

FREE EVERY MONDAY

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THE LEDGER

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON TACOMA

GO OUTSIDE
EVERY ONCE IN A WHILE

READ A BOOK
THAT ISN'T FOR SCHOOL

PLEASE

Stay
MENTALLY
Healthy
this
QUARTER

TAKE BREAKS!

CUDDLE & PLAY
w/ YOUR PET

DRINK WATER
THROUGHOUT
THE DAY!

Contemporary Accounting Forum 2021: Technology in Accounting

Accounting professionals talk to UWT about technology in accounting and how students can best utilize technology and networking skills.

BY LUKE DENUELLE &
GARRETT YAEN
NEWS REPORTER & NEWS EDITOR

Last week, the Ledger took a look at the 2021 Contemporary Accounting Forum — a forum dedicated to covering issues in today's business environment pertaining to accounting — and discussed it with Accounting Students Association Advisor, Gary Viers.

"The 2021 Contemporary Accounting Forum was attended by over 140 people," Viers said. "This was a tri-campus event that consisted of students and faculty from UW Tacoma, Seattle, and Bothell. There were also alumni and business professionals in attendance."

Last week, these guests along with the Accounting Students Association and Milgard School of Business members discussed the use of technology in today's business environment, what employers are looking for and how students can capitalize on their technological knowledge.

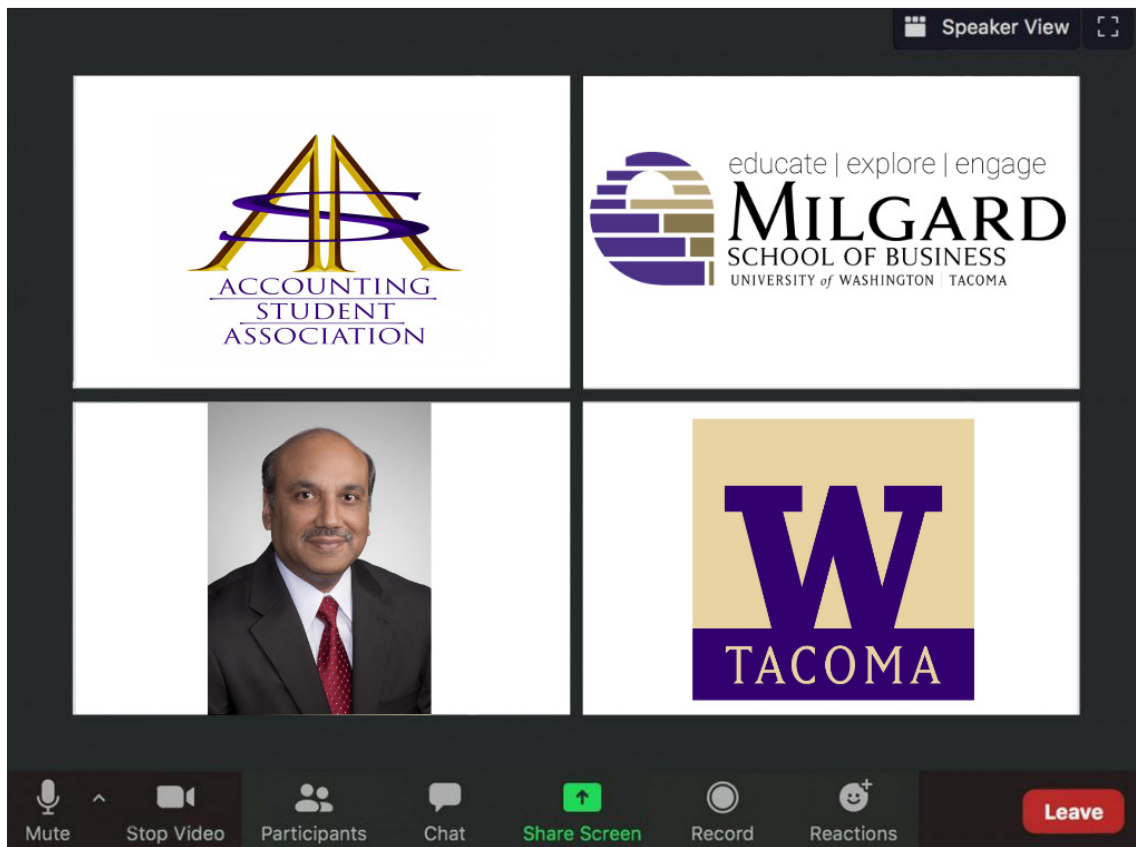
"This is a huge milestone that allows the Milgard School of Business further community engagement," Viers said.

He then noted the annual event was the first to be done through zoom. He explained that the program started to promote community engagement between UWT students and accounting professionals.

"Students provide positive feedback from these events every year. We have already received feedback from faculty, students, and professionals about the high value of this year's event," Viers said.

Viers also noted the event was started to help students get situated in real world job experiences.

"Students join these events to gain knowledge from professionals that will be useful as they begin and/or continue their careers in accounting," Viers said. "This 'real-world' per-



IMAGES COURTESY OF UWT, AND ACCOUNTING STUDENT ASSOCIATION, GRAPHIC ARRANGED BY NICKOLUS PATRASZEWSKI
With the ever-changing landscape of technology, several guest speakers gave some advice to students about technology in accounting.

spective is a valuable resource to all who attend."

