majors as well. Just like Marshall, Brandon Lofton, a wildlife biology major, went to one meeting and decided

that Art Club was where he wanted to spend his time. Art Club is a good way to take a break from class and all the real-world stress.

"I like the atmosphere," says Lofton. "It is very relaxing."

Lofton says he de-

cided on wildlife biology as a major because of his love of nature, but finding the Art Club allowed him to combine two things he loves, art and nature.

"Nature is its own kind of art," says Lofton. "I find art beautiful as well, and if you combine both, you get landscape paintings."

Along with other art enthusiasts, Rebekah Harvey says she finds the Art Club as a way to relieve

stress. According to Harvey, it's very calming for her. Art grew on her. Before art, she expressed herself through dance. Eventually, she needed to find another outlet.

"I've always had an eye for things involving art," says Harvey. "I love looking at aesthetic, pleasing things."

During the past few months, Art Club has brought students together, given students an escape


from life, and an outlet to express themselves. It has impacted each student in different ways. Kristinek says she has high hopes for Art Club, expecting it to grow and get involved in the community.

"Art Club is a way for students to feel like they are a part of something bigger than themselves," says Kristinek.

tgonzalez2552@students.  
southplainscollege.edu



A student works on painting her own Christmas ornament during a recent meeting of the new Art Club.  
TINA GONZALEZ/PLAINSMAN PRESS



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## ‘The Haunting of Hill House’ leaves audience spooked

by **TYLER YORK**  
Online Editor

The scariest moment of “The Haunting of Hill House” was a perfect metaphor for the performance of the play itself.

Two women who are guests in the house sat huddled on top of a bed together, holding each other for comfort. As an intangible knocking sound emanated from the depths of the house, a spectral form slowly began emerging from the wall of the room the women are in. It stretched the wall itself, as if it were made of a pliable rubber or elastic, and seemingly threatened to burst right through at any moment.

affected. Their lines suggested they were frightened, but nothing about their tone of voice or demeanor even remotely suggested the absolute mortal terror that should have been a result of the events unfolding around them. I later found out what I saw may not have been all that it appeared.

The play, performed by students in the South Plains College theatre program, was staged from Oct. 26 to Oct. 29 in the Helen DeVitt Jones Theatre. The story, based upon a 1959 novel by Shirley Jackson, revolves around



and willingness to be in attendance—who find themselves gathered at a famous supernaturally affected home: Hill House. The main cast includes several

answers about the house. Dr. Montague, played by Spencer Pellowski, is a specialist in ghostly dealings who is looking

tague’s largely apathetic and flippant associate. Eleanor, played by Lorena Lopez, is a lonely and delicate young woman who has some sort of clandestine or psychic background. And Luke, played by Joshua Rodriguez, is the heir to Hill House, and the primary source of comic relief in the show in combination with Dalynn Beck’s portrayal of Mrs. Dudley, the repetitive and obstinate caretaker of the home who stays away when

main character into the unknown, unseen depths that lied within.

I felt compelled to research the source material the play was based on, and it turns out the original novel is widely held up as one of the best literary ghost stories in the entire 20<sup>th</sup> century. During the show, I couldn’t understand why people weren’t reacting appropriately. But, in doing my research, I read that some of it was supposed to be all in a single character’s head. This revelation clarified much of the confusion I had about the story.

I’m sorry to say this is the first play I’ve ever seen



Students acting in “The Haunting of Hill House” on Oct. 26.  
**AUTUMN BIPPERT / PLAINSMAN PRESS**

The women, to my confusion, seemed mildly

four guests—at varying levels of understanding

“detectives” searching for

ness) who acts as Mon-



for hard evidence that the house is haunted. Theodora, played by Chantel Davis, is a noblewoman (possibly a princess) who acts as Mon-

she can manage. Beyond the fantastic effect of the ghost reaching through the wall, one moment that gave me chills involved a door that had remained locked for the entire show eerily unlocking and opening itself, and drawing a

at SPC, because I’m a big fan of theatre, and the arts in general. I’m greatly looking forward to seeing more plays in the future.

tyork0243@students.southplains.edu

## ‘Jigsaw’ disappoints with lack of creativity

by **REBECCA RUIZ**  
Editorial Assistant

After seven sequels of the “Saw”, the movie “Jigsaw” promised to deliver an expected twist to it.

“Jigsaw” starts with a man named Edgar (played by Josiah Black) running away from the cops claiming that if he pressed the trigger he had in his hand new games

the screen changes. As with the other “Saw” movies, there are five victims for the games. These five strangers are chained with a metal bucket attached from the wall, with spinning blades attached to their head at an unknown location. John Kramer (played by Tobin Bell) starts talking on the intercom, even though he was supposedly dead. He announces the next set of

chosen because everybody had a bad dark secret, so they must work together so they could survive. Every time someone dies, the body is exposed for the cops to find. There are two detectives named Halloran (played by Callum Keith Rennie) and Hunt (played by Cle Bennett), who oversee all Kramer’s victims. Also working on the case are two pathologists, Nelson (played by Matt Passmore) and his assistant, Eleanor (played by Hannah Emily Anderson), a big fan of Kramer. They are researching to really see if all the crimes belong to Kramer.

The ideas in this movie and its overall plot are somewhat underdeveloped, since this is supposed to be a new “beginning” for these movies. The movie is cut from scene to scene very fast.

Different games and different stages are being played, such as a man’s head being sliced from the top by a wagon of laser cutters. Jigsaw asks two victims to confess the biggest

crime they have ever done. The cop pressed the other’s victims button for him to start responding to Jigsaw’s question. He gets killed, then it’s the cop’s turn to respond to the same

twist no one would see coming.

It was approximately 85 minutes and was supposed to make an impact, but it did nothing. This movie is

date for Halloween so that the movie was worth watching. This movie fail to get the audience to feel involved with the movie and make them feel like the characters did.



would start.

As he gets shot, he presses the trigger and

games that are going to be played.

The victims were



question. He’s about to get his head cut open up with laser when he realizes the pathologist is getting up, and the detective realizes he was being recorded.

This is the eighth movie in the “Saw” franchise, so I strongly believe that the movie makers were just forced to make up something since this is the movie they claimed was going to be the “new beginning” with a new

known for all the diverse traps and gadgets that John Kramer had used in the previous movies. But I was not surprised at all by the basic equipment and punishments, with nothing new to me. It does not make me want to waste my money for the next sequel.

I strongly believe that the movie-makers could have done a better job, and not hurry the release

I still have hope that the next sequel is better than the last movie. Let the games begin.

I rate this movie a 4 out of 10.

# 4/10

rruiz0941@students.southplainscollege.edu



# Newest Mario game sends players on nostalgic Odyssey

by **MATT MOLINAR**  
Editor-in-Chief

Join Mario and his unlikely friend Cappy are on a nostalgia-filled Odyssey to rescue Princess Peach from her forced marriage to the King Koopa.

Exclusive to the Nintendo Switch, the 3D platform game “Super Mario Odyssey” brings the familiar basic format of a story Nintendo has been telling since its creation in the ‘80s in a fun collection of 3D worlds ready to explore.

Going back to the same playing style as in “Super Mario 64,” this game delivers a great dose of nostalgia.

The new game begins as Princess Peach is captured by Bowser and forced into marriage. Along with Princess Peach, Bowser has taken Cappy’s daughter, Tiara, for Peach to wear at the wedding.

The storyline isn’t really that great. In fact, I think it’s one of the worst I’ve ever experienced. It’s horrendously cheesy. However, the storyline isn’t the reason I haven’t been able to put this game down.

At the start of the game, Mario is kicked off of a flying pirate ship and lands in

a dark, foggy land where a community of floating phantom-hats lives called Bonneton. The two must chase Bowser across the globe and rescue Peach and Tiara.

Mario and Cappy have set off on their journey aboard the Odyssey, a giant flying mechanical hat, to rescue Princess Peach and Tiara. Their first stop is Fossil Falls, a prehistoric, mountainous landscape.

Once I began exploring the stage, I was very surprised to see how the graphics performance is for this particular video game, especially on a portable console. There are many fine details in the game, including the details of graphics and textures.

Despite the game only taking up just above five gigabytes, Super Mario Odyssey is full of interactive characters and environments, which, surprisingly, haven’t become very repetitive. It’s very well balanced and free of any bugs. You can tell that

a lot of meticulous work went into the creation of this video game.

Just like in “Super Mario 64,” the player

is immersed in a collection of open worlds full of different challenges and puzzles that reward you with Power Moons. You need Power Moons to power the Odyssey in order to move on to the next stage.

Throwing Cappy allows you to interact with the environment in a number of ways. Not only are you able to throw the hat to help extend Ma-

rio’s reach, you can also possess a multitude of creatures and animals in the game.

It’s a very strange concept, but it is one of the main mechanics of the game that you need in order to solve puzzles and get through in-game tasks. In Fossil Falls, you enter a dark forest where a giant T-rex lives and is stomping around. If you are quick enough to avoid the dinosaur’s bite, you can throw your hat at it, take control of it, and start stomping around as a large meat-eating dinosaur.

Using motion control,

you can detach your joy-con controllers and swing them around like you’re Mario, throwing your hat at an animal to control its mind.

The same mechanic can be done in the many worlds you encounter in this game, one of them being, “New Donk City,” which is Nintendo’s adorable take on New York City.

The city is my favorite stage in “Super Mario Odyssey.” It expands across quite a large area, which is surprising for a game that only takes up five gigabytes. The city also is studded with many challenges and puzzles. One quest that you have the option of doing in the city is recruiting musicians for the Mayor’s festival she has planned. But the musicians are hidden throughout the city. Like many of the quests and puzzles in the game, I had so much fun trying to complete this one. However, I can’t help but wonder why this city is in the “Super Mario” universe. Did colonization take place? And why is Mario so much shorter than the people around the city? Is Mario a human?

Personally, I like video

games with a cooperative campaign, where a friend can join you on a virtual adventure. Thanks to the Nintendo Switch, I can undock my console, and take this game, which features a two-player mode, with me. My close friends and I have taken out the switch in the car and played “Super Mario Odyssey” using the two-player mode.

In this two-player mode, one player controls Mario, while the other has control over Cappy and can roam freely within a limited distance, collecting coins and Power Moons from hard-to-reach places.

The multiplayer mechanics are so basic. But in this game, all you really do is jump and throw a hat. This kind of video game may not appeal to everyone with its basic, strange storyline. But the graphics, gorgeous musical score, beautifully detailed worlds and fun interactive environments are what keep me drawn to “Super Mario Odyssey.”

