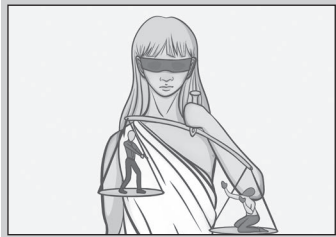




Husky
Sustainability
p.2



Police
Brutality
p.4



Last of Us
Review
p.6

Weekly Weather

Monday 49/45



Tuesday 49/39

Wednesday 49/35

Thursday 50/38

Friday 51/38

Saturday 50/36

Sunday 51/36

Upcoming Events

Feb. 8

Campus Climate
Dialogs
11 a.m. - 12 p.m.
MAT 214

Feb 13 & 27

Queer Discussion
Group
Center for Equity
and Inclusion - SNO

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Best Picture 2023 ranking

The 2023 Academy Award nominations for Best Picture is a competitive category this year, and it's difficult to say which film will ultimately take home the trophy.

By EMILIA BELL
FILM CRITIC

The 95th Academy Awards, known as film's biggest night, will be taking place on March 12. From action to drama, this year's nominees show a wide variety of selections to choose from.

This ranking is not to criticize any choices—it was impossible to say definitively which films were better. It is a refreshing variety of genres as well, so it was necessary to take personal enjoyment into account when ranking because all of these films are worthy of watching and winning.

In addition to the impressive lineup, there are very few snubs that come to mind. There is no obvious outlier and all of them are achievements in filmmaking in their own right.

The List:

10. "Triangle of Sadness," Erik Hemmendorff and Philippe Bober, Producers

This film satirizes wealth and influencers in a unique and somewhat shocking way. The acting was top-notch and the script was original and hilarious; while its over-the-top—and sometimes gross-out—humor may not be for everyone, the film earned its place among the nominees with great acting and clever jokes. You can catch it in select theaters or rent it online.

9. "Women Talking," Dede Gardner, Jeremy Kleiner and Frances McDormand, Producers

"Women Talking" is quiet and subdued with a slow start, but found its strength in the acting and the emotional moments. Some of the feminist messaging felt heavy-handed, but Claire Foy and Jessie Buckley in particular put in memorable performances that appropriately conveyed feminine rage. "Women Talking" is

currently in theaters.

8. "Top Gun: Maverick," Tom Cruise, Christopher McQuarrie, David Ellison and Jerry Bruckheimer, Producers

"Top Gun" finds depth in a film that could have been shallow and dull. The effects are stunning and the cast brings a

6. "Avatar: The Way of Water," James Cameron and Jon Landau, Producers

James Cameron's long-awaited sequel—a whopping 13 years—lived up to the pressure, and boasts a genuine heart and fantastical imagination. The effects are

Producers

This chaotic flurry of emotions and all-around excellent movie leads this year's nominations with 11 in total. The beautiful and special story sets it apart from other contenders. The film came together with amazing production design, costume design, acting performances, and score.

It is the perfect movie if you need to laugh or cry. It is available in theaters or on Paramount+ and Hulu (with premium subscriptions).

3. "The Fabelmans," Kristie Macosko Krieger, Steven Spielberg and Tony Kushner, Producers

The charming story of Steven Spielberg's childhood perfectly captures the magical excitement that movies can provide.

It was an easy watch, with its lovely performances and heartfelt moments and felt like a true achievement for Spielberg. Watch it in theaters or rent it

online.

2. "Tár," Todd Field, Alexandra Milchan and Scott Lambert, Producers

This film is not like any other; somehow, a pretentious and imposing orchestra conductor becomes the most compelling character to watch. Despite her questionable actions and unlikable behavior, you cannot help but become sucked into her world. Cate Blanchett's acting nomination is no surprise nor is the screenplay nomination. With striking cinematography and a distinct plot, this film's place in the top two is well deserved. "Tár" can be seen in theaters or on Peacock.



OSCARS 95
NOMINEES

genuine rapport to the screen. It managed to live up to the original, and found a fresh way to do so. The film is available to view in theaters or on Paramount+.

7. "Elvis," Baz Luhrmann, Catherine Martin, Gail Berman, Patrick McCormick and Schuyler Weiss, Producers

Elvis Presley's life is brought to the big screen, in a glitzy and sometimes blinding way by Baz Luhrmann. The film is beautiful and insane all at once, with the visuals being the main focus. While ridiculous at times, it was always an enjoyable viewing experience. Austin Butler, also nominated for Best Actor, sells every scene. You can watch "Elvis" on HBO Max.

astonishing and the film brings a sense of excitement back to themoviegoing experience. "Avatar" is currently playing in theaters.

5. "All Quiet on the Western Front," Malte Grunert, Producer

It is nothing new to see a war film nominated, but this adaptation adds new layers to the genre. With heartbreaking performances and sweeping visuals, as well as a poignant anti-war message, the film holds up against its counterparts. While it is difficult to watch, it is worth it. The film can be streamed on Netflix.

