PILL PROBLEMS
SPECIAL REPORT BY JOHN YI

The Happy Hour Rundown

It's Oscar Season!
THE MOVIE EXPERT WEIGHS IN
After his semi-retirement from Mississippi Valley Title, John “Bones” Cossar spent much of his spare time on the golf course. But the beloved pastime fell to the wayside after an adverse reaction to a cancer drug paralyzed the Lake Cavalier resident. “I literally landed in bed and wasn’t moving for 35 days,” he said. “I couldn’t wiggle a finger. I couldn’t breathe. I couldn’t swallow. I thought I was going to die.”

When Cossar was finally well enough to begin therapy at Methodist Rehabilitation Center, he told everyone his goal was to return to the golf course. And after months of working with MRC’s inpatient and outpatient staff, the 80-year-old made a triumphant return to the tee box.

“After I played my first round of golf, I showed the scorecard to the staff at Methodist Rehab and everyone was crying,” he said. “I can’t say enough nice things about them. I looked forward to therapy because I knew it was doing me good. They were getting me back on my feet. Here I am standing upright. And I have nothing but praise for Methodist Rehab.”

Now I can play golf again
Expanded care hours are here.

Family Medicine Offers
7:00 am | Noon | Same Day Appointments.
Call 601.984.6800.

Turn to us for:
- Screening and care for diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, asthma, and heart disease
- Physical exams for sports, school, employment, or insurance
- Workers’ compensation injuries and industrial screenings
- Wellness and preventive services
- Sick visits
- Immunizations
- Child and adolescent care
- Women’s care
- Geriatric care
Greetings, Fellow Students, Faculty, and Staff,

I hope everyone is having a very Happy New Year as we continue into 2019.

The Associated Student Body (ASB) has held its fourth ASB Council meeting where it passed some important amendments concerning ASB Council voting members and the ASB executive officer election process. These amendments came before the entire student body for voting this past month, preceding elections in February. In addition, the Vice Chancellor of Health Affairs Dr. Lou Ann Woodward delivered a State of the State address open to all campus students on January 30—an event taking the place of the ASB's fourth Roundtable discussion.

Selected ASB officers from each of the seven schools on campus also met with Dr. Woodward on January 22 to learn more about the current happenings in administration.

This past month, the ASB also held its third annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., (MLK) Day of Service organized by ASB Philanthropy Co-Chair Louise Spencer. Nearly 100 UMMC students, faculty, staff, and family members participated in service projects at non-profit service organizations throughout the greater Jackson area.

Furthermore, the ASB continued its sponsorship of the Interprofessional Education Opportunities for the 2018-2019 school year with its fourth of a series of seven seminars on January 29, featuring strategic outreach leaders in the institution, including Student Director of the Jackson Free Clinic Logan Ramsey. More details on these seminars can be found in this issue, including the next seminar in February.

Once again, Happy New Year, and if you ever need anything, please feel free to contact me to offer any questions, concerns, and/or suggestions, and I will be happy to help you.

Yours in Service,

Edgar Meyer
Associated Student Body President

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Your responses to the 2016 Student Satisfaction Survey directly led to significant changes at the Medical Center.

**You said** you were not satisfied with the food and beverage options.
**We did it!** The student union’s food court was remodeled, and the Copper Spoon coffee kiosk was added in the new medical education building.

**You said** our shuttle service needed an overhaul.
**We did it!** We upgraded the shuttle service with brand new buses and routes tailored just for students.

**You said** students need reliable wireless connections.
**We did it!** The Division of Information Systems launched a new, secure student wireless network.

**You said** students need to know where to park.
**We did it!** We provided reminders about parking policies and provided options about parking on nights, weekends, and holidays, allocated parking lot access during these times.

**You said** students need to know where to file a complaint.
**We did it!** Student Affairs now provides regular reminders of the formal complaint process.

How else can we improve the student experience at UMMC?

Please take the 2018 Student Satisfaction Survey – coming soon to your student email account – and let us know!
MLK Day of Service

Students spent their day off serving the Jackson community at various project sites. page 20
This piece looks to demonstrate a blueprint of the opioid epidemic from various perspectives, culminating with important insight from some of UM-MC’s foremost experts.

QUIICK NOTE to the READER:
Illustrated here is a very compressed version of the hx of pain and its management in the USA. Two things to note:

1. Addiction to opioids is NOT exclusive to the past 20 years. It is the rapidly climbing and difficult to control rate of mortality that has made everyone do a double-take. That being said, it is still a very big problem.

2. Big Pharma is NOT only to blame. They may share a big burden of the blame, but physician prescribing practices, governmental oversight, and cultural mindsets have all added to the problem. Pharmaceuticals have an integral role toward the solution to the epidemic as much as they were a factor for it, just like everyone else.
Drugs of abuse, such as opioids and amphetamines, activate this pathway. This means drugs like opioids not only illicit physical dependence, it also creates a psychological dependence. Thus, treating opioid addictions must tackle multiple fronts.
“Something to consider: Problems regarding opioids are not new for this country. Physician crackdowns can be traced back to the early 1900s with the Harrison Act which regulated opioids and made physicians accountable. As a society, we did not learn from much this, and history often repeats itself when we do not.

