

## Dining Changes Cause Concern Among Students

BY JOSHUA NANGLE

Students at Wheaton have felt a mix of concern and discontent with the changes that the college has made to the meal plans. Some students have already run out of their Lyons Bucks, and many students not on the unlimited plan feel they do not have enough meal swipes to use each week.

Wheaton College announced on June 12, 2023 that changes had been made to the meal plans available to students. The first option was for students to opt into the unlimited plan, which costs \$3600 per semester and allows students to use one meal swipe at either Hood, Diana Davis, or Emerson per meal period, as well as any number of meal swipes at Chase.

Yet many sophomores and upperclassmen opted to select one of the other two meal plans, given the fact they are less expensive and provide students with more Lyons Bucks. One of the plans allows fourteen meal swipes per week, while the third plan (which is reserved for students living in theme houses) receives ten per week. Any unspent meal swipes are lost at the end of the week.

An added challenge to students not on the unlimited meal plan is

that Chase has returned to making take out meals cost students an additional meal swipe. Therefore, any students who hoped to be able to eat at Chase and take food with them are unable to do so without paying extra.

Wheaton College's Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students Darnell Parker explained that the changes made to the meal plans are a way to make sure students do not run out of meal swipes at the end of the semester.

"To give some background, when I first arrived here we had students saying they had food insecurity. [Students received] all [their] meals up front, students were not keeping track of the meals, then you ran into food insecurity," said Parker.

These plans encourage students to budget their meal swipes so they will not run out completely by the end of the semester. Yet, some students still feel that if they were allowed to let unused meal swipes carry over week to week that they would be better off.

Parker also said that the meal plans offered have been budgeted so that students will have enough meal swipes to last the semester. Previous plans at



Photo by Joshua Nangles

For students not on the unlimited plan, budgeting their Lyons Bucks has taken on greater importance.

Wheaton did not permit students to let their unused swipes carry over either.

"You have fourteen meals unlimited for an entire week, they reset again the following week. The old block plans did not do that so you have food options from the start of the semester to finals because you will not run out. When evaluating the plans, we realized students received more meals during the semester than they would on the block plan."

This does not apply to Lyons Bucks, which students are able to spend as they choose. Yet many students feel the cost of meals that are spent with Lyons Bucks are too high, and that these prices are eating into their supply. While the meals can be expensive, Parker said that Wheaton accounted for inflation when considering the meal plans, and that meal swipes are intended to be the main way for students to get food on campus.

**"I want to make it vehemently clear to students that we've seen an increase in food prices. We did not pass that onto you. We ate it," said Parker.**

Some students are still unhappy with these changes. However, Parker says that these new policies were made with input from those outside of the administration.

"When we did this, we spoke to students, we spoke to parents, we talked to other colleges and universities about their meal plan. We looked at this from an equity minded approach. We asked who was disadvantaged by this plan; it was very hard to tell who was," said Parker.

## Alana Burgess' commitment acts as the framework for one of Wheaton's newest sports

BY CADEN CHARPENTIER

New is merely a synonym for exciting.

With the knowledge of a pool already a central part of campus, Wheaton Athletics expanded into a completely new aquatics sport, Water Polo. Even with small numbers on both the men's and women's sides at the moment, the team is led by a coach who is not afraid of the unknown.

Just over a year ago, Alana Burgess was announced as the new Men's and Women's head Water Polo coach. Since taking the job, the drive to build something special has been at the forefront of the former San Diego State University standout's mind.

She brings with her a wealth of experience on both sides of the country. On the East Coast, Burgess was a part of the Brown University coaching staff and acted as the leader of the St. Francis College (NY) program for a year prior to moving to Rhode Island. "When the Wheaton position opened up, it seemed like a

challenge," Burgess said, "It's a brand new program, and also Division III which was not my background—not that it is a huge difference, but there are a lot of new rules. It's all about recruiting with this area not being as big into the sport as the West Coast. It just seemed like that next natural step on my resume."

Jump-starting a varsity sport from the ground up is not a task that everyone has the capability of taking on. There are many loopholes that an individual has to be willing to encounter. Since taking the job, there has been no shortage of challenges for the SDSU alum. As the trailblazer, she has to do the things that ordinary collegiate coaches don't have to worry about. Not only was recruiting athletes something she did all year last year, but Burgess built water polo goals from scratch with the help of an instruction manual.

"I had never done that (built goals) before in my life," Burgess expressed. "Most people I knew that I called had not done that before either. The instruc-

tions were similar to "IKEA" instructions with figures. They have stayed together thus far."

She knew what she was signing up for. It's not going to be 70 and sunny every day. The West Coast native has been able to embrace the obstacles and use them as an opportunity to learn.

Earlier this month, the men's team announced some news that Burgess had been working toward since Day 1. Beginning in 2024, the men will be competing in one of the most competitive water polo conferences in the country, the Mountain Pacific Sports Federation (MPSF).

Some of the teams within the conference include Stanford University, the University of California at Berkeley, the University of Southern California, and the University of California Los Angeles. The former San Jose State University assistant is no stranger to the teams she will potentially encounter soon. The first leader in Wheaton Water Polo history competed in it as a player for four years, and later as a coach.

Burgess spoke on the Lyons joining the MPSF, stating, "That was my goal going into it. I don't think I even knew it was a possibility before I even stepped

foot on Wheaton."

She continued, "It is primarily the big dogs in that league. Even though we will be on the East Coast version, when we cross over, you still get to say you played a top Division I-ranked team. That's a huge thing for a Division III school to say. It's exciting because we will have the opportunity to play the best of the best in addition to having that main brand visibility when it comes to recruiting."

