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Instagram

NJCU Mourns Student

BY SHEVANE CESEAR

On Thursday, Dec. 1, the body of Sarah Butler, 20, was found by search crews in an undisclosed area within the West Orange section of the Eagle Rock Reservation in Essex County. She was found eight days after she was reported missing on Wednesday, Nov. 23, the day before Thanksgiving. Her 2007 Dodge Caravan was located by first responders prior to the discovery of her body.

The Northern Regional Medical Examiner's Office ruled Butler's death a homicide on Dec. 2. On Dec. 7, prosecutors confirmed that Butler died as a result of "compression to the neck." Khalil Wheeler-Weaver, an acquaintance of Butler, was arrested and charged with one count of murder and desecrating human remains.

Butler was a freshman studying Media Arts. She was an avid dancer, honing in on her passion for dance for over 17 years. She was a member of the Premiere Dance Theatre in Montclair, where her family lived. She performed multiple times at the Apollo Theater with her school, and also performed with NJCU's Dance 4 the Cause on 9/11. Her last

performance with the Premiere Dance Theatre was in June before she moved into the West Campus Village for the fall semester. Butler also served as a lifeguard for the Montclair YMCA, and was a member of the Montclair High School Dance Company.

Shaina Jefferson, a sophomore Business Major and member of NJCU's Fashion Organization (Fashion Org), shared that Butler participated in fashion shows as a model in the past. "She helped many people and [was] nothing but nice to everyone. She had a cheered spirit and a nice heart – no matter what."

Fashion Org members said they were acquainted with Butler especially because of her makeup skills, and that she also took time to attend some of their events.

LaMia Brown, Butler's best friend since sophomore year of high school, shared that they kept in contact with one another every day. "She was a beautiful person, inside and out...the funniest person I've ever met. She was extremely creative and passionate; just an all around amazing soul."

President Henderson released a statement on Dec. 2

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A LOOK BACK AT NOVEMBER

November 11



Veterans Day was observed on campus with the raising of the flag on Hepburn Hall Lawn.

Photo courtesy of Nathalie Zaro.

November 15



At the School of Business' Skyline Room, NJCU launched its Center for the Arts, announcing the 22 members of the newly formed Arts Advisory Board, and featured a keynote speech by Tony Award-winning choreographer Bill T. Jones.

Photo courtesy of Whitney Browne.

November 17-20



The Caroline L. Guarini Department of Music, Dance, and Theatre produced Johann Strauss, Jr.'s *Die Fledermaus*, a comic operetta set in jazz age New York City. The three-act journey filled with humor, intrigue, and romance was performed in NJCU's West Side Theatre for one weekend only.

Photo courtesy of Dr. Donna Connolly.

NEWS

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saying that grief counseling is available to students at the NJCU Counseling Center in the Gilligan Student Union, Room 308. Henderson's statement to the campus also said, "Her family noted that she loved to help younger students and dancers and was a devoted amateur makeup artist. She was a member of the Montclair High School Dance Company, and was a lifeguard at the Montclair YMCA. Sarah touched many lives at the University and throughout the community, and we will remember her for the lasting legacy she leaves behind."

Friends of Butler's family have set up a GoFundMe page to help pay for funeral and other expenses. If anyone wishes to donate money to aid the Butler family, please visit: <https://www.gofundme.com/SarahB-WeLoveYou>.

Active Investigation

Butler's death is under active investigation by the Essex County Major Crimes Task Force. It is uncertain what happened to Butler between the time she was reported missing until her death. Chief Assistant Prosecutor Thomas Fennelly of the Essex County Homicide Unit said that they "are trying to piece the timeline together." Because of this, it is vital that anyone with pertinent information in connection to her murder step forward.

Essex County Sheriff Armando Fontoura stated that a reward of up to \$10,000 will be given to anyone with information leading to the arrest and conviction of Butler's killer. Anyone with information is asked to call the prosecutor's Tips Line at 1(877) TIPS-4EC.

That's MINE!!!

BY ELENA ZEMAN

This year there have been two reported deaths due to Black Friday insanity and countless cases of personal injury and property damage.

Almost every year, Black Friday turns deadly as shoppers forget their humanity while trying to purchase the cheapest items. Many people see Black Friday as an opportunity to get a head start on Christmas shopping; they line up in the middle of the night to get the best deals on electronics, toys, clothes, and home appliances. Unfortunately, many of them don't realize that they can end up seriously hurt or worse.

In Hamilton Township, Atlantic City, there was a shooting in the parking lot of Macys at Hamilton Mall. It is reported that Macys was open for Black Friday shopping when the shooting occurred. These types of incidents happen almost every year during Black Friday and the only difference is generally the number of injuries and deaths. This makes one wonder why year after year people participate in this event and put their lives in danger.

