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SAINT MARY'S COLLEGE OF CALIFORNIA

The Collegian

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Halloween Around the World



Clockwise from top left: Halloween in the U.S. (Getty Images), Samhain in Ireland (Irish Experience Tours), Día de los Muertos in Mexico (AP Photo/Rodrigo Abd), Obon in Japan (Sugimoto Tea Company) and Ognissanti in Italy (Britannica)

By Anthony Romero
News Reporter

Halloween, celebrated on October 31st, is one of the oldest holidays in the world, and it is a time for chills, thrills, and spooky vibes all around. While memories of trick-or-treating, dressing up in costumes, and carving pumpkins come to mind when we think of Halloween, other places throughout the globe may have their unique traditions alongside the ones that Americans usually celebrate. Although Halloween is often synonymous with a scary good time, others may take the moment to honor their loved ones and commemorate a life beyond death. From fun commercial ventures to more religious or traditional ceremonies, let's take a quick look at how some cultures celebrate worldwide.

Ireland: Samhain (October 31st-November 1st)

The ancient festival of Samhain is an old Celtic tradition that marked the end of summer and the start of the Celtic new year. This was when the spirits of the dead were believed to cross into the mortal realm at night, and this Irish holiday is believed to be where the first Halloween originated about 2,000 years ago. Many of our most popular Halloween traditions developed from Samhain rituals: people would wear masks and disguises to ward off evil spirits and the earliest jack-o-lanterns were first made from Irish turnips and potatoes. Today, the folklorish Púca Festival keeps the Samhain tradition alive, where a symbolic bonfire is lit along with live music, fire performers, and food and drink.

Mexico: Día de los Muertos (November 1st- 2nd)

With its origins set 3,000 years ago in Mesoamerica, the Day of the Dead serves as a time to fondly remember and commemorate the lives of deceased loved ones. The barriers between the living and the dead are weakened, and family spirits are able to reunite with their families during this special time. Altars known as ofrendas are set up to honor departed relatives and are often decorated with their favorite foods, yellow marigold flowers, and photos of their previous lives. A common symbol of the holiday is the calavera, decorative skulls which can usually be made from sugar or clay. Family members may take part in the tradition of tending to the gravesites of their loved ones, which can also be where some ofrendas are placed and decorated.

Japan: Obon (August 13th- 15th)

A multi-day summer festival, Obon serves as a time to pay respect to the ancestors by lighting welcoming fires called mukaebi to guide their spirits or by cleaning their graves in prayer- a practice known as ohaka-mairi. On the next day, the family will meet with a priest or visit a temple to take part in a hoyo or kuyo memorial service, afterwards gathering for a special lunch to share family stories. People may also perform a traditional bon-odori dance to receive and then send-off spirits. To conclude the holiday, many festivals are held throughout Japan, with the most famous being the Gozan Okuribi held in Kyoto.

Italy: Ognissanti (November 1st)
Also known as "All Saints' Day", the

festival is a deeply religious veneration to all Catholic saints and martyrs. Specific traditions of Ognissanti vary by region: in Sicily, the dead are believed to rise and bring special gifts to good children, while in Sardinia children may go door-to-door to ask for offerings- a tradition with parallels to Halloween trick-or-treating. Another popular and familiar activity is practiced in the Abruzzo and Trentino regions, where people carve pumpkins and light them with candles, later using them to make delicious pumpkin risottos. The 2nd of November is All Souls' Day when people bring candles, flowers, and gifts to the graves of their loved ones. An ancient Roman tradition even had families eating an honorary feast in order to share a meal with a deceased family member.

China: Hungry Ghost Festival (August 18th, 2024)

Among several traditional festivals that venerate the visiting spirits of the ancestors, the Ghost Festival itself is a part of the greater Ghost Month held during the 7th month of the Chinese lunar calendar. People may burn paper money and papier mache clothes, gold, and fine goods in front of their homes and businesses for wandering spirits. To satisfy these hungry ghosts, ritualistic foods are prepared and incense is burned. A number of street and temple ceremonies are also held throughout the month, with a final ceremony occurring on the last day where many families float colorful lanterns to guide their ancestors and other lost souls down the river and into the afterlife.

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NEWS



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“To act upon one’s conviction while others wait,
To create a positive force in a world
where cynics abound,
To provide information to people when
it wasn’t available before,
To offer those who want it, a choice-”
-Ted Turner

Historical Synopsis of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

Contextualizing the Historical Landscape and Relations



(Image Courtesy of New Ideal)

By Jenevieve Monroe
News Editor

To read the full article, go online at www.smc-collegian.org

In the past week, the United States has emerged as a pivotal actor in the ongoing global discourse regarding the Middle East’s humanitarian crisis between Israelis and Palestinians. The focus of dispute between these two groups historically begins with the land itself: both Palestinians and Israelis claim ancestry, religious sanctity, and indigenous rights to the region East of the Mediterranean Sea. In the perspective of many Israelis, their state has existed since the ancient kingdoms of Judea and Israel, biblically known as the Land of Canaan. The people who had been living in this region prior to Israeli occupation were known as the Caananites, and are considered to be the ancestors of some Arabs and Jews today.

