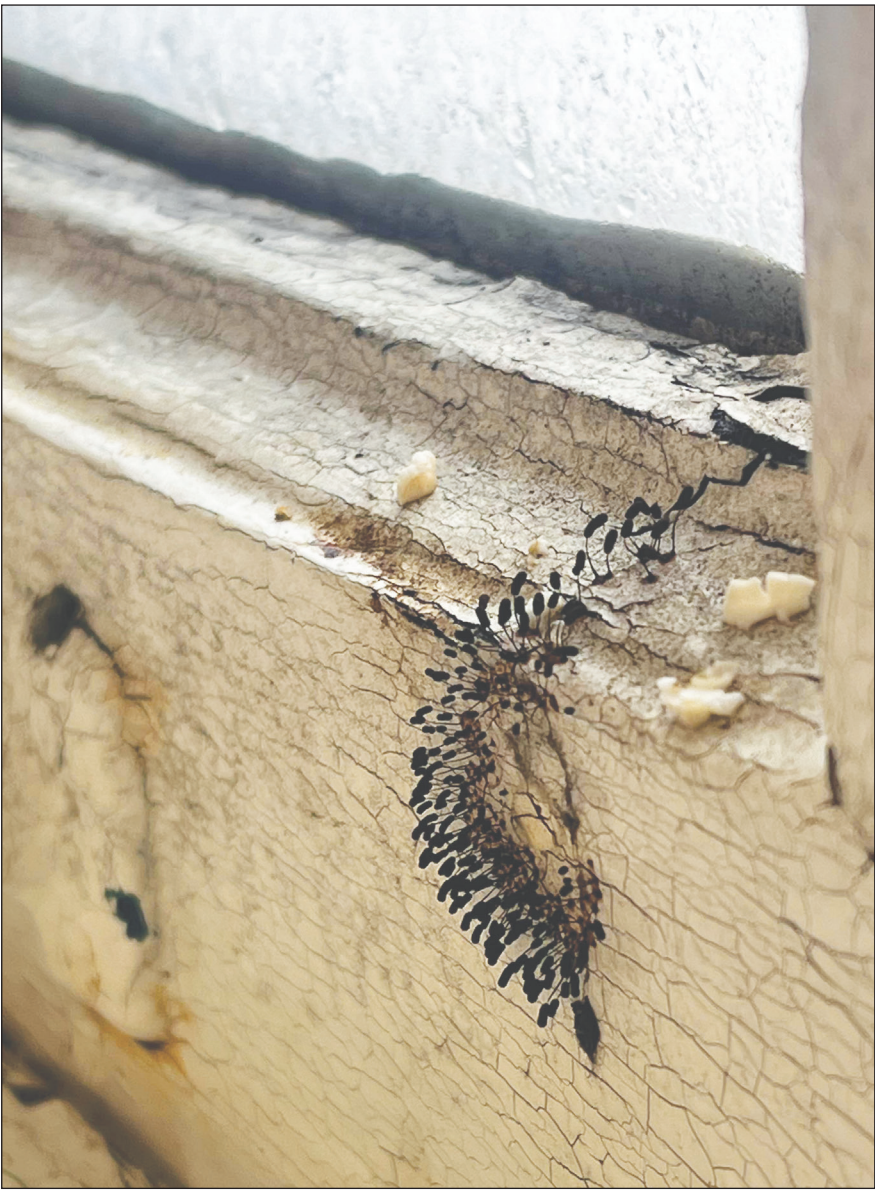


The Campus

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Slime mold inhabits Oddfellows Hall



NOELL FRITZ/THE CAMPUS

The slime mold protrudes from the men’s bathroom windowsill in Odd-fellow Hall’s philosophy wing. The mold has formed fruiting stalks to spread further.

By **MILO WATSON**
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Listen up, English majors. An ancient life form has sprouted in Oddfellows Hall.

Professor of English Matt Ferrence noticed it first on Feb. 3.

“It was very hot and humid in the building. And I happened to go downstairs into the bath-room in the old philosophy wing, and I saw on the windowsill a gelatinous mass with what looked like, kind of, pepper flakes in the gelati-nous mass,” Ferrence said. “By the next day, be-cause I had decided to visit it again, it had — the gelatinous mass had disappeared. And what was just left were the fruiting stalks of the slime mold.”

Slime molds’ otherworldly appearance may appear threatening, but University of Arkansas plant diagnosticians report that they are com-pletely harmless and usually vanish on their own.

Despite their name and appearance, slime molds are not a type of fungus at all. They’re protists, according to the National Park Service, although scientists have struggled for decades to fit them into a taxonomic category. Their current classification is a catch-all for any organism that definitely has chromosomes and a nucleus, but

definitely isn’t a plant, fungus, or animal.
Associate Professor of Biology Margaret Nel-son explained that slime molds can be divided into two main groups — cellular and plasmodial — with only the plasmodial variety growing large enough to be conspicuous on a windowsill.
“Some of them can be, yeah, really, really enormous,” Nelson said.

Plasmodial slime molds are so distantly relat-ed to the cellular species that Nelson studies that the two types have evolved completely different strategies to find food. But both manage to dis-solve common notions of the boundary between ‘individual’ and ‘community.’

Nelson explained that in food-abundant con-ditions, cellular slime molds live their lives as in-dependent, single celled organisms.

“So here are the individual cells, and then when they starve, they secrete these signals and they attract their neighbors,” Nelson said.

She then explained that thousands of these individuals form a cooperative mass, allowing them to search for food synchronously.

“So you can get like a hundred thousand cells that come together, but they’re called cellular because they maintain their individual,” Nelson said.

See [MOLD](#) | page 3

Federal funding freeze could sus-pend Allegheny research

By **AKARI BROWN**
Contributing Writer
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A federal funding freeze — which halts or restricts the allocation of federal funds to states, institutions and programs — could have significant short and long-term ef-fects on Allegheny College.

The freeze began on Jan. 27, when the Office of Management and Budget released a memo that “requires Federal agencies to identify and review all Federal financial assistance programs and supporting ac-tivities consistent with the President’s pol-icies and requirements.” According to AP news, a federal judge temporarily blocked the effort by the Trump administration the following day on Jan 28.