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NEWS

Courtney Lavergne, an Education major, said that she did her Black Friday shopping online this year. When asked about her experience and whether or not she would shop in the stores on Black Friday she said, "Never Again!"

If one attempts to forget the dangers involved with Black Friday shopping, they will surely not miss the lengthy lines awaiting them at their destination. The Macy's in Manhattan had well over 15,000 people waiting on line one hour before the store even opened. Will everyone in this line be able to purchase everything that they came for? That is very unlikely. So what are they left to do?

People rush into the stores and proceed to push, shove, and stampede over anyone who gets in their way. The promise of 25% off a cashmere sweater is too good to pass up and that last pair of boots needs to be possessed. Every single year there are images and videos of people frantically running around stores and getting into physical altercations with anyone who attains something that they weren't able to get their hands on.

Stay safe this Holiday season and keep in mind your own safety as well as the safety of the people around you.

'Say her name': Memorial at Raines Plaza

BY SHÉVANEÉ CESAR

On Monday, Dec. 5, members of the NJCU Fashion Org held a candle-lighting and balloon-release at Raines Plaza in front of Hepburn Hall for Syasia McBurroughs, Sarah Butler, and Christa Capers, all of whom were recently murdered. The three young women were participants of the organization that arranged this event. Prior to the commencement of the memorial, plastic candles and white balloons were passed out to everyone.

The service was led by Dr. Antoinette Ellis-Williams, a professor of Women and Gender Studies. She said, "We must celebrate what they have done," despite the tragic circumstances. "Say her name," she told the crowd. A red candle was lit for all three women, their first names said in unison three times.

An NJCU student and member of the Fashion Org who identified herself as Antoinette shared that she remembers giving Butler a hug during the fashion show that was held in tribute of McBurroughs and Capers in November. "I remember we all lined up. We were told to hug one another and to tell each other to 'be safe.' I remember Sarah being next to us ... and I couldn't imagine losing her."

Students and friends of the slain women, embraced one another as they wept, while another NJCU student sang "Amazing Grace." Before the balloon-raise, Dr. Ellis-Williams said, "We are bound to protect each other, to love each other." Music played as the white balloons floated up into the evening sky. Friends and students wrote messages on posters featuring images of the three women to give to their families.

Sophomore criminal justice major, Najla Hopper, who helped set up for the service, knew Butler, and remembered her for being "fun and always smiling."

Salome Moseti, a first-semester student majoring in biology, knew both Butler and Capers and danced with both in the past. "I didn't want to believe that Sarah was dead. I met her over the summer in Dance 4 the Cause. I knew Christa since high school. Christa was also a dancer."

McBurroughs' grandfather, mother, and aunt also attended the



Photos courtesy of Shévaneé Cesar



vigil. Her grandfather, Raymond Davis, said, "stay strong" — an encouraging message for all those in mourning and seeking closure.

Background On Butler, McBurroughs, & Capers

Sarah Butler, 20, was reported missing on Nov. 22 and her remains were found eight days later in an Essex County park on the morning of Dec. 1. She was a freshman studying Media Arts and was a member of Dance 4 the Cause (D4TC), a club at NJCU that performs to raise awareness for various causes. Butler sometimes served as the Fashion Org's event makeup artist.

Syasia McBurroughs, 23, was killed in a triple-murder on Oct. 5 in Newark, that left three others critically injured. She was close to earning her bachelor's in Elementary Education and History. She worked at the campus bookstore and was a member of the Fashion Org.

Christa Capers, 20, was found dead in her boyfriend's apartment in Hillside, on Oct. 20. She was earning her associate's degree at HCCC, and served as a model for the Fashion Org in the past.

REAL-istic

A COLLEGE GUIDE for Tips/Tricks

BY REGINA HERNANDEZ

Being a college student comes with a lot of responsibility. There are an endless amount of assignments and deadlines to meet. Then before we know it, our finals are due. Not to exclude that most college students also have jobs and a family to adhere to, therefore stress is at an all-time high.

I'm always looking for a budget-friendly option for easy practical ways of de-stressing. Many of my colleagues have given this re-vamp familiar product a try. Could adult-coloring books be a college student's REAL-istic approach to bye-bye headaches and an ultimate de-stressor

I didn't want to order one online with the fees of shipping and handling and not to mention the usual week or so wait, so after work I went to my local grocery store and my search came to a halt. Adult coloring books were in stock and I knew I had to give it a try. What's the worst thing that can happen, that I become a great drawer?

I gave it a try for a whole week and here's my verdict – beginning with the PROS: it is a familiar product that as kids we grew to enjoy and used to bring happiness to our lives. It's very convenient and appropriate for all genders. Studies have shown it gives you endless benefits such as utilizing the left and right brain hemispheres. Most importantly it's relaxing, and when you finish coloring you could frame it or post it on your social media account. The CONS of you buying the book: depending on the store, it may cost you around \$5.99-12.99. Another CON is that if you're buying the book instead of downloading the app you need multiple different color pens or crayons. Reading a book or doing Sudoku will pretty much give you the same effect in de-stressing one's mind. Lastly, when coloring, you need a quiet area.

