

THE LEDGER

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON TACOMA

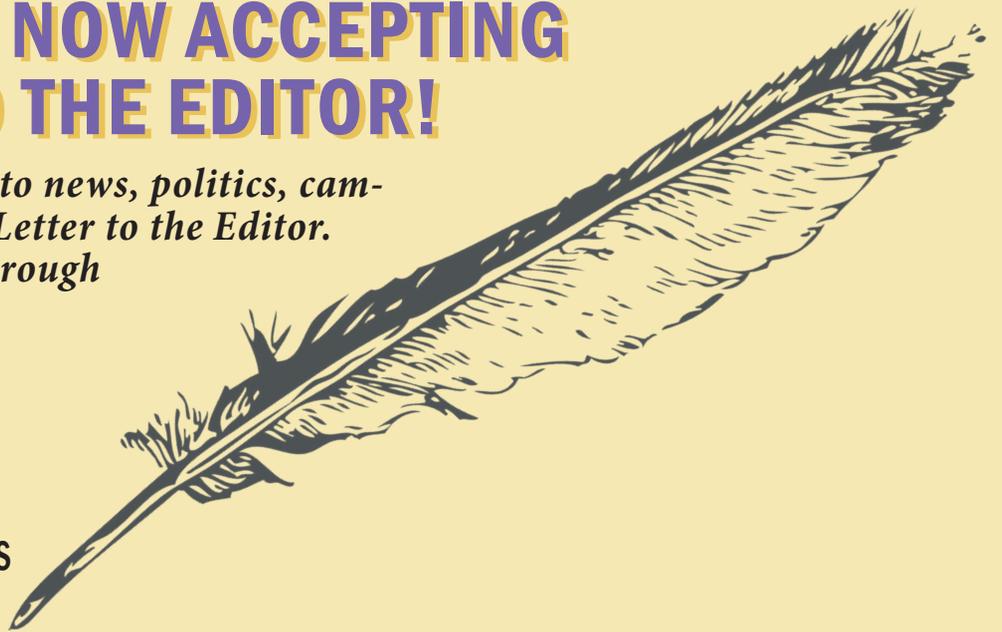


The Anti-Racist Little Free Library: What it is and how you can help

Located next to the main stairs of UWT, the Anti-Racist Little Free Library is open for anyone to use

THE LEDGER IS NOW ACCEPTING LETTERS TO THE EDITOR!

Do you want to voice your issues of concern related to news, politics, campus issues and more? Then we invite you to write a Letter to the Editor. Letters submitted to the Ledger may be published through both TheTacomaLedger.com and our print edition.



SEND YOUR LETTERS TO: LEDGER@UW.EDU

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

Huskies in the hallway:

COMPILED AND PHOTOS BY ANTHONY KREJCI

What is your favorite fall drink and why?



Miranda Santos

She/Her
Freshman
Criminal Justice

Apple cider, because of nostalgia. I used to drink it when I was sick as a kid.



Rylee Bice

She/Her
Sophomore
Criminal Justice

Hot chocolate, I am not an apple cider fan. I like the thick part at the bottom.



Andrew Norng

He/Him
Junior
Communications

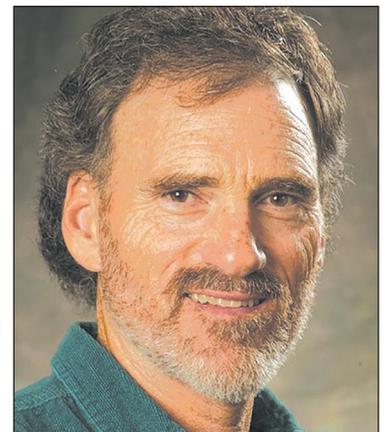
Warm apple cider, mostly because of the fruity taste. I also really like the smell.



Lucas Keener

He/Him
Senior
Writing

Coffee, I like the bitter taste and it wakes me up.



