

## Is social identity our authentic identity?

BY EMMA KIERNEN

The topic of identity is arguably more relevant today than ever before. Psychological and philosophical theories of identity have existed since long before the 21st century, but now sociological and political theories are coming to the forefront and contributing to a new kind of cultural dialogue. In attending two liberal arts schools - Wesleyan University and now Wheaton College, I have twice encountered the Social Identity Wheel as a tool for understanding identity. The Wheel was created by the University of Michigan to help students to reflect on their own identities. It is a tool that other colleges and institutions have adopted to facilitate conversation about ourselves and our relationships. However, I challenge the idea that this framework helps us understand our authentic identities.

Social identity is a specific subset of identity that consists of our social groups, such as race, sexuality, and gender. The topics and language surrounding social identity are becoming more popular in academic and social settings. This can partly be attributed to the growing prevalence of the term “intersectionality,” which was coined by scholar Kimberle Crenshaw and states that the interconnectedness of our social identities create overlapping systems of discrimination or privilege. She describes intersectionality as a tool: “Intersectionality is a lens through which you can see where power comes and collides, where it interlocks and intersects.” The Social Identity Wheel is based on this model, using social identity as its main components. The Wheel is often accompanied by questions regarding power, privilege, and oppression.

The adoption of the Social Identity Wheel in academia may be due to the much discussed notion that our social identities shape our social experiences within societal structures. Race, nationality, ethnicity, religion, and sexuality all significantly shape the culture we grow up in and the values we develop. Age, socio-economic class, and mental and physical ability are consequential factors in our life experiences. Since our life experiences shape who we are in many ways, it makes sense that social identity would contribute to our understanding of identity. But it cannot define our authentic identity.

What defines us is what makes us truly different from anyone or anything else in the world. What defines us are our values and character. We may have certain

shared experiences because of shared social identities, but we deeply connect with others when we share our authentic selves with them. I may share similar experiences and values with someone who also shares my exact social identity. However, if we have opposing values, our social identity connection is superficial. I will have more in common with a person who has a different social identity, but shares my values. When it comes to defining ourselves, values override social group membership.

When used as a framework for identity, the Social Identity Wheel places emphasis on social groups alone, rather than on underlying values. Social categories are constructs that inevitably create social perceptions, which affect how people may treat us. According to the Wheel, the way we are treated supposedly then becomes part of our identity. But the way we are treated should not define our authentic identity.

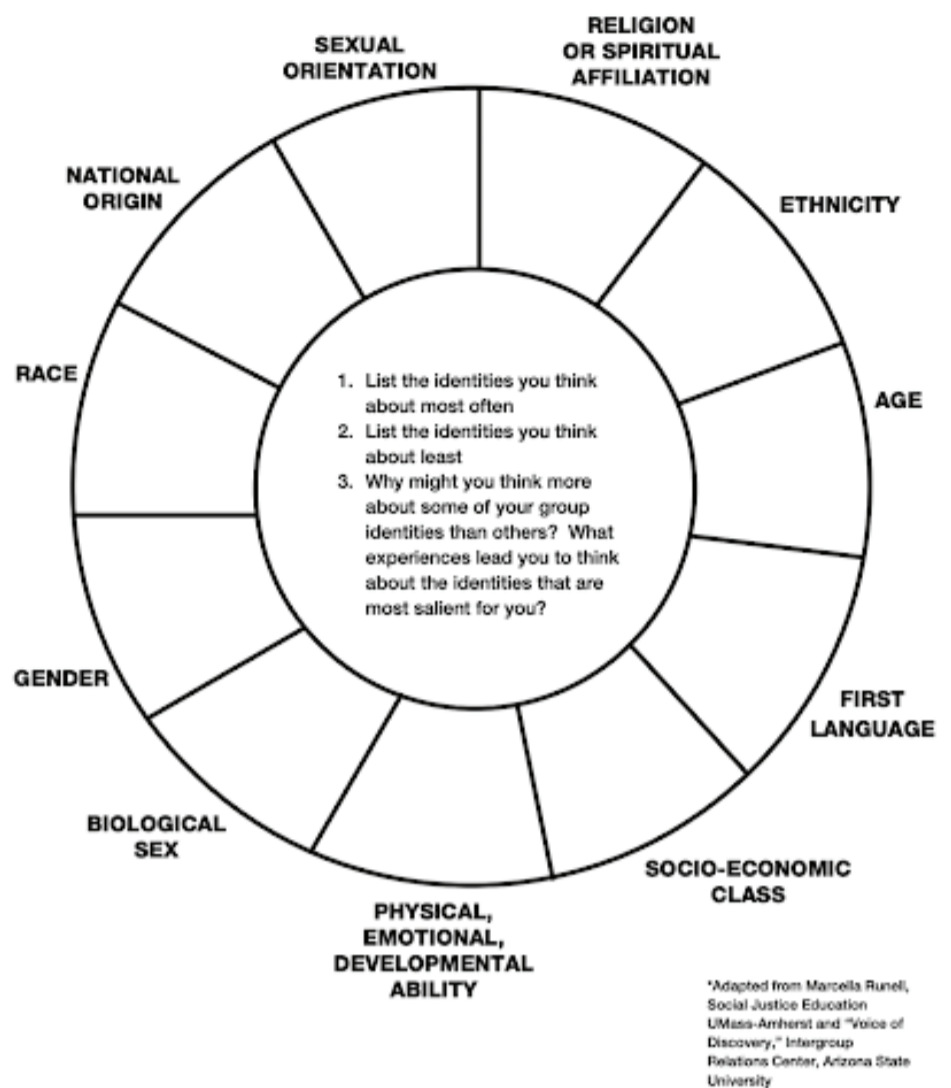
When a man is sexist towards a woman, we do not believe his treatment of her actually determines her value; she is not defined by his actions. Even our language has shifted to recognize that people are not simply defined by their experiences due to social perceptions. This kind of language shift indicates a greater societal understanding that the circumstances of our birth, our experiences, our suffering, and our oppression or privilege do not define us. And that is what the Social Identity Wheel does: it defines us by our social identity and the social power we hold.

Social identity provides a sparse theory of who we are because it is merely a subset of our identity. It excludes values, purpose, meaning, and personality. Even if these other aspects of identity are considered, they are discussed through the lens of social identity, and maybe even wrongly attributed to those categories. But race, gender identity, sexuality, do not determine values and attitude towards life.

Even religion, which is a chosen identity, does not define values - how many Christians have you met that do not espouse Christian values of love and equality? Although our social identity shapes us, it does not define us. What defines us are the intangibles of who we are — what we value, how we treat others, the choices we make that truly matter.

When we choose a framework for describing who we are, we become limited to a certain set of values. The Social Identity Wheel limits us to placing

### SOCIAL IDENTITY WHEEL



“The Social Identity Wheel worksheet is an activity that encourages students to identify social identities and reflect on the various ways those identities become visible or more keenly felt at different times, and how those identities impact the ways others perceive or treat them. The worksheet prompts students to fill in various social identities (such as race, gender, sex, ability disability, sexual orientation, etc.) and further categorize those identities based on which matter most in their self-perception and which matter most in others’ perception of them.” - The University of Michigan.

values on shared group identities and experiences. Reflect on the people you care about and admire the most. Why do you value them? Is it their race, gender, experiences? Or is it their personality? The values they choose to embody as they confront the hardships of life? Kimberle Crenshaw said herself; intersectionality is a tool. “Some people look to intersectionality as a grand theory of everything, but that’s not my intention...If it works, great. If it doesn’t work, it’s not like you have to use this concept.”

