

The Outlook

Monmouth University's Student-Run Newspaper EST. 1933

Monmouth public relations students attend national PRSA ICON Conference

CHRIS MARGOTTI
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Public relations students recently attended the national The Public Relations Society of America ICON Conference in Washington, D.C., that took place from Oct. 28-30., where they joined peers and PR professionals for networking, workshops and gained hands-on learning experience in the communication field.

The three-day event was tailored to enhance students' professional development, networking within the communication field, and expand on the current trends in public relations.

Two student members of the Public Relations Student Society of America chapter were sent as Monmouth PRSSA representatives to

the conference. Abby White, a communication major in PR and President of the PRSSA chapter at Monmouth and Danielle Williamson, a junior communication major in PR and Journalism and current PRSSA club member.

For many students who attend ICON, this is their first ever event in a professional environment. Although there is a lot of unknown and curiosity, there is also a level of excitement at what this conference can offer them in both academic and professional possibilities for future employment. "I am looking forward to hearing more about the PR field and the different career paths I can go down. I'm also looking forward to speaking with different professionals and hearing their insights and advice about this career path," said White.

The conference serves as one of the key networking and educational events for PR

and communication students. Those who attended heard from keynote speakers, participated in workshops and developed connections amongst their peers who hope to acquire both internships and employment opportunities. Mary Harris, senior specialist and faculty co-advisor of PRSSA at Monmouth University, offers what students should expect as attendees. "Students will hear from PR leaders in the industry regarding trends in the field, ethics, research, media relations, technological advancements, crisis management, recent case studies, and more. The conference also gives students ample opportunities for networking with other university PRSSA chapters and career professionals alike," she said.

Prior to the conference, Williamson said, "I'm most excited to hear Amy Sherman-Palladino speak, because she

created Gilmore Girls, which is my favorite show. I want to see what she has to say and how her work connects to public relations. There are also going to be great speakers from the business world, which I think will be so valuable," said Williamson.

In addition to the plethora of agendas during the three-days, many companies were present to offer potential future opportunities. "There are usually tables where organizations have information about internships and entry level jobs. Since many companies offer hybrid or remote work now, there may be opportunities with companies from multiple regions of the United States. Attending the annual conference can also be a beneficial addition to a student's resume, because it demonstrates professionalism and active involvement with a

national organization," Harris said.

Both students prepared themselves to get their names out there and make a lasting impression. "I'm preparing business cards and printed resumes. You never know who you are going to come across and my professors have told me it's always smart to have a business card with your information and/or a resume on hand for any job opportunities that may come of a conversation," said White.

Echoing the importance of networking, Williamson added how critical it is to her future as well. "Probably, like getting my name out there and networking. I'm going to make myself business cards and I might print out copies of my resume and just to give out and, like, see if I can really connect to someone because

"PRSA ICON Conference"
cont. on pg. 2

Monmouth senior Ana Heloisa Carvalho publishes novel

MAIREAD SPELLACY
NEWS EDITOR/EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

"It has been a dream since I was little to have a book," said Ana Heloisa Carvalho, a senior double major in education and English, who published her first novel, Elarion, on Aug. 31.

Born in Mato Grosso, Brazil, Carvalho moved to the United States when she was four years old and has

lived in New Jersey since. When she and her family moved to the states, Carvalho explained not knowing anything here. "I remember coming here [The United States] and going to the store when we were first getting situated, and I would be like 'What are they saying...and I was like wow they speak English so fast, like I couldn't even catch up.'"

Considering Carvalho's first language was Portuguese, it was not only a shift in public settings but in school as well. She began school at Lenna Conrow Elementary school in West Long Branch, and recalled how scared she was the first day starting at a school where they didn't speak her language.

"Luckily, my pre-school teacher was Peruvian and it was perfect that she spoke Spanish because it was not quite Portuguese, but it was there enough where I got a word or two per sentence," Carvalho said.

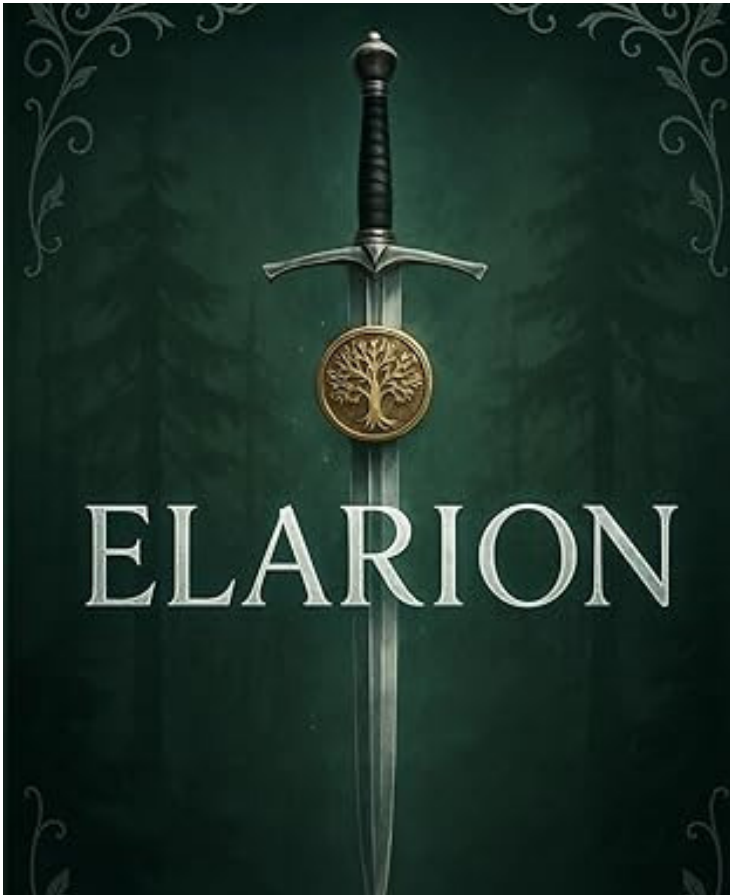


IMAGE TAKEN from Amazon

INSIDE:	NEWS	ENTERTAINMENT	SPORTS	INDEX
	The IGU's Global Understanding convention returns Pg. 3	Hannah Jadagu's album "Describe": The honest emotions of distance and love Pg. 8	Football defeats Bryant to improve to 8-1 Pg. 14	

PRSA ICON Conference

cont. from pg. 1

I'm still technically a junior, so I'm leaning more towards internships right now," she said.

On behalf of Monmouth University's PRSSA chapter, attending a national event like ICON would not be possible without a combination of university support, professional partnerships, and community fundraising. According to Senior Specialist Professor Kristine Simoes, the cost of sending two students to the conference each year—including registration, travel, and hotels—is estimated to be between \$7,000 and \$10,000, a significant increase from past years, prior to COVID, when the cost was closer to \$2,500.

"Every year we get that money courtesy of the Jersey Shore Public Relations and Advertising Association (JSPRAA)," Simoes said. "Nicole Frame, the Director of Conference Services and Events, and Adjunct Professor at Monmouth, was a former board member, and she made sure they dedicated a portion of their funds to our nationally accredited program to send at least two students per year to that conference." Simoes continued that as university and department budgets have reduced post-COVID, such

partnerships have become central in preserving opportunities for student development. "A lot of budgets have been tightened over the last five years . . . It would be very difficult for a college junior or senior to come up with a spare \$3,500 in a month," she said.

Monmouth University's PRSSA chapter acts as an entirely student-run public relations organization that partners with local nonprofits and small businesses to support communication and marketing services. The chapter is among a small group—only 28 universities nationwide—recognized as a PRSSA Nationally Affiliated organization. Monmouth's Public Relations program holds a CEPR accreditation (Certification in Education for Public Relations) from the Public Relations Society of America, an acknowledgement collectively held by 50 programs worldwide for meeting the highest standards of ethics, education, and industry readiness.

"This is my first semester at Monmouth, and since I started it has definitely opened up a ton of opportunities for me already being apart of the PRSSA club, with going to this conference, doing events with my job, and just doing

events with the club. So, I definitely think it's, you know, bringing me out into the real world more, which is nice," Williamson said.

The chapter provides students the ability to obtain career-applicable skills in writing, creating press releases, and social media content design. These hands-on experiences allow members to work directly with real clients and develop confidence in their work, making themselves more appealing to business owners looking for new hires. "I think attending the national ICON conference as a Monmouth University student adds credibility to not only our school, but our chapter as well . . . working with our clients and being nationally affiliated boosts their confidence in us to be able to effectively help them with campaigns, events, or even media promotion," White said.

"I think it's important for Monmouth students to have real world experiences and get the opportunity to network with industry professionals to help boost their professional careers. I also think it is important to represent our school. Monmouth University provides so many amazing opportunities for its students and it is important, when at these events, to represent," said White.

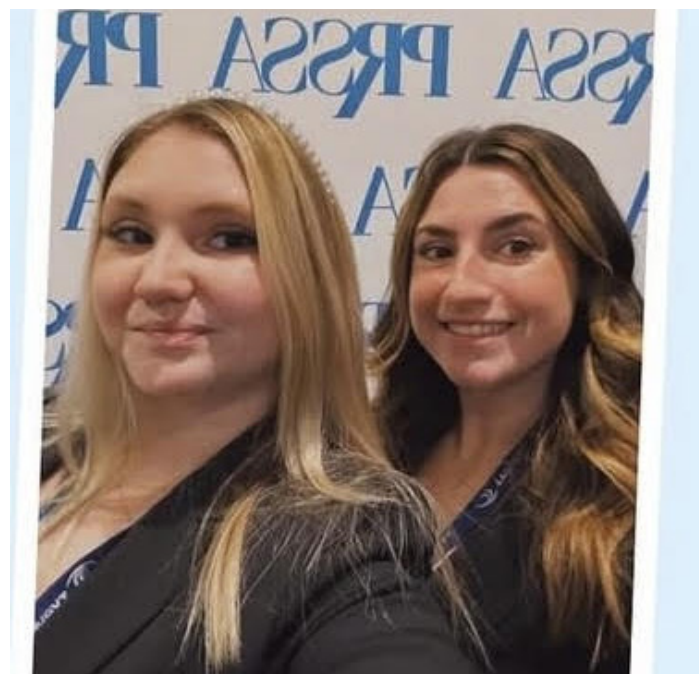


IMAGE TAKEN from Instagram @monmouthshadowpr

Abby White and Danielle Williamson at PRSA ICON Conference in Washington, D.C.