Since the existence of Canaan, these lands have been conquered for centuries by the following powers: BCE = Israelites (13th), Philistines (12th), Assyrians (8th/7th), Babylonians (6th), Persians (6th/5th), Alexander the Great (4th), Seleucids (3rd/2nd), Romans (1st BCE & 1st CE). CE = Umayyad/Abbasid/Fatimid Caliphates (7th/12th), Crusaders (12th), Ayyubid and Mamluk Islamic dynasty (12th/16th), Ottoman Caliphate (16th/20th), League of Nations’ British Mandate (20th), and the State of Israel (20th to present).

With this diverse history of conquest came different forms of oppression. For Jewish inhabitants around the 2nd century BCE, they were severely persecuted. They revolted against and were violently suppressed by generations of Roman rulers. Under the Babylonian empire in the 6th century BCE, many Jewish civilians were forced into exile. This trend continued under the Roman empire, where Roman legions forced an even greater Jewish diaspora. The emperor changed the region’s name from Judea to Syria-Palaestina as a means of erasing Jewish identity. By the 7th century CE, the prophet Muhammad founded Islam in this region. Many Muslims and Jews generally coexisted in these lands for centuries following.

After the end of World War I and the fall of the Ottoman Empire, the League of Nations seized the territory of Palestine and transferred its authority over to Britain. The document solidifying this was called the British Mandate for Palestine in 1920. The League of Nations’ mandate told Britain to control the lands and natives while simultaneously creating a Jewish national homeland. This became a major point of contention because Britain, acting as an imperial power, promised the region to both Jewish Zionists and native Palestinians. From 1915 to 1916, the British government indicated support for Arab independence and Arab self-rule in a series of communications known as the Hussein-McMahon Correspondence. Less than a year later, the British government issued the Balfour Declaration. This document expressed British support for the establishment of a “national home for the Jewish people” in Palestine. After the declaration, Britain orchestrated a great influx of Jewish immigrants into the region which resulted in territorial disputes between natives and immigrants. An overarching debate ensued on who owns the land: current residents or immigrants with ancient ties?

By 1936, the dispossession of Palestinian land, the lack of self-determination, and several altercations put many native Arabs in distress. This caused the Arab Revolt, which lasted from 1936

to 1939. An array of two-state solution proposals were prepared as a form of compromise. The Peel Commission (1927) and the UN Partitions Plans (1947) responded with geographic delineations of land ownership between immigrants and natives. However, resolution between the groups never happened because Palestinians felt their land rights were not equitably represented in the distribution policies.

Both the British government and Zionist founders disregarded the outcome of these proposals and declared the region as Israel on May 14th, 1948. Following the declaration, major conflict ensued between the groups (known as the Arab-Israeli War). The conflict resulted in significant territorial changes, with the State of Israel gaining control of more land than what was proposed in the United Nations Partition Plan of 1947. For native Palestinians, these events are called the 1948 Nakba (also known as “The Catastrophe”). Approximately 700,000 Palestinians were forced out of their homes by Israeli police and became refugees. Violent massacres ensued, like the Deir Yassin massacre, and villages were destroyed. Palestinian families were separated, properties and livelihoods confiscated, and citizens expressed experiencing an overall loss of identity and culture. Extensions of conflict similar to this ensued throughout the decades. One significant example was the 1967 Six Day War.

Persistent violent clashes continue to this day. While property rights are central to these historical tensions, religious rights are as well.

Both Jews and Muslims share sacred religious sites in Jerusalem. For those who practice Islam, Palestine is home to the Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock. For those who practice Judaism, the site of the mosque is also deemed sacred to the Jewish community due to its historical association with the Temple of Jerusalem in ancient Israel (known as Temple Mount). The site of the Al-Aqsa Mosque is under coordination with the Jordan government to allow Palestinian Muslims access for worship, but entry into the building is controlled by Israeli police. This has led to public fears that the precedent of religious coexistence between groups will be eroded.

The historical context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a complex array of narratives, indigenous claims, and historical events. It encompasses a connection to the land, religious practice, and centuries of both coexistence and contention. The recent terrorist attacks on October 7th have since caused further hostile relations. Over 1,405 Israeli citizens were killed and 5,431 injured by the actions of Hamas, a terrorist group according to the U.S. State Department. The attack has been deemed by some media outlets as the “deadliest day for Jews since the Holocaust”. The Israel Defense Force (IDF) has since responded by using air strikes against the city of Gaza and blocking border exits to a city home of more than 2 million civilians. The IDF has also deployed airstrikes in the West Bank against a mosque alleged to hold Hamas militants. The bombings are ongoing at this time and the latest death toll stands at 6,649 Palestinians killed and over 19,267 injured (as of October 25th, 2023)

This situation underscores the urgency of the Middle East’s developing humanitarian crisis as the toll of fatalities continues to mount by the hour.

