

# THE LEDGER

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON TACOMA



**HUSKIES WIN 112<sup>TH</sup>  
APPLE CUP**

# Mental health concerns rising in college students

With the rate of mental health issues rising for college students in the United States, UWT provides a few resources to support their students.

By **LAUREN ZENT**  
NEWS REPORTER

Mental health issues are increasing among college students across the United States, as indicated by the most recent Healthy Minds Study — a collaborative study between the University of Michigan and Boston University. The annual study examines mental health and utilized services regarding graduate and undergraduate students. In 2018, the survey reported that in Washington State, four out of five college students have emotional distress affects their academic performance, while one third admit to having depression or anxiety and five percent considered suicide.

Within UW Tacoma, one registered student organization seeks to further increase the awareness of mental health issues which students face. The National Alliance of Mental Illness On Campus

advocates for resources, research and support for those affected by mental illness. They have already hosted several events related to the bettering one's well-being, including a blood drive in November. NAMI On Campus is officially affiliated with NAMI Pierce County, which strives to bring educational awareness and resources to members of the community and their families.

"College is a time of transition," said Regina Harper, NAMI On Campus' president. "For many students it's the first time they're away from home and living independently for extended periods of time. Without the structure of home and parental figures, it becomes important for college students to learn how to take care of their mental health. Eating a balanced diet, getting enough sleep, and exercising regularly are important for everyone in order to maintain their mental health, but are critical for those with

mental health conditions."

UWT also supplies other additional resources with those battling mental health setbacks. The Counseling and Psychology Center provides no-charge appointments with mental health professionals and guidance with hardship withdrawals. UW Campus Safety Office is also on call 24/7 in case of an emergency.

"One thing students don't know is that our services are confidential, like any other provider in the community," Cassandra N. Nicholas, Ph.D and CAP's director stated. "Faculty without written permission [from the client] cannot receive information. Neither can other students or parents."

The current public stigma against mental illness is one of the biggest concerns as it limits people from seeking support.

"Unfortunately, mental illness has



PHOTO BY NATALIE PEYTON

NAMI rock painting event that took place on Tuesday Dec. 3.

historically been viewed as something that makes people different, an identity that ostracizes individuals and makes them feel misunderstood and alone," Harper stated. "Young adults may notice that they are not feeling mentally well, but are likely afraid to talk about it and seek help out of fear of being perceived as different or having their diagnosis become their entire identity. However, everyone has mental health and mental health conditions are common. The more

we talk about mental health and mental illness, the more these common experiences becomes normalized."

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*If you are experiencing suicidal thoughts contact the National Suicide Prevention Hotline at 1-800-273-8255 or chat online on their website:*

**<https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/chat/>**

*In case of emergency contact 911.*

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## Huskies in the hallway:

COMPILED AND PHOTOS BY ANDREA NADAL AND ELLA LUCENTE

## How did your fall quarter go?



**Kobe B.**  
Freshman  
Pre-Major

**"Decent. Better than I thought it would. Higher than normal grades. I feel pretty prepared for finals."**



**Leticia Barreto**  
Sophomore  
Urban Design

**"Pretty good. Better than expected. I feel like my grades were above average, and I feel prepared for finals."**



**Breanna Bolle**  
Junior  
Mathematics

**"My quarter has been okay. It's my first quarter here. I've also been involved with NAMI on campus — its an RSO and I'm one of the officers. It feels good to give back, and to be an advocate for people with, or affected by, mental illness."**



**Wen Yan**  
Senior  
Business Administration

**"Really fast! It's not my favorite quarter. I started working on campus, so I've learned a lot more outside of the class."**



**Kristi Soriano-Noceda**  
Faculty  
Program Support Supervisor

**"Fast, exciting! Full of discovery and new innovations."**

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# Part 1: Members of SIAS faculty voice grievances to chancellor over apparent cuts

Students and staff within SIAS are left upset as positions and some classes important to certain students were discontinued resulting in blaming the chancellor and his administration.

By MITCHELL FERMO  
NEWS EDITOR

Faculty and students are airing their grievances as several teaching positions and classes were cut within the School of Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences for the fall and winter quarters. In all, seven teaching positions were cut or unfilled and multiple curriculums — including Religious Studies and the Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences — were either left with no classes to continue their program, or are uncertain about their ability to continue.

