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THE LEDGER

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON TACOMA

Coalition Building for Racial Justice

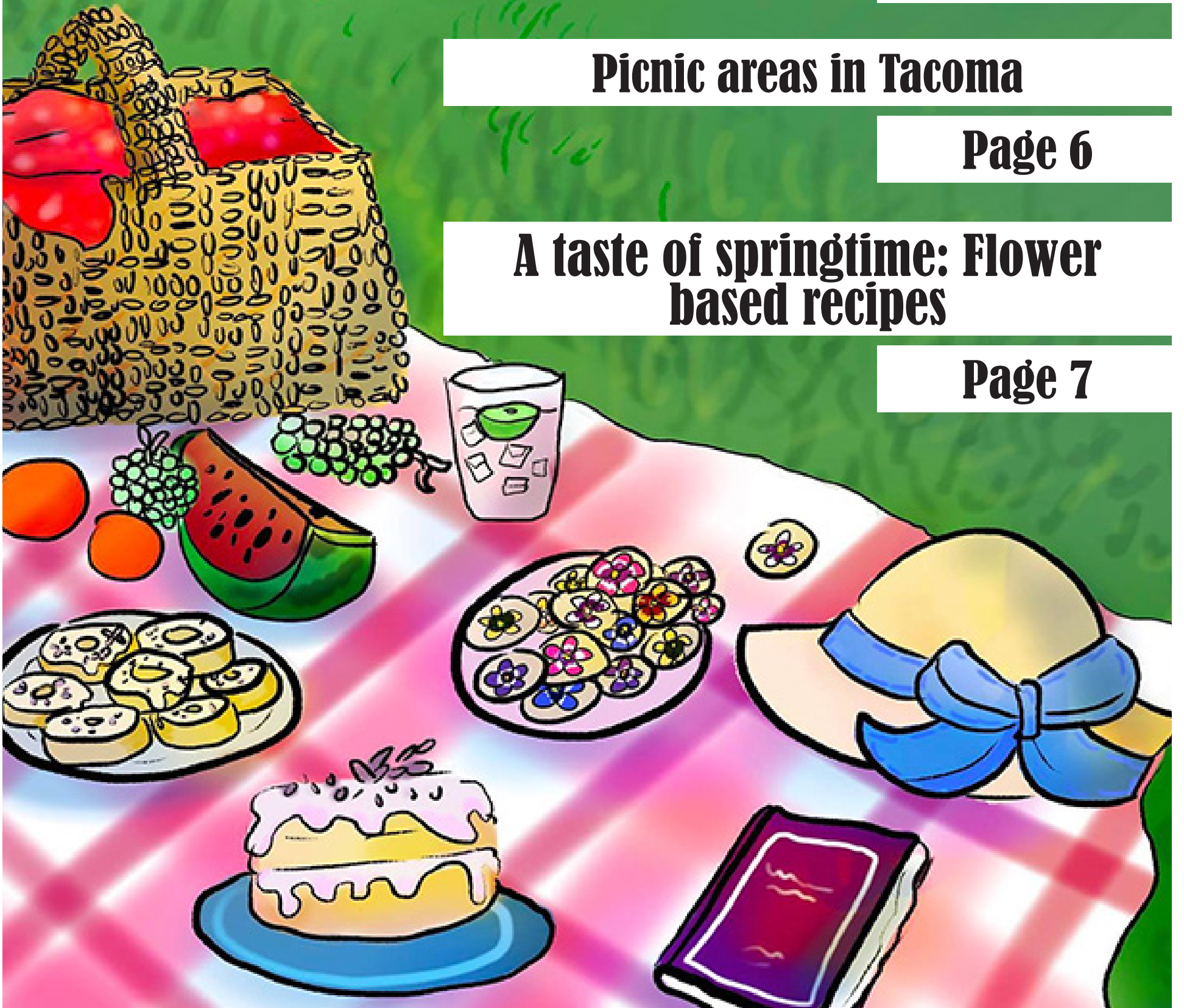
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Faculty Spotlight: Meet Alex Miller

Assistant Teaching Professor in SIAS, Alex Miller, talks to the Ledger about his passion and commitment to Gender and Labor studies.

By **ROSIE MENDOZA-BAUTISTA**
NEWS REPORTER

The Ledger had the privilege to speak to Assistant Teaching Professor in the School of Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences, Alex Miller, about why he decided to take on gender and labor studies in the first place.

"I arrived at gender and labor studies through literature," Miller said. "I was really interested in masculinity and seeing how authors translated the experience of downward mobility into their fiction."

Miller's interest in gender studies may have sprung from literature, but he has since continued past that singular focus. He now looks at gender studies in a variety of ways to determine the way gender has continued to shape our society.

"My focus within gender studies is the representation of contemporary masculinities, particularly how conversations about masculinity have evolved alongside larger transformations within the American economy," he said.

However, his interest in gender and labor studies wasn't what brought him to UW Tacoma. His affinity for Tacoma and falling love with now fellow professor, Danica Miller, is what brought him here. Since then, he's become a prominent

figure to many students on campus and amongst the Tacoma community for his method of teaching.

"Many of the courses I teach deal with the lived experiences of my students, so I invite folks to consider themselves and their experiences in relation to our course topics. Students should expect to be challenged, but they should also expect to be supported along the way," he said.

