

Westchester Community College's Premier News Source

# The Diking News

## SUNY Chancellor King Visits WCC **KEIRA FERRETTI**

Newly-appointed SUNY Chancellor Dr. John B. King visited SUNY WCC's Valhalla campus on Jan. 27 as part of his tour of all 64 SUNY campuses. A press conference was held in the Gateway Center along with SUNY WCC President Dr. Belinda S. Miles, Senator Shelley Mayer, Vice Chairman of the SUNY Board of Trustees Cesar Perales, and Assembly Member Nader J. Sayegh.

Before serving as SUNY chancellor, Dr. King worked in the Obama administration as the tenth Secretary of Education and as president of the Education Trust. This is Dr. King's first visit to SUNY WCC since taking up the position on Jan. 9, 2023.

After a short introduction by Dr. Miles, Dr. King shared a personal story with the audience of love and loss while growing up in New York City and how the public education system helped him overcome the grief of losing his parents at an early age.

"The thing that saved me was New York City's public schools," Dr. King said. "Amazing teachers who made school a place that was safe, compelling, and supportive, and that's really

what's driven me my whole career. I became a teacher to try to do for other kids what teachers did for me."

The crux of the press conference was Dr. King's announcement for increased funding to SUNY WCC from the SUNY system to EOP (Education Opportunity Program) and TRIO (a Federal program that provides services for students with economic disadvantages).

"I'm pleased to announce today that a proposal submitted by Westchester Community College for investment in increasing enrollment and to support student success have been granted, and so we will be awarding 2.4 million dollars in new state funding to Westchester Community College," Dr. King said regarding the significant loss of enrollment and semester retention at SUNY WCC.

According to Dr. King, this money was a portion of a 60 million dollar investment made across SUNY to ensure that every New York student knows that they have a place at a SUNY institution.

SUNY WCC has served the people of Westchester and New York as a whole for over 75 years.



**From Left to Right: Senator Shelley Mayer, Vice Chairman of the SUNY Board of Trustees, Cesar Perales, WCC President Belinda Miles, and Assembly Member Nader J. Sayegh. SUNY Chancellor John B. King stands at the podium in the foreground.**

Photo by Daniel Charles

Dr. King said that many people have come to him and said that SUNY has been a transformative institution.

"First generation college students, first-generation high school graduates... Immigrant families, folks who found their passions and the joy of their

career at SUNY," said Dr. King. "It's an incredibly inspiring place and Westchester Community College reflects those values."

## The Future of Research: SUNY Bridges to Baccalaureate Programs Accept Students from Diverse Backgrounds **LUIS GRANADOS**

In the midst of a scarcity in STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) programs at Westchester Community College, the Bridges to Baccalaureate Program (BTB)

offers an opportunity to students attending 2-year colleges. BTB is a research program for underrepresented students interested in transferring to a four-year institution and

studying in a STEM field. It focuses on biomedical related research.

This summer, the 2023 program requires students to be fully committed due to its rigorous

expectations. Accepted students would be provided housing and are expected to live on campus. Moreover, students would also receive a stipend.

Currently, two SUNY four-year institutions offer this summer program: SUNY Purchase College and SUNY Binghamton. Although the deadline for SUNY Purchase College was in January, SUNY Binghamton is still accepting applicants until the deadline on March 31st.

BTB will teach students invaluable skills. Once in the program, students would be assigned into small groups to promote collaboration. Through workshops and one-on-one advising, participants will not only learn to conduct research in the future, but also learn significant skills that could be applied to other future endeavors.

This program primarily revolves around biomedical related research, and so it is especially popular with pre-med students. Although research is

not a requirement for medical school, it is beneficial in the application process, as it would demonstrate experience in the field. Notwithstanding, students who do not wish to go to medical school but would like to pursue a degree that aligns with biology, chemistry or psychology, may consider this program, which is an introduction to research for students that are pursuing a career in STEM.

There are eligibility requirements that one must meet in order to apply. One of the main requirements is to be a part of an underrepresented group (Hispanic, African American, Pacific Islander, Native American/Alaskan Native). Also, having a disability or coming from a family with low annual income would make one eligible. If applying based on income, students would have to submit a copy of their FAFSA. To learn more, visit Binghamton's Bridges to Baccalaureate page on their official website.



Many of WCC's STEM classes are held in the Science Building.

Photo by Luis Granados

# The Mental Health Task Force Tells All

DANIEL CHARLES

SUNY WCC’s Mental Health Task Force (MHTF) is composed of faculty, staff, and students whose mission is to assess the state of mental health services on campus and put forth measures to increase the accessibility of these resources.

One of these initiatives is the promotion of free QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer) Crisis Intervention training to help participants recognize risk of suicide in others and apply the appropriate response in that situation to ensure the person’s well-being. This training is highly encouraged by the college but not mandatory.

“Mandating a training is no easy feat and often requires employee contractual changes, union approval; and Human Resources approval,” said the Co-Chairs of the MHTF, Kristy Robinson (LCSW) and Patrick Sheehan (LMHC).

Robinson and Sheehan explained further that QPR training can’t be enforced like Title IX: Sexual Harassment training, which is a Federal requirement for all public institutions. The QPR training module can be found on SUNY WCC’s official website, which states that the training takes less than an hour, and could ultimately save a life.

Further, The MHTF utilizes survey research to better understand mental health concerns on campus. In the 2021-2022 academic year, the MHTF received 145 responses from SUNY WCC faculty and staff members to a survey assessing their feelings about student and

faculty mental health struggles.

