

# THE SKIFF



PATTERSON  
NOT SURPRISED  
BY LT'S SUCCESS.

A STUDENT MEDIA PUBLICATION OF TEXAS CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

FORT WORTH, TEXAS



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## STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

## TCU a cappella groups sweep top two spots

By RACHEL TIEDE

STAFF WRITER

TCU a cappella groups The Horned Tones and License to Trill won the top two spots Saturday night in the International Championship of Collegiate A Cappella Southwest Quarterfinal competition, earning a place in the semifinal competition.

It was the first time any TCU group advanced to semifinals.

"It is so surreal what just happened," License to Trill member Kameron Reyes said. "It's the first time any TCU group is moving on to semifinals, and now we have two."

The Horned Tones earned first place with a mashup of "The Sky's the Limit" by Jason Derulo and "Forever" by Chris Brown, "Hold On" by Michael Bublé



PHOTO BY RACHEL TIEDE

Jackson Grosskopf is lifted into the air during a performance by The Horned Tones at the ICCA Quarterfinal Competition Saturday, February 18, 2017.

and "Brother" by NEEDTOBREATHE.

"We've had rehearsals until 11 p.m., 11:30 p.m., midnight, multiple times a week for the last three, four months," Horned Tones member Joseph Hartley said. "I'm so happy."

License to Trill performed "Nothing Left to Say" by Imagine Dragons, "Don't Let Me Down" by The Chainsmokers and "Ride or Die" by Brayton Bowman.

Members of the two

teams also took home special awards. Katlin Hess of License to Trill won Outstanding Soloist. Nick Ruiz of The Horned Tones won Outstanding Vocal Percussionist, and Jackson Grosskopf of The Horned Tones won Outstanding Choreography.

Semifinals is March 11 at UCLA.

Hartley said the Horned Tones will get ready to compete by working on the "nitty gritty details."

"We're going to focus

on the angles of everything and come out even better than we were this time," Hartley said.

Sabrina Harb founded License to Trill after her father's death. The group partnered with the LUNGevity Foundation February 1 to host a 5k and free concert to raise money for lung cancer research in honor of Harb's father. When asked what she thinks he'd be saying about their win, she said, "I think he'd be super proud. I hope."

The other teams that competed were the Green Tones from the University of North Texas, Here Comes Treble from TCU, OneSound from Collin College, RISE from the University of Texas-Arlington and Unaccompanied from Northern Arizona University.

## ACADEMICS

## Actors allow student nurses to be independent

By MICHELLE ROSS

STAFF WRITER

Nursing students will soon be working with something more lively than mannequins.

Finding real patients can be tough so TCU will simulate hospital situations using actors as patients and family members.

According to the curriculum, students begin practicing with these actors their spring semester of junior year.

Two to three nursing students at a time are challenged to take the concepts they've learned in class and apply skills to the patient, said Ashley Franklin, assistant nursing professor.

She said the actors receive a one-page description of the scene. They wear a walkie talkie in their ear to hear cues given from the lab

instructors.

Professional actress Paulie Killgore was hired to act as a family member.

"I've worked on stage, TV, films, commercials, modeling and in improv," Killgore said. "I've never done a real scenario for training purposes."

Killgore said she played a wife who was visiting her husband in the hospital. Unbeknownst to the student nurses, her character had dementia. While the students treated her husband for asthma and heart troubles, she rummaged through cabinets and took fake pills, even after the students asked her what she was taking.

"The pills were actually vitamin B-12," Killgore said.

Franklin said 20 actors are cast in various scenarios in the simulation labs.

"Some of the actors



PHOTO BY MICHELLE ROSS

Student nurses practice concepts they've learned in class on mannequins.

do commercials and TV shows," but there are no qualifications needed to be hired because we have community members too, Franklin said.

The lab experience allows students to try things they couldn't in the hospitals, Franklin said.

"The hospital nurses tell the students where to step, what to say and what

to do," Franklin said.

"Student's don't have any authority on the patient."

Junior nursing major Crysta Coomer said, "the simulation labs are really fun and it's a lot easier to learn in them compared to the hospitals."