His preferred style of teaching consists of a balance between lecture and discussion for his students. And while he thrives in that environment, like most other professors, he was faced with obstacles having to figure out how to adapt and teach in an online space due to COVID.

Even with these obstacles and setbacks, Miller still continues to take on projects. Most recently, he has been working on the Labor Solidarity Project. It's a project that centers itself around labor by providing speakers, research programs and curriculum to add further understanding of Tacoma's working class history.

"We've hosted over 20 events over the last year and a half, attracting speakers from across the country covering topics from sex work to big tech monopolies," he said. "In addition to these public-

facing events, we have funded a number of exciting scholarly projects focused on labor in the South Sound."

These events and projects serve to realign the focus toward workers who have suffered from systemic oppression in the workforce. Labor studies serve to unearth the voices of silenced workers who have a long history of being cast aside. This is what drives him to work on labor studies.

"The study of labor is the story of workers and the systemic silencing of our histories. Labor Studies works to recover that history and recenter the experiences of folks who have traditionally been silenced, emphasizing the radical potential of solidarity," Miller said.

Aside from this project, Miller has other goals lined up for the future. Hoping to begin this summer, Miller stated he looks forward to pursuing a book project centered around hip hop and masculinity.

"I'm very interested in looking into how middle-aged men have employed hip hop as they have aged to make sense of their experiences. It's all pretty rough, but I'm very excited about getting to work," he said.

For students interested in the career path he's taken, Miller recommends send-

ing him an email. He enjoys helping students get into this work.

"I once finished third on Where in the World is Carmen Sandiego? (out of three contestants)... super embarrassing,"

When he's not busy with work his hobbies include spending time with his family, fishing, snowboarding and board gaming. Besides being a professor at UWT, he's also a dad, husband and friend.



PHOTO COURTESY OF ALEX MILLER

Professor Alex Miller with his wife Danica Miller, another professor at UW Tacoma.

THE LEDGER IS NOW ACCEPTING LETTERS TO THE EDITOR!

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- Your first and last name
- "Dear Editor," as the opening of your piece
- Respond to one of our articles or happenings on campus



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Coalition building for racial justice

The Center for Equity & Inclusion brings guest speakers for the Coalition Building for Racial Justice discussion to liberate those bound by systemic racism.

By **GARRETT YAEN**
NEWS EDITOR

Last Wednesday, the Ledger had the privilege of taking part in the last of this year's Coalition Building for Racial Justice discussion series. The series is centered around raising awareness of topics relating to racial injustice, such as police brutality and workplace discrimination.

Three guest speakers joined to discuss their personal experiences with racial injustice and how their respective communities are organizing to liberate those who face injustice. UW Tacoma Faculty Member Tanya Velasquez began by elaborating on the purpose of the Racial Justice Discussion Series before handing the spotlight to moderator Jimmy McCarty.

"It's the University's response to really what's been happening nationally for the past 400 years but in particular, the past couple years in which our collective awareness of racial injustice and police brutality that many members of our community are experiencing," Velasquez said. "This is our way of bringing attention, raising consciousness and really calling people to action."

Among the previous meetings, UWT invited several national speakers, such as Black Lives Matter Co-Founder Patrisse Collins. And this past winter, the school listened to members of the Dope Black Women's Collective, who talked about cultivating joy within the community. Last Wednesday's discussion closed off the year by inviting three guest speakers to talk about previous experiences of racism and the progress being made to break down the barriers for POC equality.

"I can't think of a better way to end our year than with the students and community and with our panelists who are going to talk about the ways we work together across differences in coalition to make positive change," Velasquez said.

The Director of the UWT Center for Equity and Inclusion, Jimmy McCarty, kicked off the discussion by introducing the panelists and asking how they became advocates for racial justice. The founder of the Washington State Black Lives Matter Alliance Sakara Remmu was the first to explain her origin story and spoke on the importance of advocating for justice regardless of whether one has faced discrimination or not.

"I think that often there's a misconception that you have to have a special certain experience or that you go to a certain special school to get

prepared," Remmu said. "And it's not that most of us are either first generation or ourselves are immigrants or we are the descendants of the great migration ... so when people ask me who I am it's very difficult to answer how I got to this point."

As the granddaughter of Francis Terry, one of the first Black women to be accepted into a nursing school in Washington, and Robert Terry, the first Black man to teach in a Seattle public school, Remmu was a firsthand witness to systemic and workplace discrimination her entire life. But it wasn't until her son died from cancer that she realized how much control the system had over the lives of POC and the racial inequities present in the healthcare system. She said that by simply being a Black woman, she had to be more aware of discrimination and how to fight against it.

Kamau Chege, the Director of the Washington Community Alliance also found many opportunities being thwarted based on personal factors he couldn't control and came face to face with the realities of inequitable conditions for minorities. Although he grew up in the U.S., he was unable

to have access to the resources that most take for granted. To his surprise, he found out he was an undocumented immigrant when he was nearly finished with high school. Being ineligible for financial aid or academic scholarships, he delayed his education and looked for others who struggled with the same problems.

