

# The Diking News

## SUNY WCC's Student Center is now the David Swope Student Center DANI COLON

David Swope was a household name for WCC, as he served on the Board of Trustees from 2013 to 2016, as well as serving on boards of the Jacob Burns Film Center, Ossining Children's Center, and Katonah Museum of Art. He was also known for works at Teatown Lake Reservation and Club Fit. Swope had also been on the Foundation Board as Director since 2001, and served

them County Executive George Latimer and Board of Trustees chair LeRoy Mitchell, as well as Joanne Landau, who is the former chair of the WCC Foundation. One special guest was New York former representative Nita Lowey.

"What's bringing us together here today is our love for this college, our love for the students, because we believe

**"What's bringing us together here today is our love for this college, our love for the students."**

*Joanne Landau, former chair of the WCC Foundation*

as President and Chairman from 2005 to 2013.

On October 2, WCC held a ceremony renaming the Student Center "David Swope Student Center," along with a dedication plaque in front of the WCC bookstore.

Many Westchester County Government and Board of Executive members packed the Student Center, among

in the mission of educating students for the century," said Landau.

The ceremony started off with guest speakers from the Board of Trustees and The Foundation, who expressed Swope's hard work and dedication to the college and how he was a very touching person.

WCC President Dr. Belinda S. Miles gave a speech about how the foundation helped WCC



**The foundation gathers around celebrating David Swope's recognition.**

*Photo by Dani Colon*



**New signage has been put up for the David Swope Student Center.**

*Photo by Dani Colon*

get the resources they need for student enrollment to be up and to help students get resources for textbooks and laptops. Dr. Miles attributed this to the work of David Swope and the Foundation, who work to support students in their toughest times.

"When we learned that we wouldn't be bringing our students back from spring break in 2020, it was this Westchester Community College Foundation that was the first to ask what was needed for students, and how we can make sure students get laptops and access to wifi," said Dr. Miles.

After the speeches in the Student Center, the ceremony then moved on to the lawn. Swope's family was brought up to stand before the crowd and thanked them for this recognition. As the ceremony came to an end, a plaque was presented by the Board of Trustees and by Westchester County, certifying that the Student Center will now be known as the David Swope Student Center.

## New Communications Course to be Offered in the Spring Semester JONATHAN CERINI

Whether you're a Communications/Media major or not, this new course taught by Professor Julio Rodriguez may be interesting to you. Intercultural Communication is coming to Westchester Community College for the first time in the school's history. Intercultural Communication is the study of communication through differing cultural backgrounds and how they interact across others. It is a class that will talk about a variety of ideas regarding different ways of life.

Rodriguez was shocked when he discovered that this imperative elective (or required course for some) had never been available to WCC students.

"This is a necessary class to take in today's climate," said Rodriguez. He says that every major can utilize the concepts taught throughout the semester.

Rodriguez felt obligated to bring this valuable course to the college. Coming from a minority background, Rodriguez also has experience living in and out of the city, and he also mentioned that most of his family lives in Indiana.

"Distance is very close, but you wouldn't believe how big some of the differences are," Rodriguez said. Thus, he along with other Communications/Media department chairs and professors took initiative with a passionate mindset to create this foundational class for future students to come.

So, what can one expect to learn in such a course? Many might assume by the name that they would strictly be taught different ethnicities and their cultures, but the course goes beyond that. Several perspectives are to be acknowledged throughout the semester.

"New York has a more fast-paced culture, but the South is more laid back and slower. One is not right, and one is not wrong. It's just that there is a difference and figuring out how you can communicate that," Rodriguez said.

Regionalisms play a huge role in this course as different places in the same town, state, or country may disagree on certain things when they're all from such similar backgrounds.

Rodriguez smiled as he recalled a time when he went to a local deli in Westchester, asking for a sandwich. The man behind the

counter had asked what kind of bread Rodriguez wanted for the sandwich, to which he replied, "a hero." The deli worker then laughed, asking if Rodriguez "wanted a cape on that?"

"In Westchester they call it a wedge. I'm used to the city where we call it a hero. So, it's even the little things like that," said Rodriguez.

Professor Rodriguez has exercises planned to engage his students.

"I split the class up into pairs and I give them each a country,"

differently based on the culture they were raised in.

"In one scenario, one country never sits down until they are told to have a seat. So the student was standing for the entire conversation, which left the other students confused and was funny to see," said Rodriguez.

Having taught this class before, Rodriguez believes it should be mandated for all community colleges to have some form of intercultural communication be taught.

**"We are more alike than we are different."**

*Professor Julio Rodriguez, WCC Communications Professor*

said Rodriguez. "I have a table in the middle of the room. Everyone has a sheet that says how their country generally communicates in specific social situations. After a few minutes of letting them study their sheets, I'll have two people come up at random and give them a scenario to interact with each other."

This example allows for students to notice an individual's idiosyncrasies and understand how one can socialize entirely

"I feel like, how could you not make this required for a diverse campus like WCC?"

Some other aspects of culture expected in the curriculum include cultural etiquettes, linguistics and/or slang, stereotyping and ethnocentrism, but most importantly, respect. The goal is to respond with acceptance and appreciation for other cultures.

"We are more alike than we are different," said Rodriguez.



**Professor Julio Rodriguez teaches his COMM 109 Speech Communication course.** *Photo by Jonathan Cerini*

## Get Help Planning Your Future at the Career Services Office LUKE O'CONNELL

November is National Career Development Month, which makes it a great time to speak about the Career Services Office at WCC. One person who knows a lot about the Career Services Office is Counselor Coordinator Gelaine Williams. The Career Services Office, which connects students' educational experiences to the world of work, assists students in many ways.

"Career Services assist students with career exploration and decision-making using career assessments, academic major selection, resume and cover letter development, interviewing skills preparation, job search strategies, and so much more," said Williams.

In order to receive assistance from the office, students should schedule a virtual or in-person appointment to meet with a career counselor, which can be done using the Viking Success portal or by emailing [careerservices@sunywcc.edu](mailto:careerservices@sunywcc.edu). The Office is located on the second floor of the Student Center. In addition to offering students individualized

assistance, the office offers many workshops and events throughout the academic year, such as an interview preparation seminar and a resume preparation workshop.

"Each Spring Semester we sponsor the Career Expo/Job Fair—which is our largest employer recruitment event—in addition to the Employer tabling events available throughout each semester," said Williams.

The Career Services Office, above all else, strives to help students succeed in the workforce. In the effort to help students succeed, the office is influenced by the National Association of College and Employers, which developed eight competencies for a career-ready workforce that employers seek. These competencies are the qualities that successful students tend to possess.

"They are as follows: Career and self-development, communication, critical thinking, equity and inclusion, leadership, professionalism, teamwork, and technology," said Williams.

Successful resumes tend to feature these competencies as well, along with a few other things.

"Successful resumes tell a story about what you have to offer an employer by listing education, relevant coursework and extracurricular activities, relevant skills, academic accomplishments, relevant professional work experience including internships, field education, clinicals, community services, and professional development to include demonstrations of leadership skills," Williams said.

Internships are something that a student could potentially do, but how important are they? Very important for students to have on their resume, according to Williams. Internships help students prepare for professional work, enhance their skills, foster important connections with mentors, and build their professional network.

"In some cases, it can also lead to full-time employment upon graduation based on employer need," said Williams.

If you want to learn more about the Career Services Office, email them at [Careerservices@sunywcc.edu](mailto:Careerservices@sunywcc.edu)

or visit them on the second floor of the Student Center, room 290.

**2023**  
**BLACK STUDENT UNION**

BLACK FOR MORE THAN ONE MONTH

JOIN US THIS SEMESTER! COME JOIN A SAFE SPACE WHERE PEOPLE OF COLOR CAN LEARN TO LOVE BEING DIFFERENT WHILE MAKING NEW FRIENDS!

WEDNESDAY'S @ 11 - CLASSROOM BUILDING 105 - SHEADLYMARCELIN@GMAIL.COM

**COME AND JOIN US!**

## Bright Futures: Safety in the Workplace ANYA DUTOVA

Westchester Community College hosted the "Bright Futures" event on its campus on Wednesday, October 4. The event was intended for students pursuing careers in the engineering/energy industry to give professional advice on safety in the workplace.

