

Off & Away: Yay or Nay?

By Ryan Hewitt

The start of the new school year brought about many changes. Among them are new students, teachers, and rules. One rule in particular was a large change from last year, and it stood out to students and teachers immediately.

The rule is, of course, the new cell phone policy: Off and Away. As stated by the student handbook, cell phones must be “turned off from the first bell to the last bell of the day” and “kept in a zippered section of the student’s backpack or in the student’s locker.” This, in theory, will reduce distractions and stress for students during the school day.

The change was met with mixed reviews. Sophomore Camila Castellanos says “I don’t appreciate the new rule because I feel like it is harder to communicate with my family.” Many students echo similar feelings. “I feel disconnected, and if my parents make a last-minute change, I won’t find out until the end of the day,” said Thomas Koziol.

Other students think the new rule is pointless. Studies show that not having access to a cell phone during school increases focus, but many students say that they notice no change in stress and focus levels. Eighth grader Sawyer Straley noted, “It hasn’t affected me extremely since I didn’t use my phone often at school before.”

Teachers were also asked to try to keep their cell phones off and away during the school day. College counselor Ms. Mann says, “I don’t love the policy, but I think it can be a good opportunity to see how our phones affect us daily.” Teachers seem to generally be more in favor of the rule than students.

Marist is not alone with this change. Schools around the nation have been enacting stricter phone policies to control teens’ growing addiction to their phones. Off and Away is clearly still in the testing phase, and changes to the rule are expected as administrators reevaluate its effectiveness.

Only time will tell whether the policy lasts long term and how effective it proves to increase student concentration.

Spain Finds Marist Town

We excel at welcoming new faces to campus. Turn to our Faith section where staff writer Anna Herrero reports on the most recent visitors to our school.

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Senior Internships

By Emma Schramm

Over the summer of 2024, members of the class of 2025 participated in a variety of internships in order to experience fields of study that interested them and to help begin making decisions about their future careers.

A wide variety of companies and organizations from across Georgia hosted the internships, and the interns ventured into fields such as pediatrics, dentistry, law, theater, education, veterinary sciences, communications, and photography for the first time.

The thirty-five interns applied for their internships and practiced job interview skills with the organizations that accepted them. Through interacting with different types of people and demographics and stepping out of their comfort zones, students cited their experiences as valuable towards determining their future studies in college and

possible career paths for the rest of their lives.

The internships also gave them a chance to learn about the requirements of a real-world career, such as dressing according to the dress code and arriving to work consistently on time.

Camille Gipson interned with the Georgia Office of the Attorney General. “I completed tasks like data entry and data collection for a Valdosta gang prosecution meeting. I also sat in on Georgia Supreme Court and Court of Appeals oral arguments and spoke with Medicaid fraud, consumer protection, white collar crimes, and public relations teams,” she said. “I learned I definitely want to become a lawyer.”

Mia Abujawdeh worked with Catholic Charities of Atlanta to evaluate if a career in immigration law would be right for her. “I worked with green card applications primarily, so being able to meet the people I filed

applications for was amazing. It helped me put together everything and feel connected to all the people I crossed paths with,” Mia said.

“I got to shadow consultations and meetings, so I was able to hear so many languages and stories from people all over the world. The experience helped me solidify my future plans of immigration law,” Mia said.

Brook Astil interned with Wieuca Animal Clinic in Sandy Springs. “I worked on various tasks like shadowing surgeries in which tumors were removed, neutering, spaying, dental extractions, and all,” Brook said. “I also sampled dog and cat excrements and bodily fluids and ran them through the lab, got to watch the annual physical exams for the pets, and got to pet a lot of dogs and cats.”

Overall, the internship program was a huge success that helped seniors begin to find their future paths.

Class of 2030 Find Their Way at the Activity Fair



Photographer: Brian Collier

By Cecilia Stemper

At the beginning of the term, 132 seventh graders joined clubs to become involved with our community. Each club hosted a table at the activity fair set up for students to learn, ask questions, and sign up to be a member in

order to explore their interests.

According to Director of Student Leadership and Activities Amelia Luke, who planned and led the fair, “It fosters a sense of community, encourages involvement, and helps students find their passions while

developing leadership and teamwork skills. By showcasing these opportunities, we aim to support each student’s growth beyond the classroom and enhance their overall high school experience.”

