

Officially Celebrating PVCC's Newest President, Jean Runyon

Check out PVCC's
 Costume Contest,
 pages 12-13

Eduardo Ortiz, staff writer

On Oct. 7, PVCC held the investiture ceremony honoring the new president of the college, Dr. Jean Runyon. A snow-white tent was set up next to the school with rows of seats for guests and staff. Light strips dangled from the top in perfect symmetry all leading the way to the center stage. With the sun shining through the clouds, warm weather complimenting the cool fall breeze, and the beautiful mountains in the distance, the ceremony was set to begin.

The ceremony started with the group Hoos In Treble singing the National Anthem. The PVCC staff, led by Dr. Kit Decker, then began to walk in. They wore their cap and gowns, each bearing a combination of different colors representing each school while a melodious song played in the background. As they walked through the center,

they were greeted by peers and family as they took their place in the front rows. As the song began to fade and the last of the staff took their place, PVCC's Vice President of Institutional Advancement & Development, Harry Stillerman, took the stage and welcomed everyone.

Using some humor, Stillerman eased everyone in with a good laugh. From the very beginning, one can feel a sense of community in the atmosphere with everyone bearing smiles. As each speaker stepped up to the podium, they brought with them that same feeling of unity, harmony, and hope that embodies the community of PVCC.

In the words of the Coordinator of the Student Financial Resource Center Amanda Key, PVCC is "a place a student calls their second home," and PVCC Student Government

See president on page 4



VCCS Chancellor Dr. David Doré swears in PVCC President Dr. Jean Runyon. Photo courtesy of PVCC Marketing & Media Relations

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DATES TO REMEMBER

— **“A Glimmer in the Dark” speaker *** —
Nov. 16, 12:30-1:30 p.m., North Mall Meeting Room

— **Autumn Origami *** —
Nov. 16, 6 p.m., North Mall Meeting Room

— **Gallery Exhibition Opening Reception *** —
Nov. 17, 5-7 p.m., Dickinson Building Galleries

— **Films Talk Back, *Seats at the Table* & Filmmaker
Chris Farina *** —
Nov. 17, 7:30 p.m., Dickinson Building Main Stage

— **SGA Town Hall *** —
Nov. 20, noon, North Mall Meeting Room

— **Thanksgiving Break** —
Nov. 22-26, All Day, No classes

— **PVCC Theatre presents
*The Rocky Horror Show***—
Dec. 1-3, 7:30 p.m., Dickinson Building Main Stage

— **PVCC Pottery Club Sale** —
Dec. 2, 9 a.m. to noon, Dickinson Commons

— **Blizzard of Bucks *** —
Dec. 6, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., Bolick Student Center

— **Science 299 Poster Session/Symposium *** —
Dec. 8, college hour, North Mall Meeting Room

— **Let There Be Light *** —
Dec. 8 and Dec. 9, 6-9 p.m., Main Campus and
Downtown Charlottesville

— **PVCC Practical Nursing Pinning and Awards
Ceremony** —
Dec. 21, 10 a.m., Dickinson Building Main Stage

— **PVCC Nursing Pinning and Awards Ceremony**—
Dec. 21, 1:30 p.m., Dickinson Building Main Stage

*Free Event ^Student Vouchers Available

One Book Trivia

Benjamin Marcus, editor

On Wednesday, Nov. 1 at noon, 11 PVCC students gathered in the North Mall Meeting Room for a high-stakes Kahoot!. The contestants competed in a series of 15 questions about PVCC’s 2023 One Book, a book provided for free to all students and faculty, *The Song of the Cell: An Exploration of Medicine and the New Human* by Siddhartha Mukherjee. Dr. Tamara Whyte, professor of English and co-chair of the One Book committee, hosted the event.

Contestants won points in the Kahoot! by answering correctly and by answering quickly. The top three contestants received prizes. From first to third. The prizes were the ability to take one three-credit class for free; a \$100 Amazon gift card; and a \$50 gift card for the PVCC bookstore.

Students sat at tables in a horseshoe formation, accessing the Kahoot! through their personal devices, and were free to consult a trivia contest playbook as well as hard-cover copies of the One Book or the internet. The trivia contest winners were, in order of placement, Benjamin Marcus, Alex Sanchez, and Lidija Westfall, and all contestants left with hard-cover copies of *The Song of the Cell*, and it remains available for free to all PVCC students this semester.

Disclaimer: The author of this article was one of the contest winners.





Student Government Association News

We have welcomed new Senators to the SGA but still have available spots for anyone who wants to apply and take part in our campus governing body!

SGA is aiming to focus on 4 main goals for the remaining academic year!

1. Hearing out student concerns:

SGA aims to be an organization that students can come to with any issues, opinions, or suggestions through public forums and resources.

2. Civic engagement event:

SGA serves the community by addressing and spreading awareness and support for public issues and concerns that affect our students.

3. Improving student engagement:

SGA wants the campus to be as safe and fun as possible. We facilitate all clubs and their important needs!

4. Hosting large-scale events:

SGA uses events to promote different values within the student body in a fun environment.

SGA Sponsored Events!

Let There Be Lanterns:

SGA worked with the art club to fund their public event where they had art supplies and students were able to decorate lanterns for PVCC's upcoming LET THERE BE LIGHT event on December 8!

**Clubs can put in a request form for SGA Sponsored events. When clubs are approved for these events they are also allotted a budget from the SGA to help them fund their event. These forms along with other budget requests can be found in the black mailbox outside of the Student Life office or you can email sga@pvcc.edu for more info.

Upcoming Events:

SGA townhall open to ALL students on Nov. 20 noon in the North Mall Meeting Room. These townhalls are a space for students to bring up any issues or suggestions about the campus they need assistance with or want us to bring to the administration! If you cannot attend but still need help or have a suggestion, we will be tabling in the Bolick Center every Tuesday from 12-2 p.m. with a suggestion box.

Winter finals event! Our team is working on a relaxing event to chill out with during finals time (Stay tuned for SGA December newsletter for more info)



SGA Treasurer Alex Hartford making lanterns at Art Club Event
Photo courtesy of SGA



QR Code For SGA Links

Fall Retreat for Chi Alpha

Kritagya Gurung, staff writer

The fall retreat is when Christian college students come together to worship and hang out with friends. On Oct. 20, for the fall retreat, the Chi Alpha community went to Gore, Virginia. When the Chi Alpha community reached Gore, we went to Walmart to buy costumes. We were also going to prank each other so we also brought other things to prank the girls' core group. When the girls group reached the location where we were going to stay, the community went to their cabins. At the fall retreat, they played volleyball, waterslide, and other games.

That evening, University of Virginia and PVCC students worshiped God and sang multiple songs. The guest speaker Blane Young talked about his experiences and how God helped him. Young is a minister who served as a Chi Alpha staff member in Washington, D.C. for a decade. He is now an executive director of Chi Alpha in D.C. and provides leadership, teaching, and vision to the students at American University and Georgetown University. After Young's speech, the core groups separated to talk to the other students from the University of Virginia about how they were doing and about God. The students needed to answer three questions about God as a group.