The guest speakers noted how crucial the knowledge of technology has become as the financial and technology industries intertwine further together.

"Technology has become an even more important part of what we do in accounting and reporting," True Blue Corporate Controller, Jason Embick, said.

Embick went on to note that technology has made most of his company's initiatives related to technology. And when he first started working in the industry, most pieces of technology were fairly limited, thus requiring accountants to utilize much more manual labor.

"We had very limited capabilities, we had floppy drives to store stuff on [and] I asked my kids if they knew

what floppy drives were and they had no idea," Embick said.

It wasn't just floppy drives, Embick noted that computer programs such as Microsoft Excel were limited to only about a hundred thousand rows of data.

"When you're dealing with these huge companies with millions of transactions you just didn't have a lot of tools at your fingertips to sit through all that data," he said.

Embick explained further, noting that most of the manual transactions done by hand are being automated by computers and that more firms are now able to get more data out to more clients who need it.

"Back in the day we had an army of people doing cash applications or AP payments or account reconciliations and a lot of that work is being

automated by tools that don't need humans to touch it," Embick said.

Tax Senior Manager Chis Ebert, noted that technology has allowed them to automate a lot of the paperwork process with software such as Oracle automating entire processes from depreciation reports to tax forms.

Executive in Residence of Milgard School of Business Sandeep Verma noted that technological inclination is just as valuable as technical familiarity.

"I don't think it's possible to learn every tool which is out there, somebody may learn ACP and go to another organization, and they'd ask 'do you use oracle?' he said. "Well, I can't use my skill-set when I worked on ACP, but I think it's key that you have that tech-savvy in you. That you use that mindset to learn and to use that to further their careers."

Embick said that it's for this reason that many are recommending new accounting hires not only be competent within the field of accounting but with technology as well.

"Yes we need somebody who knows the technical side of accounting, but we are also looking for people that are tech-savvy," Embick said.

It isn't just technical skills that serve well on a resume. The speakers also noted that knowing key skills such as communication are just as important as technology.

"My favorite thing to see on a resume for someone I'm looking to hire is customer service skills," Embick said. "Have you been a server in a restaurant or worked retail? Technology is paramount but I am willing and used to teaching you to use technology."

Viers noted that the event receives positive feedback from attendees every year.

Students who missed out on an annual opportunity need not be distraught. Viers said there are other ways students can get in touch with accounting professionals.

"While the Contemporary Accounting Forum is only held once a year, the ASA provides Zoom and Learn events for students nearly every week during the academic year," Viers said.

He said these events cover a wide variety of topics in accounting which are presented by local professionals in public and private accounting.

An upcoming Zoom and Learn event scheduled for Mar. 10 will focus on the new Master of Science in Accounting.

Viers said the MSAcc program, formerly known as the Master's in Accounting program, will begin in Fall 2021. He said the program will include curriculum focused on Accounting Analytics.

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Library Shutdown: Budget shortfall impacts

Mariesa Bus speaks with the Ledger about the challenges facing the Tacoma Public Library.

By **ROSIE MENDOZA-BAUTISTA**
NEWS REPORTER

The Public Information Officer for the Tacoma Public Library (TPL), Mariesa Bus, spoke to the Ledger about the TPL's two-week closures this year and the next.

"This will be our first Budget Closure we've experienced," Bus said.

Due to COVID-19, the City of Tacoma had a shortfall in revenue that is causing the TPL to face closures this year and next due to a \$1.2 million cut to their biennium budget for 2021 and 2022.

"We are meeting the budget shortfall through two weeks of unpaid furlough, so this affects our employees' pay. We wanted to minimize the impact on our lowest-paid employees, our pages. So, we reduced pay on a sliding scale, and our top wage earners will take additional weeks of unpaid furlough," she explained.

She said this will be hard on the TPL employees and the greater Tacoma community as a whole. However, Mariesa believes that this was the best option they had.

"Although I am disappointed we need to close the libraries and go on unpaid furlough for two weeks in 2021 and again in 2022, I am glad that we were able to find a solution that helped us meet the budget shortfall without any

layoffs," Bus said.

Like many places, the TPL has been heavily impacted by COVID. Since March of 2019, the TPL's building has been closed to the public, and the staff has had to function around this.

"COVID has significantly changed the way that we connect with our community. Our buildings have been closed to the public since March, so we had to adapt to offering programs and services virtually," Bus said. "We also adapted our material check-outs as a walk-up service called TPL to Go. Overall, COVID has forced us to be creative, resilient, and adaptable, and I think our staff has done a great job."

This creativity has manifested in the library finding new methods to expand its accessibility in more ways than just providing books for the public.

"We are focusing right now on bridging the digital divide so that more community members can access our amazing eResources and digital collection and attend our virtual programs. We are working with some local organizations such as Graduate Tacoma to distribute mobile WiFi hotspots to community members who do not have access to high-speed internet," she said.

Still, the budget closure will continue to impact the people of Tacoma heavily.