Out of 148 seventh graders, 89.1% are involved in one or more student activities. Every student has unique interests and preferences when it comes to choosing clubs.

Seventh grader Isabel Allison explained her goal for the fair. “I’m looking at clubs that let me try something new and meet new people,” Allison said.

When it came down to picking the clubs meant for you, everyone was different. Tessa Nicholson joined FCA, the cooking club, and girls support girls. Walter McGee joined

Sustain Our School

By Juliet Powell

Marist achieved 1st rank in the United States in the National Green School Ranking 2024. Presented by Green Mentors, this recognition highlights our school’s efforts in areas of sustainability such as curriculum, facilities, energy, campus biodiversity, and waste recycling.

Reflected in this honor is our commitment to “care for our common home,” as set out in Pope Francis’ encyclical letter *Laudato Si*, and its extension, *Laudate Deum*. The desire to create a greener school is a step forward in the name of environmental stewardship.

One of the most unique sustainable practices is our composting program through the organization Compost Now. Since its implementation in 2019, we have diverted over 30,000 pounds of waste, created over 3,000 pounds of compost, and avoided over 88,000 pounds of CO₂ equivalent.

However, this is only the beginning. Our school needs to continue to search for more sustainable business practices across all sectors. As a member of the student body, faculty, or staff, you can help these efforts through making use of the composting and recycling programs and finding ways to get involved, whether that be through the Environmental Club, the garden, or daily choices.

Let’s support each other in our endeavors to build a more environmentally aware community.



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XC Returns to Campus

It’s been years since our campus hosted a cross country meet. The drought is thankfully over. Turn to our Sports section to read staff writer Kate Owen’s story about this noteworthy event.

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Caught by Dire Straits

Can music from a former generation strike the right mood? On our Opinion page, staff writer Jude Norden explores the timeless music of Mark Knopfler.

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Service Camp Changes Lives

By Katie Nussbaum

Change lives, including your own, in just one week. Spend a week volunteering this summer, knock out your community service, and truly make a difference in the life of someone else at Catholic Heart Work Camp.

The camp is a one-week program located throughout America. It is a Catholic service camp that balances strengthening spiritual relationships, helping others, and engaging activities along the way.

This past summer, Marist students took a trip to Memphis, Tennessee for the annual camp.

Throughout the week, students rebuilt houses for the elderly and disabled and renovated schools. They also participated as camp counselors for Madonna Learning Center, a school for children with disabilities. These acts of service made a lasting impact, not only on the Memphis community but also in the lives of students.

Student Caroline Cheney shared her experiences at the camp. "It was so touching to see how far a little bit of service can go. I loved being able to bring the Marist spirit to other communities and help those in need," Caroline said. "It was super fulfilling and truly brought me closer to God through acts of faith, service, and kindness."

I also participated in this service, and my job was to help the Madonna Learning Center's summer camp.

I worked with kids age nine to eleven with special needs. I was the personal counselor to one boy and one girl. I helped them swim, read, draw, paint, and more.

Not only did this service help the kids and their parents but it also helped me. I grew a deep connection with these kids throughout the week, and I developed a new appreciation for those working in special education.

I am appreciative of this amazing experience and hope to see more of my fellow students sign up for the upcoming summer.



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Pilgrimage Enriches Our School's Mission

By Ella Weber

This past summer, students and faculty took time to relax in the midst of their busy lives. Many went to the beach, the mountains, or relaxed on the couch. Principal Kevin Mullally and School President J.D. Childs, however, embarked on an eight-day journey in France where they dove into what it means to be Marist.

Led by Auxiliary Bishop Joel Konzen and a group of 25 Marists from around the world, Mullally and Childs started their pilgrimage in Lyon, France with day trips to places significant in Marist history.

The first location that they visited was the Basilica of Our Lady of Le Puy, which is where Father Jean-Claude Courveille, a priest in the early 19th century, visited three times to restore his sight. On his third visit, Mary appeared before him and told him to start a religious order in her name. After this vision, Fr. Courveille gathered a group of

priests to start the Society of Mary.

In 1816, this group of priests signed a pledge in the shrine of Our Lady of Fourviere in Lyon, determined to "make the whole world Marist," as described by Mullally. Childs and Mullally climbed the 500 steps to visit this shrine. They felt an instant connection to their Marist roots, and Bishop Konzen, former Marist principal, celebrated Mass there.

