

The Viking News

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WCC Mourns the Loss of its Own *Two Deaths Shake the College*



Keith Avery Miles, husband of 31 years to WCC President Dr. Belinda Miles

Keith Miles, Husband of President Miles, Passes

By Emily Moriarty & Vanessa Gonçalves

On Feb 10, the Creative Communications office announced that Keith Miles, husband of college President Belinda Miles and avid supporter of WCC, had died the previous day. In a message addressed to the entire college community two days later, Dr. Miles and her son, Gordon Miles, said, "With sadness, we mourn the loss of our beloved husband and father, Keith Miles."

The same message offered links to a biography and a message wall for the expression of condolences for Mr. Miles. It also contained an invitation to view a memorial service on February 12 at 1p.m. via live stream. The message continued, "We will bring Keith home to South Carolina this weekend for final service and interment on Monday [February 15]. Thank you for your continued prayers and well wishes as we endure this difficult time of transition. With sorrow & gratitude, Belinda Miles [and] Gordon Miles."

Those who attended the virtual service witnessed a number of family and friends pay tribute to a warm and energetic leader known for his love of baseball, an avidly practiced life of mentorship, and a strong

embrace of family values.

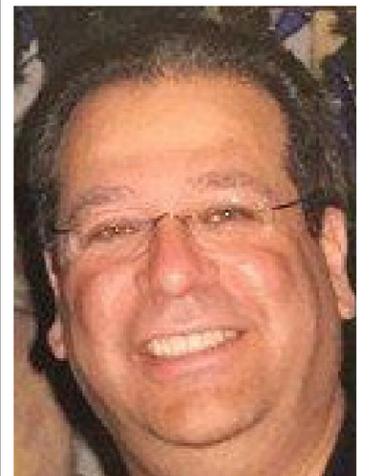
Keith Avery Miles grew up in Beaufort, SC before moving at a young age to Brooklyn, NY. There he went to high school and attended Kingsborough Community College, where he was an outstanding baseball player, being named an All American. He met his future wife of 31 years, Belinda Stephenson, at LaGuardia Community College.

He had a long career in finance and education. According to the Creative Communications announcement of his death, "Mr. Miles was an accomplished fiscal and operations leader in K-12 education, having served in progressively responsible positions with New York City Board of Education, Cleveland Municipal School District, and Prince George's County Public Schools, where he was chief operations officer for the 126,000-student district."

"Following the appointment of Dr. Miles as President of Westchester Community College," the announcement continued, "Mr. Miles became an ardent supporter of the college, often attending college events. An avid baseball fan, he served as a youth baseball coach and supported a variety of community programs for youth."

Professor Suffers Heart Attack during Zoom class

By Emily Moriarty & Vanessa Gonçalves



Professor Raphael Henkin

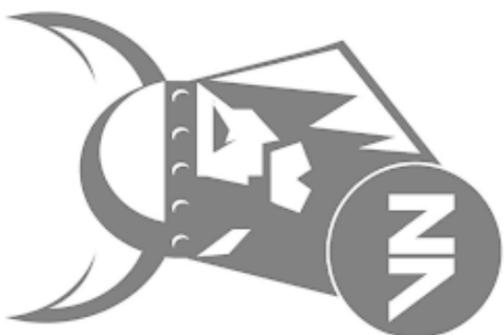
Raphael Henkin, an adjunct professor in the Biology Department, suffered cardiac arrest while conducting an online class on February 1. As reported by the office of Creative Communications, "we wish to share our appreciation to the students in his class who, when it was obvious Professor Henkin was in distress, took immediate action via Zoom to assist in his care until EMT arrived on the scene."

Efforts at resuscitation were unsuccessful.

Prof. Henkin came to WCC following a long and highly successful career in education and business, earning two doctorates, registering 11 U.S. patents, and holding high positions in two California companies: President of Del Mar Avionics and later Group Vice President of Del Mar Reynolds Medical Group, US, UK, Germany.

(Continued on page 3)

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NEWS

Health Sciences Gets a New Club

by Divyang Nayyar

A new club for health sciences students will soon be joining the WCC scene. It's called the AMSA Club (American Medical Student Association). The Viking News asked one of the leaders of the club, Melissa Westfall, to explain the purpose of the club and who might especially benefit from joining it.

