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Thousands of Students Ditch School to Lead Portlanders in Climate Strike

Also:
PSU Dodges Walkout on the Eve of Fall Term
5th Avenue Cinema Then and Now
The Importance of Media Literacy
and more inside!

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The Pacific Sentinel is a monthly student-run magazine at PSU. We seek to uplift student voices and advocate on behalf of the marginalized. We analyze culture, politics, and daily life to continually take the dialogue further.

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Photograph by Jake Johnson

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

In 1912 at a textile factory workers' strike, Rose Schneiderman spoke about how workers should be able to live with dignity. If you cross the Steel Bridge from downtown toward the Moda Center / Convention Center / Veterans Memorial Coliseum you'll see the graffiti covered building on your left (pictured above). At the top the first thing you'll read as you progress is the Schneiderman quote, "The worker must have bread..." and then a moment later you will read, "But she must have roses too." The mural by GATS PTV with Schneiderman's quote has been lingering in my mind lately. 107 years ago, Schneiderman wanted the everyday worker to be able to enjoy the good parts of life too. Today we are still trying to figure out how to create a society where everyone can have access to not only the means of survival but also the pleasures of being alive. As Schneiderman said, we all need to be able to enjoy "the sun, music, and art" and the individual agency and advocacy granted by access to the ballot.

While you're out there trying to take care of business, remember to find ways to enjoy the good and fun parts of life too,

Jake Johnson
Executive Editor

PSU Dodges Walkout on the Eve of Fall Term

SEIU strikers strike an agreeable bargain

by Margo Craig

Photograph by Margo Craig

Early on the morning of Saturday September 28th, the union representing classified employees at Oregon universities, Service Employees International Union (SEIU), came to a tentative agreement with the Oregon University System (OUS) to put an end to a labor dispute. At Portland State University, employees are represented by the SEIU Local 503 chapter. SEIU members agreed to go on strike on the first day of the fall term if an agreement could not be met. Bargaining came to a standstill on August 16, when the union determined that negotiations were not productive.

The agreement is being hailed as a victory by the union. “This is a win for the 4,500 workers who dedicate their lives to Oregon universities,” said Melissa Unger, executive director of SEIU Local 503. “Workers stuck together to demand a contract that respects the critical role they play in supporting our students and keeping our campuses running. Together, we fought back take-aways proposed by management on wages, health care, steps, and personal days, and won higher wages for all workers. This hard-fought victory is a testament to the strength and solidarity of Oregon’s front-line university workers.”

PSU Interim President Stephen Percy emailed the PSU campus community stating, “It’s great news that on Monday our full campus community will be here to welcome our new and returning students on their first day of class.”

OPB reported that the union’s demands were met halfway by OUS.

Highlights of the tentative agreement include a 3% retroactive cost-of-living-adjustment (COLA) dated back to July 1, 2019 and an additional COLA next July; the initially planned 10% healthcare cost increase for workers has been eliminated; employees will be given 48 hours of paid leave over a two year period that can be used if campus is closed due to inclement weather; removing the barriers to standard step 4.75% wage increases for classified employees who have not topped out; workers who have topped

out will receive a “longevity premium” or “ongoing 2.5% differential” yearly.

The tentative agreement came after months of negotiation and most immediately following a 22-hour negotiation session.

However, in the weeks leading up to fall term, this tentative agreement didn’t seem possible; SEIU workers and PSU didn’t appear to know how the final week of negotiations would pan out.

Leading up to the tentative agreement

SEIU Local 503 and the OUS were locked in contract disputes since February. SEIU Local 503 represents 4,500 workers in Oregon’s public higher education system. Classified staff work all over Oregon’s public universities in essential departments like financial aid services, food preparation, and information technology. But those workers were poised to go on strike if OUS and SEIU’s higher education bargaining team didn’t come to an agreement by Monday, September 30th, the first day of fall term. The crux of the dispute is about wages. The union demanded two cost-of-living wage increases (COLAs) over the next two years and additional opportunities for raises for longtime employees. OUS initially denied the latter and offered a smaller wage increase. The union rejected their counteroffer. Workers voted overwhelmingly in support of a strike if negotiations failed.

On Thursday, September 26th, plenty of back-to-school activity was afoot on “Move-In Day” at PSU; Interim President Stephen Percy chatted with students and families as they lined up to truck luggage up to dorms. PSU’s streets teemed with activity. Days before fall term begins, campus seemed cheerful and serene. But that morning, PSU got a whiff of a potential storm ahead.

Classified staff from Oregon’s public universities rallied for the



second time in a week outside what was then known as 724 Harrison. Last week, Interim President Stephen Percy tweeted that he was “excited for the formal opening” of 724 Harrison on September 26th, “our modernized, one-stop-shop to serve students’ financial, advising, and academic needs.” Old Neuburger Hall closed in January 2018 for a \$71 million renovation; the worker’s rally was meant to disrupt the grand opening. But, after OUS and SEIU 503 failed (yet again) to negotiate in mediation, the university cancelled 724 Harrison’s grand opening. On Thursday, it reopened unceremoniously as Fariborz Maseeh Hall with no donors or high level administrators there to cut a ribbon. Instead, a handful of students stood in line for registration and financial services while outside, about 50 spirited union members marched, chanting slogans like, “Chop from the top!” “No contract! No peace!” and “You can’t break our union down—Portland is a union town!” It was the second rally of the week.

Percy posted a message to the website of the Office of the President assuring the Campus Community that, if a strike occurs, PSU would still open Monday, September 30 “with normal operations and class schedules.”

But the union workers expected chaos if they didn’t show up on the first day of the busiest term of the year. “They need us more than we need them!” one worker yelled over the megaphone.

“We are like the backbone of this whole institution,” Thuy Huyen told *The Pacific Sentinel* during the rally. Huyen has been an accounting technician at PSU for 17 years. Part of her job is to fix technical issues on campus. “I deal with every single building—touch every single building—on this campus,” Huyen said. If her office goes on strike, Huyen said “it’s going to be crazy, because everybody depends on us. Everyone.”

Huyen said the strike would also affect the jobs performed by many students. Even though workers on strike cannot tell students to skip work, many students work under the supervision of a classified employee. “Without us,” Huyen said, “I think this whole place would be shut down.”

Rex Marshall, a staff member in Millar Library, was also ready to go on

strike. He planned to picket in the Park Blocks and anticipated a robust turnout. “95% voted to strike in the Union! That’s a big deal.” Without library staff, Marshall expected students wouldn’t be able to check out materials, let alone find them. Even if the university hired temps to step in, per Marshall, “there is no chance” they’d have been able to do what permanent staff does. “It’s too specialized to train a temp.”

Some of the rallying workers were PSU alumni. “I’m here because I got a degree from this university,” Grace Piper said over the megaphone. “Now I’m employed by them and they won’t give me a fair contract!” The crowd booted.

Union supporters stood on the periphery, and cheered on the protest. Joe Daunt, a worker’s husband, who lives in Portland and works in Beaverton, showed up to support the picketers. “My wife works on campus so I have an interest, but I’m just here to support the employees because I know that the higher ed workers have gotten the short end of the stick for many years, really.”

Several members of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) union came out to support but didn’t want to go on record for fear of compromising SEIU’s bargaining.

On Friday afternoon, Jen Duggar, director of the Disability Resource Center sent out an email to the DRC listserv to inform Students that they should still go to class, but could “expect a delay in services all over campus.” The email added that, if there was a strike, the DRC would close an hour early at 4p.m. It concluded “We hope a solution is agreed upon soon and that all get what they need and deserve.”

For the moment it appears that the classified employees union, SEIU, and PSU have come to an agreement that both sides feel fairly positive about. The walkout has been averted for now and the tentative agreement is set to be voted on and ratified by union members in the coming weeks. ●



5TH AVENUE CINEMA THEN AND NOW

Photo provided by by PSU
Architecture, Engineering and
Construction Archives (AECA)

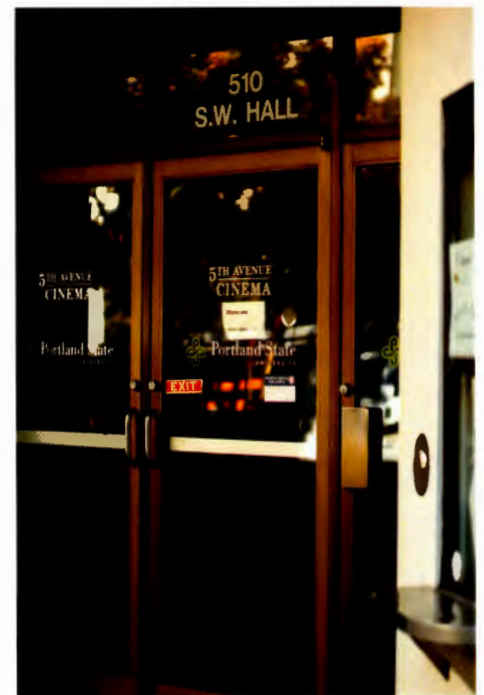
by Zach Zhe Li

5th Avenue Cinema is the only student-run movie theater in Oregon and one of the few left in the country. Students started running the theater on October 1st, 1989, making this year its 30th anniversary. For many, 5th Avenue Cinema occupies a special place on Portland State's urban campus. The unassuming, ground-level building from 1970 sits just off the corner of SW 5th Avenue, tucked behind several residential high-rises. Although a colorful mural of books takes up the wall along 5th Avenue, this building is for movies. The venue is welcoming but often seems idle. These days, it is a cinema on weekends but a lecture hall on weekdays. Passersby stop beneath its vintage marquee of slotted letters to catch a glimpse of the featured film titles before moving on. Today, the appeal of the cinema's modest operation is in its eclectic film selections.

