

Pokémon cards are nearly impossible to find



PHOTO | JAY'MI VAZQUEZ
An empty shelf in Walmart which should contain Pokémon packs in New Milford, Conn. on Sept. 2.

By Jay’Mi Vazquez
Managing Editor

Buying Pokémon cards used to be as easy as walking into a store and grabbing a few packs. Today, it feels more like hunting for a shiny Charizard in real life.

The Pokémon Trading Card Game has exploded in popularity again, fueled by nostalgia, investment hype and a massive cross-generational fanbase.

Sets like Prismatic Evolutions, 151 and Paldean Fates have taken on near-mythical status, driving collectors old and new back into the hobby. But the surge in demand has far outpaced the supply.

Retail locations only receive small allocations of products at release, while online listings are often snatched up instantly by bots and scalpers.

A \$4 booster pack can rise to \$15 or more within days. Sealed boxes that retail for \$30–60 often exceed \$300 on the secondary market.

The rarest cards quickly climb into the hundreds, making the hobby frustrating for anyone trying to chase a favorite pull or complete a set.

For many collectors, the casual joy of opening packs, trading duplicates and building decks is slipping away.

The scarcity has priced out casual fans, leaving them stuck in a cycle where timing, strategy or a much higher budget is required just to participate.

What was once a hobby built on curiosity and connection now feels more like a competition for access.

The problem is not with the fans but with the system itself.

The Pokémon Company has increased print runs of popular sets, yet the reprints remain far from enough. Supply chain issues linger, while scalpers and resellers dominate the market.

Experienced collectors who know release calendars and online drop times often strike out, while newcomers face inflated prices just to engage in the hobby.

This shift has distorted the culture of Pokémon cards.

Instead of celebrating the thrill of pulling a rare card, much of the conversation revolves around resale value. Sealed products are hoarded as investments rather than opened for enjoyment.

Videos and online discussions now focus more on profits than on the excitement of discovery.

You can watch common cards which may be valuable to some collectors because of the character or art get tossed into a pile because they are considered worthless across thousands of videos.

To restore balance, changes are needed.

Online retailers should strengthen anti-scalping measures with better bot detection, stricter purchase limits and verified customer queues.

The Pokémon Company could further expand print runs, reissue popular sets and offer

more transparency about restocks to rebuild trust among fans.

Until then, the cards continue to get harder to find despite being more popular than ever.

The classic slogan, “Gotta catch ‘em all,” feels more like “Good luck finding ‘em,” as the joy of collecting is overshadowed by the struggle of finding a pack.

I have experienced this firsthand. A few months ago, I ventured back into the world of Pokémon cards and quickly discovered how scarce they have become.

I have spent hours driving around Connecticut just to track down a few packs of the new Destined Rivals set.

While major retailers like Target and Walmart are usually empty, smaller spots like Dollar General, Family Dollar and Dollar Tree have surprisingly been more reliable.

Still, the constant disappointment of bare shelves has made collecting a very different experience than it used to be.

Sabrina Carpenter album review

By Solé Scott
Editor-in-Chief

My fellow 5-foot queen, Sabrina Carpenter, released her seventh studio album, “Man’s Best Friend,” on August 29, and honestly, it is a slight disappointment.

Do not get me wrong, I absolutely adore her creative directions when it comes to music videos and her brand partnerships, like the one with Dunkin’, but this album just does not stick with me.

The first two songs are instant bangers.

“Manchild” is one of her most relatable songs yet. She sings about an immature man who struggles with having an adult relationship, and Carpenter is fed up.

“Tears” is a ’70s pop-inspired song which is accompanied by a magnificent music video inspired by “The Rocky Horror Picture Show,” with Colman Domingo playing a drag queen.

What I can say about Carpenter is that she is our generation’s best music video artist.

There is always a story being told that we follow throughout the video, and the color grading is spectacular and should be

duplicated in movies we see today.

Cohesively, this album was mediocre at best; most of the songs sound generic with a mild country influence. Out of the 12 songs, a solid six are fillers.

I am currently still on the fence about “Sugar Talking” and “Never Getting Laid.”

I fear this album is a downgrade from her last two albums, “emails I can’t send” and “Short n’ Sweet,” both released respectively in 2022 and 2024.

The one thing that is an instant turn-off about this album is the original cover art.

Carpenter is featured on her knees, wearing a black dress and black heels while a masculine figure whose face is obscured is gripping her hair in a fist.

The whole album is such a tone-deaf statement around women’s rights in this political climate.

Carpenter is known for being cheeky and risqué, but this is too much for me, considering the music is not even all that.

I guess I am confused on how Carpenter can reconcile the tone of her cover with her song lyrics being about female

empowerment, sex, body positivity and equality.

In an interview with Gayle King on CBS Mornings, Carpenter shut down the public’s meltdown over the graphic.

“Y’all need to go out more,” Carpenter said.

King had her elaborate what message she was trying to send with this album and the cover.

“My interpretation is being in on the control, being in on your lack of control and when you want to be in control,” Carpenter said.

