

THE LEDGER

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON TACOMA

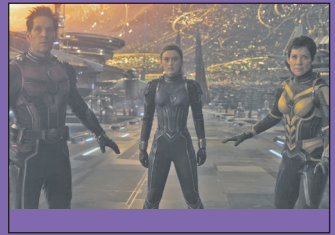
FREE EVERY WEEK VOL. 27 ISS. 21 • FEB. 27-MAR. 3, 2023 THETACOMALEDGER.COM



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Climate doom and climate change

Is our planet genuinely going to be unlivable one day?
Are we able to do anything to help the Earth?

By CELIA WILLIAMS
OPINION EDITOR

From our own personal trials to the most-read headline in the nation, we are not short on events that raise never ending concern. Climate change has been a conversation for a while now, as has whether it is as serious of an issue as it has been made out to be. Specifically, within the last few years, there has been a growing number of articles and social media posts stressing this and what has been called "climate doom."

So what is climate doom? Well, it's the idea that our planet is basically going to be unlivable within the next decade or so. This concept, while trying to bring attention to a very serious matter, has gone about it in the wrong way. The fear-based tactic to get people to care more about the Earth is one that I think is, simply put, wrong. I don't think that placing fear into people is ever the right way to go about things, even for something as serious as our planet. Oftentimes, we aren't even offered accessible ways to help the environment. Are we even the ones to blame though?

I spoke with University of Washington Tacoma professor, Michael Kucher, about his thoughts on climate change and the idea of climate doom. We had a great discussion about climate change as well as the many aspects that are in play. One thing that he pointed out was the idea that we know when the world is going to end.

"We think we know how much time we have," Kucher said. "And the way we are responding to the issue may not be quick enough."

Why is this though? Wouldn't you think that we would be more concerned about the only inhabitable planet we currently have?



ILLUSTRATION BY STEVIE ESTEBAN

Professor Kucher says there are "lots of good reasons to fear change," especially with big oil companies creating so many jobs.

Which basically means that we are prioritizing wealth and capitalism over our planet.

With this in mind, what are younger generations doing to try to guarantee their future? It's actually a very interesting thing. Professor Kucher brought up the Gen-Z group in Europe suing their government for the

climate crisis to hopefully get government officials to start creating change at the executive level. He also mentioned President Biden's hand in moving towards a greener America with the Inflation Act. This definitely puts things into perspective when thinking about the state of our planet. I personally have found that, while change has been slow, there is so much more to come.

After our long conversation about climate change and the doomsday mentality, I asked Professor Kucher what he thought was the most important thing for students to take away from this. He gave a lot of advice, but his biggest recommendation was that the younger generations should "run for something," whether it be a simple mayor position in your hometown or a seat in the senate, run for something. This is how we create change and how we can

begin to preserve the planet and our environment.

In short, the planet is in the process of becoming uninhabitable, but we still have the time to change that. While environmentally-friendly products and ethical brands are fairly inaccessible to the majority, we have a voice and the ideas that can change our future for the better.

CORRECTION: In regards to the article "UW Library staff win union contract" by Katie Scott a few corrections have been made.

The subhead was corrected from "After 4 years of negotiations..." to 15 months and an attribution was corrected (from Petrich to Gregory in paragraph 15).

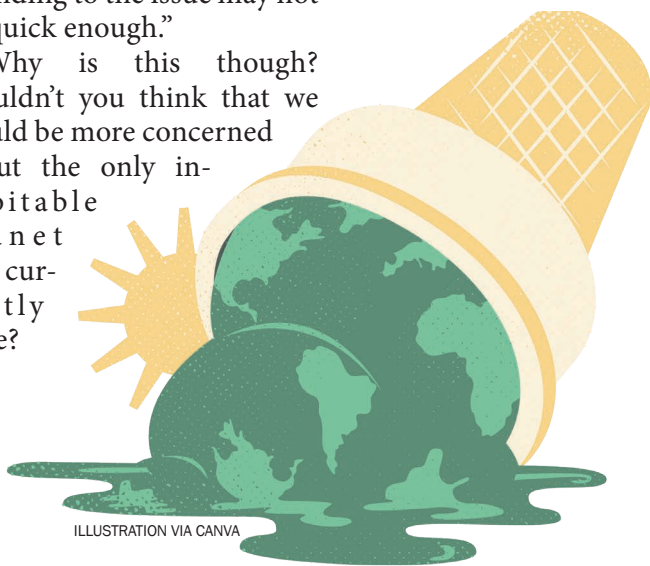


ILLUSTRATION VIA CANVA



Faeryn Stephens, Black Sheep Resale co-owner.

PHOTO BY KATIE SCOTT

South Tacoma's Black Sheep Resale reopens after burglary

Black Sheep Resale, a second-hand boutique that is a safe space for the LGBTQIA+ community, has reopened after a break in that resulted in over \$5000 worth of cash and items being stolen.



Black Sheep Resale displays pride flags and artwork in the front window storefront.

