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The Student Voice

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Search for new president underway

By Brandon Dyer

A search for someone to fill the role of Georgia Highlands president has officially begun nine months after the departure of former president Don Green.

The Board of Regents named the members of the two committees that will oversee the search: the Presidential Search and Screening Committee and the Regents Special Committee.

The PSSC will submit their work to the Regents Special Committee for consideration after choosing a handful of candidates from the applicants selected by the search firm Storbeck Search.

Storbeck Search held a virtual open-forum on Feb. 1 to ask faculty and students what they thought some of the qualities should be for the new president.

"I would like to see someone from this area who knows our area and political culture," PSSC member Billy Morris said.

Storbeck Search Managing Director Thomas Fitch

said that while the search would expand nationally, the firm will try to keep the request in mind by focusing on applicants in the south-east region.

Other members of the faculty used Green as an example of what qualities to look for in the new president.

"That person is going to be approachable from the top-down like how Green was," Executive Director of Enrollment Management Jennifer Hicks said. "We like to do things well and want a president that will never settle and not be afraid to get his hands dirty."

Steve Stuglin, Associate Professor and Director of Honors, brought up some of the issues that the faculty is having as an example of what he would like the president to tackle.

"GHC faculty and staff are suffering from 15 or more years of having more responsibilities added to each job description in the name of cost cutting and efficiency," Stuglin said.

The final decision for the next president is expected to



Art by Bree Messenger

Presidential Search and Screening Committee members

Jason Hitzeman

Ejiroghene Ogaga

Randy Green

Greg Patton

Lisa Jellum

Gregory Shropshire

Billy Morris

Travice Obas

Matthew Perry

Laura Walton

Cindy Williams

Lucinda Montgomery

Covid-19 aftershocks

Understaffing is still a nationwide issue and GHC is no different

By Ashley Hall

When driving through town nowadays, one thing has become commonplace: help wanted and now hiring signs plastered in the windows and glass doors of almost every restaurant and retail store as far as the eye can see.

Even after quarantine regulations have been lifted throughout most of the US and citizens can return to work or look for new work, businesses, restaurants and other organizations are having trouble finding employees.

GHC has had its fair share of noticeable faculty and staff shortages as well. According to multiple sources, a combination of COVID and necessary budget cuts due to the former are the cause of the short staff at GHC.

"When COVID hit, we cut two to three, maybe five million dollars from the budget initially," Clifton Puckett, Cocurricular and Transition Programs Coordinator, said.

Puckett oversees the recently established Student Engagement.

This department organizes extra-curricular activities students can engage in across GHC's six campuses: Paulding, Floyd, Cartersville, Douglasville, Marietta and the Heritage Hall location in Rome, GA.

"Next year we have to cut another

two [million dollars] because the way the state does your allocation for funding," Puckett said. "...they look at your previous two years and allocate your funding based on that."

According to Puckett, the current state funding GHC is receiving "is based off 2020 which was COVID."

"When COVID first hit we had to let go of 13 people," Puckett said.

"The way we try to prevent that in the future is that when positions become open, we don't fill them."

Earlier in the fall 2021 semester, nine interim positions were filled at GHC.

Bradley Gilmore, Human Resources Programs Manager at GHC, said, "Three months or less is an acting title. Anything that's going to exceed three months typically, would be an interim. And so the interim person is the one that has both the authority and responsibility of office while they're doing it."

The need to fill so many interim positions at once comes with disadvantages such as timing and unpreparedness on part of the staff in the interim position.

Part-time Student Engagement employee Madison Signoret said: "I would say just the biggest thing is just a little confusion because people are trying to learn their positions... people are reaching out for resources that that position used to



Cocurricular Coordinator Clifton Puckett and part-time Student Engagement employee Madison Signoret are the only two Student Engagement staff after Student Life was dismantled during the initial height of COVID. **Photo by Ashley Hall**

offer and the interim may not realize"

Due to the nature of these positions, interims need to be appointed as soon as possible.

"It gets hard because then you don't know every little detail about that position when you're in it because it's just interim, so it's like you need a little more time to learn it and know it inside out like you would a normal position," Signoret said.

Tristen Tolbert, fall 2021 Gaming Club president and former SGA president, has experience with club involvement and the legalities behind running a club.

According to him, submitting paperwork for official club activi-

ties has become difficult since some employees have retired and those positions have been filled with either interims or inexperienced permanent employees.

