

# The Wheaton Wire

Volume LVI

Wednesday, April 17, 2024

Issue #7

## Norton experiences the rumblings of an earthquake, glimpses of a solar eclipse

BY ELSIE CARSON

Last week Norton saw two rare natural phenomena: an earthquake and a solar eclipse. Neither were very showstopping, but they certainly provided an interruption from daily life, if not a mild sense of awe.

### Earthquake

On April 5 at 10:23 a.m., a 4.8 magnitude earthquake originated in Tewksbury, New Jersey. The earthquake sent tremors up the East Coast, from Maryland all the way up to Boston. Though some parts of New Jersey were close to the epicenter and sustained some damage, Norton experienced only very light shaking. As Abbie Cramer '26 said, "I didn't feel a thing."

Norton Deputy Fire Chief Michael Wilson said in an email to The Wheaton Wire that Norton does "not have protocols specific to earthquakes, but we do have protocols for building collapses and other emergencies that would result from an earthquake. As I am sure you are aware, earthquakes are extremely rare in this part of the country, but we always need to prepare for the unexpected."

Wilson is right that earthquakes are rare in the Northeast, which lacks the major fault lines of the West Coast. According to Wheaton geology professor Geoffrey Collins, most earthquakes on the East Coast "are caused by the gradual settling of the ancient mountain range that we live on top of. Kinda like the random pops and groans of an old house."

"300 million years ago most of the East Coast was in the middle of a Himalaya-scale mountain range — earthquakes would have been common and strong back then — and it's been eroding and settling ever since."

### Solar Eclipse on Campus

Gracie Beach '24 describes the scene on campus on the day of the eclipse as looking "like Woodstock 1969 in the Dimple," with everyone crowded around on blankets and chairs to see the partial solar eclipse. The Boston area got roughly 93% coverage, which, as Beach put it, meant that "not much happened... it got a little dark and a little cold, but nothing crazy happened with the lighting."

Still, Beach and Aidan Connor '24 said the event brought the campus together. "So many people I know said their professors let them out early to go to experience the eclipse," said Connor, who also noted that the weather was another upside of the day.

"It brought people together and allowed everyone to go outside and just have fun and enjoy the warm weather. And the eclipse itself was cool," Connor said.

Beach and Connor watched the eclipse from lower campus, on the Outdoors Haus roof with some of their housemates and friends. Beach said that from the roof she could hear whoops and cheers echo across campus when the moon covered the sun.

"There were people out on the soccer field throwing frisbees, and I saw a group of three women wearing long skirts holding hands and running in a circle as it was happening," Beach said about the scene from the roof.

### Traveling to the Path of Totality

John Morris '24 decided that he wanted to be in the path of totality, where he could see the full effects of the solar eclipse. On Sunday night, he, his girlfriend, and four friends loaded into his car and joined over 150,000 other people to view the complete eclipse in Vermont. Vermont, Maine, and parts of New Hampshire were all states in the path of totality.

"I'm not a scientist, but I know that we're the perfect distance from a star that life can survive on this planet. So to watch something very, very slowly come between us and the sun, to slowly block out the light and the warmth, to watch the color drained from reality" Morris said. He paused. "I don't know. I don't know the words for it. Maybe grounding. Just to realize how reliant we are upon the sun."

Morris said it was a worthwhile event to skip class for, and a "very human experience."

Another human experience was driving in traffic on the way home. It took him and his friends eight hours to get from Vermont to Boston, something many eclipse travelers experienced.

"It was equally as human that we all gathered and watched the sun disappear as it was that we all got stuck in traffic on the way home," Morris said.



Photo courtesy of Casey Drury

Wheaton College students gathered in the Dimple to watch the eclipse.



Photo courtesy of Ajahni Jackson via the Wheaton College Instagram  
The solar eclipse as seen from Wheaton College, MA.



Photo courtesy of Emmett Anderson.  
The solar eclipse, as seen from Lake Champlain, VT.

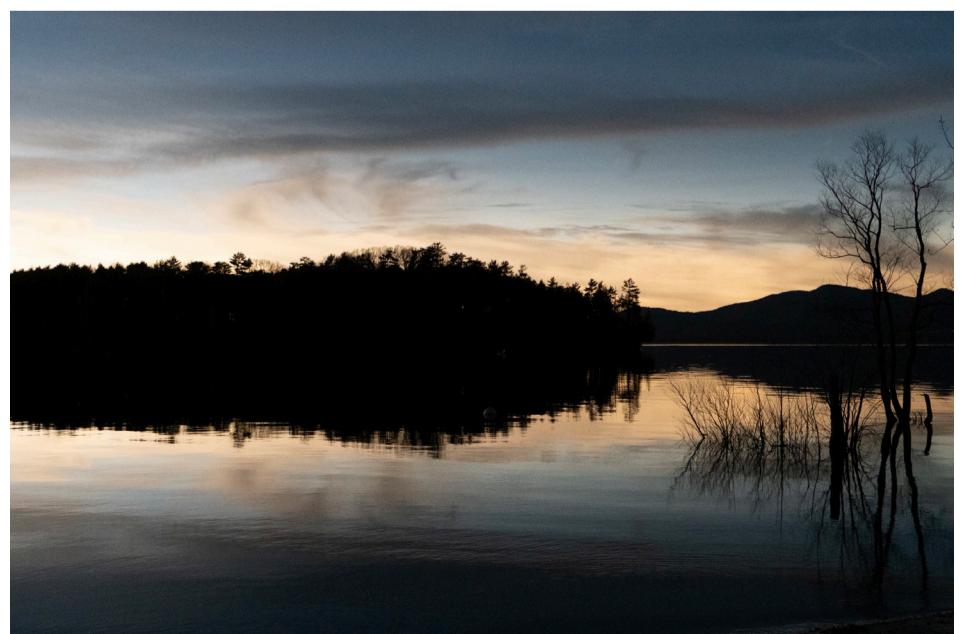


Photo courtesy of Emmett Anderson.  
Lake Champlain, VT, when darkness fell during the eclipse.

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## Letter from the editor

Dear Readers,

It is with great pleasure that I present to you the seventh edition of this year's Wheaton Wire. I sit and write with the privilege of feeling like nothing has happened recently, aside from the eclipse.

My journey was all-consuming but worth it. Like many other Wheaton Students, I traveled to the Path of Totality- two of my colleagues Elsie Carson-Holt and Keira Whitaker documented their experience. I brought two Wheaton friends to my home in central Maine on Sunday, and then Monday morning we made a one hour and 15 minute trek north to Jackman, Maine, which happens to be my father's hometown. The town of Skowhegan suddenly appeared more like Skowhegas and the winding Bingham Hills I only saw as barren my whole life held bumper-to-bumper traffic. Luckily, with my family connections, I was able to park in Jackman. We sat, we drank, we made new friends, and we saw the motel

lot go dark. And then we went back. What was supposed to be a two hour drive ended up being almost six. To pass the time, we listened to the audiobook of Stephen Kings' Misery, a book I had been interested in for some time. We inched our way to the town of Moscow. Marley asked me why it's called Moscow and for some reason, I made up a complete lie of a story. I would hate to disappoint her with the fact that no one really knows why Maine has towns named after European cities (with the exception of New Sweden).

As bumpers grew closer and my Kia Soul came to a stop I started to feel the soreness of the continuous driving. My neck was hunched over and my head ached and a stinging sensation shot down the back of my right leg every time I had to hit the break, which was often. And, my friends, God bless them, are from New York City and therefore don't have licenses. I started to feel the pain of Paul Sheldon, the protagonist in Misery, stuck in a cycle of pain, but

in my case inflicted by my lime green Kia Soul.

I get desperate and ask Olivia and Marley about their driving experience—after all, we are in no-man's land. Marley has a permit and can legally drive with us in the car, but has only practiced in parking lots. The crowded roads resembled New York more than Maine, and my leg is starting to fall asleep, so I give Marley the wheel. And, for an hour, the girl did great! She had that moxie to her.