4. "Everything Everywhere All at Once," Daniel Kwan, Daniel Scheinert and Jonathan Wang,

Article Continued
on PAGE 6 ▶

The Husky Sustainability Fund now accepting applications

The Husky Sustainability Fund provides grants for student-led projects that seek to improve the student experience at UWT.

By **KATIE SCOTT**
NEWS REPORTER

A new UWT program, the Husky Sustainability Fund, is supporting student-led projects that focus on campus sustainability. The Husky Sustainability Fund provides an opportunity for UWT students to grow positively, while also serving students' various needs and creating a way for them to be seen and heard in the process. All UWT students are eligible to apply.

"We all are living in a world, and within institutions, that are just kind of unsustainable. We do the best we can, but the Husky Sustainability Fund looks at ways we can support students in addressing some of those challenges. We explore ways that we can make small changes, or ways we can make huge policy changes in what the university is providing to students. We want projects to be student-led and student-focused," said Genevieve Conley, Student Sustainability Coordinator for the Center for Student Involvement.

The Husky Sustainability Fund encourages students to create and pursue projects focused on subjects they are passionate about. Projects can be in line with the applicant's field of study but do not have to be. The

goal of the program is to create an avenue for student voices and experiences to be heard, while making UWT a more sustainable place overall.

The Husky Sustainability Fund awards grants for student projects that aim to improve social, economic, or environmental sustainability at UWT. Though the program takes a holistic view to sustainability, Conley explains there is often a misunderstanding of what the term means for the program.

"Sustainability as a term is so broad and used so often to mean so many things. A lot of times when we think of sustainability, we think of things like recycling, which is valuable but it's not the only thing," Conley said, "There are so many different options. I don't want students to think we're only focusing on recycling or planting trees, which are great projects by the way."

Conley says social sustainability projects could be anything that focuses on social issues such as community creation and growth, accessing information, social movements, human rights, getting people out to vote or issues with safety on campus.

In autumn of 2022, as a social sustainability project, the Husky Sustainability Fund, in partnership with the Student Activities

Board, brought Tacoma Poet Laureate and UWT Alumni Ty Nguyen to campus to perform spoken word about sustaining and retaining culture in America. This event intentionally encouraged a safe space for cultures to be acknowledged and celebrated through storytelling and community building. In addition to Ty Nguyen's performance, ten UWT student poets shared their own work to an audience of approximately 50 student attendees. Conley explains this as a wonderful example of social sustainability.

Economic sustainability projects could be focused on parking access, transportation, housing access or addressing food insecurity. Conley explains economic sustainability projects should approach how UWT can spend money in a more efficient and effective way.

Environmental sustainability projects could be focused on urban gardening, waste reduction, improving energy efficiency, creating more green spaces on campus, bringing solar power to UWT, or encouraging students to get outdoors.

"There are so many opportunities for environmental sustainability because anything that hits the ground goes to the sound," Conley said, "It can also



PHOTO BY ALEXA CHRISTIE

be something like how do we create green spaces on campus? How do we create spaces where people want to be outside?"

Conley says projects that bring more green spaces to the UWT campus would help to elevate people's moods, offer a place for meditation, and encourage gathering and community building.

The Husky Sustainability Fund has two application types, mini grants and large grants. Mini grants are awarded on a rolling basis and can be dispersed within the same quarter as the application is submitted, though students have the choice to schedule the funding further out if desired. Mini grants are awarded for projects that fit into one or more of the sustainability categories and are requesting \$1000 or less.

Large grants are for projects that request \$1000 or more. Large grants have a more involved application process and are typically funded after the application quarter. Projects requesting a large grant must also fit into one or more of the sustainability categories.

Applications can be submitted for both grant types until March 6. Conley invites students to meet with her and her team to work together throughout the application process.

"It is intimidating when we say apply for funding," Conley said, "You're not on your own filling out the application. We will help you through the entire process."

In addition to filling out the application, students are encouraged to contact Conley and her team, talk through their ideas, connect with campus and community partners and receive guidance on navigating the application process.

The Husky Sustainability Fund also has a "submit an idea" option, for students who may have an idea but are unavailable to pursue the project. This allows students to have their voices heard and ideas shared, without being obligated to take on any project or responsibility. This enables students who may have a theme in mind, but no project idea, to work with the Husky Sustainability Fund team to bring their theme to life.

The Husky Sustainability Fund is funded through student services and activities fees included in UWT tuition. Grants are awarded on an annual basis by the Services and Activities Fee Committee (SASC).

