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STIMULUS CHECKS: A REFLECTION OF THE US

By Ira Whitacre

In April 2020, the first stimulus checks started to hit the weary bank accounts of U.S. citizens. More than being a point of political tension, the first round of stimulus checks began to shine brightly as prime internet meme material. At a time when unemployment was sky-

rocketing and the deadly COVID-19 pandemic was at its prime, these \$600-\$1,200 checks were considered laughably low by many on both sides of the political aisle; appearing to be more of a consolation prize than a meaningful gesture by government. Now, in March of 2021, the second round of checks have

begun to trickle into bank accounts and not much has changed.

Under a new administration, unemployment has gone down, deaths due to COVID-19 have decreased, and vaccination rates have drastically increased. Yet, in spite of the increased \$1.9 trillion budget, reactions to this year's

stimulus checks, though they are not as brash, have remained essentially the same. Far left political followers express that the checks are a joke and express concern that they do not address the underlying systemic problems of U.S. society. Far right supporters protest that the checks are a crutch for lazy citizens

and a waste of taxpayer money. More moderate liberals continue to praise the Biden Administration for their forward thinking and heartfelt initiative.

There's no clear evidence as to whose argument carries the greatest merit but it is clear that the stimulus will become yet another argument for an already divided country.

More than anything, the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the weak points and division of American society. What remains to be seen is if the radically diverse population of the United States will be able to pull itself together, or only be pulled further apart by the challenges it has yet to face.

GAMESTOP STOCK "SHOOTS TO THE MOON"

By Eli Jordan

On Jan. 28, 2021 the stock market was shaken to its core when a Reddit board, r/WallStreetBets, shot the price of GameStop stock "to the moon." Wall Street Bets, or WSB, banded together to buy the GameStop stock to help each other's personal gain. Redditor Keith Gill, who also goes by the name DeepF***ingValue, led the charge of average joes to buy the stock. He, as well as many others, made millions of dollars. Gill claims to have made

around \$20 million off the stock.

Two days after the unprecedented rise in GameStop stock, popular stock trading app, Robinhood stopped its users from being able to buy the stock, and urged users to sell it. This is where things really began to heat up. WSB urged the stock's owners to hold on to their stock. Popular day trader, Dave Portnoy, also urged his fanbase to hold on to their stock. They believed Robinhood and other stock trading apps were protecting hedge funds

owned by America's top 1%. A hedge fund is money given to a company by an investor. The company then borrows a stock that is on a downward trend from a stockbroker, then sells the stock immediately, and they wait for the stock to fall in price. Before the company has to return the stock to the stockbroker, they buy the stock back for a cheaper price, and return it to the stockbroker. Hedge funds usually do this with three-to-five-dollar stocks, but on a massive scale for

hundreds of thousands of dollars.

When the new investors heard of why their GameStop stock was no longer able to be purchased, they all banded together to hold on, and make the top 1%, who take advantage of the market, lose money. Multi-million-dollar hedge funds went under or had to be

saved by their investors.

The craziest thing about the whole ordeal was that both Republican and Democrat politicians agreed that what Robinhood was doing should be illegal. U.S. Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez said, "We now need to know more about [Robinhood's] decision to block retail investors from pur-

chasing stock while hedge funds are freely able to trade the stock as they see fit." Republican senator, Ted Cruz, agreed with her statement. He tweeted that he, "fully [agreed]." Robinhood's CEO was taken to court over this, and the verdict has not been reached.

GameStop®

NEWS



PRESIDENT BIDEN SIGNS EXECUTIVE ORDER TO SUPPORT US SUPPLY CHAIN

By Eli Jordan

On the afternoon of Feb. 24, President Biden issued an executive order to help keep the American supply chain in check in case of crisis. Peter Harrell, senior director for international economics and competitiveness, said: “Last year, in the early months of the pandemic, front line health care workers couldn’t find the masks, gloves, or PPE to keep themselves safe as they treated COVID-19 patients. Today, automakers are having to take workers off factory lines because they can’t get access to enough computer chips to maintain production.”

