

# The Viking News

## Campus Food Complaints on the Rise **JONAS BARR**

The Viking Café in the student center is a hive of activity nearly every weekday. It's one of three cafes where students from all across campus gather to partake in eating and socializing with friends. Lately, however, students have been expressing their concerns about the price, quality, and variety of food available on campus.

The Faculty-Student Association (FSA) is the entity which oversees the food services on campus. Working in tandem with the Dining Services department, their responsibilities include determining the pricing, acquisition, and preparation of food and beverage items for the three restaurants on campus: The Viking Café and the Crema Café in the Student Center and the Siegel Café in the Gateway Center. Many students use the main cafeteria—the Viking Café—most frequently because, in the words of WCC student Christian Neves, it is a “convenient location to eat on campus.”

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the FSA was deeply affected by the closure of the main WCC campus as well as its extension sites. Remnants of this are still being felt as the FSA begins operations for this coming year.

“We're trying to get back into the swing of things after COVID,” said Iman Mims, Assistant Director of the FSA. “We want to make sure that the student's and the campus community's needs are met by ensuring prices are affordable without compromising on quality.”

Staffing shortages and rising food costs related to inflationary pressures on the economy have not spared SUNY WCC. There is a delicate balancing act between the services which the FSA provides to students and managing the costs associated with running food services on college campuses. Occasionally, the prices which students pay for food products will be affected.

“We want to make sure we stay mindful we're not raising prices to the point where people cannot afford to buy food here, while still looking at our bottom line,” Mims said.

The Dining Services department was unable to respond to requests for an interview regarding the pricing of food and beverages on campus.

In addition, there seems to be concern among students about the variety of food options.

“They make the same thing over and over. Try something different,” said Omar Gomez, a cyber technology student. “I wish there were more options.”

There have been a few additions to the cafés, however, such as the Viking Bowls where each week the ingredients are inspired by various international cuisines. There is also the BLEND Smoothie and Salad Bar and Coffee Labs as well as the Culinary Arts Café where “student chefs and managers, under the direction of experienced faculty, develop the unique themed dining experience,” according to the WCC website.

“A lot of students don't know about our culinary dining experience. It's good, I like it,” said Lotus Taylor, President of the Student Government Association (SGA).

Culinary Arts serves luncheons on Thursdays. It is open to students and faculty via reservation and a waitlist and there is a cost of \$12.00.

Some students have been addressing their concerns about dietary restrictions to Taylor.

“I had a student reach out to me recently saying that—because she has a lot of allergies—not a lot of the foods available meet her dietary restrictions,” said Taylor.

Taylor has expressed her desire to establish a dining committee within the SGA to be able to focus their efforts on addressing student's concerns and ideas in conjunction with the FSA.

Prior to the pandemic in 2020, the FSA was in the early process of formulating plans to introduce halal certified food to the Viking Café due to a sustained interest among students on campus.

“We have [since] revisited that conversation but we wanted to get things up and running with what we have [while] making sure we're mindful of those students that have dietary restrictions,” said Mims.

It remains to be seen whether such plans will come to fruition in the near-term, although it does seem that student voices will be critical in guiding such changes.



Geese keep watch from the Technology Building.

Photo by Sorelle Marsh

## Geese Ecology at WCC: Understanding the Lives of Our Feathered Neighbors **SORELLE MARSH**

The Valhalla campus is home to a diverse ecosystem and is a refuge for many native species, fostering a rich and thriving natural environment. Among these species, one notable presence that calls this campus home is the Canadian goose (*branta canadensis*). These iconic waterfowl have established themselves as a vital and fascinating component of the ecological tapestry, adding both beauty and complexity to the local environment.

As these birds have increasingly made the campus their year-round home, their permanent residency reflects remarkable adaptation and resilience to the unique ecological niche that is the WCC campus. The presence of resident geese in the area the entire year, however, can lead to various issues, including, overgrazing, water pollution, erosion, and the transmission of diseases. Some locals even view birds as “urban pests” because these particular geese

have much more environmental impacts, affecting grazing patterns and feces distribution, according to CTV News.

To grasp the environmental impacts caused by geese, it is imperative to explore their population dynamics and their relationship with the surrounding ecosystems.

A century ago, there were almost no resident geese in New York due to their near extinction. During the 1950s and 1960s, the population of geese experienced a remarkable growth. This was largely due to the efforts of the NYS Conservation Department, which released these birds in upstate areas where populations thrived. Currently, New York hosts nearly 200,000 Canadian geese according to the NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation. Efforts to re-establish these species in southern areas led to migratory habitat loss, as the newer populations have no “childhood memories” of returning to northern territories where they hatched. Expansion teams have exceeded expectations and have sometimes led to an

overabundance, according to The New York Times.

With the exponential goose population growth and climate change, complex ecological dynamics with far-reaching implications are unfolding.

As the climate warms, the New York region is likely to expand, creating more opportunities and less of a reason for these geese to fly south for winter. As more of the country becomes habitable year-round, the decreasing number of migratory geese in the southern regions will result in population surges in the seasonal regions. Likewise, human development has been greatly impacted as geese typically lack natural predators and there is an abundance of ponds and lakes for these birds to utilize. These opportunistic vegetarians will readily consume crops, gardens, and even plain grass, making city parks and well-manicured landscapes ideal habitats for geese according to ABELL Pest Control.

On this campus, you'll likely encounter a flock foraging in the numerous lawn areas that abound.

To combat the problems caused by these birds, Carol Capobianco, Director of The Native Plant Center, suggested altering the campus habitat to make it less appealing for geese; perhaps by shrinking the size of lawn areas by shrub and tree planting, letting the grass grow taller by being cut less frequently. The campus has already tried other methods such as coyote decoys, which haven't had long-term success.

Capobianco proposed studying the geese's preferred and avoided areas on campus, with the aim of replicating them elsewhere. To date, the school has yet to discover a working solution to alleviate the harm caused by these birds. Through a combination of responsible wildlife management, habitat restoration, and public awareness we can strike a balance that allows both humans and geese to coexist harmoniously while preserving the delicate equilibrium of our ecosystems.



Students pay at the Viking Café in the Student Center.

Photo by Jonas Barr

## Chessing is a Blessing

**BILLY LE BLANC**

How can chess help me? This is a question often asked of Shelley Estacio, the President of the Chess Club, which is actively recruiting new members for its Wednesday Common Hour sessions.

“The thing that’s great about chess is that it’s for everyone,” Estacio said. “It can bring people of different backgrounds together. It’s not exclusive to gender or race, it’s welcoming to everyone despite background.”

Estacio believes chess can provide value to a lot of people and often uses her own experience as an example. Estacio started playing chess at a young age, at first taught by her family. She lost a lot of games as a kid, but she learned how to lose. By realizing it’s not the end of the world and figuring out that losses don’t define her, she became able to accept a loss. At the same time, she gained patience and discipline, and improved her social life by meeting players that shared her love for chess. This in turn led to lasting friendships.

Estacio’s enthusiasm is supported by experts.

“Chess has been proven to increase your IQ, improve memory function, help develop higher levels of creativity,

simultaneously exercise both parts of the brain, help prevent Alzheimer’s and dementia, and increase [critical thinking] ability,” according to chesswizards.com.