"We try to use live actors in every simulation, but mannequins are sometimes used when students practice invasive procedural," Franklin said. "Like when a patient needs a tube inserted in their nose or bladder."

After an hour in the simulation lab, students receive feedback from their peers who watched them on TV.

Franklin said student feedback on the simulation labs has been very positive, but it can take awhile for students to realize they too have to perform like actors for their classmates.



## The Skiff

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**Distribution:** Newspapers are available free on campus and surrounding locations, limit one per person. Additional copies are \$.50 and are available at the Skiff office.

The Skiff is an official student publication of Texas Christian University, produced by students of TCU and sponsored by the TCU Department of Journalism. It operates under the policies of the Student Media Committee..

The Skiff is published Thursdays during fall and spring semesters except finals week and holidays.

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## The Skiff

Circulation: 2000

Subscriptions: 817-257-6274

Rates are \$30 per semester.

## Moody Building South

News Room, Room 212

2805 S. University Drive, Fort Worth, TX 76109



## FEATURE

# Ann Louden says farewell to TCU

By **MAKENZIE STALLO**  
STAFF WRITER

Ann Louden walked through her storage unit, dropping off boxes.

It's filled with the countless files that catalogue three decades of work at TCU.

"You open a file drawer and there's a file for everything I've ever done," Louden said. "I was wallowing in emotion by walking into a storage unit."

Each file details a project: where it took place, the organization details and – what's most important to Louden – the people involved.

"That's what's made this place so important to me," Louden said. "The people I've met have become friends, they've become relationships that have mattered to me professionally, and they've benefitted TCU which is the main goal."

She's leaving for a new adventure at Adelphi University in New York.

## History at TCU

Louden never intended to make a home at TCU. She originally planned to work here temporarily as a mean to finance her way to law school.

She heard about the school through a friend and said, through him, it left a positive imprint in her mind.

She took a job as assistant alumni director, and got promoted to alumni director within a year, making her the youngest ever for the Texas/Arkansas region.

Three decades later, she holds three titles: chancellor's associate for strategic partnerships, director of the Center for Connection Culture, and chair of Frogs for the Cure.

She estimates in her time here that she has sent over 730,000 emails and conducted around 2,000 meetings. She's

held over a dozen titles and brought numerous new programs to campus including the Center for Connection Culture and many alumni programs.

"I think if I could say I feel proud about anything it's creating new programs," Louden said. "Every one of those programs I've been involved in has brought me a lot of pleasure."

"I want to have touched lives so that people experience the power of being engaged in higher education and also find their own place as a volunteer."

## Frogs for the Cure and History with Cancer

Louden is probably most recognized for her work with Frogs for the Cure.

Louden serves as the chair for the organization that partners with TCU Athletics to benefit a non-profit cause. For the first 11 years the organization worked with Susan G. Komen – the first in the nation to do so. They began partnering with Cancer Care Services in 2016.

The partnership with Cancer Care Services created a shift to all cancers rather than just breast cancer.

She said Frogs for the Cure made the change because she realized many students had cancer stories that weren't breast cancer.

"We had students come to TCU because they knew this was a place where their cancer stories would be revered and honored," Louden said. "We wanted to be part of their journey."

At the final Frogs for the Cure Celebration on Feb. 16, survivors, music video participants and volunteers all gathered to honor the success of the organization, but also to honor Louden herself.

Many gave speeches

sharing stories of their time working with Frogs for the Cure and praising Louden for all she has done.

TCU senior Connor Roe said he was happy they get to graduate together. "There is such a legacy left here," he said.

Melanie Wilson, CEO of Cancer Care Services told Ann: "My life is definitely better because you entered it."

Musician and TCU alum Tim Halperin said Louden is "excellent in everything she does."

Halperin who provided the music for the first three Frogs for the Cure music videos said he was proud to be part of this TCU experience.

"After the first couple of times I was around the cancer survivors in this community and saw the way they approached life, the zest they had for it, and the way they showed appreciation to those around them when the gift is what they gave to us, that was enough for me to want to be part of it," said Halperin.

She was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2006 after a routine mammogram.