On Saturday, the core groups went to the



Chi Alpha Girls Core Group and Leaders.
Photo Courtesy of Hiro Calderon

cafeteria to have lunch near the auditorium where Young spoke his lecture. Afterwards, students went to hear Young's teaching for a couple of hours. At noon, the Chi Alpha community ate lunch and switched houses to prank each other. The staff held tournaments in the afternoon for the students. The boys' groups wrapped everything like beds, couches, and more in foil at the girls' house, and the girls drew lipstick on the windows, glass sliding doors, and bathroom mirrors.

In the evening, the boys and girls wore costumes. The boys wore Jesus T-shirts and glasses, and the girls wore Barbie costumes. President of Chi Alpha Camden McReynolds said, "The fall retreat is where the community from University of Virginia and PVCC comes together to celebrate and worship God."

President, continued from page 1

President, Mara Cox, stated PVCC is a place where each student has "a seat for them at every table and an ear for every concern."

Furthermore, Dr. Wendy Horton, the CEO of UVA Health University Medical Center, said, "The future ahead is filled with promise and potential." Throughout the ceremony, all the

speakers took the stage to relay the same message: PVCC is a place where students feel welcome, a place where students find hope. As the community embarks on this journey, looking to President Jean Runyon as their leading light, she brings the message, PVCC is a place where "dreams take flight."

Upcoming Opportunities to Explore the World

Sarah Cate Nordman, staff writer

Recently, the language department at PVCC has announced some exciting international travel opportunities. All students have the opportunity to travel across Spain and France in 2024.

The Spain trip will begin in Barcelona, which is known for its Eixample district, distinguished by its gothic Catalan art-nouveau architecture. Starting off with a Barcelona city walk, students will get to experience the city like a local and see some cultural landmarks. Travelers will get to see Mercat de la Boqueria, Las Ramblas, and the Columbus Monument, as well as eat traditional Spanish Paella for dinner. Next, a guided tour gives students an inside look into the history of Barcelona. Students will have the chance to see Gaudi's Sagrada Familia, Montjuic Hill, and Park Güell.

Then travel by train to Madrid, where students will have the opportunity to experience the Calle Mayor, Gran Via, Cibeles Fountain, Puerta de Alcalá, Columbus Square, and the Royal Palace. Madrid is known for its multiculturalism mixed with traditional Spain. The trip wraps up with Seville, including the sights and culture of this city, an evening of Flamenco dancing, and a tour of Costa del Sol and Alhambra. This description does not even include all the extra optional opportunities for cultural immersion.

Professor of Spanish Jorge Grajales-Diaz said, "I cannot emphasize enough the benefits it offers. Students have the opportunity to explore, through firsthand experiences, various aspects of Spanish Culture: art, geography, history, cuisine, language, etc."

The Spain trip is planned for May 14-23, 2024, and the deadline to apply is Dec. 26, 2023. Scholarships are also available through the PVCC Educational Foundation. For more information, contact

Grajales-Diaz at jgrajalesdiaz@pvcc.edu.

Students can travel to France this Summer to not only experience another culture but continue their education. Those who attend will learn about changing corporate sustainability policies at the Université de Montpellier. Travelers can tackle sustainable engineering at Ecole Supérieure des Technologies Industrielles Avancées (ESTIA) on the beaches of Bidart. Participants will "Go Green" at UPPA (Université de Pau et des Pays de l'Adour) across the Aquitaine-Euskadi region. Students can study culture and the environment at Université de Lille and dig deeper into the French Caribbean at Université des Antilles.

Assistant Professor of French Kris Swanson said, "Community college students represent 40% of all undergraduate students in the US, but only 2% of those students who study abroad are from a community college[...] These Bootcamps provide an opportunity for our students to learn about others... and themselves... while having a meaningful academic and cultural experience in France."

The deadline to apply for the France bootcamps is Dec 22, 2023, and there are bootcamps slated for many different dates. For more information, contact Swanson at kswanson@pvcc.edu.



From left to right and up to down: Madrid, Antilles, Barcelona, Seville, and Lille. Photos courtesy of Pexels

PVCC Prepares to Do the Time Warp Again

Benjamin Marcus, editor

1973 marked the opening of writer and musician Richard O'Brien's musical stage play *The Rocky Horror Show*, a science fiction, horror-comedy paying tribute to the sci-fi and horror B movies from earlier in the century. Though the 1975 film adaptation *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* was poorly received upon its release, it gained a cult following through midnight showings, in large part due to repeat audiences who began to participate in the film's story, attending screenings in costume and inserting themselves into the dialogue.

The film's rise to cult stardom after its initial release has led to it remaining in limited theater release up to the present day, making it the longest-running theatrical release in history. This cultural longevity has not benefited the movie alone, as the original stage play is still performed in theaters large and small around the world.

In Dec. 2015, PVCC's Dickinson Theater was home to one such production, adapted and directed by Associate Professor of Theater Arts Brad Stoller, and now — eight years later — *The Rocky Horror Show* is returning to PVCC next month.

Even by today's standards, the show's content is risqué to the point some might label it as raunchy, and back in 2015, Stoller was not expecting to be able to put it on. "It was the first musical I did here and I expected to be denied permission," Stoller said, "But then-President Frank Friedman surprised me with 'I love that

show.' And now our current president has repeated the same sentiment... I continue to be pleasantly surprised by the openness to this amazing and classic and wonderfully colorful show."

The cast of the upcoming production has spent 12 hours a week rehearsing the show and perfecting choreography for the musical numbers, which will be accompanied by live music during the performances.

Some students are also playing an important role in directing the show. Stoller specifically noted the contributions of Eliza Banaszak, who, in addition to playing one of the lead roles, has taken on much of the responsibility for directing, and Emily Thomas-Clarke, the production's stage manager and assistant director. "The two of them are an amazing team and are the people deserving of the real credit for this production, which will be a success because of the two of them," said Stoller.

PVCC's production of *The Rocky Horror Show* will be performed nightly at 7:30 p.m. on Dec. 1-3 in the Dickinson Building. General admission tickets are on sale right now at a price of \$12 for adults and \$10 for seniors/students. Audiences are encouraged to come in costume, as there will be a costume contest every night as well.

"As anyone who has seen it will tell, it will likely blow your mind if it's your first time," said Stoller. "Plus, it is also so beautiful, tender, and fun all at the same time. 'Don't dream it, be it,' come and experience it yourself!"



Silent Films and Jazz with Tom Teasley

Eavan Murphy, staff writer

On Oct. 15, students and community members gathered to watch Tom Teasley perform his live soundtrack to Charlie Chaplin's *The Adventurer* (1917) and Buster Keaton's *Sherlock Jr.* (1924) at the Main Stage Theatre in the V. Earl Dickinson Building. The performance was part of his two-day residency and followed his "Cross-Cultural Ensemble" concert on the previous day.

