A degree of impossibility

Getting Associates in Two Years
an Uphill Climb

Anthony Sganga
Editor-in-Chief

64 credits. Four semesters. Two years. One degree.
It seems like a simple enough equation, however, for students who choose to begin their quest for a BCC degree, the journey will take far longer than they had anticipated.

When a student begins a degree program, they typically receive a course load worth anywhere from 60-65 credits. This is inclusive of Composition I and II along with speech, communication, all three of which are compulsory for all BCC students.

Which leads to one of the hardest parts for most of those looking for a two year path, the entrance exam and remedial courses.

All students who attend Bergen Community College are required to take an Accuplacer exam that determines their standing in English and math. Exceptions to the test are SAT scores and AP courses. However, a student who does not meet these exceptions and therefore, takes both sections of the test. The students who do not pass one or both of these sections are then placed in English Basic Skills (EBS) or remedial math courses, which do not offer transferrable or degree earning credits and can often lead to confusion in choosing the right program.

What’s discouraging, however, is that over 70% of students who enter BCC are placed in an EBS or remedial math course, making their chances of graduating in two years an impossible task.

For example, a student who scores below a 159 (the lowest bracket possible) in the English placement test must take EBS-011 during their first semester. EBS-012 during their second semester and then pass a mastery exam all before they can take Composition 101. The time span for this to be accomplished is one academic year.

So a student who did poorly on the accuplacer would have to wait a full academic year before being able to take an accredited English course. There are alternatives, such as obtaining an A in the first EBS course and taking the mastery exam, however this is still a minority option for most students. Although, some students in higher brackets only have to take one EBS course and sometimes are allowed to take it concurrently with WRT-101.

The standards for math placement are more widespread as there are two sections: arithmetic and algebra, and based on scores from each section, non-passing students are placed in anywhere from one to three remedial courses. This once again places a student into taking non-credit courses for up to a year.

Keeping track, this means in an ideal situation, it would take a student who doesn’t pass the accuplacer at least three years to graduate. This would include them taking winter or summer courses, which are cash only and therefore harder to pay for.

But what about students who pass the entrance exam and begin with a normal course program, does the path towards a two-year associate’s get any easier?

The short answer is no, students who pass all sections of the accuplacer still, on average, take longer than four semesters to meet graduation requirements. This can be for a variety of reasons, work requirements, families, but the culprit can also be misunderstandings in the course programs due to frequent changes.

Without understanding the path possible, there is still a minority option for students who pass all sections of the accuplacer and are able to establish the Center for Student Success.

Continued on page 2

Changes at BCC this semester

Christopher O’Hanlon
Staff Writer

With the spring semester fast-approaching, departments across campus are working to implement new changes that will make life at BCC more convenient for college students.

When President B. Kaye Walter first took office last semester, a number of key faculty positions were vacant; this will be rectified this semester with the appointment of three new vice presidents.

Naydeen Gonzalez-De Jesus is set to take over as Vice President of Student Services. De Jesus is no stranger to working hard for students - she was recently positioned at Burlington County College as Associate Dean of Student Advertising, transfer, special populations, and the educational opportunity fund. She also served at Salem Community College, where she was director of a $1.7 million dollar Title III grant and used a portion of the funding to establish the Center for Student Success.

Yun K. Kim will take over as Vice President of Institutional Effectiveness. Kim most recently served as Associate Provost for Academic and Institutional Effectiveness at the University of Pennsylvania. At BCC, her role will entail aiding and providing support to enhance student academic success; therefore the ultimate destination of the funds, students should have a say in the process.

Kim’s experience will ensure the accurate auditing of financial data to provide students with a transparent and efficient process that takes the voucher straight from the financial aid office to the bookstore so when students get to the bookstore all they have to do is ask. Trustee Winston mentioned that New Jersey is the only state that requires students to have health insurance. With the

Continued on page 2

Board of Trustees addresses rising student health care cost

Board also welcomes three new VPs

Brian Felix
Staff Writer

The Board of Trustees welcomed the college’s three new vice presidents and discussed the increased cost of health care to BCC student during its January 15 meeting.

Trustee Winston mentioned that the audit for financial aid has been completed. Dr. Ronald Anthony Milton, who is the new vice president of Administrative Services, said that Accuplacer and the program that was developed by their colleagues at Bergen Community College will provide funding for 31 public colleges and 19 county colleges, including Bergen Community College. Now that we have a portion of all that cash guaranteed, the next step is putting it to use. The money is due for higher academic success; therefore the students should have a say in the ultimate destination of the funds, since the students are the ones being educated. Many students would agree that the money should be invested in a medical Education Center, given that it is the most transited building, as well as intensively populated and the oldest building on campus.

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Opinion

Why students should visit their professors, pg 5

Copy Editor Norman Shafto shares his views on why students should take advantage of professor’s office hours.

Reminding a New Jersey Hero, pg 6

Contributing Writer John Cross express why students should remember General Norman Schwarzkopf

Features

Coming attractions of 2013 pg 8-9

Roger S. Echegoyen previews the world of TV and movies of 2013.

Books all college students should read pg.13

Photographer Jamie Kurtz lists books that should be read by college students.

Uncle Sam’s allowance

Prop #1 passed; now to decide what we do with the funds

Ricardo Montero
Staff Writer

Election day was quite interesting last year, apart from the obvious presidential dilemma that had the country divided, New Jersey students were voting on the “Building Our Future Bond Act,” which authorizes $750 million to be granted to New Jersey’s colleges and universities. These funds will be used to build, equip, and expand facilities in order to achieve higher academic success.

