Rice in the Rankings

Diana Nazerian argues against the systemic trend of overcommitment on the Rice campus

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NEW Montrose restaurant Pax Americana peddles inventive, inconsistent, New American fare

SEE A&E P. 8

OWLS mount a late comeback against Old Dominion, only to be denied the win by a late field goal

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RiceX begins developing hybrid rockets to launch into space

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Competition prompts boba sale limits

BY NAOKI SHIBA

Rice University student clubs need to start looking for new fundraising ideas, due to new limits placed on boba tea sales this academic year. According to Rice Taiwanese Association President Tim Chang, three years ago the only clubs that sold boba tea were the Chinese Student Association and RTA. Chang, a McMurtry College senior, said when other clubs discovered RTA’s boba tea sales this academic year. According to Rice Taiwanese Association President Donald Bowers, this year, will regulate the number of times clubs can sell boba. Halliburton said, “This is the first time we have done this.” Halliburton said, “I had so many requests for boba [sales], and I was already booked, so I had to change the policy to one semester.”

“Because we have the limit of one boba tea sale per day, that allows us to have five groups in the fall and five different groups in the spring, rather than having five groups sell in the fall and spring.”

According to Halliburton, these rules ensure clubs are able to sell out and are not competing with each other. Halliburton said she has yet to see whether these rules will prove to be successful, but she knew something needed to be done.

“This is the first time we have done this,” Halliburton said. “I had so many requests for boba [sales], and I was already booked, so I had to change the policy to one semester.”

President of the Chinese International Student Association Zhihan Li said she was not aware of the new policy. Nonetheless, Li said she does not mind other clubs selling boba tea, despite it being thought of as a traditionally Asian drink.

“I understand that many clubs are doing it because it is such an effective way of raising money,” Li, a Lovett College junior, said. “At the same time, people do need to come up with new ways of fundraising options. For example, another fundraising option that [CISA] has right now is [charging] a membership fee.”

Show of hands

Moderator Donald Bowers asks the audience to raise their hand if they know somebody who has been pulled over by the police for no reason at a townhall meeting on Sept. 23 on the Ferguson police shooting.

Pod structure to encourage discussion

BY JIeya WEM

Rice University Student Association is employing a new group structure, referred to as a pod, to address four presidents’ topics of interest: the LPAP requirement, campus-wide election timelines, campus-wide announcements and calendars and the blanket tax process, according to SA President Ravi Sheth.

“I can’t possibly claim to know the solution to these topics — if there is any current problem with them at all — so I am asking small groups of four or five students to consider these topics and provide recommendations to [the] Student Senate as to how to proceed,” Sheth, a Munet College senior, said. According to Sheth, each pod will focus on a different topic.

“These small groups are open to any student, and the college leadership have been asked to inform any relevant students who are interested in working on these issues that they can join,” Sheth said.

According to Sheth, the four topics originated from discussions with different groups on campus.

“In a given week, I have 15-20 hours of meetings and hundreds of emails, with groups ranging from students [such as] college presidents, senators [and] SA committees, to faculty, staff and administrators,” Sheth said. “These issues have come up in these settings or discussed informally with students.”

Lovett College President Meghan Danavenport said she

Rice in the Rankings

The 2015 edition of the U.S. News and World Report, released Sept. 9, ranked Rice University 19 among national universities, a drop from the previous year’s tie at 18 with the University of Notre Dame. This is the second consecutive year Rice has fallen. Brown University, the University of Notre Dame and Vanderbilt University are just above Rice, all tied at 16.

U.S. News and World Report

Rice has either held its rank or fallen since 2004; Rice held its all-time high of ninth on this list in 1989. The current ranking of 19 is the lowest Rice has been ranked since 1984.

Academic Rankings of the World/Shanghai Rankings

In these world rankings, Rice has consistently performed in the top 100, reaching its peak in 2003 at position 61 and falling consistently until 2009. Rice currently stands at 82, but fluctuations of more than five positions are not uncommon.

Times Higher Education

The ranking criteria for THE includes a university’s teaching and learning environment as well as the breadth and influence of its research. Rice has held a wide range of positions in this ranking but held its highest position in 2010 when it reached the top 50 universities.

Forbes

Forbes includes liberal arts colleges in its ranking, and this may affect why Rice is consistently ranked lower as compared to the U.S. News and World Report, which has a separate list ranking liberal arts colleges.

QS World University Rankings

Unlike many other rankings, QS criteria most heavily weights the way academicians from peers across the world view the institution. Rice has not been ranked in the top 100 of this list since 2009.
Baran said the campuswide election timeline is an equally important topic.

“Election timelines impact just about every student and student organization at Rice and connect to a lot of other important discussions, such as how we can make it as feasible as possible for students to study abroad,” Baran said.

According to Sheth, the pod focusing on the LPAF requirement will discuss whether the current requirement is in line with its original mission and possible alternatives to the status quo.

The pod for campus-wide announcements and calendars will discuss whether the current system of announcements coming primarily from individual residential colleges is efficient, or whether a campus-wide calendar would perhaps improve the situation.

Sheth said he expects the pods to provide recommendations to the SA on how these four areas should move forward.

“This will be an efficient way for us to quickly gauge opinions on these issues and potential for future changes, while also making sure what we are doing is in line with what students want, and not just what I or our leadership wants,” Sheth said.

Baran said he supports the idea of pods because it engages people with a strong interest to start a discussion on the topics that could lead to more formal consideration.

“Because the Student Senate tends to have a crowded agenda with topics that have been raised by the administration or are the subject of legislation, it’s hard to find time to discuss topics that haven’t yet developed to that point,” Baran said. “The pod system is a beneficial expansion of the SA’s ability to gather and structure student input and, thus, to accomplish something valuable to the student body.”

