

Natural Selections

A NEWSLETTER OF THE ROCKEFELLER UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY



Eclipse: Protect Your Eyes for The Big One

MIGUEL CRESPO

Summer is here and again sun, humidity, and mosquitos will relentlessly plague our days. But the firmament reserves something unique for us: a celestial spectacle we do not get to witness every day. On Monday August 21, 2017, a total solar eclipse will cast its shadow across America. For those who happen to be in the right place at the right time, a once in a lifetime experience will take place in the form of a couple of priceless minutes when the sky will switch colors like the canvas of a mad artist.

But what is a total solar eclipse anyway? A total solar eclipse occurs when the Moon stands between the Sun and the Earth, briefly obscuring a patch of land where night and day become indistinguishable for a few moments.

The ancient Chinese legend has it that solar eclipses occurred when a legendary celestial dragon devoured the Sun. In Vietnam, a frog eats the Sun, while people of the Kwakiutl tribe on the western coast of Canada are convinced that the mouth of heaven consumes the Sun. Myths and legends of the ancient world always had something romantic to them. As a child, I loved to believe them until one day I was pointed to a scientific source, only to learn from Stevie Wonder that "...when you believe in things that you don't understand then you suffer, superstition ain't the way." Modern

science has elucidated mythical representations of natural phenomena—the Hubble telescope taught us that red light comes from farther away than we thought, and yes, the Earth does revolve around the Sun. Times of darkness and ignorance are long gone for humanity. Or are they? A quick YouTube search is enough to come across countless videos proclaiming the wackiest ad hoc interpretations of this summer's forthcoming eclipse. Fulfillments of biblical prophecies always come in handy, and contrary to the general opinion, never get old. However, Numerology is my all-time favorite. Desperate subtracting and adding in search of the just too probable coincidence, ideal for the construction of the pyramids by Martians but may also be invoked in case of an eclipse. Together with a few Web sites of the same genre, this serves as a reminder that, as Sam Harris said, "Civilization is still besieged by the armies of the preposterous."

The majestic gift from Helios is as beautiful as it is ephemeral. Only two to five minutes in the path of totality guarantee the full-blown eclipse experience. The path of totality is a 70-mile-wide stretch of land that will diagonally run from Oregon, all the way down to South Carolina. In search of a reverse path of enlightenment, thousands of enthusiasts will travel

to those areas, carefully mapped by NASA, where Selene and Helios will unite in the short-lived affair that the Ancient Greeks anticipated so many centuries ago. Hotel owners and tour organizers alike have also taken note of the event, offering the best rates to enjoy the unforgettable experience together with music festivals, river cruises or even a trip on horseback.

Anticipation has been building during the last few months. Currently, myriad Web sites offer relevant information, including the best spots to view the eclipse, the weather forecast, timing, eclipse simulations, and the exact dates of past and future eclipses. As a matter of curiosity, the longest eclipse will last seven minutes and twelve seconds, and will happen on June 25, 2522 for those who are still around. The best maps can be found on the NASA site www.eclipse2017.nasa.gov, while www.eclipse2017.org offers everything you always wanted to know about eclipses but were afraid to ask.

Some might wonder if those meager two minutes of glory are worth the travel, the wait and the expense. Well, here is what we can expect from a total solar eclipse. If you are within the path of totality, the so-called Contact 1 marks the beginning of the show. The Moon disk seems to tan-

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ANTOINE CARON "Astronomers Studying an Eclipse"



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gentially come in contact with the Sun, biting a tiny little piece of its periphery. As it progresses further into the Moon, the Sun starts looking more and more like a crescent, the tables turn and it becomes "a little moon" for a moment. This image is priceless, though just as harmful as looking at the Sun at any other time: only special eclipse filters or glasses can be used to safely enjoy this moment. The good news is they are inexpensive and easy to find, remember: Google is your friend. As the Moon incessantly munches on the defenseless Sun, eclipse watchers will notice its shadow looming closer and closer. There is no way back; only a silver ring will be visible when the two celestial bodies finally

join in this improbable turn of events. But there is more: from that point on the atmosphere becomes eerie, the air acquires a rare quality, the sky darkens, and birds start to chirp in bewilderment. As the temperature drops in the improvised night, the miracle finally occurs and the entire Sun is hidden behind the almighty Moon. Only then can one look at the Sun without protection, and only in these circumstances will one be able to see the Sun corona. An aura of plasma extends into the sky surrounding the Sun, like a pearly white crown emitting ever-changing rays. The glow of a multitude of mutating colors in a shimmering cotton candy around an impossibly black hole. No photo, no *National Geographic* documentary would do justice to the uniqueness and the magic of witnessing a total solar eclipse.

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*selections.rockefeller.edu
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A FAREWELL & THANKYOU

YVETTE CHIN

This month, the *Natural Selections* Editorial Board bids farewell to Yvette Chin. We would like to thank her for her dedication and for helping Natural Selections to become what it is today.

Yvette has been a contributor and editor for Natural Selections for one year. She was the first person to take on our Editorial Assistant role, having joined us from Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center. Yvette was a tremendous asset and we will miss her dearly!

Challenging Conventions in Rei Kawakubo's *Art of the In Between*

DAKOTA BLACKMAN

The Metropolitan Museum of Art is a classic tourist destination in New York, overflowing with a sweeping collection of art that traverses time periods and cultures. Among the classics, which include the Greco-Roman sculpture hall, or a collection of European paintings from Rembrandt to Gauguin, is a more modern draw: the Costume Center.

Founded in 1946 with the help of funds from the fashion industry, and reopened in 2014 as the Anna Wintour Costume Center, it focuses on the intersection between fashion and art in both the present day and the past. The Center consists of a range of works throughout the museum, from nineteenth century dresses and trousers to the museum's comprehensive collection of medieval armor. More well-known efforts of the Center include dedicated gallery spaces for thematic exhibits such as Alexander McQueen's *Savage Beauty* in 2011, and an exploration of the punk movement in *PUNK: Chaos to Couture* in 2013. Former First Lady Michelle Obama, who cut the ceremonial ribbon at the 2014 reopening, describes the Costume Center as a place "...for anyone who cares about fashion and how it impacts our culture and history."

Along the lines of the former First Lady's words, the work of Rei Kawakubo, the designer behind the clothing label Comme des Garçons, is currently on display in a thematic exhibit at the Costume Center. Among works of art that are defined by the very notion of convention, Kawakubo's *Art of the In Between* is presented as an exhibit that pushes against the conventions of classic art, of culture, and of fashion itself.

Kawakubo's commentary on, and pushback against, the norms of fashion has long been a hallmark of her company's work, and it is exemplified in both the layout and garments on display in *Art of the In Between*. The architecture of the gallery, which was designed by Kawakubo herself, isn't simply dress forms on display behind panes of glass; the exhibit has museum-goers weave through a maze of snow white architectural anomalies—domes, pods, hollowed cylinders with small methodically placed cutouts—to catch a glimpse of the garments inside.

The bright white architecture provides a stark contrast to the vibrantly colored and uniquely shaped garments, which undoubtedly fulfill the goal of the Costume Center by turning a commentary on culture and fashion into art. The exhibit is divided into ten parts, all of which present two sides of a defined binary within which the garments exist: Clothes/Not Clothes, Design/Not Design—and, perhaps most notably, Fashion/Anti-fashion—to name a few. The titles of individual exhibit sections help to align the viewer with the question posed by Kawakubo



DAKOTA BLACKMAN | Natural Selections

and how her garments seek to answer it.