Ana Heloisa Carvalho

cont. from pg. 1

She taught Carvalho everything she needed to know, to where she never had to take an ESL class. "Without her, I don't think I would have done so well in English later because you would think since I came from another country. I've been in honors English my whole life, that doesn't quite make sense but it's because of her...and now here we are with a book."

After majoring in nursing for her first semester of her freshman year at Brookdale Community College she quickly switched to an education major before transferring to Monmouth and pursuing a double major in both English and education. Carvalho's brother helped her to recognize her true love for education after telling his sister how he saw the love she had for helping others, especially children.

Her brother reminded her of the times when she was little that she would set up her dolls, make fake homework for them, and then grade it. "Without him I don't know if I would have accepted it, truly," she said.

Carvalho wrote for The Outlook starting her junior year but her love for writing began almost a decade prior. As young as 12 years old, Carvalho would use her mom's Dell to write stories and print them out as if it was a book of her own. Carvalho has contributed to the lifestyles, entertainment, and features section of The Outlook. While she had already begun her writing journey prior to becoming a contributing writer at The Outlook, she explained writing for the student-run newspaper as a "different experience" having her name published on something. It took away any fear she had

by writing for the newspaper first before publishing something on her own.

From the very beginning of the writing process, "It's just been really me," she explained, even down to the editing. Her hometown friends were the first to know about the idea and encouraged her to go through with the publishing of her own book after years of ideas. Carvalho began the process in the spring of '25 with a google doc and a character chart. Her goal was to finish the book by the time the '25/'26 school year started. She explained the purpose of the google doc and character chart was to help her vision the entirety of the book, up until the end.

Carvalho emphasized the importance of character development when writing the book, from character traits, to romantic and platonic relationships.

She even took the time to purposely name each character with a specific meaning. The author honed in on one character specifically, Adeline, who she created for young girls to look up to. "She's smart, she'll give the ideas, she's strong but also if she needs help, she'll ask," Carvalho said as she explained the character of Adeline. "I got tired of trying to look for characters in books that looked like me, talked like me, and I couldn't find her so I just made a bunch of different versions," she added.

Ace, her nickname given to her by her friends at Monmouth is the name that she used to publish her book. The nickname came from her desire of always wanting to do well in school. Carvalho joked that her friends always ask her, "Did you ace it?" A big part of who she is is school, therefore using her nickname seemed fitting to her.

During the summer, the

author balanced a job while also setting a disciplined schedule to stay on track with her goal. She spent the summer writing at least a chapter a week, sometimes staying up until 3 a.m just to get a few last words in, and stopping after every ten chapters to edit before starting the writing process of the next.

Once published, Carvalho shared the excitement and joy she had when the first copy was finally in her hands. As a reader herself, her room is filled with books. She shared the moment that she scanned her room of all the books on her shelves and looking back at her very own in her hands thought to herself, "What if this is on someone's shelf one day just like my books are."

Carvalho dedicated her book to her brother who helped her recognize and accept her love for education and English. She hopes to become a high school English teacher while writing books on the side, and not only teaching how to read and write but being an example herself.

The IGU's Global Understanding convention returns

JASMINE JENKINS
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Monmouth University's Institute for Global Understanding will host its two-day Global Understanding Convention on Nov. 12-13, after a four-year hiatus. Faculty and students will present research papers, panels, and film screenings to address global issues and suggest solutions for current global conflicts.

This year's theme, "Global Matters: Paths to Trust and Peace," draws inspiration from the United Nations General Assembly resolution (A/RES/78/266) that encourages nations to settle conflicts "through inclusive dialogue and negotiation" to restore trust and peace. The conference planning committee worked for several months, including this past summer, with the final planning and programming being finalized by the GUC Planning Committee co-

chairs: Dr. Jiwon Kim, Dr. Jennifer Shamrock, Mr. Kurt Wagner, and students Jackie Tamburrino and Paris Galgano.

Students and faculty are welcome to showcase their research that reinforce these values. "Students can reflect on some of their classes and the ways in which their important work each semester can potentially be framed as a proposal," said Dr. Jennifer Shamrock, a senior lecturer at the university and a co-chair of the Global Understanding Convention. Dr. Shamrock has participated in the conference nearly every year it has happened, and takes pleasure in involving her students as well. She added that the chosen theme for the conference allows various disciplines across campus to share their views and make a meaningful difference.

The conference has previously explored themes such as "Human Rights and the Environment" in 2021, which was held virtually, and "Practicing Nonviolence in a Violent World" in 2015. This year, the event aims to

expand those conversations through a closer analysis of the impact of education, culture, conflict resolution, and human rights. "These conferences serve as a way to engage with national and international issues, looking at the ways different disciplines can contribute to peace, social justice, equity and inclusion," said Dr. Shamrock.

This year's keynote speaker is Monmouth alumna Dee Baker, founder and CEO of Beyond The Uniforms. Baker, a U.S. Air Force veteran, established the program in October 2023 to coach, empower, and equip women, particularly female veterans, with tools for personal and professional growth. Beyond The Uniforms is focused on helping women regain their sense of self and strengthen their leadership, personally and in the corporate world. Baker hopes that attendees leave the conference with "courage and clarity," using their voices to make influential changes locally and beyond. "I hope students and faculty walk away with the courage to recognize the



IMAGE TAKEN from Monmouth University website

Dee Baker, Monmouth University alumna and U.S. Air Force Veteran who is this year's Keynote Speaker at the convention.

power of their own voice, and clarity to see that leadership and global understanding are not abstract," said Baker. "Every student and every professor has a unique lens to share and enrich not only their communities, but the global stage."

Monmouth's Institute for Global Understanding can draw in a large crowd of active participants and listeners. Paris Galgano, a junior political science major concentrating in legal studies, is a student co-chair for the conference, helping to organize panels and coordinate speakers. By being on the committee, she explains how valuable her role in the conference is to her. "I don't get that many chances to do something like this on campus, so this is definitely a great way to help me be around faculty members and be on their level," she said. Paris adds that her background in political science has given her a broader understanding of the world and politics. When she first heard about the convention, she knew it was something she wanted to pursue. Reflecting on her role, Paris shared, "The fact that I'm on the committee and helping create such a big convention is a defining moment I won't forget. It has shaped my skills in the professional world and I'm happy to be a part of it. [Global issues] are present right in our neighborhoods," Baker emphasized. "Whether

it's climate change, migration, equity and peace, they are not abstract concepts: they're lived realities shaping families every day."

The Global Understanding Convention is more than just a two-day conference. "It's a really crucial part of the university's mission to address intercultural issues both on campus, the surrounding community, and the larger nation. We really feel like the Global Understanding Conference gives a lot of visibility to the institute and what our mission is." Dr. Shamrock also added that she is constantly impressed and appreciative of the high levels of student and faculty involvement, both as presenters and audience members. "I think it's a great way for students to work with their professors and fellow students to see how topics they are learning and skills they are developing can be applied to address concerns that we face in our everyday lives," Shamrock said.

Next year marks the 25th anniversary of the conference, highlighting Monmouth's commitment towards fostering collaboration and tolerance in an ever-evolving culture. Organizers hope that the 2026 conference will be extended into a week-long discussion. Dr. Shamrock said, "The campus community will see just how integral intercultural issues are to a college experience."



IMAGE TAKEN from Monmouth University website

The Global Understanding Convention Committee will host its biennial convention on Nov. 12 and 13, with this year's convention reflecting on the United Nations' Member States Declaration of 2025.

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NIL: negative or positive?

EDITORIAL STAFF

Monmouth University recently announced plans to hire a Senior Associate Athletic Director for Annual Giving, NIL, and Revenue Generation. The goal is to strengthen fundraising, connect with alumni and donors, and ensure student athletes have the resources they need to succeed. With new NIL (Name, Image, and Likeness) rules and growing competition between schools, this position could play a key role in shaping the future of Monmouth Athletics. The editors at The Outlook weighed in on if Monmouth can keep up with household name institutions and whether this new position at Monmouth Athletics will help student athletes.

One editor said, "I think this position is an overall positive for student athletes. NIL is brand new for a lot of people, including the people that benefit from it. Having someone provide a little guidance can be a big help for Monmouth's athletes."

Another editor agreed that this director position could be positive, "I think it could po-

tentially but student athletes have a lot of resources already. What could this new position possibly offer that other ones already don't."

One editor is optimistic, but cautious about this new position, "... it's not a bad thing if they focus on staying balanced. If the new position helps secure funding for better facilities, academic support, and opportunities, that's a net positive. The danger is that fundraising overshadows the actual college experience."

Almost unanimously, the editors believe that Monmouth cannot keep up with larger schools with greater resources. "Monmouth simply doesn't have the funds. We are a small school and don't compare to giants like Alabama, Ohio State, and Texas," one editor said.

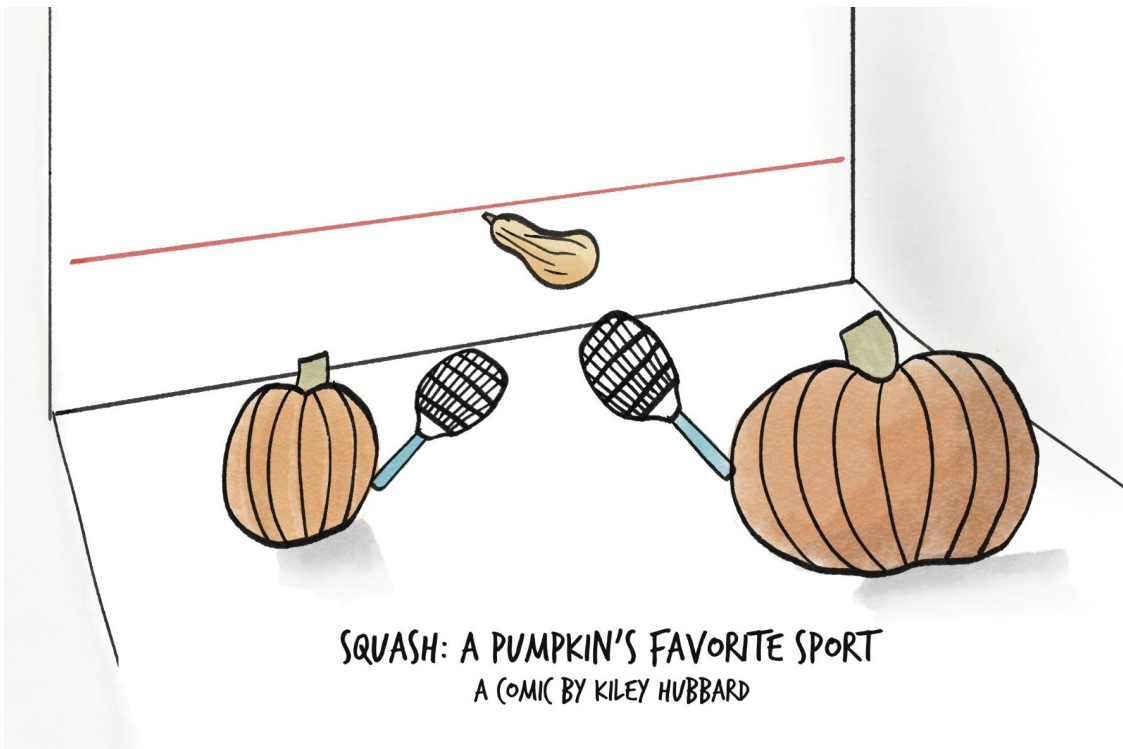
"I don't think Monmouth can keep up with other bigger name programs and athletic directions. Monmouth is still a relatively new athletic school if you compare it to the legacy of those like Michigan and Rutgers. Those schools are founded on years of legacy and tradition while MU still has

ways ahead," said another.