I give this game an 8 out of 10.

**8/10**

emolnr0541@students.southplainscollege.edu

# ‘Thor: Ragnorak’ sacrifices intensity for humor

by **RILEY GOLDEN**  
Entertainment Editor

Thor, Loki, and Hulk go on a cosmic mission to save Asgard.

“Thor: Ragnorak,” the third Thor film in the Marvel Cinematic Universe, premiered on Nov. 3 and had a largely successful opening weekend.

The movie begins with Thor Odinson (Chris Hemsworth) imprisoned by Surtur (Taika Waititi), a Fire Giant of Muspelheim. Thor is telling the skeleton that’s in the cage with him about what he’s been doing the past two years and how he got where he is. Bleh. I would’ve rather seen a montage recap of what he had been up to, and it could’ve still been narrated by him. The next scene almost makes up for it though.

Thor falls from his cage and ends up dangling in front of Surtur, who goes on to tell the God of Thunder that Ragnorak, the apocalypse, is coming to Asgard.

Surtur is portrayed by Taika Waititi, who also directs and does a few other things for the film. While Waititi may not do everything right with this film, he nails Surtur, which could’ve been hard, seeing as he is a Fire Giant.

I wish Surtur would’ve been much more present in the film, and as is the case with a lot of this movie, Thor should’ve been more serious. Instead, he’s cracking wise which really takes away from the possible suspense of the scene, as well as Waititi’s stellar performance of Surtur.

Thor summons his hammer, Mjolnir, breaks free, defeats Surtur, and heads to Asgard to warn

his father, Odin the Allfather (Anthony Hopkins), of the potential danger coming to Asgard.

Upon arrival, Thor discovers Heimdall (Idris Elba), the Gatekeeper of Asgard and the Watcher of Worlds, has been banished, and Skurge the Executioner (Karl Urban) has been left in

h i s  
steed.

L o k i  
(Tom Hiddleston), Thor’s adopted brother, is parading around disguised as Odin when Thor forces him to submit and the brothers go looking for their father. Loki left him in New York, and when they get there, they’re greeted by none other than the Sorcerer Supreme himself, Dr. Steven Strange (Benedict Cumberbatch).

Strange traps Loki in a different dimension while he and Thor talk, and it’s quite a fun and rewarding scene for comic fans. Dr. Strange sends them to their father’s location.

Odin tells his sons that someone who was once his ally and has now gone rogue, Hela (Cate Blanchett), is coming, and it’s up to them to protect Asgard.

Hela appears to them

shortly after and destroys Mjolnir. Loki calls for the Bifrost (the doorway between the Nine Realms that’s usually overseen by Heimdall), and Hela goes into the Bifrost

with the brothers. She throws them out, and they both land on Sakaar in different places and at different times.

Although not directly said at all in the film, Sakaar is the planet from the comics that is also known as Planet Hulk, a place where the Hulk persona completely took the wheel from Bruce Banner.

Since the film rights to Hulk belong to Universal Studios, Marvel isn’t able to make a solo Hulk film, and they did an adequate job of bringing a Planet Hulk to the MCU and not allowing Hulk to take over the whole movie. I have heard some critics saying that the heart of the film belongs to Planet Hulk, and I have to strongly disagree. This movie is in most ways a Thor movie that pays homage to Plan-

et Hulk in some big ways for sure, but not in a way that completely takes over the film.

The Grand Master (Jeff Goldblum) is kind of the ruler of Sakaar. When Thor is captured by Valkyrie (Tessa Thompson), an Asgardian who later becomes an ally, he has to fight for the Grand Master, and he goes up against his champion: The Incredible Hulk. This arena fight scene is probably the best action scene in the movie, in part because there aren’t really any lives at stake, at least not immediately. Hulk and Thor just duke it out in full-on comic book glory.

After Thor, Banner, and Valkyrie make it off Sakaar, they go straight to stop Hela from destroying

Asgard, but not really in a way that’s expected or appreciated.

[SPOILER WARNING] Odin tells his sons that Asgard is not a place but the people. So to destroy Hela, they destroy Asgard. What the f\*\*k?! The people are called Asgardians, after the city of Asgard. For thousands of years Odin and Thor have fought to protect Asgard or in the name of Asgard.

I think this was a terrible idea and honestly the first real mistake that has been made in the MCU.

In Thor’s previous two appearances, he’s been quite dark and brooding, because of this lingering fear for Asgard that he’s had on his shoulders. And now that it’s coming to a climax, Thor, or I should say the self-indulgent director Waititi, wants to laugh everything off and make it all a joke. I don’t really buy it. This film had more tongue-in-cheek

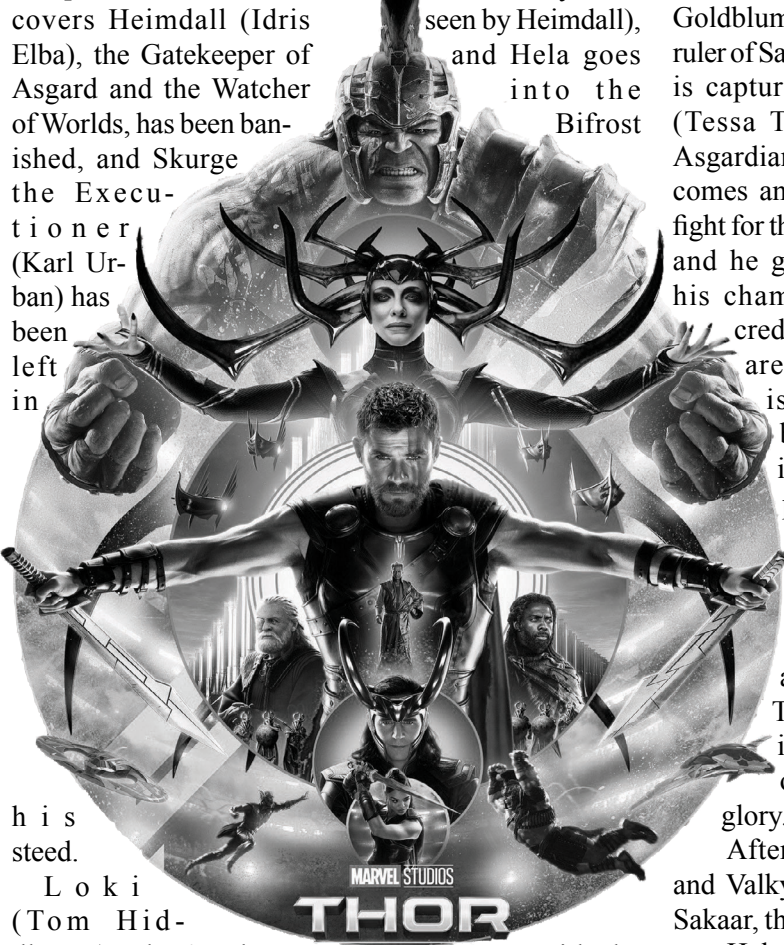
type comedy than “Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2,” which was an amazing movie and is supposed to be funny, whereas Thor should lean more to the serious side.

That being said, the MCU has hit the nail on the head with Loki. In the comics, Loki is unpredictable. He’s always doing something dark and mischievous, then ends up doing something good. He’s an extremely complex character whose motives are always a mystery, and I’m quite impressed with his arc in this movie.

“Thor: Ragnorak” is a beautiful, colorful, and fun film that just sacrifices too much intensity for way too many quips and one-liners. I give it a 7.8 out of 10.

**7.8/10**

rgolden3411@students.southplainscollege.edu





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November 13, 2017

Plainsman Press

## Video game composer discovers niche through unexpected events

by NICOLE LOPEZ  
Sports Editor

Grant Kirkhope can't understand how he got so lucky.

When he was growing up, Kirkhope never considered being a video game composer. He went to school in the United Kingdom, and music has always been part of the majority of his life.

"I played the trumpet and recorder when I was younger," says Kirkhope. "I started picking up the guitar from ages 11 and 12. I wanted to play in metal bands. That's all I ever wanted to do."

Kirkhope attended the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester when he was 18 years old. "I kinda did the studying half heartedly," Kirkhope says with a laugh during a recent interview with the Plainsman Press, "but I passed. I was terrible at harmony. You had to pass the harmony exam within the four years you were there, and I failed it the first three years. I scraped by in the fourth year because I was bad at understanding the harmonies."

After graduating from Royal Northern College, Kirkhope continued to play for local rock bands. He played in a band called

career changed forever. One of his friends, Robin Beanland, who was a keyboard player, announced he received a job at a company called Rare.

"I asked [him] 'doing what?' and he said, 'Writing music for video games,'" Kirkhope explains. "I asked him if that was a thing. I played a lot of video games, and he was there for a year and a half. He says to me, 'You know, Grant... you've been unemployed for about 11 years. Don't you think it's time for a job?' I was 33 at the time."

Beanland encouraged Kirkhope to try to compose some tunes for Rare. Kirkhope says that even though he wrote music for

a reply from Rare, a rising video game company, asking if he can meet in Twycross, England, where the headquarters of the company was located. He went, and the company was pleased to meet him and hired him.

"It's a surprise to me than anybody else," says Kirkhope. "That was it. I started working with Rare up till 1995, and it was an absolute fluke. I never thought I could do it. I didn't even consider it as a career choice."

Kirkhope's process of composing music hasn't changed in 22 years. He explains that his process is not intellectual. Rather, he uses his imagination and messes around with the sounds of different musical instruments.

"So, I think with any composer, it starts with

about spike instruments such as celeste, glockenspiel and things that sound icy to me. If someone says a lovely warm forest, I think about nice strings and bassoons."

Kirkhope says through his composing process he always hopes he writes a good tune, and that's what he always tries to do.

"My favorite part of composing music is the

well-known video games such as "Donkey Kong Land 2," "GoldenEye 007," "Banjo-Kazooie," "Banjo-Tooie," "Banjo-Kazooie: Nuts & Bolts," and "Donkey Kong 64." His most recent project is for "Mario + Rabbids Kingdom Battle."

Although he is referred to as a veteran composer, he doesn't see himself as such. He considers him-

money. It's a mystery on how I keep going."

Kirkhope likes to reply to people who like his work on social media such as Twitter. He doesn't consider himself a celebrity of any kind and likes to interact with his admirers.

"I don't like to use the word fans," Kirkhope explains. "I really try hard to reply to people on Twitter.



Photo courtesy of Grant Kirkhope.

core sequence and the melody," says Kirkhope. "I'm a really bad polisher. I'm an ideal person, and I

self humble with anything that he achieves.