"I remember sitting in a parking lot in my car in Dallas thinking that I couldn't drive back to Fort Worth because if I did all of the things I knew about my ordinary days wouldn't be ordinary anymore."

Louden used her drive to overcome and help others as her motivation for Frogs for the Cure.

In 2010, Frogs for the Cure began doing music videos to bring their message to new communities.

"The music videos have created a sense of engagement and compassion that we couldn't have any other way," Louden said.

Louden said she is proud of how the



PHOTO COURTESY OF VICTORIA RENEAU

Ann Louden at a Frogs for the Cure Video shoot.

initiative has grown and the amount of student and staff engagement.

"We started with four or five people, and I look back now and think of the thousands of people who have been involved."

One of those volunteers was Victoria Reneau.

Reneau met Louden when she was a first-year student and took a leadership seminar that Louden was teaching. Reneau said she and Louden became acquaintances from the course. Some time later, she went to Louden looking for ways to get involved.

Louden introduced her to Frogs for the Cure. Five years later and Reneau is still a passionate volunteer and a great friend of Ann's.

"I had the opportunity to develop those new skills and really figure out what I was capable of," said Reneau. "She pushed me to things I never would have done."

Reneau said even though the departure will be sad, she is just happy that she had such a good friend to spend time with.

"How lucky am I to have somebody in my life that makes saying goodbye so difficult," Reneau said.

## Next Chapter

As her last day on campus approaches, Louden said she is excited to move to New York.

At Adelphi University, she will be serving as Special Assistant to the President, a position that was created for her. She

is also starting her own non-profit consulting firm. Her first client is the Gladney Center for Adoption.

Louden said the Gladney Center is close to her heart because it's through the center that she adopted her daughter.

"I would not have a family without the Gladney Center," she said. "My life is forever changed because of them."

She said although she is excited for her move, it was bittersweet to decide to leave TCU.

"If I was going to do this, I might as well go really big, and New York City has always been a dream of mine," Louden said.

## Legacy

When thinking of her own legacy, Louden said she hopes she has made a difference.

"I want to have touched lives so that people experience the power of being engaged in higher education and also find their own place as a volunteer," she said.

She said she will return from time to time to participate in events and visit her daughter Carey, a first-year.

"For me to pass on my purple clothes and my purple traditions is a little less painful with someone in my family that's here and that I can come back to see," Louden said.

**James R. Mallory**  
Attorney at Law

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## FEATURE

# Dashiki shows African culture on TCU's campus

By **CALEB JAKANA**  
STAFF WRITER

A show of African heritage can be seen on TCU's campus weekly thanks to the African Student Organization.

For "Dashiki Tuesday," TCU students of African descent take a break from American attire and try dashikis, traditional African attire, in order to display their heritage.

This weekly tradition was started by the African Student Organization two years ago.

Philip Kafuluma, president of ASO, said weekly traditions like Dashiki Tuesday gives students an opportunity to show their appreciation for African culture.

"It gives them an opportunity to express their love for their roots and it's also an opportunity for non-Africans because there are a lot of American people who have bought dashikis," Kafuluma said. "It's a time where members of ASO and

non-members can show we care about Africa."

Kafuluma said when he wears a dashiki, it gives him an opportunity to teach people more about the attire and why people wear the item.

"Personally, every single time I've worn it I've had someone either compliment me or ask me, 'what are you wearing?'" Kafuluma said. "I usually take that opportunity to tell people where I am from and also to tell about the dashiki itself."

One member of ASO, Claire Janat, said wearing her dashiki lets her express her culture without a verbal explanation.

"It is a way to express my African culture without explicitly saying I am African," Janat said.

More than anything, the dashiki embodies African culture, and is a great conversation starter, Kafuluma said.

"People always associate African culture with lots of color, lots of



PHOTO COURTESY OF TCU ASO

The African Student Organization was started at TCU two years ago.

flash," Kafuluma said. "The dashikis usually represent that."

The garment that

once originated in Africa has become popular throughout the United States, apart from TCU's college campus.

The dashiki has a myriad of meanings from fashions statements, to a form of rebellion and, for today's owners, a form of pride or appreciation for the culture and history.