President Biden aims to make sure the United States never has shortages of necessary products in times of crisis. After the shortages of many medical and household products, the president and legislature are doing what they can to make sure similar shortages do not happen again if another crisis arises in America.

Products like chips, for computers and cars, large capacity batteries for electric cars, pharmaceuticals, and pharmaceutical ingre-

dients used in American medicines, and essential minerals that are required for American industry and defense will receive an immediate 100-day evaluation of their supply chains to ensure they are crisis ready.

The EO will also ensure six sector specific reviews of defense, public health, biological preparedness, information and communications technology, transportation, energy, and food production to be completed within the next year. The method used in review is closely modeled after the review system of the Department of Defense’s review structure of the American defense system.

After completing these reviews and evaluations, action will be taken to close gaps and plug holes in the supply chains and systems to ensure the American people never experience shortages as seen in the past 365 days. Agencies will be asked to study risks and other threats to their supply chains to ensure some resilience to their networks and that no errors ever come up again.

THE COVID-19 VACCINE VERSUS NEW COVID-19 VARIANTS

By Ben Hulsmeyer

New and more contagious variants of the COVID-19 virus have been found in the U.S. With this development, the question is asked: do the available COVID-19 vaccines protect against these mutations? Some current vaccines can recognize the variants but they might not provide as much protection. Cory Stieg from CNBC, shares more information on why the vaccines might provide as much protection from the variants. “There are several reasons the antibodies generated after receiving a vaccine might recognize a variant but not fight it as well. For instance, antibodies protect you by attaching to each individual spike protein on the surface of the coronavirus, which prevents it from infecting your cell. If a variant produces many times more virus, the antibodies may not be able to attach to all those virus pieces as precisely or efficiently.”

Three vaccines have been approved for emergency use by the Food and Drug Administration: Moderna, Pfizer-BioNTech and Johnson & Johnson. These vaccines work in

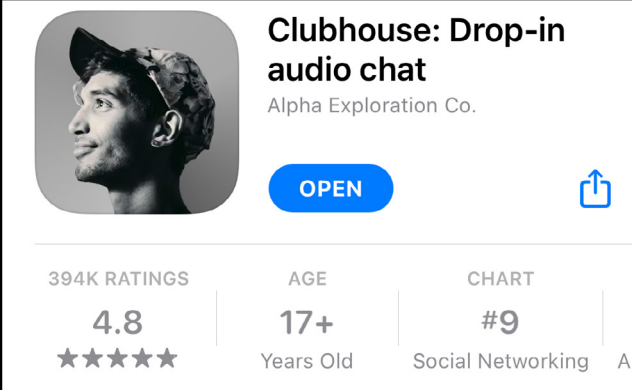
different ways and have different approaches to handling the variants. The Moderna vaccine is planning on adding a third dose as well as a booster shot to deal with variants per Cory Steig at CNBC. The Pfizer-BioNTech is also working on a third booster shot. Pfizer’s Chief Scientific Officer Mikael Dolsten said in an interview on Feb. 25, “We think our vaccine is robustly active against all strain.” There’s “a reasonable possibility” that people will need to get regular booster shots. There’s also a possibility that the company may have to change the strains every few years to adapt. Johnson & Johnson, which is only a single shot dose and the newest vaccine to gain emergency use, is in position to adapt the vaccines to the variants and is working on developing software that will “help address some of these new and emerging variants,” Johnson & Johnson CEO Alex Gorsky said during an interview with CNBC’s Squawk Box on March 1. With these new variants, companies are being forced to adapt as quickly as possible to provide the best and safest options for the people.

