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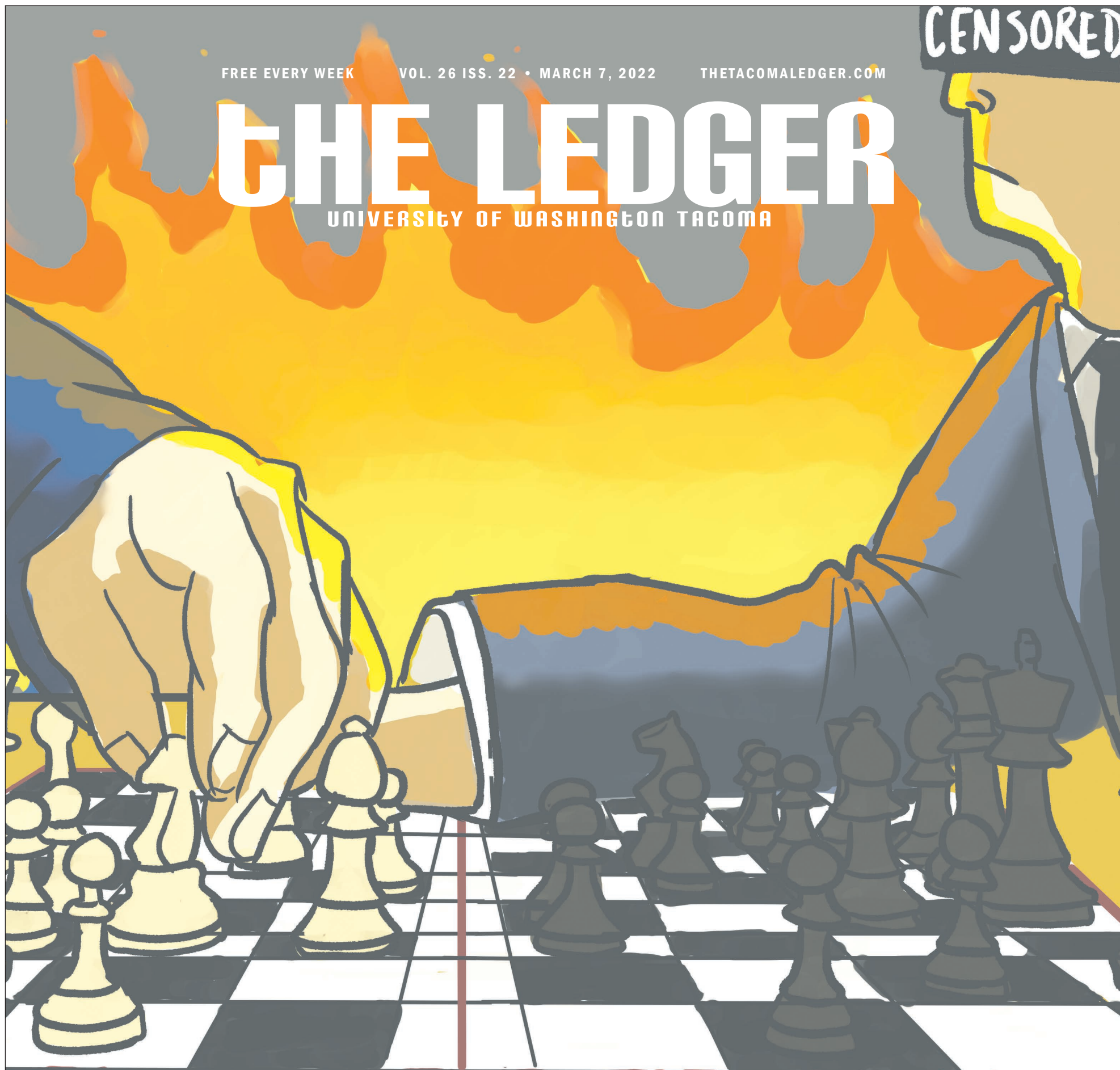
FREE EVERY WEEK

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THE LEDGER

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON TACOMA



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OPINION: Free Ukraine, End Imperialist Wars

Capitalist inter-imperial rivalry is behind the horrors in Ukraine. Russia must end the occupation, the U.S. must end its expansion, and the racist and nationalist double standards have got to go.

COVID-19 cases declining call for a new mask mandate on campus

Due to Gov. Inslees’ new mask mandate UWT has responded by removing outdoor masks while keeping indoor masks.

By **LESLIE GONZALEZ CRUZ**
NEWS REPORTER

On Feb. 17, 2022 Governor Jay Inslee addressed the state in regards to the mask mandates in place. According to state data, COVID-19 cases are declining with current hospitalization rates at 13 per 100,000 people, igniting a new mandate. “The good news is we are approaching a place fairly shortly where we will not have to be wearing masks generally in these conditions,” said Gov. Inslee, “We think this is good for our health and our education of our children and the total reopening of our economy.” March 21 was initially the day the mask mandate would be lifted, however, in guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the mandate will now be lifted

ed on March 12. “We can do this because we are significantly declining the activity of the virus in our state, this is good news” said Gov. Inslee on Feb. 28. As of March 12, Washington’s indoor mask mandate will expire for most public settings, with local governments still having the power to implement their own face masks or vaccination requirements. This will also apply to ending the mask mandate in schools. The mask mandate will be lifted in outdoor settings like restaurants, bars, schools, child care facilities, churches, gyms and grocery stores. Masks will still be required in health care facilities, such as hospitals and nursing homes, and outdoor spaces like public transportation, school buses and taxi services. On Feb. 22, 2022, Dr. Geoffrey

Gottlieb, UW advisory committee on communicable diseases, announced that UW and UWT will no longer be requiring face masks for outdoor events or gatherings of 500 or more people, while indoor face masks will still be required in all facilities when other people are present; i.e. lobbies, stairways, bathrooms, elevators, classrooms and in shared vehicles. Effective March 1, vaccine verification will no longer be required for events or venues such as museums and theaters; however event organizers may still choose to require proof of vaccination or a negative COVID-19 test. Per Gov. Inslee’s indoor mask mandate ending on March 12, UW’s mask policies will be decided by the guidance that is received by King and Pierce county’s health departments. As of now, the indoor mask man-



PHOTO COURTESY OF PIXNIO

date at UWT will not be lifted before the ending of winter quarter. As the virus evolves, UW’s policies will adjust with it. To meet current required face mask policies at UWT, they must be snug around the face, covering from under the bridge of the nose down to the chin, tightening the loops around the ears if necessary.