"I don't like focusing on the success thing too much, because you're only as good as the last thing you've done right," says Kirkhope. "If the next thing is [expletive] then, people forget about what you did before. I've been so lucky to be on some of those projects. It gave me inspiration to hopefully write hopefully good music. Like going from Rare to coming to America and going freelance. I think it's always a happy set of fortunate disasters that kinda get me to the right place."

According to Kirkhope, he is happy to stick around when it comes to composing music. He says he feels that he's very

I always think of it like this... If I could reach out to John Williams, he's my absolute hero, and say, 'Hey, John, I think you're fantastic' and he says, 'Cheers Grant,' I would be over the moon. I think it's a nice thing to do when I reply to people."

Kirkhope takes his composing career one day at a time. He doesn't focus on the success too much because he tries to live in the moment.

"I don't really consider myself successful," Kirkhope says. "I don't let myself get a big ego. It's nice to think that people like my music. I always say if one person, if someone likes anything that came out of your head, it's pretty amazing. To see that people like my



metal bands that he was part of, he didn't think

imagining the level or scene," explains Kirk-

hope polishing. My favorite part is getting the main melodies down."

Kirkhope has won awards such as Best Original Score for a Video Game or Interactive Media for "Sid Meier's Civilization: Beyond Earth" at the International Film Music Critics Association in 2014, Best Score for "Sid Meier's Civilization: Beyond Earth" at the Cue Awards in 2015 and, Best Video Game Score for "Sid Meier's Civilization: Beyond Earth" at the Movie Music United Kingdom in 2015.

He has had countless nominations for many different video game award categories. He has also composed music for many popular,



lucky to be writing music, because if not, he would still be playing for local bands.

"I would be playing for local bands back in Yorkshire," says Kirkhope. "At 55 years old, making no

tunes, I'm always humble. It's amazing for people to like what I do. That's the reward for me."

nlopez0806@students.  
southplainscollege.edu



"Little Angels," who toured with Bon Jovi and Van Halen.

"I played in metal bands for a long time, and I really didn't get anywhere," Kirkhope explains. "I did this for about 11 years. I had on and off unemployment. So, I would be on tour, come back play in local bands, and make no money."

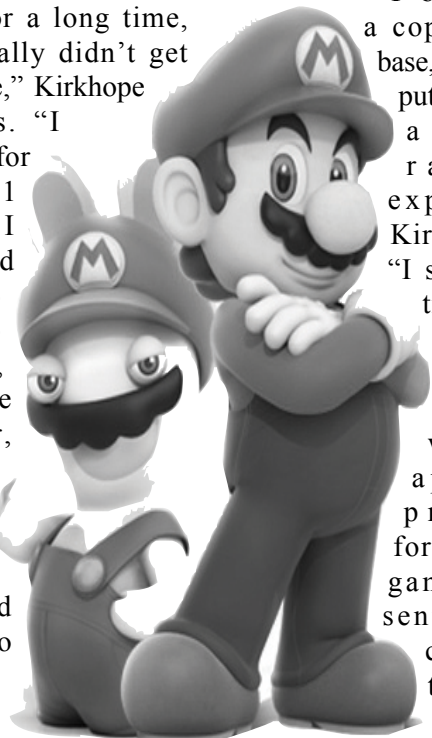
Kirkhope thought we would continue to do the same routine until one day his

he could compose video game music. But he gave it a shot.

"I bought a copy key base, a computer with a megaram," explains Kirkhope. "I sat and tried to write tunes that were appropriate for video games. I sent five cassette tapes to Rare

through the course of the year... never got a reply."

One day, Kirkhope got





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# ‘Origins’ of Assassin’s Creed executes best game in years

by **RILEY GOLDEN**  
Entertainment Editor

Discover the origins of the assassin’s creed on

guards or other enemies. Bayek’s fighting style is extremely brutal, and Ubisoft has turned up the gore effects, which I

dodge, block, or parry attacks, and choose their opportunity to strike wisely, or they can end up being run through. Players are more

All of them are good for fighting guards, but when overwhelmed, it’s best to go with a weapon that allows you to de-

because it gives players the materials they need to craft better bracers, hidden blades, chest protection, and pouches.

All of these weapons and upgrades are necessary to Bayek’s survival in Ancient Egypt, a dangerous and breathtaking land.

Ubisoft has released an “Assassin’s Creed” game annually since 2009, with last year being the only exception. Ubisoft decided to take a step back from the series last year, evaluate what makes it great, and put all those efforts into making one amazing game, versus two sub-par games.

The only complaint I have about the game is the scenes that follow the assassination of a major target. The assassins have always spoken to their targets as the life leaves their bodies, but they are lying down and are obviously dying. In “Origins,” the player can air-assassinate a target, only for there to be a scene afterward in which Bayek kills the target in a different, scripted way. I feel like this pulls the player out of the im-



Play as the first assassin on a mission of vengeance through Ancient Egypt.  
Photo courtesy of Dualshockers.

a journey of exploration through Ancient Egypt.

“Assassin’s Creed,” developed by Ubisoft, is a Third-Person Action/Adventure videogame series that sends players to pivotal moments of history as an extremely acrobatic and parkour-capable assassin.

In “Assassin’s Creed: Origins,” players take control of Bayek, a man driven by vengeance, like so many assassins that follow in his footsteps. But, Bayek does not call himself an assassin. In fact, when the game starts, he’s not really an assassin by any definition. He is a Medjay, a protector of the people of Egypt.

really think adds to the immersion.

Ancient Egypt was a brutal and deadly place, and this is reflected on the gameplay.

Fighting in the “Assassin’s Creed” series was previously based on a hit-box system in which enemies could attack. As long as it’s timed right, the player will counter the attack, with the result being a satisfying kill animation.

But, in “Assassin’s Creed: Origins,” the fighting style has been completely revamped. It’s much

susceptible to being killed by an enemy who is several levels above them, so it’s best to do side missions or clear forts that are around the same level as the player.

“Assassin’s Creed” has developed R.P.G.-like features as the games have progressed, but “Origins” is almost a full-blown Role Playing Game. The new

leveling system is a good indicator of this.

Players and enemies start at level 1. As players explore, they will increase their level and quickly find enemies that are levels above their own, too tough to damage, and very quick to kill Bayek.

Although it’s not impossible to take on enemies several levels above yours, it’s even more challenging to do so if you’re ill equipped.

“Origins” is full of R.P.G. aspects, and one of those key ingredients is being able to consistently find or buy weapons that look cooler and provide more damage than what you already had.

There are several weapons classes that are divided into two major categories – ranged and melee.

The melee weapons consist of spears, swords, and two-handed heavy weapons. Spears are great for fighting groups or keeping your distance with wild animals.

Two-handed heavy weapons can also be useful for killing animals, as well as fighting a lone powerful enemy.

There are straight swords, sickle swords, and combinations of a sword in one hand and a dagger in the other.

fend yourself with your shield.

Shields can be found or purchased as well, and they range from larger ones to smaller ones.

or Alexandria, a massive and advanced city overflowing with Greek influence. To scout these locations, Bayek has an eagle named Senu. Players can



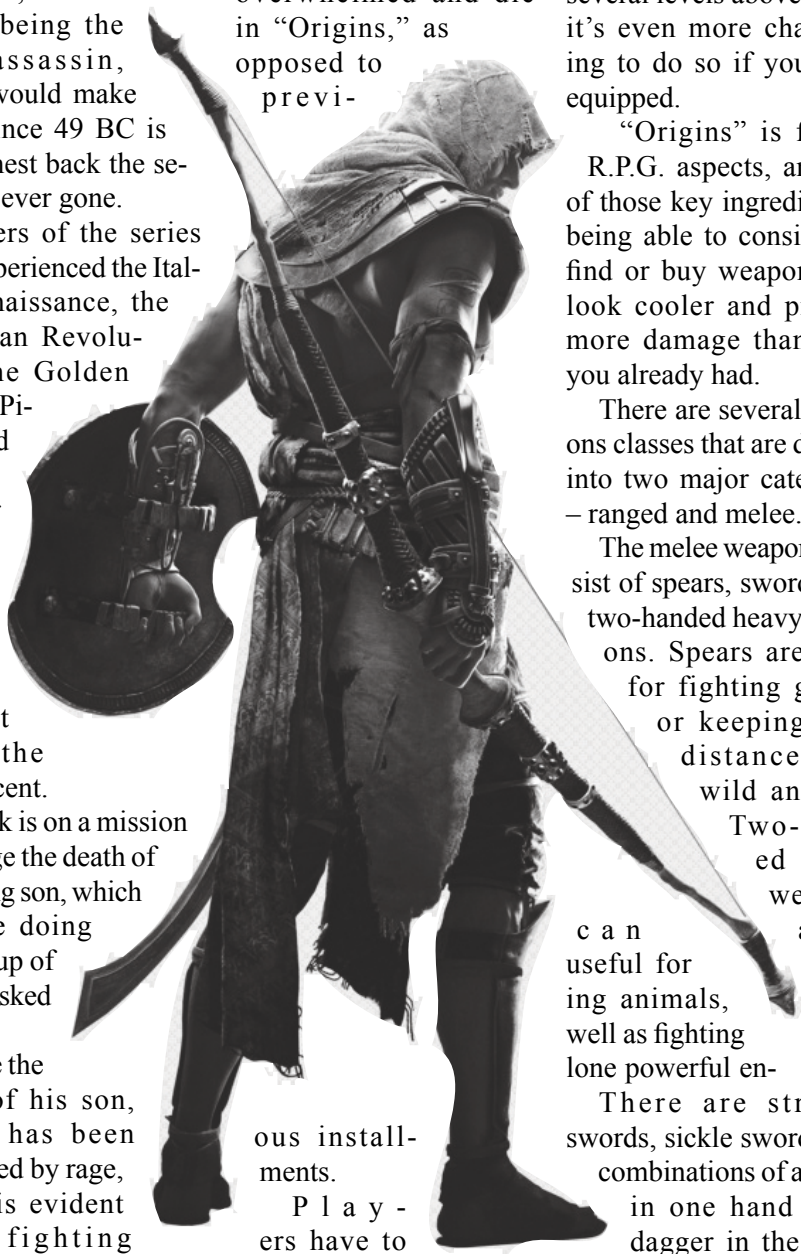
However, the subtitle of the game, “Origins,” refers to Bayek being the first assassin, which would make sense since 49 BC is the farthest back the series has ever gone.

Players of the series have experienced the Italian Renaissance, the American Revolution, the Golden Age of Piracy, and several other settings, with Ancient Egypt being the most recent.