The infrastructure of the cinema has changed very little since it first opened in 1970 as a commercial theater, designed by Richard Campell and William Yost, as part of the larger university campus construction project. In the center of the reception hall, there are two opposing couches and a table in the middle, making the room a cozy and intimate space. In fact, people can rent the cinema space for a fairly low rate. The cinema's projectionist, Amelia Eichler, said that people have rented the space for birthday parties and have used the movie screen to play video games. The concession stand to the side sells refreshments and candy, but the popcorn is free with free admission for PSU students. The cinema has two screens. One screen is equipped with a digital projector to

play films on Digital Cinema Package (DCP), the physical storage format that distributors now use to distribute digital films, which allows the theater to play more contemporary films in addition to the more classic movie formats shot on 35 mm and 16 mm film.

According to archivist Bryce Henry at the PSU Architecture, Engineering and Construction Archives (AECA), the cinema was built as a commercial space together with the Ondine residence hall, which was originally a for-profit co-ed student housing called The Viking. The commercial theater was never particularly profitable. There are few records about the past operations of the commercial cinema. However, there is one anecdote. In 1981, the cinema premiered the highly controversial documentary *Ashram in Poona*, which depicted the spiritual leader Rajneesh and his intentional community that once attracted a mass following. The footage of the film opening in 5th Avenue Cinema was shown for a split second in the Netflix documentary *Wild Wild Country*. To attract students, the theater solicited programming suggestions from the PSU Film Committee, one of the oldest student organizations at PSU whose history goes hand in hand with the movie theater. Before the theater was run by students, "[t]he committee was showing movies on campus and the theater would ask for suggestions about what to play to attract students," said current cinema coordinator, Makaveli Gresham, who has been part of the operation for three years, the longest out of any member on the team. In 1989, PSU



bought the theater and it reopened as a student-run cinema. 5th Avenue Cinema is operated by the PSU Film Committee to this day.

While the infrastructure has not changed much over the years, it seems as if the heydays of the theater have passed. On a Friday afternoon this October, the theater was empty. According to Gresham, back in the day, 5th Avenue Cinema was "a much bigger deal on campus." It used

to be open seven days a week, with students assisting 20 paid staff members. Gresham said that “somewhere between ‘95 and [the] 2000s, the cinema went into decline.” Since at least 2004, the operating staff has been much smaller. “Now, during the weekdays, the cinema serves as lecture halls for a myriad of classes such as psychology and film,” said Madi Alexander, 5th Avenue Cinema’s publicity coordinator.

Over the past three years, Gresham and his colleagues have faced challenges and adopted new directions for the cinema. The current management knows that the university is known for its non-traditional student enrollment and seeks to expand viewership and draw in the increasingly diverse student body of PSU. The cinema tries to reflect that in its operation and programming. “I think we have a strong students attendance base in the last three years,” Gresham explained. “We try to get more engagement, but it is difficult since lots of the students commute, and it is hard to get them [to] come back downtown during the weekends.” So, they’re expanding into other film venues. For example, the PSU Film Committee was invited to take over film programming for the event series, Parkway North Project, which takes place in Smith Memorial Student Union. As Gresham put it, the expansion gives the film committee some flexibility: “[w]e are able to have programming outside of [the] theater and also in the theater, so students have more options to see good movies and we have another outlet to show different types of films.”

At PSU, the student body is diverse and a significant part of the students have families with children. “We also try to engage with students with children more. So instead of showing movies at 7 now we start at 5 at Park, and we have films that are more family oriented like *Iron Giant* for this term.”

Because 5th Avenue Cinema is run by students, operations must stay adaptive as staffing fluctuates and new hires learn the ropes. As of now, three out of five students that work there are new members and they are still looking to hire another projectionist. The dynamic is a new experience for the most veteran worker, Gresham, who said there was little staff turnover over the past three years. Because students run the show, they can tinker with how it’s done accordingly. Gresham said that hiring new staff led to other changes. “We start to navigate differently,” he said. “Our programming approach has changed and is in flux right now.” But the operation functions with staff

consensus. “We want to make sure everyone agrees with our organizational mission for programming and have more specific discussions on what types of film we want to show.” And ultimately, as a student group, everyone on the team is learning the trade. “We want everyone to build the skills that they should be building in this position, like programming, speaking to distributors and writing about films,” Gresham said.

While there are things that new staff need to catch up on, personnel changes also bring fresh perspectives to the table. Until recently, 5th Avenue Cinema featured 35 mm and 16 mm films exclusively. “It was the mission of [5th Avenue] cinema a while ago to stick [to] 35mm no matter what,” Gresham said, “but that is just not practical anymore.” Most of the new movies are no longer shot or distributed in 35mm film. The cinema acquired a digital projector system in 2018. “We need to show movies and have access to archival stuff and old movies that are in digital format,” said Gresham. Different hardware platforms allow the theater to feature movies from different times, which often spark interesting dialogues. Last winter, the cinema featured *Get Out* (2017) in DCP as well as lesser-known *Portrait of Jason* (1967) in 35 mm. Each movie portrays the African-American experience from the perspective of a different decade.

The group is very deliberate when it comes to programming. The theater tends to feature many international films. This term, the program’s



range includes Mexican coming of age road film *Y Tu Mamá También* (2001) to recent Chinese documentary about China’s one child policy *One Child Nation* (2019), but it also serves as a community forum for PSU and the city at large. For example, after campus security officers shot and killed a young black veteran named Jason Washington outside a bar around the corner from 5th Avenue Cinema in June 2018, the community effort to disarm PSU Campus Police gained momentum. The cinema staff met to discuss whether they should take a stance on the issue or not. They decided to use the marquee upfront to display “Disarm PSU” for the rest of the academic year, despite pushback from the administration. In March, 5th Avenue Cinema co-organized and hosted a three-day event in collaboration with PSU Student Union (PSUSU) called Disarm PSU: Grassroots Organizing, Building A Movement, which featured film media, lectures and workshops about the history of community organizing in Portland. The marquee continues to reflect this student group’s support to disarm PSU. “We still have the Jason Washington memorial on the marquee,” Gresham said. “We all agree that it is important to show.”



References:

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- <https://www.pdx.edu/floorplans/buildings/cin>

Photographs by Marina Castro

MAPS

Goodbye Maps Collection, Hello Graduate Collaboratory

4th Floor of Millar Library to undergo state-of-the-art makeover

by Margo Craig



For twenty eight years, the southeast wing of Millar Library's 4th floor has been home to Portland State's collection of maps. The understated 3,700 square foot space has a dusty library air of yesteryear—scuffed linoleum floors, natural light from big windows, sturdy wood tables pushed together, surrounded by filing cabinets for maps of all kinds and all regions. The collection has road maps, atlases, raised-relief topographical maps, geological maps, aeronautical and nautical charts, local neighborhoods, foreign countries, even some celestial bodies. But last month, the maps were packed up to prepare for a renovation. The sleepy corner of the 4th floor will be transformed into a state-of-the-art collaborative learning center for graduate students tentatively called "The Collaboratory."

The Collaboratory is a project between the Graduate School and the Library to foster interdisciplinary research and professional development for graduate students, Thomas Bielavitz, Library Dean and lead of the project, wrote in an email. "At its most basic, it will provide study space for graduate students, which is common at many university libraries." But the Library also plans to use The Collaboratory to develop partnerships with organizations like the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS) Collaborative, a group of students that organized because they do not feel that PSU provides enough support for interdisciplinary research, Bielavitz said. "We plan to work with them to provide space and other support for their activities."

According to the project description from the PSU's Campus Planning Office, The Collaboratory will be equipped with "the latest technologies for learning, research, and

collaboration," updated with sleek "interactive projection screens, smartboards, multi-touch coffee tables and 'maker' tools." The proposed floor plan shows a wall partitioning off the entire southern portion of the 4th floor. One door leads to the reception and another door leads to open lounges along the curved windows that face the Copper Beech tree outside. Entrances will be controlled by a card access system, Bielavitz explained, but students and faculty that are invited or working on interdisciplinary projects will also have access.

