“Game of Thrones” Professor Takes Legal Action Against the College

EMANUELE CALIANNO  STAFF WRITER

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Francis Schmidt is hardly in need of introductions nowadays. The story of the BCC professor, suspended without pay after pictures of his daughter online wearing a Game of Thrones t-shirt, has made international news in a matter of days. But the conflict has not shown signs of improving.

The combined efforts of the Faculty Association, the college’s accrediting organization, the Board of Trustees, and the Faculty Senate, as well as the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, the college’s accrediting organization, have pushed to raise the current graduation rate by 25 percent. However, many faculty members said they do not feel an improvement. But this level of dissent was minimal as to what motivated his resignation: “I can no longer accomplish what I am trying to do here, as I feel increasingly stifled by the Administration,” he said.

“In recent weeks, the professor has been contacted by a non-profit organization focused on helping academic communities exercise their First Amendment rights,” they have said. “We feel the measures taken by the college constitute any kind of threat. Schmidt constituted any kind of threat. We feel the measures taken by the college are a direct violation of First Amendment rights.”

In preparation of the legal process, Schmidt wishes to send a message to members of the college, who he feels have been treated similarly in recent months. “Students shouldn’t be afraid to exercise their First Amendment rights and speak out against injustices they’ve suffered from the Administration. My colleagues and I have a responsibility to do so,” he said.

An opinion poll on nj.com’s website counting more than 4,000 votes showed that less than 1.5 percent found the picture posted online by Professor Schmidt’s daughter threatening. The college found the picture threatening.

“The school used the fear of a mass shooting as a way to cover their own stupidity, and it’s an insult to the victims of these tragedies,” Schmidt said.

Following the eight-day suspension, the school allowed Schmidt back on campus under the conditions of keeping the matter private, avoid wearing clothing with “questionable statements,” and not make disparaging comments about the college or its members. But Schmidt feels that the school’s actions and terms he had to agree to “maximize potential for student success,” which have been put into effect during the course of Dr. Walter’s presidency, “why don’t you resign and [expel]get deleted go back to Texas?”

Dr. George Cronk, Senate Secretary, told the president “I’ve tried to try to get back to Dr. Walter, but I just can’t anymore.”

Dr. Walter apologized to the Senate following the reaction, admitting discontent among faculty while visibly shaken.

Prior to recent events, the general tendency of the faculty had been to abstain from commenting on the situation, either in fear of possible consequences or negatively influencing the work environment.
At the April Board of Trustees meeting, there was a vote to change the Student Code of Conduct so that all students need to be aware of. These changes arrived on the back of President Barack Obama's signing of the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act (VAWA), which imposes new obligations on colleges and universities under its Campus Sexual Violence Elimination Act, or SaVE Act provision.

The new Student Code of Conduct includes changes in existing legal requirements and government agency enforcement statements. It has added this new language to the BCC Student Code of Conduct according to Board of Trustees Action EG 2, which was approved on April 1, 2014. The resolution was submitted by BCC President Dr. B. Kaye Walter and Dr. Naydeen Gonzalez-De Jesus, Vice President of Student Affairs, both of whom submitted the authorization of the acceptance of the revised Student Code of Conduct, and were unavailable for comment on what their thoughts were on the subject of a safer campus and how the changes might impact incoming students.

The Clery Center for Security On Campus, which regulates colleges and universities that participate in federal financial aid programs to keep and disclose information about crime on their respective campuses, compliances are monitored by the United States Department of Education. According to Clerycenter.org, “The Campus Sexual Violence Elimination (SaVE) Act represents a turning point in our nation’s handling of sexual misconduct on college campuses and universities… The Campus SaVE Act seeks to address the violence women face on campus.”

With the new wording that has been introduced into the new Student Code of Conduct, it has become a much easier to read document with clear and concise offenses and how they can be handled. According to the Clery Center, one of the biggest problems that affects women on college campuses is stalking. The Clery Center also reports, “the highest risk of nonfatal intimate partner violence, and 20 to 25 percent of female students experiencing rape or attempted rape.”

According to the SaVE ACT, accountability has clarified minimum standards for institutional disciplinary procedures covering domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking to ensure that “proceedings shall provide a prompt, fair, and impartial investigation and resolution and are conducted by officials receiving annual training on domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking. [That] both parties may have others present during an institutional disciplinary proceeding and any related meeting, including an advisor of their choice. [That] both parties will receive written outcomes of all disciplinary proceedings at the same time.”