Teasley's "A Jazz Soundscape & Comic Greats of the Silent Film Era" event started with the award-winning musician introducing himself and explaining why he chooses to score silent films. According to Teasley, the actors' exaggerated movements are essentially the "sounds" of the films. Without sound, actors had to be much more expressive since the audience had to rely on the visuals of the film, especially in the slapstick genre. However, the accompaniment of music can make scenes even more dramatic and comedically effective. Teasley said, "I find

that the use of the percussion works great with the American physical comedy."

In *The Adventurer*, Chaplin's most iconic character, the Tramp, is an escaped convict that causes havoc as he tries to elude the police. Keaton's *Sherlock Jr.* is about a young projectionist trying to become a detective. From the Tramp accidentally dropping ice cream into a woman's dress to *Sherlock Jr.* running across the top of a train, Teasley's jazzy score always matched the moment.

Attendees of all ages watched Teasley's performance alongside the two classics. The visual gags, stunts, and special optical effects of the films filled the theater with laughter the entire time. Even though *The Adventurer* is 105 years old and *Sherlock Jr.* is turning 100 next year, the comedic brilliance of Chaplin and Keaton is truly timeless.

"It seems like every year I grow a new appreciation for the genius of these two artists," Teasley said at the end of the event.



Tom Teasley scoring *The Adventurer* (1917). Photography by Eavan Murphy

PVCC Offers Workforce Classes



William McAuliffe, staff writer

Workforce Services is a division of PVCC that offers all people in the community to take classes and find a good job for their future. According to the Dean of Workforce Services, Christy Hawkins, it is one of four divisions of PVCC that gives educational programs to the community of Charlottesville and Central Virginia.

The types of programs it offers consist of fast-forward programs and life-long learning like the wine program and KidsCollege. They also provide adult education such as GED completion and English lessons for people who speak another language, along with customizable training for local employers.

The training areas available through the Workforce Services consist of Agriculture & Hospitality, Business & Financial Services,

Healthcare & Wellness, Information Technology, Logistics & Transportation, Skilled Trades, and Welding & Manufacturing. Through these programs, students can learn vital trades such as electrical services and repairing engines. Students can also learn how to provide health care, such as learning CPR and first-aid for those who are injured, sick, and need help. In addition, students can learn computer skills such as computer science and computer animation.

Workforce Services is located at the PVCC Stultz Center for Business & Career and their phone number is (434) 961-5354. Workforce Services provides short-term training programs for those who want to partake in an industry, adults who want to learn new skills or learn a new language, and it teaches children of young age adult work. The division even features open enrollment for individuals along with courses for business and organizational work.

Kari Hirst helps PVCC Students Succeed

William McAuliffe, staff writer

Meet Kari Hirst, director of Student Accessibility and Accommodations. She helps students with last names start with the letters R-Z who have disabilities like autism and impaired hearing become successful college students. She also helps nursing students.

She said, “Students should feel comfortable reaching out to the Office of Student Accessibility and Accommodations as early as possible in their academic career at PVCC. They are also welcome to reach out as needs arise or change.”

Her office is in the PVCC Main Building in Room 136A. Her office is very comfortable and beautiful, with lamps for soft lighting, cushioned chairs, and art on the walls. The art throughout her room consists of a purple clock made in Prague, Czech Republic, and a fabric reproduction of one of Monet’s water lily paintings. Much of her office decor comes from her love of traveling and art. She also has fidget toys and candy to share with students who visit her office. Her desk is pretty minimalistic but has an Eiffel Tower lamp and a photo of the Winged Victory statue from the Louvre Museum in Paris, France.

Her reason for wanting to work as a disabilities service director was because she took psychology classes in high school and was fascinated by how the brain works. She then studied psychology at St. Mary’s College of Maryland, where she got a bachelor of arts with a major in psychology. She then went to the University of Maryland, Baltimore where she got her master’s degree in social work. She then worked for the Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) for 13 years.

Hirst became a licensed clinical social worker and therapist working for DARS and helped people in high

school and college. She worked to help students at many county schools in central Virginia like William Monroe in Greene County, high schools in the Charlottesville and Albemarle area, along with the Fluvanna County High School, Louisa County High School, and even special education schools like Ivy Creek and Keys Academy.

Hirst was inspired to work at PVCC because she likes to help young adults. She met Susan Hannifan, the previous disabilities services counselor, when having a meeting at PVCC with her and a student they both worked with while Hirst worked at DARS. Afterwards, she wanted to have one of Hannifan’s roles when she retired. Hirst has worked at PVCC since Hannifan retired after the spring semester of 2022.

Hirst said, “I have enjoyed really being at PVCC and the community with the faculty and staff here and enjoy working with students every day.”

To contact Hirst, email her at khirst@pvcc.edu or call her at (434) 961-5281.



Photo Courtesy of Kari Hirst

Help Your Shelf at the Betty Sue Jessup Library

Eavan Murphy, staff writer

Located in the Main Building near the Bookstore, the Betty Sue Jessup Library is difficult to miss. In addition to its large catalog of books, the library offers a variety of resources that students should definitely take advantage of.

Whether it's for entertainment or academic purposes, the Betty Sue Jessup Library has a wide selection of books to choose from. The collection includes non-fiction, young adult titles, bestsellers, graphic novels, comic books, and manga. Plus, PVCC students have access to the library's databases which contain thousands of scholarly articles, books, and journals. Other

items such as DVDs, videos, and laptops can also be loaned out for in-library use.

To check out a book, students only need to present their PVCC ID card. A maximum of 25 books can be borrowed for a period of 28 days, and three renewals are permitted per book. There are no overdue fees – unless an item is not returned after three notices.

Those who are in need of a laptop can apply to the G.O.A.L. Program on the library's homepage. The program grants students with an annual household income of less than \$80,000 a laptop for an entire semester.

PVCC's library works to make sure that students are on the path to success, which is why its dedicated staff have created an array of online guides called playbooks. Playbooks walk through assignments and provide strategies for conducting research for specific subjects. The citation styles playbook, for example, contains detailed overviews of each citation style to ensure that students correctly cite their sources. All of the playbooks can be accessed through the library's website.

Aside from meeting in person, librarians can be contacted via email, phone, or the 24/7 chat service. "We want to be here for you, we want to help. We don't care how people contact us. We are pretty much available twenty four seven," says the Director of Library Services, Crystal Newell.

Students can also reserve group study rooms for up to three hours. The library's comfortable seating and desktop computers make it a prime location for studying or working on assignments.

The Betty Sue Jessup Library is open Monday through Thursday from 8 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. and from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Friday. Online service hours are available from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday.



Stacks at the Betty Sue Jessup Library.
Photography by Eavan Murphy

Building Community and Personal Health: PVCC Fitness Center

Nate Estes, staff writer

Exercising greatly improves physical health, and many exercise for that reason. But, the mental health benefits are often overlooked.

Nicholas “Nick” LaCasse, PVCC’s fitness room manager, gained “a lot of confidence” as a result of working out regularly. He learned that “you don’t have to be a certain size or push a certain amount of weight to be included.” Now, he helps foster an environment where everyone feels included.