One editor agreed, especially in regard to the recognition schools of a larger student population get. "I think that these financial benefits will help athletic students and it will bring promotion to our already-budding sports programs, but I think that we will never be able to reach the level of recognition that Big Ten schools like Rutgers [have]."

One editor believes that what Monmouth may lack in finances, is made up for in other ways. "Not financially, but Monmouth can still be competitive. What the school lacks in money can be made up for in the community, whether that's through alumni networks or local sponsorships."

Some editors think that the shift in collegiate athletics focusing heavily on money will shift the traditional experience of student athletes attending college. Referencing money, one editor said, "In fact, it might be the thing students focus on the most. We see stud players from smaller schools transfer to bigger schools all the time. Why is that? Money."



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When is it time to deck the halls?

RILEY KINDLER
OPINIONS EDITOR

Even before Halloween, car brands began showing holiday commercials. It seems like by the time mid-October hits, everyone is impatient to skip Halloween and fly right to the holidays. Many shops begin decorating their storefronts before Halloween is over, or even on Halloween, and Christmas music often begins on Nov. 1.

However, many people don't see this as a reasonable move. Many people hold onto fall as long as they can, and many people even celebrate Halloween through the majority of the fall, keeping their decorations out as long as possible.

The weather's getting cooler, leaves are beginning to fall, and now that Halloween's over, the true argument begins; when is it truly time to decorate for Christmas?

While my family does not begin to celebrate or decorate until after Thanksgiving, I have already made my Christmas playlist and started buying decorations for my dorm. While we won't be on campus for very long into the Christmas season, I made a point last year to decorate my space, and it really helped me get through my finals with a positive

mindset.

Many people who argue that Christmas starts right on or after Thanksgiving, at least in America, often point to two pieces of media when making their argument: the Elf on the Shelf and the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade. We are conditioned as children, at least, to believe that the true holiday season begins after Thanksgiving because of the traditions surrounding these two things.

The Elf on the Shelf is a fun way to get children to behave during the holiday season (sorry for ruining the magic) and have them earn their way onto Santa's nice and naughty list. Personally, I never had one as a child, but all of my friends did, and my parents had one in their business for a long time. The legend of the Elf on the Shelf says that the elf travels to its child's home sometime in the last week of November, but almost every family that I knew had the elf come on Thanksgiving, a true ushering in of the holiday season.

Many people also use the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade as an excuse to begin celebrating the holidays. Every Thanksgiving morning for nearly 100 years, Macy's holds a huge parade in New York City that almost everyone has watched at some point. There's massive balloons, floats, marching bands, and other

extravagant displays of the upcoming season. At the end of the parade, however, comes the viewer's sign of the impending holidays. Santa and Mrs. Claus reside on the final float of the parade, surrounded by elves, reindeer, and fake (sometimes real) snow. This has always been a sign to the children of America that the holidays begin on Thanksgiving.

However, much of the debate comes down to personal preference. While my family doesn't decorate our home for Christmas until after Thanksgiving, our business is already decorated. Many people choose to take down their Halloween decorations on Nov. 1 and pull out the tree all on the same day, and many spread it out over the first few days of November. As I said before, some people even take down fall decorations before Halloween and put up their tree well before Oct. 31.

It seems that the majority of the Outlook staff and their families reside firmly in the camp of the rest of America. Lorelai Hilarczyk, Entertainment editor, had to say about her traditions; "As much as I'd like to celebrate Christmas right now... we don't! Right now we're in Thanksgiving mode until Black Friday. From Black Friday until the first week of January we're in Christmas and holiday mode! I do listen to Christmas music now though because I'm a tad crazy." Lorelai's



IMAGE TAKEN by Riley Kindler

traditions mix with many other people that I know, including my own family, when decorations don't go up until Thanksgiving, but the music starts playing as soon as the clock strikes midnight on Nov. 1.

Frank Hoarle, Sports editor, also shared his traditions; "I personally don't start celebrating the holiday until after Thanksgiving, but I know my family is decorating our house as early as this week." This is a unique scenario that I haven't really seen before. I find that one of the reasons I celebrate Christmas so early is because of my fear of missing

out, my FOMO, if you will. I find myself infected by the Christmas spirit as soon as I see anything related to the holiday, so I would personally never be able to put off my Christmas spirit if my family was already in the full swing of it.

While there probably will never be a set answer on when the right time to begin celebrating the holidays is, it's unquestionable that this time of year is infectious to everyone. No matter when you put up your trees and wreaths, this truly is the happiest time of the year, and almost no one can deny that.

The galaxy far, far away is better if you follow the chronological story

LORELAI HILARCZYK
ENTERTAINMENT EDITOR

Release order is not the droid you're looking for! Being a "Star Wars" fan all my life, my love for this franchise has grown as I have. Now being 21 years old and a huge fan of classic films, I truly understand the importance of what film does for culture. I'm not the entertainment editor of The Outlook for nothing!

One of my favorite things about the "Star Wars" franchise is the ever-changing fan controversies and opinions. The biggest one of them all being what order to watch these films in. While some passionate fans will fight you in a lightsaber duel swearing that the correct order is to watch them how they were released. I believe those who watch them in timeline order have the higher ground on understanding the development of these films.

Now before you read on, spoiler incoming!

The "Star Wars" franchise was created by film genius George Lucas. He's responsible for the director and writer vision of "Episode IV - A New Hope," "Episode VI - Return of the Jedi," "Episode I - The Phantom Menace," "Episode II - Attack of the Clones," and "Episode III - Revenge of the Sith." The rest of the films were heavily influenced by him and included him as a producer, even if he wasn't directly involved in the directing or writing aspects. It's because of this that I feel everything Lucas has created automatically goes down as the best "Star Wars" films.

Therefore, the best way to understand the universe is to start by watching "Episode I - The Phantom Menace" (1999). This film will give you a great introduction to the universe, the conflicts, and some of the main characters like Obi-Wan Kenobi (Ewan McGregor)

and Padmé Amidala (Natalie Portman). You get to watch the characters grow up and evolve, including Anakin Skywalker, played by Hayden Christensen in the prequels, who is as important as a character can get.

While skipping episodes one through three might protect some of the cinematic integrity and mind blowing moments, it hits even harder when you know the backstory. Sorry David Corenswet, I do not agree with your order and I insist that Darth Vader's identity is just as jaw-dropping if you watch it in timeline order. While the mystery of who Darth Vader is, is compromised this way, Luke Skywalker's (Mark Hamill) reaction to finding out is just as impactful.

Watching Anakin grow up on Tatooine, learning about his mom, watching him train as a Jedi with Obi-Wan and fall in love with Padmé in "Episode II - Attack of the Clones," (2002) makes the entire betrayal of him

turning to the dark side so heartbreaking. It also greatly impacts the nostalgia of watching "Episode IV - A New Hope" (1977) because you see his children, Luke and Princess Leia (Carrie Fisher) work against the empire and cross paths. The character development is extremely important and watching them go from innocent children to defending the galaxy.

I also feel it's better to watch the films as one linear story. Now that all of the "Star Wars" movies are out in the world and have been for some time, there's no need to wonder about time gaps. If you watch the films in release order, it can be quite confusing to jump back in time and piece it all together. Timeline order follows your favorite characters as if it's in "real time." We have the perfect rise, fall, redemption, and rebirth arc throughout every prequel, original, sequel, and spinoff.

And I truly mean it when I say the spinoffs add to the

story arcs. "Star Wars" is such a complex universe with tons of characters, terminology, and plot lines, each piece of the cinematic puzzle is important, including spinoffs and mini-series'. Whether it's the "Star Wars: The Clone Wars" (2008) animated series or "Rogue One: A Star Wars Story" (2016), if you're invested in this franchise, you watch them all.

While the quality of the films might not make sense and be a little bit irritating, thinking of the characters and storyline first will make the bigger picture clearer. You might be wondering where you can find the correct order to start in. Luckily the "Star Wars" section on Disney+ puts all of them in order for you starting with the series "The Acolyte" (2024) which takes place before episode one. Whether you've seen the films a million times or have never seen a single one, take the jump to lightspeed and watch the entire series in timeline order!

Top 10

favorite line dances of Dr. Lionetti

AVA MCGINTY
MANAGING/FEATURES EDITOR

Last year, The Outlook decided to come up with a “Top 10” spotlight to learn about the hobbies and passions of some of our favorite professors. Not only does this series aim to bring students and faculty closer together, but it also builds a sense of community throughout the University.

Dr. Lionetti is an As-

sociate Professor of Biology with a specialization in microbiology, and she received her Ph.D. from the State University of New York at Stony Brook. Her current research interests include, the effect of the microbiome on health, antibiotic resistance, applications of molecular biology in clinical diagnostic procedures, emerging viral diseases and pedagogical techniques in STEM, according to the university website.

Outside of the classroom,

Lionetti likes to line dance, and at the beginning of the semester, she became the faculty advisor for Monmouth’s new line dance club, Hawks ‘n’ Boots. Each line dance is choreographed to match a specific song. Every dance has its own name and is designed to fit the rhythm and count of the music. Sometimes, dancers do “song switches,” performing a choreography to a different song that has the same number of beats.

