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Majors Fair  
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12 - 2 p.m.

May 24

CEI End of Year  
Celebration  
William Philip Hall  
5:30 - 7 p.m.

# THE LEDGER

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON TACOMA

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## UWT hosts its first ever poetry festival: 'Between the Lines'

Students, community organizations, alumni, staff and faculty came together to celebrate poetry and creativity.

By **KATIE SCOTT**  
NEWS REPORTER

The 2023 UWT Poetry Festival, "Between The Lines," concluded on Monday, May 1 in William Philip Hall. Conceived and facilitated by UWT professors Ever Jones and Dr. Sarah Chavez, the event started as an idea to host a poetry reading on campus. Through planning and community organizing, the professors evolved the poetry reading into a festival that could host multiple poetry readings, involve writing studies students and UWT Alumni, and connect community organizations to campus groups.

"We thought, if we're going to do something big, then we should do it in perpetuity. If we're going to do it big, we should do something that's going to get bigger and pull in more people and be a real staple for not just creative writing students and not just writing studies students, but for the full campus and for the community," Dr. Chavez said.

After much planning, the festival became a three-pronged approach to cultivating a writer's community on campus. The first portion of the festival invited UWT Alumni, who are professional writers, into the creative writing courses of Jones and Dr. Chavez to work directly with undergraduate students. These workshops were open to all students and focused on honing the skills and ideas of writers to develop new approaches and perspectives in their projects. The workshops also included an opportunity for current students to hear how the alumni were pursuing writing on a pro-

fessional scale and offer advice on how to become a successful writer after graduation.

The second part of the festival took place in the afternoon of May 1, and included open poetry readings from student editors of UWT's Tahoma West, a student-run literary magazine that publishes UWT student art, prose and poetry. The event provided snacks and community building activities for students, staff and faculty who are interested in growing the UWT writing community.

The last part of the festival was an evening event, held in William Philip Hall, that featured community literary organizations such as Write 253, Blue Cactus Press and Creative Colloquy. UWT Alumni writers and vendors like Tien Creations were also in attendance. Other UWT groups were available at the event such as the Writing Studies department, UWT Librarians and UWT Creative Writing RSO, the Wordlings.

The evening began with a dinner and networking hour, where students met with other writers and poets to discuss interests, share ideas and experiences, and eat. A selfie booth, magnetic poetry board and student raffle were available for students to participate in.

The evening hosted open readings by two prestigious local poets, Sasha LaPointe and Arianne True. Sasha LaPointe describes herself as being "...from the Upper Skagit and Nooksack Indian Tribe. Native to the Pacific Northwest, she draws inspiration from her coastal heritage as well as her life in the city." Arianne



Professors Ever Jones and Dr. Sarah Chavez hosted the festival, where local poets Sasha LaPointe and Arianne True read original work. PHOTO BY KATIE SCOTT

True, the current WA State Poet Laureate, also read from her collection. Arianne describes herself as "...a poet and excitable human based in Tacoma, WA, and from the Choctaw and Chickasaw nations...She's taught with Writers in the Schools, mentored with the Seattle Youth Poet Laureate program and Hugo House's Young Writers Cohort, (and) been a guest lecturer at the University of Washington."

The poets read several poems for the audience and sat for a question-and-answer session. Students and attendees had the opportunity to get to know Sasha and Arianne, while learning about their writing processes, what inspires them and an involved discussion on what a bunk-bed couch is.

The evening event ended with over twenty UWT students reading their own original poems during open mic. The poem subjects ranged from an ode to toast, to the frustrations of retail workers, to family trauma and relationships, along with ideas

about nature. Students chose their own pieces and read for up to 3 minutes each.

Professor Jones and Dr. Chavez publicly recognized and thanked the many staff and faculty that donated their time, resources, and money to help bring the event to fruition. They acknowledged how many UWT community members banded together to support the event. The professors expressed a public thank you for the support and help of those who donated in any way to make the event a success. Both professors announced their "hearts are so full" for the help of their community. They explained without it, the event would not have been able to happen.

The UWT Poetry Festival is set to be an annual event, held each spring on campus at UWT.

Sasha LaPointe's website can be found at <http://sasha-lapointe.com>



Arianne True's website <https://www.ariannetrue.com/>



PHOTO BY KATIE SCOTT

The UWT Poetry Festival is set to be an annual event, held each spring on campus at UWT.