To learn more or apply for a grant, visit the Husky Sustainability Fund website at: <https://www.tacoma.uw.edu/involvement/hsf>

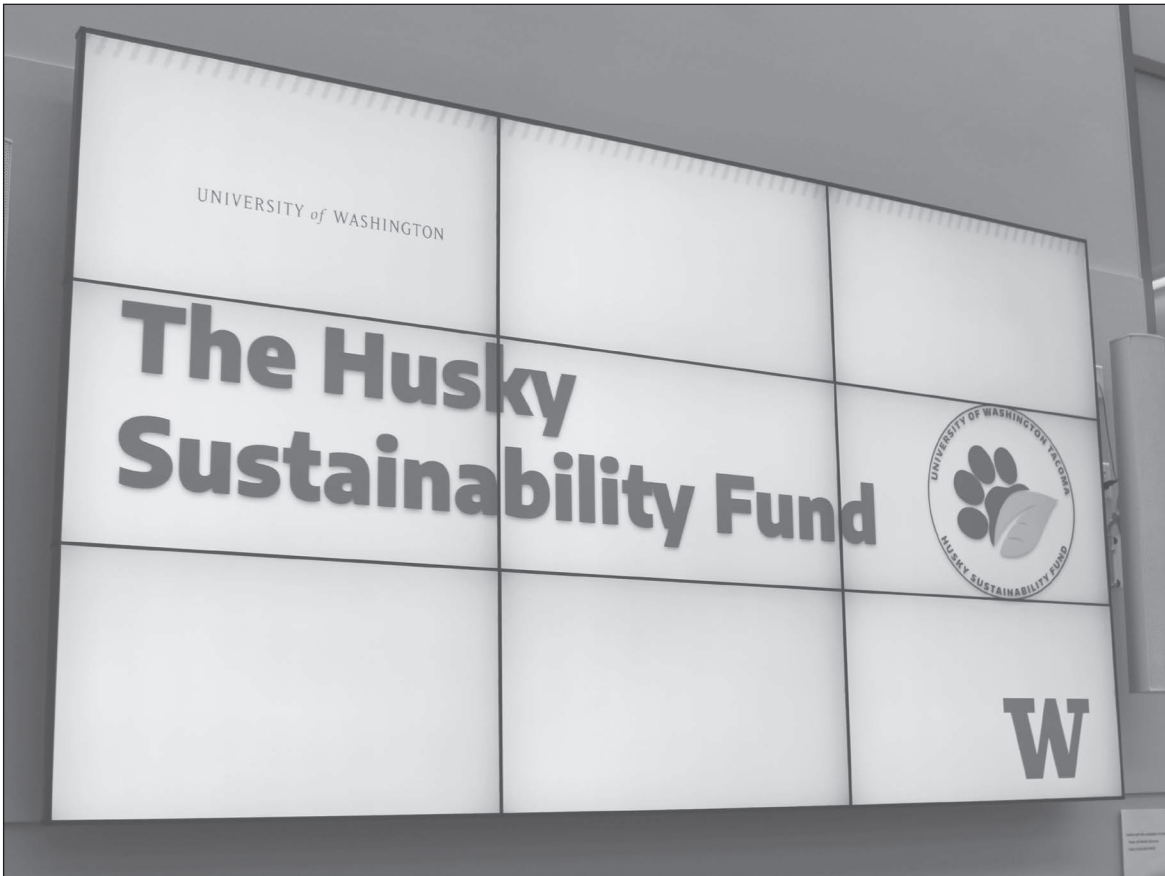


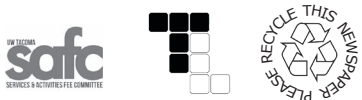
PHOTO BY ALEXA CHRISTIE

The Husky Sustainability Fund held a grant writing workshop to encourage students to apply for sustainability project funding.

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Get ready to learn with Grit City Think and Drink

Grit City Think and Drink will be meeting for their February discussion at 7 Seas Brewing.

By DESTINY VALENCIA
NEWS EDITOR

Gear up to learn new and exciting topics that are relevant to student life with February's Grit City Think and Drink at 6:30 p.m. on Feb. 14. Grit City Think and Drink, which is hosted and coordinated by Jim Gawel, will be having its first in-person meetup since 2020, at 7 Seas Brewing.

This month's discussion will be led by Ander Erickson and the topic is titled "Is It Really Cheating? Understanding the New Relationship Students Have with Information and Truth."

Erickson, who is an associate professor of mathematics at UWT, specializes in research regarding informational literacy in mathematics classrooms. He also conducts research on how students seek out informational tools and resources that aid and help them with their studies outside of the classroom.

This discussion comes at an interesting time as new resources have been made available to the public such as AI bots like ChatGPT.

ChatGPT, which is a chatbot auto-generative system according to PC Guide, can do a wide variety of tasks that have some educators worried. This AI system is

capable of generating texts such as essays, articles, code, poetry, etc.

When this event was originally planned, ChatGPT had not been released yet and while it is not a focus of the talk, it will be discussed.

"It's useful in terms of providing initial drafts of something to work from or generate ideas," said Ander Erickson regarding the AI chatbot.

This is just an example of some of the resources Erickson will look at but more as a discussion on how resourceful students can be and the gray area that comes with outside help in an academic setting.

"I tend to shy away from that term [of cheating] but it does come up in the talk because obviously there is some tension there when people are making use of online sources in particular... if I'm using this, is it okay? What's the right way to use these resources there," said Erickson.

The goal of these discussions is for students to learn more about these said topics and learn more about them with scholars and experts who can help students understand these issues more thoroughly.

"I like the format, I enjoy learning something different and I have a good time," said Jim Gawel.