More information regarding face covering policies at UWT can be found at www.ehs.washington.edu/covid-19-prevention-and-response/face-covering-requirements

Guide to navigating drugs and alcohol as a college student

Data, resources and other information is shared to help bring awareness to the drug and alcohol abuse of college students.

By **SHARLAYE DEZURN**
NEWS REPORTER

As the end of the quarter is approaching, the campus saw busy students, intense course assignments and high levels of stress. Recently on television, students saw a lot of TV shows that exploit the use of drugs and alcohol like “Gossip Girl,” “90210,” and “Shameless.” However, in the Emmy award winning show “Euphoria,” students saw an entirely different understanding of drugs and alcohol that can inspire the use through articulating the cause and effects of drug and alcohol use. With most of UW Tacoma’s student body commuting to campus, one can assume student’s often balance work, school and their lives, making them more susceptible to mental stress. Students can attest that self-care is not an easy thing to come by for college students which can open the doors for drug and alcohol abuse.



According to the website Learning English, most college students who turn to drugs and alcohol do so to decrease mental stress from school and other problems. Out of the college students who use drugs illegally, 93% use marijuana for students under the age of 21, 37% use cocaine and 36% use hallucinogens, according to a study done by The National Center of Drug Abuse

Statistics. For more information about these statistics students can visit www.drugabusestatistics.org. The UWT Student Health site offers a variety of resources like the Alcohol and Other Drugs site. It explains each resource and how it can help students. The Washington Recovery Helpline is an organization that provides callers with emotional and mental

support and local treatment resources for drug abuse, alcohol abuse and mental health crises 24/7. This resource can be used by UWT students, faculty, staff and Washington State residents. E-check Up To Go is a resource offered on the website where students can take a questionnaire that provides information on their BAC information as well as trends they may or may

not recognize in their bodies when consuming alcohol. This is a great resource for those who are able to legally drink and desire more information about safe drinking. Another resource The UWT Student Health site offers is UW Tacoma Psychological And Wellness Services (PAWS) that help students, faculty and staff with alcohol and drug screenings and referrals to community support and services. According to www.tacoma.uw.edu/paws PAWS is only offering virtual services throughout the winter quarter, check their website for more information. Additionally, throughout the week of March 7th there will be events like Create-Your-Own Self-Care package, Stuff an Emoji, and Make your Own Stress Ball day. UWT is doing a self-car week to help students relieve stress check out the uwtpacks Instagram for specific event information.

The Ledger

UWT's weekly student publication

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SAFETY AND ACTIVITIES FOR THE COMMUNITY

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Office: MAT 151

Phone: 253-692-4428

Email: ledger@uw.edu

Editors

Editor-in-ChiefMadeline Hiller

Managing EditorMadi Williams

News Editor.....Andrew Anderson

Opinion EditorRemi Frederick

A&E Editor.....Josephine Trueblood

Copy Editor.....Raj Kumar

Cover Art

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Distribution Manager.....Raj Kumar

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Film Critic.....Ryan Mantle

Design

Page Designer.....Trisha Carandang

Page Designer.....Anuvir Dhaliwal

Art

IllustratorJaida Noble

Photographer.....Nickolus Patraszewski

Photographer.....Alexa Christie

Advisor

Publications Manager.....Daniel Nash

UWT looking for new Pack Advisors for the next school year

UW Tacoma is now accepting applications for those wishing to apply as a Pack Advisor for the next academic school year.

By **ANDREW ANDERSON**
News Editor

Students in their first year at UW Tacoma are assigned to be in one of four, color-coded groups known as packs all run by their own Pack Advisor. Pack Advisors work with their group of students and inform them about activities, provide them with helpful resources, answer general and frequently-asked questions about the UW Tacoma campus and whether they are currently hiring.

Pack Advisors are responsible for assisting New Student and Family Programs in providing direct service to students. They work to encourage students and aid them in adjusting successfully in changes with their academic and social transition into UW Tacoma. Pack Advisors are frequently seen as role models and mentors to new students, organizing group activities, programs and making time for one-on-one interactions as needed.

The applications for Pack Advisors are open until March 13 and the position will run from May 1, 2022 until May 1, 2023.

Monika Anonuevo, the New Student Success Specialist at UW Tacoma, helps to run and oversee the Pack Advisor program on campus.

"There are a total of eight Pack



An image of the office for the Student Transitions Programs, of which Pack Advisors fall under.

Advisors," Anonuevo answered in an email asking how many students apply for the position each year versus how many are hired. "Each year the number of open spots depends on how many returning Pack Advisors we have... but on average we have about two to three students who are returners.

"We have had about 10-15 students apply each year for the Pack Advisor position for the past couple of years. This upcoming year (2022-2023) we will have five slots open on

the team."

With five slots open, Anonuevo was also asked how the Pack Advisor position aids students and helps them with their college careers. She gave the following response:

"I believe that any opportunity where a student can get involved on campus, whether that is with an on campus job like being a Pack Advisor or a member of a student organization, can positively impact their college experience."

She laid out the following specifics for the Pack Advisor program such as being a part of the team and community within the Students Transitions Office, having greater networking opportunities, creating and implementing programs to support new students and gaining leadership and professional development that can aid them on campus and post-graduation.

Those wishing to apply for the position must be an enrolled, full-

Students wishing to apply for the Pack Advisor position and find more information on the position can go to

www.tacoma.uw.edu/new-students/pa/apply

For updates students can go to their Instagram and Tik Tok @uwtpacks

Or visit their office in MAT 106

Any specific questions can be directed to New Student Success Specialist Monika Anonuevo at mlgd30@uw.edu

time undergraduate student at UW Tacoma who has completed at least one quarter and has a cumulative GPA of 2.75 or higher. An application, current resume and cover letter will also be required.

