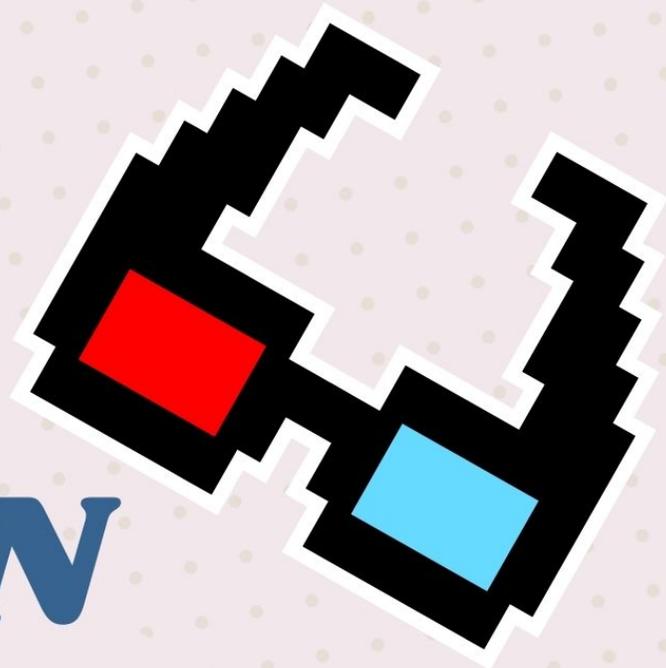


MSC Aggie  
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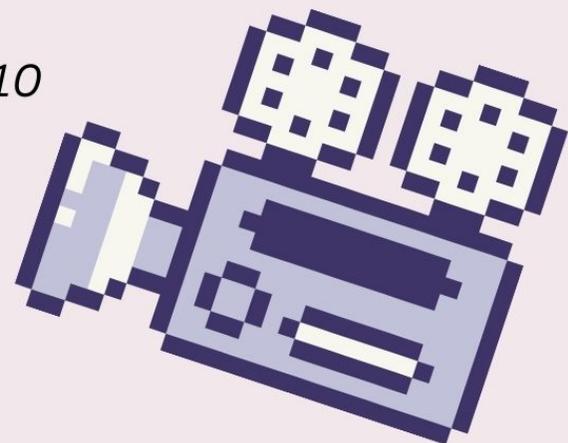


**NEWSLETTER**  
**SPRING 2023**  
**Volume No. 8**

# ***INSIDE THIS EDITION***



- **Dedication to Penny Ditton, former Aggie Cinema Advisor,** *page 3*
- **Jenny Slate Event Recap,** by Connor Field, *page 4*
- **Meet the New Chair,** by Austin Baltes, *page 5*
- **The Super Mario Bros. Movie** review, by Sam Brady, *page 6*
- **The Big Event 2023,** by Shelby Morris, *page 7*
- **Interview with a former MSC Chair: Liam Morris** by Carlo Dal Colletto, *page 8*
- **AggieCinema.TAMU.edu Streaming Site Update** by Armando Vasquez, *page 9*
- **Meet a new Exec: Aarya Kanuru,** *page 10*
- **Ways to Sponsor,** *page 11*
- **Thank you to our Sponsors,** *page 12*





