

Greg Harris Film Festival spotlights student filmmakers

Tenth annual festival features variety of talented filmmakers

by Eleanor Kaplan

On April 26, the tenth annual Greg Harris Film Festival took place at the Wilmette Theater, showcasing a variety of student-produced films.

Any New Trier student had the opportunity to submit a one-to-six minute film to the festival and win an award from one of the ten categories, ranging from Best Dialogue to Best WTF Film.

Students also can take part in the 72-hour Film Race. Submissions must be completed within this time period and must have contained three secret elements: a light being turned on, somebody saying the phrase, "You forgot about one thing....," and a water bottle.

This year, senior Lucy Spahr's film "Bon Vivant" about cake-decorator Emily Nijad, won the Best Film award.

Spahr, who has submitted films to the festival both her junior and senior years, said, "It's a film festival celebrating student's work

just from New Trier, and it's great knowing that at our school there are kids doing everything from directing, filming, song-writing, and acting."

English teacher Chris Oetter, who has been helping organize the festival since its inception in 2008, noted the increase in popularity of the festival.

At the beginning, about 20 films were entered into the festival. Now, close to 35 to 40 films are submitted every year.

The variety of categories that students can win awards in is one of the key draws of the festival.

"Categories don't just include the best film of a certain genre. It helps include films of all varieties," said sophomore Jules Brown.

Brown, who began making films in 8th grade, enjoys the innovative aspects that filmmaking involves. Although she began in front of the camera with acting and theatre, she soon realized that "being behind a camera gives you a lot more creative freedom."

Film submissions varied in type. For example, Spahr also submitted a music video titled "Flying Colors," written and produced by senior Nathan Yamaguchi and sung by senior Piper Phillips.

Freshman Lilia Rose Osborne won the Rookie of the Fest award for



Spahr and Phillips celebrate their Harris Awards for "Flying Colors" | Spahr

her film, "The Loarkehnboarg," about a family dealing with the lost hopes from living in a post-apocalyptic world.

"Film is simply the extension of words written in a book, and as a writer, I think the way you can express a message or share ideas through the art of film is just really captivating," said Osborne.

The majority of the dialogue

in the film is in what is known as a conlag, a made-up language. Osborne called her language Angg-Losh, and left viewers to interpret what the title means.

"It gave students the center stage and made me feel like what I was doing was important and being recognized."

The award for Best Experimental Film went to senior

Ryder Vassilos and his short, "The Infinity Complex."

Vassilos emphasized the significance of the festival showing student-work on the big screen.

Based on the audience's reactions, he added, "It's also a great indicator to the filmmaker of what they could improve upon."

"It's so affirming. Kids who put in so much time into their movies get to see them in the theater," said Oetter.

The theater was almost completely filled, with about 110 people in attendance.

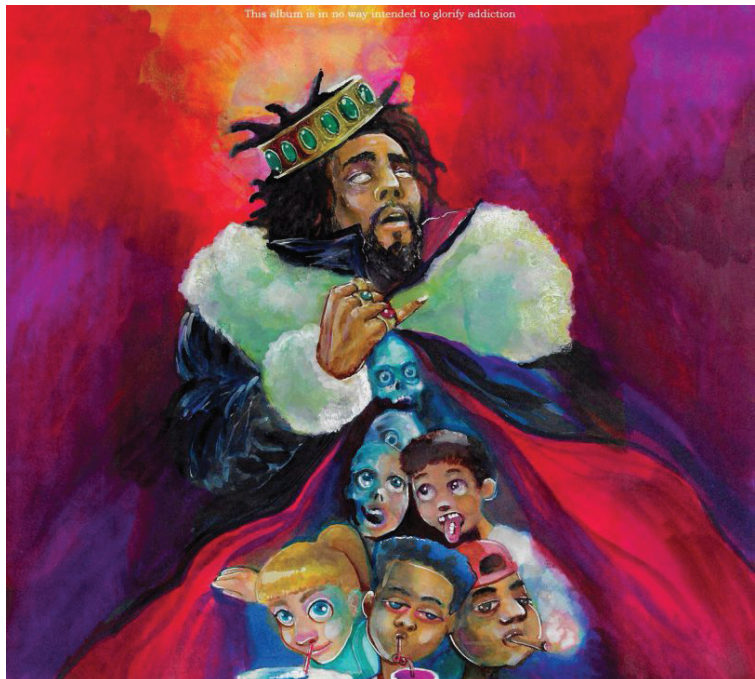
Junior Olivia Luna centered her film, "No New Messages," around a common phenomenon. The film follows "Two people who like each other, but are too petty to text the other first," she said.

The festival is named in celebration of former English teacher, Greg Harris, who created the film class at New Trier.

The central excitement of the festival is for students to see their work on such a massive scale as a movie theater screen.

"Getting to go and see your work played on the big screen is just so incredible. You're seeing all your hard work pay off," said Osborne.

