Noticing the lack of Latinx toy products, Jennifer Ellis created the game, Chiquitos.

By TAMANNA SOOD Staff Writer

Self-proclaimed tinkeree and lover and Young student Jennifer Ellis first started her toy making journey while working at the Innovation Lab at the Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism. After noticing the different ways students around her used technology to create interesting gadgets, she wanted her four-year-old daughter to learn more about science, math and technology while she played.

However, having a difficult time finding age appropriate products that focused on educating young children, Ellis decided to create her first toy project, Giggle Chips. The computer science flash card game uses STEM-related terms to help children recognize key concepts at an early age to turn their attention to the field. The card set also has multiple levels of play including alphabets, color matching, numbers and binary number matching and shapes to introduce children to STEM subjects at an age appropriate level and to ensure better understanding of science and math concepts in their future.

The popularity of Giggle Chips led Ellis and her daughter to be invited on the ABC show “Toy Box” and put her in touch with the National Science Foundation. Ellis was also selected as one of 20 women in the United States for the Google Women Techmakers in Computer Science Scholars Program in 2020, where she won a $10,000 scholarship. Ellis started working on her next toy project, Chiquitos, which means “little ones,” after noticing the lack of products representing her Latinx culture.

“I realized by trying and sharing your message about issues … you have in the world, that people will listen,” Ellis said. “So Giggle Chips got me to a certain level of success, but then I also realized that I have to pivot. And that’s why I’m working with Chiquitos to serve the Hispanic community through storytelling with games and toys.”

Chiquitos will include various games related to STEM subjects and Latinx culture. Their first game, Makey Shakey Mojiapte, is a coding game that teaches children five years and older about building an algorithm through a salsa recipe. Ellis feels the board game format will help children learn alongside their family and friends in a team environment.

“The thing that I care most about is just making sure that little kids have access to STEM education and I feel like when you make it fun and simple for kids, and especially for their families,” Ellis said, “it’s a good entry way to learn about STEM.”

Alongside her personal projects, Ellis also started Toy and Game Inventors at USC, a campus organization that helps students who are building physical toy models find resources, including inventor mentors and contacts within the toy industry. The organization, started by Ellis and her two IYA peers Alyssa Goldberg and Bassimi Doshi, looks to help students grow and flourish as toy inventors.

“Our goal is to become a forum for students that are either interested in [toy design] as a hobby, but also for finding age appropriate toys for her daughter to learn about STEM.”

WBB students navigate in-person semester abroad in China, Italy

Studying in cities with low coronavirus cases, students adjust to a new normal.

By FRANCESCA DE NES Staff Writer

Alex Eaton is part of a handful of USC students who have been taking in-person classes all semester. But Eaton, a sophomore in the World Bachelor of Business program, isn’t in Los Angeles. The program allows students to study on three different campuses and earn three different degrees, and with some reports recording as low as five new positive coronavirus cases per day in Hong Kong, Eaton and some of his classmates headed there to begin their second year in person.

Some students have been able to take in person or hybrid classes at Hong Kong University of Science and Technology and at Bocconi University, Italy. However, others in the program have remained online instead of being at USC, where they had hoped to initiate their educational journey around the world. First year students have their first year at USC. Second year in Hong Kong, third year in Milan and can spend their fourth year at one of the three universities of their choice.

Eaton was among the students who were able to start optional in-person classes in Hong Kong. He said he was initially concerned he might not be able to reach Hong Kong because of strict coronavirus regulations. With the United States being categorized as a high-risk country, his cohort was only allowed to enter because they were enrolled as full-time students at HKUST.

The travel process involved a number of precautionary steps to mitigate a potential coronavirus spread. Eaton first flew from his home in Atlanta to L.A. to get tested at USC at the start of the semester to prove he was negative for the virus at least 72 hours before his flight to Hong Kong. Once Eaton arrived in Hong Kong, he wait ed 14 hours for another test and when it came back negative, he was transported to a hotel for a two-week quarantine.

“They literally put a bracelet on our wrist to make sure that we weren’t leaving the hotel room,” Eaton said. “We literally could have no contact with anyone like physical contact, doors closed all the time, they dropped food off three times a day, we didn’t get a choice what we ate.”

Once his quarantine was completed, Eaton was allowed to venture into the city. He said Hong Kong was highly regulated with gatherings limited to four people and mask wearing strictly enforced. While initially nervous about exploring the city, Eaton has now had the chance to visit many parts of the city without having to worry about crowds or tourists. HKUST also has given students flexibility to take either in-person or online classes with many students opting for online classes while living in Hong Kong.
Special Offer When You Join AAA Today!