According to Professor of Biology and Head of Faculty Development Lisa White-nack, the freeze threatens critical resources such as Pell grants, financial aid and work-study programs, as well as federal grants that support the college’s operations.

The freeze could disrupt student and faculty research, particularly for senior

comprehensive projects reliant on feder-ally funded databases. Whitenack noted that some databases have already been inaccessible for weeks, creating challenges for students and faculty. Additionally, fed-eral grants, such as those from the Nation-al Science Foundation, provide overhead funds that support campus operations, including technology and infrastructure. A freeze would jeopardize these resources, impacting the college’s ability to function effectively.

Allegheny College President Ron Cole, ’87, highlighted broader concerns, includ-ing potential changes to federal financial aid programs like Pell grants and Parent PLUS loans. Cole noted that recently 40% of Allegheny’s incoming class have been Pell-eligible. Cole emphasized that while no stop-work orders have been issued for federal grants, the uncertainty surround-ing funding creates stress and instability for faculty, staff and students.

The freeze’s implications extend be-yond Allegheny College, potentially af-fecting scientific progress and innovation nationwide. Federal funding supports not

only research but also initiatives like the Howard Hughes Medical Institute’s grant for inclusive excellence in STEM, which was recently paused. The removal of pub-lic health data from the Centers for Dis-ease Control and Prevention website fur-ther complicates research efforts.

Cole stressed the importance of advo-cacy, urging collaboration with lobbying groups and elected officials to prevent these measures from taking effect. He warned that a full-blown federal funding freeze would have a “dramatic, dire im-pact” on Allegheny’s ability to fulfill its mission, affecting student financial aid, faculty research and institutional opera-tions.

Federal funding freezes are often im-plemented during periods of budgetary constraints or political disagreements. The Trump administration’s past freezes, aimed at reallocating resources to prior-ities like infrastructure and tax cuts, cre-ated uncertainty for states and institutions reliant on federal support. Critics argue that such measures undermine essential services and hinder long-term planning.

See [FREEZE](#) | page 2

ASG organiz-es events

By **ANTON HODGE**
Staff Writer
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Lyra Lindsay, ’27, passed first confirmation to be Co-Director of Student Affairs, a currently va-cant cabinet position when Allegheny Student Government met Tuesday, Feb. 18.

Cabinet Reports:
Director of the Treasury Dominic Juliana, ’27, reported the budget for this week. Total expenses were recorded as \$4,713.37, with \$1,720.50 going to Ski & Snowboard Club for a trip.

Director of Diversity and Inclusion Kaleialoha Froning, ’25, reported the “Being Alive Well” in-digenous programming was a success.

Director of Community Relations Hunter Go-erman, ’25 reported to the cabinet that Fourth Graders as Scientists would be on campus this Friday, Feb. 21, as well as March 14th and 28th.

Attorney General Chezka Quinola, ’27, re-minded all to submit candidacy applications for ASG president by next Tuesday. Henderson Campus Center tabling will begin this week to engage students in the process.

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<i>In this week’s Campus...</i>		
HEAD TO HEAD Contributing Writera Akari Brown, ’25, and Alex Nash, ’28, debate over “Fight Club’s” ending. Page 4	WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO LIVE GREEN? Staff Writer Kat Pointer, ’25 explores the history and future of Allegheny’s Gator Green Living Community. Page 5	‘BEING ALIVE WELL’ Contributing Writer Julia Müsseler, ’28, reports on the programming of “Being Alive Well,” meant to explore Indigenous conceptions of health and well-being. Page 6

Ask Allegheny

Could you be in a relationship with someone who has vastly different political views than you do?



Left: Chezka Quinola, '27
Majors: Software Engineering & Industrial Design

“I guess...Probably not. I’m not sure. I think it depends on how much they’re willing to like, understand where I’m coming from and stuff but I don’t know.”



Left: Max Prazer, '27
Majors: English & Economics

“Probably not because I feel like that would start a lot of arguments and it wouldn’t be really fun.”



Left: Zula Stenger, '25
Major: Business Minors: Political Science & Art

“Are they a respectful person? Then I probably could. But you have to agree on the fundamental values rather than the political party.”



Left: Zhanybek Sharsheev, '27
Majors: Economics & Computer Science

“Yeah because it doesn’t matter for me.”



Left: Kalli Greevy, '25
Major: Political Science Minors: Middle Eastern and North African Studies & Arabic

“I could date different political views but not different moral views.”



Left: Teag Cloonan, '28
Major: Data Science Minor: Writing

“No, because that means we have difference in morality and not political views.”



Left: Prakriti Shrestha, '27
Majors: Biology & Global Health

“Yeah.”



Left: Tristan Marinch, '27
Major: Political Science Minor: History

“It really depends I think because I don’t have too strong of political beliefs so I’m concerned about the character.”



Left: Hemani Alaparthi, '27
Majors: Computer Science & Economics

“I don’t think so. I just think it would be hard to understand where they’re coming from.”

FREEZE *from page 1*

For Allegheny, the stakes are high. As Whitenack and Cole have outlined, the freeze threatens not only the college’s operational stability but also its commitment to providing high-quality education and fostering innovation. Whitenack shared her experience with the uncertainty surrounding federal funding “It’s hard not having answers. You know, it’s rough. I almost, almost rather that they just say, ‘All right, you’re done,’ instead of this back and forth of, Am I done? Am I not done with my NSF grant?” she said. “I don’t know. So (I’m) spending a lot of time contingency planning and coming up with alternate ways to get the work done.”

Cole reaffirmed Allegheny College’s commitment to its mission and values despite the challenges posed by the funding freeze. “We remain committed to our liberal arts mission, values and statement of community.”

Cole said. “To accentuate this, our Board of Trustees this past weekend unanimously approved a resolution that reaffirms its support of the college’s long-standing mission and values for the entire Allegheny community.”

The uncertainty created by the funding freeze has a profound human impact on the Allegheny community. Students relying on federal aid to finance their education face anxiety about whether they will be able to continue their studies. Faculty members, particularly those engaged in research, are forced to spend valuable time contingency planning rather than focusing on their academic and scientific work.

Whitenack’s comments highlight the emotional toll of the freeze. The constant back-and-forth about whether funding will continue creates a stressful environment for researchers who depend on federal grants to support their work. This uncertainty can stifle innovation and discourage faculty from

pursuing ambitious projects that require long-term funding commitments.

