

The Diking News

WCC Faculty Senate Discusses AI and Student Integrity with Student Representatives

JONATHAN CERINI

As artificial intelligence continues to become more prominent, the world is learning to adapt to each day's latest technology. Globally, this has affected the education system

SGA Senator and representative Luiza Oliveira felt that certain programs should be allowed under these pending conditions.

"It was a controversial conversation, but nothing was concluded," said Oliveira.

other. If you are using AI as a tool to pass rather than a tool to learn, you are cheating yourself of an education," said Aguirre.

Only Faculty Senators can vote on these types of administrative decisions. However, students are encouraged to have a voice by sharing opinions, asking questions, and speaking with the senators themselves. Presiding Officer of the Faculty Senate and psychology

members to be mindful of international students.

"I teach psychology, but my students write essays and some of them speak English as their second language," said Hamaoui.

Ultimately, the policy, if implemented, would come down to the instructor to decide if their students can use specific AI programs and how

look into, but it's nothing to be fearful of. The general goal of all of this is to help students succeed in a righteous and dignifying way.

"When it comes to academic honesty and ethics within doing scholarly work, it's about being transparent," said Hamaoui.

Overall, this Academic Honesty Policy in review will have to go through a long process before

"When it comes to academic honesty and ethics within doing scholarly work, it's about being transparent."

Kamil Hamaoui, WCC Psychology Professor & Presiding Officer of the Faculty Senate

and levels of trust within each school's student body. Recently, WCC Faculty Senators as well as student representatives sat down to discuss the troubles that specific computer programs and websites have brought to our campus.

Secretary of the Philosophia Honors Society, Alec Aguirre, described AI such as ChatGPT as ambiguous.

"Everything nowadays is AI... the difference is if one is not generative," said Aguirre.

The issue with Grammarly among international students was also acknowledged, as several students spoke on their struggles with sounding "robotic" in their writing.

As immigrants, Aguirre and Oliveira could not understand why getting assistance on grammar and punctuation could be considered plagiarism.

"I use [Microsoft] Word, it's basically that. It's like autocorrect. I don't think anything is wrong with that," said Oliveira.

According to Aguirre, there were many faculty senators who disagreed with Grammarly being a form of AI or plagiarism. This back-and-forth debate eventually was pushed back to a later date where Senators will discuss further. It seems that the moral of the story is to not abuse the abilities of AI. "There are a lot of students who use it for bad, we cannot lie to each



International students utilize Grammarly to improve their writing quality without going over the boundary of plagiarism.

Photo by Jonathan Cerini

professor Kamil Hamaoui is open-minded to the concept of AI. In terms of Grammarly especially, Hamaoui believes it is important for all faculty

they may use them if granted such permission.

From Hamaoui's professional perspective, there are several important elements of AI to

any major changes can occur. It is clear, though, that eventually WCC will have to deal with this pressing issue.

Research Opportunity for Two-Year College Students – Bridges to Baccalaureate Summer Program

LUIS GRANADOS

With the noticeable dearth of STEM (science, technology,

Bridges to Baccalaureate (BTB) program gives two-year college students the opportunity to do

STEM students planning on transferring to a four-year institution. It primarily focuses on biomedical-related research.

One of the requirements of the program is that students have to live on campus. Students are provided housing on campus that would be covered by the stipend they are given after completing the program. The amount depends on the institution attended for the program.

As of now, two SUNY four-year institutions offer this summer program: SUNY Purchase College and SUNY Binghamton University. The deadline to apply for the SUNY Purchase College program is on December 15th. For SUNY Binghamton University, the dates have not yet been published.

BTB is meant to teach students invaluable research skills. Once in the program, students are assigned into small groups to promote collaboration. Through workshops and one-on-one advising, participants

Medical schools do not require research experience. However, it is received well in an application. Nevertheless, the program is not only for pre-med students. Students who seek a degree in biology, chemistry, or



Research programs can help students identify whether they want to pursue a science career through practical experience in the field. *Photo by Luis Granados*

engineering, and math) programs at SUNY Westchester Community College, the

research in the STEM field over the summer. The program is intended for two-year college

will not only learn to conduct research in the future, but also acquire significant skills that could be applied to other future endeavors.

The program is recommended for pre-med students due to its focus on biomedical research.

psychology can also apply.

Current pre-med SUNY Westchester Community College student, Ethan Valle, was a part of the BTB program during the summer of 2023 at SUNY Binghamton University.

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"Besides the whole research aspect of everything, you will make lifelong friendships and you will have a great time."

Ethan Valle, SUNY Westchester Community College student

**Research Opportunity
cont. from page 1**

"I had an amazing experience with my mentor, he was very helpful when I was trying to learn," said Valle. "Oftentimes he would give me a special lecture just for me to make sure that I understood all of the content. On top of that, I was given an extensive network

of other mentors to help me transition smoothly from WCC to Binghamton University."

During his time in the program, Valle studied integrative neuroscience. He focused his research on Parkinson's Disease.

"Besides the whole research aspect of everything, you will

make lifelong friendships and you will have a great time. I know from first hand experience how important this research is because after I completed this [program], I had so many opportunities such as scholarships here at the school, shadowing physicians, scholarships at Binghamton, and also the ability to research when I do eventually transfer to

Binghamton."

In order to apply to the program, there are certain eligibility requirements. The main requirement 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. One of the main goals of the program is to support underrepresented students. If applying based on income, students would have to submit a copy of their FAFSA. To learn more, visit SUNY Purchase's or Binghamton's Bridges to Baccalaureate page on their official website.

WCC Celebrates First-Generation College Students

JADA MICELI

Have you ever been on a road trip, using your GPS and lost service? That is how attending college feels for most first-generation students—traveling on winding roads unsure which exit is .5 miles away, because who even knows how much

along these winding roads. Students heard from many speakers including keynote speaker and WCC Library Technician Anthony Reda.

"You all are the authors of your own story, nobody else,"

"I had no idea what I wanted to do in High School. Going away to college wasn't an option financially for us."

According to Reda, he thought of the massive bills and stress on his blue-collar parents.

Reda also shared how puzzling it was to navigate scholarships and the language of higher education.

"First-generation students don't carry that generational knowledge of how to navigate those college spaces and languages of higher education," said Reda.

Reda shared the importance of utilizing the services and support available here at WCC that he wishes he had in community college, emphasizing that his struggle motivated him to advocate and advise students like him.

Attendees also heard from academic counselor and public motivational speaker Josue Quinones. Quinones studied at Binghamton and shared how he suffered academically because as a Puerto Rican, he was

raised to "never ask for help. Just figure things out."

Quinones shared that he lost his financial aid, was almost kicked out of school, and was

"No one succeeds alone," Quinones said. "No one is self-made."

Many students at WCC are first-generation college students and



Students were able to connect while they enjoyed activities and refreshments offered by Student Involvement.

Photo by Jada Miceli

disqualified from his major. He was able to turn this all around and successfully graduate from Binghamton once he decided to seek help from a mentor.

Quinones stressed to students the importance of seeking help.

speakers expressed to students that stepping foot on campus is a victory. WCC staff and advisers are available to help students guide their way through the confusing and unmarked roads that college may take them on.

"You all are the authors of your own story, nobody else."

Anthony Reda, Keynote Speaker and WCC Library Technician

distance that is? College staff and advisers can act as the map when we lose our sense of direction. Many students here at WCC are first-gen college students trying to navigate the baffling forms, certificates, and applications all needed to pursue the next level of education.

On November 8th first-generation college students were celebrated during First Gen Day. WCC Student Involvement held this event to celebrate, encourage, and guide students

said Reda.

Anthony shared that both of his parent's first languages were not English.

"Being that mediator between your guardian and the outside world [...] comes with its own levels of exhaustion and stress," said Reda.