JOIN TODAY FOR ONLY $52 AND RECEIVE A SECOND MEMBERSHIP FREE

Your membership can more than pay for itself with these great benefits!

24-hour Roadside Assistance
Whether you have a flat tire, you’re out of gas, your car breaks down, or you’re locked out, AAA is there for you 365 days a year, in any car, even if you’re not the driver.

FREE Identity Theft Protection for AAA Members
Daily web scans of key sites to search for possible unauthorized use of your personal information, lost wallet assistance, and free U.S. based fraud resolution services.

Shopping Discounts
Save big on shopping, dining and entertainment online and at more than 100,000 locations locally and around the world.

Full Service Leisure Travel Agency
From quick getaways to trips around the world, AAA can help you plan your dream vacation with exclusive savings and special Member Benefits.

JOIN TODAY
Click AAA.com/Trojans | Call 866.912.8862
they know what I’m going through, they know what we’re going through, community and that’s great because we have a group chat and we’re our own program it’s like 40-50 kids, then we all learning about other people’s cultures on YouTube and was interested in travel vid. She decided to pursue the World cause USC moved online this semester. Babayeju through her college experience in WBB, expected to spend time travel around Italy. She visited four different cities and took an empty train around the country. With Italy usually being a tourist hub, seeing the cities so empty made Babayeju feel like she had them to herself. However, a few days ago Bocconi announced that it was moving courses fully online for the two weeks due to the rise of coronavirus cases in Milan. As of Nov. 3, the daily average of confirmed cases within the past seven days was over 3,300 in Milan, according to The New York Times. Babayeju said that she is waiting to see what happens and hoping for the best.

“There’s a lot of different powers involved and as far as coronavirus goes we really are at the mercy of the country we’re living in and whatever the university there decides to do,” Gallagher said. “WBB is just a small part of each of these universities so we really just have to go with the flow.” Kristen Gao, a senior in the program, had to return to the United States while studying in Milan last spring. Gao said that the panic started States while studying in Milan last year. Babayeju started her college career online because USC moved online this semester. She decided to pursue the World Bachelor in Business because she spent her time watching travel videos on YouTube and was interested in learning about other people’s cultures as well as business practices. Although she is disappointed that she started online, Babayeju is grateful for the support offered by her peers in her cohort as well as from upperclassmen.

“Luckily, since WBB is like a small program it’s like 40-50 kids, then you all have a group chat and we’re our own community and that’s great because they know what we’re going through, they know what I’m going through, we’re taking like similar classes,” Babayeju said. “So to have someone in that way it’s really nice. I think in the beginning, it was hard to deal with because you never anticipate this, you plan 18 years like, ‘Oh, I’m gonna go to college... I’m gonna lose my best friend, and then [the] coronavirus, and you can’t do that.”

Kaela Gallagher, a junior in the program, has been attending hybrid classes in Milan and is living on campus like most students at Bocconi. When Gallagher first arrived in Milan last month, the university was operating smoothly with students attending classes every other week to lower the amount of students present in each class. Last week, Gallagher only had one midterm and used her free time to travel around Italy. She visited four different cities and took an empty train around the country. With Italy usually being a tourist hub, seeing the cities so empty made Gallagher feel like she had them to herself. However, a few days ago Bocconi announced that it was moving courses fully online for the two weeks due to the rise of coronavirus cases in Milan. As of Nov. 3, the daily average of confirmed cases within the past seven days was over 3,300 in Milan, according to The New York Times. Babayeju said that she is waiting to see what happens and hoping for the best.

“I was kind of hesitant to fly back because by that Friday after things had more or less returned to normal,” Gao said. “I remember when I took the taxi to the airport the buses were completely packed as if things were totally normal, although a few days before [they] were empty because people panicked about the virus. So yeah, there was that and then I flew back on Saturday. A few days after [I left], Milan had totally shut down so [I] actually made a good call.”

Like most seniors in WBB, Gao returned to USC for her last year, but because of the pandemic, many of her classmates returned to Hong Kong so they could continue in-person classes and have a somewhat normal college experience. Despite the semester going online, Gao remained at USC because of her interest in pursuing a career in real estate and the ability to remain local rather than having to travel to Hong Kong. Gao is enjoying being able to take USC classes again and said that despite the coronavirus, she has had an overall positive experience through WBB. However, transitioning back to USC in an online environment has had its shortcomings.

