

Welcome!



You are welcome to the sixteenth edition of our college newsletter, the DCFE Tribune, which brings you some

highlights of the college year 2023-2024, during which we celebrated our 20th Anniversary.

Primarily, I want to thank our graduating class of 2024 for their great contribution to the college academically, culturally socially and in terms of sports and extracurricular. I particularly want to mention the Student Union, the Green Campus committee and all the students who helped with or took part in extracurricular activity and community outreach activities this year. I also want to thank our students for their contribution to so many companies and concerns through our work experience programmes.

For helping so many students achieve their dreams and ambitions, I am particularly grateful to the very dedicated and professional teaching staff here in the college.

One of our main highlights this year is that funding has been set aside and agreement is in place to purchase the site of our new college campus. It is a green field site near the train station and Dunboyne centre where we have grown over the last 20 years.

Our new college will be a FET College of the Future design and will be the first of its kind in the country.

We are delighted by this announcement giving us state of the art, purpose-built facilities for PLC courses, traineeships, apprenticeships, skills to advance programs, community outreach courses and night classes. This investment is a testament to our staff, students, and the schools and communities we serve, who have put their trust in us for so many years to help us grow to over 1,200 students and become a centre of excellence for teaching and learning in this region. We thank LMETB staff, in particular CE Martin O'Brien, FET Director Sadie Ward McDermott, and Land and Buildings Officer Sinead Murphy for their constant support on this journey.

Dunboyne College is a college with a family atmosphere which gives students a wealth of learning, enabling, communicating, collaborating, and inspiring experiences each day.

DCFE is a comfortable and supportive place to learn.

We provide over 70 accredited courses at QQI levels 5 and 6 as well as new HND and apprenticeship offerings. Whether you want to be a nurse, teacher, scientist, sports coach, web designer, accountant, film maker, teacher, beautician, artist, etc. we have a course that will start you on your way. We offer practical training, giving you up to date adaptable and transferable skills. We also offer numerous Skills to Advance programmes for on-the-job employees.

We are proud of our staff, our students, and their achievements.

Dunboyne College, since 2003, has seen over 10,000 thousand students pass through, gaining qualifications in a diverse range of areas, and progressing either to further studies at higher level, or going directly into the world of work. For the third year running our student population has numbered over 1000 and so many of last June's graduates received offers to third level or are in places of secure employment.

This past year has seen record numbers progressing from our college to third level courses and directly to industry.

Four hundred and eighty-two (482) students received honours degree, Level 8 offers and two hundred and seventy-five (275) received a Level 7, ordinary degree offer. Many of these degrees were on courses requiring over 500 Leaving Cert points or in hard to access courses like Nursing. These figures do not include the many mature students who received early offers and those who took up offers in the UK for Nursing, Law or Sports degrees. In addition to these students, most of the students who studied on the vocational skills courses obtained employment, this is particularly relevant in the service and leisure courses.

Well over 90% of the students who finish with us each June are either in a third level course or employment the following September.

Thank you for taking the time to read our newsletter and share in the many activities and events of recent weeks.

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Please keep an eye on our website, www.dunboynecollege.ie, and our [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) pages, which will keep you informed of events as they happen.

We will be taking applications right through the year until next September, and we hope many students will continue to join in the experience of Dunboyne College, some of which you will find recorded here.

If you are thinking of coming to us next year, feel free to call in at any stage for more information on our courses and activities.

You can always phone us on 01-8026577 or email: dunboynecollege@lmetb.ie or look up our website on dunboynecollege.ie

We are always delighted to hear from you.



Denis Leonard
Principal

Careers and Guidance

CAO:

The change of mind facility to add and change your course is now open. You can log in and out as often as you wish and make changes without a fee. This facility will remain open until July 1st at 17:00 when on this day the CAO will fully close and your lists of course choices are locked it.

You do not need to pick between which set of results that you have, for example picking between the Leaving Certificate and the PLC results. Once you have ticked the appropriate boxes in the qualification section in your application then the CAO system can see all your results. To check that you ticked the correct boxes in the qualification section you will see in your log in page that you have your Leaving Certificate exam number, and your PPS number present.

If you do not see information on your log in page that should be present then you can use the CAO contact button on their main website page to ask them to add it, by sending them the information.

Please check your CAO account regularly as you may have important communication from them which may or may not need action.

College News & Events

Businesses and employers graduate successfully from DCFE

Over 100 employees who availed of a government funded training initiative recently received their QQI Level 5 and 6 awards. Funded by the government, the Skills to Advance assists employers and those in the workplace to upskill or reskill. The employees who come from a range of companies across Meath completed courses in Healthcare, Digital Marketing, Training Delivery, Management, Customer Service and Reflexology.

Courses were accredited at QQI Level 5 or 6 or in the case of the Reflexology by ITEC at Diploma level. Classes were scheduled to fit around business hours and work schedules with participants receiving between 70% to 100% funding.

Mary Lennon, Human Resources Manager in Kilsaran believes that the skills developed in the courses will contribute to the growth of the company. "Managing People and Customer Service Excellence are crucial skills, and our teams' investment in gaining these qualifications will undoubtedly contribute to Kilsaran's collective success."

We are thrilled to celebrate the graduation of our part-time employees who have demonstrated exemplary commitment to their personal and professional development," said Fergus McNulty of Marymount Care Centre, one of the employers that participated in the programme. "Their dedication, coupled with the unwavering support of Dunboyne College, exemplifies the power of collaboration in fostering a skilled and empowered workforce."

Dara Mullooly, Spa Manager at The Johnstown Estate highlighted the additional benefits of participating in the training with the development of a strong team spirit amongst her staff who studied for their international recognised Diploma in Reflexology.

Speaking about the initiative, Catherine Fox, Deputy Principal, Dunboyne College, said that the college was eager to support businesses to meet the challenges that they are facing. "Together with our colleagues in LMETB Skills to Advance unit we work closely with businesses to identify what they need in terms of a skilled workforce. We have taken a proactive look at the skills needs of industry and how best further education and training can meet these needs. We can provide businesses anywhere in the region with access to recognised qualifications on a part-time basis at no cost. This investment in skills will contribute to economic growth in Meath and across the country.

CAO Offers:

Offers are made to students in different rounds. If you are a mature student, you will officially receive offers in Round A in July.

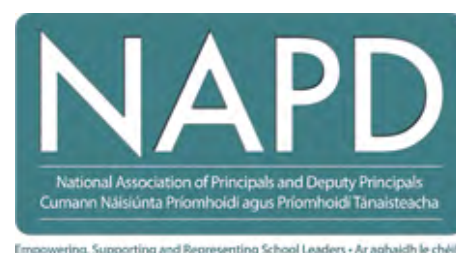
PLC students will receive offers in Round Zero in early August, using the results from the PLC course on degrees that have a quota of places set aside. Do not worry if you do not receive an offer in this round as many degrees do not have a quota of places and are offered in the next round, Round One.

Round One offers are normally the end of August, with the date still to be confirmed. Offers are made here using both your PLC and Leaving Certificate results which are independent of each other, they do not add together.



NAPD FET Conference

Journalism student Seán Tannam spoke at this year's NAPD FET conference on Wednesday 10th April in the Knightsbrook Hotel. He reflected on his experience in Dunboyne College as a mature student, noting positively the opportunities and experience provided by the college.



Digital Futures project goes live!

Earlier in the year, we welcomed our Finnish partners from [SASKY koulutuskuntayhtymä](https://sasky.fi/sasky/hankkeet/digitalfutures_en/).

During their time here, teachers from Dunboyne College and [SASKY koulutuskuntayhtymä](https://sasky.fi/sasky/hankkeet/digitalfutures_en/) worked on a project called, 'Digital Futures.'

This project was then disseminated by all teachers involved, both Finnish and Irish, in person and through Microsoft Teams reaching teaching staff in several centres across Louth and Meath, as well as teachers based in Finland.

Now it's your turn to see what the project was all about! The results of this project are now live and can be found at:

https://sasky.fi/sasky/hankkeet/digitalfutures_en/

Many thanks again to everyone who was involved in this very successful Erasmus project which will now contribute to future teaching and learning.



TFI Smarter Travel Media Awards

Aaron Leonard and Lauren Dillon attended the Smarter Travel Awards, Thursday 25th of April at The Lighthouse Cinema, Smithfield.

The students were among our three shortlisted students from Dunboyne College, Creative Digital Media in the Media category for their Motion Graphics projects promoting Smarter and Greener Travel Alternatives. Ivan Keane, CDM was also shortlisted in the Media Category.

Lauren Dillon was awarded second place in the Media category for her entry 'Now That's What I Call Smarter Travel'. Well done to Lauren and all three students on this recognition of their hard work.

The TFI Student Awards are a well-established, national event with over 200 student entries from all over Ireland in 2024. This is a testament to the hard work and creativity of our students.

Phoenix FM Broadcast Live from Dunboyne College

On 21 February the Journalism students stepped into the spotlight by taking control of the D15 Today radio show. The top-rated morning show airs on 92.5 Phoenix FM, a local community radio station that provides a voice for Dublin 15. In their first outside broadcast of 2024 our students showcased their skills in researching, presenting and working the sound desk during the D15 Today show. Guests included a lively mix of interviews with DCFE students, past and present, as well as teachers and college principal Denis Leonard. A big thanks to acting station manager Carmelle Keane and all the team at Phoenix FM.



