

THE LEDGER

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON TACOMA

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PHOTO BY ALEXA CHRISTIE

BUDGET WOES

UWT accounts for declined enrollment post COVID-19

Using social media to cause change

Page 6

Things to do this fall in Tacoma

Page 8

Union contract negotiations come to an end

SEIU 925 has been in contract negotiations with the University since July, on Friday, those negotiations finally came to an end.

By DESTINY VALENCIA
NEWS EDITOR

After months of negotiations with the University of Washington, union members of SEIU 925 have come into agreement and voted to ratify a contract with the university. This contract will become effective July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2025.

SEIU 925 is a local union that represents “17,000 people in Washington who work in education from early learning through higher education, as well as members who work in local government and nonprofits,” according to their website. This covers many healthcare workers along with staff members at the University of Washington that can

hold a range of positions from medical, to IT specialists and Program Specialists.

This contract has long been in the works with many different negotiations happening between union bargaining teams and the university since July 20 this year. Members in these contract negotiations have asked for a variety of changes with their new contracts which included pay raises, safety training and an address to staffing issues.

The original demands of the union members included a 26% pay increase to be distributed over the next two and a half years, but the school countered with a 3% and 2% offer.

“If you keep up with inflation, that’s a pay cut,” said Jesse Cooley,

an organizer and member of SEIU 925 and Program Support supervisor here at the UWT campus.

Informational pickets have been organized and held all over UW campuses such as Seattle, Bothell, and Tacoma along with Harborview Medical Center and UW Medical Center-Montlake during workers’ lunch breaks. Cooley, who works for the office of Student Transitions and Success, had to miss out on working at one of his office’s events: an orientation for new students.

“I am a program support supervisor and should be working orientation but instead I am forced to make my voice heard to my chancellor, we’re not even worth three and a quarter percent,” Cooley said at an informa-

tional picket on September 23.

Since then, one more meeting was held to discuss the union members’ contract. With a bargaining team and the university, a tentative agreement was reached around 3 a.m. on September 27. Union members were then asked to vote and ratify this contract.

The main highlights of this new contract included a pay raise of 4% in July of 2023, and 3% in July 2024, a variety of healthcare benefits, an addressing of staffing issues, and safety training that includes evacuation plans in case of emergencies along with more protections for victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking and more.

While members of the union such as Cooley are relieved that

these negotiations are finally over, there is still more work to be done. “I am an angry yes,” Cooley said in regards to his vote on the contract.

While SEIU 925 celebrates the vote for ratification, they now wait for the contract to be sent to state legislators to approve and fund it in January 2023.

If you would like to find out more about SEIU 925 and its members you can go to:

<https://www.seiu925.org/>
<https://www.facebook.com/seiu925>



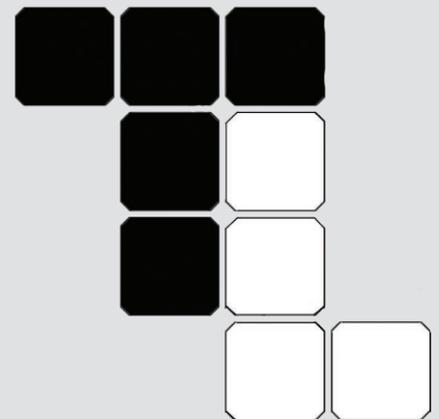
Union members take part in an informational picket regarding contract negotiations

PHOTO COURTESY OF SEIU 925 FACEBOOK PAGE

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How low enrollment is impacting the UW Tacoma's campus

UW Tacoma is among one of the campuses experiencing no growth enrollment and will have to readjust to the budget deficit as student programs and activities are being impacted by it.



PHOTO COURTESY OF UWT

The UW Tacoma campus is among many campuses experiencing low enrollment.

By **LESLIE GONZALEZ CRUZ**
NEWS REPORTER

Given COVID-19's unprecedented shutdown and closures of schools nationwide and abroad, higher education has without a doubt also experienced lasting impacts. On July 7, 2022 the Chancellor, Sheila Edwards Lange released a statement about the 2022-23 budget deficit requiring continued expense reduction.

"We still have ongoing budget issues due to the underlying gap between revenues and expenses," said Chancellor Lange

in regards to tackling the same \$5 million gap, "The Office of Planning & Budget on the Seattle campus is anticipating no enrollment growth for UW Tacoma this Autumn."

As reported by the Office of Registrar the 2021 autumn quarter began with 5,027 students enrolled and dropped to 4,527 for the spring quarter of 2022, a decline of 500 students.

"Low enrollment is not a trend exclusive to UW Tacoma, it's a trend we're seeing in colleges and universities nationally," said Shannon Carr, Vice

Chancellor of Student Enrollment. According to the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center, in the U.S. undergraduate enrollment has declined by 4.7% from spring 2021.

In efforts to improve student enrollment, Student Affairs will begin strategic enrollment planning in november.

"Strategic enrollment planning is a data-informed process that will align university resources to ensure our long-term enrollment success and fiscal health," said Carr.