The tool of intersectionality

has its place in understanding societal structures and systems of oppression. However, when the social identity framework is applied to our authentic identity - who we are and what defines us, it comes up short. Authentic identity is many things. It is the sum of our individual parts: experiences, relationships, memories, personality, and values. It is our individual sense of meaning and purpose. It is our self-perception of all these traits and experiences. When understanding our authentic identity, we need to use a framework that does justice to the meaningful nature of our lives.

## The College Bubble: Befriend or Break?

A continued column on the relationship between Wheaton College and Norton, MA.

BY MADISON MORIN

### Greyhound Racing: Wheaton’s first significant Bubble Breaker

When I asked long-time Norton residents about examples of past conflict between Wheaton and Norton, a few mentioned greyhound racing in the 1930s. While none were alive for the debate itself, they still considered it a notable example of a town issue that Wheaton became involved in. Understandably, none could name the technicalities of the event as it can not be found on the internet or even the Wheaton Archives. But, they did remember the manner in which

Wheaton approached the town, one that came from misunderstanding and self-importance. I wondered specifically what Wheaton said or did to leave an impression that sustained 80 years. To my luck, the Norton Historical Society had old newspaper clippings deliberately covering the greyhound racing issue.

During a March evening in 1939, the Norton town hall overflowed with about 500 people including residents, professors, and even some students. The hot topic bringing the usually quiet college town alive was the potential implication of a greyhound racing track in the middle of Norton.

Continues on page three.

## Letter from the editor

Dear Readers,

In this issue of The Wheaton Wire, you will find stories of poetry, movies, car accidents, and... student feet. I hope you had a fulfilling and eventful Halloween weekend; it seems that the rain spared us until Monday. Fall is fleeting and we are on the tail end of it, I have been soaking up the last of the foliage.

On the publication of our third issue this semester, I am proud of the progress our contributors have made and excited for determined newcomers.

College journalism can often feel like a rewardless job; sometimes, the only thing keeping us going is our love for the craft and words of encouragement from readers. I don't want to get too pessimistic because, after

all, we are somehow still here, printed and in your hands. But I want to give a shout-out to the underappreciated work that our student contributors create.

College newspapers are the unseen lifeblood of campus and community because we care to cover the little things. Kudos to our contributors for taking the time out of their busy schedules to make work for our community.

See you soon,  
Madison Morin  
Class of 2024  
Wheaton Wire Editor In Chief

Have a question, comment, concern, or writing piece for the Editor or Wire staff? Email us at: [thewheatonwire@gmail.com](mailto:thewheatonwire@gmail.com).

## Unhinged horoscopes

(1989 Taylor's Version)

BY RYLEIGH SEUFERT

This issue's horoscopes are based off of Taylor Swift's re-recording of her album, 1989 (Taylor's Version).

### Aries

(March 20-April 19)

Bad Blood (Taylor's Version)  
[feat. Kendrick Lamar]

### Taurus

(April 20-May 20)

You Are In Love  
(Taylor's Version)

### Gemini

(May 21-June 20)

Out Of The Woods (Taylor's Version)

### Cancer

(June 21-July 22)

Is It Over Now? (Taylor's Version) [From The Vault]

### Leo

(July 23-August 22)

Blank Space (Taylor's Version)

### Virgo

(August 23-September 22)

"Slut!" (Taylor's Version) [From The Vault]

### Libra

(September 23-October 22)

Shake It Off (Taylor's Version)

### Scorpio

(October 23-November 21)

I Know Places  
(Taylor's Version)

### Sagittarius

(November 22-December 20)

New Romantics  
(Taylor's Version)

### Capricorn

(December 21-January 19)

Now That We Don't Talk (Taylor's Version) [From The Vault]

### Aquarius

(January 20-February 17)

Welcome to New York (Taylor's Version)

### Pisces

(February 18-March 19)

Wonderland (Taylor's Version)

## Car crashes into CVS

BY DAVINA SIENKIEWICZ

FRIDAY OCTOBER 13 – Friday the thirteenth are always rumored to be unlucky, something proven true by a driver in Norton on Friday, October 13th, who crashed their white SUV into the side of CVS around 7:35PM. The Jeep Cherokee drove about 5 feet into the side of the building according to the police report, but no injuries were reported.

Gabrielle Oja '25 and Chloe Geller '24 arrived at the location shortly after the incident. Geller recounts her shocked reaction at seeing the crash saying "Oh my god, Gabby there is literally a car—we can't go in the CVS—there is literally a car in the side of the CVS."

Norton Deputy Police Chief Todd Jackson stated that the crash occurred due to operator error after the driver of the vehicle accidentally hit the gas pedal while in a parking spot. The CVS was closed following the incident as they awaited a building inspection to ensure no serious structural damage had occurred, and to guarantee the safety of future shoppers, but has since reopened.



Photos by Gabrielle Oja '25  
Photos of the car crash in the side of CVS.

## Ice Spice Munchkin review

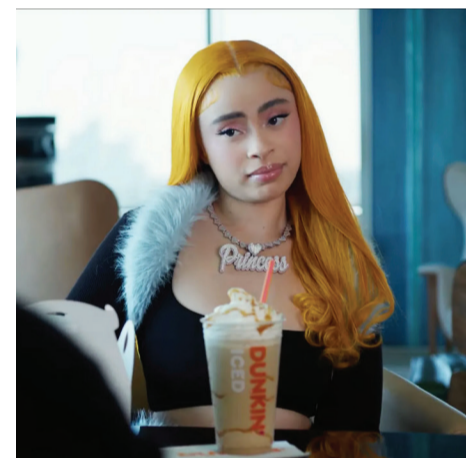
BY KEIRA WHITAKER

Recently Dunkin' Donuts collaborated with rapper Ice Spice to drop a new fall drink called the Ice Spice Munchkins Drink. The Ice Spice Munchkins Drink was dropped live on air at the 2023 MTV awards. The ad featured Ben Affleck and Ice Spice highly endorsing the drink. Ice Spice has many popular songs. This year she has earned the most Top 5 Hits headlining songs like "Karma" featuring Taylor Swift, "Boy's a Liar" featuring Pink Pantheress, and "Princess Diana" featuring Nicki Minaj. My personal favorites, "Boy's a Liar" and "Deli", help me through my daily runs especially when I feel like giving up halfway in.

I was quite curious. Does Dunkin' Donuts actually put a whole pumpkin cake donut in the drink or is it just artificially flavored with pumpkin? Turns out after doing a few quick searches, they put in a certain amount of Pumpkin Munchkin holes depending on the size of the drink. I must disclose that I am not a coffee drinker so my review may be a little skewed.

Let's dive right in. Shout out to my friend Eamon Hilferty-McMahon for providing transportation to Dunkin' Donuts. We ordered through the drive thru, and when I was handed the Ice Spice Munchkins drink, the whole car was immediately enriched with the smell of the drink. There was a vigorous scent of the pumpkin donut. It smelled very sugary. I ordered a small one because from what it looked like on the website, it seemed to be very indulgent.