Kawakubo isn't afraid to tackle big issues, and in the exhibit, she explores class, time, age, gender, and even the human form. High/Low, for example, juxtaposes the styles of bikers and prima ballerinas: the dress forms donned in skewed black tutus under meticulously cut leather jackets. This section questions class, placing the garments in the intersection between the high, or elite, and the low. In another section, titled Object/Subject, Kawakubo's "Dress Meets Body, Body Meets Dress" collection from the 1970s is on display. Kawakubo wraps gingham and pastel pinks and blues around dress forms augmented with intentional but unnatural masses distributed throughout their forms, producing pseudo-dresses. These lumps and bumps, as the collection has been deemed by critics, are reminiscent of those formed by a child stuffing a pillow in their shirt to grow a pretend belly. The garments encapsulate the heart of the exhibit, creating a completely

new human form and challenging viewers to reorient their view of what a standard, conventionally fashionable garment can and should do. In an interview with *Vogue* at the time of the collection's release, Kawakubo said, "It's our job to question convention. If we don't take risks, then who will?"

True to her word nearly fifty years later, Kawakubo has continued to take risks. The garments in *Art of the In Between* are not particularly beautiful, at least not by conventional standards, but it is clear that beauty is not Kawakubo's goal. She rips fabric, forms "lumps and bumps," and even mixes plaids (a fashion no-no). But there is a new kind of beauty within her garments, and within *Art of the In Between* as a cohesive unit. They play with norms in a way that is both mischievous and thought-provoking, and—most importantly—refreshingly accessible to those casually interested in fashion, in art, or both. *Art of the In Between* will be on display at the Met through September 4.

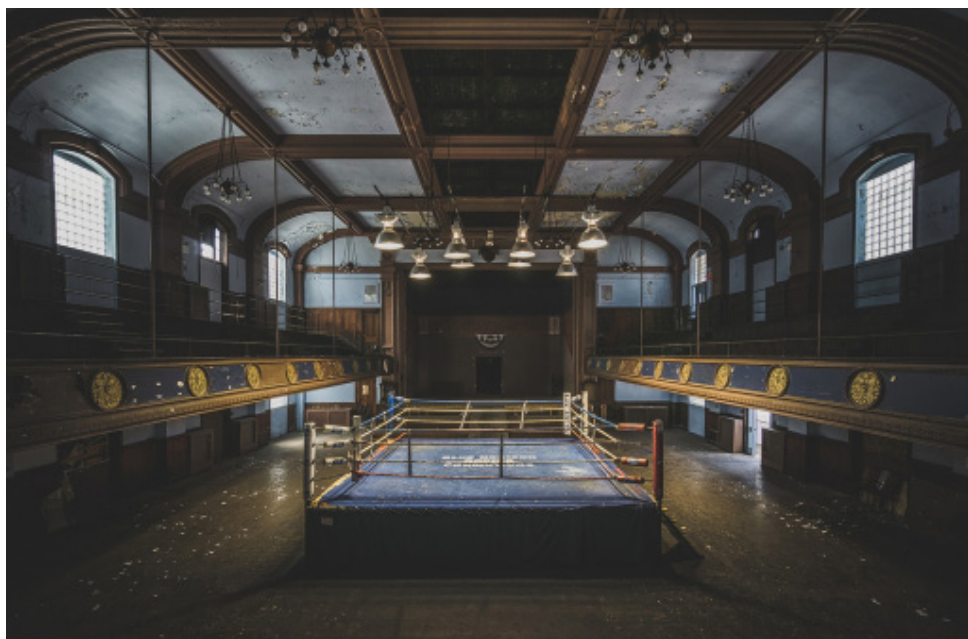
Boxing in 2017: A Resurgence for the Sweet Science?

OWEN CLARK

In my prior musings, I've alluded to the cliché of “___ is dead.” I think you'd be hard-pressed to argue against the notion that the sport of boxing is the undisputed pound-for-pound champion of this futile declaration. According to many, if not most, boxing has been dead for essentially my entire lifetime. If I'm being deadly honest, there's a fair amount of truth to this assertion, certainly when compared to the glory days of the 1940s to the 1960s when boxing was one of, if not *the* most popular sports in the USA—my aunt (whose contempt for violence makes her a reasonably unbiased source) often mentions how in the 1950s Bronx of her childhood, *everyone* would watch the fights come Saturdays. We're certainly a long way from the times when boxers like Muhammad Ali, and even the Mike Tyson of my early childhood were arguably the most famous athletes on the planet. However, for fans of the sweet science, there's a certain whiff of excitement in the air at the host of marquee matchups that 2017 has had/continues to have, garnering near-feverish excitement at the possibility of the ultimate comeback story for this historic sport.

Through my many failed attempts to get friends and family interested in the sport, I've come to accept that most see it as one of the two B's—barbaric or boring. I can certainly understand both of these positions. I actually classify myself as a seemingly paradoxical anti-violence boxing fan. I'm the furthest thing from the stereotypical “casual” that tunes in to see an all-out hands-at-the-waist slugfest, complete with gushing blood and mangled faces. I'm more of a highly skilled, ultra-slick, defensive tactician kind of guy—simply out to appreciate the mastery of a boxer like Floyd Mayweather Jr. taking the “hit and don't get hit” ethos to matrix-like levels. I definitely feel a sense of guilt when fighters suffer serious injuries; and seeing an ageing Roy Jones Jr.—one of the greatest boxers of all time—getting knocked out by guys that couldn't tie his shoes twenty years ago—makes me well up every time I think about it. But perhaps that capacity for tragedy is one of the many facets that makes boxing so captivating.

As for boredom, I'd say as with all sports, but actually boxing in particular, it becomes far more interesting once you know a little about the boxers and understand their styles, personalities, rivalries, and legacies. Don't get me wrong, there's nothing more tedious than watching out-of-shape heavyweights bumble through a 12 round clinch-fest, and bouts frequently fail to live up to expectation. However, it's no accident that so many films have been made about boxing (eclipsing any other sport by this metric) from historic classics like *Rocky* to modern-day masterpieces



Philadelphia's legendary Blue Horizon boxing venue sits in disrepair, a foreboding metaphor for the state of boxing?

like *The Fighter*, both of which won multiple Oscars. It's also no accident that legendary writers like Ernest Hemingway waxed lyrical about the sheer exhilaration of boxing, while artists like George Bellows chose the sport as their subject matter. It's undeniable that there's a certain poetry and beauty to the sweet science—that gladiatorial aspect of two pugilists stepping into the squared-circle, after potentially years of rivalry, and expectations concerning the matchup of contrasting styles—and the fact that it all goes out the window once that bell rings. There's also an element of the complete unknown that is fairly unique to boxing, in that no matter what happens during the course of the bout, it can all end with one punch—one of the main aspects that keeps fans on the edges of their seats. Lastly of course, it's an underdog's sport. As legendary Middleweight champion “Marvelous” Marvin Hagler put it, “...it's tough to get out of bed to do roadwork at 5 a.m. when you've been sleeping in silk pajamas.” Boxing is unquestionably the sport of the poor; the list of boxers that have risen from the depths of poverty, crime, and deprivation to become world champions is too long to count. As the saying goes “You don't choose boxing, boxing chooses you,” and for many boxing still offers the potential for fame, glory, and riches for those otherwise short of hope.

OK, so I can tell at this point that I've probably hooked you in as a bona fide boxing fan, so the next obvious progression is to list a whole host of complaints about the current state of boxing, because as boxing fans that's mostly what we do. I can give a pretty good rundown, but if you prefer to hear the struggles of the industry by having them yelled at

you by an angry Brooklyn native, I'd suggest you checkout promoter Lou DiBella voicing his many complaints on sports writer Chris Mannix's excellent podcast.