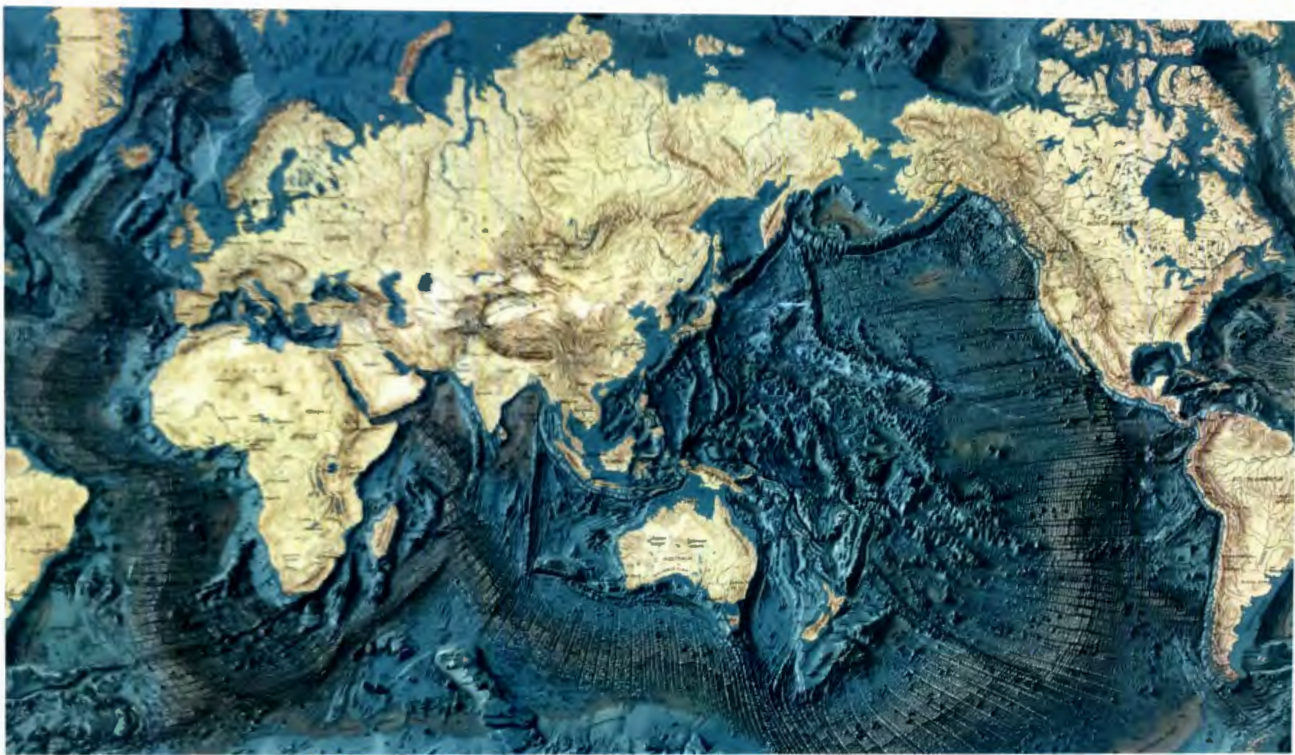
The renovation means a dramatic update for the old maps section. Geometric carpeting will replace linoleum floors, a "reflective ceiling" instead of tiles and fluorescent lights, and frosted glass partitions with dry erase window film to replace filing cabinets and book stacks. There will be open and private spaces for group work, study pods, a semi-private lounge, and two "visualization labs." The design plan points to some precedents such as the Visualization Laboratory at the University of Texas in Austin, which boasts technology like *Stallion*, the world's highest resolution tiled wall of display monitors, and *Lasso*, a high resolution multi-touch screen.

PSU's history dates back to Vanport, a prefab city by the Columbia River constructed during World War II to house shipyard workers. In 1948, a flood breached the poorly-constructed levees and Vanport was tragically wiped out. The city's education facility, the Vanport Extension Center, was moved downtown and eventually became Portland State University. Although some maps predate the flood—like a 19th century map Rick Mikulski recently discovered and moved to Special Collections—none feature the Vanport stamp. Mikulski is

PSU's Government Documents Librarian. "It's unlikely we hold maps that were originally from the Vanport library," Mikulski explained. "Since that Vanport library was destroyed, the only materials known to have survived were the card catalog—saved by library staff—and a handful of books that were checked out."

According to Head of Special Collections and University Archives, Chris Paschild, when the school moved to its current location in 1952, the Library was in Lincoln Hall, then called "Old Main," along with other departments and services. In 1960, the Library got its first "dedicated location" in the College Center, now called Smith Memorial Student Union. In 1968, the collection and public services moved into the current library's initial construction, known as Library West (the technical services in the College Center became "Library East" and weren't moved to Millar Library until 2013). In 1975, Library West was renamed Millar Library on behalf of PSU's 2nd President Branford Price Millar—whose tenure at PSU lasted from 1959–1968. In 1991, Millar Library underwent a second phase of construction to add the front addition with convex windows facing the Copper Beech tree—which was planted in 1892. Thus, a space to hold and behold maps was born.

In theory, the ample table tops and organized filing cabinets made for a very functional space for map studies. But it's unclear who, if anyone, took advantage of it. "I have never used the library's map collection," Randy Morris, geography and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) instructor at the College of Urban & Public Affairs said in an email, "not once during grad school many years ago, and not once during my time as a GIS



Research Associate at PSU.” Yet, according to his staff biography, he “delights in introducing people to the field and tools of geography as well [as] sharing his love of cartography.” It’s not that Morris wouldn’t appreciate spending time with the maps collection. “I just don’t have any spare time,” he said. In his opinion, academic libraries have done an admirable job maintaining map collections, but the plan to stow more away is “unfortunately, a trend we are seeing throughout the...mapping world.” The professional mapper doesn’t seem to need them either. “[M]ost GIS and mapping folks I know rely on the accessibility and ease of digital collections, most of which can be accessed from their office chair,” Morris said. “Most cartographers understand the lasting power and impact print maps can have that is rarely replicated in the digital medium,” but at the same time, understand that libraries face a “dynamic reality,” and must adapt to the changing needs of the community. “If cartographers want a revitalization of the printed map, then it is incumbent upon us to chart the way.”

As the Library changes, students seem prepared to adapt, too. An anonymous survey* conducted outside Millar Library found that only four out of 50 people said they favored the 4th floor for studies, mainly because it is a quiet floor with large tables. “It’s where I can focus on what I need to do,” said one undergrad. The plan for renovation didn’t bother her much.

“Graduate students prefer a separate space and the 4th floor is a good option for that,” she said before adding, “the 5th floor is also good, but it gets too hot!” Another student likes 4th floor for the French books, but no one mentioned the maps.

Whether people care or not, the Library is keeping the maps collection. Some maps were moved to the northwest corner of the basement and others were moved to an offsite storage facility that houses a third of the library’s entire physical collection. “We make daily runs out there to retrieve materials for students and faculty,” said Bielavitz.

According to Mikulski, the library started receiving maps in the 1960s. Some maps have been purchased by the Library over the years and a few are gifts from people, departments and other colleges. But the majority of the collection comes from the Federal Depository Library Program, a government program created to make government publications publically available for free. As a federal selective depository library, Millar Library must maintain a complete collection of current maps produced by the U.S. Geological Survey, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency. The Library also has incomplete collections from the U.S. Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management and the C.I.A.

Funding for The Collaboratory is split

between the Graduate School and the Library. Bielavitz said the Library is dipping into save funds it accrues from annual budgets. Recently, these funds helped renovate two Library classrooms, replace worn furniture on the 3rd floor and update study rooms with new paint, carpeting, and technology. It’s not clear when construction for The Collaboratory will begin since the timeline isn’t finalized yet. For now, anyone can visit the southeast wing of the 4th floor. The maps aren’t there but it still looks the way it did in 1991. At the end of the day, the community seems ready to welcome The Collaboratory to Millar Library. ●

| Where do you prefer to study in the library? | | | | | | |
|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|-------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| Basement (quiet) | 1st floor | 2nd floor | 3rd floor | 4th floor (quiet) | 5th floor (quiet) | No preference |
| 5 | 1 | 9 | 18 | 4 | 3 | 10 |

Photographs and infographic by Margo Craig

*data collected from an anonymous survey conducted outside Millar Library

WE CAN'T ALL
EVACUATE TO
MARS

OUR
HOME,

OUR
RESPONSIBILITY

THE
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Thousands of Students Ditch School to Lead Portlanders in Climate Strike

by Margo Craig

On September 22nd, thousands of students in the Portland area ditched class to meet downtown for the Global Climate Strike. Student activists organized the event to encourage Oregon's lawmakers to sign onto a Green New Deal to transition the power grid from fossil fuels to renewable energy.

That grey Friday morning, students and supporters filled buses and sidewalks to meet at Terry Schunk Plaza before marching over the Hawthorne Bridge. Those undeterred by a lawn of thick, treacherous mud heard a series of ecocentric speakers, many of whom were indigenous activists. This was not the first climate rally for many students. "I made this sign in March," Megan, a 10th grader at Catlin Gabel said, referring to the walk-out rally that pressured the school board to make good on a promise for climate curriculum. One mission of Portland's climate strike on Friday was to encourage local government to prohibit Zenith Energy from using the infrastructure to ship crude tar sands.

People took the slow march across the Hawthorne Bridge funneling into a single traffic lane to reach OMSI for speeches from student leaders and local officials, like City Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty. Portland police and volunteering peace officers were taxed with keeping the crowd out of oncoming traffic and off of the bridge's partitions. Several arrests have been reported: one adult for vandalism and two juveniles for criminal mischief and resisting arrest. Videos show police officers shoving students aside to arrest two teenagers standing on the partition of the Hawthorne Bridge.

The arrests have drawn condemnation from several leaders, including City Commissioner Hardesty and Nkenge Harmon Johnson Urban League's president and CEO, for excessive use of force in an otherwise peaceful march. Some viewers allege racism since a widely viewed video appears to show the police targeting two black teens in a group of white protestors, while a video from Oregonian/OregonLive

shows the police arrested one black student and one white student. In response to the video, Portland City Council candidate and Portland State University Coordinator of Student Government, Candace Avalos tweeted: "What is happening here??? I mean seriously, I need answers. I'm having a hard time thinking of any scenario that would warrant this kind of response. These are KIDS. I'm so upset, this is unacceptable."

Some are comparing these arrests to past protests when police shut down roads and bridges on August 17 and allowed a group of Proud Boys and other right-wing protestors to walk across the Hawthorne Bridge to keep separate from antifascists. Mayor Ted Wheeler is waiting for the results of an internal review before releasing a statement. ●

All photographs by Margo Craig

(Right)

"I'm from a tribe in California where there was a nuclear waste landfill put on it and there's no more fish in our river...a lot of times, people will say, 'This is a global thing. Race has nothing to do with it.' But for our local communities here in the US, the impact of global warming is almost all about race. It's the frontline communities that see it first—that have been seeing it first.