"I don't think every position had smooth transitions from the person that used to do it to the person that is doing it," Tolbert said, "And there's a lot of small job functions that don't show up a whole lot that I don't think a lot of people realize happens."

The understaffing at GHC and across the nation is a pandemic in of itself with no end in sight. But as Tolbert puts, "I think the college will fix itself eventually, just very very slowly."

University of West Georgia offers help to Douglasville campus students

By Brandon Dyer

Last year, Georgia Highlands announced the closure of its Douglasville campus at the end of the 2022 spring semester. This move will affect approximately 135 students who are currently taking classes at the campus and will need somewhere to go to finish their degree with a reasonable commute to

and from their homes.

Enter the University of West Georgia, a campus that is 30 minutes away from the Douglasville campus.

UWG President Brendan Kelly said that his staff will help the students transition over to the college for the start of the 2022 fall semester.

"As a sister institution to Georgia Highlands in the University Systems of Georgia... we are able to assist in

GHC's central goal: a seamless transition for their students to continue or complete their education," Kelly said in a press release by West Georgia.

Course substitutions will be offered to GHC students this semester to help with the transition process. The two schools will provide joint advising for the Douglasville site students to ensure that they are ready to make the transition over to UWG.

Paulding campus opens Charger Learning Commons

By Ashley Hall

On Jan. 20, the Paulding campus held a ribbon cutting ceremony for the Charger Learning Commons.

Key figures responsible for the oversight of the project were present including, but not limited to, Paulding site manager Christina Henggeler and Paulding campus librarian Laura Gargis.

The Charger Learning Commons is located on the second floor of the Bagby building in a conjoined space that previously served as two separate classrooms and a closet.

The closet was removed completely, which allowed for a walkway in between the library and the collaboration areas. The walkway

also holds some of the semi-private study rooms available to students.

Julius Fleschner, Dean of Libraries and College Testing, was directly involved in the planning and designing of the Charger Learning Commons. He said the space is meant to help students be able to engage with each other and the services the college provides as a community living room.

"The libraries have really changed and transformed a lot in the last couple of years," Fleschner said. "It's an evolution from the large building with a lot of books to a soft, flexible space that's accessible and inclusive to everyone."

In addition to the standard book check-outs, the Charger Learning Commons

"It's an investment of the college into the student experience..." - Julius Fleschner

also provides a collaboration lounge, technology check-outs and librarians acting as advisors for student success.

The library had to cut down on available materials to move into the smaller space, going from 3,000 titles to 500 according to Gargis

"That doesn't mean that students are getting less," Gargis said, "because we can get books from any other GHC library or another library in the USG system."

Gargis said the trade-off of a smaller space in the Bagby building is more beneficial to the library and students as opposed to the larger space in the old Dallas

courthouse.

"[The library] was kind of a trip for students over there," Gargis said.

"It's easier for students to come here between classes or before classes... then it was when we were over in the courthouse."

The planning period for the Charger Learning Commons began in February 2021 after the GHC lease over the old Dallas courthouse expired and Paulding County, opted not to continue the lease in the interest of selling the building.

"In the lease there was a clause that said 'either party can decide not to renew the lease with a 90-day notice,'

David Van Hook, Director of Facilities at GHC, said. "...so we had 90 days to go through the complete planning, construction and move-in process for this Learning Commons."

Van Hook and Gargis both said that the designing and construction of the Learning Commons wouldn't have been possible without every single person that helped within the given timeframe.

"I'm just really excited," Fleschner said. "It's an investment of the college into the student experience and the college is looking at ways that we can help students be successful and this is one way that we saw that students could use that flexible space."



Christina Henggeler (middle left), the Site Manager of the Paulding campus, and Julius Fleschner (middle right), the Dean of Libraries and College Testing, cut the ribbon announcing the grand opening of the Charger Learning Commons located on the Paulding campus. GHC faculty from across campuses attended the event to celebrate the finished construction of the new student space. *Photo by Abby Chesnut*



Paulding students frequently occupy the Charger Learning Commons located on the 2nd floor of the Bagby building. The main area includes multiple seating spots and tables with the addition of a microwave for student and faculty use. *Photo by Abby Chesnut*

MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS

Resources in a post-pandemic world

By **Brittany Garwick**

The college setting brings its own set of unique challenges to students that affect mental health. The pandemic brought even more changes to students and staff, with many events postponed, canceled or delivered remotely, causing staff and students to isolate and social distance.