It's only been a little more than a year, but you can see the progression of this new sport in Norton. Competitive matches for the Lyons are few and far between due to numbers, but that will soon change. The work ethic of all the current players, Burgess herself, and assistant GT Ladd is just one of the reasons why. Even with this sport in its infancy stage, there are clear-cut objectives for what this program aims to achieve.

"The four-year plan for us on both sides is to go to our Conference Championship game, and I think that is 100% possible," Burgess said, "I don't think that is a crazy goal at all. The goal for the next few years is to develop a good culture, but we also want to get some wins."



## The College Bubble: Befriend or Break?

BY MADISON MORIN  
CONTINUED FROM  
PREVIOUS ISSUE

### Growing up in Higher Education

I am no stranger to collegiate life. I grew up bouncing around the civic engagement offices at Colby College where my mother worked. After school, I would do homework on campus and during those afternoons I spent an unusual amount of time with college students and became familiar with their concerns. One day, I was stumped by my algebra homework, so badly that even Khan Academy couldn't save me. A math major named Will happened to be in my mom's office. I asked Will for help with my homework, and he seemed to have a genuine urge to assist me. He got comfortable in the chair, bringing out a pen and paper which indicated to me that he wasn't going to just help me with one problem then leave. He seemed ready to go through the entire assignment, even if it took a while.

Will desperately wanted to help me, but after an hour I had gotten nowhere. He drew diagrams that I had never seen before, and spoke with long-running sentences using words that I didn't even know could pertain to math. I tried my best to indulge in his teaching style, but it was too abstract. Despite his honest attempt, Will could not come down to my level, and it was at this moment that I questioned my current understanding of what it meant to be smart. I didn't doubt that Will understood the material. He truly was one of those rare math geniuses, but he simply could not put the material that he knew so well in feasible terms for a beginner. Standing in front of me was a future data engineer who couldn't explain basic algebra to an 8th grader.

His heart was in the right place, but he couldn't speak my language and I applaud Will for taking an hour out of his Tues-

day to help a strange middle schooler with homework. I felt oddly smart after this interaction, not in the Matt Damon Good Will Hunting way, but in that, I had something that Will did not. When I eventually learned the Algebra theory, I could explain it and I could curate different ways of explaining it to different people. I realized I somehow had something that a math genius did not, and therefore developed a multi-faceted understanding of liberal arts education at a young age. It wasn't a negative understanding, I just knew that there was a wall, a barrier that some people fall into, and that stepping onto the campus of Colby College was like stepping into a different world.

Before Will, I didn't see how conflict could arise from the existence of this "world". For a while, Colby was the place where I could escape the misery that is middle school and talk to cool older girls who turned me onto underground music and discussed worldly issues with me.

It wasn't until my interaction with Will, that I actually understood the presence of this so-called "bubble" and why it was so controversial. Our communication barrier around the topic of math wasn't just like talking to a wall, it was also somewhat chaotic. I could see how our miscommunication loop could be problematic in the context of a more serious issue.

Keep in mind though, that Will is just one example. A lot of the young women who hung out in the civic engagement offices at Colby who became mentors or friends to me were part of a movement called "Break the Bubble", an effort to improve relationships between greater Waterville, Maine, and Colby College.

It may sound casual, but Colby students saying the word "bubble" and admitting it existed was a big deal at the time. Waterville, Maine, Colby's residing town, has always been a blue-collar community, howev-

er, in the 90s and 2000s several mills in the area shut down, causing some economic instability. Waterville's poverty rate is 20.2% and 72% of students in the school district receive free or reduced lunch. Colby, similar to many liberal arts colleges, attracts students from a socio-economic class starkly different from the majority of Waterville. "The students who come here, it's not like we are choosing to come to a town that has such a clear socio-economic divide, but when we get there it is our responsibility to acknowledge that is what's happening." She continued "Just by me having a higher education and having access to a higher education, I am more privileged, even if we [students and Waterville] came from the same socio-economic background." said Stephanie Rivera, Colby College graduate '18.

Town and college open dialogues were held as part of the movement with students and faculty. The effort to recognize not just the class differences, but also the higher education disparity was considered in the same light as social-justice issues. In recent years, however, Colby's administration has taken this initiative to improve the appeal of their residing town with an aim of helping the Waterville community, a movement that has caused controversy among the town and the college. In February of 2020, the New York Times released an article titled "Colleges Invest So 'What's the Town Like?' Gets an Upbeat Answer" Featuring Colby's new initiative to "improve off-campus amenities by helping to revitalize downtowns."

This plan includes off-campus student housing, a new hotel, and the revitalization of Waterville's downtown arts scene, including a new movie theater and arts center implemented with the intent of improving civic engagement.

Michel Cady, vice president of marketing for Charlestowne Hotels, a firm that specializes in managing university hotels

says for the New York Times, "The town needs to be as vibrant and culturally interesting as the campus."

Not all students, however, agree with this approach, "I think there were two big ideas. When the students heard 'get more involved with Waterville' we thought of it as revitalizing Waterville from their roots" she continued, "Of course, now we have seen how it's played out and the students are not always happy with what's happening- it is seen as a form of gentrification. We are putting in a hotel that they [residents] can't afford to stay in... how are we helping them?" said Rivera.

Rivera admits that the implementation of a downtown dorm allowed her to interact and listen to the people of Waterville, however, she finds the "Art's" theme of the revitalization questionable, "There wasn't a huge conversation with Waterville regarding what they needed and what Colby can provide but Waterville wasn't in a position to say no, however, because any help is better than no help" she said.