Line dancing welcomes all skill levels, with categories ranging from beginner and novice to improver, intermediate, and advanced. The selection of songs played usually caters to all of these skill levels. For our first “Top 10” this semester, Lionetti talks about her current favorite line dances. She said, “For a line dance to be a favorite, it has to have a great song and great movements.” She continued, “For the

dances I love, I am smiling and thinking about nothing else but the joy of dancing as I do them. Although I am not a beginner, I am pretty much a novice. My goal is simply to have fun! I do very few dances perfectly and that doesn’t matter to me. We all take missteps (which instructors affectionately call “variations”), but as long as I can follow the beat and basically turn in the right direction and end up at the right wall, I can enjoy the dance.”

Edamame

Funky song and fun dance that goes well to the song. I love the twist, the swinging leg steps, and the turning option on the last few steps!

Chill Factor

So much fun! Lots of parts to it and lots of turns. You can’t help but be happy when you hear this song come on!

Trespassing

In many line dances, choreographers add an additional set of steps, known as a “tag,” when there is a change in the music. You cannot beat the tag in this dance! We slap out hands on our legs and do specific arm movements that go so well with the beat of this song by Adam Lambert.

Something You Can Savor

This is done to Jimmie Allen and Pitbull’s “Flavor.” Local dance instructor Caitlin Hull choreographed it and she did a beautiful job. The Latin beat and the moves that go so well to the song make it a great dance!

At Your Worst

This dance is to a beautiful song. It has great turns which feel natural and are a lot of fun to do. It also has a prissy walk where you walk almost like a model would walk (so they tell me!) It is a dance I like to sing to as I dance and that is always a plus for me (maybe not so much for others!)



IMAGE TAKEN from Monmouth University.

Walk the Line

This dance can be done to many different songs, but my absolute favorite (and the only one I really like it to) is Rockell’s version of Garth Brooks “The Dance.” It’s fast and furious with lots of turns. Somehow I can’t stop myself from throwing in an extra turn even though it often throws me off in the dance!

Pieces to the Puzzle

This is a fun and funky dance with some backwards moving swinging leg steps and a fun jump out and turn around step at the end. I have to modify the jump lately but I still have fun.

Wave on Wave

Very beautiful classic dance with flowy movement - just love the last 8 steps.

Imelda’s Way

This is such a cute dance that is choreographed perfectly to the song. It has some very fun steps including a charleston, lockstep, weave and scissor step. There is a hip bump at the end and who doesn’t love that!

Zjozzy’s Funk

Shuffles and swivels make this dance so much fun to do. It can be done to many songs but Bacco Per Bacco by Zucchero is my absolute favorite. I can’t stop smiling when I dance this!

Fall fashion finds you'll never want to take off

EMILY STACHERSKI
LIFESTYLES EDITOR

When the air turns crisp and the trees start to lose their leaves, fall starts to feel special. One thing that makes it so special for people isn't just pumpkin spice menus and candles, but it's the fashion as well. Autumn is the season where comfort meets style and layering becomes an art. Whether you're heading to brunch, a bonfire, or to class, these fall fashion staples are defining wardrobes everywhere this season.

1. Chunky Knit Sweaters

Nothing says "fall" like an oversized sweater. From cable-knit classics to modern cropped designs, chunky knits are having a major moment as always. Creams, caramels, and soft grays are always great options, but bold jewel tones like forest green and burnt orange are perfect for those who want to stand out more.

The best part is that they are extremely versatile. Dress

them up with a jean skirt and boots, or go casual with jeans and Air Forces. The chunky knit sweater is a fashion ideal for curling up with a latte.

2. Wide-Leg Pants

While skinny jeans once ruled our wardrobes, wide-leg pants have officially taken over. They're comfortable, flattering, and surprisingly easy to style. They can even be high-waisted or low-waisted. Flowy wide-leg pants bring an effortless elegance that feels both classic and current.

Pair them with a tucked-in turtleneck or a cropped crewneck. Bonus: they look just as great with sneakers as they do with heeled boots, making them ideal for workdays and weekends alike.

3. Boots, Boots, and Boots

No fall wardrobe is complete without great boots. We're in luck because there is literally a pair for every personality. Sleek ankle boots with block heels, knee-high silhouettes, chunky lug-sole boots, or classic UGGs continue to make every outfit a fall classic.

Neutral shades like black

and tan keep things classic, but white and burgundy options add a trendy pop. Pair them with everything from midi dresses to straight-leg jeans. Boots aren't just footwear; they're the foundation of your entire fall look.

4. The Midi Skirt

The midi skirt is a fall essential that transitions beautifully from warm afternoons to chilly evenings. Satin and pleated styles remain popular, but wool and suede textures are taking over for a cozier feel. Pair your midi with tall boots and a chunky sweater for a romantic yet practical fall outfit.

5. Accessories That Complete the Look

Autumn is all about texture and layering, and accessories play a huge role in tying it all together. This season, think oversized scarves, leather handbags, and gold statement jewelry. Berets and wide-brim hats are also making a comeback. And of course, don't underestimate the power of a great belt!

Fall fashion isn't just about dressing for the weather but

also embracing the mood of the season. It's so cozy yet still extremely stylish. This year's trends strike a perfect balance between comfort and sophistication, encouraging us to express our personal style in any way we want with warmth and confidence, which is a total win-win!

6. A bonus look

This year, matching sweat

sets are as popular as ever! So find a matching sweatshirt and a pair of sweatpants and get out there to serve looks with maximum comfort.

So, as the leaves change colors and the wind turns cool, layer up and fall in love with fall fashion all over again.



IMAGE TAKEN from pexels.com

The best lifestyle apps to transform your daily routine

ASIA COOKE
STAFF WRITER

In an era where our smart phones have become extensions of ourselves, lifestyle apps have evolved from simple productivity tools into sophisticated companions that can genuinely improve our quality of life. Whether you're looking to build better habits, achieve wellness goals, or simply bring more organization to your chaotic schedule, there's an app designed to help. Here's a curated look at some of the most impactful lifestyle apps that are worth downloading.

Habit Building

Building lasting habits remains one of life's greatest challenges, but apps like Habitica and Streaks have gamified the process in clever ways. Habitica transforms your daily tasks into a role-playing game where completing real-life habits helps your avatar level up and unlock rewards. It's surprisingly motivating to see your virtual character suffer when you skip a workout or forget to drink enough

water. For those who prefer a cleaner interface, Streaks focuses on maintaining chains of completed tasks, leveraging the psychological power of not wanting to break your streak. The app limits you to twelve habits, forcing you to prioritize what truly matters.

Mindfulness and Mental Health

Mental wellness apps have matured significantly beyond simple meditation timers. Headspace and Calm continue to dominate this space, offering guided meditations, sleep stories, and breathing exercises that actually help reduce stress. What sets modern mindfulness apps apart is their personalization; they learn from your usage patterns and mood check-ins to recommend content that resonates with your current state of mind. For those seeking therapy support, apps like BetterHelp connect users with licensed therapists through text, video, or phone sessions, making mental health care more accessible than ever.

Fitness Without the Gym Membership

The fitness app Landscape has exploded with options for every preference and fitness level.

Peloton's app extends beyond its famous bikes, offering thousands of classes from yoga to strength training that require minimal equipment. For runners, Strava has built an entire social network around tracking your miles and competing with friends on segment times. What's particularly compelling about Nike Training Club is that it offers professional-grade workouts completely free, with programs designed by elite trainers that adapt to your progress over time.

Meal Planning and Nutrition

Gone are the days when food tracking meant tediously logging calories in a spreadsheet. MyFitnessPal has refined its massive food database and barcode scanning to make nutrition tracking nearly effortless. For those who struggle with meal planning, apps like Mealime and Paprika generate shopping lists based on your dietary preferences and the recipes you want to make. They'll even organize your shopping list by supermarket aisle. If you're interested in intermittent fasting, Zero provides elegant tracking and educational content

about different fasting protocols without being preachy about it.

Financial Wellness

Managing money shouldn't feel like homework, and apps like YNAB (You Need A Budget) and Mint have made financial awareness almost enjoyable. YNAB's philosophy of giving every dollar a job helps users break the paycheck-to-paycheck cycle, while Mint automatically categorizes your spending and sends alerts when you're approaching budget limits. For investment beginners, Acorns rounds up your purchases to the nearest dollar and invests the spare change, making wealth building feel automatic and painless.

Sleep and Recovery

Quality sleep remains the foundation of good health, and apps dedicated to improving rest have become increasingly sophisticated. Sleep Cycle uses your phone's sensors to track sleep patterns and wakes you during light sleep phases, so you feel less groggy. AutoSleep, designed for Apple Watch users, provides detailed sleep analysis without requiring you to tell it when you're going to bed. For

those who struggle with racing thoughts at night, apps like Pzizz generate adaptive soundscapes designed to help you fall asleep faster and stay asleep longer.

Digital Wellbeing

Ironically, some of the most valuable lifestyle apps are those that help us use our phones less. Screen Time on iOS and Digital Wellbeing on Android provide eye-opening insights into how much time we spend staring at screens. Apps like Forest gamify staying off your phone by growing a virtual tree that dies if you exit the app, while Freedom blocks distracting websites and apps across all your devices during focused work sessions.

Finding What Works for You

The key to benefiting from lifestyle apps isn't downloading dozens of them—it's finding the two or three that genuinely fit into your routine and support your goals. Start with one area of your life you'd most like to improve, try an app for at least two weeks, and honestly assess whether it's making a difference. The best app is the one you'll actually use consistently, not the one with the fanciest features or the most five-star reviews.

Hannah Jadagu's album "Describe": The honest emotions of distance and love

MELANY MCCANN
STAFF WRITER

On Oct. 24, singer-songwriter, Hannah Jadagu released her sophomore album titled "Describe" and it may just be my favorite this year. This 12 track album has a unique sound that's different and refreshing from the current music dominating the billboard charts. The album is alternative/indie, with a mix of bedroom pop and electro-pop aspects. It's addictive, captivating, and raw.

Following her debut album in 2023 titled "Aperture," Jadagu moved to California for a period of time to write her second album. This change of scenery is captured through her lyrics and the sound of her sophomore album. These tracks immortalized her time away and depict her, presumably, long-distance relationship during this time.

The album opens with "Describe" and "Gimme Time" which do a good job of setting the tone for the rest of the album, as the electronic, trance-like production launch listeners into Jadagu's inner turmoil. "Describe" in particular has a

very distinctive sound with a lot of synth.