First of all, the obvious elephant in the room, the landscape of the boxing viewer seems at times as if it's almost designed to be impossible to navigate. The majority of fights are either on HBO or Showtime, both premium cable channels that represent a significant cost to the average viewer. Then, to add insult to injury, all of the top fights (and these days plenty of the lower caliber fights), are on pay-per-view (PPV), which in the U.S. at least carries the frankly astounding price tag of \$75-100 per fight. As Lou says, “The entire business model is irrational. You don't have the World Cup on PPV!” It's pretty tough to see a path to entry for new fans with the current premium channel/PPV-heavy format, and until boxing is taken into the twenty-first century, it may remain as a niche sport propped up by its most loyal and devoted fan base. Even if you're OK with ponying up that kind of money to watch a fight, the undercards of PPV fights (i.e. the bouts preceding the main event) are often woefully poor matchups, with the main event not coming on until midnight or so. I've heard plenty of tales of fans throwing boxing parties to get their friends on board, only to have people fall asleep by the time the main event comes on. It's a dire state of affairs in many ways.

Enter Al Haymon—a mysterious character that manages a stable of some 200 odd fighters from the shadows (Haymon is notorious for never giving interviews nor ever be-

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ing seen in public)—and his attempt to bring boxing back to network television with the Premier Boxing Champions (PBC), which began in March of 2015. Often maligned by fans and the press for failing to deliver stellar matchups; and the subject of two lawsuits from rival promotion companies Golden Boy and Top Rank (the former was dismissed while the latter was settled out of court), PBC has had its ups and downs. However, the fact that six million viewers tuned in for welterweight prospect Errol Spence's devastating knockout of veteran Leonard Bundu back in August 2016, was a real glimmer of hope. With rumors that Haymon is running low on investment funds and a slightly murky calendar for 2017, with most of the high profile PBC fights currently airing on Showtime, it's difficult to see a successful road ahead for PBC. At the very least, PBC represents promise in the fact that there's clearly a market for boxing on broadcast TV, and its tempting to speculate that with a more focused business model (e.g., one or two major networks and better promotion/bouts), boxing could work its way back into the mainstream.

This brings me to another glaring issue within the sport, namely promotion and marketing. I would bet good money that some of boxing's biggest stars could walk through Times Square practically unnoticed. Winning over new fans requires effort on the part of promoters and boxers alike to get the word out, with interviews on network television and magazines; and advertising campaigns that would throw the stars of boxing into the limelight—but they seem almost non-existent. A guy like Keith Thurman, who many rank as arguably the top boxer in the historically excellent welterweight class, definitely comes to mind. With his insightful and articulate manner of speech, Thurman represents an appealing spokesperson for the sport; the only problem is no one in the general public has a clue who he is. This is also somewhat due to inactivity—another salient issue in modern day boxing—with fighters often disappearing for large spells of time following a fight, no matter what the outcome. With many boxers we're often lucky if we get to see them fight once a year. It's hard to imagine people would follow a football team closely if they played one or two games a year, so why should we not expect more from boxers? Of course, boxing is an incredibly tough sport, with training camps taking a tremendous toll; and every fight providing the potential for serious injury, both immediate and long-term; however, the fighters of old were true warriors who lived and breathed to step between the ropes—I don't think it's so unfair to demand slightly more of their modern day counterparts.

Another frequent criticism of current boxers is their fear of losing their undefeated



Heavyweight world champion Anthony Joshua lands a thunderous body shot on fellow 6' 6" behemoth Wladimir Klitschko.

record, which Thurman terms "The Mayweather Effect," perhaps unfairly attributing this phenomenon to Floyd Mayweather Jr. due to his famed 49-0 career record that led many to tune into his fights purely on the basis that he might lose his "zero." Controversy magnet and trainer Angel Garcia flat out admitted that for a successful boxer it makes no sense to take a risky fight against an undefeated opponent when you could make just as much money in a bout that's an almost guaranteed win. From a business standpoint this makes sense, but of course if boxers dodge the best matchups in search of easy paydays then obviously the fans are the ones losing out. A perfect example of this happened in May, with fans and pundits spending the last two years begging for arguably boxing's biggest star, Saul "Canelo" Alvarez, to take on the mouthwatering matchup of undefeated middleweight knockout artist Gennady "GGG" Golovkin. However, the Golden Boy himself—promoter/hall-of-famer Oscar De La Hoya—instead delivered an abysmally overmatched bout against Julio Cesar Chavez Jr. in an effort to milk his cash cow Canelo by taking advantage of the loyalty of the Mexican fan base. The fight drew over 1 million PPV buys so the strategy obviously worked, as fans paid \$75 each to watch a glorified sparring session. The idea that a boxer loses all marketability once he receives his first defeat doesn't even stand up to scrutiny, as former Olympic medalist/world title holder Amir Khan can attest—staying relevant throughout the years after a shock knockout loss in the first minute of the first round to a heavy underdog in Breidis Prescott, back in 2008.

And last of all in the list of boxing bugbears: warring factions. Again, referring back to the words of Lou DiBella, "...everyone is so factionalized. This writer hates this network or this promoter or this manager. They should all be rooting for the success of an in-

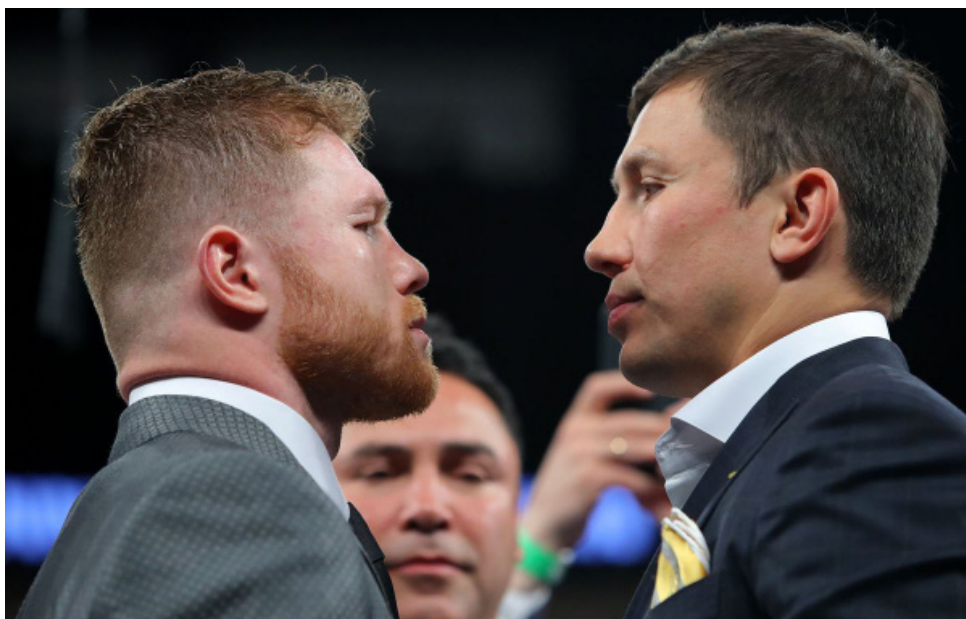
dustry, which frankly has not been on the upswing; and you would think that people, who are attempting to make a living, or pretending to make a living from the industry, would care about its success." From the outside, it does sometimes seem like we have more fights in the courtroom than on the canvas. Its exhausting keeping up with the constant drama of which promoters are refusing to work with one another, which networks have the rights to air which bouts? which boxer is the A-side and which is the B-side, and how does the purse get split? Honestly, when you see what goes into negotiating every bout it's a wonder they happen at all, let alone after several months or years, especially in comparison to the kind of structured leagues that provide the framework for most sports.