Through my observations at Colby, I have found that when a college breaks the bubble, it can be highly beneficial, but the key term here is: approach matters. The line between inability and unwillingness to engage in the world outside of academia is thin from the outside of the bubble.

Many Colby students were ready to face the higher-education divide, but when the school took a hold of the issue, the language just didn't translate. When people live in literal bubbles for so long, they often overlook communication barriers. Like Colby, and many other liberal arts colleges, Wheaton has faced such barriers in the past. Some disputes go so far back in time that the technicalities are not remembered, but the feelings linger.

Stay tuned for the next column.

## The Wheaton Wire crossword answers from previous puzzle

### Across:

1. Temple of whom? → Indiana Jones
3. Mason made a jar → Bell
5. New Dorito Flavor → BBQ
7. Feminist icon of 2023 → Barbie
9. Where you can stream Wheaton's best tunes → WCCS
11. Wheaton's Summer Scandal Story → Art Haus
13. THE Blind King of the 13th Century BCE → Oedipus
15. "Better" Dunkin → Starbucks
17. Vacation land! → Maine
19. Close to a Moose who made a mistake → Silly Goose
21. Not Tasty's but still Tasty → Bagels and Cream
23. The if ykyk fight club → Bottoms
25. A "childhood" summer drink → CapriSun
27. A bisexual utensil → Spork
29. The category of this crossword → Random

### Down:

2. Some great fabric scissors → Gingher
4. #2 but Irish → Ginger
6. A herb to make a sleepytime tea → Lavender
8. New OnCourse → Canvas
10. \*2 Minute Warning\* → BeReal
12. Only Surf, No Turf → Lobster
14. A relationship that's not a relationship, but we do relationship things... wait now I'm confused → Situationship
16. Britney Spears if she was a possessive partner → Toxic
18. Wheaton's finest NASA Scientist → Collins
20. What this crossword wishes it was → NY Times
22. An essential (but optional) school supply → Backpack
24. She's a Songbird, he's a \_\_\_\_\_ → Snake
26. Norman F\*cking Rockwell → Lana Del Ray (I'm so sorry to everyone for spelling this Queen's name incorrectly)
28. Goodreads for movies → Letterboxd
30. New meal plan → Weekly

# *Saw X* Review: Too little and too late

BY CASEY DRURY  
Letterboxd: CaseyDrury04

Amongst film discourse, it's somewhat of a running gag that successful, gory, low budget horror movies are nearly always turned into massive cash cow franchises. This is regardless of how convoluted and unnecessarily stretched out their stories become. At the end of the day, if you throw the name Halloween, Friday the 13th, or A Nightmare on Elm Street into theaters, their respective studios will make a boatload of money. And when it comes to the golden goose of horror, Saw most certainly makes that list. Despite the original film only being 18 years old, the franchise as a whole has grossed more than a billion dollars overall. This new film shows no sign of changing that, as it has already grossed 25 million dollars just a few weeks after releasing. What has seemingly changed with this new sequel, stirring up lots of interesting conversation, is the actual quality of the films. Saw X currently sits at an 82% on Rotten Tomatoes and a 7.2 out of 10 on IMDb. Shocking considering that no other Saw film has a score so high on either Rotten Tomatoes and only the original Saw film holds a higher score on IMDb. So what's really happening here? Did Saw finally strike gold a whopping 10 films in or is there some sort of over-hype?

Saw X follows John Kramer, the infamous Jigsaw killer who for the first time in the franchise is set as the protagonist. Set between the 1st and 2nd film, John learns of a miracle procedure he can undergo that can cure his terminal brain cancer, which is currently leaving him with mere months left to live. Despite this procedure being supposedly banned by the FDA and requiring John to travel to Mexico City just to get it, he does so anyway,



A scene from the movie, *Saw X*.

eager to be healed. John goes through with the procedure, and afterwards has a brand new outlook on life. There's a brief moment where John puts the Jigsaw business away, now that he's cancer free and doesn't have an impending death clock. Like I said, it's brief, as John soon realizes he was tricked and never truly received any medical treatment at all. The whole procedure was a scam meant to lure in desperate cancer patients and rob them. Unfortunately for the scammers, they scammed the Jigsaw killer, as he continues his killing and targets them.

From there the movie feels almost like every other Saw film. Excessive gore, bad acting, and horrible dialogue galore. Tobin Bell as always is a highlight for the film. He plays a disturbed and slightly sympathetic character, a shift from his role in other Saw films. You almost feel for the guy, partially because you're tied to him for most of the film and partially because you witness him briefly put the most dislikeable thing about him (the whole serial killer thing) away. Bell is also very good at making John seem as though he actually believes his evil philosophy. I'm always convinced through his performance that the character of John Kramer truly thinks he is helping people. Shawnee Smith also returns in this film to reprise her role as Amanda Young from the original 3 films. While her performance wasn't

particularly Oscar-worthy in the previous films, her line delivery and acting here feels exponentially shallow. As for the victims in John's twisted games, the con artist "surgeons" who swindled John out of money and hope, are as forgettable as any other slasher movie side character. They exist basically to be killed, with very little character being brought to them besides a scene or two of them outside of their surgeon scam living lives in poverty.

But the Saw franchise doesn't exactly rake in millions of dollars for its characters. Instead, it is the gore that brings most people into the theater. Saw's marketing strategy has famously been to release around Halloween, giving many people an extremely gory film to turn their brains off and watch for the Halloween season and easily turning a profit that way. Saw X is no different, while thankfully this time around there appeared to be no computer effects and just practical work, the film is simply a gore fest for a large sum of its runtime.