With the changing of the Student Code of Conduct, students aware of these changes can make the campus a much safer place for all. The revised version can be found in the coming fall semester’s Student Handbook that will be available for all students at the Office of Student Life in Room SC-110 take a left into the Center the Pitkin Education Center next to the help desk), or online at Bergen.edu. Use the search bar and search “Student Code Of Conduct,” and it will present a link to the PDF.

So You Want To Graduate?

MATT ZDANEK STAFF WRITER

So you’re a Bergen Community College student preparing to graduate? You have successfully navigated through the gauntlet of your first two years of college and now you must take the next steps towards your future. This can be an exciting and overwhelming time for prospective graduates, but with a little knowledge and preparation, the transition from student to graduate or continuing on to your next goal can be made a lot smoother.

The first in a series of steps a student must take is applying for their degree. This can be done in two ways: either online in your web-advisor, or with a written form. You must make sure you have completed the required course work for your degree or will be expected to finish by the end of the semester. Checking your program evaluation regularly can ensure you will be ready for graduation. On it you will see a little note that reads “pending graduation” if you are in your final semester.

Once a student has filed the necessary paperwork or submitted an online application for a diploma, it is now time for the student to focus on future goals. If you have plans to transfer to a four year university make sure you apply early to give yourself ample time to get the required transcripts in order and sent out. Official transcripts take time to process and you will need official transcripts from all colleges you have attended.

Some might also find themselves needing to send out high school transcripts to coordinate with the two year language requirement. Do not wait until the last minute for this or you may find yourself missing application deadlines and potentially losing out on an opportunity to be accepted into your desired program. Contact the college you are transferring to for application deadlines.

After students have applied for graduation and do plan on attending the graduation event, they must RSVP via email to commencement@bergen.edu. The deadline for the 2014 graduation was March 31st; however if you still wish to walk during graduation you can still RSVP and let the college know. You must also let the college know who you plan to bring to the event which will be held on May 22, in the IZOD center, 120 East Rutherford, New Jersey. The graduation ceremony will begin at 7 p.m. Directions to the IZOD center or any information regarding public transportation can be found at the office of student life room A-115. Gregory Fenkart is BCC’s Coordinator of Student Development and will help with any questions or concerns regarding the ceremony.

Students planning to attend the ceremony must attend the Graduation Salute on May 7, from 9 a.m.- 3 p.m. and May 8th from 12-7 p.m. in the BCC gymnasium. Students will pick up items including a cap and gown and be given information about the ceremony. Students are encouraged to bring as many guests as they please. Parking for the official ceremony will be free and any information in relation to the ceremony will be released at the Graduation Salute. Congratulations to the graduating students of 2014. May you have the best of luck in all your future endeavors. Stay humble, and be positive!
Puff or Pass, Marijuana Legalization

NOMI EIJKENAAR
STAFF WRITER

A big controversy that has everyone involved is whether the use of marijuana should be legalized or not. On April 21, two very interesting men came to discuss the issue here at Bergen Community College at the Anna Maria Ciccone Theater. Bob Stutman represented the side of those who do not believe in the legalization of Marijuana, while Steve Hager shared his opinion and explained why marijuana should be legalized.

Stutman made a 25-year career as one of America’s highest profile drug busts. He was a Department of Drug Enforcement Administration agent, so well known that at some point in his career, he was targeted for assassination. Even since retiring from his DEA position, Stutman has been working to provide substance abuse prevention programs.

Hager is the former Editor-in-Chief and the Creative Director of High Times Magazine. He is also a leading figure in the hemp legalization movement by creating the first national hemp tour. Hagor is one of the most well known and active people working towards the legalization of marijuana. He has campaigned on the social, political, and judicial reasons he feels marijuana should be legalized.

In the debate, Hager began with sharing his five reasons why marijuana should be legalized. His first reason was that Hawaii is one of the worst health care systems of all the industrialized nations on earth. How come we spend so much and get so little? Hager stated that children are given dangerous pharmaceutical medications from the time of birth and by the time you’re 60, they want people on 20 pills a day. He believes they don’t do it because it’s good for us, but because they make money off of it. In his opinion, if marijuana would be legalized, our generation and all generations to come would have an unlimited and free supply of medication.

Hager’s second reason was that hemp is healthy for the environment. There are 30,000 things that can be used from this plant such as rope, clothes, paper; even the first American flag was made of hemp. Hager said, “There is almost nothing you cannot make out of this plant.” His third reason was that too many people are put into jail because of their use of marijuana. It is a waste of money and space to create so many new jails. Hager’s fourth reason was that too much money is being spent on illegal drugs. If marijuana was legal, that money would go to other peoples hands, used to own things and advance society. His fifth and last point was that consuming Marijuana is a part of some individuals culture, cultures that want peace and brotherhood.