"A week without library access is a

significant detriment to our community. We chose the weeks of the closures in 2021 to be of minimal impact, but we know that it will still be a loss for our community to be disconnected from library services," Bus said.

Even with these struggles, the Tacoma community has come through for the TPL in many different ways.

"Our community has demonstrated their love and support several times through advocating for us, donating, and sharing their stories about why the library matters to them. We also have a wonderful Board of Trustees and a new Foundation who dedicate their time and energy in helping us achieve our mission," she said.

Those that want to support the TPL can still provide help through several means. The staff appreciates any support for the library.

"We encourage people to get their library cards, check out materials, attend programs and utilize all the resources that we have available!" Bus said. "We also love it when people share our posts on social media or just talk to their networks about why the library matters to them. We exist to support and serve our community, so we need people to stay involved."

Now, the TPL holds virtual programs like STEM Storytime and book



ILLUSTRATION BY ROSIE MENDOZA-BAUTISTA

Why the closure is happening and what you can do to help.

clubs along with youth and teen events that build skills while also working to combat feelings of isolation expedited by COVID.

"We have so many fantastic programs happening all the time," she said. "I always just tell people to check out the calendar on our website and sign up for anything that might interest you. You never know who you will meet or what you'll learn. Right now, we are offering some incredible programs for Black History Month, and I encourage everyone to check them out!" she said.

This support from the public pushes the TPL to continue looking towards their prospects and goals for the future.

"Like everyone, we are hoping that things return to normal and we can reopen our buildings. No matter what, we will continue to adapt and find ways to

serve our community. One great example of a change that has already happened is the Tool Library moving into the main library, as we are working to transform the massive building to be better utilized. We hope to have more nonprofits move into the second floor," Bus explained.

The TPL will be closed for two weeks in 2021 and 2022. This year, the first closures will occur Feb. 21-28. Then later on, they will be set to take place Nov. 28-Dec. 5. The dates for 2022 have not yet been set.

You can directly donate by texting **STRONGTPL** to 41444 or visiting the **Tacoma Public Library** donation page:

<https://app.mobilecause.com/f/3163/n?vid=gr03b>

UWT Staff Reads: Tackling social issues affecting higher education

Staff and Faculty zoom through the pandemic through online meetings and discussions of social issues.

By **GARRETT YAEN**
NEWS EDITOR

Although many on-campus organizations remain vacant or have stalled their operations, Staff Reads — a reading group at UW Tacoma — continues its mission to bring awareness to issues related to social justice on campus, according to Staff Reads Coordinator, Research Help and Instruction Librarian Johanna Mi-caela Jacobsen Kiciman.

Created by the Center for Equity and Inclusion, the Library and the Center for Student Involvement, Jacobsen Kiciman said a big part of the beginnings was the collaboration and co-creation with her colleague Alaina Bull, a first year Experience librarian.

Jacobsen Kiciman said the weekly meetings involve manageable 40-page-reading sections and discussions related to social justice issues prevalent in higher education.

"[It's] exciting, it's good stuff because it means that people who don't normally get to talk to each other do," Jacobsen Kiciman said. "By interacting with non-fiction texts that discuss different issues being faced in our community, the reading group provides opportunities to dia-

logue and learn from each other."

Jacobsen Kiciman noted additional benefits posed by the program include creating community by reducing isolation and enhancing campus education through peer-based discussion groups.

"One of the big reasons to have this programming is that we recognize the need to talk about issues that we're facing together as opposed to upholding the silos in the various departments," she said.

Recently, the group has looked at issues facing undocumented students in higher education. They are also reading "Life of the Mind Interrupted," by Katie Rose Guest Pryal. The book covers disabilities, mental health issues, accommodations and inequality in higher education and society.

Jacobsen Kiciman noted that the group is adamant about higher academia supporting inequitable conditions for students of underprivileged backgrounds.

"We look at social issues that are af-



COURTESY OF JOHANNA JACOBSEN KICIMAN

fecting the student population so that we, as a staff who are often in student support roles are more equipped to understand our student demographics," Jacobsen Kiciman said. "Mental health is an issue faced by staff, faculty and students alike, [and] ableism is a problem in modern-day academia we want to work on deconstructing."

Jacobsen Kiciman said the staff are working to be of better support to the students. She then noted that the learning would work as a vehicle that impacts many students at UWT.

"We have undocumented students at UW Tacoma, and we have one of the nation's largest detention centers a mile away from our campus," she explained. "So we as a staff feel very strongly that in picking the readings and the books that we do, we are not only bolstering our own learning but working to be of better support to our students," Jacobsen Kiciman said.

She also noted how a space outside of the traditional academic setting could ease group discussions.

"I think it just shows a need for spaces that are outside of the normal workflow and in that create sort of a shared sense of community," she said.

As they try to face issues across higher education by staff, faculty and students alike, she stated that their population pool has grown and has co-hosted events with authors to speak on issues for various groups, such as undocumented students in higher education.

"Our participant pool has grown, we were able to over last summer co-host an author talk with the author of a book about undocumented students in higher education, and we had close to 45 folks zooming in for that," she said.

She pointed out that this number exceeded their average participation of around 10 to 12 staff members that attend weekly throughout the quarter. Up next, the group is looking at having more weekly meetings and may do another

event with an author as a guest host.