According to Sheth, he will appoint the groups of students for each topic at the SA meeting on Sept. 24, and the groups will present their initial recommendations at the Oct. 8 SA meeting.

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The Jones School of Business develops Masters of Accounting program

BY HANNAH TODD
FOR THE THESHER

The Jones School of Business is launching a new Master of Accounting program designed for students their Master of Accounting degree in one year. Rice previously offered the M.Acc program, but it dissolved in the late 90s due to lack of student interest and lack of a need for this type of program in the accounting field at the time, according to Program Director Benjamin Lansford.

“The M.Acc programs give you that fifth and final year you need to get up to 150 credit hours because undergraduate degrees typically entail only 120 hours,” Lansford said. “That 150 hour requirement [to get a Certified Public Accounting license] wasn’t an effect when this program was in existence before, and so there just wasn’t an enough of a need for students to earn a Master of Accounting.”

The M.Acc program is being revived due to widespread success of the initial program’s graduates and an increasing need for CPAs, Lansford said. The new program will feature a revamped curriculum to better match how complex accounting has become. To earn a master in accounting, the Texas State Board requires 30 credit hours in accounting classes and 24 hours in business-related classes such as market and business communications, so undergraduates looking to complete the M.Acc program in one year need to have taken all of the 24 required business-related course hours before beginning the program.

Lansford said a business minor would prepare students for the M.Acc program well because it fulfills the necessary in business-related credit hours in addition to BUSI 305, Rice’s only undergraduate accounting course currently. The only prerequisite remaining beyond the business minor requirements would be two new undergraduate accounting courses, to be offered beginning in the spring of 2015, Lansford said.

“[If you took and enjoyed BUSI 305, that’s] a very good sign that you will enjoy other accounting classes,” Lansford said. “That first accounting class was a really good one for whether the M.Acc was a good fit for you. If students want to take another stab at a course before they sign up for the M.Acc, take that second Intermediate Financial Accounting course that will be offered in the spring.”

The M.Acc program is designed for and open to undergraduate students of all majors and is a great opportunity to combine other passions with business, according to Lansford.

“The strength of our old program, and what we hope to be the strength of the new program, is having students who have a non-business undergraduate degree, marred with the technical expertise that they would get from that one year in the accounting program,” Lansford said. “What distinguishes M.Acc graduates from Rice from M.Acc graduates from most other schools is that our graduates won’t be solely be experts in accounting. They’ll also be experts in philosophy, sociolgy, history, or whatever [their] undergraduate major was. We really want to develop thinkers.”

This program is not excluisive to those who receive their undergraduate degree from Rice, but it is expected that about two-thirds of the students will come directly from Rice, according to Lansford. Since the M.Acc program will launch in fall of 2016, current juniors, sophomores and freshmen will be able to begin the program immediately after finishing their bachelor’s degree.

Lansford said he expects future graduates’ first jobs to be comparable to those of M.Acc graduates from other schools, but that graduates from Rice’s M.Acc program will be distinguished and unique in the marketplace at which they will progress their careers. Many accounting firms, including Deloitte, PricewaterhouseCoopers, Ernst & Young and KPMG, have explicitly expressed interest in hiring future graduates from Rice’s program.

“If you want to do business, the M.Acc program is good [for you to consider],” Lansford said.

Paid internship opportunities the summer before beginning the M.Acc program are available for incoming students, according to Lansford.

Admissions to the M.Acc program will be conducted online, but interested students are encouraeged to meet with Lansford to see if the program is a good fit based on their interests and goals.

Masters of Accounting program

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According to the Kickstarter campaign for “Until 20,” a documentary about late Rice University student James Ragan, who passed away earlier this year in February after a seven-year battle with osteosarcoma, exceeded its $50,000 goal, ultimately making $83,797 of its stretch goal of $100,000.

“We raised [$50,000] in five days on Kickstarter; it was unbelievable,” co-director Jamie Paksuma Rowell said. “Our stretch goal was [$100,000] because we had more post-production expenses to make the film. We have other fundraising efforts, but we were really thrilled to exceed the $50,000.”

Rowell said she and her co-director, Geraldine Metha Meadows, had to peel back the layers to get a true sense of who Ragan, a member of Duncan College, was.

“After someone dies, they become more of an icon,” Rowell said. “I think, just like any good filmmaker, it’s [about] relationships-building, and then people are more honest and upfront about who he was. Even James, at the beginning, was very strong. He didn’t want to show us his fears, because he’s known for being a total optimist. But he also had some fears –– he’s funny –– and some of the people around him don’t treat him like he’s fragile.”

Rowell said the film includes a little bit of everything about Ragan’s life, including his competitive side on the golf course. He was competitive. We wanted to accomplish.

“Like his mom said, he really wasn’t a naturally-gifted athlete,” Rowell said. “He worked really hard at being good, both at tennis in the beginning and then at golf. He would put crazy hours into it. It didn’t matter that he’d had multiple surgeries and was on chemo –– he decided to go to college and still take treatments up until the last month of his life. A lot of people wouldn’t do that.”

Duncan College senior and friend of Ragan Naomi Manisundaram said he feels the Kickstarter’s success is a testament to how many people Ragan touched throughout his life. In providing a close-up glimpse into James’ battle against his cancer, this film will show that James was always positive and trying to help others, Manisundaram said. “Even when James was in pain, whether it be due to his cancer or the accompanying chemotherapy treatments, he always displayed a positive outlook and cared very much about how everyone else was doing.”

Donations in support of the film “Until 20” are currently being accepted at until20.org.

BOBA
From Page 1

According to Camp Keosem Volunteer Team Coordinator Meera Namireddy, Camp Keosem was also not informed of the rule, but she said she is not worried about its implications on their fundraising efforts. Namireddy, a Sid Richardson College junior, said Camp Keosem has other ways of fundraising.