The dashiki is a bright, colorful garment that usually covers the torso, but there are also versions of the dashikis that are in the form of dresses and suits. The suit dashiki reaches the knees and is traditionally worn with slacks.

The dashiki originated from West Africa, specifically Nigeria, and is seen as a unisex garment.

The name dashiki comes from the word "dan shiki" or "dan ciki", which means "shirt" in Yoruba and Hausa, languages spoken in West Africa.

Walter Eugene King, also known as Oba,

meaning King in Yoruba, Ofuntola Osejeman Adelabu Adefunmi, was the man who started the circulation of the garment in the United States in the 1960s. King left America to go to Haiti to be immersed into African culture from indigenous Africans.

King returned to America and started the small-scale manufacturing of African attire in the United States, including the dashiki.

Jason Benning, Milton Clarke, Howard Davis, and William Smith started the large-scale production of the dashiki in America under their brand New Breed Ltd, which was based in Harlem, New York. Jason Benning coined the modern term "dashiki".

During the civil rights movement, the dashiki went against the men's fashion status quo with its bright colors and the piece not being tucked into the pants. The dashiki

was used to protest the injustices against minorities and society's flippant attitude towards African Americans.

Prominent figures who wore the piece, during the political struggles of the 1950s and 1960s, include Jim Brown, Sammy Davis Jr. and many more. The dashiki also made appearances in movies and weekly TV shows: "Soul Train", "Uptight" and "Putney Swope."

As time has progressed, celebrities and prominent music figures have worn the dashiki as fashion statements because of the dashiki's bright colors or to show their African roots—such as Beyonce, Rihanna, Chris Brown, Zendaya, Wale, and Sarah Jessica Parker.

Today, the dashiki is seen on special occasions such as weddings, graduations, church and Kwanzaa.

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## SPORTS

# Patterson: Not surprised by LT's success

By **KRISTEN CLARKE**  
STAFF WRITER

When Gary Patterson came to TCU in 1998 as a defensive coordinator, LaDarian Tomlinson was a backup running back.

Now, Patterson is the winningest coach in Horned Frogs' history, and Tomlinson is set to be inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame.

"LT was a great player but an even better person," said Patterson. "The way he represents the NFL and TCU is unbelievable. His legacy will carry on for many years in the community."

Tomlinson was a running back for TCU from 1997 to 2000. Tomlinson was selected by the San Diego Chargers as the fifth overall pick in the 2001 NFL Draft. He played 11 seasons in the league, from 2001 to 2011. His first

nine seasons were with the Chargers, before ending his career with two years as a New York Jet.

Tomlinson is the Horned Frogs' all-time leading rusher with 5,263 yards, while holding 14 of TCU's 17 rushing records.

Tomlinson was the 2006 NFL Most Valuable Player when he led the league with 1,815 yards rushing while setting a single-season record with 28 rushing touchdowns. He was also that year's recipient of the Walter Payton NFL Man of the Year Award.

"Wins and losses, they keep your job," Patterson said. "What we appreciate most is getting a chance to see how they've grown up and know that we were a part of them being able to have a better life."

TCU was one of the few schools to offer Tomlinson a scholarship to play

college football.

"It's never been about how you start anyway," said Patterson. "All it is proof that you can move forward."

Tomlinson, selected in 2014 as the 11th Horned Frog in the College Football Hall of Fame, earned his TCU degree in August 2005.

"Greatness always comes at a price," Patterson said. "No matter how much running we would do in the summertime or whenever, whenever he got done he did more."

Patterson said the thing that sets great TCU players apart is what they do and how they do it.

"When LT first came to TCU as a sophomore, he weighed 210 pounds and ran a 4.60. In the offseason, he gained 10 pounds and ran a 4.38," Patterson said. "I thought

the watches broke, and we even went back and ran it again," he said.

Patterson said that Tomlinson would go back out after practice and work for another 30 or 45 minutes.

"Ability is ability and then you've got to have a little luck to get where you need to be, but if you look at the kind of people they've become and how they've done things, that speaks volumes," Patterson said. "That's the thing that I'm most proud of."