According to Reda, he grew up watching his parents work tough jobs and he became the first in his family to graduate college. He knew he needed to go to college. "It wasn't an option," Reda said.

A Lack of Media Literacy is To Blame for Silence and Misinformation During Israel-Hamas War

RAY KATZ

As the Israel/Palestine conflict continues, misinformation surrounding the topic still runs rampant, as documented by many news outlets, such as The Washington Post. And, along with it, a growing concern over the silence surrounding the crisis, according to Time magazine.

However, both the misinformation and the silence contribute to one another. Misinformation continues to spread because not enough people are talking about the facts, and not enough people are speaking out because they are either scared of spreading further misinformation, or they are scared of the backlash they will receive for their opinions.

Misinformation is spread through many facets. In the current age of technology and social media, social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and X (formerly known as Twitter)

breed the perfect culture for misinformation and biased news to thrive. Because of the ease of sharing information, when something shocking surrounding the conflict goes viral, it is near-impossible to stop the spread and correct

any misinformation. Although efforts have been made to introduce fact checking software onto these sites, there are far too many posts being made for them to keep up.

In an effort to stop the spread of misinformation, here are some



Many students have heard about the conflict, but few know the details.

Photo by Keira Ferretti

common misconceptions about the conflict and the truth:

1. All Muslims support Palestine and all Jews support Israel. This is not true. Many statements in general with polar black and white statements are not true. People have differing and nuanced opinions, and there is lots of gray area in between.

2. The U.S. military has sent troops to aid in the conflict. In an interview with "60 Minutes," Vice President Kamala Harris confirmed that the U.S. has no intention to send combat soldiers into the conflict.

3. The Israeli military made a post in Arabic confirming that they bombed a hospital in Gaza. This post was fabricated and made by an account posing as the Israeli military.

4. All Palestinians support Hamas, and Hamas speaks for all Palestinians. This, again, is a polar statement that is not true. The last election held in Gaza happened in 2006, and about 50% of Gaza's population are unable to vote, seeing as they

are children. When Hamas was elected into power in 2006, they did not win by a majority. Not to mention that back then, Hamas presented themselves as moderates. According to a poll done by Foreign Affairs, 68% of Gazans believe that the right to peacefully protest was not fully protected, and 73% of Gazans want a peaceful settlement of the conflict.

5. Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli Prime Minister, speaks for all Israelis, and all Israelis support Netanyahu. Another black and white statement that is not true. According to a poll done by Channel 13 of Israelis, 76% of Israelis do not want Netanyahu in power anymore.

Media literacy is important, and the rampant misinformation surrounding this crisis shows why. However, without people being comfortable and educated enough to speak out, misinformation will continue to spread. Until then, it is crucial for the public to learn how to differentiate credible sources from biased ones, and facts from misinformation.

Protection of Birds and Wildlife on Campus Moves into Student Focus

CAROLINA MENDOZA

While the WCC Valhalla campus was created for learning, nature can also be enjoyed during class breaks and birds are common visitors throughout the campus. However, human-made structures have a big influence

According to UCLA Newsroom, evolution has led to birds having traits like smaller body size, lower territoriality, greater ability to fly longer distances, broader dietary and habitat niches, and larger clutch sizes. Ground-nesting birds, on the other hand, end up suffering in more urban areas. With the creation of more urban areas

One of the most iconic construction feats in urban areas are skyscrapers. With their giant glass windows and incredible height comes a cost. Unfortunately, birds are falling prey to these giant glass windows. Birds cannot see glass and believe there is nothing in front of them. Therefore, multiple birds end up crashing

Audubon Society.

The Gateway Center here on campus has also dealt with its fair share of bird-window collisions. Eileen McKee works in the Gateway building as the Director of the College's Welcome Center. McKee has been working in this building since 2010 and has noticed birds crashing into the windows.

to be placed on the windows of the Gateway Center.

McKee believes that this was very helpful since they have noticed a big drop off in the bird-window collisions.

"I've only personally seen one bird crash this year. That's not to say there haven't been more," said McKee, "I think birds have a very universal appeal and I



9 dead hummingbirds were found by Gateway Center prior to the installation of additional decals placed on the Gateway Building.

Photo by Eileen McKee

on birds like the American Goldfinch, the American Robin, or the classic Blue Jay. Before industrialization, these birds lived freely in the trees and other habitats. As we have demolished their habitats and placed buildings in these areas, birds have had to get used to this urbanization.

that lead to greater economic prosperity, the larger and taller the buildings become.

"Building heights have the advantage of being available for historical periods, enabling the study of the long-run evolution of spatial economies at a micro-geographic scale," according to Regional Science and Urban Economics.

into the glass windows, which can cause injury and even death.

According to The American Bird Conservancy, glass collisions kill about one million birds annually in the United States. In New York City alone, 230,000 birds fall prey to window collisions, based on data collected by the National

McKee has documented dead birds she found by day, time, and weather, with photos. According to McKee, staff in Gateway brought the issue to Facilities' attention in 2014, when 17 hummingbirds were found dead in one day.

It's not just hummingbirds that meet this type of death at Gateway. McKee has photographed dead songbirds and even a red-tailed hawk that hit the window in 2019, but was able to fly away after 20 minutes of being stunned.

In 2019, this issue was brought up to Prince Guerra, who is the Superintendent of Buildings on campus, who heard the concern and acted to find a solution. Eventually, more ultraviolet bird stickers, or decals, were

think as a community, a college community, they're part of the beautiful campus we have and all of the nature on it, the animals, the trees. So, I think we have a responsibility as a college community to make sure the building is as safe as it can be and as sustainable as it can be, not only for ourselves but for the animals on the campus."

The concerned efforts at the Gateway Center, driven by the compassionate concern of individuals like Eileen McKee and students, showcase the power of community action. Implementing simple yet effective solutions like more decals, as the school already has done, can help continue to prevent bird-window collisions on campus.

Tardiness on Campus JADA MICELI

"Where is your hall pass?" The dreaded sentence any high schooler late to class may hear. In primary and secondary education, stellar attendance is vital. Students and teachers are expected to appear right on time each day or negative repercussions may follow. In college, this notion of diligent attendance dissipates. Why may that be? Students may wait for

On the opposing end, many professor's punctuality also lessens. When did timeliness go out of style?

All of us here at SUNY Westchester Community College are commuters and with gas being almost \$4/gallon and a bus ride costing \$1.75, the price of travel can add up quickly. Some students and professors have a

showing up at least 10-15 minutes late," WCC student Theodore Fullerton said.

Fullerton explained that many students purposely show up 10-15 minutes late to accommodate their instructor.

"The professor didn't show up for two hours [during the first day of a course]," said Fullerton. "We kept asking the front desk and they told us she was on her way. [This] makes me not want to care. It's contagious."

This contagious virus of being late translates from professor to student and vice versa. No one is perfect and our internal clocks are not always set perfectly, but it is a sign of respect to the recipient to try to be punctual.

"In traffic, [my commute] is 40 minutes," said Muhdee Nawab, WCC student. "We're paying for a product, you're showing up late to give us that product. That's not how this should go."

Professors share similar feelings. "I think it's really a matter of the students taking responsibility to try and make it to class on time," said Dr. Jenna Schultz, a history professor. "It's also a sign of

respect toward the professor." Schultz emphasized that she understands students had other

obligations that may hinder their punctuality.

"We're paying for a product, you're showing up late to give us that product. That's not how this should go."