And there you have it, the tattered state of boxing in a nutshell. If all of these issues could be represented in a year, it would be 2016. It was always going to be a tough task, coming off the year in which this generation's biggest star in boxing, Mayweather Jr., hung up his gloves after the epic anti-climax that was Mayweather vs. Pacquiao—a fight which for most happened six years too late, and ultimately resulted in scores of casual fans paying \$100 to be instantly turned off boxing in a fairly predictable bout (truth be told I actually kind of enjoyed the match, but I am a self-confessed Floyd fan after all). The inevitable void somehow only managed to produce two extremely mismatched affairs, with British welterweights Amir Khan and Kell Brook both stepping up two weight classes to get predictably dismantled by middleweights Canelo and GGG, respectively, and an enticing, yet woefully under-promoted bout, with undefeated pound-for-pound king Andre "SOG" Ward stepping up in weight to take on the also undefeated light heavyweight Russian Sergey "Krusher" Kovalev, which re-

sulted in a fairly boring controversial decision win for Ward, with very disappointing PPV numbers. In fairness, Leo Santa Cruz and Carl Frampton did both put their undefeated records on the line to give us an excellent featherweight title fight here at Brooklyn's own Barclays Center in July, and a month prior to that the very same stadium saw an action-packed welterweight brawl between Keith Thurman and Shawn Porter—but all in all 2016 spelled a dark portent of things to come.

But as I said, boxing is an underdog's sport, rife with fairytale comebacks, so if you've stuck with me this long, here's where the good stuff starts. 2017 started with a bang, with Leo Santa Cruz and Carl Frampton this time heading to Vegas to deliver a thrilling rematch that saw Santa Cruz win back his featherweight belt, setting up an epic trilogy. March then gave us PBC's biggest match to date, with the aforementioned Keith "One Time" Thurman taking on fellow undefeated welterweight Danny "Swift" Garcia, in what was only the third title unification bout between undefeated welterweights in history. We were treated to a decent bout, not quite amazing mind, but definitely enjoyable to watch, as evidenced by the fight peaking at 5.1 million viewers, the highest rated prime-time boxing broadcast since 1998 and setting a boxing record attendance for the Barclays Center at 16,533. Thurman controlled most of the action, handing Garcia his first loss as a pro fighter.

Just two weeks later we were treated to another mouthwatering matchup. This time via HBO PPV. Remember that whole "sport of the underdogs" thing? Well, as inspiring stories go, it doesn't get more dramatic than that of the third ranked middleweight Danny "Miracle Man" Jacobs. Hailing from Brownsville, Brooklyn, Jacobs navigated a tough upbringing to rise through the national ranks on the amateur circuit and become world champion as a pro, only to have his legacy cruelly torn away when he was diagnosed with osteosarcoma, an aggressive form of bone cancer. Told he would never walk again, let alone box, Jacobs received treatment just around the corner at Weill-Cornell, and through his own determination, and of course, the aid of a phenomenal medical team, he was able to make a full recovery. But that was never going to be enough for a natural born fighter, and going against the wishes of his doctors, Jacobs returned to the gym just months after his surgery, stepping into the ring less than a year later to win his returning bout. He's maintained an undefeated record going into 2017, including an emphatic first round knockout win over local rival Peter "Kid Chocolate" Quillin. But it all goes out the window when the bell rings, and stepping into the ring with what many would consider to be the most



GGG and Canelo exchange a cold stare ahead of their September showdown.

feared boxer on the planet—Kazakhstan's baby-faced assassin Gennady "GGG" Golovkin – was always going to require a little divine intervention. In an enthralling fight, Jacobs surpassed all expectations, using his sublime footwork and commanding size to keep GGG at bay, surviving a fourth round knockdown to go the distance—an achievement on its own when you're fighting a guy with an 89% knockout ratio—and win several rounds in a close fight that ended in a unanimous decision win for GGG. As a side note, Thai boxer Skrisaket Sor Rungvisai was in close competition with Jacobs for inspirational story of the night, completing a huge upset to dethrone what many saw as the pound-for-pound number one boxer Nicaraguan Roman "Chocolatito" Gonzalez on the undercard. As the story goes, a 13-year-old Rungvisai walked 60 miles by foot to find a job as a trash collector, and survived many of his days by foraging food from the garbage. He's now the WBC super flyweight champion of the world.

Flash-forward just over a month, to the most enticing fight in recent memory, with England's own Anthony Joshua attempting to topple heavyweight kingpin, Ukrainian Wladimir Klitschko. Now, I said we're currently short of characters to represent the face of boxing, but for many Anthony Joshua fits the bill perfectly. Born to Nigerian immigrants, Joshua took up bricklaying and boxing after a few scraps with the law threatened to derail his future. Despite the relatively late start at the age of 18, Joshua quickly rose through the ranks, eventually winning a gold medal at the London Olympics despite having less than 50 amateur bouts to his name (to put that in perspective GGG has more than 400). Immediately turning pro following his Olympic success, Joshua went on to win a world title after only 16 professional bouts, albeit against less than stellar competition in Charles Mar-

tin, but still quite the story. After just two defenses of his title, Joshua then challenged Wladimir Klitschko, a man who along with his brother Vitali has dominated the heavyweight division for the last 15 years. Another sidenote, the Klitschko brothers both have PhDs and speak four languages, with Vitali currently pursuing a career as a politician in his native Ukraine—pretty good candidates to dispel the notion of the brainless boxer. Although Wladimir suffered a defeat at the hands of controversial character Tyson Fury back in 2015, many still saw this test as too-much-too-soon for a young Anthony Joshua, and envisioned the veteran Klitschko using his superior experience to eke out a lackluster decision win.

As I said earlier, in boxing, excitement often exceeds expectation, but sometimes that equation gets reversed. This was definitely one of those times. Fans lucky enough to watch the action live at London's historic Wembley Stadium—after 90,000 tickets sold out within minutes—were treated to one of the most entertaining heavyweight title fights in recent memory, dare I say history? Joshua put on an early showcase, controlling the first four rounds with ease against a Klitschko that looked scared to throw. The action picked up in round five, with Joshua scoring an excellent early knockdown and looking set to finish Wlad off, but in a shocking turn of events, the young fighter completely gassed himself out going for the kill, and looked barely able to hold up the weight of his own body towards the end of the round. Klitschko then sent Joshua to the canvas for the first time in his pro career in the sixth; landing a scintillating straight right, in what was looking to be a huge turnaround that would land Joshua his first professional loss, barely able to stand up at this point. But try as he might Wlad

couldn't pick Joshua off, and he was able to survive the next few rounds hanging by a thread. In the penultimate eleventh round, Joshua then looked to gain a second wind, hurting Klitschko early in the round, then landing a scorching uppercut that looked like it would have decapitated your average human. Joshua then scored his second knockdown of the fight with a follow up flurry, and sent Wlad to the canvas again in emphatic fashion just a few seconds after he'd just got up. But, warrior that he is, Wlad was able to beat the count and continue to box. However, after another flurry had him absorbing multiple blows against the ropes, the referee waved the bout off, crowning Joshua as the unified heavyweight champion of the world at just 27 years of age.

As the division that traditionally garners the most interest from casual fans, for a heavyweight title fight to deliver in such dramatic fashion is unquestionably a huge win for the sport. The success of the event in general is also testament to the boxing boom that's currently underway in England—generally credited to Essex wide-lad promoter/impersonator Eddie Hearn—where a lot of the aforementioned issues seem to either not affect UK boxing, or at least impact the sport's popularity to a much lesser extent. Hearn promoted another must-see event slightly over a month later, with the dangerous, young, undefeated welterweight prospect Errol "The Truth" Spence Jr. travelling to my hometown of Sheffield to take on the IBF welterweight champion, Sheffield's own Kell "Special K" Brook—an excellent, technically sound boxer with just one defeat on his resume: that predictable loss to GGG, which ended in a technical knockout when his corner threw in the towel after Kell suffered a break in his orbital bone (eye socket).