“One theme that stood out is that many SUNY WCC employees are also struggling with their mental wellbeing and need support,” said Robinson and Sheehan.

The co-chairs also revealed key information from the 2022 Healthy Minds Study.

“Over 80% of student respondents feel their emotional or mental difficulties have hurt their academic performance in the last month,” said Robinson and Sheehan. “Over 28% of respondents stated that their academic performance was impacted 6 or more days due to emotional or mental difficulties and 16% of SUNY WCC student respondents disclosed having seriously considered attempting suicide within the last year.”

The MHTF suggests that the Covid-19 crisis, an intensifying political landscape, increased awareness of social causes, and the repercussions of climate change have contributed greatly to the stress levels of SUNY WCC’s student body.

Despite these somber statistics, according to the MHTF, “over 60% of student respondents reported that they ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’ with the statement, ‘At my school, I feel that students’ mental and emotional wellbeing is a priority.’ Additionally, more than half of student respondents reported that they ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’ with the statement, ‘If I needed to seek professional help for my mental or emotional health, I would know where to access resources from my school.’”

The MHTF can be contacted



A quiet space for students waits outside the Mental Health Services office in the Student Center.

Photo by Walesca Marmolejos



The bulletin board within Mental Health and Counseling Services offers resources for students.

Photo by Daniel Charles

through the email, [MHTF@sunywcc.edu](mailto:MHTF@sunywcc.edu).

The full interview can be found on the VN’s official website,

<http://www.vikingnews.org>.

# Plans In Motion For A New Gaming Arena

DANI COLON AND DANIEL CHARLES



Students use the Tech Lounge to do homework, play games, eat, and hang out.

Photo by Sorelle Marsh

The WCC Esports department hosts the largest number of players of any sports team on campus. The Overwatch team was the first team to win a NJCAA championship in WCC Athletics history. Despite their successes, WCC’s Esports teams do not have a designated spot on campus to practice, and must play together online through their home computers.

Michael Belfiore, Director of Athletics, and Professor Deborah Krikun, adviser of the New Media Group and ITECH Program, had received word of a time-sensitive source of funding to create a computer lounge on campus for gaming related activities.

“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.

Krikun supported the project because she wants to allow students in the ITECH program to have the hands-on experience of building the PCs for the lounge, and she’d like the New Media Group to use the finished products to build video games.

On Feb 2, Belfiore and Krikun asked the SGA for their approval to commandeer the first half of the tech lounge and use it as the epicenter for the “Gaming Arena.” The SGA approved the motion to start construction on the project with a 10:4:1 vote (Approved: Disapproved: Abstained).

Those who dissented mentioned that the Gaming Arena would be taking away one of the only quiet student spaces on campus. Another major concern was that the shoddy wifi connection in the technology building would pose a detriment to gaming. Also, the proximity of classrooms near the Gaming Arena as well as the quiet student lounge next door would necessitate a degree of

soundproofing that may be hard and expensive to accomplish.

Two weeks after the SGA’s vote, Belfiore mentioned that the initial funds for the project are unavailable.

“It’s still a goal but in a sense we are now setback,” Belfiore said. “We are no longer pressured to have the equipment by May and so we can now figure out where the best space is, and ideally not take away space from students.”

Even if campus space and funding is allocated to build the Gaming Arena at some point in the near future, there are many procedural hoops to jump through.

According to Krikun, for construction of the Gaming Arena to be underway, they would still need “the consensus of the faculty [...], the improvement of infrastructure that follows code safety requirements by the IT department, and people to maintain, and monitor the space during use.”

## New Exhibit Highlights the Work of Noted Artist Nancy Bowen

DANIEL CHARLES

“Sometimes A Body is Not Just a Body” is the newest art exhibit to come to WCC. Internationally recognized mixed-media artist Nancy Bowen is showcasing an anthology of her sculptures and drawings (1992-2022) in the SUNY WCC Art Gallery, located in the Hankin Academic Arts Building. Bowen attended the gallery’s opening event on January 26, from 4-6 PM, and gave a brief explanation of her art.

“What’s in our body, how do we think about it?” Bowen asked the audience as she lectured. “We think of it as a scary thing, and I wanted to make it beautiful.”

The gallery’s opening day audience expressed a variety of reactions and opinions.

“To me, it really relates to womanhood and how a lot of time, women are reduced to just their bodies,” Art and Design major Kati Sollecito, who was in the audience at this event, said. “This work exemplifies how women are first and foremost people, with emotions and humanity, which are often stolen by patriarchal dehumanization

and systemic oppression.”

Bowen’s remarks had revealed that her early work “depicted females from a feminist point of view.”

Another Art and Design major, Juleidy “Violet” Aldana, spoke about Bowen’s recurring theme of highlighting the relationship between body and spirit.

“The art is connected to the soul, the energy,” Aldana said in reference to Bowen’s Chakral Drawings, 2009. “Each chakra is connected to a certain part of your body, and the energies produced by those chakras provides healing to their specific body part.”

Bowen had mentioned her fondness of incorporating the chakral systems of Hindu and Buddhist Art into her own work.

In attendance was also Professor Matthew Ferranto, who teaches Graphic Design and Typography at WCC.

“The exhibit includes sculpture and collages from over a 30-year period and comprises several distinct bodies of work – it’s something of a retrospective,”

Ferranto said. “While the works might look wildly different at first glance, it’s possible to recognize thoughts revolved in the patterns and topics/subjects that Bowen returns to & explores in various ways.”