Those who are hired must be available for summer training and available to work the summer and the academic school year. They must also be available for spring onboarding that will happen on Friday afternoons. It is recommended those who apply are flexible and adaptable, suited to leadership positions and are good at working in teams.

TAHOMA WEST

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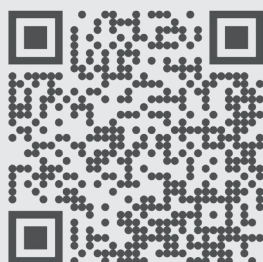
We are looking for creative works to be featured in our Vol. 26 publication!

Students, staff, faculty, and alumni are all invited to submit.

Submissions are due by March 25th

For submission guidelines, please visit:

www.tacoma.uw.edu/tahoma-west/submission-guidelines



OPINION: A Ukrainian-American weighs in on Russian aggression.

Watching her homeland besieged from abroad, Victoria Davidenko offers her perspective on the growing crisis.

By ANTHONY KREJCI
OPINION COLUMNIST

Like so many on Monday, Feb. 24 I watched with horror and anxiety as the armed forces of Russia marched into the sovereign territory of Ukraine. Under orders from Russian President Vladimir Putin, the largest European conflict since WWII had begun.

A first-generation Ukrainian-American, Victoria Davidenko has spent much of her life in Ukraine, including spending a year in Kyiv as a peace corps volunteer in 2019. She was kind enough to offer a Ukrainian perspective to The Ledger as the crisis in Europe grows.

WHAT HAVE BEEN YOUR THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS AS A UKRAINIAN WATCHING THIS TRAGEDY UNFOLD?

"It's been incredibly painful and heartbreaking watching it from a distance because on one hand, obviously, I wouldn't want to be there. I am very fortunate and privileged to be having the Ukrainian-American perspective and being here in the safety of America. However, it's a very different story when you have family there. I know hundreds if not thousands of people in Ukraine and I worry about every single one of them, and it's really painful not to be able to help anyone directly from here, beyond checking in with them and donating money. My dad has been donating to the war effort since 2014, and that's kind of been our life for the last 8 years."

SO WHAT YOU'RE SAYING IS, ON ONE HAND, YES IT IS HEARTBREAKING BUT THIS HAS BEEN AN ONGOING PROCESS THROUGHOUT YOUR WHOLE ADULT LIFE AND EVEN BEFORE THAT?

"Right, so I was around 13 or 14 when Maidan started happening and I still distinctly remember the fear I felt on Friday afternoon in ninth grade. I remember wondering if the internet and electricity would be shut off, and how would I contact my family? What will we do when Ukraine goes dark? That was a paralyzing fear."

NOW, MAIDAN REFERS TO THE 2014 REVOLUTION IN UKRAINE WHICH OUSTED THE RUSSIAN PUPPET GOVERNMENT UNDER PRESIDENT VIKTOR YANUKOVYCH, CORRECT?

"Yes"

SPEAKING OF YOUR FAMILY, WHAT FAMILY DO YOU HAVE IN UKRAINE? HAVE YOU BEEN IN CONTACT WITH THEM? HAVE THEY FLED THE COUNTRY?

"So, I have about 10 direct family members. Both of my maternal grandparents, a maternal uncle and aunt and a paternal great aunt, and various cousins. They are all staying put for now, they are in terrible geographic

locations, they are in the Kyiv area. For them there's nowhere to run and there's nowhere to hide. Getting to the Polish border would take days. Trying to get out of Kyiv is hell and trying to get across the country is hell. It may honestly be safer for them to stay put."

UKRAINIAN PRESIDENT VOLODYMYR ZELENSKIY HAS CALLED FOR FOREIGN VOLUNTEERS TO COME AND JOIN THE FIGHT. ARE YOU OR ANY OF YOUR FAMILY/FRIENDS CONSIDERING ANSWERING THAT CALL?

"No, because my parents, for example, sought a better life here after the fall of the USSR and for them their entire life is here. My friends and family that are my age don't have a strong enough patriotic pull to Ukraine, none of them have spent much time there. For me, that's still up in the air, I can't say yet for sure whether or not I'll go. The window for me would be in 3 weeks after my finals, and who knows if there will be a Ukraine left in three weeks."

WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE ARE PUTIN'S MOTIVATIONS FOR THIS ATTACK?

"Putin has issues with Ukraine becoming more democratic. He's very possessive, it's an abusive relationship. He's very unhappy with Ukraine's aspirations of joining NATO. He doesn't like that they want to join the European Union. I don't know what his ultimate goals are, some people are claiming he wants to reinstate the USSR, but I don't think Putin could inspire Communism in anyone."

DO YOU BELIEVE THAT PUTIN INTENDS TO STOP AT UKRAINE IF SUCCESSFUL?

"I think absolutely not. He (Putin) is already making threats against Finland and Sweden and other countries wanting to join NATO. Whoever thinks this will end with Ukraine just hasn't read enough about it."

YOUR COUNTRY HAS BEEN INSPIRING THE WORLD WITH THEIR RESILIENCE AND DEFIANCE. DO YOU BELIEVE THEY HAVE A CHANCE IN REPELLING PUTIN'S AGGRESSION?

"So, prior to the invasion I had absolutely no hope, I had no hope until probably 1 to 2 days ago. I think the world including Ukrainians and Russians severely overestimated Russia's ability to invade and I think that Ukraine itself was severely underestimated in its abilities to defend itself. Now that the sanctions have kicked in, now that there's a lot of advanced weaponry being sent to Ukraine. I think they have a chance, but it is slim. I think the fact that Putin has threatened nuclear warfare shows how much this isn't going in his favor. If it were going well for him I don't think he'd be doing that."



PHOTO COURTESY OF VICTORIA DAVIDENKO

Victoria Davidenko once went to Kyiv with the Peace Corps. She now considers returning as a militia volunteer.

DO YOU THINK THAT'S JUST DIPLOMATIC BLUSTER? OR DO YOU THINK HE'S SERIOUS?

"I think he's serious. I think he's half-joking, but not."