So first of all, what exactly is the AMSA club and what are some of its benefits?

The club is called AMSA WCC, which is part of a larger organization, the American Medical Student Association (<https://www.amsa.org/>). The organization has members at all different levels of schooling and has quite a number of benefits. Nationally, the club offers its members education and leadership training, networking opportunities, resources, etc. In about a month, we have a big convention we will all get to attend, which I'm pretty excited about.

Do you have a faculty adviser?

Yes. Our faculty adviser is Prof. Robin Graff, the Coordinator of Transfer Services at WCC, and an adviser to Phi Theta Kappa. She's very enthusiastic about bringing an AMSA chapter here.

Who is AMSA for? Who can join?

Pretty much anyone who is looking to enter the medical field can join AMSA (doctors, nurses, physical therapists, dentists, vets, etc.). Most of their members are physicians or future physicians, but anyone in the medical field (or hoping to later be in the medical field) can join and take advantage of their benefits. The WCC AMSA club currently has members/officers who are hoping to become pediatricians, dentists, nurses, veterinarians, etc. As students get further into their degree, perhaps they'll find other national clubs that are more specific to their goals, but at the pre-med level, this club is a great choice.

At WCC, clubs must engage in campus activities. Is the club planning on hosting any school wide events?

At WCC, we plan on hosting a variety of events. The first event will be 3/24 at 11am and it will have a panel of students who are currently in medical school. The medical students will share their stories and allow attendees to ask whatever questions they have about getting into medical school and what it is like once they got in. We also hope to offer Narcan training, a mental health event, and an event on nutrition in the future, but those are still in the planning phase.

When does the AMSA club meet?

We meet every other Wednesday at 11am. Here's the zoom info for our meetings:
ZOOM Meeting Info: AMSA Meeting Link or Meeting ID: 668 817 8772
Passcode: 7ZvNxG

If people are interested, how can they get in touch with you?

They can email me at:
MWEST44681@my.sunywcc.edu.

News Briefs

'Poets and Writers' Lineup Announced

by Elma Pejcinovic

The Spring 2021 lineup of the Poets and Writers series has been announced by Prof. Christine Timm, Assistant Chair of the English Department. It includes: Rashaun Allen (February), Mahogany L. Browne (March), and Cornelius Eady (April). All are published writers well-known for their poetry and for promoting diversity. All appearances will be via Zoom.

This year's guest writers are also known for their lively audience-engaging skills as they read their own works. Readings will be followed by a Q&A session in which students will get a chance to discuss the poems and careers of the writers.

Kicking off the series with two appearances on Monday February 22 is

Rashaun Allen, a full-time instructor in WCC's English Department. In the genre of African American poetry, Rashaun Allen became an Amazon Kindle best seller for three poetry chapbooks, *A Walk Through Brooklyn*, *In the Moment*, and *The Blues Cry for a Revolution*.

He was nominated in 2018 as Sundress Publications Best of the Net Anthology in Creative Nonfiction, a finalist in Steinberg Essay Contest in Fourth Genre in 2017, and was Tupelo Press 30/30 Project Poet in 2019. Allen is the first Fulbright Scholar in the creative writing and literature program at Stony Brook University. His work has appeared in *TSR: The Southampton Review*, *Tishman Review*, *Rigorous*, *Auburn Avenue*, *Poui*, and *River Styx* among others.



Poet Rashaun Allen

Philosophia Creative Contest Calls for Submissions

by Divyang Nayyar

Time to get creative!

The Philosophia Honors Society of the WCC Honors Program and College is currently seeking submissions for a creative contest. The range of genres is wide: Students who are interested can send in personal narratives, essays, poems, photographs, artwork, songs, videos, and more. The theme of the contest is "the new normal." The deadline for submissions is March 31, 2021. Winners of the contest will receive awards of gift cards, a showcase at an event open to the public, and, of course, bragging rights! Submissions should be made to PhilosophiaHSWCC@gmail.com. In your email, include your full name, cell number, title of the submission and a brief description of it.