Muhdee Nawab, WCC Student

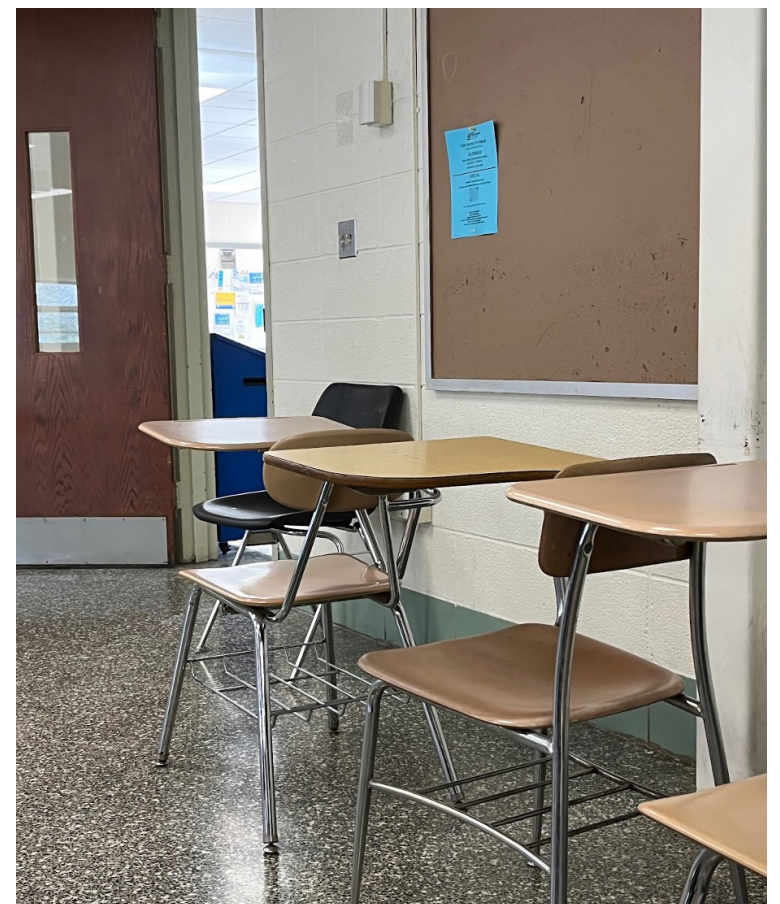
10-15 minutes for professors to enter the classroom and some students rarely attend class. Is this all a result of the laid-back culture we have entered since the Covid quarantine of 2020? Or, is tardiness the new norm?

Over the course of the semester, class attendance slowly dissolves. Fewer and fewer students are in desks during each class.

30-50 minute commute. When Students and professors are late, it can seem disrespectful to those waiting for their presence.

When speaking with students they shared that tardiness from professors makes them feel disrespected and unmotivated, and makes the professor seem unprofessional.

"One of my professors is very unprofessional, always



The contagiousness of lateness spreads across campus as we near the end of the semester.

Photo by Jada Miceli

Israel-Hamas Conflict Discussed by Student/Faculty Group

LUKE O'CONNELL

The tensions arising from the bloody conflict between Israel and Hamas have extended to college campuses in the U.S. As reported by the Associated Press, “long-simmering tensions are erupting in violence and shattering the sense of safety that makes colleges hubs of free discourse. Students on both sides are witnessing acts of hate, leaving many fearing for their safety even as they walk to classrooms.”

Unlike Columbia University and many other American colleges, SUNY WCC has experienced no demonstrations or any such turmoil. This leads to the question of whether the conflict in the Middle East has any relevance for students here.

On Monday, November 20th, a small group of students, led by political science professor George Keteku gathered to discuss the ongoing Israel-Hamas conflict. These students will remain anonymous in this article due to the controversial nature of the topic.

The discussion began with the frank admission from all attendees that no one had been following the conflict closely. Further discussion revealed that this was partly due to the lack of trust that they have in the media. One student described the conflict as “confusing” and noted that it is “hard to find a good source” about the conflict. Another student said that there is a “lot of saturated information [about the conflict] online,” which is where many young people have learned about it.

Professor Keteku said that by and large Americans tend not to care about issues outside of the U.S. However, he continued, it is important to note that the U.S. government is actively engaged in the Israel-Hamas conflict. When asked about what they think about the way that the U.S. government has reacted to the conflict, one student noted that the government is just “looking after its own interests” and supports whoever helps them to advance those interests. Another student expressed approval of the way that the

government has reacted, saying that the reinforcement of America’s power across the world keeps its citizens safe and that the United States should be the global policeman.

confused with one another. The attack carried out by Hamas on October 7th may be designated as the immediate cause of the conflict. The students in attendance were universal

confused” by the attack and described it as “horrible.”

Another student mentioned that they have seen a lot of people protesting and talking



Israel and Hamas have been at war since October 7th.

Photo by Luke O'Connell

What started the conflict? In response to this question, Professor Keteku drew a distinction between the immediate causes and structural causes of the conflict, which he noted are often

in their condemnation of the Hamas attack. One student said that when they first learned about what had happened, they were “horrified” and “confused.” Another student said that they were “initially

about the conflict in New York City. One student said that the conflict has made them reflect on their safety here. They also said that the conflict feels “weird” to them.

Students Present at an Honors Symposium on Happiness

JONAS BARR

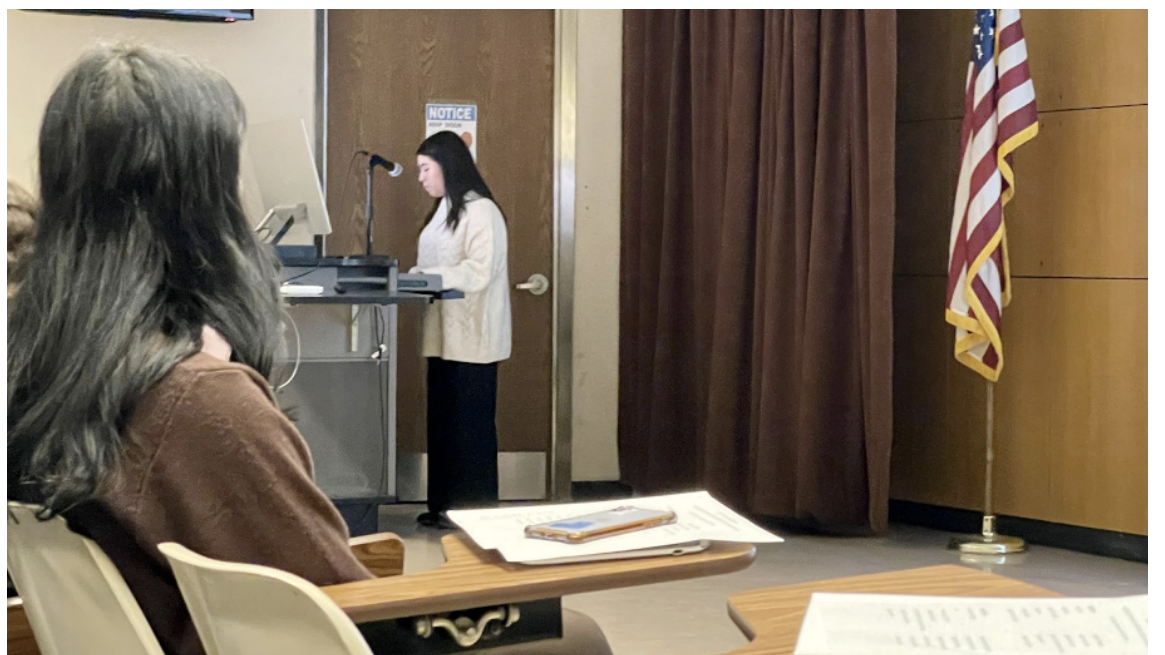
In a world where our attention is constantly being appropriated and monetized, we now have at our disposal a seemingly constant source of entertaining and pleasurable content. Our society appears to enjoy a boundless array of opportunities to experience the emotions of euphoria and happiness. But are these feelings truly available to us among the other aspects of our lives? If not, then how might one go about achieving them? How can we make ourselves happy? Dr. Mira Sakrajda, Director of the Honors Program and College, asked her English 101 Honors students to undertake a research project on the topic of “Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Happiness” that would culminate in a symposium presentation to answer these questions. “I wanted us to focus on something constructive, affirmative, and of general human significance,” Dr. Sakrajda said. This year’s symposium featured Dr. Dwight

Honors student Jennifer Rodriguez presented on the nature of happiness as it relates to social media. She noticed a pattern developing on her social media feed. As she interacted with negative content, she noticed similar content appear which began to adversely affect her emotional and mental well-being. “These videos were feeding into these negative thoughts and habits. I noticed videos of people saying it’s okay for you to not clean your room and my room was really similar [to theirs],” Rodriguez said. She sought help in overcoming this “doom loop” of negative emotions and started to take small steps to change her mood by first cleaning her room. She also spent less time on platforms like Instagram and TikTok and instead watched motivational YouTube videos. One might assume that completely ceasing their interactions on social media would be beneficial for improving their mood and mental well-being.

entirely would be very difficult to achieve because it’s a good way for people to connect and communicate with others.

recommendations accordingly. But stay vigilant about what you’re watching and block or unfollow accounts that give you

presentation also addressed the practice of fashion therapy to supplement people’s mental-health regimen. For instance,



Students presented on a wide range of topics ranging from fashion, social media, and economics.