The Ice Spice Munchkins Drink



Courtesy of Vulture

An image from the Dunkin' commercial. includes Frozen Coffee with Pumpkin Munchkins Treats, topped with whipped cream and caramel drizzled on top. I was quite impressed to see how similar the drink looked to the one in the advertisement. Sometimes advertisements overhype the appearance of the product.

When I took a sip of the drink, I could detect a faint taste of coffee. To be honest, I thought the coffee flavor would have been stronger but the sugar in the drink definitely overpowered it. To my surprise, the pumpkin donut flavor was not that strong either. I think next time Dunkin' should add in a little dash of pumpkin pie spice to really add that pop in the drink. I will be honest in that I waited to get back to my dorm to drink the beverage, so it tasted very watered down. This result could have affected the review of the drink. If you are not a big sugary drink person or if you prefer your coffee to be black, I don't really suggest this drink for you. But if you are looking to try something new and are not fazed by highly sugary drinks, I highly recommend this beverage for you. It is a nice cold refreshment but I would not replace it for your typical coffee order.

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Wednesday, November 1, 2023

# The football world mourns Madeleine Cusack, a Blade until the very end

BY CADEN CHARPENTIER

As college students, we have our entire lives in front of us. It is both frightening and riveting at the same time.

The world is truly our oyster.

Former Sheffield United midfielder Maddy Cusack was in the same boat. 27 years old. A club legend. The vice-captain heading into what looked to be a promising campaign for her side. On September 20, 2023, a little over a month until her 28th birthday, the player with over 100 appearances for the Blades was pronounced dead, just like that—no warning signs whatsoever. Nobody knows how it happened to this point. Just weeks before this occurred, she was seen joking around with her teammates during media day in United's new kits.

Some claim it was numerous medical issues that she experienced throughout 2023, but nothing has been confirmed. Police have stated that the circumstances of her death were not suspicious. Only time will tell if that is true.

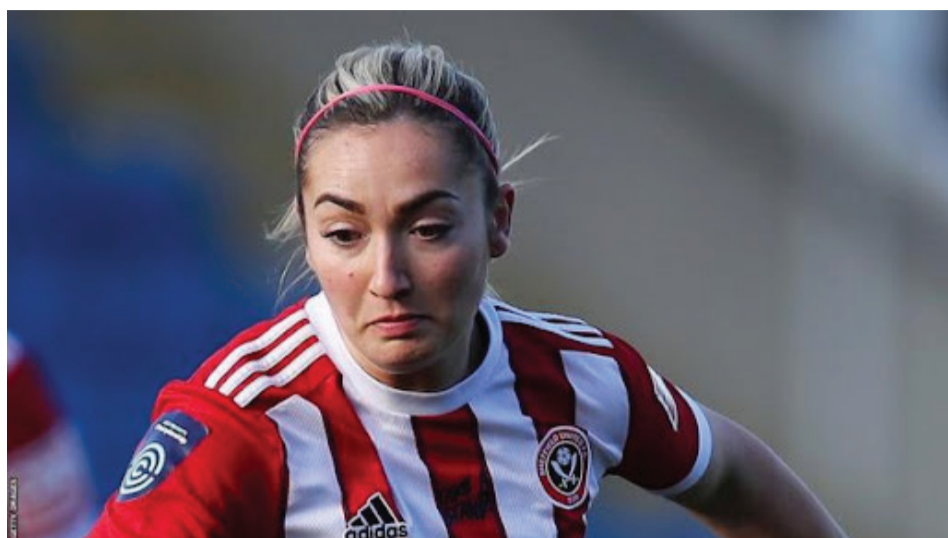
Cusack, a beloved member of the Sheffield United community, was the marketing executive for the club in addition to being a footballer. Her name was ingrained into the city of

Sheffield. She was like family. A mere few months ago, Cusack had expressed that Sheffield was “her home” upon putting pen to paper on a new contract. In the weeks since her passing, clubs around the country and the United Kingdom have paid their respects to Cusack's family and friends in addition to the club as a whole. Black armbands have been a theme around the world of women's football. The ways in which each club has honored the former United No. 8 has been special.

Saturday, October 7 was the first Barclays Women's Championship match for the Blades since the Cusack news was announced. After going down a goal to London City Lionesses in the first 45 minutes, United rallied in the second half, netting three goals to cap off an inspiring display in honor of one of the greatest to ever don the red and white stripes.

Her friend and teammate Sophie Barker paid tribute to Cusack in the club's pre-game program.

“What you meant to me, the girls and the club I would find hard to summarize into any words. The laughs, the terrible nicknames, the passion, the energy, and most of all the pure love you had for us all will never be replaced.”



A photo of Madeleine Cusack.

Courtesy of Getty Images

She continued, “Within football, we will continue to carry your legacy through every day. We will work tirelessly as a team to make you proud. You have been one of the best Sheffield United Women players to have graced the pitch and we will not allow that to be forgotten.”

Those are just the words of one person. Even the most dialed-in football fans who did not know who Cusack was before this tragedy have realized the amount of people she has impacted. Her ability to make a positive impression upon the first encounter with her was a constant theme. No. 8 carried herself with such grace on and off the pitch. As a fan of the game, I cannot imagine even weeks after what the entire club is experiencing. Not only on the women's side but the men's

as well. Nobody has had a bad thing to say. To be able to have such a legacy despite the limited time she had is a testament to the person she was.

So, why am I telling you this sad story? One is because the sports media world in the United States has failed us when it comes to women's sports coverage. The second is, this should serve as a reminder for all of us here at Wheaton. Be where your feet are. We are all trying to get somewhere, but the reality is there is a road that is required to get to that “somewhere”. Discover your passion, whatever it may be, and run with it. Don't forget to embrace the people you meet along the way. That's what Maddy did.

R.I.P Maddy.

Continued from cover page.

## The College Bubble: Befriend or Break? continued

The Norton selectman granted a dog racing company a license to build a track in the town, but a second license had to be passed in order to determine the times and dates in which the track would operate. A public hearing was held to decide on this second license, but the main controversy was the placement of a gambling arena in the first place.

The greyhound track offered the appeal of lowered taxes for residents and a potential influx of jobs, but according to the Attleboro Sun, “The churches, the college, and 90 percent of the manufacturing firms of the town are all lined up against the dog track as a destructive force, as not productive of taxes but headaches, as a destroyer of the peace and calm of an ancient town.”

Keep in mind, this is 1939, so those who opposed gambling for moral reasons weren't doing so because of animal cruelty, but rather the moral ethics of gambling and potential vices that accompany gambling. Norton church officials called it “organized evil”. Townspeople who opposed the racetrack brought up the disruptive yelping of dogs, rowdy crowds, and questionable smells that gambling attracts.

The Attleboro Sun journalist

covering the meeting referred to the moral dilemma of gambling as the question that “turned Norton into a community of cracker barrel philosophers.”

It is well documented that Wheaton was concerned about the town's image. During town hall meetings Wheaton's president at the time, J. Edgar Parker was admittedly anti-racetrack. According to the Attleboro Sun article, he said:

“It would be inhuman to place a dog track in Norton.” Park also expressed that, “a famous New York writer referred to dog racing as the lowest form of sport.” The track ended up being voted down at the special town meeting 241–87 and people moved on. The dog-track company went to Taunton instead.

Town issues like this come and go over the years and sometimes the college gets involved. In this case, Wheaton didn't single-handedly push the dog track out, both the college and a majority of the town opposed it. Wheaton and Norton residents' reasoning for opposing the track came from different corners.