Pre-University Teaching Graduation at NUIM

Dunboyne Colleges Pre-University and Liberal Arts students graduated from Maynooth University on Tuesday 16th April as part of the Turn to Teaching collaboration with Dunboyne College. The year was, without doubt, an exciting year of exploration and personal development, during which, students attended facilitated workshops on the fundamentals of teaching, while putting into practice their personal learning to deliver workshops to Saint Peters College Dunboyne, the Turn to Teaching team, and their peers in Maynooth.

The University accommodated our large group of students this year and Tuesday's celebration and lunch in Pugin Hall was such a wonderful way to end the year. Students had a wonderful ceremony with three participants finishing the ceremony with beautiful words and an original poem to re-iterate the overall feeling of the year in which all involved felt very much an integral part of Maynooth University

The harmonious confluence of academic collaboration looks set to continue and we look towards the future eager to embrace the infinite possibilities that lie ahead.



Campus Events

Green Week 2024

Running all week clothes were collected and donated to our local charity **St Vincent de Paul**. Our student committee visited classes during the week to register interest in planting trees this coming Spring.

A **Cookery demo** took place in our Professional cookery kitchen promoting using up leftovers and reducing food waste. Ali Niyazov and Thea Ferley along with their tutor Gillian Duff cooked up a storm with simple dishes easy to make from leftovers, egg fried rice and chilli.



Guest speakers Gilly and Brian from **Wild Acres Reserve** visited our students. They spoke about rewilding with emphasis on the importance of ponds as well as rainwater harvesting.



Past pupil Daniel Fildes, now marine and freshwater biologist and official photographer for **Dunsany Nature Reserve**, shared his expertise with staff and students.



Health Week

RTE's Eoin McGee (How to be good with money) visited the college to give a talk to students. Exercise classes ran throughout the week with a suggestion to carry out a random act of kindness for a colleague.

Nursing students completed health checks for staff while Hairdressing students offered blow-drys for staff and students in the salon. Staff were encouraged to hit 10k steps and Gillian and her students completed a healthy eating/healthy snacks workshop in the kitchen. Jigsaw hosted a mental health stand outside the canteen and finally Physio students offered massages.



Ulreeka's Wagathon

We're thrilled to report that Ulreeka's Wagathon was a spectacular success! Thanks to the incredible support from our community, we exceeded our fundraising goals, which goes directly to the Irish Guide Dogs for the Blind. Our heartfelt thanks go out to every participant, volunteer, and sponsor who joined us in making a significant impact. Your enthusiasm and generosity have paved the way for future success! We are already looking forward to next year's fundraiser.



Learning in Action

Archaeology Workshop

Our Pre-Arts History students carried out an archaeological survey of the Hill of Tara with the School of Irish Archaeology recently. The site survey was part of the students' project, which required them to investigate the archaeology of Tara.

The School of Irish Archaeology also carried out a workshop with students where they learned about the job of an Archaeologist, the different types of Archaeology and the problems Archaeologists face when interpreting artefacts. All the content covered will prepare students for their upcoming exam. We want to thank Mark and his team at the School of Irish Archaeology for facilitating us over the last few weeks.



National Hairdressing Apprenticeship

The salon had an open day for students and teachers to come and avail of the services (Blow-dries, cuts) from the National Hairdressing Apprenticeship students. This was a very beneficial and great learning for the students.



Guest speaker — HSE National Ambulance Service

On the 20th March at 9:30 we had 3 members of the National Ambulance Service come in to speak to the 2 x Pre – Paramedic classes.

Gavin Doyle (National Control Operations Manager) and Gary Matthews (Control Room Supervisor) and Christian Cahill (Emergency Ambulance Dispatcher) were kind enough to come into the college and speak to the classes.

The HSE National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC) is part of the National Ambulance Service (NAS) and is based in 2 sites, Tallaght and Ballyshannon. The National Ambulance Service is the statutory pre-hospital emergency and intermediate care provider for the State. The National Ambulance Service takes more than 300,000 emergency calls each year. The key objective is to respond to 999/112 emergency calls as quickly as possible with the most appropriate skills and equipment. NAS are starting a recruitment campaign in April for Emergency Control Call Takers. This was a great opportunity for the students to hear about how they can apply for this role within HSE NAS NEOC, and to get an insight into what the role entails.



After the presentation the 3 NEOC staff stayed for a Q&A session with the students.

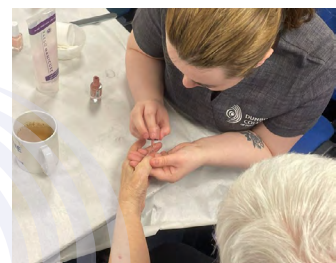
CSI Talk

Thursday 18th January, presentation by Garda Aidan Halon of the Louth Divisional Crime Scene Investigation Unit. Garda Hanlon talked about the role of the Crime Scene Unit and the procedure they follow when called to a crime scene. It was a fully interactive presentation where Garda Hanlon demonstrated, with the help of students, PPE, fingerprinting techniques, and DNA testing procedures. Psychology and Criminology students thoroughly enjoyed the talk and got an opportunity to ask Garda Hanlon questions about CSI investigations, and the role of AGS.



Annual Healthcare Community Day

In March this year the Healthcare students arranged our annual community day where we welcomed residents and staff of healthcare units, who have facilitated placement for our students this academic year. The event showcases our, Cookery, Hairdressing, Beauty & Music Departments and included a visit from Ulreeka, our community dog. The event was a huge success and all of the students involved certainly did us proud. We are already looking forward to next year.



Class Trips

Residence of American Ambassador

Journalism, Arts Culture and Liberal Arts visited the residence of American Ambassador Claire D. Cronin. This included a guided tour of the residence with fascinating insights into the role of ambassador, alongside an open questions and answers session at the end. This was a unique and informative experience for all involved.



Criminal Courts

Journalism students visit Dublin Criminal Court as part of their module 'Writing skills for Journalism', improving their skills of writing court reports on current cases.



Irish Wheelchair Association Trip

The 2 Pre-Paramedic classes were delighted to take a trip to Irish Wheelchair Association – Sport in Clontarf on March 4th, 2024.

We had a very valuable and enjoyable experience this week in the IWA Sport centre. David McGrath of the IWA greeted the students and after a quick Q&A invited the students and staff to participate in several different sports in wheelchairs.

The students played Basketball, Rugby took part in races and other games, all whilst being in a wheelchair. The aim was to give the students a very brief insight in to how it is to be in a wheelchair. Even if it was for only 2 hours.

Great day, and great experience for the students. Thank you, David McGrath, Conor and Leah!

Trim Castle and the Hill of Tara

Arts Culture visit Trim Castle as part of their Local History module, while completing a site survey of the hill of Tara as part of their Archaeology module. This was completed with invaluable guidance from The Irish School of Archaeology and their team of experts.

Student Voice

Why the Irish Language needs to be Saved

By Connla McCarthy

The Irish language is an integral part of our unique culture that has survived centuries of colonization and oppression but is dying right in front of our very eyes. Why is this happening?

Well, to understand it, we need to know what it is and the history behind it.

Irish (Gaeilge) is Ireland's native language, going back centuries to when the Celts first settled in this country. Since England colonized Ireland, the Irish language, like the culture itself, was forced underground as its use was forbidden. However, as we all know, our ancestors fought, died, and went through hell on earth to keep the entire culture alive. Ever since we became an independent republic in 1949, the Irish culture has blossomed. Yet a very important and unique part of it, the language, is dying.

We aren't the only Celtic nation to have our language in the red. Scotland (Scottish Gaelic), Wales (Welsh Gaelic), Cornwall (Cornish), Isle of Man (Manx), Brittany (Breton), Galicia (Galician) and the Basque Nation (Basque) all are Celtic nations that have their own unique and distinct language, just like the Emerald Isle.

Around 39.8% of Irish people said they can speak Irish according to the 2022 Census, but only 40,000 – 80,000 can speak it fluently. This is very good compared to just 3.65% of Scots knowing their native language overall, but only 1% knowing it fluently. Wales is doing much better with 17.8% of the population knowing how to speak the language.

However, these numbers are still low number. It's this simple. We lose the language; we lose our national identity, and our culture will feel empty and hollow. This is because in the Irish culture everything is tightly connected to each other. Take one thing away, and the whole thing falls apart.

So how do we revive it fully? Well, it will take a long time for it to be the main language, but until then, we can fix the small things that will have a big impact in future years, beginning with schools.

Secondary schools especially are teaching the language in a way that is turning the young people of Ireland away from the language rather than embracing it. The reason is because the education system is trying to force the language into the future generation of Ireland: making it complicated, putting too much pressure on them and most importantly not giving them

a reason to care for it. Teenagers go on to hate Irish not because of the language itself, but because of the way it's been taught to them in school.

What we should be doing instead is promoting the language. Give students a reason to care, get them onboard, and build on what they already know. Why make it difficult to learn?

There are multiple solutions; make the teaching of the language simpler. Don't overwhelm students with multiple words they must learn every week because they will get too confused and will therefore give up on the language right there and then. Every single human being on this planet is different, so based on that knowledge, slowly build vocabulary based on their natural ability and curiosity. Some students can learn up to ten words a week, some can only master one. Build the language around them, make Irish seem like an everyday occurrence, a part of everyday life. Build on what they already know, encourage its use, support the students, and get behind them. The entire Irish Education system is extremely outdated and needs to drastically change anyways, so doing it to save the language is a great excuse if you ask me!

Another, simpler solution that we can do right now is make it a part of everyday life ourselves. It doesn't have to be drastic, start simple and build your way up and expand your vocabulary over time. The worst thing you can do is rush it, learn at your own pace.