So, my final verdict is: **it WORKS**. If you're looking for a few minutes for yourself to unwind on an activity that's fool-proof with benefits I say go ahead and try adult coloring books.

Any questions or recommendations please email me at: rhernandez@njcu.edu

NEWS

LGBTQA Conference

BY PRISCILLA AREVALO



Photo courtesy of Pixabay.

The LGBTQA Leadership Conference held in October featured a variety of workshops and speakers from NJCU's campus. Presented to attendees were statistics about Gay & Transgender Students from PFLAG. Introduced were topics like the James Dobson organization, LGBTQA Lingo – concepts like the Bi-Sexual Umbrella and Transgender Umbrella, the Ohio State LGBTQ Center, along with progressive guides for professors dealing with homophobia, micro-aggressions, and micro-invalidations within the classroom space.

Although these are seemingly difficult subject matters to tackle, having concrete data with which to clarify them is important, especially for one not well-versed in the LGBTQ community rhetoric.

The Polaris Project provided information about LGBT youth: “they are up to 5 times more likely to be trafficked than heterosexual youth, and comprise 20 to 40 percent of the homeless youth population; these youths are at particularly high risk of being forced into prostitution.”

Throughout the conference, speakers provided “Focus on Family” as an example of a powerful organization that has used religious Catholic/Christian influence to cope with the LGBTQ community. Dobson, founder of *Focus on the Family*, said, “if this had happened 100 years ago someone might have been shot. Where is today's manhood?” Dobson presented a hyper-masculine heterosexual paradigm that most of America has yet learned to de-internalize; a scary one still existing in the South and Midwest of the US.

Elaborated upon was the transition through the honeymoon, isolation, retraction, and acceptance stage of identifying as LGBTQA. According to stats from the NYIT presenter, “LGBTQA students live their identities exclusively online on college campuses. This is not surprising since homosexuality is criminalized in other parts of the world because it's a social norm.”

The topic of gender transition was paramount during the event. According to the 2010 State of Higher Education, it is defined as the “process by which some people strive to more closely align their internal knowledge of gender

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FEATURES

with its outward appearance.” Within this, we can understand that the parameters of a “real life” experience gives us an insider’s view on NJCU’s student needs.

Yasmine Tadross, an exchange trans student opens eyes with her concerns of students on campus. Cat-calling and harassment is a very real and scaring experience for anyone in any given public space, but is something LGBT youth have to be hyper aware of. *Princeton Patch* designates Jersey City as the 20th city with the highest violence crime rate in New Jersey Monthly’s 2015 list—a detail that should definitely

galvanize students to participate in town hall meetings and get involved.

At an undergrad and grad level, impressive were the student organizations on campus that supported the conference and relayed their social activism goals. The event was all about the “opportunity to exchange language,” and become educated about the community. From the Clothesline Project Exhibit, to the Self-Care Space, to the free HIV testing offering, there were multitudes of projects in full support of a still nationally marginalized community.

Benefits of Being a Part of Greek Life

BY AMBER VAUGHN

When I started attending NJCU in Spring 2011, my only focus was on going to school. Three years later, I decided to get involved on campus. Most of the people I networked with were in fraternities and sororities. Later on, I wondered if Greek life was for me. I knew nothing about Greek life, and how being a part of a Greek organization would benefit me.

Last semester I was interested in a sorority on campus called Theta Phi Alpha Women’s Fraternity. I did my research on the sorority, and I also talked to girls I knew, who happened to be sisters of the organization. I met with other sisters, and got to know them and the sorority more. I made the decision to be a Theta Phi that same semester, and it was one of the best decisions I made.

Being a sister of Theta Phi Alpha enhanced and strengthened skills I already had, such as leadership and time management. Theta Phi Alpha also encouraged me to speak up more, be more confident, and more social with other people on campus. I went from being anti-social to talking to other students from different Greek organizations, and creating friendships with them.

Here are some current and former students expressing how they have benefitted from being a part of a Greek organization:

Vanessa Gonzalez, 24, NJCU alumni, and brother of Alpha Gamma Sigma Chapter of Alpha Phi Omega, said, “Greek life benefited me in so many ways. My leadership skills improved, [and] I get to learn more about myself every time when I’m with the frat, even after graduated. I keep in touch with my fraternity brothers from time to time. It is a family bond that will never be [torn] apart and I love each and every one of them.”