Typically, a gore fest is quite literally all that Saw has to offer. This time however, what I assume to be the main reason for such high reviews, there is much more of a focus on the narrative than just gross visuals. The film begins with a simple and honestly interesting title card and stylized introduction into John

Kramer at this point in his life, all with somewhat interesting cinematography and editing. However, this stylization ends quickly, as Saw X slowly becomes as obnoxious as all of the other films, frustrating me that the idea of a uniquely made Saw movie was teased and not delivered. While I suppose for many this beginning was enough, an entire movie of intentional camera work and editing would have sold me like the rest.

Despite its good critical reception, a majority of Saw X did not work for me. While it was still an enjoyable watch for me, that's only because I've followed the series up to this point in all of its stupidity. For most who are looking for an actually great modern horror movie in an era where we have such fantastic new horror movies being released by studios like Neon and A24, you can skip Saw X. If you're looking to watch something that starts with lots of promise and divulges into stupidity and "turn your brain off" style content, I guess you're in luck this Halloween season.

Score: 2.5/5

The  
[Wire]



## Wheaton Classifieds

All jobs listed are taken from the student employment page found on insideWheaton. For more information, visit the site or email the contact info listed.

### Economics Teaching Assistant (Spring 2024)

TAs are assigned to work with a particular economics class and professor. Most TAs offer regular tutoring sessions and grade problem sets, but they may also take on other tasks assigned by the instructor. Each TA will work an average of two to three hours per week during the semester, but hours vary week by week depending on the timing of assignments. For more information contact Phoebe Chan at chan\_phoebe@wheatoncollege.edu.

### Research Assistant in Chemistry

Involves working in the Chemistry Department for Professor Kotyk on research involving air-free lanthanide syntheses. For more information contact kotyk\_christopher@wheatoncollege.edu.

### Painting I Teaching Assistant

Work as a TA in the painting studio, assisting the professor with differing tasks. Must attend the class once per week to assist students with classroom activities and participate in critiques to give feedback to students. Assist instructor in studio preparation and maintenance. For more information contact Professor Christian Diaz Silva

at diazsilva\_christian@wheatoncollege.edu.

### Internship Development Intern

Assist in the development of a program that will further link Wheaton with external employers in a range of fields, including business, biotechnology, research, and hospitality. To demonstrate how a liberal arts education combined with the depth of study in a major and experiential learning can enhance the probability of success of the Wheaton student post-graduation. Develop a pipeline of paid internships that will further enhance experiential learning at the college. Work with a Trustee Emeriti of

Wheaton to develop the foundation of this program in support of the AVP of Life Design. For more information contact Karen McCormack at mccormack\_karen@wheatoncollege.edu.

### Farmers Market Research Assistant

Professor Justin Schupp is looking for several students that would be interested in being a research assistant (RA) for the project he is currently working on that explores the current state of the farmers market in the United States. Duties would include data collection and data analysis, survey work, and sending emails. If interested, send an email to Schupp\_justin@wheatoncollege.edu.

# Wheaton Events

BY AMELIA VERHAR

## Here's a list of some upcoming events on campus!

### Wanting some extra academic support?

Stop by the Academic Advising Drop-In Hours on Wednesday, October 18 from 2:30 PM to 4:00 PM at the Filene Center in Kollett Hall. These hours will be offered on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays for the rest of the semester from 2:30 PM to 4:00 PM.

### Interested in watching and discussing film?

Come to the Disclosure Film Screening on Wednesday, October 18 from 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM in Meenely 301. The Center for Social Justice & Community Impact welcomes you to join in a special screening of the acclaimed documentary film, which tracks the history of trans representation in film. Professor Sarah Leventer will introduce the film, guiding attendees through a series of discussion questions.

### Looking to meet fellow gamers?

Stop by the Game Club Meeting on Thursday, October 19 from 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM in the Holman Room of Mary Lyon! Join the Gaming Club and bring your own games or play the ones they provide. Board games, video games, and card games are welcome. Feel free to bring gaming consoles, TVs are limited. All skill levels are welcome! There will be another meeting on Thursday, October 26, at the same time and place.

### Do you love cozy vibes and games?

Check out the Cozy Bingo event hosted by SAIL on Friday, October 20 from 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM in Emerson Dining Hall. Students, family, and friends are welcome to come on down for a chance to win some cozy prizes just in time for fall! The Phat Police will be providing the atmosphere with some smooth jazz and good vibes.

**Do you love movies and prizes?** Check out the After Dark Family Weekend Movie/Trivia Seshon Saturday, October 21 from 7:00 PM to 9:30 PM in the Hindle Auditorium! After Dark, hosted by the Wheaton Events Board, is so happy to show Back to the Future at the event. WEB will be hosting a short trivia session after the movie showing, with 80s themed prizes! Make sure to RSVP on Engage if you want to go! Feel free to bring your own snacks too!

### Do you love open mic nights?

Come to the Demon Daze on Saturday, October 21 from 7:30 PM to 9:30 PM in the Lyons Den. The annual spooky open

mic night is hosted by the Music Co-op and Café Théâtré.

### Looking for some Halloween games and activities?

Check out the Best Buds Halloween Party on Sunday, October 22 from 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM at the Chapel Base. There will be lunch, games, and a costume contest!

### Looking to increase your community engagement and begin growing service hours?

Participate in the Halloween Card-Making for Nursing Home Residents event on Tuesday, October 24 from 5:00 PM to 6:00 PM in the Cole Memorial Chapel Basement (The Base). Join for the signature WheaServe event and make some lovely handmade cards for seniors and nursing home residents. This will be hosted by the Center for Social Justice & Community Impact and the Center for Religious and Spiritual Life.