"Gimme Time" is definitely a long drive, windows down, and music on full blast type of song. The lyrics "And now I'm waking up and/Just wishing I had you close" confirm the distance between Jadagu and her partner, while also establishing the melancholic undertone of the album.

The next two are arguably the most understated, "More" and "D.I.A.A." "More" is about her complicated relationship with a partner back in her hometown, and trying to figure out how to balance it with her growing career, while "D.I.A.A." takes a darker twist. The first line being "empty and cold" highlights the

sad tone to this song, which is seen again through the repetition of the line, "I won't do this again." This fourth track explores Jadagu's struggle to cope with pressure and loneliness within her relationships.

Next is "Perfect," a very short but impactful track. While it may be under two minutes, it packs a punch as it explores the importance of imperfections in relationships. The song could very well be a message to an insecure partner, as it repeatedly states, "I don't need you to be perfect" and "I don't need you to deserve this." It's a very reflective song that hits you right in the heart.

The next song is track six titled "My Love" and it is my

top song from the album. If you're not dancing around your room to this one, what are you doing? It's more upbeat than the rest of the album while still delivering relatable and honest lyrics. This love song is about missing someone when you are away from them, cherishing the relationship, and hoping that they feel your affection in your absence.

The next tracks are "Couldn't Call" and "Tell Me That !!!!". Much like "Perfect," "Couldn't Call" is another short and repetitive, reflective track. The lyrics are, unsurprisingly, "Couldn't call, I couldn't call, I." While the lyrics themselves may seem flat, the repetition sears the raw message of regret and lack of communication. "Tell me That !!!!!" is another one of my favorites, as the production and instrumentals are up-beat, the kind that make you bop your head in unison.

The next track "Normal Today" feels like falling in love, as it captures the stolen glances, close proximity, and infatuation you have with a new partner. "Doing Now" is set right after, and it is quite the switch, as this track focuses

on limited communication in a long-distance relationship, and the complications that arise from that.

"Miracles" is the second-to-last track, and continues the theme of long-distance complications and miscommunication. The lyrics of this song outline Jadagu's contemplation of the relationship and if it's truly what's right for her. This darkened perspective continues into the closing track "Bergamont" as this song captures the end of the relationship, the melancholic production feeling like a walk "through the memories."

While Jadagu may be singing about her particular situation, struggles of communication, and yearning, these are incredibly relatable. Her writing is raw and straightforward; her lyrics extract an emotional reaction with their honesty, and the production will have you dancing around your bedroom (or crying in fetal position). If you're looking to expand your music taste, or even looking for your new favorite artist, look no further. I can't wait to see her grow and, hopefully, launch a tour of her own. As Jadagu expresses, I hope she gets "all of your time."

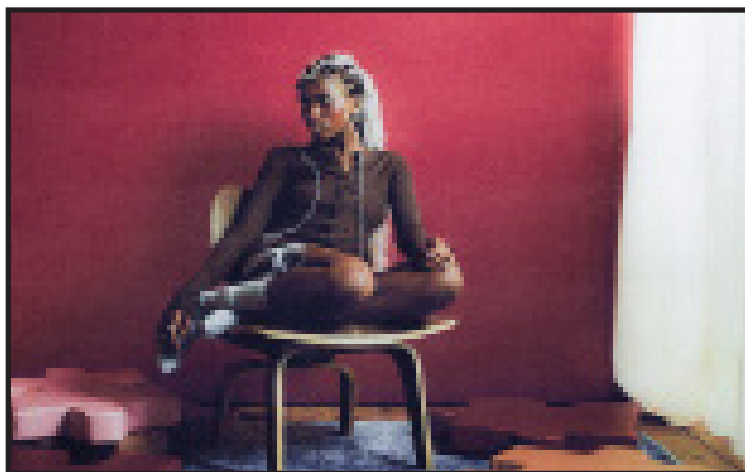


IMAGE TAKEN from Spotify.

"Nobody Wants This" season 2: Is that all?

HAYDEN KELLY
STAFF WRITER

"Breaking news, you're in a psychotically annoying relationship." Though our leading lady's sister, Morgan, has a melodramatic way with words, her description of Joanne and Noah's relationship in the first episode of season two of "Nobody Wants This" is not entirely off-base.

When Netflix debuted the first season of "Nobody Wants This" last fall, it was not long before everybody wanted it renewed as soon as possible. Created by Erin Foster, the charming love story of agnostic relationship podcaster Joanne (Kristen Bell) and rabbi Noah (Adam Brody) was, as my friends put it, "fun, fast, and entertaining."

Individually, the two leads have always been a pleasant watch, especially in past roles like Bell in "Veronica Mars" and Brody in "The O.C." Together, their chemistry is obvious and magnetic for a romantic comedy trope. And despite my previous inclination that Hollywood had run out of new ideas, I haven't seen anything like before.

Season one centered on Joanne and Noah's doubts

about their budding relationship due to their inherent cultural differences. Noah's devotion to Judaism and Joanne's devotion to, well, herself, posed as an obstacle course that I imagine many people in interfaith relationships face. Viewers were left wondering whether Joanne would ever convert to Judaism for Noah. And if she did, would his family accept her? The final episode ended with the very overdone (but much adored) 30-minute breakup, followed by Noah chasing after Joanne, and deciding to make their differences work against the odds.

The problem with season two is that there are a lot of odds, none of which contrast much from the issues within season one. I think season two is just as "fun, fast, and entertaining" as season one was, but I felt as though the plot had not moved very far, at least for Joanne and Noah.

For their surrounding cast, however, things moved along. Morgan (Justine Lupe) launched her relationship with her former therapist, Dr. Andy (Arian Moayed), which raised its own series of very entertaining concerns. Writers touched on Morgan's experience of

feeling confused in an already inappropriate dynamic, shedding light on what love bombing may look and feel like. It was nice to see a progression in Morgan's character and how she handled a relationship that was "too good to be true."

Noah's brother, Sasha (Timothy Simons), and his wife, Esther (Jackie Tohn), were my favorite pair in the storyline, and not because they thrived as a couple (they didn't). Tohn is hilarious and cutting. Though she posed as a sort of enemy of Joanne's in the first season due to her friendship with Noah's ex-girlfriend, Rebecca, she's become my favorite character.

Last season, writers explored Sasha's doubts about his marriage, most notably through his bizarre friendship with Morgan. This season, the focus was more on Esther as she manages her feelings of resentment toward Sasha and her growing sense of uncertainty surrounding her future. I like the show's portrayal of Esther's doubts about what she wants for herself going forward—not as a mother, but as a woman—especially amid pressures from her family and community to have another baby. It serves as



IMAGE TAKEN from Allure.com via Netflix.

an important reminder, especially for the many young women watching, that it's okay to change your mind at any point and start over.

Perhaps the cherry on top of "Nobody Wants This" is Noah and Joanne's parents, who met and enjoyed each other at what Joanne's family referred to as "Jewish Halloween," or Purim, in episode six. Noah's hostile mother, Bina (Tovah Feldshuh), is supposed to be Joanne's biggest adversary, as Joanne is the non-Jewish woman taking her son away from her. Despite that, her strength and brutal honesty make her lovable. Morgan and Joanne's parents, Lynn (Stephanie Faracy) and Henry (Michael Hitchcock), are, in the best way possible,

self-obsessed caricatures. Their dysfunctional family dynamic, being that Lynn is still in love with her divorced, gay ex-husband, is oddly endearing, and every time they appear on screen, I can't get enough.

Season two concluded with—spoiler alert—the same 30-minute breakup, this time followed by Noah chasing after Joanne and Joanne chasing after Noah, and the pair deciding to make their differences work against all odds—again. Despite my lack of satisfaction with season two's ending, I would happily tap in for a third season because I'm rooting for Joanne and Noah. More importantly, though, I'm rooting for some developments in the storyline.

Samantha Spano's "Whiskey Don't Work (Anymore)": Reimagining country as the coastal cowgirl

LORELAI HILARCZYK
ENTERTAINMENT EDITOR

Humble beginnings in the entertainment industry are stories we know all too well. Dolly Parton started her music career by performing for her local radio station in Tennessee, Taylor Swift performed at local coffee shops during the summer, and Lainey Wilson had a Hannah Montana impersonator act.

Local country music artist, Samantha Spano has been connected to music since the very beginning. If you're not familiar with Spano, she's a recent Monmouth University (MU) graduate who was featured on Blue Hawk Records' (BHR) 2021 compilation album, "Vol. 19: Back On Track" with her song "Whiskey Don't Work." Dubbing herself the "coastal cowgirl," Spano has performed all around New Jersey and is now making her way into the Nashville music scene.

I had the absolute pleasure of interviewing Spano in celebration of her re-recording that very track that came out of our university. As she continues to pursue her music career as a country artist, Spano is reflecting on her time at MU.

After weighing her options on colleges, she found herself here at MU ready to get involved in whatever she could. "It was two weeks into September, not even, and they [BHR] were posting about auditions, and I didn't really feel like anything I had at that time was good enough...I

really wanted to go in there and just impress them," Spano said about wanting to audition for the compilation album.

While holding herself to a very high standard of wanting to create something amazing, she tried to sit down and write. Fortunately, (or unfortunately) during this time in her life, Spano experienced her first relationship and breakup. I'm sure we all know what it's like to be in a relationship with someone where it feels like it's the best place until you're out of it.

"So I broke up with this guy in December right before the song came out which is hysterical... As I started writing the song it all came into fruition of like, wow, I'm really feeling the things that I'm writing," She said. Spano detailed that she could remember the exact moment certain lyrics came to her for "Whiskey Don't Work," especially the bridge.

Sitting in her intro to sociology class she heard the bridge echo in her mind: "And I should've known/When the bottle tastes too good, you quit drinkin'/And I should've known/When everyone said, 'the hell were you thinking'/Like your tattooed name/I can't erase the pain/Like a bittersweet kiss/It felt good on my lips." Spano said she immediately jotted down the lyrics in her notebook.

"I was writing down the lyrics in the margin. And then all of a sudden there was a bridge...I still have this paper, my mom has it somewhere," Spano said. Thankfully, BHR fell in love with her song and with the help

of Abby Garcia and Mike Viani, they brought this country track to life. In my opinion, this track is one of the greatest to be featured on a compilation album in BHR history because of the story, vocals, and overall production.

After college, Spano realized that this track might just be a song that stands the test of time, becoming unforgettable. She said, "It was always kind of like, that song was timeless, like shifting throughout these phases of my life where it's like, okay, maybe it's not the breakup I have to get over anymore. Maybe it's like mourning my teenage years or I'm heartbroken over losing a friend...and the more I started to play it, I would see people connecting with it. As soon as that first note comes out, they're like locked in."

