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THE LEDGER

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON TACOMA

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THE DEATH OF PAC AVE?

From the University Bookstore to Hello Cupcake more and more businesses are closing.

The University Book Store set to close its doors

The UWT University Book Store is among the many retailers who have closed its doors and left on Pac Ave.

By **DESTINY VALENCIA**
NEWS EDITOR

The University Book Store at UWT on Pacific Avenue will close its doors next week, January 13. The University Book Store, which has been in operation since 1990, was one of the first retail tenants of UWT when it became a permanent campus back in 1997.

In a schoolwide email from Chancellor Dr. Sheila Edwards Lange, Lange notes the difficulties that have come with the ever-changing retail market announcing the hard decision to close the University Book Store location.

The University Book Store, which closed its Bothell location earlier this year, will move to an online format and a location for students to pick

up their books and supplies ordered online will be announced in the near future.

Workers at The University Book Store are not employed by the University of Washington, but some employees have been offered positions to fill at the Seattle location.

Trevor Peterson, the Chief Operating Officer for the Book Store noted that there were five employees of The University Book Store, one of these employees being full-time and the others part-time workers who are also students. Peterson stated that the full-time employee will work at the Seattle location and part-time workers will not as it did not make sense for them to commute to Seattle for part-time work.

Pacific Avenue, which has

seen many store closures and moves in the past few years due to rent increases, lack of shoppers, and a variety of other factors, will be including The University Book Store to its roster of businesses that could not thrive or survive. At this time, it is not clear if a rent increase was a reason for The University Book Store closure.

A representative for UWT overseeing retail spaces was contacted regarding The University Book Store closures as well as other retail spaces but at the time of publication has not responded.

Until The University Book Store closes its doors, students are encouraged to order online and receive free shipping with a coupon code the school has offered.



Pac Ave, before the pandemic, garnered hundreds of people daily. PHOTO BY ANDREW ANDERSON

