

Chess Club Attends First Tournament

By Woods Walker

Chess Club is an up-and-coming extracurricular activity at our school, where students of all ages are encouraged to meet during activity period and play chess with each other.

I joined the club at the beginning of this school year, and I have been pleasantly surprised by the dedication and hard work of the officers and other club members. Founded by Owen Rice in 2023, the Chess Club has grown into a staple of our school community by providing students with the opportunity to learn more about one of the oldest board games in human history.

This year, the Chess Club attended a chess tournament at The Walker School in Marietta. Schools like The Walker School, Cornerstone Academy, Mount Paran Christian, and Augusta Preparatory all competed that day.

The tournament, which took place on March 19, 2026, had teams of six compete in a point-based tournament where each player would earn 1 point for a win, 0.5 points for a draw, and 0 points for a loss. After an overwhelming number of applications from Chess Club members asking to participate in the tournament, it was decided to create three teams based on varying skill levels.

The Team 1 players included Owen Rice, Jack Richerson, Griffin Heard, Mills Chambless, Woods Walker, and Tanner Garrison. Members of Team 2 included Jackson Cox, Bryce Matlock, Dylan Dwyer, Owen Hare, Hayes Rollauer, and Hudson Kalb while the Team 3 roster was comprised of Alex Kritzer, Tyler Corbett, Baker Hardison, Reed McMichael, Bobby Peters, and Andrew Walker.



Photo Credit: Contributed

As the Chess Club moderator, teacher Katelyn Lagnese also attended the tournament to make sure Marist was well represented.

On the day of the tournament, all the Marist competitors met outside the Walker School to talk strategy. When it was time, we went inside to begin the tournament.

Once inside, the tournament proctor explained the rules. Each player would play six games, and at the end, they would take the four highest scores from each team. The games were played with chess clocks, allotting 15 minutes per player. With that, the first game began at around 9:00 AM.

As the day of competition progressed, we began to see how fierce the competition really was. With players Jack Richerson and Mills Chambless winning some huge games against the Walker prodigies, the Team 1 took a strong lead in the first

three games.

Following the third game, the proctor posted individual scores on the wall so that players could see how their team was doing. After reviewing each player's scores, we realized that Marist Team 1 had a chance of finishing high up on the scoreboard.

The proctor then announced that several awards would be given out to teams and players with outstanding achievements. The high school teams that earned the highest and second-highest total scores would receive a trophy, as well as the highest individual scorer earning a plaque of their own.

We got together and realized that we could take home a trophy if we performed well during these next three rounds. The fourth round went worse than expected, but in the fifth round, five of the six Team 1 members won their games.

It all came down to the sixth and final round. Five members of Team 1, including myself,

finished their matches relatively quickly. We then gathered around to watch Griffin Heard in his final match.

There was an intense back and forth, with Griffin's time running out while his opponent still had a few minutes to spare. Then Griffin took the upper hand.

He promoted his pawn to a queen and took his opponent's last piece, leaving him with only a king. Finally, Griffin slowly walked his opponent's king down to the corner where he was eventually going to deliver checkmate. His opponent saw this and resigned, giving Griffin the final win of the tournament, and maybe just what we needed to give our team a good finish.

After the sixth round, the top four scores were as follows: Owen Rice (4.0), Mills Chambless (3.5), Griffin Heard (3.5) Woods Walker (3.0).

It was finally time for the placements announcement. The proctor gathered everyone

around the trophy table and called out the winners.

For high school, Marist Team 1 earned second place overall, granting us a trophy and kudos from our opponents. After the announcements were over, the team picked Griffin up on our shoulders and took a celebratory picture with him holding the trophy.

When asked about his experiences with the tournament, club president Owen Rice had this to share: "It was a fantastic experience, seeing how the Marist Chess Club stacked up against other schools and learning from matches against opponents from other schools was extremely rewarding."

Club officer Griffin Heard explained that reflected on the whole experience: "It was great to showcase what the Chess Club has to offer and compete against some great chess players. We all had a blast coming together to win a trophy in the Chess Club's first competitive tournament, and can't wait for more success in the future."