As a result, SIAS faculty sent Chancellor Mark Pagano a letter of concern on Nov. 20 — a letter that was backed by almost the entire faculty at a vote of 69 in favor of sending a letter, zero against and one abstention. Within the letter, the faculty outlined how they understood the circumstances of the events leading up to the sending of the letter. There were also seven actions listed which they wanted Pagano to immediately take:

1. Restore all of the resources needed for SIAS's curriculum, one which serves our majors, the campus, and advances the university's mission;
2. Develop and support a transparent and inclusive budget process that coordinates curricular planning with resource allocation decisions;
3. Commit to and schedule an open

discussion with SIAS faculty over the wide-range of ways our School has been damaged over the last year.

4. Launch an immediate investigation into the reasons for the 2019 budget crisis in SIAS and share the results of the investigation with the faculty in a timely and transparent matter;

5. Consult with SIAS faculty in developing a process to remedy the procedural shortcomings that led to this summer's debacle, and share the remedy with us;

6. Embrace stronger, consistent consultation with the faculty on decisions at all levels of institutional governance that impact UW Tacoma's ability to serve students, support scholarship and ensure equity in all campus affairs;

7. Do everything necessary to fully restore the faculty's confidence that shared governance and administrative decisions are made consistent with the spirit and substance of the Faculty Code.

Professor of Economics Katie Baird provided insight as to why the SIAS came to a decision to send a letter of concern to the chancellor.

"One of the things that really promoted this letter is the difficulty of us getting a coherent picture, understanding, story of what happened and why," Baird said. "And the answers that we have gotten have not lined up with what we have experienced. So, what we as faculty know is what we have experienced. What

we hear is that, 'well, it's not really a budget cut,' or different explanations that just don't jive with what we know."

The letter was also sent to the Executive Vice-Chancellor for Academic Affairs Jill Purdy, Vice-Chancellor of Finance and Administration Tye Minckler and Dean of SIAS Anne Bartlett.

While no public response had yet been issued by the administration, Minckler stated in an interview with the Ledger that there were mischaracterizations and misunderstandings within the letter about the events and the budgeting process, also saying that that is normal for this type of process.

"We didn't make any cuts," Minckler said. "There is nothing new about resources not being available. I mean, if they weren't available now, then they haven't been available ever. So, I don't know what's changed in that regard. I think that the dean [Bartlett] may have misunderstood that ... she is characterizing these as budget cuts. I think that is a mischaracterization. We did not cut the budget for that school."

Minckler clarified that each school requests more money than what they receive, and this partial funding of the budget is not unique. With the most recent SIAS Faculty Council meeting on Dec. 4, there was discussion between the SIAS faculty representatives that these were not "budget cuts," but rather partial funding of the budget.

The problems for SIAS started back to decisions made over the summer. SIAS members were made aware of such decisions in early August that the requested fiscal year 2019–2020 budget for SIAS was not completely met, catching many in SIAS off guard that there were problems with funding.

Every year around the late fall and early winter quarters, the following year's course catalog is planned out. However, from the time it is planned out to the weeks up to the start of the quarter, professors and funding can change. Within SIAS's Politics Philosophy and Public Affairs, for example, four faculty members who were on the course list for 2019–2020 have since left, and the problem became the inability to fund their temporary replacements.

The ultimate decision on which classes to cut came from Bartlett after a series of discussions with councilors on how it would impact students. The total list of classes cut include courses that were already known to not be offered, such as if a professor was going on sabbatical or were working on a grant.

"I was told that, you know, there was no more money, I had to cancel some classes," Bartlett said. "Most of the classes were cancelled for low enrollment in kind of the usual way, but there were some classes we weren't able to staff because we didn't have the money."

Students who had signed up for now-

cancelled courses were left with less than a month to figure out their schedule, unsure of what to take. Many classes were already filled up and on a waiting list. Students have taken to voicing their frustrations, with some speaking out during the Nov. 25 Student Town Hall, hosted jointly by Pagano and ASUWT. Other students have taken to social media to express their concerns and frustrations. Some students started a Facebook group called Students United Against Cuts to Classes at UW.

Through all of this, Pagano has stated that he was unaware this was happening until the beginning of October.