Pain management, as a whole, requires a nuanced approach. It is important to remember that in a place such as Mississippi with the increased disease burden, the comorbid medical conditions often dictate and restrict options for pain treatment. The CDC recommends a multimodal approach where opioids, if indicated, should be used in conjunction with other treatment options. Remember, opioids are only ONE modality for managing pain. Whether in perioperative or non-operative settings, we have other options including other medications, nerve blocks, physical therapy, distraction techniques as well as complementary and alternative techniques. Even in terms of just pharmaceutical options, there are many alternatives to treating chronic pain. Therefore, the best approach to treating pain is a balanced one."

If I could tell readers something, it’s this: This opioid crisis too will pass. We in the medical community must play our part in making this happen. We must also be diligent not only in investing in research on all facets of the epidemic (whether it is the United States’ pain problem, prescribing practices, or addiction treatment), but we must also take precautions regarding any solution to prevent history from repeating itself."

“Opioids may have some use as a treatment option for chronic pain AFTER other alternative methods are first considered. Acupuncture is one option with very little (if any) side effects that has a mountain of literature that supports its efficacy when a trained individual is able to conduct it properly. Additionally, one of the most effective and benign treatment options available to patients is exercise. When these low-risk options fail, non-opioid drugs can be used next as adjunct therapy before resorting to more powerful pharmaceutical interventions.

One issue would be that here in Mississippi, sedentary lifestyles combined with unhealthy (albeit healthy) diets make it very difficult to start or maintain an exercise regimen. Likewise, acupuncture is unfortunately not covered by most insurance companies including Medicaid and Medicare in Mississippi even though it is in some other states. For patients seeking immediate release from their pain, there may be resistance towards trying other non-opioid medications when opioid-type medications are commonly viewed as the defining solution."

“If there was one take home message I could leave readers, it is this: EXERCISE - as little as 30 minutes a day, 3 times a week can make a big positive difference in a patient’s pain levels and mood. Within the context of the opioid epidemic, the benefits of exercise (supervised in physical therapy or done independently) can be a breakthrough solution for patients who have chronic pain problems.”


Dr. Saurabh Bhardwaj
Residency: PSYCHIATRY
Fellowship: ADDICTION PSYCHIATRY

“Addiction is a chronic disease, and as such, treating it under a disease model benefits both patient treatment and the medical community. Similarly to how it would seem illogical to suddenly discharge a patient with baseline high blood pressure after only three months of treatment, it should be seen as equally illogical to view and treat a patient with a substance-use disorder in this way. Additionally, treatments exist specifically for opioid-use disorder that evidence has proven to be very effective.

That being said, every patient has different motivations for use, and therefore requires different motivations for treatment. Abstinence-only models have not shown to be efficacious. Narcan does save lives, but it does not necessarily change the desire to use drugs. So, along with medications that have demonstrated efficacy in the literature, I also recommend patients to obtain the proper social support, create an active, healthy environment, remove any paraphernalia, and be engaged with the treatment."

If I could tell people struggling with addiction one thing, it’s this: There is hope. Seek help, because there is help."

WANT A DEEPER DIVE?
CHECK THESE SOURCES OUT:

Narratives:
- Dreamland by Sam Quinones

PubMed Binge:
- Opioid Receptors: drivers to addiction? Darcq & Kieffer
- Helping to End Addiction Over the Long Term: The Research Plan for the NIH Heal Initiative. Collins, Koroshetz, & Volkow

Study for STEP:
- Pay attention in Dr. Rockhold’s class

Questions? Comments? feel free to contact John N. Yi at jyi@umc.edu
Tell us a little bit about yourself. How did you end up here at UMMC?

As a Mississippi native (I’m a proud Coast girl), UMMC was the natural choice for medical school. After many residency interviews around the country, I realized that everything I wanted in a program was right here at UMMC. I started residency with a plan of one day practicing outpatient general pediatrics, but I soon found that I really enjoyed inpatient pediatrics as well. I also fell in love with the patients of UMMC! Now, as a pediatric hospitalist, I have the unique privilege of caring for children of all backgrounds from all parts of our state. UMMC has also given me amazing opportunities in education, and for that I am very grateful.

On a personal note, I happily call Jackson home. I live in Belhaven with my husband, Mickey, my three children, Georgia (9), Mack (6) and Elis (3), and one very crazy dog, Obi-Wan. My family is my greatest joy, and home is my happy place!

What do you enjoy most about teaching?

Working with students and residents is fun! They see things from a such a different perspective. They keep me on my toes and make me a better doctor. I enjoy watching learners progress from bright-eyed and terrified to comfortable and confident over the short course of an academic year! I also enjoy watching them continue on their paths. It’s always fun to consult a former student or accept a transfer from a former resident. Being a small part of their journey is such a great experience.

Any advice to students?

Get to know your classmates. They will be your colleagues one day, plus they are pretty fantastic people!

What do you like to do outside of work?

I treasure my time with my family. My children have taught me to love things like fishing and backyard soccer, dress-up and dance parties, Nerf gun wars and family game nights. These days, it matters much less what I am doing and much more who I am doing it with!

What is your favorite...

VACATION? Travelling with my family is one of my all-time favorite things, but the vacation I most look forward to each year is the one I take with just my husband. We sneak away every October to celebrate our anniversary and see a new part of the country. So far, Maine and Arizona have been our favorites.

SEASON? Late-spring/early-summer, when the days are long but it’s still not super hot.

FOOD? Seafood

MOVIE? Field of Dreams

SPORTS TEAM? New Orleans Saints!!!

Best experience teaching?