After a long day, the team took a trip to Buffalo Wild Wings to celebrate the big win and outstanding performance from every player. The next day, Athletic Director Derek Waugh agreed to place the trophy in the trophy display case for a short time to honor the Chess Club's great achievement.

Looking back, I am incredibly fortunate to have experienced this tournament, and I am excited for what the future of the Chess Club holds. Thank you for reading, and I advise anyone who is interested in joining the club to please talk to Griffin Heard.

Mythopaloosa Takes Students Down Under

By Mary Anne LeTourneau

Every year, the Junior Classical League (MJCL) hosts a service project called Mythopaloosa to help kids from schools all around Atlanta prepare for the Pegasus Mythology Exam, an annual national exam. This tradition started in 2014 when Dr. Saunders and Mr. Marier decided to host this wonderful event.

All who attended Mythopaloosa were assigned to a "God group," following this leader throughout the day and playing for their team. The leader gods were played by JCL members and volunteers, creating an ancient, immersive atmosphere for the children. The children also participated in Certamen, a quizbowl-style jeopardy game.

This year, the theme for the Pegasus Mythology Exam was the underworld, so the MJCL transformed Ivy Street Center



Photo Credit: Brian Collier

into several regions of the underworld, including Tartarus, the Elysium Fields, and the River Styx.

On the third floor of Ivy, students participated in many underworld-themed stations and tasks, such as Pin the Ear on King Midas and a math station centered around the never-ending labor of Sisyphus, cursed to

push a boulder endlessly up a mountain.

Also on the third floor of Ivy was a life-sized recreation of Ixion's endlessly spinning wheel that the kids were able to spin on. As part of the stations, kids spun a wheel of dares that either permitted them to leave the underworld, dance, or spin on the wheel. Most of the kids en-

joyed this experience the most, the daring experience of spinning on the wheel.

After students completed the stations, they went to Connelly Lecture Hall for a museum-style presentation about underworld myths, such as the tale of Orpheus and Eurydice. The students even participated in a section of the musical "Hadestown," using props from the theater department. Johanna Hanes, an MJCL co-consul, shared his thoughts about the theatrical portion of the event. "It was really fun seeing the kids get into character with all the props," Hanes said.

Along with the certamen, stations, and the museum, students participated in a rap battle, each group creating a fun rap about their god.

Latin student Tenley Turner reflected on the experience of helping to lead the event. "Making the rap with my kids was

really fun because they knew so much about mythology, and it was so sweet to watch them work together," Turner said. Many other volunteers enjoyed meeting the students since the students' knowledge was so impressive, and the battle at the end of the day created such a fun atmosphere.

The competition this year was tough, with close ties throughout the certamen and the raps.

Overall, team Zeus, led by senior Rex Nassah, took first place with a whopping 1,150 points! They gained the majority of their points during the certamen, although they placed second in certamen. Team Aphrodite, led by senior Kaitlyn Escayg, placed first in certamen, earning 355 points.

Emmaus Memories

Turn to page 2, where Caroline McDonald documents the history and traditions behind the Emmaus retreat.

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Photo Credit: Pamela Kinzly

Twin State Runs

Check out page 3, where Katie Nussbaum and Cris Lewis fill you in on the our school's latest state championship appearances.

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Photo Credit: Touchstone Pictures

Life's Purpose

In our Opinion section, Spencer Patton brings you up to speed on Wes Anderson's 1998 film "Rushmore."

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26 Homes Later...

By Caroline Cheney

Every year, the Habitat for Humanity Marist Women Build aims to make homeownership more accessible for families in need.

In 2001, the women of Marist School partnered with Atlanta Habitat for Humanity to form the first all-female high school build in the country.

Cathy Belatti has played a vital role in the development of the Marist Women Build. Commenting on the personal rewards of the build, Belatti said, "The biggest impact was seeing homeowners with incredible joy when they finally reach their dream come true."

Cathy has been a part of this inspiring team for 25 years and has remained committed to the community, even throughout the pandemic. Since its founding, 26 homes have been built with the help of more than 200 volunteers.

Each project typically includes eight build days of seven hours each, and volunteers raise around \$90,000 each year to make these builds possible.