“We also rely on our own fundraising efforts from our executive board, counselors and general body of volunteers,” Namireddy said.

Vice president of the Vietnamese Student Association David Lam said he too was not notified of the changes in regulations. “I do think it’s fair from a more objective standpoint, because it’s a great consistent fundraiser for student organizations,” Lam said. “Although my opinion might be influenced by the fact that VSA only sells in the fall regardless.”

Lam pointed out that groups like Alternatives Spring Breaks often sell boba in unconventional areas other than the Grand Hall, because they don’t have the money to look for that location for an entire semester. Lam said he does not think that sort of competition would be affected by these regulations.

“Something I would like to see is for clubs that have a time reserved [who] decide to either not do boba that week or decide to stop selling for the remainder of the semester –– somehow to allow other organizations to take their place,” Lam said. “I know this happens informally between some groups. I’m not saying there’s necessarily a need for a formal system in this particular area, but more so I think that inter-club support would drive competition down.”

Noneetheless, places like the Hoot are opening up new opportunities for student organizations to sell boba outside of the Grand Hall. According to the Hoot’s Facebook page, this semester the Hoot has partnered with 12 student organizations, including ETA and VSA, to bring students boba every Wednesday night to help support the student organizations’ fundraising efforts.

Food Items
Because boba tea sales have become stricter, clubs must consider other fundraising options. According to Halliburton, those options have become more restricted by the new regulations set by the Houston Department of Health and Human Services starting from this academic year, which requires that food sold by clubs must not be homemade and must be individually, tamper-resistantly wrapped. Halliburton said she has had to refuse many requests for the sale of cookies, brownies or doughnuts.

“Just last semester, we had girls selling donuts, and they were allowed to do it, but they had their hair back and handed out donuts with tongs,” Halliburton said. “With the new regulations, that’s no longer allowed.”

According to Halliburton, many groups have asked her what they can sell with the new rules. Halliburton said she cannot give a definitive answer, yet some groups are trying to find different items, other than boba or baked goods that were once so popular.

“Next week, there were allowed to sell s’mores, for example, but then the regulations for s’mores, so they couldn’t do that. So [the rules] are changing on a weekly basis,” Halliburton said. “It does limit the options, but we have to follow the rules of the Houston Department of Health and Human Services.

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BY TINA NAZERIAN
ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

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“Af...
RiceX projects that aim to develop and launch hybrid rockets

BY MICHELLE TRAN
The Ticker Staff

RiceX, the Rice University chapter of the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics, started a multi-year project to develop and launch their own hybrid rockets into suborbital space. Each member of the team...
New SA pods should push for concrete solutions to campus issues

The Student Association announced at the student senate meeting on Sept. 17 that it would form four pods to examine different topics: LPAFs, election timelines, campus-wide announcements and calendars and the blanket tax process (see p.1). Though the President applauds the SA for forming groups to address important issues, the efficacy of the pods’ structures and their implementation deserve critical examination.

On the surface, pods appear to be another form of committee, albeit with a different structure wherein the pods will discuss the four topics and present their findings at a future SA meeting. The President hopes that the pods form actionable solutions that take into consideration concerns from all groups. Within each pod, the President believes the members should work toward certain concrete solutions:

- LPAFs should not be required for graduation for students, especially athletes, though they should still be offered and more generously funded. The LPAF requirement as it is antiquated as other universities’ social sciences GPAs. In a current state, an unnecessary annoyance, but LPAFs should still be available as an elective course for interested students.

- The current election timeline should be kept the same, but changes for all political pods should be moved to the beginning of the next school year. The period between spring break and the end of school is an awkward transition period that can be better used by newly-elected officers as a period of shadowing and planning for the next year.

- College listers need to remain an effective method for communicating news and events to students and should not be replaced by centralized announcement emails. However, a campus-wide event calendar listing lectures, cultural programming and athletics is essential to be established and consistently maintained as the central resource for students.

- The blanket tax process should be reformed to make provisions for money for special organizations, but other student organizations should not have to jump through so many hoops to begin receiving blanket tax money. The President eagerly awaits the solutions that arise from the pods. The pod structure offers a new opportunity to incentivize current practices and make changes directly beneficial to the student body. The pods prioritize represent the majority opinion of the Thresher editorial staff. All other opinion pieces represent solely the opinion of the piece’s author.

In the 2012 presidential election, Texas ranked 48 among the 50 states and Washington in voter turnout. Since then, Texas legislators have attempted a series of regulations that many believe will suppress voter turnout. For example, did you know that in the first week of early voting, new laws will suppress voter turnout, it is important to understand them to make sure that your vote counts this November.

College students have the unique opportunity to register to vote at their permanent address or their university address. If you decide to vote at your permanent address, make sure to look up your state’s absentee ballot regulations and request a ballot on time. If you are registered to vote in Houston, or your polling location before Nov. 6, if you are registered to vote at an on-campus address, you’ll be able to vote in the Rice Memorial Center from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Nov. 6. If voting in person, early or on Election Day, make sure to bring a valid photo ID. Unlike previous years, student IDs and IDs issued by other states will not be sufficient proof of identity to cast your ballot. You will have to bring one of these specified IDs to vote: a Texas Driver’s License issued by the Department of Public Safety, a Texas Personal ID card issued by DPS, a Texas concealed-handgun license issued by DPS, a U.S. military ID card showing your photo, a U.S. citizenship certificate showing your photo, a U.S. passport, a U.S. military ID card or an Election ID Certificate (EIC) issued by DPS. But wait, there’s more. Your documents must have expiration dates of no more than 60 days before the day you vote, and your name on your ID must match your name — or be “substantially similar” — on the registered-voters list. However, the address on your ID does not have to match the address at which you are registered to vote.

