

My favorite Christopher Nolan film turns 10

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EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

A decade ago, “Interstellar” captivated me like no other film had before or since.

With its unique story, moving score and amazing performances, “Interstellar” was destined to become an instant classic. The film remains one of Christopher Nolan’s best and is a testament to his prowess as a director.

Matthew McConaughey stars as Cooper, a former NASA pilot who is called back into action to save an Earth slowly becoming uninhabitable due to crop blight, among other existential terrors.

NASA, or what’s left of it, tasks Cooper to pilot the Endurance ship, along with several scientists, with the dire hope of pioneering a new home for the human race. Before he can leave Earth, however, Cooper must say goodbye to his daughter Murph.

Murph, portrayed by Mackenzie Foy as a child and by Jessica Chastain as an adult, takes after her father and is more interested in outdated space textbooks than how to most efficiently harvest corn.

The love shared by Murph and Cooper and their yearning to reunite is a profound theme throughout the film and is especially impressive considering they

are separated by billions of light years for a majority of the almost 3-hour runtime.

With a film that invests itself so heavily in concepts like wormholes and 4th-dimensional spaces, I find it interesting how Nolan uses these complicated ideas as a means to explore deeply personal themes, particularly sacrifice and loss.

I also enjoy the juxtaposition established early in the film between Cooper and the world around him. Cooper, who never stopped wondering about his place in the stars, is at odds with a world that has abandoned the idea of space exploration in favor of salvaging what little bit of habitability Earth has left.

Is Cooper naive? Undoubtedly. Is his hope misguided? I don’t think so.

In fact, it’s Cooper’s naive curiosity, regardless of the utilitarian benefits of pursuing such curiosity, which drives him to take up the mission in the first place. He does what is best for the planet, but his own personal motivations are emphasized just as much.

“Interstellar” is also lauded for its unmatched scientific accuracy.

Nolan’s commitment to accuracy in a science fiction film, a genre rife with creative liberties and blatant disregard for the laws of physics, set the gold standard

for future films in the genre.

Nolan consulted renowned theoretical physicist Kip Thorne throughout the film’s production. Together, they combed through every frame in excruciating detail, ensuring that every moment, from the Endurance launch to the black hole scenes, was depicted as accurately as possible.

Of course, some artistic liberties had to be taken. But when a theoretical physicist says the most inaccurate part of your film about interstellar travel via wormholes is the depiction of ice clouds on another planet, I think you’ve done a good enough job.

However, “Interstellar” is far from perfect and contains its fair share of common Nolan pitfalls. Notably, sound mixing that feels the need to loudly remind the audience of the amazing score at the most inopportune moments.

Perhaps the most egregious example occurs when a character, with their last breath, reveals a critical plot twist. What is supposed to be a moment of shock and dread is instead met with confusion as the audience scrambles to piece together the dialogue among the roaring music.

Don’t get me wrong, I love the work of Hans Zimmer, the film’s composer, but dialogue should be prioritized over score.

When the music isn’t

drowning out bloated exposition, another bad habit of Nolans, it’s utterly enthralling. I still choke up any time I hear that short motif that pervades almost every song in the film.

Ultimately, “Interstellar” isn’t my favorite film because of the cinematography, score, or McConaughey — this movie is special to me because I used to watch it nonstop with my dad.

We never watched the film in IMAX, or even in a

traditional theater, we watched the movie on our old TV in such awful quality that it would’ve made Nolan cry. But we weren’t watching it for the pretty visuals. Even if we didn’t know it at the time, what we were really paying attention to was the relationship between Murph and Cooper.

The connection these two characters preserve throughout the film, the thread that keeps them going despite

being separated by an almost inconceivable distance, is a special kind of bond that I think I subconsciously tried to replicate with my dad.

“Interstellar” undeniably left its mark on science fiction, but for me, it will always be about something far simpler: a shared love of film and the power of connection that transcends time and space.



COURTESY OF ROTTEN TOMATOES

Herald editor’s Grammy picks

Best New Artist:
Chappell Roan

Album of the Year:
“Brat” by Charli xcx

Best Rap Performance:
“Not Like Us” by Kendrick Lamar

Best Pop Vocal Performance:
“Eternal Sunshine” by Ariana Grande

Record of the Year:
“Jolene” by Beyoncé

Song of the Year:
“Espresso” by Sabrina Carpenter



THIS WEEK’S POP FLOP

ELIJAH TEMPLETON | LIFE EDITOR

“ETERNAL ATAKE 2”
LIL UZI VERT



COURTESY OF GENIUS

Lil Uzi Vert, the artist that soundtracked my early high school years, recently released a sequel to one of their most critically acclaimed projects; “Eternal Atake,” with the aptly titled “Eternal Atake 2,” and it’s pretty bad.

Uzi’s arrival in the rap game was one for the ages. Their unique flow, sound and style made them a real standout in a genre that was in need of a new sound for a new generation of listeners. Uzi’s dedication to being a rockstar in both their presentation and aesthetic laid the foundation for countless artists to further build upon.