Other examples include downloading an app to help learn the language, changing the layout of our road signs to display Irish in large text and English in small text instead of how it is currently, adapt every Irish organization and club logo to Irish, restaurants can have Irish versions of their menus, media can encourage and promote its use and our politicians can speak it in International congresses to make an example and further its progression. There are so many more small and simple things we can do right now that I haven't mentioned.

To put it short and sweet, to save the language we must start from the ground up and start small. It is something worth saving, and every one of us can do it if we all put our minds to it. Because after all, why should we continue speaking a foreign language when we have a unique one of our own that we can utilize?



Academic Pressure

By Shauna Nolan

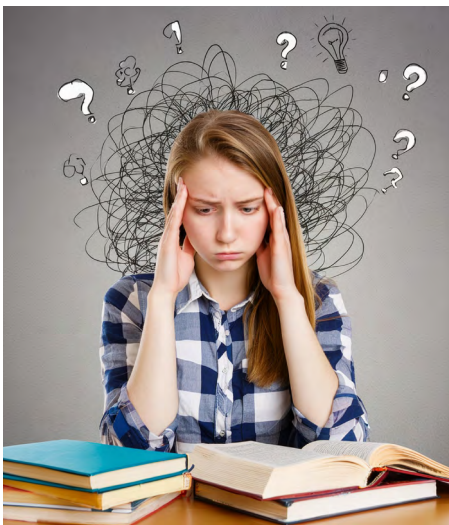
From the start of Secondary school, I got very high grades. My parents held so much pride and sang congratulations, and it gave me a sense of validation when I got some of the highest results in my class. Going into the Leaving Cert, I thought that this would transfer, and that I would be able to work well and excel the way I had hoped.

Coming towards the time of the Leaving Cert, I focused myself solely on studying in fear that I may not do well. I didn't sleep as well; I became slightly contrary and withdrawn due to it. I became exhausted, overwhelmed, anxious and unmotivated to work.

There were times when I was in my local library from 8am to 9pm, proceeding to go home and stress about the pressure I felt.

Months pass and I receive my results, to find out that I had gotten five points below what I needed, five points that stopped me from getting what I had worked so hard for, and I honestly felt so defeated. I felt so much worse that no matter how hard I had worked I still did not reach my goal.

The day after, I applied for Dunboyne as another entryway, and it was during my time here that I reflected on my last year of school and realised that I had overworked myself on subjects that I was not interested in, that the exam I thought centred my life and reflected my intelligence in fact had no impact on it and had nothing to do with how smart I was. I have met others who dealt with the exact same thing that I did in this college.



I think that it should not be so stigmatised that people disregard their health and wellbeing for it. This realisation seems so small but to me it felt so big and so relieving, and to now be in going into a sector of work that I am good at and enjoy is a gift.

From Bytes to Bedtime; The perils of tech in the Twilight zone.

By Seán Tannam

While the past few decades have been defined by a rapid acceleration in technology, no other example can be as well-known as the development of the mobile phone, and similar technologies such as tablets and laptops. With a rapid increase in the presence of mobile devices, it's no wonder that many of us have grown accustomed to ditching the book before bed and taking up this new form of digital entertainment that's much more rewarding and instantaneous.

But has this decision to late night scroll caused an effect on our bodies throughout our daily lives?

"Doomscrolling", is a term coined to describe scrolling through your phone for what seems like a short amount of time, when really hours are passing by as the human brain is engaged in digital content. Social media addiction has been recognized by addiction centers worldwide and have been the focal point of articles written by The New York Times occasionally, comparing being on your phone with being "just like a slot machine", as a reward could be achieved at any moment. But what are the long-term effects of this addiction when considering its use before sleep?

An article published in 2022 from Health Essentials claimed that engaging in social media, or any digital media for that matter, keeps the mind engaged before sleep, a time where new information, and therefore stimulation, is not necessary. Keeping the brain active and awake delays the sleeping process, resulting in an improper rest period for the body. Additionally, exposure to the blue light from these devices can throw off the internal body clock and has been shown by studies to be bad for our vision.

Additionally, research has shown a correlation between a suppressed level of melatonin, a hormone responsible for controlling the sleep-wake cycle, and the exposure to blue light we have when using digital devices of any kind. When the body runs low on melatonin, one can experience insomnia, a tired, fatigued state during the day, as the suppressed melatonin causes one to stay up later than usual. Even factors such as heart rate can be increased by exciting or violent content, once again impairing sleep quality and making it harder to sleep altogether.

Studies have been developed and shown just how long before bed we can safely engage with our digital devices to try avoiding potential damage. Sutter Health stated that engagement with digital media within even 2 hours before bed can seriously disrupt the melatonin surge necessary for an individual

to actually fall asleep, keeping the user awake and wired for longer periods. With many users, in all categories ranging from teen to adults often potentially using their phone for entertainment purposes right up until the lights go off, one can only imagine the silent damage being done to an unaware population seeking only digital thrills.

A survey ran by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) showed that while more than 98% of people own a smartphone of some kind, 92.4% would also use their phone before bed and in bed before sleep. Regarding the information stating that damage can be done by engagement two hours before bed, this only highlights the damage being done, again, to an ignorant audience.



Knowing this, what can be done to avert the damage done by smartphone engagement and limit the use of our phones so we can return to a normal sleeping pattern. One may say simply not using the phone is enough, however social media has been classed as a potential addiction and is not easily shaken off by some. Websites such as Baptist Health offer tips and tricks to cut back on nighttime smartphone usage and improve sleep cycles once again. Included in these tips are instructions such as measuring nighttime phone use and cutting back gradually at a rewarding rate, and not charging your phone by your bedside in order to increase the distance and therefore usability of your phone during bedtime.

Alternatively, options exist on our phones themselves to help combat against the damaging aspects they carry. Most devices have a "greyscale" option that limits and reduces the blue light emitted by your devices screen, making it much easier to go to sleep and stay asleep, as shades of black and grey are less stimulating than brighter colors.

What we are doing before our sleeping time is crucial for how we expect our day to play out. It has been recommended that in the hour leading up to bed, it could be wise to put down the phone, and let the body naturally wind down, lest we pay the price in years to come from an unhealthy relationship with our digital devices, finally catching up to our physical bodies.

Travel

Unveiling the Charms of Santorini: A Journey to the Jewel of the Aegean

By Erica Mooney

Nestled in the azure embrace of the Aegean Sea, Santorini stands as a beacon of beauty and serenity in the heart of the Cyclades archipelago. With its iconic whitewashed buildings, stunning sunsets, and rugged landscapes, this Greek island paradise beckons travellers from far and wide to immerse themselves in its timeless allure.

Join us on a journey to uncover the hidden gems and unforgettable experiences that await you on the enchanting island of Santorini.

As you arrive on the island, you are greeted by the sight of colourful fishing boats bobbing in the harbour and the scent of salty sea air wafting on the breeze. Begin your exploration in the charming village of Oia, perched high on the cliffs overlooking the caldera. Wander through its labyrinthine streets lined with boutique shops, art galleries, and traditional tavernas, pausing to admire the dazzling display of bougainvillea that cascades down the whitewashed walls.

As the sun begins to set, make your way to the iconic Oia Castle, where you'll be treated to one of the most breathtaking sunset views in the world. Find a secluded spot along the cliffside and watch in awe as the sky erupts in a riot of colours—shades of crimson, gold, and pink painting the horizon in a mesmerizing display of natural beauty.

The next day, venture inland to explore the historic village of Pyrgos, with its winding alleyways and medieval charm. Climb to the top of the hill to discover the ruins of a Venetian castle, where panoramic views of the island stretch out before you in every direction. Take a moment to soak in the tranquil atmosphere and imagine the island's storied past unfolding beneath your feet.

For a taste of Santorini's rich culinary heritage, head to the village of Megalochori, renowned for its traditional Greek cuisine and local delicacies. Sit down to a leisurely meal at a family-owned taverna and savour the flavours of freshly caught seafood, sun-ripened tomatoes, and creamy feta

cheese, all washed down with a glass of crisp Assyrtiko wine—the island's signature varietal.

No visit to Santorini would be complete without exploring its volcanic landscape and crystalline waters. Embark on a boat tour of the caldera, where you can swim in natural hot springs, snorkel among vibrant coral reefs, and marvel at the rugged cliffs that plunge into the sea below. As you cruise along the coastline, keep an eye out for the island's hidden coves and secluded beaches, where you can escape the crowds and bask in the sun in blissful solitude.

As your time on Santorini draws to a close, take a moment to reflect on the memories you've made and the beauty you've experienced. Whether you've watched the sunset from the cliffs of Oia, explored the historic villages of Pyrgos and Megalochori, or sailed the azure waters of the caldera, one thing is certain—Santorini will capture your heart and leave you longing to return to its shores again and again.

Discovering Mullingar

By Lee Brennan

Sitting comfortable in the middle East of rural Ireland, Westmeath calls to travellers with its rich history and vibrant culture. The annual Fleadh Festival, celebrating the traditional music and dance brings Ireland's passionate musicians from all around to add a special feeling to this already amazing town.

Mullingar, which is just an hour's drive from Dublin, offers a stunning journey through the Irish countryside, also offering other services such as bus and train that give the same experience. The town's deep musical roots come to life throughout the many pubs in the town, transforming Mullingar into a lively place full of warmth and vibrancy. During the festival, the streets resonate with the sound of traditional Irish ballads, creating an atmosphere like no other. Street performances, featuring traditional Irish dancers also add to the festive spirit. The festival is also seen as a platform for emerging musicians to express their talents. Competitions and workshops are conducted to contribute too to the festival's dynamic and inspiring aura.