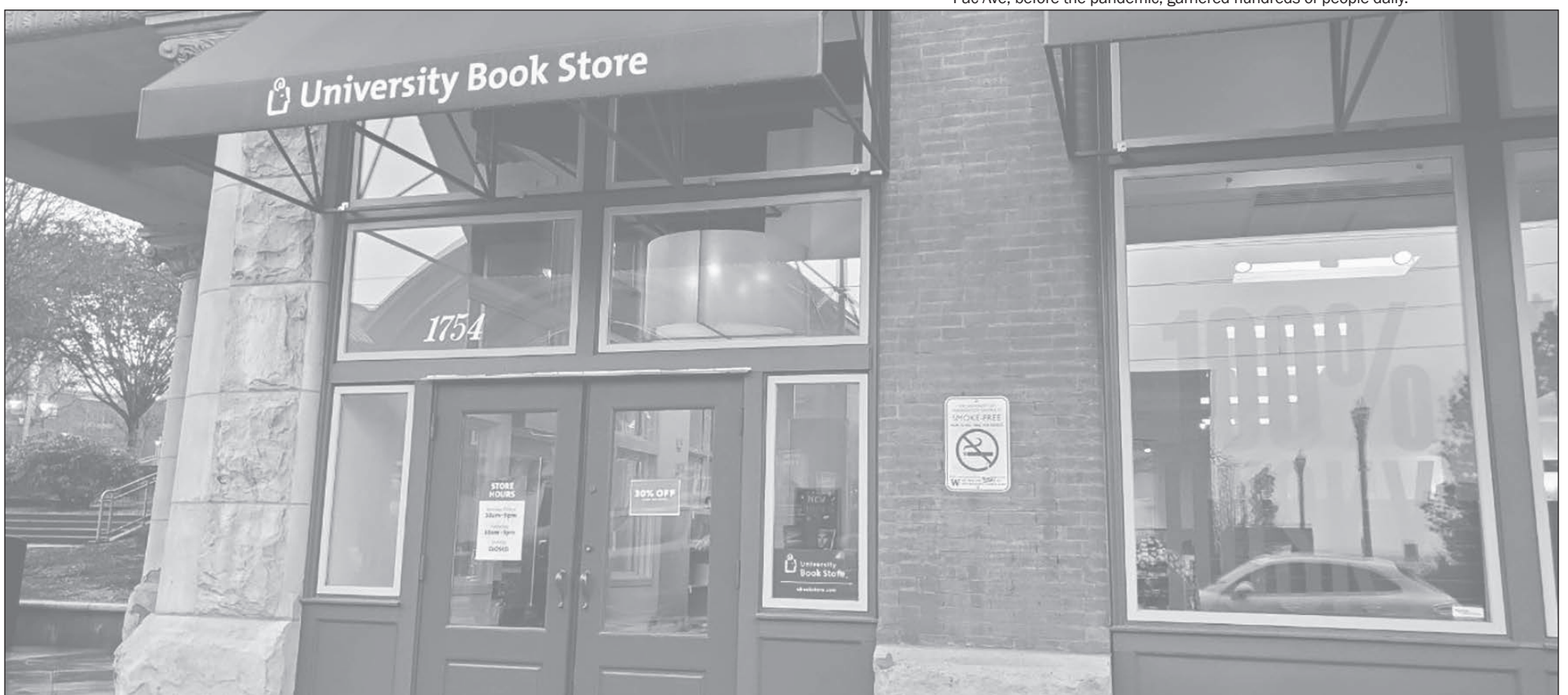


PHOTO BY DESTINY VALENCIA



PHOTO BY ANDREW ANDERSON

Pac Ave has seen many a business close, and Hello Cupcake is simply the latest.



Hello Cupcake joins the ranks of closed Pac Ave businesses

After years of delicious service the cupcake shop of Hello Cupcake has closed its doors.

By **ANDREW ANDERSON**
WEB & LAYOUT MANAGER

Hello Cupcake has been a fixture on Tacoma's Pacific Avenue for 15 years, and in their time, have served thousands of customers. Sunday, however, was the day their last cupcake was sold and their doors closed for the last time.

It was on Jan. 4 that a message from the owner was posted across their social media handles and their website. Within the message, the owner cites that while the decision came across as sudden, it had been building up for some time.

"As sudden as this may seem, it's a decision I've been forced to come to terms with after two long years of attempting to weather the storm of unpredictable circumstances, economic hardship, rising ingredient costs, and myriad other challenges Hello Cupcake has faced," the owner wrote within the announcement.

The full message can be found @hilocupcaketacoma on their Facebook page or on their official website of www.hello-cupcake.com. Since the announcement, there has been no word if Hello Cupcake has planned to open at another location or remain per-

manently closed. They also aren't the only business to have faced these challenges.

Over the years Pacific Avenue has seen a number of businesses close. Ledger editor and manager Josie Trueblood has written of businesses such as The Mad Hat Tea Company and UrbanXchange that have faced closure in her article, "Loss of vital businesses on Pacific Avenue may explain enrollment numbers." Destiny Valencia, a Ledger news writer, has also covered even the recent closing of the University Bookstore here on campus in her article, "The University Bookstore set to close its doors."

It goes without saying that the COVID-19 pandemic took its toll on numerous businesses across the state, especially businesses that rely on foot traffic like those on Pacific Avenue. However, a lack of customers hasn't been businesses' only problem.

Early 2022 was when The Mad Hat Tea Company closed its doors and had a change of location. A comment on a Facebook post of theirs in March cited that they had survived COVID, but not "greedy landlords." Hello Cupcake, while citing various factors that led to their closing,

was, assumedly, facing changing rent costs of their own.

While sales and traffic have decreased, many small businesses have only begun closing in the last year. A possible factor of this is the rescission of the COVID-19 pandemic eviction moratorium. This disallowed landlords in Washington state to raise rent prices, which included small businesses under 50 employees. The rent increase restriction was lifted in June 2021.

A Tacoma Office Rent Price & Sales Report from CommercialCafe of 2021 showed a steady increase in leasing and rental fees per square foot for offices within Tacoma. The report also shows an average asking rent of \$28.09 rent per square foot. The report mentions that Tacoma office space in 2021 marked a +21.20% change compared to 2020. Prices have been assumed to have only increased as America's economic struggles remain.

Hello Cupcake is yet another casualty of the changing landscape of the historic Pacific Avenue, and while stores like Tinkertopia and Stocklist remain, it seems as if high rent costs won't be leaving anytime soon.

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Taiwan Study Abroad story missed valuable information

To the Editor,

My name is Angel Reddy and I work at the Office of Global Affairs as the Senior OGA Fellow. We saw your most recent article about studying abroad in Taiwan through UW Seattle and we were disappointed that you did not mention UW Tacoma's program to the same country. We wanted to bring attention to our very own study abroad program to Taiwan. The program is led by Drs. Mary Hanneman, Yi Li and Lily Li from UW Tacoma and Tacoma Community College.