"This model of inviting authors to talk is really, really exciting," Jacobsen Kiciman said. "We were able to author last summer, and perhaps that becomes an annual event right to talk to the author of the books."

Jacobsen Kiciman explained that those employed at UWT, including students, can zoom in on weekly readings, discussion of social issues, and chances at attending annual events or receiving free books depending on funding by emailing her at jmjk@uw.edu, Alaina Bull at alainac@uw.edu, or the CEI Director, Dr. Jimmy McCarty at jwmccar@uw.edu.

A co-organizer for the group, Daniel Nash also serves as the Program Manager for the Ledger but did not have a say in the planning, writing or editing of this article.

If one wishes to request disability accommodations, including American Sign Language interpretation, prospects may contact the Disability Resources for Students office at (253)-692-4508 or drsuwt@uw.edu

They may also submit a request at **<http://www.tacoma.uw.edu/UWTDrs/eventaccess>**

Connection and faith in a global pandemic

In a new year with the virus still present, and with Ramadan approaching, how can we utilize this time to set important life goals for ourselves?

By **BENGISU CICEK**
OPINION COLUMNIST

As we have faced a difficult year filled with hardships and unprecedented challenges, we have survived and made it to 2021.

In 2020 we had to adapt to a new school environment away from our campuses and transition to virtual learning. We missed out on family holidays, seeing our friends, attending important events in the lives of our loved ones and religious holidays.

For those of us that observe Ramadan — the holy month where followers of the religion Islam fast for 30 days — COVID forced a very different experience than what is traditional for the month.

As a follower of the religion Islam, and someone who will observe Ramadan this year, I want to compare and contrast my experience from last year to how we can now better understand how to have a beneficial Ramadan for all.

Typically filled with in-person iftars with our Muslim and interfaith com-

munity, a shift to a virtual celebration was necessary during this time. While upsetting at first, we were able to attend through Zoom and discuss many important topics together before breaking our fast at dusk. And although it was not the same, it is important to recognize that we still have ways to communicate with our communities and are able to reflect on our own character throughout the holy month.

Following Ramadan, it is traditional to celebrate Eid together in big groups and picnics. Instead, we did an Eid drive through where we handed out gifts to friends and our community through the car. Eid is very important for us. As a celebration that occurs twice a year, it is a way for us to celebrate, give charity, call loved ones, forgive those who wronged us and appreciate Allah's — God's — blessings on this earth. Even if we were unable to hug our loved ones and brothers or sisters in Islam to wish them a happy Eid, we were still able to see their faces and connect with them through the window.

It is important to recognize that there are still ways to communicate

and connect with people even during quarantine, and the value of this human connection is not lost with our physical distance.

Now that we are in 2021 and Ramadan is about a month and a half away, I want to explore more ways we can make the best out of Ramadan, or just giving back to the community, no matter your faith or belief system.

One thing that is particularly important during these times is charity. In Islam, we call this Zakat, and it is mandatory among Muslims as the deeds are so beneficial to the one who practices it. Zakat in Arabic means "that which purifies," and the companions of our Prophet Muhammad — peace and blessings be upon him — used to pay Zakat al-Fitr a couple days before Eid al-Fitr, the Eid we celebrate after our fasting month. When you give charity, your heart, intentions and life purify.

Donating clothes and necessities to the homeless community in your area is one such way that you can practice selflessness. Ramadan is the time to remember we are all humans and guests on this earth, meaning our stay is tem-

porary and no one is more important than another. Giving back to humans, our brothers and sisters, is an excellent way to purify our souls and hearts.

Another way to do this is by checking up on our friends and family, especially with our loved ones who we haven't talked to in a while. Ramadan is a great time to reach out to them, see how they are doing and ask if we can support them with anything. Being caught up with hardships and business in our own lives, we may sometimes forget that other people are going through difficult times as well and would appreciate our message to them.

Consider setting up your own virtual events during this time. Whether this event is with family, friends or your community, this is a beneficial step towards creating a support system and space to talk. This can include something more organized, such as a virtual interfaith Ramadan iftar, other community events or something more casual, such as a friends meet up.

We should also be sure to continue setting goals for ourselves. It's never too late or too early to change or add new

positivity to our lives that will help us grow and heal. Sticking to these goals is important, and Ramadan is a great way to start since it takes place over 30 consecutive days. For 30 days you can make goals such as: taking a walk for 30 minutes, starting a healthier diet, creating boundaries with people who impact you negatively, reading a page of any book, or saying positive affirmations to yourself in the mirror in the morning.