Bright Futures is a program that prepares students for careers in energy, engineering, and manufacturing industries. Professor Anthony Suozzo, who was the speaker during this event and who is the Bright Futures Faculty Coordinator and a success navigator for WCC STEM programs, worked as a general manager of Electric

Operations in the Bronx/Westchester for 30 years.

"The events are very important for the students because they get to see how the industry works, and how their classroom skills can be applied in the real world. We try to show during the sessions that connection," said Suozzo. "It gives an exposure to

an industry students may not be fully aware of, especially in the energy sector and engineering so many new things happen every year, new technologies coming up, and jobs that exist now did not even exist a year or two ago."

The event pointed to the importance of safety for professionals in the field and the organizations that provide it. Suozzo introduced students to OSHA- which is the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. This is the organization that controls the safety of professionals in engineering and related fields, and investigates if any of the safety rules are violated by any side - company or workers. OSHA looks for every worker to have PPE - personal protective equipment, which, according to Professor Suozzo, is the key to safety.

"5190 workers were killed on their job in 2022 (3.5 per 100,000 full-time equivalent workers)," said Suozzo.

Suozzo stated that workers have a right to get training from employers on a variety of health and safety hazards and standards that employers must follow. Some required training covers topics such as chemical hazards, equipment hazards, noise, confined spaces, fall hazards in construction, and personal protective equipment, along with a variety of other

subjects.

Suozzo also mentioned the importance of communication between coworkers, and between workers and the supervisor.

"Often the best and fastest way to get a hazard connected is to notify your supervisor or employer," Suozzo said.

The event covered not only the rights of the workers under OSHA, but the responsibilities of employers as well. They are required to provide a workplace free from recognized hazards and comply with OSHA standards, provide training required by OSHA standards, keep records of injuries and illnesses, and provide and pay for most PPE.

At the end of the event, Suozzo mentioned a story about his personal experience with safety at the workplace, where the person he supervised did not use PPE and injured himself.

"I still cannot forget how this guy looked at the hospital," said Suozzo.

Con Edison is a sponsor of academic programs that prepare students for careers in energy and related fields, and "Bright Futures" is one of those programs. According to Suozzo, more and more women are stepping into the field and feeling comfortable working in it.



Professor Suozzo speaks at the Bright Futures event.

Photo by Jackson Byrnes

## Building Community Relationships with a Cup of Joe DANI COLON

October 4 is National Coffee Day, and the Westchester County Police Department held this event throughout many places in

Westchester, such as Cortlandt Town Hall and Mimi's Coffee House in Mount Kisco. WCC's community resource officer Antonio Flores held the event where students and staff could have the chance to introduce themselves to Flores and share any concerns they might have with him.

In return, officer Flores, who is a WCC alumnus, gave a coupon for one dollar off coffee in the Crema cafe in the Student Center.

As Flores is seen around campus walking up to students for a friendly conversation while building better relationships, he talks about how it feels to give back to his community and his old campus.

"It feels great to hold this event, people seem very happy with it and because of that it makes me feel really good about giving back to the community," said Flores.

The event was not only intended to allow Flores to mingle with students, staff, and faculty, but also to share information with the community. Flores also gave out drawstring bags with the words: Westchester County; Police and Community

Together. Along with the drawstring bags, he gave out pamphlets about substance use, along with flyers with Westchester Police Department contacts and websites. Students also had the option to pick out small plastic cups and pens.

Throughout the event, a large number of students and faculty showed up, as well as other police officers within the Westchester Police Department.

"It's also pretty cool having officer Flores at our games showing support," says WCC student and soccer player Elvin Mejia. "Sometimes I'm on the sidelines before I go to the game and we make small talk, crack a little joke. I appreciate his support at our games."

As officer Flores expresses how he wants to give back to the community more and wants to be more present as he hopes for future events to connect with staff, faculty, and students on campus.

Vist WCPDNY on Instagram to reach out and connect with the Westchester County Police Department or connect with Flores in his office within the Security Office in the Student Center.



Officer Flores and WCC soccer player Elvin Mejia both enjoy a cup of coffee in the Crema Cafe.

Photo by Dani Colon

## State of Emergency: What You Need to Know SORELLE MARSH

There are certain things everyone on the WCC campus should know when faced with an emergency. The WCC Security Department, led by Scott Sullivan, and the Physical Plant, which is overseen by Robert Cirillo, put an emphasis on a comprehensive emergency communication and evacuation plan. This plan encompasses a variety of communication methods, including text messages, emails, voice calls, and public address systems installed across our campus. In addition, there is a public address system installed in every building on the Valhalla Campus, which permits the Security Department to relay both audible and visual messages to specific buildings.

Sullivan and Cirillo say the measures ensure students' well-being during an evacuation.

"The Security Department evacuation procedures include the contingency to establish areas of refuge for students and employees who are unable to immediately leave the Valhalla Campus, when there is a call for the closure or evacuation of the Valhalla Campus," said Sullivan. "The Gateway Building and the Student Center are pre-determined refuge locations, but other buildings or

locations may be designated, if necessary."

In order to make the best decisions regarding closure due to unfavorable weather conditions, such as flooding, Security carefully assesses the current and future weather forecasts, considers the challenges that may arise in transportation, and thoroughly evaluates the potential risks involved. They are determined to prioritize safety in conjunction with education.

During the most recent college closure due to heavy rains and flooding in Westchester, multiple factors influenced the decision to shut down the institution for the rest of the day. This included a review of weather forecasts, emergency management reports, declarations of emergencies, and information about flooded roadways. In this specific case, the college used text and email notifications to inform all students and staff about the closure. The college properties themselves remained unaffected by flooding, allowing the Valhalla Campus and Extension Centers to remain open until everyone could secure transportation from the college.

In the wake of the recent flooding incident at SUNY

WCC, the school finds itself at the intersection of education and safety, where difficult decisions must be made to

ensure the well-being of the student and staff population. It serves as a vivid reminder of the intricate nature of the

decision-making process faced by educational institutions during emergencies.



View from a car driving through a flood zone on a campus road.

Photo by Lyn Morales

## WCC Celebrates National Coming Out Day JONAS BARR

The concept of “coming out” initially had its origins in debutante society during the 19th and 20th centuries when young women “came out” into society by presenting themselves at lavish balls. It was a sign that they were available to eligible bachelors. Over time this term has been appropriated by the LGBTQ+ community to indicate the transition from a hidden life (“in the closet”) to the open expression of their own authentic identities.

At first queer folks came out only to each other, but during the Gay Rights Movement of the 1980s, the notion of coming out became a political rallying point for LGBTQ+ activists who hoped to make visible the

rights activists Jean O’Leary and Robert Eichberg co-founded the first National Coming Out Day in the United States, aiming to impress the cultural importance of queer identity upon the public consciousness.

A tradition at SUNY WCC for at least a decade, the celebration of National Coming Out Day (NCOD) on October 11 is sponsored by the GLOW club in support of LGBTQ+ people on campus. GLOW’s advisors are Dana Hirsch (she/they) and Tiago Machado (he/him/his) of the Department of Student Involvement.

Machado said that the annual celebration is not restricted to the LGBTQ+ community.

“For students who identify in the

experience is, you have now become a part of a community and it’s that first step of really being able to outwardly say it. For them, it’s a little bit freeing,” Machado said.

For students that do not identify as LGBTQ+, Machado believes that it is still worthwhile to attend.

“For students who aren’t in the community, the goal is to help them realize there are so many different shades of sexuality and gender,” Machado said. “It’s an opportunity for them to visibly see this community and learn more about them.”

Among participants in the various activities, an overarching sense of community that helped to unify all of the attendees was apparent. Students like Nathalie Aquino (they/them) and Casper Moss (he/him), for example, came together to make bracelets. Meanwhile, other students participated in singing karaoke, while still others popped in to eat the rainbow colored bagels and pick up a free t-shirt that was designed by students.

“Being accepted for who I am in a room of people who have faced the same or worse struggles than me is nice, it’s comforting,” said Aquino. “Not having to hide any part of myself—being truly me—it’s great and I love seeing that for others as well as my friends.”

While the LGBTQ+ community in the United States is faced with many challenges, it is felt

especially in this heavy political climate.”