World overdoses on J. Cole's "KOD"



J. Cole shares distinct perspectives on drugs in music and society | Dreamville

Rapper shatters records with latest album drop

by Eli Lieberman

Rapper J. Cole released his latest album, "KOD," on Apr. 20, his fifth album to rank number one on the Billboard 200 chart.

The album covers many themes, but, as one can assume from the release date, album cover, and title, its main focus is on the younger generations relationship with drugs.

In the song "1985," he calls out SoundCloud rappers like Lil Xan and Lil Pump for their questionable motives. He raps, "Cause that's exactly what's expected when your skin black / They wanna see you dab, they wanna see you pop a pill / They wanna see you tatted from your face to your heels."

J. Cole expresses his doubt of the legitimacy of the lifestyles these rappers promote from the perspective of a slightly older rapper.

In the last lyrics of the song "KOD," it's likely he is threatening

the same group of rappers when he says "Just remember what I told you when your s*** flop/In five years you gon' be on 'Love & Hip-Hop.'"

He hints many times that he believes the Xanax genre of hip-hop, as well as the lifestyle and drug use that comes with it, is a passing, although dangerous, fad.

He also insinuates that in a couple years the popularity and wealth of this group will dry up and they'll be stuck on reality T.V. shows like "Love & Hip-Hop."

In the song "FRIENDS," he takes responsibility for contributing to the drug crisis himself, rapping "My database of narcotics / It's growing long ... I wrote this s*** to talk about the word addiction...What I'm trying to say is the blame can go deep as seas / Just to blame 'em all I would need like 20 CDs ... Type of s*** that normally would call for therapy."

Admitting he's at fault as well, the rapper expresses his disappointment with himself and that he can not just put the blame on others.

In fact, J. Cole tweeted out that the title has three separate meanings.

KOD stands for "Kids on drugs," "King Overdosed" and "Kill our Demons."

The rapper finished the tweet saying he would "leave the rest of the album to your interpretation."

All three meanings of the title can be seen in the album's bright cover art, which was released a day before the album, along with a song list.

In the image, J. Cole wears a cloak as the overdosed king. Three faces of "kids on drugs" sit on the bottom of his robe, each doing a different drug associated with rap artists (presumably marijuana, lean, and cocaine). Above are skeleton faces, some part human, which make up the demons' portion of the title.

Similar to Kendrick Lamar's latest album, "Damn," "KOD" has less catchy beats and choruses, and instead opts for more meaningful and thoughtful lyrics. Aside from the song "KOD" and a few others, it's unlikely radio stations would play this album, as opposed to the massively played "2014 Forest Hills Drive."

Yet, the album gained 64.5 million downloads in its first 24 hours in just the United States. This broke the record previously held by Drake and shows how heavily anticipated the album was.

KOD's title track alone shattered Spotify's one day streaming record with 4.2 million downloads, dethroning Taylor Swift's "Look What You Made Me Do."

This was J. Cole's fifth studio album, with his last album, "For Your Eyez Only," dropping in 2016. His talent has always been evident, but he officially rose to superstardom with the release of "2014 Forest Hills Drive", famously going double platinum without features, and containing huge hits such as "No Role Modelz," "Wet Dreamz," "G.O.M.D." and "Love Yourz."

It will be interesting to see which style he pursues in the future. With each of his last three albums coming two years after the last, it is likely we won't know the answer until 2020.

Pep Club Names Snyder Spirit Award winner



Senior and Green Team Assistant Captain James Snyder won the 2018 Spirit Award, an annual scholarship award sponsored by Pep Club | Victory Views

FDA curbs teen juul use

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The manufacturer added "These alternatives contain nicotine, which has not been shown to cause cancer but can create dependency. We believe that these alternatives are not appropriate for people who do not already smoke."

FDA commissioner Scott Gottlieb acknowledged the positive potential that e-cigarettes have for adult smokers but warned of the danger they pose to non-smokers, particularly young people, a majority of whom were not former smokers.

"The viability of these products is severely undermined if those products entice youth to start using tobacco and nicotine," said Gottlieb

Crackdowns in schools prompted public concern regarding easy accessibility to minors.

In response, the FDA had already carried out an undercover sting operation targeting various forms of Juul retailers. The agency further issued a formal warning to

all retailers regarding the violation of the law when selling products to customers under 21.

The agency targeted Juul Labs directly by ordering them to produce documents regarding the scientific research that goes into their products as well marketing info. In response to these warnings, Juul Labs agreed to raise the minimum age for purchasing their products from 18 to 21.

The company issued a formal statement regarding the FDA's initiative: "We are working with the F.D.A., lawmakers, parents and community leaders to combat underage use, and we will continue working with all interested parties to keep our product away from youth."

Additionally, the company also announced its own \$30 million campaign aimed at reducing underage use of their products.

As a final step of this initiative, the agency announced that they will continue to invest in "science-based campaigns" aimed at educating young people about the risks associated with all tobacco products.