Unfortunately these new regulations may mean that Rice students need to take extra measures to make sure they can vote and, in an increasingly dysfunctional political system, it may be difficult to find the motivation to do so. With issues that affect young people directly, such as student debt, sitting on the sidelines is no longer an option. While some may argue that their vote doesn’t matter, we must work to make change within the current system, in so much as we can, and voting is the most most effective institutionalized way to do so.

Anastasia Bolkhakova and Clara Roberts are Duncan College seniors and members of the Rice Vote Coalition.

Make sure your vote counts in November elections

The Rice Thresher, the official student newspaper at Rice University since 1916, is published each Wednesday during the school year, except during examination periods and holidays, by the students of Rice University. This issue marks the first issue in volume 10, though issues published last year were incorrectly marked as volume 9. Letters to the Editor must be received by 1 p.m. the Friday prior to publication and must be signed, including college and year if the writer is a Rice student. The Thresher reserves the right to edit letters for content and length and to place letters on its website.

We have a unique opportunity in the November election to specifically affect local change. For the first time in 14 years, we will choose a new person to serve in the Texas governor’s office. With incumbents absent from statewide races, and several down ballot positions up for grabs, the time is right for our voices to be heard. Register to vote by Oct. 6, make sure you have all the necessary information and documentation to cast your ballot and we’ll see you at the polls in November.

For more information, visit http://rivecotesblogs.rice.edu/.
There’s no doubt Wiess Tabletop is an underdog in the Rice University theater world. With freshman actors and student directors, Wiesmen have nowhere near the resources available to larger, more well-funded groups like The Rice Players or VADA. But perhaps the yearly tradition has left students with some secrets to the trade. With minimal sets, general lighting and a little bit of tech, the opening comedy acts of the year turned out consistent performances and a solid host of laughs.

riting and directed by Ryan Deal and Mikuli Khan, also with direction from Vicky Comasanas, kicked off the night. The subject matter hit close to home—a spinoff of social media dating at Rice—and the acting was solid. Lead actress Laura Dickman performed exceptionally well, feeding the other actors energy. Akash Gho-sat conveyed similar exuberance, jumping from his chair at one point to address the audience.

“Theater by Midnight,” originally written by Jeff Goode and reinvented by Max Faust and Benjamin Lau, proved equally enjoyable. Telling the story of a classic read detectives who actually murder as many people as he investigates, this act was entertaining, if not exempla-rly Rodriguez, despite his obvious gender limitations, played a convincing woman, which stopped this act from dis-apparing in the shadows.

“Chocolate Affair!” by Stephanie All-son Walker tackled an interesting and difficult story—that of a mother balancing work life and family while coping with an eating disorder to boot. In the midst of comedy, this proved to be one of the more serious shows of the night, despite its fantastical imagery (think candy bars that come to life). Some of the mocking choices, by directors Yash Tarkunde, Kathy Wei and Marlene Rizo, seemed cumbersome at times, but it didn’t rip the scene as much as the somewhat awk-ward attempt to balance seriousness and comedy, heating with a deliberate subject, the act was ambitious to begin with, per-haps too much so for the nature of Table-top, and it didn’t seem to settle well.

Tabletop also offered Walter Wykes’ “Saloon” directed by Kyle Adams and Ariana Morgan, Wayne S. Rawley’s “Controlling Interest,” directed by Josh Kaye, and “A Noire,” written and directed by Molly Cimminer and Weston Newhall and Tadee Scene, or every actor’s worst nightmare, by Hadi Tabani, Andie Elkenberg and Matt Koons. As a whole, the directors made the best of a resource-limited situation. The show choices played to the strengths of the actors—the characters were either common archetypes or someone around the age of the actor playing the role. These two decisions simplified the complicated process of creating a show, perfect for getting the most out of an in-experienced person in any field, but es-pecially theater.

But with so many acts in such a short amount of time, Tabletop really only scratched the surface of its material. They baked a cake and just took a bit of the frosting. Rest assured, though, Table-top isn’t going anywhere—Wiesmen have a formula, and they know what they are doing.

Alt-J

alt-J made a name for themselves by playing a style of music that sounded completely alien despite being made up of familiar parts. The signature, unmistakable sing-ing style of Joe Newman sits as the dynamic manifestation of the band’s sound. The drums, heavily reliant on floor toms, give the songs their con-sistent tribal feel. The synth parts, all worked out on Korgs and Mac applications, loop strange, buzzing tones together in strange rhythmic patterns. The lifting guitar lines sound like mandolins played by traveling minstrels. All of this com-bines to make Alt-J’s music sound like it is decidedly not of this cen-tury, and it certainly sounds good with listeners. Like them or hate them, there is no confusing alt-J for any other band. The row-your-boat style round-singing on their most well-known track, “Reindeer Games,” was one of the biggest moments of 2012 in music and sealed alt-J as an eclectic act and a band to watch.