Johnson Named Speaker of the House

Louisiana Republican won enough votes weeks after McCarthy ousted.

By Drew Paxman
Editorial Designer

Representative Mike Johnson of Louisiana was sworn in as the 56th Speaker of the House on October 25 after weeks of political infighting within the Republican Party.

“We will do our duty here, we will serve you well,” Johnson said in his first speech before being sworn in. “We will govern well, and we’ll make you proud of this institution again.”

The vote came three weeks after former Speaker Kevin McCarthy was ousted by a caucus within the Republican Party. The removal of McCarthy led to weeks of deliberation within the GOP, who nominated representatives Steve Scalise, Jim Jordan, and Tom Emmer. Scalise and Emmer withdrew their nominations; Jordan withstood three Speaker votes before being ousted in a secret ballot.

Republicans and Democrats do not see eye-to-eye on the election of Johnson to the speakership.

“The question here is ‘Is Mike Johnson the right guy at the right time?’” described Republican representative Chip Roy of Texas. “And I think he is...he’s got his pulse on where the American people are.”

“I do have concerns about him,” Democratic representative Judy Chu of California countered. “He is a MAGA extremist that was one of the leaders to overturn the presidential election on January 6. That goes against everything that our country stands for.”

Johnson made his first objective as Speaker very clear: to forward a bill to support Israel on the House floor.

“We stand at a very dangerous time...the world is in turmoil,” Johnson said. “But a strong America is good for the entire world.”

NEWS

The Purple People: A Cult in our Backyard

By Isabella Wynn
News Reporter

Nothing ever happens around here, right? The Lamorinda area is a safe, quiet cluster of cities and towns where the demographic appears to be mainly made up of old, rich people, some college students, and young families. Have you ever wondered if there is more going on than you may think? That perhaps the Lamorinda area is too quiet?

You may have heard about big-name celebrities living in the area. My sources tell me that Buster Posey and Alanis Morissette live in Lafayette and Zendaya allegedly spent a lot of her childhood in Orinda. This may be fun news, but there's nothing scandalous about where these celebrities live or grew up.

I'd like to introduce you to The Purple People. In the lovely, little city of Lafayette resides Lafayette Morehouse. "Morehouse" lifestyle practices were founded by a man named Dr. Victor Baranco in the 1960s. Popularly known as a "sex cult", this "intentional living community" defines themselves as researchers studying pleasurable group living. In exploring human nature they have discovered how group living can lead to the most enjoyable life. And these people really do seem to be living pleurably.

They present their research findings through payable courses open to new and existing community members. Most notably is their \$16,800 course titled "Expansion of Sexual Potential Intensive." Members may also be invited to train for a certification in the demonstration of female pleasure and teaching the Fundamentals of Sensuality course. In addition to these courses, a momentous occasion for Lafayette Morehouse occurred in 1976 where Victor Baranco and his female counterpart, Diana, hosted a public event demonstrating female sexual pleasure and its extensive possibilities for three consecutive hours. Diana is still a member of Lafayette Morehouse and teaches courses.

Known as The Purple People (although community members dislike this nickname), Lafayette Morehouse is located on the outskirts of Lafayette on the edge of the Summit Ridge neighborhood in Walnut Creek. Their property holds communal houses, tennis courts, a night club, and a pool. They also drive golf carts around their



The house in Lafayette that is the base for the group.
(Images Courtesy SFist)

property. In my attempt to visit the 23 acre Lafayette Morehouse property, I was met with a hard-to-find dirt road. Upon entry I was bombarded with screaming signs stating "Private Property" and "No Trespassing." Morehouse is, of course, located at the very end of the long dirt road. I slowly drove past huge, gray houses with steep driveways until I could catch a glimpse of purple buildings. Out of respect for the property owners, I unfortunately could not will myself to explore further, but I can confirm they exist at the address found on Apple Maps.

Given their nickname, the Purple People live in purple houses and travel by old-school purple limousines. They even used to operate More University between 1977-1997, where students could study and get degrees in Humanities and Sensuality & Lifestyles. Their three 5-star Yelp reviews paint Lafayette Morehouse as a welcoming, educational community teaching students how to successfully grow their relationships through better communication and intimacy practices. However, Morehouse wouldn't be a cult without some scandals.

One of Morehouse's few rules is "don't do anything you don't want to do," yet some have openly shared with the press that the group uses intimidation tactics to keep members quiet and coercion into taking illegal drugs. Dr. Baranco was charged with LSD possession in 1994. Aside from these small scandals and the very little information about them, Morehouse appears to quietly keep to themselves.

Living in their purple houses and driving their purple cars, The Purple People live their pleasurable lives in many different types of relationships and lifestyles; ranging from celibacy to polyamory. They spend their time throwing parties and practicing gardening, cooking, building, painting, and working on cars. They believe in perfection and achieving their highest potential. These Morehouse practices have made their way out of Lafayette. Communal living experiments using Morehouse principals have been located across the United States. With most groups residing in California, including the original Morehouse in Lafayette, groups have also been located in other states such as New York, Georgia, Hawaii, and more.