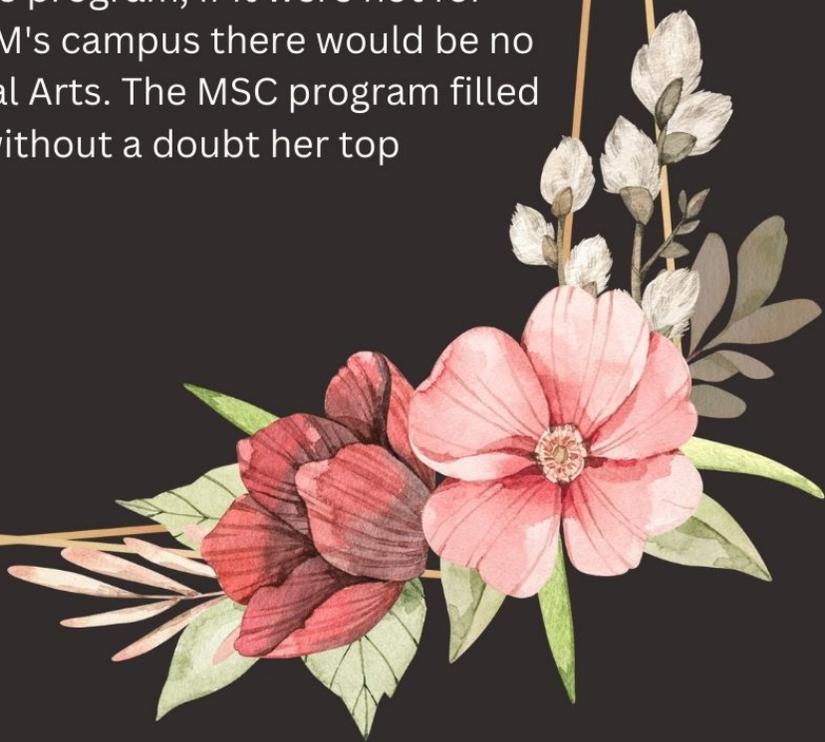
## In memory of Penelope "Penny" Ditton



Penelope "Penny" Wheeler Ditton, a long-time advisor to the MSC Aggie Cinema (aka MSC Film Society) and MSC Hospitality passed away on May 21, 2023.

She has joined her beloved husband Robert B. Ditton, PhD and canine pals Charlie and Kaiser. Surviving her are her daughters Allison Ditton Winger and Megan Ditton, and granddaughter Zoe Winger.

She advised one of the largest media events in Texas A&M history when Film Society hosted director Spike Lee in 1993. She was the co-creator of the Texas Film Festival. She was told by the faculty head of the program, if it were not for the Texas Film Festival on A&M's campus there would be no film studies program in Liberal Arts. The MSC program filled the void, but students were without a doubt her top priority.



# Jenny Slate

Event Recap by Connor Field



MSC Aggie Cinema proudly hosted actress, writer, producer, and comedian Jenny Slate this April. We screened her recent animated film *Marcel the Shell with Shoes On* (2022) followed by a Q&A with Ms. Slate, moderated by Dr. Patrick Sullivan from Texas A&M's Film Studies faculty. Ms. Slate co-wrote and produced the film, and she also co-created the original character of Marcel the Shell for the 2010 web series. Jenny Slate is known for her work on films such as: *The Lorax*, *Secret Life of Pets*, *Obvious Child* and many other projects.

Some Aggie Cinema Students were selected to meet with Jenny Slate in her greenroom where they got to have in-depth conversations with her and ask questions. Everyone who met her describes Jenny as "Absolutely Incredible" and they appreciated how "incredibly thoughtful and insightful" she is.

On a personal note, having the opportunity to talk to someone in the film and entertainment industry was an unbelievable experience and asking the right questions can make it just as insightful as it is exhilarating.

# Meet the New Chair

## Austin Baltes



Howdy! My name is Austin Baltes, and I am incredibly excited to be serving as the MSC Aggie Cinema Chair for the 2023-2024 school year. I am a mechanical engineering senior from Southlake, Texas, and can't wait to work with the incredible students on our Executive Team and all our members.

When I joined Aggie Cinema in 2020, the entirety of my college experience was through a screen. During these times Aggie Cinema allowed me to befriend people with similar interests and helped me feel like I still had somewhat of a normal freshman year. Over the next two years, I served as Arthouse Director and then Vice Chair, organizing screenings both for Aggie Cinema and programs that allowed us to aid other organizations throughout Texas A&M University

This coming year, I hope to continue to foster the same welcoming environment that Aggie Cinema showed me when I joined and allowing students to form bonds through their shared appreciation of movies. I also hope to show a more diverse lineup of films that can draw in larger audiences at Aggie Cinema events. I'm looking forward to serving and I hope that I can give back to Aggie Cinema that has given so much to me.

# SUPER MARIO BROS.™

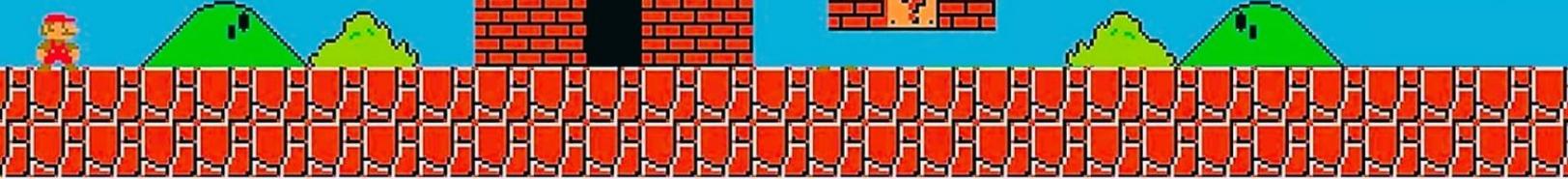
Review by Sam Brady

Here's the thing: I'm biased. *The Super Mario Bros. Movie* is aimed at an audience of people who grew up playing Super Mario games and are now old enough to pay for a movie ticket. This cloying marketability, however, does not overshadow how happy the movie is to exist and have fun.