Additional questions can be addressed to any of the Philosophia co-advisors:

Mira Sakrajda:
mira.sakrajda@sunywcc

George Keteku:
george.keteku@sunywcc

Brian Centrone:
brian.centrone@sunywcc

CARES Act Awards Available through Spring Semester

by Elma Pejcinovic

College expenses put a stress on students at the best of times; a simultaneous pandemic doesn't help. It may be more difficult during these times to pay for classes and books. Through the CARES Act, the federal government is attempting to ease financial burdens with an inflow of funding to eligible institutions and students. CARES Act awards are granted to students that can show a financial impact from the coronavirus pandemic. Availability of these funds began during the fall semester and will continue this spring semester. According to the WCC

website, students in good standing who have filed the FAFSA and identify as a "need-based Pell-eligible student" are eligible for a CARES Act award. Money can be employed for academic or personal needs. Students who fit the above description are encouraged by the college to apply for CARES Act financial relief. For further information including questions on eligibility, contact finaid@sunywcc.edu. There is also a page that students can fill out at this link: <https://www.sunywcc.edu/updates-from-the-college/cares-act-emergency-funding-affirmation>.

Students React to Capitol Hill Insurrection

Virtual 'Safe Space' Provided a Place for Expression and Education

by Guadalupe Conde

One week after the storming of the U.S. Capitol Building by pro-Trump demonstrators, WCC students and administrators held a virtual town hall meeting to discuss the event.

Sponsors of the January 13 meeting included the Student Government Association (SGA), the Department of Student Involvement, and the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI). The hosts labeled the event a virtual Safe Space meeting, emphasizing their intention to provide a pressure-free forum for the expression of thoughts and feelings evoked by the violence of the day.

Moderating the town hall-type meeting were Vanessa Gonçalves, Co-Editor-in-Chief of The Viking News and Sebastian Loreti, Secretary of the SGA. President Belinda Miles and Chief Diversity Officer Ricardo Reddick were also in attendance at the meeting.

Dr. Reddick started off the meeting by discussing what had happened in the Capitol and sharing how he felt. He said that this event brought back a memory of a time in his life when he did not feel safe. It was during a Pride festival in Milwaukee, when he and his friends were screamed at with obscenities by a group of men. Dr. Reddick reminded those present that even a shocking happening like the storming of the Capitol should



not frighten us into silence, making the point that we still have a voice. "We still have the ability to initiate change," he said, "but sometimes people do stuff that could be scary, and that can make us feel unsafe." Through all this, he reminded us that it shouldn't stop us from being who we are.

Next, Sebastian Loreti gave a history lesson about an event that occurred nearly a hundred years ago that was very similar to what happened in the Capitol. This was a violent coalition organized in Germany by Adolf Hitler that is known today as the Beer Hall Putsch.

On November 8-9, 1923, ten years before he came to power, Hitler and the Nazi Party led an insurrection in an attempt to overthrow the German government. Their goal was to march around Munich



Top: Trump supporters occupy the Capitol building. Bottom: Jake Angeli, Q-Anon shaman (Photos/Getty)

and start a revolution. This ended up failing, as police officers clashed with them and stopped their marching, causing some deaths of the Nazi Party members.

Loreti drew comparisons between the two events, saying that while this insurrection failed, just as the Capitol insurrection did, we must be vigilant and stay involved in the democratic process to prevent future violent episodes.

Later, in an interview,

he said that it is important to have meetings like this one, "so you can learn from each other, approach people's different opinions with empathy, and understand where they're coming from."

His co-moderator, Vanessa Gonçalves, then demonstrated a breathing exercise with the whole group. As hosts of a Safe Space meeting, the moderators said it was important for students to achieve a

sense of calm so that they would feel more comfortable in sharing what they thought and how they felt about the storming of the Capitol.

Students then shared their emotional response to the insurrection. Many expressed shock and wariness of what was to come next from this incident. One of the students, Gabriella Quartey, expressed her appreciation to the moderators for making the Safe Space meeting happen. She stated that her last college had never done something like this.

In a later interview, Dr. Reddick shared his view on why it was important for this Safe Space meeting to happen. "It was critical to ensure that our students and campus community were able to express their concerns and the impact of this unfortunate event," he said, "especially given the significance and historical context of the Capitol insurrection."

Loreti said that he hopes these Safe Space meetings will become regular sessions so that people may have a space where they can share their thoughts and opinions. He also said, "It's important to help out in your community by getting involved in your community and volunteering." These small ways make a big difference and help you get involved in politics, he added, without having to go all the way to Washington, DC.