We're here taking up space because Portland is a city where you have those "In Our America" signs and "Black Lives Matter" signs. If Black lives matter, then give us a Green New Deal." Sophia, 18. Cahto tribe of the Pomo nation, California





(Above)
"I just want to make a difference, that's all."
 Anonymous, 10th grade



(Above)
"I wanted to support the climate because if we don't, there will be no planet later for us to support."
 Sophie, 8th grade (L)
"I don't want global warming because it changes the weather and it changes my favorite seasons from snow here and it makes it so it doesn't snow anymore."
 Brooke, 7th grade (R)



(Above)
"What brought me out today is: I don't want to die. I think that if the planet dies, it's not only us that dies, it's everything on the planet and I don't think that's a good thing."
 Alden, age 16





(Above)
"I feel like Trump and the people he's working with aren't doing anything about our climate. Our climate is being destroyed by fossil fuels and everything and I feel like I'm done with that because we need...we need our climate. If we don't have our climate, we will die and people don't seem to understand that."
 Elena, 12



(Above)
"I feel like this isn't that big of an inconvenience to come out here and show up, to avoid a bigger inconvenience later."
 Jenna, age 25
"I feel like humans are really selfish and everyone can only think about themselves. It's time we think about everybody as a whole instead of an individual."
 Louisa, age 31



(Left)
"For my tribe, we had an ancestral fishing grounds for thousands and thousands of years and they were blocked by a dam so they're not there anymore. Celilo Falls is gone. We can't fish. We don't have any water. We can't drink water on the reservation—we have to boil it first. And nobody cares because we're brown, we're indigenous. People care now because they're white. So, we're yelling because we're one of the few brown people who can—we can be here. We're going to take up as much space as possible."
 Lilajane, 19



(Right)
"I went vegetarian because the cows are farting. You guys should go vegetarian. The food's not as bad as vegan."
 Somaya, 12



(Left)

"Today we're here striking from school to represent ourselves because me and a lot of my peers are too young to vote, so this is really our only option to force change through our government. Climate justice is an issue that really matters to us because it directly affects our health and our safety."

Matilda Milner, 16

(Below)

"I feel very enthused by the turnout today. It's a beautiful event and it's wonderful to see all the children."

Caden, 27. (in neon beanie)



(Above)

"For a while now, I've thought about what's going on and I just saw this as an opportunity to really participate and get with the world because that's what we need to do. We all need to come together right now. We can't live separately. We can't live against each other anymore. We're all humans."

Kestral, 22

(Above)

"Climate change is a real thing and people need to do something!"

Viola, 9

Brief Thoughts on Familiar Phrases

Are we too flippant with our words?

by Van Vanderwall

Illustration by Josh Gates



There are two sides to every issue.

The phrase would be more accurate if stated thus: "There are at least two sides to every issue and at least one other way to frame the question." Each issue that is commonly understood in dualistic terms (pro-life/pro-choice, gun rights/gun control, supply-side/demand-side economics, capitalism/socialism) has been narrowed and defined in order to organize the discussion—if what our culture does even qualifies as such, into a simple binary that's more amenable to planning television programs, directing advertising campaigns, and controlling thought. Accepting the dualistic definitions as presented effectively cedes the critical thinking and reasoning to powers unknown, leaving people to do little more than huddle into opposing groups that take invective for debate.

How else might the question be framed? What are the underlying assumptions and values? Who benefits from sorting people into insoluble struggles that never examine the questions any further than making tally after tally of yea and nay? For issues on which the two sides have remained entrenched for years, has anything changed or been solved? If not, are these the only two sides conceivable or even the most useful for arriving at an answer?

Could it be that the division was orchestrated to create an intractable problem? Maintaining a crisis state keeps the many commentators, specialists, news-entertainment producers, politically involved religious leaders, and others in business. If they solved the problem, their professions would no longer have an organizing purpose. Would not the logical aim be to prolong the problems as much as possible to maintain a predictable market?

Always question the proposed dualistic divisions. There may be no simple answer; indeed, a deep investigation may reveal more uncertainty and paradox rather than support for an existing platform or party.

Google it.

There are subtle, but crucial, differences among "do an internet search", "look it up on Google", and "Google it." The first phrase is hardly heard anymore, but is the best of the three for its lack of assigning an activity

allegiance to a corporation. The second phrase elides the possibility of other non-Google ways of finding information online. Although this phrasing does not rule out the speaker conceiving of other search methods, it does participate in what author Nicholas Carr describes as a consolidation of authority by a few internet companies (most notably Google and Wikipedia).

A disturbing linguistic development transforms the second phrase's noun "Google" into the verb "to Google" of the third phrase. The distinction may seem minor, but it reveals how choice among differing search methods—and even that of understanding oneself as an entity independent of Google—have been eliminated. Google's colonization of the language turns the company into a linguistically and conceptually necessary feature of the world because the words to describe it as otherwise have vanished.

First, consider that Bing, Ecosia, DuckDuckGo, and others are all viable search engines. The language need not contract into a single possibility when there are about a half-dozen choices available. This is particularly crucial because search engines curate information and therefore control the range of possible conclusions that users can draw.

If there is no way to imagine an action or a thought without invoking a corporation, how dependent on the company are we? If the name and proprietary technologies are protected as intellectual property and the company's language displaces real language, even saying the phrase "Google it" on television now requires a pay out to Google themselves. How likely is innovation if a company is synonymous with a concept? Whatever the company does would, by the fact of the colonized language, be correct and acceptable because there is no other way to imagine the world.

The noun is a tool, but the verb is thought itself.

Killing time.

There's no need to conceptualize passing time as a kind of murder. Our culture has enough of a fixation on violence without turning even the most passive moments into a figurative taking of life.

There is, however, a more sinister sentiment at work in this phrase. Life is made of time; killing time is killing oneself. In common usage, "killing time" entails something like window-shopping or poking around Facebook. If doing nothing is the best thing to do at that moment, then do nothing; reducing the number of sensory stimulations is a good thing. Inventing tasks to fill the awareness and stave off the possibility of silence accomplishes nothing and disrespects the self. In the case of the examples provided, it also cedes autonomy to corporations, which profit from attention, without receiving anything in return.

Don't kill time. Live time. Be time.

Are you religious?

In the United States, a reply in the affirmative without further qualification means that the interviewee is a Christian. Why is Christianity assumed to be the default religion? Why not ask if someone is Christian if that is what you mean? Why does it matter? The question's unstated hope is that the inquirer and the responder be of the same religion, which is of course the one true religion.

Consider flipping the question. Respond by asking why he wants to know. Inquire which religion is meant, and if the implication is that certain answers will result in judgement. Ask if the inquirer wants to know about adherence to meaningless dogma or living an ethical life.

What do you do?

The literal meaning of the question ought to elicit responses that include everything a person does in life; this would include eating and sleeping, caring for children, reading, having sex, telling jokes, and so on. This is, however, not the question's intent. The real question obscured by the apparent simplicity is this: "How much money do you make? It's important to me that I make my judgement of you based on this single facet of your life."

If someone wants to understand and empathize with his fellow man, it is far better to ask what he likes to do, what is on his mind, what he did that day, what he is reading or anything that evinces interest in the man, as opposed to his ability to serve as a means to bolster one's own social standing.

Critiquing the Critic

CRITICISM IS A VALUABLE PART OF THE ARTS, WHETHER IT'S POSITIVE OR NOT.



by McKinzie Smith

Illustrations by Ana Benitez Duarte

Think about the last time you read a review of something you love. How did it make you feel? Whether or not it validated your experience with the thing you like, it probably did one thing: It made you think more deeply about why you like it. If you boil down criticism to its bare essentials, that is its purpose: To make you think. Should you go see this movie? Why do you love this album so much? It begs questions that are, to the consumer, important. These questions can often be uncomfortable or harsh, but that doesn't mean that criticism is itself a negative concept. To view criticism with contempt is to be ignorant of its place in the world of the arts.

That being said, many artists would disagree. In just the past year alone, Lizzo, Lana Del Rey, Ariana Grande, Michael Che, Olivia Munn, Taylor Swift, and more have derided critics as nothing more than internet hate. This couldn't be further from the truth. Criticism fits under a large umbrella of essays, articles, and reviews but none of these things are meant to spread hate. In the majority of the examples listed above, the original writers were aiming their thoughts at their reader with the intention of thinking about a particular work or artist within the framework of the culture at large. Though some of the concepts presented in these examples are negative, there were no personal shots taken at any of the artists.

It's easy enough to understand why an artist would take personal offense at public criticism, though. Lizzo didn't work her way up the pop food chain only to be awarded a Pitchfork score of 6.5. She has every right to feel a sense of righteous anger that someone thought her work was average. However, this doesn't excuse an artist lashing out at critics for doing their jobs or even simply having a negative opinion.

In Lizzo's case, she took to Twitter to express her own opinion that "PEOPLE WHO 'REVIEW' ALBUMS AND DON'T MAKE MUSIC THEMSELVES SHOULD BE UNEMPLOYED." This isn't exactly the best response to an article that called the content of her album "important," even though it admitted the record sometimes fell flat musically. Calling for the unemployment of music journalists, who are already undervalued and underpaid, is a huge thing for a popular artist to do. The music industry isn't in jeopardy of ever being fully bankrupt, but many publications are.

