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THE SPECTATOR

seattlespectator

The official student run newspaper at Seattle University since 1933

May 9, 2024

Queer Prom Presents Renaissance Revenge



This event is something we needed. A dance, a celebration of queerness, a celebration of life

Hannah Cox

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Campus Currents

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Spectator's Picks

UPCOMING CAMPUS EVENTS

MAY

11
12:00 pm

Spring Carnival
The Quad

11
4:00 pm

SUVSA 19th Annual Xuân Festival:
Theo Ánh Sao Dẫn Lối/Follow the Starlight
Campion Hall Ballroom

11
7:30 pm

Outdoor Movie Night | The
Sharp End
UREC Green

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CENTER FOR ECUMENICAL AND INTERRELIGIOUS ENGAGEMENT

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CAMPUS MINISTRY



SU STUDENTS WELCOME TO JOIN THE NEXT RECORDING & WAFFLES

MAY 10TH AT 9:30 AM
CAMPUS MINISTRY OFFICE: STCN 120

STUDENTS SHARE KEYSTONE VALUES AND WAFFLES

NSSE

Katie Weston

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Complete by May 13th!

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WIN PRIZES!

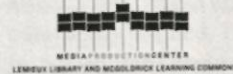
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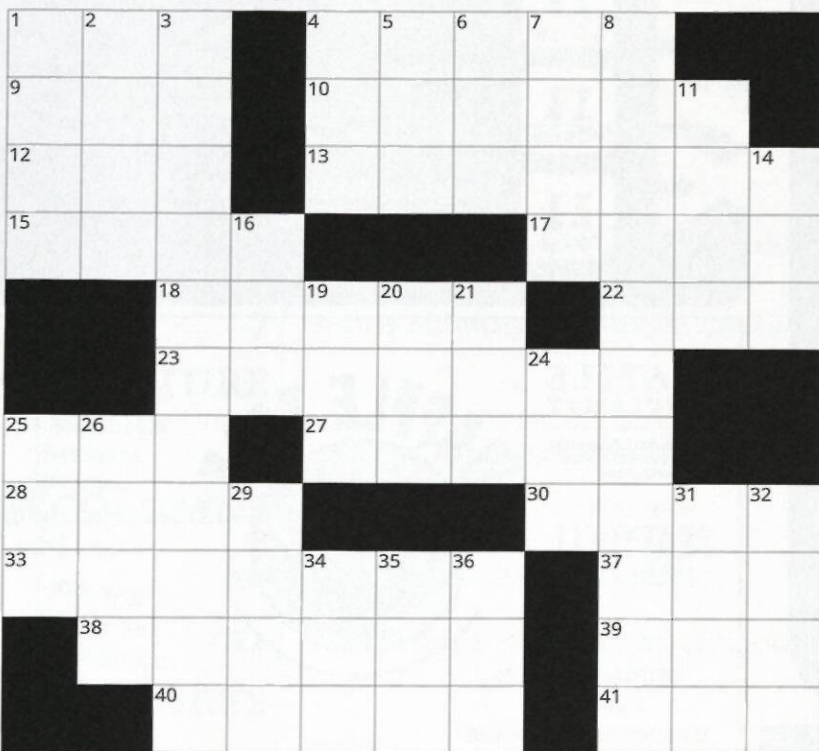


Crossword on pg. 4

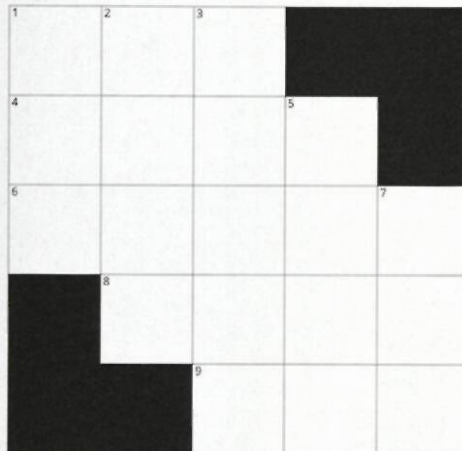
4 PUZZLES |

The Crossword

By Genny Sheara • May 9, 2024



The Mini



Across

- 1 Spanish "that"
- 4 Magical points in a video game
6. What the weather should be like in summer
8. Philosopher Descartes
9. Lil' sibling

Down

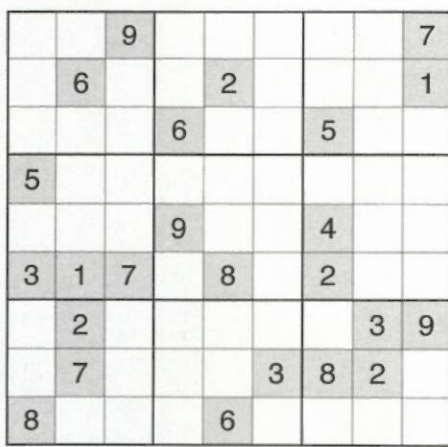
1. Letters likely on an ambulance
2. Dino's tail
3. Auntie ___ Pretzels
5. Years in Rome
7. Affirmative

Across

1. Unlikely, as in chance
4. In-app texting
9. Obamacare, formally
10. Holders
12. Wild ox
13. Division for the Seahawks
15. Four of five vowels for Old MacDonald
17. Hamilton's bills
18. Light blue
22. Federal intelligence agency
23. Seattle U's mascot, and the colorful theme for this week's crossword
25. Highest or lowest playing card
27. Past tense of 21D
28. Old, in an old way
30. Bathroom floor material
33. What a news anchor may read off of
37. Obtained
38. Pastry sold across from campus on 12th
39. Ad-___
40. European currency
41. Class schedule meeting twice-weekly

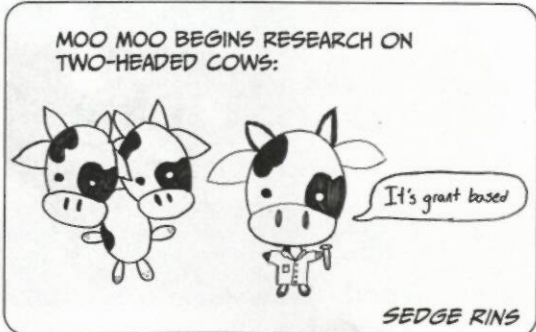
Down

1. Singer Webster
2. Bowls sold in the Sinegal Center
3. Hop on a late night flight
4. Giovanni of a Mozart opera
5. Class offering that's not 41A
6. Incorporated, abbreviated
7. Small amphibian lending its eye to the witches' brew in Macbeth
8. Sir Gawain's rival
11. U.S. I.D.'s
14. Airport organization
16. Verb suffix for becoming
19. Quiet ending
20. Organization hosting this week's Spring Carnival!
21. Chow down
24. Damp
25. New York Congresswoman
26. A student-led organization on campus
29. Light beige
31. Pirate's treasure
32. ___-A-Sketch
34. ___ Lingus
35. Radio tower in the Rocky Horror Picture Show
36. Campus support services for students with disabilities (abbrv.)



