

FREE EVERY WEEK VOL. 26 ISS. 19 • FEBRUARY 14, 2022 THETACOMALEDGER.COM

THE LEDGER

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON TACOMA



Page 7

Your guide to the perfect Valentine's Day playlist

From The Seeds to Caroline Polachek, these love songs are the perfect addition to any mix.

Local businesses to try for Valentine’s Day for college students

Local businesses share their promos and most popular items that encourage students to try new locations during Valentine’s Day.

By **SHARLAYE DEZURN**
News Reporter

Valentine’s Day is known to be a holiday where many people look forward to dining and trying big and expensive restaurants, as seen in many romantic movies and read in romantic novels. However, not many college students can afford to try those types of restaurants or know where to go. The Ledger spoke with second-year student Camryn Sheil.

“Valentine’s Day can be hard to plan for, especially as a college student,” Sheil says. Two local business owners are dedicated to making their business welcoming to new customers, especially UWT students.

The Crisp Greens restaurant specializes in meal-prep, fresh and high quality menu options that include items like salads, bowls and gluten-free bakery items. Crisp Greens owner Corie Cameron was able to

offer commentary.

“My favorite salad is the Mexican Caesar Salad, I eat it everyday,” says Cameron, “The business is a spin-off of an earlier meal-prep service so we do a lot of catering. Within the next three weeks we are opening a second location on Pac Ave right on the UWT campus and will offer a 5% discount to students who show their ID.”

This is a great restaurant for Valentine’s Day because they have a healthy and fresh food-centered menu plus desserts to counter Valentine’s Day candy calories.

Crisp Greens is located on 3602 6th Ave in Tacoma, which is only a ten to fifteen minute drive from campus according to Apple Maps.

The Ledger was also able to speak with the Driphouse Coffee Co owner Alina Derkach.

“One of our most popular drinks is the blue raspberry, kiwi, lemon blue lotus lemonade energy drink,” says

Derkach, “I recommend students to try our energy drinks for that extra boost before class, it’s infused with flavor and can be topped with orange juice, cream, lemonade, etc.”

Driphouse Coffee Co. is a coffee shop located on 1901 M.L.K. Jr Way in Tacoma. This coffee shop offers flavorful drinks, a diverse menu and exceptional customer service.

This is a great coffee location because of the huge menu and fast, friendly staff. According to Derkach, Driphouse Coffee Co. is offering a special promotion for UWT students that includes one-dollar 16-ounce drinks for students which include Driphouse Coffee Co. energy drinks and peach green tea lemonade. Alina is proud to offer milk alternatives such as oat milk, hemp milk, almond milk, soy milk and even coconut milk. Alina encourages students to try their strawberry, guava, pineapple pink lotus lemonade energy

drink because of its Valentine’s Day color theme.

Driphouse Coffee Co. is dedicated to bringing high-quality coffee and exceptional customer service. Crisp Greens and Driphouse Coffee Co. will be open on Valentine’s Day and will have normal operating hours.



Driphouse Coffee Co. energy drinks. PHOTO COURTESY OF ALINA DERKACH

Student access to health care services on and off campus

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, UWT offers health care services to students who seek care during a time when hospitals and clinics are over capacity with patients.

By **LESLIE GONZALEZ CRUZ**
News Reporter

As COVID-19 cases continue to decline across the nation, reported by the CDC, the Omicron variant is said to be extremely contagious, the rate it is circulating at in the U.S. is predicted to be greater than 99%.

In Pierce County alone, there have been 178,393 cases of COVID-19 reported by the Washington State Department of Health, as of Feb. 3, 2022 causing 7,676 hospitalizations along with 1,183 deaths from the virus.

The rising and declining cases of COVID-19 and the various variants have put a strain on hospitals and clinics that have gone over capacity in caring for patients.

As hospitals and clinics face over capacity, many patients are subject to

neglecting their health due to the lack of space as well as long waiting times.

Student health services from UWT’s partnership with the premier healthcare provider, Virginia Mason Franciscan Group, offers eligible students to obtain primary care from the Franciscan Prompt Care at St. Joseph Medical Center. Students who seek health care regarding physicals, preventative medicine and behavioral health have full access.

Students are able to seek care at five additional participating Franciscan Prompt Care clinics seven days a week, with their university identification card or any valid photo identification for verification.