NEW SOCIAL MEDIA ALERT: CLUBHOUSE HITS IPHONES

By Alex Goodloe

Launched in April of 2020, this invitation-only app called “Clubhouse” has taken off. The app lets you listen to people’s live conversations like a podcast but with a twist. Clubhouse is an iPhone exclusive app that enables users to either initiate or listen to conversations. Right from technology, sports, and literature, users can discover a bunch of topics. Even with the idea of a social media platform, there is no room for posting pictures or videos at the moment. One of the most intuitive features of Clubhouse is that users have the flexibility to either keep their conversation private or broadcast it among thousands of people. With

completely free use, and devoid of any advertisements, Clubhouse is offering the right versatility to its users. The invite-only feature of Clubhouse is by far the most compelling of all. The elitism ensures that not everyone can just open the App Store and download Clubhouse right away. Unless someone is an existing member, you can’t be a part of Clubhouse. Right after you enter your interest, the app will suggest conversation rooms as well as individuals for you to join or follow. The promotion of freedom of speech while ensuring security is a nifty add-on. The audio chats within the conversation room disappear after a while. In other words, your heart’s content remains a secret.



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VIEWPOINTS

“THE BACHELOR”: REVIEW

By Elle Barrett

Just like any other “Bachelor”/“Bachelorette” season, this one has been filled with drama and excitement: the show has its first ever black bachelor, Matt James, multiple contestants walked onto the show after the season had started, and the “Mean Girls” who were recog-

nized mid-season. The contestants are now narrowed down to the final three after Serena P. sent herself home the week of hometowns. I’ve watched a few previews for the remaining episodes and believe it or not, it looks like things are just now getting good.

From all of “The Bachelor”/“Bachelorette” sea-

sons I’ve watched, I have never seen multiple people walk onto the show and be able to compete to marry The Bachelor or Bachelorette. I don’t think it’s fair to the other contestants, but does it make the show better? Yes, absolutely. Drama like this makes “The Bachelor” more interesting. However, you can definitely tell what

parts of the show are fake. Having five new women walk on to compete for Matt’s heart wasn’t planned but Hannah G. showing up a few short weeks after the other new women probably was.

The new women walking onto “The Bachelor” definitely caused a lot more tension in the mansion and brought out the worst

in some of the original women. The original women, who became bullies, were eventually named the “Mean Girls.” For me, this was the most exciting part to watch in the whole season. At least three women were sent home because of how they treated the others. I was never rooting for any of the Mean Girls to win “The Bachelor,” but

I didn’t want any of them to get sent home too soon. They made everything so dramatic and interesting! The “Women Tell All” episode aired Monday, March 1. There are only two episodes left for this season. Michelle, Bri, and Rachel are the only women still competing to win “The Bachelor.”

THE TRUMP ACQUITTAL

By Mason Duffey

On Tuesday, Feb. 9, former President Donald Trump’s historic second impeachment trial began, on the charge of inciting an insurrection at Capitol Hill. The trial lasted five days when the Senate failed to reach a super majority to convict President Trump, making this the shortest impeachment trial in history. This made Trump the only president to be impeached and acquitted twice.

The impeachment, led by Democrats, claimed that he told his supporters to go to the capitol and “fight like hell.” While Trump did say that, he never called for violence

or for his supporters to start an insurrection. What made this argument look even worse was how many Democrats have been calling for their supporters to fight, harass, and even cause “unrest in the streets.” Democrat leaders have been trying to start a fight and justify their own violence since Trump was elected.

Many Democrat supporters watched and rallied behind their leaders who said they would “fight like hell” for the election this year. Yet, when Trump said it, they claimed he was inciting violence. This shows the clear double standard Democrats have set for politics. They allow themselves to speak against Republicans, riot

and loot across the country all the while claiming that they are on the moral high ground. Yet, when a Republican leader says to fight, and they have a mostly peaceful protest, they see it as reason to silence Republicans and smear the reputation of the party and their leaders.

The acquittal leaves the door open for Trump to run for federal office in the future, which is one reason Democrats were so persistent on convicting him. Once acquitted, Trump praised his victory and went on to say, “This has been yet another phase of the greatest witch hunt in the history of our country.”

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Spectator encourages readers to submit letters to the editor regarding topics covered in the paper. Letters should be no more than 400 words in length and are due to spectator@mcpherson.edu. For printing schedule, please consult with the Editor in Chief. The Spectator reserves the right to edit letters for clarity, space and libel. For any questions, please email us.