KIND OF TRUMP-ESQUE?

"Yes."

DO YOU BELIEVE AMERICA, NATO, AND THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY ARE DOING ENOUGH IN RESPONSE TO THIS CRISIS? IF NOT, WHAT DO YOU THINK SHOULD BE DONE?

"I think that's a hard question for myself to answer because I don't know everything about what's being sent to Ukraine. I'm touched by the fact that the world seems to be paying more at-

tention. I am touched that Germany has reversed its choices on sending weaponry to Ukraine, as well as many other countries. I wish it came earlier, but better late than never. We'll take anything we can get."

On behalf of The Ledger and the University of Washington Tacoma, I want to thank Victoria Davidenko for offering her time and unique perspective on the growing crisis in Europe.

All of us here at UWT should be concerned and invested in these events. It's easy to think "Ukraine is so far away, how could this impact me?" Well, over a century ago, many people thought the same way when the Aus-

tro-Hungarian Empire invaded Serbia, it took only a few weeks for much of the world to realize just how wrong they were, by that time it was too late. World War 1 had begun.

The truth is that we are all connected in a global community, and events like these have a tendency of snowballing into something much worse. So be vigilant, fellow students and faculty, pay attention, and take action when able. Many of us have a long time left on this earth, it's time to think seriously about what kind of world we want that to be.

OPINION: Free Ukraine, End Imperialist Wars.

Capitalist inter-imperial rivalry is behind the horrors in Ukraine. Russia must end the occupation, the U.S. must end its expansion, and the racist and nationalist double standards have got to go.

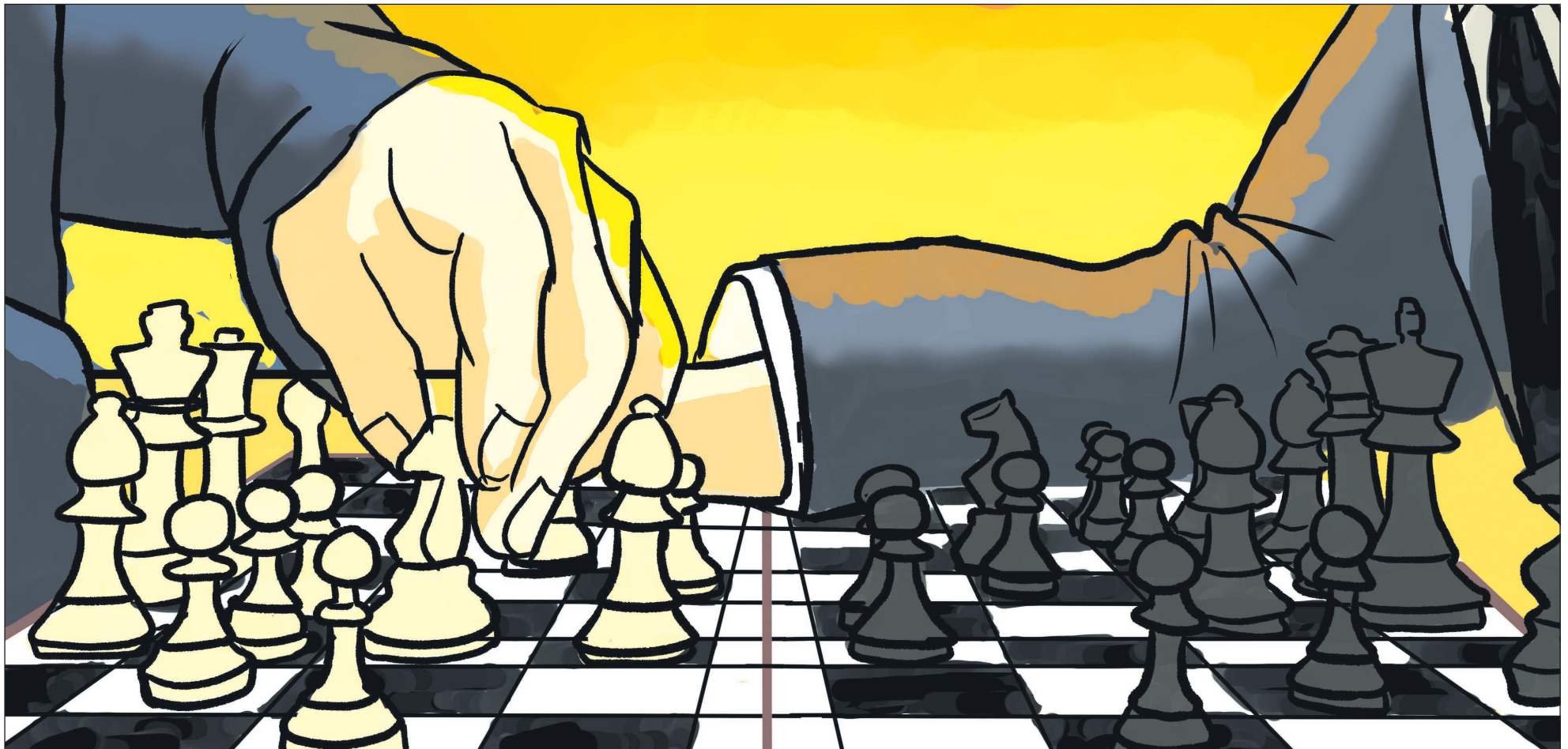


ILLUSTRATION BY JAIDA NOBLE

World leaders play chess with Ukrainian lives.

By **ALEX BUCKINGHAM**
OPINION COLUMNIST

The imperial rivalry between the U.S. and Russia turned into a full-on Russian invasion of Ukraine on Feb. 24. While the Ukrainian people have organized an incredible armed resistance, a growing and popular anti-war movement has shown itself in Russia and around the world.

The world powers continue to play chess with the lives of Ukrainians; it is in the popular struggle for Ukrainian self-determination and against the imperial ambitions of Russia, the U.S., and all the bourgeois powers, including China, that we here at UWT should look for solutions.