### Are you a first year student interested in learning some skills to succeed at Wheaton?

Check out the First Year Success Skill Modules: Wellness & Coping with Stress for Success session on Wednesday, October 25 at 3:30 PM in the Hindle Auditorium. There will be a second session on Friday, October 27 at 12:30 PM in the Discovery Center Rooms 3327 and 3328. These workshop/module seminars are hosted by Academic Advising and Peer Academic Mentors.

### Looking to meet members of The Network for LGBTQ+ Inclusion, Support, & Advocacy?

Come to their Fall Meet and Greet Event on Wednesday, October 25 from 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM in Emerson Faculty Dining. There will be light refreshments, a discussion on goals for the year, and ways for you to get involved! This will also be an opportunity to hear from community partners around what kinds of projects you'd like to see the network prioritize, or what projects feel like meaningful ones to engage in collaboratively to better empower LGBTQ+ people and allies in the local community.

### Interested in supporting the environmental sustainability of the Wheaton community?

Stop by the SGA Sustainability Board Open Meeting on Wednesday, October 25 at 7:30 PM in Meneely 105! The board will be discussing environmental sustainability plans and initiatives and are always looking for people with new event ideas, to get involved in planning, or to just hear what they've been working on! These open meetings will be offered bi-weekly on Wednesdays from 7:30 PM to 8:30 PM in Meneely 105 until the end of the semester.

### Do you love spooky crafts?

Check out the Make your Own Spooky Door Decoration event on Thursday, October 26 from 5:00 PM to 6:00 PM in the Cole Memorial Chapel Basement (The Base). Join the Center for Religious and Spiritual Life in creating your own door decorations to celebrate the Halloween season. A short informational presentation on Halloween conduct and holidays happening around this time of year for different faith practices will be held. Snacks will be provided!

### Do you love scary movies and mocktails?

Come to the Monster House Screening and Mocktails event on Friday, October 27 from 8:00 PM to 10:00 PM in Hindle Auditorium. This will be hosted by WEB's Boosting Alcohol Consciousness (BAC). The club will be showing Monster House and serving bloody temples! Be ready to be scared!

### Do you love free food and games?

Come to the Halloween Carnival on Saturday, October 28 from 6:00 PM to 8:30 PM at Chapel Field, hosted by Wheaton Events Board! Be sure to check out the Halloween slide, candy apples, cornhole, and more! Costumes aren't required, but encouraged. In the event of rain or any other disruptive weather, the carnival will take place in Clark Recreation Center.

### For more information on upcoming Wheaton events, check out Engage@Wheaton.

To submit an event to The Wire contact [verhar\\_amelia@wheatoncollege.edu](mailto:verhar_amelia@wheatoncollege.edu)



## Sustainability Board

# Open Meeting!!

Bi-weekly Wednesdays 7:30-8:30  
Meneely 105

All are welcome! Bring your friends and ideas.

Contact [palmer\\_abigail@wheatoncollege.edu](mailto:palmer_abigail@wheatoncollege.edu)  
with questions or accessibility concerns

Wednesday, October 18, 2023

## Do Wheaton College Artists Dream of Electric Sheep?

A Conversation on A.I Art  
BY CASEY DRURY

In the past few months, it has been nearly impossible to escape the A.I. conversation. Almost every American industry has had conversations on what their futures hold with the growing strength of online predictive algorithms like Open AI's ChatGPT and Google's Bard. One such group that has had especially fascinating conversations is that of the Art and Graphic Design communities. Now that there is A.I. that can generate images based on user-based text commands, many artists have fears of losing job opportunities when faced with a wave of dishonest artists passing A.I. art as their own, and much more. These fears worsened when Marvel Studios controversially had an A.I. generate the opening title sequence in the show *Secret Invasion*, likely extinguishing many artist job opportunities. Furthermore, for the last couple of months the infamous WGA and SAG-AFTRA strike has had many actors and writers on picket lines, protesting against studios to ensure that their likenesses and jobs aren't replaced with A.I. used by greedy executives looking to save money. Curious as to what the next generation of talented artists thought of all this, I asked Wheaton College artists what they thought of the growing change.

Ava Katz, a design major in the class of 2027, has been a committed artist her whole life, specializing in drawing and painting since her sophomore year of highschool. With her father being an art professor, she joked that art was "in her genes." When talking about A.I. art, she was very straight forward with her opinions on its ethical use. "I don't think it's morally responsible to call it [A.I. art] your own," she explained. Despite the fact that the



*Courtesy of Matt Lambert's Art Portfolio*

Genetic Representation by Matt Lambert.



*Courtesy of Ava Katz*

A work of art titled *Let's Sit*.

user is the one that gives the A.I. a prompt to generate, she continued "you're not the one drawing it, you're not the one picking the colors." When asked if she thought A.I. could coexist with traditional art, she discussed how art has been turning digital for a long time. She pointed at art drawn on digital tablets and computers that's undeniably deserving of full credit from the artist themselves and shouldn't lose creativity points due simply to its digital creation. However in the realm of art created entirely by A.I., it should always

be prefaced that a particular piece was generated by A.I. No art should be made by A.I. and passed off as belonging to any artist. As long as this sense of credibility is met, Ava sees artist coexistence with A.I. as a real possibility.