In addition to Strategic Enrollment Planning, there will be a shift to focused digital and electronic outreach, as well as joining the Common Application.

"Schools who have joined see an increase in applicants; Since all three UW campuses are using the Common App students will have an easier way of understanding the application process," said Carr.

Due to low enrollment programs and activities have faced cuts based on fee money that was expected to be available from projected enrollments. Among one of the student programs

and activities facing cuts is the campus newspaper, The Tacoma Ledger, the paper now prints in black and white and is no longer completely in color.

Axel Dominguez, a sophomore studying communications, noticed the color difference in the paper and questioned the odd change.

"The fact that low enrollment is impacting how the paper is produced is crazy," Dominguez said.

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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.



It's soup season in Tacoma

Go check out some of the best soups available in Tacoma.

By RUTH OGDEN
OPINION COLUMNIST

The best thing about autumn is that it's officially soup season.

I'm a soup gal. I eat soup at least once a week. I bring it as my lunch and microwave it in Tupperware. I can eat it for dinner every night and not get bored. I have made it in a Crock-ot and I have made it over a campfire. I love almost every soup I encounter.

I am not the only soup lover at UWT. I recently interviewed several UWT students asking their opinions on soup. Halanna Williams, a junior majoring in psychology and creative writing, said that she likes homemade soup the best, but if she had to choose, her favorite soup would be the pho from Pho Bac in Seattle. Jai'Shon Berry, a senior majoring in communication, said that "Soup is best fresh and homemade from your mom or grandma." Johnny Doan, a senior majoring in information technology said that he agreed with Jai'Shon, and also that "soups with noodles are the best."

There is still something about restaurant-made soup that hits the spot after a long day of studying. This week, I am excited to introduce to you what I consider the top five soups available for purchase in Tacoma.

#5 Infinite Soups - all soups

Infinite Soups should have a place on every "top soups of Tacoma" list. Their soups change daily, and every soup I've had here satisfied my soup craving. Their range of variety is incredible: they've made everything from matzo ball soup to vegan coconut curried potato soup. It's a cash-only establishment and doesn't have much in terms of seating, but their soup is so good that it's worth eating immediately while sitting on the curb outside. Check their Facebook page where they post their daily soups and hours of operation.

#4 Duke's Seafood - Clam Chowder

Duke's Seafood is an upscale seafood restaurant located on the Tacoma Waterfront serving up the best clam chowder in Tacoma. Although it's spendier than other soups on this list, the richness of the chowder ensures you feel full after a single cup. While other clam chowders seem to be more chowder than clam, Duke's clam chowder has savory clam pieces in every bite. It's herbier than other clam chowders and is rounded out with potatoes and celery.

#3 Tom Kha Gai - Thai Pepper

Thai Pepper is a family-run restaurant in downtown Tacoma, and they serve up an excellent tom kha gai. Tom kha gai is a creamy coconut broth soup made with lemongrass, ginger, chili and other spices. It's citrusy, nutty, and sweet yet sour and savory. Thai Pepper's tom kha gai is stocked with mushrooms, and for a little extra you can get a generous portion of chicken breast. I like to order mine with some rice on the side. This soup is super filling and doesn't make you feel sleepy after eating.

#2 Kotteri Tonkotsu - Moshi Moshi

Located in the Stadium District tucked next to Ball Autosales and Service is Moshi Moshi, a true hidden gem. If your idea of ramen comes from a packet at the grocery store, Moshi Moshi will set you straight. Thin, wavy noodles are served in a rich pork and black garlic oil broth so complex I could sip a mug of it all by itself. It's served with ajitama (soft boiled marinated egg) and pork chashu.

I like to get mine with an extra onsen tamago and stir the custardy egg into the broth. The generous portion of scallions sprinkled on top give a bright flavor to this soup. Having a bowl of this soup feels like sinking into a warm candle-lit bath. Cup Noodles could never.

#1: Phở Gà - La Cà Bar

Last, but certainly not least, this soup is so good that even thinking about it makes my mouth water. I once ordered it as takeout three times in one week as a coping mechanism to get through finals week. In my opinion, the best chicken-and-noodles soup that you can find in Tacoma is the Phở Gà from La Cà Bar. Located off of 6th Avenue next to Mary Mart and across from The Red Hot, La Cà Bar serves up delicious upscale Vietnamese street food. Although their menu offers a large array of vegan and vegetarian options, it is the perfect simplicity of their Phở Gà that keeps me coming back for more. The soup is made up of thin rice noodles and chicken breast served in a silky, savory, aromatic broth. It's served steaming hot with a hardboiled egg, cilantro, jalapenos, green and white onions, bean sprouts, Thai basil, and a lemon wedge - add hoisin and sriracha to taste. This soup warms both the body and soul - I consider it to be the best comfort food money can buy in Tacoma.



PHOTO BY RODNAE PRODUCTIONS

Movies vs. Books : Which do you prefer?

One writer's opinion on the time-old debate.