On a scroll in this shrine, all of the Marist priests that left Europe to go on mission and serve Mary in the 1800s and 1900s signed their names. These men knew that they were not returning to their homes ever again. This admirable commitment struck Mullally and Childs, reminding them that their work at our school is part of something larger - to spread the message of the Marists.

If one were to ask a student what it means to be Marist, they might answer having school spirit, being welcoming to all,

or striving for excellence. The real meaning is, in fact, much simpler.

Childs described being Marist as "being concerned for the well-being of another," like Mary was during her lifetime.

Childs and Mullally experienced this spirit of Mary on their pilgrimage, and they felt it most significantly when bonding with the others on the trip. A trip to France, however, is not necessary to feel a similar bond. As both Childs and Mullally learned while on pilgrimage, France was only the starting place.

The Marist community stretches across the globe, with each part of that community filled with people looking out for one another and all the people nearby they happen to meet.

On our Marist campus, thousands of miles away from the shrine in Lyon, the Marist concern for one another and for anyone they happen to meet thrives as strongly as it did so many years ago.

3790 Sets the Stage

By Caroline Palmer

On September 20, the 9th grade class, senior leaders, and homeroom teachers traveled to Sojourn Adventures for an annual day-long retreat called Camp 3790. Ninth graders spent the day bonding with their class and building a foundation for their high school years.

Students rotated through activities facilitated by Sojourn, including a rock wall, group games, and crafts. Students participated in "speed dating," where they were randomly paired and asked ice breaker questions, allowing them to meet new people.

After lunch, students were given free time to play four-square, soccer, card games, and more. These activities allowed students to expand outside of their immediate friends.

Although getting out of class for the day is an added bonus, the central mission of Camp 3790 is to strengthen the bonds of the class. When the students are seniors, they will look back on Camp 3790 as the start of their high school experience.

As part of our school's emphasis on service, the class was invited to participate in a service project in the afternoon. Students made posters for veterans, wrote letters to assisted living facility residents, and prepared sandwiches for the hungry via The Sandwich Project.

Moderator Betsy Holcomb offered her take on the camp. "The day launches the advisory program, building a safe home on campus. It allows 9th graders to forge connections among each other and to Marist."

2024 Peer Leader Success



Photographer: Brian Collier

By Maggie Foster

The Peer Leaders program is a school tradition that helps integrate new students into our community. Peer leaders help new students, from incoming seventh graders to new high schoolers.

On campus, Campus Min-

istry helps organize and plan what the peer leaders will do for the coming year. Campus Minister Maureen Pasteris shares why she decided to help lead Marist Peer Leaders. "For me, the heart of the program is about doing the work of Mary as servant leaders in her com-

munity," Pasteris said.

Additionally, peer leaders organize events during the summer with bigger groups in order to introduce new students to each other. This year, juniors and seniors served as peer leaders. During the summer, they collaborated for group gatherings, Popsicle parties, and back-to-school events.

Student Reese Sullivan expressed why she chose to become a Peer Leader. "I chose to become a Peer Leader because I have always enjoyed finding various ways to get involved in my community," Reese said.

A common attribute of being a peer leader is the calling to serve others and lead the community. Peer leaders emulate what the Marist core values are all about.

Student Ryan Akin expressed his gratitude for his past peer

leader and how that experience still influences him today. "I absolutely loved my peer leader, and I really wanted to try to have that relationship with my peer kids," Akin said.

Overall, the Peer Leading Program has provided the student body with a sense of belonging. Current students serving as peer leaders creates a welcoming environment and community for new students.

The Peer Leader Program was started in 1986 by Mrs. Claire Walls to help integrate new students. It has been apart of our school community for decades.

Both Academic Center Instructor Katherine Carroll and Theology Teacher Erin Paul were peer leaders when they were Marist students.

understanding.

The week will kick off with a welcome party and group dinner, setting the stage for a fun week. During their stay, exchange students will attend classes with their hosts, participate in a cooking class, and tour the campus. In addition, they will visit Atlanta attractions, including the Georgia Aquarium, the World of Coca-Cola, and the Civil Rights Museum.

This year, students from Barcelona will take part in many school-wide events such as a pep rally, football game, and the homecoming dance.