Another artist, Wheaton senior Matthew Lambert, has also been making art for as long as he can remember. He's a visual arts major who has taken over 10 art classes here of all different mediums. His work centers around identity, adoption, displacement, and the definition of home. He shared the same concerns many artists feel that there will be lost job opportunities. "It gives companies and businesses the ability to create images through A.I. instead of hiring or working with an artist," Matt expressed. He said that use of A.I. for art can be an interesting tool for getting slight inspiration on what to create

next, but that using A.I. as the only contributing factor of your work "isn't too interesting." Matt however said he wasn't too sure how exactly A.I. art should be addressed in the future. He believes that as long as A.I. art is not literally reproducing the exact images of someone else's art, there isn't much wrong with its existence. I asked Matt the same final question as Ava, whether traditionally drawn art and A.I. generated art could coexist. "I believe it can," he stated, "A.I. has a function to create images people are looking for to complete a goal." He continued, "Art and the stories told by it change people, cities, and the whole world. Artists and art can connect to people in ways and show concepts that A.I. has no hope of achieving for a long time at least." Matt firmly believes that while A.I. art may help corporations create shallow, uncanny pieces that are meant to advertise, true visual art has such raw emotional power that A.I. cannot achieve. "They [A.I. art and Traditional Art] are just too different to affect each other in a negative way too much," Matt Lambert finished.

Wheaton artists are an amazing talent that have great influence on campus. That much is clear when one takes a very short walk on the premises and see's the vast array of student made pieces that illuminate the vibrant creativity present within the community. As the world grapples with the increasing influence of artificial intelligence, emerging artists at Wheaton and beyond are forced to adapt to this evolving new landscape. With a combination of fear and hope, young artists are ready to grapple with this growing technology and seem confident that their creativity, and most importantly the authentic humanity of their work, will shine brighter than anything a computer could produce.

## A lesson on voice

BY MOIRA SANKEY

Allow me to start by saying that I am a Digital Media and Communications major with a double minor in English and Journalism. My entire life revolves around words in the form of essays I write to complete my academic requirements, articles I submit to *The Wheaton Wire*, and in the emails I send to professors and employers. Even choosing a career path in the journalism field centers on how well I can harness linguistic power to inform or persuade others through the written word. Years have been spent on polishing and growing my voice to portray a sense of confidence as I write what I believe in, and it has always been easier to express myself through type and print.

Therefore, when I got my tonsils out a week ago I was in for a shock. Yes, I could write just fine, and yes I found ways to communicate before I regained my ability to speak, but for the first three days after surgery I struggled immensely, feeling powerless. I had always been so focused on the metaphorical and figurative aspects of my "voice" that I unintentionally disregarded the physical manifestation of it until I was forced to resort to unfortunate attempts at charades, texting, and a whiteboard and expo marker combo (of which ran out of ink on day two). Multiple discoveries came to light throughout this experience. First, my mum is horrific at charades and mind reading; the problem definitely wasn't me ... not entirely. Second,

everyone should learn at least basic sign language at the same time as the alphabet. And last but certainly not least, my entire concept of "voice" needed to be re-evaluated, desperately.

In hindsight, I feel foolish for thinking that the written word was the most important aspect of voice. I work as a tour guide for goodness sakes, I spend two hours a week talking at prospective students as I drag them all across campus, giving them information in the same manner as providing evidence in a non-formal informative essay. Every interview I have has involved a resume, yes, but most employers are more interested in dialoguing about experience and interests. In-class discussions are a crucial part of learn-

ing material in college courses and we certainly don't sit there emailing each other our thoughts and opinions. No, we use our physical voices to express our opinions and analyses. Perhaps this viewpoint had escaped me due to my rather quiet disposition in social settings, but now it hit had hit me like a bus.

I have come away from this experience with a desire to expand and strengthen all aspects of my voice, valuing each one no less than the other. At the end of it all, I have found that the most important is learning to treasure your voice, and that is crucial to learn ways to express it, even when the most obvious way is no longer an option.

Wednesday, October 18, 2023

## WCCS Fall Playlist

BY JOHN MORRIS AND MICHAEL KANYONGOLO

A playlist to soundtrack the Fall semester - Brought to you by WCCS, your campus radio station. (wheatoncollegeradio.com)

### John's Fall Picks:



#### “Summer Breeze, Pts. 1&2” - The Isley Brothers

It's hard to cover a song that is already so well-known and loved. I'd say you would be hard pressed to find someone who couldn't hum the melody from the original Seal & Croft version of “Summer Breeze”, with it being one of the most popular songs of the 1970s. And yet, the

Isley Brothers managed to create something incredible. Stretching the melody into a six-minute song rife with harmonies, funk, and an electrifying guitar part sure to zap you into a good mood, this is the Isley Brothers at their best. Founding member Rudolph Isley tragically passed away earlier this month, so there's no better time to honor

his legacy and talent than by listening to the entire Isley Brothers discography, which I assure you is worth it. You've gotta start your journey somewhere, so why not here?



#### “Cold Steel Steel and Sweet Fire” - Joni Mitchell

Released in 1974, Joni Mitchell's For The Roses marked a major turning point in her career. Mitchell was known for expertly-crafted, heartbreaking ballads which got at the very essence of love, loss, and the pain of being human, but her fascination with the worlds of

soul and jazz could no longer be ignored. “Cold Blue Steel and Sweet Fire” is the perfect example of this, blending lush vocals, thoughtful lyrics, and some really great guitar and bass work from James Burton and Wilton Felder, respectively. This song, as well as the album as a whole, expertly blends Joni's masterful lyric writing with some of

the best session players around, creating something truly timeless. “For The Roses” is smack dab in the middle of one of the greatest album runs in music history, and this song stands out as a triumph and a testament to all that Mitchell was and would become.