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CAMPUS



ED BARR: MORE THAN SHEET METAL

By Elle Barrett

Eleven years ago, Ed Barr first heard about the Automotive Restoration program. At the time, he was working as the director of an art museum. One of his co-workers told him about the college and he was in disbelief that there was such a thing. Without much thought, Barr decided to quit his job and go back to school to pursue a career in automotive restoration. Barr received his bachelor's degree from the University of the South in Seawane, Tenn. He also went to law school for a year

and a half, then went on to graduate school to receive his master's degree in Art History at the University of Kansas.

Sheet metal restoration is Barr's favorite hobby. Most antique cars have problems with the body of the car, and that is where sheet metal restoration is used, because who knows what older vehicles have been through. Barr makes those pieces of metal have an old factory appearance. Barr's other hobbies include reading about the history of the automobile, exercising, watching TV with his family, and spending time with his dogs.

Barr has three sons, ages 25, 20 and 19. The oldest sells racing parts for cars and the youngest attends Marquette University. He and his family are also big dog lovers. They have always had large dogs. His family currently owns one Mastiff, which is his favorite breed, and one Newfoundland. Barr enjoys dogs that weigh just as much as he does. He says since dogs are demanding animals, it lets him forget about his own concerns.

Another big part of Barr's life is art and art history. He used to teach Art History and Museum Studies at Washburn

University in Topeka, Kan. Barr loved being able to use the art collection in the Art History classes. He says being able to look at the work of art adds a lot to the experience. For students it was much better to have the piece in front of them and for him to bring in artifacts. Barr also loved making metal sculptures. "Working with a material like that seems like it would be unyielding because it's so rigid," said Barr. However, he mentioned once you apply heat, you can turn it into



whatever you want.

When asked about why he loved McPherson College, Barr said: "I like being able to help young people find a career path

they love in auto restoration. I've had jobs that are miserable and it's so much fun to have a job you enjoy every day."

QUARANTINING IN QUARANTEAMS

By Junior Silva

Since the start of the Spring semester, students at McPherson College have been given the opportunity to be a part of a project called Quaranteams. The idea of this initiative is to allow students to interact with each other while keeping the circle small. Each week teams of 2-5 are allowed to request funds to fund their adventures. This could be

ordering take out, watching movies, study dates, or playing games. By doing this, the team is supposed to be limiting the amount of people they interact with, slowing the spread of COVID-19. Teams need to complete 10 hours of community service, attend at least one campus event, and host two study halls. The work required seems to be worth the reward of being paid to hang out with friends. Teams

are encouraged to document their events by taking photos of themselves with their team banner. "My Quaranteams experience has been so much fun," said freshman Taylor Bohannon. "Brittany, Junior, Mackenzie, and I have all been able to hang out in a safe and COVID-19 friendly manner, all while getting to do it for free. I mean, who doesn't want free money? My favorite event that we have done so

far is going to get Chipotle in Wichita. We jammed all the way to and from. We only almost died once, but I blame the Wichita driver for that. All in all, Quaranteams has made for a more enjoyable second semester. I look forward to seeing what other adventures our Abby Lee and the Quarantined group gets into."

M QUARANTEAM BUBBLES

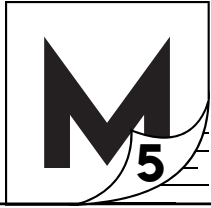
GET PAID TO HANG OUT

3 SIMPLE STEPS

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- REGISTER YOUR TEAM
- PLAN YOUR HANG OUT