Eventually, the traffic eases up and poor Marley who has never gone over 35 mph is behind the wheel on one of the most dangerous roads in northern Maine: the Bingham Hills. It's dark out and she starts to worry the people behind us are suspicious of her capabilities. After several failed attempts to pull over into the tiny rest areas, Marley eases on the brakes and squeezes towards the metal railing separating us from the placid waters of Wyman Lake. I wonder, how could an extension of the rushing Kennebec River



Photo courtesy of Madison Morin

Marley Reedy Watches Eclipse.

be so still? I take the wheel back and speed off.

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

BY RYLEIGH SEUFERT

**Aries**

(March 20-April 19)

Happy Birthday, queens! (shout-out Henry, Jessie, & Sophie)

**Taurus**

(April 20-May 20)

Roll around in the grass or something, you look like you need it.

**Gemini**

(May 21-June 20)

Take a lesson in communicating.

**Cancer**

(June 21-July 22)

Deep breaths, the semester is almost over.

**Leo**

(July 23-August 22)

Believe it or not, the world doesn't revolve around you!

**Virgo**

(August 23-September 22)

Take it down a notch.

**Libra**

(September 23-October 22)

Changing ur bio that quickly is so funny. Poser.

**Scorpio**

(October 23-November 21)

They should start paying you to have mood swings.

**Sagittarius**

(November 22-December 20)

So brave of you to have that amount of confidence!

**Capricorn**

(December 21-January 19)

Don't forget to appreciate the art around you.

**Aquarius**

(January 20-February 17)

Don't leave someone's iMessage game hanging.

**Pisces**

(February 18-March 19)

If you're going to look for drama, at least take accountability for your actions.

## SGA crisis of participation

BY DEREN SOZER

Wheaton's Student Government Association (SGA) is currently going through a period of sparse student participation. In the most recent SGA elections held in March 2024, many Class Council and Executive Board Chair positions did not have any candidates running, while many others had candidates running unopposed. This crisis of participation has also reached SGA's Executive Boards, organizations which go largely unnoticed but play an important role in campus life nonetheless.

SGA Executive Boards are a part of Wheaton's student government that helps student voices in different aspects of life on campus. They are led by a chair who is elected by the student body and also serves as a voting member of the SGA Senate where they advocate for the student body in their boards aspect of Wheaton life. Boards fill out the rest of their ranks, including positions similar to those of most club executive boards and members at large, by recruiting from the student body.

The boards will hold regular meetings to discuss issues that fall into their area of responsibility and work to resolve questions, comments, and complaints from students. Executive Boards may also liaise with various Wheaton faculty and administrative organizations to advocate the interests of students.

Existing SGA Executive Boards include Accessibility Board, Intercultural Board, Sexuality and Gender Identity, Education Council, Sustainability Board, Student Alumni Association, and College Hearing Board.

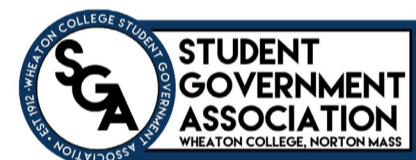


Photo courtesy of Wheaton SGA  
Logo of Wheaton College MA SGA.

Some SGA Executive Boards are better known than others, but many of them operate with only a few members, making their work difficult and frustrating their leaders. The Student Alumni Association and Education Council, for example, which coordinate networks between students and alumni and certain academic issues for students respectively, both struggle with the numbers of people involved on their boards.

Even if students do not want to commit to involvement with an Executive Board, Education Council Co-Chair Eleanor Swindler urges students to make their voices heard. "My greatest piece of advice, as intimidating as it may be, is to go to the Senate," she said.

Senate meetings take place every Tuesday from 5:30-7:30 p.m. in Emerson Faculty Dining and are open to the student body. Besides providing a great opportunity for students to hear about what is going on on their campus, students can also ask questions or make suggestions. Core Four and Executive Boards also usually hold open hours for students to come in and talk.

SGA is itching for more student participation. Education Council Co-Chair Sara Milesi highly encourages students to get in contact, saying, "All you have to do is email any executive position holding member and they will immediately get back to you!"

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## Sexual Assault Awareness Month is underway

BY SAM FERLAND AND MARGUERITE BARTLETT

Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM) is now underway with several events and discussions taking place at Wheaton during April.

The Sexual Misconduct and Assault Resource Team (SMART) has an education program on campus that will be holding several events during SAAM to create awareness about sexual misconduct and assault, specifically on college campuses. This is a topic of severe importance, as sexual assault is a common problem on college campuses across the United States and the world.

According to the Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network (RAINN), an American is sexually assaulted every 68 seconds, with college women aged 18 to 24 facing a three times higher risk than woman out of that age range. Recognizing the significance of sexual assault prevention, protection, and support on college campuses is crucial. RAINN reports that 26.4% of female and 6.8% of male undergraduate students experience rape or sexual assault.

When asked about SAAM, an anonymous student rape survivor from Wheaton said, “SAAM has become a significant source of support for me after my assault. It has given me the courage to gradually open up to more people. I have wanted to speak up numerous times but was always too scared. The statistics weigh heavily on me knowing how

many people are unable to get justice. Despite the challenges, I have hope for others. I hope that one day, if another girl feels lost and alone, the efforts of SMART and SAAM will pay off, and they will know where to seek help.”

She emphasized that being raped is something one cannot forget, and resources like SMART make a difference. If there was one piece of advice she wished she had known it would be to “not be afraid to speak up. It will never be your fault and never lose hope.”

The SMART Program, run out of the Title IX Office, also brings together the SMART Team. The team is an inclusive group consisting of faculty, staff, external partners, and students who advise other students about campus outreach opportunities, identify resources, report options on and off campus, and promote education aiming to create a safer environment at Wheaton.

“I think Wheaton’s resources specifically in regards to emergency information are very helpful. Wheaton provides confidential medical care regardless if you are ready to report, which is very important. If you are ready to report but want to stay anonymous, there are resources for that too which I really appreciate,” said student Emily Huntington.

There will be at least 10 events throughout April, including a month-long toiletries drive for a new shelter being opened by New Hope. New Hope is a sexual assault resource center with a

24/7 hotline, whose main office is located in Attleboro, Mass.

Intake Training and Prevention Coordinator, Dayna Vachon Wheeler, is running the toiletries drive to help gain materials for families affiliated with New Hope, with a donation box in Balfour.

SAAM started the month with a resource and information table in Emerson Dining Hall regarding the events this April, hosted by Vachon Wheeler and Title IX Coordinator Caraline Somerville.

The Title IX Office and SMART’s education program promote work to prevent misconduct as well as educate students on Wheaton policies that comply with Title IX, which is a federal law that prohibits sex discrimination in education environments. The program includes guidance for schools on how to respond to reports of sexual and gender-related misconduct. Title IX was first outlined in the Education Amendments of 1972 and has been amended many times since then.

SMART has begun a transition, following the end of a federal grant offered by the Violence Against Women Office. The grant funded new responsibilities and opportunities for the former SMART Coordinator position.

“The old SMART Coordinator position was part of a grant, and our time with that grant ran out earlier this year. The College has used that opportunity to invest in this space and fulfill needs where the previous role was more limited. This investment

will help Dayna’s position better meet the needs of our community on individual, organizational, and all-community levels,” said Somerville.

The former SMART Coordinator role has transitioned into Vachon Wheeler’s current role of Intake, Training, and Prevention Coordinator. Among other expansions, the new role allows her to have report intake sessions with students who were previously not permitted in the grant-funded role.

Part of Vachon Wheeler’s role also includes community outreach and supports students conducting events such as Denim Day and Take Back the Night, both taking place on April 24.