#### “I Want A Little Girl” - Oscar Peterson Trio, Clark Terry

Recommended to me by a crazy old man running a record store in Boston (Looney Tunes, if you know, you know), this album is definitely the best from the Trio. Oscar Peterson, Ed Thigpen, and Ray Brown are in full form here, and Clark Terry's inclusion cannot

possibly be overstated. His horn playing on “I Want A Little Girl” is tragic yet hopeful, powerful yet soft, and truly something to write home about. Even if jazz isn't quite your cup of tea, I'm almost certain the wires in your brain cannot help but feel something when listening to this song. Terry's final solo is filled with

such genuine longing and emotion that it seems as though only he could've played it that way, and that he played it just for you.

*All album images courtesy of Spotify*



#### “Summer Rain” - New Visionaries, Hannah Williams

The new release from neo-soul extraordinaire Hannah Williams, best known for her near-perfect 2016 album “Late Nights & Heartbreaks”, this single sees Williams partnered with New Visionaries, composed of Joel Sarakula and Phil Martin. Williams, as usual, delivers an

impressively powerful vocal performance, cementing her as one of the best vocalists working today. This single comes a few years after her most recent album with longtime collaborator The Affirmations, entitled “50 Foot Woman”, and one can only hope this means that there's more music from them coming down the pike.



#### “Bag Lady” - Erykah Badu, Roy Ayers

One of the great tragedies of my life is that I was unaware of Erykah Badu until last weekend. I knew the name, of course, but I was embarrassingly ignorant of the prowess. Good God Almighty, Badu knows how to craft a song, blending soul, jazz, funk, and hip-hop to create one

of the most mesmerizing albums that begs to be listened to over and over again. The inclusion of legendary bassist Roy Ayers really takes this track over the top, and we're all the better for it. There's not a single goddamn bad song on this album, making “Bag Lady” a shimmering ruby in a drawer full of diamonds.

**If you're interested in hearing more of John and Michael's picks, you can listen to “No Static At All” on the Wheaton College radio on Thursday from 7-8:00pm.**

### Michael's Fall Picks:



#### This is my Beloved - Mort Garson

Mort Garson is maybe one of the most unique and under appreciated artists out there. If you haven't listened to his album Mother Earth's Plantasia (Warm Earth Music for Plants and the People that Love Them) then stop reading right now and put it on. A wizard of the first commercial synthesizer, called a

Moog, Garson composes entirely unique pieces using just one instrument. Plantasia sounds like what I imagine a symphony of plants would sound like: light and cheery, curious, care-less and free. But enough about Plantasia. This is my Beloved is easily Garson's best song, off of the newly rereleased collection Music from Patch Cord Productions. In this track the Moog

synthesizer has an entire personality of its own, bringing life and wonder to a laidback drum and bass groove. Without words, the instrumental shines with a voice of its own, communicating unspoken feelings of pride and joy, familiarity and comfort. The song feels like a warm hug from a loving parent, and is sure to give you a fuzzy feeling of contentment.



#### “Hung Up on a Dream” - The Zombies

If you haven't discovered The Zombies yet, or their 1968 album Odyssey and Oracle, then oh boy, you're in for a Fall treat. With wonderfully warm production, delectable guitar melodies, and poignant piano riffs, Hung Up On A Dream would feel right at home nestled snugly between

Abbey Road and Pet Sounds. It's no wonder that it released only two years after The Beach Boys' 1966 classic and a year before The Beatles' final studio album. Listening to this record feels like driving through the countryside on a crisp Fall morning, rays of sunshine filtering through trees speckled with bright shades of yellow red. It evokes deep feel-

ings of nostalgia for simpler days, days which only really exist in distant dreams or rose colored recollection. And yet the song exists all the same, a testament to the Zombies' vast musical talent and contribution to late 60s hippie culture. If you like this one, check out The Care of Cell 44 or Time of the Season for some more soothing summery Fall vibes.

Wednesday, October 18, 2023

Continued from previous page.



### Sweet Painted Lady - Elton John

Who else could sing such a majestically melancholic song about the world's oldest profession, except for the master of melody himself, Elton John. From his 1973 album *Goodbye Yellow Brick Road*, *Sweet Painted Lady* has just as much heart and soul as the titular track. The song is

steeped in a lackadaisical atmosphere of yearning and complacency, of wanting a better life but not having the motivation to get there. Narratively, the song is from the perspective of a sailor briefly at port, and it feels like it. Immersed in an unfamiliar world with all too familiar desires, listening to this

song brings the same feeling of isolation that comes from staring at the endless ocean, knowing your destination is out there, somewhere. That and Elton John's effortlessly extravagant piano, along with a well placed accordion makes for a track that will fill your mind like warm summer rain through an open window.



### Village Green - The Kinks

The Kinks' unique sense of quirk is on full display in this song. A jumpy, slightly off kilter depiction of a rural town overtaken by time, *Village Green* makes me feel like I've left the big city and spent four years

wasting away in the middle of nowhere. Or maybe that's just Norton. Regardless, this song paints a folksy picture of life in the sticks, away from modern society with all the comforts of the countryside. It was also featured in the Edgar Wright

film *Hot Fuzz*, which depicts an equally desolate town that feels like it's lifted right out of the song (good movie too, very silly). Not sure how this one is fall themed, but it is still definitely worth a listen in any season.