I’ve loved being a part of the M3 Boot Camp. It was a big challenge to help take an idea and create a course from it and has been so rewarding. I love spending those 2 weeks with the students, hearing their nervous chatter and getting to know them on a personal level before I work with them clinically. I also love any opportunity I have to be in the same room as Dr. Lyssa Weatherly!

Any funny story/last tidbit for readers?

During my M3 year, I stopped to help someone who was stranded on campus and ended up delivering a baby in the front seat of their car. I had thankfully just finished my OB-Gyn rotation and at least remembered the important phone numbers if nothing else! So the morale of the story is…soak up all you can on every clinical rotation!
Social Hour
Every Night - 8 PM to close

$5 select drinks
$5 small plates

Hosted by:
University of Mississippi Medical Center and Mississippi Apartment Association
Open to:
UMMC Faculty, Staff, and Current and Incoming Students
Thursday, March 21, 2019
11 am - 1 pm
Norman C. Nelson Student Union

Giveaways provided
For more information:
Contact Tara Rushing at trushing@umc.edu or 601.815.0124.
UMMC's annual MLK Day of Service
MLK Day of Service

Photos courtesy of UMMC Public Affairs

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Twenty Nineteen

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Addiction Psychiatrist Expanding Treatment for Opioid Use Disorder

The University of Mississippi Medical Center’s first-ever addiction program has a new resource that gives patients what’s considered the national gold standard of care in treating opioid use disorders.

Dr. Saurabh Bhardwaj, an addiction psychiatrist hired in August, is seeing patients on Wednesday and Thursday afternoons in the Behavioral Health Specialty Clinic at the Jackson Medical Mall. An assistant professor in the Department of Psychiatry and Human Behavior, he is the Medical Center’s first provider to offer medication-assisted treatment, or MAT, for opioid use disorder.

Those medications include drugs that reduce cravings for opioid drugs and prevent addicts from getting high if they relapse.

“We are the first to roll out a formal addiction program for UMMC, starting with our clinic for alcohol use disorders for mild to moderate cases that began in 2017,” said Dr. Scott Rodgers, professor and chair of Psychiatry and Human Behavior.

The arrival of Bhardwaj, who trained in psychiatry at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center and recently completed a fellowship in addiction psychiatry at the Northwestern University School of Medicine in Chicago, “is a milestone for our addiction treatment,” said Dr. Jeff Parker, professor of psychiatry.

Parker and Dr. James Rowlett, a veteran researcher and professor of psychiatry, direct the addiction program. The team also includes additional psychiatrists, psychologists, nurse practitioners, social workers and other providers.

“He is the first and only faculty member in our department and the Medical Center with specialty training in the treatment of addictions, and whose primary responsibility is to provide clinical care,” Parker said of Bhardwaj. “With him in place, we can provide pharmacotherapy for addictions that we weren’t able to do before.”

“With the opioid crisis all over, it’s a terrible time,” Bhardwaj said. “A lot of people are on opioids for chronic pain, and a lot of doctors have started to curb the overprescribing. People are going to family and friends, or even the streets, to get them. They don’t know what dose they are taking, or what’s mixed in it.

“A lot of them end up using heroin, and many are overdosing and dying.”

Bhardwaj’s patients are all adults, but they don’t fit a stereotype. Some have a long history of opioid use and multiple relapses. Some live in neighborhoods that don’t encourage sobriety. Some have a family history of addictive drug use.

“Anyone with an opioid disorder, no matter how they acquired it, could be a patient in this clinic,” Parker said.

But they all need to understand that “they have a disease, and that they need to act on it,” Bhardwaj said. “It’s a disease that bypasses your critical thinking and deci-
sion making. You are not thinking. You initially use drugs impulsively, and when it’s compulsive, that is when it becomes a huge problem. “It’s tricky,” he said. “For a long time, there’s been an emphasis of addiction being a disease of willpower, and that some people don’t have the willpower to overcome it. However, we forget that addiction is a disease like any other chronic disease. If someone has diabetes and isn’t taking their medication, you don’t throw them out of your clinic because they didn’t take their insulin correctly.”

The core of the Medical Center’s addiction psychiatry services, Parker and Bhardwaj say, is evidence-based, individually tailored treatment for each patient.

“A lot of the studies show that if you give medications for opioid use disorder, the success rates are good. There’s no reason not to do it,” Bhardwaj said. “Some people say that if you use the MAT model, you’re replacing one addiction with another. That’s not true. We’re trying to change minds and show people that this works.”

Two of the medications Bhardwaj prescribes are naltrexone and buprenorphine/naloxone. Naltrexone works in the brain to prevent feelings of well-being, or a high, for opioid users, and it decreases the desire to take opiates. Buprenorphine, packaged with or without combination with naloxone, works to prevent cravings and withdrawal symptoms in someone who stops taking opioid drugs.

Addiction psychiatrists not only must possess a special license and waiver to prescribe the medications, but they also must have specific training. “Addiction psychiatry is such a big field now,” Bhardwaj said. “If I feel a patient needs a medication, I am providing that treatment in concert with other treatments that are personalized. It’s not cookie cutter.”

The program aims to give more access to care, including telepsychiatry for patients in the state’s rural corners who have had an initial visit at the addiction clinic. Already, the clinic is getting lots of referrals from other providers, although one isn’t required.

“It’s a very exciting time. I’m glad to be here to help fill the gaps,” Bhardwaj said. “If you’re getting comprehensive addiction treatment, there’s a much better chance that you won’t use addictive drugs and have the repercussions.”
While I’d really like to say that I’m re-energized, that fresh off the Christmas holidays there’s a sort of re-kindled intensity like a second wind kicking in at the exact right time, I’m just not, and there’s just not. I’m tired.