Wheaton was worried about the image of the town when parents came to visit, but the townspeople were worried about how

the rowdy crowds would affect their everyday lives. Also, when it came to the argument of the morality of gambling, President Park's approach may have struck some nerves. He claims that a writer thought dog racing was the lowest form of sport.

However, when it comes to issues pertaining to their town, residents sitting in a town hall are very likely impartial to what a writer 200 miles away thinks. The writer may be an expert in his/her niche and an excellent scholar, but what does a New York City writer know about the affairs of a rural front yard? “How would you like to dream all your life of the little home you're going to end your days in and then realize it only to find a dog track in your front yard,” said one resident.

President Park's reference to a New York City writer and heightened concern as to what Wheaton parents think is far from what most Norton residents care about today and 80 years ago. Wheaton's inability to see the priorities of Norton can come off as aloof, making the colleges' approach to a simple event like this one historically significant to those outside the bubble.

**Howard Street: A Soap Opera**

The racing track squirmish

of the 1930s was short-lived, confined to its time, and largely unknown. The soap opera that is Howard Street is the more well known town and gown issue that persists to this day.

Wheaton, in many ways, has built itself as a self-sufficient institution, not needing to rely on the town for much, but Howard Street has been a point of contention for years. The first street ever named in Norton, between route 140 and 123 in the town's center, Howard Street happens to cut through a section of campus in which Wheaton has slowly acquired all of the surrounding lands over the years. In 2004 Wheaton president Dale Rodgers Martial failed to negotiate ownership of historical Howard Street. Martial asked the town selectman if they could give Wheaton the road since Wheaton has owned the surrounding land since the early 1990s. The college had also paid to have a waterline placed in Howard Street at the cost of \$500,000 (although it was mostly at the benefit of dormitories) and According to a Sun Chronicle article, President Martial said the town had spent an estimated \$10,000 in the past 12 years or more to plow and police the street.

Column continues in the next issue.

Wednesday, November 1, 2023

## The state of labor in The United States

BY ELSIE CARSON

2023 has proven to be another pivotal year for labor in the United States, with major actions by SAG-AFTRA, WAG, UPS, and UAW changing the landscape of the labor movement in the United States. People have dubbed last summer “Hot Labor Summer” due to the number of strikes, and there seems to be somewhat of a resurgence in union activity. And as these organizations have fought for fair contracts their actions have become increasingly militant, marking a shift from the past few decades which saw a hesitancy to strike.

As labor tactics have changed, so has the public opinion. A Gallup poll taken in August found that 67% of Americans approve of unions, up from a dismal 48% in 2009. Strikes have likewise increased: A study from Cornell University found that strikes were up 52% in 2022, indicating the general dissatisfaction of workers across a variety of industries. Additionally, the language that union presidents have adopted has become more focused on labor organizing as a class struggle.

Take United Auto Workers president Shawn Fain, who recently wore a shirt during a press conference that read “EAT THE RICH.” When discussing the need to strike, Fain told auto workers that “I know that we’re on the right side in this battle, it’s a battle of the working class against the rich, the haves versus the have-nots, the billionaire class versus everybody else.” These words, along with the new militancy in the labor movement, signal a shift from corporate campaigns and community coalitions that emerged after the late 1980s and early 2000s. In what labor lawyer Joe Burns called “labor liberalism,” strikes tended to be shorter and for publicity, and moved away from the rank and file method that most major unions have adopted. Now, we are seeing strikes that bring entire industries to a standstill.

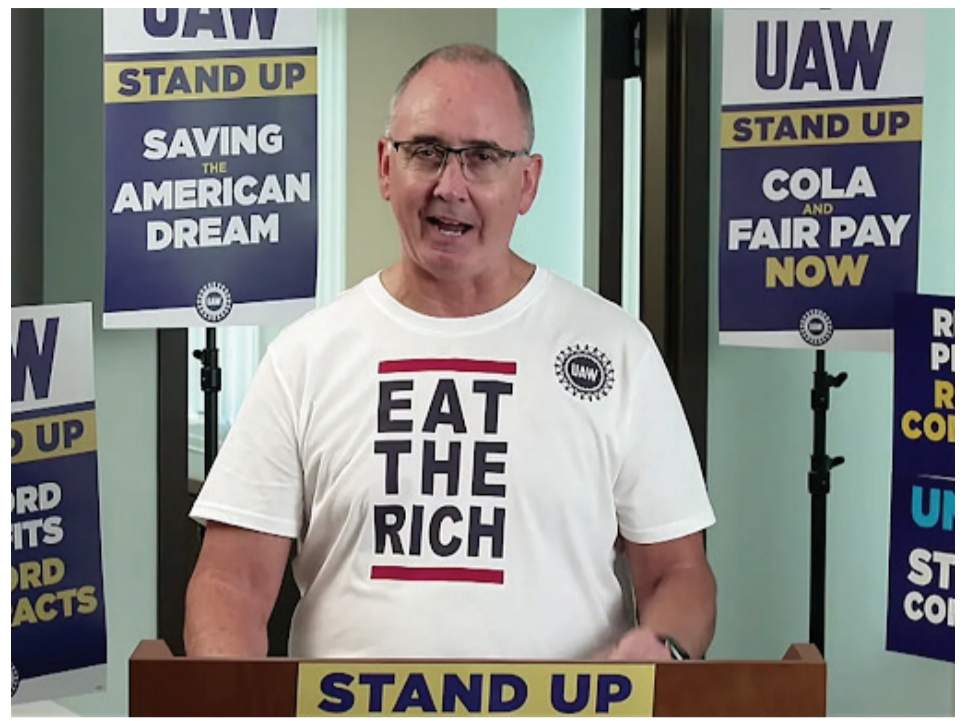
Some of the more aggressive tactics that major unions have

adopted include voting down tentative agreements, making high wage demands, and demanding the end to two-tier schemes, (where one worker group receives lower hourly compensation even if they have the same job, for example, if they’re part time). Whereas in the last decades, strikes were largely a symbolic tool, now unions are using them tactically. This is effective, according to Burns, who in an interview with the progressive publication Jacobin, said that “to revive the labor movement, we have to look back to the proven formula, which is class struggle unionism.”

“Class struggle unionism” paid off for the UPS Teamsters earlier this year, when after threatening to strike they reached a historic deal, which ended with increased wages and eliminated the two tier wage system. Had it gone through, the strike would have been the biggest strike against a single employer in United States history, and caused a major disruption to the supply-chain.

The same is also true for the Writers Guild of America, which recently ended its 148 day long strike last month. The writers got virtually everything they asked for in their contract: wage increases, pension increases, health funds, better residuals, and fairer terms for the size of writer’s rooms and length of employment. Perhaps even more significantly, it lays out guidelines that restrict companies from using AI to reduce or fully eliminate writers.

For over half of the summer, WGA and SAG-AFTRA (the actors union) were striking together, for the first time since 1960. Though the writer’s strike has since ended, actors are still on strike with no end in sight, bringing Hollywood to a standstill. Heading SAG-AFTRA as president is Fran Drescher, star of 90s hit *The Nanny* turned labor activist. Like Shawn Fain, Drescher’s SAG-AFTRA presidency has been marked by her fiery speeches against millionaire studio executives. “What happens here is important because what’s happening to us is



*Courtesy of the AUA YouTube Channel.*

A screenshot from a livestream of AUA President, Shawn Fain.

happening across all fields of labor by means of when employers make Wall Street and greed their priority and they forget about the essential contributors that makes the machine run,” Drescher said in her announcement that SAG-AFTRA would formally strike back in July. As of publication, SAG-AFTRA continues to strike, with negotiations continuing through next week.