# May declared Bike Month in Tacoma, but is biking here safe?

On May 2, city council and community members met to discuss bike infrastructure and Bike Month in Tacoma



PHOTO BY TAYLOR MERWIN

Separated bike lanes along E 64th St.

By DESTINY VALENCIA  
NEWS EDITOR

Tacomans and cyclists gathered at the town hall May 2, as the city council declared the month of May would be bike month in Tacoma.

Community members, a part of Downtown on the Go, urged local cyclists to attend the meeting in person or via Zoom to discuss bike infrastructure here throughout Tacoma and ways to improve or expand.

After the city council decreed May to be Bike Month here in Tacoma, residents were welcomed to speak in a public comment. Many residents who spoke were a part of cyclist clubs or said that cycling was their primary form of transport throughout the city.

While certain areas in the city were praised for their bike friendly lanes, many expressed a desire for the city to expand protected bike lanes, curb stops and other cyclist friendly structures. Many of these individuals specifically stated that this infrastructure should be expanded upon along 6th Avenue here in Tacoma as it is a high destination spot for many and could increase foot traffic if the area became more bike-friendly.

Community member Troy Alexander mentioned in their public comment that a city with poor bike infrastructure forces individuals to rely strictly on motor transportation.

“For too long Tacoma has developed in a manner that forces car ownership on Tacoma families at huge financial burdens to them. This a terrible financial burden truly and growing our bike network will play a big role in breaking that cycle...” said Alexander.

Other individuals such as Sasha Funk, wore their bike safety gear which included a high visibility vest and bright orange helmet. With their partner, Funk noted how difficult it was to bike from their home with their children. In what should have been a 9-minute easy ride to city council, it was doubled in time to ensure their safety.

“We live just off 6th Ave, which should be a quick trip, but 6th is an extremely dangerous place to bike,” Funk said. In their statement, Funk also noted that some measures taken by the city to increase bike lanes do not ensure the safety of cyclists:

“We need protected separated bicycle lanes, sharrows, flexible bollards and painted bicycle gutters do nothing to protect our

bodies from cars. Paint is not bicycle infrastructure.”

According to the CDC, “Nearly 1,000 bicyclists die and over 130,000 are injured in crashes that occur on roads in the United States every year.” The costs of these injuries and deaths “typically exceed \$23 billion in the United States each year. These costs include spending on health care and lost work productivity, as well as estimated costs for lost quality of life and lives lost.”

Amber Weilert, the mother of Michael Weilert, a thirteen-year-old boy who was hit and died in a crosswalk July of 2022, called in and shared their thoughts on pedestrian and bike safety measures.

“I ask the city council to keep safety in mind, always when considering anything regarding transportation. Especially bike safety. My son lost his life in a crosswalk so for me crosswalk safety becomes one of my top priorities. I ask that we keep cyclists in mind when creating infrastructure, with things like red fog lights at road crossings in addition to protected bike lanes and speed slowing measures,” Weilert said.

Council members and Mayor Victoria Woodards seemed responsive to community members and thanked them for taking the time to speak at the council meeting.

If you would like to find more information on Bike Month here in Tacoma, you can visit [https://www.cityoftacoma.org/government/city\\_departments/public\\_works/mobility\\_options/bike\\_month](https://www.cityoftacoma.org/government/city_departments/public_works/mobility_options/bike_month) for events and information.

If you would like to speak to your representative about bike safety and infrastructure, you can contact your representative at [https://www.cityoftacoma.org/government/city\\_council](https://www.cityoftacoma.org/government/city_council)



PHOTO BY ALEXA CHRISTIE

Bike racks located at UWT

## The Ledger

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# Review: The best spicy (and sweet) romance reads for summer break

Romance novels are finally having their time to shine, and I'm excited to recommend a few.



PHOTO BY ALEXA CHRISTIE

By RUTH  
OPINION COLUMNIST

I'm not ashamed to be a voracious romance reader. I take down two to three books a week, and I'll try anything once. I'm pretty open-minded and I've read some stories that have been really 'out there' (Yes, I even tried to read Ice Planet Barbarians... not my cup of tea), but some books just beg to be read again and again.

Here are my suggestions for some excellent romance reading this summer, arranged in ascending spice level.