GHC is prepared to help students with their mental well-being with programs offered through the Student Support Service programs such as Thrive and the Wellness Hub.

Per the Center for Collegiate Mental Health at Penn State, loneliness, isolation, loss of focus and loss of motivation are top concerns for college students during the pandemic. Anxiety and depression are two of the most common problems identified by medical professionals.

Counselor and Interim Director Dorothy Morgan wants to ensure that GHC students have equal access to mental health resources and disability services offered at the college. Meeting with staff for counseling or disability services is entirely confidential.

"Confidentiality is very important and really we are here to help," Morgan said.

Disability specialists Kimberly Linek, who has

a master's degree in social work, covers disability services for the Cartersville and Paulding sites, and Jenny Walker, who has a master's degree in education, covers the Floyd, Marietta and Douglasville sites.

"Confidentiality is very important and really we are here to help."
-Dorothy Morgan

Students can apply for accommodations and disability assistance through the Student Support Services website.

Morgan encourages all students, faculty and staff to visit the Thrive tiles at the Student Support Services webpage.

The tiles offer a variety of services such as counseling, psychiatric services, personal student navigators, internet-based cognitive therapy and a 24-hour support line.

Students have 24/7 access for in-the-moment mental health issues via no-cost telehealth and in-person treatment sessions provided by a network of licensed medical professionals. Students can access this network of physicians anytime

by calling 833-855-0082.

Students have training opportunities, survivors of suicide groups, Jed campus and Kognito programs available at no cost.

"We have a free mindfulness and meditation app for students," Morgan said. Students can obtain the "Headspace" app by visiting the Wellness Hub tab under student services.

The free "Mindfulness & Meditation" app is located under resources titled "Personal guide to health & happiness."

Additionally, the Cartersville location is hosting a master's level intern Marsha Brouard from the University of West Georgia. She is completing her degree in counseling and doing her practicum internship at the Cartersville location on Mondays and Tuesdays.

"We really want students to come and see her," Morgan said.

While mental health problems are not preventable, GHC provides an ample amount of varying resources to encourage their students to thrive.

Student Support Services staff are available to provide support to students Monday through Thursday 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., and on Friday 8 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Students can also email staff directly at sss@highlands.edu.



Above: The student support services bulletin board on the Rome campus highlights a few of the many resources available to students. The office is located in the McCorkle building in Rome. Students are also able to access resources electronically via the student support services website. Morgan and colleagues are available by appointment. **Photo Credits - Top photo by Brittany Garwick. Bottom graphic by Georgia Highlands College.**

Meet the faces behind the President's list

By Brittany Garwick

The President's list is a long-standing achievement of academic excellence. Students must maintain a perfect 4.0-grade average while taking a minimum of nine semester hours of credit. A few students from the Fall 2021 President's list have been open about what making the list meant to them and what recommendations they have for their fellow students.

Debra Wigbels of Rome, Georgia

Debra Wigbels is completing her Bachelor of Science in Dental Hygiene. Wigbels found a passion for learning after graduating as a dental hygienist in 2003. Wigbels said, "It's [making the President's list] made me feel a lot more confident... especially being an older student too, like 'okay I still got it.'" "Nothing sweeter than your



From left to right, Debra Wigbels, Alexa Munoz Pinon and Colby Morris are recognized for their outstanding academic achievement among numerous students that achieved the President's list. *Photo by Brittany Garwick*

eleven-year-old daughter saying 'I'm so proud of you, Mommy,'" Wigbels said. She is grateful to her husband, son, daughter and mother for supporting her while enrolled and working part-time.

Wigbels hopes to join and work alongside the teaching

faculty in the dental hygiene program upon graduation.

Alexa Daniela Munoz Pinon of Rome, Ga

Alexa Pinon is a freshman that is studying middle grades education with a focus on STEM. "All my hard work paid off," Pinon said.

"Having to stress over the assignments, the tests and going to the support center, they all paid off."

Pinon recommends that students purchase and use a planner to look ahead. Following graduation, she intends to transfer to Shorter University to achieve her

Bachelor of Education and become a fifth or sixth-grade teacher.

Colby Slade Morris of Silver Creek, Georgia

Colby Morris is a returning student having a prior bachelor's in history. He is currently studying business logistics and supply chain management. Colby intends to pursue a double major in Geology. He also works in the cafeteria on the Floyd campus.