“I think the interesting thing about it being online is that I see a lot of familiar faces in my business classes, but it’s not like I can go walk up to them after class and catch up with them. I really just keep in my classes and kind of remember speaking to them from freshman year,” Gao said. “I think we do lose a lot just because you’re at USC as a freshman [and] when you’re a sophomore you’re not them so we don’t really know any underclassmen aside from the ones in our program.”
USC needs to offer support to students in spring semester

An online spring semester will pose mental and academic challenges to students that the University can help alleviate.

By YULIA NAKAGOME Assistant Opinion Editor

As the semester draws to a close, USC’s plans for the spring semester remains up in the air. In October, President Carol Folt announced in a video message to students that the University is planning to offer in-person hybrid classes and welcome 5,000 students back to campus in the spring. However, these plans are contingent on clearance from the L.A. County Department of Public Health, which USC failed to receive as of press time.

With coronavirus cases still on the rise and stay-at-home orders still in place in Los Angeles, it is not unlikely that classes will remain online. Under these circumstances, USC will need to continue to ensure that it can maintain academic success despite remote learning challenges and provide support to students who may be struggling with mental health.

USC announced that amendments to the spring semester schedule this year will include the cancellation of spring break—which is typically one week long—in an attempt to minimize the spread of the virus due to travel. While this is not a bad idea and the University should be commended for being proactive efforts to contain the spread of the virus, it creates novel mental health challenges for students.

The lack of a fall break this semester was somewhat made up for by the fact that the semester was condensed to 13 weeks, though this posed other issues for professors and students who had to adjust to a faster-paced schedule. However, the spring semester is a more typical 15 weeks. Though enough time has been spent away from campus due to the ongoing pandemic, this extra week can be used to catch up on any lost material.

According to data compiled by the American College Health Association, 40% of college students have experienced at least mild anxiety about the spread of the virus due to travel. Additionally, 15% of students reported that they were having trouble meeting new people on campus. This suggests that students are increasingly relying on virtual means of communication and social interaction.

USC must provide students with more resources and transparency heading into the spring semester to address mental health concerns.

Donor Advised Funds hinder the nonprofit sector

Sophie Rorpe | A&E Editor

T he roller coaster of election ups and downs this week coupled with the looming end of the pandemic has been an extra surprise for many, making it difficult for anyone, myself included, to stay focused on any one task at hand. With so much else going on, my last column of the semester about (surprise) non-profits may feel out of place or random. However, nonprofits relate critically to the current political climate.

Donor Advised Funds, or DAFs, are an increasingly popular way for Americans to set aside billions of dollars for tax-advantaged charitable use. A person simply deposits cash, or assets including stocks or real estate, in the brokerage account of a commercial national charity, such as Fidelity Charitable. This donation does not require a capital gains tax, and the donor receives an immediate tax deduction equivalent to the amount donated. The commercial national charity then invests the asset and gives money to the charity of the donor’s choosing.

At face value, DAFs are an effective vehicle to get more money into charity. But what’s the catch? DAFs have no deadline or purpose to donate the money they receive, leading to the stagnation of billions of dollars in brokerage accounts.

Donors’ initial incentive to put money in DAFs was to avoid the capital gains tax and the immediate tax deduction they receive equal to the amount donated. After this initial financial incentive, however, there is no motivation for donors to ever actually receive the assets. As a result, in 2017, assets to DAFs totaled $85.15 billion, with DAFs only donating $15.75 billion. A study by the Urban Institute and the Pew Research Center found that 25% of companies with DAFs made no donations in 2017.

While initial donors definitely ultimately decide to donate their money to charity, there is incentive for commercial national charities like Fidelity Charitable to keep the money in DAFs as long as possible. Financial firms take management fees off of the amount of assets in DAFs. Therefore, the longer the assets just sit in DAFs, the bigger the pay off for the firms.

The set up of DAFs provides tax loopholes for billionaires at the expense of nonprofits that are actually doing good. For example, the net worth of Nicholas Woodman, the CEO of GoPro, shot up to around $3 billion once his company’s stock went public in 2014. Immediately, Woodman put $500 worth of GoPro stock (about $85 per share) into the Silicon Valley Community Foundation — saving him tens of millions of dollars. In 2018, GoPro’s stock culminated at $2.33 per share with no trace of the Woodman Foundation or the $500,000 he had pledged.

Knowing his tax bill would rise significantly in 2014, Woodman strategically donated to the Silicon Valley Community Foundation in order to take a tax deduction and avoid capital gains on stocks that eventually lost value. This move likely reduced his personal tax bill for years, with no benefit to the nonprofits the financial firm claims to help.