For students seeking care regarding COVID-19, the Husky Coronavirus Testing, powered by the Seattle Flu Study, are offering self-administered

testing kits available for pick-up at the University Y Student Center along with administered in-person testing.

Students who are regularly on campus at the UW Seattle, Bothell and Tacoma campuses are encouraged to enroll and participate in the testing for the virus.

UW medicine also offers COVID-19 vaccines on campus and at nearby prompt care locations. Vaccinations can be received at five participating UW medicine clinics.

To make an appointment Monday through Friday call:
253-428-2200

Additional testing kits can be ordered through
covidtests.org
to receive up to four free testing kits

Students also have access to COVID-19 vaccination spots that may be closer to home at
vaccinelocator.doh.wa.gov/



The Ledger

UWT’s weekly student publication

Feb 14, 2022 | Vol. 26, Issue 19

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Office Hours:

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Wednesday 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Thursday 8 a.m. - 9 a.m. & 11 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Friday 9:30 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Zoom Link:

<https://washington.zoom.us/j/91636229141>

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Title IX, SEM, and Tacoma campus efforts to support students

Title IX, a federal law protecting sex-based discrimination, has allowed advocates on campus that are there specifically to help students and survivors dealing with related trauma or incidents.

By **ANDREW ANDERSON**
NEWS EDITOR

The issue of sex-based discrimination is a hot topic among college sports, but it wasn't until 1972 that Title IX was passed — a federal civil rights law that falls under the Education Amendments — that things changed.

Title IX prohibits sex-based discrimination in any school or other education program that receives funding from the federal government. Other laws, such as those made by the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), allow students to profit from their name and image, which is referred to as their Name, Image, Likeness (NIL), which was previously forbidden. These laws work with Title IX to protect and help student athletes.

The SEM, short for Sports Enterprise Management, is a program under the Milgard School of Business. While the program is all about the business of sports, they also train, hire and educate students about all aspects of sports and sports management.

SEM and their advocates and interns help to answer student questions about things such as Title IX and NIL. While NIL doesn't apply to the average student, Title IX does. Rather than just applying to sports, Title IX applies to all forms of sex-based discrimination. All UW campuses have Title IX Confidential Advocates that are able to help students

and provide them with the resources they need.

Madie Brown, the Tacoma campus Title IX Confidential Advocate, has been working to help student survivors of sex-based discrimination or trauma since October of just last year. While she is not directly involved in the SEM program, she provides free services that aid students who deal with sex-based discrimination.

"Advocates and advocacy services," Brown explained, "are kind of the first step in supporting students who have experienced interpersonal violence, such as sex and gender violence." She went on to explain that on Tacoma campus the free services are available for any student, whether undergraduate or graduate, and any gender identity. It also applies to undocumented students with no question asked and full confidentiality.

"Advocates help you to understand what happened to you," Brown said, "[They] answer any questions you have, understand what next steps you can take moving forward, and get you the resources you need. Additionally they can make work, housing, and class accommodations on campus."

She can also aid in filing a police report or filling out an incident report that it happened on campus. She specified, however, that students seeking help can ask and benefit from the services even if the incident did not happen on campus.



PHOTO COURTESY OF PIXABAY

Scrabble pieces spelling out support which is what Title IX advocates are here for.

While SEM aids in providing students background information and news on Title IX and how it applies to sports, more often than not, Brown specializes in helping students who have experienced trauma.

While Brown doesn't provide therapy, she does help survivors and students understand strategies to help them begin healing or centering themselves, and provide them with options and services to decide what might work best for them and their situation.

Brown shared that she is always eager to get students involved in doing more prevention work, such as promoting bystander intervention programs, training and is on the lookout for someone to help aid her in social media.

Students can learn more about Brown and the services she offers as a Title IX Confidential Advocate at

Website: www.tacoma.uw.edu/sh/confidential-advocate

Email: uwtsva@uw.edu

Phone: 253-692-4750 (24-48-hour reply window when possible)

Those interested in the history of Title IX or having more broad and general questions and how it applies to NIL and sports management can learn more about SEM and contact them at

www.tacoma.uw.edu/business/sports-enterprise-management

She has goals of tailoring a program towards students and employees both, having a more robust effort to increase awareness of advocacy services and having others understand the process in general and how to access the services available.

"It's a good first step. It's free, confidential and judgment-free. It's laying out all the information, rights and options in front of someone and helping them understand and choose the next step taken."