Countless members of Gen-Z like myself most likely have fond memories of when Uzi dropped “Eternal Atake” in the early morning hours of March 6, 2020. It was a surprise drop and created a real moment

in time that makes this recent release all the more disappointing.

This album sounds very unrefined, like how Uzi used to sound before they blew up in popularity. It feels paint by numbers and lacks any creative vision or risk.

The project feels like a step back for Uzi and seems to be discarding the direction that their last few albums had been going in, in favor of a generic sound and lyrics that can be found on any number of lesser artists’ discography.

This project is not new or exciting and I often found it increasingly difficult to determine when one song ended and another began.

Uzi has made a career on sounding unique and different and this album is nothing we have not heard before from them and other artists who followed in their footsteps.

“Eternal Atake 2” feels unfinished or at the very least unpolished and I found it very disappointing for an artist that I used to hold in such high regard.

Hopefully, the reception of this album is a wake-up call and Uzi can get back to taking risks and favoring innovation over playing it safe, because this project was just not it.

Official Score: 3/10

NON-TRADITIONAL STUDENTS AT A-STATE

ABIGAIL LEGGETT

STAFF WRITER

When mentioning college and the college experience, many people think of the younger years of their adult life. Typically, this period is when many people get their college education. However, not everyone gets their education during that period in their life.

Learning has no age limit. From their motivations to return to school and their challenges in adapting and balancing academia with personal life to offering advice for fellow senior-age students, meet two non-traditional students of Arkansas State University.

Motivations and Beginnings

Pam Graham, an administrative analyst at KASU from Marianna, Arkansas, said she started college when she was 27-years-old, but withdrew because of an unexpected pregnancy.

Her decision to withdraw from her studies was not an easy choice, but she said she didn't feel like she had the money, time and means to continue college. But, once she was ready to return, she said she was inspired to finish her degree as a personal accomplishment.

"It is something that I wanted to do for myself. I did not get a High School diploma when I graduated from High School, I got a GED," Graham said.

She said working for the university helped make

her return to college more feasible financially, which was an initial concern for her.

"I started working for Arkansas State and you get a big discount on any classes you take," Graham said. "When I turned 60, I did not have to pay for classes unless it was online and that was a very low amount."

Betty (Irene) Hunt, a 74-year-old junior and English major from California, said she was compelled to pursue her degree, motivated by her talent for writing and poetry. Despite attending several colleges over the years, she faced numerous interruptions.

"Life always seemed to get in the way, whether it was a move to a new state, a demanding job, health issues, or family needs that took precedence," Hunt said. "I decided it was 'now or never' to finally commit to achieving my dream of earning a degree."

Hunt said her experience at A-State has been wonderful and she's especially grateful for the supportive professors and campus resources.

"I have been privileged to attend the classes of some great professors who have helped me along every step of the way," Hunt said. "I revere the IT department for helping me out more often than I care to admit."

After transferring in the spring semester of 2024, Hunt said she felt overwhelmed but quickly felt welcomed by the A-State community.

"Fellow classmates treat me pretty much like all the



PHOTO COURTESY OF IRENE HUNT



PHOTO COURTESY OF PAM GRAHAM

other 'kids,' Hunt said. "No one has ever questioned my attending college at my age, although I did bristle once or twice when someone said 'Well, good for you!' with a slightly condescending smile."

Challenges

While their motivations are strong, both Graham and Hunt faced hardships as non-traditional students.

Graham said she faced difficulties in adapting to assignments and course schedules as well as overcoming professor's doubts about her capabilities due to her age.

"I've been out of high school so long that it takes me more time in assignments and

tests than it does traditional students," Graham said. "Some of the professors I've had while working at A-State, did not want me to take their classes, I guess because they thought I couldn't do it."

One of Graham's biggest challenges, however, has been forming connections and friendships.

"Some students look at me differently like, 'what are you doing in my class?'" Graham said.

Hunt, on the other hand, faced more personal challenges. She said that navigating ADHD and cognitive disorder has made it difficult to memorize and retain information. Additionally, she said balancing academics with her personal life was difficult.

After she stopped working outside her home in 2016 and her husband died in 2022, she said she thought she would have more time to balance college and her personal life. But, she said she does not let the stigma of going back to school later in life stop her from pursuing her dreams.

"When I did go back to college at age 68, I was shocked to find that: A, I loved learning, just for the sake of gaining knowledge, B, despite my age, I still could learn, and C, I was smarter than I had thought I was," Hunt said.

Advice from a senior

Despite these hardships,

Graham said her experience at A-State has been fun and exciting. She said she encourages others interested in returning to school in their later years to give it a try.

"If there is something that you want to do for yourself, I would say, go for it because it's fun to learn new things," Graham said.

Hunt echoed this sentiment and said those who want to continue or start their higher education journey should take a deep breath and jump at the opportunity.

"It is literally never too late, one is never too old and difficult obstacles are never too high to prevent one from attending college," Hunt said.

Student Activities Board hosts "Depths of Howl" event

VALENTINA MARTINEZ

STAFF WRITER

The Student Activities Board (SAB) hosted the Depths of Howl: Haunted Hospital and Fall Fest in honor of Halloween.