Voters were given the option to support or be against the proposition, which would radically increase the capital of colleges and universities at the cost of a tax increase.

Proposition Number 1 will provide funding for 31 public colleges and 19 county colleges, including Bergen Community College. Now that we have a portion of all that cash guaranteed, the next step is putting it to use. The money is due for higher academic success; therefore the students should have a say in the ultimate destination of the funds, since the students are the ones being educated. Many students would agree that the money should be invested in a medical Education Center, given that it is the most transited building, as well as intensively populated and the oldest building on campus.

Continued on page 2
Partaking in this event is very easy: all you need to do is grab old textbooks, sit at our tables, and sell your books.

This event has gained much success, as many students have profited from it. Students can socialize with other students and ask questions related to the professor they have mastered from the books. This can aid incoming freshmen to get a stronger idea on what materials they can use for upcoming classes.

With the flexible hours, students can stop by at any time during the week to check and see what books are available. Most times students have found what they needed.

This is definitely an event that students should not miss. The event is right around the corner, start brushing off the dust of those old books sitting on the shelf and start selling.

A degree of impossibility

Continued from page 1

degree requirements or courses approved for humanities and social sciences, students can often take classes that have no impact on their degree.

Add to this the constant changing of programs each year and you get a situation where students mix up courses, wasting time and money.

While something as complicated as EBS courses will not be changed any time soon, there are steps students can take to make two years a reality.

First, understand that the program you choose when you begin at BCC is the one you follow through graduation. Although the classes may be added and taken away each year, the program evaluation you have on day one is the only one you should follow.

Next, if you happen to have EBS or remedial math courses, check the options to take them concurrently with full credit courses such as WRT101. Also check options for taking the mastery test early, allowing you to save money wasted on other courses. Ask a professor or department head about this option because for some situations a professor’s recommendation is needed.

Lastly, try to plan your schedule as soon as possible. Classes fill quickly and with limited options in some courses, you can have a wait a whole semester to take it again. Furthermore, try to take at least five courses a semester. Added up over the total of four semesters this will most likely fill up a majority of students degree requirements.

While it is certainly difficult to graduate in two years at BCC, it is possible. Do not slack at the start and follow the program evaluation you are given and you will soon be walking up to the graduation platform at commencement, degree in hand.

Board of Trustees addresses rising student health care cost

Continued from page 1

The Board of Trustees welcomed three new Vice Presidents of the college Dr. Naydeen Gonzalez De Jesus, Dr. Gonzalez De Jesus and Dr. Yun K Kim.

Dr. Naydeen Gonzalez De Jesus is now leading our area of student affairs. Dr. Gonzalez De Jesus comes from Burlington County College where she served as the Associate Dean of Academic Advisement, Transfer, Special Populations and EOP Education Opportunity Fund. Prior to her work at Burlington, she was an assistant dean at Rowan College at Salem Community College and before that she began her community college career being a counselor and assistant professor at Philadelphia Community College. She brings with her a huge array of genuine service to students. She holds a graduate degree from Penn State and a doctorate in Industrial Organizational Psychology from Northcentral University. She’s a member of the national academic testing association as well as an institutional representative of the NJ ACE-Net.

Dr. Yun K Kim is the new VP for institutional effectiveness. She’ll be responsible for the development of or program assessment, strategic planning and institutional research. Prior to joining Bergen she served as a associate provost for academic and institutional effectiveness in East Stroudsburg, PA. She had full responsibility that the university was in full compliance. She lead the development of the University’s new strategic initiative, a comprehensive plan for institutional effectiveness. Dr. Kim has extensive knowledge in every aspect of institutional effectiveness. She has developed and executed a college wide performance outcome assessment program in four different institutions. She has a Bachelors, Masters of Science and Doctorate in Educational Psychology from the University of Kentucky.

Dr. Ron Milon and he will be serving as the VP of administrative services. He actually started working at Bergen in 2008 as the director of BCC at the Meadowlands. He’s done a phenomenal job getting the Meadowlands campus off the ground. He was the dean of business and technology programs at DeVry. He’s also served as the director of the business training institute and coordinator of the liberal arts program of Boricua College in Brooklyn. He has three Masters in History, Political Science and International Affairs as well as a Doctorate in Adult Education.

Though it was a brief meeting there was a lot of positive news. The transfer of vouchers is going extremely well. There was a lot of positive news. There were a lot of positives in the development of the...
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The Torch

THE TORCH, a member of the Associated Collegiate Press and the College Media Association, is the official student newspaper of Bergen Community College. The purpose of THE TORCH is to report on the events at BCC and the local community, and to offer the BCC community a forum for expression. The opinions expressed in THE TORCH are not necessarily those of THE TORCH. All the materials submitted to THE TORCH become the property of THE TORCH. ANTHONY SGANGA Editor-In-Chief

Rising health insurance trouble for NJ students

by Anthony Sgang A

In order to attend courses at a New Jersey state or county college, a student may be covered by health insurance. This policy is unique, as New Jersey is the only state in the country to enforce it. However, if students are uninsured, the college will provide insurance, the price for this usually being subsidized. However, this is soon about to change as with the implementation of Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, also known as Obamacare. The Act, while often lauded for giving lower income citizens health coverage, also has clauses that will such as what NJ students will experience.

The price for covering a student will rise from its current price of $400 – $600 to over $5,000 per student. An increase that will fall upon the one third of state students who are not currently covered, thus leaving some to question if this insurance is right for them and if they are able to afford the premium to drop out of school. The situation will be bad but how much $1,700 will hurt students in perspective, tops out at $5,550. This means that students who are in the most need may be the ones with the least amount of money to either find a way to come up with the money to pay the extra fee to keep the insurance or find someone since their grants will not cover it. This could leave some to take out student loans in credits in order to meet the fee.