The program is designed to study the political, economic, cultural, and social developments that shaped the 20th century while using Taiwan as a focus. The program is hybrid, meaning that students will spend several weeks in Taiwan before returning to the

United States to further their knowledge through online coursework. This is a wonderful option for students that are unable to leave the country for extended periods of time. We also have other programs that vary in length and subject to match the unique student body at UW Tacoma.

Students are more than welcome to reach out to our office at uwintl@uw.edu or stop by our advising hours to meet with an OGA Fellow to learn more about how and why to study abroad (hours are listed on our website). We also provide information sessions every quarter to combat perceived barriers to studying abroad, such as those involving finances, identity, and the application process.

I myself studied abroad in 2019 to Bangalore, India through UW Seattle. I was fully unprepared for what I



experienced while abroad. I grew up being unable to travel due to my family's finances. I also grew up in a community where I was frequently the only brown person in the room. Traveling to India was the first time that I was surrounded by people who shared the same skin color as myself. I thought a sense of belonging would flood me the moment I stepped foot onto Indian soil. I thought I would have a renewed sense of who I was in the world. That did not happen. Rather, I felt more disconnected from

my identity after traveling to India. My family's history of displacement left me unaware of who I was and my place in the world. While not what I expected, my study abroad allowed me to challenge myself and view my identity in a new light. I asked myself questions that people are still unable to ask themselves well into their adult life. These questions surrounding intergenerational trauma, colonialism, and skin color informed me more about the person that I want to be. Without study abroad, I would not be the person that I am today, the person writing this letter.

I usually share this experience with students at our information sessions as a reminder that study abroad is not always perfect. However, with planning and reasonable expectations, it can be life changing.

I am always happy to talk with students more about this experience or potential questions they may face abroad. As a student who worked with UW Seattle's study abroad office, I truly feel that our office goes above and beyond to provide students with the resources they need to understand study abroad. At the end of the day, study abroad may not be for you and that is okay! Our goal is to help students make informed decisions about their options. Students should not have to miss these incredible opportunities because of a lack of information or misinformation.

Sincerely,
Angel Reddy
Senior OGA Fellow at the Office of Global Affairs

2023 MLK Unity Breakfast

The 2023 MLK Unity Breakfast, hosted by the UWT Black Student Union, will be held on Monday, Jan. 16, 2023.

By **KATIE SCOTT**
NEWS REPORTER

After a short hiatus due to COVID-19 precautions, the UWT Black Student Union is welcoming back the annual MLK Unity Breakfast. The event will take place on Monday, Jan. 16, from 8:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. at the University YMCA.

"This event is to honor Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., his birthday and to bring unity to the community in general. It is an opportunity for collaboration between the Tacoma community and UWT student community," UWT Black Student Union President, Jasmine Davis, said.

Davis explains one of the goals of the UWT Black Student Union is to create a sense of community on campus for students of color to feel comfortable. She highlights the UWT Black Student Union's focus on the importance of civic connection and how, over the years, this focus has influenced many of the events the club has hosted.

In 2007, the UWT Black Student Union began the MLK Unity Breakfast as an opportunity to bring the UWT community together with members of the city in an effort to highlight the vibrance and distinction of Tacoma. Davis says this event has become an important component in creating a holistic connection between city and campus groups.

A foundational part of the

historic breakfast is recognizing community members who hold active roles in helping their communities thrive. This is done through appointment of the UWT Dream Awards. The UWT Dream Award honors community members who have dedicated their time, talent, expertise and care to strengthening their communities through service work and civic organizing. Recipients are nominated by community members and recognized by UWT as pivotal members of the community who work to advance civil rights, social justice and community-centered services.

In addition to the Dream Awards, UWT BSU Vice President, Christian James, said, "The event will include a full breakfast and various performances, alumni speakers, and a keynote speaker. Chancellor Lange will be in attendance, as well as possible attendance by government officials and the Mayor of Tacoma."

The 2023 keynote speaker is author, speaker and mentorship advocate, Dr. John "Push" Gaines. Sharing his experiences as a former at-risk youth, navigating the difficulties of growing up surrounded by drugs and violence, Dr. Gaines shares a message of resilience and the importance of pushing through adversity to find your purpose.