So how does sophomore record This Is All Yours stack up? Pretty well, actually. Like on An Awesome Wave, we begin with a largely instrumental intro, featuring “LaLaLa” nonsensi-cal singing. “Arrival in Nara” pits a solemn piano and subtle string ar-rangements against Newman’s softly cooing voice. “Nara” is classic alt-J, Tom Petty

Dreamers, rebels, rock-and-roll sweethearts, rejoice in the oppor-tunity to la-zy and vibe with Tom Petty and the Heartbreak-ers on Thursday, Sept. 2 at 7:30 p.m. The tour supports their first new studio album in four years on Reprise Records, Hypnic Eye.

alt-J – This Is All Yours

BY BENJAMIN HUBER-RODRIGUEZ

The sophomore album from a young, successful band is often the most important to their career arc and for good reason: The sophomore slump is a very real thing. Countless upstart indie bands, from MGMT to The Strokes to The xx, have received some degree of critical backlash for their second LPs, typically because they either changed nothing about their formula or they changed it too much. This is the stage set for alt-J, the Leeds-based folk and electronic crossover band that came out of no-where in 2012 to win the Mercury Prize, the award given to best British LP of the year, for their debut album An Awesome Wave.

alt-J made a name for themselves by playing a style of music that sounded completely alien despite being made up of familiar parts. The signature, unmistakable sing-ing style of Joe Newman sits as the dynamic manifestation of the band’s sound. The drums, heavily reliant on floor toms, give the songs their con-sistent tribal feel. The synth parts, all worked out on Korgs and Mac applications, loop strange, buzzing tones together in strange rhythmic patterns. The lifting guitar lines sound like mandolins played by traveling minstrels. All of this com-bines to make Alt-J’s music sound like it is decidedly not of this cen-tury, and it certainly sounds good with listeners. Like them or hate them, there is no confusing alt-J for any other band. The row-your-boat style round-singing on their most well-known track, “Reindeer Games,” was one of the biggest moments of 2012 in music and sealed alt-J as an eclectic act and a band to watch.

So how does sophomore record This Is All Yours stack up? Pretty well, actually. Like on An Awesome Wave, we begin with a largely instrumental intro, featuring “LaLaLa” nonsensi-cal singing. “Arrival in Nara” pits a solemn piano and subtle string ar-rangements against Newman’s softly cooing voice. “Nara” is classic alt-J, and it certainly sounds good with listeners. Like them or hate them, there is no confusing alt-J for any other band. The row-your-boat style round-singing on their most well-known track, “Reindeer Games,” was one of the biggest moments of 2012 in music and sealed alt-J as an eclectic act and a band to watch.

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starting soft with slowly building drum and synth parts, high ethereal harmonies rising from the back like a church choir into a crashing, anthemic breakdown. None of these tracks would have been out of place on An Awesome Wave.

Then we get to fifth track, “Left Hand Free.” Reportedly written as a joke in response to the age old record-company-asking-for-a-catchy-marketable-single story, we get very traditional drumming, funky, bluesy electric guitar riffs, silly lyrics about picking up a girl in a bar (‘O-M-G gee whiz girl you’re the one for me’), and gimmicky horn and keyboard parts reminiscent of The Doors. In short, it sounds nothing like any other alt-J track. It is also one of the strongest songs on the album. Sharply turning away from their traditional style, making a goofy troll-song, these guys have managed to put together a catchy, inventive take on an American brand of music better than just about anyone else has this year.

Notable tracks:
5. “Left Hand Free”
9. “Warm Foothills”
11. “Pusher”

That’s because alt-J’s most common pitfall is attempting to be taken too seriously. Newman’s lyrics are difficult to discern, to say the least, a combination of his strange delivery style as well as his choice of words and syntax, but after consulting the lyrics sheet, we learn the songs are really about nothing. They work better as parodies of the nerdier Led Zeppelin songs, spinning medieval themes into electronic arrangements. There is no deep emotional catharsis, no political stance, no inventive storytelling, alt-J could take a lesson from fellow European weirdos Sigur Rós and sing in a made up language, and nothing about the band or why they are liked would change. So when they say the content of this song is a joke, it implies the other songs are supposed to be solemn, sobering affairs.

But how seriously can one take lead single “Hunger Of The Pine,” which prominently features a Miley Cyrus sample (shouting ‘I’m a female rebel!’) alongside deeply wound, ultimately substanceless metaphorical lyrics like ‘Bedding with me you see at night / Your heart wears knight armour’? alt-J is a band about textures. They layer vocal harmonies better than anyone else out there, and they’ve managed to be coined by critics as a ‘folk’ act despite featuring synthesizers as their main instrument. But they are not a lyrics band. That isn’t to say the listener can’t feel deeply when listening to alt-J music, but it comes rather from the beauty of the arrangements.

This Is All Yours is a consistent release with occasional high points. The female back-and-forth vocals on “Warm Foothills” are marvelous, the perfect center to a song that showcases numerous alt-J talents. The starkness of acoustic strummer “Pusher” makes you wish the group did more minimalism and held back on the over-produced, complex-to-a-fault tracks like “The Gospel of John Hurt.” Other moments are equally annoying, but they are few between an hour’s worth of typical alt-J fare, which is still pretty interesting music these days. The group certainly dodged the sophomore slump, but it’s unlikely the same formula will be as effective on a third LP. “Left Hand Free” suggests the group can maintain their identity while pushing the boundaries into other genres. So long as they don’t take themselves too seriously, I think we’ve got a lot to look forward to.
Based on the New York bestselling book of the same name, Gone Girl tells the story of an unhappy man (Ben Affleck) who returns home on his anniversary to discover that his wife, Amy (Rooney Mara), is missing. What unfolds is a dark story with endless twists and turns as Nick tries to prove his innocence in the midst of an abundance of evidence that he murdered Amy.

The beverage program, lead by pastry chef Filipino Sandalis, offers a comprehensive selection of cocktails, beer and New World wines. Most of the beer is sourced from Texas, and the wine list is exclusively domestic, focusing on Washington Pinot Noirs and classic California Cabernets. Sandalis’s dessert match Dorris’s penchant for unique pairings: The hazelnut financier is paired with a scoop of remarkably good foie gras ice cream, and the Boursin cake is infused with negroni and topped with gin fizz foam and Campari gelée, making a wonderfully-boozy parfait.