Federal funding is a cornerstone of scientific research and innovation in the United States. Faculty and students at Allegheny rely on grants from agencies like the NSF to conduct research. A freeze in federal funding not only disrupts ongoing projects but also discourages new initiatives.



Our Board of Trustees this past weekend unanimously approved a resolution that reaffirms its support of the college’s long-standing mission and values for the entire Allegheny community”

**—RON COLE
President of Allegheny College, Class of 1987**

Whitenack pointed out that the pause on initiatives like the Howard Hughes Medical Institute’s grant for inclusive excellence in STEM is particularly concerning. Such

programs are designed to promote diversity and inclusion in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. Without federal support, these efforts may stall, undermining progress toward a more equitable and inclusive scientific community.

In response to the funding freeze, Allegheny College is taking a proactive approach. Cole emphasized the importance of advocacy with lobbying groups and elected officials to prevent the freeze from taking effect.

“I wouldn’t impose the burden of this on the college community” Cole said. “Instead I’m doing this work and invite others to do so as they are able.”

For those interested in tracking the status of federal funding and related legislation, the proposed congressional bill addressing the freeze can be accessed through Politico. This resource provides detailed information on the legislative process and updates on the potential impacts of the funding freeze.

ASG *from page 1*

Class Senate Reports
Class of 2025 events are being planned, according to Sen. Akari Brown
While giving the class of 2026 report by, Iris Styers gave a shoutout to the class of 2027 for a good combination event on valentines. The process of purchasing pins is

ongoing and the committee is meeting with the class dean weekly going forward to Junior Appreciation Week.

The class of 2027 report by Liam Shields also noted that the valentines day event went well and thanks the class of 2026 for the coordination.

The class of 2027 is finalizing the volleyball event. Signups will take place next week.
A St. Patrick’s Day event is being planned by the class of 2028. The report was given by George Asante; Tabling will be done twice before spring break to inform students about it.

Budgetary requests and a meeting with dining officials have been scheduled for this week.
Executive Reports
President Ella Derosé, '27, looks forward to transition reports for operating into next year.

MOLD

from page 1

As a plasmodial slime mold, the Oddfelloes specimen started as a typical microscopic cell. But when it bumped up against another slime mold cell of the same species, the two fused into a single larger cell with two nuclei and one cell membrane. From there it kept growing, expanding until it was multiple centimeters across. The gelatinous phase that first absorbed Ferrence’s attention was one giant cell most likely feeding on microscopic populations of wood-eating bacteria or fungi by engulfing them within its cell membrane. Now, its stalks are producing spores that will initiate a new generation of single-celled plasmoids ready to form their own bacteria-eating supercell.

“I’m truly kind of struck by how it inspires a curiosity and interest in, sort of, both other people and myself.”

—MATT FERRENCE
Professor of English

“Mostly I thought it was gross and not a great sign for the general condition of the building,” Ferrence said. But he snapped a photo anyway, and took to the internet.

“So I put a picture on Facebook, and some of my friends identified it as a likely slime mold, at which point I had my greatest success ever on Bluesky when I posted a picture ‘#amoebozoa,’ because I figured out if it’s a slime mold, it’s an amoebozoa, which I did not know the natural history of until I started looking into it and went viral —viral — on Bluesky with, like, 15 likes,”

Ferrence said. “So that’s my massive influence, because for unknown reasons, when I opened a Bluesky account, I started following all the fungus accounts, which is, like, a thing. There’s a whole, like, community of people that take pictures of interesting fungi and molds and lichens and, you know, slime molds, though not exactly related, were part of that.”

For those unfamiliar with Bluesky, Ferrence describes it as “Where everyone has gone, when they fled Twitter for becoming what Twitter became.”

“I just thought it was cool, actually, because at that point, I knew what it was, and it really did dawn on me, ‘oh, I actually have, like, a connection to this sort of bizarre subset of human beings on the planet who are into molds and lichens,’” Ferrence said about the decision to post his observation online.

After witnessing zest for plasmodial life spread among his classes, colleagues and online community, Ferrence reports that he has undergone a change of heart about the Oddfellows slime mold.

“My relationship to the slime mold has shifted quite considerably because, like, truly, my first reaction with it was like, gross, as I said, and a little annoyed, but now, like, I authentically really dig it and kind of love it,” Ferrence said. “Part of my interest in it is because my students were so interested in it, and they, like, helped move me from abject disgust to uncontained enthusiasm that people keep slime mold as pets, apparently.”

Although Ferrence says he does not wish to formally adopt this slime mold, it has be-

come part of his daily routine.

“I have gone to visit the slime mold at least once a day during the work week since I first discovered the slime mold,” Ferrence said. “So I usually, when I walk to work, I walk in through that hallway, so I stop in and check on it.”

Ferrence’s colleagues’ feelings about the slime mold vary in intensity.

“Those who I’ve chatted with about it I think share a kind of bemused interest, and at least one colleague shares my actual fascination with it as a creature itself,” Ferrence said. “I know Professor Miller went to visit the slime mold today, in fact, at my encouragement.”

Despite its rapid initial transformation from blob of goo to forest of stalks, the slime mold has changed little since Ferrence’s first observation.

“I have been waiting for it to change in some dramatic way so I can do a follow-up and it has not yet, so — and I don’t know if it’s dormant or if it’s just like: its plans are different than my plans; its sense of time is different than my sense of time,” Ferrence said.

That may well be the case.

After studies showed that plasmodial slime molds can solve mazes, recognize paths they’ve already traversed and rival humans in constructing the most efficient paths towards enticing destinations, science writer Ferris Jabr mused on the slime mold’s surprisingly sophisticated abilities to evaluate its environment.

“Compared with most organisms, slime

“You can get like a hundred thousand cells that come together, but they’re called cellular because they maintain their individual.”

—MARGARET NELSON
Associate Professor of Biology

molds have been on the planet for a very long time—they first evolved at least 600 million years ago and perhaps as long as one billion years ago,” Jabr wrote in Scientific American. “At this time, no organisms had yet evolved brains or even simple nervous systems. Yet slime molds do not blindly ooze from one place to another—they carefully explore their environments, seeking the most efficient routes between resources. They do not accept whatever circumstances they find themselves in, but rather choose conditions most amenable to their survival.”