This is why when another popular artist like Lana Del Rey writes back at NPR music critic Ann Powers there is a clear power imbalance. Music will always have an audience, but criticism is in danger of becoming obsolete. In Powers' article, she questioned Del Rey's "Norman Fucking Rockwell!" on the grounds of it being "disempowered" and reliant on outdated female tropes. Del Rey wrote back on Twitter that Powers shouldn't "call [herself] a fan" and disregarded the critiques in the article. But she missed two very important things.

Firstly, in the article, Powers was placing Del Rey in the context of other great American writers, such as Joni Mitchell. What Powers was doing was attempting to grapple with Del Rey as an American icon, despite her shortcomings. This is, ultimately, a huge compliment, even if Del Rey feels that Powers misunderstood her work. Secondly,

responding directly to the writer on Twitter gives her fans the license to respond to them as well. In this case, Powers was attacked by hundreds of Del Rey fans, who called for her to "get a job" and to "keep Lana's name out of [her] mouth." Once again, the difference here has to do with job security. When a musician puts out mediocre work, it's rare that their role as a musician is put up for debate. However, when a critic puts out an article someone disagrees with, their job is often called into question.

All of this seems to boil down to a misunderstanding of what criticism is supposed to be. To some artists, criticism is nothing but a nuisance, only useful when they can share a glowing review on Twitter to promote their new work. The lack of understanding these artists have for an industry that goes hand in hand with their own is disappointing, to say the least. Criticism is one of the only places left in the arts where money doesn't matter and discussion reigns supreme. It doesn't matter how many units your album moved or where your film placed at the box office; if it's good, it's good and we'll say it's good. This is an incredibly valuable lifeline for underperforming works that otherwise struggle to find an audience. And, regardless of whether or not she likes it, in what other context can you be bothered to think about the feminist implications of a Lana Del Rey album? Without criticism, these things go unnoticed and unspoken. And I think we're all the better for being forced to think and talk about them.

All of this matters more than we give it credit for. We are all members of the world of criticism. You like and dislike things. That's you critiquing them, whether you're consciously thinking about it or not. Chances are, when pressed, you could articulate why it is that you like your favorite film or why you thought *Acid Rap* was far superior to *The Big Day*. It helps to have professional critics around to put these thoughts into the canon of arts and culture, encouraging us to think harder about what art we value and what art we don't. Opinions drive the arts, maybe even more so than money. Without criticism, we're lost in a void of content with no meanings attached to them. And you can't sell something with no meaning.

We can't do much about artists clapping back at critics. Olivia Munn comparing fashion criticism to the "suppression of women" or Michael Che posting on Instagram that critic Steven Hyden "sucks off rescue dogs" aren't level responses by any means, but they aren't going to stop happening. People have strong feelings and they like to defend themselves when called into question. That's human nature. But what we can do is identify bullshit when we see it. If you think an artist is being unfair about the criticism they've received, say something. Start conversations about it. It's all in the spirit of good criticism to think deeply about the information being presented to you. Of course, not every review is done in good faith but neither are a lot of films or music or books or TV shows. It's all a part of a healthy arts ecosystem and you can do your part by sitting and thinking for a bit (or donating to your favorite publication if you've got the cash and are feeling generous!). Where's the harm in that? ●

Nothing Wrong With Apu

Thank you! Come again!

by M. Saqif Maqsud

Illustration by Bailey Granquist

Satire is what *The Simpsons* is all about. It is what the show prides itself in doing. *The Simpsons* stands on pillars of satire and comical stereotyping. We have Homer, a rather dull man with a steady job, father of three and husband to Marge. Bart Simpson is the mischievous trouble-maker pulling pranks while his sister Lisa is the perfect model student. All of these characters are comical stereotypes and it's the jokes about them that make the show great.

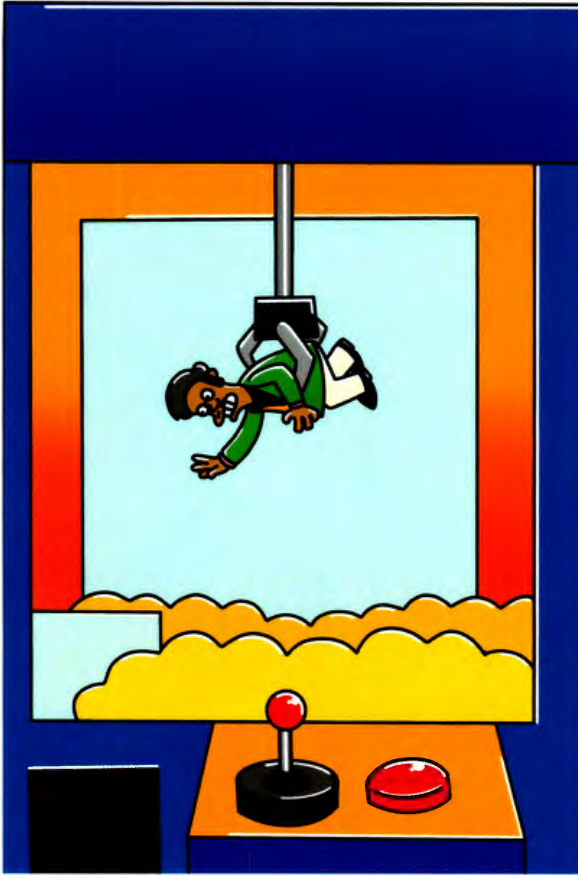
The Simpsons has a lot of characters, many of which are featured frequently. Like the Simpsons family, they are all comedic satirical stereotypes, from Luigi the "Italian chef" parody, to Police Chief Clancy Wiggum, who represents a semi-corrupt policeman, often taking bribes. Apu—who was the centre of a modern problem for *The Simpsons*—is no exception to the standard modelling of the characters in the show. If you go to *The Simpsons* website, Apu can be found in the character section, under his full name: Dr. Apu Nahasapeemapetilon, Ph.D. Jr. He is described as the owner of the Kwik-E-Mart, which is a local convenience store. Apu came from India and is highly educated, holding a Ph.D. in computer science. He appears to be a favorite amongst the extra characters, since many sketches involve the Kwik-E-Mart. Apu's constant featuring is also an example of inclusion in *The Simpsons*—for a show that makes fun of everyone.

The episode, "Much Apu About Nothing" that aired on May 5, 1996 is an example of Apu's relevance. The episode focused on the Mayor's proposition to deport all illegal immigrants. Apu confides in Homer that he has been living with an expired visa. Initially, Homer sympathizes but declines to help Apu. Homer is later seen in a bar with his friends Moe and Barney, preparing banners in support of the proposition. The dialogue in this scene is comedic as well as relevant. "You know what really aggravates me? It's them immigrants (sic)," says Moe. "They wants all the benefits of living in Springfield,

but they ain't even bother to learn themselves the language." Homer replies, "Hey, those are exactly my sentiments." The hypocrisy is stunning.

In the end, Homer and his family helps Apu prepare and pass the citizenship test. The dialogue in the bar scene provides a very clear contrast when compared to Apu's citizenship interview dialogue, where the test's proctor is asking him about the causes of the civil war: "Actually, there were numerous causes," he says when questioned. "Aside from the obvious schism between the abolitionists and the anti-abolitionists, there were economic factors, both domestic and inter—" and then the proctor saying: "Wait, wait...just say slavery." Apu is respected and showcased here. He acts as an icon of immigration and of how immigrants interact with non-immigrants. Without Apu, there would be no convenience store scenes, but there would also be no spokesperson for this particular group. Apu adds diversity to the voices present in *The Simpsons*.

Regrettably, in 2017, a comedian by the name Hari Kondabolu made a documentary called *The Problem with Apu* about how the character is widely considered to be an offensive stereotype to people of Indian and Asian descent. The film seems to focus on negative stereotyping, forcefully aligning examples with Apu. This sparked a media storm and brought *The Simpsons* back into the spotlight for the wrong reasons. It is regrettable that Apu was targeted this way, because the stereotypes he represents are stressed to the same degree as all the other characters in the show. In fact, *The Simpsons* has held Apu in higher standards than some of the other characters. If one is a dedicated viewer of *The Simpsons*, it becomes easy to identify that Apu is more charismatic, educated, and sophisticated than many of the American characters. Again, like all the characters on the show, Apu is balanced with positive and negative qualities. I tend to agree with Matt Groening, the creator of *The Simpsons*, when he said, "I'm proud



of what we do on the show. And I think it's a time in our culture where people love to pretend they're offended."

I am an avid fan of *The Simpsons*. The experience watching it as a child is very different than watching it as an adult. As a child, it's just entertaining to watch Homer get stung by bees or watching a lie detector machine blow up when an FBI agent is interrogating him. However, when watching as an adult, the comedy is enriched by further cultural context. Author Jonathan Gray's book *Watching with The Simpsons: Television, Parody, and Intertextuality* is an excellent read for those who want to dive further into the comedy of *The Simpsons* and understand it better.

In the week leading up to *The Simpsons'* 26th season premiere, Gray was interviewed by Wes Unruh from *The Peabody Awards*. During the interview, Unruh mentioned how the show features many racial, religious, ethnic, and class stereotypes, some of which are intentionally offensive and asked, "Are there aspects unique to *The Simpsons*, which has enabled hyper-stereotyping to be as effective at subverting stereotypes?" Gray's response was, "I wouldn't say *The Simpsons* has done this better than most, especially since many of their hyper-stereotypes appear so fleetingly, whereas I can think of many shows that engage hyper-stereotypes with a lot more depth and focus (*Key and Peele* or *Inside Amy Schumer* right now, for instance). But it's also better than others." Gray further explained the benefit animation brings to this argument—allowing things to be starkly drawn both figuratively and literally. "Animation is always already coded for viewers as not real, as larger than life, and thus the rather dangerous, tricky strategy of hyper-stereotyping enjoys certain benefits in this realm," he said. This statement also highlights the problem of Kondabolu's perspective. It is important to remember that nothing in *The Simpsons* is real. They are all caricatures.

