Student organizations promote free COVID-19 vaccination clinic

MU’s Department of Student Health and Well-Being collaborated with student organizations on campus, including Welcome Week leaders and the Campus Activities Programming Board, to encourage students to attend MU’s vaccination clinic Aug. 24 and 25.

BY EMMA STEFANUTTI
Reporter

MU held a free COVID-19 vaccination clinic in the Student Center on Aug. 24 and 25. The Department of Student Health and Well-being organized the clinic and partnered with student involvement organizations, including the Office of Student Engagement and Campus Activities Programming Board, to promote the vaccine to students.

Volunteers wore costumes and drove golf carts around campus, offering free rides to the clinic. Members of CAPB handed out cookies and ice cream to students in waiting areas. Involvement Ambassadors talked to students as they got vaccinated about ways to get involved on campus. Bryan Goers, the senior coordinator for the Office of Student Engagement, said these initiatives were part of a larger effort by many organizations on campus to encourage students to get the vaccine.

“The more students that have the vaccine, the safer that our events and programs will be,” Goers said. “We’ll do whatever we can to support SHWB and their efforts, and really the campus’ efforts, to get people vaccinated.”

Goers’ office oversees Welcome Week leaders, who have been involved in efforts to promote the clinic. In addition to promoting the event throughout Welcome Week, some leaders drove around campus, informing students of the clinic and offering to drive them there. Some even dressed in extravagant costumes like dinosaur suits.

Goers said beyond the excitement of dinosaur suits and the convenience of free golf cart rides, Welcome Week leaders and other student groups are responsible for caring for students’ well-being, and aim to add a sense of comfort among students who may have been skeptical about the vaccine.

The Welcome Week leaders are a group of students who are trained, and they volunteer their time to try to promote [students] thriving on Mizzou’s campus,” Goers said. “One of the ways that we can operate on Mizzou’s campus is for everybody to have the vaccine and be able to fully participate in activities throughout the year."

Aside from Welcome Week leaders, CAPB also played a key role in the clinic by setting up a “chill zone,” where students could wait the recommended 15 minutes after their vaccine in case of adverse effects. The chill zone featured free snacks, a claw machine, music and movies.

Senior Anthony Ash, marketing assistant for CAPB, said that peer influence is a factor that makes student organizations instrumental in MU’s mission to increase vaccination rates.

“CAPB’s involvement in the clinic shows you that even if you may not be the most comfortable and you have your own personal reasons for why you didn’t get a vaccine, there’s a group of people who are interested in making you feel comfortable and doing what they can to make sure that everyone all get back to normal,” Ash said.

The executive director of SHWB, Jamie Shutter, said that the end of the first day, the clinic received a much higher turnout than anticipated.

“We’ve been very pleased with the turnout. When we first planned this clinic, we weren’t sure what to expect. But we had 79 [students get vaccinated] yesterday, and we are already much busier today,” Shutter said on Aug. 25. "The clinic officially opened at 11 a.m., and we had people starting at 10:30 [a.m.] wanting to get vaccinated. So we’re really thrilled."

Given the turnout of the clinic, both SHWB and the student organizations it partnered with said they remain optimistic that campus-wide reception toward the COVID-19 vaccine will continue to improve. With some aspects of regular campus life moving back to normality, Ash hopes that students’ desires for an in-person college experience will motivate them to stay safe and get vaccinated.

“I think with how last year went, and students not really being on campus and not really seeing the same level of activities, people who were here last year [missed out on a lot of experiences],” Ash said. “Even though everything’s not fully back to normal, there’s still stuff going on and they can still get involved.”

SHWB will host another clinic on Sept. 14 and 15 to provide a second dose to students who were vaccinated on Aug. 24 and 25, but the clinic will remain open to anyone who has not yet received the vaccine.

Edited by Namratha Prasad, nprasad@themanーター.com

Politics for Dummies by Dummies: Get to know some of MU’s political organizations

Three of MU’s political organizations shared their takes on five political issues in America.

BY TADEO RUIZ AND OLIVIA MIZELLE
Reporters

Saying that politics is complicated is an understatement. In today’s political atmosphere, every issue has more than one side to it, and each side has more than one answer. MU has numerous political organizations currently welcoming students — whether those students know what they stand regarding politics, or are brand new to it.

For more left-leaning students, the Mizzou College Democrats or the Mizzou Young Democratic Socialists of America may be organizations of interest. “(U.S. Sen. Elizabeth) Warren Democrats are probably as far right as [YDSA goes], and then all the way (left) to ideologies that don’t even have parties,” sophomore YDSA President Quina Coffman said. While the Mizzou College Democrats, headed by senior President Jeffrey Bittle, is not an exclusively socialist organization like YDSA, its members encompass a variety of political ideologies, from center-left to far left.

“On an official basis, our platform mostly aligns with the general Democratic party platform, but being a college campus, we tend to align more on the progressive side of things,” Bittle said.

If the right side of politics is more appealing, Mizzou College Republicans is an option. Sophomore President Josiah Mendoza said that the organization’s goals include “limited governments, lower taxes and deregulation.”

Health care
An issue that has almost always been at the forefront of political campaigns is health care. According to the most recent data from the National Health Interview Survey, in 2020 13.5% of adults ages 18-64, were living uninsured. The leaders of YDSA and Mizzou College Democrats aligned on the issue, both proposing a single-payer health care system as a way to get more Americans insured. According to Harvard

See Politics on 4
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WE CAN’T WAIT TO MEET YOU
What's up with Spot? MU innovates uses for robotic dogs

Students and faculty have been working with four robotic dogs from Boston Dynamics to get hands-on experience with new technology.

BY ELIZABETH DEARNER AND KAGAN KING
Copy Chief and Reporter

Dogs trot around MU every day, but some aren’t fluffy — they’re metal.

Since the start of the year, MU has acquired four yellow robotic dogs, all named Spot, to give engineering students hands-on learning experiences. Students have been busy innovating uses for the dogs, from running nuclear power plant safety checks to acting in improv comedy shows.

MU purchased the first Spot for $200,000 from the robotic technology company Boston Dynamics. Energy company Ameren purchased the other three robots, and are collaborating with MU students to develop ways for Spot to perform safety checks at Callaway Energy Center in Steedman, Missouri.