I was impressed with how many elements of the Super Mario world were crammed into such a short movie. At ninety two minutes, there isn't much fat to be trimmed. The Mario Movie doesn't waste time explaining things. Mushrooms make you grow. Bricks float. Those are just the reality of the world and further explanation is not needed, nor does it ever come. And while this movie doesn't explain its rules, it does follow them. After a while, you'll be able to keep track of which elements do what. All in all, I'd call it a pretty good example of visual worldbuilding.

There was a lot of buzz about the film's bizarre casting. Luckily, the writing channels everyone's personalities very well. While I, personally, don't like Seth Rogan as Donkey Kong, he is faithfully written as Mario's rival, and that rivalry leads to some chuckles.

Admittedly, I am the target demographic of this franchise film, which makes it hard to separate my own love for the brand from the quality of the movie. Will you like *The Super Mario Bros. Movie* as much as I did if you haven't played the games? Probably not, but it's still hard to call it bad. There isn't really anything to chew on here. Super Mario Bros. has always been entertaining at face value, and that's all this adaptation really needed to be to succeed.



# THE BIG EVENT 2023

By Shelby Morris

For this year's Big Event, we helped a long term A&M professor John Crompton and his wife, a gardening extraordinaire, with their backyard. Six of MSC Aggie Cinema volunteers spent the day moving rocks from their creek onto a covered culvert, to prevent water from stagnating. We also trimmed low hanging tree branches. When the day was done, the stream flowed much more easily and paths were less obstructed by low limbs. During our lunch break, our hosts took the time to get to know us and ask our opinions about how College Station might be improved for TAMU students. Since he serves on many committees in the area, John Crompton (namesake of John Crompton Park on Holleman Dr W) is just the man we needed to talk to about creating bike lanes and fostering public transportation. It was a wonderful opportunity to learn, be heard, and serve. We're deeply grateful to have had so many committee members volunteer this year and I'm sure next year's event will be just as fulfilling and delightful!



# INTERVIEW WITH A FORMER MSC AGGIE CINEMA CHAIR: LIAM MORRIS '20



**AC:** What was your favorite MSC Aggie Cinema event?

**Liam:** "The Room". At that time I was still new to the club, so I was somewhat nervous to dress as the one and only Tommy Wiseau, but it led to so many fun interactions. It was the first of many times that I would dress up for screenings. Not to mention, the audience was so interactive with the film, it was just so great to see.

**AC:** What were some challenges that you faced as a chair?

**Liam:** COVID was easily my biggest challenge. I served as chair in spring 2020, right as the pandemic hit, and I had really only just gotten into the swing of things as chair. Everything changed, and we had to cancel many screenings and events. Despite that, I was thankful to have such a wonderful club to stay interactive through the rest of the semester through Zoom events and activities

**AC:** What have you been doing since graduation?

**Liam:** Since graduating, I have completed three out of five years of my Ph.D. at UT Austin (don't worry, I'm still an Aggie). I've also continued dressing up for movies, though rather than Tommy Wiseau I dress as Spider-Man and other costumed superheroes. It's so much fun, and incredibly rewarding to see people's faces light up when I embody their favorite characters

**AC:** That's cool that you do Spider-Man cosplay, have you seen the new Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse movie

**Liam:** I loved it. Easily the most beautiful animated film I've ever seen. Still figuring out where it sits in my personal ranking, but I'm still thinking about it over a week later which I think is a good sign

**AC:** Do you have any advice for the incoming Aggie Cinema students?

**Liam:** As for advice, I'd say to look for leadership in places you don't expect it. Include everyone in the conversation, especially those who aren't always vocal, because they may surprise you and help change Aggie Cinema for the better



# AGGIECINEMA.TAMU.EDU STREAMING SITE UPDATE

By Armando Vasquez

Here at MSC Aggie Cinema, we are so happy the campus community has shown continuous support of AggieCinema.TAMU.edu. Since January we have recorded 13,203 views, which is amazing! and, since August of 2022, more than 25,000 films were watched on our site! Whoop!

Students who work nights, or who have late classes and labs on Fridays, report loving the option to watch movies on their own schedule without paying for a subscription.