Denim Day, which takes place on the last Wednesday in April, originated as a campaign in the 1990s in response to an Italian Supreme Court ruling involving an 18-year-old girl who was raped by her driving instructor.

“Part of my role is being able to highlight these events that [student groups] are doing during SAAM and be a part of it. I’m happy to sit there, be at that event and support that happening,” said Vachon Wheeler.

There are numerous student groups involved in SAAM including Emerson House, Tulip House, Sexual Health Advocacy Group (SHAG), and TWAP.

Somerville, Vachon Wheeler, and the SMART Team encourage students to reach out in need of resources and information.

## Wheaton’s bathroom issue

BY KEIRA WHITAKER

On Friday, March 22, Residential Life Coordinator Kheldhe Bourque sent out an email to Clark Hall second floor residents concerning reports from custodial staff regarding the condition of the bathroom.

The email included information about “Custodial staff constantly finding toilets clogged by waste, menstruation products, and excessive toilet paper usage. One of the more concerning finds was that one of the shower stalls had feces in it which had been cleaned and sanitized.”

When asked about thoughts of the email, Clark second floor resident Deren Sozer said, “I was a little surprised about the extent of the mess that was being described. I think I exclaimed out loud when I read the word feces.”

The second floor in Clark is not the only bathroom that is having problems with people who don’t tidy up after themselves.

One anonymous resident who lives on the fourth floor mentioned that they have seen unflushed toilets, vomit on the walls and toilet, human ejaculates with pubic hair on toilet seats, and shavings left on sinks.

Clark Hall is not the only dorm hall with residents not cleaning the bathroom.

A Pine Hall resident said, “I’ve seen people leaving pee on the rim of the toilet, blood on the toilet and/or floor, the sinks always having puddles of water all around them, trash in the sink

or on the counter, personal products on the counter, hair in the sink, hair in the showers, people not flushing. Like people on my floor do not flush half the time. I have gone into the bathroom and none of the toilets were flushed. It’s nasty.”

Meadows East Hall resident Gracie Healey said, “My largest issues have been facial hair clippings left all over the sink, splat toothpaste on the sinks and mirror, and bodily fluids on the toilet seats. It’s just really gross honestly and really inconsiderate. Cleaning those things up should be common sense, and is also just the bare minimum of respect in a shared bathroom space. I genuinely wonder how some people act at home to make them leave things such as this in a public area.”

The restroom cleanliness issues do not seem related to the regularity of custodial cleaning practices. When asked how often residential hall’s bathrooms are cleaned, Bourque said that it was a daily occurrence.

A different Clark resident said, “People don’t flush or vomit all over the stall, and poor [cleaning staff member] has to clean it. The cleaning staff isn’t the problem, it’s other students.”

If students want cleaner restrooms, they must realize that bathroom upkeep is a shared responsibility. “Every student is responsible for their own cleanliness and hygiene and the responsibility to keep the buildings clean is not solely the job of

custodial staff but the students as well” said Bourque .

### Update:

Posters were placed up in Clark 2nd Hall’s bathroom on Monday, April 1, to combat the unhygienic bathroom conditions after a menstruation pad was found clogged in the toilet. One of the poster’s contained an alien trying to clean up a toilet with green splat stains on it and a message stating, “If you sprinkle when you tinkle please wipe the seat.”

The second poster contained what not to do with menstrual products and where to put them. The message stated “Please do not throw menstrual products down the toilet! You can either wrap it in paper and throw it in the garbage or put it in the bin next to the toilet paper. Thank You!”

Two weeks ago Residential Life Coordinator Kheldhe Bourque sent out an email to Clark Hall second floor residents regarding information about the unsanitary conditions of the bathroom. It seems that residents of Clark second are still having a hard time understanding how to keep the bathroom sanitary.

When emailed about potential new Residential Life policies regarding this issue, Tim Jordan, Assistant Dean of Residential Life, said, “We already have policies in place (see the lewd conduct policy) to address inappropriate conduct in the bathrooms, and are actively investigating

some of the more concerning issues that have come up in regards to the Clark Restrooms. The challenge we often face with bathrooms is that the actions occur without any witnesses, and although we have anonymous reporting options on campus such as the livesafe app we have not received any information to follow up on yet. This is less of a policy issue and more of an enforcement issue at the moment.”

The Lewd Conduct Policy is in Section V of Wheaton’s Community Standards, which highlights a list of behaviors intended to represent the types of acts that count as infringements of the standards.

The Lewd Conduct Policy states: “Any conduct that is lewd, indecent, or disorderly, including but not limited to public urination, public defecation, streaking, stripping, solicitation of a stripper, and/or participation in acts of a sexual nature publicly or in the presence of others that do not meet established harassment thresholds under the Sexual and Gender-based Misconduct Policies.”

Meghan Lambert, President of SGA, was asked if she had any plans to work towards creating cleaner bathrooms. “My committee, student life and services, received lots of concerns about this issue. We actually just worked with Facilities and added spray bottles of cleaner to every academic building bathroom on campus. This is the first and easiest step we took in addressing this issue,” Lambert said.

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## The crisis of meaning: The call to action in our personal lives

BY EMMA KIERNAN

This article is part of a column that addresses Generation Z's mental health crisis by calling attention to societal attitudes that may cause us to lose sight of meaning.

As we spend our days on our small, peaceful campus here at Wheaton, we have the blessing and privilege of participating in the journey of higher education. And yet, the world suffers around us.

Israelis and Palestinians endure violence that has lasted for generations. Refugee crises deteriorate countries in Africa and the Middle East; governments in many parts of the world violently oppress their citizens. Meanwhile, America has its own innumerable legal and social problems, constantly fighting to reconcile the nation's principles and values with its past and current failures.

It can be surreal to think of such immense suffering while living at Wheaton. But as I go about my life, it seems obvious that we do not escape suffering here either. Everyone faces their own battles. Maybe a loved one is in poor health or passing away, or the cost of school living is a strenuous financial burden. From strained relationships with family to alienation and struggling to maintain fulfilling friendships, to keeping up with schoolwork and dealing with poor mental health; through all this, we try to figure out who we are and how we belong in our community.

Sometimes these struggles are unspoken. The painful complexities of the lives of the people around us remain hidden. The suffering we bear witness to most often is our own and that of the people immediately closest to us.

But increasingly, people wear their pain on their sleeve. Casual jokes and comments about family trauma are commonplace. Students find ways to relate class topics to the struggles of their own lives, sharing profoundly painful personal experiences as part of class participation. This likely stems from a cultural shift in attitude towards mental health, to "normalize" our struggles and find connection and healing through sharing it with others. It's not clear whether this public "normalization" does the good it's supposed to for the person sharing or the people around them. Regardless, we find ourselves in close proximity to the suffering of friends and strangers alike. Psychologist and public figure Jordan Peterson often talks about human psychology as it relates to purpose and meaning. In one of his lectures, he discusses how we process our negative emotions:

"If you have a memory that's more than about 18 months old,

and when the memory comes to mind it still produces negative emotions, it means that you haven't fully delved into or understood all the significance of the events that are encapsulated in that emotion for reconstructing the aims of your life.

"So, something bad happened to you and it froze you. It turned you into a prey animal and produced a powerful emotional response, and the emotional response is to freeze and to avoid and to not go there again." I feel like I witness - and more than I'd like to admit, partake in - this frozen state of being. Sometimes it's easier to diminish the significance of our personal inadequacies than to fully understand the toll they take on us and the people around us.

Additionally, we often feel justified in putting aside our basic incompetence in handling our own problems by redirecting ourselves toward solving larger social problems. Constantly, we are called to take action against societal injustice. We are told we need to solve tremendous social issues from the top down. The government structure is unjust, and we need to fix it. We need to decide which policies will help disadvantaged or destitute people, and make decisive political statements that demonstrate we are "on the right side."