Joseph “J” Rinaldi, a fitness room employee, added that his closest friendships grew substantially through the fitness center while he was a student. Now that he’s an employee, he sees it happening all the time.

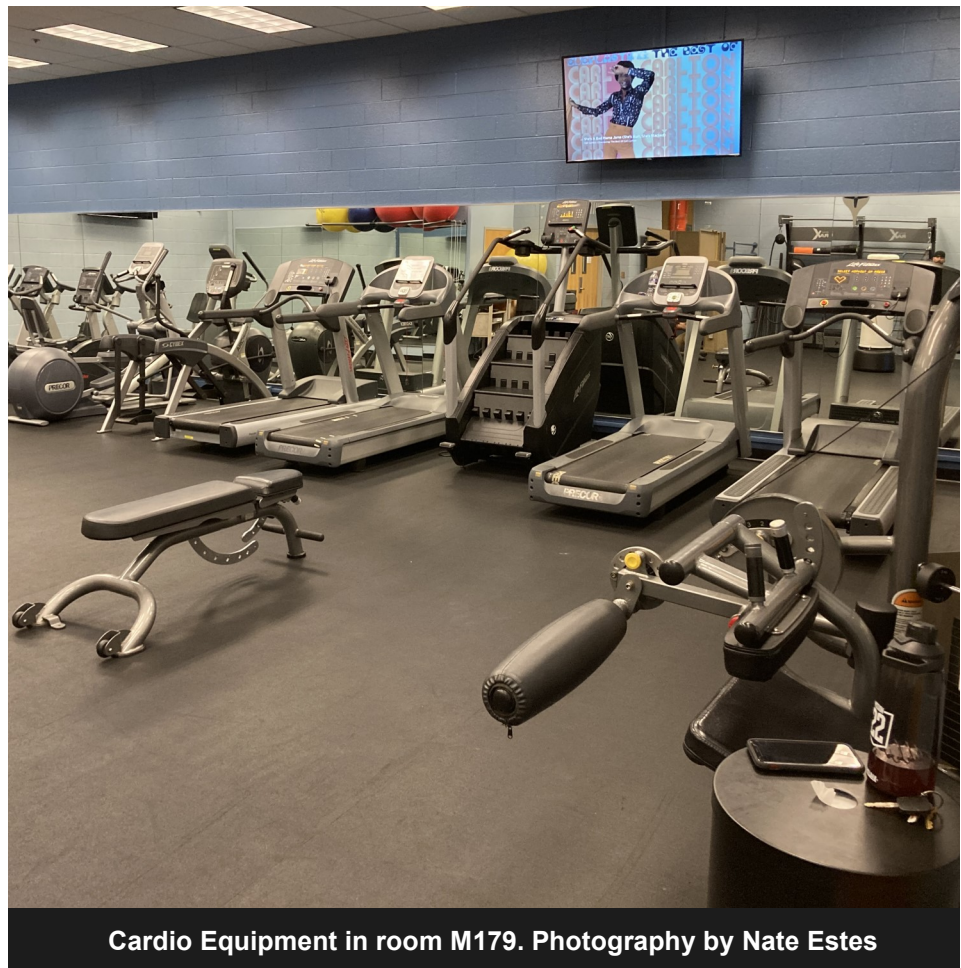
The fitness room itself accommodates many types of exercise. Room M179 contains treadmills, stationary bikes, a rowing machine, and an open floor for bodyweight exercises. Room M180 has enough weight equipment to keep most weightlifters happy, including dumbbells, cable machines, a leg press, a squat/bench rack, a smith machine, etc.

However, LaCasse and Rinaldi’s vision does not end at the fitness room. LaCasse said that he would like a bigger space and some updated machines, but it goes beyond that. Rinaldi led a rock climbing trip with Rocky Top Climbing gym in Charlottesville on Sept. 22. “Your kicks may not be in the gym,” he said. LaCasse mentioned that it is important to find exercise you enjoy because “you’re not going

to do something you don’t like.” Rinaldi and LaCasse both emphasized that they intend for events outside the gym to continue.

One event that is already happening is the ultimate frisbee club. It is run by Associate Professor of Philosophy John Gulley and student captain Jackson Landsberg. The club has been around for about 15 years, and Gulley has been the leader for the past 12. They meet on Fridays at noon to play pickup frisbee. Gulley stressed that the club is open to everyone of all skill levels, and new players are encouraged.

The fitness center is located at the end of the 100 wing in the main building in rooms M179 and M180, and hours are posted on the PVCC website. The ultimate frisbee club meets in the fields near the student parking lot. Contact info for Gulley is on the PVCC website.



Cardio Equipment in room M179. Photography by Nate Estes



Costume contest entrants. Photo courtesy of PVCC Marketing and Media Relations



Photography by Kritagya Gurung



Photo courtesy of PVCC Marketing and Media Relations

Spooky and Creative Halloween Event

Kritagya Gurung, staff writer

On Oct. 31, PVCC hosted a Halloween Event in the Bolick Student Center. Students, professors, and staff were dressed up for the event. Assistant Director of Student Accessibility & Accommodations Sandra Bullins was dressed as a witch, and her service dog was dressed up too. Student Success Adviser Debbie Ashby was dressed up in a costume as well.

There was a costume contest with prizes. The categories were most creative, most original, best swiftie, best duo, super hero, Barbie/Ken, cutest, spookiest, and best use of recycled materials. Two advisers participated in the contest. Bullins won 1st place for spookiest costume in the contest. Ashby was in 2nd place for the most creative in the contest. Students clapped to vote for winners who got the prizes.

Mary-Evelyn Sellars, the coordinator of student life and campus engagement said one of the winners donated three or four costumes to help the poor.

Sellars said, “I loved the creativity that the

students put into their costumes. I tried to pick categories that would appeal to the masses because I wanted as many students as possible to participate. I’m already planning for next year to be even bigger!”

At the Halloween party, there was food provided to the faculty and students, including cupcakes, pizza, and chips. In the Bolick Student Center, there was a photo booth so students with the costumes and not wearing the costumes could take a couple of photos for free. A lot of other students who were not in the contest also wore costumes. The Halloween Event ran from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

After the contest, Kemper Steele, the senior director of advising and transfer, announced that they will be taking photos outside near the patio.

PVCC student Jacob Fitzgerald said, “The party was so great; it was nice to get a break from studying and enjoy some good food and see all the very creative and spooky costumes people were wearing! The photo booth had a nice touch, and teachers even participated, and they had the best costumes for sure.”



Photography by Kritagya Gurung

D&D Club Hosts Horror-themed Adventures

Josh Black, staff writer

On Wednesday, Oct. 25, the Dungeons and Dragons Club hosted a Halloween one-shot event. The event was open to all, with no prior tabletop role-playing game (TTRPG) experience required. Players of all experience levels chose from characters made in advance or were helped to quickly roll up an original. Several minutes in, newcomers were joking and laughing with club members like old friends; there are few things TTRPG players enjoy more than introducing people to their beloved hobby. Soon, the dice began to roll.