"It's nice to be recognized for my high GPA," Morris said. "There was a lot of hard work last semester to get that. My philosophy is if I'm going to pay to go to college, I'm going to get the most out of it."

Morris recommends flashcards to other students. "Flashcards are a big help, especially in classes that are heavy on vocabulary; testing yourself helps."



Cartersville campus students meet with representatives from companies at the campus' career fair. *Photos by Brandon Dyer*

Should online students be exempt from in-person activities?

By Kimberly Lyons

We live in an unprecedented time as far as the ability to work and attend school remotely. It's a bit like the Wild West and it seems that everyone has different ideas about what remote jobs and classes should and should not be able to require.

A situation was brought to my attention recently caused me to question— is it acceptable to require assignments for classes or student jobs to be completed on-site from online students?

Say you decided to take a remote job with the film department as a film producer. Is it acceptable for them to require you to shoot a marketing video near your home and send it in?

Justin Ford, a GHC Film Production major on the Floyd campus, had this to say on the matter: "If you are a remote student and have a job, you should do what's asked of you for the job even if you're not on campus. It goes for classes as well."

Some online students believe that all assignments for classes and remote jobs for students should not be able to require them to do anything that isn't online. Having worked remotely and been an online student, I feel this is an absolutely absurd view to have. Really, I'm flabbergasted!

To me, the idea that working and being a student online would never require you to interact with the world at large is incredulous. People take online classes and choose to work remotely for a variety of reasons.

I understand that we are in a pandemic, but living in a bubble is unrealistic. In order to truly learn on more than a superficial level, one must interact with their community. Any job other than data entry may require you to interact with environments outside your home and computer.

My questions to those that hold the opposing

view would be— how do you expect to study the stars if you don't go out and look at them?

Justin Roper, a GHC biology major on the Floyd campus, said: "If they are a student in the class they should have to do whatever is required, even if that means going into the real world. I also feel if you have a remote job, like a sports writer or something, you need to attend the event in order to be able to properly report on it. It's part of your job."

I truly hope that the majority of students would hold the same opinion as myself and these students. Being remote for classes or a job does not absolve you from the non-online tasks it requires.

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EDITORIAL CARTOON BY CHRISTOPHER DANIEL



In-person bookstores still useful

By Ashley Hall

Here we are in the dwindling COVID era and people have become more social shut-ins than they may have already been before all the 'shelter in place' ordinances.

Even after COVID regulations have been lifted and people are free to visit their favorite shops and restaurants again, getting everything delivered through UberEats or Instacart has become the norm for some people.

The same could be said about how GHC students prefer to get their textbooks and other course required supplies through the college bookstore. Given that there are only two physical bookstore locations on the Cartersville and Rome campuses, how essential to student life are they when everything can be accessed online?

Even as a Paulding student that buys all my textbooks online, I can see the advantages of having on-campus bookstores. They offer items and services that

cannot be accessed online and give the students on those campuses immediate access to the items they need.

Eden Holland, a nursing major that attends the Rome campus, said that the bookstores are essential on the bigger GHC campuses because of the convenience and the number of students attending them.

"People still enjoy going in and actually seeing what they're about to buy," Holland said. "I definitely think that having it here is good because... you can't be spontaneous with online stuff."

Walking into the bookstore is like walking into the college student equivalent of a candy shop. I often spend more time in the bookstore than I should from browsing all the different options available. There is a plethora of snacks, drinks, school supplies, college spirit merchandise and even personal essentials.

Rome is almost an hour away from my home in Paulding county, so it is very convenient to have a selec-

tion of supplies a few minutes away. On the occasion that I visit one of the larger campuses, I may pop in and buy some cookies and water.

Holland told me that she also must drive an hour and ten minutes to get to the Rome campus from Jasper, so she is in the same boat.

"You never know when you're going to need something because you never know what's going to come up while you're out here," Holland said. "It's not like I can drive home and grab something that I need super easily."

The on-campus bookstores also have items that are not available online.

Nursing students like Holland must visit the bookstore to buy nursing kits required for their classes.

Art students must also buy art kits for their classes.

It was explained to me by Lee Duke, a sales associate at the Rome campus bookstore, that these kits are not available anywhere else.

"They're custom made for each department," Duke



The on-campus bookstores are a one-stop shop for students. It has a wide selection ranging from course materials to everyday essential items. *Photo by Ashley Hall*

said. "[The instructors] best determine what they need to best teach their students."