Sudoku

The Comics



SGSU's Newly Elected Positions

Abdullah El-Sherbeeny

Staff Reporter

The Student Government of Seattle University's (SGSU) elections for the beginning of 2024-2025 academic year have concluded. Results for the new positions were officially sent out April 26 by current SGSU President Isabelle Alamilla.

The new officers for the fall are as follows: President Sophia Cofinas, Senate Chair Jeremy Ruan, Chief Financial Officer Iona Robinson, Vice President of Academic Affairs Sarah Rauf, Student Employee Senator Zhanea Champagne, Multicultural Senator Masee Anderson, College of Arts and Sciences Senator Diego Gonzalez. These roles will take effect at the start of the year.

Some members expressed a readiness to plan new ideas during the summer for the upcoming academic year, and others are planning what they can do to improve what SGSU has already built.

The incoming president, Sophia Cofinas, a third-year public affairs and international studies double major, is currently the senate chair.

"When I walked into that first meeting freshman year, I was like 'one day, one day, I will get there.' And I met the president then, and I was like, this is so cool, I wanna be you one day, and I just feel so humbled and so grateful that it's actually happening," Cofinas expressed.

Cofina has been involved in student government since her freshman year and

has been climbing the ranks since then. She shared her ideas for the upcoming academic year.

"In terms of guiding, the number one thing that I want to do is build trust between SGSU and the student body. I want people to utilize our space," Cofinas said.

Aside from plans to build that trust with students, Cofina wants to make sure that the connections between the other SGSU members are built first. The 2023-2024 iteration of SGSU was plagued with frequent resignations, with unproductive discourse and a lack of trust, transparency and communication between members cited as the reasons for several of the departures.

Cofinas' other goal as president is to have more student engagement.

"I want to see people bringing their concerns to us. That's what we're here for. There's no work if there's no student voice," Cofinas said.

Alongside Cofinas, other elected board members talked about their plans and ideas for next year, such as Sarah Rauf, a second-year business management and marketing major, who will continue to serve as the vice president of academic affairs.

Rauf hopes to start working on a petition to help with the current issues around international students who come with visas to study nursing. Nursing is not considered a STEM major, which means they are not qualified to

stay after their visa expires by a year.

"I would like my committee to explore that and probably write up a petition or a resolution for the university to petition the U.S. government to add nursing onto their list of STEM majors," Rauf said.

Elected College of Arts and Sciences Senator Diego Gonzalez, a first-year criminal justice major, hopes to utilize SGSU's resources to help other clubs.

"I want to support clubs that way, because SGSU has the resources they have the connection that most clubs don't. It's just a way to support all clubs, mostly the clubs that have less members or less resources," Gonzalez said.

Jeremy Ruan, a third-year cell and molecular biology major, served as the SGSU legislative assistant last year and currently serves as the senate chair after switching positions from chief of staff.

Ruan had many doubts when he was running for his position due to the competition. However, because this has been a goal of his since he joined SGSU, he persisted.

"I am grateful that the student body believed in my abilities and chose me as their Senate Chair—and I will work hard to live up to that trust they have placed in me in my work next year," Ruan wrote to *The Spectator*. "One of my main goals for the new year is to build trust, unity and collaboration within SGSU Senators as a foundational step in order to carry out more effective and greater work that will benefit the student body as a whole."

Cofinas also has plans for how SGSU will deal with potential internal issues next year. She believes that adding "intentional recruiting and hiring" and looking for people passionate about their roles in SGSU will make a difference.

"I think that aligning the two is really important. There is SGSU, the governing body, and there are students on the ground advocating, and I think those two can be completely aligned. I see so much potential in our student body to get involved and to really make a change. I just want to really hit the ground running with that," Cofinas said.

SGSU has many aspiring board members hoping to show their support to their fellow Seattle U students and help amplify students' voices.



Imagining the World: Photography Exhibition Returns After Four-Year Hiatus

Caleb Stipkovits
Volunteer Reporter

This year's "Imagining the World" photography competition at Seattle University saw nearly 150 submissions from 37 different photographers, including the most faculty entries ever recorded. A six-judge panel was tasked with selecting eight winners and 15 honorable mentions, all of which were showcased in the Lemieux Library April 30.

College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) Dean David Powers expressed his excitement for the return of the event on the exhibition's web page, stating that "This edition is a testament not only to the university and college commitment to student engagement with global issues and communities, but it is also a testament to the energy and resiliency of our community."

Fourth-year Photography Major Hannah Sutherland won first place in the education abroad category for her entry titled "Boys of Dakar."

"It's actually a really fun story. [When I was] in Senegal I was walking around with my camera," Sutherland said. "These young boys saw me with my camera and came up to me and asked, 'take my photo, take my photo!' I just took one photo and it was a really lucky shot. I love that photo and it was kind of a happy accident."

A large part of the event's revival is thanks to Seattle U Alumna and First-year Graduate Student Alice Farrer. A student in the Master of Nonprofit Leadership program, Farrer is the Graduate Marketing Assistant for CAS.

Farrer said that part of her job was reinstating the photography exhibit as the program manager.

"This program had been on ice for a few years due to COVID, and [CAS was] trying to find a way to bring it back, but they just didn't have the staff," Farrer said. "When I got hired, they said it would be a great idea for me to be the person to do that."

Although Farrer said the process was difficult, she was glad everything came together in the end. The event had some issues with determining a location before finding a home on the second floor of the library. In the end, the event planners successfully hung up the chosen photos, ordered catering and created signs.

The judges consisted of three Seattle U faculty members and three professional photographers. Each person who entered the competition was allowed to submit up to five photos. The photos were blindly judged, which allowed some students to have multiple submissions in the gallery.

Since there were so many entries this year, Farrer said the judging process was strenuous and challenging.

"It was really difficult," Farrer said. "It was a six, seven-hour process of us being in the room, going through the pictures, and trying to narrow them down because there were some really, really great entries."

Sutherland also had another one of her photos selected for the gallery, one she took while studying in Morocco.

"[The photo] was taken from my bedroom, which is crazy because the view is insane.

It's honestly a big flex that I got to stay there for a week," Sutherland said. "One of my friends actually took this photo first on her iPhone, and I was like, 'That's a really awesome shot!' So honestly, I owe that shot to her."

Second-year Communication and Media Major Avani Koganti attended the event for a class and



Alexander Perez in front of his honorable mention, "Chapel"

was intrigued by what she saw.

"I think there's a story to be told with each photo," Koganti said. "Even if I'm not able to understand all of it, I feel like everyone can gather meaning from it in their own way and resonate with it somehow."