Gawel, who has been hosting these events for around



Grit City Think and Drink is a program often hosted and coordinated by Jim Gawel.

PHOTO BY ALEXA CHRISTIE

six years, has coordinated a wide variety of topics that Grit City Think and Drink have conducted over the years (which you can find on YouTube). Discussions such as online dating, gender justice for missing indigenous women, bugs, plagues, and so much more.

"There was one talk about yeast, by Jack Vincent... he did this great talk about how he's used yeast in genetics and beer making and he made beer with four

different yeasts and there was a taste testing and that was pretty spectacular and hands-on," Gawel said.

Presenters can get creative with their talks with some even incorporating performance with their Grit City Think and Drink session.

Attendees of this event can expect a presentation at these events along with a moderated Q&A, along with some giveaways for attendees and light trivia questions.

Individuals of all ages are welcome to attend this event and do not need to be over the age of 21.

If you have any questions or would like to learn more, you can email Jim Gawel at jimgawel@uw.edu or visit <https://www.tacomaledger.com/sias/grit-city-think-drink>

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- Your first and last name
- "Dear Editor," as the opening of your piece
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Then we invite you to write a Letter to the Editor.

Letters submitted to the Ledger may be published through both TheTacomaLedger.com and our print edition.



There are no true repercussions for perpetrators of police brutality

Once again, the trial for the three Tacoma police officers charged in the killing of Manny Ellis has been delayed.

By **RUTH OGDEN**
OPINION EDITOR

On March 3, 2020, life-long Tacoma resident Manny Ellis died while being arrested by Christopher Burbank, Matthew Collins and Timothy Rankine, three on-duty Tacoma police officers. Ellis was tasered, choked, punched and kneeled upon. Officers placed a spit-hood over his head and pushed his face into the street asphalt. Ellis died at the scene.

Ellis' final statements are a grim echo of George Floyd's last words: a police radio recorded Ellis repeatedly pleading "can't breathe, sir."

Rankine is charged with first-degree manslaughter. Manslaughter typically indicates a reckless disregard for life but does not involve malice or an intent to kill. Collins and Burbank are charged with second-degree murder.

The trial was originally scheduled for Jan. 30, 2023 but has now been delayed yet again until September 2023, pending the outcome of a Washington Supreme court case set to determine whether internal affairs statements from an officer who was not charged should be released to prosecutors.

There have been no functional repercussions for Burbank, Collins or Rankine. During the internal investigation, they were placed on administrative leave and continued to receive their salary from the city of Tacoma. Although they were detained in jail pending the trial, they were bailed out that very same day by a local Tacoma businessman. For three years, they have gone about their lives in our community awaiting trial. They have been able to go grocery shopping, relax at home with loved ones and celebrate the holidays.

Meanwhile, Ellis' family and friends are still living a nightmare. Three years later, Manny is still dead, legal fees are piling up and the court date is continually pushed back. For victims of police brutality and their families, justice is shallow, if it ever comes at all.

Unfortunately, this is not uncommon in the United

States. Trials involving unjust killings and police misconduct against citizens can drag on for years. Those who are convicted of a crime are often handed sentences involving house arrest, probation, or a few paltry years in prison.

In a finance-based legal system such as the one we have in America, you have to be able to pay to retain a lawyer to even file charges. If you are poor, you cannot afford justice. The US census reports that Black people experience poverty at a significantly higher rate than white people (21% versus 9%). In a country with heavily entrenched systemic racism, people of color are far more likely to experience police violence. Mapping Police Violence, a nonprofit that keeps track of police shootings, reports that although Black people are 13% of the US population, they make up a disproportionate 27% of those who are killed by police. Combining these two factors, people of color are far more likely to be killed by police as well as be unable to access legal justice.

An on-duty police officer can be reasonably assured that they will not be found culpable for any acts of racial violence committed against the public. The police in the United States possess functional legal immunity, performing in the field as judge, jury, and executioner. Operating like any other gang in their territory, police possess a monopoly on the use of force, and any resistance against that force is a potential justification for your execution in the street. That should scare you. It scares me.

If you would like to report a violation of the Police Misconduct Statute, Title VI, or the OJP Program Statute, contact the Justice Department at civilrights.justice.gov.



ILLUSTRATION BY STEVIE ESTEBAN

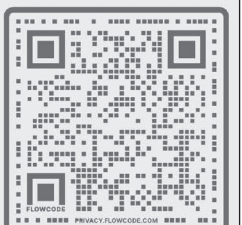
Police brutality is an ongoing problem not just in Tacoma, but around the world.

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The importance of Indigenous history and representation

Why the U.S. education system should be including Indigenous history, culture and teachings.

By CELIA WILLIAMS
OPINION EDITOR

Most people know by now that the current-day United States was stolen from Indigenous people after explorations revealed the lands to European explorers. This sparked centuries of genocide and cultural oppression of Native Americans. With this in mind, have you ever thought about what you really know about Native Americans and our culture? Or what Native American culture and education looks like?