Glen Hadad, 24, a senior finance major, and brother of Rho Alpha Chapter of Kappa Alpha Psi, said, “The fraternity has made me appreciate so many aspects of life that I could realize by being involved in this great organization. In addition to the growth and development I have obtained, Kappa Alpha Psi has made it possible for me to connect and socialize with people who can give me good advice

and life lessons. The fraternity has made it possible for me to network with various people with the same college major, making it a great way for me to have a great understanding on what my future job will consist of. Kappa Alpha Psi has been a great accomplishment to my life.”

Claudio Josuel Alejo, a senior history and secondary education major, and Chapter President of the Baronet Beta Chapter of Psi Sigma Phi Multicultural Fraternity, Inc., said, “In Spring 2013, I crossed Psi Sigma Phi Multicultural Fraternity, Inc. as the National Solo in my organization. Joining Greek Life has become the pinnacle moment of my leadership career here at NJCU. Like I tell students that inquire about Greek Life, joining an organization is a very small scale showcasing what life is about... Overall the major benefit in joining Greek Life is not only the skills but also the family that organization becomes to you. Your Greek organization becomes your home away from home. They make you feel welcome and they show you that as a family you all are working to strive and thrive.”

Jennifer Hernandez, 21, a senior economics major, also a brother of Alpha Gamma Sigma Chapter of Alpha Phi Omega, said, “My experience with APO has helped me grow both as a person and academically. Before becoming a brother, I would keep to myself often and go to classes and then go straight home. As a brother, I have learned to open [up] with other individuals as well as become selfless and give back to the community. Being a part of Greek Life has also helped me become focused on my academics because I am surrounded by other individuals that are also dedicated to their academics and career goals. Overall I feel that Greek Life has enhanced my college experience greatly.”

If you are interested in being a part of a Greek organization on campus, please do the following before saying “yes”: go online and research the organization, approach a fraternity brother or sorority sister expressing your interest in their organization, be informed of the requirements each organization has, ask any questions you may have, talk about the organization with your family and get their support, and make sure the organization is right for you.

If the timing feels right, GO GREEK!!!!!!

FEATURES/OP/ED

Italian Holiday Traditions

BY ERIK S. ORDYKE

Did you know that Italy has a witch that delivers presents by broomstick during Christmas season? This witch is an old woman with magical powers called La Befana and she shares similarities with Santa Claus in the United States, yet she has many stark differences.

While Santa Claus (or as the Italians call him, Babbo Natale) is becoming more popular, La Befana is still widely celebrated in Italy. Just like what Americans know about Santa, La Befana delivers presents to the nice kids and a lump of coal to the naughty ones. Children spend all of Christmas season writing letters to this old woman who will determine whether that child deserves what they asked for, which is why young children are extra careful to be nicer around Christmas, so La Befana delivers them the gifts they wished for.

However, unlike Santa, La Befana does not deliver the presents on Christmas day, nor does she deliver presents to children in the entirety of the month of December. On January 5th, she goes down the chimneys of every house with children and delivers their presents, which will be opened on January 6th. This folklore aligns with Little Christmas, which is on January 6th. Traditionally, this is the day that all the children in Italy would look through their stockings to see if they received presents or alternatively – coal. Due to some families being less fortunate than others, children will often receive little more than fruit, chocolate, and stuffed animals in their stockings instead of more expensive gifts like electronics.

Another popular tradition during the Christmas season in Italy is the Feast of the Seven Fishes, which is celebrated on December 24th. Just in case you did not know, Italians take their holiday feasts very seriously, and this one is no different. In some varieties of this feast, you will find that some make more than seven fishes – up to thirteen in many cases. Although many people do celebrate this feast, most that do are Central or Southern Italian. My family comes from southern Italy and the types of fish served can range from eel to baccalà to fried calamari. The types of fish served can drastically change based on what region of Italy someone is from. Additionally, one of the many reasons why the number of fishes is fixated on seven is because of the days of the weeks, also being seven. The reason for seven, nine, or even thirteen types of fish holds multiple meanings, changing from family to family. These reasons that connect to the amount of different fishes served can range from religious reasons to something as simple as the number of days in the week – as stated before. Italian culture is something very well known here in the United States with the various Italian restaurants dotting locations across the tristate area and across the country. You may already be familiar with the traditional pizza and pasta served, but by looking deeper into Italian culture you can find many folklore stories and histories behind these foods that many people may not know.

“EOF HAS HELPED ME”

BY RENEE BEHR

EOF, which stands for Educational Opportunity Fund, is a New Jersey State funded program that helps New Jersey College or University students who come from academically and economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Some of the services EOF provides include tutoring, academic workshops, financial services, and counseling. A student is eligible for EOF based on their family household income and residency requirements.

EOF officially came into being in 1968 because of the 1967 riots in Newark. Other states, such as New York, have programs that are extremely similar to EOF but are referred to by different names and abbreviations. At NJCU, EOF is referred to as OSP, which stands for Opportunity Scholarship Program. OSP/EOF also has an honor society known as Chi Alpha Epsilon. There are EOF alum throughout the state that has become very successful politicians and educators.