PHOTO BY KATIE SCOTT

By KATIE SCOTT
NEWS REPORTER

Just three weeks after opening in January, Black Sheep Resale, a second-hand resale shop in south Tacoma, was burglarized. Intruders came in through the ceiling of the shop, stole over \$5000 in cash and merchandise and caused hundreds of dollars in damages. Due to damages and theft, the resale boutique was forced to shut down temporarily.

Faeryn Stephens, Black Sheep Resale co-owner, says after the break-in, she and her business partner questioned if staying open was the best option for the business.

“With all that said to do what we did and then to have push back and then to have all this stuff like it felt really disheartening, like did we make a mistake? Is Tacoma not ready for this?” Stephens said.

Stephens explained, in the beginning, when Black Sheep Resale came out as a safe space for the LGBTQIA+ community, the shop began to lose followers online and some customers stopped shopping in-store. Stephens says it felt overwhelming to think about staying open.

After the break-in, the community showed support through online messages and donations

to the Black Sheep Resale GoFundMe, Stephens and her business partner decided reopening was a must.

“The outpouring of support, now that people know what we’ve been going through and that we exist, is really heartening. People are coming in specifically because they found out about us because of what happened. They now know we are a safe space (for the LGBTQIA+ community) and (Black Sheep Resale) is making an impact... The amount of direct messages from people in the community, other businesses, and members of the queer community and the non-queer community reaching out to show support has been very positive. So, that’s been really good,” Stephens said.

After closing their doors for a week to assess damages and discern reopening procedures, Black Sheep Resale reopened on February 17, exactly one month after opening their doors to the public.

Offering sizes from extra small to 3X, Black Sheep Resale seeks to create an inclusive, safe, and positive shopping experience for customers.

Black Sheep Resale describes their items as curated, pre-loved, vintage, and modern clothing items. The shop’s goal is to offer

unique fashion-forward items from designer brands, while cultivating a safe space for the LGBTQIA+ community to connect in Tacoma’s south end.

“We have unique, weird, eclectic clothes, yes that’s technically what we do to survive under capitalism, but being a part of the community, and meeting people and forming bonds, that’s the most important part,” Stephens said.

Black Sheep Resale is now open during their regular business hours. Shopping hours are Monday through Saturday, 11:00a.m. to 6:00p.m. and Sunday 12:00p.m. – 5:00p.m. Buying hours are Thursday through Sunday 12:00p.m. – 5:00p.m.

Black Sheep Resale buys gently used, high quality vintage and unique style items. Donations are also accepted, as space allows.

Black Sheep Resale plans to host community events in the future, such as movie nights, fashion competitions and a Twilight Market. Information on upcoming events and specialty markets can be found on the shop’s Instagram account @BlackSheepResale.

Black Sheep Resale is located at 4020 Steele Street #106, Tacoma, WA 98409

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- Friday** 11 a.m. - 5 p.m.

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Rock of Ages: leather, hairspray and '80s hair metal

UWT's spring production of Rock of Ages.

By DESTINY VALENCIA
NEWS EDITOR

Get ready for "Nothin' But a Good Time" with UWT's spring production of Rock of Ages in partnership with the Tacoma Little Theatre. This production will be directed by Maria-Tania Bandes B. Weingarden, or Dr. B, as they are also known.

Rock of Ages is a "jukebox" musical that features a large list of classic rock songs from the 1980s. The plot focuses on a cast of characters who are falling in love and chasing their dreams, all in the name of rock 'n' roll. Theatre go-ers can expect to see lots of leather, hairspray and fishnet tights in this production.

The Tacoma Little Theatre describes the musical as, "Aqua Net, Lycra, lace, and liquor flow freely at one of the Sunset Strip's last legendary venues in the 1980s. A place where sex machine Stacey Jaxx takes the stage and scantily clad groupies line up to turn their fantasies into reality. Amidst the madness, aspiring rock star (and resident toilet cleaner) Drew longs to take the stage as the next big thing (and longs for Sherri, fresh off the bus from Kansas with stars in her eyes).

But the fairy-tale is about to end when German developers sweep into town with plans to turn the fabled Strip into just another capitalist strip mall. Can Drew, Sherri, and the gang save the strip, and themselves, before it's too late? Only the music of hit bands Styx, Journey, Bon Jovi, Whitesnake, and more hold the answer."

"It's a love story and it's about dreams and trying to achieve your dreams," said Dr. B.

With a large cast of 26 individuals, composed of UWT students and community members, all have gone

through a rigorous rehearsal schedule with practices beginning at the start of the quarter in January, Sunday-Thursday 7p.m.- 10p.m. at night.

"It's a whole lot of fun, like seeing a mini concert," said senior Asante Hayes who plays the strip club DJ and is also a part of the men's ensemble.

"It's a good time, the music is amazing, it's a party... the actors go out into the audience. It's not your traditional (musical), we hope the audience rocks out with us," said Dr. B.

When asked what the cast members favorite song was, all had different answers that ranged from "Wanted Dead or Alive" by Bon Jovi, "Pour Some Sugar on Me" by Def Leppard, to "Cum on Feel the Noize" by Quiet Riot.