This song has that "arena" feel where the pain and passion could resonate with the masses. If people can listen, feel connected, inspired, and even relate to those words or melodies then an artist has struck gold. We all know the story of Olivia Rodrigo's "drivers license" in 2021 and the success of Taylor Swift's original "All Too Well" in 2012. These are songs fans just couldn't get enough of, making them cultural staples in music. Spano seeing people cry to her song while she performed was confirmation that she created something with meaning.

Which leads me to her reimagining of her song, "Whiskey Don't Work (Anymore)," but with updated country twang. In 2023, Spano released "Lie to Me" followed by her fan favorite song, "GUNSLINGER!" in 2024. Naturally, people wanted to hear more from Spano and she knew she wanted to give this song new life to reflect the present her as an artist.

"I knew I needed this updated version with more mature vocals. I wanted the fiddle. I wanted the pedal steel [guitar]. I wanted my band on it because when I recorded it the first time. I didn't even know Nick, Zach, and Shane [her band members]," Spano explained. It was important to her that the people who supported and influenced this track, got to experience the magic with her.

The updated song was recorded at Shorefire Recording



PHOTO COURTESY of Samantha Spano.

Studios in Long Branch, New Jersey. It was there that Spano and her band played around with the mechanics until it sounded like their vision. The new version, of course, honors the original lyrics and melody, while offering a more mature vocal outlook. Spano isn't that heartbroken 18 year old girl anymore. In fact, I view her as someone who is way more talented, stronger than she knows, and this phase in her life reflects that.

She explained how it's cool to see that no matter what instrumental changes they did in the studio, the lyrics still reflected who she was in college. She said, "So, that's so cool because I go back and I look at the phase of life that I was in back then and how this song has moved with me to now being in Nashville... If anything, it just makes me proud of like 18 year old me for taking that, you know, terrible position I was in and turning it into this thing that I can carry with me always in a good way."

Spano carries those stories of her music and branded them into her image the "coastal cowgirl." From performing at Barefoot Country Music Fest to local Jersey joints like Jenks Club in Point Pleasant Beach, people can't seem to get enough of the coastal image. As she continues to lean into her Jersey roots,

she'll bring more representation for the average country music fan. After all, not all of us can relate to some of the off-road Chevy trucking or lake side fishing that other country artists depict. As Spano described it, "people need to see themselves in you and know like, 'wow I'm represented in country music.' I live by the beach, but I love country music, and like I have the same values and same morals as Lainey Wilson or Jason Aldean."

Her new and improved "Whiskey Don't Work (Anymore)" is set to release on Nov. 7 on streaming platforms. If there's one name to come out of Monmouth University and blow up the music industry, it's Spano. She credits a lot of this to learning, growing, and networking during her college years.

While she still waits for that pivotal turning point in her career she'll never forget her time here. Spano is one of us, a hawk for life and a proud Jersey girl. Whether you've been cheated, mistreated, or jaded; her lyrics encompass growing through the changes of life.

So set your alarms for Nov. 7 and meet your new favorite country artist. Let's get one thing straight, this type of whiskey comes in an unlimited supply and works like a charm!



PHOTO COURTESY of Samantha Spano.

Samantha Spano's song "Whiskey Don't Work (Anymore)" comes out this Friday. Listen wherever you stream your music.

Privately funded White House ballroom draws scrutiny

HENRY BOODY
POLITICS EDITOR

Crews have been seen tearing down a portion of the White House’s East Wing to make way for a new 90,000-square-foot ballroom, the first significant structural change to the executive mansion in nearly eight decades. Announced in July, the project was initially expected to cost roughly \$200 million, with a more realistic estimate of \$300 million as of late, and is being privately funded, according to the White House. President Donald Trump has promoted the plan on Truth Social, writing that the ballroom “won’t cost taxpayers a dime because it is being privately funded by ‘many generous Patriots, Great American Companies, and, yours truly.’” At a Jul. 31 press briefing, he said the hall would be “near it but not touching it,” adding that he was “the biggest fan” of the building and wanted to preserve its historic character, as reported by NBC.

The East Wing, constructed in 1942, has long served as office space for the First Lady and as a cover for the underground Presidential Emergency Operations Center (PEOC). In October, workers removed much of the façade, revealing interior offices and leaving what one New York Post report described as a “gaping hole” on the east side of the residence, according to PBS NewsHour. A White House official told Oregon Public Broadcasting that some offices will be modernized and a “more secure bunker” will be installed as part of the renovation, with

the White House Military Office overseeing the PEOC upgrade, according to NPR.

While demolition continues, details about the ballroom’s design have begun to emerge. When finished, the ballroom will feature bulletproof windows and an interior modeled on the Mar-a-Lago ballroom, Trump’s private club in Florida, according to NBC. The White House described the expansion as “a much-needed and exquisite addition,” explaining that the East Room can accommodate only about 200 people for events. In contrast, the new venue will seat approximately 1,000 guests, according to the President, in a new briefing. “The East Wing was badly in need of refurbishment,” Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt told reporters, adding that “past presidents have made their mark on this beautiful White House complex,” according to CBS News. The White House initially listed a \$200 million price tag, but later estimates from President Trump and other officials placed the figure between \$250 million and \$300 million, according to FactCheck.org. Roughly \$200 million has been pledged so far through private donations, according to the BBC, with contributors including Lockheed Martin, Amazon, Apple, Coinbase, Comcast, Google, and Meta. \$22 million comes from a YouTube settlement with the Justice Department, and Google contributed an additional \$5 million. Preservation groups, such as the American Institute of Architects, and members of the National Trust for Historic Preservation have raised concerns about both the process and the funding. Preservationists

note that the new ballroom will nearly double the size of the existing 55,000-square-foot White House, according to Oregon Public Broadcasting. The Washington Post reported that demolition began without approval from the National Capital Planning Commission or the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts, both of which traditionally review alterations to federal landmarks. The National Trust for Historic Preservation urged the administration to pause construction, to which the White House argued that the building is exempt from the National Historic Preservation Act, according to Artnet News.

Others have focused on donor influence, with Senator Richard Blumenthal calling the project a “gigantic boondoggle” and warning that contributors “expect something in return,” according to FactCheck.org. Noah Bookbinder of Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington told Axios that large private gifts create “a real possibility that influences the official’s decision-making.” Former White House ethics lawyer Richard W. Painter called it “use of public office for private gain,” warning it could amount to “pay-to-play,” according to FactCheck.org. Claire Finkelstein, a professor of law at the University of Pennsylvania, told FactCheck.org that the project represents “a misuse of public real estate” that could raise constitutional issues under the Emoluments Clause, a division in the U.S. Constitution designed to prevent corruption and foreign influence.

At Monmouth University, student reactions leaned toward confusion and skepticism. “It’s a little why? What’s the point?”

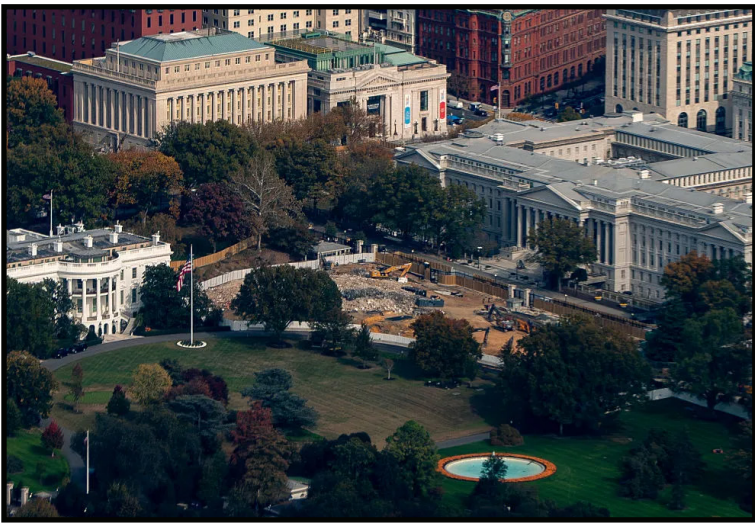


IMAGE TAKEN from Al Drago/Getty Images

said Shane Hughes, a senior homeland security major. “I think this administration is doing it as a big F-you to the Democrats and to everyone. It’s completely pointless, a big ‘I can do whatever I want’ move.” Hughes said he preferred the project be privately funded but questioned its purpose. “It’s weird. Why are you donating money to a project that doesn’t benefit anyone? I don’t think it helps Trump’s image when everyone says he only cares about his rich friends.”

Carlos Bon, a freshman health studies major, said his reaction was mostly confusion. “I just thought there was no reason for it,” Bon said. “He just did it because he wanted to, for his own gain. If taxpayer money went into it, it would be a bigger issue, but it still feels out of touch. No other president ever had a problem with the White House. He just wants to leave his mark.”

Political reactions have been just as divided, with House Speaker Mike Johnson defending the project, calling it “for the American people”

and “glorious,” adding that opposition was driven by “Trump Derangement Syndrome,” according to Colorado Politics. Democratic Representative Jamie Raskin shared a photo of the demolition on social media, comparing it to the 1812 burning of the White House. An ABC News/Washington Post/Ipsos poll from late October found that 56% of Americans opposed tearing down the East Wing, while 28% supported it. Among independents, opposition rose to 61%. The Guardian noted that most respondents were unaware of the project’s private-funding structure.

The White House says the new ballroom will be completed before January 2029, the end of Trump’s second term, according to PBS NewsHour. If finished as planned, it would mark the most significant physical change to the presidential residence since the Truman reconstruction of the late 1940s. While privately financed, the project remains under scrutiny from preservationists, ethics experts, and lawmakers concerned with its cost, oversight, and long-term implications.

Beyond our coverage

Local

- “Murphy signs bill to split military, veterans affairs department” (New Jersey Globe)
- “One dead, 1 arrested after domestic dispute turned deadly in Hudson County” (NJ.com)
- “NJ election mail-in drop boxes are open for November election” (North Jersey.com)

National

- “2 arrested in connection with explosion at Harvard Medical School, FBI says” (CNN)
- “D.C. Sandwich Thrower Goes on Trial as Jurors Hear of Mustard and Onions” (Wall Street Journal)
- “MAGA Reacts to Dick Cheney’s Death” (Newsweek)

International

- “EU says it could admit new members by 2030, praises Montenegro, Albania, Ukraine” (Reuters)
- “Will Ferrell’s ‘Elf’ suit set to hit the auction block, and Hollywood Christmas magic doesn’t come cheap” (CBS News)
- “Russia open to sending hypersonic missiles to Venezuela” (The Telegraph)

“The Outlook” is committed to bringing you the most important and essential news coverage on Monmouth University’s campus. However, we live in rapidly-changing times and continue to strive to inform you of local, national and international headlines of the utmost importance.