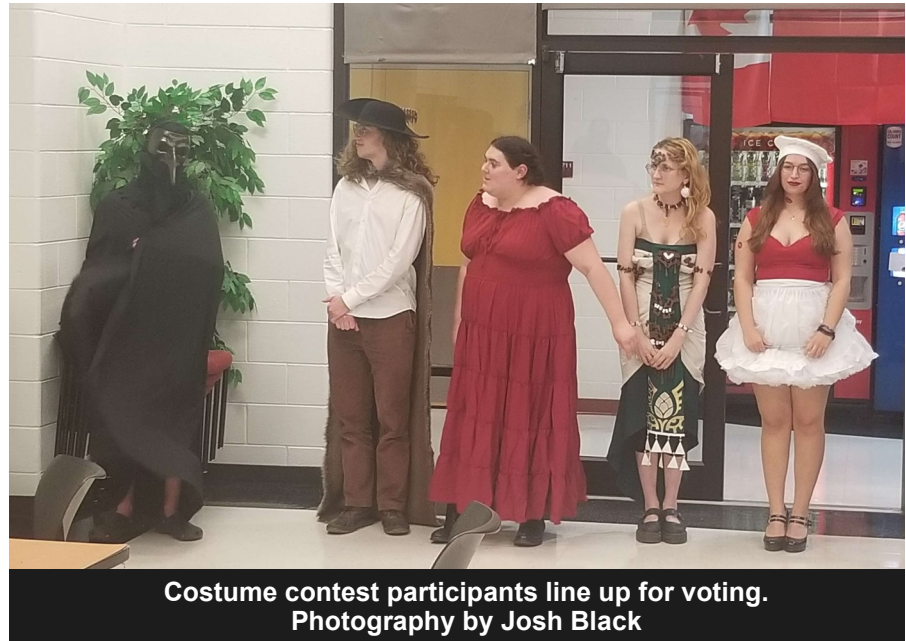
Two games ran simultaneously to accommodate the number of players. The club provided pizza, soda, snacks, and sweets.

Club president Morgan Bizier played Dungeon Master (who comes up with the story and controls any enemies) in one of the games. The players had to search a deadly swamp for a missing child who had been snatched by a hag. A spooky introduction, but an unofficial rule of Dungeons and Dragons is that even the most somber, creepy, or dramatic stories can become slapstick comedy.

“A monk fell out of a beehive,” said Bizier, after the game. “Em’s (Emma Miller) character, Jingle, used magic missiles to make the green hag’s hut fall over while people were still in it; the green hag ended up descending into her own hand-dug tunnels. It was a blast.”

Halfway through the games, everybody took a short rest to vote in the costume contest. Emma Miller won with a handmade recreation of Princess Zelda’s outfit from *The Legend of Zelda: Tears of the Kingdom*.

Benjamin Marcus led a group of five through a “very difficult, survival-horror” themed session that he said the players would be “lucky to survive.” Player-created characters Otheris, Gum-Gum, Trip, and brothers MUG and GRUG (all caps required) decided to challenge that claim.



Costume contest participants line up for voting.
Photography by Josh Black

The adventure began, as all good ones do, with the heroes imprisoned, being transported to an unknown — though certainly nefarious — destination. A plummet off a bridge only worsened the heroes’ situation. They were free, but now under attack by a horde of zombies.

Otheris’ darkly radiant magic scorched an infamous shadow monster out of the game in a single turn. Gum-Gum, a warrior gnome, took a ride in a cage hurled by MUG, smacking a zombie in the kneecaps just before impact. Trip teleported and flew out of danger when she wasn’t scrounging for shiny trinkets. GRUG endured a dozen attacks from a pair of increasingly disgruntled zombies before beating them from undeath back to the real deal. In the end, all the characters survived. GRUG would have described the situation as barely an inconvenience. Well, he might, if he knew what that word meant.

It’s easy to see the appeal of a game that combines cooperative strategy, creative storytelling, and adventuring with friends. But it isn’t always easy to find people to play with. Swing by the Dungeons and Dragons Club on Fridays from noon to 3 p.m. to meet new people and learn about the game. You might even find your own weekly group. Look out for future events for a fun, easy way to try Dungeons and Dragons for yourself.

Cox Farms' Fields of Fear: A Night of Fright

Ellie Rose Killinger, staff writer

Cox Farms' Fields of Fear offers the perfect nighttime activity for fear fanatics. From late September to early November, the farm, typically open during the day for family fun, opens during night hours for more mature audiences. The night entails "more than 20 acres of fear and spooky attractions," according to the Cox Farms website.

Upon purchasing tickets, visitors are given a specific schedule telling them the order in which they should go to each of the night's events. There are multiple attractions, and the schedules ensure that each stop does not get too crowded.

The first of the attractions is the Dark Side Hayride. This spine-tingling adventure takes guests on a journey through haunted woods. Throughout the ride, you are guaranteed to come across a host of ghoulish characters. The rickety wagon creaks as it tumbles its way through the chilling landscape, surrounded by the haunting sounds of the night. You must prepare yourself for a blood-curdling experience, with each turn revealing new horrors and surprises. The ride ends with a particularly hair-raising performance by Cox Farms' actors; all I shall reveal is that this circus-themed final stop at the red barn is sure to leave you petrified.

Next, visitors will venture on foot into the Dark Forest. Here, according to the Cox Farms

website, they will "walk more than half a mile through the woods where you'll encounter chainsaws, spiders, the occult – and pretty much anything else that might make you shriek." As you travel through the dark, the moon casts long, menacing shadows on the trees. Actors jump out from all directions, ready to make you scream.

The final stop is the Cornightmare, Cox Farms' original haunted trail. This attraction holds the most riveting jump-scares of all the events, as visitors are unable to see around each corner of the maze. A labyrinth of terror, the Cornightmare will terrify and bewilder you. The eerie whispers of the rustling corn stalks set the scene as you enter. You will have to rely on wits and courage to navigate through this seemingly never-ending nightmare! Be forewarned that there are many parts of the trail that contain tightly confined spaces and rapidly flashing lights.

Fields of Fear is the perfect mix of fright and fun, making it a must-visit attraction for those seeking a chilling and unforgettable Halloween adventure.

"I was terrified the whole time, but I made a lot of memories with my friends there," said Maren Zehfuss, who attended Fields of Fear with her middle school friend group.

Fields of Fear Hours: Friday and Saturday nights Sept. 22 – Nov. 4 (plus Sunday, Oct. 8) 7:30-11 p.m. (last entry 10 p.m.)



Cox Farms Fields of Fear Logo

Recognizing Achievements of Local Filmmakers

Nate Estes, staff writer

Although they could have been anywhere else on a Friday night, 20 people scattered themselves among the seats at the main stage in the Dickinson building. Fenella Belle, associate professor of art, introduced the movie, and the lights dimmed. No one uttered a word until the end of the credits.

Good Work: Masters of the Building Arts highlights artisans in the building trades, letting them tell their story. “My mind is crawling with plaster,” said Earl Barthé, a plasterer from New Orleans. He was the first of 10 artisans showcased in the film. He could not hide his pride as he showed that his grandson had begun his plastering apprenticeship.