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E3 PODCAST GOES LIVE

By Ira Whitacre

The E3 Podcast is an interview-based show

that is built upon the core ideals of McPherson College. The “E3” name is a multi-faceted ref-

erence that hints to the three founding pillars of McPherson College: Scholarship, Participation, and Service. However, “E3” primarily stands for the enterprising model that the college both lives by and teaches to its students: explore, experience, and engage. The podcast represents a dedicated move, by both faculty and students alike, to connect in a time when connection is at its most vulnerable. MC’s Executive Director of Career Services, Amy Beckman, said, “Our goal is to continue...(to) get connected and stay connected.” The podcast is due to air its first episode

before the end of March and will continue to release twice-monthly over the course of the following weeks, and plans to have produced six episodes by the end of the 2021 Spring semester. The interviews will be conducted and edited by MC’s own Jacob Reed, who is currently serving as The Podrangle Studio Manager. Active participation by both the faculty and students of MC will preserve a rich and advantageous learning environment. The long-term goal of the E3 Podcast is to create a bridge between current MC students and MC alumni who have recently traveled the collegiate path, but have

also done the hard work of breaking into professional spheres of their own. E3, depending on its reception, aims to make itself a staple of MC life. Eventually it will become a continuous library of knowledge and experience where students can absorb an array of experience, advice, and wisdom of those who have come before. As any good podcast, E3 will be available on the most widely used streaming platforms, such as Spotify and Apple Podcasts. But, the most beneficial way to listen to the podcast will be from its own website, [“mce3.transistor.fm.”](http://mce3.transistor.fm) This website can be found through a link on MC’s

alumni page or by simply typing the web address into a search bar. Episodes will be posted and catalogued for long-term listeners. “Give it a chance,” said Monica Rice, Director of Alumni and Constituent Relations at McPherson College. At 20 minutes a piece, E3 is an accessible and flexible resource that can be retrieved at almost any time and any place. The podcast is a progressive step for MC in providing its students with accessible and meaningful resources to advance their education and to, of course, help them explore, experience, and engage with the world that waits beyond.



STUDENT ACTIVITIES NOW IN PERSON

By Jason Okoro

All through first semester, most of the school’s activities moved online due to COVID-19. These activities can now be held in-person and see each other. For the whole month of March, Student Life and Bulldog Adven-

tures are presenting Lawn Games 2021. The games being played are spikeball, ladderball, Kan Jam, and croquet. Spikeball, ladderball, and Kan Jam have already passed. Croquet will be on March 22 & 25. To participate in this event, pre-register using the QR code provided in MC Hap-

penings emails and meet at the gazebo at 6:30 p.m. on the specified days. You don’t want to miss these events!

McPherson College needs a couple more volunteers for their partnership with Meals on Wheels. They deliver the route on Thursdays and

pick up meals around 11:20 at the hospital. If you are interested in delivering for Meals on Wheels and have some questions, please email studentlife@mcperson.edu.

Bowling is back, so mark your calendar to attend bowling on Tuesdays with your friends and enjoy

some games!

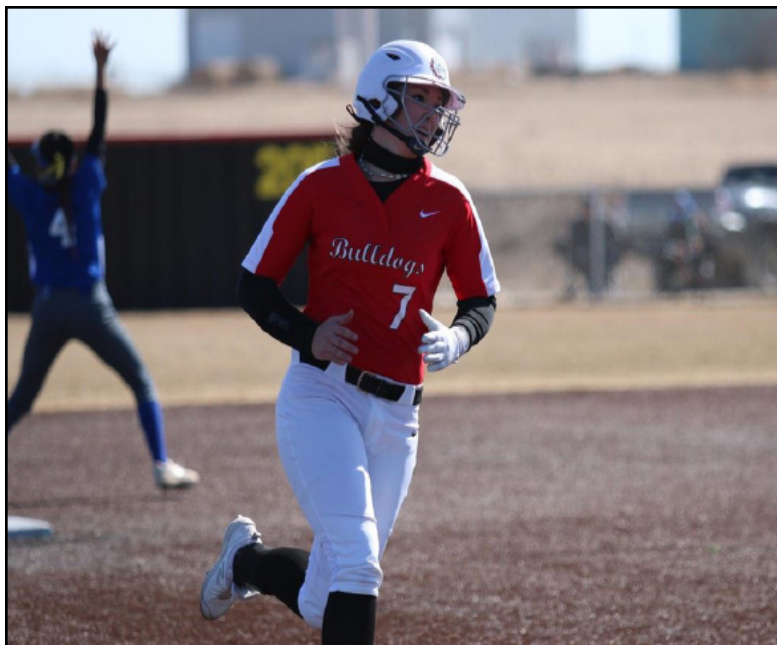
Students being able to finally go to some in-person events will help bring the feeling of being a college student back. However, all events that are in person will maintain social distancing and masks will be required to attend the events. This is to main-