Photo by Jonas Barr

“If you want to interact with more positive content, focus more on the silly aspects,” said Rodriguez. “It requires a strong mindset on how you want to improve your life because you’ll be more self-aware with the content you’re seeing.” For example, if you see a cute dog video, Rodriguez continued, make sure to give it a “like.” If you consistently interact with positive content, the algorithm will assume that you are more likely to engage with similar content and will adjust its

feelings of malaise.

Emily Contreras-Cruz’s presentation illuminated different viewpoints of clothing and fashion that could positively impact our happiness. Among these is a psychological concept known as “dopamine dressing,” according to which our mood can be influenced by the clothes we wear. Contreras-Cruz related this to the idea of fashion as an extension of gender identity, saying that she feels “very in tune” with feeling feminine and feeling masculine. Emily’s

clothing can affirm one’s gender identity which has a net positive effect on overcoming depression-related symptoms of gender dysphoria.

As the symposium illustrated, there isn’t a “correct” way to achieve happiness. Instead, there are plenty of avenues to explore in order to achieve happiness in your life. “The interdisciplinary approach,” said Dr. Sakrajda, “helped highlight the fact that happiness is a sum total of many different factors. We often forget that.”

“The interdisciplinary approach helped highlight the fact that happiness is a sum total of many different factors. We often forget that.”

Dr. Mira Sakrajda

Goodyear, WCC professor of philosophy, as a keynote speaker.

However, Rodriguez argued, this may not necessarily be helpful. Quitting social media

How Much Do You Know About Westchester County?

ANYA DUTOVA

Westchester County has a rich history that is worth exploring. Located just north of New York City, it is the city's nearest neighboring county. Westchester spreads out over approximately 500 square miles, making it larger than more than 40 countries and territories. The oldest town in Westchester is Pelham, which was settled by Thomas Pell in 1654 and bought from Siwanoy Indians as part of a purchase that included the Bronx.

Westchester was established by the Dutch in the 1640s, displacing Native Americans who had been living on that land. Later on, it got its name from the city of Chester in England. In Revolutionary days, it was an area of divided allegiances with many resident Loyalists, the colonists who chose to remain loyal to the British Crown. Westchester was the scene of extensive military activity during the American Revolution, including the famous Battle of White Plains on October 28, 1776, a sudden attack by British Lieutenant Colonel Banastre Tarleton, and the catching by the Americans of the British spy Major John André near Tarrytown.

As New York City recovered from British occupation,

Westchester farmers began to sell their cattle and produce there, according to Westchester Magazine. Ossining, on the Hudson, and Port Chester, on the Sound, were the main ports to which farmers delivered their products for transportation to New York City. As Westchester began the task of rebuilding after the war, there was one big change that benefited local farmers. Many of the landholdings in the county had belonged to Loyalists and were confiscated by the state and sold by the Commissioners of Forfeiture after England's loss in the Revolution. In all, the Westchester holdings of fifty-four Loyalists were sold off, the largest of which was Philipsburgh Manor. As a result of such sales, many farmers were able to buy the lands they had previously farmed as tenants.

Many of the most influential people in early American history have ties to Westchester. Founding Father John Jay was born in New York City, but his father soon moved the family to Rye, and Jay studied in New Rochelle before matriculating at King's College (now Columbia University), according to Westchester Magazine. Jay was a New York governor, co-

author of the Federalist Papers, abolitionist, and first Supreme Court Chief Justice. He retired to a homestead in Bedford.

The Westchester County Center, which is located close to the

commercial and community events.

Fun Facts: Mark Zuckerberg is from White Plains, Westchester County! For many years, Westchester has played a

starring Tom Hanks and Meryl Streep, and Martin Scorsese's *The Irishman* had scenes shot in Westchester County. Famous temporary or permanent residents of Westchester have



History-rich Westchester County lies just north of New York City.

Photo by Dani Colon

WCC Valhalla campus, was founded by the Westchester Recreation Commission in 1924 and has a multi-purpose indoor area to host income-producing

big role in the film industry, according to the New York Government official website. Films such as *The Intern* with Robert De Niro, *The Post*,

included Thomas Paine, George Washington, Horace Greely, Washington Irving (author of "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow"), and James Fenimore Cooper.

Diabetes: The Not-So Sweet Side of Sugar

CHRIS CANNING

OF THE NUTRITION CLUB

Most of us know diabetes has something to do with blood sugar being too high. Maybe you know someone with diabetes. Given that 11% of Americans have diabetes, that's not surprising. Estimates are that another 20% of us are undiagnosed, which means 3 in 10 of us have this disorder. That's worth talking about!

Diabetes is a disease that occurs when the pancreas doesn't produce enough insulin or the body can't effectively use the insulin it does produce. Insulin serves to help blood sugar enter the body's cells so the sugar can be used for energy. When insulin is absent, or the body's cells stop responding to it, the cells don't get the energy they need for their functions. The sugar remains in the bloodstream where it creates inflammation, raises blood pressure and damages blood vessels, tissues and organs. This can lead to chronic diseases, aging, and death if not managed properly.

There are 2 types of diabetes. Type 1 results when the pancreas doesn't create insulin at all. It is generally something that develops very early in

life and requires injections of insulin. Type 1 only accounts for 5% of all cases; the other 95% are Type 2, which often develops from dietary and lifestyle choices and is preventable.

While the triggers of diabetes are not fully understood, type 2 diabetes is more likely to develop in those who are physically inactive, overweight or have obesity. Currently, 60% of Americans are overweight or obese. Our modern lifestyle favors convenience, leading more of us to become overweight.

For guidance on optimal nutrition, the government has a website you can refer to: <https://www.myplate.gov/myplate-plan/results/2000-calories-ages-14-plus>. The average person should aim to consume 2,000 calories a day from 3 cups of vegetables, 2 cups of fruit, 5 ounces of protein, 6 servings of grains (50% from whole grains), 3 cups of dairy, 2 ounces of healthy fats and exercise 30-60 minutes per day. Choose to walk and take the stairs whenever possible!

Sugary drinks are all around

us, and so are snacks with lots of sugar, fat, and salt. It's important to keep in mind that all businesses exist to make a profit. Many see an opportunity in providing quick, tasty foods that are inexpensive to produce and bought for convenience and/or enjoyment. It's not up to businesses to safeguard our health. That's up to us! With a little planning, healthy alternatives can be just as convenient. Keep non-perishable snacks like nuts and dried fruit and a water bottle in your bag and bypass the vending machines. Opt for yogurt, water, fruit or salad instead of chips, pastry or fries. Eat simple carbs (rice, bread) with vegetables or fats because foods higher in fiber or fat slow the rate of digestion and the rate that sugar enters your bloodstream.