## The Cruel Prince

If you liked *A Court of Thorns and Roses*, I recommend "The Cruel Prince" by Holly Black

*Spice level:* (2 / 5)

*Content warnings:* graphic violence, parental death, bullying

*Tropes:* political intrigue, enemies-to-lovers, possessive love interest

So, technically, *The Cruel Prince* is of the fantasy fiction genre rather than romantic fantasy, but that doesn't mean the romance in this book isn't top-tier. Jude is a human raised in the Fey world, and Cardan is the crown prince... who also happens to be her school bully. The two become embroiled in a Faerie succession

plot for the throne, and Jude is forced to use her wit and skill as a warrior to prevent the crown from falling to the wrong person. This book is satisfying and has one of the best strong female leads I've encountered in a while.

Quote: "You really do want me," I say, close enough to feel the warmth of his breath as it hitches. "And you hate it."

## A God Of Wrath And Lies

If you want to sob your eyes out, I suggest "A God of Wrath and Lies" by K.M. Moronova (Book 1 of the Pine Hollow series)

*Spice level:* (3 / 5)

*Content warnings:* Graphic violence, pet death, major character death

*Tropes:* Betrayal, "Maybe in another life," reincarnation, fated mates

To be totally transparent, this is literally the best book I've read in a long time. I finished it at 4 a.m. and was open-mouth-sobbing. The story follows Elodie as she explores a mystical world of gods and magic while attempting to process her trauma and loss. The world building is incredible, and the author does an excellent job of allowing the reader's understanding of the world to unfold as the main character recovers her memories. Fair warning, though, this series isn't complete

yet. You and I are just going to have to wait to find out what happens next.

Quote: "You are real. This moment - this moment means everything to me. Real or not."

## Ruin

If you have a thing for bad boys and like a thriller mystery, try "Ruin" by Jolie Vines

*Spice level:* (4 / 5)

*Content warnings:* Violence, physical abuse, juvenile detention facilities, Scottish accents

*Tropes:* Possessive love interest, secret inheritance, miscommunication gone wrong

Ruin is full of sexual tension and spice, but don't let that distract you from the surprisingly high quality thriller mystery plot. Set in Scotland, this romance follows Ruin, the 'bad boy' at the local juvenile detention facility, and Theadora, a socially isolated young heiress. Both are heavily affected by circumstances beyond their control and find out that their pasts are more intertwined than they realized. It's a quick read but still manages to keep you on your toes until the very last page.

Quote: He loved me. I wanted to laugh. "For fuck's sake," he added, desperation in his tone. "Say it back."

## Priest

If you're a *Fleabag* fan, you should read "Priest" by Sierra Simone

*Spice level:* (5 / 5)

*Content warning:* Catholicism, mentions of sexual abuse (not the main characters), sacrilege, they did WHAT on the altar?

*Tropes:* Forbidden love, vow of chastity, miscommunication

The premise is simple: A Catholic priest falls in love with his beautiful new parishioner, and the following scandal permanently alters both of their lives. You can see the plot twists coming from a mile away, but the complex and nuanced main characters make up for the lack of imagination in the storyline. The spice in this book is deliciously transgressive and oh so satisfying.

Quote: "And what about an unbelievably hot priest? Is that a sound reason for exploring the Church?"

## The Never King

If you want something you shouldn't read in public, check out "The Never King" by Nikki St. Crow

*Spice level:* Off the scale

*Content warning:* Rough sex, threesomes, knives, graphic violence

*Tropes:* Found family, love after trauma

So, if you're looking for a book where the plot only exists as a framework for the spicy scenes, *The Never King* is the book for you. This is a dark retelling of the adventures of Peter Pan, and in this version, everyone is over 18 and really horny. Fair warning, this one is not something you should not read on the bus. The spice starts almost immediately, and features multiple love interests (and yes, there are threesomes!) The storyline also includes magic, intrigue and mystery but all of that is low in quality compared to the sex scenes. But, let's be honest, you're not reading this type of book for the plot.

Quote: "She needs to know... there are no white knights here. Just monsters. And I am the worst one."

Summer is the best time to turn off your brain and sink into some satisfying literature. If you enjoy a little spice in your life, these are the reads for you. They range in tropes and content, ensuring there is something for everyone. I hope you give these reads a chance and fall in love with them just as I have.