OSP/EOF is a very beautiful thing at this University. To me, OSP/EOF means family. OSP/EOF has helped me out tremendously as both a student and as a person. OSP/EOF has helped me afford to attend college. Through OSP/EOF, I have learned the importance of time management, leadership skills, how to properly network with many different people, a support network, self-advocacy, building confidence, how to be properly organized, developing a strong improvement of my social skills, and very resourceful studying habits. I will forever be grateful to OSP/EOF. Whenever I have any problems of some sort or any questions with academics or just life in general, I go to them for help. OSP/EOF has also helped many other individuals some of which do include students and educators among this university.

Andre Cummings an EOF/OSP student at NJCU said, “OSP/EOF has provided academic services that have helped me as a student. If I could describe OSP/EOF in one word it would be a strong tie between amazing or incredible”. OSP/EOF has generously provided students such as Cummings and I by giving us the opportunity to do well in college.

Gerry Lopez, who is an OSP/EOF alum and an English tutor for OSP/EOF, stated “EOF is so beneficial to students. It gives them the confidence they need to achieve in society.” I feel that I have the ability to connect to connect to this statement. I can strongly relate this statement because I am proud an OSP/EOF student. Thanks to OSP/EOF, the program has helped me become the person that I am to this very day. OSP/EOF has improved my life in many aspects and also in the years to come. I will always remember and cherish the resourceful services and kindness that OSP/EOF have provided me throughout my college years and at this University.

For more information, OSP/EOF at NJCU can be located in room 211 in Vodra Hall (201-200-3355).

OP/ED

California: Not What One Would Have Thought

BY IMANI RIVERS

People from the East Coast often dream of moving to California and living among the beaches. I, for one, have always been one of those people from California that wanted to come to the East Coast, specifically New York. The longer I am in New Jersey, the more I enjoy my experience here. Call me crazy, but from my experience so far, the East Coast is better than California.

I have lived in California all my life and I have not seen every single place that is out there. However, I used to reside in southern California, which happens to be the place so many people on this side of the coast want to go to. For what reason? I don't know.

If I were to compare the two states, I can't say that one is better than the other, at least in regard to the cities. I say this because I've found that I can compare a lot of the cities here in Jersey to ones in California. For example, when I think of Hoboken I compare it to the area that I lived in. When I think of Newark I parallel it with the more gang ridden areas of LA, and when I think of Jersey City, I compare it to a certain area in Spring Valley, San Diego. However, there are things that Jersey has that California doesn't have.

For one, Jersey has public transportation that can take you just about anywhere, opposed to California where it's necessary to own a car. Since everything is relatively close you don't need to use public transportation unless you're going out of your way. Bodegas are on every street corner and there are different types of food being sold on every block. On top of that, New Jersey is literally a bridge away from New York City. There is no place like New York in California, it is truly unique and one of a kind.

When I try telling people about the weather in California, for some reason they don't believe me. California doesn't really go through seasons in the way that New Jersey does. During the summers, most days surpass 100 degrees and the winters don't get any colder than maybe 40 degrees. Besides these two seasons the year progresses in between 70 to 80-degree weather. Jersey on the other hand, has the hot weather in the summers, the sweater weather in the fall, the freezing weather in the winter and the relatively warm weather in the spring.

Also, I've been enjoying the excess water in New Jersey; when I tell people that California is in a drought, I mean it. I enjoy taking long showers without having to worry about how much water I'm using.

The one thing I learned quickly about the people that reside in New Jersey is that they are all different and many are proud of where they come from. Just in Jersey City alone, I've seen more ethnicities, religions and people that are proud of who they are. This is a parallel

to the people that I've met in my years in California. Whether they portray it through their music or through their actions, there is a sense of pride with many groups of people in New Jersey. Some people think I might be exaggerating but I promise I'm not. My first full day here, which happened to be orientation day, I've witnessed so many people who exuberated pride about who they are and where they come from. I had never seen anything like it! Furthermore, many of the people in New Jersey have vibrant personalities.

Southern California is somewhat known for its chill and laid back feel and this applies to the residents as well. People that have a lively personality are almost one in a million in California. Being vibrant and excited is overly excessive and rowdy to most people. If you aren't used to so many people who are laid back and are willing to spend their day doing absolutely nothing, then you might perceive them to be boring, just as I do. For me, seeing people who are always excited or happy and can easily portray it, is quite the sight. I find myself enjoying myself more when I'm around

people from here than I ever have in California.

As of now I proclaim that New Jersey is better than California. The people, places, and opportunities are endless. There is so much more to do here than in California. I've lived in California for 18 years and honestly, there is not much to do out there. California is one of those places that is good to visit for a week or two but not to live in permanently. I know that a lot of people won't agree with me but take it from someone who has lived there and experienced what California has to offer. The East Coast is one of a kind and needs to be treated as such.