Bayek is on a mission to avenge the death of his young son, which was the doing of a group of blue-masked men.

Since the death of his son, Bayek has been consumed by rage, which is evident when fighting

easier to become overwhelmed and die in “Origins,” as opposed to previous



ous installments. Play - ers have to

ersion of the game, and it just doesn’t make a lot of sense to me.

“Origins” is the best “Assassin’s Creed” game to come out since 2013, which made it well worth the wait.

“Assassin’s Creed: Origins” is a strong contender for Game of the Year, and I give it a 10 out of 10.

10/10

rgolden3411@students.southplainscollege.edu

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Comic Corner

DC Comics

Black Lightning #1

Black Lightning, or Jefferson Pierce, is a school teacher by day and a vigilante by night. In “Black Lightning #1,” a group of low-level thugs get their hands on some extremely advanced guns and start wreaking havoc on Cleveland, when Black Lightning shows up to save the day. He uses his electromagnetic waves to slow down a building that was collapsing, and when it did land, it destroyed a SWAT van. The cops tried to arrest him, saying he destroyed police property, when in fact he saved the officers’ lives. “Black Lightning #1” is a great read and certainly doesn’t shy away from the prevalent social issues facing black people today.

Batman: The Merciless #1

“Batman: The Merciless #1,” takes place in Earth -12, and Ares has killed the entire Justice League, aside from Batman and Wonder Woman. Ares forged a helmet that magnified his powers 100 times and fought Bruce and Diana nearly to death, when Batman put on Ares’ helmet to end it all. The helmet corrupted Bruce and he killed every villain and hero that got in his way, when the Batman Who Laughs brought The Merciless to Earth 0, the normal DC Universe. “Batman: The Merciless” is one of my favorite evil Batmans in appearance and origin story.

The Flash #33

In “Bats Out of Hell Pt 1,” the members of the Justice League are split into small teams, with other heroes and anti-heroes, all trying to figure out a way to reverse the chaos that the evil Batmen have brought on Earth 0. The League members get separated from their current partner and appear in the cave of their evil Batman counterpart. They don’t know where Cyborg is, but he’s communicating with the rest of the League, telling them it’s too late. “Bats Out of Hell Pt 1” starts a story arc that completely capitalizes on the success of the “Metal” and “Dark Nights” arc.

Batman: The Devastator #1

On Earth -1, Batman: The Devastator is born out of fear and despair. Superman goes rogue. It only kind of alludes to this, but Bruce does say that Superman killed his wife, Lois Lane, and this made Batman snap. He realized that the why didn’t matter anymore, because it was happening regardless. Batman and Superman were fighting, and Superman cut Batman’s arm off with his heat vision. At this point, Batman tells Clark that he loved him, and injects himself with a strain of the Doomsday virus, making him powerful enough to kill Superman. Superman going bad is about as dark as it gets, and the action and story are great.

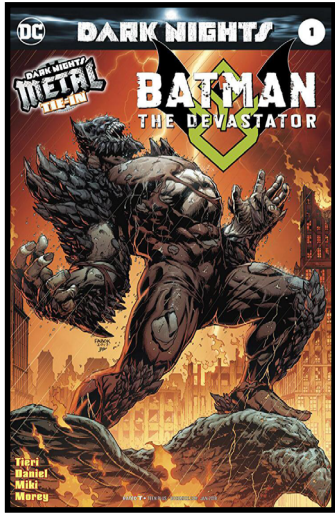
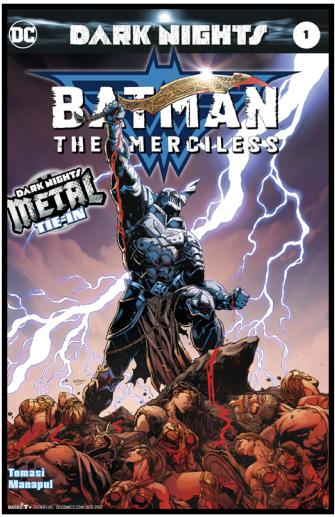
Justice League #32

In “Bats Out of Hell Pt 2,” the Earth 0 Justice League members are still separated from each other and they confront their Evil Batman counterparts. One of the most chilling themes in the “Metal” arc is that all of these extremely evil entities are Batman, maybe extremely unhinged, but Batman none the less. This is intimidating. Batman alone is intimidating, but these men are twisted. The heroes are engaged by their evil Batman counterparts for some of the most satisfying sequences of panels to boot.

Nightwing: The New Order #3

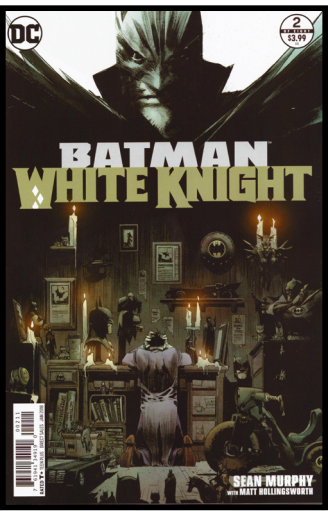
“Nightwing: The New Order #3” takes place in an alternate future where Dick Grayson, AKA Nightwing, has removed powers from the playing field. Those born with powers must go through a series of attempts at inhibiting the powers, and if that doesn’t work, they are placed into stasis. Well, Alfred has been killed, Dick’s son is placed in stasis, and Dick is arrested and breaks out. Dick fights Green Lantern and gets whipped when he’s taken away in a matter of seconds. When he comes to, there’s a gun-toting woman and an unidentified Flash standing before him.

Comics of the week for the weeks of Oct. 25 and Nov. 1



Batman: White Knight #2

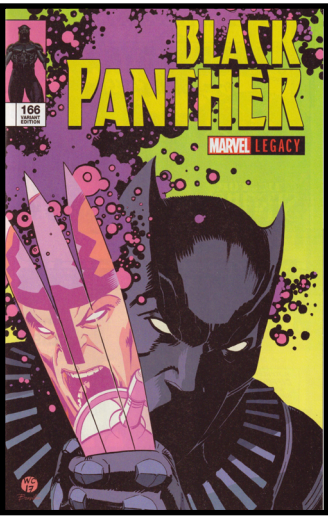
In “Batman: White Knight #1,” Batman beats Joker to a pulp when Joker pulls out a pill bottle and says it might cure him. Batman crams the pills down Joker’s throat, leaving his mouth overflowing with blood and pills. Meanwhile, the Gotham City Police Department stood by watching. Well, Joker gets seemingly cured by these pills and starts to begin a legal case against Batman and the GCPD. Issue 2 focuses on a seemingly throw-away arc between Bruce Wayne and Mr. Freeze, the only real importance being that Alfred is dying. Joker, now going by Jack Napier, proposes to Harley Quinn, and takes control of Batman’s rogues gallery of villains.



Marvel Comics

Black Panther #166

“Black Panther #166” is not really a Black Panther comic. Instead, the story follows Klaw, a longtime villain of T’Challa, or Black Panther. Klaw became Klaw when he gave up his body to become what he calls “the voice that whispers in the night, telling men what they must do.” Klaw is after the strongest metal in the world, vibranium, most of which belongs to T’Challa’s homeland of Wakanda. Although the entire focus was on Klaw, when he and Black Panther square up, readers will be forced to look at Klaw as more than just an evil villain.



Captain America #695

An evil clone of Steve Rogers took up the shield and almost drove the world to its end. Then the real Captain Rogers escaped where he was trapped and fought the fake Cap, and won. The whole idea is that the damage has been done to his name, his reputation is tarnished, and according to the cover, “Captain America battles to regain the support of a nation!” It doesn’t carry that much weight. Cap is trying to stop an evil plot in a small town, where a Captain America celebration is going on, and it’s a bunch of fans defending Cap. What about this suggests that Cap is trying to regain trust?



Guardians of the Galaxy #146

I’ve been enjoying what I’ve been reading from the Guardians pre-Legacy, and now it’s one of the best Legacy relaunches I’ve read thus far. Starlord, Gamora, Drax, Rocket Racoon, and Groot have not only recruited a new member to the Guardians of the Galaxy, Scott Lang, A.K.A. Ant Man, but they have all joined up with the Nova Corps. Gamora and Ant Man respond to a distress call in space, and the two heroes play off of each other extremely well. Ultron also makes a surprise appearance!



Iceman #7

In the last issue, Iceman went out with his former Champions buddies, Hercules, Darkstar, Angel, and Ghost Rider. While there, he hit it off with a guy named Judah. Shortly after, a bunch of homemade Sentinels start attacking in West Hollywood, and that’s where “Iceman #7” picks up. The Champions take on the Sentinels and Iceman, probably trying to show off for Judah, lets lose. He’s firing ice-blasts at all of the Sentinels and builds something I’ve never seen before, which is basically an Iceman Megazord. Every issue dives deeper into Iceman’s character, fleshing out the gay and mutant aspects of his life, and I appreciate all of it.



Mace Windu: Jedi of the Republic #3

“Mace Windu #3” begins with a flashback of the droid General Grievous hiring AD-W4, a mercenary droid, to take on Jedi Knights Mace Windu and Rissa Mano, and Prosset Dibs and Kit Fisto have broken into those respective teams and are dealing with their situation on Hissrich. Rissa and Mace are fighting droids on the surface. Prosset and Kit are under the surface, fighting a large, insect-like predator. Rissa’s blue saber and Mace’s purple saber slicing through droids, along with Prosset’s and Kit’s green sabers slicing through a massive creature in almost pure darkness, makes for some beautiful, action-packed panels.