Right now, I’m four weeks into my eight-week internal medicine rotation. I’m six months into the "eighteen-year commitment" as my dad used to say, and I’m three years into my marriage. I’m so happy and so joyful to be doing what I’m doing with the people that I’m doing it with, just really tired all the while. Matter of fact, it feels quite like running on a treadmill. I’m finding that the more of myself I put into this, the harder it is to continue. I’m sure if you’re reading this than you understand. Nevertheless, I recognize that I’ve been so blessed to get here, and I certainly see the blessings waiting ahead. However, the wool being pulled over my eyes is playing tricks. It seems overwhelming, and it feels permanent. Even though, I know it’s not.

Exhaustion is a funny thing. I’ve seen it turn sweet people sharp and positive people pessimistic, and I’m convinced that I’m not the only one stuck between two realities. This has not been quite the same as the other light-hearted and cheerful pieces that I’ve shared previously or the silly and up-beat stories that I’ve told before, but just like those other moments and memories, it’s real.

Despite this seemingly tangible exhaustion, though, I’m encouraged. I’m encouraged because wading through these sometimes shallow, yet most of the time deep, waters, I’ve been taught that it is not those feelings of grandeur – the ones that won us over as kindergarteners and high schoolers and college students for medicine – that sustain the commitment, but rather the commitment to the thing, to medicine, to patients, that sustains the feelings. So, for now at least, I’ll go on as a medical student and as a dad and as a husband because I’m convinced that a sort of re-kindled intensity, that feeling of second wind is close. However, if I’m wrong and all of this is just gibberish, here’s a picture of my favorite six-month-old!
Join the next generation of innovators
The Graduate Training and Education Center at University of Mississippi Medical Center (UMMC-GTEC) is cultivating the next generation of biomedical scientists and innovators who will help create a healthier Mississippi. Our program equips researchers to discover, disseminate, and apply new information to diverse stakeholder groups.

The UMMC-GTEC is an evidence-based, interactive, research training and education program. Doctoral and health professional students enrolled in health-related degree programs from participating Mississippi colleges and universities are eligible to apply. Our primary goal is to prepare students for a successful health sciences career with a strong foundation in cardiovascular health and research methods. We do this by providing training and skills in cardiovascular epidemiology, health disparities, and responsible conduct of research.

Robert Smith, MD, Graduate Scholars Program

Jackson Heart Study Graduate Training and Education Center

John D. Bower School of Population Health
University of Mississippi Medical Center
2500 North State Street
Jackson, MS 39216

Phone: 601.815.9015
Email: gtec@umc.edu

The Robert Smith, MD Graduate Scholars Program at UMMC is a research training and mentoring program. Academic credit hours are not conferred, tuition is not charged and therefore financial aid for this program does not apply under Title IV. Students selected for this two-year research training program will receive a stipend of $7,500/year.

The National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute (NHLBI) funds this program and has also established the eligibility criteria (See NIH notice NOT-OD-18-210).
Our program is a competitive and intense two-year research and mentoring program. The program focuses on training the next generation of researchers and health scientists in cardiovascular health. Each year, eight (8) scholars will be selected from a competitive pool of applicants across the state. The program will be completed with the scholar’s existing program of study.

All students accepted to UMMC-GTEC receive:
- Memberships in national, regional, and state-level scientific organizations
- Research training sessions
- Student data sets for analysis
- Covered travel costs to a JHS Vanguard Center
- Annual stipend of $7,500

YEAR 1
Our carefully designed research training program focuses on:
- Cardiovascular epidemiology
- Biostatistics
- Health disparities and minority health
- Responsible conduct of research

Experienced educators give students individual career coaching. Additionally, students collaborate on teams to produce scientific manuscripts for peer review.

YEAR 2
Students enhance their research skills in core programmatic areas:
- Cardiovascular epidemiology
- Biostatistics
- Scientific writing
- Scientific presentations
- Career coaching and preparation for future research training

UMMC-GTEC opens doors for career opportunities
UMMC-GTEC complements the doctoral and health professional programs in which students are currently enrolled. Our graduate students expand their peer and mentor networks as they explore future careers in biomedical/biobehavioral research. The combination of an academic degree and a UMMC-GTEC certificate uniquely prepares students for post-doctoral fellowships, residencies, and faculty positions.

The UMMC-GTEC Certificate Program
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Research is creating new knowledge.
- Neil Armstrong

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The Happy Hour Run Down

Every happy hour you need to know about, updated with the latest restaurants, bars, and speakeasies! page 36

Talk of

The Town

Your guide to the city of Jackson and beyond
THE HAPPY HOUR RUNDOWN
BY MIKEY ARCEO

It’s 5 o’clock in the 601
Offset your student loans with these deals around town. That counts as financial planning, right?

NEARBY

Apothecary
T-Sat 5-7 PM: $6 cocktails - daiquiri, jack rose, manhattan, martini, old fashioned, sidecar

Babalu
M-F 3-6PM: $1 off draft beer, $4 sangria, $5 house wine and wells, $6 house margaritas, tequila, sangria, $10 mojito flights, $3 tacos, $7 dip trio, $10 slider trio, $5 dessert sampler

Barrelhouse
M all day, T-F 3-6 PM: $3 off wine, $2 off beer, $4 well drink, $5 meatballs
Tuesday scrub day, 20% off for wearing scrubs

Fondren Public
M-F 4-7 PM: $1 off beer, wine and liquor

Hops and Habanas
M-Th 4-6 PM: $5.50 cocktails, draft beer, adult slushies, wine
small plates: bourbon wings, portobello fries, crispy brussel sprouts, stuffed mushrooms.