Courtesy of free images.



The OG is Back in Shin Godzilla

BY ISMAEL J. RAMOS-PEN˜ AHERRERA

After 12 years of being in suspended animation in Japan, the “original *Godzilla*” returns for his 31st installment (29th produced by Japanese studio Toho) in the world’s longest running film franchise, and it’s nothing like those that came before it. At all. But in a good way.

Toho Studios gave birth to one of the world’s most iconic monsters back in 1954 in what was an ominous and metaphorical film. “Gojira” represented the devastation of nuclear weapons. That movie had a message, and “Shin Godzilla” does too.

Shin’ is as much a political film as it is a monster movie. It’s a critique of how the Japanese government handled the 2011 Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster following the earthquake and tsunami that hit the country. Just as the beast was a metaphor in the first film for the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945, this new iteration of the creature is a metaphor for those recent tragic events.

There is a lot of bureaucracy and talking in the film, which could be a bit of a turnoff for some American viewers, since the film is in Japanese with English subtitles. There are *a lot* of subtitles, most of which seem unnecessary, such as a description of literally every location the movie takes place in. That type of text appeared at the top of the screen, even when it’s a place like the fourth floor of some building in some district of some Japanese city.

Sometimes the screen would be so bombarded with text that it doesn’t let the viewer appreciate everything that is on screen because they are busy trying to read everything as fast as they can.

Some advice: don’t bother reading the location text. It’s irrelevant to the overall plot of the story, which is essentially trying to find away to stop Godzilla’s rampage. It’s pretty much just government buildings.

Now, onto the Big G himself. He goes through some pretty significant changes when it comes to his origins, appearance and abilities this time around.

His original origins were that he was born/awakened by the atomic bomb. In this new film, he is a tiny organism that mutates from radioactive contamination in the sea.

Godzilla appears for the first time on screen as a yellow, fish-eyed, gill-bleeding, armless eel-like creature that has two hind

legs which help him slither through the crowded streets of Tokyo. He then evolves and grows as his skin turns red and looks raw; he stands upright and grows two tiny Tyrannosaurus Rex-like arms.

Some might say that that these two forms look a bit goofy, but the music they use in the scenes where he first appears help make the scene a bit more creepy and give it an eerie feel to it. The film uses music from the franchise that hasn’t been heard since the original, which is truly chilling. The other classic Godzilla themes and sound effects used throughout the movie will give a welcoming sense of nostalgia to any longtime G-Fan.

In this film Godzilla can do things he’s never done before, like shooting several purple laser beams out of his back in between his dorsal plates and even one out of the tip of his burned off tail. I’ll admit, the tail beam seemed a bit off-putting at first, but the more I saw it, the more I was OK with it. The “back beams” however, were undoubtedly awe-inspiring at first sight. The scenes it was used in were amazing as it cut through buildings, among other things.

His atomic breath was thinner too, but it also had instances of appearing like lava and flames as it burned through the city. His bottom jaw splits open when he unleashes it. And yes, his atomic breath is purple too.

“Shin Godzilla” wasn’t perfect, but it definitely wasn’t bad. It was different. Change is good for a franchise that has gone on for 62 years. Repeating and recycling the same old ideas gets boring. As long as the changes don’t get too out of line with what the central character is and what he represents, it’s all good. And Shin’ absolutely does that.



Courtesy of Group 1200 Media

“Shin Godzilla,” also known as “Godzilla: Resurgence,” received a limited theatrical release in the U.S. in roughly 440 theaters for just a week initially in October. It was extended another week and a half due to popular demand.

With its success in Japan and around the world, you know it’s going to get a sequel. And no, it will not be called *Knee Godzilla*. For the record, “shin” in Japanese means “new” or “true.”

Be on the lookout for distributor Funimation Films’ home and digital release of this Godzilla flick, as it has been reported that there will be an English dubbing of it. Funimation Films has said there will be news on it soon.



This Would've Been a Better Pokemon Movie or an Episode Of Doctor Who:
**A "Fantastic Beasts and
 Where To Find Them" Review**

BY EMMANUEL LEBRON

A familiar chime seeks to welcome you back into a magical world of witchcraft and wizardry.

The new movie "Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them" is the first full-length Harry Potter franchise story that leaves behind whimsical childhood adventure and teen angst, and deals with adult characters living in an adult world. Adults who also get into whimsical and quaint adventures while eventually going on to face grim and very dark events.

Eddie Redmayne plays Newt Scamander, a shy, fumbling, potentially on-the-spectrum, Brit visiting 1926 New York City on a mission involving capturing magical animals. Newt wants to attend his magical suitcase full of CGI creatures in peace, but a chance encounter with non-magical wannabe baker Jacob Kowalski (Dan Fogler) and anti-magic fanatic Mary Lou Barebone (Samantha Morton) sets some of his charges free, and he has to re-capture them all, Pokémon-style.