Photographer: Brian Collier

Students are also eager to engage in activities like shopping, exploring, enjoying live music, and bonding with Marist students and their host families. Beyond sightseeing, this exchange allows students to immerse themselves in a new culture and make lasting connections.

Student from Maristes La Immaculada Ivet Cruces expressed her excitement about the exchange. "I hope to satisfy my curiosity about American culture and how life in the United States really is," Cortés shared. Before her visit, Cortés wondered if movies like Mean

Girls and High School Musical accurately portray teenage life in America.

As the students from Barcelona and Atlanta trade their cultures, they leave with memories that will last beyond the program. The exchange is not only about practicing a language but also about building bridges between cultures and expanding worldviews.

Cultures Connect

By Anna Herrero

From September 27 to October 6, students from Maristes La Immaculada in Barcelona will visit Atlanta for an exchange student program. The program will offer many opportunities, primarily for language immersion.

Academic Dean Kim Premoli emphasized the importance of an exchange. "Nothing prepares a person more for the real world than immersing oneself and experiencing it" Premoli explained. "Cultural exchanges provide the best opportunity for students to experience another human condition in language and culture."

The exchange experience enhances language skills but also proves to foster empathy and

Paris 2024 On Your Mind?

By Caroline McDonald

Late July of this summer, the torch was lit and the fans were ecstatic as the 2024 Paris Olympics began. As students across campus were asked about the many accomplishments shown, the most common categories mentioned were in track and field, swimming, and gymnastic events.

One figure that stood out to a few girls in the 8th grade was a sprinter named Gabby Thomas. Gabby Thomas, the 200-meter American gold medalist, showcased her incredible speed and strength after being injured while she was training for the Olympics.

Equally as inspiring, Katie Ledecy, a four-time gold medalist in the 800-meter freestyle, was talked about by many students in grades 9 through 11. Katie Ledecy has been in the last four Olympic games and has achieved the status of the most decorated female American Olympian due to her performance in the Paris 2024 Olympics.

Additionally, both the men's and women's gymnastics teams for the U.S. were a topic many 7th grade students spoke about in front of Ivy when asked. The students described the floor routines of the women's gymnastics teams as exhilarating and satisfying while still being tidy.

On the men's side, the gymnastics team gave the crowd an impression of teamwork and gratitude at the end of each specific event. Students also stated that even when they didn't watch the 2024 Olympics on purpose, the events would still amaze them when they saw short advertisement clips showing Olympic feats.

Finally, the closing ceremony led students to consider the values of these Olympic Games. The closing ceremony of the 2024 Paris Olympics mainly highlighted the five key rings that represent the Olympics and the representation of "finding" them in a theatrical way.

While the audience of the Olympics this year is left impressed, no one can wait for what is to come as the 2028 Summer Olympics approach.

Flag Football Sets Off

By Reese Sullivan

Crossing into uncharted territory, an explosive group of female athletes is competing in our school's first ever season of flag football.

The Lady War Eagles will play teams from around Georgia and will usually compete on Wednesdays and Thursdays. This season, the first ever season of flag football in the history of the school, is currently in session and will continue to progress throughout the fall and winter.

Some rules may be new to



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XC Puts on a Show at Home!

By Kate Owens

On Friday, August 23, the cross country team, dressed in their new uniforms, prepared to dominate their only home meet of the season.

It had been a tradition for our school to host a meet each season until COVID hit. This year, Coach Kevin Lisle and Coach Matt McMurray worked extremely hard to revive the tradition of a high school home meet. Our school's coaches put on a show like no other, scheduling the meet at night with a fitting name: Marist Twilight.

The teams from Paideia, St. Pius X, and West Forsyth all traveled to our campus for this thrilling two-mile race. Carefully planned out, the course included a lap around the front field, a loop around the baseball field and track, and a final shoot on the front field.

The touchdown taco and

Marist Fam did not disappoint, creating an electric environment. Students, decked out in neon, lined up along the start line and finish shoot, "rowing" Tommy Latham into a first place finish in the boys' varsity race. The energy and enthusiasm of the students, parents, and friends was unmatched.

Adding to the excitement of race day, Lisle designed dri-fit t-shirts as well as custom Marist Twilight medals for the top 20 finishers in each race.

The St. Pius XC head coach even commented on the atmosphere of the race, claiming it was the most exciting race he has ever attended. Not only was the atmosphere electrifying but both the Marist girls and boys had "monster races," as McMurray would say.