It is also useful for students to have immediate access to bookstore associates like Duke to help them with any problems. Duke told me that they try to be as accommodating as possible to students.

While I was speaking with Duke, a student walked in with rain check money for a cup of coffee.

"We do a lot of personal things for students if we can help them," Duke said.

Although it is useful to have an on-campus bookstore, Akira Monroe, a childhood development major on the Paulding campus, said that getting textbooks online is easier than going to the bookstores.

"I think [Paulding] is fine without one just because we do have the online option," Monroe said. "And this is

one of the smaller campuses compared to Rome and Cartersville that has the bookstores, so I think we're good without it."

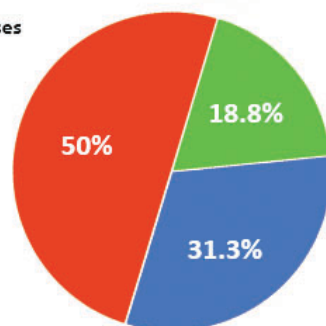
Monroe added that the on-campus bookstores are still good for the students that are taking more in-person classes in Rome and Cartersville.

The Paulding campus is in an area with a Kroger, a QuikTrip and a Starbucks that are all only a five-minute drive away. The Rome and Cartersville campuses are isolated from town on the sides of highways.

The digital age may be gradually advancing to the future we all covet from sci-fi movies, but in-store shopping is still essential to student life as it is for the rest of the world. You just can't beat the ability to walk into your favorite store and be amazed by its offerings.

If you purchased your textbooks from GHC, how did you purchase them?

16 responses



- Physical campus bookstore location
- Online bookstore (obtained through mail)
- Used online and bookstore pick-up

The World and 'Wordle'

New York Times buys programmer Josh Wardle's game in response to growing popularity

By Victoria Bisette

"Wordle" is a new online puzzle game that tests the vocabulary knowledge of its players as they try to solve the five-letter word of the day in as few tries as possible.

The game was released in October last year by creator Josh Wardle and has amassed millions of players across the globe.

The word game releases a new word every 24 hours for players to guess in six tries. Each guess provides clues to the daily word. Letters in each guess will turn gray, yellow or green. Gray letters are not in the word, yellow letters are in the word, but not in the correct spot, and green letters are both in the word and in the correct position. All while providing players with an add-free experience.

"It's not trying to do anything shady with your data or your eyeballs," Wardle said in an interview with the New York Times on Jan. 3. "It's just a game that's fun."

Inspiration for "Wordle" came from similar word puzzles in The New York Times that Wardle would

play with his partner, Palak Shah.

Shah helped Wardle cut down the original list of 12,000 words to the current 2,500 word bank, eliminating the words she thought were not easily recognizable.

The game has experienced an increase in online presence since Dec. 16 when Wardle released a new in-game feature for social media.

"Added a share button to 'Wordle' that generates a spoiler-free emoji grid for you," Wardle said on Twitter Dec. 16, exhibiting the new feature in his post.

In an online poll taken by Six Mile Post, 67% of those that answered said that they were playing 'Wordle', a testament to the game's popularity.

The future of "Wordle"

In response to the rapid increase in players since the release of "Wordle," Wardle reached a deal with the New York Times that sold the game for an undisclosed seven figures. The deal was announced on Jan. 31 through an official statement from the New York Times.

"I'd be lying if I said this hasn't been overwhelming," Wardle said



On Jan. 25, Wordle 220 features the winning word "SUGAR". Wordle gives players a different five-letter word to guess within six tries every day. *Photo Illustration by Abby Chesnut.*

in his statement on the decision through Twitter on Jan. 31.

In the same statement Wardle said, "When the game moves to the NYT site, it will be free to play for everyone."

The official statement from the New York Times does not reveal if the game will eventually move behind the paywall for their subscription service.

GHC students and faculty can access a free subscription to the New

York Times. A video walkthrough of how to access the subscription can be found on the GHC Library YouTube channel. The subscription does not include New York Times Games.

"Wordle" is not the first of Wardle's online games. He has released two other games through Reddit called "The Button" and "Place."

"Wordle" can be found on the New York Times website.

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Review: 'Arcane' sets gold standard for LGBTQ+ representation

By Ashley Hall

After being postponed due to COVID, "Arcane," an animated series developed by Riot Games and produced by Fortiche Productions, finally released on Nov. 6, 2021 and became a Netflix sensation.