Dale Musser, an associate professor in the College of Engineering, wanted to give engineering students opportunities to experiment with technology, instead of just learning about it in a classroom.

“We want students to experience autonomous systems technologies,” Musser said. “Spot represented the front end of that — the best of the best that’s currently available in a commercial way ... all of the elements of the Information Technology program are there in Spot, but in a format that’s exciting. So, I want to have students be interested in (and) motivated by the capabilities of Spot.”

One of the dogs is on vacation in San Francisco, so Musser can work with the programming at his home. He teaches remotely to students at MU, who work with the three dogs on campus. Since they are all fully licensed, Musser also has the ability to control the dogs in Columbia from his office in San Francisco. Kristofferson Culler, assistant professor in the IT program, teaches students how to use the robots in the Autonomous Systems Lab in Lafferre Hall.

Mason Jenkins and Payton Marlin are both IT seniors working in Musser’s research class at MU to create new uses for Spot.

Marlin began working with Musser as a freshman, so he learned about Spot early on when it arrived this year. Spot doesn’t come with the ability to perform complicated tasks beyond its internal programming that enables it to walk; researchers program software to develop new functions.

Students in the research class went through training to learn how to use the technology safely. Afterward, Musser encouraged students to think of ideas for projects with Spot in mind.

Marlin, who wants to work on voice calling for Spot, said the robot is a useful tool to show students, including himself, how they can apply coding concepts from class to the world around them.

“Learning from a textbook or online is easy for some people, but self-learning is more difficult,” Marlin said. “Being able to be part of the beginning of something big definitely feels special. This experience will help us in our future careers.”

Jenkins got involved with the Spot research team by reaching out to Musser after seeing his posts online about Spot. He is currently working with other students to develop an iOS app to control Spot through iPhones. He said he is looking forward to expanding Spot’s capabilities, as they will provide learning opportunities for students with all levels of coding experience.

“Imagine Spot is doing a site survey at the nuclear plant and checking to see if things look right,” Musser said. “There’s a set of points that we want Spot to follow, and Spot may take a picture and analyze that picture to see if it’s right or wrong.”

Musser said once Spot completes a defined mission, it can perform it again without any help. Spot’s many capabilities can be put to use outside of an engineering setting as well.

Musser said MU received licenses for Spot Choreography, a software development kit that can make Spot dance. The program typically costs $10,000 per year, but MU made a deal with Boston Dynamics that the university could access the license for free if it caused an increase in sales of the robots.

“I wanted to give students opportunities to experiment with the robots, in addition to coding for them,” Musser said. “This agreement allows us to give our students a better chance to explore the capabilities of the robots.”

Musser’s research class at MU to create new uses for Spot.

In addition to the four dogs on campus, the research team purchased the other three robots, and are collaborating with students to develop ways for Spot to perform safety checks at Callaway Energy Center in Steedman, Missouri.

Brown began working with Musser this summer to learn about Spot. He is now working with student comedy groups including MU Battlewhale, MU Improv, Comedy Wars and Fishbowl Stand Up to create events that could feature live appearances from Spot. He said he believes that using Spot in comedy performances would showcase what different departments can accomplish when they use their skills together.

“Musser” has seen how it’s inspired his students to rise to the occasion and become better engineers,” Brown said. “We’re working to find ways to now involve theater people and inspire them in ways to create art that you never would have thought of making.”

He said theater students have expressed excitement at the possibility of working with the robots, and that using them will add a special layer to their performances.

Brown said much of comedy is based on human failure, and when a robot in a performance fails to be humanlike, it serves as “a way to remind us what’s human.”

Students on the research team frequently take Spot on walks around campus. Musser said Spot has garnered attention from the public, but said it is important for people to stay at least two meters away from the robot for their safety.

“(Showing Spot to the public) is a way to get people to love Mizzou a little more because of the things that we’re doing,” Musser said. “People can experience that technology, and that feeds into another mission for the university — the education of all.”

Kevin Brown, an associate professor in the Department of Theatre, is also looking for creative applications for the robots, including uses in the comedy world.

Brown said much of comedy is based on human failure, and when a robot in a performance fails to be humanlike, it serves as “a way to remind us what’s human.”

Edited by Namratha Prasad, nprasad@themaneteer.com
The COVID-19 pandemic has greatly affected America's health care institutions, overwhelming hospitals with infected patients. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, COVID-19 has killed over 670,000 Americans as of Aug. 28. The leaders of each administration responded with their opinions on the differences between the two most recent administrations' handling of the pandemic.

Bittle commends President Joe Biden for a quick vaccine rollout. "I wasn't expecting a vaccine until now, or even September, but with the administration doing more in terms of reducing vaccine hesitancy," Bittle said.

Mendoza shares similar sentiments as Bittle, agreeing on an efficient vaccine rollout. "As for the current administration, I'm not so sure as to whether or not it was more effective than the last one," Mendoza said. "I am certain that it didn't have much of the Trump administration's response would've been much more different under the current administration." Coffman criticized the current administrations. "What I could say about both [presidents] is that, as capitalists, they've made the pandemic a lot harder on Americans," Coffman said.

Coffman believes that through a socialist economy, a pandemic wouldn't have been far less deadly. "We could make it so that vaccine companies could not profit off public vaccines and the government would provide enough funding for a full shutdown, including direct payment to people while work and education are halted."

Afghanistan
On Aug. 15, the Taliban captured Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan. In the wake of the takeover, many U.S. citizens were left behind and the U.S. Embassy was evacuated. Mendoza felt strongly that Biden handled the pullout poorly, leading to consequences like Americans being left behind and an aggressive Taliban offensive. "The pullout of Afghanistan was a mistake," Mendoza said. Mendoza expressed disdain that there were Americans 'left abandoned' and without a plan" in Afghanistan. Bittle, however, pointed out the large number of people evacuated. "A lot of war-hungry actors from some of the largest media sources are eager to paint this as a crisis for the ratings, and the extent of it being botched overall has been very exaggerated," Bittle said.