Beyond the festival, Mullingar offers other attractions. The Mullingar Cathedral is a beautiful religious monument showcasing stained glass windows and offers a great sight for people who are intrigued by different religious buildings. Belvedere



House and Gardens, which is situated on the shores of Lough Ennell provides a sight of natural beauty with its beautiful gardens and walking trails. The Joe Dolan statue is also a core staple of the town being situated in the very centre of the town's main street.

Mullingar is not just a town rich with history, it's also a hub of culture and creativity. Centres such as the Mullingar Arts Centre, showcase the works of local and international artists offering a diverse and unique range of performances from traditional Irish music sessions to amazing plays. Visitors can immerse themselves in the local culture by attending the one of Mullingar's other festivals, The Agricultural show, which celebrates the region's agricultural heritage, or the Mullingar Arts Festival which celebrates literature and art too.

No visit to Mullingar would be complete without trying the culinary delights. From cozy pubs serving Irish stews to small café's offering freshly baked goods, Mullingar's food scene is sure to explode the taste buds of even the pickiest eaters. It wouldn't

be a trip if you didn't make sure to try a traditional Irish breakfast, complete with black and white pudding, or to of course indulge in one of Ireland's finest treasures, a creamy pint of Guinness.

Mullingar is also surrounded by lush green countryside which considered a paradise for nature lovers. Outdoor enthusiasts can explore more nearby trails of the nearby Mullaghmeen Forest, Ireland's largest planted beech forest. For those seeking adventure, activities such as fishing, kayaking and horseback riding are all available, allowing visitors to explore Mullingar up close and personal.

Mullingar may be a hidden gem of a location, but its charm and rich atmosphere are not to be overlooked. With it's warm and vibrant culture, stunning natural beauty and cozy hospitality, Mullingar offers a truly unforgettable travel experience. If you're seeking to immerse yourself in the magic of Ireland, Mullingar has something for everyone. So why not plan your visit today and discover the beautiful town of Mullingar for yourself?



Revisiting the bustling city of Paris

By Robyn O'Riordan

When I visited Paris for the first time at fifteen years of age with my sister, I was mesmerised by it.

The city was so busy with people chatting and being engrossed in the spectacular views of the Louvre and the Eiffel Tower. Paris is such a vibrant city and there is so much to discover when you are there.

One of the reasons why I really liked Paris is because I love the language and loved hearing the French speak it to understand what they were saying. I brought my French vocabulary copy with me and spoke a little bit of French when I was in a café with my sister. I wanted to speak the language and make an effort in the country where it's their native language but also because I was in my third year of secondary school at the time and decided I'd speak it to improve my learning.

The French are very elegant and love their comfort and style. They are proud of their country and always make sure to dress well. The nightlife in Paris is fantastic. People come out and indulge in fine food and wine and the staple French food escargots (snails).

It was a pleasure to visit Notre Dame de Paris as not just the outside of the fabulous cathedral, but the inside was well worth visiting. I'll never forget walking around the cathedral and seeing the red and green stained-glass windows and just thinking they were magnificent, and I could just stand there for hours looking at all the windows. Le Sacre Coeur (The Sacred Heart) is a must-see landmark in Paris. It is a massive building with steps leading up to it when I was there, it was full of tourists. The views of this amazing country are what caught my eye and I longed to know what Paris life was like. I can't wait to go back to speak better French as I am studying it in college.

Have you ever thought about visiting the city of love and experiencing what I have experienced? Can you picture yourself indulging in French wine and eating delicious fraiseiers (strawberries and sponge) and brioche (sweet bread)? It is a country well worth visiting.

Sport

The Miracle of Istanbul

By Jack Clynes

Liverpool completed arguably the greatest ever comeback in football history in the 2005 European cup final against AC Milan.

The 2005 Champions league Final is and always will be remembered as one of the greatest comebacks of all time in sporting history as Liverpool defied the odds in almost impossible circumstances.

The date is May 25th, 2005, and Liverpool and AC Milan are ready to battle it out in the Ataturk Olympic stadium in Istanbul. Liverpool had finished fifth in the premier league that season but still managed to make it to the European Cup Final. AC Milan were strong favourites going into the game and they were arguably the best team in the world at the time with the likes of Pirlo, Shevchenko, Kaka, Maldini all top-class players. Liverpool knew it would take something special to win this game, but they knew anything can happen in a cup final. Milan showed their class as they raced into a 3-0 lead in the first half with goals from Paolo Maldini and two from Hernan Crespo. Liverpool went into halftime 3-0 down deflated, it was looking good. The Reds came out all guns blazing in the second half and captain Steven Gerrard produced a bullet header to pull Liverpool back into the game. Gerrard being the leader that he was fired his team back up and also earned a man of the match award. Then, Vladimir Smicer scored to make it 3-2 and now the game was well and truly on. Steven Gerrard burst through and was taken down in the penalty area, Xabi Alonso stepped up to make it 3-3 and missed but tucked away the rebound. Milan left astonished wondering how they've just thrown away a wonderful 3-0 lead. The 90 minutes were up, and we were into extra time, Jerzy Dudek the Liverpool goalkeeper pulled off some remarkable saves to keep his team in the game. That was it, full time and the fate of this game lies in a penalty shootout. The penalty shootout was also a memorable one. AC Milan missing their first two spot kicks through Serginho and magician and usually so reliable Andrea Pirlo. Liverpool went 2-0 up but John Arne Riise was denied by Milan keeper Dida after Jon Dahl Tomasson had got one back, Kaka and Smicer both scored but when Andriy Shevchenko stepped up, he was denied by Jerzy Dudek and that was it, Liverpool have won it, Liverpool are European champions for the fifth time and have just completed one of the most extraordinary comebacks in sporting history.



Everybody was astonished not even the Liverpool players could believe what they had just done. Rafael Benitez admitted at the end of the game 'My problem is that I don't have words to express the things that I feel at this moment.' This was regarded as one of the greatest comebacks in not just football but in all sporting history. Former Liverpool player and TV pundit Alan Hansen said 'It wasn't just the best comeback I've seen in football; it was the best comeback I've seen in sport anywhere in the world. Even the footballing legend Diego Maradona was shocked by it, he said, 'Even the Brazil team that won the 1970 World Cup could not have staged a comeback with Milan leading 3-0, the English club proved that Miracles really do exist. Andrea Pirlo talked about the game as well in his autobiography 'I think therefore I play' he said 'We sat in the dressing room like a bunch of half-wits, we were bloodthirsty zombies faced with unseen problems, the blood was ours and they had drunk every last drop. We couldn't speak, we couldn't move. They had mentally destroyed us. Insomnia, rage, depression, a sense of nothingness. We had invented a new disease with multiple symptoms, Istanbul syndrome.'

The AC Milan team of 2005 were far superior to the Liverpool team, AC Milan's starting 11 for the game was, Dida, Cafu, Stam, Nesta, Maldini, Gattuso, Pirlo, Seedorf, Kaka, Shevchenko, Crespo. A team with world class players all over the field and arguably the best team in the world at the time.

Liverpool lined out with, Dudek, Finnan, Carragher, Hyypia, Traore, Alonso, Garcia, Gerrard, Riise, Kewell, Baros. This Liverpool side were good but on paper AC Milan were far superior which makes this comeback even more incredible.

The attendance of the game was sixty-nine thousand people. The referee of the game was Manuel Mejuto Gonzalez, from Spain.

Liverpool celebrated the win by parading the trophy around the city in an open top double-decker bus the day after the final. Business experts estimated that one in five workers took time off following the victory.



Overall, this was one of the greatest ever comebacks that we've seen in sporting history.

The Kansas City Chiefs win the 2024 Super Bowl, again!

By Zara Collins

The Chiefs beat the 49ers, 25-22 in overtime, making them the first team to win back-to-back Super Bowl championships since the New England Patriots did it almost two decades ago. This will be the Chiefs fourth Super Bowl win, and third in the past five years. The Chiefs won its first Super Bowl in 1969.

The Niners seemed to have the upper hand in the first half, and not much appeared to change as the second half began as quarterback Patrick Mahomes threw an interception on the Chiefs first possession. However, Kansas City began to slowly find its offensive footing and took its first lead of the game at 13-10 later in the third quarter.

After this, an intense match of back and forth began between the teams. With less than two minutes left in the fourth quarter the 49ers were in the lead until the Chiefs scored a field goal in the waning seconds of regulation to tie the game.

In overtime, the 49ers drove on its first possession and eventually kicked a field goal. Then, with three seconds left, Chiefs quarterback Patrick Mahomes threw a three-yard touchdown pass to wide receiver Mecole Hardman Jr. to win the game.

It is no doubt that Mahomes is a star player! He's been named Super Bowl MVP for the Chiefs' last five Super Bowl victories.

This year's Super Bowl game has become the most watched programme in the US since the 1969 Moon landing, which was seen by up to 150 million in the US across three television networks.



Creative Corner

A Sonnet

By Danny King



With words, I do write and to you I told,
By you, I choose to be a wife,
Shall never cease such words, nor allow time to fold,
By each day in length did we create a life.

An air filled with the pleasing scent of summer flowers,
The presence of your voice that sweeps aside the cold,
An instant freshness of short sun showers,
A romance to live beyond the days we grow old.