Addressing the apparent gap between the exhibit’s technical and thematic complexities, Ferranto said, “whether working in two or three dimensions, her overall process seems one of assemblage. The work includes repetition of anatomical forms & terminology – usually the human body – combined with organic & celestial patterns/images; sometimes these are literally bound up in one another, and one seems to influence or refract upon the other. Perhaps she posits a body as a passage between these various states?”

The full interview with Ferranto can be found on the Viking News official website, <http://www.vikingnews.org/>

The exhibition, which is free and open to the public, will be open through April 12, 2023.



Artist Nancy Bowen was present at the Opening Ceremony.

Photo by Daniel Charles

## Black History Month Shrugs Off Scheduling Mishap in Opening Ceremonies

DANIEL CHARLES

Black History Month (BHM) on WCC’s Valhalla campus started off with a scheduling conflict on Feb. 1. The BHM Opening Ceremony, organized by the BHM committee, and the Kickback, organized by the Department of Student Involvement (DSI), both featured the Chiku Awali Performers but overlapped each other according to the original schedule. The BHM’s Opening Ceremony was scheduled at 11:30 AM-1 PM in the Gateway Building’s Davis Auditorium, while the DSI’s Kickback was announced for 12:00-1 PM in the Student Center Quiet Lounge.

Students who wanted to attend the full duration of the Opening Ceremony would have to miss most of the Kickback. However, both organizations reached a compromise after being made aware of the issue.

“The BHM extended their event by starting 30 minutes earlier and the DSI shifted the start of their event so that the performers would have time to get to both experiences,” said Juan-Carlos Piñeiro, Assistant Director of Student Involvement. “In the end, we were able to collectively offer two distinct yet similar experiences and reach a wider group of SUNY WCC community members.”

The Opening Ceremony offered a hybrid in-person and virtual set up, and was hosted by Professor Donnie Simmons, Sr., the BHM Committee Chairperson. Simmons’ opening statement focused on the interconnectivity of WCC’s community through diversity, inclusivity, and equity.

“Without ‘We,’ none of this happens, none of this

comes to existence. This is a communal event,” Simmons said, later adding that “physical differences should be embraced, not diminished.” Simmons reminded the audience that this year’s BHM theme is “Black Resistance.”

Next, Piñeiro gave a statement acknowledging the contributions of the Indigenous population—the Wappinger and Lenape peoples—whose ancestral land WCC rests on, as well as the Black Diaspora to our global culture.

The Chiku Awali Performers (who were celebrating their 20th anniversary) then opened their act with a Mali-Empire war dance. Drummer, Gabriel Roxbury, then gave the audience a lesson on the “Djembe,” a West African goblet drum that

uses goat skin and can produce three distinct sounds depending on where and how you hit the instrument. Their performance concluded with a well-known West African Welcome Dance, “Funga Alafia” (meaning “to bring you peace and joy”). This dance required the audience to stand up and sing and dance along with the Chiku Awali performers.

The Opening Ceremony also featured remarks from WCC’s Chief Diversity Officer and Title IX Coordinator, Rinardo Reddick, as well as from the Black Student Union President, Briana Herring. “Resistance to me means being ourselves unapologetically,” Herring said about her interpretation of this year’s BHM theme.

The event closed with Dr. Gwen Roundtree-Evans’ rendition of

the Black National Anthem: “Lift Every Voice and Sing” by James Weldon Johnson, and a video montage of important events and figures throughout Black history.

The Chiku Awali dancers left as soon as they finished their performances to get to the Kickback in the Quiet Lounge of the Student Center. A catering service, “Break Bread Not Hearts,” provided all who attended with ethnic dishes entitled “Trans-Sahara Soul” (pita bread filled with black eyed peas, smoked corn, pickled onions, and cilantro), and paired with “ASE ASE Aji Sauce” (a sauce containing cilantro, parsley, garlic, lime, and LOVE). The Chiku Awali dancers performed for the faculty and students gathered in the Lounge, and stayed a bit over time to continue dancing and singing with the audience.



BHM Opening Ceremony: (From left to right) Professor Christine Timm, The Chiku Awali Performers, and Professor Donnie Simmons, Sr.

Photo by Daniel Charles



The Kickback: The Chiku Awali Performers dance with Professor Christine Timm.

Photo by Daniel Charles



**Kenneth Chamberlain Jr. speaks at the event.**

Photo courtesy of SUNY WCC Strategic Marketing & Communications

## The Killing of Kenneth Chamberlain: A Story of Police Brutality After Accidental Life Alert

SHPAT GJONBALAJ

On November 19, 2011, in White Plains, NY, Kenneth Chamberlain Sr. was brutally murdered by a group of law enforcement officers due to racism. That was the opinion of over 200,000 people who signed a petition the following year demanding punishment for the police who caused the death. The petition was started by the victim's son, Kenneth Chamberlain, Jr.

The police explanation of what went wrong is more unbelievable than Nero's (the Christians did it) or Alec Baldwin's (I held the gun but I didn't pull the

trigger). The story goes like this: Kenneth Chamberlain, who at the time was sixty-eight years old, accidentally set off his Life Aid Medical Alert necklace very early in the morning.

As a result, officers came to check out the situation. Kenneth, knowing that the alarm was an accident and that nothing was wrong, tried his best to tell them to leave. The officers claimed they weren't allowed to leave without assuring themselves that everything was ok, even if, as it turned out, it meant killing the patient. Kenneth repeated the phrase "Don't do that!" too many times for comfort.