"I met other young undocumented immigrants and their stories weren't all that different from mine, they wanted a better life for their family," he said. "People moving around wanting to make a better life for themselves is all of human history and essentially what people do everywhere. When you start organizing, you can start making dents against the system we have now, so that's how I started getting involved."

Seeing the number of people miss out on their education due to their place of birth led Chege to wonder why so many people had no opportunities for prosperity while others had a myriad of resources. Based on these experiences, Chege vowed to put his efforts towards raising awareness to help bring down some of the walls undocumented immigrants face

in their journeys for a better life.

As the executive director of Hilltop Action Coalition, Brendan Nelson's motivation to become an activist came when he was younger while listening to his parents explain that their landlord would rent homes to Black people, but refused to let them own one. Hearing this from his parents and considering the way he intimidated others due to his skin color inspired him to raise awareness and take action.

When it comes to the work they're doing now, what issues and policies they're addressing and what they've built in their respective organizations with others, Nelson explained that in order to assist the community in an efficient and resourceful way, they first worked on figuring out what exactly were the biggest issues facing minorities. And to his surprise, he found out it was housing.

"I spent about eight weeks going door to door talking to people in the community about what were those major issues and come to find out, it wasn't drugs, crime, [or] gangs, it was housing. It was employment, it was healthcare," Nelson said. "Our major

focus right now is affordable housing so we're definitely at the table with some of the key players who are doing developments in the Hilltop right now and making sure the process they're going through right now is equitable."

Remmu and the Washington State Black Lives Matter Alliance have come together to form a march with over 80,000 participants; one of the biggest BLM marches in the state's history. She explained that the reason for the success of those marches is due to the awareness of racial injustice. She also noted how people can help join in for the cause to make the organization of events, such as protests and the passing of bills, become a more efficient and effective process.

"We got 36 bills passed, half a billion dollars reparations package representing the whole of Black life," Remmu said. "It's not enough, it didn't come fast enough, it's not saving people's lives; it's beginning to lay a foundation for systemic accountability for us to institutionalize our lives and institutionalize our power. It's not enough, but it is historic."

Wrapping things up, the panelists offered options for people who want to get involved. Nelson said Hilltop is currently hosting weekly updates with the community, reaching around 3,000 people a week to discuss the happenings in the community and how they can build a more equal community together.

Other actions include bringing in developers and contractors to the discussion so they can talk about their work, supporting small businesses and publishing a national award winning newspaper called the Hilltop Action Journal — where they highlight what's going on, where people can get more information and resources for support.

"I'm always appreciative of moments like this where you can hear and learn from others ... and if folks want to get involved they can, as the pandemic has actually put us in a position to do more work and more ways to engage," he said.



COURTESY OF THE UWT CEI

Those interested in the Hilltop Action Coalition can check out the organization by going on Facebook and searching up the Hilltop Action Coalition.

They may also contact Hilltop's primary email at hacoffice15@gmail.com, where they'll be greeted by the program manager.

Protests: Moving forward

Learning from protests, past and present, around the world in order to create more effective movements.

By **ANDREA NADAL**
OPINION EDITOR

***SIXTH ARTICLE IN A SERIES ON
PROTESTS AROUND THE WORLD*
**TW: POLICE BRUTALITY, POLICE
KILLINGS, ARREST****

In order to create truly effective movements, it is important that we not only learn from what we have experienced ourselves but also to look abroad and see what we can learn from others. By looking to other movements we can learn and adapt more efficiently than if we were on our own.

This series has highlighted a few major protests that happened this past year, by no means has this been an exhaustive list. Rather, it is meant to act as a sort of introduction to the topic. What has been covered only provided a surface level understanding of these movements, and there are many more that weren't mentioned.

With this understanding, I urge anyone reading this series to continue to do research about these movements and others. Look around the world and find solidarity with those demanding change and real justice. It is important to maintain a critical approach to any and all information that you get from the internet, the state holds a privileged position over the narrative due to the imbalance of power.

The information that we are able

to access is often informed by the status quo and should be considered in that light. Those on the ground are often not safe to share certain ideas or motivations due to the power of the state. We should always recognize that as outsiders to a situation, we are unable to know the complete story.

With this in mind, there is still value in studying these movements and what information we are able to access from those on the ground. As summer approaches, we get closer to entering what is commonly referred to as "protest season" and we must be prepared for what is to come.

With the conclusion of the Derek Chauvin trial and a conviction of second and third-degree murder, as well as second-degree manslaughter, we must not mistake this moment for justice. We may breathe a collective sigh of relief at the fact that one man will no longer be able to torment and brutalize people as an arm of the state, but we have not won anything through this false "justice" system.

We cannot allow Chauvin to become the sacrificial lamb that the state so clearly intends him to be. Former officers Tou Thao, Thomas Lane and J. Alexander Kueng are all as guilty as Chauvin. For every minute that they stood by and did nothing as George Floyd's life was stolen, they too became murderers.

Every single cop across this coun-

try is an accomplice in every single act of police brutality. Every time they put on that uniform and clock in for duty they declare their complicity. And we cannot allow them to act as though they are innocent in the wake of this or any other conviction.

As the protests continue, cops across the nation will put on their riot gear and go out into the street with the intention of silencing those of us that would dare continue to demand more than a single lamb. They will use whatever means they deem necessary to achieve that goal, and in this violence, they will only further demonstrate the power the state holds over our lives.