Coffman said the pullout was inevitable. "While a religious extremist, nationalist regime is not the government we want for the Afghan people, an American occupation is almost no better," Coffman said.

Climate change
While on the topic of international affairs, climate change is an issue that défiers borders. According to the U.N., "greenhouse gas concentrations are at their highest levels in years and continue to rise." Both the Democratic and YDSA leaders support the Green New Deal. They both expressed support for creating new jobs in renewable energy so that workers in the fossil fuel industry are not out of work.

It's a complicated topic because there's work in the energy industry, and I don't want them to lose their jobs, so we should provide retraining programs, or alternatively UBI (universal basic income)," Bittle said.

Coffman added that a capitalist society would not be able to support a green future. "A profit motive is always going to make any form of green capitalism fail. You can't have infinite growth on a finite planet," Coffman said.

Both the leaders of the Democratic Party feel strongly that change needs to happen, however, their solutions differ. Bittle said the Mizou College Democrats support reforms such as "requiring body cameras to be on (the body) and turned on at all times, demilitarizing police forces, abolishing private prisons, ending cash bail, and the practice of qualified immunity and reducing funding to local police departments." Coffman, however, thinks that reform is unachievable. "As president (of YDSA), I don't think police reform is possible or really our goal (as an organization)," Coffman said. "Police aren't something you reform, they're something you abolish." Mendoza, in contrast to his YDSA colleague, believes in reforming police departments. "I do think that there is room to reform," Mendoza said. "I don't think every cop is evil or every police officer is bad." He also said that decriminalizing drugs might be an effective step toward police reform. Mendoza also believes in police reform through small, gradual changes, like requiring body cameras, as opposed to defunding. He said that rather than choosing to either love or hate their offenders must be held accountable.

"I'm a very pro-police person; I support them all the way and I'm not believing in (the) defunding the police movement by any means," Mendoza said. "If there are any tangible laws that can be enforced at a local level — that have been proven to be effective — then go right ahead." Political organizations at MU are more than just politics; they are a place where students can find a community. Bittle stressed that Mizou College Democrats is a group of people who enjoy being with each other. "As much as we would love you to get involved in our political activities, we also just want to have you there as a member of our community," Bittle said. "It's open to everybody." Coffman also commented about the plurality of ideas within his organization. "We've the two executive officers of YDSA, but even we have different opinions on issues," Coffman said. "We have a lot of ideological plurality. If you agree with either of us or disagree with either of us, there is probably room for you in YDSA." Mendoza calls on students who feel alone in their beliefs to join his organization.

"If you feel like you can't speak your mind, then I think you should come to an organization that is welcoming of your views, because campuses tend to be more left-leaning," Mendoza said. "If you feel like you're alone, come join us." If you want to reach out to any of these groups, contact them at: @mizzouydsa, @mizzoulionsbda, @mizzoudems and @mizzourepublicans on Instagram, or email mizzouydsa@gmail.com, mizzoulionsbda@gmail.com, mizzoudems@gmail.com and mizzourepublicans@gmail.com.

Edited by Emmet Jameson, ejamieson@themaneater.com
The MU Class of 2024 got a second chance to complete their Tiger Walk on Saturday, Aug. 28, 2021, at the Francis Quadrangle in Columbia, Mo. After speeches by President of Internal Affairs, Cade Koehly, Vice President of Internal Affairs, Emily Smith and Vice Chancellor, Bill Stackman, the students ran through the Columns. Most students complete the Tiger Walk as a whole class before starting their fall semester as freshmen, but due to COVID-19 restrictions last year, the Class of 2024 walked through the Columns in small groups.

“I didn’t know a lot about all of the traditions last year because of COVID-19,” sophomore Maddie Walters said. “I think being able to do everything as a class brings us together.”
Lorde finds her perfect place with the natural world in ‘Solar Power’

The critically acclaimed pop star delivered a meditative and thought-provoking junior album on Aug. 20, over four years after her last release, “Melodrama.”

BY LUCY VALESKI
Reporter

Over four years after her critically acclaimed sophomore album “Melodrama,” Lorde released “Solar Power,” a pared down pop record, on Aug. 20. The highly anticipated album debuted to mixed reviews, scoring a 6.8 out of 10 on Pitchfork. While many listeners found the music boring, the scoring is a reflection of the celebrities they worship. The track fans not to find answers in the phony lives of the celebrities they worship. The track introduces one of the album’s messages about embracing nature and truth rather than fake idols. “The Path” successfully catapults listeners into the world of “Solar Power” in a melodically exciting way. “Now if you’re looking for a saviour, well that’s not me/ You need someone to take your pain for you?/ Well, that’s not me,” Lorde sings. “Let’s hope the sun will show us the path.”

Similarly, “Mood Ring,” the third lead single, satirically looks at how young people use fads and appropriate cultures to connect with their emotions, instead of dealing with them head-on. The track is fun to listen to while walking to class or driving, and provides an interesting metaphor to dissect.

“California” dives deeper into the theme of fame. Lorde sings about wanting to flee from her stardom, and she acknowledges the dream is not real like the clouds in the skies or “desert flowers.” This track employs a tactic found throughout the album; Lorde sings an upbeat melody matched with surprisingly hard-hitting lyrics.

“All that mystery and beauty gleaned from desert flowers and gifted children/ But it got hard to grow up with your cool hand around my neck,” Lorde sings.

“Fallen Fruit,” the fifth track, also uses a repetitive and unsettling melody to deliver an impactful lyric. “And we will walk together/ Psychedelic garlands in our hair/ But how can I love what I know I am gonna lose/ Don’t make me choose,” Lorde sings.

This song feels despairing — lamenting the loss of nature and climate security for a generation, while condemning past generations for exploiting the Earth.

“Leader of a New Regime” is a haunting track about a dystopian future with a climate-wrecked society, and Lorde imagines running away with superficial objects (her designer dress and magazines). The grim view of climate change in both songs makes it an especially memorable motif.

Keeping with the theme of climate change, the upbeat lead single “Solar Power” celebrates nature as Lorde throws out her phone and flaunts about the beach in the music video. The track features stunning backup vocals from Phoebe Bridgers and Clairo.