"It would not ever occur to me that somebody would think that their budget was cut and they needed to cut 50 classes, because [the budget] wasn't," Pagano said. "That's why I didn't know that the summer started going forward and that school that cut classes got worried about something in their budget again, and inside their allocation they determined they needed to cut these classes. We didn't ask them to or whatever."

Despite the confusion all parties have expressed about the situation, one commonality that each side is saying is that they are working on this problem with the best interest of students in mind.

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Part two of this story will be continued  
in the first issue of winter quarter, Issue  
12.  
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Chancellor Pagano discusses the budget process at the Student Town Hall Nov. 25 which gave students insight on new plans for the campus.

PHOTO BY NATALIE PEYTON



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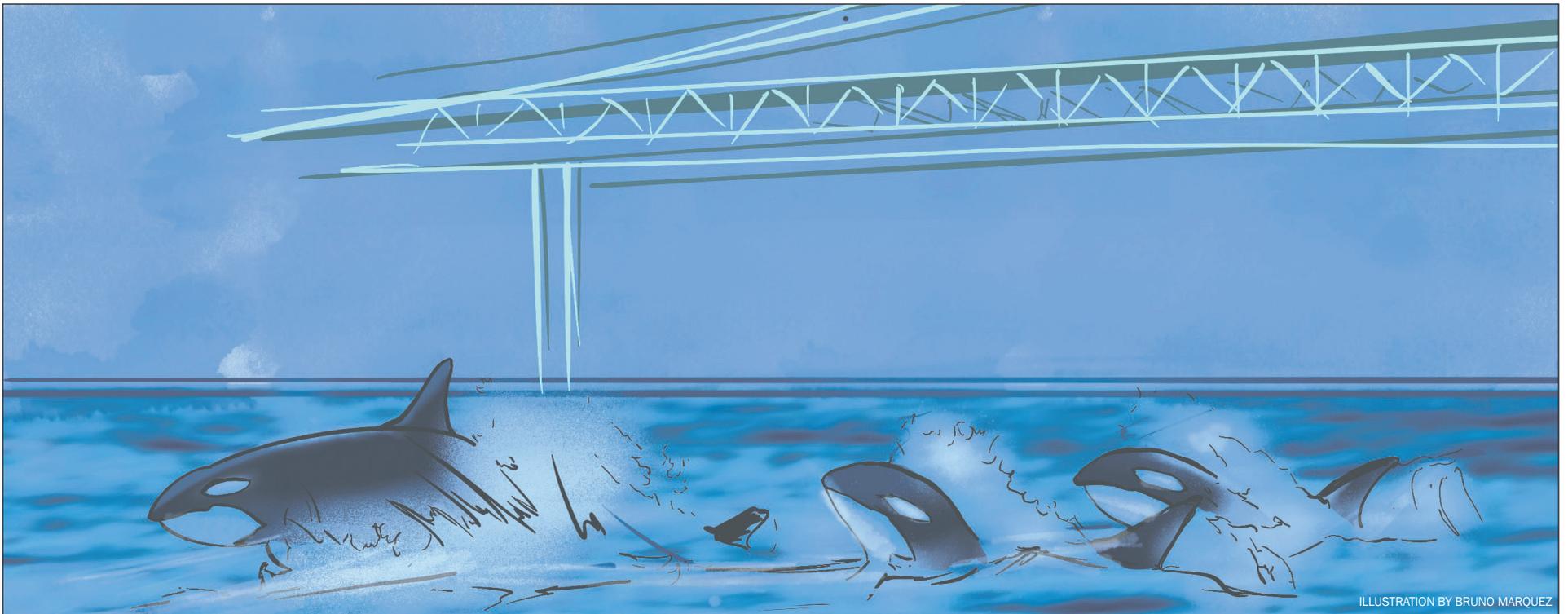


ILLUSTRATION BY BRUNO MARQUEZ

## Salish Sea killer whales — what you need to know

The declining population of Southern Resident Killer Whales continues to perplex scientists.

By **ALYSSANDRA GOSS**  
MANAGING EDITOR

**S**outhern Resident Killer Whales, or orcas, of the Salish Sea region, are beloved creatures for both local residents and tourists. With the creation of Orca Recovery Day — declared by Governor Jay Inslee as October 19, 2019 — more people are becoming aware of this mammals position on the endangered species list.