I honestly find the stir-up created by Kondabolu as one-sided. If

racial profiling or stereotyping is the issue, it must be addressed more broadly and without bias. I would have loved to see a joint rebellion regarding all of the characters that *The Simpsons* uses as stereotypes, like Waylon Smithers—a gay man working as a personal assistant who always has his sexuality stressed but rarely addressed; Fat Tony—head of an organized crime ring where everyone is Italian; the Flanders family—where everyone is God-loving and Ned Flanders, the head of the family, has become an evangelical stereotype. The documentary should have included people with Italian heritage, Christians, and members of the LGBTQ+ community. It seems personal, and the "fighting for a cause" attitude seems exceedingly fake. Kondabolu's sole picking of Apu, therefore, seems illogical. Why just pick one character? If one was being crudely analytical, one would think that this was the attempt of a struggling comedian to desperately reach out to the media and forcefully advertise himself.

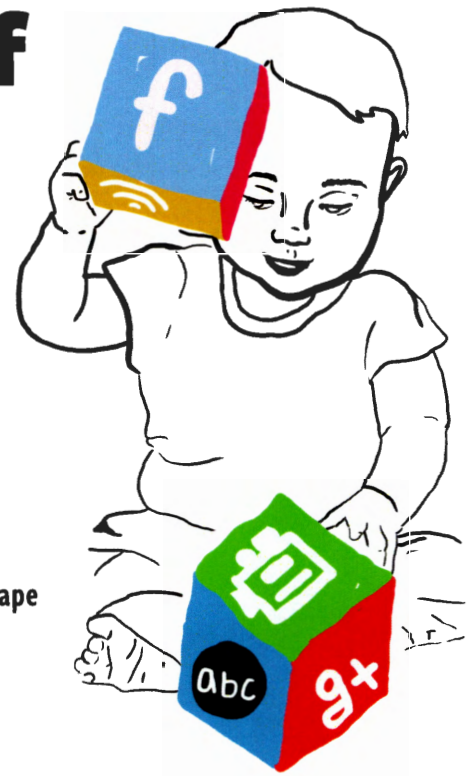
As it stands today, *The Simpsons*, previously streamed on Fox, will now exclusively be streamed on Disney+, after Disney's acquisition of 21st Century Fox. Matt Groening has confirmed in an announcement during Disney's D23 Expo that Apu will continue to feature in *The Simpsons*.

A hardworking family man, Apu is well established and is financially solvent—a very well-liked character. Therefore, when he was picked out to create a controversy, to me, it felt like picking out a bent nail from a building in construction and starting an unnecessary row with the contractor. To reiterate Matt Groening's response, he should be proud of the show and its characters. I believe that using Apu and racism to create a bit of fame for oneself, not to mention a contract from Netflix, cheapens the seriousness of racism. ●

The Importance of Media Literacy

by McKinzie Smith

Illustration by Greer Siegel



Media literacy classes may be the way forward in our oversaturated cultural landscape

A greater education in media literacy could help young people think critically about the overwhelming amount of images presented to them every day.

Reflecting back on my K-12 education, I find that one very important thing was lacking: How to navigate media. Media is, of course, a broad term. The internet, television, film, books, music, video games, advertising, social networks, and even the magazine you're holding right now are all considered media. What confounds me is the little value placed upon a deep understanding of how to read different types of media.

Media literacy doesn't have an easy definition, but the National Association of Media Literacy believes that it allows the individual the power to "access, analyze, evaluate, create, and act using all forms of communication." To know what a piece of media is telling you, to think deeply about it, and to form your own opinions on it is to be media literate. Likewise, media literate people can effectively create their own media and use it to further their personal agendas.

It can be easy to assume that we're all born with an inherent knowledge of how to do all of these things. After all, we grow up watching film and television. With time, we grow to understand the tropes and techniques of those mediums even without a formal education on how they're made. However, many people still struggle to critically understand the media in front of them. The theme, ideology, or purpose of a work is often obscured under the guise of pure entertainment.

But why is this important? Can't entertainment just be entertainment?

While this is fair and true, being able to analyze the entertainment around you is ultimately a positive thing. To use a recent example, the campaigning by both mental health professionals and Netflix viewers to cut a graphic depiction of suicide in the teen drama *13 Reasons Why* succeeded this summer.

Netflix unceremoniously edited out the scene in response to these concerns, especially after a study was done by the National Institute of Mental Health in which it was estimated that teen suicides spiked 28.9 percent in the month after the release of the shows first season. The understanding that this scene could be enacting real damage persuaded the creators of the series to make a positive statement about responsible media making. Though it's easy to write a teen drama off as entertainment, the images we see do affect us. If media makers are irresponsible, it can have serious consequences.

Likewise, the line between entertainment and news has blurred. Choosing which news outlets to read from can potentially mean opening yourself up to falsities or extreme bias. Knowing that CNN is a liberal network and that Fox News is a conservative network is of high importance in understanding not only how journalism works, but how American politics work. Media bleeds out into everyday understanding of concepts outside of itself: politics, gender, race, sexuality, social norms. The media we consume can shape our opinions on anything worth having an opinion about.

If you're still having trouble believing me, refer to such popular movements such as the QAnon conspiracy or the anti-vax movement. Both were spread through the internet at rapid speed, hitting vulnerable people that don't fact check their news and prefer to believe whatever their media of choice tells them is true. Even your conservative grandma is proof of media illiteracy: How many times has an older relative shared a dubious news post on Facebook, or a fake video about how abortion works? These posts target people with a base understanding of how and why information is spread online, literally weaponizing the media illiteracy of thousands of people.

And, yes, that means media can be dangerous. But instead of acting like the media is out to

ruin the world and is the root of all evil, we have an opportunity to take matters into our own hands. This is where the concept of media literacy comes in.

If we consider history and the social sciences important, then there must be room for media literacy in those studies. From elementary school on, knowing how to use the internet and understanding how to navigate all forms of media should be drilled into our brains. A dedicated, required class for the subject is needed to help kids gain this important skill before they become confused adults that base their political ideologies off of Alex Jones conspiracies. As well as understanding how to use the internet, we should be introduced to a basic canon of important films and cultural touchstones. Analyzing a film or a song can serve as a means to think about endless topics like relationships, race, sexuality, or ideology etc. in ways that are more palatable for the average student while also providing them with a background in the history of various mediums.

Should irresponsible media like *The Alex Jones Show* or *13 Reasons Why* even exist in the first place? Probably not. But while they do, we may as well equip ourselves with the tools to think better of believing what they're selling. And, hopefully, those media literate kids will grow up to create responsible media that is based in truth and prioritizes the well-being of their audiences. Though, to be sure, it doesn't just have to be for kids. The ability to be curious and to further analyze the media you consume is available to us all. With time, we can all be media literate. We just need to learn how to value that future. ●

The Media Literacy Crash Course series on YouTube is a fun and educational resource to get yourself familiar with the fundamentals of this subject: <https://bit.ly/2ImGMmD>

6 TIPS TO BEING MORE MEDIA LITERATE



- 1** Double-check your news sources. Familiarize yourself with potential biases ascribed to all major news outlets. Create a list of sources you trust.
- 2** Keep your consumption diverse. You don't have to watch whatever Netflix wants you to! There are lots of other places to watch things for free, like Kanopy (you get a subscription through PSU) or the PBS website. This goes for news, too. Just watching CNN all the time isn't just dry, it's mostly one-sided.
- 3** Check your source's sources to find out where they are getting their information from. Feel free to disagree with programming that you know, like, and trust.
- 4** Take a class! PSU offers classes that can help you better understand the media you consume. Film Analysis/Film 131 and Mass Communication & Society/Comm 322 provide deep dives into the things we watch every day.
- 5** Talk to your family. We can educate one another. If you've noticed Grandma sharing those anti-vax posts, it might be time to sit down with her and have a conversation regarding internet hoaxes.
- 6** Give yourself a foundation in popular culture. Wanna catch up on more classic films or novels? There's never a better time to start than the present.



Illustration by Ciaran Dillon

Pop Weekend 2019

Lana, Marina, and Charli may be in different places now, but their fanbases remain the same

by McKinzie Smith

If you were on Tumblr in 2011–2013, you may recall the popularity of a specific cadre of pop artists. All touting a dark, angsty aesthetic that translated well into glitchy gifs featuring pretty girls and lyrics like “I live my life inside a dream,” these artists served as the soundtrack to repressed teens the world over. Male-fronted bands like The 1975 or Arctic Monkeys certainly fell into this category, but women were well-represented in this subculture too. Lana Del Rey, Marina and the Diamonds (now simply Marina), and Charli XCX were important figureheads of the era. This is why, on the weekend of October 3–7, I felt the need to revisit this particular period of internet history. Coincidentally, all three women mentioned came to Portland in the span of five days. The growth they’ve achieved since 2013 is staggering and reflects the changes their fanbases have gone through over half a decade as well.