The promise of a spring fulfilling new dreams,
The pretence of what was once a passing youth,
A sweeping field perfectly laid out for what it seems,
What we have here before us highlights the truth.

Here we are within all that there is to believe,
Shall we go within an endless reality that doesn't deceive.

Premonitions

By Ciara Kelly

Down the street they prowl
Giving me premonitions
I wish were a dream.

Faith

By Ethan Kennaugh

Ragnarök will come.
Odin hides in fear as boy
Fenrir comes to kill.

Eden

By Ethan Kennaugh

The pink and purple
Skies illuminate the world.
And bring Nirvana.



Reviews

The ONLY film YOU should have on your watchlist this year!

By Tara Power

'Society of the Snow' directed by J.A. Bayona stars Enzo Vogrincic, Matias Recalt, Agustin Parella and Tomas Wolf. It was filmed on a €65 million budget and is rated 15A, with a running time of 144 minutes.

Society of the Snow is a survival thriller based on the true story of the Uruguayan 1972 Andes flight disaster. It follows the 72-day survival in the snowy Andes mountains. Unlike similar stories such as 'The Lord of the Flies,' which are about the dark side of human nature where survivors of plane crashes turn against one another, Society of the Snow is about how because they banded together and worked with one another they ultimately survived the world's harshest environment.

The Question of Religion

By Liam Estie

"Does God love us all?"

The child asks, eyes full of awe

"I wish that he could"

Writer's Block

By Ciara Kelly

I'd love to write the perfect poem,

Intricate and symbolic,

Full of metaphors and meaning.

Though ambitious it may be,

It chains the pencil to a weight.

Would an athlete run a marathon first try?

I'd love to unlock these shackles,

Let words flow to meet myself,

Rather than a standard.

What is good if there is no terrible?

That key will clear the way,

And allow a pencil to fly,

Even if it may fall.

The film follows 16 members of a Uruguayan rugby team alongside their family, friends, and supporters. The personal connections between characters in the film further adds to the heartbreak felt by both the audience and the characters for those who don't survive.

The film starts with the rugby team playing a match and convincing their friends and family to join them on a flight to Chile for another match. The warm colours and joyful atmosphere used in these opening scenes of sunny skies contrasts the harsh cold colours of the snowy Andes mountains they find themselves stranded in not long after.

The crash is a gruesome harrowing moment that will have you stunned into silence unable to peel your eyes away from the scree and without a doubt this will continue for the rest of the run time. If you weren't engaged at first, you undoubtedly after this scene. The quality of the special effects will leave you rendered speechless.

The costumes and makeup are flawless and for a moment you could almost forget that the actors are not sunburnt on the verge of freezing to death because of how realistic their appearances are. The characters having not expected to crash in the snow are wearing light thin layers completely unprepared which makes their survival even more impressive.

The director J.A. Bayona is no stranger to intense thrillers with the themes of the indomitable human will to survive, the power of teamwork and the mercilessness of nature having previously directed 'The Impossible' starring Tom Holland which deals with the survivors of a tsunami.

The most impressive aspect of the film is by far the casting. Maria Laura Berch the casting director deserves her flowers for how perfect the decisions were.

Society of the Snow is not the first time this true story has been created for the screen. In 1993, 'Alive' directed by Frank Marshall was released but compared to the more recent adaption it falls flat.

Bayona's intention in creating this film was to show the legacy of all 49 people who were apart of the tragedy to a wider audience. The survivor's courage is a beacon of hope for all showing what can be accomplished through persistence and unity in the face of uncertainty. Roberto Canessa who was a nineteen-year-old medical student at the time of the crash tells Time Magazine that watching Bayona's previous work made him have faith that he could make this movie about humans being under intense stress. Canessa also states that, "This is more than a movie. This is an experience we had to

share with humanity to show people who are having their own mountain crashes how to be resourceful and how to not give up."

I personally had never heard of the Uruguayan Air Force Flight 571 before I had decided to watch this film so therefore, I went into it completely blind. For the entire duration of the film, I could not take my eyes of the screen even if I tried, I was completely invested in the story. Afterwards I was eager to know more about this story which I am certain you will be too. Netflix also offers a half an hour documentary on the making of the film which I would highly recommend.

The highlight of the film is the performances. Each actor no matter how big or small the role was put their all into each scene making this some of the greatest acting of the decade. More specifically Enzo Vogrincic who plays Numa Turcatti and Matias Recalt who plays Roberto Canessa were the standout stars.

My favourite aspect of the film is how Roberto Canessa costs them the rugby match in the beginning for not playing as part of the team and passing the ball but in the end, he volunteers to venture out to find help ultimately saving the remaining survivors. This character development is extremely satisfying to see, and you truly feel proud of the character.

Society of the Snow has been nominated at the 96th Academy awards for Best International Feature Film, representing Spain and also for Best Makeup and Hairstyling. I would say and I'm sure you will agree that it deserved a nomination for Best Picture too.

Overall, Society of the Snow is a true triumph for cinema especially international cinema. Director Bayona was successful in accurately portraying the story. In an interview with Netflix, he stated he was determined "to direct this story as it was meant to be- in its original language, in the places where it happened, and with the ambition with which we approached the project." It was also important to tell the story of those who didn't get to go home. The narrator is a character who does not survive the 72 period but having him narrate shows the audience how he was still an important part of the groups survival even if he unfortunately didn't make it to the end. Gustavo Zerbino a survivor stated in an interview, "The protagonists of the film are those who didn't return from the Andes but live forever in our hearts."

It's easy to say if you decide to tune in you can without a doubt expect one of the greatest films of the year.

Movie Review: Barbie

By Zoe Brennan

In 2023, Greta Gerwig's 'Barbie' took the world by storm thorough its satirical yet emotive take on feminism, and the unexpressed effects of living in a patriarchal society generating an astonishing 1.446 billion dollars.



Gerwig has always been associated with her progressive stance regarding feminism and equality as witnessed through her past projects. This would include her 2019 adaptation of Louisa May Alcott's renowned novel 'Little Women' tackling gender roles and social expectations, and her critically acclaimed coming of age masterpiece 'Lady Bird' (2017) exploring the universal experience of adolescence and finding purpose through a female lens.

'Barbie' is a comedy/ fantasy film that explores the life of what society would consider a 'stereotypical barbie', referring to the previous standards society assumes in women such as 'being pretty' and 'girly', and how these assumptions can provoke harmful idealisations in women. Resulting in Barbie venturing on a determined voyage of self-discovery. Barbie is played by renowned Aussie actress Margot Robbie, most prominently known for her role as Tonya Harding in 'I, Tonya' (2017) along with supporting actors America Ferrara, Ryan Gosling, and Ariana Greenblatt. 'Barbie' is just under 2 hours long with a runtime of 1hr and 54 minutes with a 12A rating.

The movie begins with characters Barbie and Ken living in their pink and 'perfect' life in 'Barbie land'. The film immediately eliminates societies expectations and 'norms' of women as we understand women run Barbie land and are capable and achievable of any career it is they desire, disregarding the expectation that women are just capable of motherhood or maintaining a household. As Barbie is unaware of the patriarchal society that is the real world, every day is like an idyll for her. But we soon realise that this isn't the case for Ken we understand Ken's disposition solely relies on Barbies.

As ideals of death and flaws begin to absorb Barbie's brain, she journeys to the real world in an attempt to fix these negative conceptions and discover where they're coming from. But as Barbie enters the real world, she soon faces the harsh realities of male harassment and suppression, and her mind is immediately altered as she's uncovered to feelings and ideologies she's never been exposed to before. Whereas Ken perceives the appraisal and authority held by men to be honorary and mind-altering.

As Barbie first meets Ariana Greenblatt's teenage character Sasha, Barbie is immediately awakened to the realisation that she isn't the inspirational figure she truly believed she was and is soon informed of the trivial struggles women face on a daily basis including constant male oppression and unrealistic body and emotional standards. As Barbie is horrified by this new knowledge, she makes it her utmost responsibility to attempt to change these narratives as much as she can. Whereas Ken is in awe of everything he witnesses in the real world and makes it his duty to inform the other Kens in Barbie land of this forbidden utopia.

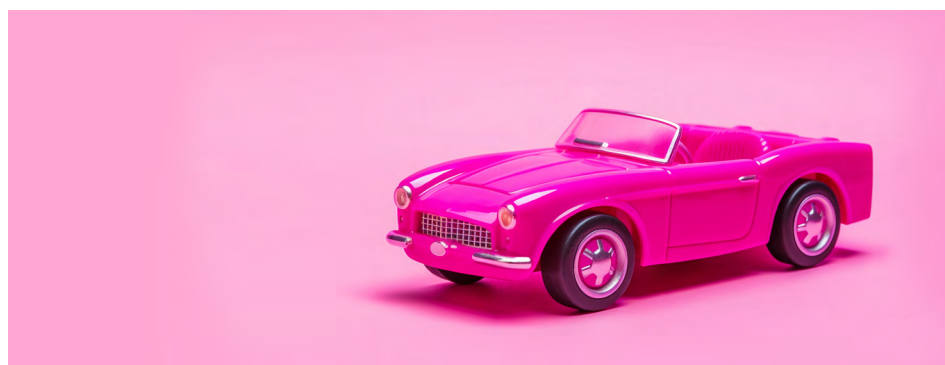
As the movie progresses, we witness the harmful and easily manipulative effects of toxic masculinity as the political stance of Barbie land causes chaos. We are then brought on a journey of the importance of self-discovery and accepting your individuality as we witness both Barbie and Ken ultimately discover and accept themselves for who they are.