Compiled by Henry Boody

TO/ The Outlook

Hello, everyone! My name is Mairead Spellacy and I am so honored to be this year's Editor-In-Chief and News editor! I can't wait to work with each of you. I am so passionate about *The Outlook*, and I hope all of you will want to share that passion with me. Student journalism is incredibly important. As students, you have the right to know what is going on within your campus, and at *The Outlook*, we promise to promote honest and informative articles that educate students on what is going on around them here at Monmouth University. If anyone has any questions or story ideas for *The Outlook*, please feel free to reach out to me at any time! My email is s1342915@monmouth.edu. Happy reading!

- Mairead Spellacy, Editor-in-Chief and News Editor '25/'26

Hi everyone! My name is Ava McGinty and I'm this year's Managing Editor & Features Editor. I'm so excited for this year & to read all the awesome articles everyone writes! If you would like to write for the features section or have any other questions about *The Outlook*, please email me at s1356207@monmouth.edu!

-Ava McGinty, Managing and Features Editor '25/'26

HAWKTV Hawk TV

Hawk TV is excited to be back for this semester! We are the student run television station on campus, and it is a great opportunity to meet new people and get involved! Our studio is on the first floor of Plangere, and we currently have three shows. Hawk TV News shoots biweekly on Tuesdays. On Wednesdays, we film our pop culture show called Triple Scoop and on Thursdays, our sports show called the Extra Point. All begin at 7 p.m. We hope to see you this semester!

- Ava McGinty, Hawk TV Secretary and Executive Producer of Hawk TV News

PRSSA PRSSA

Hi Hawks, join the Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA) & Shadow PR, Monmouth's student-run and nationally affiliated PR firm, for meetings every Wednesday at 3 p.m. in Plangere 234. PRSSA gives students the opportunity to gain real experience in the PR world through hands-on work with local clients and guest speaker events. All majors & grade levels are welcome!

- Bailey Fredericks, Co-President '24/'25

MU CD College Democrats

We have 34 reasons you should join the College Democrats. Join Team Freedom today!

- Owen Bros, President '24/'25



Real Estate Club

Hello everyone! The 19th of this month is a career night in the Bey Hall auditorium at 6:30 p.m. If you have any questions, please feel free to email me at s1322694@monmouth.edu.

- Margaret McNeil, President '24/'25



WMCX 88.9

Here at WMCX, there is so much space to grow and use your voice! With opportunities such as broadcasting Monmouth University's home basketball games, having weekly talk shows on a variety of topics surrounding sports, music, pop culture, or politics, or becoming part of the E-board, there's a place for you at WMCX! If this sounds like something for you, come to one of our weekly meetings every Wednesday at 2:45 in Plangere 236. Our doors are always open if you want to come and visit us upstairs. And stay tuned for some exciting events happening later this semester!

- Beyonce Carranza, Program Director (VP) '24/'25



LASO

The Latin American Student Organization (LASO) brings students together to celebrate Latin American culture. The club is open to everyone and hosts events like Día de los Muertos and their annual Outdoor Movie Night where they show a movie from latin american and have latin american cuisine. LASO also supports minority representation and encourages leadership. It's a great place to meet new people, learn about different traditions, and be part of an inclusive community.

- Jeff Gonzalez, general member '24/'25



"OmniSports Media" - WMCX

Tune in every Friday from 11 a.m. -1 p.m. for sports content about the MLB & NFL on WMCX 88.9.

- Dean Heidel, OmniSports Media Host



College Republicans

We are so excited to see you all and work to preserve your freedoms on and off of campus this year!

-NJFCR Chair Jacky Bruno and MUCR Chair Giavanna Cangialosi '24/'25



MU Sports Industry Club

We are a club dedicated to connecting aspiring students with sports industry professionals through networking opportunities. Our first meeting will be on Sept. 22nd at 7 p.m. on Zoom with Rachel Luscher, the Digital Coordinator at the New York Islanders! Follow our Instagram @musportsindustry for more info!

- Ava McGinty, Vice President



Get a Free Ride Back to Campus!

With cold & flu season upon us, and finals around the corner, it's important to know where to go if you start feeling run down. Hackensack Meridian *Health* Urgent Care—Eatontown is the University's preferred provider for urgent care services for Monmouth University students and employees.

We've partnered with Monmouth University to ensure students and employees have seamless access to our full range of services.

And if you need a ride back to campus, we've got you covered. Just show us your MU ID and students or employees can get a voucher via QR code which, when scanned, will activate a free return ride back to Monmouth University's campus using the Uber app.

We're open 365 days a year, including holidays, nights and weekends.

**135 Route 35
Eatontown, NJ 07724
P: 848-308-4911**

Office Hours:
Monday - Friday: 8 a.m. – 8 p.m.
Weekends and Holidays: 8 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Walk-ins are welcome.



Scan the QR code to let us know you're on your way



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CHRISTMAS SPECTACULAR

Starring The RADIO CITY ROCKETTES

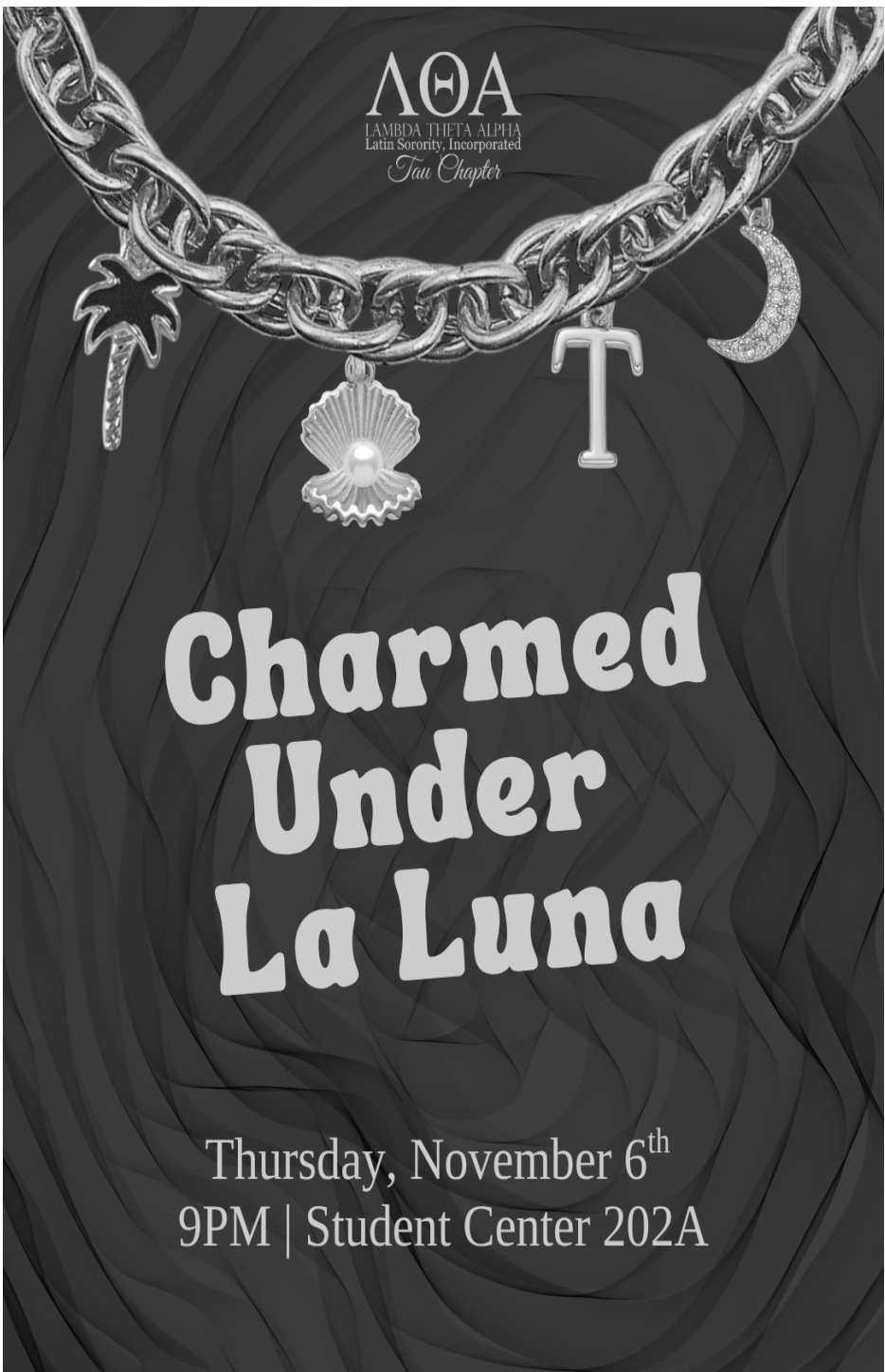
SATURDAY,
NOVEMBER 22ND

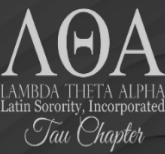
SHOW AT 7 PM | BUS LEAVES AT 2 PM

TICKETS: \$40 EACH
SALES START NOVEMBER 3RD IN THE
OFFICE OF STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

ONE TICKET PER STUDENT






LAMBDA THETA ALPHA
Latin Sorority, Incorporated
Tau Chapter

Charmed Under La Luna

Thursday, November 6th
9PM | Student Center 202A



PEARSON
WORLD CINEMA SERIES

Between Two Worlds

13 Nov, 6:05 - 9:00 p.m. | Pozycki Auditorium
Host: Manuel Chávez | Discussant: Marina Vujovnic

Based on French journalist Florence Aubenas's bestselling non-fiction work *Le Quai de Ouistreham*, investigating rising precarity in French society through her experiences in the northern port city of Caen. Directed by Emmanuel Carrere.

Football defeats Bryant to improve to 8-1

FRANK HOARLE
SPORTS EDITOR

Monmouth Football continued its remarkable season with a 35-7 victory over the Bryant Bulldogs this past weekend.

The win was the sixth victory in a row for the Hawks, as they remain unbeaten in CAA play. Sophomore running back Rodney Nelson was the star for the Hawks once again, as he controlled the game on the ground.