Professor Suffers Heart attack (continued from page one)



Professor Raphael Henkin

Returning to the East Coast from southern California, he became an adjunct professor at WCC, SUNY Rockland, and Dominican Colleges, where he taught biology, chemistry, anatomy and physiology, and physics.

Prof. Henkin was a highly respected and admired teacher.

"He was a consummate professional and an excellent professor," said Dr.

Kim Walsh, biology department chair. "He always made time for the students, who responded to his teaching and appreciated him not only as a professor but also as a person."

"The Ossining Extension Center staff will truly miss Prof. Henkin," said Dr. Nicole Joseph, director of the Ossining Extension Center. "He was always warm and welcoming to the staff and his students. Our

heartfelt condolences are with his family."

"I had the pleasure of observing him teach several times. He was so very pleasant about welcoming me," Dr. Margaret Eiden, Biology Extension Center liaison. "My thoughts were: 'Wow, are these kids lucky to have him as a professor!' It made me feel good about the courses being offered in Ossining, knowing that he provided quality teach-

ing. He had such a calm and pleasant demeanor with the students."

"In all our conversations about students' performance, I learned how to care more and educate more and feel better about my personal communication effect on my students. So I continue having him in my heart," said biology professor Dr. Basmy Basher.

OPINION

What Shows are you Bingeing?

Dynasty

by Delano Allen

Dynasty is a re-boot drama series that originally aired in the 80's. The plot is full of juicy melodrama. It revolves around the protagonist, Fallon Carrington. She is a sophisticated young woman who wishes to become the CEO of her father's (Blake Carrington) company, "Carrington Atlantic," but she is kicked to the curb when her new stepmom (Cristal Carrington) is given the position instead. A rivalry is immediately formed between Cristal and Fallon, which takes a turn for the worst when Fallon's Mom (Alexis Carrington) returns to cause mischief. Fallon's older brother (Steven Carrington) who has a history of drug abuse, begins to form a relationship with Cristal's nephew (Sam Jones). Fallon has a love affair with one of the chauffeurs (Michael Culhane) which gets complicated when she develops a second one with rival Jeff Colby and his sister (Monica Colby), who is best friends with Fallon. Get the picture? There are currently three seasons, with a fourth in production. Dynasty is filled with comedy, tragedy, romance and a big mess of drama.

Naruto

by Ana Pareja

Naruto is a manga/anime show that I would truly recommend. I started watching it because my 14-year-old son, Aaron, really wanted me to. The series consists of 220 episodes, each 20 minutes long. Naruto is an orphan who holds a beast inside of him. He lives by himself. People from his village (the Hidden Leaf village) are afraid of him. They ignore him and give him judgmental looks, which he hates. He is usually causing trouble because he wants and needs affection. His dream is to become Hokage, or village leader, one day. He goes to a Ninja school and he is not really the best in his class, but he never gives up. He keeps practicing until he succeeds. He comes across people who help him. I think the fact that he always learns something from everyone he meets is what makes him so great. As he grows up he learns he is not the only person to hold a beast inside of him. Naruto has made me cry, it has made me happy but most of all, it has brought me back to my childhood, to the little girl that believed she was going to save the world, end hunger and heal people all at the same time. Naruto is a must watch!

The Viking News would like to know what are your favorite shows to binge on during quarantine. Send us your choices and tell us why in about 200 words. The authors of entries selected for publication will receive a Viking News T-shirt suitable for framing (or wearing)!



Left: Megan O'Hanlon
Top: Samantha Kelly
Bottom: Gary Medveczky

Today, a comfy home workplace is paramount. Above are some student setups

The New Normal

Students Share the Ups and Downs of Distance Learning

by Elma Pejcinovic

The pandemic has caused a change between many things such as the change of learning: from in-person to online. Students have had to change their ways of doing work to account for the online platform. Here is an update in their own words on how the transition is proceeding.