**Students making bracelets at the GLOW National Coming Out Day event.**

Photo by Jonas Barr

that having events like these are more important than ever. Students on campus thrive by having safe spaces available to them.

“The significance of National Coming Out Day for LGBTQIA+ students [is] to celebrate

It was clear to attendees that events such as these are successful in bringing students from diverse backgrounds together in order to nurture a campus environment that is welcoming of others. The process of “coming out”

**“Not having to hide any part of myself—being truly me—it’s great and I love seeing that for others as well as my friends.”**

*Nathalie Aquino (they/them)*

diversity within the student body,” said Kiki Jimenez (any pronouns), GLOW president. “For trans, non-binary and gender nonconforming folks, it’s so incredibly important to feel united with one another,

remains a powerful tool in uniting all sorts of people behind the LGBTQ+ community. Hopefully this tradition will continue during the decades to come.



**Free t-shirts have been available at NCOD Events since 2013.**

Photo by Jonas Barr

discrimination and oppression against the queer community. On 11 Oct 1988, lesbian and gay

community, it’s about having that moment to celebrate. Regardless of what your

## Brazilian Club Helps International Students Fight Homesickness JADA MICELI

“There’s no place like home,” Dorothy mutters as she clicks her dazzling ruby slippers together three times. Just as it did Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz*, homesickness can beset international students every day. Recognizing this problem, the Brazilian Club sponsored an event on campus aimed at helping international students cope with the distress associated with separation from family and homeland.

Marmolejos greatly empathized with the new challenges that may follow being so far from home in an intimidating new environment. She validated the emotions of homesick students by explaining the immense feelings of loneliness and sadness that can come with being far away from home. Marmolejos shared many coping skills and strategies to help these students longing for home.

Marmolejos also emphasized the importance of making friends, joining clubs, and finding aspects of home where you are. Whether that be a restaurant that reminds you of sitting at your kitchen table or friends to talk to when your family is not within reach. Support is crucial for these students and Marmolejos informed them about how many mental health services and supports are available and free here on our campus.

culture revolves around oneself.

“In America, everything is about myself. Me. Me Me. And always, You. You. You, next,” Rodrigues said.

Despite these confusing traits, Carol Martins, president of the Brazilian Club, said that

“It’s been great and I think all of the professors are amazing. People here really want you to be a part of things,” said Ana Silva, a Brazilian international student.

Many students felt that WCC’s Department of Student

**“I wish we had a school community in Brazil like we do here. In Brazil, we do not have clubs or extracurriculars.”**

*Carol Martins, President of the Brazilian Club*



**Walesca Marmolejos discusses homesickness with international students.**

Photo by Jada Miceli

Students got to hear from guest speaker Walesca Marmolejos, an adjunct therapist who has been working on the WCC campus for four years.

“Finding a community of people from your country or your hometown with a common language will help,” said Marmolejos.

International students spoke about some of the issues they face here. For example, it was brought out that what may be common and everyday mannerisms to those growing up here in Westchester may appear foreign and confusing to others. Brazilian students expressed the complex and puzzling ways of the everyday New Yorker.

International student Cristiane Rodrigues said that American culture is very individualistic compared to that of Brazil. This can be very lonely and difficult to navigate. Cristiane Rodrigues explained that Brazilian culture is centered around family and community, while American

clubs and student involvement organizations are one aspect of American culture she would love to implement back home.

“I wish we had a school community in Brazil like we do here,” Martins said. “In Brazil, we do not have clubs or extracurriculars.”

All the students agreed that clubs, student involvement, and extracurriculars are beneficial when searching for community. Many students said that peers, professors, and school staff have been very supportive on their journey.

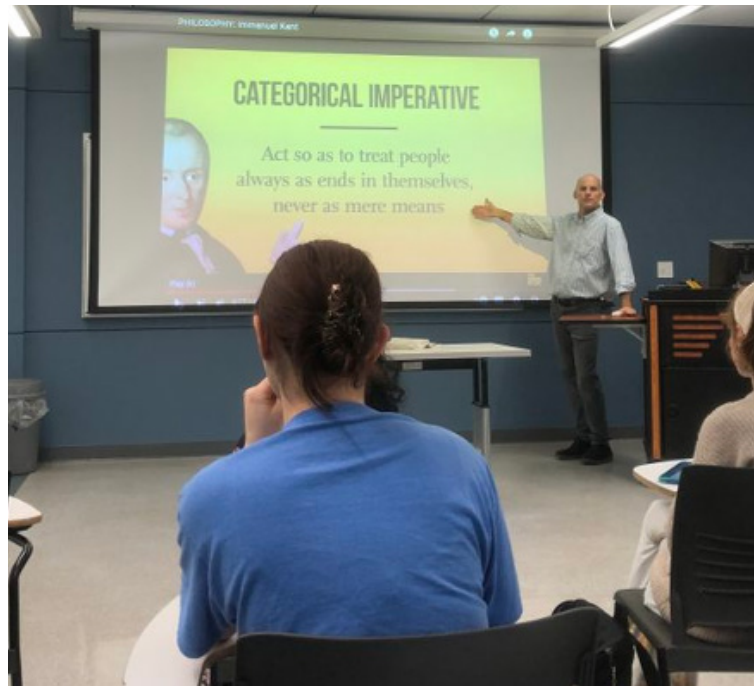
Involvement was an important part of how they cope with homesickness and missing their loved ones. Being busy and involved here at WCC, they said, gives them the opportunity to form new relationships and is a pleasing reminder to homesick students of the exciting unknown. It was clear from the discussion that international students are creating long-lasting relationships and exhilarating memories that will carry them through their next journey, even though they may sometimes feel, “there’s no place like home.”

## Philosophy is Alive and Well at WCC: An Interview with Prof. Dwight Goodyear

LUKE O'CONNELL

In his 2010 book *The Grand Design*, the scientist Stephen Hawking famously asserted that

degree in philosophy declined by around 12% in the decade from 2010 to 2020. WCC is no exception to this trend.



**Prof. Dwight Goodyear discusses Kant in his Philosophy of Love class.** Photo by Luke O'Connell

“philosophy is dead.” As if to prove the point, philosophy as a subject of study has declined substantially in popularity

Registration in philosophy courses is sharply lower now than in past years. This semester

This, however, does not discourage Prof. Dwight Goodyear, who has been teaching philosophy here for the past 20 years and was recently promoted to full professor.

“There is quite an exciting culture of young people online debating, reading, and taking philosophy seriously,” Goodyear says. “COVID got a lot of people thinking and searching and my hope is that more and more of them will find the resource of philosophy helpful in their efforts to reevaluate their lives.”

Goodyear teaches a variety of courses each year, including ethics, philosophy of love, philosophy of art, ancient/medieval philosophy, and modern philosophy. Historically, the works of various philosophers are part of these courses. For example, in his philosophy of love course, he discusses Plato’s *Symposium*, Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*, Søren Kierkegaard’s *Either/Or*, and other philosophical works.

Goodyear was first introduced to philosophy in a high school humanities class, where he was “fortunate enough” to be exposed to Plato. He has been very interested in philosophy ever since. He believes philosophy is immensely valuable for a few reasons.

“By asking general questions,” Goodyear says, “such as what is good? what is truth? what is knowledge? what is the self? what is beauty? and so on, we have the opportunity to

### Science and Philosophy

Not all scientists think that philosophy is dead. Albert Einstein, the famous physicist who created the Theory of Relativity and was named “Person of the Century” by TIME magazine, said: “The reciprocal relationship of epistemology [the branch of philosophy that deals with knowledge] and science is of noteworthy kind. They are dependent upon each other. Epistemology without contact with science becomes an empty scheme. Science without epistemology is—insofar as it is thinkable at all—primitive and muddled”

*Quoted in P.A. Schilpp (Ed.)*

**Albert Einstein: Philosopher-Scientist (1998)**

zoom in on the fundamental foundations of our belief systems and think hard about what we stand on and why.”

Students who choose to take philosophy courses and ask these questions enjoy strong benefits, according to Goodyear.

“If we do this enough, we can hope to do what Socrates implored us to do: lead an examined life and gain some wisdom that will help us both grow as unique individuals and as active participants in democracy,” Goodyear said.