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- "Dear Editor," as the opening of your piece
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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.



Book bans are an attack on democracy.

As the nation observes Black History Month, many stories of racism and equality are removed from schools

By **ANTHONY KREJCI**
OPINION COLUMNIST

Here at UWT, in Tacoma and around the Puget Sound, we enjoy a progressive bubble of democratic sympathies. It's easy to forget that around the country, more and more people are falling sway to authoritarian and regressive viewpoints.

This phenomenon did not happen overnight but has been the result of decades of right wing efforts to erode democratic values within our country.

Education and cultural understanding are essential in the development and permanence of democratic ideals but our basic animalistic instincts of aggression and self-preservation are an omnipresent specter, lying in wait to emerge in our hearts once again.

This last year, our democracy and values have become frailer than ever before. Attempts to revise inaccurate historical education have received notorious backlash, and a wave of undemocratic voter suppression laws has passed in multiple states.

It is not just the ballot box or the classroom which has been targeted

either. School libraries—arguably the most important room of any school—have been the subject of a historic level of state-mandated book bans in states like Texas and Tennessee.

According to NBC, nearly 100 bans have taken effect in 75 different school districts in Texas alone. Many of the books on the banned list focus on themes of equality, racism and LGBTQ+ identity.

Books like “To Kill a Mockingbird” by Harper Lee and “Of Mice and Men” by John Steinbeck offer crucial perspectives on the worst excesses of racism and ableism and call their readers to value empathy and equality.

Thanks to some Texan parents and communities, these books have been removed from school libraries for “being too political” or that their depictions of race and racism were “harmful to children.”

Books like “The Lawn Boy” by Johnathan Evison and “Drama” by Raina Telgemeier have also been the subject of ban demands by Texan parents. These books both provide LGBTQ+ perspectives and are a critical source of representation and under-

standing for LGBTQ+ students.

Texan parents have been demanding these books be banned for depicting sexuality and promoting gender fluid or homosexual acceptance. Much of the conservative outrage is based on the idea that these books “sexualize” their kids or encourage them to “question their sexual orientation when they don't even comprehend what that means.”

I can't help but wonder if these parents would be equally outraged by the same sexual content if it was depicted by heterosexual characters.

In my mind, the most shocking book ban this year has been the recent banning of the graphic novel “Maus” by Art Spiegelman. The only graphic novel to ever win a Pulitzer Prize, “Maus” tells the story of the Holocaust through the eyes of the author's father who lived through the events.

The story is told with Jews being depicted as anthropomorphic mice and the Nazis as cats. The artwork is exceptional, and the personal story of Mr. Spiegelman's survival is a shocking addition to the WWII storytelling canon.

Yet school districts in Tennessee have banned it based on a few panels

which depict female rats being stripped naked before being sent to the gas chamber.

I have personally read “Maus” and seen the panels in question, no genitalia are depicted and any who would argue that the scenes are somehow sexual or provocative is seriously missing the point of the entire story. Such a person's opinion shouldn't be considered at all.

As a future historical educator, these bans hit me at a personal level. History is arguably one of the most important subjects to a healthy democracy. The study of history allows us to see the world we left behind when we decided to adopt democratic and empathetic values. It reminds us of what is in store for us if we give up on each other and trust in tyrants once again.

Yet the study of history can often be stale, overly academic and stuffy. Quality historical fiction and period pieces like “Maus” or “Of Mice and Men” offer some of the best tools to expose the general public to important historical lessons. They can be the spoonful of sugar which makes the historical medicine go down.