This experience also allows students to develop leadership skills while directly serving families in their community. Students, volunteers, and leaders worked side by side to construct a home for a woman named Tia.

Tia was selected this year as the 26th homeowner of the Marist Women Build. Homeowners are required to complete home maintenance classes, including plumbing and electrical in order to care for their houses long-term.

In addition, selected partners contribute 250 hours of working alongside volunteers to help build their homes, and this lengthy process demonstrates their dedication and commitment.

Habitat for Humanity's mission is to eliminate systemic barriers that prevent low-income and historically underserved families from accessing adequate, affordable housing.

The Marist Women Build program continues this mission by encouraging women to build strength, stability, and independence through homeownership.



Photo Credit: Brendan Murphy

The "Twenties" Return

Bearing Witness XX marks the twentieth trip to walk the past and change the future

By Grace McNary

Bearing Witness XX has returned, marking ten years of teaching students about the Holocaust through lived experience. In early March, the "twenties" traveled to Europe to explore this crucial part of history firsthand.

During the trip, the twenties visited major historical sites in Munich, Prague, and Kraków. They walked through former concentration camps and memorials, such as Dachau and Auschwitz, where millions of people suffered and died.

Experiencing these sites in person gave them a deeper un-

derstanding of what happened and why remembering it is so important.

The trip is part of the Bearing Witness Institute's mission to educate students about the Holocaust and combat antisemitism. It brings classroom lessons to life by connecting students with real-world

places, people, and families.

By learning where history actually happened, students can reflect more deeply on the past.

When asked about the significance of the trip, Christian Glenn said, "It's not just something you can learn briefly in your everyday history class," describing it instead as "an organization dedicated to this important part of our human history."

Glenn added that the journey became "the best trip of my life" and that "you become so close with everyone in your group," highlighting both the educational impact and the strong bonds formed as they confronted these events together.

Over the past ten years, the program has taken countless students on this journey. Each trip helps a new group of friends learn about the dangers of hatred and the importance of standing up for others.

The experience encourages students to reflect on how to grow their consciences so they can make more meaningful choices in their own lives.

As the group returned home, they brought back a stronger understanding of history and its impact. This trip showed them that the Holocaust is not only a horror from the past but also an event people must continue to remember and learn from.

Girls Support Girls

Learn all about the club created by girls and for girls



Photo Credit: Contributed

By Claire Helfrich

Girls Support Girls is a club that was created by girls, for girls.

Girls Support Girls focuses on building a community of strong girls ready to take on the world. Whether a student joined to make friends, to learn crafts, to hear speakers, to watch movies, or enjoy snacks, Girls Support Girls offers a space for every girl

on our campus.

On Friday, March 13th, during activity period, Girls Support Girls hosted a speaker for the ninth-grade girls in an assembly located in the Chapel. The speaker, Annie Mayfield, who is beloved by Girls Support Girls, had a heartfelt and very real message to share with every girl who was in that room.

Mayfield attended The Lovett

School for middle school and high school, and also played tennis and ran track at Wofford College. She now works in technology sales, writes books, and hosts a podcast. Despite all of her successes, Mayfield said, "My heart really is just serving the person I once was, which was someone who was very insecure and anxious, and always feeling not good enough."

During this assembly, Annie spoke to the girls about how our worth truly does come from God, and how it is needed for you to "receive Christ's love for yourself in order to know what that feels like to give that to others."

Mayfield really dove into the idea that you must love yourself fully before trying to love other people, as well as you must know that your worth comes from God and not the team you are on, the sport you play, the friends you have, the parties you get invited to, and so on. To ful-

ly live how God calls us to, you must come to terms with yourself first.

Mayfield also discussed how, especially in an environment like high school, it needs to be addressed how hard it is to live for the Lord. "We have to first encourage ourselves and others that it's a very brave thing to choose to be a light in a dark world, and you have to be willing to be seen, which might make you weird and different," Mayfield said. Especially as a community of girls, we must be willing to be the change and be the "light in the darkness."

Girls Support Girls is a space where this light can be grown. By sponsoring this assembly, it is hoped that Mayfield's inspiring message and the mission of Girls Support Girls will be spread, just to make the world at Marist and beyond just a little bit brighter.