Goodyear hopes to revive a once thriving philosophy club. The club was called Logos—which means “reason” in Ancient Greek. Members would

meet once a week to discuss anything they wanted.

“We also took some interesting trips to conferences, movie theaters, and academic talks. The club hasn’t been active since a little before COVID,” says Goodyear, “but I am looking forward to its return sooner rather than later.”

Goodyear encourages students who want to learn more about philosophy to email him at [dwight.goodyear@sunywcc.edu](mailto:dwight.goodyear@sunywcc.edu). He also encourages students to check out his website <https://philosophicaleggs.com/>, where he has published hundreds of articles on philosophical topics.

The complete interview can be found online at [vikingnews.org](http://vikingnews.org).

**“The [Philosophy] club hasn’t been active since a little before COVID, but I am looking forward to its return sooner rather than later.”**

*Professor Dwight Goodyear*

among college students since then. The number of students who were awarded a Bachelor’s

a once-popular course in logic had to be canceled. The reason: zero enrollment.

### SUBMISSION FROM NUTRITION CLUB

## Feeling Stressed by Classes? Check Your Blood Pressure

DANIEL EDWIN

Did you know cardiovascular disease (CD) is the leading cause of death in the United States? CD comprises a group of diseases that affect the heart and blood vessels. Conditions such as heart disease, stroke, and hypertension all reside within the encompassing realm of cardiovascular disease. The focus of this article will be hypertension, commonly called high blood pressure: its causes, preventative measures, and suggested lifestyle modifications.

Hypertension affects approximately one in three adults in the United States. Hypertension occurs when the force of blood against the artery walls is consistently too high, which puts extra strain on the heart and blood vessels. The additional strain results in the heart having to work harder. Normal blood pressure (BP) typically hovers around 120/80 mmHg, whereas a high BP range is generally considered to start

at a reading of 130/80 mmHg or higher.

Who is at risk for hypertension? It’s influenced by things like your family history, being overweight, and stress. If your relatives have it, you’re more at risk. Being overweight makes your heart work extra hard to pump blood, which raises BP. Stress is also an important risk factor. When you’re stressed, your body releases hormones like adrenaline, making your heart beat faster and raising your blood pressure. Prolonged hypertension can lead to heart attack, stroke, kidney damage, or vision loss.

Now that we understand the risks associated with hypertension, here are some tips on how to effectively manage this condition. Maintaining a healthy weight, refraining from tobacco use, moderating alcohol consumption, and adopting a balanced diet are all things that can help maintain healthy BP levels. Paying close

attention to micronutrients such as cholesterol and sodium is crucial. Also, it’s imperative to comprehend the risks of excessive sodium intake and learn to control it.

The American Medical Association (AMA) suggests a daily sodium intake of less than 2,300 mg, and they recommend an even lower level of 1,500 mg. Considering all the salt in your food and drinks throughout the day, however, it’s important to note that many people end up having more than 3,400 mg of sodium daily.

Additionally, distinguishing between good and bad cholesterol in order to avoid bad cholesterol foods is essential. Also important is staying hydrated and incorporating blood pressure-friendly foods into our diets. The latter include omega-3-rich options such as salmon, nuts, and seeds, along with green leafy vegetables and fruits like berries and bananas.

Finally, exercise plays a crucial role in managing hypertension. Individuals with high BP should aim for about 20-30 minutes of daily exercise, as it helps strengthen the heart and alleviate stiffness in blood vessels. Regular physical activity also aids in weight management and stress reduction.

Don’t miss out on an upcoming blood pressure event, hosted by the Nutrition Club! Join us at the Student Center on December 6th, between 11 am and 1 pm, to check your blood pressure and learn more about your health. If you’re considering club membership, get in touch with us. Your well-being is our focus!



**Healthy food options are available in the Student Center**

Photo by Daniel Edwin

## THE VIKING NEWS

Westchester Community College's  
Premier News Source

Fall 2023 Issue 3 November 15, 2023  
Valhalla, NY | [vikingnews.org](http://vikingnews.org)

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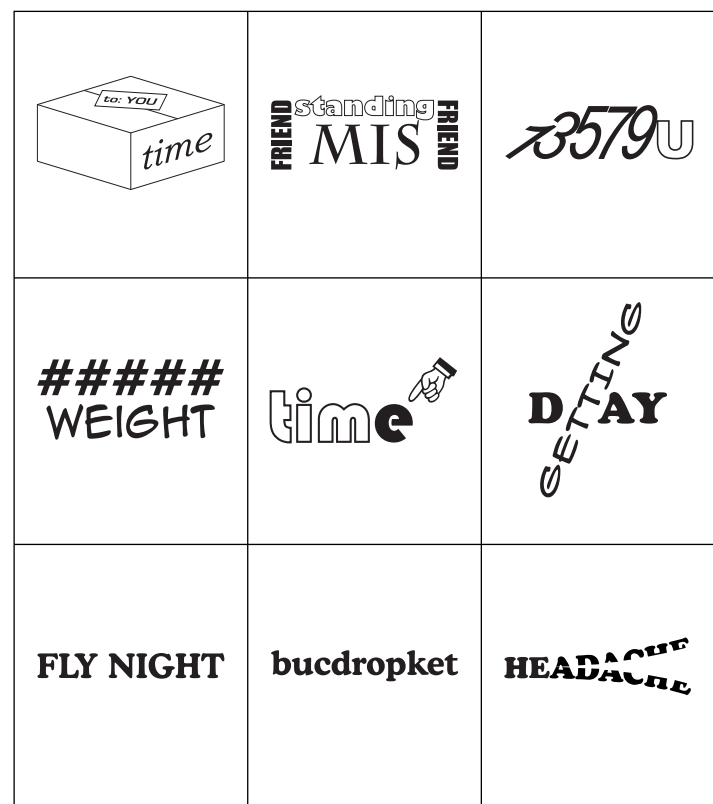
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### Word Plexers

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



### Sudoku

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

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

## November Shines Light on Epilepsy JONATHAN CERINI

How much do you know about epilepsy, a disease that is shared by 3.4 million people in the U.S., according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC)? Most people know what a seizure is, but how many can say they've witnessed one? How many can say they know more about the disease than just the simple facts? More importantly, how many can say they know what to do when someone suffers a seizure? How many know there is a major stigma associated with certain elements of the disease?

Being an epileptic, it always hurt me to feel like people were looking at me differently. They always ask me the same questions and have the same assumptions about how I live and take care of myself. I know they mean well, but frankly it can be a little annoying at times.

When I was first diagnosed in 2017, I pushed it down deep inside of me for the longest time. I denied that I ever had it, a form of imposter syndrome per se. I didn't understand what my body was going through and I didn't want to know. Eventually, I began to meet more and more people who also had epilepsy. I'm currently friends with a good number of people who struggle with similar epileptic issues. It feels good to know I am not alone. It

wasn't until recently that I had a realization that I could use my voice and my newfound passion to spread the word about this terrifying brain disorder that in my opinion gets little to no recognition in the public eye.