Lana Del Rey at the Moda, October 3

The weekend kicked off with Lana Del Rey at the Moda Center in support of her recent album *Norman Fucking Rockwell!* It’s not only the biggest venue she’s played in Portland, but arguably her most triumphant victory lap so far in her career. *NFR!* has been better received than any other album in her career, acting as a sort of synthesis of many of the ideas she’s played with throughout her previous work.

The feelings of yearning and doomed romance present in *Born to Die* as well as the hope of *Lust for Life* intermingle complexly throughout the album. And yet, Del Rey never loses her sense of humor and penchant for American pop culture. Famous for the lyric “My pussy tastes like Pepsi Cola,” she continues this theme in her writing with the opening line, “Goddamn, man-child / You fucked me so good that I almost said I love you,” and with shoutouts to the Eagles and Sublime.

The large size of the Moda allowed Lana to showcase all of her best qualities. Above all, Del Rey is a storyteller. Having huge screens on which to project stunning visuals to go along with each song added an immersive element to the set that may not have been possible in a smaller venue. Her two dancers greatly enhanced the experience as well, providing a sort of cabaret feeling to the event. Overall, though, the focus was on Del Rey. The love in the room for her as not only an artist, but as an icon of these alternate feelings of hope and desperation that she has come to represent. The audience skewed college-aged; they’ve grown up with Del Rey and have used her music to articulate their feelings to themselves. Lana has come a long way since *Born to Die*. Her love songs are less apocalyptic and more contemplative, her expressions of sadness less wallowing and more focused

on a hopeful future; something that, as a longtime fan, I can connect to my own feelings regarding depression and mental illness. Best of all, Lana seems aware of the fact that she’s become more of a hopeful figure than one of sadness. Throughout the show, she joked with her audience about losing her vape pen and took gifts from them whenever possible. More than anything, I came out of it less nostalgic and more excited about whatever she’ll do next.

Charli XCX at the Roseland, October 6

Charli XCX has always been my personal favorite of these three artists. Admittedly, she started off the roughest. Mostly circulating in mixtape format on Soundcloud, moaning over other people’s tracks, Charli wasn’t polished or mature; she was just out here to have fun. Her first album, *True Romance*, played knowingly on the Tumblr pastel goth aesthetic. She knew exactly what she was doing and that eventually propelled her into mainstream popularity with “Boom Clap,” “Fancy” with Iggy Azalea, and “I Love It” with Icona Pop. But that isn’t what her fanbase has come to love her for. Since her string of big hits, she’s mostly worked with experimental producers like SOPHIE and A.G. Cook to make coked-out hyper-pop. Her most recent release, the long-awaited album *Charli*, utilizes not only this avant-pop sort of production but some of her best collaborators like Troye Sivan, Brooke Candy, and Tommy Cash. It’s my favorite album of the year, only making more clear that Charli XCX is the most underrated popstar of our time.

From this description, it should be no surprise that Charli’s shows are more akin to a rave than an organized event at an official venue. Fans showed up in drag and bright neon, sneaking in poppers and glitter to share with one another. Like Lana, Charli is close with her listeners. The first fifty to show up in line got to meet her (I was one of them, it was the best moment of my life) and get in early to buy merch first. The show itself was high energy, only slowing down for trippy ballads “Official” and “White Mercedes.” *Charli* is much different than *True Romance*, full of bravado and wild production flourishes. This is a unique statement coming from an artist with only moderate success, but one that her fans greatly appreciate. Charli may not have become the big pop star that she’s admitted she’d wanted to be at one stage of her career, just like many of us in our twenties have had to temper our own expectations about what our lives were going to be like. But fuck it, not only are we going to have a good time, we’re going to feel good about who we’ve become. Watching Charli come into her own has paralleled my own journey and



Lana Del Rey

looking around myself at the show, it seemed that I wasn't the only one.

Marina at the Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall, October 7

As the weekend wound down, it seemed only fitting that Marina should close it out. Marina was debatably *the* most popular artist on Tumblr in my early high school years. Her sophomore album, *Electra Heart*, seemed tailored to exactly the sort of feelings I was having at the time. It explores and negotiates gender in a way that pop wasn't typically granted up to that point in time. As a young woman, there is immense pressure to present in ways that are hyper-feminine or hyper-sexualized and Marina took these expectations to task in songs like "Bubblegum Bitch" and "Sex Yeah." It was pop, but it was articulate and cutting, campy and honest all at once. It made me, and countless others, a Marina fan for life. Yes, *Froot* was cute and *Love + Fear* is thematically impressive, but we all know *Electra Heart* is That Bitch.

This is why, more so than at Charli and Lana's shows, I felt myself embody my inner teenager when I entered the Schnitzer on October 7. Marina seemed aware of the fact that we were there to hear "Primadonna," and I'm grateful for that. *Electra Heart* featured almost as consistently as her newest

material. The respect with which she shows that older material is in line with how we should all view our younger selves. Yes, we were pretty dramatic at times and, hopefully, we aren't struggling with the same issues as we did when we were fourteen. However, that doesn't mean that who we were, or the validity of the feelings we had at that time, deserves any less respect than who we are now. Marina herself appears much healthier than she was then: She was positively glowing during the show, hitting every note with a smile on her face. It felt rather full circle; if she can make it past whatever dark place she was in when she wrote "Teen Idle," then so can any of us.

Reflecting upon these shows, as well as the period of my life in which I first became acquainted with them, I feel as if I've reached a new chapter in my life, perhaps marked by this Pop Weekend 2019. I've grown up with these women, we've become better versions of ourselves, constantly evolving and negotiating who we want to be in this world. They've done a beautiful job of this and I can only hope to do the same. I saw many of the same people over and over at these shows; people my age, mostly women or gay men, all of us connecting with these artists as beacons of hope in some way or another. All three women are highly expressive, never undermining their struggles, their dreams, their sexuality, or their artistic visions. They're a bit stranger than your typical pop artists, not as willing to give in to expectations of who they should be within the pop landscape. They share a fanbase because of these commonalities, all of us desiring better for ourselves in the same way they see for themselves. This string of shows has highlighted the growth we've all achieved since 2011 and I know we can only go up from here. ●



Charli XCX



Photographs by McKinzie Smith

(Sandy) Alex G

Examining the distinctive artist's latest release

by Pete Bensen

Illustration by Josh Gates

We all know the feeling—you hear about a movie or a band, or hear a word for the first time and suddenly you start seeing and hearing about it everywhere. You think “how have I gone all my life without knowing about this unbelievably popular thing?” This phenomenon is rampant in the world of music, especially in this day and age of the internet, and perhaps no artist better epitomizes this secret yet mythic status of fame quite like indie darling (Sandy) Alex G. Your parents probably have never heard of him—but that coworker or person in your class who always wears indie band shirts? That person definitely has. In a 2014 article, far prior to the release of what would come to be his most popular work, music publication *The Fader* referred to Alex G as “the internet’s secret best songwriter,” a title which arguably still proves accurate. Even today, as he gains semi-mainstream success, these DIY underground roots are essential to his musical identity. In his most recent release, *House of Sugar*, Alex G has continued to reap the benefits of his initial cult-sensation beginnings, even amidst branching out, exploring and conquering sonic territories in ways that most other indie artists have yet to even approach.

(Sandy) Alex G, was born Alex Giannascoli, raised about 20 minutes outside Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where he began making music with his parents’ Apple computer and recorded his first EP “baby songs” in 1997 at the age of 4. Alex G would later continue his musical journey in high school where he would experiment in several musical styles, one of which would result in his high school band The Skin Cells.

The exploratory nature of Alex G’s earlier adolescent musical escapades would later result in a musical style that blends together DIY lo-fi indie rock and folk with electronic, industrial and even country elements. Following the release of Alex G’s initial 2010–2012 EP’s on bandcamp, popularity followed a somewhat typical DIY trajectory, spreading mostly through music blogs and word of mouth. In 2016, he gained significant recognition in the music world for working with Frank Ocean, providing both guitar parts and arrangements on Ocean’s seminal albums *Endless*



and *Blonde*. In 2017, Alex G made waves with the release of his second studio album for Domino Records, *Rocket*, which received wide critical acclaim for its cocktail blend of washy, ephemeral, Sparklehorse-esque indie rock with a distinct Americana twang.

In *House of Sugar*, Alex G follows a similar artistic trajectory. The strange, ethereal, low wattage folksiness is not lost—but it is more focused, deliberate, almost tangible. He has taken his formula and narrowed it down to a science. This is perfectly exemplified in one of the album’s singles, “Southern Sky,” a warm, rustic, swaying ballad that would easily feel at home on *Rocket*. Yet, perhaps unlike his last release, *House of Sugar* is notably darker than most of the music he has released thus far. We are given a glimpse into this in the song “Gretel,” ostensibly hinting at the famous fairy tale “Hansel and Gretel.” In this, he presents us with a scene that is sweet, yet simultaneously somewhat nefarious feeling. He also does not shy away from a healthy degree of creative experimentation, as shown by the airy, synth-laden “Project 2.” These are contrasted with the song “Hope,” which plainly and openly displays familiar feelings of grief, opening with “He was a good friend of mine / He died / Why I write about it now / Gotta honor him

somehow.” These grim, emotionally transparent lyrics contrast starkly with a far more buoyant and upbeat instrumental track. These are the ways in which *House of Sugar* excels—it is an emotional rollercoaster, not one thing but a thousand things, sometimes all at once.