Back Talk: Cultural appropriation raises questions regarding ethics

Culture misappropriation takes away from original meaning

Appreciation of minority cultures not appropriation



by **MATT MOLINAR**  
Editor-in-Chief

America loves to appropriate culture. In order for cultures to be taken seriously, a line has to be drawn that divides cultural appropriation from appreciation. There is a large gray area between cultural appropriation and misappropriation, which is offensive. To understand why culture is important, you must know that culture is how a society interprets the world. America is basically a crock pot filled with a variety of cultures and subcultures as the ingredients. This sets a stage for any culture to be appropriated. It is quite acceptable to have appreciation for another culture and express appreciation for that culture in outward appearance in good taste. It is not acceptable for someone from a dominant culture to appropriate pieces of a culture that they have systematically oppressed. It is also not acceptable to sexualize or make fun of an oppressed culture’s outward appearance, especially when there’s money involved. When people of a dominant culture appropriate a minority culture,

they ignore the many historical contexts associated with that culture. Whatever piece of culture somebody of a dominant culture appropriates loses its original meaning. One great person to reference when you’re talking about cultural appropriation is Katy Perry. One example of her very terrible instances is when she dressed in a Japanese Geisha costume in her American Music Awards performance of “Unconditionally” in 2013. Her version of a Japanese Geisha was tacky and inaccurate. She came out on stage wearing a modified kimono and an extremely pale face, mimicking the look of a Geisha. After her performance, the comments calling her offensive began circulating. Not only did Perry look stupid during this performance, but she offended the culture. Her performance leaves naïve Americans with an inaccurate representation of a fascinating Asian culture. Perry’s original intention was nothing negative. She may have been trying to show appreciation for the Geishas, and she has since apologized, but she used a culture for her own benefit. Taylor Swift also did the same kind of belittling of a culture when she featured a bunch of black girls twerking behind her in her music video for “Shake it Off.” While you might assume that twerking originated in American strip clubs, you may be very surprised to discover that twerking actually has deep African roots. There are several traditional dances practiced in West African cultures, such as mapouka, that exhibit

the same movements as twerking. Learning this made me realize that appropriating a culture in a negative way will indeed dissolve its original meaning into videos of white girls arching and flexing their backs to a song by Miley Cyrus. Singer Gwen Stefani has also done appearances with a group of Japanese girls she uses as props. Stefani is so inspired by the Harajuku culture in Tokyo that she decided to hire four Japanese girls to stand behind her in public appearances, dance behind her in music videos, and say absolutely nothing. If you have seen the music videos where she features these four Japanese girls, you will understand how Stefani has taken Japanese youth culture and turned it into how most Americans view young Japanese women to be: submissive, giggling Asians. The main reason why cultural misappropriation is harmful is because it exposes the dominant western culture to inaccurate stereotypes. And yes, it is possible to show appreciation for a culture without adding to the attention of an inaccurate stereotype. You can’t blame somebody for unknowingly misappropriating a culture because it looks cool. But you can educate him or her on why it’s wrong and how they can possibly find a better way to show appreciation for culture. [emolinar0541@students.southplainscollege.edu](mailto:emolinar0541@students.southplainscollege.edu)

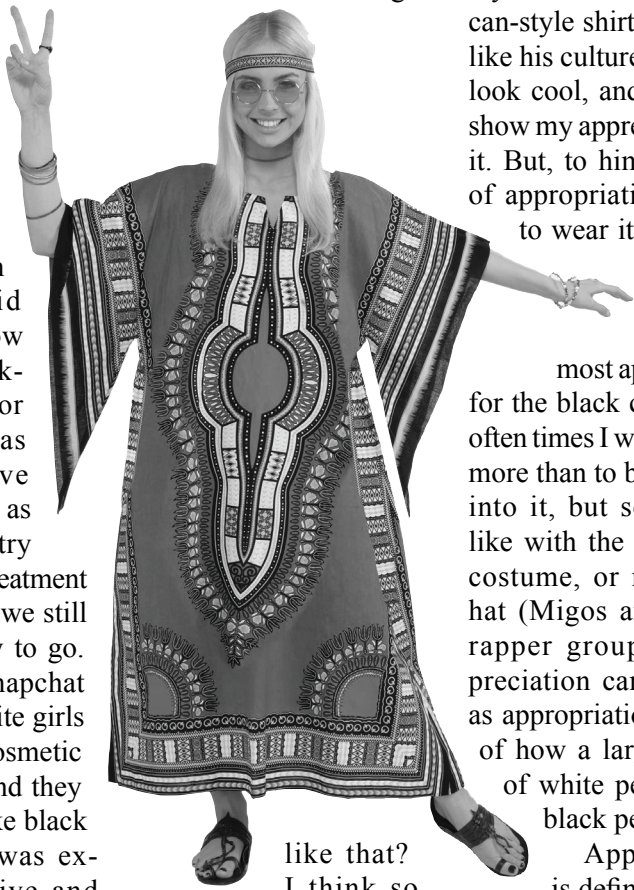


by **RILEY GOLDEN**  
Entertainment Editor

There is a fine line between cultural appropriation and appreciation, and it isn’t always fair to deem something as appropriation. When I was in middle school, I dressed up as Lil Wayne for Halloween one year. I did what I now know is called “black-face,” which, for good reason, has quite a negative connotation. For as far as this country has come in the treatment of black people, we still have a long way to go. I saw a viral Snapchat post of some white girls who had dark cosmetic face masks on and they were “acting” like black people, and it was extremely offensive and derogatory, but that is because those girls were specifically making fun of black people. When I dressed up as Lil Wayne, my goal was the exact opposite. I loved Lil Wayne – I still have somewhere around 100 Lil Wayne songs in my music library – and I was, if anything, paying homage to him. He was my favorite artist at the time

and in truth, all I was trying to do was show that appreciation. But since showing that photo to people in college, I’ve come under light fire, being told that I would be forgiven for it because I was in middle school. I’m no longer as naïve as I was in middle school, and I realize now that I could have done that entire outfit the same, minus the “black-face” make-up, and my outfit still would’ve delivered Lil Wayne. But, shouldn’t intent factor into how people receive things

But, some would point to white people using that word as appropriation, especially because of it’s origin. And not at all to dismiss what Europeans did to the African people, and not even to say that the communities aren’t still dealing with the horrors that the white man brought down on them, but we are not our forefathers. My best friend is black, Kenyan-American to be exact, and we have a lot of conversations about this topic. I wanted to get myself a dashiki, an African-style shirt, because I like his culture, the shirts look cool, and I want to show my appreciation for it. But, to him, it’s kind of appropriation for me to wear it outside of Africa. I have the utmost appreciation for the black culture and often times I want nothing more than to be accepted into it, but sometimes, like with the Lil Wayne costume, or my Migos hat (Migos are a black rapper group) my appreciation can be taken as appropriation because of how a large amount of white people view black people. Appropriation is definitely an issue that people deal with on a daily basis, but I think people should stop and think “is this person really appropriating my culture, or are they showing appreciation for it in a way that they don’t know is offensive?” [rgolden3411@students.southplainscollege.edu](mailto:rgolden3411@students.southplainscollege.edu)



Word on the Steet

Do you believe in Climate Change?



“Yes, I do. I think that, for our generation, we see a lot more natural disasters happening.”  
**Katelyn Maldonado**  
Education  
Freshman  
Lubbock



“Yes, it has to do with not just natural weather and stuff, but as what we do as people to make it worse.”  
**Varson Jackson**  
Biology  
Freshman  
Lubbock

“Yes, I definitely do. We are losing our cold areas. And our ice caps are getting smaller and smaller. I’ve definitely seen weather patterns change from the 25 years I’ve lived out here in West Texas.”  
**Janna Holt-Day**  
Speech Communications  
Professor  
Vernon

“Yes, I hear that nine out of 10 scientists believe in it. And it makes me wonder what that one guy’s point is. From what I have heard, we haven’t studied Earth’s temperature change long enough to know a certain pattern. But I think we are just in one of Earth’s natural hotter periods right now.”  
**Holden Hensley**  
Art  
Freshman  
Lubbock



“I never really think about that. It’s just kind of the way things are.”  
**Matt Soto**  
Live Sound  
Reinforcement  
Junior  
Lubbock



“I do. A lot of the ice caps are melting. Climate changes happen a lot more profusely.”  
**Thalia Lopez**  
Pre-med  
Sophomore  
Brownfield

Compiled by **Randi Jines and Bekka Ruiz**



Growing up in a small town teaches life lessons



by RANDI JINES  
Editorial Assistant

Growing up in a small town has its advantages but also comes with some disadvantages.

I grew up in a small town with a population of around 1,000 people. My graduating class included only 29 students. My town was surrounded by other small town with populations of no more than 5,000.

Growing up in a small town, not a lot of opportunities are offered for high school students to prepare them in the journey they want to take in college. For example, I am studying journalism and working for this college newspaper, which is the first real experience I have had in journalism. The small town I live in offers nothing journalism-related, except for UIL and yearbook. But yearbook was not offered for students interested in journalism. Instead, it was offered for cheerleaders and jocks. So it was pointless to even try to get in that class, because you would not be accepted otherwise. There was not

any clubs or organizations to be involved in.

Also, the small town I am from is strictly conservative Republicans. Everyone is afraid to be themselves. Most people go to college and study pre-med or something in the medical field, because it is drilled into our heads that you will not find success being creative. In fact, our school has a multi-million dollar gym

you made, the whole town would hear about it, especially if it is something negative about you. The students also love to gossip to teachers, so rumors spread fast, and your reputation could be ruined by some silly rumor in less than a day.

There are very few job opportunities in a small town. There is one grocery store, two restaurants, and one convenience store.

a close friendship with. One of them was my UIL coach and librarian. She encouraged me to study journalism and be creative. She taught me a lot about journalism and the opportunities it offers, even though the school did not offer anything journalism related. The other teacher who helped me throughout school was the assistant softball coach. I could go to her

teachers there to encourage me to not give up.

Another good thing about growing up in a small town is being able to be involved in all extracurricular activities. I got to be involved in band, FFA, athletics, and UIL, without having to tryout for any of these.

I was in band for the first two years of high school. I played softball for all four years of high

the path I wanted to take in college. I did not have to try out for any of these events because it was such a small school and a lot of open space for new people. This gives anyone a chance to discover what they enjoy and where they want to go in life.

Another advantage to growing up in a small town is being able to get where you are going within five minutes tops. Everything is not even a mile away. You can send your kids safely to the park or store because they are not going far, and everyone knows who you are. Growing up in a small town, you do not have to worry about “stranger danger,” because everyone knows whose kid is whose.

The one thing I am thankful for about my small town is the Farm Scholarship. Our school has a corn crop, and all of the money that the crop makes goes to a scholarship that every single graduating student receives, depending on everything you were involved in and the success in those activities. This scholarship has helped me immensely in paying for college.

Small towns do not offer much, but they are definitely a safe place for everyone. I am thankful I grew up in a small town because I learned a lot of life lessons from the negative and positive experiences.

rjines4851@students.  
southplainscollege.edu



and ballpark but is considering dropping the band and art program to save money. They have already dropped One Act Play, which closes off opportunities for students who are interested in theater. There are no outlets or opportunities for students who are interested in creativity.

Also, everyone knows your business. Any move

They are never hiring students, because all of their open spots are filled with adults who have free time. So students do not get a lot of job experience before moving out into bigger towns.

There are a lot of positive aspects that come out of living in a small town also. I had two amazing teachers who I developed

about anything that I felt discouraged about, and she would give me advice and help me back up.