In fact, the EPA has stated that the Salish Sea orca population has been on a declining trend. Between 1995 and 2003, there were 82 individual orcas, but in 2019 the number has dwindled to a mere 73 — with three orcas mysteriously disappearing in early July, as well.

Hopes of increasing the Southern Resident orca population to 95 by 2020 is now bleak.

Due to the orcas heightened popularity, individuals are left questioning why this animal's population is progressively depleting. After all, the signature trademark of the Salish Sea is the graceful presence of these black and white, bus sized marine animals.

Is it reduced food supply? Human activity? Or pollution impacting Southern Resident Killer Whales? Interestingly, this trifecta of components can be considered in evaluating the blend of negativity influencing this orca population.

Southern Resident Killer Whales depend upon Chinook salmon — the

largest Pacific salmon species — as their primary food source.

Unfortunately, the Chinook salmon population has been steadily declining, as well. According to the EPA, the population has declined 60 percent since the Pacific Salmon Commission began collecting salmon data in 1984.

Not only does this make the orca aesthetically emaciated, but a 2017 study — conducted by University of Washington biology professor Sam Wasser and his colleagues — discovered a connection between low food supply and late-term miscarriage in orcas.

Without proper sustenance, it is possible the orcas are incapable of maintaining the stressors of pregnancy — if they can barely sustain themselves,

then it is nearly impossible for female orcas to carry full-term.

While food supply is certainly a contributing factor to Southern Resident orca decline, pollution and human activity — seemingly intertwined — will threaten the orca for generations to come.

“Emerging threats expected to have a big impact going forward are ocean acidification from climate change and continued human population growth in the region,” said Thomas Koontz, professor of Environmental Policy in the School of Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences.

Whether it be pollution from maritime vessels or surrounding residential areas, the increase of toxic chemicals within the Salish Sea is un-

doubtedly altering orca habitat.

However, the Southern Resident Orca is not without hope — yet. There are steps we can take to ensure stable or growing numbers, and luckily for us, these actions are within reason.

Simply refusing to fish or eat local Chinook salmon, implementing a rain garden to reduce stormwater runoff, or decreasing the amount of greenhouse gas emitting activities, will propel sustainable progress — all to the benefit of the orca and its ecosystem.

As apex predators, orcas do not have any natural predators besides humans. Unless residents of the Salish Sea region choose to participate in saving this species, we run the risk of saying goodbye to the Southern Resident orca forever.

## Tips for cruising through finals week

A's get hoorays — use these tips to ace your final exam.

By **CHRISTIAN BELL**  
OPINION EDITOR

Get ready to sharpen those pencils and dust off those textbooks because finals week is here. For many students, this time of the quarter brings an ample amount of stress, feelings of anxiousness and dread. But don't sweat — here are a few tips that might help you ace this exam.

### PRACTICE NEUTRAL AND POSITIVE AFFIRMATIONS

Positive affirmations like “I got this!” or “I'm a great student,” or “I will pass this class,” are great ways to give an added boost to one's mood and remind oneself of their capabilities. However, one study from the University of Waterloo found positive affirmations are most effective when one is already in a relatively positive headspace. The study found for those with low-self esteem,

using positive affirmations might make the problem worse because they're incongruent with the well-established negative thinking. Therefore, if tricky exam questions coupled with piles of homework leave you feeling inadequate or unsure of their ability to pass — consider using neutral affirmations. Neutral affirmations such as “I am okay,” or “It's okay to make mistakes,” are the first steps towards breaking the bubble of negative thoughts and making steps towards being able to do positive affirmations.

### ASK QUESTIONS

As the old saying goes — a closed mouth doesn't get fed. Failure to ask questions during or after class time means missing out on opportunities to get the assistance or tips for the exam. Be sure to take advantage of your professor's office hours and pick their brain about your final assignments. You might learn something new or they

may give you advice that will ease a bit of your stress. If you can't make time to talk to your professor, try asking a classmate for help or advice.

### REVIEW THE POWERPOINTS

Prior to transferring to UW Tacoma, I had a professor who would lace study guide answers throughout her powerpoints. By the time finals week rolled around, she found the students who attended classes religiously and took great notes from the powerpoint slides had the highest scores. Though I don't expect every professor to be as extreme, it is still important for students to check the powerpoint slides their professor presents in class or shares on canvas. You never know what hidden gems await there.