Pig and Pint
M-F 3-6 PM, S 11-6 PM: $1 off beer

Sal and Mookie’s Pie Lounge
T-F 11-6 PM: 25% off all beer, liquor and wine

Saltine
Daily, 4-6:30 ½ price draft beers, cocktails, wine. $1 oysters, $3 chicken biscuits

Sneaky Beans
M-Th, 5-7pm: $1 off beers

Surin
Daily, 4:30-7pm: $2 off beer, house wine, martinis. 1/2 off select sushi rolls

Aladdin
BYOB, 10% off meal with UMC ID

NEARISH

Fine & Dandy
M-F, 3-5 PM: $3.5 beers, $6.5 wine, $7 golden girl, $5 tots, $8.5 pimientos, $4 deviled eggs

Gold Coast Bar at Cultivation Food Hall
Daily, 2-6 PM: $6 daiquiri, sazerac, prosecco, house red and white wine

Manship
M-F, 3-6pm: ½ price pizzas, $2 off craft and import beers, 25% off large format bombers, $5 house wine and barrel picks

Library Lounge
M-F 4-6 PM: $2 off all Author drinks and wine, $5 well drinks, $1 off all beers

Louis Full-Serv
M-F 4-6 PM: $5-8 cocktails, $5 well drinks, $3 bottled beer, $5 snacks: pork sliders, hot brown fries, salmon crostini

Deep South Pops
Daily, 4-7pm: 2 for $5 popsicles, $1 off beers

Fenians
M-F, 3-7 PM: $1 off all drinks

A LITTLE WAYS

Iron Horse
M-F, 3-6pm: $1 off pints, $3 MS beers, $4 well, $5 martinis, $6 house wine, $5-6 appetizers

Parlor Market
M-F, 4-6pm: $5 wines, $5.5 well drinks, $5-10 meatballs, truffle fries, burger

Ole Tavern on George Street
Daily, 3-6pm: $5 wine and select cocktails, $4-6 small plates, Sunday $17 bottomless brunch cocktails

La Cazuela Mexican Grill
Sun-Th, 3pm til close: 2 for 1 house margaritas

El Charro
Mon-Th, 4-8pm: 2 for 1 flavored margaritas

Martin’s
Mon: 2 for 1 drafts, Tues: 10p -12am $2.25 margaritas, Sat: 11a-2p: $3 bloody marys

Hal and Mal’s
Daily, 4-7p: $1 off all draft beer, domestic, cans, wells

The Bulldog
M-F, 11a-7p: 50 cents off pints, $1 off pitchers, $1.50 off house wine, double drinks for the price of a single
Oscars Preview

Need a movie consult? Our in-house movie critic, Mary Moses Hitt, will bring you UpToDate on this year’s best films and what to expect on Oscar night page 42.
2019 has started with breakneck speed. Classes and rotations are already underway...you’ve finally come off the interview trail, but now you’re stressed about Match Day... and you’re still a little upset you’ll have to drive out to the suburbs in order to use that Starbucks gift card from Aunt Marge in Scottsdale. Walk outside to the patio and spend a few minutes reading about what’s happening around the State, Nation, and Globe:

Perhaps the most dominant United States news story over the past month has been the ongoing federal government shutdown. The lapse in funding began at midnight EST on Saturday, December 22, 2018, and is considered a “partial” shutdown, as some of the federal government is still funded. Approximately 800,000 workers are affected by the shutdown, with some being placed on unpaid leave while others are working without pay until the government reopens and they’re able to receive back pay. The shutdown stems from disagreements between President Trump and Congress in which President Trump has demanded $5.6 billion in funding to construct a wall along the border with Mexico while Congress has been unwilling to appropriate the requested funds. [Source: NPR]

The past month’s news cycle here at home has largely been devoted to various political announcements, as 2019 is statewide election year in Mississippi. Noteworthy announcements have been made by gubernatorial candidates Tate Reeves, Jim Hood, and Robert Foster. Current Secretary of State Delbert Hosemann has also made news when he announced his candidacy for Lieutenant Governor. Keep your eyes open in the coming weeks for more announcements and be sure you’re registered to vote at your County Circuit Clerk’s office. For more information on voting, visit http://yallvote.sos.ms.gov.

The world watches as the U.K. Parliament votes on January 15th on a plan to withdrawing from the European Union, known as “Brexit.” This author finds himself in an awkward position at the time of this writing, as the vote has not yet occurred, but by the time this piece is read in print, the vote will have occurred. For the past month, Britain has been careening toward this vote without a clear indication of the outcome. The deal is important to the U.K. & World economy, which has been linked to the EU since January 1973. As Britain now seeks to financially divorce itself from the rest of the continent, the world contemplates how it will respond to the inevitable domino effect of Parliament’s decision. Other news stories around the World included the swearing-in of Brasil’s new president Jair Bolsonaro; the tragic of five missing U.S. Marine airmen, following a midair collision in early December; ongoing speculation of a potential summit between President Trump and North Korean dictator Kim Jong Un, which would be their second; and ongoing strife in Yemen between Houthi rebels & the recognized Yemeni government, despite recent attempts to call a cease-fire; and