I feel that is the best part about growing up in a small town and attending a small high school. Your classes are so small that you are able to connect with each student. I could not have survived high school without these

school, which taught me a lot about mental toughness and teamwork. I was in FFA for the first three years of high school, and as much as I hated it, it helped me realize that agriculture is definitely not what I wanted to do with my life. I also participated in Editorial Writing in UIL, which made me realize that journalism is

Makeup provides opportunity for individuality, learning experiences



by ANNIE GOLDEN  
Editorial Assistant

Covering flaws, being creative, expressing style, or showing the world your idea of what makeup is, is up to you.

What you want to express to the world with makeup is a choice. Some people choose to cover their flaws because they aren’t confident about them. But some people choose to cover their flaws, even if they are confident about them, because that is just preference. Makeup is all about individual preference.

It is nobody else’s business to choose what

makeup goes on your face. It is all about your choices and doing whatever the heck you want. That is the fun part about makeup; it can be whatever you want it to be.

Makeup can also be for being creative people, trying to show their artistic abilities. People do makeup for plays, shows,

you into animals, characters, nature, objects, or anything one desires.

Also, it can be a form of expression for any gender, race, or religion, and that makes makeup a common ground for people all over the world to connect with.

For some, that is exactly what makeup has done

now, and it is building every day because it unifies everyone. That is what people need, so that is why some involve themselves in the makeup community.

For people searching to discover themselves, it can be an extremely crucial part of their daily lives. If their flaws distract them from their goals, it can lead to disappointment. If someone has creative tendencies and make-up is their art form, it can lead to depression from lack of self-expression. If self-conscious people can’t express themselves, it leads to a feeling of loneliness. That is why anyone who wants to wear makeup can do so.

Something people tend to forget is how a person feels about makeup, and they judge someone’s makeup off of their own preferences. The best thing is that there are so many choices when it comes to makeup. I believe that anyone can make themselves into what they want with makeup, and that should be more widely accepted,



just as people can wear what they please. If someone wants to transform themselves, or even just enhance their beauty, do it. At the end of the day, it’s about what you want, not what society wants for you.

Our culture has the trait of caring so much about what other people are wearing, including makeup, instead of being aware of their own image. It is a fault in our society, but can also be a good part of it, because that means people are paying attention. If people are paying attention, more people

will notice small things, such as makeup.

If more people are noticing, more people will accept it. Hopefully, if more and more people are becoming accepting, it will become more popular, makeup lovers of different interests will surface, and the fun of makeup will return to our society.

Makeup is not just for girls or any specific person. Makeup is about learning from experiences and having fun.

jgolden0133@students.  
southplainscollege.edu



movies, and more. People even do it at home as an art for themselves, and that is perfectly OK. Makeup can transform

for them. YouTubers, bloggers, and makeup artists all connect with people. The online makeup community is huge right





# Servers not treated fairly in food industry



by **NICOLE LOPEZ**  
Sports Editor

It's a horrible feeling whenever you are a hard-working person and the establishment you're working at belittles you.

I'm not going to mention the place of my previous employment, but I will certainly tell you the horrors of being a server.

First of all, servers don't get paid enough, and automatically many believe that earning tips is enough to cover the lack of pay. Wrong. Somedays I didn't even earn enough to cover what I was supposed to earn in tips during the day.

It's not because I'm a bad server. I would know if I was. It's because many customers don't like to tip servers. They can spend \$30 on a meal, but they can't even tip their server 15 percent. At my previous employment, if you didn't make a certain amount in tips, you got

written up for it. Being a server, you have to rely on the customer that you're waiting on to tip you. If you don't earn tips just because customers don't want to, you are the one that gets in trouble.

I used to make \$3 an hour being a sever. It's bad, I know. Tips are supposed to make up for the bad pay. How are you supposed to make a decent amount of tips whenever customers don't feel like tipping you?

Another reason why I quit my previous employment is because of the way management treats their employees, especially servers. Servers receive bad pay, and we try to make the best of the situation. Management is supposed to help out servers and make sure their establishment doesn't get a bad reputation. That's pretty hard, considering whenever you're the only server working for three hours and you're expected to serve 50 people by yourself. It doesn't take a genius to figure out that if a res-

taurant is busy and there is only one server, the smart thing to do is try to call someone in. But that's the problem. A manager doesn't want to call another person in because the fine establishment that you work at doesn't want to pay for extra help. It doesn't matter if customers are getting their food orders wrong, or late, and the service is slow (since there is only one server). All of that doesn't matter. As long as they don't have to pay for another server for a couple of hours, their reputation doesn't mean anything.

My previous employer expected servers to do everything. We were expected to seat customers, take their drink and food orders, answer the phones, take care of the entrees

coming out of the oven, fry wings, fries, and other sides, wipe down tables, take care of the salad bar, and, on top of that, take care of your 'cut work' before leaving for the day.

That's not the worst part. The worst part of all of this is if you don't leave at a certain time, you get in trouble. You're supposed to do all these things, and you're expected to the tasks at hand well and fast. It seems to me managers think you have super human abilities and you can do these tasks all at once.

The last time I checked, I'm just a normal person with only two hands. I can only do so much.

It makes me upset that servers don't get the respect they deserve. You try so hard and you greet



the customers with a smile, yet you don't receive a tip. Then you have your manager in your ear all the time constantly telling you to do this and do that whenever you have a million other things to do. If you mess up an order, they get on to you. It doesn't even matter the situation. It doesn't matter that the restaurant is filled with people and you're the only server. It doesn't matter that it was the only order you messed up on. You still get in trouble.

But if a manager messes up, it's OK. It's OK because apparently managers are worth more than servers. According to one of my previous managers, "servers are replaceable. Everyone of you is replaceable."

Not all establishments are bad, though. I enjoyed some of my time where I used to work. They hired me whenever I wanted to

earn some extra money. If I were to go back in time and knew what I know now, I wouldn't even apply. It's not worth it. It's not worth my time.

Some may say I'm a cry baby, and I'm not cut out to be a server. That may be true. It's true because I know my worth. I respect people who are servers. I will and have always tipped whenever someone waited on me. I know how it feels.

I hope this gives people a little more perspective on what the everyday server goes through. I also hope whenever you go into a restaurant you plan to tip. Because at the end of the day, servers are not replaceable, and we're worth more than what we make.

nlopez0806@students.southplainscollege.edu

# Hollywood should stop making movies out of greed



by **ADAN RUBIO**  
Staff Writer

Everyone knows that when a movie becomes popular and gets great reviews, the production studio that made that movie will get more money.

Movie production companies will always make a profit off of people's enjoyment, and there is nothing wrong with that. But a studio's greed can lead to them trying to surpass their competition, or creating unnecessary remakes. A movie company's greed for money is something that results in popular franchises presenting awful and unoriginal movies.

One thing that a lot of studios do to make more money is to make remakes of past movies. One popular franchise that has made some live-action remakes and is continuing to do so is Disney.

Disney has made several remakes, including "The Jungle Book" and "Beauty and the Beast," with only a few of these remakes getting decent reviews from multiple critique websites. Despite the negative reviews, Disney has planned for more remakes, such as a "Mulan" and "The Lion King."

Remakes are just ways for popular franchises to make more money from their classic material. One can make the argument that remakes can still be good and will allow for future generations to enjoy movies that are more modern.

But with movies, such

as the Disney classics, the stories or the imagery does not have to be updated to captivate future audiences, as the originals are still loved

and can be appreciated by all ages. Movie companies making more money is the only reason why these unoriginal and inadequate remakes are continuing to appear.

Another reason that the greed of studios causes the production of bad movies is Hollywood's push for unnecessary spinoffs.

"Star Wars" is a good example of a popular franchise that is beginning to present many spinoffs, such as "Rogue One: A Star Wars Story" and the upcoming

"Solo: A Star Wars Story." These types of spinoffs are not necessarily bad movies, as I enjoyed "Rogue One," and I am

interested to see what "Solo" has to offer. But there seems to be nothing original or creative about these movies.

A studio's desire for more money has led to the creation of these spinoffs that offer nothing new to the franchise and seem to act as a distraction to keep people engaged with the main story arcs.

The greed of movie companies will always lead to poorly produced movies, such as the uninspired remakes or the constant spinoffs. But this

greed can still act as a factor in forcing certain studios to want to surpass their competitors, which is the prime reason why greed warrants more bad movies.

One main example is the competition between the Marvel movies and the DC movies. When Marvel started to form their cinematic universe

early on, DC had to catch up and begin their line of movies.

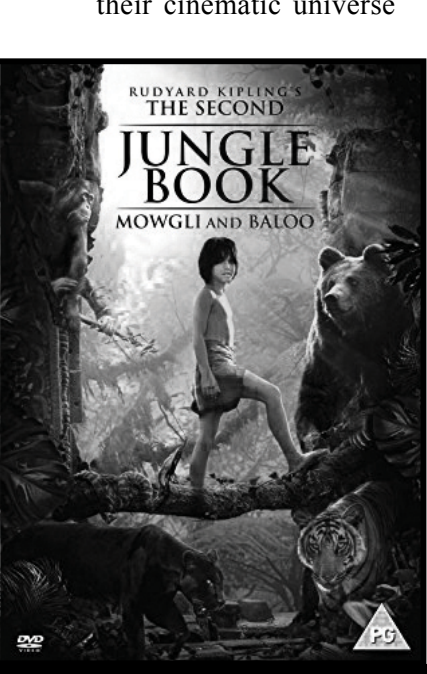
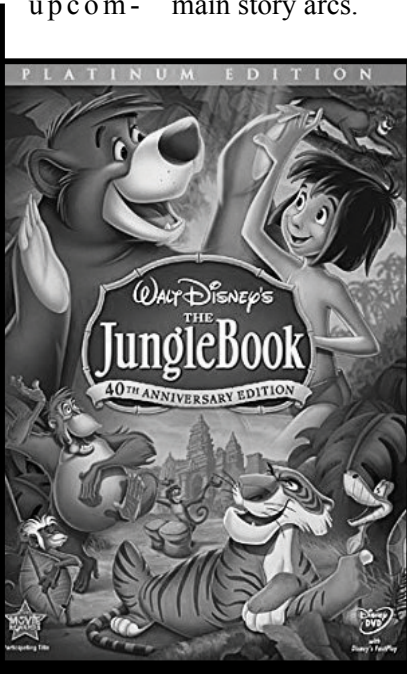
DC's desire to be the best and to make more money than Marvel is what caused the past DC movies, such as "Suicide Squad"

and "Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice," to get very poor reviews. The movies seemed rushed and poorly structured.