Michael Honey

He/Him
Social and Historical Studies

Coffee, because I need to stay awake

The Ledger

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The Anti-Racist Little Free Library: What it is and how you can help

Taking inspiration from the Little Free Library concept, this instillation on campus intends to specifically teach Anti-Racist and diverse positive lessons to adults and children alike.

By **NICKOLUS PATRASZEWSKI**
PHOTOGRAPHER

In the political wake of George Floyd's murder, many people have begun championing the ideal of not just avoiding racism and its many forms, but being explicitly anti-racist, fighting against and tearing down old ways of thinking instead, and with this concept came an idea from Eric Wilson-Edge and TeyAnjulee Leon to set up the Anti-Racist Free Little Library.

"We were looking for a way to do something for our community that would advance the ideas of equity, inclusion, and representation," they said, when asked about the beginning of this project, "TeyAnjulee and I started talking about this proj-

ect about a year ago. We'd originally planned to work with some faculty and students on campus to build a LFL that better reflect the campus community but we ran into issues that are ultimately pandemic related. It was also going to take longer to have something built and we ultimately decided to order a pre-made LFL from the Little Free Library website so we could start distributing books. In short, COVID delayed things and interfered with other plans we had."

Right now, the pair are treating the current installation, located near the Snoqualmie Library next to the central staircase of the campus, as a Pilot Program. They have the intention to purchase more from local retailers such as Parable and King's

Books that they have partnered with.

For the future, the hope is that the current Anti-Racist Library will remain a permanent fixture on campus for the sake of young people in the community, as well as ideally expanding into an even more robust partnership, even one that could bring a library back to our local Hill-top community.

For now, Students can help the project grow by completing a survey, accessed via QR code from a bookmark that every book from the Anti-Racist library has. Not only will this provide crucial info for the opinion of the Little Free Library, but also what kinds of books people wish to be stocked, and how often stocking should happen.



PHOTO BY NICKOLUS PATRASZEWSKI

Located next to the main stairs of UWT, the ARLFL is open for anyone to use.

Veterans' Week at UWT

Help celebrate the University's veterans by participating in upcoming events.



PHOTO COURTESY OF ANITA LIANG

Senior Anita Liang, Healthcare Lead.



PHOTO COURTESY OF ANGEL TORRES

Grad Student Angel Torres, Community Planning.

By **ABI MCCARTHY**
NEWS REPORTER

As of Autumn Quarter 2021, the UWT serves about 350 veteran students out of 5,216. The University will be honoring these veterans' military service with a series of events beginning Sunday, Nov. 7. The first event will be a Husky Virtual 5k run which will last all week and end on Saturday. On Monday, there will be a Veteran's Day Flag Planting along the Prairie Line Trail. Then on Friday, the University will be holding a ceremony dinner for the campus' veterans and military connected community and to close out the week on Saturday, the Student Veteran Life will be holding the 6th annual Salute to Service Tailgate followed by the Salute to Service football game, both of which are open to all Huskies, including alumni.

For tickets and more information on these events, please visit the Veteran & Military Resource Center website. The Center provides a vari-

ety of services for student veterans as well as military connected students.

Juanita Murillo Garcia, the program director, says that, "Two of the most valuable resources available to veterans and military connected students at UWT are first, helping students make the most out of their benefits as well as the strong camaraderie provided by the resource center."

Another significant area in which the resource center can help with is accessing benefits for veterans' dependents. She also states that the veteran and military connected student population is very important to the University as they have maintained a steady presence among the student body (17.32% of the student body is military connected) even through the pandemic and the difficulties resulting from it. Next week is an opportunity for us to show our appreciation for all the sacrifices our veterans and their families have made and for everything they add to the University and its student life.

Is President Biden as dedicated to climate as he claims?

Waves of mass protest and civil disobedience have once again swept through Washington D.C. this month.

By ANTHONY KREJCI
OPINION COLUMNIST

Earlier this month our nation's capital was again the site of mass protest and civil disobedience, however you wouldn't have heard about it from any of the largest media outlets.