The belief that chess can improve creativity is supported by chess advocates. Estacio and others claim that, in fact, chess is all about creativity. To begin with, they point out, chess is an art; there are 10 raised to the 40th possible moves, an astronomically large number, which means there is always room for a new idea: a creative look, or a new flavor figuratively speaking. All players develop their unique playstyle and top players can even tell who they are playing against just by the ‘personality’ of their moves.

Another important lesson chess teaches, according to Estacio and others, is accountability. They point out that chess is a single-player sport in which you, the player, decide every move you make. This means that there is no possibility of shifting responsibility to a teammate; mistakes are 100% your fault every time. But Estacio urges newcomers to the game not to be overwhelmed by this fact, but instead, to be inspired. Chess teaches you how to own up to your mistakes and improve, she says, a lifelong, invaluable skill. Likewise, claim chess advocates, you won’t get much better in chess if you play



**A Chess Club meeting might seem intimidating at first, but they are open to all students regardless of skill level.**

Photo by Shelley Estacio

passively and don’t try to learn. It’s valuable to take control of your game (as in life) and work on it to improve.

One may wonder: What if I don’t want to play chess because I’m shy and I’m bad at chess?

“You shouldn’t worry,” said Estacio. “The club is informal.

You don’t have to come all the time or you can just stop by for 10 minutes. Maybe you think you might lose, it could get intimidating, but you should take the lead. I was scared at first because it was just full of guys and I was worried that I wouldn’t fit in. No one focuses on how good or bad you play. It’s about how much you enjoy

it. I advise you to leap.”

The club will be hosting a campus-wide tournament for all students to enter in November. The WCC Chess Club (Viking Chess) meets every Wednesday from 11 am – 2 pm in the Technology Bldg., Room 123.

## WCC Welcomes New Police Officer to the Security Team

**DANI COLON**

On September 19th, the security office sent out a video to all WCC students about school safety. Instructing the video was police officer Antonio Flores, the new Community Resources Officer here at WCC. A Community Resource Officer is a police officer who works in specific communities such as schools and other facilities. The assigned officer works within and with the community, watching over it and building trust. Officer Flores may be new to the security office but he isn’t new to the WCC campus.

Flores is a WCC alumni who studied police science here before transferring to the University Of Albany. After graduation, he became a NYPD officer in the Bronx in 2020. The following year he transferred to the Westchester County Police, and was assigned to the college recently.

Flores is proud of his profession.

“Ever since I was little I’ve been interested in the job, and on top of that it’s just a very noble job that just brings honor,” said Flores. “Both of my parents are immigrants and it makes them

feel very proud, and because of that I take a lot of pride in that.”

According to Flores, what he likes most about this job is helping people and the people he works with.

“I just have amazing coworkers and because of that it makes the job so much better,” Flores said.

**“Just be open minded, just be present.”**

**Antonio Flores, SUNY WCC Community Resources Officer**

Officer Flores loves to show his involvement here at WCC, as he has been seen at multiple sports events, such as soccer and volleyball games, where he joins the cheering for a Viking win or talks to Micheal Belfiore, WCC Athletic Director, about team play by plays.

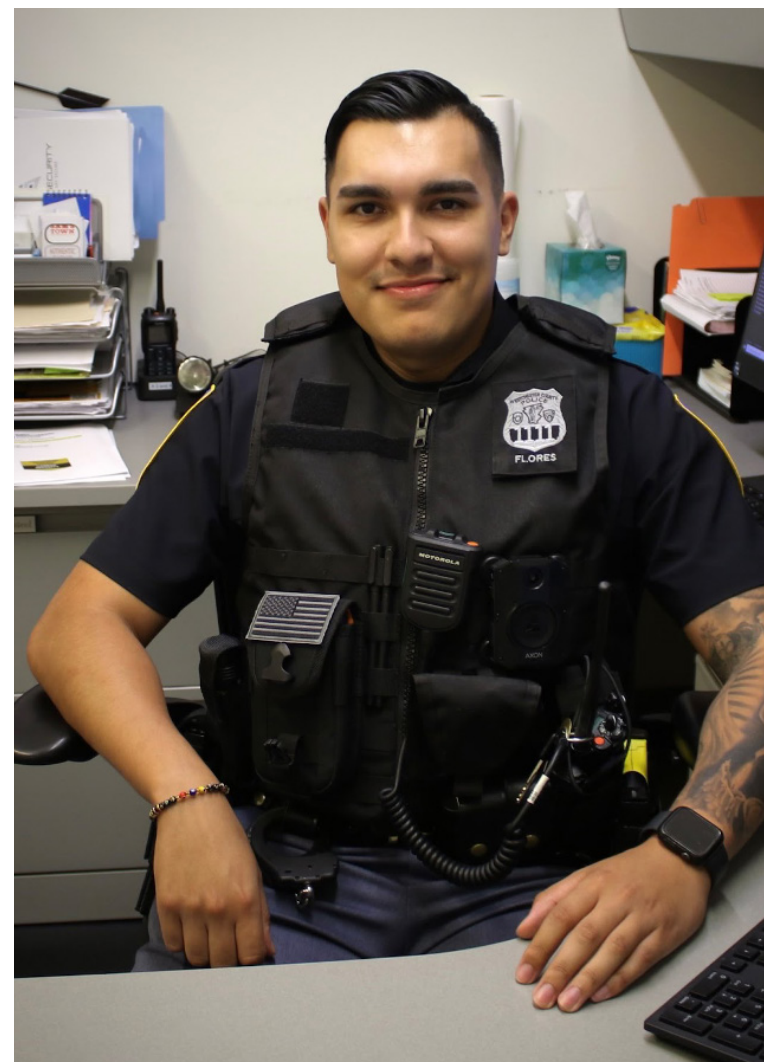
Besides sporting events, he attends club meetings and events, such as the Involvement Fair that was held on September 13th. He was also seen on October 4 giving away free coupons for coffee in the student center and mingling with students and

faculty building relationships. Flores also participated in Westchester County’s Walk to End Alzheimer’s that was held October 1.

“I just like to be outgoing and say hello to everyone I see,” said Flores. “People say I’m approachable so I’ll just talk to anybody who’s willing to hear. Just be open minded, just be

present. Here I feel like this is my community. I get to see the same faces everyday, but I also get to meet a lot of new people. When I’m patrolling on the road you don’t get to talk to many people unless you do a car stop. I get to see more good things here in the community than on the road.”

According to Flores, inevitable campus struggles can be improved by training and working together to teach each other new things, because the world is always changing.



**Flores sits in his office within in the Security Office Suite.**

Photo by Dani Colon

# Los Dias Finales de Hispanic Heritage Month STEVEN GARCIA

Hispanic Heritage Month began on September 15 in the United States, and marks a time when the contributions and achievements as well as the influences of Hispanic

week of October. WCC is considered a Hispanic-Serving Institution with over 40% of Hispanic students attending WCC in 2021.

The first event, held on

\$50 gift card. Student response was favorable.

“A great event,” said WCC student Gia Guzman. “It was also really nice to see a lot of people coming together, even



**Students try Latin American food at “Prueba Platos Nacionales.”**

*Photo by Steven Garcia*

Americans on history and culture are recognized.