It helps that alumni like Tomlinson come back to visit, said Patterson. Tomlinson was in Fort Worth cheering on TCU Men's Basketball just a few days ago.

"There's not a better example of what you want to become to motivate our kids," Patterson said. "It's a circle of life, and it helps us with every facet."

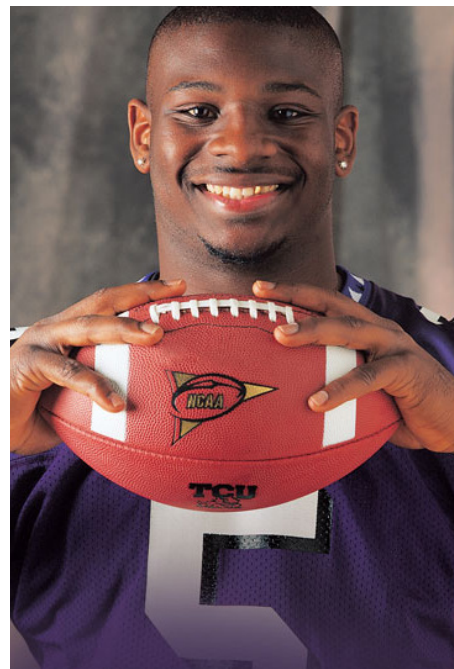


PHOTO COURTESY OF NEWSEVENTS.TCU.EDU

LaDarian Tomlinson was the 2006 NFL Most Valuable Player.

## SPORTS

## Soccer Stadium Update

By **MADISON FOWLER**  
STAFF WRITER

When crews finish work on the soccer field, players won't have to run uphill, but they will be able to safely play in the rain.

The field was built on a hill and had a clay surface.

"It may not seem to be too noticeable to the eye, but they were having to run uphill while playing," said Harold Leeman, director of TCU facility planning and construction.

The soccer field was six feet higher at one end, said Leeman.

The process includes resurfacing the field by bringing the hill down to a level for a flat playing ground.

They are adding a drainage system so they can play in the rain. The field will no longer turn muddy to affect practices



PHOTO BY MADISON FOWLER

The new stadium should be completely by the end of July 2017.

and games because the water drains through rather than sitting on top, Leeman said.

The field is being changed from clay based to sand based. This will keep the field drier with less wet spots and flooding, Leeman said. This field also permits more grass growth and less patchy spots.

They will replace the four light poles with six new poles. This will enable them to have televised games at night, said Brandie Davidson, the assistant director of media relations.

During the resurfacing

construction, the team is practicing in the indoor facility in the mornings.

Head coach Eric Bell said the field needed improvements.

"In our situation, the resurfacing needed to happen," he said. "These improvements are going to allow us to have a championship performance on a championship field."

The new field will be completed before this fall's soccer season. The grass will be growing by the end of June and will be completed the end of July 2017 to be ready by this August.





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## Horoscope

A baby born today has a Sun in Pisces and a Moon in Capricorn if born before 12:17 p.m. (ET). Afterward, the Moon will be in Aquarius.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY for Thursday, Feb. 23, 2017:

This year you open up to many fast changes. You often surprise yourself with how easily you can draw certain matters to a close, and successfully at that. You will need more private time to reflect and consider your many options. If you are single, someone you meet might not be everything that he or she claims to be. Be careful, as this person could be emotionally unavailable. If you are attached, the two of you open up to more social times with your friends. However, be sure not to deny yourselves the personal couple time you need to bond. AQUARIUS makes an excellent healer for you. The Stars Show the Kind of Day You'll Have: 5-Dynamic; 4-Positive; 3-Average; 2-So-so; 1-Difficult

### ARIES (March 21-April 19)

★★★ Wrap up a work-related matter ASAP. You naturally become more social and direct as you deal with various issues. Use the evening to network and to gain a broader perspective of what you are dealing with. Do not minimize what you have to offer. Tonight: Find your friends.

### TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

★★★★ Relate directly to one person at a time when trying to gain a broader perspective. You need to ask the right questions. You might need to postpone these conversations until later. You will gain a fresh insight by pulling away from the matter at hand. Tonight: Leader of the gang.