Why Emmaus Matters

By Caroline McDonald

Each school year, students at our school begin preparing for one of the most meaningful traditions of their high school experience: the Emmaus retreat. As upperclassmen share stories and memories from past retreats, younger students become eager to learn more about the history and purpose behind the program.

Throughout the years, Emmaus has become one of the most memorable and impactful experiences for many students on our campus.

The Emmaus retreat first began as a way to strengthen the spiritual life of students while

also encouraging deeper friendships within the community. Inspired by the biblical story of the Road to Emmaus, where two disciples encountered Jesus while traveling together, the retreat focuses on faith, reflection, and connection. Students leave behind the distractions of everyday school life and spend time building trust with one another through discussions, activities, and prayer.

Equally important, the retreat has developed into a tradition that many students look forward to throughout their high school years. Upperclassmen who have attended Emmaus often describe the experience as eye-opening and comforting.

Students from grades 10 through 12 especially speak about the welcoming atmosphere and the chance to meet classmates they may not usually talk to during the school day. Many students explain that the retreat allows them to feel more connected not only to their peers but also to themselves and



Photo Credit: Pamela Kinzly

their faith

Additionally, student leaders play a major role in making the retreat meaningful. Leaders spend weeks preparing talks and activities that encourage honesty and reflection among participants. Their willingness to share personal experiences creates an environment where students feel safe opening up about their own challenges and successes.

Many students admire how

the leaders balance fun activities with serious conversations, making the retreat both enjoyable and inspiring.

The retreat also includes memorable traditions that students often talk about after returning to campus. Group discussions, music, prayer services, and moments of quiet reflection all contribute to the experience. Students frequently mention that stepping away from technology and busy schedules helps

them focus more on friendships and personal growth

Even students who may not have expected much from the retreat often leave feeling surprised by how meaningful the experience became.

Finally, the history of Emmaus at Marist School continues to grow stronger with each new group of students who attend. The retreat has become more than a school event; it represents community, faith, and support among classmates.

While students return to campus with new memories and friendships, many already begin encouraging younger students to participate in the future. As the Marist community continues to grow, Emmaus remains one of the school's most valued and lasting traditions.

Girls Soccer State Run

By Katie Nussbaum

The girls soccer team cannot be stopped!

Our War Eagles are thirteen-time state champions, and they are looking to make it fourteen. After an incredible 13-0 season, the girls once again secured their spot in the state championship after a commanding 3-0 victory over the Westminster Wildcats in the semifinal game on Thursday night.

Coming into the matchup ranked sixth nationally and first in the region, our girls soccer team, led by Coach Curtis Engsborg, once again proved why they are considered one of the most elite soccer programs in the country.

From the opening game, the War Eagles have controlled possession, communicated effectively on both ends of the field, and applied constant pressure offensively. Their defense has remained nearly impenetrable throughout the season, completely shutting down their opponents' offenses and not allowing a single team to score two or more goals against them.

Their most recent victory in the semifinals was more than just another win; it was the latest milestone in what has become one of the most successful seasons in program history. Throughout the year, the War Eagles have worked together to defeat each and every one of their opponents, with especially notable wins over other elite teams such as Lovett and Walton.

Their consistent confidence, calmness under pressure, and collaboration have made them one of the most dominant teams in Georgia this season and a top team in the nation.

Their dominant season has also led to many individual victories, with seven players named to the All-Region Team.

One of those is Charlotte Saporito, a Division 1 soccer commit planning to attend Sacred Heart University. Saporito described the team as "a group bonded beyond compare that trusts each other both on and off the field." Saporito further stated that "everyone pushes each other to improve, and I think the chemistry and selflessness on the team is a big part of why we have seen so much success this season."

The team now prepares for the final challenge of the season, the state championship.

On May 15th, they will travel to Duluth to compete against the Blessed Trinity Titans in a rematch of last year's competition. With their undefeated record still intact and a fourteenth state title within reach, the stakes could not be higher for the War Eagles.

The students, faculty, alumni, and entire community are rallying behind the team as excitement builds across campus. After almost five months of hard work, determination, and teamwork, the team now has an opportunity to cement its place in school history with yet another championship.