At SUNY WCC, the Department of Student Involvement (DSI) joined the national celebration with Latin American Heritage Month (LAHM), with multiple events scheduled from mid-September through the 2nd

September 18 at the Student Center’s Welcome Desk, was called “Prueba Platos Nacionales (Name that National Dish).” Students got to taste test Latin American dishes and tried to guess where they were from. If they got all of them correct, they earned a chance to win a

people who weren’t hispanic.”

The LAHM Craft and Chat was held on September 26, where students got a chance to make Brazilian Patchwork Fuxico, small fabric circles used to decorate pillows, purses, bags, and blankets. The word Fuxico comes from the Portuguese



**Students dance their hearts out at Noche Caliente on October 12.**

*Photo by Marco Lazaro*

word fuxicar (to gossip).

The Fuxico craft is over 150 years old and is especially important to the women of northwest Brazil. They used to gather together and create these little circles made of leftover fabric while they talked about their lives. Making fuxico is a tradition kept alive by people who gather together and share their lives with each other as they work.

The student who ran the event was Thais Costa de Oliveira, who is an international student. She had the help of Dana Hirsch, who is the International Student Programs Coordinator for DSI.

Latin American Heritage Month is set to continue with other events, covering different topics such as Education, Housing, and Healthcare. Other events are Latin/A/X and Noche Caliente, which had around 150 student attendees, with the official closing event scheduled for October 15. For more upcoming events, follow the DSI Instagram page, @getinvolvedwcc.

“The event was relaxing,” said WCC student Bill Leblanc. “I enjoyed learning about Brazilian culture. The pouch I made was very handy. Overall I enjoyed the event. I thought it was well done. I think the spot was good because there was a lot of foot traffic there.”



**Students make fuxico flowers for their tote bags and pouches.**

*Photo by Steven Garcia*



**Student Involvement and Latinas in Power serve food at their collaboration event.**

## Make a Difference! Get Involved!

**SORELLE MARSH**

For college students, getting involved goes beyond being a mere suggestion; it's an investment in your future, according to the WCC Department of Student Involvement (DSI), which oversees student extracurricular activities at the college. The experiences, skills, and connections you create,

says DSI, are building blocks that have a lasting impact on your personal and professional life.

Associate Director of Student Involvement, Jessica Puerta, shared some insights about the key benefits of being actively involved. In her opinion, involvement in college can truly be life-changing. By immersing

oneself in a diverse community, students will have the chance to interact and collaborate with individuals from various backgrounds, according to Puerta, who emphasizes that this experience will enable students to enhance their communication and teamwork skills. Not only will students sharpen their skills, but they will also have a positive influence on both themselves and those around them at WCC and beyond. They can experience a sense of belonging within the community and have the opportunity to influence its development to suit their peers' preferences.

Studies indicate that active participation in extracurricular activities contributes to improved academic retention, a higher likelihood of completing your degree, and increased upward mobility, according to Puerta. She also says that it fosters a deeper understanding of your identity and future direction. The DSI prioritizes students' well-being and purposefully integrates these elements into the school's programs, events, and initiatives.

At WCC, there are more than 40 active clubs and organizations with open invitations to students. Students can join anytime; it's never too late. The department wants students to know there is almost certainly something to suit their



**Devin Lopez, SGA Treasurer & Accounting Club Treasurer, invites students to join at the Involvement Fair.**

Photo by Ray Katz



**Radames Ocasio, Radio Station Senior Technical Asst. poses with Chester the Viking at Power 88.1 table at the Fall Involvement Fair.**

Photo by Steven Garcia

## Time Management: A Critical Skill

**ANYA DUTOVA**

As the semester starts, and we feel pressured with a lot of assignments, deadlines, extracurricular activities, and other responsibilities, it is time to get to know a little more about time management. Time management is the ability to economically and effectively use your time resources to achieve one or more goals. The goals themselves must be realistic for time management to be successful.

Marco Lazaro, Manager of Marketing, Branding & Communications in the Department of Student Involvement, who provides time management workshops to Leadership and Development Badge candidates, says that time management is extremely important. It reduces stress, enhances self-discipline, and helps to maintain a healthy work-life balance. And most importantly, it increases productivity, so you will be able to achieve more in a limited period of time! But Lazaro stresses that the goals must be realistic in order for you to stay motivated. You should set really achievable goals for yourself by using and knowing

all the resources that you have.

The best way to start managing your time, says Lazaro, is to get to know your priorities, and for that, ask yourself some questions:

o Do you know your priorities? Is school your biggest? If so, which classes take you the most time to study for?

o How much time do you need to finish each of the tasks?

o Which tasks do you put off or procrastinate?

Once you answer these questions, you can start creating your schedule. It is recommended to prioritize the most important tasks at the beginning of the day, when we are more energized after sleeping and having breakfast, and put the tasks that can be completed with less energy at the second part of the day. Lazaro also stresses that you should leave some time open in your schedule; without it, your schedule will not be effective. We all need some free time to be able to reset and come back with more energy.

There are several time management techniques you

can use, according to Lazaro. The Pomodoro technique is one of the most effective. The main idea of this technique is to be consistent: Work for 25 minutes on your task with no interruptions followed by a 5-minute break. This builds a habit of concentration.

“Consistency is important,” says Lazaro. “Habits can break in three days.”

However, there are some disadvantages to the Pomodoro technique. For example, some people find breaks distracting; they require a lot of energy that

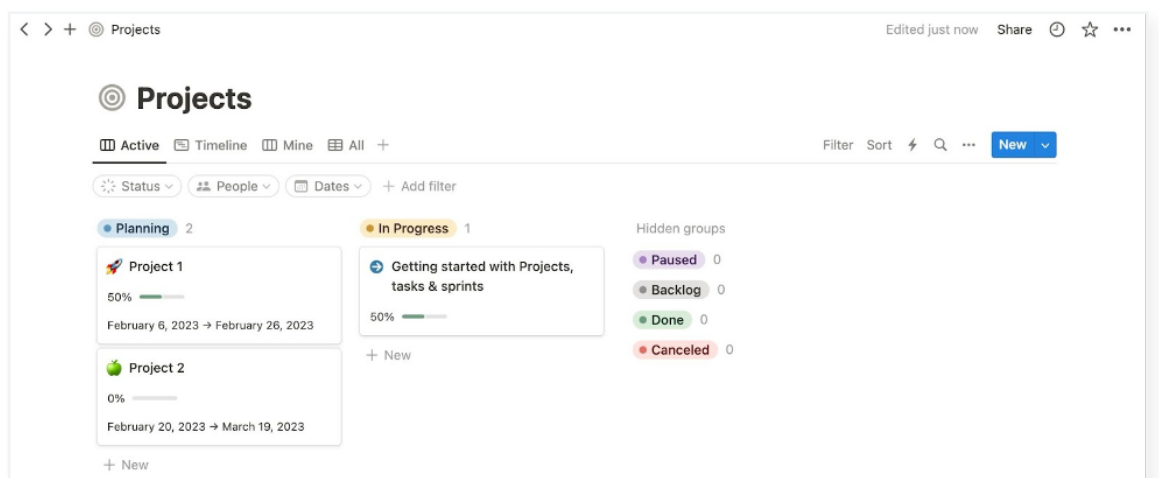
could be put towards achieving results.