By CELIA WILLIAMS
OPINION EDITOR

Harry Potter, Ophelia, Katniss Everdeen, Thomas and Elizabeth Bennett. All of these characters were created by the great minds of some of the most famous writers. As modern times have moved away from the time-old tradition of pen and paper, many of the works by famous authors like Jane Austen or J.K. Rowling have been turned into movies for the masses.

As more and more written works are being turned into movies, there has been growing controversy on whether the traditional book or modern films

are better. There is a lot to think about when deciding which you prefer. From personal interest to the amount of detail incorporated into the story, there are many aspects to both that cause someone to prefer one over the other.

Personally, I find that books offer a lot more when it comes to creating a story. One of my favorite series, "The Maze Runner" by James Dashner, was finally turned into a movie and I was disappointed to say the least.

Many of the key aspects of the book had been taken out or changed to make the story fit into a movie. I don't just mean

silly little details that don't have any impact on the overall story, I mean details that completely change the course of events in the story.

I also find that when I'm reading, being able to imagine the characters and setting for myself is more appealing than having them be laid out for you as a movie would. In some ways, it's almost as if a movie is the moment that disappointment sets in.

As a reader I spend months, maybe even years, thinking about the story and characters I've grown attached to waiting for the movie to come out. Once I've seen the movie, I'm

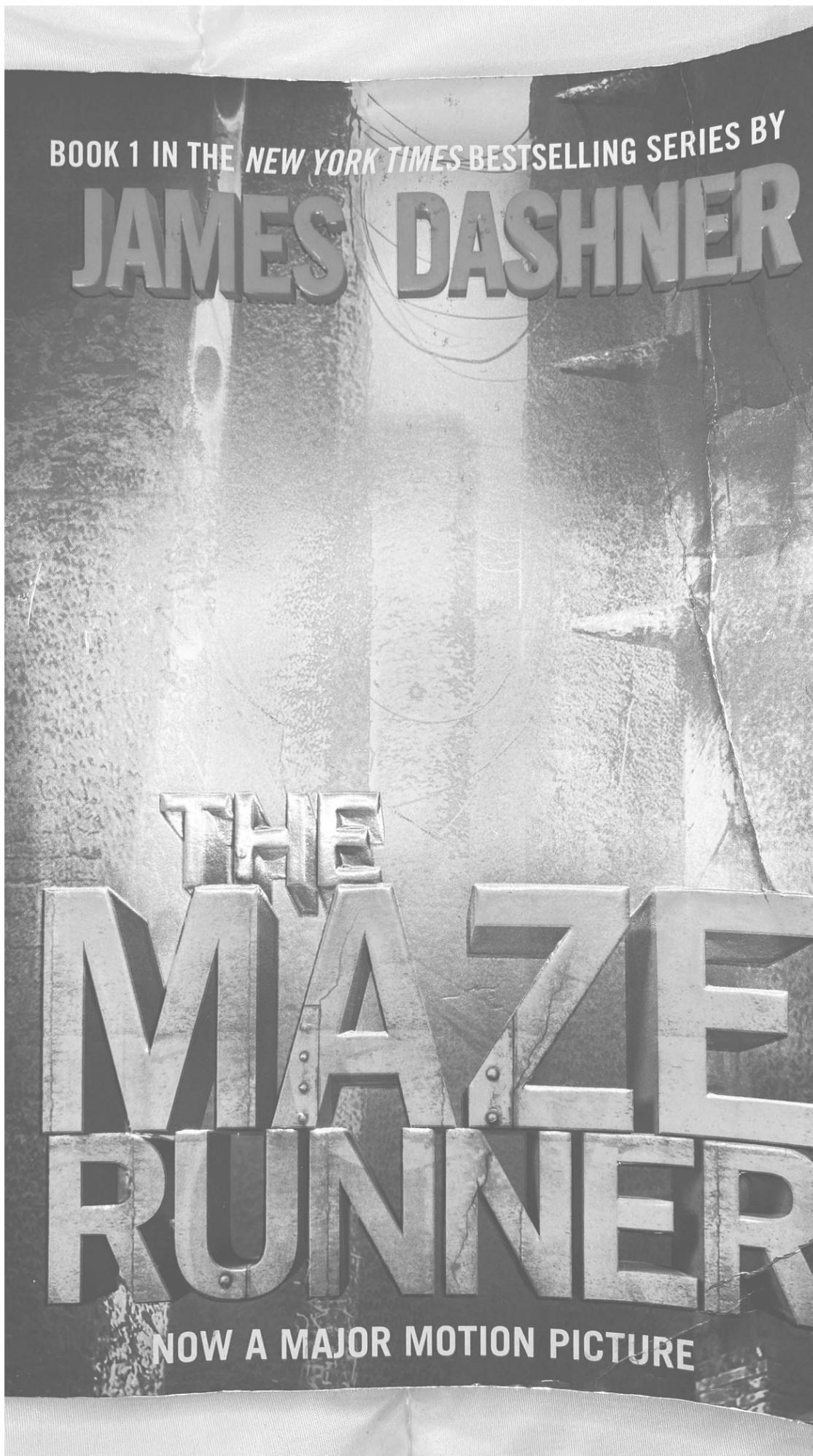
almost instantly disappointed. It's like waking up from a dream and a wave of reality crashes over you.