RUSSIAN IMPERIALISM

We have seen Russian imperial expansion throughout recent history. From intervening in the Middle East by supporting the authoritarian regime of Bashar al-Assad in Syria, to annexing Crimea in eastern Ukraine in 2014, to supporting the right-wing regime of Lukashenko in suppressing popular struggle in Belarus and actively suppressing a working-class rebellion in Kazakhstan, Russia is a significant power in world politics.

Not only is this invasion an attempt to increase Russian dominance in the region, but Vladimir Putin, Russia's president, is likely hoping to rally the Russian people around the nationalist

project that is war, to undermine the resistance to his right-wing rule.

Putin's regime is active in the overall right-wing turn in world politics. His own bigoted authoritarian rule is coupled with support for far-right governments and their repression of popular struggles.

The U.S. right-wing is in solidarity with this project and is connected to it as evidenced by both Russian participation in supporting right-wing politicians like Trump and right-wing politicians and leaders supporting Putin's regime, see Fox News's political commentator Tucker Carlson.

U.S. IMPERIALISM

This is all in the context of an inter-imperial rivalry with the other pole being the U.S. and its proxies in The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) as well as regional European powers.

Since the fall of the Soviet Union, the U.S. has actively tried to maintain and increase its geopolitical and economic dominance.

NATO has been an important tool for this project, with Specter Journal's editorial explaining that the "Clinton and Bush administrations expanded NATO into Eastern Europe, removing it from Russia's former 'sphere of influence,' and subordinating it to Washington's political, economic, and military domination."

The editorial goes on to say, "NATO's whole purpose, to paraphrase the infamous remark of its first secretary general, Lord Ismay, is 'to keep the Russians out, the Americans in, and the Germans down.' The U.S., as always, cloaks this imperial project in the language of democracy and human rights. After its butchery and war crimes in Afghanistan and Iraq, however, such rhetoric rings hollow."

Those of us living in the belly of such a beast as the United States must therefore make our positions clear when we call for the unconditional withdrawal of Russian troops, we also oppose U.S. militarism in the region and the continued expansion of NATO.

This is made all the more important given the state of U.S. politics. The potential to ride a wave of nationalist fervor that follows the war drum is surely appealing to President Joe Biden as he struggles and fails to address the social and economic issues at home. Progressive Democrats may also look to demonstrate their loyalty to politics of reformism and incrementalism by going along with such a ride.

A BOURGEOIS CONFLICT

Governments on the anti-Russian side of the conflict have responded to Putin's aggression with the thoughtful moves of chess-masters. A combination of arming the Ukrainian resistance, mobilizing troops both for posturing and readiness, and sanctioning Russia.

But their motives as imperialists are clear when one considers how sanctions have been chosen. For instance, much has been made of the barring of Russian Banks from SWIFT (Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication), but the sanctions are designed to not interfere with the Russian oil and gas that both Russian and European capital depend on.

WORKING CLASS RESISTANCE

While I adamantly oppose U.S. or NATO troops on the ground, I support the Ukrainian people who have taken up arms in the heroic defense of Ukraine and its capital city, Kyiv. I support the half a million Russians who have signed a petition calling for peace or the thousands who have marched in Russian streets even though they face fierce suppression and consequences.

I support the Russian platoon that surrendered when they realized they were an invasion force killing Ukrainians according to the Ukrainian Ambassador to the U.S.

It is the Ukrainian resistance, along with the people of Russia both inside and outside of the army organizing for full withdrawal of Russian troops, and a global anti-war movement putting pressure on Russia and all imperial powers that can end the horrors the people of Ukraine are facing.

THE RACIST DOUBLE STANDARD

Lastly, I support the opening of borders to allow refugees access to safety.

Just like refugees of Syria and Yemen, and all people really, deserve the safety of asylum, so do those fleeing the violence in Ukraine.

This means all people in Ukraine, as reports have been made of people from Africa and the Middle East, including students studying there abroad, struggling to escape while Ukrainian citizens are prioritized for transportation and border crossing.

We must denounce the racist double standard we see when folks at CNN call Ukraine "civilized" in comparison to Iraq and Afghanistan, or when the Telegraph writes "they seem so like us. That is what makes it so shocking. War is no longer something visited upon impoverished and remote populations. It can happen to anyone."

The people of Ukraine are no more deserving of shelter or support than those in the crosshairs of U.S.-funded weapons or troops whether in Gaza, Syria, or Yemen. Yes, shelter Ukrainian refugees, also open borders to all refugees and migrants.

Furthermore, we must recognize the right of Ukrainian resistance is no different than the rights of Palestinians, or others, to resist invasion and occupation. We must champion them all. Lastly, we must end the inherent imperialism of Capitalism by abolishing the system itself.

Solidarity with the people of Ukraine!

OPINION: Able-bodied privilege lies all around us

Ableism thrives in our society, making it inaccessible for many people. My grandmother is one of these people.

REMI FREDERICK
OPINION EDITOR

In 2015, my Grammie, Stevie Robertson, had a stroke.

I remember watching her during her physical therapy as she relearned to walk and grab things. Now, Grammie has limited mobility on the left side of her body and her left arm is not very useful.

Grammie's entire life and livelihood was changed in the space of a few minutes. I was only 12 so I had no true understanding of what was happening or how to help.

Today, at 19, I act as a caregiver to her as well as a granddaughter. I take her swimming to help keep her strength up and make sure she's active. I also help her with personal hygiene.

Doing these things has really helped me understand how inaccessible the world is for those who are disabled. I still don't know everything and I'm always learning more but I want to share our experience.

Grammie and I have struggled a lot with going swimming. She uses a wheelchair and she can push herself for short distances but requires me to push her most of the time.

“Doing these things has really helped me understand how inaccessible the world is for those who are disabled.”

We've had so many issues trying to get into areas that aren't particularly wheelchair accessible.

Tuesday, we had one of the two automatic doors that are supposed to open at the push of a button for wheelchairs, not open. The way we have to go through them is with me pulling the chair backward and pushing the door open with my back.

That door isn't the only one. In the place we go swimming only two out of the four total doors we have to go through are automatic doors and even those two don't always work, as we learned.