If these conditions happen to include a warm, humid windowsill in Oddfellows Hall, Ferrence observes that humans gain an opportunity to more carefully explore their own environment.

“I’m truly kind of struck by how it inspires a curiosity and interest in, sort of, both other people and myself,” Ferrence said. “It’s an organism that is showing up where you don’t expect an organism to show up, and I respect that it’s doing that.”

Nelson celebrated this curiosity.

“It’s just kind of fun to have people enjoying the weird and wonderful variety that exists in the biological world,” Nelson said.

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CRIME BLOTTER

Editor’s Note: The weekly Crime Blotter is compiled using the Daily Crime Log available on the Office of Public Safety’s web page. Crimes reported may still be under investigation. Crimes listed below are collected the Wednesday before publication.

No reported crime in the past week.

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Since 1876

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HEAD-TO-HEAD

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Is the ambiguous ending of 'Fight Club' dangerous or beautiful?

By ALEX NASH
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The ending of "Fight Club" is widely regarded as one of the most powerful and thought-provoking conclusions in modern cinema. It encapsulates the film's themes of identity, consumerism and rebellion against societal norms. Here's an in-depth explanation of why the ending is so great:

Firstly, the ending provides a dramatic resolution to the protagonist's internal conflict. Throughout the film, the nameless narrator, who is played by Edward Norton, struggles with his sense of self and his dissatisfaction with his mundane, consumer-driven life. The revelation that Tyler Durden, brought to life by the legendary Brad Pitt, is a manifestation of the narrator's psyche is a pivotal moment that forces the narrator to confront his fractured identity. By the end, the narrator's decision to "kill" Durden by shooting himself symbolizes his desire to reclaim control over his life and reject the destructive path Durden represents. This act of self-destruction and self-assertion is both shocking and cathartic, underscoring the film's exploration of duality and self-actualization.

Secondly, the ending is visually and thematically striking. The final scene, where the narrator and Marla Singer, played by Helena Bonham Carter, hold hands while watching the buildings explode is iconic. The juxtaposition of this intimate moment against the backdrop of widespread destruction highlights the film's critique of modern society. The collapsing buildings symbolize the dismantling of the corporate and materialistic structures that the narrator has come to despise. This visual spectacle, combined with the haunting sound of "Where Is My Mind?" by The Pixies, creates a powerful and memorable cinematic experience that leaves a lasting impression on the audience.

The ending serves as a commentary on the cyclical nature of rebellion and conformity. Throughout "Fight Club," the narrator's journey from a disillusioned office worker to the leader of an anarchist movement mirrors the very societal structures he seeks to overthrow. Project Mayhem, under Durden's leadership, becomes another form of control and oppression, mirroring the corporate world against which the narrator initially rebelled. The ending suggests that true freedom and individuality cannot be found in simply replacing one system of control with another. Instead, it calls for a deeper understanding and acceptance of oneself, free from external influences.

The ending also leaves room for interpretation and discussion, which adds to its greatness. Some viewers see it as a hopeful conclusion, with the narrator reclaiming his identity and starting anew with Singer. Others interpret it as a bleak commentary on the futility of rebellion, as the narrator's actions ultimately lead to more chaos and destruction. This ambiguity invites viewers to reflect on the film's themes and draw their own conclusions, making the ending a subject of ongoing debate and analysis.

Moreover, the ending of "Fight Club" resonates with audiences on a personal level. Many people can relate to the narrator's feelings of alienation and disillusionment in a consumer-driven society. The film's critique of materialism and its exploration of the search for meaning and identity strike a chord with viewers, making the ending particularly impactful. The narrator's journey and ultimate decision to reject Durden's destructive influence offer a sense of empowerment and hope, encouraging viewers to take control of their own lives and find their own path to self-discovery.

In conclusion, the ending of "Fight Club" is great and, in my opinion, makes the film greater, because it provides a dramatic and thought-provoking resolution to the protagonist's internal conflict, delivers a visually and thematically striking conclusion, offers a commentary on the cyclical nature of rebellion and conformity, leaves room for interpretation and discussion and resonates with audiences on a personal level. It encapsulates the film's exploration of identity, consumerism and societal rebellion, leaving a lasting impact on viewers and solidifying "Fight Club" as a modern cinematic classic.

By AKARI BROWN
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David Fincher's "Fight Club" has long been celebrated as a cult classic, a biting critique of consumerism and toxic masculinity. Yet, its ambiguous ending — marked by the destruction of corporate buildings and the jarring insert of male genitalia — has left a troubling legacy. Far from offering a clear condemnation of the ideologies it explores, the film's conclusion revels in chaos and spectacle, leaving room for misinterpretation and appropriation by far-right groups and hate movements. I believe the film's failure to resolve its central themes of masculinity, violence and rebellion has allowed it to become a rallying cry for those who glorify its most destructive ideals.

Claire Sisco King's essay, "It Cuts Both Ways: Fight Club, Masculinity, and Abject Hegemony," provides a critical lens through which to understand the film's problematic ending. King argues that "Fight Club" does not merely depict a crisis of masculinity but showcases its adaptability through the embrace of abjection, violence and transformation. The film's portrayal of masculinity as unstable, fluid and grotesque ultimately reinforces its cultural dominance by appropriating traits associated with the marginalized "other." This analysis helps explain why the ending feels less like a resolution and more like a chaotic shrug, leaving viewers with more questions than answers.

The film's final moments — where the Narrator (Edward Norton) shoots himself to "kill" Tyler Durden (Brad Pitt), only to watch the city's financial district explode — are emblematic of this ambiguity. On the surface, it appears to be a rejection of Durden's anarchic philosophy. Yet, the destruction of the buildings is presented as a triumphant spectacle, accompanied by Pixies' haunting song "Where Is My Mind?" This juxtaposition undermines any clear critique of Durden's ideology, instead glorifying the violence and chaos he represents. As King notes, the ending exposes the abject nature of masculinity but does not resolve it, leaving the ideological cycle of toxic masculinity intact.