I think that this comes from the lack of detail in many movies. As the standard length of a movie is between an hour and a half and three hours, there is a lot that has to be cut out for the sake of time.

To this I ask, why are we still turning books into movies? It seems to make more sense to have books turned into T.V. shows. The way in which the transition could be made is rather simple. One book is one season, one chapter is one episode.

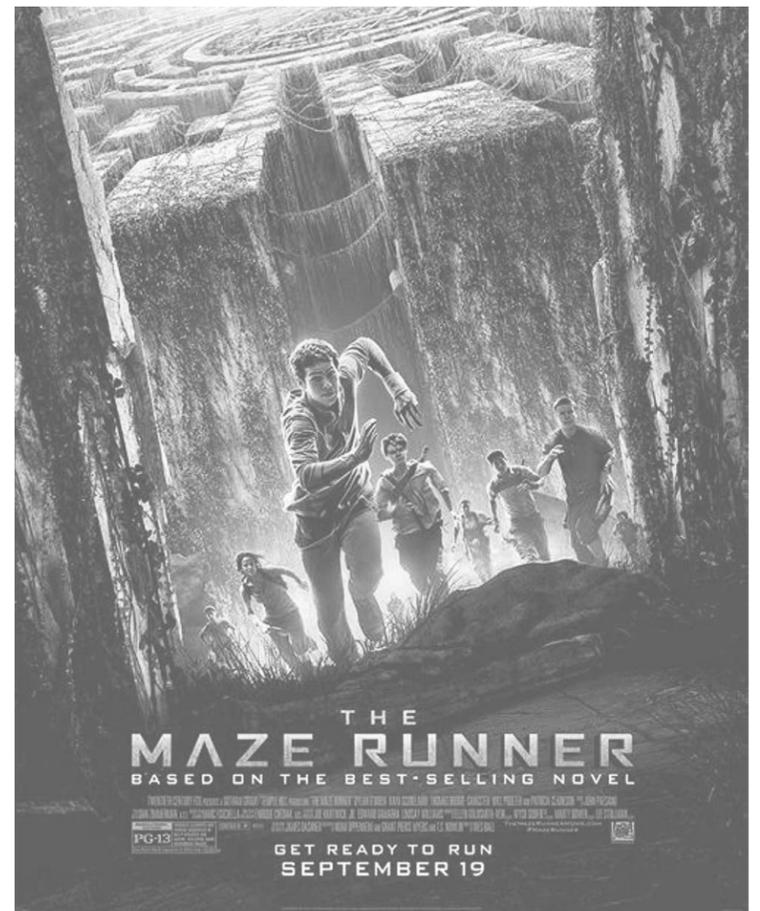
Why is this not the new norm? Why do we still settle for quickly made and unfulfilling movies? Sure there are great films out there and they do an amazing job of telling a story, but you can't deny that adaptations of novels and book series often fall short of the hopes many may have had for the adaptation.

In short, there is a lot for those working to adapt our favorite books to fit on the big screen. By moving away from today's norm, there's a greater chance of adaptations being more appealing and less disappointing in the future.



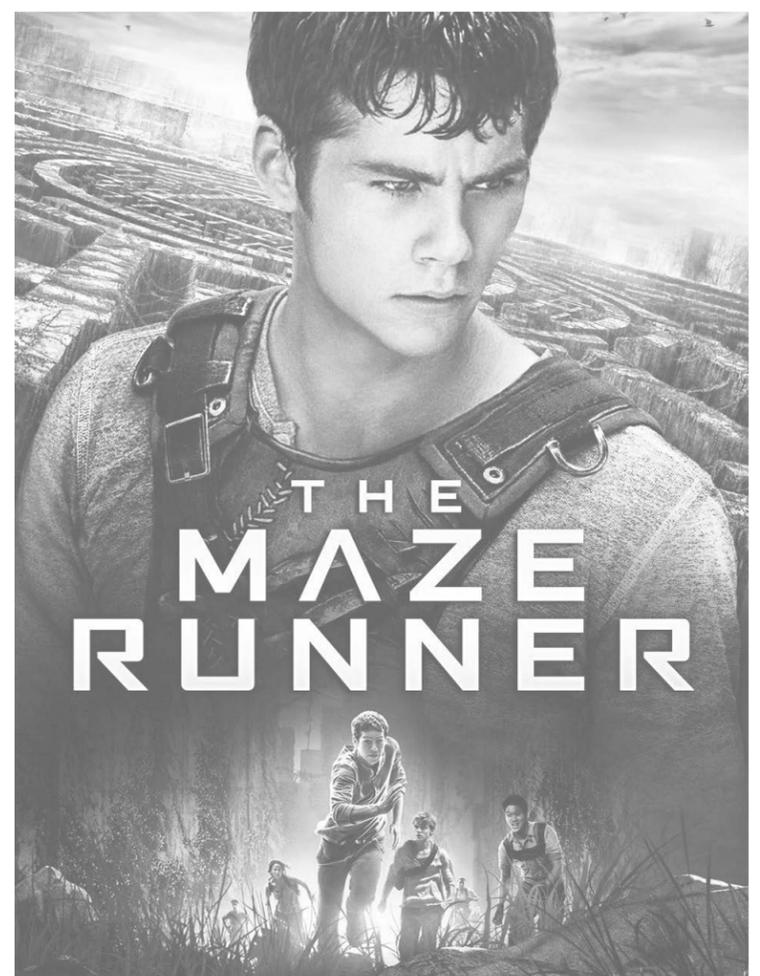
Cover of The Maze Runner by James Dashner