"I really like 'Here I Go Again,' it's just a fun song," said junior Elle Tena.

The director, cast and crew have been working nonstop on this production and are excited for the community to see what they have in store.

"Buy your tickets and bring your friends, it's going to be a blast and you won't come out the same person," said sophomore Bailey Christie.

The musical opens Friday, March 3, and closes Sunday, March 26 with an American Sign Language (ASL) interpreted show. Performances held on Fridays and Saturdays will start at 7:30p.m. and Sunday shows will be matinees starting at 2p.m. There will be a pay-what-you-can performance on Thursday, March 16 with a show at 7:30p.m.

Tickets for Rock of Ages are on sale now on the Tacoma Little Theatre's website. Tickets cost \$29 for adults, \$27 students/seniors/military and \$22 for children 12 & under. UWT students can use coupon code UWT23 during check out for 50% off their ticket.



PHOTO BY DESTINY VALENCIA

The cast and crew of Rock of Ages are excited for the community to see what they have in store.



PHOTO BY DESTINY VALENCIA

Rock of Ages has a large cast of 26 individuals, composed of UWT students and community members.

03/02/23

12:30-1:30PM

WHAT IS IT?
Participants will make their own "fake headlines" from old newspapers. Winners with the best headline will be selected to have a story written around their headline for our April Fools' Day issue!

WHERE?
THE DAWGHOUSE

THE LEDGER FAKE HEADLINE CONTEST

DON'T MISS OUT!
« EMAIL VALENDES@UW.EDU »
FOR MORE INFO



Photo of earthquake supplies

PHOTO BY RUTH OGDEN

Thinking about ‘The Big One:’ what to put in an earthquake bag

The devastation and aftermath of the recent earthquakes in Turkey is an excellent reminder to be earthquake-prepared.

By **RUTH OGDEN**
OPINION COLUMNIST

Living in the Pacific Northwest comes with some major perks: good coffee, an excellent live music scene, gorgeous hiking trails and the presence of reproductive rights. However, there is one major drawback to the Evergreen State. In the back of most Washingtonians’ minds lurks a sense of doom about ‘The Big One,’ a term referring to the inevitable colossal earthquake that will hit the Pacific Northwest.

An article in *Nature*, the world’s leading scientific journal, stated that within the next 50 years, there is a 37% chance of being hit by a magnitude 8 or bigger earthquake. For a frame of reference, Turkey’s recent earthquakes were 7.8 and 7.5 magnitude, respectively.

If you feel an earthquake, remember the motto “drop, cover, hold.” Drop down to your hands and knees, cover your neck and head with your arms and hold on to something sturdy until the shaking stops. Once the shaking stops, evacuate the building. If you can’t get

outside, hide underneath a solid structure like a desk or a table or take shelter in a doorway. Don’t use elevators. If someone around you uses a mobility aid like a wheelchair, assist them in evacuating.

Here in Washington, we are lucky that our buildings are built up to earthquake code, so there is a fairly low chance the building will collapse. Weirdly enough, getting through the initial earthquake is the easy part. The challenge is surviving the aftermath.

Simulations conducted by the University of Washington and the Washington Department of Natural Resources show a high chance of a post-earthquake tsunami, with waves up to ten feet in height flooding Tacoma. Landslides and ground liquefaction are also potential hazards and could render many structures uninhabitable. We should also expect the roads to be difficult to traverse, as the moving ground can fracture the asphalt. FEMA also warns that making cell phone calls may be difficult due to high call volume - when checking in on loved ones, texting is your best bet.

Considering the consequences of ‘The Big One’ is indisputably terrifying. However, the best salve for fear is reasonable preparedness. This means making an earthquake kit to keep at home or in the trunk of your car. An earthquake kit doesn’t have to be expensive or high-tech: the official FEMA booklet for earthquake preparedness recommends enough food and bottled water for three days, a flashlight and spare batteries. For me, I like to add a little extra to ensure that I’ll be comfortable while waiting for help.

Besides food, water, and a flashlight, here’s what’s in my earthquake kit:

- A change of comfortable clothes, including extra socks, hair bands and a KN95 mask
- A pocket knife
- A 10-day supply of essential daily medications
- Dry cat food (hey, I’ve got cats and I’m not leaving without them!)
- Menstrual supplies
- Band-aids, topical antibiotic ointment, sunscreen and ibuprofen
- Dial antibiotic soap

- A hand crank radio
- A USB power bank
- Plan B
- A space blanket
- A small notebook and a sharpie

It all fits in a backpack that I keep by the front door. In the event of an earthquake (or any big emergency, really) I can grab it at the same time I’m grabbing my keys and wallet.

But what happens if you aren’t rescued in three days?

The grim part is that we can’t realistically expect immediate help from the government. Even during a natural disaster, the rich come first: as we have seen in great disasters such as the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, wealthier parts of the cities were evacuated but low-income areas were left to fend for themselves. Those that survived the levees giving way were herded into sports stadiums and left for days with no food or water. People who attempted to scavenge supplies were branded ‘looters’ and ‘thieves,’ while the government provided billions in loans for businesses to recoup their losses. This desperate situation pushed people to the brink and kindled vio-

lence and tragedies that would not have otherwise occurred. Reflecting on the lack of federal action in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, there is no reason to expect a different reaction from city and government officials in Washington when ‘The Big One’ hits.