The fact that many of these bans

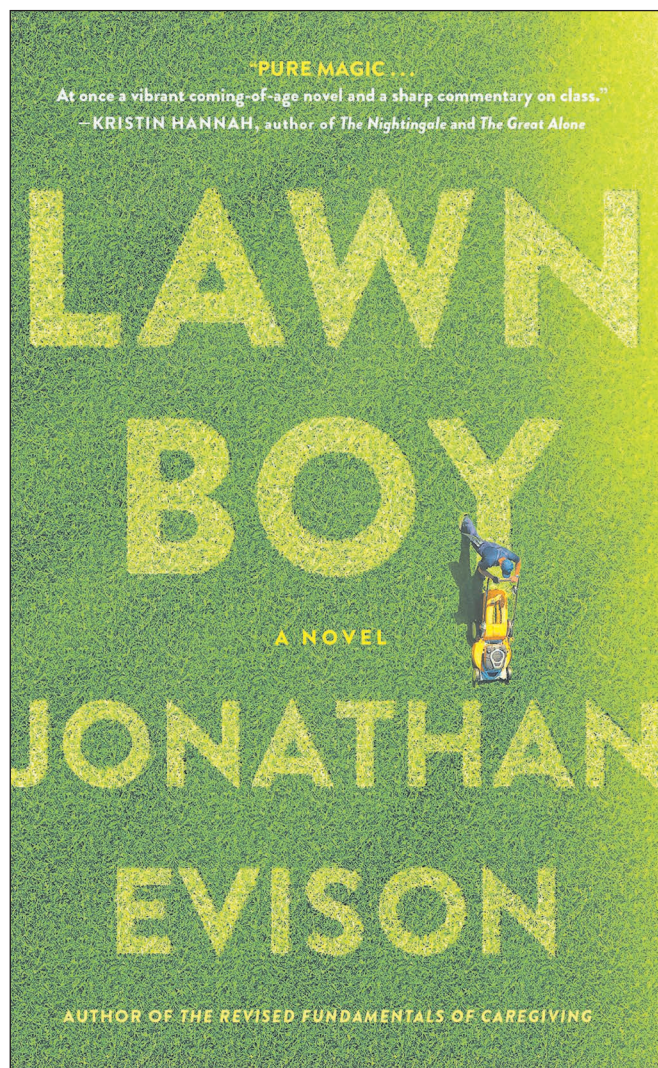
have been inspired by anti-critical race theory movements makes them all the more troubling. Particularly since many of them are taking effect as the country observes Black History Month.

Yet one source of hope and a certain degree of humorous irony is that many of these books are now seeing record sales in response to the bans. Comic book stores around the country and billionaire Ronald Lauder are sending free copies of “Maus” to anyone in Tennessee who asks for them.

Our democracy has taken some serious hits this past year but the national outrage over these book bans is proof that we are still in the fight.

In the words of the author Stephen King:

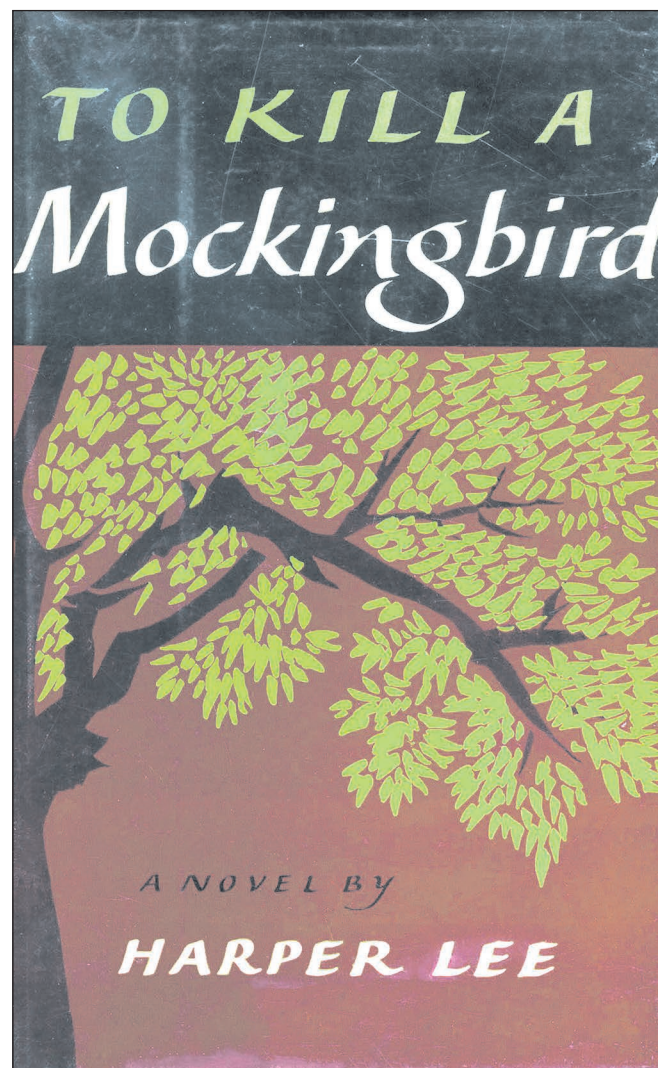
“Don't spend time waving signs or carrying petitions around the neighborhood. Instead, run, don't walk, to the nearest non-school library or to the local bookstore and get whatever it was that they banned. Read whatever they're trying to keep out of your eyes and your brain because that's exactly what you need to know.”