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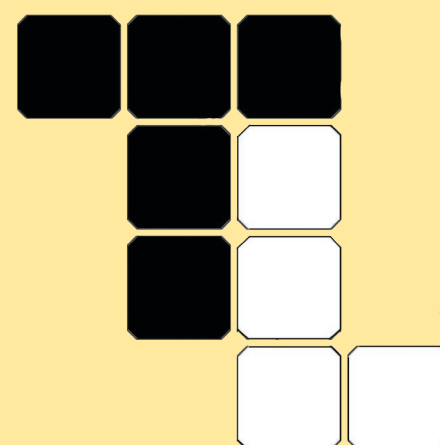




PHOTO BY TROPIDARKS

## Goth is for all colors

POC have had just as much influence inside the Goth subculture

By **HEIDI ORTIZ CANDELARIA**  
OPINION COLUMNIST

A harmful stereotype has been haunting the goth scene since its birth in the early 80s. Many believe goth to be a primordially white community and many others have aimed to keep it that way. But the reality is that goth – especially the music and iconography – would not exist if it weren't for the influence of POC.

Like many underground subcultures, goth was created from an amalgamation of different forms of artistic expression—but mainly from music (as it is a music-based subculture). Starting with the music genre though, blues was a genre that gave birth to many other genres, eventually creating the sub-category of goth: starting with rock & roll, then metal, punk and finally goth. The blues genre originated from the Deep South

and was created by African American slaves who worked in plantations. They brought in their African roots through deep rhythms, while singing and chanting about their lives as a form of oral storytelling.

This new subculture spoke to the most marginalized of groups, those who were not only rejected by society for their beliefs, but also for their sexuality and ethnicities. POC and queer folk made up a large sum of the community, adding in elements of their cultures to the sub-culture. The use of the ankh from Egyptian art became an iconic symbol, along with the pentagrams from witchcraft, the triple moon from Euro-pagan Wicca and rosaries from the Latinx Santeria. Skulls, snakes, and bones primarily came from indigenous and African cultures, which later gave space for the common goth hobby of collecting taxider-

my and oddities. Though there is much inspiration from European gothic fiction, gothic architecture and Victorian era fashion; that is only a fraction of the whole.

Using rosaries and other spiritual symbols became blatant jabs at Christianity and an appreciation for the rich spiritual cultures that colonizers attempted to erase. The appreciation for life after death and the macabre was directly influenced by indigenous, African and Latinx folklore. Even certain staple tendencies in traditional goth fashion were inspired by black and Latinx trans women, such as the erasure of features through face paint, heavy contour, and thin eyebrows. In this regard, no one can appreciate goth more than those who are directly oppressed by the racist, white fascists. It's also why you can't be racist and consider yourself goth. We don't want you anyways.

In the past two years, Puerto Rico has begun putting itself on the map as an influential goth hotspot, as the community grows and is stronger than ever. Elder goths joined hands with a few younger members to cultivate a community that not only celebrates the joys of being goth, but also embraces the beauty of the Puerto Rican culture and its mixed heritage: Indigenous, African and Spanish. This week, an event took place in the town of old San Juan titled "La Comunion" (The Communion). Two educational speeches that spoke about the origins of goth in Puerto Rico and a goth film screening took place before the party. "La Comunion" aimed to challenge the Christian ideology embedded in our island by Spanish conquistadors, using the common catholic rite of passage to intimidate conservatives.

Pushing the message of acceptance and appreciation for POC and queer folk is something that the Puerto Rican group "Tropidarks" has set out to do. The elder goths of this particular community have been working hard to ensure this since their integration into the community in the '80s, while the younger generation have learned to reject the Spanish Christian ideology that was imposed upon them. I urge others in the community to stand up for your fellow Latinx, indigenous and black goths while also expunging anyone who wishes to push the white supremacist agenda in the name of "Eurocentric appreciation" and "conservation." There is nothing more goth than embracing each other's differences and being our authentic, weird selves.

## Top food spots near campus

Hungry after class? Try these places close to campus

By **CELIA WILLIAMS**  
OPINION EDITOR

There is nothing I hate more than being hungry after getting out of class and then having to decide what to eat. For that reason I usually stick to the same few places because they never seem to let me down. Here are three food spots near campus for you to try this week:

### Al's Hot Chicken

Al's Hot Chicken is just off of 19th Street and Mildred near Tacoma Community College. It is a chicken and waffle joint with a ton of options, and only ten minutes from UW Tacoma. All I can say is I am obsessed with it!

It can be a bit spendy, with combos averaging about twenty dollars a piece, but generally the combos can feed two people. I usually order a mild number two combo, which is two chicken sandwiches and fries, with all of the dipping sauces. I also usually get a Dr. Pepper, but that is just my preference.

The chicken is always cooked perfectly, literally dripping with juices. The fries are crispy and seasoned perfectly. I never fail to be satisfied when I go to Al's Hot Chicken.