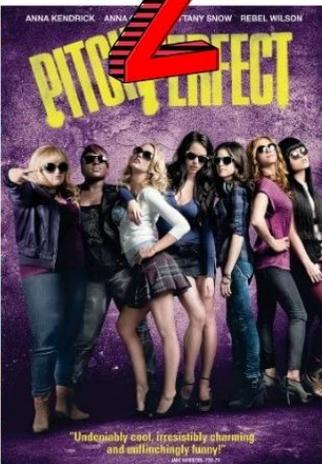
This spring was a blast! In February, we celebrated Black History Month by promoting films made by/starring African American filmmakers and actors. In March we gave a special shoutout to some of the Oscar-nominated films that were making buzz. And for April, we had the opportunity to host Jenny Slate right here in Aggieland. Leading up to the event, we highlighted a selection of her films to the site.

Here are the top 5 films students at Texas A&M watched this semester:

1



2



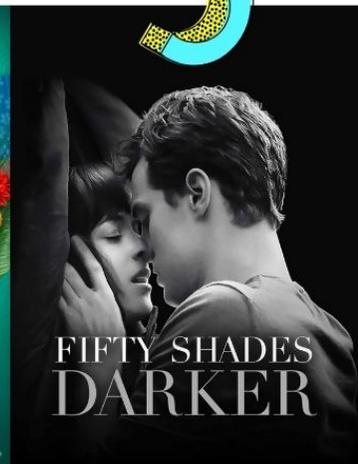
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# MEET AARYA KANURU DIRECTOR OF GRAPHICS



What's your hometown and major?

I'm from Austin, Texas just a two hour drive away and I'm a Statistics major here at Texas A&M. In Aggie Cinema, I'm the Director of Graphics.



Why did you want to join Aggie Cinema?

I wanted to join Aggie Cinema because I didn't get the opportunity to join a movie club in high school and be around more people who enjoyed cinema. I also liked that the club screens movies (sometimes ones that haven't released on any platforms yet) across campus.

What are you normally doing when not doing school, work or Aggie Cinema stuff?

I'm normally watching movies/TV shows or getting boba with my friends. Before I left for the summer, my new favorite spot to get boba in College Station was Kung Fu Tea - I loved the matcha smoothie there! As of TV shows, I'm watching "Community" after getting recommendations from many friends.



What is something you're excited to do with Aggie Cinema this year?

This coming year, I'm excited to be a bigger part of the Aggie Cinema team. I want more people to engage on our socials and I hope to be more active on them, so look out for that! I would also love to make more stickers to distribute at the MSC Open House.

What's your go to feel good movie?

My go-to feel good movie is "When Harry Met Sally." I'm a big fan of romance and I think this movie does the "best friends to lovers" trope justice. I also love the setting of New York and Meg Ryan and Billy Crystal's on-screen chemistry.

Tell us a skill or subject you'd like to learn if money and time were no object.

A skill I would love to learn would be glass blowing or ceramics. I've always found glass blowing or ceramics making videos to be so cool. I think it's nice to be able to make things that you can showcase in your house.

# SUPPORT US!

*You can help MSC Aggie Cinema provide fun, free, and safe film events for Texas A&M students next year.*



## **\$25 Red Carpet Sponsor**

Your donation of \$25 or more can sponsor a new MSC Aggie Cinema student by paying their membership dues.



## **\$50 Streaming Site Sponsor**

The MSC Aggie Cinema streaming site, **AggieCinema.TAMU.edu** has been making an impact at Texas A&M for 3 years! It's an accessible option for students who can't make it to our events in person! With a donation of \$50 or more you will be credited as a Streaming Site Sponsor and we will thank you in our fall 2023 newsletter



## **\$100 Movie Night Sponsor**

Did you know the cost of film licenses and theatre rentals rises almost every year? It costs \$750 to rent a theatre, and a new release blockbuster film costs as much as \$1,200 for one screening! With a donation of \$100 or more you will be credited as a Screening Sponsor and we will thank you in our fall 2023 newsletter.

Donate today at [give.am/mscAggieCinema](https://give.am/mscAggieCinema)

# THANK YOU

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Mike D. Schiller '90

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### PREPARED BY

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Aarya Kanuru, Graphics Director

Armando Vasquez, Student Development

Brandon Le, Streaming Site Manager

Carlo Dal Colletto, Legacy Director

Cole Cummings, Videographer

Connor Field, Classics Director

Julia Bumguardner, Blockbuster Director

Sam Brady, Arthouse Director

Shelby Morris, Vice Chair

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