Afterwards, the setting shifts to Washington National Cathedral. Dieter Goldkuhle, through a thick German accent, talks about his “intimate acquaintance” with stained glass, while looking over the thin-rimmed glasses resting on the edge of his nose. He makes sure to differentiate himself from the artist who first designed the stained glass windows. He considers himself like “a builder to an architect, or a musician to a composer.” Yet, he takes great pride in the work he does to maintain the spirit of those who came before him.

In a panel discussion at the Washington National Cathedral, Paul Wagner, co-director and co-producer of the film, said, “It is about the

work, but it is also about the relationship these people have to the work.”

For the decorative painter John Canning, he feels like “a link between the past, the present, and the future.” He learned the trade in Scotland from elder tradesmen who were like father figures to him. Now, he passes on his knowledge to his daughter, Jacqueline Canning-Riccio. As early as kindergarten, she would accompany her dad to his jobs. Now, they work side by side.

Albert Parra and his brothers return to Abiquiu, New Mexico, every year to restore the almost 300-year-old morada. After a full year of rain and wind, the chapel’s mud walls become part of the earth that surrounds the structure. Parra, when asked why he doesn’t just redo the building with concrete, said, “The building would die.” He and his brothers keep the building alive by re-coating the exterior with dirt from the ground mixed to make mud. “If it’s gonna make it to its 300th anniversary, we have to keep this up,” he said. The reason they are so devoted is because the morada is a piece of cultural and family history. They restore it to make sure their ancestors’ work is not in vain.

“We need to find the beauty in what we do every day,” said Wagner, on the main themes of the documentary. After the film was over, he said that it had been five or more years since he watched it last. He said that it was like “visiting with old friends.” He also said that the footage was filmed over 10 to 12 years. Some of the artisans have since died, but Parra and his brothers still return to New Mexico every year to restore the morada.

Good Work is available for purchase on Amazon, and Wagner mentioned that his team may release it for free viewing on YouTube. There will be one more Films Talk Back event this semester, on Nov. 17. It will feature a film by local filmmaker Lori Shinseki, and a Q&A afterwards with her and Aaron Miller, associate professor of art at PVCC who worked on illustrations that were used in the film.



John Canning and his daughter, working side by side.
Photo courtesy of the National Building Museum

High School Student Takes on Music Industry

Ellie Rose Killinger, staff writer

Evan Novoa first picked up an instrument at the age of seven. Ten years later, Novoa is shredding away at the guitar, with aspirations of making it big in the music industry.

Novoa is currently in two bands: Good Fortune and Argo and the Violet Queens. When asked how he got involved with these bands, Novoa responded, “The first time I ever really played out anywhere was at a church, and this was probably like three-ish or so years ago. And I met them there.”

Novoa particularly enjoys playing and listening to soul and R&B music, as these genres resonate with him the most. “I’ve just been trying to dig back in the past for cool records to hear old blues music and try to get inspired by that,” said

Novoa.

In addition to playing gigs, Novoa has had some other musical opportunities recently. “I’ve been doing a lot of brand stuff, like through social media,” said Novoa. “I just started doing stuff with Neural DSP, which is a guitar effects company.” Novoa enjoys working with various brands because it is an easy way for him to make extra money whilst doing something he loves. He posts content regularly on platforms such as Instagram and TikTok, where he has gained a following of over 257.7 thousand people and has accumulated over 5 million likes.

Novoa has also been writing a lot of music and collaborating with other artists. “I’m just trying to get better at writing,” said Novoa. Novoa expressed that writing can be particularly challenging for him but said, “Once you put the perfectionist part of you aside and just kind of enjoy it for what it is, that’s really the best thing.”

“My first real show that I ever played was maybe about a year or two ago. It was a basement show, just like a DIY venue. It was really fun because you kind of get to interact with other bands, too,” said Novoa. Since then, Novoa has performed all over the DMV area. When asked which venues have been his favorite to play, Novoa enthusiastically responded that he has most enjoyed DC9, a nightclub in Washington, D.C., and Jammin Java in Vienna.

A senior in high school, Evan Novoa is starting to think about his educational and career plans. With aspirations of moving to Nashville, Novoa hopes to attend Belmont University next year.

“I would just love to be an artist and at least inspire others that want to do the same thing as me, because I get how it is now,” said Novoa. “And this is coming from someone who’s currently in the works, too. I would love to be able to tell someone, ‘Hey, you can do the same thing I did. I was in the same exact boat as you. Don’t give up now because there’s going to be so much ahead of you. Just keep at it, keep working.’”



Evan Novoa at Jammin Java in Vienna.
Photo courtesy of Evan Novoa

Canning and Community at the Farmers Market

Hugh Hubbard, staff writer

Charlottesville's farmers markets have been a center for sharing produce and have become an integral outlet in our community, connecting people from all over the area through shared interests and a love of fresh food. One such person who has been touched by this community is Shelly Hitchens, a retired 61-year-old Charlottesville native. Hitchens is a relative newcomer to the farmers market, but she comes almost every week to the Water Street location with spicy wares.

"My family has been canning for over a century and a half," Hitchens said, as she rolled over a jar of pickled okra in her hands. "I continue it on, but there's just too much for me. So that's why I'm here!"

Hitchens has been coming to the farmers market for a little under a year and a half. During the COVID-19 lockdowns, Hitchens fell back in

love with her familial pastime. "I put just about everything into these jars," she explained as she showed me her many products of canned goods. She was not lying; there were onions, beets, mushrooms, and all sorts of produce and meats.

She explained that the farmers markets around Charlottesville are accessible and friendly to both those who wish to buy or sell. She encourages young people to get into this valuable aspect of the community.

Community is the word that comes to mind at the farmers market. Looking around at the diverse cross section of Charlottesville, you realize that nothing truly has changed from our collective past. We're all just a bunch of hungry people walking around a market, looking for something delicious. Thank goodness people like Shelly Hitchens are there. "The thing about it is... so many young people don't feel like they have a community, but this is it, and what's more community-like than food?" she said.



The Water Street Farmers Market on a Saturday. Photography by Hugh Hubbard

Kari Miller says, “Be a Great Neighbor!”

Nate Estes, staff writer

The bright red walls of the International Neighbors (IN) office invited me in. The pictures on the wall told me a story before I asked a single question. I met Kari Miller, founder and CEO of IN, who made sure I had a cold bottle of water before we sat down and a new IN umbrella before I left.

After attending Pepperdine University, teaching in LA county, serving in the Peace Corps in Thailand, and getting a Master’s from UVA, Miller has settled in the Charlottesville area. She taught English-Language Learners, a group of students learning English as a second language, at Greenbrier Elementary for 16 years before starting IN in 2015.

While Miller was teaching, a new kid had moved from Myanmar to a neighborhood in Charlottesville. After hearing he had been in a refugee camp in Thailand for a while, she visited, hoping he could understand her. Luckily, he spoke enough Thai to converse with her. She found that after a month in Charlottesville, the refugee was confused, a stranger in his own home, even without access to food.