This lack of resolution has made "Fight Club" ripe for misinterpretation. Far-right groups and incel communities have embraced Durden as a symbol of disenfranchised white men rallying against a feminized, consumerist society. Melody Devries, professor of digital media and ethnography at Allegheny College, described how the aforementioned groups have taken ownership of the film. "Fight Club' has become a favorite amongst cells and far-right groups for depicting disenfranchised white men coming together to rally against capitalist society," Devries said. These groups twist the film's anti-capitalist themes to fit their own narratives, using Durden's rhetoric to justify violence and exclusion.

Fincher himself has expressed frustration with this misinterpretation, stating, "I'm not responsible for 'Fight Club' being a hit with incels and the far right. I don't know how to help people who idolize Tyler Durden." While Fincher may not have intended for the film to be co-opted by hate groups, its ambiguous ending and glorification of violence have made it susceptible to such appropriation. The film's failure to clearly condemn Durden's ideology allows viewers to project their own beliefs onto the narrative, whether they align with the film's intended critique or not.

The film's treatment of gender further complicates its legacy. Durden's misogynistic rhetoric and the marginalization of Marla Singer (Helena Bonham Carter) reflect a regressive view of gender dynamics. As King argues, masculinity in "Fight Club" depends on adopting and then rejecting feminine traits, a process that reinforces patriarchal power structures. The ending does little to challenge this dynamic, leaving Singer as a passive observer rather than an active participant in the resolution. This reinforces the idea that the film's critique of masculinity is superficial at best, and complicit at worst.

The final shot — a sudden insert of male genitalia — epitomizes the film's reliance on shock value over substance. This crass visual gag, while intended to disrupt and provoke, ultimately feels like a cheap attempt at transgression rather than a meaningful commentary. As King suggests, the film's embrace of abjection and spectacle undermines its potential as a serious cultural critique, leaving viewers with a sense of unease rather than enlightenment.

In the years since its release, "Fight Club" has become a cultural touchstone, but its legacy is deeply troubling. The film's ambiguous ending and glorification of violence have allowed it to be appropriated by hate groups, who use its imagery and rhetoric to justify their own destructive ideologies. "We have to think about it's like nobody's directly orchestrating these things, but there's cultural ingredients that everybody's kind of starting to feel a type of way because white supremacy is not being addressed," Devries said. "It's being allowed to fester, inequality is not being addressed, it's being allowed to fester, and people are taking these alternative hegemonic interpretations of why that is."

Ultimately, the film's ending fails to deliver a coherent message, leaving its themes of masculinity, violence and rebellion unresolved. This ambiguity has allowed the film to be misinterpreted and co-opted by those who seek to glorify its most dangerous ideals. As I reflect on the film's cultural impact, I can't help but see it as a cautionary tale about the unintended consequences of art that prioritizes spectacle over substance.

Getting coffee with my younger self

By JAY SHANK
Staff Writer
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I met my younger self for coffee. It's 2018 and it's her first time at Starbucks. I can buy my own coffee now, and she relied on the gift cards she got for being overly involved. It was a \$10 gift card, and she kept telling me how excited she was that she could afford a vanilla bean frappuccino after all these years. I smiled at her and we sat down. I asked her how she did it; she said she won this award at her summer program and they gave her the gift card to make up for forgetting to announce her name at the award ceremony. I told her we won that award every summer until we aged out, and now we're teaching for the same program at a different location this summer. She told me she didn't know we would make it this far.

The first thing she asked was if anything changed. She asked if mom and dad finally stopped doing the drugs and if they could finally stay awake long enough to talk to me, and she wanted to know if they did end up buying a house or a car. For a second, I hesitated.

"I have a different mother now," I said. "What do you mean," she asked. "I guess I'm adopted. I don't really talk to mom anymore," I hesitated. "We were homeless again."

I watched her face droop and she didn't know what to say. She decided saying nothing was better but I saw the need for more

information in her eyes. I remembered being her once, not knowing anything but wanting to know everything.

"Yeah," I said. "It wasn't very good. A lot of stuff happened. There was a car for a brief moment, but mom and dad totaled it. So I don't live with them anymore. I don't talk to them either, I guess."

"Oh."

"Yeah." I paused for a moment; I remem-

“

I remembered being her once, not knowing anything but wanting to know everything.”

—JAY SHANK
Class of 2028

ber feeling like this. I remember feeling like there was no point to anything, and I saw in her eyes that she didn't want to deal with the abuse anymore. She didn't want to keep pretending like nothing was wrong if it was just going to continue on the same trajectory, because every time something happened, she was promised it would change. And it never did. I remember being her, 12 years old and alone.

"But it gets better," I said. I think if it were still me, I'd want to know that. I don't know if she wanted to hear that again, but maybe it was different because it was me telling her.

And that makes it true, I think.

"People keep saying that," she said after a breath.

"Yeah," I said. "They do. But they're right, too. It won't feel like it for a while. And it gets worse before it gets better. It gets really bad actually. Sometimes I don't even know how I'm here. But I am! And I love being here too! I love life more than anything in the world. I love humans and I love love. There are so many beautiful things that I've never appreciated before. But life is worth living if it means I can exist in the same place they do."

She didn't respond immediately. And then the tears in her eyes welled up, and suddenly she was crying. She missed her mother, and she thought she'd never be loved again. But here I was, telling her that she will have the life she'd always wanted if she just stuck through the horrors for a little longer. She just needed to be strong, like she always had been, and she'd be just fine. I knew she'd be fine; I always did.

"What do I do?" she asked finally.

"You keep living," I said simply. "That's all you can do, really."

For a while, we talked about small things. I told her I'm a cat person now and I don't really want a dog anymore, and that I can still eat just a handful of rainbow sprinkles if someone gave them to me like I did when I was six. I told her I like girls, which she didn't know how to respond to, but I hope it makes her feel better about herself when she figures it out herself. We laughed back and

forth. She told me she wanted to be an actor, and I told her I wanted to be a writer. I told her I'm studying English in college, and she told me she's doing math at the gifted program for gifted and talented kids. I laughed a little bit. We'll never do math again, but I'll let her explore for now.

There are things I didn't tell her; what happens during the homelessness, how horrible the first semester of college will be, that we made people cry at graduation. I know she can handle all of it, because I'm alive. When she stood up to leave, I pulled her into a hug.