Last year, as protests became more frequent, the need for improved tactics arose. Police are funded and sanctioned by the state, they are not only compensated for their street engagements (more than adequately so) but also better prepared and better equipped for them. Protestors do not have these luxuries.

Everything that a civilian does is a risk to themselves and their freedom. Every action they take against the police is taken against the full force of the state. Police get to set the stage for the interactions, and they get to call all of the shots. A water bottle can be enough for them to justify "less-than-lethal" munitions which have left people with severe injuries, permanent damage and dis-

abilities, or even dead.

Pulling a fellow protestor off the ground can be enough to justify your assault and arrest. Being identifiable in any way can subject you to what is known as a "targeted arrest." Refusing to disperse can be grounds for them to use chemical weapons against entire neighborhoods and launch flash bangs directly into crowds.

As protestors were faced with these things they learned to adapt as a means of survival for not only themselves but the movement as a whole. Helmets and goggles to protect your head and eyes from so-called "less-than-lethals." Black bloc to ensure anonymity, no clear targets means a safer crowd. Respirators so you aren't paralyzed by the choking power of a chemical weapon in your lungs. Developing tactics for moving as a crowd and learning how to engage with police in ways that minimize the risk for arrest.

Many of these tactics were observed from movements abroad. People here saw how those experiencing violent crackdowns by the state against protests responded. This allowed protestors here to be better prepared for the same sorts of things happening here. People were able to spot the signs early and begin to implement tactics that were known to be effective.

This year I don't expect to see a dissimilar trend. Things will likely pick up again in the summer, and

police will escalate their tactics accordingly, we have already seen the police ramping up again in response to actions.

Mayday, an international Labor Day is often observed by people taking to the streets for marches and demonstrations in support of laborers and the working class. This Mayday, Seattle Police were out in full force. Reports indicate that the entirety of the "Community Response Group" was out that day, a group that consists of officers and sergeants from all five precincts.

There were a number of marches that took place throughout the day, all with a police presence. Later in the day all of the police from the earlier marches came together to tail the black bloc march. At least 14 people were arrested that day, with more arrests into the night.

With the increasing levels of violence and increasingly aggressive tactics used by cops to combat and shut down dissent, we need to be more mindful than ever as the movement continues. They are feeling the pressure. And they are not afraid to use the power that has been granted to them to show us just how much of a disadvantage we are at in this fight.

The movement needs to be strategic and calculated in order to stand a chance. Continuing to be informed by the efforts of others will be key to its survival.



Several police vehicles stage in front of a large group of protestors behind a barricade. Capitol Hill, Seattle on June 3, 2020.

COURTESY OF WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Will autumn quarter 2021 take place on campus?

Emails have been sent saying the campus is going to be opening up, but is that the best decision for students and faculty?

By MADI WILLIAMS
OPINION COLUMNIST

In a recent email from UW Insider sent on May 5, the university provided updates regarding the return to campus. As a returning student myself, I am also curious about the plans for going back in person, and if plans to open campus will move forward even if COVID cases in the county are still high.

UW's webpage "Autumn Quarter 2021," focuses on breaking down what is projected to happen for all three campuses as a whole, but fails to go into much detail about UW Tacoma or UW Bothell specifically. It states, "As vaccination rates and vaccine availability climb in our region, we will continue making decisions that reflect the most current public health guidance."

Knowing that vaccination availability rates are increasing is reassuring. However, the positive COVID cases in Pierce County have continued to increase as well, and with Pierce County having rolled back to phase 2 with the potential of going back all the way to 1, what will this mean for the prospect of going back in person? Will this guidance affect which campuses are able to go back in the fall?

Looking at the UWT website for specifics about campus approaches to dealing with the prospect of in-person classes to shed some light on the situation,

UWT seems to be staying positive when it comes to classroom safety.

The page states that the office of the chancellor is, "... hopeful that Washington state will be able to adopt revised higher education guidelines related to distancing, such as the ones adopted in K-12 schools based on Centers for Disease Control guidance. All students and instructors will still be expected to wear a mask and follow other public health guidelines in our learning spaces."

As for vaccinations, "the University of Washington will require all students to be vaccinated against COVID-19. UW is working with state and county public health agencies, along with other state universities, to make decisions about whether COVID-19 vaccines will be mandated for students."

They also state that "Before the start of autumn quarter, students will need to verify they have been vaccinated unless they are claiming a medical, religious or philosophical exemption," and make note that near the beginning on this coming summer, they will "share how students can verify their COVID-19 vaccination or claim an exemption."

The real question is: What will we do if the numbers in Pierce county continue to rise and if the county continues to move backwards? Will UW Tacoma go through with opening the campus?

If the county was in phase three or

even four I would not have an issue going back. But the fact that the county's COVID numbers are rising and we are moving backwards has me concerned about the circumstances.

Being online this past year and a half has been hard for many students, both physically and mentally. Online classes are much harder, especially if professors are sending out readings and deadlines, us students are having to teach ourselves the curriculum with sometimes little to no group discussion.