In the first few weeks of school, the SGA will be hosting its annual Book Exchange where students can buy or sell their old textbooks. This event will be hosted from Thursday January 24th to Friday February 1st outside the SGA office—in the Center of Student Success. —Meadowlands Campus—Library from Thurs. Feb.14 from 1000am-6:30pm. Also, we will be hosting a Town Hall Meeting. This event is an easy way for students to address their concerns to the administrators. We encourage every student to participate and make sure that his/her voice is heard. In addition, SGA will be giving many scholarships that will help various students finish their Associates and move forward to the next level. Those students would have to show civic engagement and leadership skills at Bergen Community College. Therefore, if you would like to apply make sure you join at least one of the many clubs or organizations that BCC offers. If you have a good network of service projects, SGA recruits BCC students for that role. This semester, SGA will be giving many scholarships to clubs for community service projects. It is simply a way to make sure that a club has met one of several requirements (all of which are mandated by the Star Ranking System) to be an active organization on campus.

Corrections

The Torch strives for the highest journalistic standards and accuracy. Readers are encouraged to contact us if they find any mistakes in any edition of the Torch.

Margarita Valdez

SGA President

Dear fellow students,

On behalf of the Student Government Association, I want to wish you a Happy New Year! My name is Margarita Valdez, your current SGA President. I hope everyone had a great winter break and also that you are ready for this spring semester. In this new semester, I wish you the best of luck and I am also looking forward to those new challenges that SGA will be turning into opportunities.

This semester might be the first one for many students; therefore, it is important to remark that Bergen Community College has various resources that can help you to succeed and accomplish all your goals in this academic term, including:

- Center for Health, Wellness, & Personal Counseling – Room HS-100
- Center for Student Success – Room A-118
- Educational Opportunity Fund (EOF) – Room C-100
- Financial Aid – Room L-125
- Help Desk – Room A-205F
- Library – Room L-201
- Office of Specialized Services – Room L-116
- Public Safety – Room L-154
- Registration – Room A-129
- Student Life/Activities – Room A-115
- Tutoring Center – Room L-125

These departments will help you to move forward, however there are many others which are also here to assist students; therefore, we cannot forget the Student Government Association, which makes sure that BCC students have all the resources that they need for their education. Never hesitate to stop in; our door, Room A-101, is always open.

The SGA is an organization that is comprised of an Executive Board, Senate, Judiciary and various committees. SGA has weekly meetings on Wednesdays at 12:30 p.m. The purpose of those meetings is to function as a governing representative democracy on behalf of all students.

In this case, whether or not the repeal passes, students lose.

Letter from the Student Government President

Margarita Valdez

Dear fellow students,

I am Margarita Valdez, the SGA President. As your SGA President, I would like to remind all students of the upcoming annual Officer Training held on Wednesday, February 6th from 6:30pm – 8:30pm. This event will be held in Room A-101 Pitkin Center. Email studentgovernment@bergen.edu or more information, Room A-101 Pitkin Center. Email studentgovernment@bergen.edu or more information.

The Student Government Association is a great opportunity for students to be involved and start making a difference in their community. Being a Senator has many benefits such as improving leadership abilities, gaining professional experience, and getting more involved. As a senator, you are also expected to attend weekly meetings, attend weekend conferences, and more! Therefore, do not attend the already mandatory SGA office. This is the time to turn in any paperwork that you have or to refamiliarize yourself with the Student Government Association.

To the students who are interested in joining the Student Government Association, for applications and more information, Room A-101 Pitkin Center. Email studentgovernment@bergen.edu or more information.

Editorial: It is important to believe that it in any way “distorted the true definition of volunteering” when a club member is volunteering to clubs for community service projects. It is simply a way to make sure that a club has met one of several requirements (all of which are mandated by the Star Ranking System) to be an active organization on campus.

The Student Government Association is a great opportunity for students to be involved and start making a difference in their community. Being a Senator has many benefits such as improving leadership abilities, gaining professional experience, and getting more involved. As a senator, you are also expected to attend weekly meetings, attend weekend conferences, and more! Therefore, do not attend the already mandatory SGA office. This is the time to turn in any paperwork that you have or to refamiliarize yourself with the Student Government Association.

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A Case for Books

Sunny Glottmann
Staff Writer

When I moved to New Jersey, I was particularly amazed by two trends: the exorbitant number of tanning salons, and the absence of bookstores. I suppose you could say while living in New York, I was spoiled; so spoiled that I would shamelessly judge passersby for their literary accessories. Only bearded men should read Cormac McCarthy. Chuck Palahniuk is for girls whose wealthy fathers didn’t love them, so they took solace in moving to Williamsburg, wearing kitch suspenders, and dating guys with androgynous names like Parker and Casey. Why do vegans only make cookbooks about cupcakes? Moreover, is one woman’s tanning bed another women’s red velvet cupcake? I was no better.

I wore my novel like a pair of designer shoes, and now as I sit trying to make heads or tails of the coming semester, I have to ask you, BCC, what does New Jersey have against books? And, isn’t there a novel like a pair of designer shoes, and now as I sit trying to make heads or tails of the coming semester, I have to ask you, BCC, what does New Jersey have against books? And, isn’t there

A recent poll showed that 1 in 4 Americans haven’t read a single book in the past year. On average, most Americans read 4 books a year, with women typically reading more than men (for example, Fifty Shades of Grey). When you look at the whole, the numbers become abysmal. Literature is waging a war against The Learning Channel and Honey Boo Boo, and sadly it is losing. But are we given a choice? Funding for the humanities is dwindling. Even at Bergen, most students ever cracking open a novel. Although students are required to read poetry and essays in their writing composition courses, few are required to read an entire novel, and that is just tragic. I have spoken with professors and students regarding this matter.