Be sure to go out and show your support on Friday!



Photo Credit: FIFA World Cup

FIFA World Cup Arrives in Atlanta

By Naomi Ward

This summer, the world's biggest sporting event is coming to Atlanta. Between June 15 and July 15, Atlanta will host eight FIFA World Cup matches at Mercedes-Benz Stadium, including a semifinal match.

The expanded 104-game tournament will feature 48 national teams competing throughout North America. For soccer fans in Atlanta, the World Cup will bring an atmosphere unlike anything the city has seen in decades.

What does this mean for Marist and its students?

Soccer is already deeply rooted in Atlanta culture. As the home of Atlanta United FC, the city has become known for its passionate fanbase, and Marist students are no exception. Atlanta United stickers mark cars, and jerseys are common sights around campus on free dress days, especially during the MLS season.

Marist also has strong soccer programs of its own, with

students and faculty regularly supporting the school's teams. Last week, the girls varsity team dominated Westminster in a 3-0 victory, continuing an impressive season.

But the prestigious World Cup is unique. "International matches have an extra edge of passion and pride that I think people will really enjoy compared to MLS," stated girls varsity soccer coach Curtis Engsborg.

The World Cup's arrival has sparked excitement throughout the school community. Junior Kate Owens is planning to attend a match. "I am extremely excited to see Spain play Cabo Verde," she exclaimed. Similarly, AP World History teacher David Negus also shared this enthusiasm: "I'm very excited for the city — it's a bit like the excitement of the Olympics back in 1996."

As fans from every corner of the globe flood Atlanta, the city will buzz with the electricity of soccer's most intense event.

Engsborg shared addition-

al coaching perspective on the event's potential to inspire young players. "Having the best players in the world . . . right in our city is a great opportunity for inspiration and growth," he explained.

For many students, this tournament represents a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. The FIFA World Cup final is the most watched event on the planet, regularly attracting between 1.4 to 1.5 billion viewers. Atlantans will have the chance to witness history firsthand, rather than through a screen.

Whether students are lifelong soccer fans or simply excited about the energy the tournament will bring, the World Cup will make this summer unforgettable for Atlanta — and for Marist.

Maybe after this World Cup, you will agree with Negus, who declared that each of us can learn "how much passion people around the world have for this simple, little game."

Girls Golf in Full Swing



Photo Credit: Contributed

By Finley Harris

The varsity girls golf team has posted strong scores throughout this season, and now they have a chance to make school history.

Their success has been built on consistency across the top five players, with steady scoring in every tournament or match.

The girls dominated their area tournament, finishing nearly 30 shots ahead of the next opponent. The team capitalized on scoring opportunities from 100 yards and in, separating them from the rest of the field.

Freshman Chloe Woo's lowest round of the season helped power the team to state, where they will have the chance to

take home their first state title in program history.

Coach Troy Hall emphasizes his approach to golf throughout the season. "Golf is a game of mistakes, and we always perform at our best when we can stay present," he often said. Adopting this mindset has helped the team stay grounded during high-pressure moments and close matches.

Led by senior captain Ashlyn Taylor, the team embraced a season defined by "change and growth," as Hall described it. That growth is reflected in their ability to adjust to different course conditions, stay composed under pressure putts, or recover quickly after difficult shots.

Early morning tee times, long

tournament days, and even longer bus rides created many long-lasting memories for the team. "The late bus rides back after tournaments have been some of my favorite memories this season," shared Gigi Kammerer.

For many players, the team has become more than just a group of golfers: it's a support system. "Being a part of the team means having a support system, a family, outside my own home," said Jane Bennett.

But this support system goes beyond the course as well. "Being part of this team means a lot to me because it has provided me with some of my best friends, and getting to do the sport I love with my best friends is really special," said Ashlyn Taylor.

The team has a few weeks left to gear up for the championship in Savannah, and Coach Hall summed up the team in one word: "hungry." As they continue to strive for improvement, the girls now set their sights on finishing the season strong with focus, confidence, and a chance to make school history.

Track & Field State Bound

By Cris Lewis

The finish line is almost in sight for the track and field team. With a standout season so far, there is hope that the 2027 season will continue the thunder.