Latham, Liam Hanemann, and Andrew Strickland clinched top three finishes in

their race, each breaking the previous school record for two miles and leading our school's boys team to a victory. The top 7 boys qualified for our school's all-time top 12 in the XC 2 mile race.

Also clinching first place, the Marist girls team dominated. Nine girls placed in the top 20, with 2 podium finishes and a first-place win by Caroline Rogers. The top seven girls qualified for our school's all-time top 25 in the XC 2 mile race.

Racing at home was a first for all runners, as the Marist home meet tradition had ended the year before the seniors joined the team. It meant the world to the runners that everyone came out to support them.

A special thanks to Lisle and McMurray for their dedication. Cross Country couldn't have asked for a better season opener.

From 6A to 4A

By Rylie Albert

Wondering why Marist athletic teams are facing new competition this year? Due to the decision made in November 2023, the Georgia High School Association (GHSA) decided to completely erase the 7A class.

Classifications are based on a school's student population. By losing 7A, the classification for the largest schools, many schools have been placed in a new class. Specifically, the War Eagles moved from 6A to 4A.

The reasons for the latest reclassifications are that it allows for easier travel between teams and fairer competition. Although the move from 6A shocked many given how competitive Marist was in the class, our lower student population places our school in a smaller class.

Director of Athletics Derek Waugh commented on our school's position regarding classifications. "In reality, Marist should be a 2A school, but we 'play up' for more competition. We generally would petition to move up even further to 5A (out of 6A), but we wanted to stay with Blessed Trinity, St. Pius, Westminster, and Benedictine at 4A," he said.

Even though Marist has made the move to 4A, the change has not stopped our school community from crushing on the football field, dominating the volleyball court, and smoking the competition in cross country this fall. We anticipate the legacy of winning to continue as the sports and seasons change.

A New Elective on the Court

Racket Sports taps into pickleball's growing popularity



Photographer: Brian O'Connor

By John Elrod

During the first few weeks of this academic year, many students walking in the arcade may have noticed nets set up and students playing pickleball there throughout the day. That's because this year, students were introduced to a new elective at

our school: Racket Sports.

This class, available to all students, was introduced to the Marist curriculum as an optional PE course for the 2024-2025 school year. Over the course of term one, students participated in pickleball, badminton, and tennis matches nearly every day as they learned the rules and

basics of the sports. However, it turned out that many students taking the course have had experience with these sports before, in particular with the game of pickleball.

"I had played pickleball once before," said Campbell Caldwell, a junior who is taking the elective. He added that his classmates had more experience in pickleball than any of the other sports, commenting that he thought that most, if not all, of his classmates had played pickleball in the past. "Me and two others had played badminton," said Caldwell, "and only one has played tennis."

It is no surprise that many students have experience with pickleball; the sport has been a staple at Chanel Day for years, and the school has provided nets and paddles for students to

play.

However, the sport as a whole has increased in popularity across the country, and our school community has definitely felt the effects of that. "We wanted to provide another PE elective opportunity for students that would tap into a larger interest in the sports being offered," said Coach Chris Marshall, the instructor of the class.

In addition to the fall, the Racket Sports elective will return for the third trimester. When that time comes, students can again enjoy the growing sport of pickleball at Marist.

athletes familiar with the sport. In flag football, for example, first downs are 20 yards, compared to 10 in tackle football.

On Stadler Field, the athletes are practicing weekly in order to prepare for their upcoming games. The Lady War Eagles are led by Coach Jason Harris, Coach Troy Hall, and Coach Joan Guhl.

When asked about his experience as current head coach of the flag football team, Harris



Art of Life Photography

stated that "the coaching experience has been great." The idea of instituting a flag football team at Marist had been circling the minds of athletic directors for a couple of years. But, as Harris states, "It just felt like the right time to add it to Marist."

Known for their extensive state titles and long list of accomplishments, girls athletics at our school are held to high standards. So, it will be interesting to watch as the girls compete in

the regular season and pave the way for future teams.

If you are interested in joining Flag Football in its future seasons, the sport offers a variety of "positions to fill on both sides of the ball." Whether you are an offensive or defensive player, Coach Harris encourages students to "come on out" and test to see if they can fill opening positions.