### Zeeks Pizza

Zeeks Pizza is right near our campus, just along Pacific Ave. They offer individual pizzas or slices and have plenty of topping options. If you are a UW Tacoma student, you can even get a discount when you go, as you can with a number of spots on Pacific Ave.

My go-to order is a slice of pepperoni pizza with a half order caesar salad and one of their locally made sodas. Depending on when you go and what you order the cost can vary, usually I spend about twenty dollars when I go.

### Thanks Brother Pho

Thanks Brother Pho is another spot on Pacific Ave for you to stop if you are looking for a bite to eat. The portions are huge and are

totally worth the cost. It ended up being about thirty dollars with the tip, but the portions are enough for two people.

I ordered the basic Chicken Pho, or Pho Ga, and an order of crab rangoons. It was hot and everything came in separate containers to keep it fresh for when I got home to enjoy it. It was not overly salty and it was the perfect leftover for lunch the next day since the portions were large enough for that

Overall, I ate some great food this week and was not disappointed. I hope that you try it and enjoy it as much as I did!



PHOTO BY ALEXA CHRISTIE

Zeeks Pizza is one of the top places for students to go for lunch.



Installation view of "The Current: Saying the Quiet Parts Out Loud" at Tacoma Art Museum.

PHOTO BY PETER BERKLEY

## 'The Current' exhibit at TAM celebrates local Black artistry

Museum visitors are invited to stay awhile in this inviting gallery that doubles as a community space.

By **STEPH CARONNA**  
A&E COLUMNIST

Last August, the Tacoma Art Museum announced that a committee had begun the process for selecting a winner for a brand new award called The Current. This unrestricted, \$15,000 award was designed to honor and uplift Black artists local to Tacoma. In November, the very first winner of The Current was announced to be Darrell McKinney, an interdisciplinary artist who explores history and politics through design and architecture.

Now, museum patrons can visit a new exhibition that commemorates the inaugural year of this award. "The Current: Saying the Quiet Parts Out Loud" was curated by Artist Award Manager Victoria Miles to be both a celebration of local Black artistry and an immersive space for the community to gather.

"With this exhibition, I am inviting people in to learn more about The Current and encouraging them to be more thoughtful and curious of the landscape of Black artists in Tacoma," said Miles.

"The title 'Saying the Quiet Parts Out Loud' references the quiet and slowness around the intentionality of the work, expressing things that are intrinsic to us by nature, values that ground this work," Miles stated in a press release for the exhibit.

Upon first entering the space, the intention of comfort and support is immediately apparent through the color scheme. Warm pinks, purples and oranges—bright colors not usually associated with museum walls—invite guests to take a deep breath and engage emotionally with the works on display.

The gallery features multiple installations by McKinney. The centerpiece is a column of mirrored windows of various sizes, hanging from the ceiling in a column shape. The mirrored surface on many of these windows is scratched off to varying degrees, around the edges on many and in the middle on a few. This has a disorienting effect when determining whether one is looking through the glass, at a reflection of the gallery or of oneself.

There are also works by McKinney in his current favorite medium: concrete. These include planters sculpted with intricate designs and a piece titled "Breakwater," featuring miniature recreations of the concrete tetrapod structures used to construct breakwaters, which serve to decrease the force of incoming waves.

"Concrete is a material that's literally everywhere," McKinney said, "It's fallen to the background of our minds in a lot of ways. So for that to be brought to the forefront and to be the main feature, I think there's ways you can manipulate that property to where it is interesting again."

One corner of the space is particularly inviting, with a cushioned bench sporting multicolored pillows along the wall. In front of this, a couple of egg-shaped wingback chairs, a coffee table and a purple shag rug help complete the living room feel of the space. A collection of books which relate to the themes of the exhibit are also on display.

These elements come together to create a perfect space for discussions, gatherings and other community activities. The first of these took place on May 4, when Miles hosted a conversation be-

tween McKinney and Cristina Martinez, visual artist and The Current's final juror (as such, Martinez was responsible for selecting the winner of the award from the finalists chosen by The Current's committee). Over the course of this conversation, the three spoke about their artistic influences, the importance of providing Black artists with institutional support and the hardships of balancing art with other life commitments.

McKinney offered insight about the award process, from applying and attending workshops at the museum, to the final studio visit with Martinez. He also spoke about the importance of incorporating and acknowledging his influences while still infusing his art with his sense of self.