To remedy these issues, Congress should mandate that commercial national charities provide evidence in tax returns that measure its impact with donations to nonprofits. Additionally, the requirement to distribute donations within a fixed number of years would ensure money leaves DAFs and goes to nonprofits. Lastly, if management fees were capped, financial firms would lose incentive to keep money sitting in DAFs. As a result of a flawed系統, billions of dollars that need to be given away will sit in DAFs for years at a time, directly helping the wealthy while keeping money from those that need it most. Outside of DAFs exist a multitude of issues in nonprofits and philanthropy that lack mainstream awareness and advocacy. The first step to change is identification of the problem. Hopefully, my column this semester has brought to light issues you hadn’t thought about before and shown that, with the right reforms, the nonprofit sector and philanthropy as a whole has the potential to do immense good.

Sophie Rorpe is a junior writing about nonprofit organizations and social justice. Her column, “Progress Without Profit,” runs every other Monday.
Each spacious 1200 square foot floor plan features:
• A full kitchen with granite countertops and stainless steel appliances
• Two master suites with attached bath and downstairs guest bath
• Central air conditioning
• Private outdoor space
• Easy onsite laundry
• Optional subterranean gated parking.
This well maintained gated community is situated in North University Park, within USC’s Department of Public Safety (DPS) patrol boundaries. Our residents enjoy an easy 5 to 10 minute walk or bike ride to campus! Sorry, No Pets Allowed.

(323) 469-6734 x101   aalvarez@ismrem.com

We are pleased to offer large, recently renovated 2-bed/2.5-bath luxury town homes just two blocks from USC.

Now Leasing!
1239 W. 30th St.
L.A. 90007

Each spacious 1200 square foot floor plan features:
• A full kitchen with granite countertops and stainless steel appliances
• Two master suites with attached bath and downstairs guest bath
• Central air conditioning
• Private outdoor space
• Easy onsite laundry
• Optional subterranean gated parking.
This well maintained gated community is situated in North University Park, within USC’s Department of Public Safety (DPS) patrol boundaries. Our residents enjoy an easy 5 to 10 minute walk or bike ride to campus! Sorry, No Pets Allowed.

(323) 469-6734 x101   aalvarez@ismrem.com

We are pleased to offer large, recently renovated 2-bed/2.5-bath luxury town homes just two blocks from USC.

Now Leasing!
1239 W. 30th St.
L.A. 90007

Each spacious 1200 square foot floor plan features:
• A full kitchen with granite countertops and stainless steel appliances
• Two master suites with attached bath and downstairs guest bath
• Central air conditioning
• Private outdoor space
• Easy onsite laundry
• Optional subterranean gated parking.
This well maintained gated community is situated in North University Park, within USC’s Department of Public Safety (DPS) patrol boundaries. Our residents enjoy an easy 5 to 10 minute walk or bike ride to campus! Sorry, No Pets Allowed.

(323) 469-6734 x101   aalvarez@ismrem.com
Arts & Entertainment

Following the release of her new novel, “Crisanta Knight Series,” Geanna Culbertson spoke with the Daily Trojan about her experiences as a former student at USC and how that translated into her writing skills, passions and ventures. The Crisanta Knight Series is empowering fantasy genre books primarily read by middle-grade and young adults. The base concept of the series focuses on the children and siblings of famous fairy tale characters who live in a magical world called “Book,” where they train to be the main characters of future stories. Culbertson, who was a public relations major with a triple minor in marketing, cinematic arts and critical approaches, led the charge. Features such as strong heroine leads in series, fairy tales for the series at night, and you’re like, “Oh, my gosh, I didn’t realize, and you’re like, ‘I always knew very little about it. Call it ironic, but this, my final project for the class. I was really curious. It’s a male main character, there’s a lot more character exploration going on in different areas of what makes a person a person. I was already by then really diving into my book and that was helping me develop my characters in my world. I spent a lot of time fleshing out that formula for what made a hero princess archetype tick in terms of vulnerabilities, strengths, tropes and just really analyzing what worked and what didn’t. This really helped in terms of my understanding of what I was writing and who I was writing for. DT: What gave you that idea to begin The Crisanta Knight Series? GC: It’s been a really easy question to answer because it’s such a personal passion. It started with a final project for the class. I was really curious. It’s a male main character, there’s a lot more character exploration going on in different areas of what makes a person a person. I was already by then really diving into my book and that was helping me develop my characters in my world. I spent a lot of time fleshing out that formula for what made a hero princess archetype tick in terms of vulnerabilities, strengths, tropes and just really analyzing what worked and what didn’t. This really helped in terms of my understanding of what I was writing and who I was writing for.