To learn anything about the People vs Fossil Fuels protests, you have to depend on independent sources like Democracy Now's article "People vs. Fossil Fuels" which reported that over 530 were arrested in Historic Indigenous-led Climate Protests in D.C. which describes the actions of hundreds of Native American activists who have traveled from all over the country to demand that President Biden make good on his promises to combat climate change.

Following a week of public protests outside the White House, Native activists referred to as Water Protectors occupied the Bureau of Indian Affairs (B.I.A.) building in D.C., refusing to leave or allow official functions to continue. The activists demanded the official abolition of the B.I.A., the return of indigenous children buried at residential schools, the restoration of 110 million acres taken from Native nations, and an end of leases for oil, gas, and

extractive industries on public land.

Activists remained peaceful but were eventually hauled from the building and put under arrest for civil disobedience and obstruction of government functions. Over 500 activists have been arrested since the protests began. These drastic actions are justified by activist leader Siqiniq Maupin who said, "Yes, we had gathered to let Biden know that we're not going anywhere. Signing petitions...and following these laws have not gotten us where we need to be. There is a climate emergency. People are dying right now. And we need to make a statement, and I think we did that."

These events come just weeks before President Biden and members of his cabinet are expected to participate in the U.N. climate summit in Glasgow, Scotland. This is no coincidence. Since early in his presidential campaign, President Biden has claimed a dedication to combating climate change. Yet his actions since taking office have often been in conflict with those claims.

A report by the Center for Biological Diversity, "Lawsuit Filed After Biden Opens 80 Million Acres of Gulf of Mexico for Oil" reveals that even in the wake of the catastrophic damage of hurricane Ida, the Biden Administration

has offered 80 million acres of the Gulf of Mexico for oil and gas leasing.

And this is one example of the president "...speaking with a forked tongue," as native activist Joye Braun put it. She and her fellow activists are not just protesting on behalf of the climate, but on behalf of their rights as members of sovereign native nations.

"They're still allowing pipelines to go through illegally. Dakota Access pipeline is still an illegal pipeline. And, of course, they did not do a full E.I.S. on Line 3, and they're ignoring treaty rights on Line 5 and Mountain Valley pipeline," continues Braun later in the interview as she defends the actions of her group as they stand against these projects. All of which her organization believes have ignored their sovereign rights, damaged ecosystems and endangered the public. Braun later demands that President Biden live up to his promises towards indigenous peoples.

The events in D.C. this past month are tragically, nothing new to American-Indigenous relations. Back in 1970 native activists occupied the B.I.A. for very similar reasons. We have a long, tired tradition of disregarding our agreements with indigenous peoples.

It is the original sin of American

history, going way back before our independence from England and even before the first slave ship arrived on our shores. I am not the least bit surprised that these protests have received minimal media coverage, the only thing in America that gets swept under the rug faster than a climate issue is an indigenous rights issue.

Throughout every step of American "greatness," we have assaulted indigenous cultures, ignoring their rights and disregarding their perspectives. Simultaneously we have treated the environment and climate scientists with equal disdain and disregard. We have ignored, mocked, and refused to believe any warnings of environmental catastrophe for many of the same reasons that we have ignored indigenous rights: because there is simply too much money being made by not listening to them.

Any problems this creates can simply be a rusty can, kicked down the road for the next generation to deal with.

To President Biden's credit, he is the first President in U.S. history to campaign on climate and make climate a major focus of his presidency. This is a huge step towards changing public opinion on climate, especially considering the narrative pushed by his predecessor.

Whether he is genuinely concerned over climate change, or merely placating the more progressive members of his party base is still up for debate.

Like many Americans, I grew up with the narrative of American "greatness." I believed it and proudly said the pledge of allegiance every morning in school. Yet as I grew into adulthood, and I learned what real greatness means, I became disenfranchised and disappointed.

