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►Movie Review

An enticing review on Mike Cheslik's "Hundreds of Beavers"

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This is the story of Jean Kayak, a disgraced applejack salesman, a cider connoisseur and the only fur trapper in the state of Wisconsin drunk enough to stand up to the most vengeful pack of beavers the world has ever seen.

"Hundreds of Beavers" is a bizarre but wonderful near-silent black-and-white slapstick comedy which, despite a small budget and an even smaller crew, has captured the hearts of audiences all over America. This absurdly ridiculous tale of man vs. beaver is a product of the partnership of director Mike Cheslik and actor Ryland Brickson Cole Tews, who are also responsible for the "Lake Michigan Monster," which came out in 2018. The filming of "Hundreds of Beavers" took place in Wisconsin, with a few sequences being shot in the ice caves of Lake Superior. Despite a scarcity of resources and a budget of $150,000, the filmmakers managed to manufacture a dreamlike, snowy nineteenth-century American wilderness, filled to the brim with hundreds (possibly thousands) of beavers, wolves, rabbits, raccoons, maggots, flies and smug fish puppets.

Drawing heavily from classic comedy sources like Buster Keaton, Charlie Chaplin, Abbot and Costello, Monty Python, and the Looney Tunes, "Hundreds of Beavers" carves out its own place in the pantheon of film history with great wit, lots of falling over and a strong conviction that slapstick simply doesn't age.

It is fitting, perhaps, that the name of Kayak's distillery is Acme Applejack, borrowing from the company responsible for all the tools used by Wile E. Coyote in his pursuit of the Road Runner. There is much to say about the cartoon nature of the story world, its characters and the overall narrative structure.

The film foregoes any attempt to establish a sense of realism, opting not to animate the hundreds if not thousands of animals that permeate the story world. Instead, it uses storyboards, title cards and back projections that give a truly storybook feeling of suspended reality.

The beavers are played by actors wearing oversized cartoon costumes, and there is a horse that is essentially two actors in a makeshift costume—you know, the kind you may see in a high school play.

It all works, however, and as you watch the film and let yourself be immersed in this zany fever dream of a film, you start to accept that animals' eyes become huge X's when they've been captured in one of Kayak's ever-increasingly insane traps.

As appealing as it would be to continue musing about the vivid creativity and thoughtfulness with which the film was conceived and brought to life, there is more to the story than the plethora of visual gags and delightfully devilish packs of beavers transforming a dam into a bad guy lair. "Hundreds of Beavers" is a story of love, survival and making sense of the absurd world that surrounds us.

The hero, Jean Kayak, wakes up famished, seeing his distillery burnt down, and has to somehow procure food before he dies of starvation. As he learns to survive, Kayak exchanges pelt for tools and eventually falls in love with the daughter of the pelt merchant he works with. He struggles with alcohol addiction and learns how to make something out of nothing. All of this goes well with the fact that "Hundreds of Beavers" took Cheslik and Ryland over six years to sketch out, film, edit and release a truly independent film manifesto at a time when so many projects don't see the light of day and get buried deep in the vaults of Warner Bros. The film shows young aspiring filmmakers that even when working with a limited budget and starting with something so simple as the notion of people falling over being funny, miracles can be made.

For all the entertainment value and thrilling suspense, there's a heartwarming simplicity in Jean Kayak's trial-and-error struggles against the wilderness, near-death encounters with beavers and wanton wooing of the merchant's daughter (as the man threatens him with a shotgun nonetheless).For all that matters the film makes you care and keeps you on the edge of your seat, which is an admirable achievement for a low-budget silent B&W picture. "Hundreds of Beavers" is an absolute delight—a wild, creative and hilarious adventure that breaks the mold of modern filmmaking.

Beneath all the craziness, however, there's an underdog story of persistence and survival that resonates.

It has instantly become a timeless classic and powerhouse of absurd entertainment. Whether watching alone or with a group of friends, the film is sure to give you a good time and plenty of laughs.