PHOTO COURTESY OF CELIA WILLIAMS



Cover of the film "The Maze Runner"

PHOTO COURTESY OF 20TH CENTURY FOX



Cover of the film "The Maze Runner"

PHOTO COURTESY OF 20TH CENTURY FOX

Can utilizing social media cause change?

Speaking up for the forgotten issues; as they all cut their hair for Mahsa, and for all Iranian women's freedom.

By **KIARRA BLAKELY-RUSSELL**
A&E EDITOR

In the past few months, there have been many occurrences of disasters, natural or not; some being along the lines of more school shootings in Texas during May, to earthquakes overseas, and just recently the Florida floods. It has been our job to know what's going on in this world, but as human beings; the real issues can come down to these topics causing discomfort to our daily lives. A possible thought may be, "if it isn't happening to me it isn't happening at all." But the reality is, it's happening. The information just hasn't found its way to this campus. But without proof, what's the easiest way to gain a person's attention in 2022's tech age?

The answer to that is easy. As a community we use social media to tackle the real issues in this world. There are multiple platforms out there used for entertainment purposes. People use them for dancing, singing, debating and even cooking. However, it's only rare that political and mass destruction issues pop up and stay on your feed for longer than a few weeks.

TikTok is one example, which was released back in Sept. 2016, but did not gain traction until 2020. This is because of the rise in users once the pandemic started. TikTok is a dance app in short, one for fun and skits; the new Vine of this generation, as some would call it. It is used for captivating an audience by doing something viral-worthy, and it doesn't matter what it is. But while connecting this, it is important to realize that TikTok has also been able to bring attention to the issues of injustice that the U.S. may choose not to focus on.

One of these tragedies experienced through TikTok is the death of Mahsa Amini.

One of these tragedies experienced through TikTok is the death of Mahsa Amini. She was a 22-year-old Persian woman, who was taken captive by the morality police for not wearing her hijab properly, but was later beaten to death. Her death sparked outrage, and the women in Iran all began to protest by removing and burning their hijabs; not out of disrespect, but out of freedom. Many videos on TikTok were quoted as saying "Imagine living in a world where there's a government that believes that a woman showing her hair is

immoral, but killing a woman over showing her hair is not immoral."

A creator named @loveverne said, "This vicious and violent act catalyzed thousands of protests in the streets of Iran, where unfortunately more are being executed and harmed," she said. She also stated that some being as young as 10 years old were harmed.

Many of the videos that were coming from locations in Iran have been banned, and have been deleted due to internet restrictions from the Iranian government.

But this didn't stop the women in Iran from protesting; they continued by cutting their hair; up to their ears, and others shaving their head completely. This movement then grew due to TikTok, and many women around the world began cutting their hair in support of this cause. They do this not only as an act of protest, but to honor the many victims. While many more who continue to speak out on TikTok with what little internet resources they have, many worry if they will make it to the next day because of it.

While TikTok may not have fixed the situation, it did help in another way. Because of TikTok, people have been able to see the genocide going on in other countries.

While TikTok may not have fixed the situation, it did help in another way.

A TikTok user @elica.lebon says, "It's so important to understand that because so many of us in Iran have been executed. 80% of Iranian people in Iran right now are Gen Z; they are babies!" She then goes on to say that these are the people who are telling us what's going on through TikTok, while protesting, who are the ones being targeted, and are dying for their freedom.

A few weeks from now this issue may disappear from the public eye, though it may already have. But what you can do in order to not let others forget about the lives being lost, and the women in Iran fighting for their freedom, is spreading photos, videos, and quotes. The easiest way is from a quick repost using TikTok's new feature, or even posting a photo on your Instagram story. This article is utilizing their voices for them. The art is in continuing to share it through reading this.