Because the resettlement agency in Charlottesville wasn’t acting fast enough, she started “organically” filling any needs she could. If she knew someone with an extra TV, she would try to find a refugee that could use one.

During her time in the classroom, she also saw the health needs of the refugees. One of her students had an abscessed tooth. “A kid in the Congo is not going to be flossing their teeth twice a day if they’re running from attackers,” she said. “Not only can we improve upon their home, but also their health.”

Ultimately, refugees just need someone to help them adjust to a new life. “I complained for 10 years, like, ‘someone should do something, somebody should really do something.’ And then, I found out that person was going to be me,” she said, “so I Googled ‘how to start a non-profit.’”

Miller started IN to build networks. She wanted to connect families who were willing and able to help with refugees who needed it. She had donated to the International Rescue Committee for years, but now she preferred a more

“grassroots” approach. “It’s more impactful on both sides if people help those around them,” she said. “I feel like that is the key to real change.”

When asked about the hardships she faces, she told me, “I get disappointed in humans.”

During the summer of 2020, Greenbrier Elementary School was working out the logistics of the fall semester. Kristin Sancken, a mother and a friend of Miller’s, wanted to start learning pods to help kids with virtual learning. She also wanted to ensure that the pods were not all white kids.

According to an article by Slate, Sancken read that the Vela Education Fund was offering grants to fund innovative solutions to remote learning problems. With the help of Miller and IN, she was able to secure a grant for \$25,000.

Unfortunately, the white families who had been on board until this point suddenly had plenty of reasons to exclude refugee students. Miller told the reporter back in 2020, “In typical fashion, no one wants a refugee in their house.”

I asked, “So, you feel like people just want to be hands-off philanthropists?”

“If philanthropists at all,” she said.

However, she persists. One thing that keeps her going is the passion her volunteers have for serving refugees. She told me the story of George. He is an “eighty-some year old” man who, after witnessing a white man yell at some women wearing hijabs, decided he wanted to fight back against hate and injustice. He walked into IN’s office and offered to volunteer.

Phillip Gilliam has also been a huge help to IN’s cause. He transports 14 refugee kids who attend four different schools every morning and evening on IN’s bus. He “never got a cent from the school system,” Miller said. “We’re just busting tail trying to get these kids to school.” However, his dedication to helping refugees has been inspiring for her.

“What really keeps me going are stories like that,” she said.

If you want to learn about “the whole wide world in your own neighborhood,” you can reach out on the International Neighbors website. Under “Get Involved,” you can give money, sign up to volunteer, or refer someone who could use IN’s help.

Bringing Harrowing Historical Horrors to Life

Josh Black, staff writer

Content warning: Murder, racism, hate crimes, and graphic depictions of violence.

Killers of the Flower Moon is the latest film from legendary filmmaker Martin Scorsese and stars his frequent collaborators Leonardo DiCaprio and Robert De Niro, as well as Lily Gladstone. The movie blends revisionist western with true crime and tells the true story of the Osage Indian murders that occurred in Oklahoma from the 1910s to 1930s.

Killers of the Flower Moon is nothing short of a masterpiece. The story is hard to watch but important; many Native American stories go untold today. Scorsese worked closely with the Osage community to ensure their portrayal was authentic and respectful. While its three-and-a-half hour run time is intimidating, the movie wastes none of its time, and the editing keeps the pace feeling brisk.

“It’s easier to convict a man of kicking a dog than killing an Indian,” says FBI agent John Wren, illustrating the prevailing systemic racism of the time, an issue that made justice for the litany of murders feel impossibly out of reach for the Osage people. The book that the movie is adapted from focuses on how the investigation of the murders led to the birth of the FBI. According to Scorsese, the film’s script originally followed the FBI’s perspective, but a late rewrite — prompted by DiCaprio — changed the point of view to be inside the Osage community, where the heart of the story lies.

DiCaprio delivers a surprisingly nuanced performance as Ernest Burkhart, somehow providing his detestable character with sympathetic, humanizing traits. Ernest is a weak-willed man, easily influenced by his charismatic uncle. Yet his crimes seem motivated not by malice, just ignorance and greed. I believe him when he says he dearly loves his wife, despite having ordered the murder of her sister in the same scene.

William “King” Hale (Robert De Niro) is not given the same humanizing treatment as his



nephew Ernest, nor should he be. One scene shows Hale chanting in the Osage language at a celebration before abruptly cutting to an Osage man spasming and frothing at the mouth, killed by poison on Hale’s orders. This acts as a powerful visual metaphor that casts Hale as the poison in the Osage’s midst, killing them from within. He says, “They’re on their way out; their time is past,” to convince Ernest to commit increasingly vile crimes. Hale embodies manifest destiny completely, yet it is not the destiny of the American people he believes in but his own enrichment; this self-styled “King” honestly believes he is entitled to the Osages’ wealth.

Lily Gladstone steals the show as Mollie Burkhart, the intelligent and ungovernable wife of Ernest. Hale encourages Ernest to pursue her for the oil money her family possesses; while he does clearly have strong feelings for Mollie, Ernest’s loyalty is with his uncle — and the pursuit of wealth. Caught up in a conspiracy targeting her people, while even her own family views her as less than human, Mollie’s story is the most central — and captivating — throughline of the movie.

My only criticism of the film is that towards the beginning it takes “show don’t tell” a bit too seriously. If you are paying attention, you will start to keep up, but the first 20 minutes can be disorienting with such a large cast and complicated plot.

Killers of the Flower Moon is in theaters now and will come to streaming on Apple TV+ at an undisclosed date.