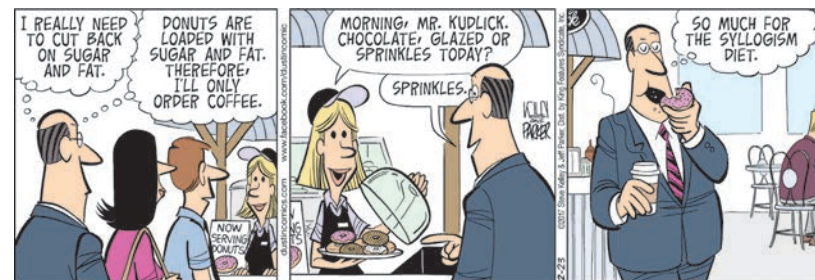
### GEMINI (May 21-June 20)

★★★★ You could be tired of heading in a certain direction. You even might decide to take a break from this particular engagement. Start seeking out experts before making a decision. You will want to grow beyond your present

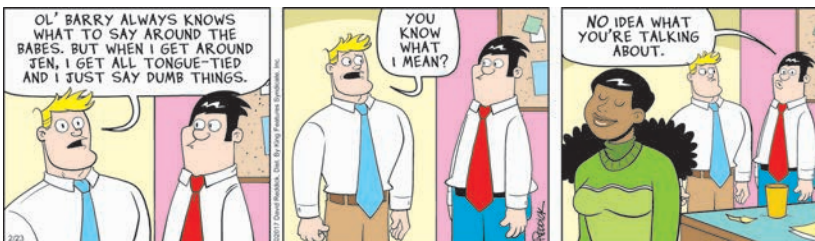
### Carpe Diem by Niklas Eriksson



### Dustin by Steve Kelley and Jeff Parker



### Intelligent Life by David Reddick



thought process. Tonight: Start thinking "weekend."

### CANCER (June 21-July 22)

★★★★ Others continue to want to run the show, which frees you up for more engaging activities. Get into this break from routine, and explore other options and ways of handling a problem. Later in the afternoon, make time for a one-on-one talk. Tonight: Opt for togetherness.

### LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)

★★★★ You could opt to get more done in the morning than you originally had planned. Getting through your workload is likely to be tiring, but knowing that your schedule frees up in the afternoon will encourage you to dive right in. Tonight: Happiest at home with a special person.

### VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

★★★★ You will want to get past a

difficult situation. You see how the issue could be resolved, but you might not know how to convince others of this fact. At the same time, you feel as if you are really needed here. Get into a project to relax and feel better. Tonight: Slow down the pace.

### LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)

★★★★ Build a project or a special relationship on a strong foundation. You might feel as though what you are

doing remains pivotal to your well-being. Understand where someone else is coming from, and you will see how it brings you closer together. Tonight: All smiles.

### SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)

★★★★ You might feel overwhelmed as you answer questions and determine your direction. You are full of fun and action. Meanwhile, ask for more of what you need. Be willing to relax in the afternoon and deal with a personal matter. Tonight: Make it a cozy night for two.

### SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

★★★ Handle serious matters in the morning, which is when you are most likely to get positive results. You could be pushing yourself too hard to complete a project. Communication flourishes in the late afternoon, no matter what you decide to do. Tonight: Meet friends at a favored haunt.

### CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

★★★ You wake up feeling ready to deal with an older friend who sometimes rains on your parade. This person knows how to trigger you. Make careful choices, and you will emerge all the better. You might be startled by how easily you can change moods. Tonight: Make it your treat.

### AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

★★★★ You might feel a little down when you wake up, but by the afternoon, you'll return to your free-spirit self. Others will be thrilled that you are casting away the gloominess. Decide to extend a fun invitation to a pal who often goes out of his or her way for you. Tonight: Head to the gym.

### PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)

★★★★ Schedule important matters in the morning. You might want to celebrate your success by the afternoon. Think through a situation that on some level is annoying you. You might have a special friend with whom you love to brainstorm. Tonight: Get some extra R and R.