### The Next Time Around - Little Joy

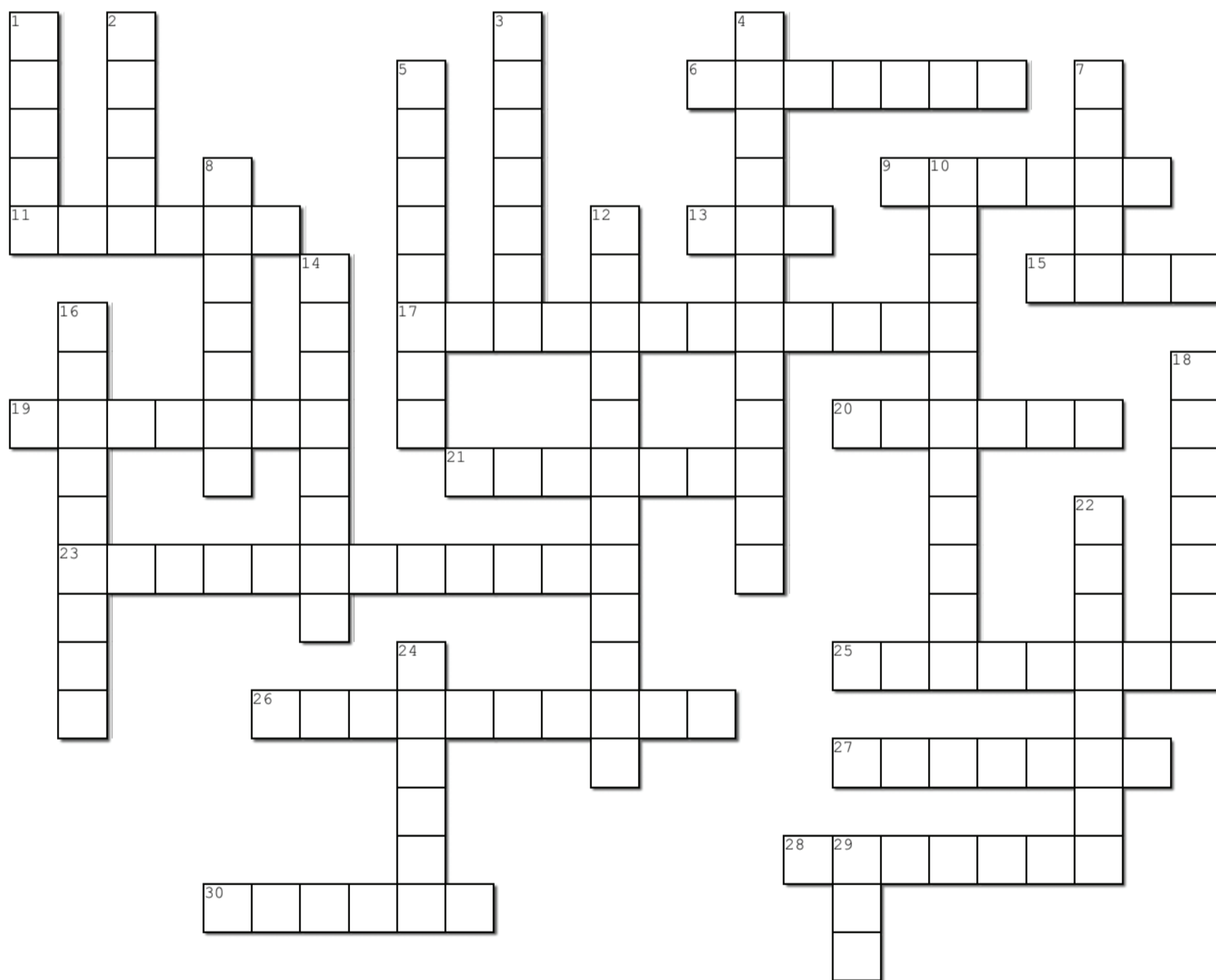
What a little joy this album truly is. Composed of the Strokes' drummer Fabrizio Moretti, Los Hermanos' singer/guitarist Rodrigo Amarante, and LA singer songwriter Binki Shapiro, *Little Joy* was a project

intended to let three seasoned musicians explore music outside of their established niche. What emerged was an incredibly consistent album that feels like sitting by the dying embers of a fire on a chilly Fall night. *The Next Time Around* serves as the upbeat opener to the album, with

drumming naturally reminiscent of The Strokes, thickly sedated harmonies, and lyrics with an understated elegance. One song just doesn't do *Little Joy* justice, so if you want the full Fall experience, throw on the entire album, make a cup of hot chocolate, and settle in before winter comes.

## Wheaton Wire Crossword

BY LILY MAGUIRE



### Across

6. Tastes good when baked, smells good when raw  
 9. Witches, ghouls and \_\_\_\_\_  
 11. Drew Berrymore should not have answered the phone  
 13. Swiper no swiping!  
 15. A dirty or filthy little drink  
 17. "Healthy" candy on a stick  
 19. Fall plaid  
 20. A fire hazard in dorms  
 21. Red, Orange, Yellow, Brown  
 23. Filled with spooky looking trees and trails  
 25. Orange flammable needles  
 26. A movie that's also a spell  
 27. Flowers blooming around this time of year  
 28. The paper snowflakes of Halloween decorations  
 30. A fall time chore

### Down

1. They keep dogs warmer when they're fluffy  
 2. A classic fall drink  
 3. Cozy knit  
 4. Make them scary or happy  
 5. Never let them walk in front of you  
 7. A grove of orange vegetables  
 8. A Christmas decoration made with orange leaves  
 10. A seasonal sleep  
 12. A classic fall caffeinated drink  
 14. He didn't have the guts to cross the road  
 16. October's holiday  
 18. Rory, not Roary  
 22. A good fashion trend, not just on the farm  
 24. A season of change  
 29. Get a 360 view to see WHO is there