Courtesy of Random House Children's Books



Courtesy of Pantheon Books



Courtesy of J. B. Lippincott & Co.

Tacoma elite organize for more police to harass the homeless

Business elites and landlords, organized as Tacoma Safe, are organizing to pressure the city to fund more police to harass the homeless. Many are even calling for a camping ban. How evil and conniving can they get?

By ALEX BUCKINGHAM
OPINION COLUMNIST

Who is this new group, Tacoma Safe, and why are they in the news? To explain who this group that is calling for more policing of homeless encampments is, let's take a step back to talk about class politics.

The elites - landlords, real estate executives and business owners - are regularly understood to be the people creating the problems in our world. You know, things like climate change, student debt, the prison industrial complex, homelessness and terrible wages.

Our local wealthy elite have various ways of organizing themselves; the Tacoma Executives Association, the Tacoma Business Districts and the Real Estate Investors Association of Washington are some examples. While acting like a community activist group, Tacoma Safe seems like just another one of these groups. They are a network that business owners are using to organize.

Tacoma Safe, according to The News Tribune, is a Tacoma-based group led by Angela Connelly. Connelly, whom the newspaper emphasizes as a local resident, has little in common with those of us living in Tacoma. While we pay too much for rent or struggle buying in the out-of-control housing market, this millionaire lives in a mansion looking over the sound. Zillow puts her house at over \$2.5 million.

Her LinkedIn profile touts her positions as co-director of Connelly Corporation and co-owner of Highlands Golf Course. If you google Connelly Corporation, it is difficult to figure out what the group is but it seems possibly linked to the real estate industry.

She also sits on various boards of nonprofits and the board of governors of Thomas Aquinas College. At this point, I think you get it. She's one of those rich people who sits on executive boards.

So what is this business group she heads up? And what's it doing with a nice name like "Tacoma Safe"?

This advocacy group, according to their talking points and a News Tribune interview, doesn't like that homeless people exist in Tacoma. Never mind the market forces they profit from are driving the very housing crisis they want to address. These elites are trying to make the encampments go away with increased policing and anti-camping legislation while obscuring their positions through the language of social justice.

If you listen to their talking points, you hear that they don't like that homeless people make their businesses look unsafe, that people without plumbing



PHOTO COURTESY OF LIFTARN

Clipart of police carrying someone away

still must excrete waste, or that people without public trash services still produce trash.

While it is obvious to most people that basing a social need like housing in the incredibly inhuman capitalist market is a terrible idea, the folks at "Tacoma Safe" don't emphasize this dynamic; they want to police public camping with some leaders pushing for a camping ban.

They couch their language in being pro-safety and pro-cop, but for those paying attention, they're clearly just anti-poor and pro-cop.

These people seem to want the real estate market to flourish along with their profits while not addressing the consequences of out-of-control housing costs.

They all met up this past January, with the Mayor and Chief of Police as noted guests, for a PowerPoint presentation and networking at the car museum in town.

While some housing rights activists entered the event to hold a banner to read "listen to workers, not landlords & bosses," others from groups like the Tacoma Tenants Organizing Committee stood outside the venue, protesting on the sidewalk against a camping ban.

At one point during the protest, a presumed right-wing zealot drove their truck up on the sidewalk, sending a woman to the hospital with a broken pelvis, according to The News Tribune.

It speaks volumes that a group saying it stands for safety in Tacoma has supporters that drive trucks into protests.

You can support this victim of a right-wing attack by supporting her GoFundMe titled "Help Theresa recover from car attack injuries." Connelly's husband, a lawyer, has secured a prominent position on the GoFundMe page as a top donor of \$5,000. While I suspect the money is appreciated, this apparent PR move is easy for such wealthy people. Don't even get me started on taxing the rich to pay for universal healthcare.

While Tacoma newspapers write propaganda pieces depicting Tacoma Safe as some nice grass roots community group, some of their leading "activists" are clearly part of a network of the most influential names in Tacoma.

It's not just the media coverage but the Mayor and Chief of Police who are giving legitimacy to their group and

inspiring confidence in their movement for increased policing and increased harassment of Tacoma's homeless residents.