UAW (United Auto Workers) also went on strike last month, against the car manufacturing companies Ford, General Motors, and Stellantis. For the first time in American history, a sitting United States president visited a picket line when Joe Biden visited striking auto workers in Michigan, giving the union massive publicity. As of last Wednesday (October 25th), UAW reached a tentative agreement with Ford, which employs 56,000 of its members. The agreement is considered to be a major win, with providing a 25% wage hike over the 4-1/2-year contract, starting with an initial increase of 11%, and an elimination of the two-tier system in some Ford operations. General Motors and Stellantis workers remain on strike, but are engaging in talks to reach a deal that is expected to match Ford’s. Fain called the deal a “major victory.”

Since the 1980s, it was typical for only the national union president to know what was going on, and negotiations on contracts took place behind closed

doors. What Fain is doing is what Burns calls “a fundamentally different kind of bargaining.” Fain “gets into office and shakes hands with the members at the plants, puts forward a list of members’ demands, and tells the automakers that either they’re going to have a deal or the workers go out on strike.” These events are unprecedented in American history, and demonstrably effective, with benefits across every industry. To provide another example, Kaiser-Permanente workers strike from October 4-6th, the largest healthcare worker strike in history, winning a 21% wage increase over four years. Despite all these gains, the labor movement in the United States is still dying. In 1983, when the Bureau of Labor Statistics started gathering data, 20% of Americans were in unions. This year, the figure was 10%. The decline started well before that, with a range of theories for why it happened. Part of the reason has to do with politics, left-leaning countries have stronger union membership. The other theory is that unions tend to expand their forces less quickly, due to increases in wages, making them cost more. A 2001 paper by Henry Farber and Bruce estimated that unions would have to increase their organizing rate sixfold just to keep the US membership rate constant. Still, it seems clear that major unions’ new militant strategy has led to historic wins—what remains to be seen is if the labor movement will be able to harness that momentum to truly create a resurgence in the United States.

## Wire satire: Roary the lion nominated for House Speaker

BY DEREN SOZER

WASHINGTON — In a surprise move on Monday, House Republicans have nominated Wheaton College mascot Roary the Lion as their candidate for Speaker of the House. After the ouster of now former Speaker Kevin McCarthy and the subsequent failure of both Rep. Steve Scalise (R-LA) and Rep. Jim Jordan (R-OH) to garner enough support to claim the gavel, it was feared that a solution would

not be found in time to avoid government shutdowns. Roary, a Massachusetts native, has been tapped as a bi-partisan candidate to break the deadlock. When asked why he is supporting Roary, House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries said, “He is a great leader with a proven track record of gathering support. Hopefully he can do for us what he has done for Wheaton College.” Many House Republicans also say that they are on board. According to Nancy

Mace (R-SC), Roary assured her in a private meeting that he would bring all bills to the floor. Rep. George Santos (R-NY) said he was happy to vote for Roary considering his previous job as Wheaton College President. Matt Gaetz (R-FL), the leader of the backlash against Kevin McCarthy, told the Wire he didn’t know Roary but liked the sound of him. “Anyone from Wheaton College is a friend of mine. It’s always worth a trip up to Illinois!”



*Courtesy of Wheaton College*

Roary.

Wednesday, November 1, 2023

## The “Truth” behind “The Watcher”

BY LILY MAGUIRE

“Dearest new neighbor at 657 Boulevard. Allow me to welcome you to the neighborhood.”

If you’ve seen the latest Netflix hit mystery show, *The Watcher*, you probably read these words in the deep underwater voice of the unnamed narrator that is “The Watcher.” Yet, for Mrs. and Mr. Broaddus, the real life Brannocks, the opportunity to put a voice to these haunting words never came.

While the Netflix mini-series aired October of 2022, the real story actually began eight years ago in June of 2014. Thanks to Reeves Wiedman, a journalist for New York’s *The Cut*, we were able to hear this story on paper before the Netflix show was created.

Warning for those who haven’t seen the show, there are major spoilers ahead.

If you were as devoted a fan as I was—or not—it is hard not to admit that the ending of *The Watcher* was disappointing. The words, “The Watcher case remains unsolved” stir in the viewers mind, leaving them in confusion and angst. It makes sense. Since *The Watcher* is based on a true story, highlighted in Wiedman’s article, creating a season two should be impossible unless the real case is developed further. But is it?

When doing a deep dive into the true story, it is clear that the Netflix show is more inspired by real events than based on them, as it doesn’t accurately tell the true story of the house and of the neighborhood that is Westfield, New Jersey, in which the story is based on.

The general story remains the same: a wealthy and “safe” neighborhood isn’t all it is promoted to be, after one house is targeted by an invisible stalker hiding behind threatening letters signed “The Watcher.” After reading the beginning of Wiedman’s article, it seems as though the characters in the show are very similar to their real life counterparts as well. Maria and Derek Broaddus are changed to Nora and Dean Brannock, and the neighbors, Pearl and Jasper, represent the real life Langfords. Even Mitch and Mo were based on an actual old couple that set up lawn chairs to watch the Brannocks, though their names are unknown.

But not all of the characters shown on screen were inspired by the truth. Take the young boy, Dakota, an I.T. entrepreneur who helps the Brannocks install cameras. Dakota ends up dating the Brannocks daughter, Ellie, as the show progresses. Yet in reality Dakota never even met the Brannocks. He was a suspect for a short time, as he is in the show, however his story is very different.

The detective working on the real Watcher case, known as Chambliss, was outside 657 Boulevard one night keeping an eye on it, when a car strolled to a stop in front of the house and parked. Finding the event suspicious, Chambliss traced the car back to a young girl, who when interviewed, claimed her boyfriend lived on the same block as the house. She claimed he played video games under the nametag “The Watcher.” He never showed up for his own interviews, though, and was dismissed as suspect.

This story might sound similar to that of *Dakota’s* in the Netflix show. However it is not how his character is presented to the viewers. Now, promoting this suspect to have a bigger role in the show doesn’t do much harm, as he was already a suspect in the original case. But what about creating suspects for the on screen case out of neighbors who were completely uninvolved?

Take on screen John Graff. Graff was a real murderer from Westfield, New Jersey, but not involved with the house as the show might suggest. His story is similar to how it is presented: John List, the real Graff, did murder his entire family, shooting his mother, wife, and two children after they returned from school, and he did eat a sandwich when he was done. However, List didn’t evade capture by cutting his face from every photo, and hiding his identity. List moved, remarried, changed his identity, and remained wanted for eighteen years before finally being caught and sent to jail. John List did not, however,



*Courtesy of South China Morning Post*

The real life Brannocks: Derek Broaddus (left) and his wife, Maria Broaddus (right), with their three children.

have anything to do with *The Watcher*, and the case. So what drove the inspiration behind his character? In the show, the actor playing John Graff is first introduced as “John,” but then later is called “Bill” by Pearl. Is this the writer’s way of telling us John changed his identity to avoid capture, or is this a man who was hired by *The Watcher* to pose as John Graff knowing it would haunt Mr. Brannock’s mind? This question is left unanswered.

