



REFLECTING & LOOKING AHEAD
TO CHARLOTTE ATHLETICS'

2021



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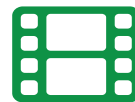
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POLICE BLOTTER

12/09: Loitering/Medic Assist

Officers responded to Lot 25, in reference to a subject loitering in an area, and that needed medical assistance.

12/11: Trespassing/Arrest

Officers responded to Atkins Library in reference to a trespassing individual. One subject was transported to Mecklenburg County Intake in reference to 2nd degree trespassing, and issued another trespass order.

VIEW FULL BLOTTER AT

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Photo by Niyathi Sulkunte

UNC CHARLOTTE'S 2020

A review of how the year unfolded for UNC Charlotte



NEWS

by Megan Bird
News Editor

January

UREC opens

On Jan. 8, UNC Charlotte officially opened the doors to its new recreational facility, UREC. The building was first proposed in 2014 and construction began in July of 2017. At 148,000 sq.ft., UREC includes both an indoor and outdoor pool, four multipurpose courts, five multipurpose studios, 80 group fitness classes a week and outdoor basketball, pickleball and volleyball courts. The project cost \$66 million and was funded by university debt and student fees.

School of Data Science opens

UNC Charlotte became the first university in the Carolinas and the third in the country to create a school of data science. The School of Data Science (SDS) is an industry-university partnership led by the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, the Belk College of Business, the College of Health and Human Services and the College of Computing and Informatics. It offers a B.S. in data science, master of data science and business analytics, and master of health informatics and analytics.

February

Remembrance Commission recommendations approved

Chancellor Dubois accepted the final recommendations made by the Niner Nation Remembrance Commission for the memorialization of the shooting that occurred on April 30, 2019. This included the construction of a permanent, communal and interactive memorial in Belk Plaza between the fountain and Kennedy building. As well as a series of exhibits to be mounted in Atkins Library, a Day of Remembrance, named scholarships dedicated to victims Reed Parlier and Riley Howell, and repurposing Kennedy 236, the site of the shooting, into a space for contemplation as well as memoriam.

March

Two UNC Charlotte students and several alumni run in primary elections

Two UNC Charlotte students and many alumni appeared on North Carolina ballots in the March 3 primary. Cade Lee, a senior at the time majoring in international studies and political science, lost his bid for the District 3 seat of the Mecklenburg County Board of Commissioners to alumnus George Dunlap. Lee won 25% of the vote, 5,997 votes overall, and won 53% of the votes in the precinct that encompasses UNC Charlotte. Jacob Baum, also a senior at the time majoring in political science, lost his race for the Republican nomination for N.C. House District 75 to incumbent Donny Lambeth. Baum received 32% of the vote, or 2,202 votes. Alumni George Dunlap (County Commissioners 3) and Mujtaba Mohammed (NC Senate 38) won their party nominations and continued to the Nov. 3 general election along with alumni DeAndrea Salvador (NC Senate 39), Joyce Waddell (NC Senate 40), Mary Belk (NC House 88), Terry Brown (NC House 92) and Susan Rodriguez-McDowell (County Commissioners 6), who ran unopposed in the primaries.

Students had a chance to vote early this year at UNC Charlotte's one-stop voting site in Belk Gym. The site had 2,037 voters during the early voting period, an estimated 98% of which were affiliated with the University.

Student body president and vice president elections

UNC Charlotte hosted its own elections for student body president and vice president at the end of March. Three tickets vied for the positions, and a runoff election took place between Zac Mazag and Gabi Hitchcock (Mazag-Hitchcock) and Tahliah Sampson and Vince Graham (Sampson-Graham). The Sampson-Graham ticket won and officially began their new positions on April 10.

Classes moved online due to COVID-19

Nine months ago UNC Charlotte and other universities developed their first responses to the spread of the coronavirus pandemic. All

classes were moved online effective March 23, and students were subsequently evacuated from residence halls. All spring and summer study abroad programs were cancelled, and those students already overseas were required to return to the U.S. Governor Roy Cooper declared a State of Emergency on March 10 and issued a stay-at-home order effective March 26. At the time, Mecklenburg County had the highest number of cases in the state at just over 100, and there were three known cases in the UNC Charlotte community.

April

Dr. Sharon Gaber named first female chancellor

In a Special UNC Board of Governors Meeting on April 28, the Board approved Dr. Sharon Gaber as UNC Charlotte's fifth chancellor and the second woman to lead the institution. Gaber holds a bachelor's degree from Occidental College, a master's degree from University of Southern California and a doctoral degree in city and regional planning from Cornell University. Before her five years as president of the University of Toledo, she spent six years as provost and vice chancellor for academic affairs at the University of Arkansas and also served as interim provost at Auburn and as a faculty member and administrator at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

One year anniversary of April 30 shooting observed virtually

April 30, 2020 marked the one year anniversary of the campus shooting that killed Riley Howell ('21) and Ellis "Reed" Parlier ('19) and injured Drew Pescaro, ('19), Sean DeHart, ('20), Rami Al-Ramadhan ('20), and Emily Houpt ('23). Howell, who tackled the shooter to the ground, and Parlier, who was presumed to be the first victim, are both remembered as heroes.

Among the many disruptions caused by COVID-19 was the condensing of the Day of Remembrance into an online format, including the cancellation of the remembrance concert at the Blumenthal.

This day was the culmination of months of planning by the Niner Nation Remembrance Commission intended to mourn and honor those impacted by April 30, 2019.

The Niner Times published a special edition dedicated to April 30, including interviews with shooting victim Drew Pescaro, Chancellor Dubois, security officials, and several students who were in the classroom or on campus when the tragedy occurred, and a few professors.

"A year for me, it hasn't been January to January. It's been April to April," Pescaro said.

May

Adjustments to fall 2020 announced

On May 4, Chancellor Dubois announced that the fall semester would start two weeks later than previously anticipated in order to give faculty time to prepare for online courses, avoid the projected COVID-19 peak in late July and accommodate the Republican National Convention set to take place Aug. 24-27 at the Spectrum Center.

The academic calendar was finalized on May 29. To make up for the two week delay, the University adopted a plan to eliminate fall break, eliminate Thanksgiving Eve break, end classes on Dec. 15 and hold exams from Dec. 15 to Dec. 23. It was also announced that the spring 2021 semester would start on Jan. 20, extending winter break by three days. It was also announced that many classes would be delivered remotely or in a hybrid format.