While some of those supporting reforms like increased funding for public housing and shelters have found themselves in league with Tacoma Safe, I think this is a mistake as it gives cover to Tacoma Safe's pro-business agenda that is ultimately one of increased policing and repression.

Trying to work in an activist network with the landlords, real estate tycoons and bosses in addressing homelessness in Tacoma, is like rabbits working with a fox to address an overcrowded warren. You might eliminate the overcrowding but not by digging a new warren.

Water is now a buyable commodity, what's next?

Just when we thought the world couldn't get further from "The Lorax," we have people monopolizing water.

REMI FREDERICK
OPINION EDITOR

The world is running out of water. It's not how you are thinking, the oceans will still have water, it's the important water that's running out. It's the freshwater that we need to drink, bathe in and cook with, that is running out.

In 2018, Cape Town residents were preparing themselves for a day-zero, where their water would run out. Completely. This is not some science fiction story but a reality of the world we are living in.

Even Washington is experiencing drought. In July of 2021, Governor Jay Inslee declared a drought emergency across the state except for the King, Snohomish and Pierce counties.

Climate change is one of the things to blame as the planet will get warmer and more and more water will evaporate.

One government study done in 2019 about water shortages caused by population growth and climate change, says that it is expected that climate change will cause extremes in the water distribution of Earth. Essentially, there will be more drastic floods and more severe droughts, places that get rain will be flooded and places with water scarcities will have serious droughts.

This has been coming for a while. Scientists have been saying for years to expect water shortages. However, how some people have chosen to address this only speaks to our society's capitalist nature and lack of ambition to actually solve problems.

Companies have started to invest in water. That is a very broad term but the definition is just as broad. People started to buy stocks in big companies

that are claiming to provide water to communities in a variety of ways.

In theory, this is great. However, this in practicality is not as useful. Nelson D. Schwartz from The New York Times reports that Cadiz hasn't earned any money and instead has accumulated over \$185 million in losses.

In addition to this, the chief executive, Scott Slader, told The New York Times that it would take at least \$200 million more to get water to Californians in need.

People have been pouring money into these ventures with what seems to be little results.

My real issue with this is that those who have the money to invest in this water are the ones who will get priority for the payoff - the water. This will be one more instance of the rich benefiting in our capitalist society.

People who cannot afford to (or who choose not to) invest in water will not get first dibs in getting the water. This is unethical and a horrible way to restore the world's water supply.

Maybe I'm just being cynical. But capitalism does seem like a horrible way to save the world.

So, how can we ensure or help ensure that everyone has water?

I mean for one, we have to fight climate change so that it doesn't continue to ruin the water cycle.

But also, we need to help make sure that everyone has a way to get clean and healthy water so that after we fight climate change, water scarcity will not be a problem for anyone. Ever.



ILLUSTRATION BY JAIDA NOBLE

Just when we thought the world couldn't get further from "The Lorax," we have people monopolizing water.

Tahoma West

We are looking for artists to submit their visual art to be featured in a student art gallery in February!

All visual media can be submitted. There is no limit to the number of artworks per submission.

Submissions due by **February 20th.**

Email tahomaw@uw.edu with photos of your submission following our submission guidelines as seen on our website. www.tacoma.uw.edu/tahoma-west/submission-guidelines



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SERVICES & ACTIVITIES FEE COMMITTEE

Call for Submissions

Online Art Gallery and
Cover Contest,
February 2022

Your guide to the perfect Valentine's Day playlist

From The Seeds to Caroline Polachek, these love songs are the perfect addition to any mix.

JOSEPHINE TRUEBLOOD
A&E EDITOR

One of the most special and affordable Valentine's Day gifts is a thoughtfully-curated playlist. Honoring the '80s cassette mixtape, complete with a well-designed cover, a shareable playlist is a timeless way to convey a loving message to a friend or partner. Here is your step-by-step guide to creating the perfect Valentine's mix.

Consider setting the tone with a prominent title, as this will be the first song the recipient sees. Songs like Father John Misty's sweet and happy "Real Love Baby," Caroline Polachek's poppy "So Hot You're Hurting My Feelings" or Mitski's floating and emotional "Valentine, Texas" are all fantastic because of their defined messages.