After a strong performance at the GHSA Region 5-4A championships, the girls and boys both are preparing for a show-out state championship this weekend. The final chapter of this 2026 season is being written in real time, and many are excited to see the outcome.

The GHSA Region 5-4A Championships served as one of the most important meets of the season: a proving ground where teams battle for regional supremacy and earn their tickets to the next level of competition.

For Marist, it was a moment to shine. The girls' team delivered a dominant performance, finishing 2nd place with 145 points, while the boys came in 4th with 86 points.

But the standings tell only part of the story. The meet was nothing short of historic for the program. Athletes set 30 personal records, 28 competitors punched their tickets to sectionals, and 9 performances cracked the all-time top-10 in school history, a feat that speaks to just how talented this roster is.

Leading the charge was Morgan Waddell, who put on a show, winning three events and contributing an eye-popping 22.5 points to the girls' total.

On the boys' side, Charlie Woodward dominated the distance events, taking first in the 3200m and finishing second in the 1600m. Colin Blackmon brought the power, earning runner-up finishes in both discus and shot put. These three set the tone, and they're not done yet.

Following the region meet, the next hurdle on the road to state was sectionals; a critical round of competition designed to further separate the field and determine who truly belongs on the biggest stage. Twenty-eight Marist athletes earned the right to compete, carrying the momentum of their regional performances into what would be another high-pressure test.

At the time of publication, official results from sectionals have not yet been released. What is known, however, is that this group showed up ready. Sectionals represented a pivotal bridge between regional success and the state championship dream, and the anticipation surrounding Marist's performance is at an all-time high.

This weekend, the best track and field athletes in all of Georgia will gather for the GHSA State Championship: the most prestigious meet on the calendar and the ultimate measuring stick for every program in the state.

The stakes could not be higher, and the résumé couldn't be more impressive. Several team members have already earned national-level recognition, with MileSplit silver and bronze elite rankings that signal this program doesn't just compete regionally, it belongs in the national conversation.

Can the girls make a push for a team title? Can the boys climb the rankings and make some noise? The answers are coming, and they can't get here fast enough.

Our Dedication to St. Peter Chanel Day

By Katerina Hoysa

St. Peter Chanel Day is a school-wide event where 7th through 10th graders enjoy fun activities, such as playing games and face painting, while the 11th graders run and coordinate all the activities as their annual service project.

Seniors participate in Senior Beach on the soccer fields, where they play yard games, socialize, take pictures, and jump on the bounce house. This year, the "Ivy Street Band" of seniors played a few songs to conclude their final St. Peter Chanel Day as they all crowded around the stage to sing along and dance together.

Teachers, staff, and students are all invited to enjoy music performed by students on the stage and to eat amazing food, like tacos and barbecue, in the flag circle.

Marist takes a whole day to celebrate Saint Peter Chanel Day on the feast day of St. Peter Chanel, April 28th. The significance of this day for students is outlined by Junior Graham Beck. "I loved having the opportunity to grow in faith and



Photo Credit: Brian Collier

relationship with friends, and becoming a Eucharistic Minister made this day worth remembering," Beck said.

No wonder our school dedicates a whole day to Saint Peter Chanel.

Back in 2023, 27 juniors were commissioned as Eucharistic Ministers, and now, in 2026, 48 juniors were commissioned.

The increase in participation represents how St. Peter Chanel Day encourages students to take the opportunity to bring themselves and the community closer to God.

Reflecting the missionary spirit of St. Peter Chanel, Fr. Joseph Hindelang shared some important reminders with students at the morning Mass.

"The good news isn't just meant for missionaries, but for all of us who are Christians," Fr. Hindelang said. He went on, "We are called to bring God's love to others and even to bring peace and joy to others."

St. Peter Chanel Day reflects one of the Marist missions of supporting one another, especially through faith. This mis-

sion is seen in many ways on St. Peter Chanel Day, from watching one another perform on the stage to juniors committing to serve the Body of Christ as a display of their love for Marist.

The first St. Peter Chanel Day, a daylong celebration held in honor of the martyred Marist priest, Fr. Peter Chanel, took place on April 28, 1983. Now in its fourth decade, the tradition continues.