The food’s most significant problem is that, while it’s never boring, some of the flavors can clash and detract from otherwise superb dishes. The same hazelnut financier that paired so well with the ice cream was also served with a duo of roasted figs that could have added to the dish’s flavor, but because of an odd choice of seasoning (salt, pepper, and cilantro) were better left off the plate.

The edgy pairing that tainted some of the otherwise incredible dishes seemed indicative of Pax’s other problems. The food itself is truly inventive, but showcasing it on the menu, which at times sacrifices substance for trendiness, seems to be a bigger challenge for the restaurant. The strong focus on fresh and local ingredients undoubtedly improves the quality of the dishes, but also necessitates the menu be frequently changed, which can be a disadvantage to those looking to have the same great dish they had on their last visit. Our waiter also informed us that the menu was centered on small plates that were meant to be shared. The “land” and “sea” portions of the menu, though, can be quite hard to share and are certainly not priced at levels that suggest small plates. Pax also offers a secret menu, which customers are told of after their first dinner. It’s another interesting addition, but given that the menu only offers 15 choices between dinner, dessert and appetizers, it’s a wonder they don’t make the additional options known.

The food at Pax Americana proves good enough that most will find it worth a visit despite the frustrating trendiness and high prices. If the menu’s kinks are worked out, Pax could even rise to the level of big names like Underbelly and the other elite of the Montrose food scene. Dorris and Sandalis clearly have the talent: Pax just need to concentrate less on what’s fashionable and more on what’s flavorful.
Late comeback against Monarchs falls short

by Evan Neustater
SPORTS EDITOR

The Rice University football team fell short in their comeback attempt against Old Dominion University in front of 17,588 on Saturday, Sept. 20 at Rice Stadium. Despite making a 21-point comeback culminating in a game-tying touchdown with just over a minute remaining, the Owls could not overcome the Monarchs.

Down 35-14 with 11 minutes left in the third quarter, the Owls outscored the Monarchs 28-7 from then until there was 1:25 remaining in the game, when a seven-yard touchdown run from sophomore Darik Dillard tied the game at 42 points apiece.

Getting the ball back with just over a minute remaining, the Old Dominion offense led by quarterback Taylor Heinicke moved the ball down the field to set up a game-winning 29-yard field goal that would give the Monarchs the 45-42 victory. A 45-yard pass from Heinicke to sophomore receiver Zach Pascal to put the Monarchs on the Rice 14-yard line highlighted the game-winning drive.

Head Coach David Bailiff said the defense recovered in the second half after allowing five touchdowns in the first 15 minutes.

“I think in the second half the defense came out and performed well,” Bailiff said. “We got Heinicke’s passing yards in half, we had three three-and-outs, but we have to get better defensively, especially on our deep-ball coverage, it’s been our Achilles.”

The game featured offensive production from both sides, with the Monarchs outgaining the Owls 530 yards to 456. Heinicke led all players offensively in the game, completing 27 of 42 passes for 430 yards, 330 of which were in the first half, and five touchdowns, while also adding 26 yards and a score on the ground.

The Owls recorded 284 yards rushing and 224 through the air. Sophomore running backs Jawan Davis and Darik Dillard continued to split carries, with Davis rushing for 110 yards on 24 carries and Dillard adding 70 yards and three touchdowns.

Redshirt sophomore wide receiver Zach Wright, who caught six passes for 80 yards and a touchdown in the game, said he has been impressed by the offense’s ability, especially with the play of the offensive line.

“I couldn’t say enough about our offensive line and how great they’ve done,” Wright said. “Ian Gray has done really great this year at the offensive tackle spot, just really exceeding expectations. They were just physically beating them down in the trenches.”

Junior quarterback Driphus Jackson completed 15 of 22 passes for 175 yards and two touchdown passes in limited action. After Jackson injured his shoulder in the first quarter, sophomore quarterback Tyler Stehling completed seven of 12 passes for 67 yards in replacement duty before Jackson returned at the beginning of the second half.

Bailiff said, despite not having won a game yet, Jackson has guided the offense through his leadership and playing ability.

“We know [Jackson] was good, but he has exceeded expectations, and I think it’s because he’s a true student of the game,” Bailiff said. “When you study football the way he studies it, there’s never a situation too big for you, and I think every week from the Notre Dame game to the Old Dominion game he has performed.”

According to Wright, Rice must now move on from the loss and stay focused on the task ahead.

“We’re just trying to move on from this game,” Wright said. “It’s definitely a very hard pill to swallow, but there’s a lot of positives that were taken out of it and we’re going to focus on those and head to [the University of Southern Mississippi] and earn our first win.”

Senior wide receiver Jordan Taylor and junior defensive tackle Christian Covington were held out of action with lingering injuries.

Redshirt junior defensive end Brian Nordstrom said the team’s defense relies on young players rising to the occasion when injuries occur.

“Even with the injuries we’ve had, a lot of guys stepped up,” Nordstrom said. “Everyone was just giving it their all. All these guys who weren’t expecting to play a lot just stepped up. I’m really proud of how our defense played from an effort standpoint. Obviously there are a lot of issues we need to address, but we’re looking forward to learning from our mistakes and have them corrected by the time we play Southern Miss next week.”

The Southern Mississippi Golden Eagles (2-2), who have won 3-25 over the past three seasons, are coming off a 21-20 victory over Appalachian State University and are also looking to earn their first conference win of the season.

Southern Mississippi has the fourth-lowest scoring average in the Football Bowl Subdivision, averaging 14.8 points per game. Addition- ally, the Golden Eagles have the No. 106 ranked scoring defense in the nation, allowing 35.3 points per game. Rice’s No. 36 ranked rushing offense will look to exploit the Golden Eagle’s defensive struggles and earn their first victory of the season.

Despite the recent struggles of the Golden Eagles, Bailiff said their team is improving and is a force to be reckoned with.