The tension was radioactive, as if an immovable rock and an unstoppable force had come into contact with one another.

The inevitable result of this absurd conflict was chaos, fury, forced entry, and a blast from a shotgun. Kenneth Chamberlain died in surgery.

On February 9th, WCC hosted a film showing of *The Killing of Kenneth Chamberlain* for Black History Month. The movie was screened at the Gateway Building, inside the Davis Auditorium. Kenneth Chamberlain Jr. was there, as were two of the filmmakers. Instead of watching the whole movie, clips were shown, and a conversation was held between writer/director David Midell, and actor/producer Enrico Natale about police brutality in America.

Not many came to the screening. The auditorium had

a few students and a lot more adults and faculty members. The one hosting this event was Don Simmons, Jr., one of WCC's librarians. The morning had a sort of reverence. What we saw was a son who has spent every waking moment since his father's death fighting for justice, spending his time informing people "how to survive a law enforcement encounter," and reliving his father's death every day. Kenneth Jr. has already done his therapy. This is his life, and he "still gets up and does what he has to do." The lesson is (in his words): "It's not resistance, it's resilience."

See this movie. Find a way. It's the least you can do.

## For Valentine's Day GLOW Sings Of Love, Friendship, and Safe Sex

STEVEN GARCIA

At a Karaoke event they sponsored on Feb 9, GLOW members took the occasion to remind the WCC campus that Valentine's Day isn't always about romantic relationships. It's also about being with people you care about, such as your homies and BFFs, and letting them know you love and appreciate them. This is especially important in the case of singles, for whom the pressures of Valentine's Day can be tough. GLOW, a campus club that serves the LGBTQIA+ community, presented "Valentine's Karaoke with Glow" as an opportunity for everyone to lose that pressure and have fun together.

Another important goal of the event was to promote safety in sexual relations. The event runners gave out party bags containing condoms, lube, and Dental Dams, as well as a manual on how to practice safe sex.

Karaoke kicked off at 1pm in the Student Event Room. Originally, only a couple of students were expected to arrive but the day's attendance was beyond the event committee's expectations. Many guests walked in with friends. There were groups, some couples, and even random people who were just passing by. There was a signup sheet for anyone who was interested in singing, either alone or with a group of friends. The sheet was available throughout the event. So many people wanted to sing that the event went overtime. The room overflowed with guests, who formed a long line at the booth.

Food and snacks were also served, in the form of fruit and cheese board, chicken tenders and french fries, vegetable platters, sodas, and seltzer drinks, which rapidly ran out.

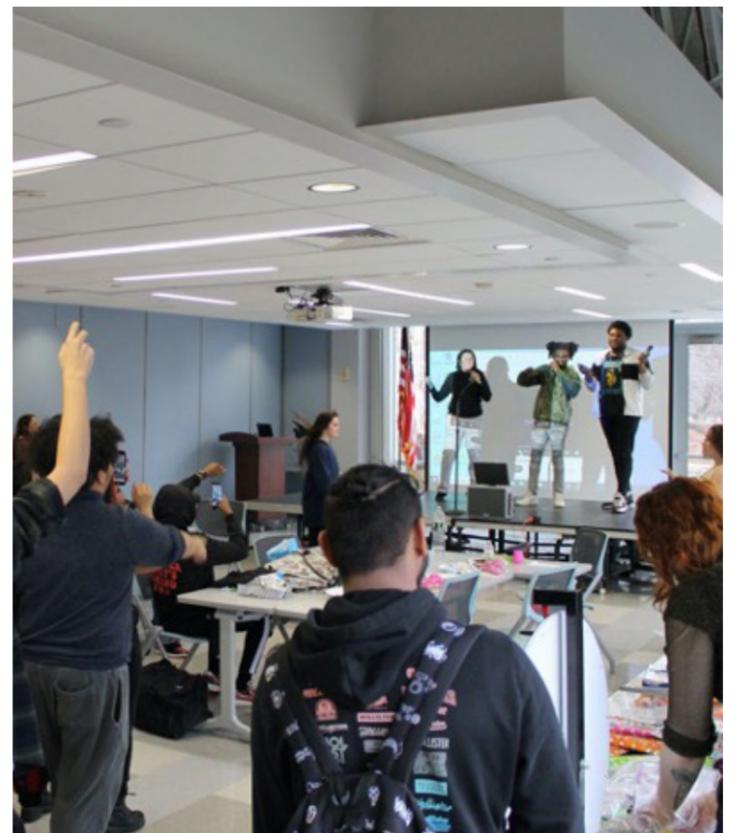
"It was fun," Isabella Arias said. "I got onstage and sang 'Dynamite' by Taio Cruz and the

snacks were delicious."

Student Zael Flund said that the karaoke brought the community together and was a fun break between classes.

Overall, GLOW's Valentine's Day Karaoke event was considered a success, not only as an enjoyable day for all who participated but as a vehicle for encouraging safer sex practices. If you would like to seek out more advice or tools for safe sex, pay a visit to the Queer Corner, room 285 in the Student Center, or at Health Services.

GLOW is an LGBTQIA+ club run by President Kiki Jimenez, Vice President Jayden Xavier, Treasurer Kiley Crisp, and Secretary Zeke Watts. They, as well as the Department of Student Involvement's LGBTQIA+ programs, welcome new members.