After watching the full interview, what I gathered is that “Man’s Best Friend” is about allowing women grace to make mistakes and being aware of situations that may not end well.

I can still say over a week later, I do not see where she is coming from, and I have a strong belief that Carpenter and her management chose the controversial photo to incite engagement on social media and to sell her album.

As of Friday, Sept. 5, Carpenter’s new album is No. 1 in the United Kingdom and debut on the Billboard 200 chart at No. 1 with 366,000 units in the United States.

‘WWE: Unreal’ unveils secrets

By Jay’Mi Vazquez
Managing Editor

Netflix’s new docuseries “WWE: Unreal” offers wrestling fans something they have always wanted but perhaps never needed: a backstage pass to the world’s biggest wrestling company.

The show pulls viewers into the machinery of World Wrestling Entertainment, spotlighting the planning, precision and creativity that go into a spectacle millions watch every week.

Across its episodes, the series dives into nearly every corner of WWE’s massive operation.

Storylines are mapped out in writing rooms, matches are choreographed in rehearsal spaces and the logistical puzzle of staging events around the globe is shown.

The docuseries has one massive takeaway, which is that WWE is not just performance, but an enormous production, demanding vision, discipline and coordination.

The human side of the business also takes center stage.

Wrestlers are shown enduring punishing training regimens, nursing chronic injuries and balancing the demands of a profession that asks them to stay larger than

life both in and out of the ring.

Candid interviews highlight their struggles with pain, exhaustion and the constant pressure of public image.

In these moments, the performers come across less as superheroes and more as workers grinding through one of the most physically taxing jobs in entertainment.

But what “WWE: Unreal” gives in accessibility, it takes away in mystique. Wrestling has always lived in a gray area between theatrics and sport, where outcomes are predetermined but emotions feel real.

Fans may know it is scripted, yet they invest as though rivalries are real, and the stakes matter anyway. That suspension of disbelief, the art of “kayfabe,” is central to wrestling’s appeal.

By revealing secrets of what actually happens backstage, the series risks breaking that spell.

Watching writers script rivalries or producers instruct wrestlers how to milk crowd reactions transforms the unpredictable into the predictable. What once felt organic now looks like a formula.

This tension is perhaps best illustrated by The Undertaker, who stayed in character for over three decades.

Mark Calaway’s commitment to the role helped sustain the illusion that his ominous presence was real.

“WWE: Unreal” takes the opposite approach by removing the mask and reminding viewers that every character is, in the end, just another person.

There is also a risk in humanizing performers too much. While hearing about their aches, sacrifices and insecurities makes them relatable, it diminishes the aura that made them larger-than-life characters in the first place.

These are figures built to tower above ordinary life. Reducing them to performers juggling injuries and media obligations undercuts the fantasy. The series is at its best when it highlights the sheer complexity of WWE’s global operation and the dedication of its performers.

It reveals too much, risking a disillusioned fanbase. Wrestling thrives on mystery, leaving audiences guessing where the line between fiction and reality lies.

By breaking down how wrestlers “get over” with the crowd or how storylines are engineered, the show risks flattening the drama-based world of wrestling into a checklist of production tricks.

SOUTHERN NEWS

Advisers:	Cindy Simoneau Frank Harris III	Solé Scott Jay’Mi Vazquez	Editor-in-Chief Managing Editor
Contact information:		Section Editors	
Email:	scsu.southernct.news@gmail.com	Brianna Wallen	News Editor
Newsroom Phone:	203-392-6928	Brandon Cortés	Features Editor
Fax:	203-392-6927	Vacancy	Sports Editor
Mailing Address:		Lily Rand	Photo Editor
Southern Connecticut State University		Wade Barillaro	Photographer
Adanti Student Center Room 222		William Gagné	Photographer
501 Crescent Street		Staff Reporters	
New Haven, CT 06515		Vacancy	News Writer
Issues printed by:	Valley Publishing, Derby, CT	Draven Dabrowski	Sports Writer
Follow us on Twitter:	@Southern_News		
Like us on Facebook:	facebook.com/thesouthernnews	Copy Desk	
Visit us online:	TheSouthernNews.org	Mackenzie Byerlee	Hannah Graham
Print edition online:	OurSchoolNewspaper.com/Southern		

Southern News welcomes any and all comments and suggestions. If we make a mistake, please contact us and we will publish a correction or clarification in the next issue.

We are the student newspaper of Southern Connecticut State University, and we welcome the writing of all Southern students and faculty.

To submit a piece, email it to scsu.southern.news@gmail.com, or stop by the Southern News office on the second floor of the Student Center, Room 225. Electronic submissions are preferred.

Visit www.TheSouthernNews.org for more.

WE’RE HIRING!

Become a staff member for student campus media and publications.

SOUTHERN NEWS VACANCIES:

- Staff Reporters
- News Writer
- Sports Editor
- General Assignment Reporters (3)

CRESCENT MAGAZINE VACANCIES:

- Copy Editor
- Assistant Online Video Editor

Contact scotts28@southernct.edu or vazquezj25@southernct.edu for more details!