What does that relate to your thesis? GC: The thesis was called “Classic and Contemporary Fairy Tales with Aimee Bender.” I was doing all that [fairy tale] re- search, reading all those books, and I thought what would be really fun ideas inside of me. Then we had to do a final project for the class. I was real- ly brainstorming, and I came up with this map of the world, and that end- ed up being the basis of all the king- doms in my series. Between that and the research of what I had already just had this big idea that I need- ed to put the stories together and they just kind of started feeding into each other.

DT: The Crisanta Knight Series is full of strong and original heroines. What were some of the challenges you face when creating these charac- ters? Was there anyone you had in mind when you created them? GC: I really wanted to write books where we care about the vul- cancy and vulnerability of the main character and her journey. It’s a lot of internal arc as much of an ex- ternal arc because even if I go back and look at book one, two, etc., [Crisanta Knight Series] is such a differ- ent approach in the way of telling these stories are such that the whole thing is what they were started. I’m a big fan of getting people to appreciate the value of change, and taking advantage of their potential and just striving to be more in life. That’s what I really wanted to put into my characters and the overall theme of my book. So creating these characters was as much about trying to develop them as it was about finding the mea- tions as it was trying to create something that someone like me and a lot of other girls and people in general, would love.

Do you tell me a little bit about the plot your book follows? How do your characters progress through the three books in the series? GC: The heroine in the title protago- nist is Crisanta Knight and she’s the daughter of Cinderella. She, along with other famous fairy tale descen- dants, goes to a school called Lady Agnew School for Princesses and Other Female Protagonists. I would say my five main characters are her [Crisanta Knight], the younger sis- ter of Little Red Riding Hood, the daughter of Snow White, the young- est brother in the family, and I, the Beanstalk, and also a charac- ter called Darnel, who is a new pro- tagonist, because not all people who go to these schools have those re- lations of fairy tales. This is a world that’s far too critical of technology. His arguments are, however, I found it refreshing to read someone who connect with something you’ve loved growing up is superheroes and superheroes. I felt like growing up, it was unusual to me most of my favorite characters, literary her- oes, etc., even cartoons, were boys. I was really excited that I found a lot of girl-driven stories, it’s chang- ing that for sure. Girl-driven stories really do focus more on the ro- mance and delicate aspects of femi- ninity. When you take the fairy tales, it’s a main male character, there’s a lot more character exploration going on in different areas of what makes a person a person. I was already by then really diving into my book and that was helping me develop my characters in my world. I spent a lot of time fleshing out that formula for what made a hero princess archetype tick in terms of vulnerabilities, strengths, tropes and just really analyzing what worked and what didn’t. This really helped in terms of my understanding of what I was writing and who I was writing for.

What was your inspiration or influence for creating the main characters? GC: You might be expecting me to get a little bit about your thesis, but I’d rather argue the obvious first: “I know where this is going.” This column began as film criticism, hoping to model a kind of unpretentious and funny way of reading movies; now I conclude by expanding that critical attitude to every part of life. I don’t think this is much of a jump anywhere for movies purport to distill life on the screen. A successful or “realist” movie is one that reflects what the audience knows to be true about the world. So, if we’re going to watch something that’s too fanciful, I think that really impacted me be- cause I’ve always been trying to live up to that amazing feeling where my books made people feel so excited.

DT: What was your inspiration or influence for creating the main characters? GC: You might be expecting me to get a little bit about your thesis, but I’d rather argue the obvious first: “I know where this is going.” This column began as film criticism, hoping to model a kind of unpretentious and funny way of reading movies; now I conclude by expanding that critical attitude to every part of life. I don’t think this is much of a jump anywhere for movies purport to distill life on the screen. A successful or “realist” movie is one that reflects what the audience knows to be true about the world. So, if we’re going to watch something that’s too fanciful, I think that really impacted me because I’ve always been trying to live up to that amazing feeling where my books made people feel so excited.

DT: What do you have a most memora- ble experience as a writer? GC: One of my very first events, Book Three had come out, I got asked to do a presentation at a middle school in Florida for their Friends of the Library event, where the middle schools each picked one book to read and then have the au- thor come to speak. They brought me down to the auditorium, and there’s about 600 kids in the audience all felt good. I gave my full speech on stage, and I did a reading and I took a Q&A. It was this larger than life ex- perience. I sat there for a minute pro- cessing what just happened, but it re- ally showed that you can have a connection. I think that really impacted me because I’ve always been trying to live up to that amazing feeling where my books made people feel so excited.