Greatness is not just defined by military might or economic success. Greatness is also defined by honesty, integrity, compassion, and moral strength of character. I believe these can exist in America as well, but they never will while we continue to grind fragile indigenous cultures into the ground. Great countries don't ignore their own people, and great countries don't ignore a serious threat just to benefit the very few.

I believe that from a certain perspective, societies are not too different from individuals. Individuals must make mistakes and learn from them in order to experience positive growth. I believe a similar pattern exists for cultures and nations as well. I hope my own country learns to do so, because we won't be everything we can be until we do.



Members of native nations across the country join in peaceful protest outside the White House

PHOTO COURTESY OF FLICKR

What does it mean to #ReclaimArmisticeDay?

Veterans Day turned a national day about peace into a day honoring the military. Veterans for Peace have called for us to #ReclaimArmisticeDay and get rid of the nationalist undertones that accompany each Veterans Day.

By **ALEX BUCKINGHAM**
OPINION COLUMNIST

Every November as the American flags are unfurled, a holiday ostensibly to honor military veterans becomes a day of nationalist and pro-war drum beating. The Atlantic magazine referred to the right-wing approach to Veterans Day as “pro-military day”

Veterans Day grew out of Armistice Day, “a day to be dedicated to the cause of world peace”. It was “after World War II [that] the US congress decided to rebrand November 11 as Veterans Day [when] honoring the warrior quickly morphed into honoring the military and glorifying war” according to Veterans for Peace. This is why they are calling on people to #ReclaimArmisticeDay this Nov. 11.

Armistice Day was first celebrated on Nov. 11, 1919, marking the anniversary of the end of World War I. The war was described by historian Jeanette Keith as a rich man’s war and a poor man’s fight. That explains why many Americans refused to be inducted by the draft or deserted after being drafted. It is also why soldiers avoided fighting once overseas and organized unofficial armistices along the trenches when possible.

I know it’s only November, but if you’re interested in learning more about such armistices, the film Joyeux Noel tells the story of the 1914 Christmas armistice.

One should not miss the hypocrisy of Woodrow Wilson’s armistice day when the same man calling for its observance oversaw the draft and war effort.

I can get behind rejecting the nationalist and pro-war undertones of Veterans Day and calling to #ReclaimArmisticeDay as an anti-war and pro-peace day of remembrance. Such a day requires us to acknowledge the horrors of war.

According to the Costs of War research at Brown University’s Watson Institute, at least 801,000 people were killed in Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, Yemen, and Pakistan in what they call “direct war violence” from the U.S.’s post-9/11 wars. Many others have died from indirect war violence like the loss of hospitals or the loss of access to clean water. Thousands of U.S. service members and civilian

mercenaries have died in combat, and “more than 387,000 civilians have been killed in the fighting since 2001”, per the Watson Institute.

As the institute’s research explains, the violence continues after the “direct war violence” ends as people cope with the traumas of war. This violence includes the over 30,000 suicides of active service members and veterans of the post-9/11 wars.

The cost of war is made all the worse by the logic behind it. Tempest Magazine describes the post 9/11 wars as part of a broader project to maintain global U.S. hegemony in the face of rising powers like China. This broader project included free trade agreements and International Monetary Fund (IMF) loans connected to free trade and neoliberal practices. Of course, the rise of China as a counter hegemonic force shows this imperial project has been a failure.

Tempest Magazine gives three reasons for this failure: the neoliberal policies the US has pushed led to the rise of new powers including China, “Washington’s failed ‘forever wars’ in Afghanistan and Iraq undermined Washington’s ability to police the world... [and] the Great Recession hammered the U.S. and its allies, while China and its tributaries continued to boom.”

Numerous political analysts have pointed to Biden’s international policy as, at least in part, a continuation of Obama’s “pivot to Asia” policy, pulling troops out of the middle east while moving bases in North Australia and ramping up the Pacific fleet. This activity is accompanied by various economic and political maneuvers. The idea is to be better positioned to contain and confront China and, to a lesser extent, Russia.