Backward planning is a type of scheduling originally used in the military. The main concept of backward planning is to understand what the end goal is to work back from that. Lazaro uses a WEB event as an example.

“Looking at an event, an event can be a month away,” Lazaro said, “and [then] looking at the little steps that lead to the event, that we need to do in order for that event to be successful.”

When it comes to where you want to create your schedule, there are multiple options. You can do it in your paper planner, as well as in a digital planner. If you prefer to create a digital schedule, you can use Notion. It is an app that offers a lot of templates to organize and schedule in the way you prefer it to look.

We are all different, says Lazaro, but no matter what your particular situation is, time management and scheduling techniques can help you boost your productivity.



**A Notion app screenshot shows one of the time management templates.**

Photo by Anya Dutova

## Local Artist's Work on Display at WCC Gallery

RAY KATZ

This year marks the 50th anniversary of Hip Hop, and with it, the entry of graffiti into contemporary art discourse.

"It is a worldwide phenomenon, with roots in America, like jazz, rock and roll, and comic book art," said artist Daina Higgins. "Graffiti in its highest forms has very elaborate expressions, but it always starts with a simple 'tag.'"

In Higgins' latest exhibition of paintings, "Uncertain Belonging: Places Lost, Remembered, and Reclaimed," currently showing at the WCC gallery in the Hankin Academic Arts Building, street art is combined with a more classical art style.

pandemic and the emotional impact caused by the murders of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor. It features paintings of several different statues of Confederate and Colonialist figures covered in graffiti.

One of the paintings, titled "John Breckinridge Castleman, Louisville, KY," features a horse with a rider defaced with spray paint. Oh the horse's side the words "house homeless" have been splashed.

"I understand that it is challenging for people to see graffiti on a statue, but we must consider the reasons for the statue being there in the first place, and how the addition of graffiti pushes against it," said Higgins.



"Triangle of Sadness," oil and spray paint on canvas.

Photo by Ray Katz

"I used my formal art training to improve and advance my graffiti, and conceptually, graffiti art caused me to learn about the politics of public space, and how space is used and for whose benefit," Higgins said.

These themes are seen continuously throughout her art.

Higgins' 2018 collection, titled "Ridge Avenue," focuses on the urban landscape of Philadelphia. One painting, titled "Ivy Ridge at Night," is set in a strip mall parking lot, with Target being easily identifiable. The reds and purples in the dusky skies, the incorporation of greens and blues that create wisps of clouds, and the halos that surround the lights in the parking lot demonstrates Higgins' formal art training.

Of the three collections, "Pandemic/Protest" is Higgins' favorite. Started in 2020, this collection combines the feelings of loneliness occasioned by the COVID-19

In her newest collection, "Letters to Home," Higgins draws from her experience of being forced to move out of Philadelphia. This collection mainly focuses on feelings of estrangement from one's home. One painting, entitled "Triangle of Sadness," stood out from others. The orange of the cigarette, alarm clock, and sun contrasts the blue hues that fill the majority of the painting. The background, full of drawings of trees, vines, birds, and monkeys, is reminiscent of wallpaper.

"Making a domestic life in a chaotic world is the theme of many of my recent paintings, and many have domestic scenes or wallpaper patterns in them," Higgins said.

Students can see Daina Higgins' work in the WCC Art Gallery in the Hankin Academic Arts Building through November 11. Gallery hours can be found on the SUNY WCC website. To see more of Higgins' works, visit her website at <https://dainahiggins.com>.

## VIKING VISIONARY

### An open letter to the one who broke my heart

CAROL MARTINS

You have many names, and it seems the list keeps growing

I thought I'd be able to call you "the one"

But the one has turned into two, three, four

I hoped the numbers wouldn't keep growing

I promised the tally would stop at three

At times I wonder if I'm the one breaking my own heart

By allowing people in, I bring myself the misery I strive so hard to stay away from

By allowing people in, I indulge in the bliss of a few months or a couple years

Knowing there will be an end

Anticipating the heartbreak and the solitude and the regret

Acknowledging that it was a mistake and I shouldn't have done it again

I tell myself it won't hurt if I know it's coming

I tell myself not to trust, not to believe, not to let them in

I keep an arm's distance in all directions and somehow I still get struck

Somehow I still lose

And everytime I tell myself "not again"

When I feel you getting closer, I hold the reins

I say no

I fight tooth and nail not to open the door

Funny how people can waltz in without permission

I didn't let you in but you've made yourself at home

I didn't let you in and still you've consumed my life

I didn't let you in but I don't want to let you go

And when you inevitably do, you'll be another tally mark

Another "never again"

Another "I've learned the lesson this time"

Another "the one" who has become number five or six or seven

Right below my own name

For being a fool and thinking it could be different

For being naive and hoping it would be different

To the one who broke my heart

I hope you enjoy the company

Amongst all the other ones who have done it as well

It's one hell of a party down here

And the list keeps growing

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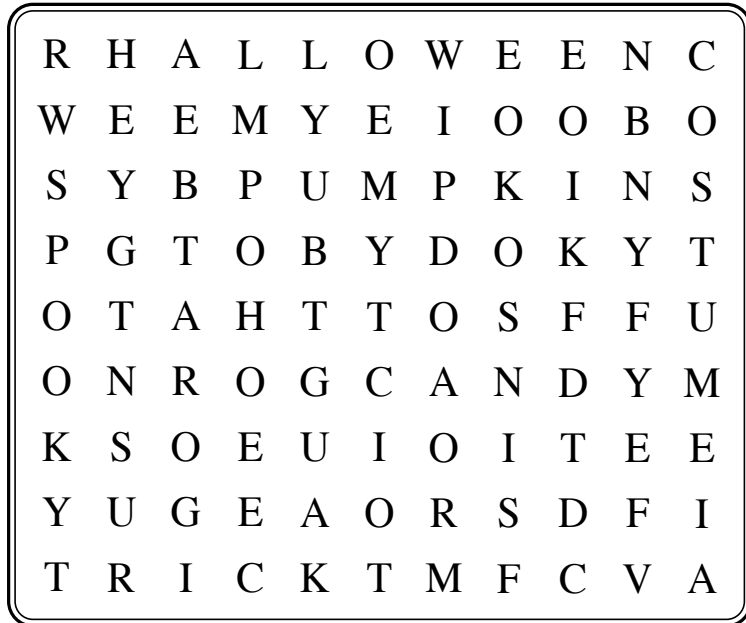
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### HALLOWEEN WORD SEARCH



- OCTOBER
- HALLOWEEN
- HAYRIDE
- HARVEST
- PUMPKIN
- COSTUME
- SPOOKY
- TRICK
- TREAT
- CANDY
- FRIGHT
- BOO

### Word Plexers

Some common words and phrases are encoded in these plexers.  
Can you tell what they are?