So can a story based on reality have a sequel, when the real story doesn’t suggest one? The show *The Watcher* plays with the idea of being based on the true story, and therefore the line—if there was one to begin with—has already been crossed. So if the line has been crossed, why shouldn’t there be a season two?

Netflix has created their own version of the real “the Watcher” case, and added incorrect details to make the show more intense. The suspect details include

the John Graff case, the eerie historical preservation society, the tunnels underneath the old house, and the child-eating cult. They have all either been fabricated or misconstrued to create more drama and suspense for the show. Therefore, it is possible—and likely—that a season two will air, even without further developments on the case.

A season two doesn’t necessarily have to focus on 657 Boulevard either, and can be solely to answer questions viewers might still hold: Like who is Bill? And why did Pearl hide him from Dean Brannock? Or why is Mo so easy to forgive Dean for his hostility towards her after he sells the house? And what is up with the fabricated detail of her son killing two so-called “look-a-likes” in her house?

All these questions still need answering, and if Hollywood’s job is to create drama, what is so wrong with making a little more of it?



*Courtesy of House Beautiful*

“The Watcher” house used to pose as 657 Boulevard for the hit Netflix mini series. Family home of Nora and Dean Brannock.



*Courtesy of MyCentralJersey*

The real “The Watcher” house, at 657 Boulevard. Home to real life Brannocks, the Broadduses, in Westfield New Jersey.

## On This Day at Wheaton

BY ROSA HERIC  
NOVEMBER 1, 1970

It's difficult to believe that October is already over — if you're like me, you might feel like move-in day was just last week — but through little effort of our own, the months are passing and fall has fully arrived. The temperature is dropping and Wheaton is collectively plodding through a mid-semester workload. The campus atmosphere this week in 1970 was much the same. Here are the most interesting bites of news I could find:

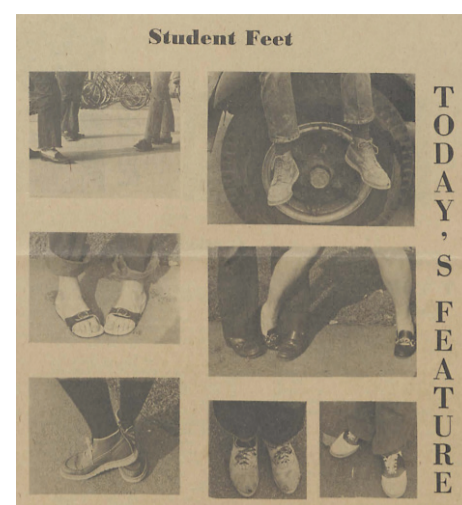
**Post Office Backlash?** A concise yet sneakily spiteful “apology” issued to the Norton Post Office made the front page. Apparently in the previous issue, the Wire printed a photo of campaign flyers overflowing in a trash bin and littering the floor. The photo wordlessly demonstrated the “political apathy and ineffectiveness” of bombarding student boxes with campaign paper, much the way we receive spam emails nowadays. Apparently this garnered backlash from the Post Office, who had serious issues with a photo insinuating they didn't keep their premises swept and dusted to spotless perfection. The student apology seemed to

say: Never fear, Norton P.O. — you may be politically apathetic but your floors are gleaming.

**Is Revolution Possible?** A small section was dedicated to a student review of a lecture on revolution, given by an Amherst College professor. Titled “Is Revolution Possible in America Today,” the lecture was apparently discouraging at best. The lecture acknowledged that “the most obvious groups not benefiting from the present society” were people of color and the proletariat. Students and young people, as well, suffered a “psychological deprivation” because of their ability to see and critique society, and their simultaneous inability to make change. And the middle class, too, was recognized as being denied “high quality public services,” mainly healthcare, education, and transportation. Despite these clearly timeless issues, the Amherst professor, Norman Birnbaum, maintained that no groups were “capable of leading a revolution,” one reason being that youth inevitably age. The section concluded that though the lecture wasn't very comforting, half of it was inaudible anyway because of Professor Birnbaum's “propensity for addressing his ideas to his tie tack.”

**A Co-Ed College?** A letter to the editor expressed a desire for the campus to be made co-ed (keep in mind, during the time this issue was published, Wheaton still had eighteen years left of being a womens' school). The letter senders, who signed themselves collectively as “The Male Hunters,” argued that “certain unsavory characters are always going to be on an all girls campus” regardless of the rules, and that no Wheaton student can expect their campus — and their bathrooms, in particular — to be completely devoid of men. Furthermore, said the senders, “Are girls any less obnoxious (or loud) than males? All girl parties, from what we've heard (and experienced) rival any mixed meetings.”

**Waited Dinners?** If you've ever wished the dining hall operated like a restaurant, there were people from 1970 who agree with you — but not many. Apparently dinners at Chase in 1970 were split into two categories: line dinners (the setup we're all accustomed to today), and waited dinners, where students sit and enjoy being waited on by dining staff like restaurant-goers. However, this tradition was already going out of style, and when the Food Committee sent out a survey about whether they should



Courtesy of Wheaton Archives  
A collage of student shoes in 1970.

continue, not many students expressed enthusiasm about it. The Food Committee was set to make a decision the following week, but I think it's safe to say this paper officially saw the end of waited dinners at Chase.

**Unsatisfactory Enrollment?** The Task Force on Wheaton Priorities decided that enrollment should be the main focus of their efforts. They wanted the next incoming freshman class to be larger than ever, in order to boost the total school enrollment up to 1200. To accommodate this, the dorms above Emerson were created (where before they were faculty offices), and Hebe was switched from staff apartments to student housing (for first-years who may not know, Hebe is currently home to the Office of Human Resources).

## x Killers of the Flower Moon review: a masterfully told tragedy

BY CASEY DRURY

Letterboxd: CaseyDrury04

I was rather shocked to learn that 80 year old director Martin Scorsese had another movie set to release so soon after 2020's “The Irishman.” “Irishman” was a movie filled with themes of what it's like to see the world change around you as you grow old. Seemingly the perfect film for a director with such a long and esteemed career to end on. However Killers of the Flower Moon threw a wrench in this thematically fitting end to Scorsese's career, and proves that 56 years after the release of his first feature film, the director is as creative as ever.

Killers of the Flower Moon is an adaptation of a nonfiction book written by David Grann of the same name. Both follow the Native American Osage tribe, a group that upon being removed from their home land, discover oil on the new land they've settled on in Pawhuska, Oklahoma. This makes the Osage tribe incredibly wealthy, and in the 1920's they became the wealthiest people per capita on the planet. This made them a target for the rest of America, and as a result, white men began to move to the Osage Nation's home in Pawhuska, attempting to marry the wealthy Osage women and then murder them for their inheritance. One such man was Ernest Burkhart, the film's

protagonist played by Leonardo DiCaprio. After coming to Pawhuska to work for his uncle, he decides to join the heinous mass murdering after marrying an Osage woman by the name of Mollie Burkhart, played by Lily Gladstone. As Ernest has already gotten too far deep into his assistance of genocide, The FBI comes to Pawhuska to investigate the murders. From there, a cat and mouse game ensues as Ernest fights to succeed in his evil manipulation while the massacre is slowly unravelled by law enforcement.