Doesn't sound too bad, right? Spending your time partying, gardening, playing tennis, learning new skills, and having the best sex of your life? Morehouse believes in living your best life at your highest potential. Now, this isn't a promo. Let's not forget about the fact that Morehouse is ultimately a cult, however they don't appear to be harmful and I am in no place to judge other people's lifestyle choices. Please do stay respectful of their property.

Foreign Agent or False Alarm?

The Charges Against Senator Menendez Explained.

By Matthew Colvin
Visiting News Reporter

Just three weeks ago, at the start of JaNew Jersey Democratic Senator Bob Menendez has pleaded not guilty to a double indictment on charges of bribery and conspiring as a foreign agent with the nation of Egypt. It is the second time he has been indicted for corruption-based offenses in the past decade.

According to the indictment, a federal search of the senator's home turned up nearly \$500,000 in cash, as well as gold bars and a Mercedes-Benz convertible. Both the senator and his wife, Nadine Menendez, stand accused of having acquired all of these funds via a "corrupt relationship" with several other businessmen. Menendez has vehemently denied the charges, claiming that the indictment was "as outrageous as it was absurd."

The accusations did not stop there, however. On October 12, Menendez was charged with taking actions within the Senate on behalf of the Egyptian government, which would qualify him as an unregistered foreign agent. Despite charges of Menendez's corruption consolidating, he continued to fervently deny them, claiming that, "piling new charge upon new charge does not make the allegations true." While many other Democrats have called for Menendez to simply resign, the New Jersey senator has stubbornly refused.

The senator previously faced a set of bribery charges completely unrelated to the current situation in 2017, but the ordeal ended in a simple mistrial. However, with both charges and evidence seemingly stacking up against the senator in this new case, the result may prove to be quite different.

On October 23, Menendez officially entered his not guilty plea before US District Judge Sidney Stein in a federal court, not budging from his established stance. As the official trial is commencing, should Menendez be found guilty, he may be facing up to 50 years of imprisonment.

ON CAMPUS

What is SMC listening to?

A List of some of SMC’s Favorite Fall Playlist Picks.

(Image Courtesy wnyc)



By Lillian La Salle
Associate Editor

It’s officially that time Saint Mary’s! Fall is upon us and coming on strong with the autumn leaves changing hue outside the Rec Center. The deer and squirrels are out and about regularly, and although we’ve got a few random 90-degree summer days this October, the temperature is nearing the 60s for our long-awaited sweater weather.

This year, it seems that the weather is actually matching up to the seasons. Although we had a brief heatwave, we have gotten to bypass last year’s 3-month heatwave that lasted all the way until Novem-

ber and seemed to cook the first years in their residence halls. Thankfully, the rain has graced us with its presence just after we enter the week before Halloween, leaving us with plenty of time to get excited for the Spooky Season.

We all know music is the perfect thing to put us in a good mood. So why not influence our fall feelings with a whole setlist from some SMC students and staff? With midterms behind us and Fall in full swing, some of our Saint Mary’s students have offered up some of their favorite fall playlist picks for this 2023 season. You can find the list of fall favorites below, so get on your coziest hoodie and eat something pumpkin-flavored while you listen to these lyrical masterpieces:

Gabbi Tolentino - Spooky: Jesse Springfield
Autumn In New York: Ella Fitzgerald
Tis Autumn: Nat King Cole
AJ Clements - All Blues: Miles Davis
Kaylin Hollerman - October Sky: Yebba
Emma Fitch - There She Goes: The La’s
Desiree Sturock - Andromeda: Weyes Blood

Liar: Built to spill
Blue Light: Mazzy star
Paper Bag: Fiona Apple
Kill of the Night: Gin Wigmore
Jenevieve Monroe - Season of the Witch: Donovan
Crystal: Stevie Nicks
Maddie Sciba - Sweater Weather: The Neighborhood
Cerys Price - Spacegirl: Beach House
Angelina Landeros - Talk It Up: Sammy Rae & The Friends
Ashley Maravilla - We Fell in Love in October: girl in red
Andrew Cabrera - Sparks: Coldplay
Lillian La Salle - Francis Forever: Mitski
Kat Legrama - My Life: JCole
Professor Zeccardi - I Used to Be Young: Miley Cyrus
The Pay Back: James Brown
The Boss: James Brown
Izzy Ruiz- CORALINE: MANESKIN
Rigo Sainez- Mario Breakup: Gucci

Honorable mentions:
Falling Behind: Laufey
I Think I Like When It Rains: WILLIS
Was It Something I Said: Cavetown
Junk of the Heart: The Kooks
To the Mountains: Lizzy McAlpine
Sweet Marie: Marcel
Evangeline: Stephen Sanchez
Dirty dancer: Orion Sun

Saint Mary’s Alumni Making a Difference

By Jenevieve Monroe
News Editor

Taylor Marcus and the Girls Gain Confidence Initiative

At Saint Mary’s College, you’ll find alumni who are actively contributing to positive change throughout the Bay Area community. One notable example is Taylor Marcus, a graduate from Saint Mary’s class of 2020 with a degree in Justice, Community, and Leadership. Currently, she is in the final stages of completing her master’s program in Nonprofit Administration from the University of San Francisco. Marcus serves as the Executive Director, founder, and CEO of Girls Gain Confidence, a local 501(c)3 nonprofit organization dedicated to empowering Black girls aged 12-17 through a variety of services. These include “mentoring, community engagement activities, field trips, tutoring, and educational events.” These initiatives are designed to enhance the self-confidence of participating mentees, cultivate academic excellence, and instill a sense of agency both “in and outside of the classroom.”