St. Peter Chanel Day reflects the best of our school through faith in action, shared happiness, and a commitment to serving others. The strength of the Marist community is why this tradition has been able to stand for so many decades.

More than just a day of celebration, St. Peter Chanel Day continues to unite the Marist community through faith, service, and joy by living out the saying of the year, "We Are Marist." As the tradition grows and student involvement increases, the spirit of St. Peter Chanel lives on, inspiring students to strengthen both their relationships with God and one another.

The Illusion of Control

The psychological connection between Stanley Kubrick and Nathan Bateman in "Ex Machina"

By Spencer Patton

In the 2014 film "Ex Machina," writer-director Alex Garland created one of science fiction's most fascinating characters in Nathan Bateman, a genius tech CEO obsessed with controlling everything and everyone around him.

Garland was inspired by Stanley Kubrick when developing the character, as Kubrick was known for obsessively maintaining control when making his films. We see shades of Kubrick both visually and psychologically in Nathan. His beard, glasses, and intellectual intensity all feel very much like the legendary director.

But the deeper connection between the two figures lies in the idea of control. Not only did Kubrick become famous for masterpieces like "2001: A Space Odyssey" and "The Shining" but also for his obsessive management of every detail of filmmaking.

Kubrick was known for exhausting preparations, endless takes, and demanding perfection from everyone working on

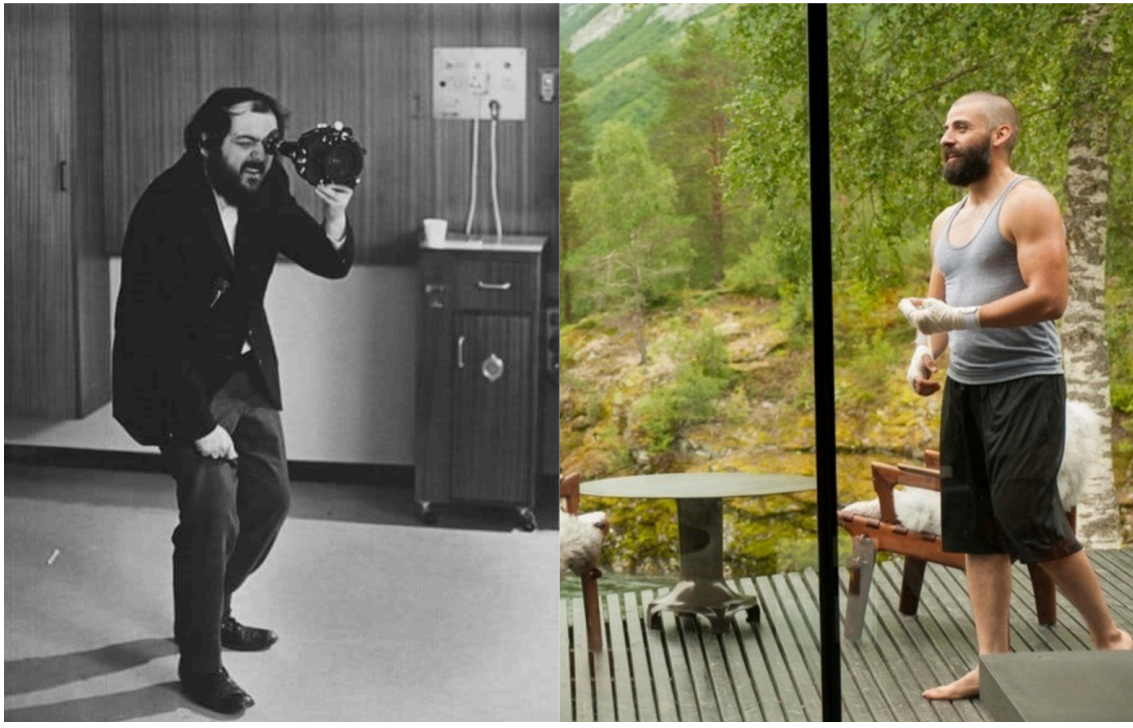


Photo Credit: A24 Films 2014

his films. Whether it was the acting, the camera work, the lighting, or the sound, every element of his filmmaking had to be completely true to his vision. He was extremely controlling, but that's what make his films great.