As an Indigenous person, I've noticed that very few schools within our education system teach an in-depth history of the Native American, our culture and history. While my experience was still certainly more inclusive than others, I still remember the lesson on Native Americans being very short and even a bit inaccurate. It felt a bit awkward at times and I was never really sure what to say.

Higher education, having more funds than public education, has broadened the representation and information taught in the classroom. I mean the University of Washington Tacoma has a minor specifically focusing on Native American history and culture. However, this is just the tip of the iceberg

when it comes to the incorporation of Native American history within education.

The University of Washington Tacoma has been a major part of Indigenous representation. We not only have staff dedicated to Native American involvement, education and support, but also an organized club and space for students to meet and learn outside of the classroom. I want to recognize and stress that this is not a universal thing and is huge in including Native American history, culture and teachings in the U.S. education system.

Native American history and culture is very complex, but important to the future of the United States. Indian federal law, literature, song and dance, and environmentalism practices, are all vital to an array of things. That being said, there is a lot to know and learn about Indigenous history and culture.

Dr. Danica Miller, a professor here at the University of Washington Tacoma says, "All people living in the now United States should have a firm understanding of settler colonialism, the genocide of Native peoples, and framework of American Indian sovereignty."

But why is this specific aspect important?

Not only is the history of the

genocide and oppression of the American Indians important, it should also be a required curriculum taught in school.

In a perfect world Dr. Miller says "those histories must be taught with the permissions and relationships of local tribal communities firmly in place."

After all, who knows our history and culture better than us? This could look a number of ways if implemented in schools.

But some don't agree with this, why? I think that if Germany is able to recognize their role in the Holocaust, then it is completely reasonable for the Unit-

ed States to be educated on the genocide of Native Americans. Countless languages, traditions, and entire tribal nations were wiped out over the last few centuries. This is a fact, and it's time to recognize this. Education is just the first step.



Student standing with UW Tacoma's "All the Rivers in the World" art work.

PHOTO BY ALEXA CHRISTIE

The Church Cantina: Yummy Eats & Spooky Beats

A wonderful gathering place for local goths and horror fanatics.



PHOTO BY THE CHURCH CANTINA'S FACEBOOK BUSINESS PAGE

The Church Cantina restaurant.

By HEIDI ORTIZ CANDELARIA
OPINION COLUMNIST

As a new writer for the Tacoma Ledger and a veteran goth, I've made it my mission to create a small community for students who are into goth subculture. I've met lovely souls during my time on campus, and have heard the same thing over and over again: it's rough making friends out here. This is especially true for those who are part of the goth, alternative, j-fashion and punk communities. I find that even though we are many, there are very few places that cater to our specific subcultures. That is why I've set off on a journey to find, promote and perhaps even create these places for my classmates and other peers in the Tacoma area.

The Church Cantina is a hidden gem that deserves to be talked about more often. It was surprising to me that I hadn't heard of such a well-kept, innovative and fun little restaurant. It was even more surprising that I only found out about it through a Facebook group. My first impressions were very positive: the owners engage with their customers often and know their stuff. It's not just a goth-themed restaurant and bar, but it's also a goth-run restaurant & bar.

The owners, Nicole and Adam, opened their doors four years ago. Their mission is simple: they wanted to create a space where everyone feels welcome. Their idea sprouted

from the wish of making a restaurant/bar that has no sports (yucky) and some quality music. I mean, who wouldn't want to sit at a bar & listen to The Cure while taking sips?

Despite its very niche and targeted décor, Nicole and Adam aim to please and cater their Cuban-inspired menu to be delicious & inclusive, with a wide variety of vegan dishes. As a Puerto Rican though, I'd definitely consider their menu to be more Latinx-inspired than Cuban since their food ranges from elotes, nachos and tacos to tostones, chimichurri steaks and chorizo. That's why I made the decision to try their 'Cantina Cuban' sandwich and really put them up to the test. But it's safe to say it was delicious, toasty and savory. I matched it with their "Strawberry Apocalypse" cocktail, and I fell into unholy heaven. Extra props for adding garlic to the sandwich, and for the extremely clever names for every item!

Other than their yummy food, they have some of the best decor I've ever seen in a restaurant. There are framed retro horror movie posters throughout the entire establishment. Skulls, pumpkins and serial killer props adorn the walls and hang between liquor bottle shelves. There's also a large collection of intricate, golden mirrors, statuettes and knick knacks that scream vampire goth. For lack of a better description, it gave "Van Helsing" vibes. But my favorite piece by far was their hanging skeleton

chandelier. Each skeleton is tied together by chains and they each hold candles that light up the room. I also had no idea before visiting that they have a separate recreational area with a small collection of horror-themed pinball and skee ball games. One of them being "Munsters" themed, which I thought was so unique. There's also a large pool table where patrons often go to have drinks and vibe with the music. I felt like a little kid "ooo"-ing and "aaa"-ing at every little detail. Especially when I kept finding myself thinking how cute some of those decorations would look in my room. I'm definitely using it as decor inspiration when I get my own house!