(Sandy) Alex G has always been something of a phenomenon. In a song from his new album, titled “Cow” he sings “You big old cow / you draw me out / lie on the ground / kiss on the mouth.” It feels safe to say that few other artists could sing such a line and have it not only be something that can be taken seriously, but could be unironically described as beautiful. Yet, this has always been a strong suit of his. Throughout his career, many of his most poignant songs work this way, masking a feeling of sincere bittersweet melancholy with a surface level goofiness. Yet, in these songs, these two feelings are not separate from one another. If anything, he excels in characterizing the realism of human emotion through his music. His music feels the way life often does—not simply sad, lonely, happy, or nostalgic, but some fuzzy, soupy amalgamation of different, sometimes contradicting emotions. In this, we are offered a window not only into his life, but also into our own. ●

Clairo Sharpens Her Songwriting and Sound on Charming Debut Album *Immunity*

by Shane Johnson

Illustration by Elizabeth Hung



For an artist such as Clairo, who burst onto the music scene with DIY pop singles that found viral streaming success, a lot of weight can be placed on the debut album in determining the trajectory of its artist's career. With her first full-length, *Immunity*, Clairo seizes on the opportunity, releasing an unexpected highlight of the summer in music. It is her strongest body of work to date and solidifies herself as a talented singer-songwriter with staying power.

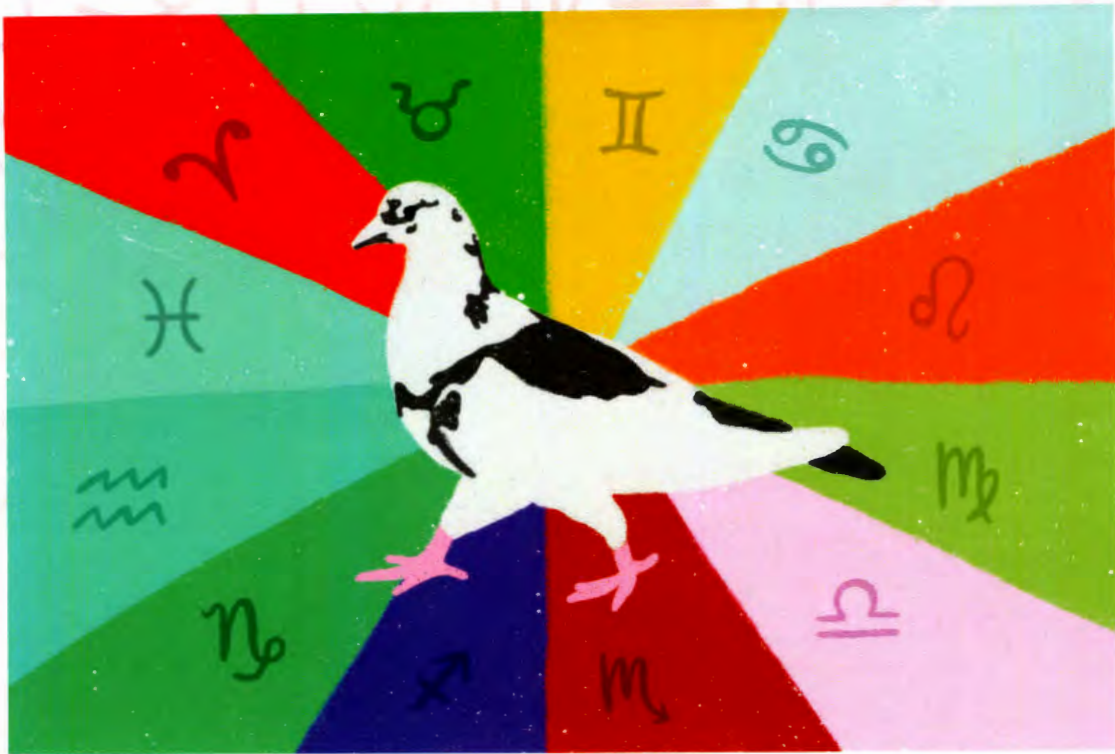
Immunity finds Clairo splitting the difference between Gen Z bedroom pop star and indie rocker in the best way possible. "Bags" was rightly chosen as the lead single for the album—its fuzzy guitar and earworm melody quickly became one of my most-played tracks of the year after its release. "Every second counts," she opens the song, depicting the tension of a crush. Clairo's queer identity is present in small but meaningful ways throughout the album, and "Bags" is cleverly complicated by the uncertainty of having newfound feelings for someone of the

same gender. "Can you see me? I'm waiting for the right time / I can't read you, but if you want, the pleasure's all mine / Can you see me using everything to hold back?" she croons. On "Sofia," the memorable chorus "I think we could do it if we try" doubles as not only a proposition to the titular love interest, but also an affirmation of reassurance to oneself in the face of self-doubt over one's sexuality.

Many of the songs on *Immunity* feel suspended in a moment—between a feeling and an action; between the present and the future; between desires and reality. "All I'm tryna say is I miss you in every way / Fingertips on my back / Things I know that I can't have," she sings on "North." Clairo writes songs about love and the uncertainty of early adulthood with just the right level of specificity. In a similar (albeit less nuanced) manner to Frank Ocean, Clairo sprinkles details throughout her songs in an impressionistic way that lends them both sincerity and relatability—her memories could be our own.

At the center of the record is Clairo's voice. It is gentle but compelling, adding warmth and familiarity to her introspective lyrics. Her sharp but simple songwriting is further elevated by production from Rostam Batmanglij, who has created a fruitful catalogue of production and solo music since leaving Vampire Weekend in 2017. His production provides the album a level of consistency even as it moves from classical-inspired arpeggios on one track to heavily autotuned crooning on the next. Rostam continues to record drums like no other, and the drums on this album—some of which are played by pop-rock star and frequent Rostam collaborator Danielle Haim—are consistently strong throughout, adding momentum to the songs. Clairo and Rostam prove to be an inspired team on *Immunity*, and together have created a project that feels distinctly Clairo—an impressive and significant achievement for a young artist early in her career. ●





The Signs as Beloved Celebrity Birds of PSU

by Shane Johnson

Illustration by Alison White

The astrological signs tell us everything we need to know about ourselves. Understanding your sign can provide council in times of hardship, allow for insights into relationships, and most importantly, tell you which of a group of things you are. You may already know which Timothée Chalamet outfit the celestial bodies of the universe have prescribed you to be, or which *Simpsons* meme coincides with your crush's birth date, but before you lies the answer to the greatest question of all: *What beloved celebrity bird of PSU is my sign?*

Aries: Little Cow Pigeon

Aries are first and foremost bold and passionate, so the bold coloration of Little Cow Pigeon with its passionate online following make the beautiful bird a natural fit for those with an Aries alignment.

Taurus: Little Cow Pigeon

An earth sign that desires serenity and stability, Taurus individuals can clearly relate to Little Cow Pigeon's consistently small living area around the tranquil PSU park blocks and earth-toned bricks of PSU urban center.

Gemini: Little Cow Pigeon

Gemini are symbolized by an image of twins and representative of the duality of the yin and the yang. They can see both sides of the issue but also be wishy-washy or two-faced. What is better representative of these dual qualities than the interweaving of black and white on Little Cow Pigeon's beautiful set of feathers?

Cancer: Little Cow Pigeon

A sense of home and supportiveness permeates

Cancers, who are better at loving unconditionally than any other sign. And what bird does PSU love unconditionally more than Little Cow Pigeon! LCP is a single star in the dark night of our collegiate lives, guiding us home. We don't deserve our lovely bird.

Leo: Little Cow Pigeon

An astrology website told me that Leos often have a large group of friends that adore them. No PSU-based bird has a larger group of adoring friends than Little Cow Pigeon!

Virgo: Little Cow Pigeon

The symbol of Virgo is a virgin. Has anyone seen Little Cow Pigeon having sex with another pigeon? Case closed.

Libra: Little Cow Pigeon

Libras strive to find balance, harmony, and justice in the world. They must be sorely disappointed. The governing bodies of the world refuse to take significant action on climate change. Hate and bigotry continue to prevail. Health care and basic necessities of life continue to be inaccessible to millions upon millions while the wealthy get wealthier. Where is the balance or justice in that?

Scorpio: Little Cow Pigeon

Sorry if that got kinda intense there. I've been going through a lot lately. Scorpios are Little Cow Pigeon.

Sagittarius: Little Cow Pigeon

People born as a Sagittarius are the ambitious philosophers of the world. But they may often be irresponsible and blindly optimistic, two terms

which may also be descriptive of myself when I pitched this astrology article to my editor and confidently asserted that there was "certainly far more than twelve different celebrity birds at PSU" and I would have "no problem" identifying a unique one for each astrological sign.

Capricorn: Oswalt the One-Eyed Owl

Oh so just because you haven't heard of this one means that I made it up to keep things interesting this late in the article, huh? Do you have definitive proof that Oswalt the One-Eyed Owl doesn't live tucked away in some corner of PSU's campus, where he is left offerings by a small but passionate secret society of students who adore him? You don't believe me? What a pessimistic and cynical response. Typical Capricorn.

Aquarius: Little Cow Pigeon

Aquarius is the last air sign of the zodiac, and no member of the PSU community commands the air with more poise and beauty than our beloved Little Cow Pigeon.

Pisces: Little Cow Pigeon

Dreamers at heart, Pisces have fantastical and romantic inner lives. Maybe Little Cow Pigeon is a Pisces. Maybe it has always dreamed of being more than a pigeon. Being an idea that provides meaning and guidance to the lives of others. Being an astrology article. Maybe you and me, dear reader, made its little dreams come true today. And maybe that means you're okay that I shoehorned Little Cow Pigeon into fitting into nearly every astrological sign???? ●

NOVEMBER FUNNY PAGE

all comics by Josh Gates



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