Monmouth started the game with a drive that got into the Bryant red zone, but an interception by freshman quarterback Frankie Weaver ended Monmouth's chances at getting on the board early. Bryant was not able to take advantage of the turnover, as the Hawks defense forced a three and out.

On the Hawks second drive, Nelson struck. After he rushed for four yards on first down, he broke free for a 69-yard touchdown run on second down to give Monmouth a 7-0 lead a little under halfway through the first quarter.

After the Bulldogs went three and out on their second straight offensive drive, the Hawks got the ball back and were able to drive to around midfield, but Weaver would throw his second interception of the game. Bryant's senior defensive back Olatunde Mkparu returned the interception for a touchdown, but an illegal block in the back penalty on the Bulldogs nullified the score. Despite the penalty, the interception stood and Bryant was set up in great field position.

On the first play of the second quarter, Bryant took advantage of the interception and scored a touchdown on a 9-yard pass from junior quarterback Jaden Keefner.

With the game tied at seven, Monmouth got the ball back and got into Bryant territory, but on fourth down the offense was stopped and the Hawks turned the ball over on downs.

The turnover on downs was followed up by Bryant's third three and out of the game, and Monmouth followed that up with a three and out of their own.

A fourth Bryant three and out led to Monmouth's offense finally breaking



Rodney Nelson once again dominated for Monmouth, as he rushed for 244 yards and two touchdowns. He was named the Stats Perform FCS Offensive Player of the Week.

PHOTO COURTESY of Monmouth Athletics.

through and scoring, as Nelson punched it in from three yards out to give Monmouth a 14-7 lead.

After Bryant turned the ball over on downs, the Hawks got the ball with a little over a minute to play in the half. After getting into Bryant territory, sophomore wide receiver Tra Neal got behind the Bryant defense and Weaver found him for

a 41-yard touchdown and a Monmouth 21-7 lead heading into halftime.

After Bryant punted to start the second half, Monmouth went on a long drive that took over seven minutes. That drive would end in a Weaver touchdown throw to junior wide receiver Gavin Nelson. The score made it 21 unanswered points for Monmouth, who extended

their lead to 28-7.

For the remainder of the game, Bryant struggled to get anything going on offense. They got into the Monmouth red zone early in the fourth quarter, but once again turned the ball over on downs. Monmouth had one more long drive in the fourth that ate up over eight minutes of game clock and ended with a

touchdown run by freshman running back Elijah Jennings. When the final horn sounded, Monmouth had won 35-7.

Weaver threw for 218 yards, two touchdowns, and two interceptions in the win. The 218 yards passing is the most in a game for Weaver this season. Nelson once again dominated on the ground, carrying the ball 34 times for 233 yards and two touchdowns. Not only was he named CAA Offensive Player of the Week for the second straight week, he was also named the Stats Perform FCS Offensive Player of the Week, an accolade given to the best offensive player in all of FCS football for that week. The last Hawk to do it was graduate quarterback Derek Robertson in 2024. Nelson now has 1,485 rushing yards on the season, which is first in the FCS.

Not only does the offense continue to perform for the Hawks, the defense is also playing its best football of the season. After giving up an average of 35.2 points per game through the first six games of the season, the defense has only given up 12.7 points per game through its last three games.

The Hawks, sitting at 8-1 on the season and tied for first in the CAA, continue to rise in the FCS rankings. They now sit at No. 6 in the AFCA FCS Coaches Poll and No. 7 in the Stats Perform FCS Poll thanks to losses by multiple teams ranked above them last week such as Tarleton State, South Dakota State, and UC Davis.

This weekend, Monmouth returns home after a two game road trip to take on New Hampshire. The Wildcats, a team that was once ranked in the top 25 earlier in the season, now sit at 5-4 overall and 3-2 in CAA play.

As for Bryant, their struggles this season continue as they drop to 2-7 overall and are still winless in CAA play. They will look to get their first conference win as they travel on the road to play UAlbany this weekend, a team that is also winless in CAA play.

Field Hockey win over Northeastern secures CAA Regular Season title

EDWARD GRANADOS
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

The Monmouth University field hockey team capped off an impressive regular season with a statement victory, defeating Northeastern 4-1 at So Sweet A Cat Field on Oct. 31. The win not only marked their final regular-season matchup but also secured the Hawks the No. 1 seed in the Coastal Athletic Association (CAA) standings and the honor of hosting the 2025 CAA Field Hockey Championship.

From the opening whistle, Monmouth controlled the pace of play against Northeastern. Freshman forward Maia McCourt struck first, giving the Hawks early momentum. Senior captain Claire Campen extended the lead shortly after, showcasing her leadership and poise on both ends of the field. Junior standout Florence van Doorn played a crucial role, recording a goal and two assists. She tied her career high with



Florence Van Doorn scored the game winning goal and tallied two assists in Monmouth's 4-1 victory over Northeastern on Friday, Oct. 31.

PHOTO COURTESY of Monmouth Athletics.

three points. Monmouth's offense capitalized on set pieces throughout the game, converting three goals off penalty corners and one from a penalty stroke. The defensive unit held strong as well, limiting Northeastern's scoring chances and closing the

match with confidence. With that victory, Monmouth concluded the regular season as the top team in the conference, finishing with an impressive record and a strong case as one of the most complete teams in the league. The team's

chemistry, discipline, and offensive creativity have been evident all season, and their performance against Northeastern reflected why they are considered the favorites heading into postseason play.

Now, the Hawks turn their focus to the CAA Field Hock-

ey Championship, which will take place at So Sweet A Cat Field from November 7 to November 9. As hosts and the No. 1 seed, Monmouth will open the tournament in the first semifinal on Friday morning against the No. 4 seed, Hofstra. The second semifinal will feature the No. 2 and No. 3 seeds later that day, with the winners advancing to Sunday's championship game.

Hosting the tournament is a major achievement for the program and the university. It not only reflects Monmouth's success on the field but also highlights the school's ability to stage a premier conference event. Playing in front of their home crowd gives the Hawks an invaluable advantage as they aim to capture the CAA title and secure a spot in the NCAA Tournament. With momentum on their side and championship aspirations within reach, Monmouth's field hockey team is ready to make the most of their moment at home.

Kamau Dumas: Monmouth's new Defensive Backs coach

EMILY STACHERSKI
LIFESTYLES EDITOR

The Monmouth University football team's new hire, MU alum Kamau Dumas, has started his first season with the Hawks on the coaching staff as the Defensive Backs (DB) Coach after joining the team in February of 2025.

Kamau Dumas is in his first season coaching at Monmouth; however, this is not his first time with the Hawks. Dumas attended Monmouth from 2013 to 2017, where he played football as a defensive back.

During his time as a player, he appeared in all 11 games as a sophomore, junior, senior, and fifth year. He was part of the 2017 playoff team and led Monmouth in kickoff returns his junior year and punt return yards his sophomore year.

Shortly after graduation, Dumas went back to his high school, Morristown High School, and spent three years coaching football and track and field. He then helped guide Gannon University's team to a PSAC West Championship and one of the best

seasons in school history. After a year with them as the cornerbacks coach, he was Wagner College's DB coach, where he was named to Football Scoop's Rising Minority Coaches List.

Before Monmouth, Dumas spent the 2024 season at Central Oklahoma as the cornerbacks coach, where he helped lead the team to an MIAA Conference Championship and a second-round playoff appearance. This defense ranked among the top ten nationally in pass breakups.

He left Central Oklahoma after being contacted by Monmouth about the open position. Right away, the job was extremely appealing to him. According to Dumas, the familiarity of this place, along with the care he has for it and the success it brought him in life, was why. The familiarity, added to the financial aspect and the opportunity to coach at a higher level, ultimately led to him accepting the job offer.

Dumas believes he was the right choice as the new DB coach because he knows what needs to be done, having been in the players' shoes himself. He said that it is a little bit more special when

it's someone who sat in the same seats in the locker room, played on the same field, and has had success at the same school.

"I've learned a lot through my years of coaching, and I've been thankful to help develop a lot of players, both on and off the field. I would say just having had success here and getting opportunities that some of these guys aspire to have, having walked in their shoes, adds more value on top of me, knowing what I need to do for the position group," Dumas said.

Dumas' former coaches, Head Coach Kevin Callahan and Defensive Coordinator Lewis Walker, made a collaborative decision to hire Dumas, said Walker.

"He has a lot of energy and passion he coaches with. He really, really implements a positive mindset and a growth development mindset and really preaches confidence into the players. I think he has an approach that he takes to continually develop every single player in his room. He's very detailed in terms of his technique in coaching," said Walker, who actually served as

the team's DB coach from 2017-2021.

Since his arrival, the Hawks' record is 8-1 in the current season. In the entire 2024 season, defense totaled six fumble recoveries, four forced fumbles, and five interceptions. Nine games into 2025, the defense is already at 11 fumble recoveries, nine forced fumbles, and five interceptions this season.

"We've been doing well. There's always room for growth, and that's for us as an entire defense. I think in terms of the young guys he has in that room that don't have a lot of experience, he's really, really getting those guys to step up to the plate and execute their assignment," commented Walker.

Comparing the defensive backs he's been coaching from when he first met them to now, Dumas said he has seen tremendous growth in terms of technique, eye discipline, and leverage on the field. However, off the field is where he believes they have grown the most.

He often tells his players, "Today is the worst we'll ever be, but the best we've ever been."

Though he admits to using the "tough love" method of coaching, his players have been responding positively.

"I like him as a coach. I think of him like family, like an uncle, like a pop. He's a good person. He definitely develops me and gets me better at my sport," said Chris Palmer Jr., freshman defensive back.

Palmer Jr. had a fumble recovery in the Hawks' game against Villanova, which helped lead Monmouth to a win. He attributes a lot of his success so far this season to Coach Dumas.

Dumas hopes to make it to the playoffs for the FCS Championship, taking his love for football and combining it with the knowledge he has of the team, the position group, and the sport overall.

"I feel like it's ordained from God for me to do this. I believe it's my calling to help young men become better people in society through their character and morals, through having an influence on them from my faith, and I really enjoy seeing these young men reach their potential," said Dumas.



FIELD HOCKEY CLINCHES CAA REGULAR SEASON TITLE



Field Hockey locked up the CAA Regular Season Championship and the No. 1 seed in the CAA Tournament with a 4-1 win against Northeastern on Friday.

SEE STORY ON PAGE 15

PHOTOS COURTESY of Monmouth Athletics.