The MLK Unity Breakfast is open to all. Attendees are

encouraged to pre-register, as space is limited to 275 tickets. Table sponsorship options are also available. Tickets for the event are \$15 for general admission and \$10 for students and children 10 years and younger. Ticket pricing includes admittance to the event and breakfast. Vegetarian breakfast options will be available.

Currently, the UWT Black Student Union is looking for event volunteers who are available to help setup, sustain and tear down the event space. All UWT Black Student Union event volunteers will receive free admission to the event and a complimentary breakfast.

"[The UWT Black Student Union] has many thanks to give to the different offices we are in collaboration with for this event," James said.

Those offices include the BSU Alumni Association, Center for Equity and Inclusion, Center for Student Involvement, Office of Community Partnerships, Office of Global Advancement and the Office of Student Affairs.

In addition to the MLK Unity Breakfast, the UWT Black Student Union is currently hosting a fundraiser for the Innocence Project, which provides support to wrongly incarcerated individuals and/or individuals who are incarcer-

ated and have under-funded access to legal representation.

The UWT Black Student Union has a full calendar of events and volunteer opportunities available throughout 2023. If you are interested in supporting or joining the UWT Black Student Union, President Davis recommends joining the club's Discord and Instagram pages, which can be found in the club's link tree at <https://linktr.ee/uwtbsu>

For more information, or to register for this event, please visit the MLK Unity Breakfast webpage at <https://events.uw.edu/mlk23> or email the event coordinators at mlkuwt@uw.edu.



PHOTO VIA UWT

The truth about social media

A win-lose situation for the younger generations.

By CELIA WILLIAMS
OPINION EDITOR

With 2023 finally upon us, like many, I have been thinking about my resolutions and how I would like to better myself. Something I've constantly battled with is my love-hate relationship with social media. Social media has become one of the most influential parts of the lives of the younger generations. While access to the internet can be helpful in connecting people and spreading valuable information (looking at you TikTok), it has had damaging effects too. From cyberbullying to the spread of harmful misinforma-

tion, there is much to consider regarding the internet. All of this has made me want to change how I use social media and how often.

Students from middle school to college are becoming increasingly consumed by social media and its many features. Since the start of MySpace in 2004, social media platforms like TikTok, Snapchat and Instagram have become more and more popular. This sparked not only a rise in the connection between people but also an endless loop of issues many can't escape from since the internet is so accessible and always there. Anxiety, depression,

self-harm, and body image issues leading to eating disorders have been shown to be connected to many students' social media use. The Canadian Medical Association Journal stated that "In Ontario, the proportion of teenagers reporting moderate to serious mental distress increased from 24% in 2013, to 34% in 2015 and to 39% in 2017, with parallel increases in health service utilization."

I myself have struggled with the growing use of social media and the status it holds in society currently. In high school, I felt like I could never escape social

media and its harmful effects. While there were times I enjoyed social media (who doesn't love a good meme?), I found myself not enjoying the time I spent endlessly scrolling on my phone. While I might have felt alone in these feelings, an article published in the Canadian Medical Association Journal made it clear that many students feel this way or have negative experiences connected to social media. What does this mean though?

Social media is not going anywhere anytime soon. This being the case, it's important to be mindful of not only how of-

ten we use social media but what we share too. The idea of "once it's on the internet it's there forever" and a digital footprint is reason enough to think about what you do when you're on the internet. This doesn't mean that social media is inherently bad or something to avoid, it just means that like many of the things in our lives we have to enjoy it in moderation.

This year, let's try to unplug and step away from being connected to the entire world. Let's take a chance to better ourselves and grow. Happy New Year, Huskies!



PHOTO BY CELIA WILLIAMS

Many young adults and students these days have multiple social media accounts.