Consuming more whole foods and less processed foods, avoiding added sugar and exercising will ensure you're getting the nutrients you need and help keep your weight in a healthy range which will reduce your risk of developing diabetes as well as many other health issues.

3 Nutrition Hacks to Get You Through Finals

PROF LIZETTE MARTINEZ

FOODS AND NUTRITION CURRICULUM CHAIR

- 1 Fuel Your Brain.** Jumpstart your day with a balanced breakfast. Options like oatmeal with nuts and berries or avocado on whole-grain toast provide sustained energy during study sessions.
- 2 Smart Snacking.** Choose nutrient-dense snacks like Greek yogurt with honey and walnuts or carrot sticks with hummus. These are better choices than sugary snacks that can lead to energy crashes and decreased productivity.
- 3 Hydrate for Clarity.** Maintain hydration throughout the day to support cognitive function. Carry a water bottle and consider adding a splash of citrus for flavor and a boost of vitamin C, known for its cognitive benefits.

Remember, choosing nourishing foods positively impacts cognitive function and overall well-being during finals. **Good luck!**

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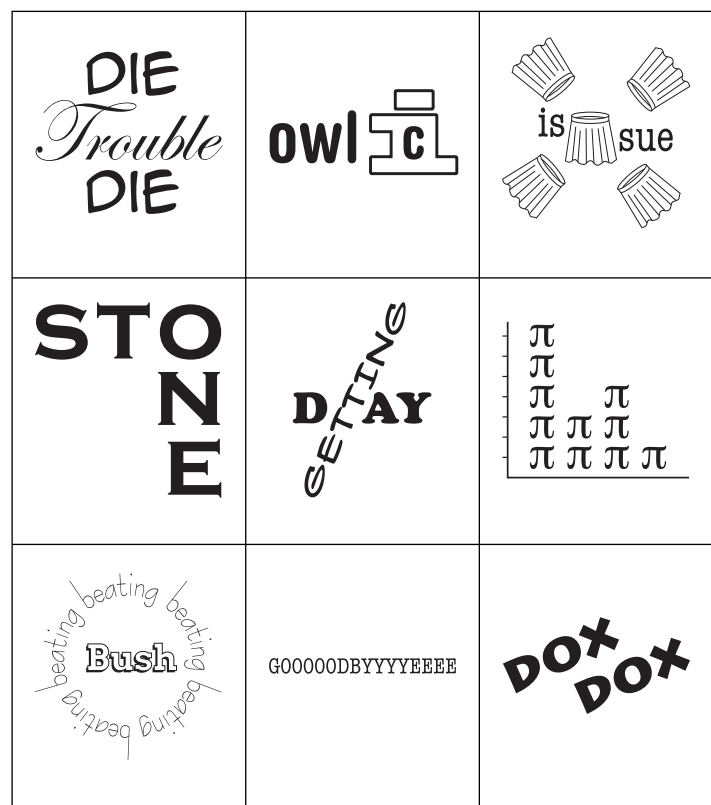
DECEMBER WORD SEARCH



- NEW YEAR
- KWANZAA
- CHRISTMAS
- WINTER
- HANUKKAH
- HOT COCOA
- DECEMBER
- ICE SKATE
- SNOW
- FINALS

Word Plexers

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



Sudoku

							5	
	1	9	8		2			6
6		3	7	1		9	8	2
			5	3	1		4	7
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Answers on VikingNews.org

GLOW's Annual Drag Show Dazzles, Entertains

RAY KATZ

Cross-dressing has been around for centuries, with one of its current forms, drag, appearing in Harlem in the 1860s. Pioneered by black queer and trans people, drag is now popular worldwide. On Nov 2, GLOW, WCC's LGBTQIA+ club, hosted its 11th annual drag show in the Hankin Academic Arts Building auditorium. The event showcased an impressive array of talent, including renowned figures like Robin Fierce from RuPaul's Drag Race, the well known Venus, and the popular drag king Showponii. The show also featured debut performances

voluntarily. Clearly, those who weren't drag fans could choose to attend or not.

And yet conservative politicians across the country are writing and submitting legislation to ban drag. Let's be clear: In my opinion, legislative attacks on drag are thinly veiled attacks on transgender and gender non-conforming people. "Trans bodies have always been subject to a lot of scrutiny and a lot of attacks," the drag performer Showponii said. These bans on drag are just another form of attack. When you make it illegal to do drag, you are giving someone else the right to decide if a trans person's presentation to the



Show Ponii performs at GLOW's annual drag show in the Hankin Academic Arts Building. Photo by Ray Katz

by two WCC students, Zekey and MissMakoMadness. The audience paid exuberant tribute to the talent of the performers and clearly had fun.

Given the level of enjoyment the show engendered, it may be difficult to remember that, while for many people drag is a form of art and expression, others view it as an abomination that should be outlawed. In many states, there are actually bills being written right now to criminalize drag. These bills contain many accusations about what happens at drag shows that are

world is valid. Essentially, a ban on drag is a ban on gender nonconformity. It is a ban on trans and nonbinary people who don't pass as cisgender. At the very least, it is also a ban on art. "My art is being attacked, but their lives are being attacked," said Robin Fierce. That is why this fight is so much bigger than just the art of drag. It is about the freedom of expression, especially the freedom of queer expression.

While it's very easy to stand back and dismiss as crackpots those who think that drag is a crime, this issue needs

"My art is being attacked, but their lives are being attacked."

Robin Fierce

not true. So, for the record, here's what did happen in the AAB auditorium Nov 2: dancing, lip-synching, singing, artistic expression, an interview, and a photo op. Here is what did not happen: pornography, discussion of sexual things in front of children (there were no children present), or grooming (a term indicating a technique used by sexual predators to gain the trust of their victims). Everything that happened was age-appropriate for college students, and everyone who attended was there

to be taken seriously. If we don't start taking it seriously now, it may be too late to start taking it seriously when it truly matters: when human safety is at risk. Think about it.

If you are a part of the LGBTQIA+ community and need support, GLOW can be found on the top floor of the Student Center. They have many resources for those in need of assistance.

Say "Nein!" to Shein: Fast Fashion Exposed

BILLY LEBLANC

If you're a young college student, chances are your wardrobe contains at least some items of fast fashion: Inexpensive, mass produced knock-offs of designer clothes often manufactured by ill-paid workers in third world countries. This article is about why you should not buy fast fashion, especially items made by Shein, a fast fashion brand.

What's wrong with trying to save money by buying fast fashion? Plenty, according to Brian Centrone, a fashion historian and professor at WCC, who offered profound insight into the detrimental impacts of fast fashion when I interviewed him recently. One of the concerns about fast fashion manufacturers is the amount of lead in their apparel. According to Prof. Centrone, "There are companies that study the amount of lead that appears in fast fashion, and Shein has one of the highest lead counts in their clothes. So the lead is in the clothing and we're wearing that material."

The worst thing about fast fashion is "probably the human cost," according to Centrone, who says that these garments are produced by individuals working in hazardous conditions, where their safety is compromised, fair compensation is lacking, and often illnesses or injuries are the result. The purchase of fast fashion poses a significant ethical dilemma in light of these issues.. While it may be affordable and trendy, one must consider the hidden costs—exploitative labor involving underprivileged individuals, sometimes even children, who may be subjected to forced labor.

According to TriplePundit, fast fashion

also ruins the environment. It fills up landfills and decays over time putting microplastics in the soil. When we wash those clothes, the lead is coming into our water systems. According to a contributor to TriplePundit, "It takes about 2,700 liters of water to make just one t-shirt, which is enough water for one person to drink for 900 days."