Additionally, having to look at a computer screen for hours at a time has caused students, myself included, to start getting migraines or worsen migraine symptoms. But even with the irritation of online school, it is ultimately the safer option for students and faculty.

Many people feel hesitant about getting the vaccine due to how fast they were made and then made available to the public. Even if I had the vaccine I would still not feel comfortable going back in person based on where we are now.

The reason I have yet to get one is because of how vaccines affect me. I am often left feeling sick for days on end. I know that if I got it I would not only have the side effects, but it would also impact my school work since I would not be fully present due to my symptoms.

Personally, I would rather con-



COURTESY OF PIXABAY

The school has noted they will require proof of vaccination records to return to campus.

tinue being online to protect the health and wellbeing of not only myself and my family, but other students, faculty and their families.

In person classes are an unnecessary risk for everyone involved. Even though the school is making it mandatory for everyone to get the vaccine, people may still not get it based on exemptions. As a commuter campus, UWT has many students using public transportation to get to campus and we have no idea if individuals on public transportation are vaccinated.

If they were contagious then it

could easily spread on campus, which could lead to a campus outbreak affecting not only those on campus but anyone they come into contact with. There are still so many "what if's" about the vaccine and side effects with how quickly they came out.

We also don't even know if the county will even be open by autumn quarter. If it isn't, then the school should not be forcing students to be on campus. The school should be focused on keeping students and faculty safe, and if that means more online classes, then so be it.

The benefits of dancing

There are hundreds of different dances, let's explore the benefits of rapidly moving our bodies!



COURTESY OF ANTE

By BENGISU CICEK
OPINION COLUMNIST

Ever feel down and drained from the day but you can't exactly describe the feeling? It's not quite laziness but not a sign of sadness either, you just feel tired with a desire to do something productive. Maybe you spent hours on your phone scrolling through the endless posts and videos social media provides, or hours working on a com-

puter and doing nonstop homework.

Due to quarantine, some of us may have to work remotely and may be at home the majority of the time. Our bodies may feel tense and stiff if we don't move around a lot or work just from one place. There may not be a lot of walking areas or parks near us, so we may feel more inclined to stay at home and remain sedentary.

Well, did you know that dancing is actually a good thing that everyone can

do, even at home? Yes, dancing has physical, mental and emotional benefits for us!

As explained in Sara Lindberg's 2019 article for Healthline, dancing improves our cardiovascular health. "Professional ballroom dancer and certified personal trainer Leon Turetsky says that all styles of dance make for great cardio workouts since your heart rate gets challenged from executing the different moves," said Lindberg.

"Movements that we typically do in our daily life, like walking, taking the stairs, and common workouts like treadmills and cycling, occur in the sagittal plane, but dance works your body from all planes, including lateral and rotational, which turns on and conditions all muscles, meaning no muscle is left behind," said professional dancer Jonathan Tylicki.

You are free to move in any way you want! Being in a comfortable space where you feel safe is important because then you can feel the body restrictions and muscles unravel as you start moving in whichever direction you please.

The Better Health Channel listed some of the benefits to dancing, which

include: "improved condition of your heart and lungs, increased muscular strength, endurance and motor fitness, increased aerobic fitness, improved muscle tone and strength, weight management, stronger bones and reduced risk of osteoporosis, better coordination, agility and flexibility, improved balance and spatial awareness, increased physical confidence, improved mental functioning, improved general and psychological well-being, greater self-confidence and self-esteem, better social skills."

Cultural dances are also very important. If you are from an ethnic background you connect deeply with, you can experience more from your culture by learning the movements passed down from your ancestors, which can also be a good way to connect with your identity and move your body in a way that is significant in your culture's history.

Being Turkish American, I love the richness and variety of dances that my culture has to offer. There are so many different dances, and each has their own traditional costume and music to go along with them. Even if I don't

own the clothes or have them at that moment, I am happy to be able to exhibit the dances and learn each step to honor my heritage.

There are so many different types of dancing all over the world! Picking a tune to your liking, going into a comfortable space, and dancing however you feel can also affect your mood. Dancing can provide a boost of self-confidence, and not only this, but it can also help relieve the tension and stress built up over an hour, day, week or month even if it's only for 20 minutes a day.

According to Everyday Health in their article "9 Health Benefits of Dance," dancing reduces stress, decreases depression, benefits your heart, helps you lose weight and increases your energy.

To create a good and comfortable space for yourself, put on some earbuds, seclude yourself in a private space, put on clothes that make you comfortable, a tune of your liking and dance away! Remember, you can control your body the way you like it, you make that decision for yourself, so let yourself have the best of fun while dancing!

2021 Seahawks draft grades

The annual NFL draft is officially in the books and the Seahawks believe they made picks that have bettered them for the present and future. But how well do these picks really fit their needs?

By **BROOKS MOELLER**
SPORTS REPORTER

The NFL offseason is slowly coming to an end and teams are starting to finalize their roster before training camp this summer. The final stage of this was the NFL Draft two weekends ago where teams selected the top players from college football to earn a spot on their roster. After being completely virtual the year prior, the draft was able to return in person and players were able to go on stage after being picked.

For the Seahawks, this year was unique as they entered the draft with only three picks available due to prior trades with other teams. Most thought they were sure to wheel and deal their way to more picks, but head coach Pete Carroll and general manager John Schnider ended up deciding to make

For the Seahawks, this year was unique as they entered the draft with only three picks available due to prior trades with other teams.

only three selections.