The show is based on the universe of the popular online multiplayer game "League of Legends."

It is not an exaggeration to say that "Arcane" is one of the most articulating and compelling pieces of media I have experienced in 2021.

The story of the show is told through a beautiful blend of 2D and 3D animation which serves to represent the characters and the environment around them that shape who they become.

The central focus of the show is the relationship between main characters Vi and Jinx, sisters born in Zaun who lost their parents at a young age during an insurrection between Zaun and Piltover.

The show serves as an origin story for them and other characters, chronicling each one's struggles, achievements and growth.

The show took creative liberties with developing an LGBT relationship between two prominent characters from the popular MOBA (Multiplayer Online Battle Arena): Caitlyn, the privileged aristocrat from Piltover, and Vi, the rough



The animated series "Arcane" is now available on Netflix. It features many different characters in a steampunk-themed atmosphere. *Photo illustration by Abby Chesnut*

street rat from Zaun.

Although their relationship builds rather quickly within the five episodes of them meeting, it doesn't feel forced.

A major issue with most visual media is the tendency to include minority characters for inclusivity points, making them token, one-dimensional archetypes of the demographic they're meant to represent. "Arcane" is not one of them.

Vi and Caitlyn's trust and attraction have natural progression, going from untrusting partners bound by

common interest to lowering storm-weathered barriers and finding it difficult to leave the other's side.

Their relationship develops throughout events of the show, their closeness being revealed through body language and speech.

Georgia Dow, a psychotherapist that specializes in anxiety and depression, breaks down the iconic brothel scene from episode five of "Arcane" in her "Therapist Reacts!" YouTube video, explaining the psychology behind Vi and Caitlyn's relationship.

Dow said: "So right away when you tell someone that you're attractive and the way that Vi said it was not those really sugary 'oh you're so pretty' compliments. This was more like a statement then she went into [Caitlyn's] space; she cornered her. That often can be seen as a very threatening gesture unless you like the person and you can tell right away that Caitlyn was taken aback but that her breathing started to change and she didn't try to escape."

"You're hot, cupcake." -Vi, E5: "Everybody Wants to Be My Enemy"

Those who have already watched the show may have noticed that the mere mention of the characters' relationship being a queer

one cannot be found anywhere.

According to HolyYuriMother, an LGBTQ+ anime and manga reviewer, "this was by design."

HolyYuriMother was able to discuss this with executive story editor Amanda Overton during an interview on Dec. 7.

"Mostly we just wanted to be true to the diversity that exists in Runeterra," Overton said. "Why should we carry the same systemic societal baggage from our world into a world that is completely different, with a completely different power structure and history?"

"Arcane" has achieved a 100% critic score and 97% audience score on Rotten Tomatoes and become Netflix's top-rated show on IMDB with a score of 9.4/10. It was released in three acts, each act being three episodes in length.

An announcement trailer for "Arcane" season two was posted on the "League of Legends" YouTube channel immediately after the final act of season one was released, exciting fans with more to come.

"Arcane" is a seamlessly woven masterpiece of a story and people do not have to be fans of "League of Legends" to enjoy it. Anyone that likes an immersive story with organic characters are doing themselves a disservice if they have not already picked up the show.

"You're hot, cupcake." -Vi, Ep. 5: "Everybody Wants to Be My Enemy"

'Percy Jackson and the Olympians' gets a do-over

By Victoria Bisette

"Percy Jackson and the Olympians," a New York Times best-selling book series written by Rick Riordan, has been greenlit for a TV series adaptation that will stream on Disney+. This is the second time the book series will be adapted since the movies that hit theaters in 2010 and 2013 respectively.

Buzz about the new adaptation began with a teaser trailer released during a Disney shareholder meeting on Dec. 10, 2020.

As of Jan. 25, fans received confirmation that the show will make its way to their screens through an announcement made by Riordan on Twitter and his personal blog.

Riordan said on his blog that he is an executive producer and has been involved in every writer's meeting, saying the team members are fans of the books.

Brooke Niemann, GHC



Brook Niemann poses with her nine-year old copy of "Percy Jackson and the Olympians: The Lightning Thief" on the GHC Paulding Campus. *Photo Illustration by Victoria Bisette*

Paulding campus student and decade-long fan of the "Percy Jackson" book series, said that she has high hopes for the series with Riordan's direct involvement in the writing process.

"I think this could turn out very well, and I want to be optimistic," Niemann said.