The announcement came days after SGA published the results of their referendum on the fall 2020 calendar. Of the nearly 3,000 students that voted, 89% opposed UNC Charlotte's academic calendar while 90% supported SGA's proposed schedule of maintaining the original start date of Aug. 24 and utilizing remote learning until Sept. 7 in order to preserve breaks and end the semester earlier.

June

Black Lives Matter protests

Protesters gathered in Uptown Charlotte

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every night beginning May 29 and throughout June as part of the resurgence in the Black Lives Matter movement. The group was founded in 2013 and gained a huge following after the murder of George Floyd by former Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin.

Some of these Charlotte protests became violent, mostly due to instigation by the police who used tactics like cornering non-violent protestors in a parking garage and shooting them with pepper balls. Mayor Vi Lyles and Mecklenburg County Board of Commissioners Chair George Dunlap jointly signed a local State of Emergency that went into effect on May 30 at noon.

UNC Charlotte students joined the movement through a “march against injustice” organized by Josh Mason ('22), Pruthu Patel ('22) and Kyle Uy ('23). Hundreds of students walked around the University City area despite the summer heat. Among the attendees were Associate Vice Chancellor and Dean of Students Christine Davis, Chief of UNC Charlotte Police Jeffrey Baker and District 5 Mecklenburg County Commissioner Susan B. Harden.

UNC Charlotte faculty speak out against racism

On June 4, the UNC Charlotte Africana Studies Department released a statement “to call attention to the intersection of Blackness, state sanctioned violence, anti-Blackness and structural violence.”

They were joined by the departments of Religious Studies, Anthropology and Communications, who also issued statements in support of racial justice. The College of Health and Human Services' Diversity, Inclusion via Equity Committee and the School of Social Work released their own statements as well, and Chancellor Dubois gave a statement on George Floyd's death.

The Africana Studies Department also began hosting monthly online forums to discuss issues related to race.

UNC Charlotte faculty group demands dismissal of vice chancellor of safety and security

On June 11, UNC Charlotte's chapter of the American Association of University Professors (UNCC-AAUP) sent a letter to Chancellor Phil Dubois and other administrators demanding the termination of Associate Vice Chancellor for Safety and Security John Bogdan due to his past position as warden of Guantanamo Bay.

The UNCC-AAUP's letter concerned actions and policies that occurred from 2012 to 2014 under Bogdan's watch including genital searches of Muslim detainees, treatment of hunger strikers and

monitoring confidential attorney-client meetings, among other offenses.

The memorandum marked the first organized effort against the associate vice chancellor since the “Coalition to Remove John Bogdan” formed in Oct. 2019.

Chancellor Dubois remained steadfast in his support of Bogdan and gave no indication that he would consider Bogdan's termination. Instead, he told the Niner Times that he asked a group to develop a proposal for a campus police oversight committee that would include students, faculty and staff.

Athletics rebrand

For the first time since 2000, Charlotte 49ers Athletics announced a new brand identity for the school and athletic department. On June 23, the school went live on YouTube to showcase the logos and new trademarks. The phrases “All-In-C” and “BoldRush” are at the forefront of the new identity, wrote Niner Times Sports Editor Bradley Cole. The change came after the athletics program had one of their most successful seasons in program history.

Phil Dubois retires after 15 years as UNC Charlotte's chancellor

On June 30, former chancellor Phil Dubois stepped down from his tenure as the UNC System's longest serving president and UNC Charlotte's fourth chancellor. Dubois was inaugurated as chancellor in 2005 after serving as president of the University of Wyoming.

July

UNC Charlotte mandates face masks be worn on campus

The University announced on July 3 that they would be required during the fall 2020 semester.

Chancellor Sharon L. Gaber begins tenure

On July 20, Dr. Sharon L. Gaber began her term as UNC Charlotte's fifth chancellor. She is the second woman to lead the institution (after founder Bonnie Cone) and the first woman to serve as chancellor.

Gaber came to UNC Charlotte at an unprecedented time in higher education as universities deliberated how to operate during the coronavirus pandemic. She is also charged with continuing remembrance and security efforts after the shooting on April 30, 2019 and overseeing UNC Charlotte's continuous enrollment and campus growth.

August

Workers sue UNC System and UNC Charlotte over fall reopening plans

As tens of thousands of students returned to UNC campuses in the midst of

the coronavirus pandemic, faculty and staff sued the UNC System over unsafe working conditions. Lead plaintiffs included members of the North Carolina Public Service Workers Union (UE Local 150) and the North Carolina American Association of University Professors.

No students in the UNC System were required to test negative for COVID-19 before returning to campus, and universities like Chapel Hill and N.C. State began reporting clusters of cases days after their semesters began.

UNC Charlotte workers were asked to come in at 3:30 a.m. to clean before classes started. Housekeepers were responsible for cleaning a housing unit following a confirmed positive case of COVID-19 and were trained to clean those residence halls where students were set to quarantine.

Start of in-person

instruction delayed until Oct. 1

On Aug. 23, Chancellor Gaber announced that UNC Charlotte would begin the semester online with plans to reinstate in-person instruction on Oct. 1. Move-in to residence halls was delayed until Sept. 26 except for international students, RAs and other students with extenuating circumstances.

The announcement came after 23 members of UNC Charlotte's public health faculty sent a letter to Chancellor Gaber urging her to begin the semester online. At the time, the University reported only four cases of COVID-19 on its main campus.

September

Campus workers deliver petition to Chancellor Gaber

A few days before remote classes began at UNC Charlotte, campus workers and North Carolina Public Service Workers Union members gathered outside of Cato Hall to deliver a list of demands to Chancellor Gaber. Among them were daily N95 masks and symptom screening, no 3:00 a.m. shifts and at least 25% additional hazard pay.

UNC Charlotte released a statement on Sept. 3 in response to the rally, saying “The University has taken several measures to protect essential workers, in line with CDC guidance, including providing personal protective equipment daily, shifting schedule times to support physical distancing, and deploying new technology to promote safety measures. We continue to listen to the needs of our employees and work with staff supervisors to ensure that proper protocols are in place to protect the health and safety of the entire campus community.”

UNC Charlotte launches Niner Health Check

Starting Sept. 7, all students and faculty were required to complete the Niner Health Check, a survey of symptoms associated with COVID-19.

Dr. Cheryl Waites Spellman appointed as interim diversity and inclusion leader

On Sept. 8, 2020, Chancellor Sharon Gaber announced Dr. Cheryl Waites Spellman, Ed.D. as the new Interim Special Assistant to the Chancellor for Diversity and Inclusion at UNC Charlotte. Waites Spellman began this new, temporary position on Sept. 16, and a search for a permanent leader will take place in the spring semester. This position was put in place to “strengthen and expand our efforts” to make UNC Charlotte a welcoming environment for learning and teaching.