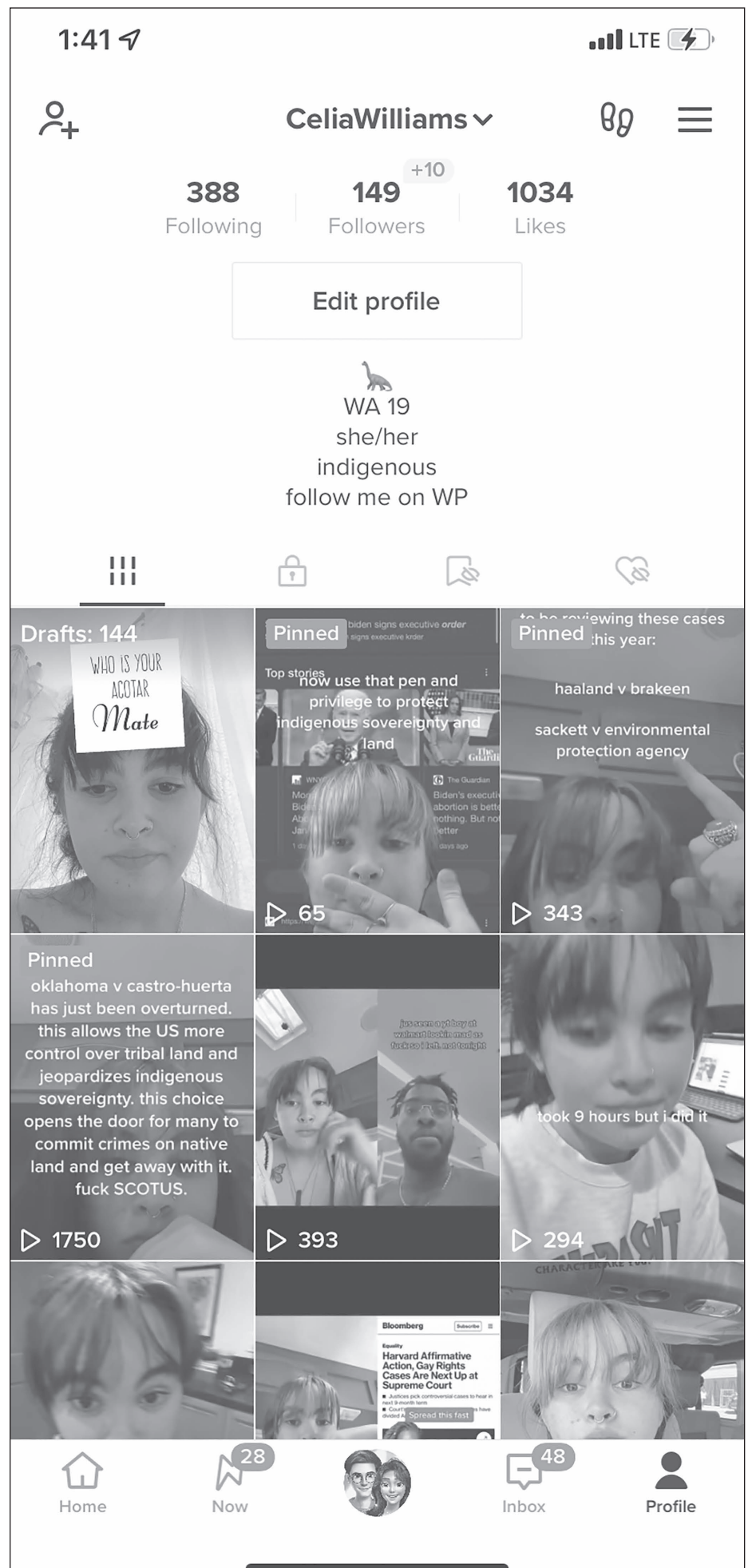


PHOTO BY CELIA WILLIAMS

An example of a social media platform page.

Electrical grid attacks are a national cause for concern

The Department of Homeland Security released a national bulletin indicating that the vulnerabilities in the United States' power grid as well as its "interdependency with other infrastructure sectors" make it an appealing target for domestic terrorist attacks.

By **RUTH OGDEN**
OPINION WRITER

Recent substation attacks in North Carolina, Washington, and Oregon have drawn attention to vulnerabilities in our infrastructure. The implications are dire and should not be brushed aside.

On Dec. 25, 2022, four electrical substations were intentionally damaged, cutting power to thousands of homes in Pierce County. A federal investigation led to the arrest of two Puyallup residents, Matthew Greenwood, 32, and Jeremy Crahan, 40. As of Jan. 3, 2022, they have been charged with possession of an unregistered firearm and conspiracy to damage energy facilities.

Earlier in December, unknown assailants shot up two North Carolina substations, leaving thousands of rural residents without electricity, including the Moore County Regional Hospital. The lack of power combined with freezing weather triggered the announcement of a county-wide state of emergency. The investigation is ongoing.

On Thanksgiving morning of November 2022, an unnamed person was charged with using a firearm to intentionally dam-

age a hydropower substation in Clackamas, Oregon.