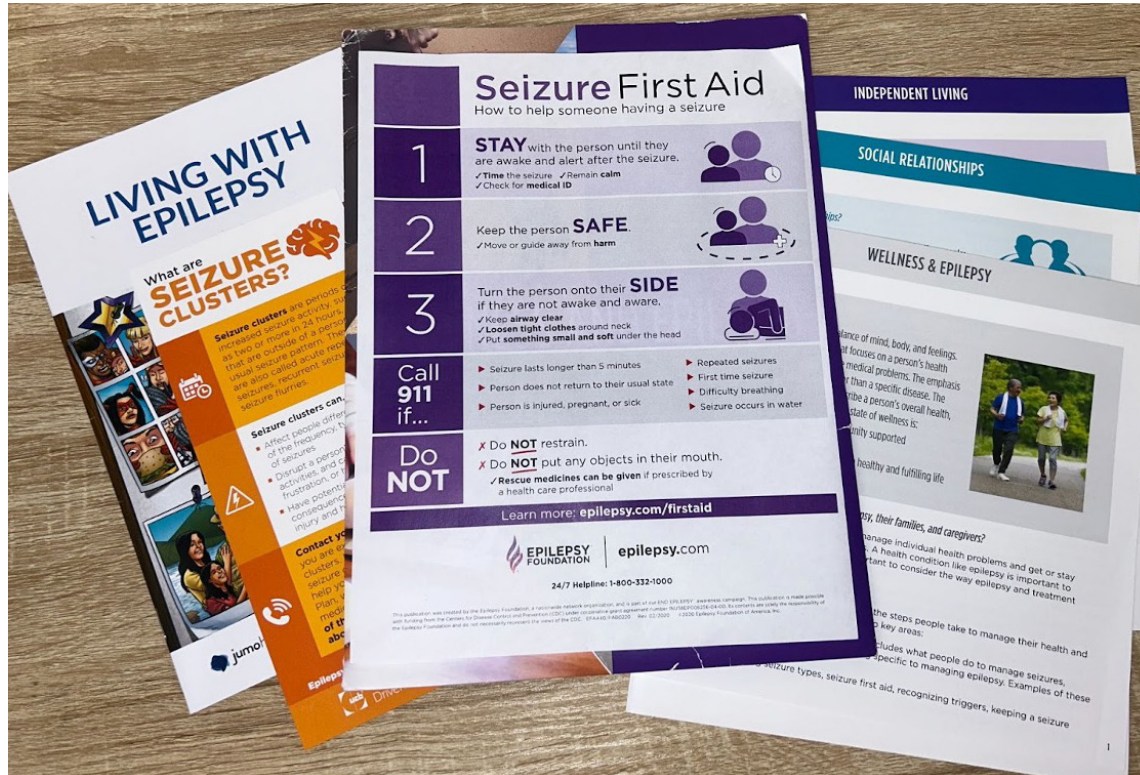
My purpose in writing this article is not to share facts about epilepsy, but to shine light on its lack of recognition in society. This is a good time to do it since November is Epilepsy Awareness Month.

saddening and frustrating to feel that we do not get the same support that is given to other health causes. Epilepsy is a disease whose victims need the proper assistance during acute episodes. Why do

or epilepsy. I spoke with a few employees and even they were surprised that there was no epilepsy literature available for students, faculty, or staff.

By the way, I am in no way trying to say that the other illnesses are not important. I just wish we could have events and representation for epilepsy the same way we do for these other diseases. I also would like to suggest first-aid training so people can know what to do if someone experiences a seizure. How often do you see posters at local libraries, churches, cafeterias, and other public places that show the steps for CPR or for assisting someone in the event of a heart attack or stroke? But there is no information for when someone experiences a seizure. This is an important process to know.

To summarize, feeling invisible is a true struggle. Epileptics need safety protocols in place and awareness to be spread to enjoy peace of mind. If you or someone you know suffers from epilepsy, suggest a wellness center or support group. There are more epileptics in the world than you think! You are not alone. As for the non-epileptics, please stay informed and spread these messages. We need the same considerations and protections that people with other illnesses enjoy.



**Epilepsy literature and first aid posters help people handle different situations in the safest possible way.**

Photo by Jonathan Cerini

There's a lot of things people do not know about epilepsy. I would highly recommend that anyone interested in knowing more about the disease visit the Epilepsy Foundation's website: [www.epilepsy.com](http://www.epilepsy.com).

I notice that there are often many charitable events such as fundraisers or walks enlisting support for various diseases. I have yet to see any local events like this for epilepsy. As an epileptic, it's

people afflicted with epilepsy not receive the recognition we need or deserve? Here at SUNY WCC, for example, the Wellness Center on the Valhalla main campus doesn't have any information on seizures

## The Purr-fect Study Buddy SORELLE MARSH

If you're looking for extra motivation and support for your study time, look no further—a cat may be the answer! You may think I'm crazy for having three cats, but it's truly comforting to have a companion who understands your struggles. Over the years,

I have experienced noticeable enhancements in stress reduction, motivation, and emotional well-being from my feline companions..

To begin with, having a cat is a constant lesson of responsibility. It's not just about owning a pet; it's about taking care of their needs, like

feeding them, making sure they are groomed, and cleaning the litter box. These tasks have taught me the value of routine and responsibility, and I've found that this responsibility corresponds to study habits. Making sure my cats' needs are met on a consistent schedule, I've learned the importance

of time management: Appreciating the significance of allocating time for specific tasks and sticking to those commitments. In this way, the simple act of caring for my cat has indirectly reinforced the key factors necessary for successful studying.

The gentle purring of a cat is like a warm, comforting embrace. Picture a late-night study session, with the weight of academic stress bearing down on you. In such moments, my cat's mere presence becomes my sanctuary. The rhythmic cadence of their purring isn't just a sound; it's a lifeline. It's almost like a therapist's soothing voice, melting away the tension that's knotted up inside me. As deadlines creep closer and exams draw near, it's as if my friend is my steadfast study partner, a potent stress-buster, always there to keep me grounded, centered, and laser-focused on my goals.

Cats, in their unapologetic pursuit of hedonism, teach me to savor every moment and find joy in life's simplest pleasures. When the whirlwind of academic chaos surrounds me, watching them play becomes a reminder to hit PAUSE, breathe,

and smell the roses. Their curiosity and inquisitiveness ignite a spark in me. Whether it's the exploration of a cardboard box or their exhilarating chase after a feather toy, I can't help but be inspired to infuse my studies with the same infectious enthusiasm and zest. In the company of cats, I've learned that curiosity is a powerful driving force, and it becomes a propellant, reminding me that the journey is as important as the destination.

Cats...they will always love you (well, for the most part!). Their gentle headbutts, cuddles, biscuit-making (kneading), and the pure contentment of having them by my side are soul-lifting. They don't judge my grades or performance. What they do is embrace me for who I am. Their unconditional love acts as a soothing balm during moments of distress. In the stormy waves of pressure, their emotional support goes a long way in maintaining my mental well-being. It's as if, with each purr and nuzzle, they're whispering, "You're enough, just as you are," and that assurance is priceless.

Have a kitty? If not, get one. You'll be missing out if you don't!



**A student hugs their cat during a study break.**

Photo By Sorelle Marsh

## FILM REVIEW

**The Creator** STEVEN GARCIA

On September 29th, 2023, a captivating science fiction movie titled *The Creator* made its grand entrance into theaters across America. The film has emerged from the creative minds of Gareth Edwards and Chris Weitz, the makers of *Rogue One* (2016), acclaimed as one of the best additions to the renowned *Star Wars* saga.

Critics praised this cinematic masterpiece due to its exceptional visual effects that brought futuristic landscapes to life on screen. Additionally hailed were Gareth Edward's impeccable directorial skills and outstanding performances by a cast headed by John David Washington, the talented son of Denzel Washington. Each played a role in bringing this thought-provoking tale to fruition.

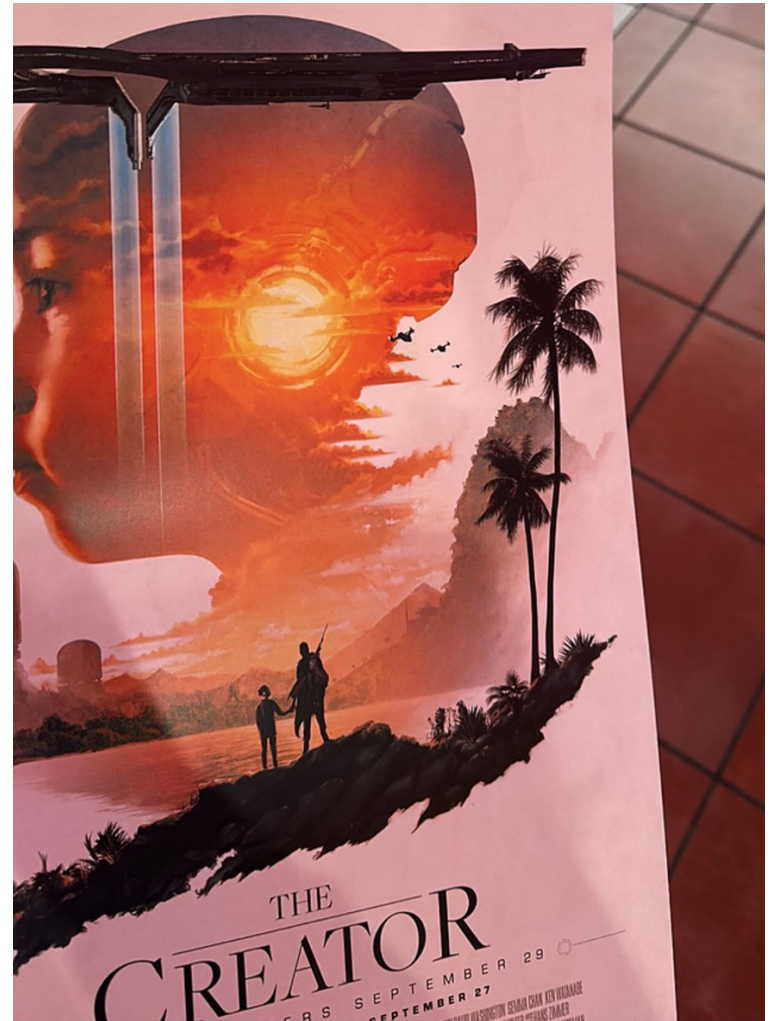
The storyline occurs in a future world heavily impacted by an intense war between humanity and artificial intelligence (AI). The protagonist is an ex-special forces agent named Joshua, played by Washington, who finds himself recruited for a crucial mission: to track down and eliminate the enigmatic figure known as the "Creator." This mysterious individual possesses a weapon with unimaginable power, capable of ending the war by annihilating mankind itself. However, our hero faces an unexpected dilemma when he uncovers the true nature of this formidable weapon; forcing him to question which side he should align himself with.