The program is structured on three levels: mentorship (level one), partnerships (level two), and community events (level three). Marcus explained that these levels are designed to extend support beyond the program’s designated cohorts. “Our goal is to ensure that Black girls in the Bay Area can readily access mentorship, educational workshops, and career advancement prospects.”

When questioned about the source of her inspiration for Girls Gain Confidence, Marcus explained that the vision had been

inspired from her youth. “I founded this nonprofit based on my experiences as an early teenager. I know firsthand how negative influences and unhealthy relationships can destroy a girl’s self-esteem.” She explained that by initiating a program centered on “genuine love, unwavering support, positive representation, and a sense of accountability,” mentees could be motivated “to embrace their full potential rather than give in to the negative influences that often surround us.”

Marcus also expressed that the mission of Girls Gain Confidence is centered in the transformative power of community. “GGC bridges the gap between families, educators, and Black girls. Our goal is to cultivate positive decision-making, academic excellence, and a strong sense of agency among our mentees.” She shared some testimonials from students that participated in the program and were inspired moving forward in their academic careers.

“This year I’ve been trying to dodge conflict, but last year I ran straight towards it. I’ve changed because I don’t fight anymore, and my grades are good now. In 7th grade I had no self-respect. I didn’t even know what it was. Now I do.” (Student, 2022).

“When I started Girls Group, I was the girl who wanted friends. Now I’m the girl who prioritizes herself and I do what makes me happy. My perspective on conflict has changed because now I know to choose my battles wisely. I will stay true to myself in high school.” (Student, 2022).

(Image Courtesy www.justgiving.com)

Throughout her professional journey, Marcus has remained connected to the Saint Mary’s community. Girls Gain Confidence has established partnership with one of Saint Mary’s service opportunities, known as the Community Engagement Program. Students participating in this program are collaborating with Marcus to advance her nonprofit’s mission. Their contributions include providing one-on-one research for careers and higher educational opportunities, media focused outreach through marketing strategies, and organizing fundraising efforts for the nonprofit’s annual Historically Black College Tour. On this trip, the mentees will have the opportu-

to travel to schools like Texas Southern, Prairie View, Howard, and Hampton University. All donations will go towards covering the costs of travel and lodging. If you are interested in supporting the mission and mentees of Girls Gain Confidence, check out their website at www.girlsgainconfidence.org or their Instagram account.

If you would like to support fundraising efforts for the Historically Black College Tour, go online to the JustGiving.com Donation Server and search “Girls Gain Confidence (Oakland) - HBCU Student Tour”.



Alexis Arguello
Girls Gain Confidence (Oakland) - HBCU

ENTERTAINMENT

Sistahhs! It’s the 30th Anniversary of Hocus Pocus!

The Disney film that became a Halloween classic.

By Madison Sciba
Editor-in-Chief

On July 16, 1993, Walt Disney Pictures released *Hocus Pocus* in theaters. Now, over 30 years later, the film has become almost synonymous with Halloween and this spooky time of year. For many, *Hocus Pocus* was an essential part of Halloweens growing up. Was it really Halloween if you didn’t watch Max light the black flame candle?

As a child, it seemed as though there was nothing scarier than watching Billy Butcher’s not-so-dead body rise from the grave and cough up moths. Even to this day that scene can give shivers to anyone with a dislike of scary movies. It was one of the films that chil-

dren were allowed to watch that was considered “scary.” While it still maintains a PG rating, some scenes, like the witches draining Max’s life force, could be really terrifying for kids.

Directed by Kenny Ortega, the film takes place in Salem, Massachusetts, a historically *bewitching* town. Most known for being the site of the infamous Salem witch trials in the early days of American history. As a result of the film’s success, Salem has become not only a destination for those interested in the witch trials, but also for fans of the film. The town welcomes tourists to come during the Halloween season and see the filming locations from the movie. They also host a variety of themed events and fan meet and greets with the cast.

Even though the original has become a classic Halloween film, the 2022 sequel *Hocus Pocus 2* was seen as a bit of a disappointment to fans. With very little of the sequel tying it to the original film, audiences did not have those same nostalgic feelings toward it.

Whether you enjoyed the sequel or not, it is hard to deny that *Hocus Pocus* has become a tried and true classic Halloween film. It has all the essentials of a good movie for the season: takes place over Halloween, in a historically spooky location (Salem), witches, the undead, and magic. It is no wonder that *Hocus Pocus* has stood the test of time and continues to be watched by future generations when celebrating Halloween.