SAB transformed University Hall into a haunted hospital for students to enjoy, with haunting decorations, eerie sound effects and costumed volunteers creating an immersive experience.

The event not only catered to thrill-seekers but also provided a safe space for students to enjoy the Halloween spirit in a fun and community-oriented environment.

Asis A. Flores Ortiz, a psychology major from Querétaro, Mexico, said the event was a heart-racing experience.

"I really enjoyed it!" Flores said. "It was really scary for me; my heart was beating so fast."

Flores said she was impressed by the student's work this year in comparison to past events she's attended

since being at A-State. She said the event was her favorite and enjoyed experiencing the haunted house with her friends.

"Being with friends made it easier and funnier," Flores said. "I really like the events they've made this semester. So far, this is one of my favorites. I expected it to be like last year's haunted house, which wasn't that scary, but this year was so much better."

Similarly, Jesús Manuel Cortés, a junior majoring in mechanical engineering from Cadereyta de Montes, Querétaro, said he found the Haunted Hospital to be an engaging experience.

"It was a great event. I had a good time with my friends," Cortés said.

He said he wished for more of an extensive experience regarding the haunted hospital.

"I think there was a good organizational scheme," Cortés said. "However, I would have liked to have more time to enjoy the experience."

Garrett Britt, a junior

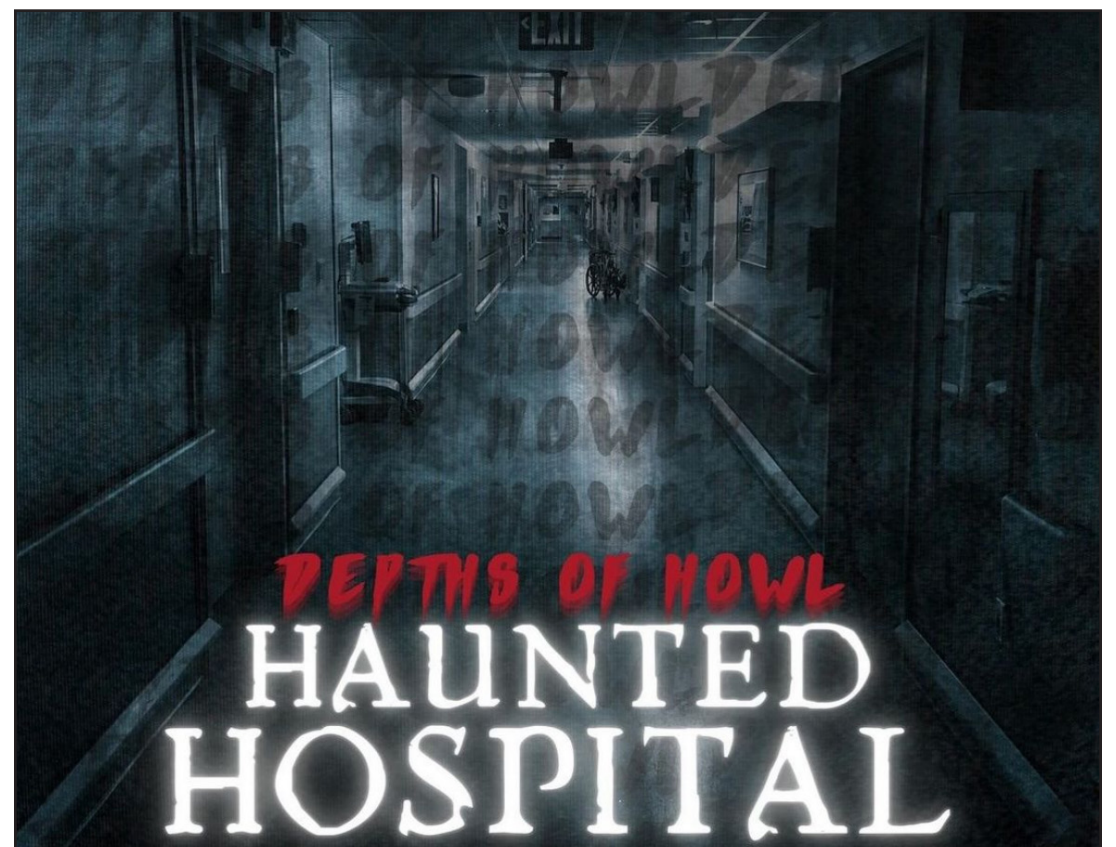
biology major student from Brenton, volunteered for the hospital by being a scare actor. "The hardest part of the event was standing in a dark room with continuous strobe lights for 3 hours," Britt said.

Britt said the event's goal of scaring students and giving them a good time was successfully achieved.

"The expectation was to scare the students and give them a good time," Britt said. "I think the goal was definitely achieved because of the chatter around school about it the next day."

Many students took advantage of the Fall Fest activities, which provided a counterbalance to the thrill of the haunted house and showcased student body creativity.

The Fall Festival featured hot chocolate, apple cider, pumpkin carving contests, a costume parade and a special screening of "Halloweentown" to round out the evening.



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