Farrer plans on running the event next year and hopes to build off of the success of the gallery.

"I'll be doing it next year as well, so I can learn from mistakes and learn what I can do better next time," Farrer said. "I think [I want] to make it more known because it was away for a few years, I want to make sure that freshmen get the word that this is a great opportunity to experiment. Not everyone here in the gallery are professionals, they're students, they're just people that manage to get a great picture."

Although the award ceremony is over, all 23 chosen photos are on display near the math lab on the second floor of the Lemieux Library. The photography exhibition is back and looks like it's here to stay.



Shreshtha Alok in front of her first place "The World From Above"



Laura Spitz talking to Professor Hahn



What is 'Mainstream' Hip-Hop in 2024? [OPINION]

Dylan Berman
Volunteer Reporter

Hip-hop's absolute cultural dominance in the American music landscape has grown increasingly unstable in recent years. The ubiquity and saturation of figures like Kanye West and Jay-Z is unmatched by any modern day equivalents. Kanye and other hip-hop legends, of course, still release music and are largely relevant, but arguably out of their prime.

Many look at the current landscape of hip-hop and feel unsure about the future of the upbeat music genre, and they are not alone. Who are the strong and talented new voices in the field?

Increasingly, 'break-out' artists find their footing in meme-able and repetitive tracks that feel designed for TikTok fame. Ice Spice is a lot of fun to listen to and talk about, but does anyone really expect her to release something influential, something with genuine artistic merit, something that will be remembered? Playboi Carti has a unique, infectious and evolving take on mumble rap, but he chronically refuses to release music.

The most significant news in hip-hop right now is the explosive beef between Drake and Kendrick Lamar. The artists have had problems with one another for years, but this full on war began with Kendrick's verse on "Like That," with Future and Metro Boomin, and has now escalated into enough diss tracks to create a collab EP between Drake and Kendrick. Drake, by leaning into and helping create a mainstream demand for soft, RnB and pop-infused hip-hop, is one of the genre's most commercially successful figures. Drake's last few projects have come and gone with little impact, and Kendrick's attack on his social impact exemplifies the larger stagnation occurring within hip-hop.

In recent years, hip-hop has spawned numerous niche and online microgenres. "Outsider trap," as a very broad term, could be seen to describe the explosions of 'digi-core' or 'hyper-trap.' Following Hyperpop's invention as a term and mainstreaming by the success of 100 Geecs, collectives like NOVA gang and artists like midwxst, Glaive, quinn, wido, Kid Trash and twikipedia infuse modern trap with blown out synths and a different approach to auto tuned vocals. Outside of a few one hit wonders, and breakouts like EricDoa, almost none of these rappers can

escape into the true mainstream.

Artists like Fax Gang, with the most unique and carefully put together take on bitcrushed trap, also innovate within trap as a subgenre. Artists like Bladee, delivering his take on the growing Rage sound in modern trap with his recent album *Cold Visions*, remain on the outskirts of full mainstream success, but still hold influence sonically and aesthetically, maintaining a unique and evolving sound. These artists' work doesn't necessarily appeal to many conventional hip-hop listeners, and despite the exceptions, much of it is as empty and derivative as it is enjoyable. That doesn't mean that this movement has lacked influence.

Just as pop and hip-hop had previously become increasingly blurred genres in artists like Doja Cat, Drake and Lil Nas X, hyperpop and trap are increasingly heavily intertwined. Post the birth of the Rage subgenre following Playboi Carti's "Whole Lotta Red" and artists like EricDoa, Yeat and Ken Carson, aspects of hyperpop— the blown out mixing, layered and sugary synths, heavy and stylized autotune— are more and more present in contemporary hip-hop.

Another large subgenre, Rage, has seriously changed hip-hop. Huge tracks like "I Miss the Rage," the endless hype cycle around a potentially Playboi Carti album drop, Yeat's mete-

oric rise, and artists like Destroy Lonely and Ken Carson signing to Playboi Carti's Opium label show the significance of this sound.

All of these artists, outside of Playboi Carti, fail to be broadly and culturally dominant. They are not household names, they are not widely artistically celebrated or recognized. Their music is infectious and sometimes innovative, but much of their popularity spreads through half ironic memes, and it feels to me that they're only taken seriously by some.

In many ways, the landscape of modern hip-hop is increasingly innovative, with large artists like Kendrick Lamar releasing divisive and experimental projects, including "Mr. Morale and the Big Steppers." Microgenres exploring new takes on trap, a subgenre many thought had been exhausted of all potential, can still be found in modern tracks. Maybe the decreased control hip-hop has in culture is simply because hip-hop's influence has spread across a variety of musical genres, with pop and hyperpop unable to exist without hip-hop.

The most popular and influential artists in the genre right now are figures who have been established for a while, and it's unclear what new voices will define this era, who will be remembered and in what musical direction hip-hop is heading.



KAY MCHUGH



Queer Prom Presents Renaissance Revenge

“Queer Prom” was a night of theatricality. The emancipatory utopia, housed in the alumni building in the Stuart Rolfe Room, May 3, provided an atmosphere of rich, cozy celebration. The night had poured in crowds of jeweled costumes. In its intimate space, the spirit of the room was playful. A lovely charade of kicking stilettos and angsty sounds. The angels were dancing.

Reign Riley, a third-year double major in film and media studies and sociology, disciplines his craft through a lens of societal reflection with his band “Fluttering,” an elaborate reinvention of alternative rock.

“Celebrating queerness is super important, especially how it relates to art and how the art scene is always tied to progressivism. Keeping that aspect of art alive, not only making sure that the art we’re playing is progressive, but that it also has some kind of progressive message too,” Riley said.

In the absence of critique, the bodies that dove themselves into the space that night grew feverish. As Riley’s student band, Fluttering picked up their kits and screamed their song, the people jumped and jumped.

Challenging heteronormative structures on campus, in the promotion of LGBTQ+ rights and experiences, fosters a sense of belonging.



Hannah and Kamettii serving looks.

FERN CRESON

The prom grew ever intimate, gifted to queer identities.

AshLee Day, assistant director at MOSAIC, talked of the resurgence of queer sanctuaries on campus and the genesis of the event.

“The MOSAIC Center hosted the event once before and it was suggested by students, but that year was 2019 and after COVID, we had to start from scratch,” Day said.

Reestablishing events that celebrate queer culture at Seattle University necessitated a collaborative effort for the creation of an inclusive community that celebrates diversity. The arduous shove for events the Pride Link had cultivated underscores the ongoing commitments to advocate for LGBTQ+ rights, visibility, and resources within the university collective.

“This year, we went from one person on staff to four students working 10 to 15 hours a week. That has shifted and grown what’s available, but the first piece of the goal is community building and the resources for support,” Day said.

There are six Links spread throughout campus aimed to support student populations. These are spaces welcoming to various identities of student life.