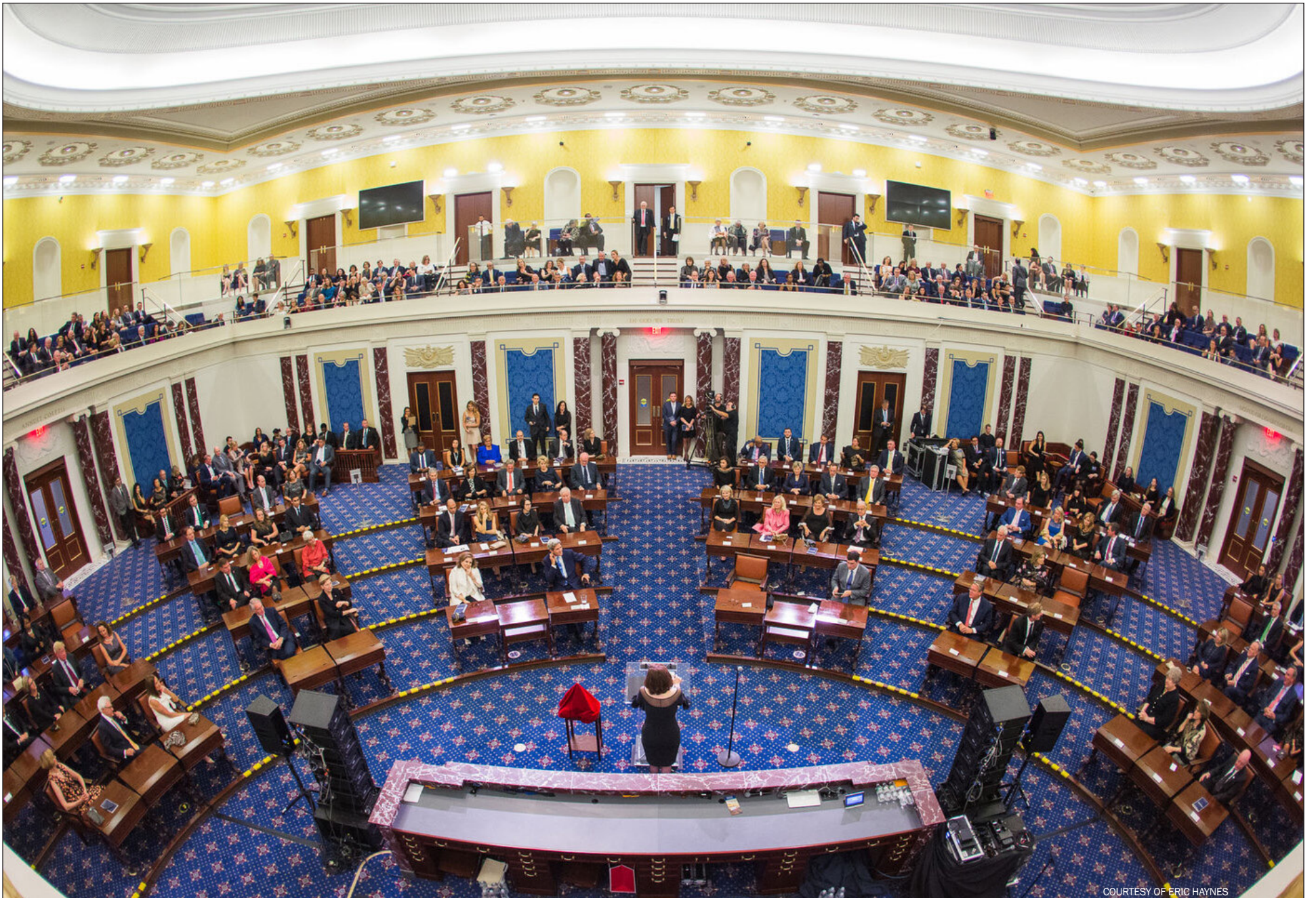
By doing this for 30 days you can work to establish a routine for yourself. Even if you get tired in between, by not giving up it will be a goal to finish the full month with the honest effort put toward achieving your goal while also learning new things about yourself along the way.

I don't want to see COVID as a barrier to having a happy and eventful Ramadan this year. I know that Allah tests the ones he loves the most, and these hardships present in our lives are tests. I know that we can ace this test, and with the support and love of one another, we can make it so our happiness depends on ourselves and not on what we had before COVID existed.



White Supremacy and the failure to impeach

How the white supremacy ingrained in the foundations of this country makes the state incapable of countering its power.



COURTESY OF ERIC HAYNES

By **ANDREA NADAL**
OPINION EDITOR

Content warning: Police violence and killings

The impeachment trial of former President Donald J. Trump lasted just five days, and in the end, the Senate voted to acquit him on the charge of inciting the Jan. 6 Capitol siege.

In his article “Senate Votes To Acquit Donald Trump On Impeachment Charge Of Inciting Capitol Siege,” Ted Johnson briefly outlines the proceedings.

“The Senate voted 57-43 to convict Trump, short of the 67 votes needed. Seven Republicans joined with 48 Democrats and two independents in favor of conviction. This is the second time that Trump has been acquitted of impeachment charges. On Jan. 13, he became the first president to be impeached twice.”

Johnson goes on to explain that “a conviction would have prevented Trump from running for federal office again.” Despite Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell’s claim that Trump’s actions

were “a disgraceful dereliction of duty” and that Trump was “practically and morally responsible” for “provoking the events of the day,” the possibility of Trump one day holding office again seemed to be of little concern to McConnell along with the other Republicans that failed to convict.

Many Republicans argue that it would be unconstitutional to convict former President Trump on the basis that he is no longer a sitting president. McConnell later claimed that “Impeachment was never meant to be the final forum for American justice,” going on to say that “President Trump is still liable for everything he did while he was in office.” And finally, making the bold claim that “He didn’t get away with anything yet.”