While many of the beautiful things mentioned throughout the album are tangible, Lorde also explores growing up, including the challenges and beauty of aging. In my favorite track, “Stoned At The Nail Salon,” Lorde gives personal advice about loving life despite its imperfections. However, as the title suggests, she backtracks all her abstract thoughts with “I don’t know” and a melancholic tone. “Stoned At The Nail Salon” effectively strikes emotional chords with difficult lyrics and a beautiful piano track.

Lorde’s iconic “Ribs” discusses growing up with a head start. “Secrets From A Girl (Who’s Seen It All)” shows the artist’s growth from the “Pure Heroin” track by acknowledging the overwhelmingly rapid passage of time and hardships with honesty and experience. The song is repetitive and catchy, with an emotional ostro that made it one of my favorite songs on the record.

“Oceanic Feeling,” the long and meandering conclusion to the album with two alternating choruses, is about Lorde’s connection to the world and people in her life, both past and present. She leaves listeners with the confession that she has not yet reached enlightenment, but continues the journey toward it with the help of the natural world. She has lost the angst and judgement of her teenage debut “Pure Heroin” and the young adult confusion of “Melodrama.” Lorde, the liability, disappeared into the sun four years ago with “Melodrama” to find joy in the pain of solar power.
Before I graduated from high school, I made up my mind that I was going to law school. I pursued a political science degree at the University of Missouri and concentrated on getting good grades. I set goals for myself, and I’d often lie awake at night plotting out how to achieve them. I considered each step that would be necessary to achieve them. I considered each step that would be necessary in the process and identified allies. Sometimes my ambition surprised me. As a freshman I pledged [to] one of the school’s most prestigious sororities. I was the first woman to chair the university’s homecoming gala. I became a football hostess, a job in which you help recruit athletes…. You had to know the difference between a tight end and a linebacker because when you’re meeting with a potential recruit it is important to make him feel welcomed and needed, and knowing about his job as a football player was part of that.
Addison Rae’s new film, ‘He’s All That,’ falls short of spectacular

The film, released to Netflix on Aug. 27, is a trainwreck, and you can’t help but watch.

Addison Rae is TikTok-famous and has amassed over 83 million followers on the platform. Generations Z and Alpha are obsessed with her, and if they’re not, they’ve likely heard about her by the multiplicity of career avenues she has entered into this last year.

With a new makeup line, a possible singing career and of course some dancing talent, it doesn’t come as a surprise that Rae emerges into the film world. But, dare I ask, was it a necessary escapade into the movie industry? I think not.

Rae’s character is updated to fit within the landscape of her generation, but little else is done to evolve the plotline from the original. The film follows the journey of a bet from start to finish. Padgett’s friends dare her — after her celebrity boyfriend cheats on her — to turn the biggest loser at school into prom king by the end of the semester. If she can’t, her friends will deem her a write-off for the rest of her life.

However cliche and cringeworthy the plot sounds, there was promise. Director Mark Waters is known for his escapades throughout the high school film landscape, most notably known for directing the hit 2004 film “Mean Girls.”

Because of this, I suppose I shouldn’t have hoped for too much. “Mean Girls” prided itself on catty women who backstabbed each other to reach the highest pinnacle in life: being known and still being hated.

This movie simply wasn’t great because Rae was cast as the lead.

They do cast Tanner Buchanan as the male lead, who helps hold the film together until the very end. Buchanan plays Cameron Kweller, the “loser” that Padgett tries to turn around by prom. Still, his obvious shoulder-length wig, self-righteous attitude and cliche photography “geek” character trope doesn’t offer much else to the story.

But Buchanan does a decent job at portraying his character, or at least making it somewhat entertaining.

While Buchanan seems to have the outcast loser-boy vibe down, Rae struggles to add substance to her character, and seems a little out of place. It is obvious the film tries to accentuate the concept of popularity in the real world and on social media. However, it is unclear who is teaching this lesson.

Kweller’s insight in the film is, “high school’s just a bunch of scared people pretending to be something they’re not.” And to me, it appears Buchanan is the one preaching to us about hating in on our authenticity.

Yet the film revolves around Rae: a huge influencer in the real world, who struggles to identify living a life without fame and assurance on screen when she is singled out.

By Abby Woloss

Reporters

“He’s All That” is not all that and a bag of chips. While I wasn’t expecting to be blown away by Addison Rae’s acting chops, I was hopeful that the movie wouldn’t completely bore me. It’s the type of borderline-terrible film that you can’t help but watch. Between Rae’s grimacing smiles, a two-minute cameo from Kourtney Kardashian and an ending scene with a galloping horse, I can’t begin to describe my full horror. But, I will try.

Netflix dropped “He’s All That,” a gender-swapped reinvention of the 1999 film “She’s All That” — on Aug. 27. The remake debuts TikTok star Addison Rae into the film world playing Padgett: the female version of Freddie Prinze Jr.’s original character.

Its
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that

Edited by Elise Mulligan, emulligan@themaneater.com

GRAPHIC BY GABRIELLA LACEY

BY ABBY WOLOSS

Edited by Elise Mulligan

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Ten books you can purchase with nonprofit Peace Nook’s book club

The book club gives customers at the Peace Nook the opportunity to buy 10 books from their selection and receive their 11th pick for free. Check out these top 10 titles on Peace Nook’s shelves.

*“The House in the Cerulean Sea” by TJ Klune* Klune’s fantasy novel introduces Linus Backer, a government caseworker who determines the proper care for magical children. His disciplined and precise work lands him the job on a special case with the strangest children he has encountered. The book enlivens its readers in sweet themes of found family, belonging and individuality; however, it never veers too saccharine, as it also tackles the nuances of prejudice.

*“The House in the Cerulean Sea” is an easy and satisfying read with suspense and political allusion.*

*“Beartown” by Fredrick Backman* “Beartown” is a versatile read for fans of most genres. With a complex cast of characters, a claustrophobic setting and a relevant story, Backman’s hockey town drama filled with interpersonal relationships and action should intrigue many readers. The novel focuses on a declining town, the only hope for survival lies on the success of the high school boys hockey team.