"My biggest problems with remote learning are living at home...I have to keep my video off because of disruptions and I don't want to seem rude to the teachers. It's hard to focus when everything to distract you is easily accessible."
- Freshman, accounting

"I do miss being in class, I miss the crowded hallways, the library and just being around my classmates....I like having our videos on. It makes being in class more real than when we hide our faces. I feel more like I'm in class when I see my teacher's and all of my classmates' faces."
-Freshman, social sciences

"I am pretty familiar with distance learning. I have no problems with it at all."
-Sophomore, comm.

"I still feel that learning from home is very difficult. But I am changing my routine so I can focus more. For example, I started taking notes instead of pictures. One thing that I noticed that helped me insanely is Google slides of the class sessions."

-Sophomore, social sciences

"The transition to distance learning was a little nerve-racking at first but I am feeling a lot better about it now. I was a bit nervous about how to join a meeting because it seemed like I had no one to guide or help me use the blackboard website. Luckily it was pretty simple to use so I am feeling a lot better now."
-Sophomore, digital film

"My transition to distance learning has been very difficult. I am generally a lot better when I am in person. The biggest problem for me is management I tend to forget to check blackboard and have a hard time keeping up with assignments. Although this semester I have lightened my load a bit."

-Freshman, digital film

"Distance learning hasn't really bothered me much. I do find that I tend to take longer to do assignments now that I'm home all the time it kind of doesn't feel like I'm in school."

-Sophomore, Social sciences



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Weekly meetings are open to all students and staff on Mondays at vikingnews.net/meeting

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Spring Break Is Gone but Is it all that Bad?

by Elma Pejcinovic

Students have mixed feelings about the news of spring break being cancelled. Many feel disappointed in not having time off during this semester; others are shocked not to have heard about it until they were asked by The Viking News; some are simply shrugging it off.

“Honestly I had no plans this spring break because of the virus going around... However I do think that there needs to be some form of break during the semester. I would tell the administrators that we all need a break during these difficult times for our own mental health.”

-Freshman, electrical technology

“In all honesty since we have remote learning there really is not much of a defense to have a spring break at all. I’m not really disappointed about it because we have online classes. We already had a big enough break from online classes in the winter, so I’m fine with not having a break in the spring.”

-Freshman, business and professional careers

“I wasn’t planning on going anywhere in the pandemic anyway. I am not disappointed...I would have been home with my kids anyway. My kids have been safe. I would like to keep it that way.”

-Freshman, social sciences

“I honestly only learnt about the cancellation of spring break just minutes ago during class. I am totally disappointed...Online classes are way more tiresome and stressful than in-person classes and due to this spring break shouldn’t have been cancelled.”

-Freshman, math sciences

“The fact that spring break is canceled is highly problematic. In the COVID-19 era, students are spending too much time at home having their virtual classes...how much of a mental and physical toll it was for students during this entire time...made me cancel a trip I had planned to Ohio to go see my grandmother, whom I have not seen since the pandemic...a short break in the middle of everything going on in the world to protect our mental health is crucial for maintaining a high level of student productivity.”

-Freshman, math sciences

“I wasn’t aware we weren’t having a Spring Break. If I could address the WCC administration I would tell them to reconsider giving students a spring break. While handling the stress of school and work many students also find themselves dealing with grief and depression. This is a hard year for everyone, and I think they should be more considerate of their students.”

-Freshman, social sciences

“The cancellation of spring break is news to me! I didn’t hear about it until it was mentioned in class. Personally, I would have loved a break just to free my mind and relax...We are in the middle of a crisis that is redefining life, and how we can live. This fact is already taxing.”

-Freshman, accounting

If I could address the WCC administration, I would offer spring break as a “Destress week.” College already sucks this year because of virtual learning, which means you cannot really bond with others in extracurricular activities or school events.

-Freshman, digital filmmaking



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FEATURES

Poet Amanda Gorman performs at President Biden's inauguration



(Photo/AP)

A Star is Born

Amanda Gorman makes history as the youngest poet to perform at an inauguration

by Guadalupe Conde

On Wednesday, January 20, history was made. Amanda Gorman became the youngest poet to read a poem at a presidential inauguration. Walking to the podium, in her show-stopping Prada yellow coat and coordinating red horizontal headband, she was truly a sight to behold. As she recited her poem “The Hill We Climb,” her words held power and beauty. They took us to another world, a brighter world.