Garland built Nathan's char-

acter using a similar blueprint

In "Ex Machina," Nathan controls his high-tech house, its security systems, and the experiment that's central to the film's plot. Like Kubrick, he believes the success of his work, the development of humanoid A.I. robots in this case, comes from

controlling things others don't even see or think of.

But Garland uses Nathan to explore what happens when control becomes an illusion. The tension of "Ex Machina" is not only about whether artificial intelligence can become conscious; it is also about whether

humans can truly control the intelligence they create.

Nathan believes his masterpiece robot, Ava, is a machine operating the way he programmed her. Instead, Ava gradually shows that she understands emotions, that she's able to manipulate, and that she can make choices on her own.

By the film's conclusion, Nathan realizes too late that he doesn't fully understand what he created.

That is the difference between Nathan and Kubrick. Kubrick's obsessive control helped him create some of the best films ever made because the filmmaking process was something Kubrick was capable of controlling. Nathan, on the other hand, believed he was in control of his creation when, in reality, he wasn't.

In the end, Garland uses the Kubrick-inspired Nathan character as a warning that human geniuses may create incredible technology, but that genius alone does not guarantee the ability to control it.

Rushmore - A Study in Finding Your Purpose

By Spencer Patton

"War does funny things to men."

Wes Anderson's 1998 film "Rushmore" is widely considered a comedy, and when viewing the film purely through a humor lens, that's a fair assessment. The film delivers big laughs on the back of a witty, smartly written script filled with memorable dialogue and one-liners.

But beyond the laughs, there's a deeper meaning to "Rushmore," one that addresses existential questions around purpose and fulfillment. Like many of Anderson's films, "Rushmore" will have you laughing in the moment, and then thinking for days.

The film features two characters who are on opposite journeys. Max Fischer, the movie's

protagonist played by Jason Schwartzman, believes that he has found his purpose in life. That purpose is attending Rushmore, the prestigious prep school that he loves. As Fischer says in the opening scene, "You've just gotta find something you love to do and then do it for the rest of your life."

Fischer's academic performance at Rushmore is one of the reasons he's on track to achieve that goal. His journey in the film, however, is about discovering, and ultimately accepting, that your purpose in life may not be exactly what you thought.

On the other hand, there is wealthy business mogul Herman Blume, played by Bill Murray, who by appearances seems to have life figured out. We soon learn, however, that Blume is fully aware that his life lacks

purpose. Blume has amassed all the material success he could ever wish for. But with his failing marriage, disrespectful sons, and chronic malaise, Blume's journey is about finding his purpose when he had all but given up on it.

Fischer and Blume form an unexpected friendship upon meeting at a student assembly where Blume served as the guest speaker.

Enter Rosemary Cross, a first grade teacher at Rushmore played by Olivia Williams, who serves as the catalyst for both journeys of discovery. When both Fischer and Blume start developing feelings for Miss Cross and their friendship becomes a heated competition, it sets off a string of events that breaks each character out of his stasis and ultimately leads to life-changing realizations.

For Fischer, his obsession with impressing Miss Cross drives him towards actions that get him expelled from Rushmore, which turns his world upside down. But only in having his world turned upside down does he realize that his purpose isn't Rushmore; his purpose is to be true to himself regardless of where he goes to school. In losing the competition for Miss Cross' heart, he actually finds himself.

Meanwhile, Blume, who never pretended to have life figured out, finds an unexpected purpose in Miss Cross, who returns the feelings he expresses for her. This romance leads Blume to the realization that his purpose in life was never to be a titan of business or to amass great wealth; his purpose was to find someone he could truly love, who would love him back.

"She's my Rushmore," Blume tells Fischer in a poignant moment at the end of the film when the two reconcile, a line that brings the film's theme full circle.

The genius of Wes Anderson is his ability to create characters that are so unique, almost to the point of seeming unreal, but through those characters we encounter stories and lessons that are universally relatable.

Max Fischer and Herman Blume are perfect examples of this in "Rushmore," a film that makes you laugh, that makes you think, and that makes you ask yourself one of life's most important questions - what's your purpose?