"Thank you," I said. Because after all, she's the reason we're having coffee at all.

I hope we meet again soon.



PHOTO PROVIDED BY JAY SHANK
Shank's younger self at Starbucks for the first time in 2018.

Comedy Corner: Waste, transit and Superman

By **JOSEPH KLEPEIS**
Co-Editor-in-Chief
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Politico reported on Feb. 14 that Democratic Rep. Haley Stevens eyes open Michigan senate seat.

“I was just staring off into the distance when I made eye contact with the seat,” Stevens said. “It started folding and unfolding and flipping all around until it opened itself up.”

West Mead township has approved a waste transfer, according to The Meadville Tribune on Feb. 13.

“We’re sad to see waste go but it was time and we’re being compensated handsomely for the departure,” said a West Mead township official. “The transfer fee has yet to be revealed but West Mead management are saying the price made the deal more than worthwhile.”

Sen. Tina Smith, D-Minn., will not run in 2026, according to USA Today on Feb. 13.

“I’m 66 and about to turn 67. I’ll be nearly 70 by 2026,” Smith said. “I’ve had some great years, but running is simply out of the ques-

tion at my age. I’ll stick to walking.”

CBS News reported on Feb. 10 that Donald Trump has directed the Treasury Department to stop minting new pennies.

“I don’t understand why we were doing it in the first place,” Trump said. “The Treasury Department isn’t Andes Chocolate Mints, so why we were minting things in the first place I’ll never understand.”

Reuters reported on Feb. 13 that a Humpback whale swallowed and then spat out a kayaker off the Chilean coast.

“I’m so glad we nicknamed him Jonah,” said the father of the kayaker. “God knows what would’ve happened had we not.”

In an audit released last Thursday, Allegheny County Controller Corey O’Connor raised concerns that public defenders’ heavy case-loads may make it difficult to provide effective representation, according to The Pittsburgh Tribune-Review on Feb. 14.

Public defenders are overworked? Who could have ever guessed that would be so?

The San Francisco Chronicle reported on Feb. 14 that a 25-year-old Australian wom-

an was arraigned on drug trafficking charges in San Mateo County after she was allegedly found with 44 pounds of methamphetamine hidden in her checked luggage at San Francisco International Airport.

The woman allegedly told authorities she flew into Los Angeles, where she met a stranger and picked up a locked suitcase before continuing her journey to SFO.

“This is why you guys need high-speed rail in this country,” the woman said. “If I could’ve just simply taken a train from Los Angeles to San Francisco I never would have been caught.”

Conneaut Lake has shot down plans for a Dollar General store, according to The Meadville Tribune on Feb. 15.

“It was an accident, plain and simple,” said a borough official. “A few of us officials were out skeet shooting and someone replaced one of the clay pigeons with the plans for this new Dollar General.”

The Independent Record reported on Feb. 14 that sampling last year found that “an overwhelming majority of trout from rivers in the upper Missouri River Basin are healthy” (real quote.)

That’s according to a news release last Wednesday from Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks about field work conducted in 2024 by both FWP and Montana State University.

“That’s great to hear,” said one of the trout. “There’s a real lack of healthcare for us so the fact that so many of us are healthy is very reassuring.”

Birders have taken to the outdoors for the annual counting event, according to The Arkansas Democrat-Gazette on Feb. 14.

“It’s been tough this year, I have to say,” said one of the birders. “I keep seeing what might be a bird, a plane or Superman.”

Pennsylvania plans to close the Waynesburg inmate reentry center, according to The Observer-Reporter on Feb. 15.

If we help the incarcerated return to society they might not return to prison and who would want that? Better to save a few bucks and gain some more prisoners right?

Disclaimer: All quotes are fictitious unless otherwise noted. Any lack of joy as a result of this article is unintentional and we claim no responsibility.

By **KAT POINTER**
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According to the Department of Energy & Environmental Protection, the average college student produces 640 pounds of solid waste each year, but inside Allegheny’s Gator Green Living Community, Allegheny students prove that number doesn’t have to be the norm. Through composting, energy conservation and eco-conscious habits, they’re redefining what it means to live on



KAT POINTER/THE CAMPUS

The members of Allegheny’s Green Living special interest housing currently reside at 312 Loomis St., pictured above.

campus without leaving behind a footprint. At first glance, the Green Living House — currently located at 312 Loomis St. — looks like any other special interest housing on Allegheny’s campus, but step inside and you’ll find a community built on sustainability, where students trade disposable for reusable and car rides for bikes.

Mazzie Standish, ’25, has resided in Green Living since the fall semester of her sophomore year and cannot imagine living anywhere else. “It’s kind of been the most rewarding aspect of Allegheny for me: the basis of where my friends have come from and where I feel sane,” she said.

The Director of Sustainability and one of the founders of Green Living, Kelly Boulton, ’02, is the faculty advisor to Allegheny College Bike Share, the Carrden and the Green Living house. “Really, to be honest, what it means to live in the house shifts over time in a response to who is living in the house and what interests and skills that they bring to the table,” Boulton said.

Green Living has had many innovations and inventions over the years, ranging from implementing rain gardens and rain barrels to compost bins and planting fruit trees.

“There was a student who was really into chickens and asked if he could bring his chickens to campus, and so for several years, we had a chicken coop and chickens laying eggs,” Boulton said.

Currently, Green Living students have been hard at work monitoring their electrical meters to track how much electricity is being used weekly, as well as timing each other’s showers to reduce water consumption.

“I really like water conservation. When we came back from winter break, Elsa (Waidelich) got a waterproof timer to count in our shower, and it’s fun,” said Madi Kermis, ’25. “I love French Creek, and I like all of the community efforts to protect French Creek, like participating in the French Creek Cleanup.”

Some new inventions in the house include a coat rack made out of a tree and the

removal of all paper towels in favor of rags and more reusable methods. Kermis talked about implementing a fun new challenge of totaling each house member’s trash for a week to see how well they recycle, possibly during Earth Week in April.

Green Living collaborates mainly with the Students for Environmental Action (SEA) and the Green Students of Color Society (Green SOCS) to hold events since Green Living is not a club and therefore does not have a budget with ASG. The Green



KAT POINTER/THE CAMPUS

The members of Allegheny’s Green Living special interest housing currently reside at 312 Loomis St., pictured above.

clubs have held potlucks at the Green Living House, which gives the events more of a homey feel.