*“Beartown” is a versatile read for fans of most genres.*

*“She Said” by Jodi Kantor and Megan Twohey* Fantasy fans looking for a more mature read can follow ex-convict Shadow Moon along after his unexpected early release from prison due to the sudden death of his wife in “American Gods.” On his journey home, Shadow meets Mr. Wednesday and agrees to work for him after realizing his life back home will never be the same. Little does Shadow know, he is about to be introduced to a world of war between old and new gods. Though at times a challenging read, Gaiman encourages readers to reflect on modern America in a very imaginative manner.

*Fantasy fans looking for a more mature read can follow ex-convict Shadow Moon along after his unexpected early release from prison due to the sudden death of his wife in “American Gods.”*
Money can’t buy old friendships

BY MAVIS CHAN
Columnist

A friendship on the rocks can teach quite a few things about the effects of rising socioeconomic inequality in society.

Shortly before returning to campus for my junior year, I had dinner with a few old friends from high school. Some I hadn’t talked to since I started college. Unfortunately, some friendships, like ancient manuscripts in a museum, crumble the moment one tries picking them up again. That was the case with my friend, P.

In my memory, P. was down to earth, despite coming from a privileged background. She lives in one of the most wealthy neighborhoods in Hong Kong, and spends her summer vacations in Germany and Austria, visiting palaces and seaside resort towns. However, she never talked about her wealth or possessions in front of us. In my mind, she wasn’t the type that cared about money or status.

Over dinner, we talked about the things we looked for in a partner. I said I wanted to find someone who had had different life experiences than mine, someone interesting I can learn from. But before I even finished speaking, P. jumped in and asked me what I would do if that person’s family wouldn’t accept someone from such a different background. She quickly added that she wasn’t talking about race or ethnicity, but more about social status.

I was startled. Then, I remembered she had said earlier that a number of her college classmates wouldn’t even date people outside their major. She is studying medicine, and knows perfectly well how much doctors make. On the other hand, everyone at that table knew the likely income and job security of a journalist.

As the conversation continued, I couldn’t get that brief exchange out of my mind. Economic inequality has been increasing in recent decades in many places all over the world. In the U.S., the top 10% of earners had incomes 22.6 times more than the bottom 10% of earners in 2018, according to data from Pew Research Center. The U.N.’s World Social Report 2020 showed that income inequality was rising in most high-income countries, and countries like China and India that are some of the most populated in the world.

In Hong Kong, where I come from, the contrast is stark: In 2018, it had the fourth largest number of high-net-worth individuals (people holding financial assets over $1 million) among all the cities in the world; however, there are also 2.4 million people living under the poverty line (pro-government cash intervention in 2019).

My conversation with P. showed that the wealth gap isn’t just an economic phenomenon, it destroys social cohesion as well. The Victorian British Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli famously pointed out the “two nations” between the rich and the poor where “there is no intercourse and no sympathy; who are as ignorant of each other’s habits, thoughts, and feelings, as if they were dwellers in different zones, or inhabitants of different planets.”

As the wealth gap widens, the two groups of people will continue to drift further away from each other. We will end up living in our own socioeconomic bubbles, stratified into classes that no longer recognize one another.

A nation is, as the political scientist Benedict Anderson put it, an “imagination community.” People are more likely to care for others in the community when they hold similar interests and share a common identity. But with the rich and everybody else growing further apart — living in different neighborhoods, working in different occupations, or in P.’s case, not even dating each other — the lived experiences of these groups will become more and more alien to each other. Even though they nominally live in the same country, in reality their lives are becoming mutually incomprehensible.

We are already seeing that phenomenon. After the 2016 presidential election, half of the country derided the other half as liberal, metropolitan elites, while the other half seemed uncomprehending of what the “left-behind” rural working class was thinking. The same atmosphere of recrimination and blame could be seen in the aftermath of Brexit. The declining support for liberal democracy all around the world in recent years may point to many people’s disillusionment with the inability of this political system to join the “two nations” together.

The ideal “out of many, one” is a nation that can live in the same country, in the same house, and have the same hairstyle as their neighbors. As the wealth gap widens, the ideal “out of many, one” is one I know nothing about. The same atmosphere of recrimination and blame could be seen in the aftermath of Brexit. The declining support for liberal democracy all around the world in recent years may point to many people’s disillusionment with the inability of this political system to join the “two nations” together. The ideal “out of many, one” is one I know nothing about.

The conclusion has Davidson say, “but now I’m trying to make a smarter choice,” before wincing in pain as the dermatologist continues to remove his tattoos, stating, “I’m still trying to figure out where to go.” Davidson’s comparison of his tattoos to serious foolish decisions further demonizes tattoos in a culture where they are already seen as taboo. He and Smartwater instigate that getting a tattoo is equivalent to causing a scene within a restaurant or a fashion show.

I don’t subscribe to the notion that tattoos lead to inevitable regret. When I show people mine, many compliment them, but sometimes a few ask the followup question: Aren’t you worried about getting a job?

“Questionable choices” deliberately work into a workers’ uniform.

To answer in short: no, I’m not. I believe that tattoos have little to do with one’s personal identity and no sympathy; who are as ignorant of each other’s habits, thoughts, and feelings, as if they were dwellers in different zones, or inhabitants of different planets.”

A study conducted by Michael J. Tews and Kathleen Stafford, both professors specializing in either hospitality services or human sciences, concluded that employees with a higher number of tattoos or darker–shaded tattoos were treated unfairly. These employees reported higher rates of discrimination in the workplace, and less respect as well as positive feedback from supervisors when compared to other non-tattooed employees.

As the reaction to tattoos within the workplace is a key factor as to why many people refuse to get a. A government report focused on the history of tattoos in corrections states that outlaws and criminals have historically used tattoos to “document their crimes, sentence-
Complexity in reporting is dying because of simplified journalism

BY BOBBY LEE
Columnist

As we see mass media organizations flounder to adequately describe the situation in Afghanistan, we must take a look at why journalists fail to fully report on complex situations.

As I spent the day unpacking after moving into MU, I scrolled through Twitter to watch the breaking news coverage of Afghanistan’s demise. That Sunday, Aug. 15, was the day Kabul was overrun by the Taliban after years of fighting. I saw Charlie Kirk, radio host and conservative activist, state that the fall of Afghanistan could’ve been stopped if the generals weren’t so focused on “white rage,” following the Jan. 6 Capitol riot.