Competition between movie studios can be a good thing, as it allows for growth and a desire to be better. But when greed is involved, the movies produced appear to be forcefully put together.

The greed of movie studios is a major factor that is detrimental to movies. This greed can result in many pointless and poorly made movies. This desire for profit has created a way for bad films to constantly appear.

arubio2831@students.southplainscollege.edu





# Texans place first after dominating regional cross country meet

by **DOM PUENTE**  
Staff Writer

The South Plains College men's cross country team defended their regional team title after placing first at the NJCAA Region V Cross Country Championship.

South Plains College hosted the Region V Cross Country Championship at Brasher Lake park in Levelland on Oct. 28.

The Texans competed in the men's 8k-race, with three runners placing in the top 10. SPC finished the race with an average time of 25:28.70.

"Our men's team continues to perform well," said Erik Vance, head track and field coach at SPC. "Being able to win a postseason meet such as a regional championship is always great for the program."

Leading the Texans and placing first overall was sophomore All-American Felix Kosgei, who posted a time of 24:36.08. Kosgei led the field of 35

throughout most of the race, increasing his pace and distance from the pack to coast to another first-place finish.

Freshman Andrew Bosquez displayed his



Felix Kosgei placed first at the NJCAA Region V Cross Country Championship at Brasher Lake in Levelland on Oct. 28.  
**DOM PUENTE/PLAINSMAN PRESS**

skills to stay behind Kosgei throughout the race, finishing with a time of 24:47.71 and placing second overall.

A host of Texans stayed within striking distance, placing fifth, sixth and seventh as well to secure their second consecutive regional championship.

Freshman Filmon Beyene led the group of three, placing fifth with a time of 25:43.45. Freshman Jessie Madrid placed sixth with a time of 26:00.90, and freshman Benjamin Rono placed seventh with a time of 26:15.33.

Also competing for the Texans was freshman Erik Arambula, who finished 20<sup>th</sup> after posting a time of 27:02.45, and sophomore Michel Leoardo,

who finished 22<sup>nd</sup> with a time of 27:17.06.

With a men's team consisting of mainly freshmen, Coach Vance is pleased with the way the team has handled themselves throughout the year, as well as at the regional meet.

"We weren't sure what to expect from this group at the beginning of the year," said Coach Vance, "but these young guys have stepped up and are ready to keep competing in the future."

The Lady Texans were unable to place in the women's team standings at the Regional V meet due to only having four runners compete because of injuries.

"We had a girl out due to an illness, so our girls ran as individuals, but we competed well overall and worked hard to finish in the top 15," explained Coach Vance.

Three of the four Lady Texans placed in the top

10, with the fourth runner falling short of the top 10 by a matter of 37 seconds in the women's 3k race.

Leading the Lady Texans was sophomore Les-



Leslie Romero placed second for the Lady Texans at the NJCAA Region V Cross Country Championship.

ued to increase her pace through the final stretch. Although Romero fell short of first place, she did set a personal record for the race.

Following behind Romero was sophomore Seselia Dala, who placed third with a time of 17:54.70. Dala was able to edge out a New Mexico Junior College runner as the finish line neared to earn a top-three spot.

Sophomore Poro Gahakev battled multiple El Paso Community College runners to place seventh for the Lady Texans with a time of 18:57.10.

Sophomore Caitlyn Mercer finished 14<sup>th</sup> out of 38 runners with a time of 19:57.20.

"Overall, I was pleased with the way both teams competed, and both our boys and girls teams are sure to make an impact for us in nationals," said Coach Vance.

Both the men's and women's teams will travel to Fort Dodge, Iowa, for the NJCAA Cross Country National Championship on Nov. 11.

dpuente3388@students.southplainscollege.edu

## Passion for basketball lands Williams assistant coach position

by **NICOLE LOPEZ**  
Sports Editor

Careers can take people to unexpected locations, which is how Matt Williams landed in West Texas.

Originally from Peru, New York, Williams had the opportunity to come to South Plains College to become the new assistant men's basketball coach.

"The past four years, I was at another junior college called Georgia Highlands, outside of Atlanta," says William, "So, I worked there for four years and I actually had the opportunity over the summer to come here and work for Coach Green."

Williams graduated from Southern New Hampshire University with a bachelor's degree in sports management. He received his master's degree in athletic administration at Concordia University in Irvine, Calif.

"My first job out of school was in North Carolina," says Williams. "I was in North Carolina for a couple of years, then I worked in Georgia for four. I've been bouncing around. Basketball has always been my greatest passion. I grew up playing it in high school and played a little in college. Then I had the opportunity to get into coaching. I just really enjoy it, and I'm basically trying to see how far it can take [me]."

According to Williams, being the assistant men's basketball coach at Georgia Highlands and being the assistant men's basketball coach at SPC are somewhat similar duties.

But, every school is different.

"Mostly, the main things I do is recruit-

and working for Coach Green," explains Williams. "He's been here for 17 years now and won

multiple national championships. He's in the Hall of Fame. He's been great to me. He has been looking out for me ever since I've been here. He's given me a lot of opportunity, a lot of responsibility. So, to have that chance to learn from him every day has been great, and I'm just trying to make the most of it."

According to Williams, his transition moving from the East Coast down to West Texas has been smooth.

"Everywhere I've lived, it's been a little bit different," says Williams. "It's been going great. The people all around the school, the administration, the Athletic Department, the teachers, they've all been really nice to me. It's been going really well here. I like the whole town. It's close to Lubbock, so there are things to do. I've just been getting used to it. It takes time where ever you go. But it's been going well, and the people have been great



Matt Williams is excited to be working under Steve Green, head coach of the men's basketball team.

**TOVI OYERVIDEZ/PLAINSMAN PRESS**

ing," Williams explained. "Then we do a lot of work with the players. We try to make them better, help with player development, and, of course, academics. We try to monitor guys and make sure they're doing what they're supposed to be doing in the classroom. Because the most important thing for us is to get really good players that are also good kids. But also, make sure they graduate so they can move on to NCAA Division I schools."

Williams is excited to be working under Steve Green, head coach of the men's basketball team, and he was surprised when he received the call from SPC about the job offer.

"The biggest thing for me is coming to SPC

nlopez0806@students.southplainscollege.edu

## Lady Texans rodeo team finishes fall season ranked first in region

by **DOM PUENTE**  
Staff Writer

The South Plains College men's and women's rodeo teams capped off their fall season earning a pair of top-10 finishes.

Both teams finished their fall rodeo semester on the road at the Sul Ross State University Rodeo in Alpine on Nov. 2.

Finishing fifth overall, the Lady Texans scored a total of 130 points, and are ranked first in the region with a total of 971 points.

The Lady Texans had four riders place in the final round of the goat tying event. Sophomore Lariat Larner placed second overall, scoring 115 points. Larner posted a time of 7.2 in the long round, then

followed up with a time of 6.8 in the short round.

Sophomore Avery Gonzales placed fourth in the event, scoring 129 points for the Lady Texans. Gonzales finished the long round with a time of 6.8, and then put up a time of 7.9 in the short round to earn a final average time of 14.7.

Sophomore Jenna Dallyn finished in the top 10 again after running a time of 7.2 in the long round. Dallyn finished eighth after posting a time of 8.2 in the short round.

Freshman Josey Shannon also earned a spot in the top 10, clinching the ninth-place spot behind

Dallyn. Shannon posted a time of 6.9 in the long round, after putting up a time of 9.1 in the short round to average a time of 18.6 and earning 45 points for the Lady Texans.

Freshman Delaney Kanau earned a ninth-place spot in the break-away roping event, putting up a time of 2.8 in the

putting up a time of 106.6 as the final average.

In the tie down roping event, sophomore Stefan Ramone placed fifth after posting a time of 10.2 in the long round, and running a time of 14.7 in the short round. Ramone finished the event earning the Texans 85 points.

In the team roping



Freshman Josey Shannon practicing roping before the Sul Ross State University Rodeo in Alpine on Nov. 2.

**TOVI OYERVIDEZ/PLAINSMAN PRESS**

long round. Kanau missed in the short round, averaging a final time of 102.8 and scoring 27.5 points for SPC.

The Texans placed sixth overall, earning a total of 245 points.

Sophomore Chase Wilson placed fourth in steer wrestling, after putting up a time of 5.2 in the long run, and running a 4.7 in the short round. Wilson averaged a final time of 9.9, while scoring 30 points for the Texans.

Sophomore Chet Boren also finished in the top 10 in the steer wrestling event, placing eighth. Boren posted a time of 4.6 in the long round, but missed the short round,

event, SPC's Zack Kirkpatrick was paired with Tarleton's Abby Medlin. The pair placed fifth overall, roping in 70 points. The duo finished the long round with a time of 6.6, but missed the short round and finished with an average of 106.6.

Both the men's and women's teams will continue their rodeo season in February on the road in Odessa, competing in the Odessa College Rodeo on Feb. 23 – Feb. 25. The also will travel to Brownwood March 23 – 25 to compete in the Ranger College Rodeo.

dpuente3388@students.southplainscollege.edu



# Covering college football brings exciting experience for sports journalist



by **DOM PUENTE**  
Staff Writer

Covering football at different levels can bring many experiences for a sports journalist. But covering college football is by far the most exciting. I had the opportunity to cover the Texas Tech Red Raiders for the Homecoming game against Iowa State on Oct. 21 at Jones AT&T Stadium in Lubbock. Having worked for the local paper, the Hockley County News-Press, I learned the ins and outs of being a sports journalist and having to go out and cover high school games in multiple sports. But covering high school-level football has proved to be widely different than college-level

football events after attending the Texas Tech game. I was impressed with the professionalism everyone showed along with displaying their initiative to properly cover the game. Accessing the appropriate areas, such as the designated entrances, press areas and field areas, was easy enough. Although I was unaware of the proper areas I was to follow, the Texas Tech staff kindly directed and showed me some of the ropes to follow and had no problem answering any questions I had. Being able to maneuver through a large Tech campus can be difficult with such a big crowd gathering for Homecoming, but the Tech shuttle services made it easy for me to get to the stadium and back to the media parking areas. This was one of the benefits that I enjoyed

while experiencing my first college football game insight for journalists beginning to enter the field. Being able to learn and see how the environment is in the press box and on the field was one of the important things I wanted to gain from an opportunity such as this. Enjoying the process was important as well. I have spent some time in high school press boxes, and it was completely mind blowing how different both environments are from each other. Within this enormous press box that at least sat 40 people, each seat was already assigned, and stats and other helpful materials were already placed at every seat. Instead of having to ask for rosters for both teams at a high school game, I was im-

pressed with having all the proper materials at my designated spot and having stats and bios for all the players on both teams. Being able to have a bird's eye view of the entire stadium and field was amazing. I clearly saw every play and had no problem following the game and keeping a stat line throughout the game. Sitting in the press box and being able to talk to other journalists and media outlets throughout the game was enjoyable. After halftime, I made my way to the field level to take pictures and enjoy the atmosphere on the field. Since it was Homecoming, I could feel the energy going through the stadium with fans from both sides being as loud as they could be. Compared to a high school game with a few hundred people, Jones Stadium held thousands of energized fans, which made my experience better.