"I'm bad at time management," McKinney said when asked for advice about juggling art with other responsibilities, "But you have to just block out that two hours every day. It doesn't have to lead to anything. The small bits of time eventually add up to something"

The 2023 award year cycle for The Current has yet to be announced, but with the success of its inaugural year, it is sure to be on the way. Black visual artists in Tacoma should keep an eye out for upcoming events related to this award.

Anyone who is passionate about supporting marginalized voices in the art world should be sure to visit "The Current: Saying the Quiet Part Out Loud." The exhibition will be open through October 15, 2023. The museum's Neighborhood Nights are the perfect opportunity to do so; every Thursday evening, admission is free for all visitors 5-8 p.m. For more information visit [tacomartmuseum.org](http://tacomartmuseum.org).



Installation view of "Breakwater."

PHOTO BY PETER BERKLEY



Installation view of "One Way Mirror."

PHOTO BY MARIJKE PIETERS-KWIERS

# Are game leaks good for release publicity?

'The Legend of Zelda: Tears of the Kingdom' leak unveils mixed reactions among video game fans.



Screenshot of "The Legend of Zelda: Tears of the Kingdom."

PHOTO BY NINTENDO

By **COLE MARTIN**  
A&E COLUMNIST

As of the release of this article, the new "Legend of Zelda" game is out! A sequel to the critically acclaimed and basically ubiquitous Switch title, "The Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild," comes the much anticipated "The Legend of Zelda: Tears of the Kingdom." I'll admit, I've strayed away from spoilers best I can; I'm one of many fans who've been really looking forward to this game coming out.

The game gained plenty of hype and popularity before its release due to the marketing teaser trailers and slow release of information. However, the game was also leaked in its entirety a few weeks before launch, which really made the internet an unsafe zone for my spoiler-averse eyes.

There's always some controversy with the ethics of game leaks; whether or not leaking is okay, or if company reactions are reasonable. Nintendo actually has quite the track record of their games getting leaked close to release after the game is finished, but just before they hit shelves. This is exactly what happened for "Tears of the Kingdom."

"Physical copies that appear to have been sold ahead of the game's May 12 release date began making the rounds over the weekend, with some of them popping up on reseller shops for hundreds of dollars. It wasn't long before the files were dumped online and some players raced to pirate it and begin playing ahead of release," says Timothy Geigner at techdirt.com, a game news site.

Most games facing leaks tend to have it pretty bad. The recent

leak for Rockstar's "Grand Theft Auto 6" was an absolute disaster and one of the largest leaks in video game history, with plenty of key assets and mechanics being released to the public. The game was expectedly in an extremely unfinished state, but some critics did not pay that any mind and tore apart anything they could.

For "Tears of the Kingdom," on the other hand, the leaks really didn't affect much. Due to the game being in its finished state when leaked, it would be hard to argue that the leaks did anything to impact the game's publicity negatively; it already was going full steam ahead to markets. That being said, Nintendo was quick to crack down in a very Nintendo fashion: content strikes, DMCA takedowns and even some attempted legal action.

In their purge of anything leak-related, Nintendo also took down tons of YouTube videos from content creators that weren't even breaking the rules.

"It's hard to become excited for Tears of the Kingdom when the Zelda community is being nuked off YouTube," says @PointCrow, a Zelda-centric YouTube content creator.

Getting to a conclusive thought for these things is tricky; while the game leaking might not be so ethical itself, reactions from major companies tend to be filled with corporate malice—especially in Nintendo's case. The leak situation didn't really smooth over in the end, and Nintendo still has its ruthless eyes out for people breaking their rules. Regardless, if you decide to still pick the game up, "Tears of the Kingdom" is out for \$70 on Nintendo Switch.



Art from "The Legend of Zelda: Tears of the Kingdom"

PHOTO BY NINTENDO



The cast of "Guardians of the Galaxy: Vol. 3."

PHOTO BY WALT DISNEY STUDIOS MOTION PICTURES

## Review: 'Guardians of the Galaxy: Vol. 3' is the best Marvel film in years

The third installment in the popular Marvel film series proves that Marvel can still make a good film—thanks to James Gunn.

By **EMILIA BELL**  
A&E EDITOR

"Guardians of the Galaxy: Vol. 3" begins with the familiar group of rag-tag heroes – Peter Quill (Chris Pratt), Drax (Dave Bautista), Mantis (Pom Klementieff), Nebula (Karen Gillan), Groot (Vin Diesel) and Rocket (Bradley Cooper) – living their lives as usual when suddenly Adam, a gold-skinned killing machine—played by Will Poulter—arrives to disrupt them. During this fight, Rocket is severely injured. The group discovers they must retrieve a code to save him with the help of Gamora (Zoe Saldana). This means going against the un-

hinged High Evolutionary (played by Chukwudi Iwujii), who created Rocket and others like him years prior. It is packed full of emotional gut-punches, funny jokes and touching moments.