Fast fashion is also bad for the economies of countries in Africa and South America, according to Centrone, affecting their design industries because they struggle to sustain their own fashion businesses while importing substantial amounts of clothing from the West. "They have their own artisans and their designers," he says. "We have this awkward perception that anything that's not the West, you know, is in need of our help. But in fact it is damaging those design industries... and those cultures. Essentially, fashion corporations treat other countries like a dumping ground for their unwanted clothes and label them as donations." But in reality, says Centrone, what's going on is they are just getting rid of garbage they don't want while simultaneously ruining national economies. This trickles down, he says, to actual humans who try to make a living by being designers.

You can make a difference by refusing to support fast fashion industries like Shein; mending your clothes instead of shopping for more; and buying your clothes from sustainable brands. Centrone recommends buying more expensive pieces because they will last longer and not end up in the trash with your other fast fashion purchases. Fast fashion affects a broad scope of social levels negatively. It's up to you, the reader, to make a difference.

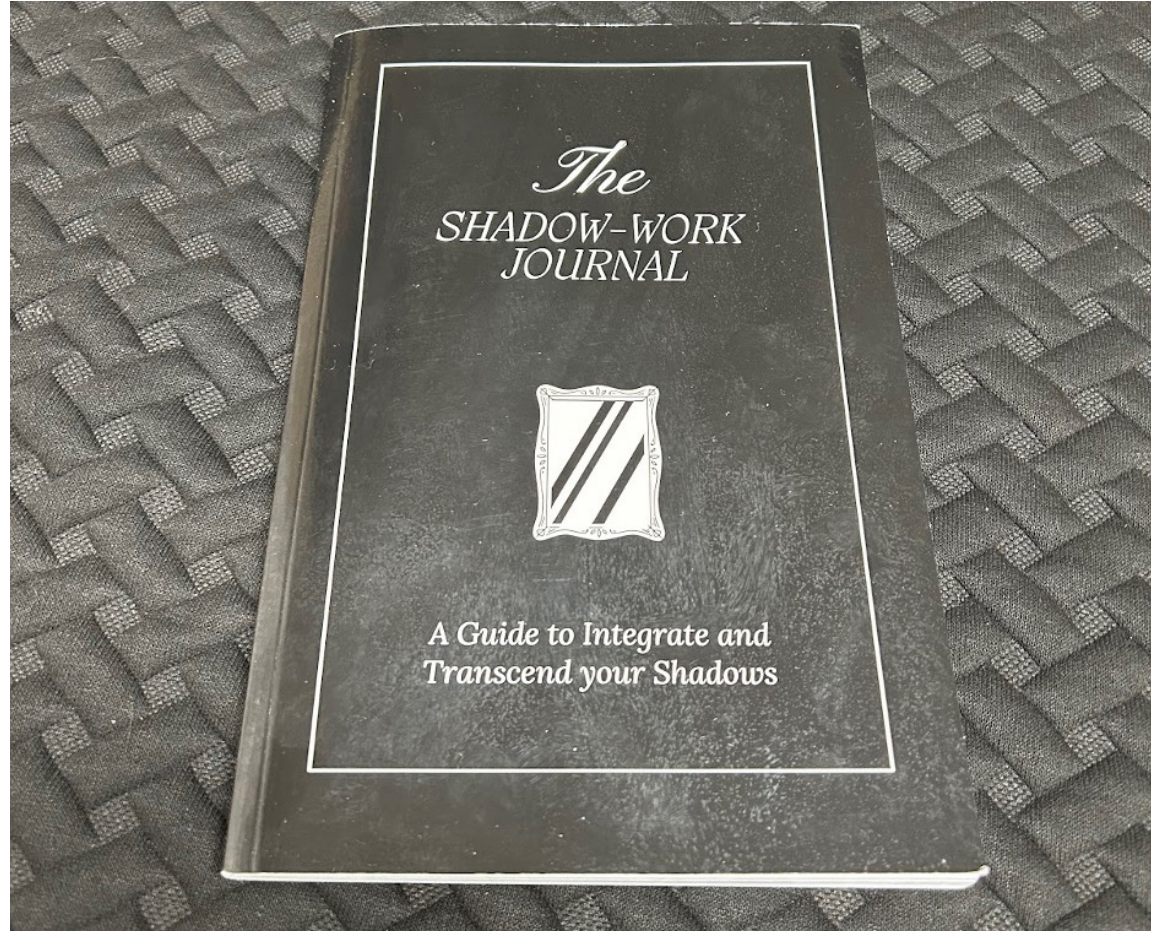
Is TikTok Playing Fair? JONATHAN CERINI

If you're an avid social media user, you may have noticed a consistent stream of posts talking about *The Shadow Work Journal*, a self-help book which can be purchased in the TikTok shop. Shadow work is a form of psychological therapy based on the theory that humans tend to hide aspects of their personality even from themselves. These hidden traits or inclinations are called shadows, and bringing them to the surface is judged to be therapeutic. *The Shadow Work Journal* is a reflection book that assists in discovering the deepest parts of one's self through psychological writing exercises.

Thousands of TikTokers have been creating content sharing their experiences using this product. The truth is, *The Shadow Work Journal* is an innovative and reasonably priced prompt book to buy for your own use or as a holiday gift for a friend. So, what's the catch? The underlying issue is that many of the posts for this product are in fact being used by TikTok to sell books without following the guidelines for transparency in advertising. In essence, transparency requires that a business selling a product online inform potential customers about how it handles, sells, and presents its advertisements. The issue with the way TikTok creators are posting is that they fail to provide enough context to TikTok users. These posts are

actually part of a marketing effort. They are advertisements for *The Shadow Work Journal* that do not show any signs of being such.

Responsible social media always offer users a form of advertisement certification. While this is clearly not prevalent across all platforms, it appears to be more pronounced on TikTok. Originating from China, the app seems to operate under comparatively lax rules regarding transparent advertising. In contrast, in regions like the United States, this discrepancy sparks legal and ethical discussions concerning potential consumer manipulation. The United Kingdom has updated its policies for the app, now requiring a form of labeling for commercial content. This means that the post must be identified as an advertisement, sponsorship, paid partnership, or promotional content. This way, the relationship between the individual customer and the business is transparently identified. The European Union recently passed the Digital Services Act (DSA) which will further protect online users, allowing them to make purchases safely and fairly. Other nations like the United States are doing their part to prevent such deceitful advertising via the Federal Trade Commission. The goal is to spread awareness of the need for truth and honesty



Found in the TikTok Shop, *The Shadow Work Journal* is a therapeutic prompt book meant to help the consumer to understand their psyche more clearly.

Photo by Jonathan Cerini

within consumerist culture.

It still seems that TikTok needs to address this as they manage to frequently duck criticisms. According to Techcrunch, “because of policy loopholes and lax oversight, especially around influencer marketing, coupled with an ongoing lack of ads transparency by TikTok — which offers no publicly searchable ad archive — are

making its video-sharing platform vulnerable to passing off ads as organic content.” Despite this vulnerability, the content consumer does have leverage over what their feed shows them. All social media platforms give users the ability to personalize what they see, enabling them to opt for specific content and avoid anything that's irrelevant or unwelcome.

As the holidays rapidly approach, it is important to find a quality gift for your loved ones. Regardless of what you're going to buy, if you see something online to purchase it is important to be mindful of the product's proper labeling. Make sure you're viewing an advertisement and not investing in a scam.

TV SERIES REVIEW

Steven Spielberg Scores Again! *Life on Our Planet* a Stunning Success LUCAS WERNER

It's been nearly a year since the release of Steven Spielberg's last production, “The Fabelmans.” Now the creator of the iconic

Jurassic Park movies has returned with his latest work, “*Life on Our Planet*,” which made its debut on Netflix in late October. The good news is that



Photo by Lucas Werner

Spielberg has scored again: *Life on Our Planet* is a captivating spectacle from start to finish. This docu-series mainly focuses on the evolution of complex life on Earth. Through the use of computer-generated imagery, viewers are shown what life was like millions of years ago, with live videography of modern animals, such as cheetahs, elephants and bald eagles. The series was produced by Amblin Television and Silverback Films and is narrated by Morgan Freeman.