While this tweet made my blood boil, the ones that hurt worse were from bigger media institutions blaming a single person, President Joe Biden, for a conflict that has thousands to blame. This lousy journalism ignores crucial, extenuating events that led up to Afghanistan’s demise. However, this problem is not new. National media organizations and institutions have repeatedly failed to explain the complexity of international events. Strict deadlines and favoring quantity over quality have led to sloppier, lazier and partisan media use simplified journalism that delves into complexity without sensationalism. One of the only things that business executives will respond to is revenue. By not interacting with media that values quality and trust, the public can push these institutions toward better practices. Additionally, pushing for former journalists in executive positions will start to change the mindset from the top-down. As for journalists, unionizing in the industry can help protect their jobs and give them the freedom to tell better stories free of clickbait and misconstrued coverage.

There is no silver bullet for fixing this culture, but with both sides working together, the industry will eventually become better and redeem its trust in the public’s eyes.

Coverage in Afghanistan was extremely oversimplified, but this issue is not an outlier. We see this parastic trend continue with the coverage in the Capitol riot. Sensational reporting that tied the entire event back to American politics. The public deserves better coverage of events, and they deserve the truth while. Yet, while the truth may never sell as well, it is essential for having a more informed public.

The American public deserves this content. Media organizations were compelled to aim for sensationalism instead of the antithesis of the original goal. Journalists should strive. Editors and business executives running these institutions put even tighter deadlines on journalists to fully transition to a market built on quantity. The American people deserve the whole truth. While it will be hard to top a system that has thrived for three decades, journalism needs to change. Even though the pursuit of a more informed community through constant news is a fantastic idea, journalists need the ability to perform long-term journalism and focus on complexity. The public and journalistic community can, and must push for fixing trust in the industry. For starters, the eyes and ears of the public can be a voice used to change the system. Watch, read and support quality journalism that tells stories that delve into complexity without sensationalism. One of the only things that business executives will respond to is revenue. By not interacting with media that values quality and trust, the public can push these institutions toward better practices. Additionally, pushing for former journalists in executive positions will start to change the mindset from the top-down. As for journalists, unionizing in the industry can help protect their jobs and give them the freedom to tell better stories free of clickbait and misconstrued coverage.

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Edited by Sarah Rubinstein, srubinstein@themaneater.com

beliefs, though this trend slowed near the 1880s as criminals chose not to give police officers an easier time identifying suspects. Tattoos marked who was a criminal, but this was in the late 1800s, not in the 21st century.

Even with this being the case, Smartwater’s advertising perpetuates this stigma. It claims that those with tattoos made a mistake. “It’s the easier choice” to get them removed — though the advertisement fails to mention the cost of laser tattoo removal.

I spoke to a representative of Cayce Medical Spa, off of Market Dr. in Columbia to ask them about the price of having a tattoo laser removed. “They told me that each session is a minimum of $300, but no more than $200. The average number of sessions (varying based on age, location and size of the tattoo) is 10 sessions, with each occurring six to 12 weeks apart. If you take the average between these numbers, you’re looking at $1,500 and 50 weeks to get your tattoo removed.

Compared to the price of getting a tattoo, the difference is astronomical. I called Iron Tiger Tattoo, located in downtown Columbia, and learned that the minimum of $50 for each tattoo and an hourly rate of $150. Not only is laser tattoo removal inaccessible to many due to its high costs in both money and time, but, when the two price points are compared, and someone could get multiple tattoos for the price of removing one, they’re almost encouraged to get more.

People get tattoos for various reasons. They get them to represent the people they love, their religious beliefs, key moments in their lives, displays of their profession, or, for some, no reason at all. And this is completely their adult decision. People’s ability, intelligence, drive or character shouldn’t be diminished as a result of putting artwork on their body.

For this reason, I don’t think anyone should be getting “smart with smartwater,” but should be getting smart by being aware of the negative stigmas surrounding tattoos instead of reinforcing them.

Edited by Sarah Rubinstein, srubinstein@themaneater.com

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The Chase Chronicles, Part 1: Chase Van Dyk’s love of baseball withstood the turbulence of his freshman year

A former Top-500 prospect, junior left-handed pitcher Chase Van Dyk couldn’t pitch in the Tigers’ 2021 season, but he brings talent and hunger for baseball to Columbia.

BY MASON ARNESON
Assistant Sports Editor

Growing up, all Chase Van Dyk wanted to do was play baseball. As soon as Van Dyk had a pet, he yearned to be in the backyard hitting or tossing with his dad, Brett Van Dyk. As Brett Van Dyk coached his son through Little League, he continuously preached the importance of fun in baseball. “I told him, ‘keep playing while you’re having fun,’” Brett Van Dyk said. “If it’s not fun, then it’s something to consider not doing anymore.”

Even when Chase Van Dyk wasn’t on the diamond, baseball served as the sun he orbited around. Whether he sat through baseball cards after school, played Backyard Baseball at home and on road trips or watched games on TV, Chase Van Dyk wanted to do it all. “I’d rather play a game for my job than sit at a desk or do math or any other sort of activity,” Chase Van Dyk said. “It was always something to do and something I enjoyed, so I think a passion started at a young age and never really died.”

A simple childhood dream has brought him to three colleges in three years, left him in a burning car and forced him into months of arduous rehab. But in Chase Van Dyk’s estimation, the chance to suit up for Missouri’s baseball team and pitch at the Division I level next spring made that journey worthwhile. “It’s just a sacred game that has a lot of meaning and history, and it’s just a privilege to be a part of that,” Chase Van Dyk said.

Scouts and coaches knew that Chase Van Dyk could play at the Division I level years before he committed to the Tigers. The Frisco, Texas, southpaw joined a select team when he turned 11, and immediately flourished. Chase Van Dyk’s skills progressed to the point of him finishing freshman year of high school on the varsity roster with a fastball that could break 90 mph. Scouts from SEC and Big 12 schools took notice that summer, but Chase Van Dyk knew right off the bat he wanted to play at Oklahoma. As a sophomore, two years before he could officially sign with a college, Chase Van Dyk committed to the Sooners.