The "Guardians" series has always managed to be at the top of the pack regarding MCU films, but with Marvel's current state it was uncertain if the third film would maintain this appeal. However, it is by far the best Marvel film in years.

The film is considerably darker than most of Marvel's other work, and takes full advantage of its PG-13 rating (slight spoiler: if you are an animal lover, you will probably cry). Rocket's backstory

is horrific and the villain is imposing. Director James Gunn is known to utilize more intense and gross creatures and imagery in his non-Marvel projects, and this carries over in "Vol. 3." This brought a fresher feeling to the film. However, the film does maintain the enjoyable lighter moments that the other two also have.

In terms of the effects, the CGI actually looks quite good, as do the visuals in general, which is also refreshing given Marvel's problems with visual effects. It doesn't appear that the actors are standing stiffly in front of a green screen for the whole film, unlike recent Marvel installations.

The film is not completely free

of flaws; a few people have said it is too heavy-handed with the emotional aspects, which is debatable. The emotions do run high, but it feels earned and genuine; the "Guardians" films have always balanced humor and tragic scenarios, though this one did start off a little rougher than the others. The beginning is a tad choppy and uneven in tone, which makes it awkward at first, but it moves past it quickly. The character of Adam Warlock is slightly underused/underdeveloped, so it is likely he will be seen again. It seems overall, the emotional side is effective and made the conclusion to this trilogy all the more impactful.

The film managed to actual-

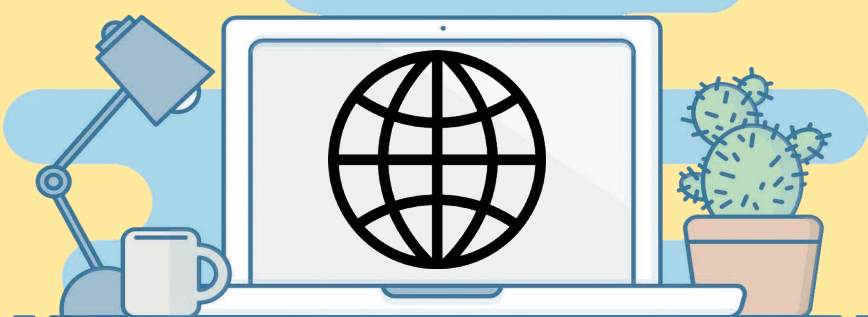
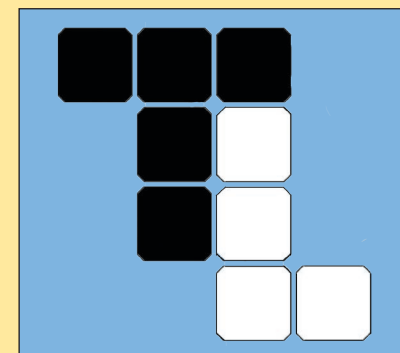
ly feel connected to the others in the trilogy, and not rely on other Marvel projects for context. The soundtrack is solid, of course, and there are plenty of nostalgic nods to the first film. It is ultimately satisfying and heartwarming, strengthened by its strong emotional center that a lot of recent Marvel films have been missing. This further proves that Marvel's other films have been severely lacking in quality, and that it is possible to still produce a good one.