### GET LOTS OF REST

Believe it or not, late night cram sessions are not good for your brain. In fact, many researchers — such as Texas



ILLUSTRATION BY BRUNO MARQUEZ

### TAKE MINI-QUIZZES

A&M's sleep expert David Earnest — have found sleep deprivation leaves a “staggering effect on the brain's memory.” With each hour the brain is deprived of sleep your “brain loses efficiency.” Try setting an alarm that'll alert you to stop studying and head to bed. Drink chamomile tea or invest in a weighted blanket. Get your power sleep.

Before every exam, I like to quiz myself. If I have a study guide, I practice answering each question. If a study guide is not available to me, I create my own and drill myself about the answers. Mini quizzes are a great way to retain information and help you prepare for what is to come.



## Locals' guide to Tacoma's holiday hidden gems

The best ways to kick back and celebrate the holiday season during winter break, straight from Tacoma natives.

By MEGHAN RAND  
A&E EDITOR

The up-and-coming city of Tacoma is full of hidden gems and well-known local favorites alike. But sometimes, the best way to get to know a city is being led by a local — someone who has tried and tested everything a city has to offer, and can point you in the direction of what you should check out, and what you should pass on. The holiday season is no exception. The Tacoma Ledger asked Tacoma locals what some of the best places in Tacoma are to celebrate the most wonderful time of the year.

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### HOLIDAY DRINKS AT STARBUCKS

If you are an otherwise busy person, college students recommend picking up a festive drink or two during the holidays to bring a little cheer into your routine. The caffeine pick-me-up is a perfect addition to studying for finals, too!

As a bonus, Starbucks has a robust collection of giftable items such as premium bags of coffee, mugs, and gift cards.

"I spend a lot of time here," said UWT junior Abby Toomoth. "Being a busy college student and working pretty much non-stop, I love that coffee shops like Starbucks give me a chance to fit celebrating the holidays right into my super busy routine."

### ZOOLIGHTS

This one is a Tacoma classic. Point Defiance Zoo and Aquarium puts on a show every year of thousands of lights, and this has become a tradition for locals to check out every holiday season.

"In my opinion, Zoolights is a great place and well known place for some fun sight seeing. Not only do you get to see some animals, you also get to see some pretty cool light displays," said UWT sophomore Jasmin Randhawa.

The zoo offers different types of tickets — one option for Zoolights alone, one for visiting the zoo during the day, and another that will admit you to both.

Unfortunately, the aquarium is closed during Zoolights, and most of the animals are resting, so be sure to keep this in mind while planning your visit.

### WAFFLE STOP

One might not imagine this whimsical breakfast restaurant as being a go-to wintertime spot for cozy eating, but that is where the locals beg to differ.

"Waffle Stop is a hidden gem in Tacoma's Proctor District," Randhawa also recommends. "Everyone there is super nice and welcoming! They have great breakfast and lunch options. My personal favorite is the Nashville chicken and waffles! If you're looking for an aesthetically pleasing place to have a

cozy breakfast, this is it!"

### FROZEN FOUNTAIN AT POINT RUSTON

This ice skating rink is a great, festive addition to Tacoma's holiday line-up. Open until January 5, 2020, you have the chance to visit this pop-up ice skating rink, just a few minutes away from UW Tacoma. Nestled among a lot of other vendors and fun activities, going to Point Ruston to enjoy the holidays is a great, lesser-known way to celebrate.

### SPRINKER ICE SKATING RINK

Two words: bumper cars.

If you aren't good at ice skating, but you still want to enjoy the experience, skip Frozen Fountain at Point Ruston and check out Sprinker Recreation Center. This year, Sprinker joined the only 14 places to offer ice bumper cars. They offer different prices, depending on if you would like to ride the bumper cars, or skate on the ice as well.

### FANTASY LIGHTS

This attraction, celebrating their 25th year, is a two-mile drive through Spanaway Park where you can look at festive light displays. Being right next to Sprinker, this would make a great way to warm up, without having to stop your fun. Plus, at \$15 a vehicle, Fantasy Lights would be a cost-effective way to celebrate with a group of friends.

"Fantasy Lights is great because you can stay warm and enjoy lights, unlike Zoolights," said Toomoth. "It's inexpensive and low-pressure, I love going!"