The fight took place at the stadium of my home football team, Sheffield United, and hearing Michael Buffer's unmistakable voice utter the words "Welcome to beautiful downtown Bramall Lane," coupled with Kell entering the ring in red and white trunks (United's home strip) caused me to nearly pass out from feverish excitement. Again, a total 50/50 fight between two elite competitors, the opening rounds definitely delivered plenty of action, with Brook taking an early lead on the scorecards. But again, tragedy reared its ugly head for Brook, suffering a knockdown in the tenth round; then taking a knee to end the bout, seemingly unable to continue, as we learned of a cruel twist of fate, with Kell again suffering from an orbital bone-break, this time in the other eye, completely impeding the vision of the home fighter. Not to take anything away from the performance of Spence Jr., of course, his thunderous body shots clearly caused Brook issues throughout the bout, and he was surg-

ing ahead to a victory on points after winning rounds six through ten on the judges' cards—but the circumstances of the win really put a damper on the whole event, and my excitement quickly turned to sympathetic woe and misery. Predictably, keyboard warriors and even some boxer pundits like Tony Bellew and Amir Khan immediately came out of the woodwork to lambast Brook for committing the ultimate cardinal sin of quitting a boxing match. However, those of us with a more rational outlook recognize how difficult it must have been to even box one round having the doctors words of "One more round and you could have gone blind," spinning through your head after suffering the same injury just months before, that left him with a titanium eye socket, and see Kell as a hero for putting on such a brave display.

At this point you might be asking yourself if there's an alternative way to follow boxing other than reading random descriptions of fights by some guy on the Internet. Well, as far as upcoming fights go, by the time this article comes to press, the impending light heavyweight rematch between Ward and Kovalev will have come and gone, so that's out. Continuing their partnership with Showtime, PBC is putting on an intriguing matchup at the Barclays Center on July 29, with slightly disappointing but generally entertaining character, four division champion Adrien "The Problem" Broner taking on three division champion and unbeaten fighter Mikey Garcia. I promised myself I wouldn't, but since it was finally just confirmed amidst much speculation, I'll have to mention that the great Floyd Mayweather Jr. is returning to the ring August 26—coming out of retirement after almost two years to fight MMA star Connor McGregor in a 12 round boxing match, likely costing an extortionate \$100 on PPV. While most involved in both the boxing and MMA worlds see this as a circus show cash grab (the fight is expected to rake in an astonishing \$500 million), it will at least finally settle the age-old debate, of who would win in a boxing match—the greatest boxer of their generation, or some guy that does a different sport?

Thankfully for us boxing fans there is actually a bona fide super fight on the immediate horizon. Remember that awful, glorified sparring session that I mentioned earlier, between Mexican favorites Canelo and Chavez Jr. (Chavez Sr. was a legendary Mexican boxer, hence the fame of his son)? Well as disappointing as that fight was, one good thing came of it, a slightly bizarre WWE-style announcement of the fight that everyone actually wanted to see: the long-anticipated middleweight showdown between Canelo and his arch-foe GGG on September 16 on HBO PPV. As Canelo vs. Chavez Jr. showed, any fight can be hyped, and ultimately a lot of people will believe the hype and start buying into it as the date grows near and opinions/

predictions fly back and forth. But I really can't overstate how exciting this bout is. GGG boasts deadly knockout power, having dispatched 33 of his 37 prior opponents by way of the canvas as well as sublime ring generalship/boxing IQ and a fantastic chin—developed over 400 amateur bouts (and possibly a few childhood pick up street fights with Kazakhstani miners as the story goes). Canelo arguably boasts the superior resume', coming back from his only loss to Mayweather Jr. in 2013 to beat excellent competition in veteran Puerto Rican fighter Miguel Cotto, and slick Cuban Erislandy Lara and possesses a sharp counter-punching ability that dovetails nicely with GGG's come-forward fan-friendly style of boxing. Although it caused much unrest in the boxing community, the two-year match-making process that had a lot of people concerned that this fight would never get made (one of the revelations of the Golden Boy Promotions vs. PBC lawsuits was that Canelo represents 95% of GBP's revenue, thus De La Hoya seemed very hesitant to risk a loss against rising star GGG), has actually kind of added to the intrigue, with GGG looking somewhat more human in his last couple of bouts—albeit against better competition, that he was still able to dispatch. But at 35, he's no spring chicken, and he's facing a 26-year-old Canelo that's potentially right in his prime, looking excellent in his last few fights, albeit against worse competition. Can GGG knockout a fighter that's never been down? Can Canelo box his way to a victory against a dangerous unbeaten veteran fighter? You'll have to tune in come September to find out.

If you still don't fancy watching an actual boxing match, I can live with that, but at the very least I'd urge you to checkout some of the media offerings that encapsulate the larger-than-life nature of the sport. While the budget for boxing has recently undergone significant cuts, HBO still makes fascinating documentaries ahead of their biggest fights as part of the 24/7 series. Even if you don't end up watching any of the bouts, just witnessing grueling training camps and hearing inspirational back-stories is enough for an adrenaline surge—Jacobs vs. GGG is a good place to start. Netflix also recently debuted a documentary of their own, Counterpunch, providing an inside look at various levels of boxing on both the pro and amateur circuits. Then of course there's the silver screen, where the sweet science provides the blueprint for biopics that will have you scratching your head in disbelief. 2016's Bleed For This comes to mind—starring Miles Teller as Vinny "The Pazmanian Devil" Pazienza, a tough-as-nails boxer that defied all odds, making a truly miraculous return to the ring following a devastating car crash that looked to all but certainly end his career. All in all, while the future of boxing still has a tough fight on its hands, the sport continues to stick and move—always one punch away from a thrilling comeback.

Culture Corner | Who Killed Rock and Roll?

BERNIE LANGS

*Who killed Davey Moore
Why an' what's the reason for...
"Not I," says the referee
Don't point your finger at me
....It wasn't me that made him fall
No, you can't blame me at all..."*

*Who killed Davey Moore...
"Not us," says the angry crowd...
"Not me," says his manager...
"Not me," says the gambling man...
"Not me," says the man whose fists
Laid him low in a cloud of mist....
"It was destiny, it was God's will."*

*Who killed Davey Moore
Why and what's the reason for?
(Excerpts from Who Killed Davey Moore? by
Bob Dylan)*

*Who killed rock and roll?
Why and what's the reason for?*

Not us, says the popular radio stations. We have charts and graphs and demographic studies proving what the people want to hear. So what if the classic rock stations play the same exact songs for years after years, grinding them into the ground and reducing the so-called precious recording artist's output to a handful of songs? They should be grateful for the exposure if not the royalty checks. It doesn't matter at all that what was once rare and precious is as free as oil spreading across a pristine bay. We have to maintain our advertising revenue. No shame in that, for after all, any good rock star will tell you a buck is a buck. "Hotel California" and "Bohemian Rhapsody" until your ears bleed? Get a real problem. It wasn't us who made rock fall, no you can't blame us at all.