This author is currently listening to Maggie Rogers singles “Give a Little,” “On + Off,” “Fallingwater,” and her career-igniting tune “Alaska” in anticipation of her debut full-length album, Heard It in a Past Life, which releases on January 18, 2019. Rogers’s career experienced a meteoric rise when a YouTube video titled “Maggie Rogers - folk / Alaska (Pharrell’s feedback)” was released, showing Williams in tears as he listened to “Alaska” during his visit to her NYU masterclass.
Lights, camera, action. Pop the champagne and adorn yourself in your evening best because the most glamorous [and perhaps the most discussed] night in Hollywood is upon us. For those dedicated to the cinema, the Oscars is more than participating in a current pop culture event; it’s personal. It represents the culmination of a year’s worth of watching, critiquing, and championing the films that have most affected you, comparable to following your football team through the Super Bowl. Even with devoted followers, the prestigious ceremony is facing declining viewer numbers, continued backlash of #OscarsSoWhite and accusations of being disconnected from the viewers.

The voting body responsible for nominating these vague films? The Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences with the majority party being Caucasian men over the age of 60. Multiple though feeble attempts have been made at reconciliation including moving eight categories from the live show and a quickly cancelled motion to have a Best Popular Movie category. The term “Oscar buzz” goes beyond the scope of the winner hopefuls this year as the controversy surrounding Kevin Hart stepping down as host is still ablaze with whispers surrounding the Academy’s decision to move forward without a host. As for what will be filling all this extra show time, I can only say tune in for the mystery.

The ballot is its traditional battlefield of Oscar-bait heavy-hitters vs. independent game-changers with historical breakthroughs across the board. The triumphant victory cry heard round the world was film-streaming service Netflix finally gaining a seat at the table in the Best Picture category for its film Roma, leading the charge into Oscars night tied with The Favourite at 10 noms apiece. Marvel Universe has also been granted access into the race for Black Panther, scoring 6 nominations and shattering both the box office and the Academy’s perception of superhero films. The Academy has heavily recognized blockbusters such as this and Bohemian Rhapsody while essentially shutting out other mainstream films like First Man or Mary Poppins Returns in favor of more obscure films like The Ballad of Buster Scruggs (no offense Coen brothers).

The predictable voting body also made a statement of turning the ballot into the year of the foreign language film giving major nominations beyond the cinematography nods given to Roma and Never Look Away (Germany), as well as a controversial director nod to Poland’s Cold War over fan favorite Bradley Cooper for A Star is Born. Though particularly heavy-laden with sequels and spinoffs, 2018 still found a way to give us an unlikely friendship in Green Book, success stories in A Star is Born and Bohemian Rhapsody, heroes in Black Panther and BlackKlansman, and beautiful period pieces in The Favourite and Roma. I’d like to thank the Academy for choosing me for this life and for this opportunity. Read on for my predictions of what’s going to go down at the Dolby Theater on February 24th.

Happy Oscars, cinephiles!
For the most prestigious award of the night, the Academy allocates for as many as 10 or as few as 5 nominees, and this year eight made the cut, down from nine last year. As mentioned, Roma and Black Panther, mark Netflix and Marvel’s breakthrough entries into the category and have definitely been frontrunners along with The Favourite across award season. There is the surprise twist of Green Book’s victory at the PGA’s where eight of past ten have won the top honors, but it’s hard to imagine the Academy awarding any other film besides Roma as their love for it is obvious across the ballot. I have to go with it despite really not feeling strongly about there being a best film of 2018, perhaps a personal first.

The sophisticated voting body denied 2017 winner Damien Chazelle (First Man) and rookie Bradley Cooper (A Star Is Born) in favor of European film Cold War, and the momentum sparked from Ms. Gerwig’s 2018 nomination has been extinguished without a woman in sight. However, Spike Lee earned his first-ever directing Oscar nom for BlackKkKlansman, making him the sixth African American to receive the honor. None have yet to prevail, and Lee has produced a worthy film with an accreditable body of work to deservingly earn this place in history. It will be hard for him to succeed over the distinct, statement that is the filmmaking of Roma, even though Cuaron was given this same golden statuette in 2013. The voters could tip in favor of history with the ease of satisfying recognition of Cuaron in producing and cinematography categories, but a more likely prediction will be him walking away with all top honors.

Willem Dafoe over Ethan Hawke in First Reformed... Okay Academy. This category boils down to battle of the better transformation. The duelers being a more robust Christian Bale as former Vice President Dick Cheney vs. a mesmerizing Rami Malek as Queen’s lead singer Freddie Mercury (you can already guess who I’m leaning toward). The race has been split throughout award season: Malek with SAG, Bale with the Critic’s Choice, and both leaving victorious at the Golden Globes due to split categories. Yes, Cooper did his own singing and Bale was less recognizable, but Malek truly was a wonder to watch and with every conversation gesture and sassy stage strut turned his role into hypnotic work of art that I believe was the performance more worth rewarding.

Fans have been going “gaga” over A Star is Born since early in award season, but the film may have peaked too soon. Lady Gaga gave an authentic performance that voting bodies have been consistently acknowledging and could prove to be triumphant here, but as she is the fourth woman to take on this role, I predict the Gaga fever will be satisfied with a speech from her for best song. The Oscar will likely go to the long overdue Mrs. Close for her compelling work in The Wife as a woman who sacrifices her professional ambitions but truly for her body of work in general as this marks her seventh nomination without a win.