(The full text of the poem can be found on page 7)

Amanda Gorman has not only made history, but has become an inspirational icon. Reciting poetry all over the country, she has become a model for young women of color. Her talent has given women of color a bigger platform, especially in the literary world, which for centuries has been largely male-dominated.

Amanda Gorman's story started in Los Angeles, California, where she was raised by her single mother, Joan Wicks, who is a 6th grade

English teacher. Education was of great value in Amanda's life. Her mother was the inspiration of the poem, “The Hill We Climb.” In the poem she said,

We the successors of a country and a time where a skinny Black girl descended from slaves and raised by a single mother can dream of becoming president only to find herself reciting for one.

Her mother raised her in an environment where there was no TV, so Amanda has said that her life was filled with imaginative plays, musicals and the usage of a pen regularly. Here, the members of The Viking News can relate to her love of literature. We were brought together by our love of writing, and we know the power a piece of writing can hold.

This poem was also the product of a time when many have suffered copious pain. The year 2020 was not an easy one for anybody. It was marked not only by the

Covid-19 pandemic, but the horrible incidents involving George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and many other black lives that were lost through police brutality. And the year 2021 has begun with the most recent incident of white supremacy: The storming of the Capitol, which happened only two weeks before the inauguration.

Since Trump took office in 2017, the transparent exposure of the fatalities that this country has caused has been stronger than ever. We have seen the differences between the way white people and minorities are treated. We have also been faced with the overwhelming question of whether our country will be moving forward or backwards. To this question, Amanda answers:

We've seen a force that would shatter our nation rather than share it. Would destroy our country if it meant delaying democracy. And this effort very nearly

succeeded.

But while democracy can be periodically delayed, it can never be permanently defeated.

In this truth, in this faith we trust.

The hope and strength that her poem conveyed made us shed tears, and made us envision a brighter future: One where we, the younger generation, will make sure that the injustices that have happened be amended. She is one of the many young people-- like us college students--who are giving all of us new confidence. Confidence that will be within future leaders, writers, educators, and artists of this world.

And the leaders won't only be white men anymore. They will be any person, from any background.

They will be you.

For there is always light, if only we're brave enough to see it.

If only we're brave enough to be it.

Viking Visionary



(Photos/AP)

The Hill We Climb

2021 Inauguration Poem

by Poet Laureate Amanda Gorman

When day comes we ask ourselves,
where can we find light in this never-ending shade?
The loss we carry,
a sea we must wade.
We've braved the belly of the beast,
We've learned that quiet isn't always peace,
and the norms and notions
of what just is
isn't always just-ice.
And yet the dawn is ours
before we knew it.
Somehow we do it.
Somehow we've weathered and witnessed
a nation that isn't broken,
but simply unfinished.
We the successors of a country and a time
where a skinny Black girl
descended from slaves and raised by a single mother
can dream of becoming president
only to find herself reciting for one.
And yes we are far from polished.
Far from pristine.
But that doesn't mean we are
striving to form a union that is perfect.
We are striving to forge a union with purpose,
to compose a country committed to all cultures, colors, characters and
conditions of man.
And so we lift our gazes not to what stands between us,
but what stands before us.
We close the divide because we know, to put our future first,
we must first put our differences aside.
We lay down our arms
so we can reach out our arms
to one another.
We seek harm to none and harmony for all.
Let the globe, if nothing else, say this is true,
that even as we grieved, we grew,
that even as we hurt, we hoped,
that even as we tired, we tried,
that we'll forever be tied together, victorious.
Not because we will never again know defeat,
but because we will never again sow division.
Scripture tells us to envision
that everyone shall sit under their own vine and fig tree
and no one shall make them afraid.
If we're to live up to our own time,
then victory won't lie in the blade.
But in all the bridges we've made,
that is the promise to glade,
the hill we climb.
If only we dare.
It's because being American is more than a pride we inherit,
it's the past we step into
and how we repair it.
We've seen a force that would shatter our nation
rather than share it.
Would destroy our country if it meant delaying democracy.
And this effort very nearly succeeded.
But while democracy can be periodically delayed,
it can never be permanently defeated.
In this truth,
in this faith we trust.
For while we have our eyes on the future,
history has its eyes on us.
This is the era of just redemption
we feared at its inception.
We did not feel prepared to be the heirs
of such a terrifying hour
but within it we found the power
to author a new chapter.
To offer hope and laughter to ourselves.
So while once we asked,
how could we possibly prevail over catastrophe?
Now we assert,
How could catastrophe possibly prevail over us?
We will not march back to what was,
but move to what shall be.
A country that is bruised but whole,
benevolent but bold,
fierce and free.
We will not be turned around
or interrupted by intimidation,
because we know our inaction and inertia
will be the inheritance of the next generation.
Our blunders become their burdens.
But one thing is certain,
If we merge mercy with might,
and might with right,
then love becomes our legacy,
and change our children's birthright.
So let us leave behind a country
better than the one we were left with.
Every breath from my bronze-pounded chest,
we will raise this wounded world into a wondrous one.
We will rise from the gold-limbed hills of the west.
We will rise from the windswept northeast,
where our forefathers first realized revolution.
We will rise from the lake-rimmed cities of the midwestern states.
We will rise from the sunbaked south.
We will rebuild, reconcile and recover.
And every known nook of our nation and
every corner called our country,
our people diverse and beautiful will emerge,
battered and beautiful.
When day comes we step out of the shade,
afraid and unafraid,
the new dawn blooms as we free it.
For there is always light,
if only we're brave enough to see it.
If only we're brave enough to be it.