A scene of major importance and what many consider to be the pivotal moment of the film is America Ferrara's iconic monologue towards the end which tackles the unrealistic expectations of a modern-day women. Character Gloria begins to reveal that it is truly impossible to accept and meet the unrealistic expectations that are constantly created against women by men so therefore you may as well accept and appreciate your true self and fight against the direction society attempts to guide you with. This proved to hold major universal significance as many began quoting and re-recording this monologue all over social media. Further justifying and showcasing just how effective, world renowned and relevant this movie became.

The Barbie movie was jam-packed with bright and captivating settings and costumes and contained a merry and comedic tone clearly held throughout. I believe this along with its modern soundtrack and relevant pop culture references undeniably attracted audiences.

The dialogue throughout Barbie was fun and comedic which although many found to be entertaining and fresh, I personally found to be simple-minded. I believe the message and purpose being conveyed was immensely prevalent and paramount which is why I wish it was delivered in a more structured and controlled manner throughout. Furthermore, although the film contained 'silly' and 'goofy' scenes catered for young audiences such as Barbie and Kens travel to the real world and their escape from Mattel, I'm under the impression that this diminished the significance of its intended purpose.

To conclude, Barbie was a universal sensation online, offline, physically, and emotionally to many worldwide which cannot be denied. I believe Gerwig was successful in portraying the distinguished message of the importance of female empowerment and self-love. Shining light on the harms and realities that are associated with living in a patriarchal society and the suppression of women in reality to this day.



Run Forrest Run! Forrest Gump an instant classic

By Stephen Kenny

Forrest Gump is based on the 1986 novel written by Winston Groom. It has a very strong cast with the big-name being Tom Hanks who plays the main character Forrest, Sally Field who plays Forrest Gump's Mam and Robin Wright who plays as Jenny and has a big part to play in the film. It's a long film at two hours twenty-two minutes but honestly watching this film time flies with a mixture of happiness and sadness and a long rollercoaster journey.

The film is rated PG. The film was nominated 13 times in the 1995 Oscars, winning six of them including best actor, best picture, and best actor. It did a clean sweep of the Oscars that year. The movie caused some controversy as it beat "Pulp Fiction" for best picture that year while in 2007, John Travolta the actor who starred in the movie "Grease" revealed in an interview he turned down the opportunity to do Forrest Gump and decided to do Pulp Fiction instead.

The film is about Forrest Gump's life from childhood to now. Forrest was born with strong legs but a very crooked spine. This meant in his early childhood he was forced to wear leg braces which made walking difficult and running impossible. This led to him being bullied however Jenny saved Forrest thus leading them to becoming childhood friends. Then we see Forrest's adulthood and we see what Forrest does with his life as he tells us through his perspective and see what challenges he overcame.

In the film we see Forrest stand out from the rest of the characters in the film. Forrest shows he's a very caring person and shows cares towards people he meets in the film such as Bubba played by Mykelti Williamson and Lieutenant Dan played by Gary Sinise who become Forrest's best friends. The costumes and lighting play a massive part in the film. In the film Forrest wears a variety of different colours. In the start of the film, he sits at a bus stop wearing a white suit while bringing a box of chocolates which is also white too which symbolises peace and goodness and by the end of the film, he wears baby blue t-shirts which has the meaning of peace and positivity.

The film also represents good vs evil with Forrest being the good person in the film. However, most of the characters in the film think of him as "strange" or "weird" and avoid talking to him but eventually Forrest wins them over with his kind and bizarre personality.

This film has everything when it comes to lighting and cinematography. For the lighting it has sunsets, sunrises, lashing rain, thunderstorms and more. Even more so you realize each of the weather have a meaning. In some of the scenes, where Forrest's gets drafted to represent America in the world war, as he gets on the bus to begin his army journey, its lashing rain meaning a tough challenge is awaiting him, whereas in the scene where he non stops running "cause he felt like it" it's always sunny meaning he's doing a positive thing or everyone around him watching him running are feeling positive or happy.

The film's message for me is always do the right thing and never give up on your goals and be yourself. In the film, Forrest always is picked on for his weird and bizarre personality and thoughts while he is also very positive and smart. The characters were annoyed at how he acted but over time, Forrest was never frustrated about it he kept being himself and he won the characters that didn't like him over. Forrest made sure to help his friends before he helped himself. He helped his friends in so many ways in their lives by just being himself. Whether that be giving his closest friends family millions of dollars or starting up a fish business he was always willing to help his friends. Forrest himself had plenty of goals and I think his friends without even Forrest realising helped him reach his dreams.

Overall, this film is one of my favourite films I've ever seen. It brings me so much happiness and sadness as this film is 100% a roller coaster of emotions.

I give this film a five-star rating simply because of how good it is. Everything about it makes sense and its very rare that a film is made based on a fictional character's life and I think they did it perfectly. It's one of the best films ever made.



Saltburn Review

By Ellie Martin

Saltburn is a new psychological thriller released on November 17th, 2023. Fans of hot shots Barry Keoghan and Jacob Elordi are only dying to see it, but is it worth the hype or is it just good because eye catching actors are starring in it? Writer, director and co-producer Emerald Fennell says, "I have been working on the plot seven or eight years now and it has developed more and more."

The movie follows young boy Oliver Quick who is attending his first year in Oxford University in England in the mid 2000's. Oliver becomes infatuated with fellow student Felix Catton, who is the young hot 'popular' rich boy in the University. Oliver stands out like a sore thumb in Oxford because of his clothing choice and his academic skills. Oliver is constantly watching and admiring student Felix and finds the perfect way to get his attention...

Oliver sees that Felix's bike has a puncture, so he offers his help, Felix then thanks him by inviting him over to his table in the local pub. They quickly become inseparable, and Oliver gains the nickname 'Ollie' and begins to dress and act like Felix. Oliver soon admits to Felix that he doesn't have a relationship with his mother and father and that he has no siblings as he is an only child.

Felix invites Ollie to live with him in 'Saltburn' for the summer.

We soon see that Ollie's unhealthy obsession with rich boy Felix is a concern to everybody living in Saltburn.

This movie is so intriguing and really glue you to your seat, everyone was left speechless in the theatre with their jaws on the floor at the ending.

Barry really portrays Oliver as a very condescending character, and it really enhances the movie to its fullest potential.

I believe this movie is the one for you if you are over the age of 16 as it does contain some inappropriate scenes.

The movie is genuinely gut wrenching and well worth the watch if you are ready to be sucked into the life of Oliver Quick.

I would rate this movie a 4.5/5 as it leaves the viewers genuinely shocked and horrified at the same time.



Quarterback

By Sam Dixon

Title: Quarterback

Directors: Peyton Manning, Pat Kelleher, Keith Cossrow, Ross Ketover

Cast: Marcos Mariota, Patrick Mahomes II, Kirk Cousins.

No. of seasons: 1

No. Of episodes: 8

Age Rating: MA (Mature Adult.)

For Sport lovers and especially those who want an in debt investigate the day-to-day life into a professional athlete's life, This Netflix series called "Quarterback" is certainly one to dive right into. Released in July 2023, Quarterback starred three Quarterbacks in the National football leagues, (NFL). Patrick Mahomes, Quarterback of the Kansas City Chiefs, Kirk Cousins, Quarterback of the Minnesota Vikings, and Marcos Mariota the Quarterback of the Atlanta Falcons. These three superstars opened their doors to film crew to give us the everyday fan, an insight into how they perform at such a high-level week in week out. Patrick Mahomes, arguably being the face of the NFL was a big reason to watch this series as he was the MVP (Most valuable player) of that season of filming.

With all three starring Quarterbacks at different teams, it is evident that there is different cultures and expectations at each franchise, For Patrick Mahomes the weight of expectation is significantly different than Kirk Cousins and Marcos Mariota and you can see this by his daily routine in his training work ethic. This eight-episode series is worth a watch for any sports fan or any professional aspiring athlete who wants to learn about what it takes to dedicate their lives to a specific craft they wish to pursue, but also the ability to fit Family time into an athlete's day to day life. With the Kansas City chiefs winning the Superbowl (The Whole competition) it was quite fitting that Patrick Mahomes could be a part of the winning team as we watched his whole season unravel in front of our eyes.

With a new season being planned, and a different cast set to be announced shortly, Quarterback Season two is sure one to add to your bucket list of series to sit down and watch.

Xavier Renegade Angel: Too weird for the audience at the time, but boy did their kids like it!

By Bartosz Labuc

Xavier Renegade Angel is a satirical comedy show released in 2007 and presented in a visually unimpressive 3D style many find off-putting.

It is written for an adult audience, featuring a lot of swearing, jokes about race, sexuality and just about everything and anything else.

XRA as it's called is a story of Xavier, a part human, part snake, part deer, spirit-seeker inspired by native American lore.

Xavier is a terrible person, that's not to say he is poorly written, XRA is a cautionary tale about the dangers of spiritualism taken too far.

The average episode of XRA starts with Xavier rambling to himself in a desert, spouting such classics as "Every luxury has a deep price. Every indulgence, a cosmic cost. Each fibre of pleasure you experience causes equivalent pain somewhere else. This is the first law of emodynamics. Joy can be neither created nor destroyed. The balance of happiness is constant. Fact: Every time you eat a bite of cake, someone gets horsewhipped."

The show is a fever dream, it doesn't bend the knee to any power, not logic, not reason, as it explored up to ten themes per fifteen minutes episode.