While this was President Obama’s strategy for the U.S. empire, he only made modest, if any, progress. His biggest intervention, the Trans Pacific Partnership free trade agreement, was meant to isolate China and strengthen the U.S. but was undermined by the Trump presidency. It is in this context that we can understand the U.S.’s recent role in arming Australia with nuclear submarines. This activity is in the interest of the billionaire class and yet it leads to wars that the poor must fight.



Army Chicago ✓
@ArmyChicago

#PleaseAWomanIn5Words (or man). I'll pay your student loans! #ArmyTeamChicago

6.9K Soldiers graduated with degrees last year

\$162M tuition assistance paid for by **U.S. Army**

5:16 AM · Sep 16, 2019 · Twitter Web App

PHOTO COURTESY OF ARMY CHICAGO ON TWITTER

The US government uses an economic draft to call its standing army “volunteer”.

To briefly explain, I use the phrase U.S. empire to mean much more than just the maintenance of U.S. colonial territories like Puerto Rico or Guam or the hundreds of military bases around the world. I think of it instead as the various ways the U.S. maintains global dominance and competes with its rivals. So, the funding of the Israeli military which acts as a watchdog state for the U.S. in the middle east, or free trade agreements with Mexico serving the interests of American capital, or embargos on Iran and Cuba, are all examples of U.S. empire or imperial activity. The U.S. actively engages in imperial competition with other powers, like China and Russia. While the nationalists support the U.S. in this endeavor, the internationalist rejects both Chinese and American imperialism and recognizes that the popular classes of both China and the U.S. have far more in common and shared interest with each other than we have with our rulers competing with each other.

Celebrating peace and honoring the victims of the U.S. empire, civilian and veteran alike, means holding the directors of war responsible. Instead of celebrating Colin Powell in death, we should condemn his active role in the U.S. invasion of Iraq.

George W. Bush is not some nice old man painting in his retirement, he is a war criminal who should be charged

“This activity is in the interest of the billionaire class and yet it leads to wars that the poor must fight.”

with crimes against humanity.

Barack Obama, who pardoned Bush’s war criminal cronies saying, “we must look forward, not backward”, should also be held accountable. Obama continued to oversee covert torture centers, ramped up the war in Afghanistan, and began his now infamous signature drone strike program. Trump continued the tradition of funding Israeli and Saudi Arabian war crimes as well as dropping his own bombs in the Middle East. Now, Biden is steering the ship.

This Veterans Day let’s call out this trend. Furthermore, let’s call out the U.S. army for preying on the vulnerable when they recruit young people by offering to pay off student debt. And it’s not just student debt pushing

people into the military but the costs of healthcare, the lack of jobs in small towns, and an overall lack of opportunity for young people.

The US military knows this; the Army Times wrote, “[t]he low unemployment rate and booming economy make recruiting difficult, especially when compared to past recruiting pushes during the Iraq and Afghanistan wars that lined up closer to a major global recession.”

Therefore, we need to not only stop the U.S. war machine, but we need to fund free higher education for all, free healthcare for all, and a massive green jobs program. We can be free from the economic draft that is currently used to maintain our “volunteer” standing army.

Howard Zinn, author of “A People’s History of the United States”, famously said that “there is no flag large enough to cover the shame of killing innocent people”. In a similar vein, there is no number of flags that can cover the horrors or cost of the U.S. empire and its military industrial complex. Let’s respect veterans this armistice day by bringing the troops home, closing the pentagon, and funding healthcare, education and jobs for all.

Bodily autonomy and vaccine requirements

Vaccine requirements have brought up questions about bodily autonomy.



By REMI FREDERICK
OPINION EDITOR

Vaccine requirements have started to go into effect all around the country and it is expected that one day something like a vaccine passport will be needed to travel or for crowded areas such as malls or theaters.

UWT's vaccine requirement went into effect on Oct. 29, so make sure that you have attested to your vaccination status or a hold will be placed on your winter quarter registration. All students and personnel are required to be vaccinated and while there are exemptions, there is no exemption for personal beliefs about the vaccine.