“[USM Head Coach Todd Monken] is as good a football coach as there is in the country,” Bailiff said. “They’re solid this year and they’re playing hard. The last time we played them here they made a lot of mistakes, and he’s got those mistakes worked out and they’re improving every time they hit the field.”

Bailiff also said it is critical for Rice to go out and win a road game, especially after starting the season with three consecutive losses.

“We need to go on the road and get a win,” Bailiff said. “I think our football team will be hungry for one.”

Kick off against Southern Mississippi is at 2 p.m. on Saturday, Sept. 27 in Hattiesburg, Miss.
Volleyball continues success at home invitational

by Julie Doar
THREESER STAFF

Rice vs. Texas Southern University
3-0

This past weekend, the Rice University volleyball team hosted a tournament in which the Owls won two games and lost one in their second invitational of the season. Rice began the tournament by sweeping Texas Southern University 3-0 on Friday night, followed by a loss to the University of Louisville 3-0 later in the day. The loss to Louisville put an end to a seven-game winning streak, giving the Owls their fourth loss of the season. The team came out on Saturday and won in their final game of the tournament against Stephen F. Austin University. The weekend’s play brought Rice’s current record to 10-4.

Head Coach Genny Volpe said she was impressed with Rice’s performance this past weekend, especially with the team’s ability to recover from the Friday night loss.

“[Stephen F. Austin] showed they’re clearly a good team,” Volpe said. “We were disappointed after [Friday] night, and the girls were still down a little this morning. We just told them that it’s over with and we can’t change yesterday, but we can focus on the task at hand today. I was glad we played a team of SFA’s caliber to bring that challenge to us.”

Junior defense specialist Kimberly Vaio said the team is pleased with the season thus far and believes the team has a strong work ethic.

“I am hopeful after the results,” Vaio said. “During the off-season we worked on playing as one unit, staying disciplined and playing with confidence. I am really proud to say that all that hard work paid off in the matches and I could see the positive changes we have made.”

Vaio also said the team has been dedicating special attention to their defense.

“This past week we have focused on staying disciplined on defense,” Vaio said. “We have a very balanced offense, but what will be the real difference maker after last weekend is if we can attack the game plan in our defensive scheme.”

As the season progresses, Vaio said Rice has its eyes on long-term success. She said the team’s ultimate goal is victory in the conference tournament.

“This season we are first and foremost aiming towards a conference championship,” Vaio said. “After that, we want to keep the momentum and win a conference tournament championship and compete in the NCAA tournament.”

This Friday, Rice will travel to Hattiesburg, Mississippi to play the University of Southern Mississippi. The team will then journey to Western Kentucky University on Sunday, Sept. 28. That following Wednesday, Rice will face North Texas University in Denton, Texas. All three of these upcoming games are conference events.

Volleyball Calendar

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Senior middle blocker Jillian Humphery goes up for a block in a 3-0 loss to the University of Louisville on Friday, Sept. 19. The Owls have won seven of their last eight games and are now 10-4.
Rice University's rowing team held its first practice at a newly-constructed dock on downtown Houston's Buffalo Bayou on Saturday, marking the first time in years in which Rice Crew has been able to practice on the water in Houston.

According to Water Coach David Alviar, the new facility heralds the beginning of a new era for Rice Crew in which they will be able to practice much more effectively than in previous years, when rowers and coaches had to drive out of Houston to Clear Lake in order to have access to water practice.

“It will allow the team to be competitive like other teams are,” Alviar said. “We will be able to practice at the level that they do.”

Land Coach Michael Matson also noted that the challenges posed by practicing at Clear Lake had put the team at a disadvantage.

“We’ve been going an hour and a half round trip [to Clear Lake],” Matson said. “Students have been paying the gas themselves, driving at about five o’clock in the morning on High- way 290, returning during rush hour traffic – it’s been a big sacrifice.”

Varsity Captain Timothy Threatt described former practice conditions as demanding.

“It was kind of a strain on me because not a whole lot of other varsity teams, and even fewer are willing to commit that amount of time, that amount of energy, that amount of gas to taking an entire team and a half round trip,” Threatt, a Will Rice College sophomore, said. “I’m excited about the fact that it’s [now] a lot closer.”

According to Alviar, the idea to construct a permanent mixed-water sport activities center on Buffalo Bayou originated eight years ago with his predecessor Chad Shaw. Shaw cooperated with the Army Corps of Engineers to build some of the basic facilities needed at a location near Tony Marron Park, 10 minutes from campus by light rail. However, an interruption in coaching led to the abandonment of the project until four months ago, according to Alviar, when he and Matson decided to revive it.

Alviar and Matson worked with two local organizations, the Buffalo Bayou Partnership and the Texas Dragon Boat Association, to raise funds and build boat storage and a dock, which Alviar said were finished three weeks ago.

“We created what looks like a dormant prehistoric bomb shelter right now,” Alviar said. “It’s not the most glamorous thing, but it exceeds anything that we had before in terms of functionality and accessibility... and the swatch of water is amazing.”

According to Alviar, the facility still needs a ramp and some security measures to be completed. The facility is owned by the Buffalo Bayou Partnership, according to Alviar, but Rice has a 99-year lease for its use.

In the long term, Alviar and Matson hope to work with the other involved organizations to develop the facility into a public water activities center. According to Alviar, plans are being developed for a boathouse that would hold 60 to 80 boats, including specific space for Rice Crew and the Texas Dragon Boat Association, along with a public kayak and paddle board area.

“Opening the facility to the public will be the next stage,” Matson said. “Essentially the facility was built originally with the idea that we would keep this facility as a training platform for Rice University, but this will last until we get there... This venture, all in we’re talking 30 to 50 thousand dollars, next step we’re talking a million, a million plus. So that’s the next big step.”