DT: What do you have a most memora- ble experience as a writer? GC: One of my very first events, Book Three had come out, I got asked to do a presentation at a middle school in Florida for their Friends of the Library event, where the middle schools each picked one book to read and then have the au- thor come to speak. They brought me down to the auditorium, and there’s about 600 kids in the audience all felt good. I gave my full speech on stage, and I did a reading and I took a Q&A. It was this larger than life ex- perience. I sat there for a minute pro- cessing what just happened, but it re- ally showed that you can have a connection. I think that really impacted me because I’ve always been trying to live up to that amazing feeling where my books made people feel so excited.

DT: What do you have a most memora- ble experience as a writer? GC: One of my very first events, Book Three had come out, I got asked to do a presentation at a middle school in Florida for their Friends of the Library event, where the middle schools each picked one book to read and then have the au- thor come to speak. They brought me down to the auditorium, and there’s about 600 kids in the audience all felt good. I gave my full speech on stage, and I did a reading and I took a Q&A. It was this larger than life ex- perience. I sat there for a minute pro- cessing what just happened, but it re- ally showed that you can have a connection. I think that really impacted me because I’ve always been trying to live up to that amazing feeling where my books made people feel so excited.

DT: What do you have a most memora- ble experience as a writer? GC: One of my very first events, Book Three had come out, I got asked to do a presentation at a middle school in Florida for their Friends of the Library event, where the middle schools each picked one book to read and then have the au- author come to speak. They brought me down to the auditorium, and there’s about 600 kids in the audience all felt good. I gave my full speech on stage, and I did a reading and I took a Q&A. It was this larger than life ex- perience. I sat there for a minute pro- cessing what just happened, but it re- ally showed that you can have a connection. I think that really impacted me because I’ve always been trying to live up to that amazing feeling where my books made people feel so excited.
Robert Zemeckis transforms a Roald Dahl classic

Zemeckis talked about his artistic choices in the “The Witches” during a Q&A.

By ALEXANDRA MILLER

Students, faculty and alumni turned into a live Q&A with Oscar-winning director Robert Zemeckis Wednesday as he discussed his most recent film “The Witches” and its peculiar coronavirus-era release.

Zemeckis, a School of Cinematic Arts alumnus, adapted the film from the classic children’s novel of the same name written by Roald Dahl. Though the film faced both critical reception and backlash from the disabled community for its vilified portrayal of limb differences, it has made $4.9 million in the international box office and was recently released on HBO Max.

There are many challenges to reimagining a story as well known as “The Witches,” the greatest of which, Zemeckis said, was deciding what the witches would look like. He took issue with the use of physical masks to depict the witches’ transformation in the original 1990 film adaptation and sought to take a more technological approach.

“I thought, ‘Look, if they’re witches we can transform them using what we will call digital prosthetics and make it look more interesting and use all our modern tools,’” Zemeckis said. “‘There is so much feedback and technological approach. I was thinking in a larger scale thinking ‘OK, we’ve gotta find a better way to do that.’”

Aside from the wardrobe, makeup and special effects, casting was also critical to making the fictional witches come to life. “It’s brought to life by having a casting director is I need actors of the disabled community and other special effects choices. Zemeckis said. “The expression I always say to my casting director is I need actors who are working behind their eyes. There’s a lot of actors who perform a line and then you can kind of see them getting ready to do the next line. You just have to feel it.”

He also explains how he uses the hands-off directorial approach to elicit the best performances by stating that he wants the next take to be funnier or sadder and lets the actor run with it. “I don’t want to hear where you go to get that, that’s your job,” Zemeckis said. “I don’t want to be in therapy with you.”

Like many other films, the planned theatrical release for “The Witches” couldn’t happen because of the pandemic. Instead, the film was released on streaming services earlier than originally planned.

Zemeckis was not heavily involved in the distribution decisions. He said that although he did not know the reasoning behind releasing the film on HBO Max, someone else must have made that choice for a reason.

Lorenzo Mendoza, a graduate student studying film production, asked Zemeckis how he stays true to his vision in the face of constant feedback. As expected, the acclaimed director gave sage advice.

“Here’s the only thing that I am able to do to keep my sanity, and that is never take the note at face value,” he said. “Because they’re not the filmmaker. You’re seeing the whole film and they’re reading a scene from the script.”