“This space has been here and it’s been for LGBTQ+ students for a while. But, previously, it was just a room, there were pride flags, and nothing was happening. It really wasn’t until last year when I hired Sam [Grande, the event’s coordinator] that we started hosting multiple programs and we’re hoping this event can be a part of a larger consistent calendar of what we have to offer” Day said.

The efforts being made by MOSAIC, launching venues for queer bodies, surpasses the initiatives the university has done historically. In an attempt to forego institutional homogeneity, MOSAIC seeks to pioneer inclusive channels that recognize the liveliness of queer experiences, fostering an environment where individuals feel seen, heard and valued.

Elaborating on the safe haven for diversity and acceptance, Alex Takemoto, a third-year interdisciplinary liberal studies major, articulates the Pride Link at MOSAIC as a refuge

Hannah Mwangi
Staff Reporter

worth investment. The space beacons as more than a harbor of inclusivity, but as a manifestation of change.

“This is a place where if someone needs to vent, or if someone needs to sit or take a nap, the door’s always open. We don’t have all of the resources that the other [links] do, but we’ve managed to make a welcoming spot with what we have,” Takemoto said.

They looked around the room and pointed out the pieces that had bared the space. At the beginning of the year, “We didn’t have a couch, we didn’t even have that whiteboard,” Takemoto said.

The room had been underutilized and unoccupied before the current staff took it in. Now, the Pride Link sits in STCN 390 with an abundance of color and trinkets collected by the staff.

“The door is always open. I’ve gotten a lot of people coming through here just to say hi, and then those turn into three hour long conversations. It’s a safe haven, and it doesn’t matter how much someone knows about you, there’s just a general sense of safety and belonging here,” Takemoto said.

Sam Grande, a fourth-year film and media studies major and the event’s coordinator, had requested that “Queer Prom” take place this year. Its one-time legacy of representation, from 2019, inspired Grande’s advocacy. The event’s theme played off “Renaissance,” meant to avenge a history where queerness had been marginalized. Or, rather, intercept the theme with the modernity of Beyoncé’s disco X house music flair that acclaimed LGBTQ+ identity.

Hannah Cox, a first-year social work major, collaborated on the event. She talked about her excitement for the prom, expressing her anticipation for what the MOSAIC Center’s team had created.

“This event is something we needed. A dance, a celebration of queerness, a celebration of life,” Cox said.

For many, this was their first prom, a space catered to the celebration of queer identity without fear of judgment. Rainbow banners

dressed the walls, as glittering streamers waved at the entrances. They huddled in the room's main space, at the feet of the student band, exchanging laughs and small conversation. Tonight, they would create memories, surrounded by embrace.

Ren Meyers, a second-year film and media studies major, soaked in the event's atmosphere belonging to them.

"I didn't go to my [high school's] prom for a multitude of reasons. COVID was one of them and it was also scary to go in general. This event is a lot more approachable, because I know everyone here, I knew that everyone was going to be similar to me, and in high school, it wasn't that way," Meyers said.

As Meyers spoke, a kaleidoscope of identities, appearing in angel wings and clownery, clustered the building, each outfit a testament to the blend of self-expression. Fashion, here, highlighted the ensemble of bold and striking personalities, a way to express queerness without whispering a word.

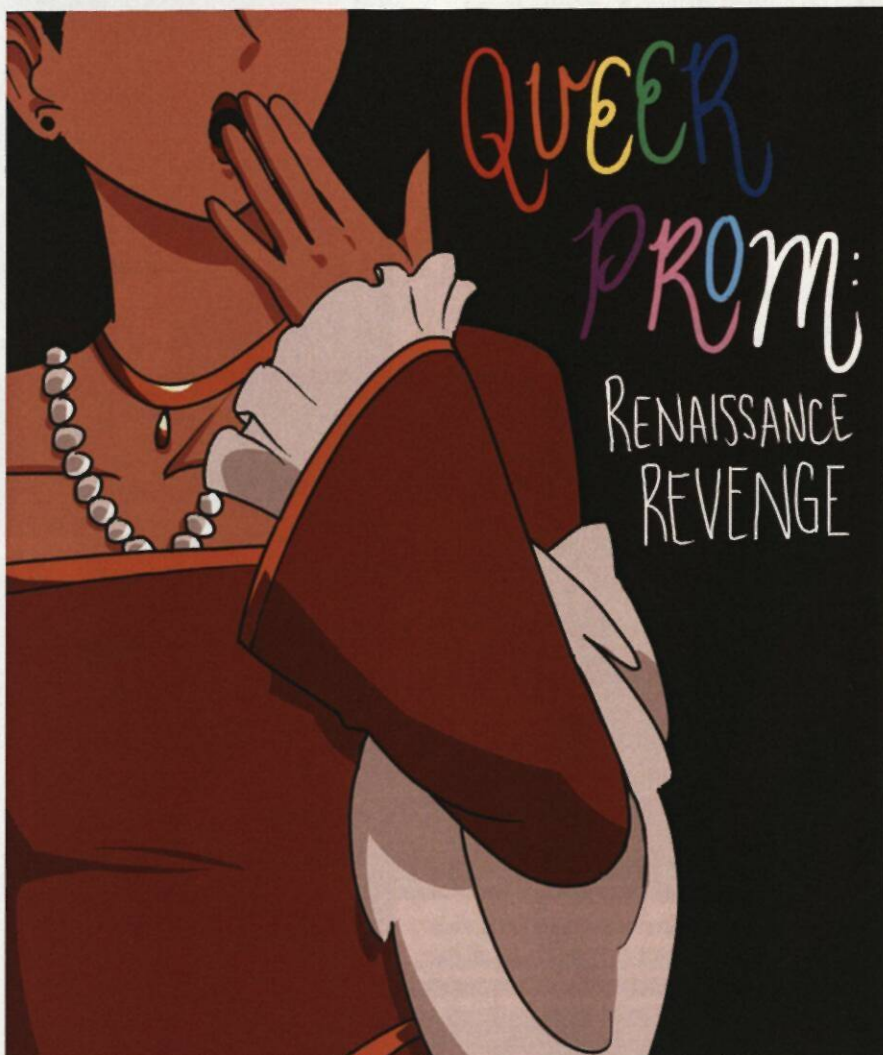
Kyra Hart, a second-year psychology major, and Tristynn Cadez, an incoming Seattle U student, walked in while giggling with each other. Their attire had been textured in lace and leather, their makeup pale and gothic. Hart laughed and explained their ensemble.


"It's definitely a little jester-y-esque," Hart said.

In this space that upset normality, the authenticity in fashion and culture felt free. The lure to behave and dress in a way that aligns with their identity festered all around the building, where diversity was not only invited but encouraged. Cadez emphasized the importance of events like the "Queer Prom," in hopes that this night encouraged the involvement of queer bodies into the collective.