In 2015 and 2016, faculty called for former Chancellor Phil Dubois to create a chief of diversity position.

Enrollment surpasses 30,000

On Sept. 26, UNC Charlotte announced that enrollment had surpassed 30,000 students for the first time in the school's history. This milestone made it the second-largest university in the UNC System after N.C. State, wrote news intern McKinley Campbell.

In fall 2019, the student body consisted of 29,615 students. This fall, the University accepted 4,000 freshmen, 2,600 transfer students and 2,400 new graduate students, totaling a student body of 30,146.

COVID-19

The number of positive coronavirus cases remained low throughout September as students took all of their classes from home. On Sept. 7, the University announced an off-campus COVID-19 cluster involving eight students residing together in two private residences. On Sept. 17, the football game against UNC Chapel Hill was canceled after several members of the offensive line were placed into quarantine following the University's COVID-19 contact tracing protocols. During the two weeks prior, there were three positive cases of coronavirus found in UNC Charlotte's football team.

October

In-person classes begin and stu- dents return to campus

On Sept. 22, the University confirmed its plans to begin some in-person instruction on Oct. 1. Students began filing back into residence halls on Sept. 26.

The decision came after UNC Charlotte's chapter of the American Association of University Professors sent a letter on Sept.

18 imploring university administration to continue remote instruction and establish a clear plan for random testing of asymptomatic people. They also asked that no employee be required to work on campus.

At the time, UNC Charlotte reported a 1.1% positivity rate in testing and Mecklenburg County's was 6.4%.

UNC Charlotte observes Indigenous Peoples' Day for the first time

On Oct. 12, UNC Charlotte observed Indigenous Peoples' Day for the first time. The formal recognition was directed by Dr. Cheryl Waites Spellman, interim special assistant to the chancellor for diversity and inclusion.

Spellman was prompted by the recent legislation passed on Oct. 8 by the Student Government Organization (SGA) dubbed the Indigenous Peoples' Day Act, wrote news writer Kathryn Caudill. This legislation encouraged the University to observe Indigenous Peoples' Day and to, “acknowledge and educate the UNC Charlotte community about the historical mistreatment of indigenous people.”

UNC Charlotte releases official spring 2021 calendar

On Oct. 19, Chancellor Gaber announced the revised spring 2020 semester schedule. The first day of classes for the semester will commence Jan. 20 with in-person instruction for only select classes, much like the fall semester. Spring break, will still occur Mar. 29 through Apr. 3; however, all classes will be moved to online instruction after spring break. Classes will end on May 5 and final exams will take place May 7 through May 13.

The University will continue with health precautions like Niner Health Checks, wastewater testing and contact tracing. As a new safety measure, students returning to campus will be required to test for COVID-19 before the start of the spring semester.

Men's cross country wins C-USA cham- pionships; women's team places second

Charlotte's men's and women's cross country teams traveled to Birmingham, Alabama on Oct. 31 for the Conference USA Championships, reported sports writer Amanda Olson. The men's team took home the gold, winning the Conference USA Championship. This is only the second time to have been done in the history of the cross country program. The women's team also brought the heat, taking home second place.

COVID-19

During the month of October, the University tested five residence halls after detecting SARS-CoV-2 through wastewater testing. They also reported a cluster of seven cases involving student-athletes and staff within

the Men's Basketball Team as well as one off-campus cluster involving five students in a private residence. By the end of the month, the University had administered 10,087 tests since July 1 with a 1.5% positivity rate. There were 526 confirmed positive cases in total.

November

National, statewide and local elections

71.2% of eligible North Carolina voters participated in the November 2020 election, breaking a 40-year record set in 2008. Young voters especially turned out in record-setting rates. Many people voted early due to COVID-19, and UNC Charlotte hosted an early voting site at Belk Gym.

North Carolina was one of the last states to certify its election results. The battleground state supported Donald Trump, although Joe Biden ultimately secured the presidency. Senator Thom Tillis, R, was selected for a second term, giving Republicans at least 49 senators. NC sent five Democrats and eight Republicans to the U.S. House of Representatives, including Alma Adams, D, from Mecklenburg County's district. Nationally, Democrats maintained a majority in the U.S. House.

Governor Roy Cooper, D, secured a second term with 51.52% of the statewide vote. Democrat Josh Stein won the attorney general position after a close race required a recount. Democrats took the state auditor and secretary of state positions while Republicans won the state treasurer, superintendent of public instruction, commissioner of labor, commissioner of insurance, and commissioner of agriculture offices.

Republicans secured their majority in the State Senate, winning 29 seats compared to Democrats' 21. In Mecklenburg County's district, incumbent Mujtaba Mohammed won, D, with 78.14% of the votes.

The NC House of Representatives also remained under Republican control, securing 65 seats compared to Democrats' 55. Democrat Carla Cunningham will represent District 106 where Charlotte is located.

Democrats secured all of the Mecklenburg County Commissioner positions. Democrat Fred Smith was elected as the Mecklenburg County Register of Deeds and Rich George secured the position as Mecklenburg Soil and Water Conservation District Supervisor. Charlotte voters approved all three referenda appropriating bonds for transportation, housing and neighborhood improvement.

UNC Charlotte employees donated at least \$110,084 to political campaigns in 2020, 79.4% of which was directed to Democrats and 3.4% to Republicans.

This was more than any year prior and the second most in the UNC System.

Students return to online classes fol- lowing Thanksgiving break

As announced on Sept. 22 by Chancellor Gaber, the University transitioned back to completely remote instruction after Thanksgiving break. Only those students who were exempted by the University were allowed to remain in on-campus residence halls.

Pass/no credit grading system an- nounced for fall 2020

Starting on Nov. 23, students were able to choose to replace their letter grades with pass/no credit. For the fall 2020 semester, students can select up to two courses for pass/no credit by Dec. 14. For the spring and summer 2021 terms, students can choose pass/no credit by Jan. 27 and May 25 respectively. Each student gets a maximum of three courses that they are allowed to replace their grade with pass/no credit for the entire school year (spring and summer courses included). Only two of the three pass/no credit courses can be used for the fall 2020 semester. The remaining pass/no credit course can be used for the spring and summer 2021 semesters, reported news writer Catherine Sawyers.