In my opinion, this movie is phenomenal. It is also timely, due to the present controversies surrounding the increasing

use of AI. The post-apocalyptic society pictured in the future may not be so far away from happening in the real world as we'd like!

As a fan of the director I was primed for this movie. I went to see it on Imax. Not only was it an ideal way to see the grand visual effects of the film, but I received a free movie poster even before entering the theater. So it was a big disappointment when, because of a mistake made by the theater, we started watching *Barbie* instead of *The Creator*! But the mistake was eventually rectified, and soon the amazing images of the sci-fi film were flashing on the enormous screen.

I heartily recommend *The Creator*. It is one of the best sci-fi pictures ever. And FYI: The poster looks amazing on my wall!



Free posters were given to IMAX viewers. Photo by Steven Garcia

## FILM REVIEW

**Five Nights At Freddy's** STEVEN GARCIA

(WARNING: CONTAINS SPOILERS)

The 2023 American supernatural horror film, *Five Nights at Freddy's* (FNAF), is an adaptation of the popular video game franchise created by Scott Cawthon, who serves as a producer alongside Jason Blum. Directed by Emma Tammi, the plot revolves around a troubled security guard who takes a night-time job at an abandoned family entertainment center, only to discover that the animatronic mascots come to life and kill anyone remaining after midnight.

Tammi co-wrote the screenplay along with Scott Cawthon and Seth Cuddeback from a story by Cawthon, Chris Lee Hill, and Tyler MacIntyre. The FNAF movie was based on an indie point-and-click survival horror video game, especially the first installment of the series, as developed by Scott Cawthon and released in August 2014. The goal of the player is to survive five nights at Freddy Fazbear's Pizza while avoiding being captured and stuffed into a mascot costume, thus becoming a target for the murderous animatronic characters, who track their victims' movements via the restaurant's security cameras.

As a huge FNAF fan, I have waited patiently for this moment for eight years of my life and I have to say that I have been spectacularly rewarded! I was lucky enough

to get early access to watch the movie a day before the official release on October 26. Since I've played all the FNAF game series, I understand the plot and the lore of the game. While watching the movie, many childhood memories of playing the game series came back to me, and I was able to "get" even the smallest references of each game. The most amazing thing about the film is that the animatronics—Freddy, Bonnie, Chica, and Foxy—were not human costumes but were all actually programmed. I was in awe (and a little terrified).

I was very happy while watching the film but was also displeased by a couple of things. One is that the movie was rated PG-13, which disappointed me: I would have preferred an R rating and more blood (as is shown in the game). The movie does follow the game's story line but makes some twists. All in all, I don't think these twists will bother fans. On the positive side are the inclusion of Youtubers familiar to players. One is a Youtuber named "Game Theory" whose whole premise is to theorize about the game's unfolding story. I was hyped when he showed up.

Another Youtuber known as "CoryxKenshin," who also played all of the FNAF game series, is also introduced in the movie. Unfortunately one of my favorite Youtubers, "Markiplier," could not make it into the film because he was working on another film.. This

was disappointing since he was one of the Youtubers who popularized the FNAF game series.

Overall, my responses to the film were both positive and negative. Overall, though, the movie is great. I recommend it

to you to watch and re-watch!



The Garcia Brothers attended an early showing of the film.

Photo by Steven Garcia



## TV SERIES REVIEW

**Interstellar Zedd War: Power Rangers Cosmic Fury** LUCAS WERNER

**P**ower Rangers Cosmic Fury is the third and final season of the Power Rangers Dino Fury sub-series of the long running (30 years) Power Rangers show. It arrived on Netflix in late September, a full year since the conclusion of Power Rangers Dino Fury's second season. From beginning to end, this latest season is a worthy celebration of the franchise's 30th anniversary (even though there are some who would disagree).

Here's a summary of the storyline of Dino Fury: 65 million years ago, on the planet Rafkon, the evil Sporix Beasts were unleashed on this world, laying waste to the entire place and leaving few survivors. Once they had their fill of destruction on Rafkon, these monsters headed for prehistoric Earth. The Knights of Rafkon (the aforementioned survivors) followed the Sporix Beasts and continued the battle on Earth. But with each battle, the monsters grew stronger, until they grew giant.

With the Knights and dinosaurs on the run, the Earth too seemed lost, until the Morphin Masters (ageless beings with untold power, including the ability to turn anyone into Power Rangers) arrived, turning

the Knights of Rafkon into the Dino Fury Power Rangers and giving them Zords (giant robots) to battle the gigantic monsters. During the final battle against the Sporix Beasts in this time period, seemingly all but one of these warriors, Zayto, survived and guarded the Sporix cocoons (which hatch into the monsters) along with Solon, a cyborg dinosaur.

Fast-forward to present-day, in the city of Pine Ridge, a villain called Void Knight unleashed the Sporix on Earth once again by accident when he tried to take them for himself, thus prompting Zayto to train a new team of Rangers. After many battles, the Power Rangers defeated the Sporix and sealed them away with the help of the Morphin Masters. But six months later, the evil Lord Zedd (the very first 'Emperor of Evil') returned with a vengeance. With new foes and new Zords in tow, can our heroes save the universe from total destruction?

Power Rangers Cosmic Fury has both good and bad points. On the plus side, the return of fan-favorite characters throughout PR history, including Billy (the first Blue Ranger from Mighty Morphin Power Rangers) and Heckyl (former villain, now



**The author watches Episode 1 of Power Rangers Cosmic Fury.**

*Photo by Lucas Werner*

Dark Ranger from PR Dino Charge), made my jaw drop in amazement. The new semi-autonomous Cosmic Fury Zords' designs are a sight to

behold. The Rangers' new suits and weapons, which looked spectacular, are as good as ever in battle. The team even has

orange as a new signature color for Fern (who first appeared in Dino Fury).

As a lifelong PR fan, I never saw the Squid Ink Inc. plot twist coming. I don't want to spoil it, but I think it will leave you astonished. Several Megazords showing up in the final battle was a real treat for the eyes, featuring five of the most iconic PR teams in their giant robots.

On the debit side, a show lasting only ten episodes does have a feeling of wasted potential, since there could have been more put into it. Javi (the Black Ranger) losing his arm to activate the Cosmic Fury Zords just didn't sit right with me. This 'dramatic' moment felt like a low blow to the character and a real waste of an opportunity. This plot twist has turned a lot of fans off, leaving them with the feeling that Javi deserved better.

With this era of a classic show now over, the conclusion has left many fans of this franchise conflicted, with some saying it was a disgrace to the legacy, while others calling it a great sendoff. Cosmic Fury gets a rating of 4.5 out of 5. If you want to check this show out for yourself, it's now streaming on Netflix.