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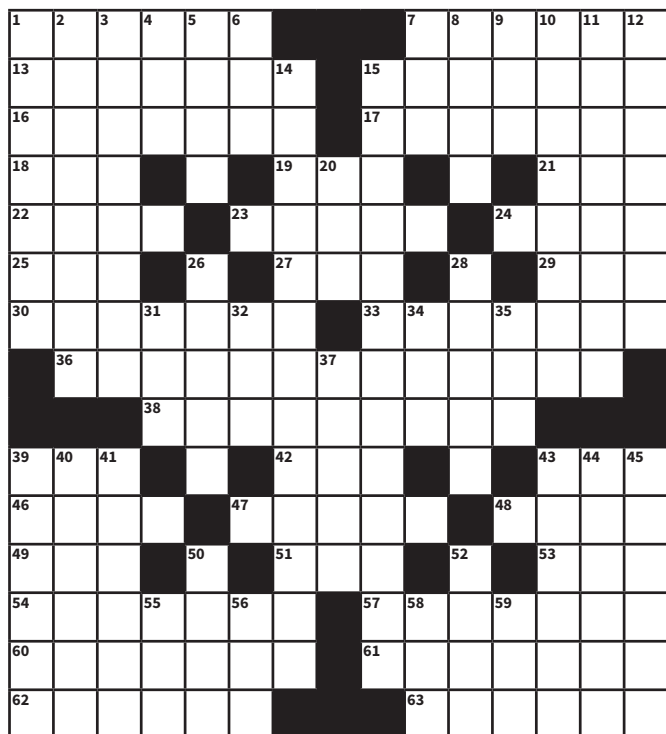
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Edited by Will Shortz



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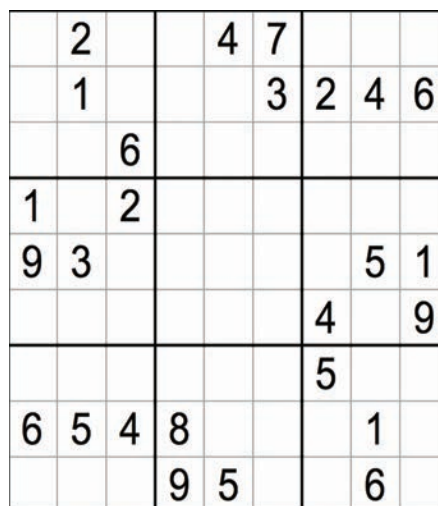
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- 39 Blu-ray forerunner
- 42 "True Detective" ailer
- 43 Swab
- 46 Sister company of Applebee's
- 47 Native-born Israeli
- 48 Ring
- 49 Kiss \_\_\_
- 51 Looks for ganders, e.g.: Abbr.
- 53 Wash. neighbor
- 54 Modifier on a dessert menu
- 57 You might empty it into a bucket
- 60 Gives a new handle
- 61 Leader targeted in 1989's Operation Nifty Package
- 62 Visit
- 63 Cloth insert

### Down

- 1 Celebrity

- 2 Awful
- 3 Public relations effort
- 4 Economic benchmark, briefly
- 5 Retain
- 6 French possessive
- 7 See 30-Across
- 8 Groening who created "The Simpsons"
- 9 Actress Hagen
- 10 Musical intervals from F to B, e.g.
- 11 Travel sci-fi style
- 12 "Count me in!"
- 14 They present hurdles
- 15 Cork opener?
- 20 Title that anagrams to another title
- 26 Satirist \_\_\_ Baron Cohen
- 28 Sched. listings
- 31 Worked (up)
- 32 Stretch (out)
- 34 "Coronation \_\_\_" (Elgar composition)

## Sudoku



### DIRECTIONS

Fill in the grid so that every 3x3 box, row, and column contains the digits 1 through 9 without repeating numbers.