COVID-19

During the month of November, UNC Charlotte tested six residence halls after detecting SARS-CoV-2 in the wastewater. The University also announced two clusters in the athletics department: one with eight cases in the Basketball Team and another with seven cases in the Football Team. On Nov. 20, the University reported an off-campus cluster of 11 students living in private residences. As of Nov. 29, the University had administered 17,863 COVID-19 tests and reported 943 cases since July 1. The positivity rate was at a high of 2.3%. Mecklenburg County's positivity rate was 8.9%.

December

COVID-19

Over the month of December, UNC Charlotte has tested three residence halls for COVID-19 after detecting SARS-CoV-2 in the wastewater. As of Dec. 11, the University has completed 19,025 tests and reported 1,025 cases of COVID-19 since July 1. The University's positivity rate remains at a high of 2.3% while Mecklenburg County's positivity rate is a staggering 10.9%.

REFLECTIVE CONVERSATIONS ON ISSUES OF THE PAST YEAR



OPINION

by Hiral Patel
& Milo Cain
Opinion Editor,
Asst. Opinion Editor

Opinion editors reflect on key news events you may have missed in 2020

Nurses Union in Asheville

H: In mid-September, Nurses at Mission Hospital in Asheville, NC won the right to unionize. This is a milestone in southern-American history as unionizing has been in decline since the 1970s. Southern states aren't known for laborers to unionize, so Milo, what changes are we expecting to see? And do you think this will be a set example for workers in other industries?

M: I think, hopefully, the Asheville nurses union will represent a catalytic moment in the southern labor movement. Most importantly this shows that even in a time of intense economic inequality and economic instability, workers not just in the south but across the world can find a better life through solidarity. The failure of the labor movement in the south stems primarily from the harsh anti-labor laws that were put in place in the mid-twentieth century to protect the south's agriculture industry. At the same time, these labor unions also struggled to break through the racial divisions that pitted workers against workers. It is with this in mind that I ask, is the south ready for a resurgence of the labor movement, or will the issues of the past be too strong for the present?

H: The south has a deep history for strictly enforcing racial divides, de-facto or not. I don't think it will take long to overturn it, but many leaders in the south do not have the willingness to overturn or mitigate a lot of racist and bigoted damage from the past, and that's because they contribute to it. In 2018, flight-readiness

and inspection workers at the Boeing plant in Charleston, South Carolina voted to unionize. According to NPR, it was over "wages, hours, apparel, supervisors and other conditions of employment that differ from those of other Boeing employees." Five of the six workers who had cases built upon this worker discrimination were unlawfully fired that year. Though many lawsuits are being brought upon Boeing, it doesn't seem like they are willing to concede to their actions even to this day. Other companies such as Nissan and Volkswagen in the south have also been persistent in response to their workers trying to unionize. Union Track explains that racial divisions against workers in the south prevent both major industries (manufacture and agriculture) from being able to unionize, and enforces an "equal pay for equal work" mindset to workers. It's dangerous because the struggles of workers are at the very least of concern just so corporate heads can greedily funnel more money into their pockets. We all know how greed works, and prejudice seems to increase one's motives if they benefit from it. It will be hard to unionize under the current climate of political and corporate leaders we have now, but I too hope that the victory in Asheville brings light to the future leaders.

City orders church to close due to the increase in COVID-19 outbreaks

H: In October, all United House of Prayer for All People (UHOP) churches in Mecklenburg County were

ordered to close for about two weeks as they were linked to hundreds of COVID-19 cases, and a couple of deaths. There were at least 121 confirmed cases and at least three deaths. In addition to the closure, this Abatement of Imminent Hazard order also issued the UHOP to properly clean and disinfect the churches. In response to the closing, Pastor Kenneth Robinson states, "The health department sees it from the scientific standpoint, and we believe in science here (with the) concerned clergy, but we understand there's a religious standpoint," he said. "If you're not a pastor or a person of faith, and worship in that area, you don't understand how to have that conversation. So you can not just tell churches to shut down. It must work together." I just wanted to have a conversation about this in regards to the relationship between the church and state and why the order was issued.

M: I think there is some obvious reasoning for the issuing of this order, in that there was a direct quantifiable threat to public health with the continued operation of the UHOP. With approximately 74% of all ICU beds in Mecklenburg county currently being occupied, there is no room for the virus to continue to spread at an uncontrolled rate. It seems that most religious organizations deem the loss of in-person congregating as an existential threat to participation. However, there are alternatives to this. Several churches and other places of worship have Zoom prayer or socially-distanced gatherings with a limited number of people based on appointment. Not to mention that there have been televised worship for decades- televangelists. The means exist and it is possible to hold onto religion in these trying times, it is up to the religious

leaders to keep their congregations safe, and that starts with shutting down until the vaccine can be fully distributed.

UNC Charlotte Professors urge for Bogdan's removal

M: The former warden of Guantanamo Bay and our current Vice Chancellor for Safety and Security John Bogdan has drawn criticism for his practices as a warden. On June 11, the UNC Charlotte chapter of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) released a letter calling for the dismissal of Bogdan. With that in mind, Hiral, what were your takeaways from the letter?

H: I believe that from this letter, there is one major takeaway: someone who has committed inhumane atrocities should not be in charge of the safety of students. It sounds so obvious when I say it, so I don't understand why the University doesn't get it. Bogdan's past does not align with the principles of this institution, and that a position of accountability should not be held by people like him. After reading the letter from the AAUP, what raised my eyebrow the most was a letter in 2013 written by 19 military lawyers of defense questioning Bogdan's bias, prejudice, temperament and actions of dehumanization. My question here is that if Bogdan being a warden at one of the most violating and dehumanizing prisons in the world wasn't convincing enough to not hire him, the word of 19 of his colleagues should sway the argument to fire him right? Why do you think the University is hesitant to let him go?

M: I think the school still believes in their justification. Back in early January, the University released a set of facts that attempted to justify the employment of Bogdan. These

facts attempt to justify criticisms of his time at Guantanamo as fully within the standard practice of someone in that position. The issue with this is that criticism of Bogdan is not one of legality but one of morality. As we as a country begin to recognize the systematic violence being perpetrated by our government on people of color, both at home and abroad, we must ask ourselves, what role should UNC Charlotte play? I ask the University to consider whether the employment of John Bogdan is contradictory to their commitment to people of color.