<p>head <i>loheelsve</i></p>		<p>ONE ONE ONE</p>
<p>INJURY + INSULT</p>		<p>T U P or T U H S</p>
	<p>think uact</p>	<p><b>ANOTHER</b> one thing</p>

### Sudoku

							3	
	1			6	2	9	7	4
	7	2					8	5
								7
5	6		2	3			9	1
	2		4		6		5	
					1			9
	8	3						
6	4		9			5		

Answers on [VikingNews.org](http://VikingNews.org)

## A Message from the Editor

KEIRA FERRETTI

October has always been my favorite month. The leaves are changing, the air is cooler, and I can finally start wearing all the knit sweaters packed away in my attic. This season feels like a new beginning, one where I can finally live my best Gilmore Girls life (maybe minus the unending and immature drama of Rory, but I digress) and study like I'm going to an Ivy League while downing coffee like a mid-century poet.

Everyone has a different reason for loving a specific season, and sometimes I feel that with every solstice and equinox, I change my mind. However, I do find myself continuously drawn back into a love for autumn.

As a former emo kid (although, do we ever really grow out of it?), I am emotionally attached to Halloween. It was the one night per year I could wear corpse paint and no one would blink. Although Halloween has a different meaning for me now (All Hallow's Eve), I do still enjoy the merrymaking that comes with carving pumpkins and handing out candy to kids wearing their best Power Rangers or unicorn costumes. There is something to be enjoyed about dressing up as your favorite superhero or animal.

However, as I've grown older, I've come to realize that there is no longer a need for me to hide behind the costumes I used to wear in my younger years. In middle school, I had felt a deepening dread that I would not find myself before I became an adult and was forced to choose. I now feel that I know who I am and what I want, and I'm happy.

I hope that this Halloween you, too, dear reader, will be able to find yourself if you haven't already. Make the most of Halloween: Examine your choice of costume. When dressing up as Batman or a fairy princess, look beyond your own facade to discover what you are meant to be.

Now, this October, I only want to watch "Twilight" and listen to Type O Negative on vinyl while gorging on Milky Ways. Not everything has to have a deep meaning behind it, so I encourage you all to have fun or become aware of your own true identities—or maybe even both. Have a happy Halloween, Vikings!

Keira Ferretti

*Editor-In-Chief, The Viking News*

## Should You Invest in an iPhone?

STEVEN GARCIA

Owning an iPhone, as with any other smartphone, comes with its own set of advantages and disadvantages. These will vary depending on individual preferences and needs, but here are some general points to consider.

First, the advantages, starting with its high-quality hardware. iPhones are known for their structural quality and design, often incorporating premium materials such as recyclable aluminum and ceramic glass. These are integrated into Apple's own software, called iOS, which includes a wide range of apps and services developed by the company. If you use other Apple products such as a Mac, iPad, or Apple Watch, this ecosystem will offer a seamless and unified user experience.

Additionally, the App Store offers a vast selection of apps that are well-designed and of high-quality. Apple's strict app review process can contribute to a more secure app environment, while regular updates are required to enhance overall security and functionality. This company provides regular iOS updates for several years, even for older devices. This policy can

enhance security, performance, and functionality.

The strong privacy features Apple is known for have introduced features like the "App Tracking Transparency," which gives users more control over their data. FaceTime and iMessage are built-in communication tools that are popular for their easy use and smooth integration with other Apple devices. Apple is well known for strong security, thanks to features like Face ID and Touch ID for biometric authentication.

Now let's go into the disadvantages of owning an iPhone, primarily its higher prices compared to Android smartphones that offer similar features. The difference in price can be a significant deal killer for budget-conscious consumers. Also, the customization limitations on iOS, despite being simple and user-friendly, limit personalization options that Android phones have. This may not be suitable for users who prefer extensive customization.

Another shortfall is the closed ecosystem. Although the iOS ecosystem offers integration benefits, it can also be restrictive. You may need to use

Apple services and products exclusively for the best experience.

Most importantly among the disadvantages, the battery life varies across iPhone models, and some users have reported that Android phones have a longer battery life in similar usage patterns. The file management on iOS has limitations when it comes to sharing compared with Android. Another major drawback is the need for expandable storage. iPhones do not support expandable storage via microSD cards, which means you're limited to the storage capacity that came with the device as purchased. Repair and maintenance costs on iPhones can be expensive, and often need to be performed by authorized service providers or the Apple company itself.

It's essential to consider your specific needs, preferences, and budget when deciding whether an iPhone is the right choice for you. Additionally, technology and iPhone models evolve, so it's a good idea to research the latest models and their features before making your decision.

In my opinion, the latest iPhone 15, recently unveiled, is a worthy model, but I don't



**The iPhone 14 Pro Max's screen is made from Ceramic Shield glass.**

Photo by Steven Garcia

recommend getting this version if you already have an iPhone 12 or later since the features are similar. The differences are the dynamic island with the USB-C charger, the all-day battery life, the use of recycled aluminum

and titanium forging, and the introduction of the new Action Button.

Overall, iPhones are fine but expensive. Before taking a thousand dollar plunge, do your homework!

RESTAURANT REVIEW

**Alex's Lounge II: A Hidden Gem** SORELLE MARSH

Nestled on Main Street in Elmsford is a restaurant that may be the village's best kept secret. I recently discovered Alex's Lounge II (so-called because it's a descendant of the original Alex's Lounge). For those who don't know about this place that has captured my taste buds, I happily introduce you.

Alex's Lounge II is a big, welcoming lounge. To enjoy the ultimate relaxation and maximum comfort, I recommend visiting during the quieter days of Monday to Thursday, from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. During this period, you will have a chance to explore the variety of seating options available, which I personally always enjoy. Whether you're seeking the comfort of a snug, cozy nook, where you can enjoy some quiet solitude, or prefer the conviviality of communal tables where you can join lively group gatherings, Alex's has a spot to suit your mood.

Upon your entrance, your eye catches the arrangement of Connect 4 board games on each table. This serves as an inviting and engaging welcome, promising not just a meal but also the opportunity for some lighthearted competition and camaraderie. I have become obsessed with Connect 4. There's nothing better than winning four games in a row while savoring a good meal. Now to the best part: the food!

I'd describe this cuisine as a Mexican/American fusion with a diverse menu that highlights a rich tapestry of flavors. Delicious empanadas and fine clam chowder are among Alex's tasty treats. The dish I hold in high regard, which I can't help but order every time I visit, is corn nuggets. This appetizer consists of bite-sized, deep-fried pieces of seasoned corn and batter, a harmonious flavor combination of earthy sweet and savory with a hint of honey. I can't get enough of them and would go to this place to simply order these taste bombs.

Another entrée that I thoroughly enjoyed was the

lobster macaroni: tender, real lobster meat melded into creamy cheese sauce. This dish has earned a place in my heart as well as on my top ten list of comfort foods. It's priced at a wallet-friendly \$15.95, compared with the cost of \$30 you might experience at other restaurants. It underscores the exceptional value Alex's offers to those who wish to prioritize their bank account.

For a fun night out with friends and family, Fridays are a great choice as they often feature special events and late-night live-band performances. Recent performances included a local band called The Red Balls, a rock and roll trio that plays classic, alternative, and modern music with great energy. Alex's Lounge II is located at 86 East Main Street in Elmsford, NY, their phone number is (914) 909-5707 their website can be found at [www.alexlounge.com](http://www.alexlounge.com).



Corn Nuggets boast a harmonious flavor combination of earthy sweet and savory with a hint of honey.