An iconic Halloween film.
(Image Courtesy Walt Disney Pictures)

Ghouls, Ghosts, and Gondolas: A review of A Haunting in Venice

By Matthew Colvin
Visiting Entertainment Columnist

The spookiest month of the year, October, has finally arrived, and with it comes a slew of new horror movies for you to get your annual fix of chills and jump scares. One of the first is *A Haunting in Venice*, the third in a series of loose adaptations of famed mystery author Agatha Christie’s Hercule Poirot novels helmed by director, producer, and lead actor Kenneth Branagh. The previous two films, *Murder on the Orient Express* and *Death on the Nile*, came out to middling reviews, but *A Haunting in Venice* does things a little differently, layering supernatural horror elements on top of a good old-fashioned whodunit. So how does this genre smash-up fare? Quite well, all things considered.

The story hook is simple but effective; retired detective Hercule Poirot receives an invitation to attend a séance at the palace of a famous opera singer and skeptically accepts, only for a slew of murders and ghostly appearances to occur, forcing him to come out of retirement for one night to solve the mystery. While the plot itself does not reinvent the wheel, it manages to be suitably



(Image Courtesy Disney/20th Century Studios)

entertaining for the film’s hour and forty-minute runtime, carried by a wildly entertaining cast of actors. Branagh does well as the iconic detective Poirot, but it is Michelle Yeoh and Tina Fey in particular who steal the show as a spiritual medium and a crime novelist, respectively. The filmmaking on display is what really makes the experience. It is exceptionally well shot, making use of claustrophobic close-ups, contrasting lighting with deep, brooding shadows and

unique angles to constantly keep the tension up and the audience on edge. The scares themselves are good, at times pushing that PG-13 rating to its limits; not necessarily likely to terrify diehard horror fans, but certainly enough to keep any average moviegoer on the edge of their seats. This feat is especially impressive considering that the film’s source material, the 1969 novel *Hallowe’en Party*, has no trappings of the horror genre, but is

much more of a straightforward detective story. It is these very creative liberties that Branagh takes with the source material that make *A Haunting in Venice* an improvement on the two films that preceded it, and an enjoyable Halloween flick that demands little from its audience to enjoy. So if you are looking for some decent popcorn entertainment and some solid scares this October, *A Haunting in Venice* is a good pick.

ENTERTAINMENT

Killers of the Flower Moon is a Critical Self-Examination

By Andrew Martinez Cabrera
Entertainment Editor

In the non-fiction book *Killers of the Flower Moon*, journalist David Grann writes about the time of blossoming flower fields, referred to as the season of the Flower Moon. Starting in May, “taller plants, such as spiderworts and black-eyed Susans, begin to creep over the tinier blooms, stealing their light and water. The necks of the smaller flowers break and their petals flutter away, and before long they are buried underground.” It is an instance where nature acting as metaphor reflects real life, when members of the Osage Nation, some of the wealthiest people in the world per capita, began to die off mysteriously. These murders became the basis for the latest Martin Scorsese picture, *Killers of the Flower Moon*.

With a 3-hour-long runtime, *Killers* places its message in the foreground. Following deeply involved consultation from the Osage Nation and an entire rehaul of the story, moving away from the FBI investigation that is the foundation of the book, Scorsese decides to focus on the relationship between Ernest Burkhart (Leonardo DiCaprio), one of the main conspirators to steal the Osage wealth, and his wife Mollie Burkhart (Lily Gladstone), an Osage woman who is the emotional core of the film. While we do see many different Osage perspectives, the core tragedy of the deaths relates to Gladstone’s character and her response to the greater Reign of Terror. Gladstone is monumental; a

performance that shifts from restrained and melancholic before transitioning into total heartbreak. She represents the best of our humanity, the antithesis of Burkhart.

Killers of the Flower Moon is incredibly reserved and paced like an adagio musical piece, boiling with an anger unparalleled in his other films. When Scorsese previously depicted violence in his youth, it was an ugly spectacle – flashy, scored to period-era songs; the camera constantly moving, the editing flowing in a hectic motion. *Killers’* treatment of violence does not revel in its ugliness, it just shows it. It is as simple as it is powerful. These terrible moments carry so much weight because we have to carry that emotional weight when these static scenes unfold in front of us. What Scorsese illustrates best in *Killers* is that evil is banal. That is the most terrifying realization one can come into contact with.

Scorsese exposes us to some of the dumbest hicks on the planet who mess up almost every single step of their conspiratorial plot and yet they still succeed. While their plan progresses, so does the entire American project situated in the periphery. All the while, an entire history continues to set like the moon, disappearing below the horizon line, until it is out of our view.

While depressing, Scorsese still reminds us about the beauty of the Osage people, many of whom worked behind the camera or were towering 30 feet in the air while projected on the silver screen. The Indigenous Americans of Scorsese’s youth, people meant to be antagonists, have

their voices and faces be the ones we connect to. However, he understands his limitations as a non-Osage to tell this story, and the only way he knows how is through the victors.