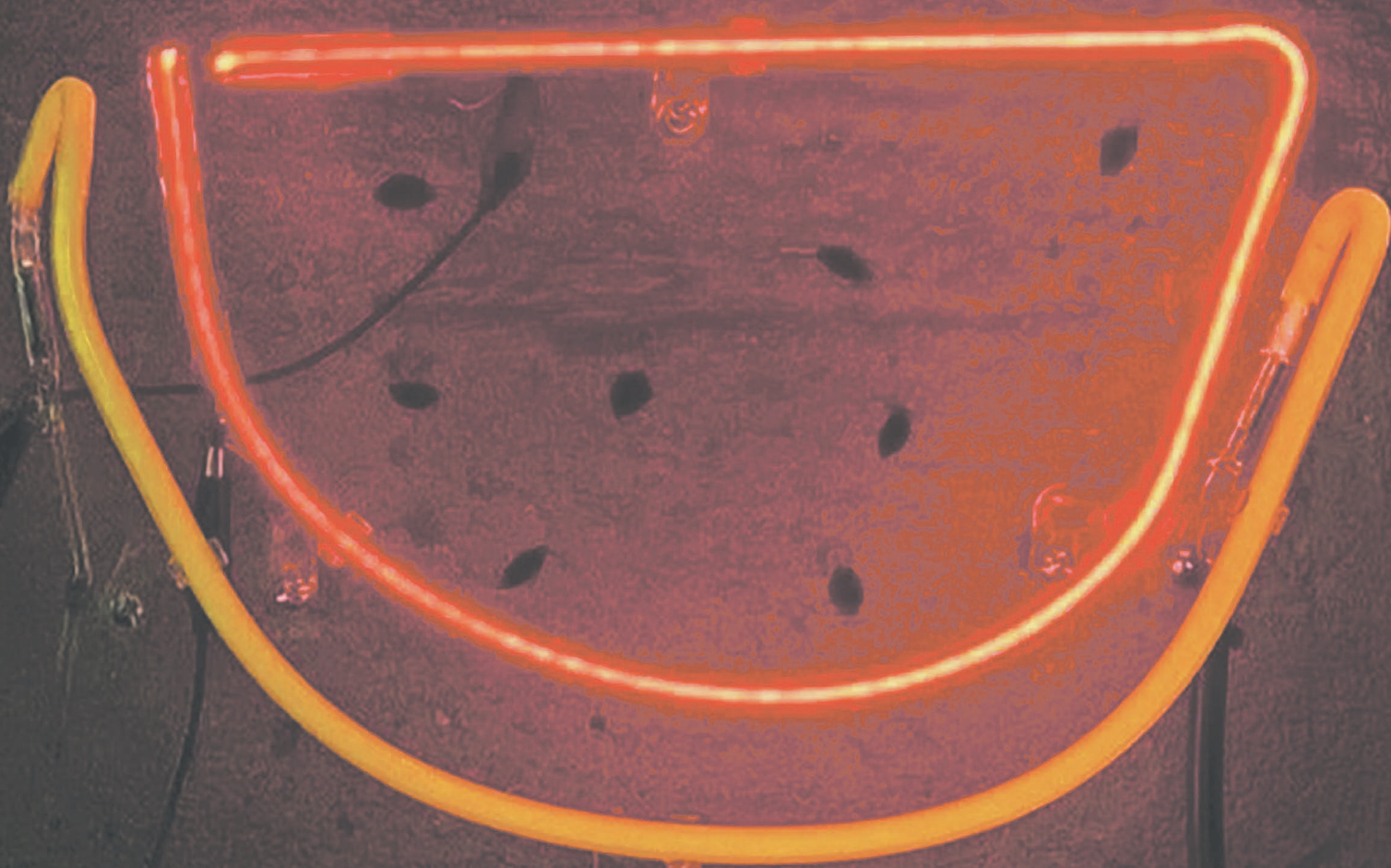
The solution to this is to get to know your neighbors and build a community network. After Hurricane Katrina, it was not the federal government but the ‘Cajun Navy,’ a group of civilians in their own motorboats, who navigated the treacherous flood waters to rescue over 10,000 people stranded on apartment rooftops and freeway overpasses. Here in Washington, we need to be ready to rescue our neighbors if they need it.

Community is important, especially when it comes to a natural disaster like an earthquake. We must be all prepared to help ourselves and others when the time comes.

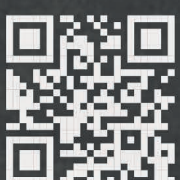
ON VIEW NOW!

SHE BENDS

REDEFINING NEON LEGACY



She Bends: Redefining Neon Legacy explores the evolution of the neon trade from commercial signage to fine art as the practitioners of these skills become younger and more diverse. The exhibition features women and gender-expansive artists of historically under-represented communities in neon alongside the women who taught them.



