

# THE COLLEGIAN

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The Collegian is the student publication of Southwestern College in Winfield, Kansas. Feature stories and opinion pieces are published and distributed monthly during the fall and spring semesters. Timely news and sports coverage is published in electronic version at [updatesc.org](http://updatesc.org).

News contributions will be accepted by sending an e-mail to [angel.vadillo@sckans.edu](mailto:angel.vadillo@sckans.edu) or through campus mail addressed to: The Collegian, Southwestern College, 100 College Street, Winfield, KS 67156.

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Subscription rates: first copy free to students, faculty and visitors to Southwestern College. Subscriptions are available for \$10 per school year mailed.

## Pulitzer author explores homefront battle

By Kylie Stamper  
Staff reporter

It all begins with a knock. The white gloves and dress blues give it away the instant the door is opened. They know. As soon as families see this scene on their porch, they know their soldier is dead. They know their loved one is among the most recent casualties from the Iraq war. “Final Salute: A Story of Unfinished Lives,” written by Jim Sheeler, tells the story of several widowed families through the eyes of the Marines tasked with notifying the ones the soldiers left behind.

In the secluded world of a small, private college in Winfield, Kan., we tend to lose sight of what is happening in our country and around our world. One of the things overlooked is the war in

Iraq. With gripping stories and mesmerizing photos, Sheeler brings the world of the Iraq war to us.

Sheeler was a writer for the Rocky Mountain News and specialized in covering the war’s impact at home. He began this series of writing when the first Colorado soldier died in Iraq. He won the Pulitzer Prize in 2006 for a newspaper feature that inspired “Final Salute.”

This book tells the stories of the Marines in charge of casualty notification. These Marines didn’t sign up for the job. They signed up to fight for their country. Instead they were sent to do the job most Marines say is harder than fighting on the front lines.

Marine Lance Cpl. Kyle W. Burns, Navy Corpsman HM3 Christopher “Doc” Anderson,

Marine Cpl. Brett Lee Lundstrom, Army Pfc. Jesse A. Givens, and Marine 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. James J. Cathey are among the soldiers immortalized by the stories told throughout this book.

The stories start the moment the notifying Marines are sent out on their mission. From that point on, almost the entire history of each soldier killed in action is told not for the attention, but for remembrance.

A major point in the book was that it’s not all about reminding the families what happened, it’s about reminding the readers.

The book is broken up into sections that rotate between the soldiers’ families. The stories are told by the mothers, fathers, wives, and brothers, and even some of the men that were with the soldiers in their last minutes

of life. A 24-page picture spread tells the stories no words can say.

I definitely recommend this book because I believe it is something every American should read. It is a good, easy read and since it takes place so close to home, there is a personal connection. It’s not about the war or the fighting or gruesome death scenes.

This book is about the home front. It tells the stories of what happens back home after a death in combat. Major Steve Beck, a casualty notification officer, said, “It’s not an ending. It’s not a period at the end of their lives. It’s a semicolon. The story will continue to be told.”

*Kylie Stamper is a sophomore majoring in communication. You may email her at [kylie.stamper@sckans.edu](mailto:kylie.stamper@sckans.edu)*

## Steamy book fails to fully translate to film

By Bailey VenJohn  
Staff reporter

Fifty shades of confusion would sum up my experience of the movie “Fifty Shades of Grey.” It’s a toss-up as to whether the movie was just short of spectacular or if the content was the issue.

I went into the theatre with high expectations after reading the book.

Although the novel was sometimes a bit over the top and I occasionally found myself questioning what the story line even was, I couldn’t put it down.

This seemed to be the case for many people I talked to. They couldn’t get enough of it.

As for all the inappropriateness that the movie encompasses, I’d say they produced it in the most tasteful way possible.

They were able to get across the idea of love that is control, bondage, dominant and submissive without it being repulsive.

The film followed the plot of the book almost perfectly yet somehow I was bored and not satisfied.

One problem was that the movie was not able to portray the actual love that Christian Grey has for Anastasia Steele.

In the movie it seems he is just

in it for the pleasure like all his past relationships.

As for the book, the author makes sure to explain the way Grey feels for Steele and how it is strange for him to have these feelings.

For an outsider who has not read the book and understands Grey’s feelings I can see why the movie would seem so disgusting to them.

On the side of the actors and actresses chosen for the movie, they halfway nailed it.

Dakota Johnson, who played Anastasia Steele, was perfect. She was supposed to be an average, awkward girl that many

women can identify with.

She was just pretty enough but not drop dead gorgeous. Her way of seeming so natural in the role

was a great fit and she brought a few giggles out of the crowd.

Christian Grey, played by Jamie Dornan, was an okay pick. He was not what I expected Grey to look like. To be honest, I had imagined a guy on a higher level of hotness. The kind that you cannot take your eyes off of because he is simply beautiful.

Although this movie did not live up to the hype, do not even doubt for a second that I will miss seeing the sequel.

Especially with the ending of the first one they kept people wanting more.

They have to make a second one to follow up that closing.

I just recently finished the second book and it is a million times better than the first.

I intend to start the third book of the trilogy soon.

I will have even higher expectations for the second book due to the amount of money they made off the first and a better story line to follow.

“Fifty Shades of Grey” came out over Valentine’s Day Weekend breaking previous records for that weekend and making \$85.2 million.

With that kind of money raised from the first movie they should have a higher budget for the second.

Plus, as previously mentioned, the second book has a much better plot.

As I have heard mentioned multiple times, just get through the first book and all the sex scenes and you will arrive at an actual story line.

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