PHOTOS BY NATALIE PEYTON

Hot chocolate and ice skating at the Point Ruston CHI Fransiscan ice rink.

## How to destress after finals week

Finals week is an anxious time for a lot of students — here are a few tips to help you relax after those grueling exams.

By BENGISU INCETAS  
OPINION COLUMNIST

Ready or not — it's time for finals. As stressful as finals week may be, the bright side is when you finish your exam you won't have to deal with that class again. Here are some ways in which you can relax successfully after a hard and long autumn quarter:

First, you will need to get rid of all the evidence of that class — make it a

clean break. If you want to keep your notes for future classes — go ahead, but stash them somewhere your eyes cannot spot for the next few weeks you will have to yourself.

Second, clean out your school bag and rearrange your notebooks. Throw that bag in the washer — you won't need it until winter quarter. Don't let it be a constant reminder of school. Clean out your desk at home and surround it with your favorite items.

Third, check your calendar and make sure you're not working so much that you miss out on fun activities. There are many things to do this holiday season such as binge watch your favorite shows on Netflix, drink yummy hot chocolate, read that book that has been eyeing you in the corner of your room, etc.

In order to destress, anything concerning school must be off of your mind. Try going to Lush and buying that new bath bomb or getting your favorite

scented candle. This will melt those worries away.

If you are unsure of which events to go to, Facebook has a section in which it posts events near your location that may be of interest to you — whether it's a winter festival or community event.

A lot of coffee shops have already prepared for the winter as well, with drinks such as pumpkin spice and eggnog. Spend your time adventuring to new coffee shops, and tasting these fes-

tive treats.

No school means more free time essentially, so going down and checking out that locally owned store you always pass by is a good way to pass time and wind down. As the holidays have approached us as well, the festivity of city is here too.

Going down to your city and checking out the light show and walking down the lit trees on the sidewalk is a peaceful way to feel relaxed after those big exams.

# SPORT REPORT: Huskies win the 112th Apple Cup

The rivalry between Washington State University and University of Washington was heated as the Huskies took the win 31-13.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF SEATTLE TIMES PHOTOGRAPHER DEAN RUTZ

**Above:** The coin flip landed in favor of the Washington State Cougars giving them possession of the ball at the beginning of the game. **Below:** University of Washington's linebacker Ryan Bowman triumphantly tackles Washington State University's quarterback Anthony Gordon.

By **BROOKS MOELLER**  
SPORTS COLUMNIST

**N**ew season, same result. The Huskies were able to handle business in the 112th annual Apple Cup and take down WSU 31-13. This marks the Huskies' seventh straight win over the Cougars — who have lost ten of the last eleven games against the Huskies — dating back to 2009. This also extends UW's lead in the all time series with WSU to 74 wins, 32 losses, and 5 ties. It was a very similar result to past seasons, so what does UW do that has made them so successful against WSU?

It was one of the best atmospheres of the year at Husky Stadium as expected, where over 70,000 people attended. The

Cougars came out firing, scoring with ease on their first drive of the game to go up 7-0, silencing the crowd. That was about all that Cougar fans had to cheer for, as UW dominated every aspect of the game from that point on.

It started on UW's second offensive possession of the game where junior quarterback Jacob Eason connected with sophomore wide receiver Terrell Bynum for a 57 yard completion. Eason capped off the drive with a quarterback sneak for the Huskies' first touchdown of the day. This really set the tone for the game, and Eason recognized that when asked about the play.

"Yeah that is the energy we needed," Eason said in his post-game interview, "The momentum changer we needed. They went down on the opening drive and scored and we had a three and out on our drive. Terrell ran a great route and gave me an opportunity to throw him the ball and then made a nice play. So, that was kind of the spark in the first half and we went after that."

WSU bounced back with a field goal, but the Huskies answered with a their second touchdown, and another outstanding play from Bynum. This sixteen yard score gave them their first lead over the Cougars of the game 14-10. During the second half of the season, Bynum has shown that he will be an important part of the Husky offense next year and will likely be the #1 target for whoever ends up under center.

UW put one more touchdown on the board, giving them a 21-10 lead going into halftime. Since their first drive of the game, WSU was unable to

gain any momentum on offense, as the Husky defense did what they always do and completely neutralize the Cougars' pass heavy approach. WSU quarterback Anthony Gordon threw 62 pass attempts but only for 302 yards showing that UW was able to stick to their assignments and limit big plays from WSU.