“We gotta have a place where we can feel safe! A place to feel loved, and normal. I remember going to prom in high school and feeling weird. We need to feel accepted with whatever we do and without judgment

- TRISTYNN CADEZ



ANNABELLE DEGUZMAN-CARINO 

Grande elaborated on their process pioneering the event, noting that students had wanted smaller events highlighting queerness throughout the quarters as opposed to low funded festivities just once a year.

"There's nothing really established for queer students throughout the school year. We have the Lavender Celebration, but that's exclusive to our graduating queer students already leaving the school. It's important to celebrate them, yes, but they should be celebrated throughout their four years. I had advocated for 'Queer Prom' as an event opened for anyone wanting to come but especially for queer identities," Grande said.

In advocating for institutional recognition of queer bodies, Day reflects on the collabo-

orative efforts that had led to the prom.

"SU definitely has room for growth in terms of creating spaces and availability for queer students. You have to convince people that something is valuable before they'll invest in it. These past couple of years, and working with this team of students, in particular, has led to convincing [the university] that it's worth their investment," Day said.

There's a lot that needs to be done in labeling our campus a sanctuary for all. The hypocrisy of inclusivity festering our campus contradicts the efforts the university has put into creating spaces and resources for queer identities. The MOSAIC Center will continue their push in advocating havens at Seattle U and progressing the integration of queer events into the campus itinerary.

After the Show: Dean Lewis Part 2

Sean Alexander

Director of Photography

I first learned of Dean Lewis in October when I was asked to cover his show at the Neptune Theatre. Leading up to the show and my initial interview with him, I listened to a good quantity of his music, preparing for and getting an idea of what his music is all about.

After speaking with him and attending his show, I continued listening to his music and he quickly became one of my favorites. Not just because of the relatability I found in his lyrics, but because of his overall honesty and commitment to his craft.

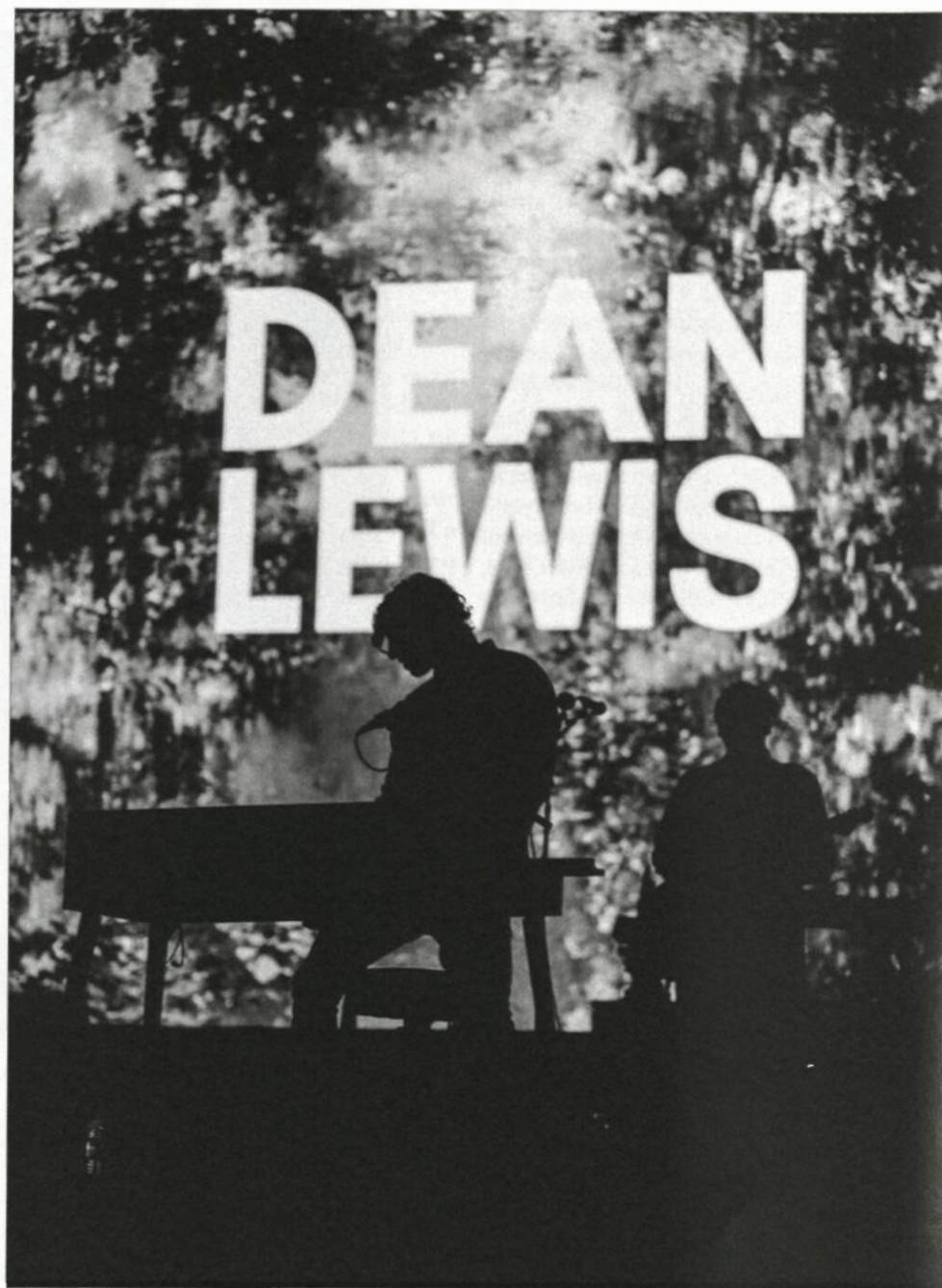
During our most recent conversation, Lewis and I had the opportunity to talk about all the different things that had happened for him over the last few months and his upcoming third album.

The new album could have been finished six months ago, according to Lewis. However, he has gotten on a roll of writing new songs that he can't hold back till the fourth album. Lewis loves every song included and feels like the vibe closer resembles that of his first album as opposed to the second one. Part of this is due to the inclusion of more acoustic guitar riffs and melodies like those in "A Place We Knew."

"If anything it's gone a bit more raw," Lewis said. "I think it just sounds a little bit more me. It's maybe my first album but going even further into that organic sound."

SA: When you say it's more "you," what do you mean by that?

DL: "Well, you spend so much time throwing things at the wall trying to see what works. And I think sometimes with that first album, there's an intuition with how it all comes together and you have so long to put it together. Sometimes you need to come to your third album to have some perspective of where you want to go, who you wanna sound like, and who you are."



Lewis has only had two or three months off at a time in between touring and shows. This time was key in leveraging his time for writing new music without distractions. According to Lewis, sometimes when you are writing songs some just don't hit or are a dud and others you can recognize as being good. He is grateful that despite all the time on the road the last thirty or so songs he has written have been good in his eyes.