"Percy Jackson & The Olympians: The Lightning Thief" and "Percy Jackson: Sea of Monsters" were the first adaptations of the book series, developed by Fox Studios for movie theaters. The movies took creative liberty from the books and removed the original plotlines.

Niemann said she, like many fans, did not enjoy the movie adaptations. "They were well-directed movies that one could enjoy passively if you completely block out the fact that they're supposed to be adaptations," Niemann said.

Riordan's previous statement on his own opinions concerning the movie adaptation align with Niemann's concerns.

"You can tell how I'm feeling about it by what I do or don't say...For instance, check out my website, rickriordan.com. Do you see any indication there that the 'Percy Jackson' movies ever existed?... No, you do not,"

Riordan said.

In light of the new show, Riordan directly addressed this critique and point of concern for "Percy Jackson" fans like Niemann on Jan. 29 through his blog.

"I can tell you with 100 percent confidence that this [first] season follows 'The Lightning Thief' faithfully," Riordan said. "Although we're adding a lot of interesting nuances, depth, Easter eggs, and backstory that will keep the story fresh and fun even if you know the books inside and out."

Riordan says that closed casting has opened for the roles of Percy, Annabeth, and Grover, with plans to begin filming the first season this summer in Vancouver, Canada.

Plans for more seasons of the show have not been announced. However, Riordan's blog reveals that his own goal is for each season to follow the events of each book.

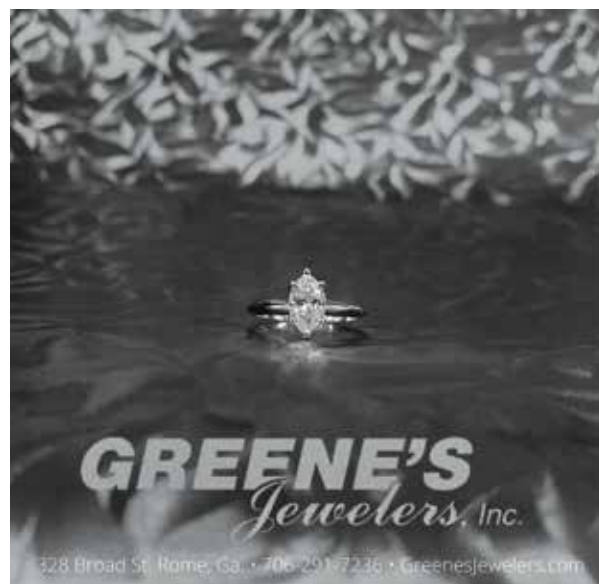
"I just hope that they cast actors who are closer to the ages of the characters in the books and don't 'PG-13' it up," Niemann said. "I do not want a sex scene in my childhood novel adaptation."

A statement on the show through whatsondisneyplus.com on Jan. 25 includes a summary of the plot and states the general target audience is tweens to young adults, so fans who share Niemann's concerns can breathe easy.

There is no set release date for the show.

More updates for "Percy Jackson" on Disney+ are available on the official Twitter, @PercyJackson_TV, for the show as it officially enters production.

GHC readers can catch up on the books by finding them through the GHC Library page or even requesting the first book by searching the title on the website.



International players bring unique perspectives

By Brandon Dyer

Since the basketball program at GHC started, women's head coach Brandan Harrell and men's head coach JJ Merritt are no strangers to bringing international players from across the globe.

While this year's men's team has two international players, Ubong Okon from Nigeria and Mamadou Diop from West Africa, the women's team is much more diverse, featuring two players in the starting lineup from other countries, Sasha Shishkina and Sandra Lin.

Shishnikina and Lin both arrived at GHC in 2019, with Shishnikina coming from Russia while Lin came from Taiwan.

Harrell brought in another international player this off-season, Rita Kun, who was graded as the best player at her position in her home country of Hungary.

Kun said that she was taken aback at how different the game of basketball was compared to Hungary.

"American basketball is so much faster and we have to concentrate on our defense more," Kun said. In Hungary, they play place, and sometimes these places are assigned to a certain person like point forward."

Kun said that she got to achieve one of her goals by playing somewhere outside of her home country.

"The offer here was a really big opportunity for me and I think that I will never play in Hungary again because I want to travel around

America or somewhere else in the world," Kun said.

The process of moving from Hungary to the United States isn't an easy one, according to Kun.