H: I agree with you that legally, John Bogdan has done his part for this University. Bogdan's effective response to the April 30 shooting has proved his ability to do his job in my opinion, and maybe that's why the University is still holding on to him, but I also agree with you about holding him accountable for his past based on morality. Bogdan has technically done his part in Guantanamo Bay too, as he was allowed to commit certain actions, humane or not. The issue with that is that even when the system allows for these actions to be enforced, that does not mean that principally it is the right thing to do. For example, Jim Crow was legalized at one point in American history, but principally it did not justify the mistreatment of minority groups. In my opinion, with his time in the U.S. Army, Guantanamo Bay and the Department of Defense, Bogdan seems to be in favor of the militarization of security and police. Although it has its benefits, it also has its doubts in conjunction with the type of person that Bogdan is; and in light of the protests against systemic racism and police brutality this summer, the University should reconsider who will actually uphold their values instead of just looking at who has the ability to uphold their values.

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ECONOMIC INSTABILITY,
WORKERS NOT JUST IN
THE SOUTH BUT ACROSS
THE WORLD CAN FIND
A BETTER LIFE THROUGH
SOLIDARITY."

- MILO CAIN,
ASST. OPINION EDITOR

"IT IS UP TO RELIGIOUS
LEADERS TO KEEP THEIR
CONGREGATIONS SAFE,
AND THAT STARTS WITH
SHUTTING DOWN UNTIL
THE VACCINE CAN BE
FULLY DISTRIBUTED."

- MILO CAIN,
ASST. OPINION EDITOR

"SOMEONE WHO HAS
COMMITTED INHUMANE
ATROCITIES SHOULD NOT
BE IN CHARGE OF THE
SAFETY OF STUDENTS."

- HIRAL PATEL,
OPINION EDITOR



SPORTS

Fisher learned lessons from a pandemic season

COVID-19 has taught Charlotte football's Jaelin Fisher to live life to the fullest

by Cameron Williams
Staff Writer

Jaelin Fisher (68) gets ready to snap the ball.
Photo courtesy of Charlotte athletics

While Charlotte's football season may have been short for the 49ers, this didn't ruin offensive lineman Jaelin Fisher's outlook on the season as it helped him realize to live each day to the fullest.

"Covid has helped me see that nothing is guaranteed in life, and why stop what you're doing because some games got cancelled and you're feeling down," said Fisher.

Growing up just outside of Nashville, Tenn., Fisher played for Pearl Cohn High School. He received many accolades for his success on the field such as the state's top lineman award as well as earning All-City and All-Metro honors.

Fisher enjoys cooking and playing video games with friends. He especially enjoys spending time with his family.

"I'm really big on family," Fisher had to say when listing some of his hobbies.

After serving a redshirt season in 2016, Fisher played in six games during the 2017 season, starting in one of those games. He made his first collegiate start against FIU in which the team recorded a Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) record of 349 rushing yards that game.

As a redshirt sophomore, Fisher started all 12 games at center for the 49ers en route to four 200+ yard rushing performances

for the team. Three of these performances came against C-USA opponents in FAU, FIU and Western Kentucky.

In 2019, as a redshirt junior, Fisher and the offensive line gave up only 1.62 sacks per game which was tied for 32nd lowest in the country. The offensive line was the only unit in C-USA to earn a spot on the Joe Moore Award's midseason honor roll. The team scored on 88.4% of possessions in the red zone ranking them in the top 35 in the nation.

To add to what was an outstanding season for the program, Fisher played in the 49ers' first bowl game in program history on December 20, 2019. It was a losing effort, but history was made nonetheless as it showed that Charlotte has a bright future in the sport.

"It means a lot especially for Charlotte which is an up-and-coming program, and

"Covid has helped me see that nothing is guaranteed in life, and why stop what you're doing because some games got cancelled and you're feeling down,"

JAELIN FISHER

Coach Healy always said that he is blessed to be able to coach here because it is big time," said Fisher.

Apart from the total team success, the 49ers have had great success running the football over the last several seasons.

Fisher as well as the other lineman have had the opportunity to block for several outstanding running backs. Benny LeMay, who has spent time with the Cleveland Browns practice squad, had two 1,000 yard seasons. Aaron McAllister and Tre Harbison III have had a great deal of success this season in just five games this season.

"They make our jobs a little easier, they are all great powerful backs that bring their own style and flavor to the game," said Fisher in reference to the three running backs.

Fisher started in all five of the 49ers' games in the 2020 season. Although it

has been unfortunate that the pandemic interfered so much, the team made the most out of the games they were able to play. Charlotte had a 2-3 record on the season having played tougher power five conference opponents as well such as Duke from the ACC.

Aside from athletics, Fisher boasts a 3.4 GPA and is on the dean's list as well. Fisher is an Africana studies major and was on the C-USA honor roll in 2016 and 2017. Balancing a college workload as well as being a division one athlete is not an easy task and requires a great deal of time management.

"You really have to balance the two (athletics and academics) out, and you have to find the right time for your studies," said Fisher.

If there is one thing that 2020 has taught Fisher, it's that nothing is guaranteed as Fisher noted and that he's appreciating his friends and family even more as well as football. As the pandemic has challenged everyone, Fisher sees the need to to work hard and live every day like it could be his last.



Reflecting and looking ahead to Charlotte athletics' 2021

After a rollercoaster 2020, Charlotte athletics looks to rebound in 2021

by Bradley Cole
Sports Editor

Charlotte gets ready for a football game.
Photo by Chris Crews

Back in January, things looked bright for Charlotte 49er athletics for 2020. The football program just came off a record-breaking season which included a bowl appearance, the women's and men's basketball teams were in the midst of winning seasons and spring sports were on the horizon with mostly new coaches at the helm.

For the first two months, things went smoothly. Then the world turned upside down. As the coronavirus pandemic put a premature end to spring sports back in early March, the last nine months has been a continuous roller coaster for Charlotte athletics.

With 2021 nearing, the virus and the issues it presents won't go away but there is hope brighter days are ahead for Charlotte's athletic program and college sports in general.

"I can't wait to resume a normal rhythm," said Charlotte athletics director Mike Hill. "I think that when we do, we will pick right up from where we left off and see more growth from our sports. I think we are going to see tremendous growth in our championship pursuits."

Unexpected endings

The first two months looked promising for Charlotte. The men's basketball team, who was projected to finish 12th in Conference-USA, finished fourth and was ready for a deep C-USA tournament run. That was cut short due to the pandemic as was the women's teams title run hopes. The 49ers won their first round game against North Texas in the C-USA tournament until that was cut short due to coronavirus. The women's team finished 21-9 on the season.

Right as the pandemic started to flare up, spring sports were just getting their seasons started. The 49er softball team won 14 games to start their shortened-season with big victories against both Pittsburgh and Appalachian State under first-year coach Ashley Chastain.