The plans for a public boating center face the challenge of dealing with issues of liability and scheduling.

According to Alviar, the concession schedule this season has given Rice a win.

“We’ve had a very strong preseason and done well,” Hughes said. “So there is a lot of pressure on us to win. We are ready to go [into Conference Play] and take the field.”

Head Coach Nicky Adams said she feels that the character and grit the team shows on the field is the key contributor to winning those close games.

“One thing we know for sure is that this team has so much character,” Adams said. “They find a way to win. [The] sign of a really good team is finding a way to get it done and it’s exciting to be a part of.”

Adams said the following Conference USA team games are “a must win and strive extra hard to beat them.”

“Heading into Conference play in 4-1-2 means we have a target on our back,” Adams said. “We need to be prepared to handle that. But our team is a group of winners; they never give up.”

The Owls will remain at home this weekend and open up with two C-USA matchups. On Friday, Rice will take on the University of Southern Mississippi at 7:00 p.m. The second matchup features Rice and the Louisiana Tech University Bulldogs. Kick-off for that match is scheduled for 1:00 p.m.

“[Rice] is the next stage,” Matson said. “Essentially Rice has made strides in listing the project to the [community], which is the next step in our development.”

In the long term, Alviar and Matson hope to land the university, they’re our friends,” Reiskind said. “We are hoping to bring it back with all of the enthusiasm to Rally Club.”

According to Reiskind, the Rally Club plans on accomplishing this through collaboration with administration and supporters.

“We are working closely with the Athletic Department in order to give a sense of enthusiasm for athletics in the Rice community,” Reiskind said. “We are trying to reach out to alumni who were part of the Rally Club in order to hear their ideas and feedback.”

According to Kittleman, the Rally Club will function as a resource for Rice students who want to become involved in Rice athletics. Kittleman said he plans to involve students in the Rally Club in events available for all interested Rice students.

“The Rally Club is available for students who want to support athletic events,” Kittleman said. “We have [a] meeting for the 12 boathouse members of the Rally Club.”

For more on the Rally Club plans on continuing hosting events and bringing students from all colleges together to support Rice, Reiskind said he hopes to see a shift in how the student body views athletics.

“People need to recognize that the body that the athletes aren’t just pawns of the university, they’re our friends,” Reiskind said. “When we support them, we support our friends.”

Follow the Rally Club on Facebook or on Twitter @Rallyclub1203.
Am I in Physics 50?

Well you see this is a classic Schrödinger’s Cat situation. Seeing as this is an anonymous posting, we actually cannot know. And thusly, due to elemental properties of quantum field theory, you are likely both in, and not in, Physics 101. QED. Regardless, the cat died. Pretty sure that’s how it works. Never took Physics.

I’m a linguistics major... is that allowed?

Ahhh. So you think you can dance the dirty dance of the phony phonemes? Phenoms? Why the hell not? Just don’t try to get an advanced degree here. And you should probably consider getting a more marketable double major, like the Jewish Studies minor.

Should I go to the Hanszen party?

Are you a filthy middle-aged man who drinks constantly and is somehow deficient in vitamin C in the modern world? Are you missing one eye? Do you have Reese’s toppings, and I felt like he really cared. Do you enjoy white cheddar popcorn? Then you go get her tiger. Chase down those experiences, that your intellect has otherwise precluded you.

Season one is pretty average. Tonally inconsistent and well-intentioned small-town humor. Wait a sec! Is this Becky? We’ve already had this conversation. I’m sick and tired of you trying to undermine me by starting on season three of Parks and Recreation. You can’t just skip out on season two, like you skipped out on the Thresher.

So I totally like banged this girl at the Martel party, but her roommate’s, like, so hot though. What should I do, bro?

This might be a good time to give her some time and give her some space. Until then, there’s plenty of fish in the sea. Well, let me qualify that. Fish certainly exist in the sea.

I know this girl named Becky who’s a single.

I’m pretty into this guy, but he and my roommate dated for like three weeks at the beginning of college and so I don’t want to make things weird there, but he’s been so sweet to me recently, and I just feel like we really have something. Like, the other day, we went to froyo and he knew I wanted Reese’s toppings, and I felt like he really cared. Do you think my roommate will understand?

If you roommate doesn’t understand Reese’s Piece, then she probably never will. I mean has she seen E.T.?

I think I might have just flexed in the no-flex zone. You know better.

Sometimes I sort of just lay in bed and listen to my roommate breathing for like hours. Is that normal?

Which part. I think the breathing part is pretty normal. Listening part? Maybe not. You do you.

With classes piling up I feel like I need to drop some of my commitments... is that ok?

Becky? Is this you? You get your ass back to the Thresher and you start editing. I’ve heard enough of your complaining. Don’t even pretend you’re not a Linguistics Major with a Jewish Studies minor. What are you going to put on your resume? That you quit the Thresher? If you quit the Thresher, Becky, I’m quitting you. I’m sorry, I guess I just have too many “commitments,” Becky.

I’m still really in love with my girlfriend who’s a sophomore in high school. Is that ok?... I’m a fifth year.

Case 1: You are a genius and attended college at age 12. Then you get her tiger. Chase down those experiences, that your intellect has otherwise precluded you.

Case 2: No.

Is it alright if I start Parks and Recreation three seasons in?

Season one is pretty average. Tonally inconsistent and well-intentioned small-town humor. Wait a sec! Is this Becky? We’ve already had this conversation. I’m sick and tired of you trying to undermine me by starting on season three of Parks and Recreation. You can’t just skip out on season two, like you skipped out on the Thresher.

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Due to a series of anonymous questions posted on the growing app “Yik Yak” this week, we at the Thresher Backpage have decided to try and answer some of the more pressing among them.