XRA is a show that demands your constant attention because it is a cleverly written show under the surface, the surface is just insane.

What makes Xavier different from his peers is the willingness to commit to the absurdity, they always find a way to one-up the weirdness.

Don't believe me? What if I was to tell you that in one scene, Xavier's mother, a perfectly normal human, turns him into a massive bowl of soup, in another scene Xavier talks a farmer into shooting up at the sky to hit God, literally wounding a hereto unmentioned god causing it to rain blood.

A crucial part of the equation is Xavier himself; he is self-centred and egotistical but he's not evil, he always tries to do good and in a tragic and incompetent way he usually doesn't even realize he caused whatever disaster is plaguing this episode's town or village.

Xavier is a bumbling idiot and we as the audience aren't supposed to relate to him, he is as much the culprit as he is the victim and rather than judge Xavier or the world we must sit back and watch.

Personally, I found Xavier's need to help people inspiring but unfortunately it never went anywhere.

I also want to point out that Xavier tends to make up words and phrases at a whim, you can see that he isn't some wise shaman, he is a self-centered idiot saying things like: "Powers are for the weak. I have no powers. I mean unless you count the power to blow minds with my weapons-grade philosophical insights."

Additionally, the show is rather shabby in presentation also, early 2000s 3D graphics combined with bland, blocky backgrounds and low-resolution images plague both seasons of the show, that's not to say that the show can't be pretty when it wants to be.

Various parts of the show, like the 'game of life' section is the second season featured many smoothly animated characters and sharp lighting for the time.

So why does XRA look like it does? Put simply it's two things, firstly there's the budget — a weird show like XRA that might never take off is a big gamble for Adultswim, the show's producers, simply put they were limited by a budget and scope.

Putting together one good looking scene isn't worth it when the script needs a dozen different, weird scenes, at some point you just must focus on keeping the costs down to even produce the show.

In conclusion XRA is a 10/10 show for me, it's unlike any other and the writers knew just how to play into XRA's janky visual humour.

If you are a person with an open mind and some tolerance from early 2000s gross-out humor XRA is a must-watch, the two seasons will feel a lot longer than they are, but you won't even realize when the show abruptly ends in its second season.

As with all things old and weird, XRA developed a cult following despite not finding an actual audience in the moment.

The show is available for watch on the official Adultswim website, as one last word of warning, remember to pay attention to the show.

Sometimes the comedy is as subtle as the delivery of a line or a callback to an old statement, these things can easily go unnoticed and without them XRA would just feel like a meanspirited fever dream which it is not.



Red Dead Redemption 2

Evan McClean

Red Dead Redemption 2 is a Western themed game set in 1899, released in 2018 by Rockstar Games. Outlaws are a dying breed as we follow the Van Der Linde gang and the main protagonist Arthur Morgan through a tale of loyalty, betrayal, heartbreak, death, sacrifice and redemption. It has a beautiful setting in the unique 1899 western setting of New Austin, Ambarino, New Hannover, Lemoyne and West Elizabeth in the USA. With dynamic graphics, and the most realistic and detailed world building in gaming history, I believe this is Rockstars greatest achievement to date.

The story begins with Arthur Morgan, the main protagonist we follow throughout the story of the game, escaping from a failed heist in Blackwater with the rest of the Van Der Linde gang in the snowy mountains of Colter. This introduction to the game would be the first part of an 8-chapter long story we follow Arthur and the gang through. This theme would set the theme for the rest of the gang, a group of outlaws running from the law, Pinkertons and other outlaws, fighting to survive through the end of the Wild West era, as the world is quickly changing and modernizing, a world where outlaws are no longer welcome.

The intro, while small at first, slowly opens you up from a small, limited area in the snow, to a beautiful large map, which almost feels like a reward after braving and fighting your way out of the snowy cold blizzards of Colter. It truly allows you to appreciate the beauty of the game and its mind-blowing graphics and attention to

detail. From the snowy mountains to the alligator infested swamps, the golden desert, thick forests and beautiful grass lands, the map truly immerses you in the game, and helps you connect with the environment and characters.

Red Dead Redemption 2 does a fantastic job of opening up all areas of the map in course with the story of the game, basing each chapter of the game in one specific area of the map, which constantly gives the game and player a fresh feeling of the game, and keeps your attention and immersion throughout, as it gives the player a whole new area to explore and discover, even towards the end of the game I was presented with more areas to explore. Not to mention how interactive the wildlife is, from watching animals play, hunt and fight from a distance to hunting them and selling their pelts for money or outfits, or fishing for a more relaxed pace to take a break from the intense story.

The slower pace of Red Dead 2 is a new change of tone compared to other Rockstar projects such as GTA 5, but I feel as though they executed the story perfectly, watching Arthur Morgan develop into the character he becomes based off your choices in the game, is a truly beautiful story, and personally, I believe he is the best character in fiction after playing, or should I say, experiencing Red Dead Redemption 2.

All of Us Strangers

By Sophie Dardis

Love is a tender, painful, beautiful, mysterious, and heartbreaking thing. If you don't agree, you will by the end of watching Andrew Haigh's heartfelt new film All of Us Strangers. With a running time of an hour and 45 minutes, and an age rating of 16, this film will have you sobbing by the time you walk out of the cinema. Starring Andrew Scott, Paul Mescal, Claire Foy, and Jamie Bell, the film is about Adam, a man who strikes up a new relationship with his neighbor, Harry. Adam then returns to his family home, where he finds his parents living there as they were thirty years ago in 1987, around the time that they died.

Andrew Scott does a wonderful job of portraying the character of Adam. He is a lonely, single man who lives by himself in an apartment in London. His apartment block is empty except for one other soul — Harry, portrayed by Paul Mescal. Harry introduces himself to Adam, and although he is at first hesitant to open himself up, Adam allows himself to get to know this other young man and they build a tender, caring relationship over the course of the film.

At around the same time that Harry comes into Adam's life, Adam returns to his childhood home. He is a struggling screenwriter, and he is seeking inspiration for his current project. He returns to the place he grew up in to find his parents, living and breathing, in their family home. Surprisingly, Adam doesn't question

this, and he simply goes along with this seemingly amazing chance to reunite with his parents. As a viewer, one might wonder why Adam doesn't think it is strange that this is happening, or one might suggest that he is perhaps high and is simply imagining it. Throughout the film, there are times that make it seem like maybe it is all in his head, but somehow something about the raw emotion that the visits with his parents elicits causes one to believe that it is real, and he is getting the chance to say goodbye, a chance that he didn't have all those years ago.

Adam's relationship with Harry is also a beautiful yet surreal thing. Adam opens up to Harry in ways that he hasn't opened up to anyone in a long time, if ever. Harry also confides in Adam about the tough life he too has had. It is obvious that both men are lonely, but they find companionship and comfort in each other in ways that they both desperately needed. Both men open up to each other about their harsh experiences being gay, something that is very real and relatable for many LGBTQ+ people, especially those who grew up in the 80s and 90s, like Adam and Harry. In one conversation with his mother, Adam tells her about his sexuality, which is somewhat hard for her to come to terms with. She asks him many questions about it, and it seems to be difficult for her to accept at first. However, it is clear that she loves her son very much, and wants him to have a happy life, no matter who he chooses to share it with.

Once Adam meets his parents again, he frequently visits them, spending hours with them, making up for lost time, of course. He also furthers his relationship with Harry, and even invites him to come with him to meet his parents. Without spoiling too much, this visit does not turn out the way Adam had hoped, and the film becomes much more tense from here on out.

This is a moving, emotional film that everyone should see, and is well worth a 4-star rating. While watching, you might be baffled by how Adam can see his parents and wonder what any of it means. Are they ghosts? Is he imagining everything? Is he mentally well? These are questions that you'll have to find the answers to yourself, by watching the film. There are also several questions that can be asked about his relationship with Harry, and how real it is. Nevertheless, the film is a beautiful portrayal of the timeless effect that grief and loneliness can have on people. It is a film that makes us think about the human condition, what it means to love, how hard it can be to cope with losing loved ones. Although you might need to bring a box of tissues into the cinema with you, this film is well worth the watch. It will draw you in and will make you think about your own experiences with love and loss, and you'll be left pondering the thought of what it's really like to be a human being in this beautiful yet terribly cruel world.



Short Stories

Go West Young Man

By Bronwyn Murphy

Waking up was harmless. I was in my bed in my own room like any other day, no cars were passing by though. It was early to be fair. I got up and went through my daily motions the silence made itself known. I put it down to no one in the house being awake, but everyone should be up and getting ready for work surely? It was not my job to go rounding everyone up anyway that's up to them, so I head out into the street. The bus stop was empty, odd at this time of day, nor were there any cars heading out into their morning.

It was almost like the entire world was in on something I wasn't, yet I carried on, ignoring the pangs in my stomach.

Deciding to be nosy I glanced in the windows, when I noticed that absolutely nothing was happening behind them. There was evidence of life there, but not now. Lights were on in some homes, even some TVs playing, but for some reason that did not sooth my dread. There was a part of me that was too freaked out to stop and look closely, so I clung to hope that someone would be making their commute anywhere or something. No, I wasn't being crazy, and it wasn't four in the morning either, so what the hell happened here. I missed my turn, so I pressed on, passing parked cars, but I needed to get out into the town centre, where not a single soul roamed apparently. Where people would be bustling was wind and endless, endless silence. That's what I cannot get past, the solitude of these streets was unheard of around here, and truly seemed as if a human would never appear to console my worries.



Did everyone decide to up and leave?