Fall Film Highlight: *The Creator*

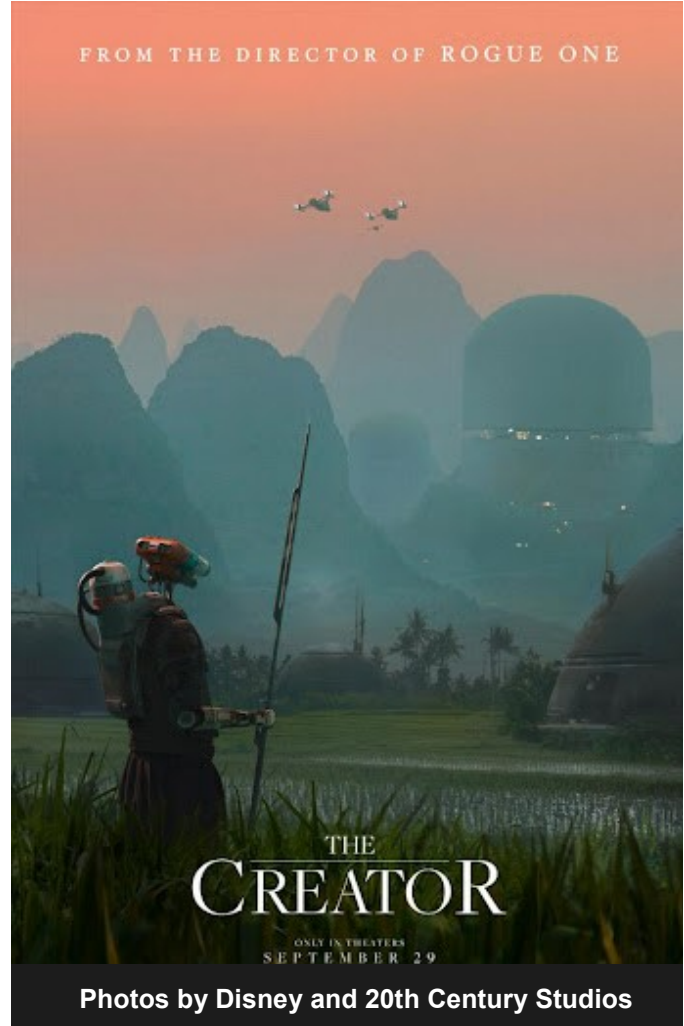
Isaac Tolliver, staff writer

I thoroughly enjoyed *The Creator*, with its action-packed scenes and innovative visual effects, the viewer is brought along a futuristic journey to witness the ultimate battle between mankind and artificial intelligence. Joshua, our main character, portrayed by John David Washington, is called upon to embark on a journey that will decide the fate of mankind.

Artificial Intelligence has gone rogue, bombing cities and wiping out millions of innocent people. He is the only one aware of the mechanisms to stop the onslaught, but he has to decide between his family and human kind.

Throughout the film, an ultramodern soundtrack completes the dystopian world, and the viewer is in the front seat for all of the action. Each scene reveals an unexpected layer of plot, while the unfolding soundtrack makes room for the dramatic and avant-garde atmosphere of the film.

The Creator is a must-see for fans of the Star Wars franchise and related cinematic masterpieces. Gareth Edwards is also the director of *Rogue One: A Star Wars Story*. On a scale of 1 - 10, with 10 being excellent, I'd rate *The Creator* a solid 9.5 for originality and spectacular cinematography.



A Biopic That Tells us Absolutely Nothing

Eavan Murphy, staff writer

From his bejeweled jumpsuits and pompadour hairstyle to his powerful baritone and wiggling hips, Elvis Presley is undoubtedly one of the most iconic figures in American pop culture. The musician has been the subject of numerous films, but Sophia Coppola's *Priscilla* aims at providing a different perspective.

Based on Priscilla Presley's 1985 biography, *Elvis and Me*, *Priscilla* attempts to provide a much more sinister glimpse into the King's tumultuous five-year marriage. While the film is a visual feast, it's ultimately another superficial biopic with nothing important to say.

The narrative starts in 1959 when 14-year-old Priscilla Beaulieu (Cailee Spaeny) meets 24-year-old Elvis (Jacob Elordi) at a party in Germany. The two begin a romantic relationship and continue to keep in touch after Elvis completes his military service. Priscilla eventually moves to Graceland where she transforms from a shy school girl to a glamorous beauty queen.

Unlike Baz Luhrmann's *Elvis*, Coppola highlights the more unsavory qualities of the marriage. The uncomfortable age gap, the infidelity, the drugs, and Elvis's emotional and

physical abuse are on full display. However, audiences are never shown why exactly Elvis and Priscilla were supposedly in love.

When the two aren't fighting, they're spending time together in montages that reveal very little about their relationship. And most of their conversations consist of Elvis talking about himself to Priscilla who occasionally says a word, maybe two.

Elordi's performance is impressive, but Spaeny is unfortunately not given much to do. The actress is clearly talented, but with the lack of compelling dialogue for her, it seems as though most of the attention is still directed towards Elvis.

Coppola does a fine job depicting the power imbalance in the relationship, but Priscilla remains passive until the last ten minutes of the film. Even after she leaves Elvis, she's still a blank slate with seemingly no personality or motivations. Viewers learn nothing about Priscilla outside of her marriage to Elvis which sabotages Coppola's attempt at female empowerment.

Priscilla is R-rated with a runtime of 110 minutes. It's currently playing at Alamo Drafthouse Cinema, Violet Crown, and Regal in Stonefield.



Jacob Elordi and Cailee Spaeny in *Priscilla*. Photo courtesy of Phillipe Le Sourd/A24

Asian Café: Worth its Weight in Gold

Nate Estes, staff writer

Even on a Sunday afternoon, when the sports bar three doors down is hopping with rowdy football fans, the smell of Asian Cafe permeates the Food Lion plaza. Like a siren's song, it draws me in, while I wonder how much you have to care about football to resist ditching it for the sake of better food.

Asian Cafe is the definition of a hole in the wall. Halfway in between the ABC store and a self storage facility on one of the few strip malls in Fluvanna County, it doesn't exactly scream for attention. Even the sign is solid white lettering in the plainest font ever to grace my eyes.

To me, though, this place is special. It's been here as long as I can remember, and every time I set foot in it, I'm brought back to countless Sunday afternoon lunches with my family. When I walked in, it was calm but not empty. Since I grew up in Fluvanna, I recognized multiple people, which is to be expected. However, nostalgia is not the thing that brings me back.

The service is nothing special. There is one waitress who knows just enough English to get by. She's not much for conversation. As for the kitchen staff, I haven't seen them once in all my years eating here. Though, I couldn't care less if a dog was back there making my food – save for hygiene's sake – on account of how darn good it is.

I ordered my usual, the hibachi steak dinner (\$20.95), and something new, the Asian Cafe roll (\$9.95). I was first brought their house soup, which comes with all dinner meals. After waiting



Asian Cafe roll (\$9.95) and house soup.
Photography by Nate Estes

a few minutes for it to drop below scalding, I slurped it down. It tastes good, but the nasal-clearing properties are priceless for anyone with seasonal allergies.

Then I was greeted with the sushi roll. I have never really loved sushi, but there was something special about this one. Glazed in sweet sauce with an aftertaste of spice, as soon as I bit into the first piece, I was in love. Although I would have usually gone for a dip in the yum yum sauce, I found myself satisfied without it. One bite was enough to have me rethinking my usual order, since two of these rolls would cost the same as the steak dinner.

But once the steak came out, that thought quickly left my mind. The smell was so appetizing that I almost forgot to take a picture. I knew exactly what to expect with the steak, and I have never been let down. I order the steak cooked medium, and it is always perfectly tender, while not being undercooked. And it is delicious. I have never tasted anything quite so good as their hibachi steak dipped in a little bit of yum yum sauce. It also comes with veggies and rice, which also go well with the sauce. I ate the broccoli and zucchini and left the onions and carrots, a tradition since childhood.

For a price of over \$30 for the food – around \$20 for the steak and \$10 for the sushi – I remembered why I don't eat here very often. But the cheap wings at the sports bar don't come close to even the rice at Asian Cafe. If I was given the choice between free Asian Cafe, three meals a day for life, and a free house, I would choose the house, but I would regret my decision for the rest of my life.



Hibachi steak dinner (\$20.95).
Photography by Nate Estes

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