Alternatively, a zinger at the end is another good way to tie a playlist together, especially if you pick lots of your favorite songs with off-topic titles. Wolf Alice's beautiful "Don't Delete The Kisses" or INXS' power-ballad "Never Tear Us Apart" are a few classics to end with. No matter what you do, make sure to double

check the lyrics, as songs like Fiona Apple's "Valentine" may send a sadder message than intended.

Every good playlist needs at least one deep cut, throwback song to add a sense of timeless nostalgia. '60s girl groups like The Ronettes are full of loving songs, like their hit "Be My Baby," but many standards from that era, like Dusty Springfield's cover of "The Look of Love" or "Crimson and Clover" by Tommy James and The Shondells are also great options. If you're looking for a more upbeat, garage rock tune for your Valentine, "Can't Seem to Make You Mine" is the perfect obscure love song for you. Look at some of your favorite artists from the '50s, '60s and '70s, because they will definitely have at least one love song no matter their genre, like The Beach Boys' "All I Wanna Do."

It is absolutely critical to have a few songs that your listener can relax into, making a nice balance of more upbeat love songs and slower ballads. Beach House's "Space Song" or Radiohead's "All I Need" are great slow songs to add an interlude to your mix. Most of Slowdive's discography along with Galaxie 500 and other dream pop bands always have some



PHOTO BY JOSEPHINE TRUEBLOOD

Get inspired by the '80s mixtape

good-vibes staples.

If romantic love songs aren't your thing, consider making an anti-Valentine's day playlist, chock-full of My Bloody Valentine's complex hits and the vicious and loud "Valentine" by Snail Mail. The broken heart playlist is also greatly appreciated on this hol-

iday, songs like "You've Lost That Lovin' Feelin'" by Nancy and Lee pair well with all your cry-your-eyes-out favorites.

General playlist-gifting tips include being cautious about the length: it is important to give your Valentine a listenable playlist, not a five-hour behemoth or two songs

thrown together. A last-minute listen-through is also a must, as the flow of a playlist is just as important as the songs on it. Further, don't forget a poignant title! No matter if your mix is sweet or sour this Valentine's Day, enjoy the process and listen to your favorite love song on repeat.

A rom-com for every Valentine's mood; "The Incredible Jessica James"

"The Incredible Jessica James" checks all the boxes for a solid Valentine's Day film.

RYAN MANTLE
FILM CRITIC

If you're like me, Valentine's Day during the pandemic has largely centered around cooking a nice meal, eating chocolate and scrolling through streaming services to find something inoffensive and short: enter "The Incredible Jessica James." Is this movie a masterpiece? No. Does it need to be? Also no. It tries, and often enough that is all anybody really wants on this holiday that only continues to exist because of marketing companies.

Let's start off with the good in this rom-com. "The Incredible Jessica James" balances the story of two people recovering from breakups with its witty dialogue and just enough sex to not make it awkward. Jessica Williams, playing the titular character, oozes confidence throughout the film but always manages to feel vulnerable and real when needed. Chris O'Dowd uses his natural charisma to make shameful moments into something endearing. Noël Wells's character Tasha is probably too perfect of a friend but brings joy to the film regardless.

Normally, mentioning the runtime might signal that something went wrong but this movie glides by in an hour and twenty-five minutes, letting you get to the more important part of Valentine's Day. That could be eating too much dessert or something a bit more sensual. Either way, this movie will not stand in the way of your plans.

Removing the rose-tinted glasses reveals some minor issues with the film. Mainly, the plot is generic. It tries to mix it up with a revelation here and there like revealing that she's getting over a breakup even though she was the one who ended the relationship (gasp!) but these moments do little to differentiate it from other breakup-centered rom-coms. When Jessica leaves New York to go to her sister's baby shower, the film loses its purpose for a bit. It's a good section for comedic purposes but is neither romantic nor necessary. When a film is this short, every scene should be necessary.

It is important to note that even though I find the plot to be lacking, the movie differs in an important way from most of the films available on streaming services: a black woman is the lead. This

is a breath of fresh air in a style that traditionally has been dominated by affluent white people. "The Incredible Jessica James" certainly doesn't push the envelope, but this alone provides new perspectives, imagery and jokes to permeate into an otherwise stale genre.

What makes this a good Valentine's Day flick though is that it can serve a number of purposes. If you are recovering from a breakup then this film can be about rebuilding hope and confidence. LaKeith Stanfield plays the ex, and if she can get over him, chances are you'll get past your ex as well. If you're in a relationship, this won't kill any moods you have set up and you really don't need to pay too much attention to it. "The Incredible Jessica James" is a fun film that you can enjoy no matter what mood you are in on Valentine's Day, just don't expect much more than that.