### SOLUTION FROM 2/16

2	9	1	6	5	4	8	3	7
6	3	5	7	8	2	4	1	9
7	4	8	3	9	1	6	5	2
4	8	9	2	3	6	5	7	1
5	6	2	8	1	7	3	9	4
1	7	3	5	4	9	2	6	8
3	5	4	1	7	8	9	2	6
8	2	7	9	6	5	1	4	3
9	1	6	4	2	3	7	8	5

## TCU Trivia

Baseball: The TCU Horned Frogs will be facing Arizona State Sun Devils this weekend. **TRUE OR FALSE?**

### SOLUTION FROM 2/16

B	U	S	T	E	D	A	P	A	R	T
U	N	A	W	A	R	E	C	O	V	E
T	A	X	I	C	A	B	I	K	E	B
L	O	S	T	D	E	C	A	N	T	S
H	O	P	S	S	A	T				
U	N	L	O	A	D	S	R	A	G	T
S	T	A	N	T	O	N	E	L	A	P
B	A	N	A	N	A	S	P	L	I	T
A	R	E	A	R	U	G	T	H	E	N
N	I	T	W	I	T	S	S	A	N	G
D	O	S	E	I	O	T	A	S	A	D
N	E	I	G	H	E	D	I	N	O	R
A	R	M	H	O	L	E	R	O	L	A
B	R	O	K	E	N	I	N	T	W	O

### TCU TRIVIA ANSWER

State this weekend. **TRUE!** TCU will face Arizona

## ENTERTAINMENT

# “The Great Wall” is a hollow and flimsy blockbuster

BY CHRIS GARCIA  
STAFF WRITER

The newest film starring Matt Damon, “The Great Wall” is an action-adventure that falls apart on almost every level.

The film follows mercenaries William (Damon) and Tovar (Pedro Pascal) as they team up with a secret military group to defend the Great Wall from monstrous forces known as the Tao Tei.

The biggest issues lie within the drawn-out and tonally confused plot. The first act starts strong, doling out a large amount of exposition and some interesting action sequences. Unfortunately, very little happens in the second and third act before wrapping up with a poorly-done and unsatisfying conclusion. This makes the film a slog to

sit through, especially as the few interesting ideas that are set up have little to no follow-through and are quickly forgotten.

Major plot points seemingly occur out of nowhere with little explanation and, combined with a badly executed love story, make the story almost incoherent. The tone also shifts randomly from dramatic and serious to cheesy and comedic within seconds, making it hard to determine what kind of film “Great Wall” is trying to be.

Damon is essentially a cardboard-cutout of an action hero, moving from scene to scene with little emotion and an inconsistent accent. This isn't helped by bad performances from the rest of the film's cast as well. Jing Tian does OK as Damon's love interest Lin Mae, but it becomes apparent she's



JASIN BOLARD/LEGENDARY PICTURES AND UNIVERSAL PICTURES VIA AP  
This image released by Legendary Pictures and Universal Pictures shows Matt Damon as William Garin in a scene from “The Great Wall.”

doing her best with weak material. Willem Dafoe is also completely wasted as the other prisoner, Sir Ballard, a role that requires little more than translating for the majority of the movie.

The only good performance comes from Pedro Pascal's Tovar. Pascal brings a sense of snark and charm to his role and becomes the most interesting

character over the course of the film. Unfortunately, Pascal is underused and sticks to the background for the majority of the plot.

These mostly-poor performances are emphasized further by the lack of character development. The only character who gets any sort of development is William, but none of it feels earned. William's

growth occurs at random points throughout the film with little explanation as to how or why he has become the way he is. The rest of the cast is completely devoid of development, with many characters either staying the same or never being seen again after a certain point.

The only positive “Great Wall” has comes from its visuals. The practical effects and costumes look great, with the armor and set design coming across as eye-catching and unique. The colors of the armor also stand out nicely against the gray and brown of everything else, making the film pop in certain aspects. The Tao Tei are visually average, coming across as standard CGI monsters that sometimes fall into poorly-done territory. The backgrounds follow suit,

with some being nicely done and adding to the atmosphere while others stand out sorely.

Because of all this, the film's negatives far outweigh the positives and make “Great Wall” hard to recommend. Audiences looking for explosions and over-the-top won't find much to be entertained by due to the little fighting and long stretches of exposition in-between. Damon's weak acting also keeps the film from staying afloat and won't win over fans new or old.

## Verdict

*Despite having some interesting ideas and eye-catching visuals, “The Great Wall” crumbles under the weight of its poor lead acting and incoherent story.*



**1.5/5  
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