On the 2nd Friday of every month, they host a goth night with DJs spinning Bauhaus, Siouxsie and The Banshees, Clan of Xymox, Molchat Doma and other goth and darkwave bands. These events start anywhere from 8 p.m. till 2 a.m. This is the perfect chance to meet with friends, have a few drinks and jam to your favorite songs. Though I couldn't make it this week for their one-year goth night anniversary, I'll definitely be dropping by for the next one.

If you find some free time and would like to de-stress from the busy student life, I recommend visiting The Church Cantina. Just remember to stay safe, drink responsibly, and Goo Goo Muck it out with your spooky pals.

OSCARS, continued from front page

1. “The Banshees of Inisherin,” Graham Broadbent, Pete Czernin and Martin McDonagh, Producers

A joyously strange and off-beat film, “Banshees” takes the number one spot on this list. Its atmosphere is unmatched with its quirky moodiness. The amazing screenplay and thought-provoking performances, from both the lead and supporting casts (and even a donkey), create an unforgettable movie. The film is available in theaters as well as on HBO Max (and Hulu and Amazon Prime with premium subscriptions).

Most likely to win: Given that “The Banshees of Inisherin” won the Golden Globe for Best Musical or Comedy Film, and “The Fabelmans” won for Best Drama, it seems likely that it is between these two for the grand prize. “The Banshees of Inisherin” may have an edge though, given its praise among critics and the general public. It has also received a spectacular nine nominations overall. However, it would not be surprising for “Everything Everywhere All At Once” to win due to its huge popularity.

Snubs: It was surprising to see that Jordan Peele’s “Nope” received zero nominations, and though it was not perfect, it seemed worthy of a screenplay nod at the very least. “The

Whale,” while aptly recognized in the acting categories, did not land a Best Picture nomination despite arguably deserving one. “The Menu,” while perhaps not the most incredible film to be released this year, could have done with a screenplay or production design nod.

“The Northman,” a mind-blowing period action-drama from Robert Eggers, was noticeably absent from the nominations as well, which was a disappointment. “Official Competition” from Spain did not receive a nomination even in the International Feature category, though its acting performances and screenplay were phenomenal (though there could have been some eligibility problems since it first premiered in 2021).

Surprises: Ana de Armas received a controversial nomination for her performance in “Blonde,” which earned her a Razzie nomination as well. Though her acting is praisable, the film itself was panned by critics and audiences alike for its exploitative attitude regarding Marilyn Monroe and a lack of plot. “Black Panther: Wakanda Forever,” was given a special effects nomination, which seemed odd given that the CGI was overused and often subpar in quality, while Angela Bassett became the first actor to be nominated for a performance in a Marvel film. While

she is undeniably talented, some may find it an odd choice given that Marvel’s films are considered to be more casual viewing.

All in all, these films are wonderful in their own ways and deserve the nominations they have received. It will be exciting to see which film does take home the trophy. Catch the 95th Academy Awards on ABC, or check out The Grand Cinema’s Film Awards Party, where they will be streaming the event live in their theaters. Find out more on their website!



Colin Farrell (left) and Brendan Gleeson (right) in a scene from the movie. Above is the movie poster. PHOTO BY SEARCHLIGHT PICTURES

Is ‘The Last of Us’ worth the hype?

Taking a loved video game and turning it into a live action drama that’s sure to make anyone cry.

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

HBO Max has put out a rendition of a known and loved video game, “The Last of Us” created by Craig Mazin and Neil Druckmann and produced by Greg Spence and Cecil O’Connor. This apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic nightmare follows Joel Miller (Pedro Pascal), a hard-working construction man just trying to make a living, and his young daughter Sarah Miller (Nico Parker). A normal day turns chaotic as a fungal outbreak ravages

the planet, Joel must move past his loss in order to survive. Viewer discretion is advised.

The show heavily pays homage to aspects of the video game and for fans of the game series. Fans have been praising the adaptation for following the original storyline but keeping it original all in one.

There are fans online using scene-by-scene comparisons online of the moment when Joel met Ellie (Bella Ramsey). As I watched the gameplays, I was impressed by the similarities in graphics, and stylistic choices made, with its bold vibrant colors, background

setups, and rehearsed furniture movements.

The gameplay was evident in the shooting sequences with the more complex zombies, as it took multiple shots to knock one down. The movements were obnoxiously slow as well, and the graphics’ special effects lived up to the game.

But as we pay homage to the gameplay comparisons, we can also appreciate the attention to its storyline.

When quoting episode three, Den of Geek writer Bernard Boo says, “Simply put, this is one of

the best episodes of television in recent memory and acts as irrevocable proof that this show may be, only three episodes in, the best video game adaptation ever made.”

“This isn’t a show about monsters—it’s a show about relationships,” Boo says.

Film noir stylistic aspects also become apparent during the third episode “Long, Long Time.” Every moment of the episode seemed to allow the viewer to immerse themselves as if they were playing a video game. As this episode shows as a flashback, we are also

able to tell the two stories apart, the director did this well. Focusing the episode on a love story between Bill (Nick Offerman) and Frank (Murray Bartlett), that is sure to make anyone sob.