Killers is a difficult movie to talk about, for starters the movie is nearly 4 hours long. It is chock-full of characters with unique ambitions and many overlapping arcs. Furthermore the tragedy inflicted on the Osage people is deeply disturbing to witness, as the film never holds back on displaying the brutality and horror the tribe had to face. While the film is very long, it's never boring. It was the longest film I had ever seen in theatres and yet when the credits rolled I was confused as to how it felt like the runtime flew by.

The performances in this film are nothing short of remarkable. Robert De Niro plays Ernest's uncle, an old man who has been participating in the murdering of the Osage long before Ernest arrived. De Niro expertly displays the long rooted evil

built up in a man who has been overseeing such carnage for so long. Leonardo DiCaprio plays Ernest Burkhart so well, masterfully displaying how far greed can make one go. Ernest Burkhart was a deplorable man who participated in genocide in order to make money, and DiCaprio's performance expertly shows us how pathetically his ego shatters when he is close to getting caught. However, the highlight of the film for me was Lily Gladstone's phenomenal portrayal of Mollie Burkhart. Lily gives a heartbreaking performance, as we see her manipulated over and over again by a man she truly loves, whom she believes loves her too. She brings nearly every emotion into the role 100% convincingly. If you are someone who likes to predict who will win what during awards season as a game with others (as my family does), I would go all in on Lily Gladstone winning best supporting actress at the Oscars.

The film is masterfully made, although I would expect no less from Martin Scorsese. Nearly every shot (especially the first and last) are absolutely stunning. The cinematography as a whole was always captivating. This was also probably Scorsese's best edited film to date. So many times in the film symbolic choices in the editing elevated the story to such great heights. The script is razor sharp, as nearly every line of dialog holds

its essential importance. If you have a keen eye for symbolism, this film has some remarkable uses of it (pay attention to when and where you see flies in the movie). Overall nearly every aspect of the production is well made.

Killers of The Flower Moon is an advanced movie. It's full of extremely complex characters with even more complex motivations. There is so much to digest, so much that I know very well I missed. That is what makes it so unique, I think that everyone will walk away from this movie taking something a little different out of it. It has an ending that I can admit may not be for everyone. It may leave people scratching their heads, as it is incredibly simple compared to the rest of the film. However, I thought it was an extremely fitting ending not only to the film, but also possibly to Martin Scorsese's career as a whole. While this may not be his final film, it would be an incredible way to end off one of the greatest filmographies of all time.

Score: 4.5/5

The  
[Wire]



Wednesday, November 1, 2023

## The Making of a Poetry Festival

BY AMELIA VERHAR

The Many Voices, Many American Poetries Festival took place this past weekend, marking the first event of its kind on Wheaton's campus. The festival included round table discussions held by visiting poets, a showcase that featured undergraduate students from the Boston area and Wheaton alum, as well as a poetry reading by a local arts organization.

The event was created and executed by Wheaton English professors, Ada Thomas and Kent Shaw. Thomas and Shaw had discussed the idea of a poetry festival for several years, but their dream was not able to be carried out until Thomas received a grant from the University of New Hampshire's Center for Humanities this spring. Combined with funds from the Visiting Artists Program at Wheaton, the festival was able to take place.

Shaw explains that funding from the Visiting Artists Program is competitive, saying that "at the end of the year all of the different arts programs here propose events to the Visiting Artists Program, and then everyone meets as a committee and we decide which ones are carried forward." This collaboration between different art programs is to make sure everyone is getting funding that is somewhat equal to one another. In his own words, Shaw stated that he "was lucky that both of the other writers in the creative writing program were willing to support this event."

The festival was run by Shaw, Thomas, and several student interns hired to help out. Thomas was able to receive another grant from the same UNH organization, and "that money that she raised in a second round was explicitly earmarked for student interns," according to Shaw. The two-day festival was executed in record time as the proposal was approved in June of this year, and executed on the 13th and 14th of October. Shaw says that "typically an event like this you would try to start planning out a year ahead of time," which goes to show the quickened timeline.



*Courtesy of Kent Shaw*

The entire team who put together the poetry festival.

"The funding came available, and the fact that Ada [Thomas] and I were both teaching these poetry literature courses that would be relevant to the poet-student that were coming to visit, and all of that kind of combined." Shaw also explained that the festival featured all non-white poets, and focused on their contributions right now to American poetry. He reached out to several writers to ask them to come to Wheaton and offer terms. Jessica Kuszaj and Kristie Mahoney, who administer the Visiting Artists Program, took care of the contracts and transportation for the poets.

There was excitement and anxiety regarding the upcoming festival. What invigorated Shaw was all of the collaboration that occurred to put the festival together. Shaw says, "it's really refreshing and exciting because it kind of feels like there is a larger mission that we are all working towards."

The group effort didn't stop there. Thomas found the designer for the Many Voices, Many American Poetries Festival poster, created bookmarks, and distributed t-shirts for the team. The student interns took care of spreading awareness about the festival on social media. In Shaw's words, "how all of these different energies came together to promote the event, that was already a success to me."

Although the collaboration

behind the festival was planned, there were some unplanned connections that formed during the festival as well. The student interns and students participating in the showcase quickly got along with each other and "there was just this kind of cohesiveness among them that was really exciting to see," explained Shaw. "There were moments where I just really felt like the moments of the festival really came together in ways that we didn't plan for them to come together."

The second day of the festival took place on a Saturday, at an early 10 AM. Although Shaw was initially concerned about people not showing up to the discussions, he was pleasantly surprised to find that many people showed up ready to actively listen to the poets.

The energy and focus during the discussions on Saturday were shared by the writers and audience alike. Shaw described it by saying, "It just felt like there was a focus in the room and when the writers who were on the roundtable would interact with each other, people from the audience were asking questions."

Some of Shaw's other favorite moments from the festival were the ones that happened naturally. Two of the visiting poets, Gabriel Dozal and Abigail Chabitnoy, began the America is More Than the English Language roundtable by offering to read a selection of their poems, without prompting or asking for more money. It was a moment that set a nice, open tone for the roundtable. Another moment that stood out to Shaw was when an audience member shared the trauma they felt from their parents' immigration with keynote speaker Oliver de la Paz in an unplanned Q & A session. Shaw said "it was very moving to me to hear that question and to have it posed to Oliver, who then gets to respond to it also. That kind of moment, you can't plan that kind of thing, and it was really moving to me to hear that exchange come up." The whole experience was "exactly what I had always dreamed

would happen," said Shaw.

As for the impact of the festival, Shaw was just happy that it was a space to engage with issues that felt relevant to people in the audience and to the poets who were up in the front.

He hopes that the festival is included in the Wheaton website in a concrete way that could reach potential students who might be looking to see what kind of creative arts events Wheaton provides.

In terms of potential poetry festivals in the future, Shaw shared that it would have been difficult to get the festival to happen without the extra grant secured by Thomas. Another festival would require extra funds.

Shaw claims that the Visiting Artists Program is generous, but that many faculty members are asking for money from the fund. Therefore, he hopes to hold a condensed version of the festival in the future for a more focused discussion, and potentially hold the festivals every so often. Overall, he says that "Ada and I were both really excited about what happened."