tain the safety of all the students and faculty members here at McPherson College, as the last thing we want is a repeat of Spring 2020.

SPORTS



SOFTBALL STRIVES FOR CONFERENCE CHAMPIONS



By Natalia Ahrens

“Expectations are high. The team knows that. We accept it. We will work hard every day to get to the goals that we want to accomplish,” Head Coach Tony Segovia estab-

lishes the level of intensity the women play with. After the Bulldogs had their 2019-2020 season taken away from them due to COVID-19, they are thrilled to be back on the field. After 10 games, they are currently 5-5. Senior Maile Deuch currently has the team’s highest batting average, with a .481 with 27 at

bats. The most strikeouts in one game is currently nine, set by sophomore Raegan Kleppe. Their next

home game is against Friends University on March 24 at 2:00 p.m.



(Left) Senior Brandy Trengrove runs from base to base. Photo by Paul Choi (Right) Senior Destiny Bacon prepares to hit the pitch. Photo by Natalia Ahrens

SENIOR SPOTLIGHT: CORI ALEXANDER



By Natalia Ahrens

Two sports in four years at McPherson College. Not many people accomplish this, but senior Cori Alexander is one of those few. She started her

first three years playing softball, and switched to track and field to become a thrower. The path during her sports here wasn’t always smooth, she said: “the biggest thing I had to overcome was having a coach who didn’t believe in mental illness. As an athlete who deals with mental illness and having

teammates who deal with it as well, it was tough for all of us. However, we picked up each other every single day and made each other feel like we mattered.” She is looking forward to her and her teammates “break their own PRs and see all of our hard work pay off!” The first outdoor track meet will be March

19, 2021, at Emporia State University. Alexander is a sports management major, and she has recently found a passion in healthcare, and hopes to be a Physician Assistant after she graduates McPherson College.

Photo courtesy of Cori Alexander



SPORTS

MEN'S SOCCER STARTS SPRING SEASON

By: Nipho Methula

The McPherson College men's soccer team got off to a great start in their spring season. They started early February with two exhibition games against Division two school Newman University and Wichita Academy, which both

ended in victories for the Bulldogs. Both these games did not count on their record. The Bulldogs had one of their toughest tasks of the season, taking on the number 17 team in the nation: Mid America Nazarene University on the road. The men were able to put together an impressive performance and

get the win. Unfortunately, fast forward four days and the team suffered their first loss of the spring, falling to Benedictine University. However, the future is still bright for our men as they still have a good chance to make it to the national tournament.

Sophomore Antoine Detavernier dribbles past a defender.
Photo by Natalia Ahrens



Photo by Jakob Komel

SENIOR SPOTLIGHT: FREDERICK WATTS

By Ben Hulsmeyer

Frederick Watts is a senior and team captain on McPherson's Men's Basketball team. Fred is a business and accounting major from Channelview, Texas. When asked what it meant being a senior during COVID-19, Watts said, "it diminished the

enjoyment of college and connecting with peers of this mass." Watts was also asked if it was harder to lead his team during this time. He said: "it was definitely more difficult. I had to sit out due to COVID-19, and got out of shape even more. I didn't have the chance to do the team bonding activi-

ties to really build that relationship. On a team, the freshmen naturally look to their senior to set an example." Watts said it was harder to bond with the younger players because of COVID-19. "There was less in-person communication, as there would be. There were no team bonding activities." The team

certainly looks to Watts as a leader on and off the court during his time at McPherson College. His contributions to the team have shown in the team's record and in Watts, himself, being named a KCAC Honorable mention.