A second touchdown from freshman running back Richard Newton, and field goal from Peyton Henry, capped the scoring for the Huskies and secure their seventh straight Apple Cup victory 31-13. It was the perfect way to send out the seniors who finished their careers never losing an Apple Cup, and head coach Chris Petersen recognized the importance of that.

"I'm really happy for the seniors, there are only so many groups of guys who can go through here and say they never lost to their rival," Petersen said in his postgame presser. "We played good team ball today, our defense did a great job once again, playing that 'bend and don't break' defense, it's about points and not yards."

The win brings the Huskies record to 7-5 on the year, and they will be heading to a bowl game in the following weeks. Although it was a disappointing season for UW, it was important for them to take care of WSU, as this guarantees them their tenth straight year with a winning season. This was also the second senior class in a row to never lose to WSU. Senior Nick Harris gave us the moment of the day when after the game he lifted up his jersey to show a shirt that read, "WE DON'T LOSE TO COUGS."



## The Trans Siberian Orchestra was back in Tacoma

Orchestra music with a twist, plus an amazing light show.

By **MADI WILLIAMS**  
A&E COLUMNIST

It is officially the beginning of the holiday season, which means that it's time for the annual Christmas music explosion, and what group is more festive to help you embrace the music than The Trans Siberian Orchestra. The TSO makes classical music experience exciting for everyone, thanks to their use of electric guitars, drums, singers, electric violin, a mini orchestra, tesla coil — which is electricity hitting a metal ball making different pitches — and a laser light show.

Before the show started, the hosts of the radio station Star 101.5 gathered on stage and explained that part of the proceeds from tickets to the show were going to organizations in the area. The first was called The Forgotten Children's Fund, which helps give children Christmas gifts, and they received a \$6,610 donation. The second is a sister program of The Forgotten Children's fund called Birthday

Dreams. This organization has helped 85 hundred kids have wonderful birthdays, and they received \$6,610. The third organization was called Northwest Harvest, which gives food to 375 hundred organizations in the Tacoma/Seattle area to help people have food and they got the largest donation of \$13,213. The fact that the Orchestra helps the organizations in the areas that they are playing at is admirable, and what they value.

The TSO has been around for 21 years. This particular concert was "Christmas Eve and Other Stories," reflecting their CD of the same name. Some of the well-known songs the group performed were: "A Mad Russians Christmas," "O Come All Ye Faithful/Holy Night," and "Christmas Eve" (Sarajevo 12/24).

During the second part of the show, the group did not perform songs from the album, but these were songs that people would recognize by ear, from composers such as Beethoven and Mozart/Figaro. During the second half of

the show, musicians from the Orchestra interacted with the audience — just like any other concert — asking if this was anyone's first show, who were repeat offenders, and if we were overall enjoying the show. At one point, they talked about one of their members Paul O'Neill and how he put so much work into the Orchestra, helping make the show into what it is today. They played a song that has never been released called, "Can You Hear Me Now," a song they came across after the death of O'Neill that he had written. The song was dedicated in his memorial. During this song, it was not like the other songs with all the guitars and light show, it was a slow song and the only light show that happened was from everyone turning on the lights on their phones.

Overall, the show was a really fun experience, and a great way to kick off the holiday season. The audience enjoyed both some traditional Christmas music along with some that is off the beaten path.

The light show made it all the more enjoyable, as well. Even the parts of the show where the members came out and told stories between the sets were enjoyable, even if some people likely thought it was

cheesy. If you ever get the chance to go and see the Trans Siberian Orchestra go see it — even if it is not their holiday show in particular. Any one of their shows will truly be a memorable experience.



PHOTO BY ALEX LARSON

The lighting and visuals for TSO set the mood for some holiday cheer.

# Festive movies to watch this holiday season

Get in the spirit of the Noel with these movies.

By **ANDREW BROWN**  
FILM CRITIC

There's no shortage of movies based around the holiday season, so it can be daunting to try and pick just a few to watch. Fortunately, I have compiled a list of varying yuletide flicks that are sure to get you into the holiday spirit.