Simultaneously, most of us barely have a grasp on basic economics and the structure of our government. Most of us have barely lived long enough to see the effects of government policies passed before we were born, but think we know the policies we ought to pass today. Most of us haven't sorted out our family lives, we don't treat the people in our day-to-day lives with enough compassion and respect. Most of us are quick to judge harshly and jump to conclusions.

So why do we think we know what's best for our country, or even the world when we don't know what's best for ourselves? Why do we think we can answer the call to action against widespread poverty, injustice, and inequality when we have yet to answer the call to action in our personal lives?

The call to social justice will be present throughout our lives. But so will the call to fight our battles against anxiety, depression, fear, and selfishness; the call to strive for bravery and perseverance in our day-to-day problems; the call to treat ourselves with respect and love others better.

In answering the call to action in our personal lives each day, perhaps we could find the meaning in those battles and successes that we have abandoned as we pretend to fight the larger political and social battles that we barely understand; and in doing so, better prepare ourselves to face those challenges competently when called.

## Happiness is a buttered biscuit

BY JOHN MORRIS

Last month, I ventured to my favorite restaurant in the greater Norton area for a little St. Patrick's Day brunch. I'm going to withhold from mentioning their name for two reasons: One, it's hard enough to get a table at 10:30 on a Sunday without the sweaty, hungry hordes of Wheaton College students swarming the place, and two, I just don't want to see you people there while I'm enjoying my breakfast. I just want a life of peace, and the general populous of Wheaton College has an incredible talent for preventing that. If you want to find this place, I urge you to get out of your dorm and explore. Drive if you can, walk if you must, and if all else fails, steal a car and live life in the fast lane.

This restaurant, which we'll call Paradise, is, hands-down, the best restaurant in the area. Tucked away at the end of an unassuming strip of shops, Paradise feels like you're entering a completely different world, a home away from home. Even on the busiest of mornings, the atmosphere is warm and comfortable. Local art populates the walls, all for sale with new pieces rotating through. It's clear a great deal of time was spent picking out the silverware and the dishes, with light blue swirled ceramic plates and dark red mugs that feel like they were pulled out of your aunt's cabinet (in the best way possible). And the food? Forget about it. I've eaten at every restaurant in the area, a product of both my curiosity and boredom over the past four years, and this is the best spot around. I've eaten at Paradise upwards of fifteen times, always getting something different, and I've yet to have a meal that was anything less than stellar. Never before in this Pilgrim-ass state have I had food filled with such flavor and made with such love that I've been compelled to write about it and recommend it to everyone I know (Except y'all). This brings us back to St. Patrick's Day.

When I pulled into the parking lot outside Paradise, I was delighted to see that they had two specials, one of which was Birria Biscuits and White Cheddar Gravy. Now, I'm a simple man, and sure as God made green apples, I'll order some Biscuits and Gravy. They're the best breakfast food. Sorry. Bacon and Eggs? Get a personality. Pancakes? Grow up. Bagels? Unless they were boiled in some New York City sewer sludge, I don't want that anywhere near my morning. But Biscuits and Gravy? Warm, fluffy, buttery biscuits covered in rich, creamy, homemade sausage gravy? I'll worship at that altar any day of the week.

I immediately ordered the Biscuits and Gravy. I didn't

even bother to look at the menu, which features the stunning Breakfast Burrito, a killer plate of Chilaquiles, and hands-down the best Cubano I've ever had. I mean, what kind of crazy person puts pineapple on a Cubano? Let me tell you folks, it's life-changing. I could write endlessly about the wonders of Paradise's menu, but I'm trying to arrive at a larger point here.

The Biscuits and Gravy were, and I mean this, transcendent. Delicate, fluffy homemade biscuits smothered in rich, cheesy gravy, piled high with slow-roasted birria pork and a scattershot of cilantro and onion on top. They're the best Biscuits and Gravy I have ever had. When I cut into them, I was floored to discover that they had cut the biscuits open and buttered them before putting the gravy on top. Are you fucking kidding me? Do you know how much love and respect goes into a step like that? In a restaurant setting, every second counts, so the fact that the chef took the time to make the meal that much more enjoyable shows that a tremendous amount of love was put into making that food. I'm not ashamed to admit that I teared up as I was eating it. It simply dawned on me that I didn't know the last time I had eaten a meal made with such love. I haven't been home in months so I can't say I've had one of my mother's tremendous home-cooked meals, and most of the home-cooked meals I've eaten recently have been made by me, and it's impossible to taste the love in your own cooking.

I don't exactly believe in all that "love language" nonsense, but if my love had a language, it would have a lot to do with food. I feel as though my time spent watching my mother cook dinner has taught me the value and importance of a home-cooked meal, and that a meal doesn't have to be intricate and extravagant to be made with love. Something as simple as a grilled cheese sandwich has the ability to satisfy all your earthly and spiritual needs if it's made with love. And, believe me, you can taste the love in food. Anyone who says otherwise has not had a good meal in a while, and I urge you to find one as soon as possible. Honestly, I can't blame people who have forgotten how wonderful food can be. Living in Norton, where the only options for dinner are often either Chase or fast food, it's hard to remember that food is meant to nourish us, not just fuel us.

Fast food joints especially are responsible for this mindset shift. Cheap ingredients, awful conditions, preservatives and additives galore, and processed foods are all combined to make something that barely resembles real food. This is, of course, not

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## Happiness is a buttered biscuit

Continued from previous page...

surprising. The very nature of fast food is that it's quick and, ideally, cheap. Anyone who has labored over anything for someone they love will tell you that the words "quick and cheap" do not exist in those recipes. The problem is that these fast food chains are often the only options in small towns, and even if local wonders like Paradise exist, they're often closed long before people end their work day and are looking for something to eat.

Food from real restaurants, from cheap mom-and-pop shops to swanky high-end establishments, is made with purpose and respect for the consumer. When you buy a sandwich from a restaurant, you can almost always be sure of what you're eating, of what you are exposing your body and mind to. Of course, you won't be as sure as you would be if you made the meal yourself, but it's unreasonable to assume that everyone has the time and money to cook food for themselves every night. This is where fast food steps in, providing people with an irresistibly easy option that is sure to satisfy their pleasure centers. Due to the very nature of their existence, the underpaid teenager making your Filet-o-Fish (which is gas, btw) is not making it with love, and no one is expecting them to. And the food they're serving you is aloof and shrouded in mystery. As Dissent Columnist Arun Gupta puts it, "A McDonald's burger can range over the planet, with meat from more than 100 different cattle reared in Brazil, Poland, Canada, and Australia compressed into a single patty." The food delivery systems created by these awful empires of grub and gruel have traded love for efficiency and have convinced us, much like a sketchy drug dealer you meet your freshman year, to put something in your body without knowing exactly what it is.

Speaking of awful empires of grub and gruel, let's talk about the dining at Wheaton. Not that the wonderful staff of Wheaton's dining halls do not try to make a nice meal for us each and every day, because God knows they work hard to feed us to our fullest. It's hard to make good, enriching food for 1,500 kids every day, and speaking as someone who makes the baked goods for Chase twice a week (with The Wheaton Wire puzzlemaster Lily Maguire), it's hard to find the enthusiasm to make something fun and exciting everyday. Oftentimes, the easiest and most cost-effective option is not going to be the most satisfying or exciting, and that's just a reality of producing food for over a thousand people every single day. To quote Elsie Carson '24, it's "possible to find nourishment but doesn't facilitate it.

You can't make mass amounts of food with care."