Puget Sound Energy and Cowlitz County Public Utility District have also publicly confirmed there were attacks on their substations in November 2022.

But why is this happening?

An intelligence briefing obtained by CNN from the Department of Homeland Security stated that since 2020, there have been several highly credible and specific plans to attack the American electrical grid. These plans were by white supremacist and anti-government extremist organizations. Messages and video manifestos call for 'lone-wolf' style attacks that do not require any technical knowledge (such as using firearms, bolt cutters, or hammers to damage the equipment). The purported aim of attacks such as these would be to incite riots or sufficient chaos that would temporarily disable law and order in a given area.

Cutting power to residents does more than inconvenience people. For individuals that rely on oxygen, electrical medical devices or have medications that require refrigeration, power cuts can be deadly. Many rural areas have

pump-based septic and water systems: without a working pump, a power outage quickly turns to a water shortage. In the absence of electricity, extreme weather patterns induced by climate change such as blizzards and heat waves can harm thousands. Even car accidents are more likely in a power outage due to non-functional traffic signals. Intentionally damaging the power grid is a violent act towards others and should be prosecuted as such. There is a chance that these types of attacks could increase in frequency and even intensity.

This doesn't mean we should panic. However, it does mean we should be prepared to take care of ourselves and our community. Make sure you have shelf-stable food and water for 48 hours for your own household. In addition to this, consider the needs of your neighborhood: in the event of a power outage, elderly residents and families with young children may need extra help. Local law enforcement and federal agencies can only do so much - protecting your community starts at home. And of course, if you see something, say something.



PHOTO BY ERIK MCLEAN

Attacking the electrical grid should be considered a terrorist act..

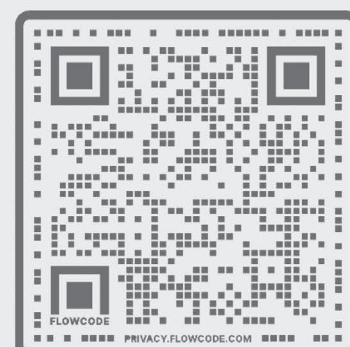
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Five binge-worthy shows perfect to revisit this winter

Even better background noise for those with short attention spans.

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

As we ease into our second week of the winter quarter, I thought why not speak about some TV entertainment for a second. With all the new shows coming out this new year, I bet some students are excited for new stories to take in, and others might not be ready for more, needing to catch up on the last six episodes of the show that you've somehow forgotten about.

There are people that have the ability to go through multiple shows in a few days and gather all their intel in order to provide the tastiest of spoilers to gloat online about. While those with short attention spans remember periodically to revisit an old comfort show.

I know that I can't personally sit down and finish anything without stopping for weeks.

So for those looking for some comfort or new shows to revisit another time, here are five binge-worthy shows for people who don't binge watch TV.

"The Good Doctor"

"The Good Doctor" is about a young surgeon named Shawn Murphy who is navigating the

world while living with autism and savant syndrome. The show focuses on key aspects in his life, where Shawn must overcome socializing with others and slowly work with other doctors in his same position. Many people with autism face challenges every day and in each episode is a lesson for Shawn to learn, which makes this a great comfort show to revisit.

It also serves to help audiences who are also on the spectrum possibly feel seen or be able to critique where the show could've done better. I was able to revisit the show after speaking more about it in my Disability in Film class, which made me love the show even more. You can stream this show on Hulu.

"Wednesday"

Everyone loves a good spooky show, and why not enjoy a new remake of an old classic we all know and love. "Wednesday" is a Tim Burton twist on the "Addams Family" movies, where we see a teenage Wednesday head off to a school for freaks after nearly killing her brothers' bullies. There, she encounters danger, and has to solve a decades-old curse before it ruins the school of Nevermore Academy with the help of her not-

so-liked friends, and a revival of Christina Richie, the original actress for the 1991 "Addams Family" films. A lot of mixed reviews are met with this show given multiple comparisons between the two actresses but if you are willing to give this show a shot, I recommend doing so. You can stream this show on Netflix.