You can rent it now on Amazon Prime for less than $3 and see for yourself that "Hundreds of Beavers" is a must-see.

►Fashion Review

Fashion for fall: setting the seen beginning with Saltburn and tweed

By Em Karsten
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A new year means a new wave of fashion trends falling into place. Contrary to the summer heat in September, stores and I are patiently waiting for the fall season to come full swing, bringing new trends, new colors and what to look for. Some of the more interesting trends I am seeing draw from some of the media from the winter in particular.

There is also a new cycle of fall colors to expect, with the classics staying there.

Looking at the clothes for the season, one can see that there is a stray from focusing on basics to dressing to impress.

Interestingly, on social media, there seems to be this call to a Saltburn aesthetic trend, which, in my eyes, defeats the purpose of the movie; however, I am mainly here for fashion.

Tweeds and knits are hitting the runway with long coats partnering them. Long skirts seem to be coming back from last year again, creating that classic silhouette. It also seems that yarn is a new textile showing up beyond sweaters and into coats for the season.

Like last year, leather jackets, high-waisted pants and low-waisted pants are returning once more. Fringe and sparkles seem to be the add-ons for the season as well, from bags to jackets. These two add-ons seem to be joining the fall.

A couple trends that I don't love seeing in the fall would be the rise of microtrends coming back for another season. Historically, microtrends have never really lasted longer than a season, even just a couple of months, and it will also lead to more fashion waste. Y2K comes to mind as a microtrend slowly starting to fade.

There is a difference between a personal style—something that makes you happy and speaks to who you are compared to a rise of a trend—and letting go of that trend lasting less than one season.

Moving on to colors, the new colors for the seasons are light golden, teal, red-orange and leafy green.

The new colors add to the list of core colors for the seasons, joining the new trends at the start of the season.

The core colors fall back into cream, brown, grey, and dark blue. The core colors normally stay the same for a couple of years at a time, allowing there to be a consistent color palette for the seasons.

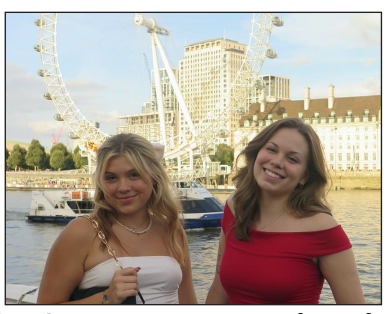
A new school year brings trends sprouting up within our campus. I look forward to seeing the different styles a new year brings us.

With fall slowly creeping up on the calendar, so will the trends that follow suit.

Personally, I find the start of a new season allows us to explore new styles that will last us for many falls ahead.

►Study Abroad Column

Letters from London: an (un)official self-guided walking tour in the city



By Summer Langva and Kayla Anderson
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Picture this: two wide-eyed, passport-wielding Bennies fresh off the plane, ready to conquer London. Armed with enthusiasm, Citymapper, and a questionable knowledge of British culture, we've officially set up camp in the land of red phone booths, royal palaces and unpredictable weather (Spoiler alert: we still haven't figured out when it's appropriate to carry an umbrella and have gotten ourselves caught in the rain).

In this column, we'll be your tour guides—except, unlike actual tour guides, we tend to get hopelessly lost, trip over cobblestones (more so Kayla than Summer, which she takes great offense to), and make an art form out of getting on the wrong tube. Between us, we've mastered the intricate science of trying to understand British accents while secretly Googling "what does 'innit' mean?" under the table.

We're here to give you an unfiltered, slightly chaotic, but always entertaining glimpse into our study abroad adventures. So buckle up and get ready for tales of Tube mishaps, tea disasters and our ongoing quest to figure out how to cross the street without being hit by a red double-decker bus.