In Episode 1, viewers are treated to a comprehensive overview of the entire series. Episode 2 delves into the mysteries of life beneath the ocean's surface, exploring the intricate world of plankton and the organisms that follow in its wake. Episodes 3, 4, and 5 meticulously detail the emergence of the first terrestrial organisms, leading us through the evolutionary journey to the Triassic, Jurassic, and Cretaceous periods when dinosaurs dominated the Earth. Episodes 6 and 7 enlighten us

on the evolution of pterosaurs, showing how these avian creatures, alongside mammals, adapted to the post-dinosaur Earth in the aftermath of the Cretaceous era. Episode 8 unveils the chilling narrative of the Ice Age, capturing the ascent of humanity from that frosty epoch to the present day, interwoven with glimpses of machinery in the ever-evolving tapestry of our planet's history.

This Netflix series struck both good and bad chords with me. On the plus side, the use of the previously mentioned animation and filming techniques creates an outstanding visual experience of developments in the natural world, such as the adaptation to different environments and territorial disputes between members of the same species. On the debit side, the “jump-scare” moments, which occur when animals are abruptly consumed unexpectedly or in synchronization with eerie music when transitioning to animals of different periods in

each episode might unsettle individuals unaccustomed to such moments in films, be they live-action or animation

This Netflix series teaches us that our planet is still changing to this day. Unfortunately, however, this change is veering toward disaster. Global warming is clearly on the rise, and we as humans need to act—and quickly—or we may risk extinction. No matter the excuses or circumstances, this issue is our reality. If we simply stand idly by and allow modern life on our planet to perish, what does that say about us as a collective? We need to band together and take care of this problem head-on or risk Armageddon coming for us all. We must focus on this bigger picture, because in the end, we're all going to lose our position as the apex species on this planet. Due to these lessons, *Life on Our Planet* gets a rating of 4.6 out of 5 in my book. If you want to see this stunning series, it's now streaming on Netflix.

MUSIC REVIEW

Now and Then: The Last Beatles Song RAY KATZ

I never thought I would get to see The Beatles release a new song in my lifetime. I grew up as a huge Beatles fan, but since they stopped releasing music as a band in 1970, I never even considered that they had an unreleased song. So when The Beatles' Instagram posted a teaser for a new song in October, my Beatlemaniac friends and I all freaked out (my mother can attest to this: I ranted at her for a full half hour). The Beatles were such an integral part of my adolescence, and were a core part of my personality for an embarrassingly long time.

My obsession aside, The Beatles have been an inspiration to so many other prolific musicians (Billie Eilish, Aerosmith, Mac Miller, Frank Ocean, Lady Gaga...the list goes on). I cannot think of a single musician who doesn't name The Beatles as a source of inspiration, or whose creativity wasn't in some way influenced by The Beatles. Whether you enjoy their music or not (heathen!), you cannot deny their impact on the music industry. And it shows. Now and Then is the first Beatles song to hit number one on the charts in 54 years. The Beatles last album

came out in 1970, and fans were so excited for a new release that they pushed Now and Then to number one.

Now and Then, released on November 2nd of 2023, is the final Beatles song. It is the A-side to Love Me Do, which was the band's first single. John Lennon originally wrote and recorded it at his home circa 1977, but it was ultimately left unfinished. In 1994, Yoko Ono, Lennon's widow, presented Paul McCartney with the cassettes containing the demo for "Now and Then." In their 1995 reunion sessions, the remaining Beatles—McCartney, George Harrison, and Ringo Starr—attempted to complete the demos, but Now and Then was left unfinished and unreleased because the quality of the original Lennon recordings was too low and, at the time, unrestorable.

Now, due to improvements in technology, McCartney and Starr were able to utilize machine-assisted-learning (MAL) audio restoration technology (essentially a very fancy AI) to extract Lennon's voice from the recordings and restore them to Beatles quality audio. Along with freshly

recorded piano by McCartney and drums provided by Starr, they also used guitar recordings by Harrison from their archive.

in the proper hands it can be used to do amazing things. The use of AI to enhance and add to creative vision has unlimited

used in the way The Beatles have used it for Now and Then: to bring back the voices of those who have died so that people



Limited Edition Now and Then on vinyl. Now and Then is the first Beatles song to hit number one on the charts in 54 years. Photo by AJ Coschignano

Now and Then also proves that AI is not inherently bad and that

potential. And while AI can be, and is, used for plagiarism, it doesn't have to be. It can be

can hear them once again.

Attention
BREAKING NEWS

**Viking News
Members Wanted!**

Interested members should report to Room 111 in the Student center or email us at EditorInChiefVN@sunywcc.edu

Here are some movies to keep you warm by the fire!

MARYGRACE ORFANELLA

- Hanukkah on Rye**
(2022)
- Love, Lights, Hanukkah**
(2020)
- Krampus**
(2015)
- Christmas with the Kranks**
(2004)
- The Polar Express**
(2004)

WCC Holds Annual Hall of Fame Ceremony DANI COLON

On November 17, the SUNY WCC Athletics Department held their annual Alumni Hall of Fame ceremony at Juliano's Caterers in New Rochelle. The ceremony welcomed many alumni from at least the class of '76' all the way to '22'.

The ceremony was held for past athletes who have accomplished the most in their respective sport. As the ceremony started, the first half was dedicated to SUNY WCC's head bowling coach Walter Hauk who passed away last spring.

As the ceremony continued, five alumni and coaches were selected for their outstanding performances while playing and how great of an impact they had on the campus. Buddy Caruso was the first to be nominated as he coached many sports such as softball, baseball, and bowling. He worked hard with these teams to help each athlete improve and play hard. He was also recognized for his contributions to the campus with the "Buzz Keefe" award.

Another coach who was recognized was Max Bowman,

who coached the football team that WCC formally had. In 1977, Bowman was the head coach leading the season with an almost perfect record and helped the team get a national championship. Not only did he coach the football team but he also coached baseball. He then went to coach at Rutgers University and even coached with the Buffalo Bills.

WCC's former women's basketball player Donna Tribble Bannister, who played in 1981-82 and 82-83, was known for her amazing rebounds that helped the small team of six push through to get the region 15 title.

Another player who was recognized was SUNY WCC's former football player and coach Mario Valentini, who played for three years helped the team win a national championship for the first time. Valentini loved helping athletes so much that he made it his career becoming an Athletic Director, physical education teacher, and football coach in Mount Saint Vincent in the Bronx.



WCC president Dr. Belinda Miles and director of Athletics Michael Belfiore celebrate.

Photo by Dani Colon

Former men's basketball player Wendell Owens, who played in 1984-85, was recognized for helping the men's basketball team get into the region 15 tournament and lead them to all Americans. Owens also helped

the team get conference MVP and region MVP. Owens then got a scholarship and transferred to Texas Tech, where he continued his basketball career.

Not only did this event

help to recognize Alumni accomplishments, but it was also created to bring back one big family for a family reunion.



Left to right Athletic trainer Sam Champa, recreation coordinator Javed Trotman, Athletics operations coordinator John Hrycko, Director of athletics Michael Belfiore.

Photo by Dani Colon

How Sports Shape Us DAVIS CHADER

As studies have proven, injuries don't only affect a player's ability to play the game, it can also impact their psychological state. That doesn't have to stop players from being there and participating with their team however they can. Jose Perez is a dedicated newcomer to SUNY Westchester Community College's soccer team, having just joined this year.

Despite the challenges that Perez has faced, he is a perfect example of a player that doesn't let anything get in his way. Perez started playing at eleven years old and he was very active early on trying sports like swimming and football, but he didn't stick with the sport. He was encouraged by his close friends in Ossining, which has a big soccer community, to give soccer a try.