**Attendees perform karaoke at the event.**

Photo by Steven Garcia

## From the Page to the Stage: The Enduring Impact of Langston Hughes

ZEFFERINO CARRIERO

The Harlem Renaissance in the 1920s and 30s marked a cultural turning point for African American artistic expression, with Langston Hughes becoming one of its leading voices. As we celebrate Black History Month, let's examine the connections between Hughes and the contemporary artist Kendrick Lamar, who has continued to carry on the legacy of this important cultural movement.

Hughes, a poet and novelist, explored the experiences of African Americans and challenged the dominant narratives of the time. His poem "I, Too" endures as a powerful testament to Black pride and resilience in the face of racial discrimination. First published

in 1926, it speaks of a Black man who is denied a place at the table and forced to eat in the kitchen. The man, however, declares that he is not ashamed and that one day he will sit at the table as an equal. Through his prose, Hughes inspired a generation of artists and writers alike, and his legacy can be seen in the work of contemporary Black artists such as rapper Kendrick Lamar.

Lamar, renowned for his social consciousness and musical ability, often explores issues of race, class, and social justice in his music. His song, "The Blacker the Berry," released in 2015, is a searing indictment of the systemic racism that permeates American society. The song begins with a sample of a news report about the murder of

Trayvon Martin, a young Black man who was shot and killed in Florida in 2012. Lamar then delivers a series of verses that confront the contradictions of Black identity, including negative stereotypes projected onto Black people and the internalized racism that many Black people feel.

Like Hughes, Lamar challenges the dominant narratives and brings his unique perspective and artistry to both celebrate Black identity and critique the ways in which Black people are oppressed and marginalized in American society. Despite the differences in time and genre, the works of Hughes and Lamar share a common thread of Black artistic expression, speaking to the experience of being Black

in America and the struggle for equality in the face of systemic racism.

Hughes' poem speaks of a time when Black people were denied basic human rights and were forced to live in the shadows, while Lamar's song speaks of a time when Black people are still facing the same issues, despite the progress that has been made in between. Both artists use their art to bring awareness to Black issues and effect social change. The connections between the Harlem Renaissance and contemporary Black artistry highlight the ongoing source of inspiration and creativity reignited by the movement.

The legacy of the Harlem Renaissance provides a

framework for contemporary socially conscious artists to explore and celebrate Black culture while challenging the status quo. It continues to elevate the voices of Black people and highlight the beauty and individuality of the Black experience while bringing awareness to broader social issues and challenges.

The works of Hughes and Lamar are both powerful statements of Black pride and resilience, reminding us of the importance of celebrating Black history and Black artistic expression. As we continue to celebrate Black History Month, let us appreciate the contributions of Black artists to that history.

## THE VIKING NEWS

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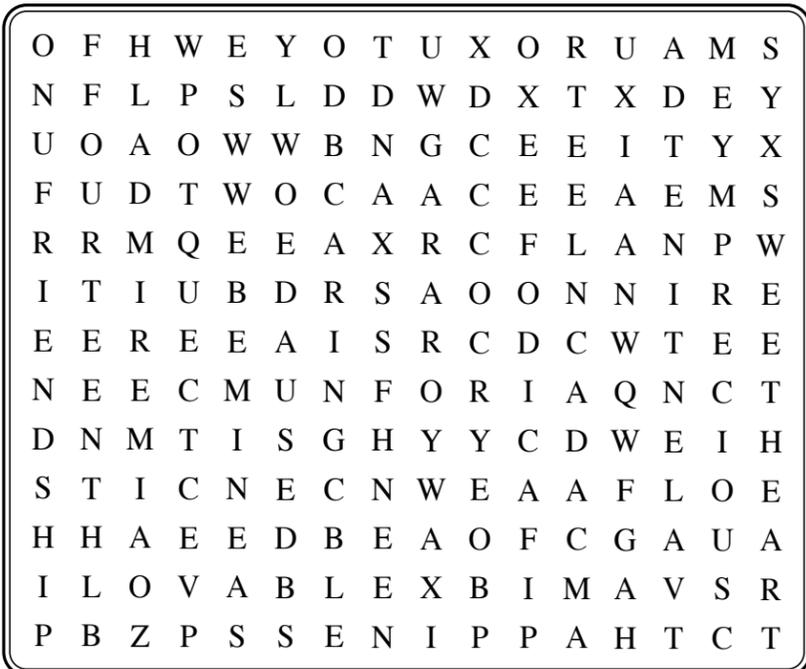
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## Valentine Word Search

SORELLE MARSH



- SWEETHEART
- HAPPINESS
- CHOCOLATES
- FOURTEEN
- PRECIOUS
- FRIENDSHIP
- BE MINE
- VALENTINE
- ADORABLE
- CARING
- ADMIRE
- FLOWERS
- LOVABLE
- CANDY

## Word Plexers

KEIRA FERRETTI

Some common words and phrases are encoded in these plexers.

Can you tell what they are?

		step spets spets
servng CCCCCCC	ARARM	NOSE
	IIIIIIII OOO	INJURY + INSULT

## Sudoku

KEIRA FERRETTI

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

## Hypersonic Striders: A Review of NETFLIX's Sonic Prime

LUCAS WERNER



Screenshot of Sonic Prime Episode 1. Photo by Lucas Werner

After the success of Sonic The Hedgehog 2 in mid-2022, the Sega Sonic Team has collaborated with Netflix to keep the momentum going with the first Sonic Netflix original series: Sonic Prime, which first aired on December 15, 2022.