SA: For you, what is a dud versus a success when you're writing songs?

DL: "That's a good question. A dud is sort of faceless. It doesn't say anything. It doesn't impact me emotionally. The melodies aren't that good or the lyrics don't make you feel something. You get those now and then. I think I'm just on a bit of a good, good vibe right now. Everything's just clicking, but I'm scared for the future. 'Cause you go through those periods where you only can write duds. Right. But right now, the good ones are flowing."


SA: So do you have a target you're trying to hit when it comes to the amount you're producing?

DL: "A lot of it's the bandwidth. A lot of the time there'll be three months of just touring and then I'll go, 'Oh, I should do this and this and this.' And then like in three days I'll write three ideas and email off Ruth B or email Martin Garrick or Kygo and we'll go, 'let's do a song or something like that,' and then we'll just do it. Sometimes I feel like I'm working hard when I'm doing all this cool stuff that I have the opportunity to do and I try to capitalize on it 'cause I have the opportunity to do it. And other times I'm just focused on trying to get by. 'Cause maybe life's tiring at that point or so much touring or I don't have the energy to write. A lot of times it's really hard to write songs when you're on the road. But I'm always really productive when I feel like I'm not where I want to be. So I start doubling down and writing heaps more and I force myself into productivity."

Currently, Lewis is touring with the band AJR, as their opener. At first, this may seem like an odd pairing given how different their music is, however, there is a method behind that. Touring with a band of their size gives Lewis the chance to perform in front of people who are new to his music and not just one or two potential new fans but upwards of 10,000 in a night.

DL: "It's been different because you have to learn how to adjust on stage. People don't really know my songs. So how do you bring people in when they don't know you? And it's been a challenge, but It's been really fun. My goal is to go out there and go, they don't know who I am and I'm an opener. I'm probably a bit of an inconvenience, but I'm gonna convince them that we're good by the end of it. We have a really good attitude and we try to do as best we can. And we're noting that the crowds have been great and it's working for us so far."

Lewis' success is only increasing on a daily basis, but this has not stopped him from being a human and he still has concerns and worries like everyone does from time to time. This is apparent in the music he creates, and part of why it has resonated with millions of people across the world is it is incredibly human and a testament to what it means to move through life both the good, the bad and the chaos that fills the gaps in-between.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY SEAN ALEXANDER 



Totally Booked: “The Possibility of An Island”



Dylan Berman
Volunteer Reporter

“The Possibility of an Island” is the first book I’ve read by controversial French author Michel Houellebecq. Houellebecq uses a unique narrative framing to explore themes of sex, love, aging, death and immortality, challenging modern culture’s endless desire for freedom and progress as ends in themselves.

In the tortuous midst of an unofficial relationship with an Italian college student named Esther, the novel’s protagonist, Daniel, decides to spend some time with the Elohimites at their volcanic island compound during an important cult ceremony. Directly modeled after the real life cult, the Raelians, the Elohimites numbers are growing, promising the near future invention of perfect genetic cloning to guarantee immortality. Once the cult preserves a person’s genetic code, they can be recreated upon death with their consciousness intact, memories and all.

While the cult may not truly invent their genetic cloning procedure during the lifetime of Daniel, despite what they lead the public to believe, the reader is aware that eventually, the cult succeeds. Interspersing the chapters of Daniel (labeled as Daniel 1), are chapters from Daniel 24, and then Daniel 25. The Elohimites preserve Daniel 1’s genetic code during his lifetime, and use it to create a long line of clones in the future. Daniel 23 is literally the twenty third clone of Daniel. As a requirement of the cult, when one is going to ‘die’ (insofar as the Elohimites really believe in death), they write a ‘life story’ for the next generation clone to read. Daniel 1’s chapters are his written life story, and Daniel 24’s chapters are his commentary on the life of Daniel 1, and on humans more broadly.

Daniel 1 is a deeply cynical, intelligent and dysfunctional B-tier (but still important) celebrity, famous for his offensive comedy and avant-garde violent short films. A depressed, misanthropic and controversial figure with nothing very positive to say about the state of things, Daniel 1 could certainly be read as a self insert for Houellebecq.

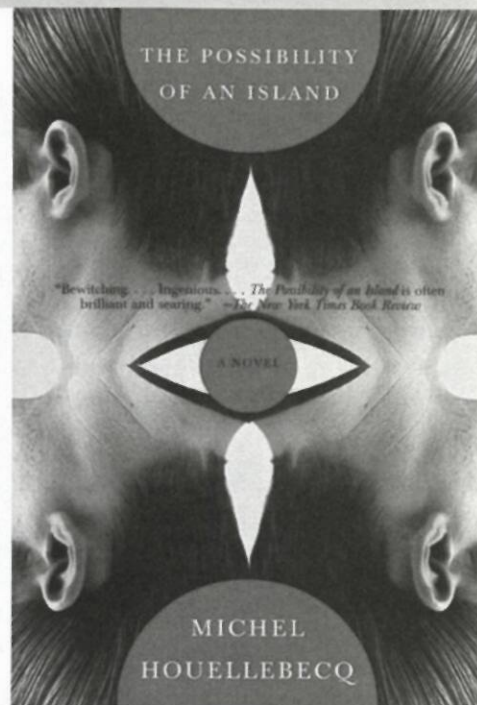
Since Daniel 1’s chapters are autobiographical, he intersperses descriptions of his day to day with dense cultural commentary. His perspectives on modern life are disgusting as often as they are insightful. Frequently they

are both. Daniel has thoughts on Teilhard de Chardin and progressive christianity, Vladimir Nabokov, Harmony Korine, the trend towards barbarism in popular culture, the horrors of physically aging, and changing societal norms around sex.

Without excessive quoting, it’s hard to get across the frequency, brutality and, at times, undeniable accuracy of the book. Houellebecq cannot be dismissed as someone trying too hard to be a cynic. Although the often offensive nature of Daniel 1’s rants may be too much for some readers, Houellebecq clearly writes with conviction and intelligence.

Daniel 24 doesn’t consider himself human. He lives in the far future of the ‘neohumans.’ Living in complete social isolation outside of online communication, unable to experience powerful negative or positive emotions, true sexual desire or love, the neohumans reflect on humanity from a future that views our current human values and lives as nearly incomprehensible, ridiculous and destructive. Houellebecq imagines the ideological and practical details of this future, and of the Elohimites, with care and intelligence. The perspectives of the neohumans, commenting on Daniel 1’s life story as a window into our culture, impressively call so many fundamental things we hold dear into question, and ask the reader to reflect on how a faux-utopian future like theirs could easily emerge from our world. The book is powerfully disorienting in its presentation of our society through the eyes of a completely different one.