Plan your visit today.
[museumofglass.org](https://www.museumofglass.org)



Music prodigy to goth royalty

The world's most influential Gothic Lolita

By HEIDI ORTIZ CANDELARIA
OPINION COLUMNIST

Mana (also known as Mana-Sama by his fans) is a multi-talented icon of both the goth and Harajuku subcultures. A true artist, Mana was born on March 19 (year unknown) in Hiroshima and spent his early life dedicated to music. As the son of two music teachers, he grew up in an environment that encouraged the appreciation and finesse of classical music. Mana picked up piano and began his journey of composing his own pieces.

It was during his teens that Mana was first introduced to metal, and his love was solidified after experiencing his first-ever concert: Mötley Crüe. Right after, he bought his first album: Iron Maiden's Piece of Mind. He found musical inspiration in Mötley Crüe's drummer, Tommy Lee, and his passion was ignited from there.

After finishing high school, Mana joined his first band after enrolling in a music school in Osaka. This band – Girl'e – helped Mana begin his transition through different subcultures. Starting with punk, Mana had a blatant dislike for "girly" and feminine aesthetics and openly considered himself "hyper-masculine," rejecting the typical punk ethos that embraced androgyny. Shortly after the bands' separation, Mana decided to drop out of college and move to Tokyo after realizing his dislike of music theory and the rigidity that comes from following

its rules. He went on to pursue music as an independent artist.

Mana found work in a local karaoke bar, where he met Kōzi, a fellow musician who appreciated punk and metal. After joining and leaving the band Matenrou, they decided to start their own band. This was Malice Mizer, undoubtedly the most influential visual kei band ever created. With Mana's love of classical music, they created a unique mix of elegant instrumentals with the heavier, darker sounds found in gothic rock.

In 1999, shortly after Malice

him to sell his designs in Paris and The Netherlands.

Malice Mizer made a name for themselves through their heavy feminine makeup, colorful hair and aristocratic-like clothing that resembled that of Victorian goth, occasionally mixing in leather, feathers and heavy metal jewelry. After the tragic death of their drummer and the separation from their lead singer Gackt, Malice Mizer attempted to continue their legacy. It was short-lived though, for by 2001, the remaining band members decided to place themselves on hiatus. Though never formally broken up, they have no current plans of playing together.

It was a year later – though – that Mana decided to start their own band. A solo project, entitled *Moi dix Mois*. This is where Mana showed the range of his talents. He single-handedly produced, wrote the lyrics, played several different instruments, sang and designed the outfits for the other members. The members were made up of a group of rotating musicians that were considered support for live events, as Mana performed all of the duties needed to keep his solo project going.

Moi dix Mois's popularity sky-rocketed after 2004, and Mana made a decision that very few Japanese musicians had made up to that point: he began touring overseas. This expanded the world's knowledge of visual kei and redefined western and European standards of what gothic rock can be. Victorian goth be-

Mana-Sama became the face of the goth subculture in Japan, and Gothic Lolita worldwide.

Mizer's creation, Mana created his own clothing line: *Moi-même-Moitié*. A gothic lolita line that is still alive and well today. It is considered the most popular Gothic Lolita brand and has been featured in the lolita magazine, "Gothic & Lolita Bible." Mana was featured multiple times modeling his own designs and was recognized internationally, allowing



PHOTO BY MOI-MÊME-MOITIÉ ARCHIVES

Mana-sama showing an example of the *Moi-même-Moitié* clothing line.

came more popular than ever, as Mana chose to only present himself in feminine clothing. Gothic lolita became his signature look: A hyper-femme version of Victorian goth that includes heavily curled hair, bows, knee-length

dresses with petticoats, frills, lace, bloomers and Mary Jane-heeled shoes.

Mana-Sama became the face of the goth subculture in Japan, and Gothic Lolita worldwide. With his mysterious and alluring image, he helped an entire subculture grow and inspired many men, women and androgynous folk to embrace their dark hime (princess) fantasies. Mana is not known to speak in public and only communicates through whispers and through mediators who speak for him. This caused many people to believe that he was indeed a woman, which Mana embraced wholeheartedly. He welcomed the idea that his outward appearance caused people to question his true gender. Though Mana has admitted that he still considers himself a cis male, he rejected gender roles inside fashion and made it his mission to teach men that they too can be beautiful and feminine.

Mana-Sama has always been one of my biggest goth idols. I believe him to be one of my first introductions to goth. I found it absolutely amazing how he could polish the already beautiful Victorian goth into what I can only describe as my childhood dream: A princess with a haunted, porcelain doll-like appearance. I wanted to be him, and even though I no longer yearn to be a gothic lolita, I would love to please my inner child someday and buy a few dresses from the *Moi-même-Moitié* store.



PHOTO BY INDEX COMMUNICATIONS

Moi-même-Moitié as seen in the Gothic Lolita Bible.

Try to disconnect from your devices and explore these local parks

How disconnecting from technology can benefit your mental health.