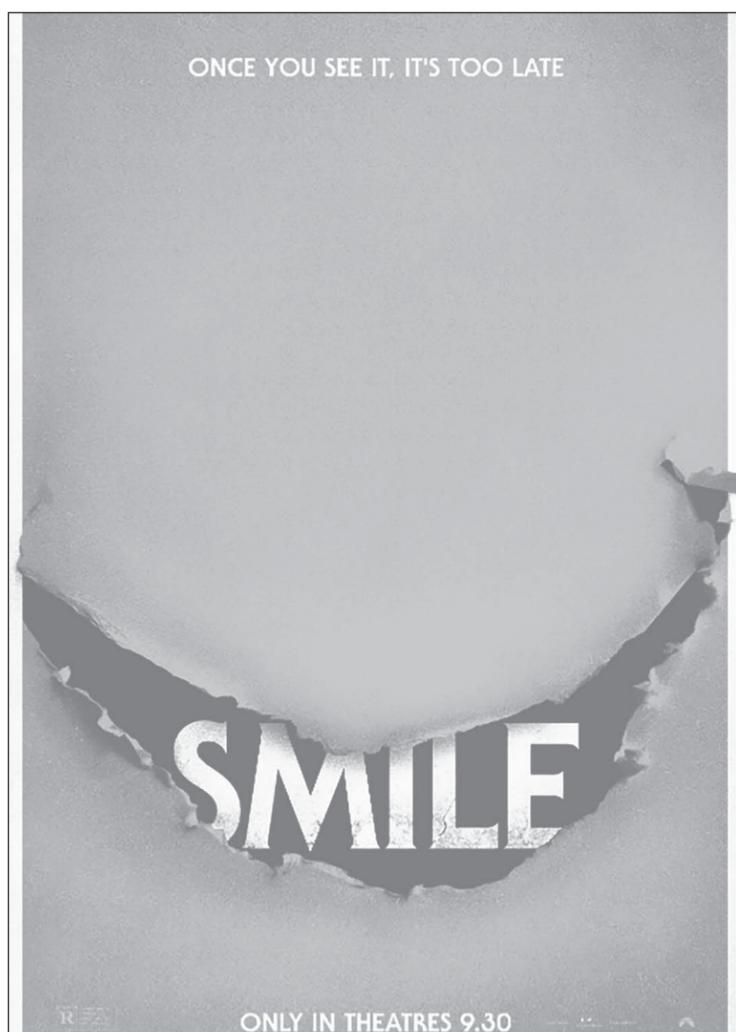


An illustration depicting a protest over the death of Mahsa Amini.

ILLUSTRATION BY STEVIE ESTEBAN

“Smile” only finds horror in its dull story

Though it has a promising concept, “Smile” falls flat with cheap scares and awkward writing.



Theatrical release poster

PHOTO COURTESY OF PARAMOUNT PICTURES

By EMILIA BELL
FILM CRITIC

“Smile” begins when a therapist named Rose, played by Sosie Bacon, meets a patient who claims she is being plagued by an unnerving entity that appears as people smiling and causes bad things to happen. After the patient shockingly kills herself while smiling in the session, Rose begins to have the same experiences. When this entity starts to ruin Rose’s life and everyone around her believes her to be crazy, she attempts to get rid of it and in the process, face her own trauma.

The film possesses a strong concept. The imagery of people smiling is ominously disturbing, but it is underutilized and more perplexing than anything else. The scene with Rose’s patient smiling caused the audience to laugh, and as time went on, it added nothing to the plot. It is visually well-made, using fun upside-down camera angles and a moody color palette, but the script needed several rewrites, as the dialogue throughout is painful, exposition-heavy, and can’t seem to stick to one consistent tone. The protagonist is slow to unravel clues that the audience has already pieced together from scenes she has been a part of, and the supporting characters don’t add anything to the story. Rose is shown traumatized after

the incident with her patient, while the character of her sister obliviously discusses her son’s birthday and dismisses Rose’s concerns. This creates a self-centered mother stereotype, resulting in an exaggerated character that could have been scrapped altogether. Through moments like this, its perspective on mental illnesses is uninformed and comes up shallow, boiling down Rose’s motivations to help others to misguided guilt.

Everything ends up comedic rather than scary; Moments like a child shuddering in fear result in hilarity. For this reason, it’s possible this film could end up as a cult classic of the “so bad it’s good” variety although it lacks tension, and the ample jumpscare that rely heavily on musical cues become tiresome.

By the end, the audience can anticipate the next jumpscare based on the musical cues.

The cues feel as if the score is trying to tell the audience when they should feel scared, or are simply adding a loud noise to force a scare. To create a jumpscare, a scene transitioned by cutting to a car honking, resulting in a fake-out fright. For a horror movie, there is little to no horror involved, with more bland and quiet moments rather than scary ones. It would have benefitted from raising the stakes by being more creative and committed to parts that were

meant to be scary, and executed more effective character development.