Three selections in the draft are tied for the second lowest in the modern draft era. This makes it even more important that these picks do well and contribute right away for the Seahawks. So, how well do I see these picks turning out and how well did they meet the team's needs?

**ROUND 2, NO. 56 OVERALL:
D'WAYNE ESKRIDGE, WR, WESTERN
MICHIGAN**

One of the Seahawks biggest needs heading into the draft was a wide receiver. After David Moore left for the Carolina Panthers in free agency, this opened the WR3 position behind DK Metcalf and Tyler Lockett. Some thought that second year Freddie Swain could be the guy, but it was clear that Carroll and Schnider were hoping to add a bigger threat for Russell Wilson and the passing game.

This is where D'Wayne Eskridge out of Western Michigan comes in with the potential to be an instant playmaking threat in the deep passing as well as the return game. In the shortened 2020 season, Eskridge racked up 25 receptions for 660 yards and seven touchdowns. He also averaged 28.8 yards per kick return and took one back for a touchdown.

In my eyes, Eskridge is exactly the

type of wide receiver this team needed. He is someone who will require a lot of over the top help from defenses with his elite speed and will hopefully open up space for Metcalf and Lockett. He will also most likely open the season as the team's kick returner where the Seahawks haven't been very successful since Lockett stopped returning kicks. Many people were raving about this pick and I completely agree with them.

GRADE: A

**ROUND 4, NO. 137 OVERALL: TRE
BROWN, CB, OKLAHOMA**

The next selection for the Seahawks did not come until day three of the draft in the fourth round, which ended up being Oklahoma corner, Tre Brown. Following the departure of Shaquill Griffin — who signed a multi year contract with the Jacksonville Jaguars — the Seahawks were a bit thin in the corner room.

Tre Brown had a very successful career at Oklahoma totaling four career interceptions, including three in 2020. He's also known to be a good special teams player and will likely make an impact on the Seahawks' right away. Additionally, he also earned second team All-Big 12 in 2020.

Overall, I like this pick. Brown is about the best a team could get when

drafting a corner this late. He will definitely be a work in progress and is unlikely to compete for a starting outside corner spot right away, which is where Carroll envisioned him. Surprisingly, at only 5'10", he is much smaller than your prototypical Seahawks corner. I see Brown becoming a solid special teams contributor with the potential to eventually develop into a solid #2 corner.

GRADE: B

**ROUND 6, NO. 208 OVERALL: STONE
FORSYTHE, OT, FLORIDA**

The Seahawks final selection of the draft came in the sixth round with Florida offensive tackle Stone Forsythe. As you may know already, our quarterback was publicly upset with the ways management has handled the offensive line and had already made a couple of moves in the offseason to address it.

At 6'8", Forsythe is the perfect body type for an NFL offensive tackle. He started 28 of his 40 games played during his four years at Florida, and started all 12 in 2020, anchoring one of the best lines in the nation with the elite Florida offense.

Many had a second round grade for Forsythe due to his tremendous size and pass blocking ability where he only allowed two sacks in 2020. This was a great

selection by the Seahawks, as he should be able to compete for the starting right tackle spot with Brandon Shell. Even if he does not start right away, he will have time to learn from Duane Brown who will be 36 this season and may be his eventual replacement.

GRADE: A

Although there were only three picks made by the Seahawks in this year's draft, I think this can end up being a very successful class.

Although there were only three picks made by the Seahawks in this year's draft, I think this can end up being a very successful class. Eskridge will be an elite playmaker right away while Brown and Forsythe are likely to contribute right away as well while developing into eventual starters. Schnider and Carroll are sure to be active in signing undrafted free agents as well where they have been known to find gems in the past.

FINAL GRADE: A-



Western Michigan wide receiver D'Wayne Eskridge was the first pick by the Seahawks in this year's draft. He will most likely be the #3 WR to begin the season.

COURTESY OF WESTERN MICHIGAN ATHLETICS



COURTESY OF WARNER BROS.

Fan favorites, like Liu Kang and Kung Lao, return for another round in this reboot.

“Mortal Kombat” gets a modern day reboot

Mortal Kombat gets another movie adaptation that attempts to make its mark in the franchise’s expansive universe.

By **HENRY NGUYEN**
FILM CRITIC

“Mortal Kombat” is one of the most celebrated fighting games of all time. In 1995, it received its first film adaptation which was met with mixed reactions from fans. Growing up, I played my fair share of the brutal series and so, when they announced a 2021 remake of the film, I was especially excited.

As a continuation of the storyline, this film introduces Cole Young — played by Lewis Tan — who is a young MMA fighter born with the mark of the

dragon. Unaware of what’s truly going on, he finds himself being hunted by Outworld’s Shang Tsung, played by Chin Han, and his warrior, Sub Zero — played by Joe Taslim.

Special forces major Jax — played by Mehcad Brooks — contacts Cole to warn him about his mark along with the danger that he and his family are in. With Jax’s direction, he teams up with Sonya Blade, played by Jessica McNamee. Together, they uncover a hidden temple that houses other fighters who bear the same mark. This is where Cole begins to train for The Earthrealm Tournament, in

which fighters from different realms engage in a mortal kombat to decide the fate of the realm they belong to.