So, is “The Last of Us” worth a watch? Yes, I’d recommend you take a seat, turn on your TV or laptop, and enjoy your regularly scheduled program.

You can watch all three episodes on HBO Max, as more will be added every Sunday at 9 p.m. EST.



PHOTO VIA HBO

Episode 1 “When You’re Lost in The Darkness”



PHOTO VIA HBO

Episode 3 “Long, Long Time”

Five fantastic indie games you may have missed last year

Plenty of hidden gems brimming with style that may have snuck under your radar.

By **COLE MARTIN**
A&E COLUMNIST

2022 was a great year for gaming, with games like “Elden Ring” and “God of War Ragnarök” collecting multiple awards. However, if you take a look aside from what made the rounds, you will find a plethora of indie games made by smaller developer teams, just waiting to be discovered.

One of the things that so many love about indie games is that there’s something for everyone, be it deeply story-driven, fun with friends, or just plain cute. Developers from all over the globe are making niche little experiences that very well might cater just to your tastes.

To save you some time and narrow down some of the things I had the great pleasure of playing, here are five indie games from last year to try out.

“PlateUp!”
Out of all the games on this list, “PlateUp!” is definitely the one I sunk the most time into.

Created by a solo developer, Alastair Janse van Rensburg, this game is an extremely fast-paced rogue-lite cooking game, where a player can slowly upgrade their kitchen and fight to keep up with customers’ orders.

Things start off simple, but as the game progresses so do your customers’ demands, ramping up the challenge by adding multiple dishes to juggle between customers and other various restrictions to your kitchen.

With ongoing development and an ever-expanding modding workshop, this game continues to grow with more and more replayability. You can take that even further with its seamless two to four-player online and local co-ops, which adds another layer of hectic chaos to the mix. The game is available on Steam, with a free demo to boot!

local islands, filled with interesting characters that help you along your grand journey. You can play “Lil Gator Game” on Steam or Nintendo Switch!

“SIGNALIS”

Now, for a bit of whiplash from the last game; here is “SIGNALIS,” a game made by the two-person team Rose-Engine, which is captivating in a way unlike anything else I’ve ever played. This is a sci-fi survival horror game with

tion throughout the cutscenes. If you’re a fan of horror, don’t hesitate picking this one up; it’s available on PC, consoles, and Switch!

“Core Keeper”

For those of you who appreciate a good sandbox experience, look no further than “Core Keeper,” a wonderful little caving adventure game made by Swedish game studio Pugstorm.

This game has players stranded underground, exploring the vast cave system beaming with life and enemies.

it’s available on Steam!

“Solar Ash”

This game is technically a little bit of a cheat. “Solar Ash” was made by the acclaimed studio Heart Machine, and was technically released at the tail end of 2021 on PlayStation for consoles and Epic Games Store for PC exclusively. However, the game was released on Xbox consoles and Steam for PC late 2022, where I finally got a chance to play and enjoy it. In the sci-fi high-speed platformer, players take control of Rei as she fights for the fate of her planet from a malevolent blackhole, known as the Ultravoid. Players can skate around otherworldly neon clouds, explore dungeons, and fight off the Ultravoid’s massive wormlike creatures.

As someone who finds themselves immersed in the style, vibrant colors and foreign planets, this game hits all my personal notes. Aside from the aesthetics, the gameplay

itself is also phenomenal; being zipped around these massive environments is incredibly satisfying. If you like the sound of it, I highly recommend you pick it up! It’s available on PC and consoles!

You farm, build, and gear up to fight massive bosses to power some mysterious technology. There’s plenty of underground biomes to explore, filled with resources that allow you to upgrade your tools and make the perfect little base. “Core Keeper” draws a lot of noticeable inspiration from other indie games, like “Stardew Valley” and its mining system; that’s an extra bonus to those of you who are looking for a farm game fix. Give it a shot,

“Lil Gator Game”

If you’re looking for something so overwhelmingly cute, look no further than “Lil Gator Game,” made by the three-person MegaWobble team. In this adorable adventure game, you are a playful and adventurous little alligator who wants nothing more than to hang out with their work-ridden sister, just like they used to as kids. Players are able to run around the

controls similar to games like “Resident Evil,” and has deeply rooted themes of despair and isolation as you struggle your way through decrepit military bases looking to save a lost lover.

The aesthetics and visual style of this game are phenomenal. Scenes with 3D models are thrown through obscuring low-resolution pixel filters, gorgeous art panels and anima-