The baseball team just got their season rolling with series sweeps against St. Johns and UMBC under first-year coach Robert Woodward. The 49ers' season ended with an impressive 9-8 victory against NC State, who was ranked ninth in the country at the time.

Both Charlotte tennis teams were enjoying success during their non-conference portion of the season. The

men's team went 6-7 with a signature win at Clemson until the season came in a halt. The women's team went 11-6 with a big win against Appalachian State.

A busy summer...sorta of

With no sporting events during most of the month of March, all of April and into the summer, things were quiet when it came to 49er athletics as the world was adjusting to a socially distant lifestyle.

In June, however, Charlotte made a splash with their announcement of a rebrand for the athletic program named "Bold-rush." The campaign consisted of a new primary logo and other secondary marks that involved the city of Charlotte more than the previous logos. It was the first rebranding for Charlotte in 20 years. With the new branding came new jerseys for Charlotte's teams, a new court inside of Halton Arena. Charlotte plans to install a new turf field for the football team which will showcase the new logo on the 50-yard line, according to Mike Hill. Plans to replace the turf are already a year behind due to the pandemic.

The summer ended on a somber note as the fall seasons for the volleyball, men's and women's soccer teams were postponed to the spring of 2021 due to the coronavirus. That left the football and cross country teams with seasons for the 2020 season.

Roller coaster fall

After months of no events, Charlotte athletics was back on Sept. 15 as the football team played at Appalachian State. In a 35-20 loss, the 49ers were able to show off their logo in front of a nationally televised audience on ESPNU.

The season didn't get better for the 49ers. Just that next week, Charlotte had to cancel their game with UNC-Chapel Hill due to COVID-19 concerns. The coronavirus ended up affecting nine games for the 49ers, with five being canceled by the other team. The football team even had to shut down in-person activities due to the large outbreak of COVID-19 on the team after little to no COVID-19 cases throughout the summer.

"What transpired is what we feared might happen when we were preparing for the year this summer," said Hill. "As I reflect back on it, Coach Healy and I have talked a lot if we regret attempting, we don't. In the end we did it for our players. They really wanted to play."

Losing so many games was quite the blow to not only the football team, but the athletic program as a whole. The athletic department announced temporary furloughs for employees who make \$50,000 or more. Employees could start taking the furlough days Nov. 23 and until June 30, 2021.

"We were really excited with how it's taking root," said Hill. "We look like a big-time program and that was apart of the goal."

The men's cross country team, however, won a C-USA championship in October in what was a bright spot for the fall season.

A busy 2021

Given three fall sports will be playing their seasons this spring, there's a lot to look forward to in 2021. The women's and men's soccer teams will be playing in the spring as well as the volleyball team. As of now, those seasons will be playing on time this spring.

"It's gonna be chaos with all those sports on campus," said Hill. "But I welcome that because that means we are playing."

As teams get back to the field and court, Charlotte will also look to rebound financially as the pandemic as slowed the money flow. Less fans for football games and no fans for basketball games means Hill and his team have had to adjust the budget.

According to Hill, the athletic department has to reduce their budget by ten percent and will also have to take on new expenses, most notably coronavirus testing and more scholarships for athletes. The NCAA has allowed an extra year of eligibility for athletes which means extra scholarship money coming from the budget.

"I think we all are experiencing financial loss," said Hill. "I don't know if we will be able to recoup those loss right away but we have had to alter how we operate."

BEST SONGS OF 2020 SELECTED BY A&E WRITERS

A&E writers collaborate on a compilation of this year's brightest tracks.



by Anders Hare, Emily Kottak, Jack Hale, Tyler Trudeau, and Arik Miguel

Image courtesy of respective artists and music labels

2020 has been a wild year full of ups and downs. While we haven't been able to rely on much else, at least we have been able to rely on our music. This year has been a great one for new and diverse music that has helped many of us get through this uncertain and unprecedented year with a bit more ease. The songs below have been selected by A&E staff members as the best songs of 2020.

Anders Hare

"Do It," Chloe x Halle

It's no secret that Chloe x Halle's "Do It" is the definitive R&B jam of 2020. The Bailey sisters seamlessly blend their signature style with odes of maturation and club-ready feels on the Scott Storch-produced track. "Do It" stands as a centerpiece of the Bailey sisters' prolific sophomore effort "Ungodly Hour" and a cultural mainstay of 2020.

"Lost One," Jazmine Sullivan

Jazmine Sullivan is perhaps one of the most underappreciated artists in the music industry. She has the ability to riff and run with singers twice her age, but it's on her 2020 comeback single "Lost One" where she bears her soul on a bigger stage than ever before. Opening a new era in

Sullivan's discography, "Lost One" remains one of 2020's greatest musical efforts.

"XS," Rina Sawayama

On her debut album "Sawayama," Japanese-British songstress Rina Sawayama effortlessly meshes sounds of Nu-Metal with a wave of early 2000s pop. This innate artistic ability is exemplified on "XS," a transcending track about the dangerous overindulgence in western culture. The track is one of this year's brightest, and ultimately the one that put Sawayama on the map.

"Black Parade," Beyoncé

Beyoncé's anthemic celebration of Black culture ruled the airwaves this summer after the premiere of her ode to Africa "Black Is King." On its own, "Black Parade" serves as a reminder that Black is beautiful and Black lives matter in the midst of racial unrest and after.

Emily Kottak

"Rockstar," DaBaby (feat. Roddy Ricch)

An iconic song to say the least, "Rockstar" by DaBaby made its debut in April and quickly rose to popularity. The song was very popular amongst Tik

Tok users and even had its own dance. According to my Spotify Wrapped, this song was my most played song this year. Needless to say, it is a great one.

"Kings & Queens," Ava Max

An upbeat song about female empowerment, Ava Max sings about how women are strong and are powerful queens. She also includes the reminder that we are never alone and deserve to be on a throne. Ava Max had her breakthrough in 2018 and has not disappointed since. She continues to come out with iconic and upbeat songs for all to enjoy.

"Mood," 24kGoldn & iann dior

Released on July 24, 2020, "Mood" quickly became a worldwide chart success and peaked at number one in the United States, the United Kingdom and several other countries. The pop-tinged "summer" track is about the toxic relationships of the rappers. "Mood" became the first song to top the Hot 100, Hot Rock & Alternative Songs, Hot Alternative Songs, and Hot Rap Songs charts in the same week. Once again, like many other of our favorite 2020 songs, "Mood" became wildly popular on the Tik Tok app.