He explained that he digs deeper into each piece of feedback to extract what is helpful while still taking others’ opinions with a grain of salt. “What do I say I hear ‘OK, what are they really trying to say?’” he said. “What’s the note under the note?”

Mendoza found comfort in these words, as he can relate to the ceaseless feedback a filmmaker endures.

“There is so much feedback and so much information coming in for all these different places. Your editor is giving you feedback, your five instructors are giving you feedback,” Mendoza said. “I was thinking in a larger scale project when you have Robert Zemeckis working on something like [The Witches], I can’t even imagine how many people would be giving you feedback at that level.”

Robert Zemeckis’ adaptation of the Roald Dahl classic has received criticism for its representation of the disabled community and other special effects choices.

Zemeckis was not heavily involved in the distribution decisions. He said that although he did not know the reasoning behind releasing the film on HBO Max, someone else must have made that choice for a reason.

Lorenzo Mendoza, a graduate student studying film production, asked Zemeckis how he stays true to his vision in the face of constant feedback. As expected, the acclaimed director gave sage advice.

“Here’s the only thing that I am able to do to keep my sanity, and that is never take the note at face value,” he said. “Because they’re not the filmmaker. You’re seeing the whole film and they’re reading a scene from the script.”

He explained that he digs deeper into each piece of feedback to extract what is helpful while still taking others’ opinions with a grain of salt. “What do I say I hear ‘OK, what are they really trying to say?’” he said. “What’s the note under the note?”

Mendoza found comfort in these words, as he can relate to the ceaseless feedback a filmmaker endures.

“There is so much feedback and so much information coming in for all these different places. Your editor is giving you feedback, your five instructors are giving you feedback,” Mendoza said. “I was thinking in a larger scale project when you have Robert Zemeckis working on something like [The Witches], I can’t even imagine how many people would be giving you feedback at that level.”
The New York Times
Crossword

ACROSS
1 Access code to pay $1.30 A
2 Inventor’s goal B
3 Parking pre B
14 Opposite of WNW C
10 Opposite of WW D
16 Aynress Gar B
17 United film E
19 Deegs, for A
20 Marie Curie’s research partner F
21 In accordance with G
23 Drone in India H
24 East Coast rival of Caltech I
26 Email who directed the “Eel and Dead” serial J
33 Worker for a beefload K
34 In a sour state L
35 Director Lee M
36 “Great Nobody wants to hear that” N
37 Majesty the Queen O
38 One named after the 2014 hit “Chernobyl” P
40 Beer brand whose popularity didn’t drop during the 2020 pandemic, surprisingly Q
41 “Died” R
43 Committed accounting fraud S
45 Blandly T
47 Newsroom fits U
50 History’s , for V
51 A relative of a chicken W
52 Little girl in “Tintin’s Congo” X
55 Make calm Y
57 Lightfoot sort Z
58 “East of (Shakespeare’s) novel” A
59 Supreme Court B
61 Friend in France C
67 “No thanks” D
68 Element, as a subscription E
71 “Daily” F

DOWN
1 People in polite “sawls” G
2 Blackletter Song of Solomon H
3 Spies from the air I
4 Up to a revolution may suffer in J
44 Mosaic upgrade K
56 Relative of a carambola L
57 “Little” M
58 “Tintin’s Congo” N
59 Nifty O
60 Number between ten and a hundred P
61 Name to the U.S. Cyber Command Q
62 Gets info after a hypnosis R
65 $25 put away for a rainy S
66 Opposite of the things gender studies are about: “male” T
69 Tombstone T
70 Made during a suspension U

Edited by Will Shortz
No. 1005

DAILY TROJAN CLASSIFIEDS
will be updated on the
Daily Trojan website, www.dailytrojan.com/classifieds on the following dates:
November 9, 11, 16, 18, 2020
December 2, 7, 9, 14, 16, 21

Deadline for submitting your classified ad is 3 p.m. two business
days prior to the update
classifieds@dailytrojan.com
FOOTBALL
Heroes and luck help Trojans claw back

by Nathan Ackerman

The Trojans needed a 36-yard reception from Jordan Losi, a fumble recovery courtesy of assistant defensive coordinator Todd Orlando’s unit, and a bit of serendipity to overcome a 13-point deficit in the fourth quarter of Saturday’s game against Arizona State.

But hey, they won, and I’m a positive guy. Let’s talk about something good: Kedon Slovis.