“So Oklahoma? Because of the relationship he built with head coach Skip Johnson and the short drive for his parents from Frisco up to Norman, Oklahoma,” Brett Van Dyk said. Indeed, Chase Van Dyk initially saw a as “a perfect formula for success” but flaws. First, he needed to wait for playing time. Johnson’s pitching staff didn’t have many innings to spare, so the available options were limited between innings or a redshirt year.

Chase Van Dyk didn’t like either of those options. “You don’t want to go to a four-year school and sit on the bench,” said Jake Bacik Sr., Chase Van Dyk’s high school pitching coach and a former MLB pitcher. “You can’t practice pitching in a game unless you pitch in a game.”

In the final week of his first semester at Oklahoma, Chase decided to continue his baseball career at the junior college level, something that he and his parents wished they had evaluated sooner. “If I could have done it again, I probably wouldn’t have let him commit so early,” Lara Van Dyk, Chase’s mom, said.

There’s not much that’s special about Denison, Texas. The town inhabited by 25,500 people isn’t a bustling hub of commerce by any stretch of the imagination. There’s little debate when Chase Van Dyk’s primary forms of entertainment were watching ducks at the Hagerman National Wildlife Refuge and seineing on gigantic oil rigs. The town 75 miles north of Dallas is interesting to the extent that it is the birthplace of former president Dwight Eisenhower and Chesley “Sully” Sullenberger, the pilot who landed a plane in the Hudson River. But aside from fun facts, there isn’t much flair for the town that sits less than five miles away from the Oklahoma border.

The tiny Texas town contains Grayson College, the perfect place for Chase Van Dyk to improve on the diamond — a no-frills, all-baseball town that won three National Junior College Athletic Association Baseball World Series titles since 1999. “It’s not impressive by any means,” Chase Van Dyk said. “But there’s some sort of magic there that is kind of unexplainable as far as the athletic side.”

The magic at Grayson stemmed from the baseball-centric atmosphere of the junior college level that Chase Van Dyk craved. Alongside the method of coach Dusty Hart, who understands that growing up a baseball town that won three national titles since 1999. “The Chase Chronicles” is a three-part story. Part Two will arrive soon.*

*Edited by Kyle Pinnell, kpinnell@themaneater.com

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A former Top-500 prospect, junior left-handed pitcher Chase Van Dyk couldn’t pitch in the Tigers’ 2021 season, but he brings talent and hunger for baseball to Columbia.
When Missouri football coach Eli Drinkwitz puts out the bat signal, Tigers fans pay attention.

In this context, the bat signal is a simple tweet without text. An animation of Faurot Field’s south end zone doors opening to a spotlight shining over the rock “M.” What often comes next is an exciting recruitment or transfer announcement.

In December, the tweet preceded true freshman wide receiver Dominic Lovett’s announcement of his flip from Arizona State to Missouri. Not even a month later, the same tweet went out shortly before reports surfaced that redshirt freshman receiver Mookie Cooper traded in Ohio State’s scarlet and gray for Missouri’s black and gold.

The sudden, unexpected arrival of Cooper and Lovett kicked off an offseason full of both excitement and hypotheticals. Will the receiving corps be the Tigers’ offensive strength? How will redshirt sophomore quarterback Connor Bazelak perform in his first full season as a starter? How will redshirt sophomore quarterback Steve Wilks perform in his first full season as a starter? Can new defensive coordinator Steve Wilks adjust quickly enough to the college game? What exactly is the team’s ceiling?

Those questions are just a few of many Missouri has to answer in the coming months. Now, with the home opener against Central Michigan, the Tigers finally turn their full attention to the field and play football.

“Whether it’s extra 6 a.m. workouts, spring football or Saturdays throughout the summer, the guys have done a tremendous job of everything we’ve asked them to do to be at this moment,” Drinkwitz said. “We’re excited about what this means for us and our program going into year two.”

Much of that excitement comes from the slow return to normality, at least in college football terms. That means fans being allowed to fill 62,621-seat Faurot Field, non-conference matchups and even the return of home game day traditions. For many players, the Sept. 4 game also marked their first time playing in front of what should be a relatively full stadium. Bazelak made his first start under center in that environment. Sophomore cornerback Ennis Rakestraw Jr. and sophomore kicker Harrison Mevis found themselves in the same situation.

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One player who made his first significant start at Faurot Field is junior safety Martez Manuel. Born and raised in Columbia, he knows what the atmosphere is like, mostly from the sidelines and the stands as a fan. Now one of Missouri’s three permanent captains in his third season, Manuel is expected to play an even more significant role on the defensive side of the ball. Manuel and many of his teammates could hardly contain their excitement in the week leading up to the game.

“I know this year, when we run out there and see all the fans, it’s going to be awesome,” Manuel said.

With this enthusiasm also comes the possibility of unknown challenges. The Chippewas are the Tigers’ first non-conference foe since they beat Troy 42-10 on Oct. 5, 2019. Drinkwitz and his players will soon learn how the team responds to adversity.

“We haven’t been tested in the fire yet,” Drinkwitz said. “We haven’t had the adversity of being down or giving up points on a scoreboard. Just like anything else, until you really do it, you’re not going to be quite sure what the deficiencies are and what has to be fixed.”

Now fans will see what the Tigers are capable of on the field in Drinkwitz’s second season at the helm. And, after an offseason full of exciting additions and weeks of excruciating practices in the summer heat, the Sept. 4 game against Central Michigan is where the real work begins.

“I think everybody missed the game day excitement with fans and the atmosphere,” Wilks said. “I’ve heard nothing but great things about SEC football. Just to get back on the sidelines and have fans back at Faurot will be exciting for us. I can’t wait.”

Edited by Mason Arnason, marnason@themaneater.com

A crowd of MU students and fans cheers in the stands during a football game against Central Michigan University on Saturday, Sept. 4, 2021, at Faurot Field in Columbia, Mo.

Go time: Missouri football hopes to turn offseason excitement into regular season success to begin 2021

The Tigers’ real work begins as they kick off their 2021 season against Central Michigan.