Washington currently requires the COVID-19 vaccine for health care workers and long-term care workers, cabinet agency state employees, and employees in educational settings according to the Washington State Department of Health.

However, vaccine requirements

bring up the question of bodily autonomy.

I've seen protesters use the slogan "My body, my choice" while protesting the vaccine requirement. Which isn't really the right slogan for the cause so if I may, anti-vaxxers, can I propose a new slogan for you?

"It's my choice, but everybody is impacted," basically that means sure it is your choice but see, your choice impacts others.

Now, I know some of you are wondering, but Remi, how is abortion a different conversation than requiring vaccines?

So, here is what makes requiring the vaccine different than abortion. Abortion isn't contagious. Pregnancy isn't contagious. However, COVID-19 is. Especially the Delta variant.

Getting a vaccine does affect others. If you are not vaccinated you are more likely to spread COVID-19 due to the higher chance of getting infected, according to the CDC. When you get in-

fecting you infect others, even if you are being as careful as you possibly could be, no precaution is 100% effective and there is always a risk.

There are many examples of things that "should" have bodily autonomy but don't.

For example, sure it is your right to get drunk and drive a vehicle or operate heavy machinery. But, law enforcement will still send you to jail because what you are doing is dangerous to others and yourself.

Another one is smoking in a crowded building. Again, you have a right to do so but, you will be sent to jail as it is a health hazard to others.

Abortion doesn't put the general public in danger. The scope of impact for abortion is very narrow. I will say it again and again until I am blue in the face. I'm so tired of hearing this conversation.

It is your body but the choice doesn't stay inside your body. It affects everyone.

Tacoma Darkroom: film photography and creative event hub

Check out this exciting new addition to Tacoma's flourishing arts scene.

By JOSEPHINE TRUEBLOOD
A&E EDITOR

Laying on the grimy, rain-soaked steps of the 12th Street Hill Climb at 7 a.m., Ayden Pierce was ready to quit the Tacoma Darkroom. The security gate bent beyond repair, the front door smashed and thousands of dollars worth of cameras and gear were stolen from another founding member, Daniel Davis. That early Oct. morning, Pierce and Davis, 23 and 25, didn't know Tacoma Darkroom was going to keep fulfilling its vision of making film photography accessible and affordable. After posting about the loss via social media, the Darkroom was inundated with support. Meeting their financial goal of raising \$2,500 within days, the Tacoma Darkroom is determined to rebuild and give back to their dedicated supporters.

The surprisingly overwhelming response solidifies that there is a strong need for more creative spaces in Tacoma. Founded by Ayden Pierce, Daniel Davis, Wong Nama-ya, Charlie Stanfill and Dave Coss, Tacoma Darkroom plans to become an open resource for photographers and creatives of all ages. The five-member group crafted the business through out of pocket funding, donations from fellow creatives and hard work. All industrious, young

entrepreneurs, Pierce said "none of us have ever owned a business before" and that "I feel a really strong responsibility to make it happen."

In addition to darkroom facilities, the team is working towards having competitive pricing for quick film development, rentable studio access, regular workshops and photography walks. Davis said "I want to take care of every single young photographer who has any kind of ambition to grow in that craft, whether they plan on doing it professionally or not, I just want to help them at least attempt it." Their hope is that students "walking between classes can come in and see it and get their film developed, or even develop it themselves."

What started as a need for darkroom and studio space has blossomed into a creative hub that has been embraced by artists and creatives all across the South Sound. Over the past few months, Tacoma Darkroom made their mark on the community through their after-hours gallery parties. Limited by supply chain issues and business start-up setbacks, the team decided to host musicians like Vealinium, DJ Don Havi and other local up-and-coming artists in their spacious location in Downtown Tacoma to introduce the business to Tacoma residents. The parties, centered around networking and gallery exhibits, have also featured vintage

vendors, tattoo artists and local makers. Davis explained that many events have been the result of gallery pop-ups; "I've had a lot of people asking if they can come by and promote their art, the answer is yes, every time."