**ACTOR**

Christian Bale – Vice
Bradley Cooper – A Star Is Born
Willem Dafoe – At Eternity’s Gate
Rami Malek – Bohemian Rhapsody
Viggo Mortensen – Green Book

**ACTRESS**

Yalitza Aparicio – Roma
Glenn Close – The Wife
Olivia Colman – The Favourite
Lady Gaga – A Star Is Born
Melissa McCarthy – Can You Ever Forgive Me?
Mahershala Ali is about to go an impressive 2 for 2 in this category and make a clean sweep through awards season already earning the Globe, Critic’s Choice, and SAG. While I barely remember Sam Rockwell and Sam Elliott being in their respective films (no offense), Ali gave a vulnerable, complexity to his essentially lead role as Doc Shirley in Green Book that was superior to his fellow nominees in execution as well as screen time. The only surprising thing about this category was the noticeable absence of Hollywood’s It Boy Timothee Chalamet for his work in Beautiful Boy.

With her sixth nomination, Amy Adams is on the type of losing streak that the Academy traditionally will make amends for at this point for a beloved actor (i.e. Glenn Close for best actress). However, Regina King is on a fiercely triumphant ride through award season for her performance that I believe will oust Adams once again from landing her first Oscar victory.

**ADAPTED SCREENPLAY**

Nicole Holofcener, Jeff Whitty – Can You Ever Forgive Me?
Barry Jenkins – If Beale Street Could Talk
Eric Roth and Bradley Cooper & Will Fetters – A Star Is Born
C. Wachtel & D. Rabinowitz and K. Willmott & Spike Lee – BlackKkKlansman
Joel Coen and Ethan Coen – The Ballad of Buster Scruggs

**CINEMATOGRAPHY**

Alfonso Cuaron – Roma
Caleb Deschanel – Never Look Away
Lukasz Zal – Cold War
Matthew Libatique – A Star Is Born
Robbie Ryan – The Favourite

And the Oscar goes to... Alfonso Cuaron for the absolutely beautiful work he achieved with the cameras in this film that as one critic put it “made every frame worth framing”.

**EDITING**

Hank Corwin – Vice
Yorgos Mavropsaridis – The Favourite
Barry Alexander Brown – BlackKkKlansman
John Ottman – Bohemian Rhapsody
Patrick J. Don Vito – Green Book

Perhaps one of the most exciting announcements of the night would be a victory for Black Panther’s Hannah Beachler, the first African American nominated in this category. Known for her work on Moonlight and Beyoncé’s Lemonade album, Beachler’s innovative, “afrofuturistic” creation of Wakanda should earn her this place in the history books come Oscar night.
In a traditionally Pixar-dominated category, who would have thought that the box-office giant Incredibles 2 would not be the clear frontrunner? Late in the game, Spider-Man: Into the Spider-verse has emerged with an evangelical following and a staggering 7 Annie awards (plus the Globe and Critic’s Choice) to back up its street cred. It’s an animated game-changer that created new software to achieve a classic comic book turned motion picture that will allow the category to award the animation for once, and I back this decision 100%.

I’m sorry, but I am still just not over Justin Hurwitz’s snub for First Man. The man is a musical genius, rightly racking up all the other awards as one does every time their score is on the ballot when your Justin Hurwitz. I digress and by consolation am betting on Britell’s string-heavy capturing of love and injustice infused with a little jazz for If Beale Street Could Talk.

**Best Sound Mixing**

Black Panther (Steve Boeddeker, Brandon Proctor and Peter Devlin)

Bohemian Rhapsody (Paul Massey, Tim Cavagin and John Casali)

First Man (Jon Taylor, Frank A. Montaño, Ai-Ling Lee and Mary H. Ellis)

Roma (Skip Lievsay, Craig Henighan and Jose Antonio Garcia)

A Star Is Born (Tom Ozanich, Dean Zupancic, Jason Ruder and Steve Morrow)

**Score**

Terence Blanchard – BlackKkklasman

Nicholas Britell – If Beale Street Could Talk

Alexandre Desplat – Isle of Dogs

Ludwig Göransson – Black Panther

Marc Shaiman – Mary Poppins Returns

**Song**

"All the Stars" – Black Panther

"Girl in the Movies" – Dumplin’

"I’ll Fight" – RBG

"The Place Where Lost Things Go" – Mary Poppins Returns

"Shallow" – A Star Is Born

“When a Cowboy trades His Spurs for Wings” – The Ballad of Buster Scruggs

**Visual Effects**

Avengers: Infinity War

Christopher Robin

First Man

Ready Player One

Solo: A Star Wars Story

**Costume**

Alexandra Byrne – Mary Queen of Scots

Ruth Carter – Black Panther

Sandy Powell – The Favourite

Sandy Powell – Mary Poppins Returns

Mary Zophres – The Ballad of Buster Scruggs

**Hair & Makeup**

Border

Mary Queen of Scots

**Foreign Language**

Capernaum (lebanon)

Cold War (poland)

Never Look Away (germany)

Roma (mexico)

Shoplifters (japan)

Biggest joke of the night. Obviously gonna be Roma.
Need to Know

Best Sound Editing
Black Panther (Benjamin A. Burtt and Steve Boeddeker)
Bohemian Rhapsody (John Warhurst and Nina Hartstone)
First Man (Ai-Ling Lee and Mildred Iatrou Morgan)
A Quiet Place (Ethan Van der Ryn and Erik Aadahl)
Roma (Sergio Diaz and Skip Lievsay)