By **KIARRA BLAKELY-RUSSELL**
OPINION EDITOR

Do you remember what it felt like to play outside as a child, carefree, with no set mindset and no need of finding a purpose yet? Where books, payments, homework or jobs didn't take up our daily lives. Aside from that, phones weren't even present. Well, I sure do remember and so, I took some time disconnecting and getting outdoors; enjoying the leaves, the wind in my hair and the rain on my skin – something I could never do on my phone.

Technology is sweeping up this generation: new trends of fake positivity, tarot readings that feed delusions on how you should be living your life, and overwhelming negativity like new facts about toxins in foods and ignored world issues. By living our lives through our screens, we've all been starting a downward journey into losing self-awareness.

Tiffany Shlain's new book, "24/6: The Power of Unplugging one day a week," says "Spending time away from your screens will lead you to deeper connections with those around you and more presence to the wonders and joys of your everyday life."

I've found that disconnecting can lead me to being more productive, keep me focused, and

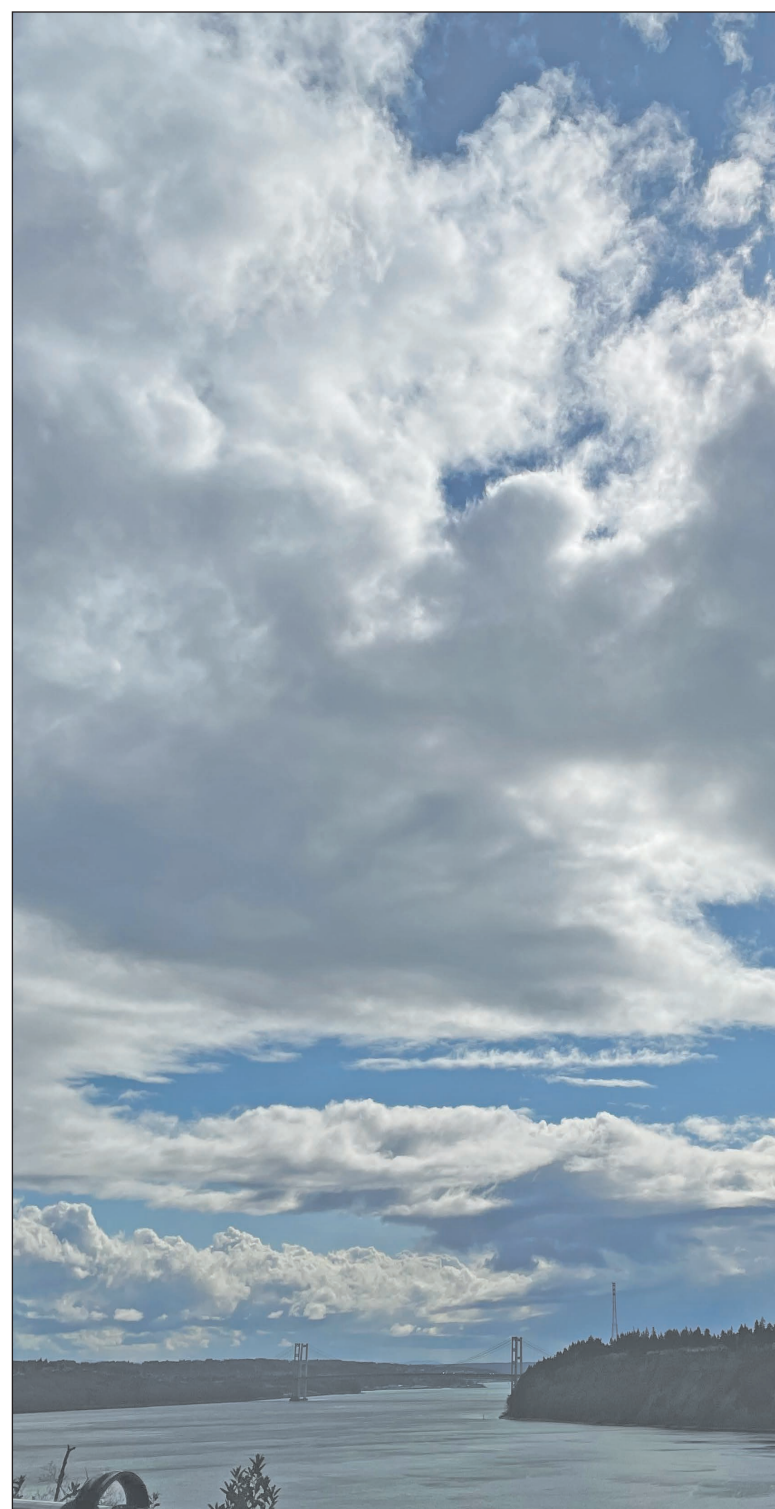
reduce my stress. However, for others I feel it would benefit in the same way but also in others such as making better connections and obtaining them, better sleep and just having the time to know yourself more. As I'm understanding and taking in my own advice by learning to disconnect more, I found that parks are what made the disconnect worthwhile: here are two closeby parks in Tacoma that you all might consider disconnecting in.