While they are putting the final touches on their darkroom space, Pierce and Davis encourage people to reach out through social media and stay tuned for upcoming events. Davis added that "we're never opposed to learning new things, there are a lot of really creative young artists at UW Tacoma, I would love for somebody to come in and teach me new things." The Tacoma Darkroom team wants to serve as a creative resource for Downtown Tacoma, from film photography services to engaging events, exemplified by their comment; "come by the Darkroom, we'll take care of you!"

.....
Make an appointment or reach out to the Tacoma Darkroom via Instagram, @thetacomadarkroom to learn more about their events and business.
.....



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE TACOMA DARK ROOM

Dan + Shay bringing country music to Tacoma

Nothing beats having live music back.

By MADI WILLIAMS
MANAGING EDITOR

Live music is back in full swing and the community is here for it. There is nothing like a bunch of country music fans to get the ball rolling. Country music fans are already a rowdy group of individuals and when they come together for an artist they love, it makes the concert experience so much fun since everyone feeds off of each other.

The show started with Ingrid Address, an up and coming country artist, whose debut single "More Hearts Than Mine" peaked at number 30 on the Billboard Hot 100 chart in 2019, and released her first album "Lady Like" in 2020. Address is more of a

laid back country singer but still has the strong story that many country songs have. The set she played was short but the songs she picked were strong and showed her range.

The next group on the list was The Band Camino, an alternative indie band from Memphis Tennessee. The band has been around since 2015 but didn't get a larger fan base until 2019. They are a rock/pop/ indie band which was a unique choice for a country concert, but the audience loved them because they kept the upbeat atmosphere going.

Dan+Shay entered the stage opening up with their song "10,000 Hours" which got the audience on their feet, ready to party the rest of the night. The light effects they had

during the songs were unique compared to other county shows recently with how the lights went along with the music really well, and not just getting bright when the song reaches the height of the song. The videography that they used on the screens during a song was so beautiful. With a timelapse video of the moon moving along the sky from night into day or another that showed the northern lights, the way they matched the videos to the songs really helped keep the audience engaged.

Dan+Shay themselves are good at keeping the audience upbeat from song to song. Throughout the show, they kept giving challenges to see how loud they could get the audience to sing back lyrics of the song, which continued to

get louder through the night.

The middle half of the show was a mix of some of their newer songs along with songs from past albums, which was really enjoyable because many artists will strictly play their new album and a few of their bigger hit songs. The way that Dan+Shay chose their setlist kept the audience guessing. But like always, artists save the best for last and Dan+Shay ended with "Speechless," "I Should Probably Go To Bed," "19 You + Me" and ending with "Tequila," a fan favorite. The last four songs really brought everyone together, recognizing that moment of finally being able to experience that 'live music feeling' for the first time in two years. The Dan+Shay: The Arena Tour was a

great first concert back from the crazy whirlwind that has been life.

For more information on Tacoma Dome Rules:

Starting Nov. 15 proof of vaccination or negative test results (some events may enact additional requirements)

Masks are mandatory for anyone 5-years of age or older.
Bags can be a clear 12"x6"x12" bag or smaller, small clutch purses are allowed 4.5"x6.5" or smaller
Lockers are available to keep items in for \$10

DAN + SHAY

THE (ARENA) TOUR

2021

w/

THE BAND CAMINO

INGRID ADDRESS

September - December 2021 • North America Headline Tour

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE TACOMA DOME

PASSIONATE? ARTISTIC? SHARE YOUR CREATIONS!

TAHOMA WEST IS ACCEPTING SUBMISSIONS SOON

FROM FICTION TO NONFICTION, POETRY TO DIGITAL ART: WE DO IT ALL
THERE IS NO LIMIT TO YOUR CREATIVITY, SO SHOW US YOUR BEST!

SUBMISSIONS DUE
MARCH 15TH

CHECK YOUR STUDENT EMAIL
FOR THIS MONTH'S CONTEST!