Brothers in Arms: The Album

By Jude Norden

The poetry and musical expertise of Dire Straits have proven to stand the test of time, and their hit 1985 album *Brothers in Arms* offers all the astounding guitar riffs and eloquent lines that defined rock music of the 1980s.

Lets narrow down and review two songs from the album that offer some of lead singer and writer Mark Knopfler's best work to date.

The album starts off with a slow tune, "So Far Away," that throws the listener into a very relaxed yet melancholy mood. Mark Knopfler sings from the perspective of a man who has been separated in some way from his love interest.

The phrase "so far away from me" is used in the song both literally and figuratively, as he describes how he is "tired of making out on the telephone," as well as "being in love and being all alone." The refrain now means so much more. He is both physically far away from his lover, having to use a telephone, and emotionally far away, feeling very lonely.

The long and drawn out wails of his guitar work alongside the slow tempo and echoes to create an atmosphere where the listener floats through the music, feeling the same emotions Knopfler describes.

On the heels of this melancholy tune leaps the roaring song "Money for Nothing," which is the band's second most listened to song.

"Money for Nothing" begins like the previous song - slowly - until a massive guitar riff crashes in and separates it from the lull of "So Far Away." "Money for Nothing" mainly focuses its lyrics around a blue collar narrator who has to "move refrigerators" and "color TVs" and is tired of seeing all the eclectic rock stars on the television making money and getting women.

The irony of Knopfler's criticism of rock stars, himself being one, shows his great writing skills. Riff Magazine ranks the opening riff of the song in their top five riffs of all time.

Knopfler is a magician with the strings on the entirety of *Brothers in Arms*. It is no surprise that he was a professor of English at Loughton College. Both wonderful writing and revolutionary riffs on the guitar contribute to the album's all time greatness, winning a Grammy award and being the eighth best selling British album of all time.

Impact of Local Politics Underrated

By Camille Gipson

With all of the media noise about the 2024 presidential election this fall, it is easy to fall into a state of despair about the current political landscape. As a young person, I want to get involved in our government but struggle to understand how.

I interned this past summer at the Georgia Office of the Attorney General, where Chris Carr, a Marist alumnus, and his incredible team allowed me to learn about their work. There, I realized that there is so much more to our country's government than just the national headlines.

Carr's prosecution teams work daily to protect Georgia communities with units dedicated to fighting gang activity, human trafficking, organized retail crime, Medicaid fraud and elder abuse.

"Since its creation in 2019, the Attorney General's Human Trafficking Prosecution Unit has rescued and assisted nearly 200 victims - that's nearly 200 lives that will forever be changed," said Kara Murray, Carr's Communications Director.



Contributed to The Blue & Gold

I have always been concerned about human trafficking, but thanks to my internship, I am more aware about this important issue. By doing a little bit of research on issues that you care about, you too can find specific ways that your cities, counties, and states are working to solve them, which can give you hope and inspire you to get involved.

The Politically Georgia podcast, a weekday show broadcast by the Atlanta Journal-Constitution, focuses on Georgia politics. It is an amazing resource that helps listeners to understanding the impact of a state senate run-off election or to identifying key political figures

in our local communities.

In contrast to national government, state and local politics are far easier to get involved in. Reaching out to a city council member or voting in a local election present unparalleled opportunities for your voice to be heard.

Jordan Watson, Director of External Affairs and Policy at the Georgia Office of the Attorney General, says that he wants young people to know more about their local world. "If they work hard, learn about the issues and get involved, they will be shocked by how many lives they can change for the better," Watson said.

At Marist School, this involvement is already ingrained by our devotion to community service, but I think our student body could benefit from more education on current events in order to find specific local initiatives to devote our time and energy to.

Amidst the chaos of 2024 politics, action and awareness, particularly on local and state politics, can dispel fear and create ripple effects of change throughout our communities.

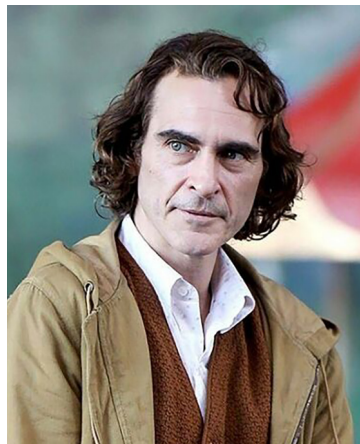
Joker: Folie à Deux

By Marshall Lisenby

Joker: Folie à Deux is Todd Phillips's most recent installment in the *Joker* series. The latest film follows the chaos the *Joker*, played by Joaquin Phoenix, unleashed on New York City in the 2019 original.