3.5/5 STARS

["The Incredible Jessica James" is streaming only on Netflix]



PHOTO COURTESY OF BEACHSIDE FILMS

“Me vs. Me” is another run of the mill rap album

“Change My Ways” is one of the better songs to listen to in this album

ANGELO ALEGRE
A&E REPORTER

After dropping six singles in anticipation for his newest work “Me vs. Me,” NLE Choppa has finally dropped the full album. The songs that fans have already heard include “Final Warning,” “Mmm Hmm,” “Jumpin,” “I.Y.B.” “Drop Shit,” and “Too Hot.” Of the six released singles, only three are in his top 10 most popular songs on Spotify, with his single “Jumpin” being his most popular song as of Feb. 6. This is a perfect coincidental analogy of NLE Choppa’s new album, as many of the new songs are a hit-or-miss.

“Shotta Flow 6” is another addition to his Shotta Flow tracks and is great, being the newest entry. Possibly one of the best songs of the album, it is placed well as the first song. With lyrics like “One pop we pop we made him drop,” it is catchy enough to make people try and listen to the rest of the album.

“Push It” is a collaboration song with Young Thug and is a great follow-up to “Shotta Flow 6.” This is actually the most popular song of the album on Spotify disregarding the songs that were released as singles prior to the full album, and it makes sense as the song is a good listen since it’s very catchy. Some lyrics that make you want to sing along would be whenever “Push it” is said in the song. It is also a good collaboration that shares the song as it starts with NLE Choppa, goes to Young Thug and ends with NLE again.

“Trap Phone” is not great but isn’t bad either. Nothing stands out, for good or for bad. The only thing this song has going for it is that it is catchy because of how the song starts but then it quickly turns into another generic NLE Choppa song when he uses the same old flow found in many of his other songs. The lyrics don’t really add much to the song at all.

“Stompin” had potential with a good beat. Lyrics just don’t hit, too many corny lines like “I see through these b*tches like Snapchat filters.” The song relies on basic wordplay that would be used in puns of lyrics, and it just does not have great lyricism.

“Change My Ways” hit a little different from the other songs from the album because of the enunciations and pitch of lyrics matching with the beat of the song. It can be heard with the lyrics “Don’t run from this a** whoopin’ and if you run, I grab my gun.”

“Ima Dogg” is a complete rip-off of Gucci Mane’s “Ima Dogg” but worse. It just feels like NLE Choppa is



NLE Choppa looking back at his younger self

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just slurring the title of the song over and over again with other lyrics tying in with the theme of dogs, which can be seen with the lyrics “don’t make me use my paws, n****.”

“Still Hood” starts slow, which is a nice change of pace, but it goes back to the same flow. The lyrics are great, it seems like it has meaning to the artist. This is easy to see as the song describes how NLE Choppa feels about where he came from, and he believes that he has not changed from what he used to be.

“Chicago to Memphis” a collaboration with the artist G Herbo as they

rap and sing about where they are from and what they have seen. It is a good song with some meaning behind some lyrics, such as G Herbo’s opening line “Anytime a n**** play, it raises the murder rate,” which is reflective of Chicago.

“Lick Me Baby” is a purely sexual song. It tries its best to be a good song with a great beat, but at the end of the day it is just full of sexual lyrics that have no meaning. There is one thing that makes this song stand out from the rest, the spelling out of “LICK ME BABY” like when Gwen Stefani spelt bananas in her song “Hollaback Girl.”

“Youngest to Do It” is the last song of the album and does a good job ending it. Having the last song of the album have meaning is great for the artist and for fans alike. This song is about NLE Choppa’s journey to where he is now and is one of the better lyrics of the album, despite it having the same flow as the rest of it as well.

“Me vs. Me” started off great and ended alright, with a lot of bad songs sandwiched in between. Although it is not different from his other albums that have also done this in the past, it would have been nice to

receive a great album through and through. Much of the bad in the album is from NLE Choppa’s overuse of his signature flow alongside lyrics that are just not good. Overall, it’s an album you might catch yourself hearing from time to time, but it is most likely going to be a cherry picking type album with fans only listening to their favorites of the album while ignoring the bad.