I arrived at the outskirts soon enough, where flats sat ghosted, and the playground remained untouched. Except for one thing. Peering very hard I could make out a figure, a man I believed. He would know what was going on, or if not, at least another living being was still here and we could figure it out together. I sort of skipped up to him worried he would get away, to find him turned around and smiling softly, almost happy to see me too.

'Hi stranger.' He said.

'Hello...stranger?' I replied sounding unsure.

'I can call you something else if you'd like.' he didn't even question my inept greeting.

'Well my name is- '

'Do you know what's happened at all? I haven't seen anyone anywhere all day have you?'

Rude, but okay. I could get a better look at him up close. Apart from the dismissiveness he looked like a person to me. Whether I could trust him was an entirely different question, but beggars can't be choosers or so they say. Something, not sure what, alerted me to caution, so I made a point of scanning his physical appearance as subtly as possible. Nothing seemed off so far, but his hair was remarkably kept I had to say, impossibly smooth. But his eyes were difficult to meet, there was something almost repulsive about how unrelenting they were. I couldn't help but feel something was off but it wasn't based in anything tangible, so I swallowed my fear down with a polite laugh, not really registering a word being said.

I took up this man's offer to scour the shops for resources, we engaged in smaller than small talk for the time being, but ultimately determined to deduce what had happened to this town.

Uncanny was the word I had been searching for, I still hadn't learned this man's name by that point, and I was honestly too afraid to ask, I'd passed the acceptable time threshold. I glanced persistently at how his limbs were striving back and forth, they seemed a bit long for his body, but I told myself I was being a bit creepy and carried on. I honestly believed I had seen him before. In a dream? But I would've had to have seen him in my real life for that to happen, so where then? He could've been any random face plucked from a crowd; except he wasn't. I ruminated on this for what felt like hours, until I was pulled into reality once more and into the supermarket. Bizarrely, it was desolate here too. Though whatever forces were at play couldn't turn off the harsh yellow lights. I say forces as there were no signs of staff, let alone customers. This meant more for us, I guess. We split up to scrounge for nonperishables, which was unsettling to say the least because the burning sensation underneath my skin told me something was wrong with this, like something primal in me said 'no get out.' But what else was I to do? This other person is my best bet at piecing this mystery together.

As lame and cliché as it sounded, it really felt like we were the last two people on earth.

It wasn't a far-off guess at that point, but instead of that being vaguely romantic it felt like something really, really bad would happen. I chose to confront him.

Hey, I'm so sorry but I never caught your name what was it again? Sorry.'

'Does it matter?' he said as blunt as ever.

'Actually, yes it does' I said. What an odd thing to say.



'Well, I don't know then.'

'You're making no sense surely you have one.'

'Actually, I don't.'

'How then?' I was right to think something was up.

'We literally seem to be the only living things left around here what difference does it make?' No one gets that defensive when asked about their name of all things so what's up with you?

'Nothing is up with me, stranger.'

'I told you not to call me that it's really creepy.' As I spoke my stomach twisted hard. I regretted ever saying a word, but seriously who gets that defensive unless they have something terrible to hide?

'Seriously just tell me who you are.'

'I can't.'

'Why?'

'I can't.' he replied very shortly and sped up.

'You already said that.' Were you up when this went down did you see anything.'

'No.'

I hated how short he was in his answers, it was excruciating getting anything out of him. I paced up beside him.

'Look the way you're acting is really off-putting and I'm already scared so could you please tell me literally anything about yourself or what you know.'

'I don't owe you anything stranger so shut up.'

'I'm not a stranger I may be all you have here, so say something.'

This asinine argument looped a few more times. We were both irate and wasting time. I felt more threatened than ever, despite my companion's angry but calm demeanour.

'If you keep nagging me, you'll have to face the consequences.' He said.

I felt like a child being scolded, which I was never going to take from this distasteful individual, especially with a cringe line like that. 'But you sound like you're hiding something; I'm beginning to actually wonder if you're even human for god's sake like what is actually wrong with you'.

What a colossal mistake that statement was.

Nevaeh

By Alisha McEvoy

People around me are crying. I tried to look around, but I could see nothing. I screamed yet no one heard me. The whimpers of my family and friends were disturbing so I blocked out all the noise and went deeper into my mind.

I saw the tree I was messing on before I got stuck in my mind. I see a boy on the top of the tree. Maybe I'm not alone. I went over to see who he is and why he is in my mind. "Hey, who are you?"

I startled him. It's like he thought he would be the only one here.

"Hello, I'm Billy who are you?"

He looks familiar.

"My names Chloe".

He waved at me and came down from the tree. This place was extravagant, beautiful to the eye. It was all new to me other than the tree.

"How did we get here?"

Billy gave me a weird look and changed the topic.

"Let's explore".

I nodded my head with unsureness.

As we walk, there are so many luxurious buildings around us. These buildings are something I would have never dreamed of seeing. This place is filled with animals. There are meadows filled with flowers, fields with long grass.

"Look, look there's a flying pig! Wow this place is amazing".

Billy looked at me and smiled. As we kept walking more random things appeared. We were exploring for what felt like hours.

"I wonder what this place is called".

He gave me a strange look. He turns to me smiling weirdly and said "Nevaeh".

It's starting to get dark; the stars are twinkling in the sky. I hear the echo of my own footsteps, the crickets in the long fields of grass and many nocturnal animals. Billy and I found a place to sleep.

"There is a little cottage over there."

His head turned.

As we ran over Billy looked at me "beware as there may be shadows, shadows of the unknown".

I try to think nothing of it. The cottage was purple with a green roof, it was perfect for the night. I am starting to feel homesick; I've never been away from my family for this long. Billy can tell I'm upset. I want to sit alone tonight.

I got no sleep. There is nothing I can do. Billy is starting to wake up. We began to pick green shiny apples from the tree. That is our meal for today.

"What do we do?"

"We keep walking".

As we walk, I still notice the same things around us. I am feeling tired, so I sat down on a large stone.



"I give up we are getting nowhere".

Billy's face dropped.

"You cannot stop now, push through and get to the end".

What actually is the end? Can I trust him? I'm not letting my intrusive thoughts get the better of me. All I have is Billy and no one else right now.

I took a deep breath, "You're right".

We see a train station and begin walk over to it. Before we could reach the train station, I could feel my body starting to tingle. I am starting to freak out, I begin to cry. I didn't know what was happening. Billy looked at me as if he knows something. Before I could ask Billy, I feel my body leave Nevaeh. I see big bright white lights but suddenly everything went dark. This is a strange feeling although a familiar one. I can hear my mam, dad, brother, and doctors. Yet again, I cannot move nor speak. I'm shocked I even get to feel the comfort of my family again.

Two days of just being stuck here, lying in a hospital bed is tough. This is too hard for me. I overheard the doctors say there is no chance I'm making it. I hear my family enter the room for the last time. I want to force myself to say one last thing. Three hours go by, the doctors and nurses ask if they are ready to turn off my life support. I hear my family breakdown.

The room went silent as I muttered "I love you".

As the machines started beeping, my family never left my side, I can feel their presence. As my soul is leaving my body, I see the big bright white light again.

I arrived back at Nevaeh. There he is Billy standing there waiting for me.

"I knew you'd be back I didn't want to walk without you".

I noticed the train station disappeared. This is creepy.

"Thanks".

I told him exactly what happened.

"This happened me to before I was stuck here. We need to walk to make it out of here, come on" I did what he said, we both kept walking. Three months of walking, we see these big gold gates. It was a beautiful sight. There was a sign that said you've now reached heaven. Billy turned and looked at me.

"This is your stop" he declared.

"Are you not coming too?".

He looked deeply into my eyes and said, "I have to tell you something".

Billy is telling me about the night I passed away and how it happened. I am shocked. I

didn't know what to say.

I could feel a lady trying to connect with me.

"Billy, wait here".

A woman is connecting with me, she is a medium. She is telling me my family is here. To know it is legit they want me to tell her something she wouldn't know. I describe the way I rip the tags off all my clothes and keep them in the left of my bottom drawer. She says that they are all laughing. This makes me happy. She told me they are here for closure. "They want to know what happened you".

I begin to explain "I was on the top of my favourite tree; it looks like I fell off by accident but that is not the case. This boy named Billy came over and asked could he play. I said yes as I noticed he was new to town. He pushed me off by accident. He climbed down, ran off and committed suicide."

"Please let them know I forgive Billy and I know the truth is hard to hear".

She started to explain everything to them. They are upset but agreed to forgive him.

"Tell them I love them and miss them and that I am okay."

She is telling them and said that they love me to the moon and back. I left the connection and went back to the gateways to heaven.

I turned to Billy.

"You're coming with me to heaven, I forgive you. You kept me safe here and I know your sorry". He smiled but said "I don't deserve to go with you, I did wrong".

I shook my head.

"Both of us deserve to be living in the real world with our families but we aren't so let's live the afterlife together. We all make mistakes some we learn from and some that may be brutal. If I can forgive you the big man through the gates will to. Come on."

The gates open and we walk in.

As I walk in, I feel uneasy. This isn't what I expected heaven to be. I don't know what to believe now. Did I die like that? Did Billy lie to me? My family thinks I am safe. Billy turns to me again.

"Beware of the shadows, the shadows of the unknown".



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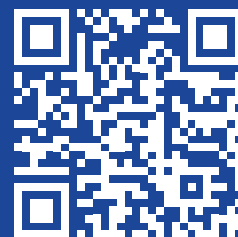
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