I followed the action on both sidelines, working my way around the field to get the best possible pictures I could. At a high school game, there are hardly any restrictions for photographers, if any. But in college football, there are markings all around the field that photographers cannot pass, which includes team bench areas. Getting to talk to some of the local Lubbock news station people, along with other photographers, was among the highlights of my experience. Photography is not my strongest point, but being able to learn from others who have been in the field longer was enlightening and enjoyable. Overall, covering high school-level football compared to college football amazed me. As I enter the sports journalism field after college, I look forward to working my way up to the college level and being able to cover football and other sports for a living.

dpuente3388@students.southplainscollege.edu



Keke Coutee avoiding a tackle from the Iowa State defense at Texas Tech's Homecoming game on Oct. 21. DOM PUENTE/PLAINSMAN PRESS

# Pizza founder speculates NFL protests leading to lack of dough



by **NICOLE LOPEZ**  
Sports Editor

Trouble is rising in the world of pepperoni and cheese, as John Schnatter has claimed his business isn't raking in the dough due to the NFL protests. Schnatter, founder

and CEO of Papa John's, hasn't weighed in on the NFL protests, but he did have something to say to the media recently when it comes to his pizza sales. "The NFL has hurt us by not resolving the current debacle to the players' and owners' satisfaction," Schnatter said in a conference call reported by Bloomberg News. "NFL leadership has hurt Papa John's shareholders. Leadership starts at the top, and this is an example of poor leadership." Schnatter is blaming the NFL for low pizza sales because the league hasn't resolved the situation. According to a CBS re-

port, Papa John's reported on Oct. 31 they recorded a lower than 1 percent rise in sales for its North American locations. Sales were up to 5.5 percent at the same time a year ago. I'm not necessarily agreeing with Schnatter. But I can understand the reasoning why he is blaming the NFL for the low pizza sales. I can also understand that maybe he is blaming the NFL for the wrong reasons. Maybe the reason why the pizza sales are low is because viewership is down for NFL games. There could be a connection between the league and lower sales numbers because less people are

seeing Papa John's advertisements. Either way, Schnatter shouldn't have said that the NFL is an example of poor leadership. Since Papa John's is the official sponsor of the NFL, this leads to the question of whether the company and the NFL will continue to work with each other. I'm surprised that Roger Goodell hasn't commented on what Schnatter said, because now there can be an issue with NFL and Papa John's. Schnatter does make a point with his comment about the NFL. He says that the NFL hasn't resolved the current situation of the NFL pro-

tests. I agree with half of his statement. The NFL needs to resolve the issue with players, because if less people are watching football, that means less people are seeing advertisements from different companies. This can hurt sales for these companies, which can hurt the NFL in a major way. Greg Creed, CEO of Yum Brands, parent company of Pizza Hut, has said that they haven't seen an impact on their sales, and Schnatter's comment was ridiculous. But Creed has to realize that Pizza Hut isn't the face of the NFL. Pizza Hut is the official sponsor of the NCAA, while Papa John's

is the official sponsor of the NFL. So, Creed's comment is irrelevant to the situation. It doesn't matter if the NFL is for or against the players standing for the national anthem. The problem is that they need to handle the situation, or companies such as Papa John's are going to be voicing their opinion and causing more negative attention to the issue. Roger Goodell needs to come up with a compromise soon, or he's going to be losing a lot more than just viewers. nlopez0806@students.southplainscollege.edu

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# Comic Culture

## Impact of comics apparent in society



by RILEY GOLDEN  
Entertainment Editor

Comics are a form of social history. “They tell us about the time,” according to Robert Weiner, humanities librarian at Texas Tech University. “Comics have always been like any part of pop culture. They tell us something about who we are.”

Comics, specifically American comics, have a tendency to reflect the social and political landscape of the country.

“I think at a certain level, comics can’t help but deal with social issues,” said Roy Bearden-White, assistant professor of English at South Plains College. “The very idea of the superhero is dealing with right and wrong. That’s a lot of what we deal with on a daily basis. In another respect, I see comics as a reflection of who we are.”

In one of this year’s comic book film adaptations, “Logan,” Bearden-White says that the movie had to end the way that it did because of the country’s current political makeup.

“Wolverine dies,” Bearden-White said. “You get to the end of that movie and the idea of hope is really gone. As a reflection, we’re coming out of this very turbulent presidential election where both sides are feeling excluded and neither side can see a way to work together. I think that movie had to end like that at that time.”

But, the death of a superhero is not always as well received as it was in “Logan.” As much as experiencing the death of a fictional character can teach people about death, it can also deeply affect them.

“I remember, I must’ve been 9 or 10, reading a story from the Legion of Superheroes [comics], where a character died,” said Weiner. “I’ve since been told it was Chemical King, and to this day I’ve not reread that story because it really affected me. It felt like a friend had died. And I know, historically, a lot of people go back to the Spider-Man story of Gwen Stacy’s death, and that being such a pivotal moment – that teaching them about death and what that means. But for me, it was that Legion of Superheroes story, which really affected me. I felt it.”

In 1992, Bearden-White’s favorite superhero, Superman, died, and this left him, and many others, feeling betrayed.

“I’ll tell you one thing that shifted the culture, 1992,” said Bearden-White. “They killed Superman. I had a very hard time explaining this. At the time, I grew up with this. And it was a symbol of everything that was pure. And then it wasn’t. And then it was a blatant trick. I resented that. When you grow up with a character, you do feel ownership of that. I felt it was taken away from me. To this day, I have not, nor will I buy a Superman comic.”

Because people feel this ownership of these characters, even when they’re not being killed off, these stories and their characters need to be handled

dark, and he’s not. Superman was actually – before we had such a term – a social justice warrior. He was really socialist in those early issues. [He]

fought corruption in governments and literally overturned governments that had terrible policies toward their people. It changed later to him being truth, justice, and the American way.”

Superman isn’t the only patriotic character that writers have a hard time handling. Fans of Superman despise his death, and fans of Captain America hated his most recent story arc.

Captain America switched sides to Hydra, a villainous organization in Marvel comics. Not only was it rejected as any kind of plot twist, but readers saw it as a trick from the get-go.

“With all of Marvel’s attempts at equalization,” said Weiner, “with the Hydra Cap, they have offended not only Cap’s Jewish creators, but every soldier who fought in World War II, and all of those who died in concentration camps.”

Bearden-White says that a character changing and evolving is a necessity. But, it has to be done with thought and care, and sometimes it’s just better to create a whole new character.

“Some of my new favorite characters have been some of these socially diverse characters,” said Maxwell French, an employee at Monster Lair comics in Lubbock and a microbiology major at Texas Tech. “Sometimes they work, sometimes they don’t. They always work best when it is its own new character. Whenever you just rebrand a character, force diversity, it doesn’t work as well. I think people will accept it more if it’s a new thing.”

But that’s not to say that people hate a diverse change to a character, if it makes sense. Iceman recently came out as gay, and the Mighty Thor is currently Jane Foster.

“Iceman is gay,” said Maxwell. “There were some negative reactions from the older comic community, but for the most part, it was pretty positive... Women in comics recently, they have been stepping up. You’ve seen a lot more female-led titles. When the female Thor stepped in, no one really complained. The female Hawkeye – people said

image), they’re going to know Spider-Man, Batman, the Joker, Superman, and Wonder Woman.”

“So these characters are a part of our collected unconsciousness,” added Weiner. “They resonate. And I don’t see that going away anytime soon.”

Comics have so many facets, and one of the most important is the villain. Weiner recognizes this, and he has helped write an analytical book on the Joker.

“The Joker, in all his iterations, whether he’s

ways answers, and the Joker teaches us that... The Joker is interesting, because he’s just as likely to let you live as he is to kill you, depending on his mood.”

According to Weiner, comics have had a stigma in the United States that they contribute to the dumbing down of society, but something so complex can’t possibly contribute to that.

“For a long time,” said Weiner, “comics were looked at as literary and artistic trash, that they



that didn’t really make sense. But things like “DC Comics Bombshells” has been super popular, and it’s pretty much only a female audience with female characters.”

With the introduction of gay characters and women into major roles in comics, along with story arcs that are constantly evolving, some of this knowledge may linger within the community for years before the rest of the public knows about them. But because so many people grew up with comics and superheroes, coupled with the fact that you can’t play video games or watch movies without coming across a comic book adaptation, these heroes can be seen as modern-day folklore.

“Danny O’Neil, a Batman writer, talks about how he realized when writing Batman, that he was a keeper of folklore,” said Weiner. “Let’s be honest here, more

playing practical jokes on Batman – simple, harmless – or being the



can make you stupid. But now, brain researchers are finding out that it’s active engagement. Educators are finding this out too, because you look at a sequence of pictures, and you read the text that’s there. You have to make inferences; your brain is working to do that. So instead of making you dumber, comics can actually make you smarter.”

More than anything, comics are a reflection of the culture, but their impact on society is also apparent.

“It doesn’t really matter that comics are still kind of a niche audience, as opposed to the ‘40s when they sold by the millions,” said Weiner. “The stories are with us... The impact and influence of comics is everywhere... Whether it’s graphic novels, films, video games, toys, memes, YouTube



dled delicately. Sometimes exploring deviations from a character’s true self can be met with appreciation, but sometimes it can be met with pure rejection.

“I hate what [Zach Sny-



people today know the story of Batman, Superman, and Spider-Man, than they do Odysseus or Ulysses. You can go anywhere in the world, and between the ages of 3 and 120, whether they’ve read a comic, picked up a video game, or even seen a movie, you show them that picture [points at Spider-Man

torture-porn character that he is today, represents our deepest fear: chaos,” Weiner said. “And he represents the way the world really is. The world is a chaotic place. There is no real security in life. Because there aren’t al-

mash ups, or political cartoons, their impact is everywhere.”

rgolden3411@students.southplainscollege.edu

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