**Queen and Queerness: Together at Last** RAY KATZ

**W**hen the British band Queen came onto the scene in 1970, it was nearly unheard of to be openly queer, especially as a public figure. The media suppressed queerness so much that one of Queen's music videos for the song "I Want to Break Free" was actually banned from airing on MTV because it was seen as promoting cross-dressing. (You should absolutely go watch that video. The whole band is in drag and it's iconic). Although the media denied his queerness for years, lead singer Freddie Mercury is now known as a queer icon.

There are so few queer icons from that time. In fact, it is only recently that positive queer representation has become available to youth. It is so important for people to be able to see themselves represented in media, as failure to be recognized can result in feelings of shame in one's sexuality or gender presentation. Even though I was born in a very different time, I had no queer role models to look up to in media until I was in my teen years.

When my mother offered to get me Queen tickets for my

birthday, I jumped at the chance. Queen is one of my favorite bands, and Freddie Mercury and Adam Lambert both played a large part in my being comfortable in my own queerness. As I was watching

a queer person celebrated in person. The revelation made me bawl. To see a sold out Madison Square Garden's worth of people cheering for both Freddie Mercury and Adam Lambert, two openly queer

Besides the public celebration, it is also important to have queer role models in one's personal life. For me personally, seeing advisors at the Department of Student Involvement who are not scared to be themselves

up, there were rumors about teachers being gay, but it was never confirmed, and all of the rumors that were spread had negative connotations. It wasn't until earlier this year that I saw "seasoned adults" out and proud, and it gave me the confidence to do the same. For me, it took twenty years to see that part of myself represented in someone I personally knew. In some ways, that makes me lucky. Some people will never get that chance. There are still 70 countries around the world where being queer is a crime.

Gay marriage was legalized nationally in the United States on June 26 of 2015. At the time I didn't quite understand the magnitude of what had happened, but looking back, it was a huge deal, and it still is.

It is so important for people, all people, to see queerness in media, as it helps to erase harmful stereotypes and destigmatize queerness. It was people like Freddie Mercury who gave me the confidence to come out. And there is no doubt in my mind that he has helped countless others feel comfortable in their own skin and confident enough to be themselves.



**Queen performing at Madison Square Garden Oct 12.**

*Photo by Erica Mizutani*

the concert, I realized that watching the current lead singer, Adam Lambert, perform was the first time I was seeing

men, was surreal. Everyone - gay, straight, didn't matter - cheered for them in unison.

has had a huge impact on me. It's made me realize that it is not unprofessional to look or be queer. When I was growing

## Dedication to the Game

CHRISTOPHER LATTIN

Tommy Poggi, infielder/pitcher for the SUNY WCC baseball team, looked back at his journey to get to the collegiate baseball level. Poggi was drawn to the sport of baseball at a young age, because of his dad's strong influence on the game.

"I was born into it. My dad was a big baseball fan, and the only thing he's ever wanted for me is to be a baseball player," said Poggi.

Poggi grew up a die hard

were Yankee legends Alex Rodriguez and Derek Jeter. He also became a fan of former Yankee Ichiro Suzuki because of his unique playing style. Baseball wasn't the only sport that Poggi played growing up, he played basketball much throughout his childhood.

"I kind of realized that I wasn't going to grow to be 6'6," Poggi said, sharing his reasoning for committing to baseball.

Because of this he definitely wasn't stopped to continue to play baseball. During his junior

such a high level with other players and teammates who are very skilled in the sport of baseball and because of the high level performance he wanted more.

However, this didn't mean Poggi's pursuit of baseball at the collegiate level was all sunshine and roses. Coming out of high school, he nearly quit the sport because of the stress that it added for him. He mentioned that it was a difficult decision, but in the end he could not leave the

without it," said Poggi.

But that wasn't the only reason

"I feel like we have some unfinished business, and the

**"I feel like we have some unfinished business, and the guys and I are very motivated to take our team to that next level, and hopefully take that regional championship"**

*Tommy Poggi, Second Base #14*

that his future in baseball was in jeopardy. Poggi had no coaches reach out to him out of high school, except for WCC baseball assistant coach Bill McClure Sr. Poggi credits McClure Sr. as the reason that he's currently playing college baseball at WCC.

"I don't know where I'd be without him," Poggi said about McClure Sr.

Playing baseball at the collegiate level is a grind for anyone, and that isn't any different for Poggi. His dedication to the game is clear through his daily routine.

"I wake up, get to my classes, but right after class I try to get an hour in the weight room. And then, go to practice, get some reps in, and do what the team has scheduled. And then I try to stay after a lot and get individual work in. And then when I get home, I try to do more of an intense lifting program," Poggi said.

Poggi doesn't consider himself one of the main leaders of the team, he points to the leadership strengths of his teammates as a large reason for the team's success. He cites A.J. Falciglia, Michael Manganiello, Thomas Browne as teammates who taught him valuable lessons when it came to leadership.

Poggi has been a two-way player at WCC so far. While he is most known for hitting and playing the infield, he has registered some time on the mound as well. In 2023, he went 1-0 on the mound with a 4.32 ERA in 8.1 innings pitched. But when asked to compare pitching and hitting, there was one clear choice.

"Definitely hitting, because I'm better at it," Poggi said with a laugh.

Poggi is coming off an incredible season, with a .417 batting average, .486 on-base percentage, and .567 slugging percentage in 50 games. He also recorded the most at bats of anyone on the team, with 187.

When asked about personal goals for next season, Poggi pointed back to the pursuit of the team.

guys and I are very motivated to take our team to that next level, and hopefully take that regional championship," Poggi said about his goals for next season. Despite playing baseball for practically his entire life, Poggi said that he experienced his greatest team moment in 2023 with WCC.

"Being nationally ranked last year was a very big moment for us, granted that we are a very small community college, we don't even have dorms or anything like that. So for us to be nationally ranked, whereas we are at a little bit of a competitive disadvantage compared to the other schools we're up against, I think was a great achievement," said Poggi.

WCC peaked at a ranking of #20 in the Week 4 NJCAA Division II rankings and received votes at other points during the season. The team finished with a 41-10 record in 2023, with a 14-5 record in conference play.

"If you can't build that chemistry, you can't have a winning team," Poggi shares about his team.

Another lesson that baseball has taught Poggi was the ability to deal with failure. WCC is coming off a successful season, with 41 wins. Despite their regular season success, WCC was not able to secure the regional championship. Poggi knows how important building in 2023 is, despite the failure to win it all.

"Dealing with failure, and moving on are definitely some of the very important lessons that baseball has taught me," said Poggi.

Poggi is looking ahead to next season, and large expectations are set after the success of WCC's last season.

"We have high expectations for ourselves, where we do want to get the job done, winning the region, and hopefully moving on to the district tournament, and seeing what we can do from there. But we're just locked in right now, and we're trying to chip away and get better and better every single day," Poggi said.



Tommy Poggi plays alongside his brother, Patrick, in the Region 15 Tournament.

Photo by Dani Colon

Yankees fan, taking after much of his family that lived in the Bronx. His childhood idols

year of high school, it started to truly sink in for Poggi. He realized that he could play at

game of baseball behind.

"I didn't know who I was

## Home Away From Home: The Legacy of Frank J. Sinatra III

LYN MORALES

The phrase “baseball field as a second home” is often used to describe the deep connection that many baseball players and enthusiasts have with the sport but for Franky he actually meant it.

Who is Frank J. Sinatra III? Franky was a true Viking. For those who don't know, Franky was passionate about the sport of baseball, he spent time at the field that was his way of showing love to the game. It's a place where he fully immersed himself in the game he loved.

“He was a very loveable person, very friendly with an infectious smile that made everyone smile,” said Laura Sinatra, Franky's mother. “He genuinely cared for others. He loved being a member of the SUNY WCC Baseball Team, from the coaches to the players. He loved caring for the field, he was very strong and loved using his physical energy to maintain the field.”

The current Vikings baseball team came together for their first

home fall game on September 22nd and paid respects to Franky. The memorial event was held before the game and a memorial is located next to the baseball field near parking lot 5 and was set with a rock, some flowers and what Franky dreamed of... batting cages.

“Franky struggled with a drug addiction,” said Sinatra.

Drug addictions are an issue in baseball, as in many other sports, for many years. Various substances, including performance-enhancing drugs, recreational drugs, and prescription medications have been associated with drug addiction problems among athletes.