The instructors fear the students won’t commit themselves to any substantial reading material, and most students feel they are reading too much as it is. When did reading stop being fun? When did our education system turn its back upon creating a well-informed, literate society?

We live in an inherently violent, irrational world. We condemn the politicians whom we choose to elect. We denounce the sensationalism of our media, yet we persist as fantastical avatars via facebook. We are overstimulated, yet unsatisfied. As a whole, we have lost sight of the human condition. It transcends ecstasy, innocence, death, and loss, and we don’t necessarily recognize its absence, but we feel its death all the same. We mourn the loss of a friend we do not know. After all, our lives are just a series of stories, and the narrative is the fabric of our minds.

So this next semester I challenge you, my fellow students, to read a book, and let it move you.

Resolving a mystery: Why professors have office hours

Norman Shafto
Copy Editor

Are you one of those students who receives the syllabus, takes one glance at your professor’s office hours, and then proceeds to trash it, or one of those who copies down the information for future reference? Well, hopefully you are one of the latter, as the benefits of visiting your professors (and maybe even dropping off some coffee or cookies) can be greater than you think!

Even if you are not a Hermione Granger in the classroom, who nearly jumps out of her seat every time a question is asked, a visit to your professor’s office is an excellent way to show that little bit of interest that you do not have the guts to display in public. Better than anything, there is nothing like a little visit and a chat to help give your grade that little boost. Professors have office hours not because they need to take long breaks, but because they hope that someone in their class will show sufficient interest to pass by and say hi. Professors will really appreciate your visit, and will most likely remember it when adding up your points at the end of the semester. You never know, a B could easily become a B+ with little to no effort.

If you are having trouble with an assignment that a professor gave, and it is due next week and you still have no idea what topic to write about, visit your professor! Professors do not generally hand out assignments for which they do not have several ideas in mind. A quick talk that lasts less than 5 minutes can solve the whole problem. When one student was feeling completely lost with one of his literature papers, he simply went to his professor and asked if he could provide him with an idea. Within less than 30 seconds, his professor discovered that he is interested in technology, so the professor suggested the student discuss the technological aspects of Frankenstein and Dracula. It was perfect! So, no more struggling with ideas for papers.

And what are you going to do when you are ready to transfer, and desperately in need of letters of recommendation, but have no professors who you made friends with? If you always sat quietly in the back, there is a chance professors will remember the look of you, but there is no way they will be able to describe your skills and capacities. So visit your professors, chat about anything if not about class material, and you will have made valuable connections that can prove to be crucial in your educational career.

Students too often think that professors are only meant to be seen in class. Too few students actually take advantage of professor’s office hours, and many times because of this, only realize at the end of the semester what a mess their grades are in. BCC student Sunny Glottmann described the problem perfectly by saying “Not seeking out assistance from your professor is like driving around lost in Brooklyn for three hours because you are too pigheaded to open up the perfectly good map in your glove compartment.”
People Kill People
Guns Kill People

John Cross
Staff Writer

Gun violence has again escalated to the political forefront with the recent tragedy in Newtown, CT. This uncomromising violence must be stopped without infringing on our Constitutional rights. A gun is an inanimate object no different than a kitchen knife or automobile. An individual must make a stabbing, reckless driving, or pulling a trigger. Society must concentrate on the individuals who commit these horrendous offenses.

This nation has become the political scapegoat, as it is the least challenging to regulate. However, taking the more difficult routes by first, enacting a psychological medical clearance for the applicant before issuing a weapons permit and second, by addressing the issue of parental guidance, is seen by many as political suicide. Again, our politicians revert to their doctrine, “Never let a serious crisis go to waste”.

They continually “grandstand” at our expense, the constituents for whom they work, I challenge them. Fix the problem!

Mass shootings derive from an array of issues from workplace violence at Accent Signage Systems in Minneapolis, MN, to a religious zealot at Ft Hood, TX, and a psychopath in Newtown, CT. Meanwhile, untold numbers of individuals are murdered by beatings, stabbing, guns, drunk drivers and countless other scenarios.

In our own back yard, Camden, NJ is continually ranked #1 in the U.S. with a murder rate of 46 per 100,000 people. Camden absurdly ranks #20 in this category. This should be a must read for every parent.

Schwarzkopf, a NJ Hero

John Cross
Staff Writer

Retired four star General H. Norman Schwarzkopf branded “Stormin’ Norman” by the media for his blunt, no nonsense “Stormin’ Norman” of the Century”. As a teenager he was the son of a founder and first Superintendent of the NJ State Police. His father investigated the kidnapping of the infamous Charles “Lindbergh’s” baby, which was labeled “Trial of the Century”. As a teenager he attended school in Iran where his dad trained the national police for the Shah of Iran. Later he followed his father’s footsteps and graduated West Point. This man then volunteered for Army and graduated West Point.

In 1999, he declined an offer by Governor Whitman to become the NJ State Police Superintendent, the position his father previously held. Instead he devoted his energies as the national spokesperson for prostate cancer and for awareness for the recovery of grizzly bears. Additionally, he was active in charities for chronically ill children. In retirement he frequently NJ by serving as Grand Marshall of his hometown parade and visited his third parade and visited his third hometown parade and visit.