Central to the novel is an attack on our culture’s attitudes towards aging and treatment of the old. Reacting to a 2003 French heatwave that left many elderly people dead in nursing homes, Daniel 1 says “that only an authentically modern country was capable of treating old people purely as rubbish.” Daniel, and (it feels) Houellebecq, thinks that our society genuinely hates the elderly, and unhealthily worships youth and beauty. Daniel is unable to cope with physical changes of age both in himself and in his second wife, whom he leaves remorselessly as she ages. Daniel is unendingly tortured by his loss of youth. This fits in with the mass appeal of the Elohimites, and their promise of immortality.



COURTESY VINTAGE INTERNATIONAL

We learn from Daniel 23 that most neohumans choose to die and be reborn before 50, since they recognize a purposelessness and horror in life beyond that point.

Another central focus and incredibly influential factor in Daniel 1’s life is sexuality. He straightforwardly says that he would kill himself if it wasn’t for the joys of sex. Houellebecq writes sex like he writes a lot of things, with uncomfortable detail and complete emotional detachment. He also seems unable to write female characters with much depth, and he writes them barely at all outside of the few that Daniel is sexually involved with. Nonetheless, Daniel’s life and struggles do a lot to explore the intense power of sexuality and love, as well as the evolution of romantic and sexual behavioral norms.

Houellebecq’s prose is minimalistic, clever and dry, but nonetheless beautiful. Evocative visuals are woven throughout the commentary of both Daniel 1 and Daniel 24. Whether it’s the stark volcanic rock of the Elohimite compound, the endless flashy and tasteless luxury homes, hotels and restaurants that Daniel 1 bounces between, or the endless puddled sands of what used to be the ocean in the neohuman future, Houellebecq chooses setting masterfully.

Nasty, hilarious, horribly cynical and yet equally celebratory of our absurd existence as a species, “The Possibility of An Island” is philosophically and narratively compelling. If you don’t mind the offensive, abrasive commentary signature to Houellebecq, I would highly recommend this book. Outside of the intense negativity, or perhaps through it, Houellebecq has a lot to say.

Rapinoe-less Reign Struggle Out of the Gates in '24

Natalie Schorr

Social Media Manager

The 2024 National Women's Soccer League (NWSL) season has been off to a rough start for the Seattle Reign. After making it all the way to last year's finals, spending a few weeks at the bottom of the table is a far fall from grace.

The team saw quite a few changes between the 2023 and 2024 seasons. One major development was the retirement of star Megan Rapinoe, who had played for the team her entire NWSL career. They also lost two of their United States Women's National Soccer Team (USWNT) players in Rose Lavelle and Emily Sonnett to NY/NJ Gotham. While the team still has players who have earned USWNT caps, none of them have been named to recent rosters and some represent other federations. Another large change was the return to the original Seattle Reign branding.

Despite the departure of multiple star players, the Reign were able to start the season strong with a win against the Washington Spirit. However, the team would go on to lose five games in a row, one of the longest losing streaks in club history. The Reign had a lot to prove going into their latest game against San Diego Wave if they wanted to start climbing back up the table from the bottom spot.

The team was determined not to lose a sixth. Reign goalkeeper Laurel Ivory felt a different energy going into the San Diego match.

"I knew. You could just feel it. We were going to pull something out today," Ivory said in a postgame press conference.


The game started out with a bang after Reign forward Tziarra King was ejected from the game in the ninth minute with a red card. Shortly after, the Wave's Kyra Carusa was able to capitalize on the confusion and score a goal.

The early red threw a wrench in the plan for Seattle. Having to compete down a player for almost the whole game made the fight to the top all that much harder.

"Obviously when you have someone sent off as early as we did, the full game plan goes out the window a little bit," Reign head coach Laura Harvey said. "When something happens so early in the game, you can either crumble or you can stand up and fight."

The Reign were not going to crumble. The players showed they could stand up and fight, and were able to keep the Wave to that



NATALIE SCHORR 

single goal. Then, in the 34th minute, Bethany Balcer was able to win a tackle against opposing keeper Kailen Sheridan to equalize the score.

After half the fight continued. With 10 cards being given out in total, both yellow and red, fight was an appropriate word to describe the match. The Reign were able to keep the Wave away from their goal, and if they made it that far, Ivory was there to make save after save.

"I think defensively we did an unbelievable job," Harvey said. "We were still aggressive, we still defended on the front foot. We made it difficult for them."

Through all of that, the game was still all tied up. Then, in the 89th minute, a free kick from Ji So-Yun out of the Wave's box was converted into a goal by a header from Veronica Latsko.

It was not quite time to celebrate yet. Because of the amount of yellows and free kicks, nine minutes of stoppage time were added on to the clock. The Reign kept up their defense and held their lead. In the dying minutes of the game, the Wave were granted one last chance in a corner kick. Ivory was able to make the save, but when the ball was played out everything stopped as the referee went over to check the Video Assistant Referee. It was unclear for what at first, but the crowd was soon able to see that they were

checking for a potential red card to the Wave.

The whole stadium seemed to wait with baited breath as the ref checked the replay. Then, as she blew her whistle and came back onto the field, Wave midfielder Kristen McNabb was shown a red card. After that, the game was finally over, and the Reign were able to celebrate their second win of the season.

"All I kept saying after the game was 'what just happened?'" Ivory said.

The home crowd was up on their feet cheering after their team broke their losing streak. Throughout the almost 120 minutes of play, the Reign were able to show that they should not be written off just yet.

"I think it just shows that this team has grit, and that's the backbone of a championship team. You don't win anything without grit, and we showed that for 90 minutes tonight," Latsko said.

The Reign still have a long way to go to get to the top. After the weekend of NWSL play, they are only in 11th out of 14 teams. If they are able to keep performing at the level they showed against the Wave however, they may just be able to get back to where they were last year.

George Burquest

Staff Reporter

Named Western Athletic Conference (WAC) Freshman of the Year, Seattle University Men's Golfer Kevin Li had an impressive end to his first season. Li became the first freshman to win the WAC individual title since 2015, and the second Redhawk to ever win the conference tournament.

Taking place April 26-28 in Payson, Ariz. at The Golf Club at Chaparral Pines, Li shot a three-round total of six-under 210 (69-72-69), securing himself first place and a ticket to the NCAA regionals by one stroke.

However, it was not always a straight road to success during Li's freshman season. The business economics major had to overcome his own stress and self-criticism in order to play his best golf of the season when it was win or go home at the WAC Championship.

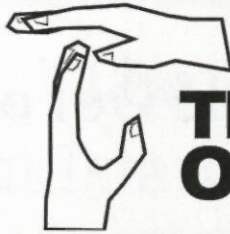
The following is a condensed May 3 interview with Li.

GB: Obviously you ended up finding success, but what were your expectations headed into your freshman season?