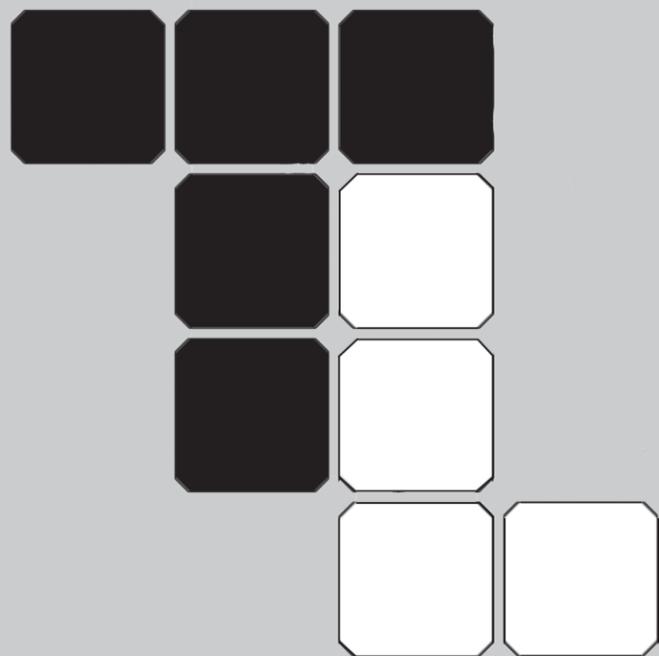
This film is just a combination of other horror movies that came before it. It seems to follow in the footsteps of “The Ring” (2002), “It Follows” (2014) and “The Babadook” (2014) but doesn’t provide a new take on any of those ideas and themes. The only original element is the visual of the smiling, but it didn’t make the experience much more enjoyable.

The film was overall predictable. The message behind the story is weak and unoriginal, resulting in a heavy-handed metaphor and a mediocre story that does little to make up for the lack of horror. The only positive quality comes at the end with one unique sequence. However, by that point, the audience was restless. Ultimately, the conclusion as a whole was unoriginal, frustrating, and unsatisfying.

2/5



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The Tacoma Ledger

Virtual reality recommendations and where to try it near Tacoma

Virtual reality has come a long way and for the better.



VR artwork courtesy of Asketch via Pixabay.

PHOTO COURTESY OF PIXABAY

By **ANGELO ALEGRE**
A&E COLUMNIST

Virtual reality is an area in video games that is not talked about enough among the community. Though it had a shaky start when it was first released, VR has slowly been getting the support it needs. The most notable support has been the recent upgrades to the technology used, as well as more video games for consumers.

There are many types of games that people can try out in VR ranging from single-player adventure games to multiplayer horror games and everything in between. There are games out there, but there are a few that stand out from the rest. Some prime examples being “VRChat,” “Phasmophobia” and “Skyrim VR.”

“VRChat”:

“VRChat” is a free VR social platform available on SteamVR and Meta Quest. The social platform contains many worlds made by the community that you can play and explore. It is a great way to slowly become accustomed to VR, as the game is fairly simple to understand and has motion comfort settings. As the game is a social platform, there is no real end

goal in “VRChat,” so the things you do are only limited by your imagination.

“Phasmophobia”:

“Phasmophobia” is a multiplayer ghost hunting game that is only available on Steam. It can be played in desktop mode, but it also has great VR support. With its latest update, many quality-of-life changes have been made for both desktop players and VR players. Alongside the VR support, there are a multitude of maps to choose from, as well as multiple levels of difficulty keeping the game from feeling dull.

“Skyrim VR”:

What would you do to make a great game with an amazing story even better? Make it playable in VR; that is exactly what happened in “Skyrim VR.” Being known as one of the best titles in the open-world genre due to the freedom to do anything in its world, all the while having a great storyline; “Skyrim VR” is a must-pick-up for people who are looking into playing solo. It is available on both SteamVR and Playstation VR.

“Boneworks”:

This is coming as a recom-

mendation from Samm Benigno, a second-year business student at UWT who has experience with VR for nearly three years. He explains the game as “a physics-based puzzle game where everything around you reacts with how you manipulate it.” When you compare the in-game physics of “Boneworks” to other VR titles like “VRChat,” it is easy to see that the creators of “Boneworks” put more time and effort into production as your virtual hands cannot phase through objects, and instead fully interact with the environment around you. If this physics-based puzzle game seems interesting to you, you can find it exclusively on SteamVR.

If you do not have access to VR directly, there is a place near Tacoma where you can try it. Digital Reality Gaming in Point Ruston. It offers multiple ways for you and your friends to enjoy VR. They offer access to their Meta Quest VR station, VIVE VR station, and their Roto VR Chair. Prices may vary depending on which service you get, but all their prices are based on the time played and not games played.

Spooky Season is here and Tacoma is ready

It’s time for warm comfort food and a whole lotta pumpkins.

By **JOSEPHINE TRUEBLOOD**
MANAGING EDITOR

Whether you’re chasing the thrill of the spooky season, sick of the summer heat or just excited for pumpkin-themed desserts, Tacoma is full of amazing opportunities to gently transition into the fall season. Learn about the best October events, activities and eats available in the area.

Frighthouse Station:

The longstanding Tacoma haunted house takes place in Freighthouse Square, originally the historical Milwaukee Road Freight Houses built in 1909. Presumably a little haunted, the maze-like, old building is the perfect setting for an immersive haunted house experience, complete with actors and a new theme each year. Buy tickets and visit the intricate and well-designed haunted house this October, open Thursday through Saturday, 7-10 p.m.

ALMA Tacoma:

If you are looking for something entertaining, funny and fall-themed, try a spooky drag show! To put a spin on their famed regular 18+ drag events, ALMA is hosting Halloqueen: a Halloween themed drag show. Macy Marks, Ursula Major,

Jack King Goff and Glenn Coco are sure to put on a horrifying show in the ALMA Venue that absolutely slays. Snag tickets before they sell out and prepare to be blown away on October 15.