People love to complain about the food here at Wheaton, which is understandable. People are, by-and-large, picky eaters. It's a hard thing to reckon with, and people often don't want to admit to themselves that they are, in fact, fussy when it comes to what they eat. Students walk into Chase and expect something akin to a home-cooked meal for three meals a day, seven days a week, and that's just never going to happen. The Wheaton College dining staff works their damndest to make sure that everyone is fed and at least moderately happy with what they're given, and most people are too busy complaining about the food to acknowledge that. The undeniable truth of the matter is that people will complain about the food no matter how good it is. You can't please everybody. It's impossible to make food that satisfies everyone's cravings, dietary restrictions, and personal taste, so often, the simplistic and blandest option is the only feasible one. If you don't like the food at Chase, fine. It's not great. But you can do lots of things to make it better. Go to a few different stations, combine some shit, add some spices, and eat more than simply what is given to you. Unless you're a vegan or a vegetarian, you can really make Chase a worthwhile experience if you put in a little work.

However, I don't want to make it seem like I think the dining experience at Wheaton is flawless. I think an aspect of Wheaton's dining plan worth complaining about is how it differentiates between what food is able to be paid for by a meal swipe versus Lyons Bucks, which hold about as much value as monopoly money the second you step off campus. It's undeniable that the best food at Wheaton is hidden behind a Lyons Buck paywall, which makes sense. It's a lot harder to make a grilled-to-order cheeseburger from Balfour than it is to shovel

out 50 steamed hamburger patties at Chase, so it makes sense that Wheaton would try and make a little money from that extra work. Wheaton, like all colleges, is a business, and Aramark, which provides Wheaton with its food, is, to put it politely, ravenously hungry for profit. But the best businesses respect their customers, and it seems like Wheaton and Aramark have forgotten that tried-and-true business practice over the past couple of years.

Making people pay for nicer food means that you can make the food you give out for a meal swipe as cheap as possible. There's no economic incentive to make the food at Chase better because people, especially underclassmen, are reliant upon it and are essentially forced to eat what is given to them. This problem is much more evident for people with dietary restrictions, who are often restricted to one option. And if that option sucks? So be it. If places like Balfour and Emerson, which feature more diverse and flavorful food options, remained open for longer hours or were able to be paid for with a meal swipe, students would have more agency over what they can eat, and would probably be more satisfied. Given that we are paying for the food here, it would make sense to provide students with

as many options as possible.

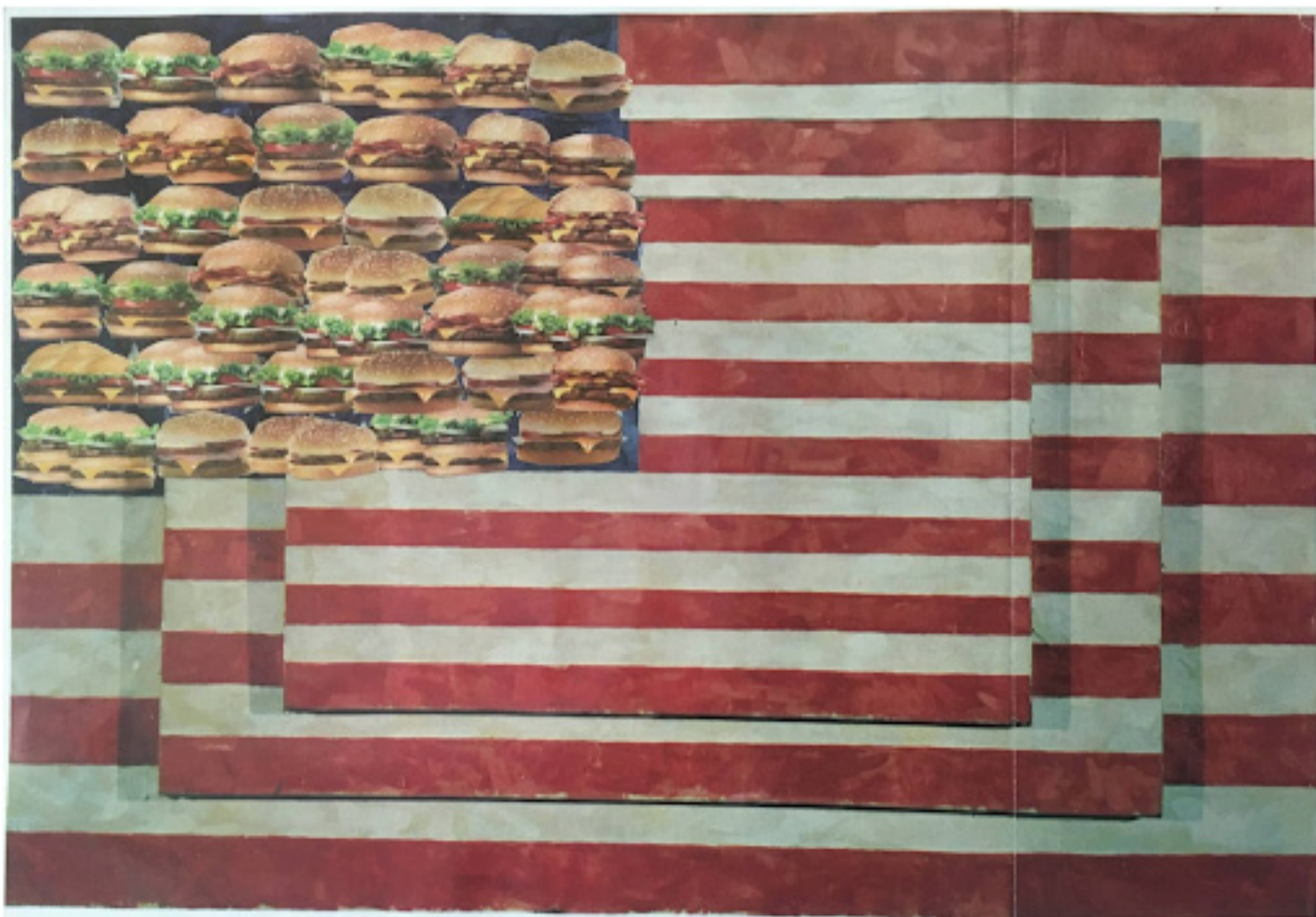
Again, all of this is not meant to imply that the food at Chase, or at any of the dining halls, is not made with love. The care and effort put into making the food by the staff is evident and should be noted, but it's hard to notice when the tools and ingredients they're given to make the food with are, to be frank, subpar. The dining administration, like all administrations, likes to cut corners to increase profits and save money. This makes sense. All businesses like money. That's their whole deal. But maybe we could keep the dining halls open later and provide better food to all students on all meal plans instead of spending \$12,000 on lobster every year? I'm not a business major (thank god), but that seems like a better use of our money.

I urge you to be conscious of what you consume. If you don't like Chase? Experiment. Throw some shit together and see what sticks. Put some spices in a to-go box and cook with them back at your dorm. Tell the administration what food you like and what dining halls you like and beg them to listen. And please, for your own sake, find Paradise. I'll tell you where and what it is if you ask, but not until I graduate next month. Then it's all yours.



Photo courtesy of "Paradise" Yelp reviews.

A dish from the "Paradise" restaurant.



"No country for Veg men" collage.

Photo courtesy of Carlos Schongut

## On violent imagery and Civil War

BY ELSIE CARSON

I saw Alex Garland's *Civil War* with my friends because the movie seemed like an entertaining, if self-serious warning about how America could descend into a civil war. The trailer featured cool shots of the White House getting blown up, and as *Vulture* film critic Bilge Ebiri said in his review "Americans sure do love to see their institutions destroyed on screen."

*Civil War* was not that movie—what the trailer and press junket failed to relay is that *Civil War* is not a movie about polarization in America but about the nature of political violence, violent imagery and the moral tradeoffs of war photography. The film does deliver in its depictions of American institutions getting destroyed on screen, but examines why audiences want to see that.