Tahoma West
Literary Arts Magazine



ILLUSTRATION BY JAIDA NOBLE

Sandworms were the unsung heroes of “Dune” (2021) for distracting us from bad writing.

“Dune” (2021) is a planet-sized disappointment

Denis Villeneuve’s long-awaited remake of the 1984 David Lynch cult sci-fi classic underperforms in multiple ways.

By ELL HOBBS
FILM CRITIC

In the year 10191, Paul (Timothée Chalamet) is the coming successor to the great House Atreidis, a family and empire which is granted conservatorship of an unforgiving desert world famed for its invaluable mineral, Spice. However, Paul has been having disturbing premonitions of the world, of war, and a mysterious woman (Zendaya), and fears the worst.

If nothing else, this new adaptation of Tacoma-native Frank Herbert’s 1965 novel is massive: the visuals, the score, and the cast are all enormous. As many have noted, “Dune” (2021) is built to be seen on the biggest possible screen — whether it’s good is another question. Cinematographer Greig Fraser (“Lion,” “Rogue One: A Star Wars Story,” “Zero Dark Thir-

ty”) uses scale to the max, if blandly, to depict enormous and uninspiring shots of para-futuristic technology. His attempts to smash Denis Villeneuve aesthetics with amusement park visuals do more to dull the spectacle than enhance it, and that partly comes down to the overuse of CGI. For example, Villeneuve’s signature aerial shot used to follow vehicles in his films is usually breathtaking with the natural scenery gushing by like a watercolor backdrop. In “Dune” (2021) however, someone high up in production thought it was a brilliant idea to use this with a tan vehicle over a tan, CGI dust cloud — an expensively boring shot. Many big-budget films have recently failed from their excessive use of CGI (I would argue that “Avengers: Endgame” is among this list), which often lacks the same awe-power as analog visuals.

The score, I’ll credit Hans Zimmer, was quite good. It may not have lined up perfectly with the stale dialogue, but that may have been his attempt at bringing any level of intrigue to the film. The sound was unnecessarily loud, though, and at times the mixing made it difficult to hear the characters, another example of trying way too hard to create something ‘massive’ rather than something good.

The cast should have been incredible, but it was inevitable that there would be little room for acting so much as reading lines in such a nondescript, big-budget Hollywood mess. The acting low was by far held by Jason Momoa (“Game of Thrones”) as soldier Duncan Idaho, who I have come to realize loses all of his compellingness as an actor sans-beard. On the other end of the spectrum Stellan Skarsgård (“Good Will Hunt-

ing”) was easily the best, playing the arch-villain imperialist Baron Vladimir Harkonnen. Most of the acting, though, fell into the unremarkable grey zone populated by a boring script and flat characters. The surplus talent is immense; from Javier Bardem (“No Country For Old Men”) to Oscar Isaac (“Inside Llewyn Davis”) to Zendaya (“Euphoria”) to Stephen McKinley Henderson (“Fences”) and on, the extent of wastage is Marvel-sized.

Even the plot was over-bloated with unremarkable filler and unclear worldbuilding. Large sections of the film were borderline boring, the exposition viewed like a poorly edited restaurant wall of fame, introducing each character like a choppy cameo, and the end-portion was entirely unnecessary. In fact, the entire film felt like an exposition which, between one milquetoast action sequence and the

next, was apparently meant to promise better things in the inevitable sequels. The entire time the audience is jerked around by narrative tour-guides from one shallow scene to the next — at least it can claim quality production design.

I can’t say that I expected more, but I am disappointed in the director. This has to be my least favorite of Villeneuve’s features since before his critical resurgence with “Polytechnique” over a decade ago. “Dune” (2021) is as bland and poorly articulated as any other revenue-motivated, agar-flavored, B-grade Hollywood sci-fi flick.

TITLE: DUNE (2021)
STAR RATING: 2.5/5

[Available at time of writing to see in theatres or stream on: HBO Max]