These claims fall flat as republicans intentionally put off the trial that could have taken place before the inauguration of President Joseph Biden. With this, they left themselves this loophole as an explanation of their failure to convict. It is the responsibility of the senate to hold the president to account, and these arguments about timing and constitu-

tionality are little more than excuses to avoid dealing with the issue of white supremacy in this country and the ways that the president they supported emboldened that supremacy.

From a sitting president openly calling for violence and claiming fraud in order to gain more power, to the group of people that openly organized this action online and identified themselves breaking into the state capital and assaulting police officers. The failure to convict former president Donald Trump for inciting his supporters to storm the capital is just one more example of the rampant, unchecked white supremacy of this country. The sense of entitlement from the former president and his supporters that day was made clear in their tactics.

These are not the tactics of people who think the deck is stacked against them, these are the actions of people that know this system was built for their benefit. Wholeheartedly believing that they will walk away from this with their lives unchanged.

And or the most part this is what we have seen. Police officers flew home and

went back to brutalizing communities, and the other unknown participants have also gone back to their daily lives. While a few officers were put on leave and will face internal investigations into the allegations, most people who took part have yet to face any sort of backlash or investigation of any kind.

While we should never encourage or seek state violence against anyone, the importance here is in recognizing the double standards and their root in white supremacy. Those that uphold the power structure that built this nation are allowed to walk freely and continue to do so, while those who seek to undermine that power structure to create a more equitable system for people of all backgrounds will face the brunt of state power and violence in order to silence them and undermine their efforts.

Meanwhile, Seattle police officers involved in the insurrection either remain on the force or are off on paid leave and the people of Seattle continue to face brutality at the hands of The Seattle Police Department. With people still being arrested for de-

manding justice for Black lives — we have already seen multiple arrests this year for things as minimal as drawing with sidewalk chalk. And outside of the Black Lives Matter movement, police have shot and killed at least two people after being called to the scene to complete a wellness check on an individual experiencing a mental health crisis.

We continue to see the injustices of this country being perpetuated and the system of white supremacy being enforced. The failure to convict the former President of the United States for not only upholding the same ingrained white supremacy as all presidents do, but also for emboldening violent white supremacist action is something that cannot be ignored.

This has shown just how deeply ingrained white supremacy is in our country, and how because of that the state is incapable of countering that supremacy from within.

Good changes are coming to Point Defiance

Changes are coming to a known and loved spot in Point Defiance, and it's for the better.



PHOTOS BY NICKOLUS PATRASZEWSKI AND CITY PLANS COURTESY OF METRO PARKS TACOMA

Images of what Owen Beach looks like currently with images of how it will look after the construction.

By MADI WILLIAMS
OPINION COLUMNIST

If you are someone who frequents Point Defiance you'll soon find that the park is going to look a little different. Owen Beach will be undergoing construction beginning Feb. 22 and will sadly be inaccessible to the public until mid-summer of 2022.

This closure comes at an inconvenient time with summer quickly approaching. Owen Beach brings the people of Tacoma a fun water escape right in their backyard. Not having access to this will be a huge damper on many people's summer plans, but what exactly is this construction about anyways? Is it worth losing a summer of fun?

Since the announcement of the beach's closure, people have been sharing their thoughts about these improvements. Many of which seem to be negative. Some explain that the construction will change the feeling of what the beach is, taking it from an open natural beach to a more structured one. In all honesty though, I feel this is something that needs to happen considering it has been a while since the park has seen major improvements.

After watching a video by Metro Parks called "Owen Beach Improve-

ments Presentation" and researching the plan on Metro Parks' website, the changes that they have laid out will make a significant and positive impact, which will benefit everyone. Modifications of the area were bound to happen sooner rather than later as a remodel for the aging 50-year-old buildings are needed in order to continue making Owen Beach a place where people desire to come and create memories, much like I have.

These improvements include: adding new restrooms, improved parking, improving existing buildings, adding a multi-use pavilion, environment friendly play areas, as well as making the beach more accessible to those with disabilities.

These improvements include: adding new restrooms, improved parking, improving existing buildings, adding a multi-use pavilion, environment

friendly play areas, as well as making the beach more accessible to those with disabilities. Even with all these newly added things, further down the beach the same aesthetic of the park that has always been there will remain. The driftwood, which has been a big part of the beach, will not be lost.

The new improvements to the entrance along with the newly designated play areas are being made more easily accessible for those who have disabilities, which is something I feel should have happened long ago. Due to these changes, these individuals can now enjoy the park and allow more people to experience its beauty.

Something that I found particularly interesting are the plans to raise the recreational areas and push them back in order to make them on different levels leading down to the beach, almost as if it were a continuation of the tides. This can be seen in their plan regarding the informational area's location along with the new buildings and restrooms near the parking lot. The next level down will be the open lawn and play area, then walkways that will lead gradually down to the beach itself.

"This setback is to provide long-term resiliency of the facilities as we take into consideration the scientific data for sea level rise occurring along

the shoreline," Metro Parks explains in their FAQ section on their website under Owen Beach Improvements.

