

Gran Torino makes my day, pur

John Hurlburt
The Clackamas Print

Whenever Clint Eastwood is holding a gun on the cover of a movie, it's usually a sign that viewers are in for something great. The only difference this time is he's 78 and it's showing. The good news is that's the point.

'Gran Torino' is the story of Walt Kowalski (Eastwood) a retired veteran of the Korean War who ever since, hasn't been able to adjust fully to the regular world and he seems to hold a certain level of contempt for everyone in it. His self absorbed family doesn't help to improve his position. All throughout the movie, like a pack of vultures, they hint at trying to pick apart his estates before he is even dead.

His granddaughter in the very beginning of the movie at the funeral of Walt's wife asks him flat out if she can have his car when he is dead. His face cringes in disgust and he just walks out on her, a display that happens many more times throughout the movie.

The disappointment faced by Walt also stems from what one would assume to be his worst nightmare - the neighborhood he has lived in for nearly all his life has fallen into shambles and become a melting pot mostly inhabited by Hmong people.

Walt's disgust with his new neighbors shines in brilliant apparentness when a fight between

his new next door neighbor Toa and Toa's cousin, a member of a bottom of the barrel gang 'The Spider,' breaks into Walt's yard. In retaliation, he grabs his old war rifle, an M1 Garand, and points it at the gangsters telling them he isn't afraid to pull the trigger.

Eastwood's character puts a whole new spin on the old cliché of an old man yelling, "Get off my lawn!" Instead of laughing uncontrollably, I just focused on the fact that he may as well of been saying, "Do you feel lucky punk? Well do you?" He makes the phrase terrifying.

His performance as a disgruntled old man trying to make it by in the world is nothing short of astounding. He was born to play in 'The Dollars Trilogy,' the same way he was born to play Walt Kowalski in 'Gran Torino.' Just instead of being a young quick draw, he is an old racist man who never quite caught up with the times.

Throughout the movie the racism depletes as he befriends his new Hmong neighbors and takes their son under his wing, but the racial slurs don't. As a friend said to me, this movie almost seems as if it was an excuse to use every racial slur made for Asians. It doesn't stop there, however. It attacks every race from the Irish to African Americans, but instead of being offensive and over the top, it makes sense for a man stuck 40 years in the past.

The movie focuses just as much on the decline of Americana as it does on anything else.

Everywhere in the world you see young people being disrespectful and Eastwood's appalled face noticing it. He finds hope in his neighbors and ultimately the movie becomes worth watching on multiple levels not because it's an action flick because it's not. Instead, this is a movie that deals with changing times, American values and the fragility of life and death, an issue that goes back and forth between Walt, the seemingly know-it-all of death, and his priest, the gleaming beacon meant to represent life.

The supporting cast is a collection of no-names and first time actors assembled more for realism than for their acting ability but it is in no way hindering to the overall feeling of the movie. Instead of emotions being over-dramatized, the viewer gets the feeling they are actually in a Midwest town and not tinsel town.

'Gran Torino,' isn't the best film in 2008 and it does show the signs of what may have been a lower budget. However, Eastwood's outstanding acting and a story that sends a message out to all Americans in one way or another about what it is to be in modern America make it a film more than worth watching. Plus this movie may be our last chance to hear Eastwood saying things like, "I used to pile guys like you five high and use your bodies as sand bags," on the big screen. It's a must see for Eastwood fans and a good way to spend 10 bucks for anyone who isn't.



Contributed by W

What do you expect of Obama?



Ariane Amstutz

"Oh my goodness, great things will happen."



Giovanni Lowry

"Oh God, I hope he gets the deficit under control. I hope he brings the guys back from the war. I think he will attempt to do those things."



Dominick Walker

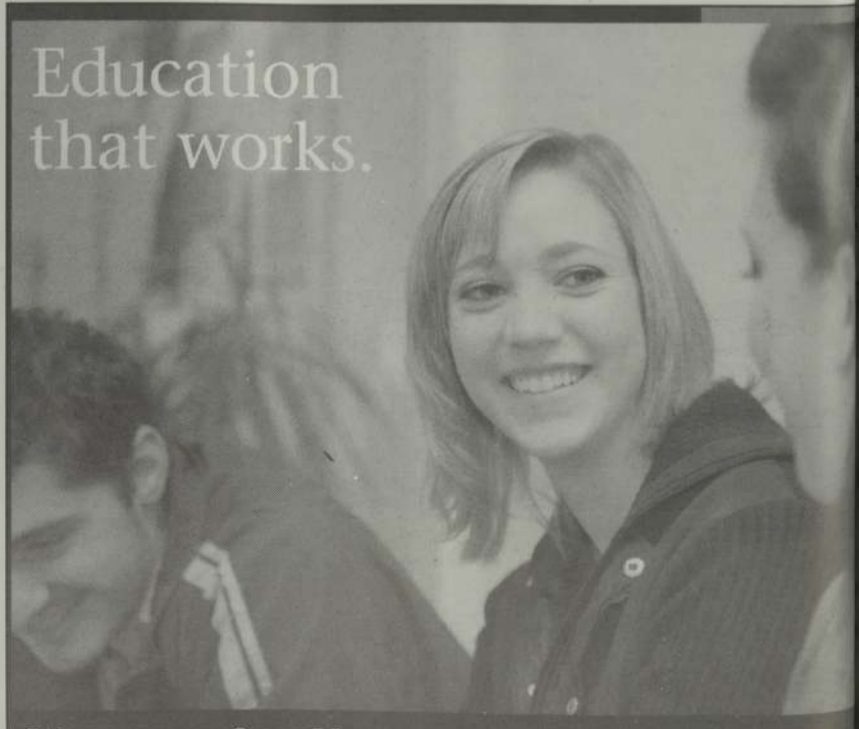
"I think it will be a positive change. I think this is what we needed."

Health Fair participants needed!

Bill Brod Community Center
Wednesday, Feb. 18
11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

If you want to help educate Clackamas staff and students about health issues or provide community resources, please e-mail at mbaker@clackamas.edu or stop by their office to fill out a

Education that works.



WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY
VANCOUVER

360-542-XXXX
www.vancouver.wsu.edu