As our school is located in the city, there aren't many parks closeby. That is unless you look for them, such as Wright Park, which is not too far from campus. The park is just about three minutes by car, but a 15 to 20 minute walk. The park resides next to a few shops and restaurants. Once you enter it, you'll be met with green and brown trails with many seated areas and occasionally interesting characters that'll remind you that you're in Tacoma. But beyond that, what makes this park a lovely pick would be its trail leading up to the W.W. Seymour Botanical Conservatory. The small conservatory is filled with unique flowers and a gift shop, along with benches and fountains nearby. Along with this garden is a single arched trellis located outside with flowers and rose bushes surrounding; only sprouting during spring.

Point Defiance Park would be another to seek out. With it being conveniently located right by the Point Defiance Zoo and 15 minutes away from the school, I'd seek out this park for a couple hours of leisure time. I recommend taking a book if you don't plan on exploring the entire park, and just observing the scenery and taking in your surroundings: birds chirping, people running by, children playing.

Ruston Way and the Waterfront strip would be my final recommendation, if you're more open to crowds and activity-based scenarios. Ruston Way offers bike riding down the strip with a close friend or more, or just sitting by the water—watching the waves move quickly with the wind. Enjoy the vast options of restaurants around or just Ice Cream Social if you are into cold desserts in the winter time.

I hope you don't let the rain or windy climate stop you from enjoying the fresh air and the ability to remove yourself from technology and its unrealistic depictions of life. It's important with finals coming up that you take the time to relax and choose self-care this winter entering into spring.



A cloudy day overlooking the waterfront.

PHOTO BY KIARRA BLAKELY-RUSSELL

The ingenious accessibility of 'Hi-Fi RUSH'

Whatever kind of gamer you are, this game is sure to hit all your notes.

By **COLE MARTIN**
A&E COLUMNIST

"Hi-Fi RUSH," a smash-hit rhythm action game from the incredible team at Tango Gameworks, is a masterpiece. The rhythm, hack-and-slash combo seamlessly combines two drastically different game genres in an experience unlike anything I've ever played.

The game introduces players to Chai, a wannabe rockstar who gets infused with music in an accident involving an experimental prosthetic robot arm implant from the comically evil Vandelay Technologies. Now being hunted down by the company as a 'defect,' Chai and his rebel friends must uncover secrets and slash their way through the ranks, all while keeping up the beat.

"Hi-FiRUSH" shadow-dropped at the end of January and has already garnered an overwhelming amount of positive reviews across multiple platforms. Many players would point to the success being from the games outstanding visual style, incredibly satisfying rhythm-based gameplay, or its high quality original soundtrack, I would argue that the thing that sets "Hi-Fi RUSH" apart from any other game is its innovation in accessibility.

Accessibility in games has always been a very important discussion in the gaming world. As game companies continue trying to make their products available to as many people as they can; accessible games must be able to be enjoyed by the widest range of people, regardless of any external factors or impairments. Aside from just ability, another way to reach this 'widest range of people' is to make your game as approachable and easy to get into as possible.

Rhythm games are generally a good example of inaccessibility, as they are notoriously difficult and have a high skill floor that is often a barrier of entry for many players, including myself. The task of making "Hi-Fi RUSH" accessible wouldn't be an easy task to take on, but John Johanas, the director at Tango Gameworks and the mastermind behind "Hi-Fi RUSH," was thinking about accessibility straight from the start.

"[In a rhythm game,] if you don't press on time, you'll fail. There's a fail state. But the worst thing you can do in an action game is to press the button and nothing happens; it feels like it's a mistake," Johanas said.

"Hi-Fi RUSH's" solution to this problem is to make everything sync up to the beat; from the background and the characters to the

health bars and attacks. Johanas and his team designed the game from its very core so that missing a beat did not mean failure; your inputs will still go through and will be synced up with the music regardless of when you press.

"You're rewarded for playing on the beat, but you're not punished for not playing on the beat... So even if you're not good at rhythm games, you can enjoy the experience of being good at rhythm games."

This inclusive design was not left unnoticed by the game's audience. Sinfultrackster, a commenter on Steam, left this positive review for the game:

"I have a hearing impairment and have been locked out of most rhythm games, but this one has been so inclusive! The multiple visual queues really help!"

To further aid this accessibility, the game has a plethora of accessibility options within these settings. Some notable ones are a colorblind

mode, extra visual indicators, single-button options for quick time events and context subtitles.

The accessibility in "Hi-Fi RUSH" is inherently weaved into its core game design; I haven't seen many games do so expertly before. Its innovation allows the game to be fresh, unique, and easy to pick up for a wide variety of players.

If you'd like to try the game out yourself, it's \$30 on PC and Xbox consoles, and is also available on Xbox Game Pass for \$10 a month.



Screenshot of 'Hi-Fi RUSH'

PHOTO BY TANGO GAMEWORKS



Paul Rudd, Kathryn Newton, and Evangeline Lilly in "Ant-Man and the Wasp: Quantumania" PHOTO BY WALT DISNEY STUDIOS MOTION PICTURES

'Ant-Man' proves it's past time to start skipping certain Marvel movies

Despite its less-than stellar reviews compared to Marvel's usual releases, this film is a disappointing follow-up to the previous "Ant-Man" features.