His magical-critter fetch-quest is fairly slap stick and predictable; it's mostly an excuse for comic bungling and chase sequences. But it's strangely only a minor subplot, which drags in a disgraced magical investigator Porpentina Goldstein (Katherine Waterston), her mind-reading flapper sister Queenie (Alison Sudol, doing a better Harley Quinn than the one we got in "Suicide Squad"), a shady magical enforcer (Colin Farrell -- who at first I was surprised to see but who later ended up being one of the best things in this movie), and a non-magical politician and his family, who would be inconsequential to the plot if one of them wasn't played by Jon Voight.

Add in Mary Lou Barebone's badly abused orphan horde (including future Justice League star, Ezra Miller, in a hideously embarrassing haircut that constitutes child abuse on its own) and another fumbling, impotent magical bureaucracy, and "Fantastic Beasts" starts feeling too similar to its source material, when this was the perfect opportunity to break formula.

Not all of the story elements fit together, conceptually or tonally. This is a movie that centers equally on vicious beatings of affection-starved orphan children, and then slows down for the wacky cartoon shenanigans of a really cute, gold-hungry magical platypus (called a Niffler, apparently) that wants to cram all the world's valuables into its



Courtesy of Warner Brothers.

bottomless flesh-pouch.

The film seems to really struggle with capturing its older audience with its darker themes and also trying to appeal to younger audiences with its often weird, silly moments. It's not just a serious adventure with comic elements, or vice versa: it's a grab bag of world-building wonder and awkward absurdist humor, with violence and childish giddiness tossed around in equal measure. It reads as though Rowling's version of an adult world is still dependent on the patronage of kids. In other words, it's a standard blockbuster movie, trying to grab adults and children at the same time, and not entirely serving either audience.

At its best the film brings back the anything-can-happen fantasy element and the sense of scope and surprise that initially made the Harry Potter stories compelling. At worst we get Redmayne honking, rolling around, and wiggling his ass at the camera in a mating dance aimed at luring an escaped, glowing giant CGI rhino-beast called an Erumpent, apparently.

(Now had this been a movie about Pokémon... Wait. Of all the things being turned into live action abominations for original source material, why is no one making a Pokémon movie? Let's not give Hollywood anymore terrible ideas.)

If nothing else, it's interesting to see that there's a Potterverse outside Harry Potter himself. His world has always been big enough to sustain other stories. Finally, it has a chance to.

Introducing NJCU's Center for the Arts

BY JOSEPH SEVERINI

This year, NJCU is drawing back the curta in to present the Center for the Arts – a guide for visual, performing, and literary arts here at the university.

In the center's Calendar of Events promotional pamphlet, a message from the university's president, Sue Henderson said, "The Arts have long been at the center of NJCU, and this year, the University has formalized its new NJCU Center for the Arts to officially bring all of our activities under one creative umbrella."

The Center for the Arts is divided into four groups: music, dance, and theatre; film and media arts; visual arts; and English and literary arts. Each center showcases the sensational talent of the school's diverse faculty and student body, along with a few guest performances and speakers from outside stars, including Tony Award-winning choreographer Bill T. Jones, Spanish guitarist Iliana Matos, and Grammy-nominated saxophonist, Audrey Cupples.

Whether you are interested in watching a theatre performance, such as the renowned sci-fi musical *Little Shop of Horrors*, attending the media department's Black Maria Film Festival, or want to be enthralled by the faculty art exhibition or poets on campus events, this year the Center for the Arts is sure to provide your fix of raw talent through NJCU's most gifted stars.

While the Center for the Arts is not a physical location, everything you need to know about this fall's performances and exhibitions that will showcase NJCU's utmost talents can be found on the university's website.



Tony Award-winning choreographer Bill T. Jones

WHY ARE NFL RATINGS DOWN?

BY ISMAEL J. RAMOS-PEÑAHERRERA

The NFL is the most popular sports league in the country, yet this year's TV ratings have been down.

Former NFL coach and commentator John Madden has an idea why.

"What happens is there are not a lot of good teams, and they have too many windows to put these games in," Madden said recently on a Bay Area News Group podcast. "When you think of an early-Sunday window, a late-Sunday window, a Sunday-night window, a Monday-night window, a Thursday-night window. They all want good games, and there's not enough good teams."

It's true. The action on the field has been far from good this season. There have been a lot of one-sided and blowout games. In situations like that it's easy to just turn the channel, especially when there are so many other options available. But this year there has been a different kind of option: the presidential election.

The much talked about presidential election contributed to the double-digit decline in TV ratings through the first nine weeks of the season, compared to last year.

According to Nielsen, the first presidential debate averaged a total of 84 million viewers across 13 of the TV channels that carried it live. It was on at the same time as the Monday Night Football game of the Atlanta Falcons vs. the New Orleans Saints.