*Civil War* begins at the end of the titular affair, as a fascist president played by Nick Offerman is about to surrender to the Western Forces, an inexplicable alliance between Texas and California. There are also several other factions of Americans fighting each other, such as the Florida Alliance. In this setting, we follow hardened photojournalist Lee Smith, played by the absolutely incredible Kirsten Dunst, fellow war reporter Joel, and veteran journalist Sammy working for Reuters and "what's left of the *New York Times*." Along the way, they pick up Jessie, a wannabe photojournalist that idolizes Lee, and convinces Joel to let her tag along after Lee saves her from a protest that gets out of hand in wartorn Brooklyn. They begin their road trip from New York to DC in order to get an interview and photo with the president before he surrenders and is killed by the Western Forces.

As they make their way

south, they encounter truly horrendous visions of what war actually looks like: two men strung up, still alive and being tortured in an abandoned car wash, mass graves, refugee camps, suicide bombings. At every turn people are shot point blank and horrific poverty abounds. The violence is at once nonsensical and calculated, and Lee and Jessie capture it all without hesitation or sense of emotion to their subjects.

*Civil War* shows its protagonist reporters to be professionals deeply dedicated to their mission, but it also doesn't turn a blind eye to the fact that at the end of the day, in the midst of endless suffering, Lee and Jessie still want a good photo. It is undeniable that photojournalists are needed in combat zones to capture the reality of the violence we inflict on each other. But *Civil War* also suggests that the person capturing that violence, even if it is for the good of the public, runs the risk of diminishing the humanity of the subject. In the car wash scene, Lee poses the torturer with his victims when she takes their photo, when Jessie shows her an image she took of a soldier taking his dying breath, she responds by praising the composition of the shot.

What it means to capture and consume violent imagery has never been more relevant. Going on your phone or turning on your television means that you may see someone dying in a mass shooting or terrorist attack or police killing. Videos of George Floyd being murdered, photos of Abu Ghraib torture victims, of the 9/11 falling man, these are just a few examples, all of which propelled people to action. But also, on some level it is profoundly unsettling, that the existence of those photos and videos means that someone, somewhere, saw death or suffering and then captured it

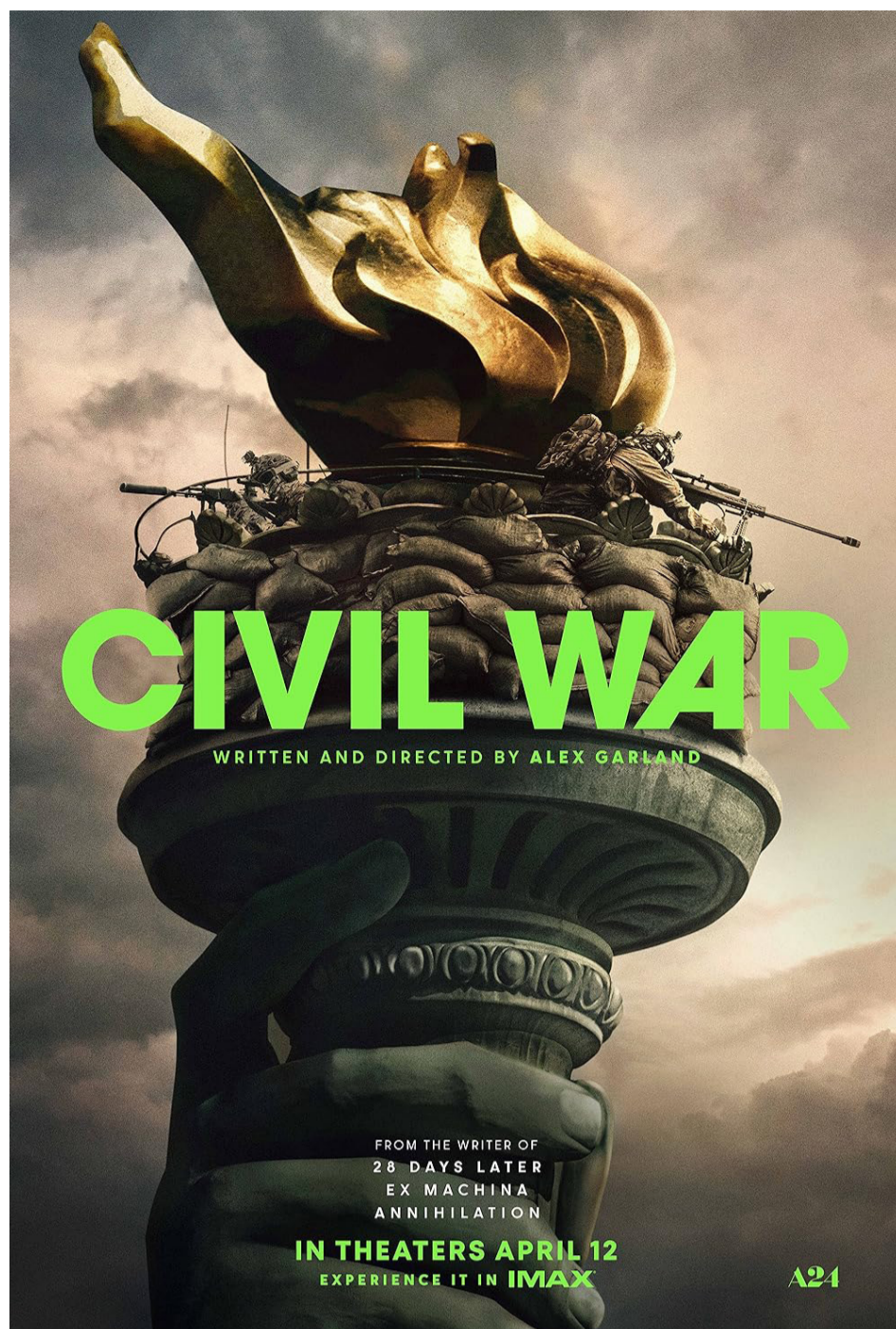


Photo courtesy of IMDb

Alex Garland's *Civil War* movie poster.

on camera to show others.

The *Washington Post* ran a series in November titled "Terror on Repeat," which featured graphic images of mass shootings done by gunmen wielding AR-15s. In doing so, it broke an unwritten media rule that bloody photos of mass shootings should not be published in mainstream news outlets. The executive editor of *The Washington Post* defended their decision to run the pictures, saying that doing so advanced the public good because "most Americans have no way to understand the full scope of an AR-15's destructive power or the extent of the trauma inflicted on victims, survivors and first responders when a shooter uses this weapon on people." There is an argument to be made that it's time that the American public sees up close and personal the consequences

of our politicians voting again and again not to restrict the sale of guns. As journalism professor Susan Linfield said in a *New York Times* opinion piece about the issue, perhaps "the nation should see exactly how an assault rifle pulverizes the body of a 10-year-old."

Most of the parts of *Civil War* that are striking are so because they are familiar. Images of Ferguson in 2014, of the Black Lives Matter Protests of 2020, of bodies strewn on the ground after a gunman in a mall or music festival or elementary school or church opened fire all echo the political unrest and violence that we see in movies like *Civil War*. What *Civil War* does differently is that it forces the viewer to see that we don't have to wonder what it would be like to see contemporary America as a war zone—we already know.

## Former Wheaton College lacrosse player charged with sexual assault

BY ELSIE CARSON

Oliver La Du, 22, a former lacrosse player for Wheaton College, has pleaded not guilty to sexually assaulting and choking a Wheaton women's lacrosse player during September of 2021.

According to *The Boston Globe* La Du "entered his plea in Attleboro District Court to two counts of indecent assault and battery on a person aged 14 or older and one count of strangulation or suffocation, records show" on Tuesday,

March 26.

La Du was a sophomore at the time of the alleged assault, and the victim was a freshman. He was released on personal recognizance (meaning he was released without bail, but signed a written promise to return to appear in court) following his arraignment in Attleboro District Court and is due back on June 7.