By **EMILIA BELL**
FILM CRITIC

"Ant-Man and the Wasp: Quantumania," directed by Peyton Reed, begins with Scott Lang (Paul Rudd) and his family enjoying their down time. As Scott enjoys his newfound fame as Ant-Man, his daughter Cassie (Kathryn Newton) becomes unsatisfied. Cassie and Hope—the Wasp (Evangeline Lilly)—reveal that they have created a way to map the mysterious Quantum realm. They are helped by Hope's father, Hank (Michael Douglas), while Hope's mother Janet (Michelle Pfeiffer), who also spent time trapped in the realm, has concerns about the technology. Her concerns are realized when they all end up stuck in the realm themselves. As they try to escape, they meet fantastical creatures and characters who help and hinder them along the way—particularly the imposing tyrannical "Conqueror," known as Kang.

The plot of the film is weak and the jokes didn't often land, but to be

fair, an exception was Paul Rudd's comedic narrations in the beginning and end of the film. A lot of the plot was tied to the television show "Loki," so anyone who had not viewed it would have been a bit confused.

Much of it was so over-the-top goofy that it was impossible to have an emotional connection to any of it. None of the characters felt properly fleshed out, the Wasp was barely in her own movie and winds up forgettable, and the Quantum world, while promising, never gets a moment to shine. The CGI, as has been the case with most Marvel films as of late, was distractingly bad in many moments and seemed to hinder the performances.

Paul Rudd is known as a charismatic and likable actor, whose personality had carried most of the previous "Ant-Man" films. Unfortunately, whether it is due to poor writing, or Rudd not connecting with his character anymore, whatever charisma he had in the previous films is not enough in this one and doesn't prevent it from being underwhelm-

ing and low effort.

Jonathan Majors, who plays Kang, is overly serious in a film that does not seem to care, and the writing did not give him proper motivations or depth. He is an acceptable villain for a different film—or at least a different mood.

Much of the film is bogged down with green screen use. Kathryn Newton and Michelle Pfeiffer never seem to believe they're looking at anything, which in turn breaks any remaining immersion the audience may have had. Newton was a recast, which raises some questions, given that her performance was significantly subpar; her reactions fell flat and her emotions never felt genuine.

Michael Douglas brings more energy, and it's clear that he is having a good time, but doesn't seem to take anything particularly seriously. His line deliveries border on sketch comedy level rather than film acting.

The film overall had strong "Star Wars" prequel trilogy vibes, but not in any of the positive ways other than creature design. The creature

design was the main positive element of the film. A new character called Veb, who resembled a snail encased in pink Jell-O with gangly limbs, and had an amiable disposition was a highlight and one of the few characters that felt well-realized, though he had little screen time.

A sense of scale is very important with the "Ant-Man" movies due to the character's nature of changing sizes. This film had virtually no sense of scale. Paul Rudd could have been an inch tall or forty feet tall and it would have been difficult to tell. It was often disorienting and difficult to work out what was happening in action sequences, with truly messy and jagged editing that did not help. Many moments throughout the film felt as if they were missing a scene for context.

The film felt rushed; it was as though they were told to make an "Ant-Man" movie in one week, with little to no preparation.

While the film is certainly worse than many from Marvel's film catalog and the previous "Ant-Man"

movies, it is receiving criticisms for things that Marvel has been guilty of for a while now. The fact that films like "Thor: Love and Thunder" and "Black Panther: Wakanda Forever" have far better reviews is somewhat puzzling. It's true that "Black Panther" had higher highs and proper emotional connection while "Thor" managed to find some enjoyment despite its odd choices. But, they still suffer from an overuse of CGI, messy and unsatisfying plots, and in "Thor's" case, cringy and forced humor. "Ant-Man" is not alone in its poor quality; this is simply a continuation of Marvel's inability to take its time and think things through. More often than not, new releases have begun to feel like a waste of time. After the excitement of "Endgame," though it was a far from perfect film, it felt as though the studio was lost. It could be possible that Stan Lee's death around that time influenced this, but it's hard to say definitively if that is the problem. It is unclear if Marvel will be able to return to its former glory.

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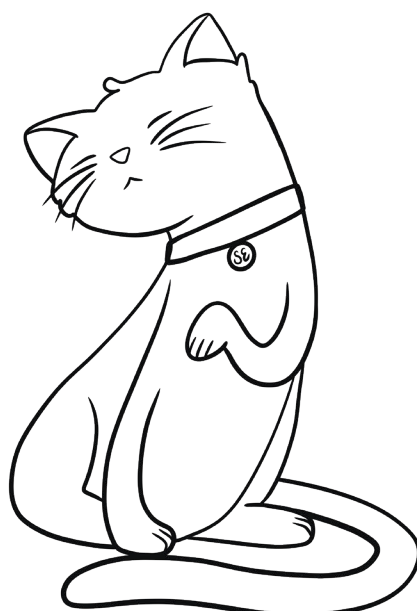


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