VIEWPOINTS



CARS ON THE CORNER WITH MASON DUFFEY

Many restoration students have great stories about how they acquired their project car, but some of the best stories are when they have been handed down from relatives. This is the case for student Brandon Chaffin who got his 1975 Ford F350 from his grandpa, who bought the truck new.

Chaffin was fifteen when they pulled the truck out of his grandpa's prop-

erty where it had sat for around 20 years. He and his family spent some time doing basic maintenance as well as replacing the brakes, tires, cleaning the gas tank. Once they had it running, he drove the truck with his mom and brother, from Santa Cruz, Calif. to Austin, Texas.

He continued to drive the truck throughout high school and is still fond of the memories and friends

he made with the truck while working on it in his auto-shop class. Like many gearheads, he enjoyed driving his project as a teenager, having the feeling of freedom being behind the wheel in his own ride.

Since he got the truck, he has continued to do basic maintenance on it and drive it as much as he can. He has also stayed away from modifying the truck

too much as he wants to keep the truck as it was when his grandpa drove it back in the day. And just like his grandpa, he continues to use the truck to haul his other projects around. Although there are two modifications, he said they are some of his favorite parts of the truck, one of which is the custom horn he installed, which has the sound of a cow, that pro-



vides a laugh for everyone around when he honks.

Chaffin is currently a junior in the auto restoration program and hopes to work in the painting

side of restoration after graduating and plans on continuing to drive his grandpa's truck for as long as possible.

THE WORST AUTOMOTIVE TRENDS

By Spencer Ice

Many people in the car world say that all vehicles and project cars should be respected. While I can agree with this in most circumstances, I have to still ask, where do we draw the line for builds? Because some

trends and vehicle modifications look ridiculous, and quite frankly, unnecessary. In this article, I am going to go through modifications that are considered some of the worst alterations people do to their projects.

First and perhaps the most horrifying is the "Carolina Squat." What is the Carolina Squat? I really wish you didn't ask. The Carolina Squat is

where an individual takes their truck or SUV, lifts the front of the vehicle, and lowers the rear. It seriously looks like the truck is trying to take a dump on the pavement. What possess people to do this? We may never know, but this trend started because of Baja 1000. The Baja 1000 is a racing series where trucks race through the desert and are built to jump and handle rough driving conditions. These modified trucks have a slightly lowered suspension in the rear-end to help with easy landing and prevent crashing upon touchdown. For some reason, people took this as inspiration and thought

squatting their bone stock Chevy truck would look great. Well, I hate to break it to everyone out there, but this just looks dumb.

The second most ridiculous trend is stretching tires. This is obnoxious looking and unsafe. Stretching tires is taking a tire that is too narrow for a rim and stretching it to fit that rim. This can result in a poor seal where the tire and rim meet to seal and keep the tire from leaking. People usually do this to minimize the view of the tire and maximize the view of their rims. However, tires are not engineered or developed to fit a rim that is too wide. This can cause issues if you hit a pothole

or curb, and you can pop a tire or lose air very quickly.

The last trend that I am going to pick on is stancing a car. Stancing involves lowering a car's suspension and angling the tires outward. This trend has no use except for its look, and if they are aiming to look bizarre, they succeeded. This actually reduces the car's performance, and when the suspension has no travel left, the tires have to work hard to compensate. Many car owners also mix stancing their vehicles with stretched wheels. With this disastrous mix of modifications, the car will take bumps like a china cabinet falling down the stairs, and handle like

a nun carrying a refrigerator. Needless to say, this is a terrible modification.

I'm sure there are people in the world who want to defend these trends, however, some of these modifications are just getting out of hand. These trends are either unsafe, reduce any redeeming quality about your vehicle or are just plain ridiculous. So whether you are considering squatting your Chevy Silverado, stancing your Honda Civic, or thinking that it may be a great idea to stretch some tires onto your rims, please do us all a favor and reconsider your life choices.