Best Documentary Feature
Free Solo (Elizabeth Chai Vasarhelyi, Jimmy Chin, Evan Hayes and Shannon Dill)
Hale County This Morning, This Evening (RaMell Ross, Joslyn Barnes and Su Kim)
Minding the Gap (Bing Liu and Diane Quon)
Of Fathers and Sons (Talal Derki, Ansgar Frerich, Eva Kemme and Tobias N. Siebert)
RBG (Betsy West and Julie Cohen)

Best Animated Short
Animal Behaviour (Alison Snowden and David Fine)
Bao (Domee Shi and Becky Neiman-Cobb)
Late Afternoon (Louise Bagnall and Nuria González Blanco)
One Small Step (Andrew Chesworth and Bobby Pontillas)
Weekends (Trevor Jimenez)

Best Documentary Short
Black Sheep (Ed Perkins and Jonathan Chinn)
End Game (Rob Epstein and Jeffrey Friedman)
Lifeboat (Skye Fitzgerald and Bryn Mooler)
A Night at the Garden (Marshall Curry)
Period. End of Sentence. (Rayka Zehtabchi and Melissa Berton)

Best Live-Action Short
Detainment (Vincent Lambe and Darren Maho)
Fauve (Jeremy Comte and Maria Gracia Tur geon)
Marguerite (Marianne Farley and Marie-Helene Panisset)
Mother (Rodrigo Sorogoyen and Maria del Puy Alvarado)
Skin (Guy Nattiv and Jaime Ray Newman)
Need to Know

**MO’S MOVIE MONTHLY**

A MONTHLY PREVIEW OF NEW AND NOTABLE FILMS CURRENTLY AT A THEATER NEAR YOU

MARY MOSES HITT

A pair of thrillers and a promise to hold us over. That is January and 2019 at the cinema.

Even some of the most celebrated of 2018’s films were lackluster, uniting moviegoers in a plea to Hollywood to give us better this year. The lineup is bliss for the month of January (unless you’re a devotee to the thriller genre), so reject cynicism and hold on to the anticipation of the release of four Disney live actions as well as to the wistful hope of something as original as Inside Out or as well told as Spotlight to be released this year.

The Finale: "Glass"
Jan 18th
Metascore: 42 | Rotten Tomatoes: 36%

With a $20M budget, a 13 million viewed trailer, and a fanbase following that spans 19 years (sorry Richard Linklater), this is not your typical thriller being released. Spearheaded by the genre master himself, M. Night Shyamalan’s Glass is the culmination and sequel installment to both Unbreakable (2000) and Split (2016). Reprising their roles, Bruce Willis, Samuel L. Jackson, and James McAvoy star as three superpowered (yes, I’m counting personality shifting) misfits who join forces into a trio to be reckoned with… I think? Oh, and Sarah Paulson graces us, yay.

Thriller: "Serenity"
January 25th
Metascore: 38 | Rotten Tomatoes: 22%

Vague suspense. That’s the theme I garnered from the trailers as well as how I am proceeding toward this movie. The initial trailer was released last June announcing an October release date that tbh I thought had been seen through. Yet here we are still awaiting access to see Matthew McConaughey as a fishing boat caption playing opposite a blonde Anne Hathaway for the first time since Interstellar in a role that screams Julia Roberts in Sleeping With the Enemy. I don’t anticipate a Shutter Island, but maybe seasoned starpower suggests a good product? Hard to tell because as I mentioned earlier, the plot is hazy, boasting of a small town full of secrets and an abused wife thirsty for revenge with few spoilers as to how those elements will be exploited.

Even some of the most celebrated of 2018’s films were lackluster, uniting moviegoers in a plea to Hollywood to give us better this year. The lineup is bliss for the month of January (unless you’re a devotee to the thriller genre), so reject cynicism and hold on to the anticipation of the release of four Disney live actions as well as to the wistful hope of something as original as Inside Out or as well told as Spotlight to be released this year.
THE MURMUR
BOOK REVIEW

ASSYMETRY | BY LISA HALLIDAY

This novel will keep you flipping the pages. Asymmetry has two main plots. The title is actually very relevant to the way author describes each story. First is “Folly,” a story about a young editor named Alice who is in a relationship with a famous author named Ezra Blazer, 40 years her senior. The author does such a phenomenal job describing their relationship, and it’s no surprise. When Lisa Halliday was in her mid-twenties, she actually dated Peter Roth, a famous author also 40 years her senior. The second story is “Madness.” It is about an Iraqi-American man who is detained at London’s Heathrow airport. He is making a stop while on a mission to find his missing brother. The novel is full of comedy and passion, but also sadness and confusion. A great read per me. If you need further validation, Asymmetry also made it on President Obama’s list of best books of 2018.

ASSYMETRY | BY LISA HALLIDAY

BECOMING | BY MICHELLE OBAMA

“Failure is a feeling long before it’s an actual result.” My favorite line in this book, and maybe my favorite line ever. From the South Side of Chicago to the White House, and everywhere in between, Michelle Obama takes us on the journey of a lifetime and somehow makes it all relatable. Spoiler Alert! So what’s her biggest advice in life? Don’t be scared to “swerve.” The former First Lady talks about how we each have the right to change our minds. In fact, almost every major event in her life occurred because she and Barack decided to “swerve.” She actually credits Barack as the one who taught her how to “swerve.” Becoming is a piece of inspiration and passion. I’d love to hear what you think!

BECOMING | BY MICHELLE OBAMA