Even though this will be a new look, the construction will ensure that we still have access to this area in the years to come as the sea rises. Not only this, but the changes in parking will make it more accessible to disabled people. And beyond that, they are making outputs looking over or near the water that allow people with disabilities to have the ability to experience the beach in an easier way.

The current beach setup makes it very difficult to get a wheelchair anywhere near the water along the rocky terrain. With these outlooks, it will give these individuals the possibility to get close to the water in a much safer manner.

They are also making it easier for individuals who enjoy water sports, such as kayaking, by including better storage for the rented kayaks in the pre-existing building, which is currently unused. They plan on constructing an incline into the water for easier access that also ensures a way to safely enter the water during high tide.

Beyond that, a multi-use pavilion will invite many kinds of activities to the beach. People can rent out space to create memories at the beach, like

family get-togethers or birthday parties. It doesn't just stop with recreational activities though, the high school Science and Math Institute students can use this as a classroom.

As a SAMI alumni, having a learning space down there will bring back some of the old SAMI experience since students are actually going out into the park and learning what's around that classroom. For example, this space could be used for marine biology, biology and chemistry classes during labs or for an art class focusing on the sound. Having access to the area that is being taught in class is very beneficial and makes it easier to understand things that are happening. Instead of having to imagine what something looks like, they can actually see these events take place in front of them.

Change can be hard, especially if you have close personal connections with that area — including myself, since I spent four years in that park during high school having class down at the beach. But sometimes changes are needed in order to allow others to also be able to make those same connections and memories that you have. Even though many people are against these changes at Owen Beach, I feel that these changes are going to make all the difference for future generations.

2020 NFL Season takeaways

Tom Brady leads his team to the top of the football world for the seventh time, here is what you need to know heading into 2021.

By **BROOKS MOELLER**
SPORTS COLUMNIST

The 2020 NFL season is officially in the past and was able to do so through a worldwide pandemic as well as zero game cancellations. Before we get into the actual football topics, this outcome is something to be celebrated. The NFL did a tremendous job showing that it is possible to play sports in a safe environment that protects everyone. Every team should also see getting through this season as an accomplishment considering most teams made it through without any sort of major COVID outbreak.

However, even in a unique and ab-

The NFL did a tremendous job showing that it is possible to play sports in a safe environment that protects everyone.

normal season, we saw a well-known end of season result that portrayed Tom Brady hoisting the Vince Lombardi trophy following the Super Bowl. Besides this, there were many other storylines you need to be aware of as we head into the 2021 NFL Season.

TOM BRADY IS UNDOUBTEDLY THE GOAT

The Tampa Bay Buccaneers' 31-9 Super Bowl win over the Kansas City Chiefs was one of the most dominant and best all-around performances I watched all year. The defense held Patrick Mahomes to zero touchdowns while the offense was able to move down the field with ease all game.

Coming into a week 13 bye week, the Buccaneers sat at 7-5 and were still in a loaded NFL playoff race for one of the three wild card spots. The team finally clicked the way analysts thought they would coming into the season where they finished on a four game win streak to clinch the five seed heading into the playoffs. The win streak would

This was Tom Brady's seventh Super Bowl championship and the fifth time he was awarded Super Bowl MVP.



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE NFL

obviously continue, and they would do so as the underdogs in their final three playoff games to win their second championship in franchise history.

For Tom Brady, this was his seventh Super Bowl championship and the fifth time he was awarded Super Bowl MVP. Now at 43 years old, the quarterback owns more Super Bowl championships than any other franchise. Brady is the definition of what a winner looks like, wherever he goes the team instantly gets better and becomes a contender.

ARE THE CHIEFS IN TROUBLE?

Following their Super Bowl 54 win over San Francisco, many thought this was the beginning of a dominant reign for the Chiefs with nothing in their way to stop them. The Bucs shut that narrative down after almost completely dominating them in every aspect of the game. Was this just a fluke for the Chiefs? Or did the Bucs figure them out, helping teams down the road using the same gameplan?

I think the best answer to this question is a mix of yes and no. The Chiefs are obviously still one of the most talented teams in the league and as

long as Patrick Mahomes is in control of the offense, they will be a contender year after year. The Bucs developed the perfect game plan for a team that was missing its two starting tackles and brought loads of pressure on Mahomes, rarely allowing him to get a clean throw off. Other teams will try to replicate what the Bucs did but this is one of the fastest and most aggressive defenses I have seen, so it will be hard for others to do so.

THE RUSSELL WILSON DRAMA

By now you have probably heard many different rumors surrounding Russell Wilson and his future with the Seahawks following his statement criticizing the offensive line and how he has to be protected better.

Although he is completely right in saying that he must be protected better — has been sacked 374 times over his career which is the most of any QB in that span — it's never a good sign when your starting QB is publicly criticizing the team and management decisions. He also has said that he hopes to be in on personnel decisions with general manager John Schnider and head coach Pete Carroll, which

Although he is completely right in saying that he must be protected better [...] it's never a good sign when your starting QB is publicly criticizing the team and management decisions.

could cause friction between him and other players since he is basically demanding to be treated differently.