"Broad City"

One of my favorite go-to comfort shows that warms my belly is "Broad City." The comedy show is about two 20-something friends, Abbi Abrams and Ilana Wexler, who met during their college years and are trying to navigate their way through New York despite multiple adventures that lead them to unfortunate places. This show was created by Abbi Jacobson and Ilana Glazer, who play the leads. The show involves talks on women's rights, relationship types, sexuality, drugs, equality and more. With crude but silly jokes that might be someone's cup of tea, but could stray others away. Most episodes provide multiple hilarious scenarios where Abbi's awkward personality of questioning everything and Ilana's extroverted and sometimes obnoxious personality often gets

them into obscene and weird situations down the rabbit hole. If you like not knowing what to expect with each episode and love randomness, I recommend "Broad City" to revisit. This show is streaming on Hulu.

"The White Lotus"

Here is a recent and probably commonly known show on many media platforms: "The White Lotus" is an Emmy-Award winning, dark-comedy anthology about an all-star cast that heads to a resort and is able to do whatever they desire, including multiple privileged impulses. The show grew to popularity in its second season, once they brought in Aubrey Plaza and her story, while also continuing on with Jennifer Coolidge's storyline of unfortunate events. The show gives a very thriller, who-done-it vibe with multiple sequences jumping back to each character's POV. All these occurrences and events happen when they must talk their way out of something. The show has many twists, but since I can't seem to keep up with social media, I'm still on the first season with the Mosbacher family and a newly-wedded couple having troubles in paradise. If

you can sit down long enough for what seems to be hour-long episodes, you will enjoy adding this to your comfort list. You can stream "The White Lotus" on HBO Max.

"Brooklyn Nine-Nine"

Two comedy shows on one list may sound shocking but in the wintertime we all could use a good giggle to distract us from possible seasonal depression. "Brooklyn Nine-Nine" is about a talented carefree detective with the best arrest records in the office, Jake Peralta, played by the hilarious Andy Samberg. This show includes a variety of now well-known actors such as Terry Crews as Lieutenant Terry, Chelsea Peretti as Gina Linetti, Stephanie Beatriz as Detective Rosa, Jason Manzuukas as Adrian Pimento, and more. The characters try to work around the chaotic work ethic of Detective Peralta with a hint of dark comedy. An overall good choice to end the list because this show is one you can have on in the background on any day and still enjoy sitting down watching. You can stream "Brooklyn Nine-Nine" on Peacock, Amazon Prime and selected social platforms.



'The Whale' is a character-driven triumph

The buzz surrounding Brendan Fraser's performance is not exaggerated, but the film manages to reach beyond the hype of his performance alone.

By **EMILIA BELL**
FILM CRITIC

"The Whale," directed by Darren Aronofsky and based on the play by Samuel D. Hunter, focuses on Charlie (Brendan Fraser), a severely overweight online college teacher whose health has been steadily declining since the devastating death of his boyfriend. He lives a purposefully isolated life, only interacting with his stubborn but kind-hearted nurse Liz (Hong Chau). When Charlie learns he doesn't have long to live, he attempts to reconnect with his estranged and troubled teenage daughter, Ellie (Sadie Sink). "The Whale" marks Brendan Fraser's return to the spotlight, something that the internet has fondly dubbed the "Brenaissance."

Darren Aronofsky is widely known for making disturbing and controversial films such as "Black Swan," "mother!" and "Requiem for a Dream." These are all known to be troubling and edgy in their own ways and "The Whale" is no different. Aronofsky does not shy away from uncomfortable imagery or subject matters like mental illness, pain, or death, which can reasonably alienate some audiences. But the risks taken with "The Whale" are necessary to tell an honest story.

The screenplay by Samuel D. Hunter is intentional and poignant, and the dialogue mostly felt authentic. There are moments in the film that detract from the general realism and may seem silly, but they have a purpose in Charlie's journey and do not diminish the emotional center of the film.

The film is heart-wrenching and gut-wrenching, displaying a wide variety of emotions from humor to heartbreak. One can tell it is based on a play from the focus on the performances and the

single setting of an apartment, but that is not a drawback. The story revolves around grief, trauma, guilt, and how people cope with it.

The performances are the driving force of the film.

Brendan Fraser and Sadie Sink both complement each other, with Fraser's sense of optimism and Sink's angsty pessimism. The role of Charlie could not have gone to anyone else but Fraser—he brings a certain charisma and genuine feel to the character despite his circumstances and lack of confidence. This helps the audience empathize with him rather than pity him. Hong Chau is magnificent as Liz, bringing humor, sensitivity, and frustration to the film. Ty Simpkins provides awkward comedy as a missionary who isn't sure how to deal with Charlie or his daughter. Sink's character is easy to dislike given her abrasive attitude and cruel actions, but through Charlie's eyes, the audience will seek to understand her and sympathize with her situation.