“It’s cozy,” said Elsa Waidelich, ’25. “It’s really nice to have this space for that kind of event because you can do it in Carr Hall, but it is really nice to feel like you are in a house.”

Green Living house was founded in 2010 in Allegheny Hall, a dorm building that used to reside on the corner of Allegheny St and North Main St. They were there for two years before moving down to 296 Loomis St. where they lived for the last decade.

“It used to be a special interest house, and there was an understanding that that was kind of the address we stayed at,” Boulton explained, referring to 296 Loomis St. “There’s been a lot of changes in Res Life, and so the house was given to the Phi-Delt’s. They currently live there, but we will see for the future.”

According to Boulton, there used to be a formal special interest housing process in Res Life, and there is something similar in place now in terms of getting a house on campus. Though, before it used to be an application process where you had to specify what your special interest house would bring to campus, how you would educate the student body and improve student life.

“Our house was formed as a way to let students live together where they could practice sustainable living, they could learn from each other, and they could adopt new habits and test them out,” Boulton said.

“Ideally, we would like to have a lot more practices outside like we used to,” Standish said. “I think we had a lot more pre-Covid at the old house, but we can’t really take action on any of those yet without knowing where we are going to be next year and if we will get the old house back at some point.”

Residing in the basement of 296 Loomis St., the Allegheny College Bike Share began in 2012 and is an ASG-approved student group on campus that teaches students about fixing their own bikes and the upkeep it takes. They also provide free bikes for

students that they tune up and place at the Lawrence Lee Pelletier Library, where you can check them out with your student ID.

According to Boulton, the large overlap between students in Green Living and Allegheny College Bike Share adds to the reasoning behind wanting to have their old house back for the next academic year, despite the two being separate entities. There are also a lot of Green initiatives implemented in that space that cannot be moved from house to house.

“We had a gray water system in the bathroom that would catch all of the water that came down from the sink and hold it in a tank, and then it would use that sink water to flush the toilets rather than using freshwater,” Boulton explained. “We’re hoping we can get that house back at some point because that is a really good synergy.”

While the members of Green Living regret losing their old house, 312 Loomis has quickly become a new home to them. “It’s really unfortunate to have lost the old house, but I am grateful that we still get to have a house,” Waidelich said. “This house has been really good for us, and while we’d really like the other one back, it’s nice we have something.”

“I actually love this house so much; the quirks it has and the way we live in it, and just how far we’ve grown as Green Living in this house speaks volumes compared to the other one,” Standish said, “Moving here has only made me realize: the people are green living.”

In the past, Green Living has put on lots of workshops to educate the student body and the community about sustainability. One of these workshops included making your own cleaning products out of vinegar and baking soda.

“We’ve done natural craft workshops or ‘make your own skin care and shampoo,’ and a lot of educational things as well,” Boulton said.

The members of Green Living have many programming ideas that they would like to do this semester, including a Natural Dye Workshop in collaboration with the Knitting Club on campus.

“I want to take people on a mindful walk around Greendale Cemetery, and maybe we collect some stuff and make some art with it,” said Aiden Beinhauer, ’27. Beinhauer is a first-year member of Green Living and has many new ideas for programming in the coming academic year.

“I’d like to get some ingredients from Carr, if possible, and teach people how to cook some stuff from the garden,” Beinhauer said, “I’m excited about gardens. I feel like



KAT POINTER/THE CAMPUS

Phi Delta Theta fraternity members reside at 296 Loomis St., which previously housed Green Living.

‘Being Alive Well’: an indigenous approach to well being

By **JULIA MÜSSELER**
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During the program “Being Alive Well” members of indigenous tribes presented their holistic conception of well-being among others at the Doane Art Gallery in the Henderson Campus Center last week.

“We basically just invited indigenous people of various kinds and left it to them to decide what to do,” said organizer and Visiting Associate Professor Steven Farrelly-Jackson about the program.

The event on Feb. 14 was divided into several talks from members of the local Seneca Nation, and also included workshops as well as an indigenous lunch. The thought behind the diverse program was, according to Farrelly-Jackson, to represent the interrelation between community, nature and food by having multiple dimensions at the event.

Addressing Allegheny students in the first place, the program was intended to “introduce students to the richness of indigenous culture” and to fight against the “lack of knowledge” and ignorance of indigenous living and the challenges it poses.

Besides the invited speakers who stayed throughout the whole event and supported their colleagues, mostly students attended the event. On Friday around 50 people

gathered for lunch, but after the first talk the majority left. With the remaining 15 people, there was a pleasant family atmosphere.

Lorinda John, a member of the Seneca Nation, opened the event with a speech addressing thanksgiving for the served food and presenting the menu with a proud smile.

She prepared steamed broccoli, chicken spiced with ginger, vanilla and cacao and a wild-rice pilaf. As a vegetarian option she served a Bolognese containing beans, tomato sauce and different kinds of pasta. Initially thinking about presenting the three main indigenous ingredients corn, wheat and squash, she had to improvise a bit in the end.

“Unfortunately I burned it (the spaghetti squash) this morning and you guys get pasta instead,” John said.

The origin of “Being Alive Well” was a short course called “Native American, Health and Social Justice” founded in 2017 by Farrelly-Jackson and Caryl Waggett, associate professor and chair of the Global Health studies program. Originally this year’s event was built around Kyle Powys Whyte, who serves as George Willis Pack professor; university diversity & social transformation professor; professor of philosophy; Tishman Center faculty director at the University of Michigan, quickly expanded by various speakers from mostly the local Seneca Nation, but also from the Hawaiian

tribe Kāneʻohe represented by Kaleialoha Froning, ’24.

Even though the module could not take place this year due to a lack of enrollment, Farrelly-Jackson is pleased that at least the event could take place and is looking forward to meeting the participants in person.

Besides Farrelly-Jackson and Waggett, Professor and Philosophy Program Chair Eric Palmer helped with organizing the event. Together they reached out to mostly existing contacts collected through the organization of the module over the last years. Unfortunately, they had to deal with some last-minute changes since Powys Whyte and a member of the Cherokee nation had to cancel their talks due to difficult weather conditions and urgent family matters.