The festival was also met with positive reviews from the student body. Rachel Barretta '25, attended most of the festival events. She said "I was thoroughly impressed by the festival and I was grateful that I was able to listen to and meet such a passionate and diverse group of poets. I probably would have never had an opportunity like this outside of Wheaton so I'm really thankful I was able to get an even deeper understanding of their work."

The poets also came up to Shaw to express their appreciation for the festival. Many writers asked him how many years the festival has been held, because they were so impressed with the audience and structure of the festival.

Shaw says "I will likely be doing it again, but I just don't know when."



*Courtesy of Kent Shaw*

An image from the America is More Than the English Language Roundtable Discussion.

Wednesday, November 1, 2023

## Crossword answers from previous issue

### Across

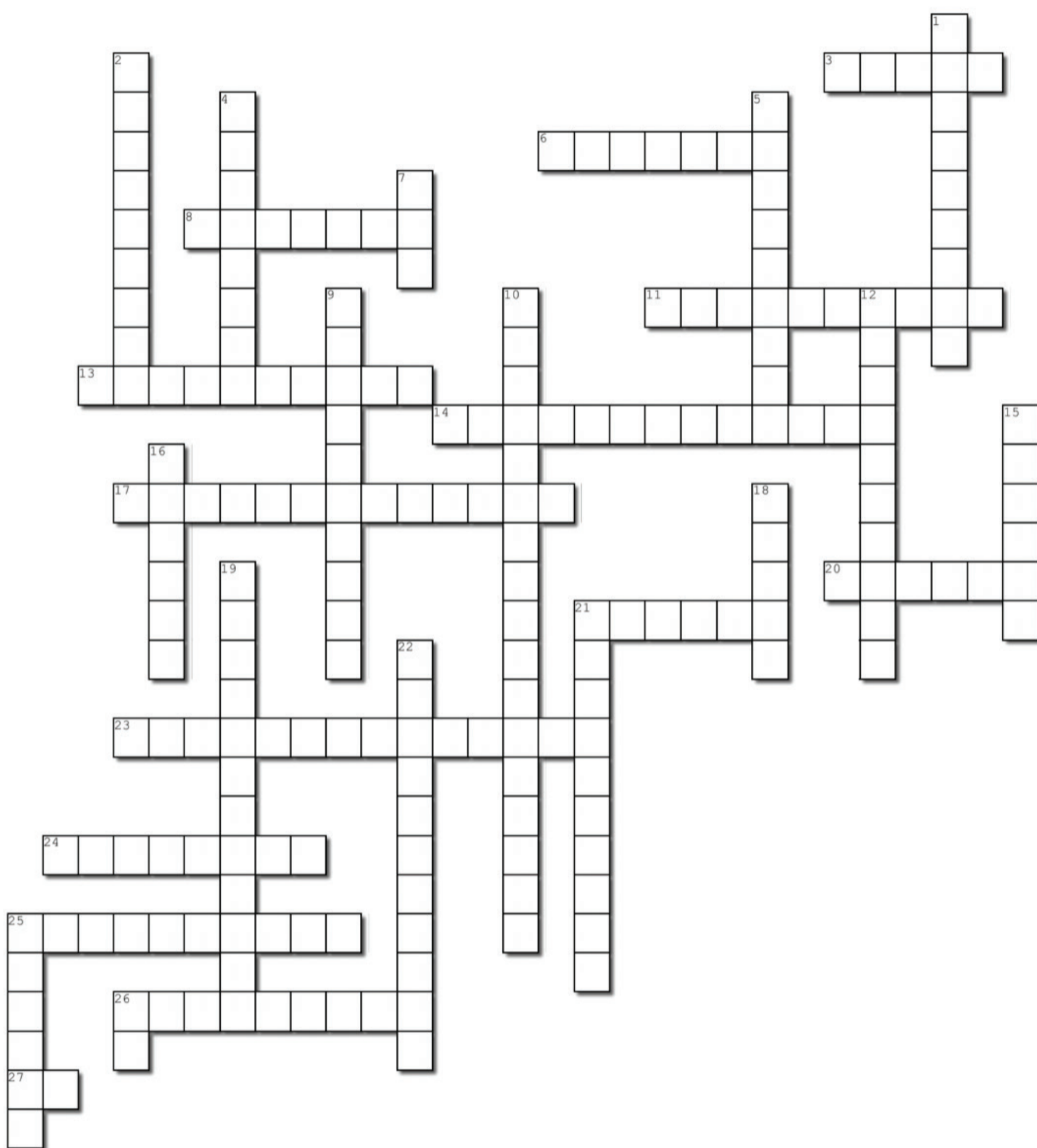
1. Fall plaid → Flannel
3. Cozy knit → Sweater
5. Rory, not Roary → Gilmore
7. A dirty or a filthy little drink → Chai
9. A Christmas decoration made with orange leaves → Garland
11. Tastes good when baked, smells good when raw → Vanilla
13. A fire hazard in dorms → Candle
15. They keep dogs warmer when they're fluffy → Socks
17. A classic fall drink → Cider
19. A classic fall caffeinated drink → Pumpkin Spice
21. A grove of orange vegetables → Patch
23. Orange flammable needles → Pine Tree
25. "Healthy" candy on a stick → Caramel Apple
27. Red, Orange, Yellow, Brown → Foliage
29. Make them scary or happy → Jack-o-lantern

### Down

2. October's holiday → Halloween
4. He didn't have the guts to cross the road → Skeleton
6. The paper snowflakes of Halloween decorations → Cobwebs
8. A season of change → Autumn
10. Witches, ghouls and \_\_\_\_\_ → Ghosts
12. A fall time chore → Raking
14. Filled with spooky looking trees and trails → Wheaton Woods
16. A movie that's also a spell → Hocus Pocus
18. Drew Berrymore should not have answered the phone → Scream
20. Swiper no swiping! → Fox
22. A seasonal sleep → Hibernation
24. Get a 360 view to see WHO is there → Owl
26. A good fashion trend, not just on the farm → Overalls
28. Never let them walk in front of you → Black Cat
30. Flowers blooming around this time of year → Annuals

## Wheaton Wire Crossword

BY LILY MAGUIRE



### Across

3. Apparently now there's a creepy robot?
6. The King of writing horror
8. He does not say "blah, blah blah!"
11. Be careful of the full moon
13. 1994, 1978 and 1666 according to Netflix
14. Not to be confused with Edward Scissorhands
17. Which project was about the witch?
20. The bloodiest Prom Queen
21. Theme of crossword since it's one day after Halloween
23. Humans should not be turned into bugs. Please never do that again. Why are there three of them? Stop this.
24. Who can? The \_\_\_\_\_ can!
25. The worst Friday to ever Friday
26. Florence in a culty-cult-cult
27. This family is seeing double

### Down

1. Jamie Lee Curtis slays, but doesn't actually do the slaying
2. Please don't put your hand in the sewers
4. "Jason \_\_\_\_\_" (Not Derulo)
5. That creepy doll
7. How many have they made now? They just keep coming
9. "Here... comes... Johnny!"
10. You wear clothes, he wears skin. Yeesh.
12. Scary Saint Patrick's Icon
15. A serial killer for serial killers
16. That other creepy doll
18. She'll feed ya to the alligators
19. He wears a mask, but we all know who he is
21. Head rolling fun
22. Apparently you don't actually bury animals here
25. The scariest person at church
26. Don't go in Octavia Spencer's basement

Look for the answers in the next issue!