The police report states that the alleged assault happened after La Du and the woman went to an off campus party on Sept. 10, 2021. The woman

alleges that following the party, La Du said "I'll walk you" once the party was over, and then led her towards his own dorm room, where he told her that he had to "go grab something" and that she "should come up" to his dorm room according to court. There, he allegedly locked the door and sexually assaulted her.

The woman went to Sturdy Memorial Hospital the next day and Norton police received a sexual assault evidence collection kit. She also spoke with Wheaton's Title

IX coordinator, but "became aware that La Du never completed a statement" about the alleged assault and had left the college," said *The Globe*. La Du transferred to University of Colorado, Boulder. In summer of 2023, the woman filed an official report with the Norton police.

A Wheaton College spokesperson said in an email to *The Wheaton Wire* that "the legal case involving two former students is active and, as such, the college is not in a position to provide comment."

Wednesday, April 17, 2024

## Dead media explorations

BY MICHAEL KANYON-GOLO

It may seem ridiculous now, but before our digital age of streaming and the internet, media used to exist in a physical format. Sure, you remember your parent's CD collection or an old VHS player. For those audiophiles out there, you may even have a vintage vinyl collection that you praise for its superior audio quality when even audio experts can't really tell the difference. But amongst the successful media formats, the ones that stood the test of time and memory, there are dozens of failed ventures, lost formats that served as stepping stones to greater endeavors. Here we will unearth these buried vestiges of an analog world, find out what they did well and why they died, before finally putting them to rest.

Our working definition of dead media comes from author Bruce Sterling, who started the Dead Media project in 1995. If media is "a device that transfers a message between human beings," then dead media is such a device that is no longer manufactured or used in any mainstream capacity.

The laserdisc is our first piece of dead media, released in the US in 1978 as a home video format called DiscoVision (groovy, right?). Each laserdisc looks like a record-sized DVD and could carry up to 64 minutes of video on each side. I actually own a laserdisc that I found in a thrift store underneath a pile of records. It's a special edition of the 1985 movie "Brazil" (which I would highly recommend if you are into unusual sci-fi stories with ingenious practical effects). Anyway, despite predating the DVD by about 20 years, LaserDisc offered high definition video, almost doubling the resolution of VHS, its contemporary competitor.

The unique format of LaserDisc also allowed for special features like freeze frame, variable slow motion, and reverse play, something other formats did not fully support. The freeze frame function could even reference each frame of a recording by number, which made it very popular in film schools and similar analytic settings.

The technology behind LaserDisc is called optical video recording, invented by David Paul Gregg and James Russell in 1963. At a basic level, it is an analog format consisting of small holes embedded in the disc surface to be read by the player's laser. "This hole, no hole" sequence (also called "pits and lands") was interpreted by the player and played back as a video.

As for the death of the la-

serdisc, there are multiple causes. For one, the players were expensive and unable to record TV broadcasts, which was a large draw for VHS. Its superior quality was only truly appreciated by videophiles and playback errors like crosstalk made it a less attractive alternative.

Despite its popularity in Japan and other wealthy Southeast Asian countries, LaserDisc never took off in the US. The last film on LaserDisc was released in Japan on Sept. 21, 2001, marking its death.

Laserdisc, we lay you to rest. Rest in Peace, Sept. 21, 2001.

Our next dead media format is an unusual one. Created by Circuit City in 1998, this format was marketed as an answer to DVD rentals, the words "no returns, no late fees" rampant in its marketing. Called DIVX (Digital Video Express) the format was essentially a specialized DVD with additional encryption and DRM (digital rights management) to ensure that discs could only be played at certain times. Every disc was initially playable for 48 hours after purchase, after which you could call in to add more time to your rental. After that period was up you were encouraged to recycle or discard the unplayable disc.

There was also a feature called DIVX silver, which allowed you to upgrade a normal DIVX disc by calling in and paying a larger fee.

The discs relied on unique barcodes embedded within them that told specialized DVD players with DIVX technology if the disc was playable or not. As you can expect, there was huge public pushback against this format. Environmental concerns were brought up and DVD retailers attacked the format for being anti-consumer and overly restrictive, calling DVD an open format in response.

Despite this, for a time DIVX was a popular format for new releases. Studios valued its stronger encryption, namely Dreamworks, 20th Century Fox, and Paramount Pictures, which all released new films exclusively on the DIVX format for a time after its release.

Similar to the other dead formats mentioned, the DIVX player was expensive, almost twice the price of a normal DVD player at release. This is speculation, but I doubt many people wanted to pay for a restrictive format that required a phone call to unlock your discs.

DIVX died a year later, on June 16, 1999, when the format was officially discontinued, hastening the decline of Circuit City.

We lay you to rest DIVX, and good riddance to your DRM.

Rest in Peace, June 16, 1999.

The last format is a personal favorite of mine, mainly due to its compact format and retro-futurist style. The Minidisc is just that, a small, CD-like disc encased in a permanent plastic covering. They look like a cross between floppy discs and CDs, and function similarly as well. Released by Sony in November of 1992, the Minidisc was a portable, recordable, compact response to the cassette tape. The Walkman had dominated the 80s, and now Sony gambled on a new future for the 90s.

Not only was the minidisc re-recordable, up to "a million times" as claimed by Sony, but its high read speed also allowed for gapless playback, a feature that eliminated audio skipping. It came in 60 minute, 74 minute, and 80 minute vari-

ations, matching the capacity of CDs, though in a lossy, compressed format called ATRAC (Adaptive Transform Acoustic Coding).

But alas, the minidisc never fully took off. Few record labels embraced the medium, and the cost of an entirely new player was a tough sell for the teenage market.

Despite surviving for about almost two decades, the minidisc was discontinued in March of 2013. Rest in Peace, Minidisc.

And rest in peace to all of the lost discs, floppy or not. We may not use the formats of old but they still serve as worthwhile markers in our species technological advancement. Streaming may be the next big thing, but who knows what format will come along and overtake it. Only time will tell.



Photo courtesy of Pioneer Corporation

A Laserdisc and its player. Each disc is roughly the size of a 12-inch vinyl record.



Photo by Peter Huys on FreeImages

A minidisc. Note the built-in case and small, CD-like disc.