This General, hero, and most monumental man inspired me by his boldness, courage and self awareness when he confided, “I may have a reputation as a general in the army and I’m very proud of that, but I’ve always felt that I was more than one-dimensional. I’d like to think I’m a caring human being... it’s nice to feel that you have a purpose”. This man who was prodded to join the political arena. He most definitely would not have effectuated civility to our national politics, and instead donated his energies to children, animals and disease.
the scientific equation for career success

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To learn more about USciences and your potential for transfer scholarships, visit usciences.edu/TransferNow.
Happy New Years fellow students of Bergen Community College! We begin the journey to a new year with some questions: What movies will be played in theaters that I may enjoy? What television shows are coming out with new episodes? Well, a word to sum up the future events this year could be: Oh. Yes, the word “oh” for “Oh, I need a lot of time to see, hear, and experience these things!”

By: Roger S. Echegoyen

Television

Now on to the small screen. There will be a few new seasons from hit shows, some shows ending and some beginning, but all are going to be worth the DVR space at your home. The show that many people have been waiting for is finally coming out with a new season. “Arrested Development,” the show that was cancelled for some unknown and dumb reason, is returning. There are finally some new misadventures from the Bluth family that we can laugh to! Unfortunately, the show will be shown on Netflix only. There is a date that hasn’t been confirmed yet, May 4, 2013, for the release of the fourth season. So, there is still some chance for people to catch up on all the episodes of “Arrested Development” before the new season airs.

“Dexter” fans will have to wait for season eight sometime this year. There hasn’t been an announced date yet, but there is speculation of a summer show time. However, Spring is coming! “Game of Thrones” fan shall wait no more as the third season will premiere on March 31st, 2013.

Are there any Sherlock fans out there? Well, your favorite sleuth will not return this year. Sorry, I had to pull a Steven Moffat on you, but there will be new episodes of “Doctor Who” in April. These are a few of the many things to come this year. There are shows and films which I have not mentioned, so keep an eye and ear open for news on what’s to come.
There are many big films that are already getting some buzz from social media sites, and fans are already counting down the days until their releases.

Comic book fans will finally end their withdrawal from The Dark Knight Rises with the arrival of Earth's favorite Kryptonian: Superman. The film titled “Man of Steel” will be an original story. The film will ask a question that few have asked: What would happen if there were a real Superman? “Man of Steel” will be released on June 14, 2013.

Trekkie fans rejoice! The most logical sequel to the cult favorite, “Star Trek,” will come out on May 17, 2013. “Star Trek Into Darkness” will reunite the crew of The Enterprise when they return to Earth to find it in a cataclysmic event from an unknown assailant. Also, America’s favorite wolf pack will return to conclude “The Hangover” trilogy. “The Hangover Part III” will be released on May 24, 2013.

One film would be the sequel to the hit film, “The Hunger Games.” “The Hunger Games: Catching Fire” will pick up where the first film left off after the conclusion of the 74th Hunger Games, and the return of the victors Katniss Everdeen and Peeta Mellark. “The Hunger Games: Catching Fire” will be released November 22, 2013.

Another comic book favorite will be the lone x-men (or x-man): “The Wolverine.” The Wolverine will be about Logan’s (Wolverine’s) journey in Japan as he searches a meaning to his life, and sought out an enemy from his past. “The Wolverine” will be released July 26, 2013.

Iron Man will make a return to the big screen as he battles Mandarin. This film will also explore if Tony Stark is still a hero without his suit and if he can rescue the world from Mandarin. “Iron Man 3” will be released on May 3, 2013.
Don’ts for singles on Valentine’s Day

**Erica Diaz**  
*Staff Writer*

Valentine’s Day is coming up and you’re single. While it may seem like everyone else is in love and has someone to share the day with, that doesn’t mean you can’t enjoy the holiday. Here are some things you should never do if you’re single on Valentine’s Day:

1. **Don’t** self-pity. You’re not the only single person in cupid’s day. Realize that not everyone is in a relationship or in love and there’s nothing wrong with that. Don’t cry, stuff your face with chocolate or sit at home wondering why you’re single. It will only make you feel worse, and who wants to waste their time doing that?

2. **Don’t** hate. Valentine’s Day isn’t just for couples anymore. Everyone from friends to family is celebrating, so why not join in on the fun? Gather a group of your closest, single girls or guys and do something. You can go to a bar, ice skating or out to dinner. Staying home isn’t fun and there are plenty of other singles who don’t want to be stuck at home either.

If you follow these simple rules, you’re guaranteed to feel the love. After all, it is Valentine’s Day.

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**Nita Lim**  
*Layout Editor*

Girls talk about their sexual encounters. Girls know this and even guys are beginning to realize this. Of course there are always those that know how not to “kiss and tell.” But some of the things said can cause more damage than realized. When loitering, the female restroom conversations about previous sexual encounters tend to arise (no pun intended) and the topic at one point is likely to diverge into the size and shape of the male’s member, if there was a male involved.

Typically another conversation is about his sexual performance or lack thereof during a specific episode. When this occurs, females can take a turn for the worse. Some have downgraded a man’s “manliness” and began to lessen his sexual performance or who he is as an entity. This is often due to a male’s own insecurity. When in the sheets and this occurs women will often blame themselves first. “I didn’t use teeth” or “Am I not hot/cute/smart enough for him?”

Being female we literally can never imagine what it is like to be a man’s partner. Friends with benefits: If you’re still unsure if you’re ready for something more, you can always try it out. You can still get along with someone they will be easier for your lover to have to be complicated and it came along. Friendships don’t have to be complicated and it will be easier for your lover to get along with someone they think you’ve never been with.