The Scallion

In Case you Can't Tell, this Is Satire



(Photo: Adobe)

Musk and Bezos Compare Sizes before Congress

by M. Barrass

The voices could be heard throughout the cafeteria of the Capitol Building.

"Mine is bigger than yours!"

"The hell it is! Mine is bigger than yours!"

Most of the senators and congressmen paid no attention. It was a common argument that often echoed through these halls of male power ("Testosterone Center," as it was known in the Women's Caucus.) It often preceded an angry double stomp to one of the marble Men's Rooms. Mitch McConnell stopped sipping his soup and looked up, thinking for a moment that Trump and Ted Cruz were going at it again. But no, those days were over. "Thank God," he murmured softly before returning to his gumbo.

Actually, the voices belonged not to politicians but to the corporate moguls Jeff Bezos and Elon Musk, the two wealthiest men in the history of the world. They were in D.C. to de-

fend themselves at a Congressional hearing against charges of rape brought by 174 thousand competitors. The argument was not over body parts, as Nancy Pelosi and Chuck Schumer had assumed, but rather the size of their ambitions.

Bezos, who recently stepped down from his position as President of Amazon, the company that so lived up to its name that even Satan trembled at its mention, was basing his claim on his intention to carry the Amazon name into outer space, where he intended to build a warehouse roughly the size of Delaware on one of the nine lucky planets. He had already put the location out for bids. Immediately the planets began vying with each other for the prize site. (Venus was said to be in the lead with planetary-sized tax breaks).

Not to be outdone, Elon Musk, whose Tesla electric cars were on back order until the twenty-third century,

announced that he, too, was planning to take over the galaxy. Asked why he wanted to take on such a huge task, he replied, "Cause that's what rich guys do, a--hole!"

The voices of the two titans grew louder as the immeasurable scope of their future (and futuristic) plans kept pace with the volume. "I'm gonna make Venus our backyard, boasted Bezos.

"I'll get there first and re-name it Musk. The inhabitants will be Musketeers."

"I'll give them jobs. They'll be so grateful to me, they'll rename the place Bezos."

"Grateful?? Hah! At your wages, they'll have to immigrate to Mercury."

"Don't you mean Jelfworld? I've been negotiating with Mercury for months. We're about to close."

"No body wants Amazon to expand. But who doesn't want a Tesla?"

"Me, for one."

"Why? What do you drive?"

"A Bezos. And so do the millions of people who I own, uh, I mean, who work for me."

"I'll do more for humankind than you ever will," said Musk.

"That's a laugh! What'll you do? Give the universe electric toilets?"

"I'll put all-terrain electric vehicles on the moon."

"I'll offer free shipping from Mars!"

"I'll cure cancer on Jupiter!"

And so it went until it was time for them to testify. As you may have heard, all charges were dropped after both men agreed to reform their policies. "Cross my heart and hope to die," each man promised. They then pledged their future generosity to each and every member of the committee. The verdict in their favor was a rare example of bi-partisan unanimity.

To nobody's surprise.