In addition to this, no one even offers to help. All we get is stares. I can count on my hands how many people have helped us by holding a door.

If they don't hold a door then they certainly don't move out of the way, even when they see us.

We are treated with indifference.



ILLUSTRATION BY JAIDA NOBLE

This is me and my grandmother, Grammie before enjoying a concert.

While this makes me angry, frustrated and sad, I can't help but remember a 12-year old me who gave no thought to others and their needs. I wouldn't have thought about how someone with a wheelchair could access my school because I could.

Now, everywhere I go, even when I'm not with her, I still think about it and watch my surroundings for any trace of inaccessibility.

I could go on and on and on. People who take the disabled cabana for changing at the pool for their three screaming kids or those who park in disabled parking spots with no placard or license plate.

Even the retirement home where she lives has disabled the automatic door to get into the building. This is due to COVID-19 restrictions but with often no receptionist available I have to attempt to get us both into the building with a heavy door closing on us rapidly.

I've seen issues even here at

“We must be vigilant of these inaccessibilities that seem to be everywhere.”

UWT. Classrooms with raised tables and levels in them with no visible ramps. Parking spots with no room on either side to open the door wide enough to get a wheelchair up to it.

Even tasks that I used to think were simple are now a struggle and require help or special equipment. Putting on a bra for one requires fine motor skills which Grammie doesn't have. Opening cans, cutting her bagels and even typing all take extra effort or tools or she can't do it by herself.

We must be vigilant of these inaccessibilities that seem to be everywhere. I don't pretend to know everything and I am still able-bodied

but I've learned a lot.

We must listen and watch for them and when we can, fix them. The world should be accessible to all no matter what disability they have.

It shouldn't have taken my grandmother having a stroke for me to confront my own able-bodied privilege, but it did. Please, think about the world through someone else's eyes, ability and situation.

The highlights of the Pokémon Company's full week of announcements

Pokémon Week started small to build up for Pokémon Day, the finale of the week.

ANGELO ALEGRE
A&E REPORTER

Every year on Feb. 27, Pokémon Day is celebrated to honor the day the game franchise started. The celebration is also used to announce future Pokémon projects, but this year was different. Rather than one specific day, the Pokémon Franchise has chosen to create a full week of announcements and celebrations, which has now been called Pokémon Week. With each day before the franchise's birthday, a new announcement was made, and these are the highlights:

On Feb. 21, Pokémon Masters EX, the mobile game, announced new content for the game, as well as an anniversary celebration. The new content for the mobile game is "Victory Road," which is now available, featuring a brand-new challenge for players to face to earn up to 5,000 gems as well as the option to choose one sync pair to team up with. The anniversary celebration is the sync pair character "May (Anni-

versary 2022)" and "Latias," which will only be available in their featured Poke Fair Scout from Feb. 27 to Mar. 30. Since they are limited, it will be a good way to celebrate both Pokémon Week as well as the mobile game's two-and-a-half-year anniversary.

On Feb. 24, Pokémon Unite, a game like League of Legends, received its newest addition to the playable roster, Hoopa. Hoopa is a ranged supporter who was made available to unlock at the moment of announcement. This new playable Pokémon will be one of the biggest updates to the game as it will change how it is played both casually and competitively. Hoopa can support its team by setting up teleporters anywhere on the map that both he and his team can use to traverse the map faster or to set up between two goal zones, which will make it easier for the team to support each other. This is huge news as the only supporter being used in high-level competitive play right now is Eldegoss, and this update aims to change the norm of the game and add diversity to how players create strategies

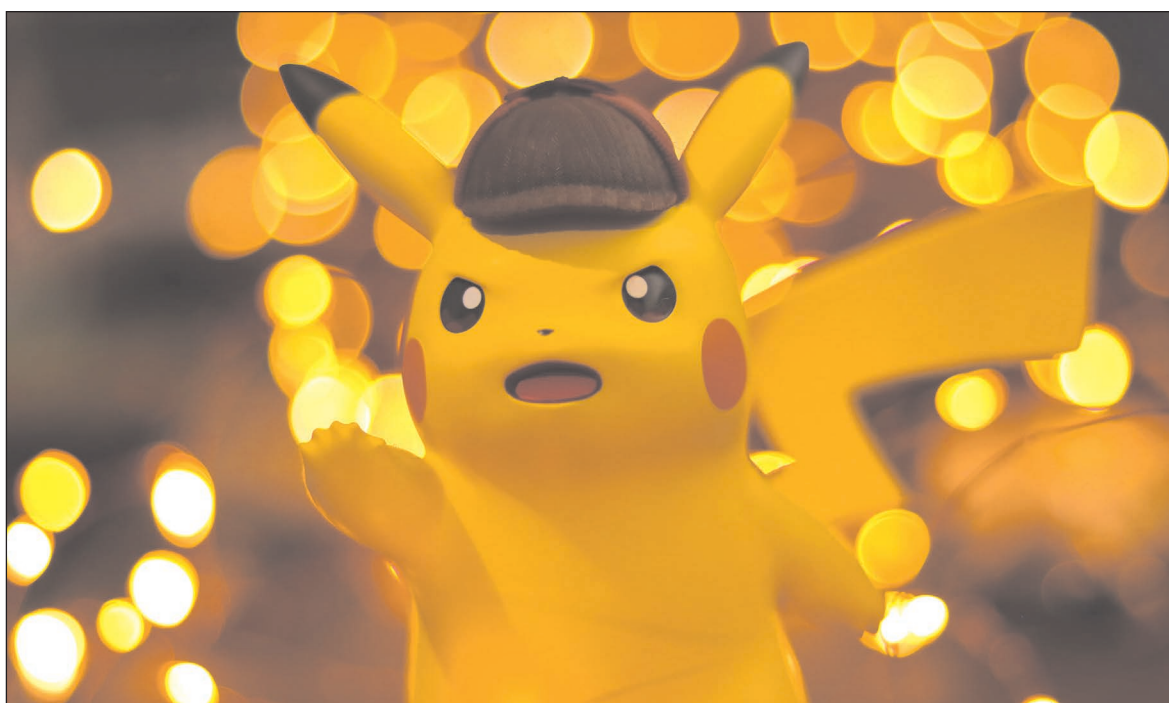


PHOTO BY CAROLINA CASTILLA ARIAS VIA PEXELS

Pikachu, the face of the Pokémon Franchise.

to give them an upper hand in the game.