Ice Cream Social:

End any fall activity with a trip to Ice Cream Social, the cutest ice cream shops spread across Tacoma. With locally-sourced ingredients, the Social has released new fall flavors: Pumpkin, Chocolate Peanut Butter Cup, Apple Cider Sorbet (vegan/dairy free) and Coconut Cinnamon (vegan/dairy free). Visit one of their three locations in Proctor, Point Ruston or Hilltop, open everyday.

Pumpkin Patch:

If you’re dying to carve some pumpkins, consider making the trek out to Puyallup to support a local farm and get the perfect pumpkin patch experience. Located on River Road, Double R Farms and Picha Farms are offering u-pick pumpkins this fall, priced by weight. Double R famously hosts a lengthy five acre corn maze, along with pumpkin sling shots and hay rides. Visit any day of the week and find your perfect pumpkin.

Antique Row:

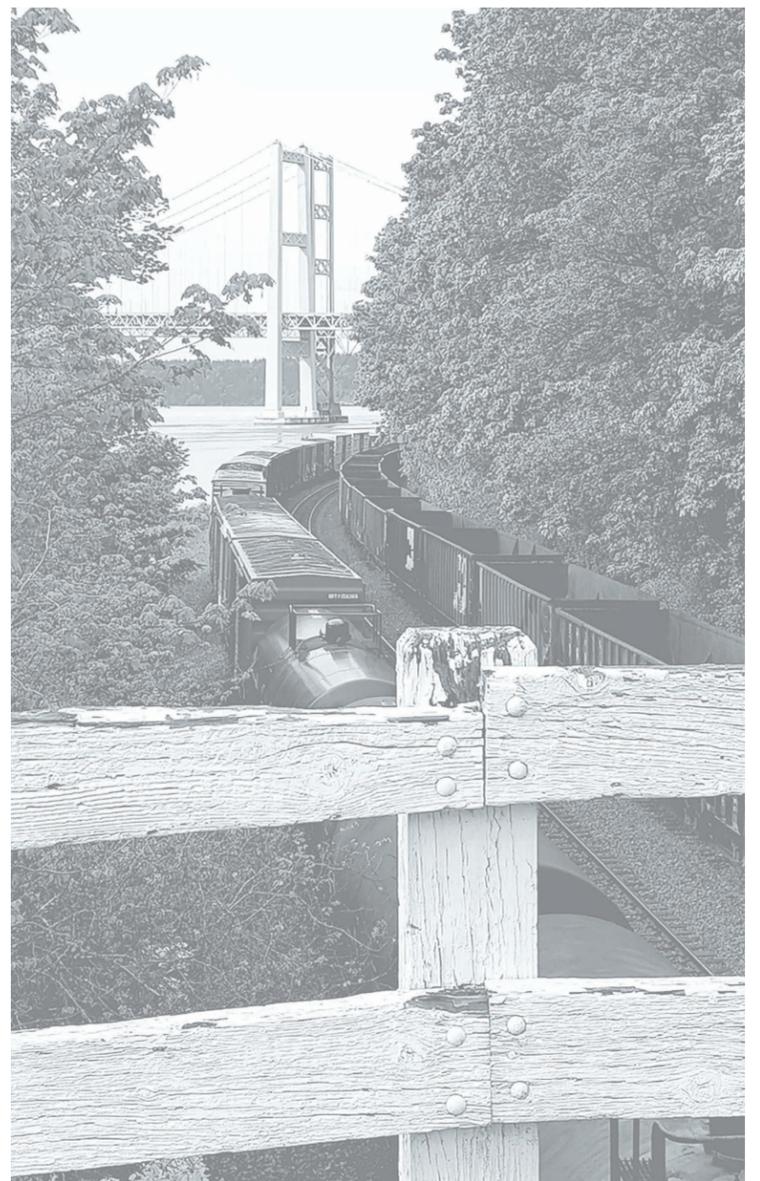
If you’re already starting costume prep for Halloween, check out Antique Row in Downtown Tacoma to find those special finishing touches and add some vintage flair. Located on Broadway street, the Row is more active Wednesday through Saturday, housing a variety of antique stores. From Mecca Mercantile’s “little bit of everything” approach to D. Habadashery’s curated menswear, you’ll be sure to find a showstopping costume.

Brewery Blocks Tacoma:

Located just across from the far side of campus, Tacoma’s newest restaurant and bar hub is a great new place to check out this fall. Incline Cider House, 7 Seas Brewery and the adorable new pizza place, Camp Colvos, all are right off of 21st. Get in the fall mood with some warm pizza and delicious craft cider.

Point Defiance Zoo:

The Zoo is putting on their annual Zoo Boo, a fall-themed Zoo weekend. Watch the animals eat pumpkins, see underwater pumpkin carving and experience various ghostly games. This family friendly activity will be available October 15 and 16, 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.



Tacoma is lovely in the fall.

PHOTO COURTESY OF PIXABAY