Who killed rock and roll?
"Not us," says MTV, we just made songs visual for all to see. Okay, maybe we had a few years of blatant racism until we saw the dollar signs in Michael Jackson's eyes, and perhaps there are hundreds—okay, thousands—oh, okay, tens of thousands of videos demeaning women, reducing them to sexual objects for the pleasure of idiotic bad boys. Okay, the whole thing is one Marxist, drooling commodity fetish. But we spiffed up the genre with dancers! Scantly clad dancers, sure. And now we have really good looking artists, posers, and fashion leaders. If anything we expanded rock's reach. We don't even know what auto-tune is! They all lip-sync anyway! Live videos? Live is dead, man, get with it. It wasn't us who made rock fall, no you can't blame us at all.

Who killed rock and roll?
Not us, say the popular magazines. Sure, we



PETE SOUZA | Official White House Photo

Bob Dylan with President Obama after playing at the "In Performance at The White House: A Celebration of Music from The Civil Rights Movement" concert, February 9, 2010.

loved to cover all the tragic rock stars' meteoric falls into drug and alcohol abuse and their paranoid ravings and simplistic political posturing, but we also have our tearful in-depth profiles of their rebirths, their recoveries and all the life lessons learned. And now they're making the very best music of their lives (of course not, but, hey, what do our readers know - just what momma would call "a little white lie" as Forrest Gump says). Really, doesn't everybody want to know about the songs written about breakups between our stars, more craft in the guessing than in the actual music composition? As a guitarist yourself, you know you can strum from C to G all afternoon and get at least ten songs out of it! If you think of it that way, that's *real* talent. And as our reporters are let into the artist's inner sanctum, our readers just love to hear how we ate sushi with them and went to the studio and someone thought they saw Bono crossing the street. That's news, my friend! Let us tell you a trade secret: There ain't no art there in the first place, so why ask about it? Besides, we make drugs and drinking and promiscuity keep up the image of sex and drugs and rock and roll. You say that was always just a cheap slogan and never had meaning for the real music? That's why you are writing for an online newsletter and not *Entertainment Weekly* or *Rolling Stone*. It wasn't us who made rock fall, no you can't blame us at all.

Who killed rock and roll?
Not us, say the music stars, even Elvis didn't really play guitar. Sure you think that David Bowie's music predicted the emotionally dead, empty-thought, technological charred ruin of an ISIS Internet state, and that Led

Zeppelin's journey through Kashmir is as mystical as a real life Aladdin carpet ride, and that The Beatles grew in leaps and bounds as composers the likes of which we haven't seen since Wolfgang Amadeus. Be happy you had that and don't blame us for not measuring up to those standards! It's a job, for crying out loud. It's community, the swaying sing along at the end of the show proving we are all one, we are together, we all love, until we get to our cars to go home—and if that guy doesn't get the hell out of my way...Didn't Elmo sing "Every day can't be Christmas"? Well, every concert can't be Woodstock. And you try to write a hit, my man, there are only so many notes on a guitar and a piano, they've all been taken, my friend. A wise man once said that there are only three or four plot lines in literature. Well, we're just repeating the same old guitar and piano lines, but look at the polish of it! Our producers have more power in their consoles than the rockets that went to the moon! If you're looking for art, try twisting a volume control these days—not so easy! And this constant criticism of our parties and of stars gazing at stars—seems a bit like sour grapes, Mister Home Recording hermit. It isn't us who makes rock fall, you can't blame us at all.

Who killed rock and roll?
Not us says Dylan, Springsteen, the Stones, Paul, Ringo and Led Zeppelin, we've kept our integrity. And this is something of which I completely agree.

*Who killed rock and roll? Why and what's the reason for?
Laid low in a cloud of mist
"It was destiny, it was God's will."*

For Your Consideration | Ones to Watch, Vol. 1 Edition

JIM KELLER

No matter how you spin it, 2016 was not a kind year for women who remain trapped on the other side of a cracked glass ceiling. So it is with great pleasure that I begin this first in a four-part series focused on the leading ladies of the Best Actress race. Last year's race saw the defeat of #OscarsSoWhite with people of color represented in all of the major categories, and of course, Best Picture, in a turn as dramatic as the films themselves, going to *Moonlight* following an [envelope mix-up backstage](#). (Can someone please explain why that guy hasn't been fired yet?) As we look to Oscar nominations in January 2018, we do so under the shadow of a man who is hidden behind a veil of secrecy. It will be interesting to see how the Academy is affected by the state of the union. Will they choose to support performances from films of heavy subject matter, or go the opposite direction and support those from films of lighter fare? If the historic win of *Moonlight* this year is anything to go by, the shiny happy sheen of a film, such as *La La Land* and those who dream, was not what the Academy wanted; to make a bold statement. Last Oscar season, the race came down to two very deserving actresses in roles that were the polar opposite of one another: the eventual winner, Emma Stone, as the fictitious young ingénue in *La La Land* and Natalie Portman as the titular Jackie Kennedy in *Jackie*. What story has yet to be told this year? The film screenings to take place over the next couple of months will weave that narrative. For now, let's examine last year's Best Actress nomination results.

Of the eleven roles that were discussed here, only two went on to join Stone and Portman and secure Best Actress nominations: Meryl Streep for *Florence Foster Jenkins* and Ruth Negga for *Loving*. Viola Davis ended up being nominated in a supporting role and winning for her searing performance in *Fences*. Jessica Chastain and Rosamund Pike's films, *The Zookeeper's Wife* and *A United Kingdom*, respectively, were pushed to this year, thereby falling out of contention. Finally, *Allied*, *Passengers*, and *The Light Between Oceans* were seen as genre fare, promptly taking Marion Cotillard, Jennifer Lawrence, and Alicia Vikander, respectively, out of the running and leaving behind Taraji P. Henson (*Hidden Figures*), Emily Blunt (*The Girl on the Train*) and the aforementioned Adams who had two chances for a nomination: *Nocturnal Animals* and *Arrival*. I would argue that when all was said and done, the only real snub was Adams who all but literally carried *Arrival* on her back to earn eight nominations, including Best Picture and Best Director. The last nominee was Isabelle Huppert (*Elle*).



FOX SEARCHLIGHT PICTURES

Emma Stone in *Battle of the Sexes* (2017)

THE QUEEN BEE: Meryl Streep – *The Papers* (director: Stephen Spielberg):

FYC: This historical drama, inspired by true events, involves a cover-up that spanned four U.S. Presidents and drove the country's first female newspaper publisher of *The Washington Post*, Kay Graham (Streep) and its hard-driving editor, Ben Bradlee (Tom Hanks) to join an unprecedented battle between journalists and the government in publishing the Pentagon Papers. Streep is discussed every year in this column. The actress has racked up 17 Oscar nominations and three Oscar wins—two in lead (*Sophie's Choice* in 1983 and *The Iron Lady* in 2011), and one in supporting (*Kramer vs. Kramer* in 1980). Unless you have been living under a rock for the past year, you know that the film is highly relevant following constant attacks on the press by, and several ongoing investigations of, the man who currently occupies the White House.

THE LESBIAN: Emma Stone – *Battle of the Sexes* (directors: Jonathan Dayton and Valerie Férís):

FYC: The comedy-drama film is loosely based on the 1973 tennis match between Billie Jean King (Stone) and ex-champ/serial hustler Bobby Riggs (Steve Carell). Stone is on fire at the moment having won the Oscar for Best Actress just this year. She was previously nominated for her supporting role in *Birdman* or (*The Unexpected Virtue of Ignorance*) in 2015. What's more, the last film directed by Dayton and Férís, *Little Miss Sunshine*, was nominated for two Oscars and won two others, including Best Supporting Actor for Alan Arkin.