On Feb. 27, Pokémon Day started with a Pokémon Presents. In this 14-minute presentation, news about every large Pokémon title was made. The ones that stand out include Pokémon GO, which is introducing Pokémon of the Alola region; Pokémon Unite, which received a new game mode called full-fury battles as well as a teaser for the next Pokémon to come to the game; Duraludon, and Pokémon Legends: Arceus, which received a new mechanic to the game which introduced massive mass outbreaks, a deviation of the normal

mass outbreaks, as well as the addition of more players to challenge in the village training grounds.

Finally, the presentation ended with the biggest announcement yet, the introduction of generation nine. The Pokémon Franchise has shown early gameplay of their newest upcoming games, Pokémon Scarlet and Pokémon Violet. People who have watched the presentation believe that this newest region will be based on Spain as there are glimpses of buildings very reminiscent of Spanish buildings like the Sagrada Familia in Barcelona. They also showed the

first stage of the brand-new starters for the region, Sprigatito the grass cat, Fuecoco the fire crocodile, and Quaxly the duckling. With this, it was announced that these games are slated to be released in late 2022.

Although there was much more announced throughout the entire Pokémon Week, these were the major highlights of everything announced. If you want to see everything for yourself, most of the information is found on both The Official Pokémon YouTube Channel and the official Pokémon Twitter page.

John Mulaney returns to SNL, joins the "Five-Timer" club

In a nutshell: John Mulaney, yes! LCD Soundsystem, boring.

JOSEPHINE TRUEBLOOD
A&E EDITOR

Reflecting on both a chaotic and spectacular year for comedian John Mulaney, his return performance to SNL does just that. Discussing his drug intervention, stint in rehab and the birth of his son, Mulaney describes the year as "complicated," while telling exuberant stories during his opening monologue. The exciting achievement this episode honored, however, is his fifth time hosting the show, or joining the "five-timer's club" alongside many other famed comedians. With too many celebrity cameos to count and consistent sketches, John Mulaney's newest SNL appearance is highly anticipated and quite solid.

Instead of their usual, politically-centered cold open, SNL decided to dedicate this time to honor the atrocity of the invasion of Ukraine. Opening with The Ukrainian Chorus Dumka of New York, the choir performed a short song, "Prayer for Ukraine," with a candlelit 'Kyiv' in front of them. The

show did a great job throughout many sketches of keeping things light while making space for the terrifying events of the week.

The first sketch was "Monkey Judge," Mulaney plays Honorable Judge Tango, juxtaposing a neutral tone while describing monkey limitations within a courtroom. Mulaney always manages to steal the show, like playing a supportive husband in "Cupid Shuffle" and "COVID Dinner Discussion." Paying homage to timeless Mulaney SNL themes, he brings back the absurd, New York-themed musical with "Subway Churro," which covers everything from subway stabbings ordered by Giuliani to Jesus wearing a beer helmet.

"Weekend Update" had a particularly hard job to do this week, as Michael Che and Colin Hanks typically pull a lot of political content into their segment. Hitting Russian leadership hard, they delicately navigated the Ukraine invasion, mostly focusing on Chernobyl and Trump's response. Balancing this with the classic strange news headlines and even a "yo mama" joke, "Update"

ended up being cut short with no additional interview segments.

Unfortunately, SNL always has a dud or two. "Blue River" was a bit lackluster, yet the low point in the show was LCD Soundsystem's performance. With a technically spot-on performance, they gave everything and not enough. Playing two throwback songs from 2005, the lead singer, James Murphy, was serving some Morrissey vibes, in a bad way. The stage setup was both strange and boring, as there were excess percussion players, resulting in one dude literally standing in the corner doing nothing for a majority of a song. With both Moog and percussion overkill, their two repetitive songs with dull lyrics were not a great representation of the art-rock genre. If this is the best New York has to offer, thank goodness we don't live there.

Yet, exciting moments definitely include the numerous celebrity cameos from Paul Rudd, Steve Martin, Candice Bergen, Elliott Gould, Conan O'Brien and Tina Fey, all to honor Mulaney's induction to the five-timer's club. Further,



PHOTO COURTESY OF NBC

John & Malcolm SNL Promo.

LCD Soundsystem makes an additional appearance in a sketch. As usual, there is a surplus of great content as the two cut-for-time sketches, "Podcast Set" and "Family Band" are both fantastic. The most exciting cameo is hands-

down John's new son, Malcolm, whom he poses with in his series of SNL promotion photos for the week. The comedy community clearly went all out for Mulaney's triumphant return.

“Don’t Look Up” is not worth your time

Adam McKay’s latest is a depressing take on the world at a depressing time.

RYAN MANTLE
FILM CRITIC

“Don’t Look Up” follows two scientists who are consistently undercut by greed and politics while they desperately try to stop the apocalypse. Unfortunately, the humor used either came off as forced or too relevant to actually be funny. Perhaps I would have liked it more under different circumstances, but the message and cynicism felt particularly hopeless considering current world events.

Generally speaking, I’m a fan of director Adam McKay’s work but “Don’t Look Up” relies more on who is delivering the lines than actually making those lines comedic. Jonah Hill’s role as Jason Orlean embodies that perhaps more than anyone else. He is both the president’s son and chief of staff, taking a shot at the nepotism of the previous administration. While that concept sounds like it could be funny, it is utterly wasted by jokes that felt more appropriate for a thirteen-year-old than an adult.

Even Ariana Grande and Kid Cudi team up for a storyline and song that highlight our reliance on social media and feel-good news stories; a theme of the film that is addressed constantly over the two and a half hour run time. They are not bad per se, but they are superfluous and distracting. There are a seemingly endless number of cameos and bit parts played by recognizable faces and voices, but their presence takes the focus off the main cast who are supposed to be inspiring.