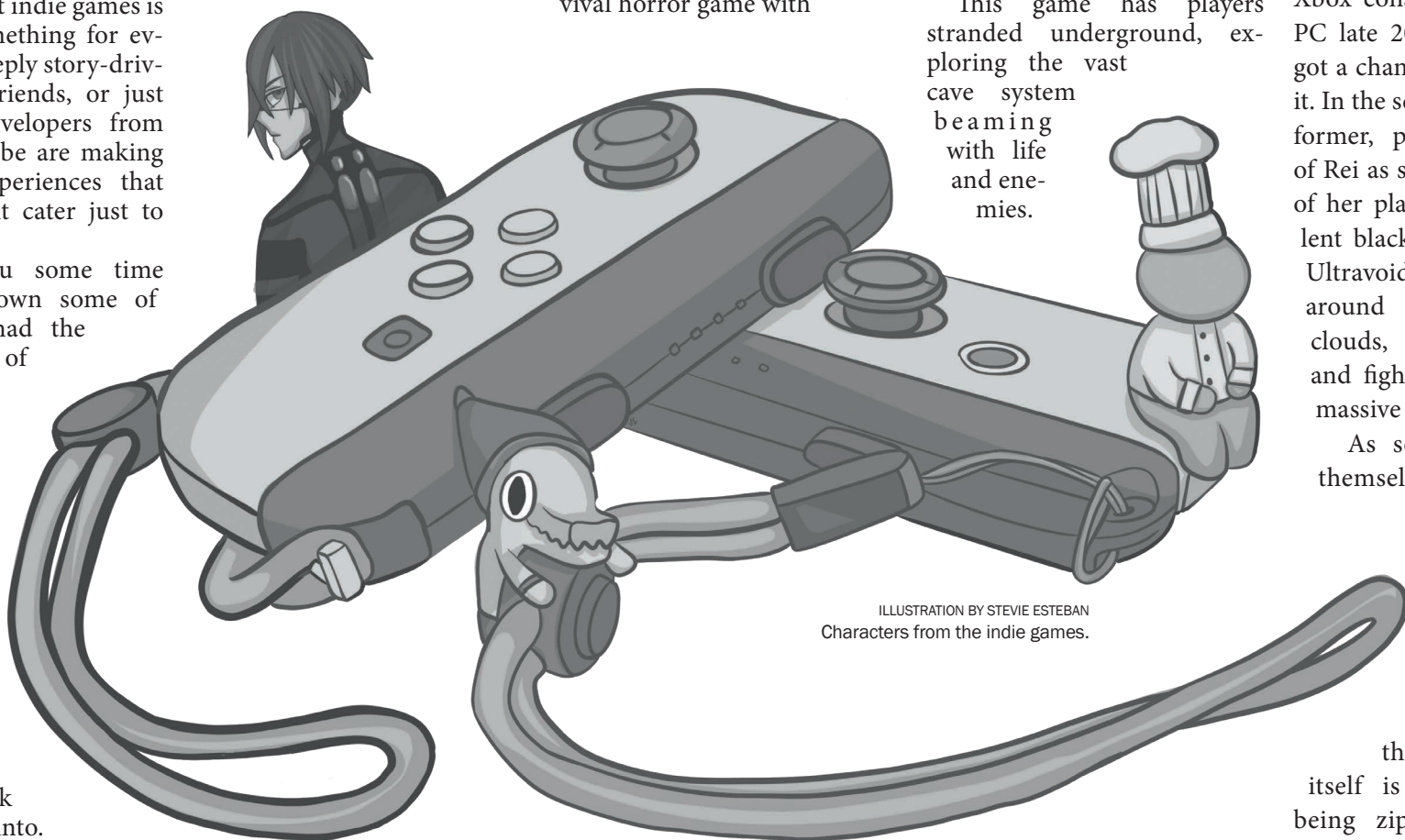
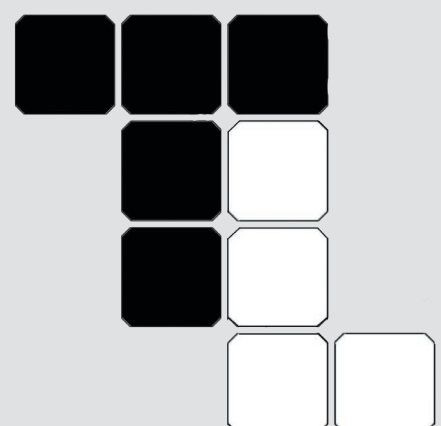


ILLUSTRATION BY STEVIE ESTEBAN
Characters from the indie games.

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Huskies in the Hallway

Question: What are you watching right now?



Jaylene Delgado: Senior, mathematics, She/her

“I’m watching the anime Bleach, and I’m watching a new anime called Hana-ka-kun.”



Max Yim: Junior, computer science, he/him

“I’ve been trying to finish the 1970 version of Murder on the Orient express. It’s kind of an older movie so you have to really engage yourself.”



Kyle Van Meter: Senior, psychology, he/him

“I just finished up the newest season of Bleach, one of my very favorite anime shows from childhood.”



Jasmeet Kaur:

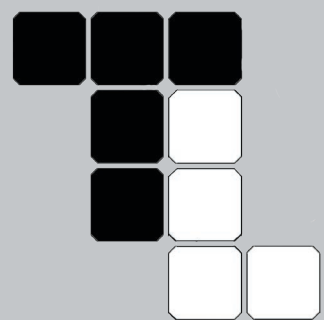
“I watch a lot of anime, right now Bleach.”

THE LEDGER WEEKLY PLAYLIST

THIS WEEK: GREY FEBRUARY



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