BY KYLE PINNELL
Sports Editor

When Missouri football coach Eli Drinkwitz puts out the bat signal, Tigers fans pay attention. In this context, the bat signal is a simple tweet without text. An animation of Faurot Field’s south end zone doors opening to a spotlight shining over the rock “M.” What often comes next is an exciting recruitment or transfer announcement.

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Edited by Mason Arnason, marnason@themaneater.com

A crowd of MU students and fans cheers in the stands during a football game against Central Michigan University on Saturday, Sept. 4, 2021, at Faurot Field in Columbia, Mo.
The Maneater’s September Horoscope

BY PRAJUKTA GHOSH AND EVER COLE
Writers

ARIES (MARCH 21-APRIL 19)

The month of September ushers in new experiences and relationships for you, busy Aries. You may find yourself mingling with individuals and striking special connections; hang on to these people, as they may help you down the road. You will start to see your passion and desires manifest before you, including fascinating objects and personal achievements. While all of this will be exciting, make sure to keep an eye on your mental and physical well-being too.

TAURUS (APRIL 20-MAY 20)

This is your time to shine! Your confidence is like a well-oiled machine, and you can take advantage when it comes to getting what you want. However, do not fall into the habit of waiting for good things to come to you. You must take charge and fight for your desires! Don’t worry, the universe is on your side.

GEMINI (MAY 21-JUNE 20)

Stop and smell the roses this month, even if they may have thorns. Although the start of the month could be rocky for you, things will level out soon. September is the time to nurture yourself, your relationships and your future. Think “glass half full” and you will get by just fine.

CANCER (JUNE 21-JULY 22)

Your loved ones have your back, Cancer, whether that be in your creative journey or overall success. Don’t forget to thank them for their support! These relationships have value in your life, so treat them with care. Put that brain to use in September to excel in your classes and organizations — you won’t regret it.

LEO (JULY 23-AUG. 22)

Connection is in the air, Leo. This month will make way for new, lasting relationships or strengthen existing ones. You just might meet your soulmate! The stars know that 2021 may not have been the kindest for you thus far, but don’t fret — your horizon will brighten soon. Creative juices are flowing and doors will open left and right for you, making you try new things and start adventures. Take this as a sign to travel somewhere new or pick up an interesting hobby.

VIRGO (AUG. 23-SEPT. 22)

All attention is on you this month — happy birthday! You will feel as confident as ever this September. Use this time of celebration to put yourself out there: dance on the Quad, speak up in class and reach for the stars. The time of your moon in Virgo is the universe telling you “GO!” Don’t hold back, and certainly don’t dwell on limitations.

LIBRA (SEPT. 23-OCT. 22)

You will find yourself loving September, Libra! As Jupiter covers you with passion, productivity and love, you might find love might find their better halves and sink into the waves of love more intensely than ever. It’s a great time to relax and focus on pleasure, affection, charm and excitement.

SCORPIO (OCT. 22-NOV. 21)

This month will be engulfed with joy for you, Scorpio. You will be transported to a zone that will encompass you with light and make you feel right at home. Your current relationships with close ones will continue to thrive. It is a great time to relax and rejuvenate, and doing so will also make love more magical around you.

SAGITTARIUS (NOV. 22-DEC. 21)

This is going to be a major month for you, Sagittarius. You will be moving ahead and find yourself wanting to explore. You might find yourself feeling curious about the world and will do anything under your control to explore it. It is a great time for writers, social media influencers and public speakers to persistently succeed in their areas of expertise.

CAPRICORN (DEC. 22-JAN. 19)

A month with sweetness in the atmosphere is right in front of you, Capricorn. The universe is all set to bestow gold upon you this year. Start making plans, since new opportunities are on their way. Focus on spreading your horizons in terms of people who you value in life. An amazing social life will be buzzing for you this month.

AQUARIUS (JAN. 20-FEB. 18)

September has planned plenty of goodies in store for you. More luck and lots of opportunities will be seeping their way through to shower joy and happiness on you. Keep an eye on your expenses, since there is a high probability you could be spending more than saving. Awards and recognition will also be boarding the venture. You might just meet your soulmate.

PISCES (FEB. 19-MARCH 20)

An incredible turning point has arrived this month for you, Pisces. You will feel the urge to heal and develop a spirit booster during this time of your life. If you were looking for the right time to let go of all your baggage, now is the time to do so.

Edited by Abby Stetina, astetina@themaneater.com

The Aviary

BY NAOMI KLEIN
Writers

Find the next clue to the mystery on The Maneater website next week!

Lightning streaked across the sky as five unsuspecting guests waited outside of Alouette Aviary, the mansion of the eccentric Avery Alouette, a professor in psychological studies. Alouette waited for them inside, a wide grin on their face.

“I welcome you all to The Supper!” they said, their grin only widening as the guests stepped inside the lavish parlor. “I do hope you enjoy tonight’s dinner. Please, sit down and speak with one another. Introduce yourselves.” They all obliged and Alouette left the room as quickly as they entered. Brown, black and white, red, blue and green masks sat around the circular table as their meals appeared before them, and they looked around amongst themselves.

“The Supper ... sounds delightful!” the woman in the brown mask mused, taking a few sips from her soup.

The man in the black and white mask knocked the bowl from her hands and it clattered to the ground. “Careful, my dear. I don’t see why the host would go out of their way to poison us. They seem nice enough.”

“I wouldn’t trust a strange invitation like the one I received in the mail this morning. Let alone one with masks provided,” said the woman in the green mask, pushing her soup away from herself. “You’re all paranoid,” said the man in blue with a sigh, though he didn’t mean to move to eat. “Nothing’s going to happen; this is a party! Parties are enjoyable!”

As he spoke, the lights flickered for a moment, then shut off completely. The lights turned on again. A stream of deep crimson leaked from the kitchen, seeping into the carpet.

To be continued...
Fun under 21

BY TAYLOR DRIVER-FLORES
Fun and Games Creator

Fun activities to explore in Columbia — no ID required!

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KEY:
- Cat Cafe
- Farmers market
- Roots n' Blues
- The Blue Note
- Pizza Tree
- Forum 8
- Ragtag
- Tailgate
- True/False
- Devil's Icebox
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