4.5/5



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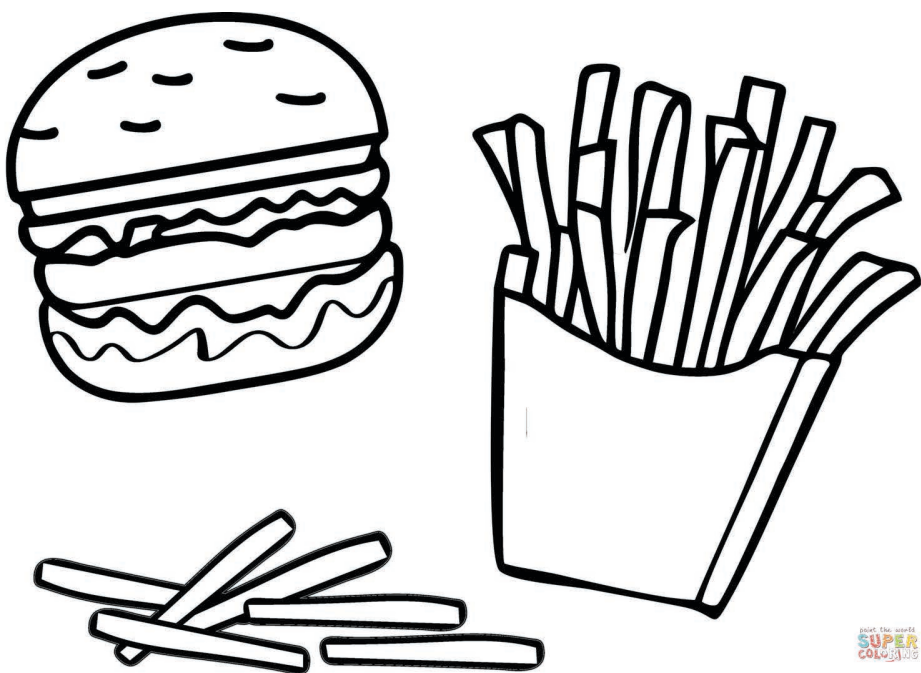


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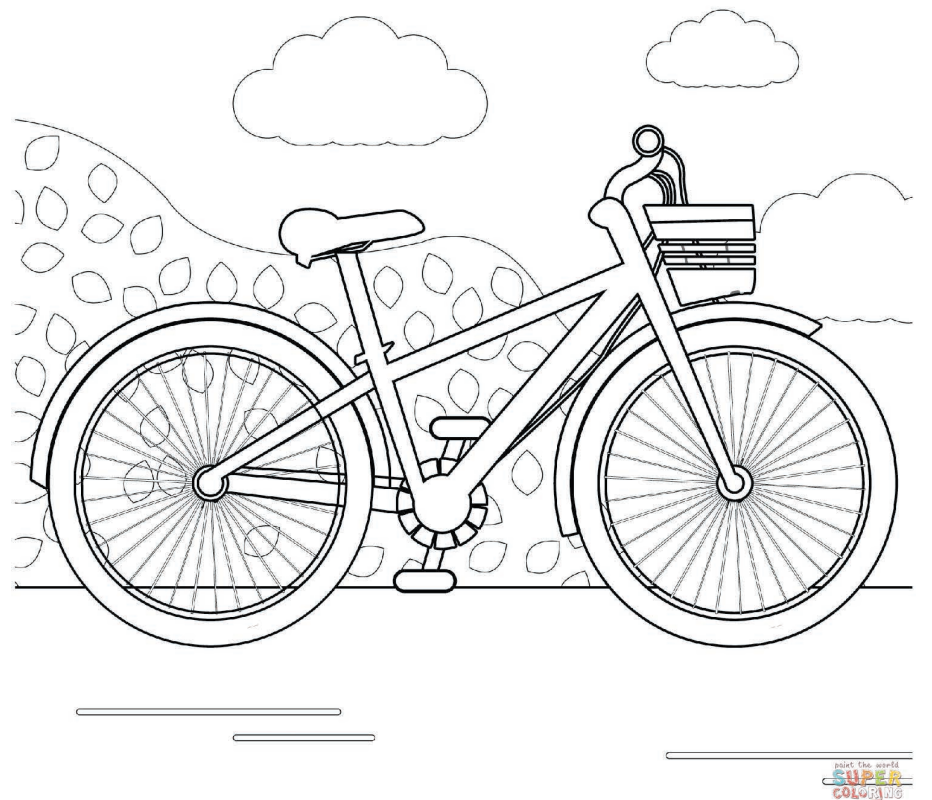


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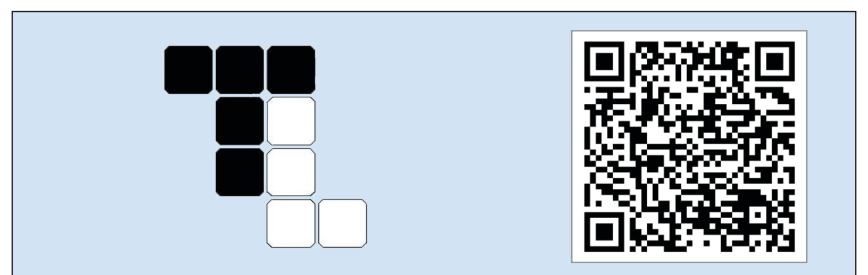
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## The Tacoma Ledger Weekly Playlist

Old World



## Ledger Spotify Profile



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