Alright, I missed you. I have to lead off with this because it’s essential to the point I’m making. The sophomore quarterback did not play particularly clean football. He was good, sure. He was not amazing. He was the kind of stat sheet that would fool someone who didn’t watch the game, namely, a non-USC or ASU fan who decided it wasn’t particularly worth it to arise basically at the crack of dawn to watch a college student catch the 9 a.m. kickoff. (Seriously, Larry Scott, East Coasters can watch games at 4 a.m. eastern time.)

Slovis forced way too many passes into double- and triple-coverages in Week 1, and though an offensive line porous in pass protection prevented him from getting comfortable until late, his decision-making was nonetheless uncharacteristic.

The would-be interception that went right off the hands of ASU redshirt junior linebacker Kyle Soelle and into those of sophomore receiver Drake London stands out. As does his actual interception in the second quarter, thrown into literally triple coverage. As do several other dangerous balls that, thankfully for USC, fell to the ground. As well, there were several balls that Slovis simply under- or overthrew.

It was clear Slovis didn’t have his A-game, and it’s clear that Heisman candidate London is the target to turn to through it. I’m talking about the presence of mind to heave it up to junior receiver Amon-Ra St. Brown in the end zone on fourth-and-9 down 13. Knowing USC had a free play after an ASU offline penalty, in hope of a lucky bounce—which he got. I’m talking about the strike to St. Brown across the middle for 36 yards to put USC just outside the red zone, setting up that first touchdown.

Slovis in those two drives was 8-for-12 with 114 yards and two touchdowns. Anything less than that, and USC is 0-1. In a game where the sophomore played well but not quite up to his standard, he managed to get the job done in the biggest moments, a marker of elite maturity and poise.

Of course, the story of USC’s comeback can’t be told without mentioning several other contributors: redshirt freshman bru McCoy, who found himself in the right place at the right time on that first touchdown and scooped up the ensuing onside kick; freshman kicker Parker Lewis, the author of said kick that gave USC the chance to tie it up in the first place; redshirt senior running back Vavae Malepeai, who ran for 33 yards combined on the first two plays of the decisive drive to set up the go-ahead score; St. Brown, who picked up the aforementioned 36-yard reception and showed awareness of his own in tipping the first touchdown to McCoy.

The story of the other 55 minutes can’t be told without junior safety Talanoa Hufanga’s 10 tackles and forced fumble, St. Brown’s 100 receiving yards, the four turnovers and yes, head coach Clay Helton taking the marching band-risk-taking on fourth down a bit too far with a failed attempt in the third quarter when USC desperately needed to draw within one possession.

Neither of these stories—the comeback or the game at large—can be told without London, who led USC with 125 receiving yards and hung on for a seemingly unlikely, double-overtime, upset. He wasn’t amazing. His was the Heisman. Slovis surprised me. I thought he was going to be elite all game Saturday, and he wasn’t. To be honest, I’m not quite sure what to make of his performance.

Ah, heck. I won’t try to make anything of it. I’ll take it for what it was: a fine showing followed by a four-minute stretch in which Kedon Slovis showed everyone how a great quarterback simply finds a way to get the job done, no matter the circumstances.

James Wolfe | Daily Trojan

Freshman quarterback Kedon Slovis winds up to hit a receiver during USC’s victory over Arizona State Saturday at the Coliseum.

ACKERMAN | Slovis stepped up big time

Nathan Ackerman is a junior writing about USC football. He is also an associate managing editor of the Daily Trojan. His column, “The Wrap,” runs every Monday during football season.
USC ekes out improbable win over ASU

Kedon Slovis did what great quarterbacks do in Week 1

The NBA and the music industry are both sinking

The NBA and the music industry are both sinking as the coronavirus pandemic has forced the two to adapt to a new normal. The NBA's season was canceled in March, leading to a significant drop in revenue for the league. In contrast, the music industry has seen a decline in sales and streaming as people stay at home and avoid large gatherings.

The NBA is also facing financial challenges as it prepares to resume its season. The league has estimated that it could lose $4 billion in revenue if the season is canceled. The NBA and the National Basketball Players Association have been negotiating over how to divide the remaining money from the league's revenue-sharing program.

In addition to the financial strain, the NBA is also facing a public relations challenge as it contemplates how to resume its season in the midst of the pandemic. The league has had to navigate questions about how to ensure the safety of players and staff while also addressing concerns from fans and programmers.

The music industry has also been hit hard by the pandemic, with live events canceled and people staying home to avoid spreading the virus. Streaming services have become more popular, but artists are still looking for ways to make a living.

The NBA and the music industry are both grappling with the challenges of adapting to the new normal. It will be interesting to see how they continue to navigate these challenges in the coming months.