The story so far: After a battle with Doctor Eggman goes awry, Sonic finds himself in an alternate multiverse called the “Shatterverse.” There he must traverse “Shatterspaces,” alternate worlds (such as one where pirate versions of Amy, Tails, and Knuckles roam the seven seas) in search of the four shards of the mysterious “Paradox Prism,” and, hopefully, a way to return home.

So far Sega’s first go at a Netflix show has hit both high and low points. Let’s start with the positives:

Interesting story up to this point (with a possible nod to the Disney studio: For some viewers, Sonic’s traveling through a strange new multiverse will recall the Disney Plus show What If? with its series of different scenarios in different parts of the Marvel Cinematic Universe (such as Peggy Carter becoming Captain America instead of Steve Rogers).

Sound moral values: Sonic realizes that sometimes his reckless actions have consequences and takes responsibility, as he should.

Now for the negatives:

The story element where Sonic is thrown into another Shatterspace each time he touches a Paradox Prism shard just feels a bit dumb to me.

Shadow the Hedgehog does not get as much screen time as the other characters. I understand that Sonic’s the main focus, but is it really too much to ask for a little more insight as to what happened to Shadow after the Prism shattered from his point of view?

But make no mistake: This is a good show. I’d give this season a 4.5 out of 5, and I can’t wait for season 2. If you want to check the show out for yourself, Sonic Prime is now streaming on Netflix.

## Is Puss In Boots: The Last Wish a Better Movie Than Avatar: The Way of Water?

DANIEL CHARLES

Anyone who has spent even a modicum of time on Reddit in the last two months will be familiar with the vast number of memes generated recently comparing Puss In Boots: The Last Wish and Avatar: The Way of Water. Both movies came out in late December, the release date traditionally reserved for holiday blockbusters. Despite Avatar’s completely annihilating Puss in terms of box office revenue (a whopping \$2 billion compared with \$334 million), the reviews tell a different tale. Puss currently has a 95% rating on Rotten Tomatoes, while Avatar only scored 76%. This has sparked a surge of memes highlighting the contrast in ratings between the two films. I decided to see for myself which movie was superior.

While it’s difficult to compare films with such vastly different themes and cinematic styles, I decided that my verdict would be based on enjoyment and emotional impact. Puss had me hooked all the way through, which makes sense since the targeted audience for this movie is children, who have notoriously low attention

spans. The dialogue was fast-paced and witty, the action scenes were fluid and explosive, and the characters—Goldilocks and the Three Bears, Perrito, Kitty SoftPaws, Jack Horner, and, of course, Puss-In-Boots—all had distinct personalities a well as motives that really meshed well with each other.

But the character who really stood out from the rest had to be “Death,” even though he had the least amount of screen time. Throughout the film, Puss-In-Boots is being chased by the literal, physical manifestation of Death, who comes to him in the form of a giant wolf wielding dual scythes. Death’s goal is to kill Puss-In-Boots, effectively taking away his last life (since cats have nine lives in this universe) because he didn’t appreciate any of his other lives.

Avatar in comparison started off slow, with Jake Sully (Sam Worthington) telling the audience in a voiceover narration how he started a family with Neytiri (Zoe Saldana) after he decided (in the first movie) to spend the remainder of his life with the Na’vi people.

We also see the resurgence of an old enemy, Colonel Miles Quaritch (Stephen Lang) and his team of Marines, who have had their memories uploaded to Avatar bodies before the final battle of the first movie. They have a personal vendetta against Jake for betraying and killing their human forms.

The movie starts to pick up considerably when the Sully family leaves the Na’vi Forest people to travel across the ocean to hide themselves from the Sky people (human invaders of Pandora), and live amongst the Reef people (Na’vi who live on islands). Sully’s children take up more of the spotlight in the film, especially his second son, Lo’ak (Britain Dalton). Director James Cameron has made good use of his \$400 million budget: Pandora’s strange flora and fauna are mesmerizing. The ending fight between the Na’vi and humans is an intense, suspenseful battle.

Both films are great, but I would have to choose Puss-In-Boots: The Last Wish as the better movie. It’s a film that helps both young and old come to



Robynne Hu- Picture of Zhang Jia Jie National Park that resembles Pandora.

terms with their mortality, which is often a topic that parents and teachers forgo because they fear it will scar their children. But the conversation is necessary and helps to facilitate a healthy relationship between children and their perceptions of death. Dreamworks really nailed it with this movie, and I highly recommend watching it!



Gustave Dore- Puss-in-Boots. Copyright 2023 WorksheetWorks.com

## Pierce the Veil Returns After 7 Years

KEIRA FERRETTI

Pierce the Veil has always been at the forefront of the Warped Tour, pop-punk era of music. With their well received fifth album, The Jaws of Life, PTV has grown ever more iconic. It’s their first album since 2016’s Misadventures. Although in their early days, they were undoubtedly a guitar-heavy foursome with all of the ‘traditional’ punk influences,

this new album sees a shift in not only their sound but also in their maturity.

Nowadays, all the members are married and their lead singer/ rhythm guitarist Vic Fuentes recently welcomed his first child. The album shows that the band has pushed through their tough adolescent and early-20s phase and has proceeded into adulthood, something that they have been reaching for from

the beginning of their musical career.