Prescription medications especially are known as a major issue in sports. Misuse of prescription medications, particularly painkillers and opioids, has also been a concern in the sports world. Players may develop dependencies on these drugs due to the physical demands of the sport and the need to manage pain

and injuries. This issue has led to efforts to improve pain management and the use of non-addictive alternatives.

“Being part of a baseball team can create a strong sense of camaraderie and community,” said John “H” Hrycko, a former teammate and assistant to the athletic director. “The field becomes a gathering place for teammates, where they bond, work together, and support each other.”

The field was Franky's escape from his addiction.

The memory of Frank J Sinatra will forever live on here at SUNY Westchester Community College.

Franky's family, friends and teammates will forever cherish the sport of baseball just like he did.

**IF YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW STRUGGLES WITH ADDICTION PLEASE CALL THE DRUG ADDICTION HOTLINE 1-800-662-4357.**



His love for baseball made Frank J. Sinatra III smile.

Photo by Lauren Sinatra

## Breaking Barriers and Shattering Stereotypes: Women in Sports

LYN MORALES

In the world of sports, women have long been underestimated, undervalued, and underrepresented. However, over the years, female athletes have shattered barriers, defied stereotypes, and achieved remarkable success in various sports disciplines.

In recent decades, female athletes have achieved unprecedented success and recognition. In sports like tennis, Serena Williams has dominated the courts, while Simone Biles has redefined gymnastics. In soccer, players like Megan Rapinoe and Marta Vieira da Silva have gained worldwide fame. These women have not only proven their athletic prowess but have also used their platforms to advocate for gender equality and social justice.

“Being a woman in sports is continuing to create a path,” said Sam Champa, Vikings Athletic Trainer.

Many women, including Champa, are pushing for equality. Efforts to promote gender equality in sports have made significant strides. Initiatives like Title IX have opened doors for female athletes in educational institutions, while organizations like the Women's Sports Foundation work to level the playing field. The inclusion of more women's events in the Olympics and the

growth of women's professional leagues in various sports have contributed to greater representation.

Despite the progress, female athletes still face unique challenges. Issues such as

image pressures persist. Many female athletes have spoken out about these challenges, pushing for change and raising awareness about gender-based discrimination in sports. Women's participation and success in sports have inspired

contributed to changing societal perceptions of women's abilities and roles.

The future of women in sports looks promising. With more role models and increased access to opportunities, young girls are

continued efforts to challenge stereotypes and promote gender equality in sports will play a crucial role in shaping the future landscape of female athletes.

Women deserve the same respect as men get in sports. Pay disparities in sports have been a focal point of gender equality discussions. Many female athletes have advocated for equal pay, as they often earn less than their male counterparts in terms of prize money, sponsorships, and salaries.

The best advice anyone could give a woman in sports is “Keep pushing,” said Champa. Women often are treated differently and cruel in the sports world and the one thing you can't do, Champa says, is to give up.

“You belong here and we are here to stay,” said Champa. “If you want to be in this industry you gotta be tough and stay strong. One thing you never do is stay quiet always push back and show them what a woman can do for the sports world.”

While progress has been made, challenges and disparities still exist, and the fight for gender equality in sports continues. Women in sports continue to break barriers, inspire others, and work towards creating a more equitable future for all athletes, regardless of gender.



Sophomore Kris Melo, who is studying athletic training, smiles for her love of basketball.

Photo by Lyn Morales

pay disparity, inadequate media coverage, and body

countless individuals, both female and male, and have

being encouraged to pursue their athletic dreams. The

## Westchester Vikings vs Sullivan Generals: A History of Rivalry

DANI COLON

Many people could agree that the most important and entertaining thing to be interested in while watching

college, Monroe Express College, Hostos Community College, Dutchess Community College and many more.

in the regional 15 tournament, knocking the Vikings out and leaving them distraught. Westchester's volleyball team seems to take over Sullivan's,

beat them in a few years and whenever we play them it is a packed gym and it's a game that everyone is looking forward to watching," said Yave Cruz, a WCC basketball player. "They know us, we know them. They even have some guys that were gonna attend our school and went there, then we got some guys that were gonna attend their school and came to ours, so whenever Sullivan comes up it's a big game and one that everyone is looking forward to watching."

While facing such huge rivals, one might think that the players

The dugouts are loud at all times, and if someone does something good, they'll certainly let the other side hear about it. The Sullivan and Westchester rivalry is a Yankees and Red Sox-type rivalry."

WCC baseball fell to Sullivan back in May in the NJCAA region 15 tournament, knocking the Vikings out of getting a chance to go to the NJCAA world series, which is why the team is now pushing themselves to come back and face Sullivan.

During the regional 15 tournament, Sullivan let



WCC men's basketball player Yave Cruz instructs a play.

Photo by Dani Colon

any sports game is the rivalry. Almost everyone knows about the Yankees and Red Sox, and the Giants and Eagles rivalry. With WCC falling under NJCAA division 2 region 15 mid Hudson conference, the current schools that WCC faces are Rockland Community

One school that has a strong past history with WCC is the Generals SUNY Sullivan Community College, which is located in Loch Sheldrake, New York. Looking back at past history with Sullivan Community College, their baseball team beat the Vikings

but when it comes to both mens and womens basketball teams, Sullivan knocked them both out of their seasons. So how did this rivalry start? WCC's men's basketball player Yave Cruz says.

"Sullivan is one of our biggest rivals because we haven't

are under such pressure to win the games against Sullivan that they'll slip.

"I know I have to do whatever I have to do to win the game, so if that's me getting an extra rebound, or making the extra pass or getting the steal," said Anwar Zahzam, a WCC men's basketball player. "Just doing the small things to win the game. And there is no fear at all facing them or any opponent."

According to freshman men's basketball player Efrain Davila, he is aware of the rivalry but that it's important to focus on each opponent, and not just on Sullivan.

"The team really brings the energy," said Tommy Poggi, who plays infielder on the WCC baseball team. "The passion and will to win is always present in the team.

Westchester know about their mistakes with their players and coaches mocking the Vikings, saying Westchester attributed the success they had last season to "playing a soft schedule" and that they weren't as good as their record showed.

"Win at all costs. 110% intensity at all times. Don't give them an inch," said Poggi. "They've definitely heard about it. It's something you don't fully know until you experience it. We'd do anything to beat them and they'd do anything to beat us."

While the rivalry is strong, the Vikings are showing even more determination this season to knock Sullivan out of the region.

## Vikings Prepare for Viking Madness

DANI COLON

Last year, to start off the basketball season, the mens and womens basketball team held Viking Madness. Both teams used this event to introduce themselves to the WCC community. This event had raffles, snacks, and WCC's very own Power 88.1 were DJing the event.

Both teams held competition games as to who could do the most layups or even run across the court while dribbling the fastest, and later the mens and womens team split up and played against each other.

This year, Viking Madness took place on November 1. While both men's and women's teams fell in the regional tournament ending their season, they are still working on any of their flaws that they believe they could improve.

"Our freshmen are very skilled

already," said WCC women's basketball player Dominique Gaydarik. "They came in with the energy we needed. So it's all about communication and playing as a team. And once we reach our full potential nobody can stop us."

Above else, it's an opportunity for the teams to bond.

"I'm just trying to push my teammates hard in practice to physically prepare my team," Gaydarik said. "They definitely run their hardest and take practice very seriously, so when we hit the floor we make something happen."

There are not many sophomores on the women's basketball team, most being freshmen, so Viking Madness helps prepare the team. Especially the freshmen are able to get more comfortable

playing in front of a huge home crowd.

One freshman who has practiced her skills for this event is Milagros Alston, who is constantly finding her rhythm and making sure she can get tough shots.

Another freshman, Baronique Russell, shows that her greatest strength is her paint work along with making sure she takes hard consistent shots overall.

Head coaches for the women's team, Karim McFarlane, and Men's head coach, Andre Pennicooke, put lots of work into developing new and continuing athletes. With almost a whole new team, the Vikings are happy to show their skills to WCC during Viking Madness and make sure they are prepared for the 2023 basketball season.



WCC coach Karim McFarlane instructs a play to WCC players.

Photo by Dani Colon