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**Views expressed in this article are strictly personal.***
Anne Berlin
News Editor

Probably two of the worst feelings are coming back to school after summer vacation, and coming back to school after a long winter break. The pain that most college students feel when this time comes is so intense that I’m sure it can be felt around the world. Although on that dreaded first day back at school it seems impossible to get out of that winter break funk that everyone is still feeling, there are some things that can help you out!

The first step is to set yourself up with a practical schedule and try the best you can to stick to it. The schedule can be as detailed or un-detailed as you like it to be, but the important thing is to follow it. This purpose of this is to get your mind and your body used to the idea of having to get things done at a reasonable time. This will also help when it comes time to go class, because you will be used to following the schedule that you usually won’t have anything else that needs to be done during your class time but go to class.

One thing that is extremely important to remember when making this schedule, however, is to leave time for fun. Don’t pack tons of work into one day and not give yourself any time to go out with friends or to do something you truly love. Another idea is to even set aside time to learn something you are interested in but never had the time to do before. This kind of schedule will force you to look forward to throughout the day and leads you to get everything done in order to truly focus and relax on the more fun part of your day.

Coming back to school after such a long break is always one of the hardest changes, especially when it comes time to do homework and wake up early for that class you hate. If you try your best to stick with a balanced schedule, though, and spend your free time on your hobby and going out, you will quickly realize that it mentally prepares you to work hard during the spring semester. Soon you will have a perfect schedule and be able to cope with that sad feeling of returning to school!
Lionel Asbo versus exceptionalism

David Gomez
Co-Editor

Complexity shows through the many conflicting characteristics in society everyday. The world can be anything from sorrowful to joyful at any given moment. As a result of such dichotomies, irony and humor flourish, and they can be found in nearly anything—nothing is simply defined as black and white. Fortunately, more and more this is recognized and embraced—consider TV shows such as “Portlandia” or “Louie.” But take American exceptionalism for example. If you were born and/or raised in this country, you endured the strain of nationalism, the idea that America is the best country on Earth, and that it is infallible. “God Bless America” has been repeated past its initial irrelevancy. Despite attempts by nationalists to propagate otherwise, just because you accept the reality of it all doesn’t mean you are unpatriotic. Contrarily, the initiative to strip something down to its bare reality has produced overwhelmingly visceral works of literature (“Catch-22” and “Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas” being personal favorites).

It is this theme and perception of culture that seems to be the basis of Martin Amis’s “Lionel Asbo: State of England”—modern culture, its laborers, patrons and stage directors. The book follows the relationship between Desmond Pepperdine and his degenerate uncle, Lionel Asbo. The setting is the fictional, English town of Diston, a criminal-breeding and mayhem-filled dystopia. As the novel describes it, with light verse (“the poetry of Chaos”).

Each thing hostile
To every other thing: at every point.
Hot fought cold, moist dry, soft hard, and the weightless.
Resisted weight.

Desmond, despite the surrounding aura of negativity (including his uncle, who encourages him to watch pornography, ditch school, and other taboo teachings of an anti-social dad), shows a keen interest in academics. He is 15 years old when the novel begins and carries a secret that, if leaked to Lionel, would seriously jeopardize his life. The conflict between Desmond is met with, which also spawns others throughout, is his love for his uncle, but also his intimidation of him and his capabilities.

While Desmond succeeds academically and individually, Lionel—typically in and out of prison for a few months out of the year—wins the lottery and gains a substantial amount of wealth. Lionel is called “Lotto Lion” and transformed into a nation-wide celebrity by the media, he takes full advantage of it all and indulges as dangerously and amusingly as one would expect a psychotic multi-millionaire and criminal to. The image of Lionel serves as a result of and theater to the English media and public. His exploits and deviant behavior in the public’s eye demonstrates the always-interesting train wreck-type of entertainment, which always allows the audience to enjoy their own disapproval.

Amis’s interest and focus on culture is a recurring theme within his novels, and more apparently in his journalistic essays and reviews. But despite this and his command of English prose, a few critics in England met “Lionel Asbo” with negative reception. The book’s subtitle, “State of England” (which Amis now says he regrets including), could have possibly instilled some presumptions in the critiques—the false assumption that the book’s sole intention is to make a mockery of the country. In an interview by BBC’s Newsnight, the author addressed the comments calling his book an attack on the English country and people: “This is not strict realism. This is a sort of fairy tale world of arbitrary rewards and punishments—of nursery rhymes.”

A collection of Amis’s essays on American culture, “The Moronic Infernos,” published back in 1989 highlights, in the same way, peculiar aspects that are specific to the country. It seems that the critics are ignoring the significance of this type of novel. It is essentially an illustration of the world we all live and accept. The literature that is inspired is a result of, not in spite of, that world. In fact, “Lionel Asbo” stands as homage to the state of England, and any other westernized cultures for that matter.

Like “London Fields,” “Money,” and others, Amis employs a hovering, ominous feeling of imminent shifts in plot throughout. The prose is traditional: Amis beautifully and completely composed, where others, in an attempt to imitate him, would run the risk of forming pretentious dribble.

A$AP Rocky, the up-and-coming star from Bergen County

Anne Berlin
News Editor

A$AP Rocky is a fairly new name among the rap and hip hop scene. In just a short time he has shown incredible talent and success. Who knew that this previously unknown New York City and Bergen County’s own Elmont Park was just waiting for his time to shine? This is exactly what he did with his first music video, “Peso,” and even more so with his first solo album “Long.Live.A$AP.”