Photo by Sorelle Marsh



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What to Watch on Halloween

Whether you want to keep it sweet or spooky, these 5 Halloween movies are frightfully fantastic!

MARYGRACE ORFANELLA

Interview with the Vampire (1994)

Halloween Kills (2021)

Beetlejuice (1988)

Hocus Pocus 2 (2022)

Halloweentown (1998)



## FILM REVIEW

## Ninja Turtles, Spider-Verse Style

LUCAS WERNER

**(WARNING: CONTAINS SPOILERS)**

Less than a full year since the premiere of *Rise of the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: The Movie* on Netflix, *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles - Mutant Mayhem* was released in theaters in early August, and it was a definite masterclass film for both new and old fans of the TMNT franchise.

In this latest version, Leo, Mikey, Raph and Donnie are still living in the sewers of New York City. They have spent most of their lives longing to be accepted by the masses of New Yorkers. However, when a band of mutants emerges to assert their dominance as the top species, they have a more urgent problem: Can our heroes put the bad guys out of commission?

This movie has both great and terrible points, so let's go over what was good first:

The animation is similar to that of the *Spider-Verse* movies, specifically how each character had been worked on by several animators. Maybe because of this, the characters in the movie are appealing, and the world

around them pops out in color at the viewers as well, which I enjoyed.

The film introduces new characters, including Ray Filet and Cynthia Utrom. The excellent use of references to other TMNT shows, including the Techno Cosmic research Institute (TCRI) from the 2012 series and Genghis Frog from the 1987 series, along with the insanely good fight scenes throughout the film add to the enjoyment.

What was bad about this movie? This iteration of Baxter Stockman does not receive as much screen time as fans would have liked. Having the character killed in the beginning just doesn't sit well with me, since he should've had a more significant role to play, compared with the previous versions of him throughout TMNT history. The method of extracting the Turtles' blood by 'milking' them was also something I found objectionable. Strapping them to a milking machine like they're cows is not only a cruel way to get it done, but it's also inhumane. There have to be more civilized ways to get

blood, and the creative team should have thought of them.

I hope that Utrom and the rest of TCRI get what's coming to them. Getting away with killing Stockman, who wanted a family, not weapons, and nearly causing the end of humanity's reign on Earth? That alone screams "Time to die!" Messing with the natural order of things can't be dealt with lightly.

For these reasons, *Mutant Mayhem* gets a 4.6 out of 5, and already I'm looking forward to the sequel, which will include a new version of the Turtles' greatest adversary, "The Shredder."

If you want to see *Mutant Mayhem*, the movie is now streaming on Paramount Plus. In the meantime, while *Mutant Mayhem's* sequel is being made, you can check out *Tales of The Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*, a new Nickelodeon series coming to Paramount Plus in 2024. This installment of the franchise will fill in the blanks between *Mutant Mayhem's* aftermath and the second movie with new friends and new foes. I can't wait!



*Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles- Mutant Mayhem* came to theaters on August 4th. Photo by Lucas Werner

## FILM REVIEW

## Striding Across the Shatterverse: *Sonic Prime* Season 2

LUCAS WERNER

**(WARNING: CONTAINS SPOILERS)**

*Sonic Prime* premiered on Netflix in December of last year. Following its success, the second season came out this past summer, and it was just as amazing as the first.

Here's the story up to this point: After a battle with Dr. Eggman doesn't go as planned, Sonic finds himself in an alternate multiverse called the "Shatterverse," where there are four distorted versions of his original reality, each holding a fragment of the mysterious "Paradox Prism" that Sonic had shattered. Now he has to find the shards and bring them together in order to restore Green Hill to its normal self. It won't be easy, though.

This second season hit both good and bad notes with me. Let's focus on the good first.

Finally finding out what happened to Shadow after the Paradox Prism broke in Season 1 was definitely a good thing. While Sonic was caught in the shockwave created by the prism's shattering, Shadow used the Chaos Emerald he had on hand to teleport out of the shockwave's path, but when he

came out of the warp, he found himself in "The Void," an empty space between the Shatter Spaces. Shadow also lost the emerald when he got knocked out by floating crystals. So all the while Sonic was exploring the Shatterverse in the first

season, Shadow was trying to contact him.

The season is filled with epic and breathtaking fight scenes. Chaos Sonic's design surpasses Metal Sonic's, making the iconic robotic doppelgänger look like yesterday's news. This is

reinforced when Chaos Sonic's red eyes give off a menacing mood, similar to the Sith Lord Darth Vader from *Star Wars*.

Now that the good parts of this season are covered, it's time to look at the bad. The falling out between Nine and Sonic, for

example. When each of these characters told the other what they wanted to do with the Prism Shards (Sonic wished to restore Green Hill to its normal self, while Nine wanted to reshape the Shatterverse to his own image), they had an argument which resulted in Nine taking the Shards to "The Grimm" - the secret fifth Shatterspace.

When he realized that restoring Green Hill could erase him and the other variants, there had to be another way to fix Sonic's mistake other than that outcome. Captain Dread's greed leading him to betray his crew and avarice taken to its darkest degree possible could be a cruel way to go. It certainly is a dark path to tread.

I give the second part of *Sonic Prime* a 4.8 out of 5. Meanwhile, while I'm looking forward to Season 3, I'm concerned. The show's creators have shown they are not afraid to eliminate characters, and I don't want the variants of Sonic's friends to be erased. Let's hope for the best! If you want to check this series out for yourself, Season 2 of *Sonic Prime* is now streaming on Netflix.



Episode 9 of *Sonic Prime*, "Avoid the Void," is action packed.

Photo by Lucas Werner

## The Changing Landscape of College Soccer

LYN MORALES &amp; DANI COLON

What is college soccer and why is it becoming so big? College soccer serves as a critical steppingstone for aspiring soccer players in the United States. It provides a platform for high school talents to showcase their skills, gain valuable experience, and potentially transition to professional careers.

With more than 800 men's and women's soccer programs

revolves around soccer in Columbia. I enjoy being a student-athlete."

According to Elvin Mejia who plays as #15, getting enough sleep is important but sometimes things can get in the way of a good night's rest.

"Time management issues [come up] and staying up late doing homework," said Mejia.

While not all college soccer players go on to play

coach Alfio Carrabotta.

College coaches often serve as mentors, guiding their players on and off the field and helping them become well-rounded individuals. College soccer is

also fostering a sense of camaraderie and passion among fans. As college soccer continues to evolve, it remains a vital contributor to the development of soccer talent in the United States and an

currently 4-3. Last season they ended 7-9-1. They had fallen in the post season to Nassau Community College, which knocked the Vikings out of the mid Hudson conference. The Vikings definitely felt the



#15 Right Back Elvin Mejia expresses his love for soccer on media day 2023.

Photo by Lyn Morales

**"[One of my jobs is] to pass along to the players the passion and love of this beautiful game."**

*Alfio Carrabotta, Men's Soccer Head Coach*

spread across the NCAA, NAIA, and NJCAA divisions, there are ample opportunities for players to continue their education while honing their soccer abilities. Division 1 has the most competition while WCC is under NJCAA division 2, the mid Hudson conference region 15.

The Vikings soccer team athletes are fostering a sense of community and school pride.