Teams like Real Madrid and pro players like Cristiano Ronaldo were large sources of inspiration in Perez's early years of playing. Like many of these great athletes, Perez faced early challenges in his soccer career.

In high school, Perez tried out for varsity his freshman and sophomore year, but didn't

make the team. Instead of being discouraged, Perez found this to be a motivation to improve. He trained and played as much he could during the offseason and it paid off as he made varsity as a junior.

Perez was happy that he made the team, but he wasn't satisfied with his playing time and continued to want something more out of himself as a soccer player.

The following summer, Perez took his training to the next level. He focused on practicing soccer, running, and eating well the summer before his senior year. All of Perez's hard work in the offseason paid off and he became a starter as the right back for his team his senior year.

Close friends that Perez had been playing with his whole childhood continued at a high level, which elevated his game and encouraged him to improve his skills into college.

"When you play with better players, you get better," said Perez.

Perez recently faced his most difficult challenge yet when

he dislocated his shoulder. It hasn't stopped him from being with the team and continuing his efforts to improve, though.

"His presence is felt when we either practice or play," said teammate and goaltender Nicholas Nunez. "When he was hurt he would still show up to practice to learn the plays."

In spite of Perez's strength, he still admits he struggled with his mental health during the time he couldn't play.

"That's basically how I cope with things - I always exercise and I always run and lift weights just to get a sense of coming back," said Perez. "I couldn't [with my shoulder injury]. I had to rest so really it was a new challenge. It was a new way of facing challenges and overcoming challenges so basically I just had to focus on my mental health."

Perez shares advice for any athlete who struggles with mental health issues and staying focused.

"Keep going, pray, meditate, go on walks and just remember to take it day by day. It gets better," said Perez.

As Perez demonstrates, it



Jose Perez knows the importance and fundamentals of guarding a ball.

Photo by Dani Colon

doesn't matter how late you start or what challenges you face along the way. If you want it, there is a path forward.

Breaking the Cycle: Addressing Freshman Hazing LYN MORALES

Entering college as a freshman is an exciting time, full of anticipation and the promise of new friendships. For many, joining a sports team is an integral part of this experience, offering camaraderie and shared goals.

can range from seemingly harmless pranks to outright physical and emotional abuse.

"I see hazing as more of a form of bullying than a tradition," said Freshman Luke Friscoe.

These activities, often perpetuated by a misguided

lead them to participate in hazing rituals against their better judgment.

"Freshman already have so much on their plates," Friscoe said. "They are stressed about so much with it being their first year in college."

Friscoe believes hazing does not bring the team together, it sheds negative light on the team chemistry. For many freshmen, the pressure to conform to team norms may lead them to endure hazing rituals silently.

"Team leaders should set an

should be vigilant in detecting and addressing any signs of hazing within their teams.

One of the major challenges in addressing freshman hazing is the code of silence that often surrounds it. Freshmen may fear retribution or social isolation if they speak out against hazing. It is essential to establish clear channels for reporting and ensure that those who come forward are protected from retaliation.

To break the cycle of freshman hazing, a collective effort is required. It starts with open dialogue, education, and a commitment from all stakeholders—athletes, coaches, university administrators, and even spectators. By dismantling harmful traditions and promoting a culture of respect, university sports teams can create an environment where freshmen feel supported, valued, and free to pursue their athletic passions without the shadow of hazing looming over their experience.



Vikings baseball team takes a moment of silence before the game.

Photo by Lyn Morales

However, a dark shadow looms over the initiation rituals of some teams: freshman sports hazing. This practice, often hidden behind a guise of tradition, poses serious ethical concerns and jeopardizes the well-being of those involved.

Freshman sports hazing refers to initiation practices that

sense of tradition, can have profound and lasting effects on the individuals subjected to them. The culture of hazing can undermine the very essence of teamwork and mutual respect that sports teams should embody. For freshmen, the pressure to conform to team norms may

Such activities can leave lasting psychological scars, fostering an environment of fear and mistrust rather than one of support and collaboration. Hazing perpetuates a cycle of toxic interactions and sets a damaging precedent for future team members.

example," said Friscoe.

Coaches and team leaders play a crucial role in fostering a healthy team culture. It is their responsibility to create an environment where respect, inclusivity, and personal growth take precedence over harmful traditions. Leaders

In the dynamic world of university sports, it's time to redefine team bonding, leaving behind the damaging practices of the past and embracing a future where athletes can thrive in an environment that nurtures both personal and athletic growth.

The Boy Who Believed ALAN COYT

Growing up, kids have plenty of options when it comes to extracurricular activities. For Nicholas Nunez, it wasn't even a question. He always wanted to become a soccer Player. Growing up in Yonkers, Nunez went to Saunders High School. While growing up he was versatile and could play several positions including winger,

accolades any soccer player can be proud of. It wasn't until he joined the SUNY WCC Vikings that the opportunity of a lifetime came around. A few days before the season opener, the team's starting goalkeeper suffered an injury. All hope lost and not much availability of goalkeeping around, Nunez stepped up.

shots that any world-class goalkeeper wouldn't be able to save.

"I do regret not playing goalkeeping earlier, when growing up there were a lot of times when we needed a goalkeeper," Nunez said. "2-3 years ago in high school, we were in sectional semifinals when our goalie got hit right in

the game but Nunez only got a handshake. Nunez knew this was a sign of trust from the coaches. This motivated him and made him believe even more that he was capable

In Nunez's first season as a goalkeeper, the team went 5 and 7.

"Even though teams change as time goes on, you have teams

"Over time I had realized that I had gained my teammates' trust."

Nicholas Nunez, WCC Soccer Goalie



Nicholas Nunez works hard to defend his goal.

Photo by Dani Colon

center back, and even forward. Where he shined at most was at fullback, both sides. A player that could play multiple positions? That's what we call being versatile.

He was All League and All City League Champs in High School,

"Two days before the first game, that's when I put the jersey on," Nunez said. "That's when I asked the coach, can I try it, we have nothing to lose." The coach allowed it. Although they lost the first game 2-0, Nunez was only beaten by two goals from outside the box,

the face."

His first game as a goalkeeper in college for Nunez is memorable for him. It was during the 21/22 season against Monroe College. He still remembers even before the game, coaches usually speak to each player before

of playing a position that he hadn't even touched before in an actual game.

He thanked one of his coaches Alfio Carrabott as he knew that he believed in him. The small number of words spoken didn't matter, the goal was clear.

"The first shot I couldn't see anything, it was in the box as well, all I could see was legs," Nunez said. "Then all I see is a little white dot, all I remember was sticking out my left foot and I got it."

After this save, he was cheered on by his teammates. "I shocked myself, I was like 'woah what did I do,'" Nunez said.

Throughout the rest of the game, Nunez had many more saves of all different kinds, in some instances even rushing out of his box.

"I wasn't scared of anything, most of the saves were just me coming out and getting big," Nunez said.

Although they lost the game 2-0, Nunez saw this game as a learning opportunity. The rest of the team couldn't help but cheer Nicholas on as he had done a good job.

"Over time I had realized that I had gained my teammates' trust," said Nunez.

that are good technically and are good individually on paper, but when it comes to game time it's a disaster," Nunez said.

Nunez believes that this past season was one of those situations where they could have gone further than they got, and it came to the team not playing well enough together.

In his first season playing for the SUNY Westchester Vikings, they managed a 7-9 record in the league and qualified for playoffs where they would ultimately lose to Manhattanville College. This past season their record was 5-7 and unfortunately, they weren't able to qualify for playoffs.

Nunez is grateful to his team for believing in him over the past couple of seasons. Nunez is a sophomore this year and although the season is over, he's already looking into the future. He thinks about transferring to Iona University or SUNY Purchase after finishing at WCC. The idea of playing for these schools is a wonderful dream for Nunez. From the boy who started on the wing, to ending up in the box, Nunez is the boy who believed.



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