Tracks like “Shared Trauma” and “Resilience” reflect times when your teenage angst just seems to meld into the grown-up you, whereas “Death of an Executioner” and “Pass the Nirvana” are hype songs with fast-tempos and lyrics about punk shows. Although their sound has matured into one with synths and alt-pop

influences (like “Flawless Execution” and “12 Fractures” featuring Chloe Moriondo) PTV still hold onto their roots throughout the entire 12-track LP. Every song is recognizably a Pierce the Veil production, and if I were 13 years old, sweating in black skinny jeans at the Warped Tour, I’d certainly be headbanging once again.

Final rating: 4/5



Jaws of Life album cover. piercetheveil.net

### 5 Must-See Movies

KEIRA FERRETTI

- Sounder (1971)
- Black Panther: Wakanda Forever (2022)

- The Half of It (2020)
- If Beale Street Could Talk (2018)

- Ant-Man: Quantumania (2023)

## A Love Lesson from the Editor

### Editorial

As another Valentine's Day passes, we see couples happily holding hands, singles proclaiming "happy singles appreciation day," and stores rolling out anything that they can possibly make pink and heartshaped. The consumerism that has long held sway over holidays such as Christmas, Easter, and Valentine's Day continues to overshadow what used to be seen as a religious holiday. For those of you who are more cynical than romantic, I've decided to provide you with a brief history of Valentine's Day.

Valentine's Day was originally celebrated as the Feast of Saint Valentine, as a way to honor the Christian martyr Valentine. Saint Valentine was a clergyman who devoted his time to helping persecuted Christians, and was rumored to have officiated weddings for persecuted Christian couples. After being beheaded, he was sainted.

Though having only vague connotations of love within its own holiday, Valentine's Day may perhaps take some of its romantic tendencies from the pagan holiday that it shares a day with. The dates of Feb. 13-15 were originally claimed by the pagan holiday of Lupercalia, the celebration of the pagan gods Pan and Juno, the gods of love.

Looking past the overlapping of dates within the pagan and Christian holiday of romance, historically notions of Valentine's connection to love did not begin to occur until after a famous poem by none other than Chaucer. Whether due to the rhyme scheme, time of year, or his own amusement, the line "on Saint Valentine's day, when every bird comes there to choose his mate" appears in Chaucer's poem "Parliament of Fowls." The premise of the poem being that several male birds make compelling cases to win the heart of a single female. This poem sparked a thin but consistent link between Saint Valentine and love.

While the most prominent Valentine martyr is the patron saint of beekeeping, epilepsy and Terni, who's to say that one of the other martyrs didn't have a penchant for matchmaking!

Marygrace Orfanella

**Editor in Chief**

## A Letter To Our Readers

Dear Readers,

It has been a very exciting time at The Viking News these past few weeks. Finally, after years of our current Editor in Chief, Marygrace, and her predecessor working so diligently by themselves, the VN has a complete editorial staff! This means that more can and will be done for our readers and the community as a whole.

Since being taken on as a staff writer here back in October 2022, I have been looking forward to updating our extremely outdated and unorganized website. Luckily, I have been given the wonderful opportunity to be the website editor (and features co-editor)!

Now, The Viking News has a completely transformed, brand-new website! At [vikingnews.org](http://vikingnews.org) there will now be online content posted. This consists of the same quality writing you have seen in all our physical issues and opens the door for more reader-submissions, more connection to the community, and an opportunity for up-to-date and relevant articles.

If you haven't already, please do check out our new site at the same old address: [vikingnews.org](http://vikingnews.org) (you'll even be able to meet the new editorial staff!).

Thank you,

Keira Ferretti

**Website Editor and Features Co-Editor for The Viking News**



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# The Viking News

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## Spring into Baseball Season DANI COLON



**Vikings pitcher Patrick Poggi a moment before a throw.**

*Photo by Dani Colon*

As our spring semester rolls in, it comes along with spring sports. With one of SUNY WCC's most popular sports, basketball, coming to an end, you may think "Now what sport is there really to watch at SUNY WCC?" That's where baseball rolls in.

WCC's baseball standings in the past years were phenomenal with their 2018 standings being 28-12, as well their 2019

standings of 24-16, and their 2020 standing at 10-4. However, they could've stayed up with their 2022 standings as it was 22-20. During the postseason they were 0-2 in the playoffs.

With the 2023 baseball season starting in February, a few of SUNY WCC's baseball players agreed to an interview. Thomas Mark, pitcher, talks about his favorite pitch to throw.

"My fastball is just the easiest

pitch to throw," said Mark. "I've been working on a cutter this year, I started working on it last year so I'm gonna try and execute it this year and see how it works."

The team's 2022 standing was not as strong as the years before, even though players have continued to work hard.

"I think this year with covid being gone and we're more of a single team and a lot of the boys are friendlier and everyone is vibing together, I think everyone is going to have a good mix this year," Mark said.

"I think we're coming together as a team," said Patrick Poggi, utility player for the team. "We've now known each other longer and now know each other better and were open to come in definitely stronger than last year."

According to Patrick Poggi, his favorite position to play is right field because he's gotten used to it over the past few seasons.

"My favorite throw is my fastball," said Tommy Poggi, second baseman and pitcher. "I like to gear up and throw as hard as I can. Try to play as a hitter trying to get my velocity up right now and get my arm up for this season."

Beyond the team's baseball strategies, all three players agreed that their favorite team is the New York Yankees. If they were to choose their walkup song, Mark would choose "Funky Town" by Lipps Inc. and Patrick Poggi's pick would be "Welcome To The Jungle" by Guns and Roses, while Tommy Poggi was not sure yet.