KL: My primary goal for the year was to get a couple of collegiate top-10's, and as a freshman, that can be difficult. You have to compete with everybody else in the field, including your own teammates... I struggled a lot throughout the year, I never got a collegiate top-10 until the WAC conference.

GB: You mention struggling at times, how did the season go for you up until the WAC Championship?

KL: Interestingly, my national ranking reflected my mental state... During the fall I was playing better than I expected, but then, over winter break, I was down in Florida playing in tournaments, and was struggling until I received a text from my coach after he saw my scores, telling me that I needed a break and was stressing myself out... my mental was being left behind. When tournaments came around in early spring, I would fall apart at the end because I was expecting too much from myself. Soon enough, my ranking fell as much as I wanted to raise it, and I knew that I had to change my mindset and commit to what my coach had told me: live in the present, trash all the stuff that happens before and stop over-anticipating. It's almost dramatic. In my first-ever conference tournament, which was pretty stressful, I lost sleep the week before and even during the tournament. Given all of that, it was such a great experience to win.

**TIME
OUT****Kevin Li Wins
the WAC**PHOTOGRAPHY BY KEVIN FRAZIER 

It will be a memory for a lifetime.

GB: How did you manage to play such good golf when you had so much stress during the conference tournament?

KL: The last time I had won was at an amateur tournament that led to me earning a spot on the team here at Seattle U. In both that tournament and the WAC, I had similar amounts of stress—I was losing sleep the night before the final round. For the WAC tournament, I couldn't even eat my breakfast properly. But, I knew the stress would fade away when I stepped onto the driving range, because that's exactly what happened when I last won... Once I got onto the course, I was able to talk myself into concentration mode, focusing on the things that I can control, rather than thinking about what position I will end up in or how other players are going to do.

GB: Was there any point you thought to yourself, "I could actually go win this thing?"

KL: Oh, throughout the whole tournament. After the first round, I was in solo second-place and I realized, ok, other people are messing up. The course was sneaky, people made some huge mistakes by just missing a little bit, so it required consistency and accuracy. It was one of those courses which fit my type. My ball flight is consistent and relatively precise, so the conditions were to my advantage.

GB: So what comes next? What are your

thoughts heading into the NCAA regionals?

KL: Honestly, what's next is making up homework... But yeah, based on how I played in the spring, I wasn't planning on regionals. But when the moment comes, you have to seize it.

GB: Does this accomplishment during your freshman year affect your outlook for the next three years?

KL: Not for me. In my perspective, these things shouldn't affect the way you work at all. I am hungry for achievements, but a very important lesson I learned this year is that you can't purposefully go after it, you have to trust the process and put in the work. Nobody can guarantee when they are going to win a tournament or when the work they put in will result in their game.

GB: Do you have plans to pursue golf professionally after Seattle U?

KL: Yes, absolutely. It's been my dream to turn pro since I was six. It has taught me so many life lessons and I am just so appreciative of my parents for leading me here, and I really appreciate all the work I have been able to put in over the years.

Li will compete in the NCAA's Racho Sante Fe Regional May 13-15. If he finishes in the top six out of 15 golfers, he will advance to the NCAA National Championships later in May.

Bridget Lawrence
Staff Reporter

Women's Rowing is Paddling into New Waters

Seattle University has 20 Division I level sports. One of the most recent additions to this number was the transition of the women's club rowing team to a DI sport in 2012.

Head coach Jenny Parker was involved with this transition when she joined the staff in 2012 after coaching at the University of Washington. She became interim head coach in February of 2013 and then officially became the head coach in July.

The decision to move from a well-established program like UW to Seattle U's was not a small one for Parker. Now 11 years later, she has stuck with her choice. Parker's team has undergone structural change since its move to Division I—the program used to rely solely on walk-ons for the first seven or eight years. That affected the team's ability to choose from experienced rowers.

"We would recruit but we didn't have any scholarships for a number of years so the recruits were students who were already coming to Seattle U and wanted to row," Parker said.

Five years ago the team went from no scholarships, one paid coach and renting rack space from the Seattle Rowing Center to two paid coaches, their own boat house and just over four scholarships to offer.

"Lots of big changes in the last few years, which has been awesome to see, the growth of the program and the changes in competitiveness. It's been a pretty amazing experience in building this program," Parker said.

With the addition of scholarships, Parker has seen a change of competitiveness in the team throughout the years because of the ability to recruit.

Cami Torres, a freshman English major, was recruited for the team and chose Seattle U despite the newness of the rowing program.


"I cared more about the amount of personal ties I could make instead of a school with rowing prestige," Torres said.

Rowing is a naturally competitive sport because there are only so many seats available. The team usually races two boats with eight seats and one four-seat boat. While other programs are more time-oriented and focus on posting times from training off the water so everyone knows where they stand compared to the rest of their teammates, Seattle U is not as focused on that aspect of rowing.

That being said, there's still a personal interest to row faster and get a better seat in a boat. Some, such as Senior rower Ceci Logan, enjoy the challenge.



SU rowers pictured during the Cascade Cup 3V8+ at the Windermere Cup along the Montlake Cut

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JORDIE SIMPSON 

"I want my boat to be ahead. I'm going to push myself because I'm not going to be able to control what other people are doing, but if I'm pushing myself really hard maybe my boat will be ahead," Logan said.

The competition for seats is something that Torres also likes about the sport.

"That's the beautiful thing about rowing... It's so mental because even before you're racing you're just competing with yourself to see how fast you can row and what limits you can break," Torres said.

Finding teams to be competitive against is a challenge for the team because they are the only rowing team in the Western Athletic Conference, forcing them to compete independently.

"I think being in a conference would definitely test the limits of the team because we would be competing with some fast teams which would probably be a good push for us," Logan said.

Other well-established rowing schools may have fully recruited teams, but Seattle U still relies heavily on walk-ons. The number of walk-ons change from year to year but the team usually looks for them in the fall.

Those who are on scholarship don't feel like they are affected by new walk-ons who may join the team with no rowing experience.

"The coxswains see everything and know what a stroke is supposed to look like and they are definitely the ones taking point in making sure the walk-ons are getting attention," Logan said.

With a reliance on walk-ons and a developing rowing program, Seattle U does not have an edge over other competing schools. Their season officially finished on May 4 at the

Windermere Cup hosted by UW. There were nerves expressed about the last race of the season for both Torres and Logan. They were excited that it was at home and they could have supporters come and watch their race.

"Even if we don't necessarily win, I'm very proud of our team and just how far we've come in this last year," Torres said.

All three of Seattle U boats finished last in their respective races—putting an ignominious end to the season. Ending the season, they can only look to the new recruits and walk-ons to see how this program continues to grow and develop. With scholarships available to the team, women's rowing should be able to bring in more experienced rowers and drive the team to a DI level of competition in the coming years.



SU's women's rowing team pictured at the Windermere Cup during the Cascade Cup V8+ race.

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