With a majority of characters from the video game making an appearance, Cole Young is the only character that is exclusive to the film — an interesting choice given that Cole is rather bland in comparison. Thankfully, other characters like Kano, played by Josh Lawson, are able to pick up the slack and give the film that cheesy charm.

As side characters had little to no chemistry with each other, the dialogue between them came off a bit awkward

and forced which left the rest of the casting to be desired. The introduction of all of the characters seemed rushed as well, which only added to the awkward feeling.

For “Mortal Kombat” fans who are wondering if the film lives up to how gory the games are, unfortunately, it does not. However, the film does take a more realistic approach towards the over the top gore and violence that you would find in its film predecessors. As an R rated film, it’s definitely as rated R as you can get when it comes to violence.

The fighting scenes are well choreographed and chock-full of excitement

despite only being a bit more realistic than the video games. Although I had hoped that a film based on a fighting game would include more fighting scenes, this instead chose to go with interactions that feel less than cheeky and more cheesy.

The filmmakers utilized references and top notch action sequences to try to make a film that caters to all fans out there wanting a modern “Mortal Kombat” reboot. If you are a fan or are interested in fighting games then this deserves at least a watch.

Picnic areas in Tacoma

Areas in Tacoma that provide breathtaking views for some quality outdoor time.

By **MADELINE HILLER**
A&E EDITOR

Spring has sprung and flowers are in bloom. It is finally time to get outside and enjoy the nice weather. And what better way to do that than with some friends, family and a basket full of food?

Picnics are a universal activity that can be done as a date with your significant other or as an outdoor get together with friends or family. Below are some of the best places in the area to have a picnic where you can spread out and enjoy the nice weather all while remaining safely distanced from others.

WAPATO PARK

This Tacoma park consists of wooded areas, a lake, walking trail and all around beautiful views. It is the perfect spot for a day outside. Dogs and children are welcome here with the presence of a playground and dog park. With various picnic spots available, it is a spot guaranteed to provide a cheerful day. Along with endless opportunities to spot some wildlife, from ducks to turtles, Wapato Park

is a getaway destination that you don’t have to travel too far to reach.

RUSTON WATERFRONT

Ruston way is a well known spot for Tacoma locals. There are shops, restaurants and a movie theater right on the waterfront. Additionally, there are breathtaking views of the water, surrounding landscapes and our beloved Mount Rainier. There are plenty of opportune areas to set up some lunch and just take it all in on a nice Washington day.

KANDLE PARK

Whether you have kids or are a kid at heart, this is the place for you. While it is yet another hangout destination with views and picnic areas, there are plenty of things for kids to do — such as a playground, ample space to run around and a shallow splash pad-like pool. According to the website, the splash pad should be opening relatively soon, but doesn’t provide any information regarding COVID related updates.

TITLOW BEACH

Much like the previous parks, Ti-

flow has just about everything. Located in the Puget Sound, you are guaranteed to get some great water views and see the mountains on nice days. Here, there are a fair amount of walking trails, a playground and a waterfront beach. With all of these spots, you’re bound to find a lovely area for you and your friends or family to enjoy some snacks and absorb your surroundings.

DASH POINT STATE PARK

With a campground located in the park, for those who want to turn their picnic into a weekend getaway, Dash Point is the place to go. The campsites may be on the smaller side, but the abundance of wildlife makes up for it. With loads of trails to walk and spaces to play games like frisbee, you will definitely not be bored at this gorgeous site.

With the increase in vaccine administration and things slowly re-opening, more areas should become available over time. For now, it is still a good idea to remain distanced from others but still enjoy the nice weather while we can.



PHOTOS BY NICKOLUS PATRASZEWSKI

Thea Foss park is one of the numerous options for a nice park to enjoy the outdoors.

A taste of springtime: Flower based recipes

Flowers don't just smell good, but taste good too!

Spring has officially sprung and flowers are freshly blooming — adding an array of color to a once rainy and dreary town. But, did you know that flowers are not just a lovely sight or gift, and a large selection are edible? In this article, we will be exploring recipes that incorporate a whole new level to spring — having flowers carefully selected to add to the culinary experience. When cooking with flowers, it is best to use some from your own garden or purchase culinary jars to avoid the possibility ingesting pesticides.

Fruit & Flower Salad

(source: vegetarianimes.com)

½ of a cantaloupe, cubed
1 cup fresh pineapple cubes
½ pint fresh raspberries
½ pint fresh blackberries
1 banana, peeled and sliced thin
1 cup seedless green grapes
1 mango, peeled and cubed
4 oz. part-skim swiss cheese, diced
2 tbsp rose water
1 cup plain nonfat yogurt
4 tbsp mango chutney
½ cup sliced almonds, toasted
About 1 cup edible flowers

First combine the fruits and cheese into the bowl, sprinkling it with rose water and then tossing. Next, blend the yogurt and chutney separately then pour it over the salad. Toss again if desired. Spoon portions onto plates and garnish with almonds and flowers. While this recipe calls for any edible flowers, I recommend poppy, hibiscus or pansy.