Along with Major League Baseball (MLB), SUNY WCC is also adopting a new rule called the 'Shift Rule.' This rule is enforcing that four infielders must remain within infield and cannot reposition themselves

where they believe would be a better place to hit the ball.

"I'm excited to see the shift change being a yankees fan they have a lot of shift outs and I think that's how the game should be played," Mark said. "And it'll be more fun."

Beyond MLB news, there will also be the World Baseball Classic in 2023. World Baseball Classic is a series of pool (group) games that are held every four years. Teams such as Japan, USA, and the Dominican Republic have very strong rosters this year.

"I'm hoping the U.S. will win, but team Dominican Republic has a pretty strong team," Tommy Poggi said. "I think, honestly, as much as I want team U.S. to win, I think team Dominican Republic is for sure gonna take it."

SUNY WCC baseball has started their training and their official season started on February 15. They seem very dedicated to the game and are hoping to have a better impact this season.

## WCC Bowling Leads With Strong Season DANI COLON

With the spring semester in full swing, SUNY WCC's bowling team started their season on January 31st. WCC's men's and women's bowling teams started their season off with strong leads as Westchester hosted the "Westchester Shootout" and the "Westchester Classic."

The two top womens bowlers were Jessica Kasper and Felicity Keogh. They both got the win for the championship with Kasper winning all events and Keogh coming in 4th. Both players have a winning spot in the tournament. Keogh averaged out 163.2 and Kasper was at 162.2, which earned them each 10th and 11th place respectively.

The men's basketball team with Max Belvedere took the lead and finished 10th overall with an average 181 during all events. Following behind was Anthony Pulisio averaging about 173 in 14th place.

"We were down a little bit but even though Max was having a good game and Brendon even had a really good game," said SUNY WCC bowling manager Trevion Morrison. "We could've done better but we had a decent amount of averages."

According to Morrison, Grace DaProcida was doing well but the game was more focused on Keogh and Kasper.

"They are both a good duo

for each other," Morrison said. "They won their nationals last year coming in second. As for the men's, we could do better. Julian [Cocking] is getting up there along with Anothony and Max. Brendon Adair had a good 100+ for the past four games."

According to Morrison, Adair improved the most in terms of score as he has been able to get in more strikes as of late.

"I think we did okay," Cocking said. "Not anything too special and not anything terrible either. I can improve on the throwing quality and some can improve on positioning and speed."

With the last games against Northeast Classic being



**WCC bowling manager Trevion Morrison in action.**

*Photo courtesy of Trevion Morrison*

scrimmages and the "Viking Classics" coming in 4th, the team will travel to Schenectady, NY for more games and tournaments.

Many more games are to come to determine where the SUNY Westcher Viking bowling team stands overall.

## Vikings Take Over, Defeat Rivals Rockland CC DANI COLON



**WCC men's basketball player Ed Beqiri led the team with most shots against Rockland.**

SUNY WCC's Men's Basketball team faced their rivals Rockland Community College on Feb. 2. As SUNY Westchester's overall standing puts them 11-13 (press time), four games remain to decide whether or not the men's basketball team will make it to the postseason.

Ed Beqiri, position forward, had led the team with the most shots--25 in total. After his

good jumper in the first quarter, Beqiri was determined to keep up with the most shots.

"I felt pretty good about my shooting performance against Rockland," said Beqiri. "I definitely was in the zone and just felt like I couldn't miss."

With this still in the beginning of the first half, Rockland had started off falling behind as they had a miss layup with 19 minutes

left in the first half. Within those minutes they were also getting turnovers, which meant it wasn't a good start for them. On the other hand, the WCC Vikings were getting rebounds and blocks with good jumpers within the same 19 minutes left in the first half.

With 15 minutes left in the first half, Rockland was quick to come back as they had gotten a three pointer with an assist putting them at 11 and the Vikings at 7. With this, Rockland stayed in the lead for a while until the end of the first half, when the Vikings took the lead 42-28.

The vikings stayed focused and in the lead all throughout the rest of the game, as well as in the second half when the Vikings stayed in the lead and didn't even let Rockland get close to passing them in points.

Just behind Beqiri, Omar Nkonde, position forward, had the second most lead shots with 23 in total.

"It felt good, especially because

the game before I didn't play too well. I know I can play and during a conference game, it felt great," said Nkonde.

Another player who was particularly dedicated to the game was Yenfry Paulino, position small forward, who was third leading shots with 10 points.

"It feels good [to lead with third most shots] but coach tells me every game I gotta shoot more," Paulino said. "I definitely should have shot more, but I'm still fine with how I did."

Not only did the whole team's dedication make them push forward to get the win, it was definitely their head coach Andre Pennicooke who also played a huge part in the team's success.

"[The zone defense] was effective," Pennicooke said. "We did a lot of analysis on the coaching staff and watched films. We know that they love to drive.

According to Pennicooke,

players hit lots of shots that they usually don't hit.

"That happens when you play zone, once certain guys hit one or two they get feeling good," said Pennicooke. "And they got hot, but it was effectively preventing them from driving them. It was effectively slowing down their offense and it was effective in making them do things they are not used to doing."

The strategy was effective and ultimately brought the Vikings the win. According to Pennicooke, Rockland was not used to playing zone the whole game, just as much as they are not used to WCC playing zone the whole game.

"We all have to be in sync defensively and offensively, run our sets, run our lanes, and protect the ball," said Anwar Zahzam, position point guard. "When we all are in sync no one could beat us."

Now with only four games remaining, SUNY Westchester must work tough to make it to the postseason.