Helpless and depressed in a psych ward, Arthur Fleck, the *Joker*, finds himself unable to mutter even the beginnings of a joke as he is consumed by his impending jury trial. When heading out for an interview to address the public, Fleck collides with Harley Quinn, played by Lady Gaga, who reignites sparks within him and drives the *Joker* out into full view, clashing head-on with the corrupt system that's trying to indict him with the death penalty.

The movie dives headlong into the psychological burdens of the trials and explores deeply Fleck's mind, who battles his identity as both the *Joker* and an agonized man amidst a system geared to take him down. Through his experiences at Arkham Asylum and the courtroom, Fleck finds himself slipping further away, consumed by his newfound desire for Harley Quinn.



Warner Bros. Pictures

Utilizing the voice of Lady Gaga, the film synthesizes a beautiful score into the plot, transforming parts into a musical. The score amplifies the extent of their psychological insanity, formulating a unique avenue to explore the characters in an unconventional way.

Philip's cinematography is breathtaking. With dynamic shots filled with complex undertones and ambiance that match the emotional state of the characters, Phillips creates a beautiful visual experience that engages the audience. From moody, deep blue shots of Fleck in the psych ward to bright and dazzling performances on the grand stage, the film fluctuates constantly in its appearance,

matching the characters' internal states.

While many are quick to criticize the film for its apparent downfalls, it does effectively continue the *Joker* series while adding a unique and enthralling spin that tests the boundaries of cinema and the audience's expectations. Further, while the plot is derided for its seemingly slow pace, the storyline matches the film's hallucinatory and mental focus as it extensively takes viewers through the complexities of Fleck's mind and his development as the *Joker*. In essence, the *Joker* embodies all of society's corruption.

Joker: Folie à Deux is an avant-garde film that is an exciting and thought-provoking watch. The film provides a unique and thrilling experience.

With a convoluted ending that leaves openings for much more to be answered, there is undoubtedly more to come in this universe. Amongst the fall slate of films, I highly recommend that any viewer embark to the theater to engage with this movie in its full beauty and delve into the troubled mind of the *Joker*, Arthur Fleck.

Inside Out 2

By Luke Childs

Inside Out 2 recently released in theaters. The Disney-Pixar sequel follows Riley as she navigates the challenges of becoming a teen with a new set of emotions.

The movie explores how Riley's original emotions — Joy, Sadness, Anger, Fear, and Disgust — evolve and adapt around new emotions — Anxiety, Ennui, Embarrassment and Envy — all the while as Riley faces the difficulties of growing up.

The sequel's introduction of new characters and emotional experiences reflects Riley's transition from childhood to adolescence. The film delves into how these changing emotions influence Riley's decisions, relationships, and self-esteem, offering a nuanced look at the struggle to balance and understand one's feelings during this stressful period.

For new 7th graders, or for any students attending a new school, encountering new emotions, similar to Riley's, is part of facing a new environment, making new friends, and adjusting to unfamiliar responsibilities. It's important to remember that, while these emotions are a natural part of the transition, staying true to yourself is crucial.

The introduction of new emotions and experiences, much like in the movie, can feel overwhelming at times. In *Inside Out 2*, when Riley and her friends are invited to a three-day hockey camp, she meets Val Ortiz. Riley is so focused on gaining Val's approval she neglects her former best friends and starts to mirror Val instead of being herself.

She is also so driven by her competitive desires as Riley only feels satisfaction whenever she either gains approval from Val or proves her competitive dominance. Riley's new emotion, Anxiety, has negatively changed her joyful personality. Similarly, students of all ages might struggle to adapt to new experiences, but it's important to recognize that these feelings are a normal part of growth.

Despite the whirlwind of new emotions, staying true to oneself is essential. The movie highlights that, while emotions can guide and affect us, they should not completely define who we are or dictate our actions.

A healthy life is about finding a balance between acknowledging your feelings and maintaining a sense of your core values and identity.

For students at our school, this balance means embracing new experiences and challenges while staying grounded in what makes you unique. By doing so, you manage your emotions more effectively and build resilience and a stronger sense of self as you navigate the high school journey.

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