This album debuted on January 15 and was swarmed with amazing reviews. Upon listening to this collection of music most people can agree that this is an all around amazing album. Not only is A$AP’s talent truly relieved, but his diversity is as well. There are not only fellow rap and hip hop artists featured on the album but guest spots from other musicians like Florence Welch, and Skrillex, to name a few. His unique style can be seen throughout the entirety of the CD but it is also perfectly accompanied by the melodic voice of Welch and the amazing beats of Skrillex.

A$AP Rocky is known for his hard hitting lyrics, and his intense beats. Yet if one listens closely, he adds some much needed comic relief which brings in an entirely different audience. He is able to attract fans of House music, Alternative music, as well as those who enjoy comic stylings similar to that of Tyler, The Creator.

With his song “F**kin’ Problems” featuring Drake, 2Chainz, and Kendrick Lamar at number nine on the iTunes top ten list, and his album coming in at number one, A$AP shows no signs of slowing down. On tour now to promote his debut album, you can see him perform May 4 or May 5 at the Barclays Center in Brooklyn along with Rihanna on her Diamonds World Tour. Go check out Long.Live.A$AP as soon as possible. This is definitely not an album to be missed.
Books every college student should read

Jamie Kurtz
Photo Editor

As college students, we are always studying, working, and dealing with the stresses of life. Amid the stress, what better way is there to relax and take your mind off of things than a good book? The following list is sure to get any college student interested in reading.

One of the classic novels you might have already read, but is definitely worth re-reading is “The Catcher in the Rye” by J.D. Salinger, narrated by a rebellious teenage boy named Holden Caulfield. What used to be considered a ‘risky’ read is the epitome of what our youth is enjoying right now.

Other classics are the “The Kite Runner” by Khaled Hosseini and “The Odyssey” by Homer. Both very different novels but which let you explore new worlds. “The Kite Runner” explores violent political and social issues while “The Odyssey” is the journey of a God trying to make his return back home.

One last classic, but also a book you should read before the movie comes out, is “The Great Gatsby” by F. Scott Fitzgerald. This book looks into social and moral values but also expresses the American Dream. “The Great Gatsby” film is said to be released May 10, 2013 so this is a must read if you have not read it already.

“The Hunger Games” by Suzanne Collins is the ever popular and in demand book on all the shelves. It takes place in a dystopian world where children are forced to fight and kill each other for the amusement of the government. This book is suspenseful, action packed, twisted, and even has romance. What college student does not enjoy that? “Catching Fire” (the second installment of the series) is scheduled to be in theatres November 21, 2013.

These next three books have to deal with real problems and the struggles of being a teenager, and have stories with heart wrenching characters you cannot help but relate to. These books are Crank by Ellen Hopkins, Speak by Laurie Halse Anderson, and “The Perks of Being a Wallflower” by Stephen Chbosky, some of which have personally helped me through my life, so I highly recommend them.

Now the following book I have not read, but I have been told by many people it is a must! “City of Bones” by Cassandra Clare can be categorized as urban fantasy and is an exhilarating, gritty, and gripping novel that you cannot put down. It is also said to be in productions for a movie to be released sometime in 2013.

Last but not least, this book bound to bring back childhood memories is the world wide phenomenon of the Harry Potter series by J.K. Rowling. I know most people have already watched the movies, but since you already know you love it, read the books as well! These are only to name a few great books. If any of these are of interest to you, check them out at the Library in Bergen Community College or go to your local library.
**Funnies and Games**

**MAN, I SUCK AT PICKING UP GIRLS**

**YOU'VE REALLY GOTTA STOP WITH THE "PARTY IN MY PANTS" LINE...**

**YOU'VE GOTTA BE MORE FORCEFUL! HMM...**

**THERE'S A TRIAL IN MY PANTS AND YOU'VE BEEN SUMMONED**

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**Multiple Choice**

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**Used**

- **new** $203.65
- **used** $152.75

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As a huge movie buff and a moderate history buff I was very much looking forward to Zero Dark Thirty, and the realistic account of the hunt for Osama Bin Laden.

I was even more excited by the acclaim surrounding the film, as well as the controversy shrouding the film’s depiction of US agents torturing detainees. It was incredibly difficult to go into this movie with an open mind and no expectations, my expectations were honestly as high as they had been for any movie that came out last year apart from The Dark Knight Rises. And I’m sorry to say that Zero Dark Thirty fails to live up the expectations and hype surrounding it.

The story, interesting enough from the outside starts out well in Act 1, when the audience is thrown right into the action of a detainee and possible terrorist being interrogated. However from that point on the screenplay stumbles all over itself trying to fill the film’s 157 minutes with action and tension, sadly failing on both accounts.

While the film leaves you on edge at points with some great effects, you can almost guess what’s happening before it happens. Even the final act, the raid on Bin Laden’s compound, could have been cut in half and would still have contained more drama and uncomfortableness then the film portrayed.

If you had just walked in to the theatre for that ‘climactic’ scene you wouldn’t be able to tell if this was Seal Team Six taking the Bin Laden compound or a group of FDA agents taking a poorly defended drug house.

The effects, props, and sets were all spectacular, especially when taken into account the film was done with zero help from the government, as asking for help from the government would’ve result in having to get approval for the screenplay. Getting the film approved would have resulted in being granted access to anything, from choppers to active military bases, but also most likely would have resulted in the film’s controversial ‘interrogation scenes’ being cut.