"WAP," Cardi B (feat Megan Thee Stallion)

Say what you want about it, but it's a bop. Though very explicit, "WAP" took 2020 by storm and quickly rose to popularity, especially on the Tik Tok app. Dances, parents and grandparents reacting and so on have been byproducts of Cardi B and Megan Thee Stallion's hit single. The accompanying music video, directed by Colin Tilley, features cameos from several famous women including Kylie Jenner, Rubi Rose, Normani, and Mulatto. "WAP" broke the record for the biggest 24-hour debut for an all-female collaboration on YouTube.

Jack Hale

"Summerhouse," Kota the Friend

Kota the Friend's "Everything" album is the definition of good vibes and summer music; something many of us probably desperately needed this summer. And the leading track of the album sets that tone immediately with a very laid back and relaxing production. The lyrics aren't too deep, but they don't really need to be. Kota gives a few really nice flows with some okay lyrics, but the lyrics aren't the point of the song or even the album. It is all about the good vibes he is putting off.

“After Hours,” The Weeknd

The title track off of The Weeknd’s latest album is one of the darkest he’s put out. Although the theme and message is a recurring one throughout The Weeknd’s career, it is the moody and atmospheric tone that really pushes the darkness, as he states “my darkest hours.” The beat switch a couple of minutes into the song really turns it from a good to a great song. The drums kick in and fit The Weeknd’s autotune use much better. Arguably the best song on a really good album, it is a travesty that there were zero Grammy nominations.

“Daylight,” Joji & Diplo

The instrumental on “Daylight” is easily my favorite off of Joji’s latest album, “Nectar,” and is the best part of this song. I really like Joji’s performance, but that shows just how strong the instrumental is. I love the switch from more low-key and moody during the verses and picks up rapidly in a cinematic way during the chorus. The same goes for Joji, as he uses more of a monotone voice in his verses while being more expressive in the chorus.

“Borderline,” Tame Impala

While Tame Impala’s “The Slow Rush” didn’t quite live up to their previous album “Currents,” there are still quite a few great songs including “Borderline.” The production and sounds are pretty standard when it comes to Tame Impala, but it’s Kevin Parker’s flow on the song that stands out. He really mixes up his delivery into a more snappy and catchy flow which works perfectly.

Tyler Trudeau

“Levitating,” Dua Lipa (feat. DaBaby)

While the pop music scene was dominated this year by female artists like Taylor Swift, Miley Cyrus, Ariana Grande, and many others, English pop icon Dua Lipa continued her path to the top with her second album “Future Nostalgia.” While hit singles “Don’t Start Now” and “Physical” have been on repeat for me since March, her recent collaboration with rapper DaBaby in a remix of her single “Levitating” instantly hooked me. Even more than Dua’s dreamy soundscapes, DaBaby’s new verse in the song elevated it

to become one of my favorites of the year.

“Unusual,” Mating Ritual

In a love letter to East Los Angeles hipster culture, the fourth album from indie-pop duo Mating Ritual offered up seductive tracks perfect for the summer heat. With the world stuck indoors for the majority of the year, the band opted for a mental vacation from it all, bringing together a collection of escapist hits that transported their listeners to an Eastside party scene full of enigmatic characters. While tracks like “Voodoo” and “Elastic Summer” traversed the group’s breezy lyricism and complex instrumentation, “Unusual” slowed things down, all while sending you on a transformative musical experience.

“To Die For,” Sam Smith

Sam Smith’s latest album showcased their spectacular vocal range, but ultimately left me wanting them to go deeper into their own emotional psyche. While there are some fantastic tracks that ride the line between subtle ballads and full-fledged pop hits, many just don’t strike as substantial a chord as Smith’s previous work. One of his deepest dives, however, comes in the original title track of the record. While Smith’s vocals might be bathed in Auto-Tune, the feelings of longing and heartbreak in the track manage to bleed through.

“Coverage,” Maya Hawke

The debut record of “Stranger Things” star Maya Hawke was a surprising gift in a very odd year. Just as I was getting used to seeing her on-screen in projects like the aforementioned hit Netflix series and films like “Once Upon a Time in Hollywood,” the daughter of actors Uma Thurman and Ethan Hawke dropped a delightfully melancholic folk-rock album. Her single “Coverage,” which showcased the actor and singer’s versatile pipes, stood above the rest in a satisfying, experimental debut.

Arik Miguel

“BALD!,” JPEGMAFIA

JPEGMAFIA has made a name for himself as an internet-age provocateur who makes aggressive and smartly humorous rap that seems reminiscent of Death Grips. “BALD!” is perhaps the

best song he has released so far in his career. The song revolves around a short but incredibly addictive loop, and over it JPEGMAFIA casually takes down his critics and jokes about his hairline. With this glitchy high-energy song, JPEGMAFIA proves he is one of the most unique and talented artists making music right now. Or maybe I am biased towards this song because I played it during the first week of lockdown when I shaved my head.

“Savage Remix,” Megan Thee Stallion (feat. Beyoncé)

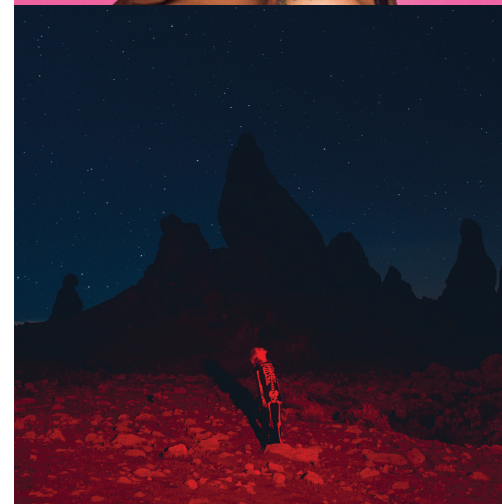
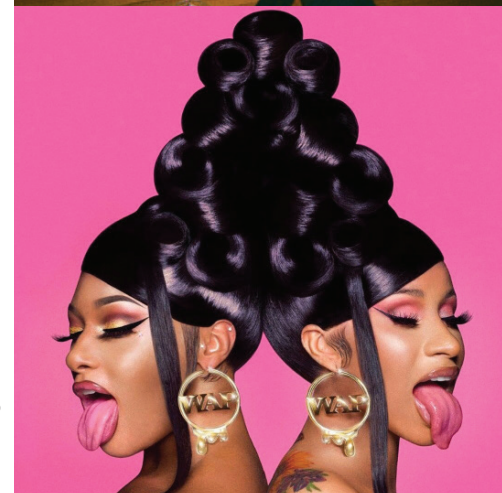
“Savage” was already a certified hit, and had elevated Megan Thee Stallion to a household name, and then the remix dropped. Few artists are lucky enough to get Beyoncé to remix their song, much less rework the song’s entire chemistry. Beyoncé the rapper is not someone we get to see very often, but she still brings unique character, raw talent and delivers some now-iconic lines. These two Houston natives trading effortlessly playful verses can lift the mood in any room.