The Seahawks are in a tough spot right now. They clearly have glaring holes to fill both on the offensive and defensive sides of the ball but have little cap room to do so. They also have a few players, including Jamal Adams, who will be needing contract extensions soon. Scheduled to make \$32 million in 2021, Wilson currently makes the most of any Seahawk. If he wants the protection he desires, it might

require him to take a pay cut so the Seahawks have the cap room to bring in a couple of veteran free agents.

OTHER TEAMS TO WATCH

The 2021 season will be an exciting one to watch with the several teams who have a legitimate shot at a Super Bowl championship. One team to keep an eye on is the Buffalo Bills. Led by young quarterback and MVP candidate Josh Allen, the Bills are hungry after losing to the Chiefs in the AFC championship. They will be returning almost everyone and if they add a few more pieces, I believe they can dethrone the Chiefs in the AFC.

One more team to watch is the Los Angeles Rams. They recently acquired future hall of fame quarterback Matthew Stafford from the Detroit Lions and it will be exciting to see what Stafford will do with a better all around team than he has ever been a part of. In order to make a run, the Rams will have to go through a stacked NFC West — which is possibly the best division in the league — and will do so with a top tier defense led by defensive player of the year, Aaron Donald.

REVIEW

“The Little Things”

★★★★★

The Good:

- Great aesthetic choices and cinematography
- Soundtrack adds a lot to the overall ambience

The Bad:

- Editing and overall pacing of conversations are very jarring
- Lackluster performances from A-list actors



Jared Leto steals the show in this thriller.

PHOTO COURTESY OF HBO MAX

Playing judge, jury and executioner in 'The Little Things'

Rami Malek and Denzel Washington team up to track down a serial killer.

By HENRY NGUYEN
FILM CRITIC

Rami Malek has recently been on the rise to fame as well as on my list of favorite actors. His acting in the television show “Mr. Robot” is probably his best performance to date and what propelled the show from just an average drama with some technological hacking mischief, to a study on how the schizophrenic mind works.

When it comes to performances that usually steal the show, the same could be said about Denzel Washington and Jared Leto. “The Little Things,” written and directed by John Lee Hancock, is a murder mystery that stars all three of these acting powerhouses.

A serial killer plagues Los Angeles where there has already been several murders with zero suspects to match. Deputy Sheriff Joe Deacon — played by Washington — teams up with Sgt. Jim Baxter, played by Malek, to track down and stop the killer’s murderous rampage. However, one of them might be harboring a dark past that could put the case in jeopardy.

In a lot of ways, the film resembles many of the narrative elements that

are found in existing murder mysteries — such as “La Confidential,” “Zodiac” and most similarly, “Se7en.” A couple of flawed detectives try to

In a lot of ways, the film resembles many of the narrative elements that are found in existing murder mysteries — such as “La Confidential,” “Zodiac” and most similarly, “Se7en.”

solve a case while a creepy suspect tries to mess with them. In order to combat these popular elements, the film adds some interesting plot points that mix it up in terms of important narrative details, as well as a couple of “edge of my seat” scenes.

Overall, the movie looks really good. This film contains a lot of dark colors and tones that are then disrupted by bright starry lights in the darker scenes that create an interesting look to match the film’s bleak

tone. Some aesthetic choices, especially the ones found in the more dimly lit scenes where colors and white lighting really pop out.

Characters were also very well cast for their roles. Jared Leto has been recently seen playing eccentric characters like the Joker and Niander Wallace and his character in this film, Albert Sparma, is no exception. With the way that Leto is able to portray a very disturbed individual very well, casting him to play the main suspect was a very good choice.

However, while characters are well cast, they unfortunately fall short in their respective roles that make most of the performances end up lackluster. Rami Malek and Denzel Washington especially feel more like they are simply reading lines off of a script rather than embodying their characters, which leaves the chemistry between the two of them almost nonexistent.

The soundtrack composed by Thomas Newman is one of the best parts of the film. The film’s non-diegetic music is suspenseful and comes in at the appropriate times to heighten the mood of each scene. Without it, the scene wouldn’t be nearly as

impactful. The licensed music that they used also complemented the scenes well. Where they would have otherwise likely come off as cheesy, the music worked in the film’s favor and subtly foreshadowed events in an interesting way.

However, when it comes to more dialogue heavy scenes, the conversations between characters in the film come off very odd. Characters constantly cut each other off making these interactions feel awkward that, in turn, throw off the entire rhythm of the scene. Considering there are a lot of cuts that feel heavily out of place and occur quickly paired with weird sound choices that don’t seem to fit, the editing and sound design here don’t help either.

The film itself moves at a very brisk pace. Right off the bat characters are introduced surprisingly fast and the audience doesn’t really get a chance to learn who they really are before the plot thickens. This pacing issue continues throughout the whole movie until viewers arrive at the climax.

Overall, “The Little Things” is a great looking movie that will put viewers on the edge of their seats.

The film itself moves at a very brisk pace. Right off the bat characters are introduced surprisingly fast and the audience doesn’t really get a chance to learn who they really are before the plot thickens.

However, look too closely and you will definitely start noticing the little things, as in the little things that make the movie jarring and odd. If you are a fan of murder mysteries, then I would highly recommend at least a watch if you have access to it.

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