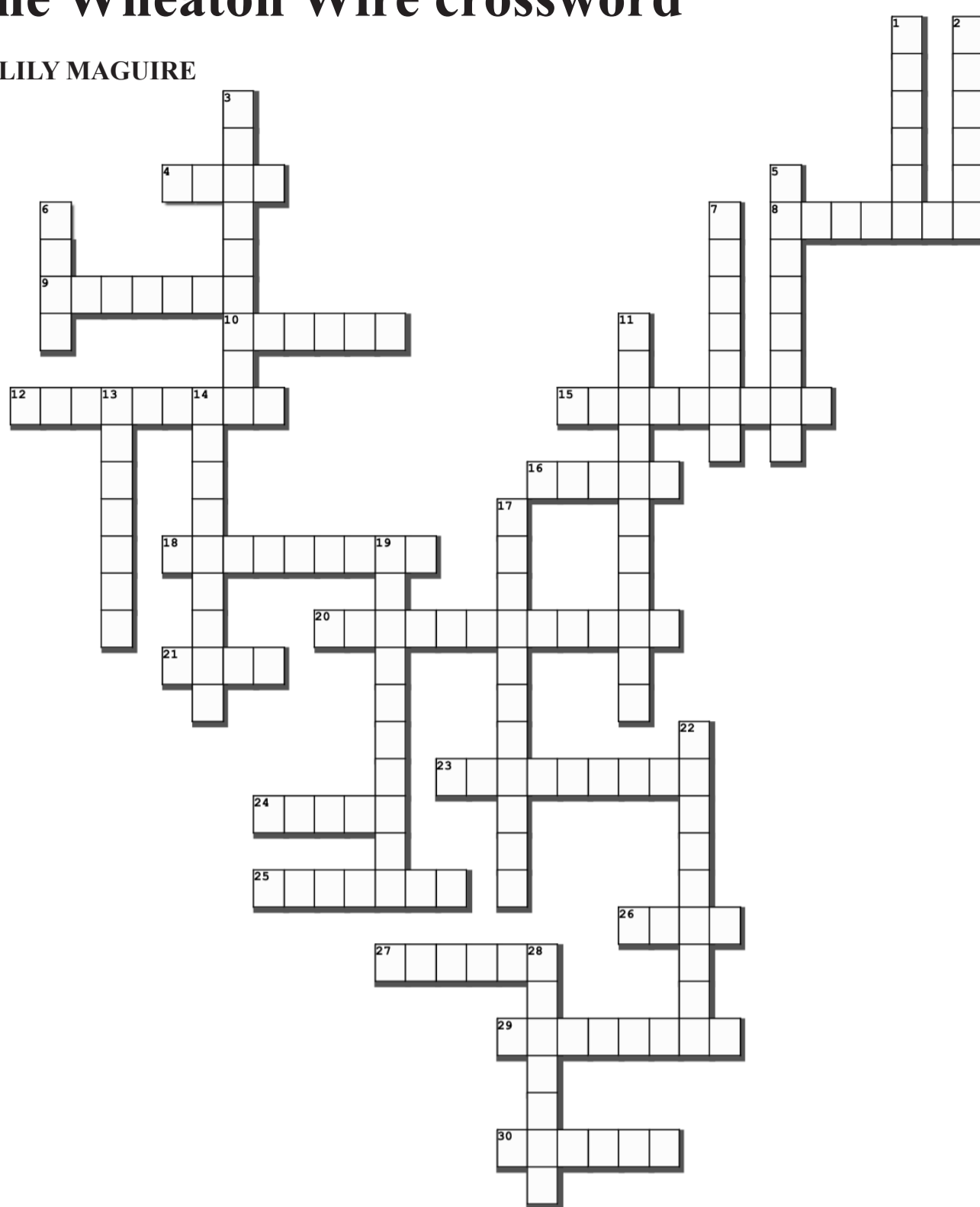
Photo courtesy of ProScan

A DIVX disc and its DRM-infested player.

Wednesday, April 17, 2024

# The Wheaton Wire crossword

BY LILY MAGUIRE



## How the crossword comes to be

BY LILY MAGUIRE

Crosswords are one of the purest forms of a puzzle, one of the originals. Dating back to Arthur Wynne in 1913, crosswords were first born in diamond shape. Now, they look all sorts of funky. In a way, crossword puzzles are like people: they can come in every shape and any size, and while most have a theme and some sort of direction, many crosswords turn out very random and frazzled.

Crosswords could take a participant less than a minute to complete, while some take groups of friends hours to fill in all the squares—and the same could be said for the puzzle master.

Imagine a cold rainy morning, a chai in my hand and my buttocks in a chair in Emerson Dining Hall. Laptop open. Headphones on. I'm listening to the Rolling Stones. *Beast of Burden - Remastered 1994*. Or perhaps it's sunny out. The birds are chirping. The chai and buttocks still remain the same – frozen in their places of crossword creation. Eyes scan for inspiration, but usually end up dry despite overuse of eye-drops. The hamster in my head is whirring on its wheel but still nothing. It's out of breath. Perhaps another day.

One day turns into night, and while the sun is setting the answer comes. A theme. I see it on the horizon of my page. I watch it bolden the top of the document and dictate orders to the clues. Fifteen down, fifteen across. The crossword seems quite simple. Another round of chai is needed. Maybe a Yerba Mate this time.

The clues have character – a product of the puzzle master's deliberate attempt at humor. Some become a mouthful and hard to chew, they're sticky and tough, but not so bad that it's impossible. Most become a variation of a play on words, or the clue is part of the answer.

Thirty clues and thirty answers. Have wit, but be polite. Don't give away the answer, but don't hide it from them. Inside jokes won't work, and not everyone will understand. Just because I know the answer doesn't mean other people will. How niche is niche enough? How niche is too much? Eventually the right balance is mixed together.

There's always a warm sense of pride when I pick up the newspaper on my way out of Balfour. There's always a specific sense of satisfaction when doing your own crossword. Something so nice about already knowing all the answers. It's calming, relaxing, easy. With my pen gracing the page and filling in the small boxes with a scribbled rush of letters, I feel for once what everyone else does: the sunny glow of doing a puzzle.

Signed, The Puzzle Master

## Current crossword clues

### Across

4. If you do your homework, part two is worth it
8. Writer turned real spy? Count me in!
9. This stuntman just really loves Autumn
10. A Lion King origin story? Okay Disney!
12. It's no longer just a news special
15. A remake that was DEFINITELY not our mother's movie
16. Drive Away from these women
18. Who woulda thought you can't swim in your own backyard pool!
20. A dead guy and a wolf man = best friends!
21. They were murdered, but they're NOT dead
23. Not your typical Texas steakhouse
24. It's about time she got her own documentary
25. Dating is a team sport now
26. It's a typical shark movie, but replace shark with a lion
27. You're a wizard, Aren
29. We definitely won't be in Kansas anymore when this movie drops
30. A rom-com about synesthesia

### Down

1. Milly Bobby Brown's a different type of princess
2. It wasn't always A Quiet Place...
3. He doesn't fight much in this fight club
5. He Gets Bigger
6. Who would've thought Kevin Hart would pull of a heist without laughing
7. This Mercury won't kill ya, but make you feel alive!
11. Apparently part of it was filmed at Chase Dining Hall
13. Arthur isn't just a dog, he's \_\_\_\_\_.
14. This creepy teddy bear is not in your head
17. Jack Black's back. For the fourth time. Let's. Go.
19. Supposed to be the horror movie of the year
22. Awe guys, Jason Statham's making organic honey now. He's a homesteader!
28. A plane!? On the bottom of the ocean!? ShArKs!?

## April 5 crossword answers

### Across

1. The only appearance of the Devil on Easter is in this yummy snack → **Eggs**
3. Eggs are hiding. They're in the brush. They're everywhere. Watch your back. → **Egg Hunt**
5. Peter Rabbit never stood a chance against this Easter legend → **Bunny**
7. The 4/20 Outdoors Haus Event of the Year → **Spring Thing**
9. The Puzzle Master but Plural → **Lilies**
11. Get yourself some Wonka \_\_\_\_\_ → **Chocolate**
13. Nancy Sinatra and Lee Hazlewood's favorite kind of wine → **Summer**
15. Rey in Disney's Star Wars franchise actress → **Daisy**
17. This Wheaton spot is always popping in the springtime → **Dimple**
19. In like a lion, out like a lamb → **March**
21. March can get pretty crazy sometimes → **Madness**
23. Some thick, dirty water → **Mud**
25. St. Patrick is looking very small... and green...? → **Leprechauns**
27. Don't forget your Mama on this day → **Mother's Day**
29. The birds are back → **Migration**

### Down

2. Wheaton's best boat race → **Peacock Regatta**
4. Crocheting's cousin → **Knitting**
6. A springtime baby bird staple → **Chick**
8. Would you still love me if I looked like this? → **Worm**
10. Birds need homes too. Advocate for the birds. Build for them. → **Birdhouse**
12. The tiny frogs call us at nighttime and it's joyful → **Peepers**
14. The sky cries for warmth → **Rain**
16. The semester's half-way point → **Midterms**
18. The semester's half-time → **Break**
20. Do you trust your friends not to prank you? → **April Fools**
22. Tell Ben Franklin the weather's perfect for his activity → **Kite**
24. The prettiest bug of the season → **Butterfly**
26. Somehow these guys make it in every season, but they belong in Spring → **Gnomes**
28. Find four-leaves and you'll be lucky! → **Clover**
30. Does anyone know if there's gold at the end? → **Rainbow**