## TIER 1: THE CLASSICS

### "HOME ALONE" (1990) & "HOME ALONE 2: LOST IN NEW YORK" (1992)

Still a riot to watch today, a child accidentally left home by his family outsmarts two clueless crooks with ingenious traps that every kid in the nineties attempted to replicate. Even the second movie is loveable, despite it having essentially the same plot as its predecessor.

### "DIE HARD" (1988)

Let's cut to the chase, this is a Christmas movie, as well as a top-notch example of 80's action. Bruce Willis became a star from it, thanks to his everyman looks and great charisma, and the legendary Alan Rickman became one of cinema's best bad guys. All wrapped in a heist plot during an office Christmas party.

### "GREMLINS" (1984)

One of the great bait and switches in movie history, the plot has a kid getting a cute furby-type pet for Christmas only for everything to quickly go wrong. A deft combination of genres like family, holiday, comedy, and horror, and the puppet special effects are amazing even today.

### "LOVE ACTUALLY" (2003)

Romance and the holidays seem to go together hand in hand. Here, the many stories of love, humor and heartbreak among a dozen people in England are intertwined as Christmas comes closer.

### "NATIONAL LAMPOON'S CHRISTMAS VACATION" (1989)

One of the seminal holiday comedies and the strong third entry in the "Vacation" franchise, this movie gets you laughing with its all too close to reality portrayals of awkward relatives, ruined Christmas dinners, and lighting decorations that never work. Yet, it also warms your insides with its ultimate message of the importance of togetherness around the holidays.

## TIER 2: THE OVERLOOKED GEMS

### "ARTHUR'S PERFECT CHRISTMAS" (2000)

I know what you're thinking — a Christmas special surrounding the characters of an animated kids' show? But it's full of catchy musical numbers and is surprisingly educational about

the ways other cultures celebrate the holidays. If you're willing to give it a chance, you're in for a treat.

### "ANNA AND THE APOCALYPSE" (2017)

An offbeat horror musical comedy that sets a zombie apocalypse in a small British town during the holidays. The songs are well done, and it's just so earnest that you want to give it a hug.

### "THE CHRISTMAS CHRONICLES" (2018)

Most Netflix subscribers likely already saw this one when it debuted a year ago, but it's still a surprisingly good entry into the holiday canon. Kurt Russell is well suited to the role of Santa, and it maintains a jovial, childlike perspective we could all use in the season.

### "ARTHUR CHRISTMAS" (2011)

Featuring an all-star voice cast and some stellar animation, this is a solid newer Christmas movie that reiterates the value of personalized gifting.

## TIER 3: SO BAD THEY'RE GOOD

### "I'LL BE HOME FOR CHRISTMAS" (1998)

90's teen heart-throb Jonathan Taylor Thomas quit his role on the hit sitcom "Home Improvement" to jumpstart a movie career, and this Christmas turkey was the result. It involves him embarking on a cross-country road trip to see his family for the holiday, but only so that his dad will reward him for the visit with a vintage car.

### "SANTA CLAUS CONQUERS THE MARTIANS" (1964)

A low budget is usually an indicator not to go overboard with a movie's plot, but that didn't phase these filmmakers. Aliens from Mars — looking suspiciously like humans in leotards with green paint on their face — kidnap Earth's Santa so that he can bring holiday cheer to their children instead of ours. Perfect if you're looking for a truly head-bending holiday film.

### "SAVING CHRISTMAS" (2014)

Not just an easy candidate for worst Christmas film of all time, it might be the worst movie ever to see a theatrical release. Evangelical actor Kirk Cameron tries his best to convince his close friend 'Christian' — groan — about the true origins of Christmas, conveniently ignoring evidence contradicting each of his arguments. This has to be seen to be believed.

### "JACK FROST" (1998)

The premise alone should have been laughed out of the pitch room — a musician dies and is reincarnated as his son's snowman. It was probably made for kids, but the humor is at the bottom of the barrel, and the CGI snowman looked bad even when the movie was new.



Chevy Chase plays the always bumbling dad of the Griswold family in "Christmas Vacation."

COURTESY OF WARNER BROS



Macauley Culkin stars as the mischievous Kevin outwitting bungling burglars Joe Pesci and Daniel Stern in the "Home Alone" movies.

COURTESY OF 20TH CENTURY FOX



Jonathan Taylor Thomas tries to get to his family in time for the holidays in "I'll Be Home For Christmas."

COURTESY OF BUENA VISTA