The brutally blunt portrayal of America’s original sin is an honest attempt to honor those whose lives were lost and condemn those who benefitted from those deaths. I am hopeful now that those faces and those stories will continue to blossom for years to come on the silver screen; for when the sun sets, the moon will always come, and shine anew.



(Image Courtesy Addie Roanhorse/Apple/Paramount)

What’s this? The 30th anniversary of Tim Burton’s The Nightmare Before Christmas

By Madison Sciba
Editor-in-Chief

On October 13, 1993, Jack Skellington made his first appearance on the big screen. Now, thirty years later, Tim Burton’s *The Nightmare Before Christmas* has become a cult classic. What people may not know is that Tim Burton did not direct the classic Halloween film. According to the Netflix docuseries, *The Movies that Made Us*, Burton was too busy filming *Batman Returns* to direct *The Nightmare Before Christmas*. Although the film was directed by Henry Selick, it was the brainchild of the infamously creepy and weird director, Burton, while he was still an animator at Walt Disney Studios. However, Burton was one of the producers and kept a firm hand on how the film was being made.

Initially, the film was not a success and it wasn’t until after a few years



(Image Courtesy Disney Studios)

the film found its popularity. At first Disney chose not to put their name on the film but rather that of Touchstone Pictures, one of their adult-centered production companies. *The Nightmare Before Christmas* was rated PG which was a big deal for Disney who was churning out G rated movies at this time such as *Aladdin*.

Made entirely in stop motion, *The Nightmare Before Christmas* was the first full length stop motion feature film. It set a precedent and began a trend of creepy stop motion films hitting theaters. Films like 2005’s *Corpse Bride* and 2012’s *Frankenweenie* followed in *A Nightmare Before Christmas’s* footsteps and both films were nominated for Academy

Awards.

Now, thirty years after the world was first introduced to The Pumpkin King who wanted to become Santa Claus, Disney is still profiting highly off a film that they thought was going to be too creepy for their brand. Every September and October, Disneyland hosts the Oogie Boogie Bash, a Halloween party based on the villain from *The Nightmare Before Christmas*. So every year, Disney fans from around the world flock to Disneyland to celebrate the spooky holiday with the characters that Tim Burton drew almost forty years ago while he was a lowly animation apprentice at Disney Studios.

OPINION

Who Did It Best: Morticia Addams

Which Morticia was the best, from newspaper comics to Netflix series

By Val Hill
Visiting Opinion Columnist

Over the years, there have been many versions of The Addams Family. Along with that brings different versions of Morticia Addams, who is considered to be one of the “mothers of goth.” So which Morticia is the best, and what separates her from any of the other versions?

But first we need to look at the many different variants of The Addams Family from over the years. The idea first started as a comic in 1938 by Charles Addams on page nine of The New Yorker. It was just a simple black and white single-panel that depicted a salesman trying to sell a vacuum cleaner to the spooky family. That panel was the spark that was needed to light the fire for the 1964 TV show, starring Carolyn Jones as Morticia and John Astin as Gomez.

The TV show was only the tip of the iceberg, making room for cartoon shows,

movies and a Netflix series. And with all these different Morticia’s, which actress did the best job at bringing her out of the coffin and onto our screens?

I believe that the best portrayal of Morticia came from The Addams Family Values, made in 1991, starring Anjelica Huston. Her performance and added depth of the character made the movie so much better. The almost corpse-like color of her face and the way she

moves in her long and slender black dress making her look as if she was floating across the set made her the best choice. The on scene chemistry between Huston and Raul Julia, the actor for Gomez, was immaculate. It was as if the two were an actual couple in real life, and the embodiment of the dynamic between Morticia and Gomez. Huston’s dedication to the role of Morticia was amazing, bringing the whole franchise to new heights.



(Image Courtesy Paramount)

Overrunning Childhood Traditions: Is Trick or Treating Out-Dated?

By Olivia Burke
Visiting Opinion Columnist

If you’re anything like me, you most likely have very fond childhood memories of choosing the very best spooky (or sparkly) costume to wear on October 31st. You walked around your neighborhood, knocked on doors to collect sweet treats, perhaps with your friends or siblings, and then returned home to trade for all your favorite candies, and eat an excessive amount of sugar before bed. Nowadays, it seems as if organized events are becoming more popular than traditional trick or treating. Churches and schools are hosting fall carnivals and trunk-or-treat, and many folks attend several of these fun events, eliminating the need, or desire to participate in door-to-door trick or treating. Is the childhood tradition of trick or treating becoming an outdated practice? Are organized community events replacing traditional trick or treating? What role do parental concerns around the safety of trick or treating play in this?

Trick or treating, though its origin has not been officially confirmed, can be traced back to the ancient Celts. It is believed that some influence was derived from Celtic celebrations involving costumes and banquets that were aimed at eradicating phantoms. Around this time, there were also several traditions in which people would perform some sort of ritual in exchange for food.