We'd like to think we're looking more like locals by the minute, but let's be honest, we are still firmly in the adjustment period. As such, there's a few things we've learned that feel worth sharing for this first installment, and maybe they can apply to your CSB+SJU adventures back across the pond too.

Lesson one: public transportation is a gift.

We imagine when we come home, we will be sitting on the Link for hours trying to recreate the feeling the Tube gives us daily.

Want to go to Big Ben on a whim? Tap your Oyster transport card (pre-loaded by our institution with unlimited travel between Zones 1 and 2, thank you very much) follow the signs, hop on the right tube (mind the gap), plot about how to steal and bring home the dog sitting with the guy next to you because you miss your pets, and then walk right off in a brand-new place.

Let's also not forget that where the tube fails, there are buses/trains/bikes to fill in the blanks. We wish we had more of this back in the states, so don't take your morning Link commute for granted (and please thank your bus drivers).

Author's note: In the interest of only saying nice things about the transportation here, we'd like to disregard the time we went all the way to Camden during our first night taking the tube just to realize we didn't know why we were there and that we were lost.

We then tried to get back on the tube home when the doors closed and left half of our friend group stranded on the platform. (This is not a joke. Kayla made it on while Summer stood behind the glass and looked like she was going to faint because her phone was almost dead, and Kayla was the only one in the group with the directions pulled up. No, of course we don't have separation anxiety, why do you ask?) The important thing is that everyone made it back to the flats safely, just about 30 minutes apart.

Lesson two: don't trust your shoes.

If you think you've successfully "broken in" your shoes for walkable cities like London, you haven't. Averaging 20,000 steps a day will teach you this lesson extremely quickly. And especially don't be like Summer who wore brand new heels on day two and proceeded to give herself blisters that are (seriously) still not healed. Kayla was concerned there was a chance of infection. We're still monitoring the situation.

The moral is: Get yourself some nice cushioned shoe inserts for your Quad stair treks, or any other journeys (Chapel Walk anyone?)

Lesson three: if you are the worst cook on the planet like Kayla, your life may be a tad difficult...hooray for forcing yourself to learn new skills.

Some study abroad programs have limited food plans, some don't. Here on the London program, we are 100% on the hook for our own meals.

This has been a trial by fire for Kayla, who regularly burns toast and relies on her food-enthusiast Johnnie boyfriend and Gorecki to save her (hi TJ).

As an extra challenge, food in British grocery stores has much quicker expiration dates— either you eat it within three-ish days, or it goes bad (makes you wonder what in the world we are putting in American food that makes it last so long...)

At least Summer can (sort of) cook and has become the appointed chef in Metrogate Flat 19. There is a silver lining to everything folks, but maybe teach yourself some new survival skills this week, like cooking eggs or something.

Lesson four: Go to the museum exhibitions or community events. Book the random activities you found on Tik Tok. Just do it.

Most of the museums here in London have free admission (hooray for the broke college kids), but additional experiences and exhibits go for a small fee. Booking tickets for special events can even get you discounted drinks and food at a restaurant in the National Portrait Gallery that would ordinarily be way above our tax bracket (it was great, by the way).

Case in point: In October we are making custom purses in Edinburgh, Scotland, because Kayla found a video of the shop and sent it to Summer back in August during a late-night Tik Tok scroll.We quite literally created an entire trip around this activity and are dying to get on the train already and go.

Whether you're back at home in St. Joe, planning your spring break (already?) or getting ready to study abroad later, find experiences wherever you are.

Go with your friends. Make a whole day (or a weekend) out of it. We've found plenty of free activities here too, which is especially true back at CSB+SJU with so many clubs organizing things for you to do. Get up and find stuff to look forward to.

As our first weeks in London come to a close, we're planning on doing and seeing everything we possibly can and documenting it for your reading pleasure.

Here's to the next few months of becoming honorary Brits, and the start of your CSB+SJU fall semester back on our home turf.

We'll be living vicariously through each other, okay?