"I started playing soccer when I first started walking," said Juan Espinosa, who plays #6 and is a marketing major. "My family has always played soccer, and everything

professionally, the experience gained during their college years opens various career paths. Many become coaches, referees, or administrators in the sport, contributing to the continued growth of soccer in the United States.

Coaches in college soccer play a pivotal role in the development of young players. They not only focus on enhancing athletes' technical and tactical skills but also emphasize teamwork, discipline, and sportsmanship.

"[One of my jobs is] to pass along to the players the passion and love of this beautiful game," said head

more than just a sport; it's an integral part of the American collegiate experience. It provides opportunities for players to excel athletically and academically, while

enduring source of excitement and pride for universities and their communities.

Currently the Vikings soccer season has just begun and the Vikings standings are

heartbreak, which inspired them to work hard and make a comeback to win the region 15 title.

## Excitement Builds as Vikings Basketball Season Tips Off

LYN MORALES

As the leaves change color and the temperature drops, basketball courts across the country are heating up in preparation for the upcoming basketball season. With anticipation running high, fans, players, and coaches are eager to see what this season has in store.

One of the most intriguing

aspects of junior college basketball is the constant influx of new talent. This season, scouts and coaches are keeping a close eye on several promising freshmen and sophomores who could make an immediate impact. From sharpshooters to defensive dynamos, these young stars are poised to light up the scoreboard and make a name for themselves.

"Skillset, mental toughness, effort," said head coach Andre Pennicooke about what he looks for in an athlete.

Coaches at the junior college level often serve as mentors, helping players refine their skills and develop both on and off the court. This season, expect to see innovative coaching strategies and a strong emphasis on player

development. From fast-paced offenses to stifling defenses, these coaches are sure to put on a clinic in basketball strategy.

Pennicooke explains that his strategy when recruiting new players depends on how many and what type of players are returning for the next season. He looks for players that will fit the Viking style of play and demonstrate effort and mental toughness on the court.

Every season, Vikings basketball brings intense rivalries to the forefront. The matchups between historic foes create an electric atmosphere that keeps fans on the edge of their seats. Whether it's a showdown between a powerhouse team or a grudge match between cross-town rivals, these games are not to be missed.

The team is hoping for a championship this year like all the others but what's so special about the Vikings team is that Pennicooke does not lose touch with his former, current and new players.

"I have to be strong willed and emotionally intelligent," Pennicooke says.

According to Pennicooke, he has to be able to navigate

the myriad of emotions he encounters when coaching. Now when it comes to losing and the new season Pennicooke is a whole new coach. For some teams, this season offers a chance at redemption. Last year's close losses and missed opportunities have fueled the fire within these players, and they're determined to make this season count. Expect to see heart-stopping comebacks and underdog stories that will inspire fans everywhere.

Perhaps the most exciting element of college basketball is the unpredictable nature of the game. With so many talented players and passionate teams, anything can happen on any given night. Whether it's a buzzer-beating three-pointer or a game-changing block, the unexpected moments are what make this sport so thrilling.

So, as the Vikings basketball season dawns, fans and players alike are gearing up for an unforgettable ride. With new talent, fierce rivalries, coaching brilliance, redemption quests, and the ever-present element of surprise, this season promises to be one for the books. Stay tuned for the action, as the hardwood heats up and the drama unfolds.



WCC men's basketball team discusses play by plays.

Photo by Dani Colon

## Behind the Scenes of SUNY WCC Athletics DANI COLON

It is never an easy task to set up for games, events, and other activities for the athletes. WCC's very own John Hyrko is the Athletics Operations Coordinator and in charge of lots of planning. Hyrko has been working here at WCC for 12 years. He sets up the games for all sports, runs the scoreboards, and is the DJ during these games. He also sets up the seating during basketball games and writes down play by plays to upload to the athletics website [gowccvikings.com](http://gowccvikings.com), in addition to announcing players, scores, and wins. Hyrko is also a WCC alum and played for the men's baseball team.

"I've been playing baseball for my entire life starting from little league all the way up to playing here at SUNY Westchester for 2 years and still playing in a 17+ Men's league," said Hyrko.

"I like to start to set up for a game a few hours before the teams start to warm up. It may be crazy, but this gives me plenty of time to make sure nothing is broken or if something needs to be adjusted. It's all about the experience that our Student Athletes get," Hyrko said. "I want them to walk out on the field, or on the court with the best possible environment we can give them. Once the teams are out on the field/court, everything basically runs itself. You just have to be very fluid in the moment because anything could happen at any given time."

During games, Hyrko uses many methods while watching

the games and keeping scores, and writing down every single play by play. He uses live statistics through the NJCAA website to keep up scores for games. On top of watching the game and submitting scores through the NJCAA website, Hyrko also has to punch in scores on scoreboards and even announces every game. No matter how hectic and busy he might be, he also enjoys it.

"There's a few instances where I'm doing both at the same time. Certain sports like Men's Soccer and Baseball I'm able to start the game and run the scoreboard congruently along with announcing the goals or the next batter so it gets a little hectic but I enjoy every second of it," said Hyrko.

Along with having the responsibility to keep scores, announce games, set up the seating, and be the DJ, Hyrko also manages the WCC athletics website, the two Instagram accounts, two Twitter handles and three Facebook pages all under the WCC athletics teams.

"Usually it takes me a few minutes to upload scores to social media or to the national site, but if I have to enter stats for an away match, it'll take me 15-20 minutes to upload," said Hyrko. "After that's done, I take the file and upload it to our athletics website and then do a game story. That'll take me 10-15 minutes depending on how much information there is."

Another person who puts in the extra hard work and makes sure all of our athletes here at WCC are healthy and fit is the



**John Hyrko and Micheal Belfiore discuss a volleyball play by play.**

*Photo by Dani Colon*

athletic trainer Sam Champa. She is currently in her third year here at WCC and she is seen at every home game for any sport making sure no athlete is injured. Sam always shows her passion for sports at almost every game, where she is seen cheering on the teams for a Viking win.

"In high school I was an athlete and I love biology and anatomy, so I started to explore who and what ATs (athletic trainers) are," said Champa. "I played basketball and soccer my whole life, and throughout college worked with the athletic teams."

Not only does Champa work hard every gameday to make sure each athlete is accounted for and ensures that each athlete is healthy and can play in the game, she also teaches them how to prevent further injuries. In addition, she works on athletes who don't have games and are most likely practicing and also need her help with injuries.

"Game day tends to get crazy. I have to prioritize the athletes who have a game as well as take care of athletes who are practicing those days," said Champa.

Champa even tries her best to make it to every playoff competition for the teams to show her support and still work on the athletes.

Surely, all of these games or even teams wouldn't be where they are if it wasn't for one person: Mike Belfiore, who is the Director of Athletics. Belfiore is in charge of all athletes here at WCC and makes sure each one plays up to their potential. Mike works hard with each coach and with Champa and Hyrko to ensure every game runs

smoothly. Belfiore encourages each student to play to their potential and advocates for every athlete whenever they have trouble.

"I like to speak up for the students here and I want them to feel comfortable here on campus," said Belfiore.

Last spring, Belfiore was strongly advocating for the esports team to have their own gaming arena and practice area, and expressed how important it is to him to have each team and teammate together.