Outstanding performances by Jessica Chastain (Maya) and Jason Clarke (Dan) are dragged down by the rest of the cast. The cast featured a lot of unknowns as well as cameos from some actors of the most well known TV shows of the past and today. These include, James Gandolfini (Tony Soprano of The Sopranos), Harold Perrineau (Michel of Lost), John Barrowman (Captain Jack Harkness of Doctor Who), and Chris Pratt (Andy Dwyer of Parks and Rec), who seem to be in a general fog.

Sadly, former Academy Award Winning Director Kathryn Bigelow (Best Director 2009 The Hurt Locker) fails to get as much out of the cast as needed, possibly because of how thin the script was. Overall Zero Dark Thirty will go down as a good movie, but falls short of the greatness expected of it.
Jeff Carbone
Staff Writer

Ray Lewis’ final game. The Harbaugh brothers facing off. The undoing of Colin Kaepernick. Former Rutgers standout Ray Rice. A halftime show with a median age under 50. Oh, and by the way, crowning the champions of the NFL. There are million storylines around Super Bowl XLVII, so it’s easy to forget that after all that fanfare, there is still a football game to be played.

Around 6:30pm on February 3rd The San Francisco 49ers(13-4) vs. The Baltimore Ravens(13-6-0) will play in the biggest game of the year. Like every other game this season, it will be 60 minutes of which team can prove more physical than the other. While both teams’ game plans look to be similar on the outside, when they take a closer look you realize the Harbaugh brothers couldn’t have more different teams.

Head Coach John Harbaugh’s 49ers rely on a strong traditional running game and an overpowering defense. The 49ers defense, which played well during the season, has been exposed a little in the playoffs. This doesn’t mean Harbaugh hasn’t found the same ferociousness that allowed them to hold the league to a second best 175.5 points per game. Another key to success for the 49ers will be running back Frank Gore, who rushed for 1,214 yards this season, good for 5th in the NFC. On top of their defense and Frank Gore they have a Quarterback in Kaepernick that has the ability to run. An ability everyone saw in the divisional round where he set an NFL record for rushing yards by a quarterback (183 yards on 13 rushes). If Kaepernick can’t find an open receiver he has the skillset to run it 50 yards just as easily as throwing it away. Many would say this gives you the younger Harbaugh the advantage over his brother John, head coach of the Ravens.

However, since the playoffs started the Ravens’ defense has raised its level of play from pro to elite, and have a four good quarterback of their own in Joe Flacco. A more traditional quarterback, Flacco has proven over his short career that he can make all the throws and have the ability to keep his cool under pressure. The biggest difference though, is Flacco’s inability to move outside of the pocket and extend plays the way Kaepernick can. With their above average quarterback the Ravens have one of the best running backs in the NFL, Ray Rice. Though he had a down year in 2012, Rice is only a year removed from leading the league in Yards from Scrimmage in 2011. When hope builds up, especially among sports journalists, who do everything in their power to make every little thing about the Super Bowl big. This year the hot ticket is future Hall of Famer Ray Lewis retiring after the season. However, this season’s biggest story should be and is two excellent teams facing each other. Kaepernick’s running game will be answered in Brooklyn and the 49ers are getting their full healthy line up back, it will be interesting to watch where both teams fall in (or out) of the playoff standings. Look for a healthier and revitalized Knickerbocker squad to make a run at the best seed in the eastern conference. And watch the New York fans closely, as they all bickered out in time to compete with the Nets in what could become the most new age playoff picture ever. Even though they don’t have the depth the Knicks’ roster has shown. They do have one thing, and if all goes as planned, it can take them to the promised land. That is a superstar point guard, Deron Williams. Yet, while Nets fans cringe to see the underskilled captain/point guard play, there is still plenty of hope and promise that the tide will be turned and that he will return to superstar form and lead the Nets in the right direction.

To go with their above average quarterback the Ravens have one of the best running backs in the NFL, Ray Rice. Though he had a down year in 2012, Rice is only a year removed from leading the league in Yards from Scrimmage in 2011. When hope builds up, especially among sports journalists, who do everything in their power to make every little thing about the Super Bowl big. This year the hot ticket is future Hall of Famer Ray Lewis retiring after the season. However, this season’s biggest story should be and is two excellent teams facing each other. Kaepernick’s running game will be answered in Brooklyn and the 49ers are getting their full healthy line up back, it will be interesting to watch where both teams fall in (or out) of the playoff standings. Look for a healthier and revitalized Knickerbocker squad to make a run at the best seed in the eastern conference. And watch the New York fans closely, as they all bickered out in time to compete with the Nets in what could become the most new age playoff picture ever. Even though they don’t have the depth the Knicks’ roster has shown. They do have one thing, and if all goes as planned, it can take them to the promised land. That is a superstar point guard, Deron Williams. Yet, while Nets fans cringe to see the underskilled captain/point guard play, there is still plenty of hope and promise that the tide will be turned and that he will return to superstar form and lead the Nets in the right direction. While tough questions must be answered in Brooklyn and the Knicks are getting their full healthy line up back, it will be interesting to watch where both teams fall in (or out) of the playoff standings. Look for a healthier and revitalized Knickerbocker squad to make a run at the best seed in the eastern conference. And watch the New York fans closely, as they all bickered out in time to compete with the Nets in what could become the most new age playoff picture ever. Even though they don’t have the depth the Knicks’ roster has shown. They do have one thing, and if all goes as planned, it can take them to the promised land. That is a superstar point guard, Deron Williams. Yet, while Nets fans cringe to see the underskilled captain/point guard play, there is still plenty of hope and promise that the tide will be turned and that he will return to superstar form and lead the Nets in the right direction. While tough questions must