“Ringtone (umru remix),” 100 geecs

100 geecs released one of the most unexpected and divisive albums of 2019, and invited a variety of musicians to help on this year’s remix album. Hyperpop producer Umru fully glitches out the song, adding a sense of urgency that somehow makes the already danceable track even more danceable. The most impressive thing about the remix is how Umru managed to find the emotional heart of the song, and bring it out in a profound way. The song breaks down at the end, into an unexpected moment of pure bliss.

“Garden Song,” Phoebe Bridgers

Phoebe Bridgers has made a name for herself as one of indie music’s most prominent Elliot Smith-style songwriters. Her songs dwell in melancholy, and are often filled with the type of emotionally resonant lyrics that remind you music can be poetry. “Garden Song” is largely about recurring nightmares that the singer experienced while on tour, but the evocative details described burrow deep into your brain. The song is full of haunted memories, real and imagined, that build a universe no one else could have created, but in which anyone can find beauty.



BEST SONGS OF 2020 SELECTED BY A&E WRITERS

What should've been a promising beginning to a new decade has been a chaotic year on all fronts. The pandemic not only affected individuals and businesses but the music industry as a whole. Live performances were first to go as concerts and music festivals were forced to be postponed or move to virtual platforms. Music titans such as Lady Gaga and Alicia Keys ultimately decided to delay or shelve projects altogether. What's more, months of racial tension following the unjust deaths of Black people at the hands of police caused an additional shift. Several artists released anthemic songs to speak out against police brutality. This movement also spurred country artists such as Lady A and The Chicks to remove connotations of slavery from their names. R&B duo Chloe x Halle even went as far as to push back their album out of respect for George Floyd and Breonna Taylor.

In spite of everything that occurred, 2020 still gave us some great music moments that we'll remember for years to come. Virtual performances, engaging DJ sets and live battles kept the music industry going through these tumultuous times, and we were still blessed with great new tunes. With the last 12 months in the rearview, the Arts & Entertainment presents a list of songs to soundtrack this life-changing year.



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NEXT TO CIRCLE K, BESIDE UNCC

Book Review:



Bleeding Violet by Dia Reeves

by Julianna Peres
Lifestyle Editor

Photo courtesy of Paul Weil

Genre: Fantasy, paranormal YA fiction

CW: self-harm, suicide, manic-depression, rape, murder, gore, spirit possession, torture, explicit intimacy

A long time ago, I read “Slice of Cherry” and the cover of that book brought forth such a visceral reaction that I just had to buy this book last week. “Slice of Cherry” was every bit as weird and unsettling as this book. Reeves was able to hit it out of the park twice. The relationship between the sisters in “Slice of Cherry” and the relationship between the mother and daughter in “Bleeding Violet” are so complex, compelling and unmistakably familiar in the most disturbing way.

Wow, what a cliffhanger to round off chapter one, and it only gets crazier from there. The main character, Hanna, is mysterious not only to her estranged mother but to the reader as well.

Hanna identifies herself as biracial, bicultural and bipolar. That’s a recipe for displacement for anyone, especially someone whose father has just passed away. She’s bold, optimistic and has a hyper-fixation with purple. A fixation which begins to make narrative sense once Hanna realizes that all of the townspeople of Portero, Texas only wear black. She notes that it looks like a perpetual funeral. However, her love interest Wyatt, is part of an elite monster-hunting group that wears green. Not to mention that Hannah’s mother Rosalee, loves the color red.

On Hanna’s first quasi-monster-hunt, she encounters a decomposing man named Melissa who has a woman’s voice. That sentence is a lot, I know. But, even though this chapter is about possession, it really bothered me as an LGBT reader, to see that the author put windowpane ghouls, cannibals and poltergeists on par with a non-gender-conforming character. Sure, it turned out that Melissa was really the spirit who was speaking through the body of a man named Bob. But, to act as if a high-pitched voice and a typically female name for a person who appeared to be male was as strange as the rest, really rubbed me the wrong way.

However, the dialogue in this book pulls absolutely no



punches. When 16-year-old Hanna tells her mother that she’s decided to sleep with a boy she’d just met, Rosalee (sarcastically) handed Hanna a box of condoms and said, “Need anything else? Lube? Instruction? Handcuffs?” I have never read a Young Adult novel that was so not YA. Sure, there’s the cute butterflies in Hannah’s stomachs and jealousy toward Wyatt’s ex-girlfriend, but there’s also suicide, murder and plenty of gore.

Throughout the novel, most of the characters claim that it’s just a “weird town.” Many townspeople refuse to believe in the

existence of magic, yet invisible teleportation doors open up along alleyways, lattes turn to blood and there are giant maggot worms in the milk supply.

About a quarter of the way through, I was prepared to call the copyright police. I was very strongly reminded of the podcast “Nightvale.” Things seem crazy to the readers but the most profane occurrences can become mundane if they happen frequently enough. To readers, it’s exciting and chaotic to find that one of the main characters is newly possessed. To the main characters it’s as mildly inconvenient as a flat tire. But it wasn’t until the mayor of Portero appeared that the similarities between “Bleeding Violet” and “Nightvale” became too much. The mayor in both stories is an all-powerful woman with the ability to resurrect, imprison and decimate any living thing. Where Portero has the “dark park,” Nightvale has the forbidden “dog park.” But the podcast that I’ve been a fan of for the past eight years didn’t actually precede this 2010 novel.

Once I arrived at the killer stick figures with beating hearts that must be snatched from inside their chests, the story falls apart. It’s fast-paced but too nonsensical to make me truly excited to witness the grand finale. The ending was a bit cheesy and ultimately unfulfilling. I like to see past the “end of the battle” daze. It would’ve rounded some of the sharp edges and answered several questions if Reeves had given the readers an idea of life post-possession. Wyatt continuing to improve on his scientific magic, Rosalee learning how to love without losing herself and Hanna finally leaning into the emotion she’d claimed to be incapable of feeling.



Rating: 3.5/5