The tradition of going door-to-door came later. In medieval times, after Christianity had become more widespread, the church celebrated a day known as “All Souls’ Day”. This involved wealthier families providing food to the less fortunate, in exchange for prayer over their deceased relatives. It then shifted to a tradition of, more specifically, children going door-to-door asking for food.

The trick or treating tradition that is widely known today is significantly different from its presumed origins, and in the

past few years public attention has begun to shift to a new tradition. Many organizations such as churches and schools host carnivals in celebration of Autumn or Halloween, and an increasingly popular event many have taken on is trunk-or-treat. My home Church is one of many that hosts a yearly “trunk-or-treat” event. Volunteers park their cars and decorate the trunks in various themes, and then pass out candy as children walk through the event. This is the same general practice as traditional trick-or-treating, however

it has several unique benefits. Firstly these types of events are constrained to a more manageable area than an entire neighborhood, decreasing the possibility for a child to get lost, and thus granting parents and guardians peace of mind. The smaller area also requires less stamina, and because all the cars are parked close to each other it takes much less time than traditional Trick or Treating, but with the same amount of fun.

In the New York Times, Fernanda Santos quotes a six year old who explains trunk-or-treat from his point of view, exclaiming, “You go trick-or-treating when you go to people’s houses to get candy...You go trunk-or-treating when you go to people’s cars to get candy, and that’s much better because you can go around the cars a million dozen times and you don’t even get tired”. Not only are organized events easier for parents, they are often more fun for children. While there is something to be said for the nostalgic aspect of trick-or-treating, children who grow up attending these less traditional events will acquire their own unique sense of nostalgia.

While door-to-door trick-or-treating may continue for many years, I believe that it is slowly being overrun by other Halloween events. trick-or-treating is far less popular than it once was. The safety and ease of community events continues to draw people in, and such events will likely continue to flourish in the coming years.

(Image Courtesy Country Living)



SPORTS

Gaels Climb the Ranks

By Val Hill
Sports Editor

Gaels make the AP Top 25 preseason rank

With Gaels men’s basketball season only 6 days away, the team is currently standing at 23 in the preseason AP Top 25 Poll. Last preseason, the Gaels weren’t ranked in the preseason AP Poll. And after last year’s outstanding performance, the pressure is on for another exceptional season. This is not only for the freshman but also for Alex Ducas, who has come back for a fifth year. It will be up to Ducas to lead the team, along with Aidan Mahaney. Both players truly stepped up to lead the Gaels to one of their most successful seasons.

Mahaney was an amazing leader last season, rallying the team behind

him. No matter the game, win or lose, Mahaney was there making sure the team was flowing as one. The question remains, will the Gaels be able to outdo themselves yet again this season?

This season the Gaels might be able to finally claim first place in both the regular season as well as the WCC tournament.

The Gaels first game this season will be on November 6th against California State University, Stanislaus. This game might set the tone for the season. Only time will tell for the Gaels, and prove whether the team is back and better than ever.



Above: Alex Ducas, Aidan Mahaney, and Mitchell Saxen (Image Courtesy Tod Fierner)

Below: Gaels’ Head Coach Randy Bennett (Image Courtesy the WCC)



Trying New Things: Updates coming to the 2028 Olympics

By Oliver Collins
Sports Reporter

The Paris Olympics are starting to gain momentum as teams across the world look to take home the gold in their respective events. 203 different countries will be competing for their respective countries, making it the highest in game history. The Olympics, which have been a staple point for unification in sports, is going on 212 years, and what better way to evolve than inserting a new variety of sports to the event list.

There have been many intriguing new sports added to the 2028 Olympic list, creating a new dream for young athletes around the world. Flag football, lacrosse, cricket, squash and baseball all bring the possibility of a new framework, adding to the tradition of including the world’s most watched sports. American football is one that has brought some hesitancy but also a lot of positive perspectives. CBS analyst Caitlyn O’Kane reported on the adage of an iconic American sport, “Football is one of the most popular

sports in the U.S. Flag football, a safer variation of the sport often played by children, has never been included in the Olympics – until now. About 20 million people participate in flag football at the elite level.” It’s clear that America is welcoming the addition of the sport with open arms, but will the rest of the world be so quick to show its support?

One of the biggest benefits of new events being added to the Games, will bring generational dreams to a new variety of athletes. One of the most important parts of the sports process is evolution. Bringing these sports to the Olympics could truly change the future of the Games for decades to come. It’s just a matter of whether or not the fans will support it. One thing is clear, new event athletes are as hyped as you would expect them to be. Kelly Amonte Hiller, women’s lacrosse coach at Northwestern University in Illinois, was quick to share her reaction to the news, “There’s so many people that have dreamed about this,” she said of her initial reaction.

“You always dream of being an Olympian, even if your sport isn’t in the Olympics.” - Amonte Hiller didn’t have to describe the players’ reactions. They were posted for all to see. While we do have almost 5 years to wait until the Olympics come to the States, all the better for these events’ athletes to prepare for the opportunity of their lifetimes.



(Image Courtesy Joe’s Auto Parks)

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