THE WILDCARD: Frances McDormand – *Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri* (director: Martin McDonagh):

FYC: A dark comedic drama that depicts the plight of a mother (McDormand) who takes a stand against a revered chief of police

(Woody Harrelson) using three billboards leading into her town after several months have passed without a culprit for her daughter's murder. McDormand was first nominated for Best Supporting Actress in 1989 for *Mississippi Burning*. She won Best Actress in 1997 for *Fargo*, and earned two more Best Supporting Actress nominations for *Almost Famous* and *North Country* in 2000 and 2006, respectively. Although McDormand has largely remained outside of the Oscar conversation since her last nomination, the trailer for the film shows a lot of range from the actress, who appears to be relishing in the role. Sight unseen, I have her as the one to beat this year.

THE DAME: Dame Judi Dench – *Victoria and Abdul* (director: Stephen Frears):

FYC: This British-American biographical drama film, based on Shrabani Basu's book of same name, depicts the unlikely friendship between Queen Victoria (Dench) and young Indian clerk Abdul Karim (Ali Fazal). It's hard to believe that Dench who has been nominated of Best Actress five times (most recently for *Philomena* in 2014) and Best Supporting Actress two others (*Mrs Brown* in 1997, *Chocolat* in 2001) has only won a single Best Supporting Actress Oscar for *Shakespeare in Love* in 1999. Further, like McDormand, if the range depicted in the trailer is anything to go by, we will be seeing an awful lot of Dench this awards season.

THE PERENNIAL: Jennifer Lawrence – *Mother!* (director: Darren Aronofsky):

FYC: Although very little is known about this thriller-horror that centers on a couple whose relationship is tested when uninvited guests arrive, disrupting their tranquil existence, Aronofsky's *Black Swan* did quite well with the Academy (despite naysayers saying that the film wasn't within their wheelhouse), earning four nominations, including Best

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Picture, and winning the Best Actress Oscar for Natalie Portman. *Black Swan* is also described as a thriller; could lightning strike twice? Lawrence earned her first Best Actress nomination in 2011 for *Winter's Bone* and she won the Oscar in 2012 for *Silver Linings Playbook*. She went on to net a Best Supporting Actress nomination for *American Hustle* (2014) and her third Best Actress nomination for *Joy* last year. Even though all of her performances do not catch fire in the awards race, Lawrence remains one of the most bankable actresses to date, and in our capitalist society, bankability often translates to awards heat.

THE REDHEAD: Kate Winslet - *Wonder Wheel* (director: Woody Allen):

FYC: The plot is unknown for this period drama set in a late 1950s amusement park at Coney Island, Brooklyn New York, but Allen's films often find themselves in the thick of the Oscar conversation. Winslet's career has yielded two Best Supporting Actress nominations (*Sense and Sensibility* in 1996 and *Iris* in 2002) and three Best Actress nominations (*Titanic* in 1998, *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* in 2005 and *Little Children* in 2007). In 2008, she infamously won the Oscar for Best Actress for her would-be supporting role in *The Reader* over Streep's wonderful turn in *Doubt*. Winslet last brushed shoulders with Oscar when she was nominated for her supporting role last year for *Steve Jobs*. Early images from the film show Winslet with red hair engaged in a passionate argument with co-star Justin Timberlake. Given that she excels in relationship dramas, and the film has a December 1st release date, she's a pretty safe bet.

THE CLASS ACT: Emma Thompson - *The Children Act* (director: Richard Eyre):

FYC: This drama based on Ian McEwan's novel of the same name concerns British High Court judge Fiona Maye (Thompson) who is asked to rule in the case of a minor refusing treatment because of his family's religious beliefs. Thompson won the Best Actress Oscar in 1993 for *Howard's End* and went on to be nominated the following year for *The Remains of the Day*. 1996 brought her not one, but two Oscars: Best Actress and Best Writing, Screenplay Based on Material Previously Produced or Published for *Sense and Sensibility*. Thompson was most recently in the Oscar conversation in 2013 for *Saving Mr. Banks*, but she was snubbed by the Academy for her role as P.L. Travers—the author behind the Mary Poppins books. It's important to note that the last film to be adapted from one of McEwan's novels, *Atonement*, garnered six Oscar nominations, including Best Actress and Best Picture. It seems a safe bet to throw Thompson's hat in the ring at this early stage.



AMAZON STUDIOS

Kate Winslet and Justin Timberlake in *Wonder Wheel* (2017)

THE GAMBLER: Jessica Chastain - *Molly's Game* (director: Aaron Sorkin):

FYC: This drama marks the directorial debut of Sorkin and is based on Molly Bloom's memoir *Molly's Game: From Hollywood's Elite to Wall Street's Billionaire Boys Club, My High-Stakes Adventure in the World of Underground Poker*. Bloom was a former Olympic hopeful-come-successful entrepreneur who became the subject of an FBI investigation after she established a high-stakes, international poker game. Chastain, perhaps the actress most overdue for a win discussed here, was nominated for Best Supporting Actress for *The Help* in 2012 and Best Actress the following year for *Zero Dark Thirty*. As per usual, she has a few other films in contention this year: *The Zookeeper's Wife*, and *Woman Walks Ahead*. But having more films, doesn't necessarily equate to more chances to win—especially with an actress as talented as Chastain who consistently delivers—because the Academy often splits the vote without a consensus. For now, I'm putting my money on this one having the highest profile of the bunch, and that late November release date sure doesn't hurt.

As always, the women discussed here are some of those with the pedigree to earn a

nomination. Others include Saoirse Ronan in another McEwan adaptation *On Chesil Beach*—a drama set in the early 1960s centered on a young couple on their honeymoon. The actress also stars with Annette Bening in *The Seagull*, who also has a shot with *Film Stars Don't Die in Liverpool*. Then there's Helen Mirren in *The Leisure Seeker* who stars as one-half of a runaway couple on an unforgettable journey in the faithful old RV called "The Leisure Seeker." Sally Hawkins also has two films to consider: *The Shape of Water* from visionary director Guillermo del Toro and *Maudie*—a role for which she is already winning rave reviews. As if that weren't enough, Halle Berry has her shot in *Kings* from Turkish director Deniz Gamze Ergüven in a drama that follows a foster family in South Central LA just before the city erupts in violence following the verdict of the Rodney King trial in 1992.

The Oscar race will really get its start with the Venice International Film Festival August 30 - September 9, 2017 and the Telluride Film Festival August 30 - September 4, 2017. These festivals often set the stage for the season to come as frontrunners emerge. Stay tuned in September when I take a look at the leading men of the Best Actor race.

INTERVIEW

Natural Selections interviews Jazz Weisman of the Scientific Computing Users Group

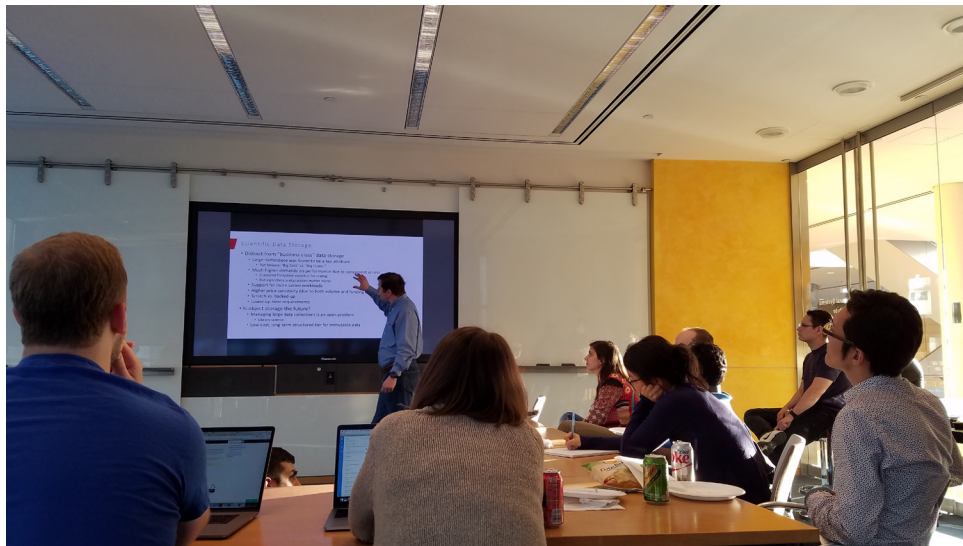
JULIETTE WIPF

On April 12, Scientific Computing Users Group (SciComp) of The Rockefeller University's (RU) held its inaugural meeting in CRC 406. The founders of the group, Jason Banfelder, Director of the RU High Performance Computing Systems (HPC), and first year graduate student Jazz Weisman, led the meeting. I caught up with Jazz Weisman about this new group on our campus.