"The baseball team builds comradery because they are all engaged with each other and they build friendships, they have teamwork and we want our esports team to do that too and it's hard for them to do that at home," said Belfiore.

Belfiore tries his best to make it to every home game to encourage the athletes. Belfiore also works hard having meetings with athletic faculty, coaches, and other athletic directors from the Hudson region to make sure the schedules and practices all fall into place.

While Belfiore, Champa, and Hyrko all work very hard together to make sure each athlete has the best experience, they also help them try their best to win region 15 championships and bring home a ring.



**Athletic trainer Sam Champa helps a WCC alumni.**

*Photo by Dani Colon*

## Stepping Up to the Plate: Vikings Baseball Team Hungry for a Chip

LYN MORALES & DANI COLON

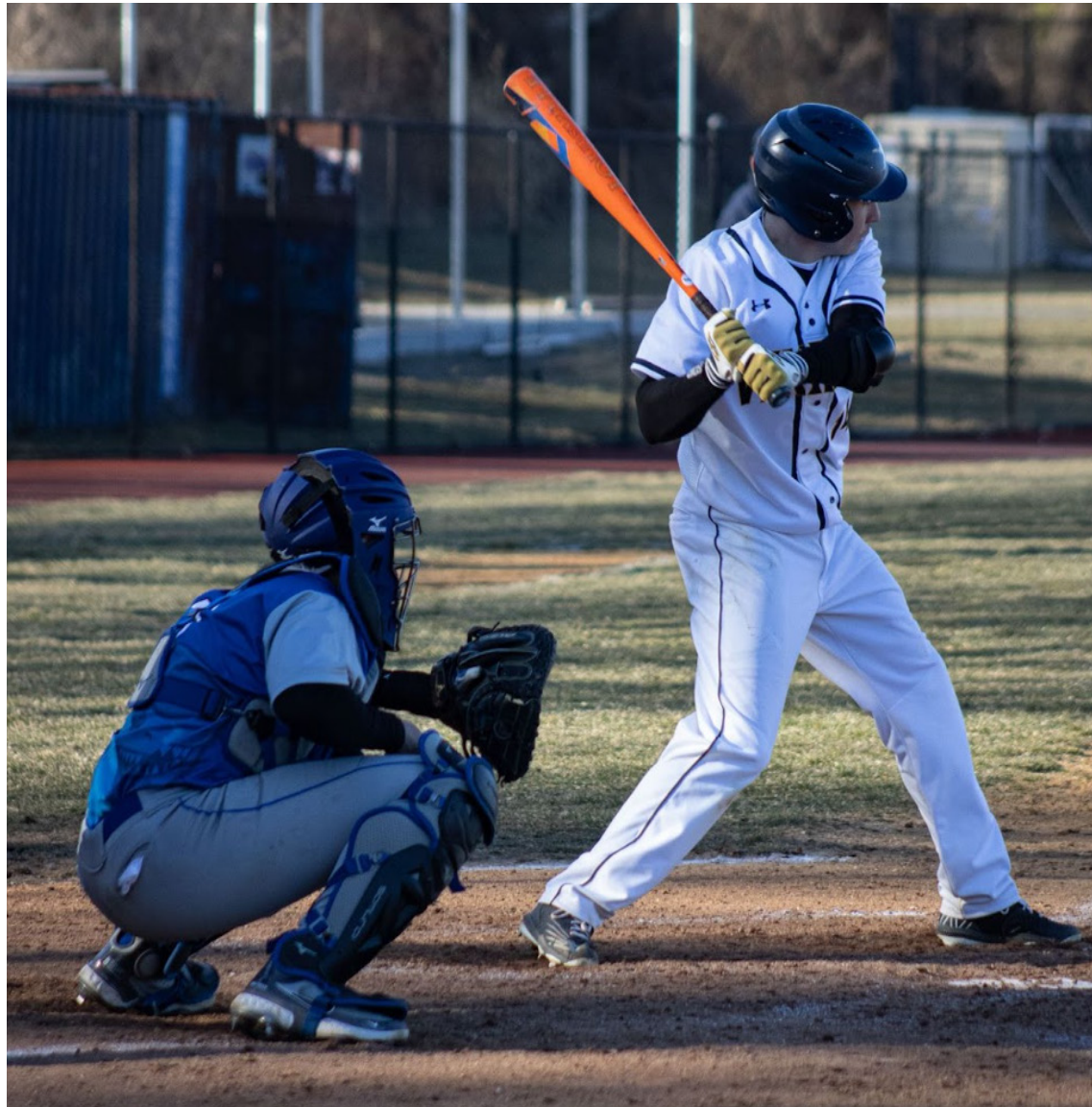
Junior college baseball, often referred to as JUCO baseball, holds a special place in the landscape of American

The Vikings play in the NJCAA (National Junior College Athletic Association) Region 15 Division II.

Dutchess Community College 8-5, but later suffered two crushing losses to Sullivan community college (8-4) and

vikings overall record 41-10, and with this tough loss it definitely brought out strong emotions for the Vikings.

baseball enthusiasts from the local community often attend games to support their favorite JUCO team-



WCC baseball player Tommy Poggi steps up to the plate.

Photo by Dani Colon

sports. It serves as a bridge between high school and the higher echelons of college and professional baseball.

After entering the Region XV tournament as the number one seed, the Vikings defeated

Rockland community college (8-1) to eliminate them from the tournament. Leaving the

“Last spring’s playoff loss made me hungrier,” said sophomore Tommy Poggi, second base #14. “Losing the way we did, with the team we had, was devastating to say the least. I don’t want to feel the way I felt in that moment ever again. That feeling is what pushes me day in and day out.”

One of the primary goals of junior college baseball programs is player

the Vikings. These games offer a more intimate and accessible baseball experience for fans. They help the WCC athletes feel as if they are playing division 1 NCAA or even in the major leagues.

“I think it definitely helps us perform better,” 1st baseman AJ Falciglia said about families and friends driving the motivation. “It drives us to be better every single game... I’m

### “Last spring’s playoff loss made me hungrier.”

Tommy Poggi, Second Base #14

development. Coaches work hard to enhance players’ fundamental skills, refine their baseball IQ, and help them mature as individuals. The coaching staff at WCC includes former Vikings players, adding an extra dimension to the development process. As part of this process, last season Mike Belfiore the Director of Athletics wanted to get started as early as possible on the baseball season; as a result the Vikings record book will show that the 2023 baseball season started on February 15th.

Although junior college baseball games may not draw the same crowds as NCAA Division 1 games, they still enjoy a dedicated following. Friends, family, scouts and

sure you’re wondering what we should expect this season and that is “the win!”

Junior college baseball is a vital and often underappreciated component of the American baseball development system. It provides a critical pathway for aspiring players to reach their goals, whether that be earning a scholarship at a four-year university or pursuing a professional baseball career. Beyond the diamond, JUCO baseball instills values, fosters personal growth, and creates memorable experiences for the players who take the field. Aspiring baseball stars continue to find success in the world of junior college baseball, making it an integral part of the sport’s rich tradition.

The Viking News  
Dutchess Community College

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AJ Falciglia bats at the first fall home game.

Photo by Lyn Morales