Many people have expressed discomfort with the film, saying it is gross and hard to watch, which was likely Aronofsky's goal. Charlie struggles with eating and his weight due to his grief. Obesity in popular culture is often shamed, but the film explores how grief and depression can lead to coping mechanisms like Charlie's over-eating. Overall the movie is very touching and scenes where the character is grappling with his problems and his body are more sad than disgusting.

Fatphobia in Hollywood is still a major issue, but this film does not criticize those who are overweight. Some content creators have expressed concerns on how the film could be used to perpetuate fatphobia, which is a valid concern, but a slippery slope on

its own. Charlie is overweight because he is dealing with the loss of a loved one, but he is framed as a layered human that the audience could connect with. He is not criticized by Aronofsky; rather, he is portrayed objectively.

The film also discusses the complicated relationship that Charlie and the surrounding characters have with religion. Religion is not outright demonized in the film, but rather approached sincerely with the negatives not glossed over. It primarily acknowledges the damage it has done to the LGBTQIA+ community, as well as to relationships between family members and friends. The storytelling here is not limited to the screenplay; Aronofsky highlights the themes in his visuals as well.

Aronofsky chose to film the movie in 4:3 aspect ratio, which means the images were closer to a square than the conventional wide rectangle most audiences are used to. This adds a confined, claustrophobic feeling to the movie, mirroring Charlie's physical and emotional state of being trapped. The only times the aspect ratio changed were when the character felt more free.

Brendan Fraser has received excessive praise for his performance, which is worth seeing, even if Darren Aronofsky is not one's cup of tea. Though it is a bit of a cliché for actors to be commended for performances that involve a physical transformation—with many complaining that actors often win Oscars due to impressive makeup—Fraser's performance does not rely on his appearance. He proves himself with every smile, every line delivery, his body language, and every tear. There was not one moment where the audience doubted him.

"The Whale" is currently playing in theaters.



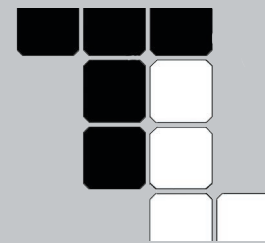
Brendan Fraser in "The Whale"

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‘Art Battle’ is taking over Freighthouse Square this January!

For all art lovers and those with a keen eye, this event is for you.

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

Welcome back students and a happy new year, the winter quarter has finally begun. We hope your holidays were just as exciting as this event will be. For all the art lovers and students interested in seeing a battle as intense as a joust, the yearly “Art Battle” will be returning January 14 in Tacoma at Rainer Room—Freighthouse Square.

“Art Battle” is a live and competitive painting battle where groups of artists have

20 minutes to take their blank canvases and transform it into whatever their imagination creates. As they battle the clock, they will have bidders surrounding them, and voters discussing in a high-stress but fun event. The artwork will be available for silent audience after the shows.

Sean Bono, the first of the co-founders, created Art Battle events in New York in 2001 and has worked 20 years to advance the idea of live art competition. The second co-founder, Simon Plashkes, launched the “Art Battle” tour-

naments in Toronto, and also works with “Art Battle” communities around the world who help celebrate their artistic talent. The last co-founder, Chris Pemberton, the Tournament Commissioner but is now on artistic sabbatical; was responsible for many shows that balanced competition and community.

“Art Battle” is described by The New York Post, “Like Iron Chef, but with Paint!”

As someone who attended this event in 2020, I’d describe it as a very high-energy, vibrant and colorful dynamic.

Where many people from different groups come together to see about 12 artists, or more, given that this has three rounds for each group of people. I was able to interview an artist that year, who said her nerves were what made this exciting; As did her paintings, which showed her talent and why she competed.

It is expected with battles like these all across the world, to be crowded, and packed into buildings. This year they decided to move this battle into a bigger build-

ing rather than their choices for past events; at the ALMA Mater, which they didn’t predict overcrowding; organizers chose Freighthouse Square, which is a better alternative.

“Art Battle” will be held one day only, on January 14 at Freighthouse Square. Tickets run for \$15 for the early bird, \$17 for general admission, and \$20 plus tax at the door. All other information can be found at Artbattle.com. We hope you enjoyed your holidays and happy 2023!

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