NS: How did you and Jason come up with the idea to start the SciComp group? I attended Jason's Quantitative Understanding in Biology course at Cornell University and wanted to learn more. When I asked him about opportunities he said that starting a group is always a good, as well as a feasible idea. In fact, he had thought about starting something for a while as well. I actually recommend Jason's lecture, or a similar intro level data analysis class, to everybody. A lot is already going on in that area, and we tried to create something in this pool. The future is definitely more computed, and we have to start somewhere.

NS: What do you think is the biggest plus of the SciComp group? Painful and repetitive work should be reduced as much as possible. So many things can be done a lot easier with the help of computing, which will make repetitive tasks in science a lot less painful. But there are a lot of side benefits to our group. People get to know Jason as a representative of the IT department, which will make communication between the scientists in the lab and IT easier. People tend to be a bit shy about their computer skills, and we hope to make the IT department more accessible. Finally, we want to get interested people together. Labs can sometimes be a bit insulated; however, their computational interests would be similar.

NS: Researchers (myself included) can sometimes be a bit scared of using new programs, even though we use computer programs daily. Why do you think that is? I think most are afraid of messing up their data. We also don't want the design of our results to change, since we have long



Jason Banfelder, Director of the RU High Performance Computing Systems, talking about the most commonly used computing tools at the inaugural meeting of the SciComp group.

chains of experiments, sometimes generated over years, and a change in the output can sometimes make it hard to represent data neatly. But, as I said, most of our experiments come in long chains. Programming languages, such as R, Python or MATLAB, can simplify such tasks, and are actually a lot faster and easier to use than, for example, Microsoft Excel. Most importantly however, they make things repeatable, which is always better. If we use code to perform a string of tasks, this code can be given to a new student for example, and everybody can be sure the desired analysis was executed exactly the same way as usual. The student, on the other hand, can also study the string of code in peace and quiet, which will make understanding of the method easier for the new student as well.

NS: What can people expect from those meetings? Are there exercises that you do on computers together, or is it more of a discussion round?

Our group meetings usually start with a short talk of approximately 15-25 minutes on a chosen topic. For example, in our second meeting on May 18, we chose to talk about the data visualization tool ggplot2. After the presentation, we hope to get an open discussion going where everybody can ask questions. You can bring

your laptop because it can help showing others the actual problem you are experiencing. It is not necessary that you attend the whole meeting; you can also just come for one part of it. We want our meeting to be an open thing. Also, we understand that everybody is busy and that you might have limited time for stuff.

NS: Who can attend the SciComp meetings? What skill level is expected from participants?

Absolutely everybody can attend our meetings and no previous experience is required. If you want to learn more on the discussed topic, please come. We expect nothing and are simply happy you are interested. If we talk about an R-based tool like ggplot2, for example, it will all make a bit more sense to you if you know some of the programming language R already. But it is not expected at all. We want the group to be widely accessible. Everybody who wants to should come!

NS: What do you expect from the participants (ask questions, prepare, etc.)?

People shouldn't be afraid to get a discussion going. We are happy to answer the most basic questions! This is exactly why we thought the group environment would be nice, just to make everything more

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CONTINUED FROM P.11

laid-back and relaxed. Ultimately we hope to also see group members helping each other out, with me or Jason only assisting when needed.

NS: What topics will be discussed in the meetings?

People can actually vote on which topic will be discussed. In this [Google group](#), people should add their requested topics. If you and your colleagues want to learn about a specific program your lab is using, you should individually log onto the Google group and vote, so we can see how

big the demand is. With this approach, reruns of hot topics are also possible if needed; just reenter the topic into the Google group. We hope to soon talk about DNA or RNA sequencing, which I definitely think is the topic most people are interested in at the moment. In addition, we will use the Google group for general updates as well as a place for people to ask questions.

NS: In your inaugural meeting, you talked about the most successful tools currently available to get a feel for the needs and interests of the attendees. In the last meeting you discussed the R plotting tool ggplot2,

which makes all kinds of beautiful plots and graphs. When will the next SciComp meeting take place and what topic will be discussed?

We've decided to have the next meeting on August 3 in CRC 506 from 5:30 - 6:30. We will discuss Dynamic documents in R, presented by Thomas Carroll, head of the new bioinformatics resource center. Finally, if anyone is interested in becoming a co-organizer they should contact me via email at jweisman@rockefeller.edu. I think that one or two more people to plan and put the word out could be a good thing for the SciComp group.



This month Natural Selections interviews Maria Encarnacion, Customers Service, Weiss Café, The Rockefeller University

INTERVIEW BY GUADALUPE ASTORGA

New York State of Mind



How long have you been living in the New York area?

37 years.

Where do you currently live? Which is your favorite neighborhood?

First I lived in High Manhattan for 22 years and I recently moved to New Jersey. I like this city, it's really calm compared to The Big Apple.

What do you think is the most overrated thing in the city? And underrated?

Overrated: the rent prices, they are just too high, also the transport. Underrated: the salaries, they are not high enough to com-

pensate.

What do you miss most when you are out of town?

To be honest I don't miss anything because I like to go out and relax and forget about the stress of the city.

Has anything (negative or positive) changed about you since you became one of us "New Yorkers"?

I feel really happy to live in this city and in this country, and I am lucky to have all these opportunities, but I think I have not changed.

If you could change one thing about NYC, what would that be?

I would decrease the poverty and crime in some neighborhoods. I would like that people respect each other more.

What is your favorite weekend activity in NYC?

I like to walk, visit the Saint Patrick's Cathedral and the Rockefeller Plaza on Fifth Avenue. I think it's a nice place to go.

What is the most memorable experience you have had in NYC?

I've been working at RU for 17 years, and I love working here because people are kind, comprehensive and inclusive. It's been an honor for me to work here.

Bike, MTA or WALK IT???

Good question, I love the bicycle and I have always ridden since I was a teenager. However, here I don't have a bike because it wouldn't fit in my apartment. I use the subway and the bus.

If you could live anywhere else, where might that be?

I belong here, but I also miss my country. Unfortunately, there are two social statuses there: rich and poor. So, I prefer the life quality here or in Florida.

Do you think of yourself as a New Yorker?

Yes!

Life on a Roll

QIONG WANG

One World Trade Center semi-visible under a cloud veil on an overcast morning: this is what the Manhattan skyline looks like from 15 Exchange Pl, Jersey City. I bet it is not often that one gets to catch a glimpse of the new symbolic landmark like this.

One minute after hopping onto the under-river train, I was already at the new World Trade Center PATH transit station in Manhattan, a new establishment completed in 2016. As you might have heard, the outlook of this construction resembles a bird taking off. The first thing in sight off the train was a dazzling huge flag of stars and stripes, hanging down from a lofty white space supported by long parallel comb-like beams. The blue and red flag, the pure white interior, it is minimalism well executed!