"I had a manager in Hungary and he said to me that he thought I could win in the United States so I took my SAT and studied more English," Kun said.

"I had an offer from coach Harrell in May and decided to announce my commitment to Georgia Highlands," Kun said.

Kun was ready to join the Lady Chargers after four months of paperwork.

The contrasting styles of play are also something that players in the United States have to adapt to. That way they can show their international teammates how the game differs from the country that they came from.

Chargers forward Jarred Rosser, who has resided in America his whole life, says that it is a challenge whenever the basketball team gets a new international player.

"When we first meet them, we ask them a lot of questions because it's different," Rosser said. "We ask where they came from, their background and how long they have been playing."

Different playing styles are something that Rosser says he has had to watch out for when it comes to opposing teams having international players as well.

"Playing against somebody from a different country is different from having a player from a different country on your team because

how they play basketball is different from how we play basketball," Rosser said.

Rosser roomed with a teammate from the Dominican Republic while he attended South Plains College and he said that experience opened his eyes to the international player scene.

"They paired us together for me to teach him English

so the whole semester there I had to be his translator," Rosser said. "I didn't even know Spanish that well so I had to use hints as to what he was talking about."

While international players require extra assistance in some areas, it is evident that players like Rosser can walk away with a different worldview and some life lessons along the way.

Rosser said that one of those lessons in life is that "Don't take anything for granted and just play hard all the time. You're bigger than basketball in terms of putting your country on your back and representing them."

**"American basketball is so much faster and we have to concentrate on our defense more."
- Rita Kun**



Art by Bree Messenger

Women's sports being held hostage by society

Sports Commentary by
Brandon Dyer

Throughout the centuries, women have been disadvantaged at every turn. Equality has come a long way, but underlying social issues remain.

Women's sports leagues do not get as much recognition as their male counterparts, such as basketball.

Last season at the women's college basketball Final Four, Oregon player Sedona Price decided that she was fed up with the contrasting ways that the NCAA approaches female and male athletes.

Price took to TikTok with a video displaying the weight rooms that the women were given for the Final Four compared to the men, with the difference between the two being nothing short of laughable.

According to the website Spotrac, the highest paid WNBA player, Skylar Diggins-Smith, made \$228,094 last season.

This would sound like a great salary to most people, but when it is compared to the minimum salary of their brother organization, the NBA, it's pocket change.

The absolute minimum of an NBA player for the 2021-2022 season is set at \$925,248.

There are several factors that play into why NBA players get paid so much more than their female counterparts such as revenue and TV deals, but what if it were because of a



The visiting side of the game between the Georgia Highlands Lady Chargers and East Georgia State Lady Bobcats is nearly empty during their game on Dec. 1, 2021. *Photo by Brandon Dyer*

bigger problem than just the income difference?

What if this is just another way to keep women from fighting for equal pay and it's a problem with how society view women?

These differences are well-documented to the point that it affects women playing college sports today, such as Lady Chargers basketball player O'Mariyah Tucker.

"I feel like we all come into games with a chip on our shoulder because people always talk about the men's basketball team and never the women's team," Tucker said.

Lady Chargers assistant coach NaeNae Sexton has grown up around the game of basketball since she was a kid and says that back then, there weren't any female

athlete role models that she looked up to.

"I think I really mimicked my brothers. Every time I played with them, I couldn't get a shot off and they would block my shot. Every time I seen how they reacted to it, it made me want it more," Sexton said.

Purdue University Professor Sheryl Cooky and another professor from the

"We can make ourselves look good without dunking." - O'Mariyah Tucker

University of Southern California researched how much airtime women's sports get on national television compared to their male counterparts, with the overwhelming majority of airtime being given to male sports.

They found that just 1.6 percent of national sports coverage was focused on women.

While there has been progress made in women's sports, coach Sexton believes that there still isn't enough being done on the subject.

"The WNBA has impacted the view of women's sports, but it's still disappointing that a man can come out after their first year of college whereas girls can't," Sexton said. "I think that's unfortunate. We have to go a full four years in college."

Something that is often used as a joke as to why the WNBA isn't entertaining is that they don't dunk the basketball, which is something that Tucker noted.

"We don't got to be dunking and showboating and all this other stuff that guys do to make our game entertaining," Tucker said. "We can make ourselves look good without dunking."

There are many ways to fix the attendance problem at women's sporting events, but until then, women's sports will unfortunately be put in the back of our minds until we as a society are ready to say that women's sports matter to us.