That game had just over 8 million viewers tune in as it was dwarfed by the record-breaking debate.

Also according to Nielsen, prime-time Monday Night Football games averaged 12.9 million viewers in 2015, 13.35 million in 2014 and 13.68 million in 2013. So the decline has been steady.

Another reason for the ratings skid could be the controversial national anthem protests by athletes that began when San Francisco 49ers quarterback Colin Kaepernick sat during the anthem in the preseason. He then opted to kneel instead, and many others have followed suit since.

According to a Yahoo Sports and a YouGov poll conducted in late October, 40 percent of NFL fans said they were watching less football because of the anthem protests.

However, NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell didn't think that's the answer.

"We don't think that's a factor," he told reporters at the owners meeting in Houston prior to the release of the poll, "and our network partners don't either."

Despite all of the anthem protests drama, ratings have seen an uptick

Continued on next page

SPORTS

since the election. Some games became a bit more competitive and having the playoff race heat up surely helped as well.

Most notably, the NFL's Thanksgiving matchup between the Washington Redskins and the Dallas Cowboys had a 14.5 rating and 35.1 million viewers, per Nielsen. That's a 1 percent increase in ratings and an 8 percent increase in viewership from the Carolina Panthers vs. the

Cowboys on Thanksgiving last year (14.3; 32.5M). Ratings were also up 2 percent and 10 percent, respectively, from the Philadelphia Eagles vs. the Cowboys game in 2014 (14.2; 32.0M). This year's game ranked as the most-watched NFL regular season contest in 21 years.

Even with this year's ratings decline, the NFL will continue to be immensely popular.

TAKING ONE FOR THE TEAM

BY ERIK S. ORDYKE

"To say the first half of the season has been emotional would be a huge understatement."

Those were the first words uttered by long time Dallas Cowboys quarterback Tony Romo in his speech to reporters. That was followed by a short period of somber silence, which defined the entire press conference. The Dallas Cowboys are having very much of a storybook season this year, topping every weekly power ranking and unquestionably standing atop the NFL, all while being led by rookie quarterback Dak Prescott. However, through all the wins every week for the Cowboys, Romo has been sitting on the sidelines waiting for his return to the field. This was becoming less likely with every passing week, and the veteran quarterback was aware of it.

Prior to the start of the regular season, Tony Romo had broken a bone in his back. This caused much uncertainty for the Cowboys' season this year, without having the face of their team leading the way. Tony Romo was estimated to be out until at least November, and this gave the rookie quarterback Dak Prescott an opportunity to secure his place as the first-string quarterback. After suffering a tough loss to the division rivals New York Giants in their first game, the Cowboys went on to bring themselves up to an 11-1 record under that same rookie quarterback. Very few quarterbacks can boast having that record, let

alone possessing it in their first NFL season.

That run was, in all ways imaginable, what Dak Prescott needed to prove himself to his team, his fans, and the entire league. However, while it may have been a near perfect season for Prescott, it has been all but that for Tony Romo. He continued in his press conference to say "But then, here you are, sidelined without any real ability to help your teammates win on the field." This season may have, so far, been everything Prescott and the Cowboys needed. However, the same cannot be said for Romo's position. He was sidelined because of an injury, for months. He sat and watched his team win game after game, but sadly that was all he could do, just watch. Watching his team climb in the standings every week, while his hope of returning to play was falling every week. That was what the veteran quarterback had to see with every passing game.

In this press conference, Tony Romo acknowledged his role on the team. He spent every year of his football career with the Dallas Cowboys, but Dak Prescott is a rising rookie and Romo knew that. He knew that this new Dallas Cowboys team was something special. Here, Romo needed to do what was best for his team, something he was aware of. At the end of the conference, he took no questions, and instead finished his talk much of the same way he began – with a somber tone. "I feel like we all have two battles ... going on, one with the man across from you and the second is with the man inside of you. I think once you control the one inside of you, the one across from you doesn't really matter." Here, he voiced what he had been going through these past weeks. Tony Romo was presented a potentially career-ending conflict because of Prescott's rise. He did what was best for his team and his fans, he let them know that he is ready to come to terms with himself – and accept the unfortunate position that he is currently in.

Get Focused

The Gothic Times newspaper and website are recruiting new team members!

Are you interested in photography, writing for the web or writing longer pieces for the newspaper? Do you want to create short web videos or contribute to our new podcast?

Our meetings are held every Thursday at noon.

Located in GSUB (Room 301) The Gothic Times is a completely student-run publication with a full-time advisor. Students involved in the newspaper learn

real-world skills and team work. They collaborate with the editor in chief to meet deadlines and leave with a greatly enhanced resume.

If you are interested, come to a meeting or reach out to the editors at gothictimes@gmail.com or to the faculty advisor, Theta Pavis at tpaviswell@njcu.edu

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