Following the lunch, Tyrone Bowen-Colleteta, a student at the University of Pittsburgh at Bradford, talked about lacrosse and its meaning for him as a member of the Seneca Nation and a passionate player.

He was supported by a large part of the men’s lacrosse team and some of the women’s team, too, which came for his speech and helped John to set up the food.

The next activities were more craft oriented. Antoinette Scott and her daughter Mary Denea prepared a workshop for corn-husk doll-making. During the workshop she and her daughter went around and helped

every person individually. Some people also used the intimate atmosphere to get to know them and their culture in a more personal way.

“We used to make corn-husk dolls when I was growing up,” said Erin McGee, ’28, who was most excited about the food and the doll-making workshop. Together with Rachel Statsick, ’28 they visited the event out of curiosity and thought that it was a “great opportunity” to learn something new about the local indigenous population which they didn’t know much about.

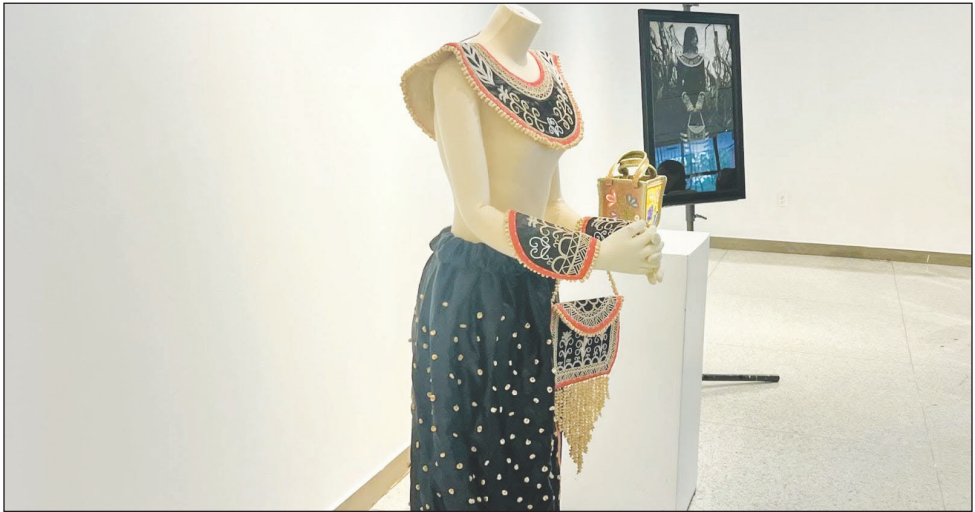
After the workshop an exhibition of beadwork was presented by Karlene Familo, a member of the Seneca Nation and the Hawk clan. The dress and purse she introduced to the remaining 15 people were worn by a model for the winter 2024 issue of the “First American Art Magazine.”

It took her one month to finish these two art pieces. The dress is constructed of beans and corn and is like a real person to Familo. This was followed by a talk about environmental justice by Jason Corwin and another workshop for crafting a community dream catcher led by John.

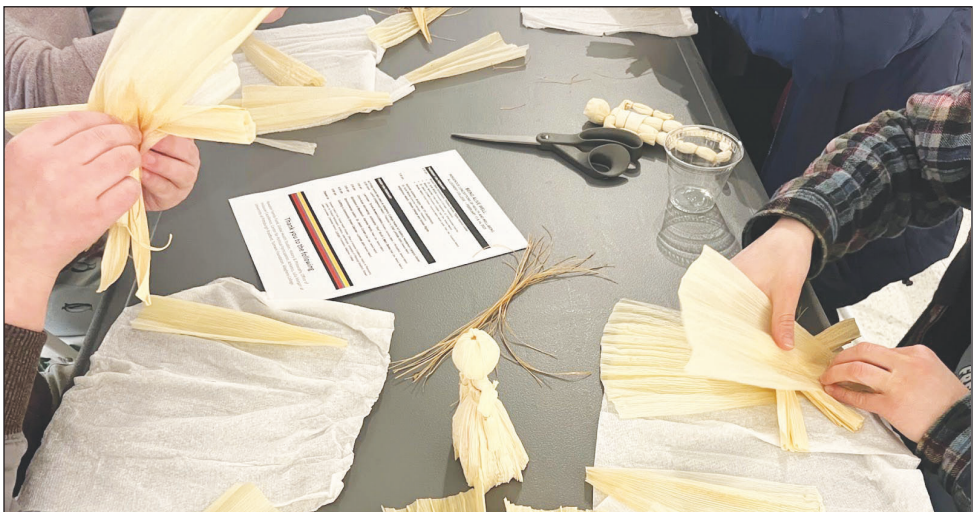
Hoping that the event could inspire students and open their eyes for alternative ways of living, Farrelly-Jackson is already planning new events to hold.



JULIA MÜSSELER/THE CAMPUS
Attendees of the ‘Being Alive Well’ event on Feb. 14 wait to try food made by Seneca Nation member Lorinda John.



JULIA MÜSSELER/THE CAMPUS
A dress featuring intricate use of beans and corn is among the items on display in Doane Hall for the ‘Being Alive Well’ event.



JULIA MÜSSELER/THE CAMPUS
Participants learn how to make corn husk dolls from mother-daughter duo Antoinette Scott and Mary Denea.



JULIA MÜSSELER/THE CAMPUS
Attendees settle in to listen to the first talk of the program in Doane Hall.

Cognitive Dissonance

By **HENRY GREFENSTETTE**
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YEAH, SO MY WIFE AND I WENT OUT LAST NIGHT... SAW A MOVIE, GOT A NICE DINNER... WHAT'D YOU DO FOR VALENTINE'S DAY?

...I WENT OVER TO MARY'S PLACE AND WE SAW A MOVIE TOO, ACTUALLY.

THE NIGHT BEFORE...

...WOW, CAPTAIN AMERICA, THIS REALLY IS A "BRAVE NEW WORLD", HUH?

MUNCH MUNCH

ISN'T SHE THAT ONE WAITRESS WHO CAN BARELY STAND YOU? HOW DID YOU MANAGE TO PULL THAT OFF???

I'LL TELL YOU HOW, MY FRIEND: PURE, ANIMALISTIC CHARISMA.