Candied Rose Petals

(source: <https://leitesculinaria.com/>)

1 rose bloom
1 large egg white
½ cup superfine sugar

Carefully pluck rose petals and rinse them gently under water, making sure not to bruise them. Place them on a paper towel and leave them until completely dried. Next, grab a wire cooling rack and place it on a cookie sheet. Crack an egg into a small bowl, whisking it with a fork. In another bowl, dump the superfine sugar. Use a soft bristle paint brush to gently paint the rose petals with egg whites, or alternatively, dip the petal into the egg mixture whilst turning it to allow any extra residue to drop off.

Next place the egg-coated rose petals into the bowl of sugar, turning to allow it to be coated evenly. Feel free to sprinkle on extra sugar to make sure the petals are coated completely. Space the candied rose petals on the wire rack and leave them out for an hour or until they are dried and hardened. Be sure to eat or use them the same day as they become softened and wet if they are left too long.

Pansy Topped Shortbread

(source: theviewfromthegreatisland.com and jocooks.com)

1 handful of pansy blooms
1 ½ cups of salted butter, softened
1 cup powdered sugar
3 cups all-purpose flour

Preheat the oven to 325 degrees. Next, add butter to a large bowl and use a stand mixer at medium speed to blend until smooth. Then, add the powdered sugar, mixing until it is well combined and scraping the sides of the bowl as necessary. Turn the stand mixer down to low speed and add flour. Combine until the mixture is crumbled and soft.

Next, let's work on the flowers. Carefully remove the pansy from its stem before placing between two sheets of parchment paper using books to weigh and flatten them down. Let them press for about 30 minutes.

Now, line an ungreased cookie sheet with a separate piece of parchment paper, patting or rolling the mixture from the bowl until it is spread evenly through the pan. It should be about ¼ inch in thickness. Place the cookie sheet into the oven to cook for about 12-15 minutes, or until it reaches a lightly golden color — do not let them become brown. As you pull the cookie sheet out of the oven, gently begin pressing the flowers into the cookies while they are hot. The heat will bond the flowers to the surface. Cut into shapes desired.

Earl Grey Cake with Lavender Buttercream

(source: plumdeluxe.com)

Batter:
3 ½ cups all-purpose flour
1 tsp baking powder
1 tsp baking soda
2 tsp ground cinnamon
¼ tsp nutmeg
1 cup vegetable oil
½ cup honey
½ cup brown sugar
3 large eggs (room temperature)
1 tsp vanilla extract
1 cup strongly brewed earl grey tea
½ cup fresh orange juice
Buttercream:
¾ cups unsalted butter (room temperature)
3 ½ cups powdered sugar
1 tsp dried and minced lavender
1-2 cup milk (if needed)

First, you must preheat your oven to 350 degrees. Next, grease a 9" pan generously. Use a standing mixer with a paddle attachment, mix the flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt, cinnamon and nutmeg together in a bowl. After mixing, add honey, vegetable oil, brown and white sugar, eggs, vanilla, tea and orange juice to the mixer. Use the lowest speed on the stand mixer to ensure the batter is thick and without lumps. Spoon the batter into the pan and place inside the oven. It will take around 60-75 minutes to bake.

While waiting for the cake to bake inside the oven, prepare the lavender buttercream. Remove lavender petals from the stem and mince them well. Begin mixing butter while slowly adding powdered sugar and lavender. While mixing scrap the sides of the bowl. Continue until the mixture becomes fluffy and peaked, milk can be added slowly to the mixture if frosting seems too thick. Once the cake is completely cooled, you can frost it as desired.

Lilac Donuts

(source: adamantkitchen.com)

Batter:
1 cup flour
1/3 cup sugar
1 tsp baking powder
½ tsp salt
2 tbsp coconut oil
1 egg
½ cup milk
1 tsp vanilla extract
½ cup lilac blossoms
Glaze:
½ cup powdered sugar
½ tsp vanilla extract
1 small pinch salt
1 or 2 tbsp milk
¼ cup lilac blossoms

First, preheat your oven to 350 degrees then grease a donut pan and set it aside. Prepare the lilac blossoms by washing them if necessary, then gently remove individual flowers from the stem, removing all green parts of the flower. Whisk the sugar, baking powder and salt together, then add the egg, coconut oil, milk and vanilla extract to the bowl. Stir to blend ingredients together but try to avoid overmixing. Next, either spoon batter carefully into the pan or grab a Ziploc with a cut corner to use as a piping bag to fill the cavities of the pan. Fill each cavity about ¾ full, this will allow you to make about six donuts in a standard size pan. Once you are done filling the pan, place it inside the oven for about 8-10 minutes.

While the donuts are cooling down, you can start on the glaze. Grab a medium sized bowl and add powdered sugar, vanilla extract and a pinch of salt and begin whisking them together. Next add a tablespoon of milk and whisk, you may add milk overtime to adjust the consistency. Once the donuts have completely cooled off, dip them inside the glaze. Place each of the dipping donuts onto a wiring rack and sprinkle lilac on top of them, gently press the flowers to ensure they stick. Let the glaze sit for about 5-10 minutes and then they are ready to serve!



Lilac donuts are one of many delicious dishes you can make out of flowers.

PHOTO BY LORE ZENT