If you’re not exhausted from reading about the cast yet, the main group

is full of A-List types who deliver fairly compelling performances in this otherwise empty film. Jennifer Lawrence’s Kate Dibiasky highlights how women are treated more harshly by the media/internet than their male counterparts. Her anxiety is both understandable and feels real. Rob Morgan brings a very needed down-to-earth presence in the film as Dr. Oglethorpe, the only sane member of the US government. Meryl Streep’s President Orlean does an admirable job propping up an otherwise shallow villain. Mark Rylance gives an unsettling performance as the “Mark Zuckerberg type” of the movie. Cate Blanchett’s character has no ambitions of her own and it is unclear why her storyline was necessary, but she manages to still be engaging in spite of that writing flaw. Other actors/actresses that get extended screen time but are wholly unnecessary are (takes a deep breath) Timothee Chalamet, Tyler Perry, Paul Guilfoyle, Himesh Patel, Melanie Lynskey and Ron Perlman.

I wish that were the end of the cast discussion but sadly, no. Lastly, Leonardo DiCaprio plays Dr. Randall Mindy, a man with crippling anxiety who is thrust into the spotlight and finds that he enjoys it. If there is one thing that DiCaprio excels at in his acting, it is having panic attacks and he showcases this skill frequently in “Don’t Look Up.” His character arc is fairly typical, but he handles it with the poise you would expect from him at this point.

If that seems like a lot of ink about the cast and little about the actual movie, that’s because it is uninspired. “Don’t Look Up” makes fun of the hyper-politicized present that we live in but

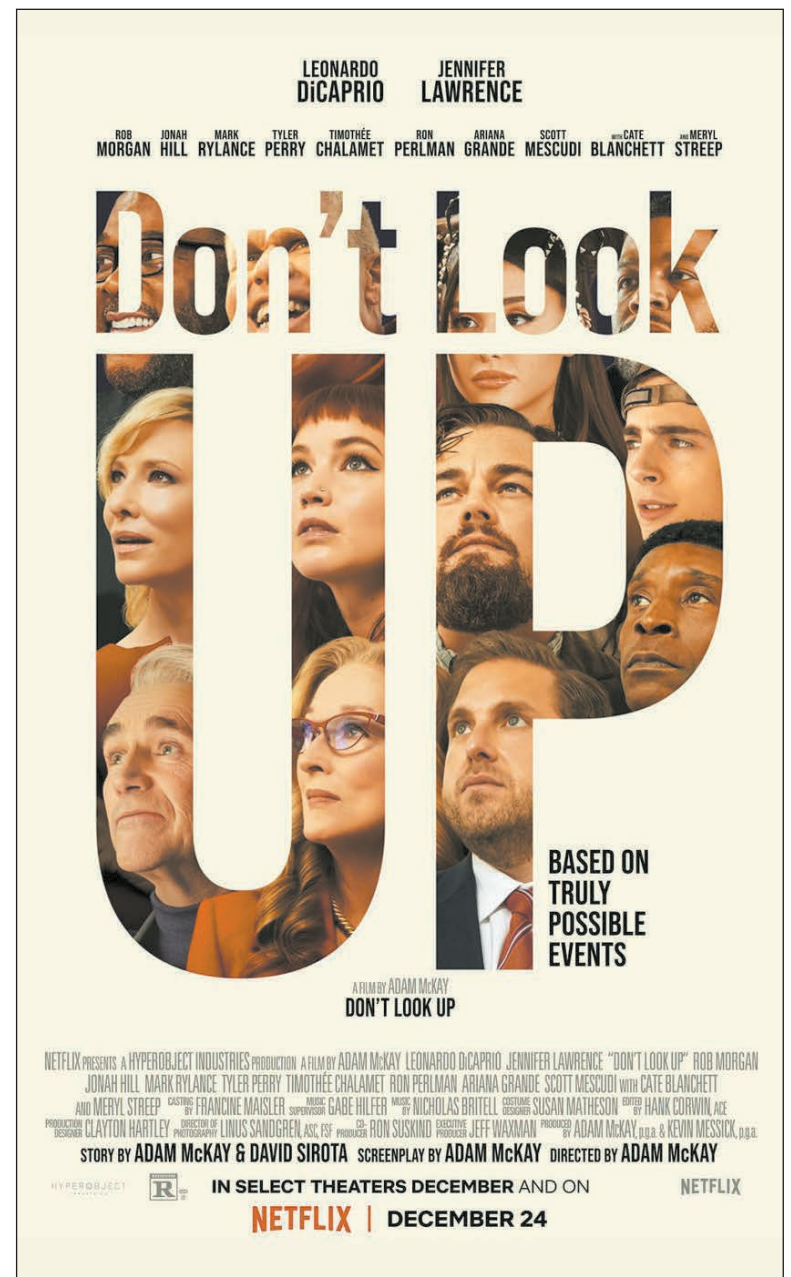
does it in ways we’ve all seen before. A conservative talk show here, depictions of white men in cowboy hats chanting there; it is a familiar and lazy take. The media is depicted through a “Today Show”-style format that dedicates more time to celebrities than actual news. The only trope they missed was an athlete being particularly dumb or someone pretending to do Joe Rogan’s podcast, though they got Sarah Silverman to partially fill that void.

Relying on familiarity can be a good thing if the message is well thought-out, but I left feeling more hopeless and depressed than anything. Greed and power are prevalent throughout the film for comedic purposes, but it felt like, in the end, they always win. That likely isn’t what McKay was trying to convey based on his previous films, but this is also not a feel-good movie so I can’t rule it out.

Overall, “Don’t Look Up” is a comedy with very little earned comedic features. There were two jokes in the whole film that I actually laughed at, which means the rest of the time I was watching people have panic attacks about the end of the world. There were so many unnecessary scenes and characters that it distorts the main story into something far more cynical than was necessary. It needed to focus on one thing to criticize instead of attempting to attack social media, the tech industry, distrust in science, the media, and politics. What results is a movie that is far worse than the sum of its parts.

STAR RATING 2/5

[“Don’t Look Up” is available to stream only on Netflix.]



Don't Look Up Movie Poster

PHOTO COURTESY OF NETFLIX



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