On the other hand, Stutman explained his position regarding the matter. He explained that just like no other medication is legal to grow on your own, marijuana should not be either. Medication should be prescribed, given in the correct dosage to the right people, and not assumed by the user. “If you went to a doctor and she gave you pills, if you asked how many you are supposed to take and she said to take as many as you need, what would your response be? That is the same concept with personal use of marijuana as a drug. No one can tell you how strong it is by looking at it” said Stutman. Even though hemp might be a great way to create products, it does not mean people will buy it. Stutman asked “Why do 97 percent of college students in Europe not wear hemp clothes, or use hemp paper, or hemp ink? It must not be as great as Steve said it was before.” In response to what Hager said about marijuana being a part of a religion, Stutman said, “Just because you do something in the name of religion, does not mean it is right.”

Why Summer Classes Matter To You

NOMI EIJKENAAR
STAFF WRITER

Summer classes matter to you. Bergen Community College is called a two year college, but is it really? The truth is, this may not always be the case. In order for a student to be eligible to graduate, they must complete at least 64 college-level credits. When thinking of a two year college, most will assume that it will consist of four semesters: two in the fall and two in the spring. Even as a full time student, however, 12 credits per semester won’t make you eligible to graduate in four years. Hager’s fourth reason was that too much money is being spent on illegal drugs. If marijuana was legal, that money would go to other peoples hands, used to own things and advance society. His fifth and last point was that consuming Marijuana is a part of some individuals culture, cultures that want peace and brotherhood.

According to Stutman, students think that because summer classes are shorter, they might not count as actual classes. Some might think they are difficult to transfer out, and some might think they are not equivalent to the full on spring semester classes because one cannot pay for them through Sallie Mae, the financial aid assistance service offered to students during the fall and the spring semester.

It is difficult to accept the fact that while all our other friends attending four years schools will be on their summer vacation, we might still be here at Bergen taking classes, but in all honesty, it is truly worth it. Summer I and Summer II sessions are 5 weeks long, and students can take up to three courses in each 5 week period. This make it possible for students to potentially complete 18 credits in the summer, and guarantee a degree in two-years, if not less!

Not only is it smart to finish up at Bergen as quickly as possible to be able to transfer to a four year school, it is also much cheaper to collect credits at Bergen. All schools in New Jersey are required to accept any Bergen Community College graduate as a junior and allow the transferring of all credits they have collected.

Make the right decision: push a little harder, take summer classes, and finish your two year college degree within the two years you believed it would take when stepping in here at the very beginning.
The Green Team, Fighting For Our Future

MATT ZDANEK
STAFF WRITER

You may have caught a glimpse of them emptying trash cans and recycling bins around campus. They wear their distinct tie-dye shirts and are joined by a common purpose. To help move the college in the direction of a sustainable and thriving environment. The members that make up the Green Team, a skeleton crew of concerned students that have spearheaded a movement on campus to establish an eco-friendly culture and atmosphere. Their hope and ambition is to educate students and provide everyone on campus with the ability to recycle and take part in preserving our way of life.

In modern times it is an unfortunate reality that concerns for a healthy environment take the backseat to other dilemmas. However, Ecologist and Environmental scientists have been foreseeing the direct impacts people have had on the planet already. Much of the damage at this juncture is irreversible, a sad truth that nobody wants to admit. However, it is not too late to act and it all starts with being educated. The Green Team students are mostly volunteers. The movement itself was being funded by grants, BCC funds and Federal Work Study, which has effectively been discontinued. Leaving Rachel Wieland the Green Team manager in a conundrum.

Without the Federal Work Study there is no Green Team. Most of the members are already taking their time to sift through garbage cans and sort out recyclables from trash. They do this without any paycheck. In fact when the Green Team approached the administration about putting recycling bins around campus they were stonewalled. The group didn’t take no for an answer; instead they collaborated with the Art Department and developed their own hand-made recycling receptacles. Students started to use these recycling bins around campus and before long administration took note of this and began to establish official recycling units throughout the college.

Figuratively as well as logistically it was a success. It showed that when given a choice people will often will make the right decision like putting an empty water bottle in a recycling container instead of throwing it in the trash. Unfortunately the college still doesn’t support a full recycling process, many of the recycling bins are later emptied and combined into the trash, defeating the goal that was employed from the beginning. That’s where the Green Team comes in and separates the trash from the recycling themselves in order to ensure the recyclables are actually recycled.

Among other activities, the team has set up bee hives from which they obtain their own honey. They also create compost from waste to be used in the aid of plant life around campus. All of this is done on little to no funding and now with the Federal Work Study funding coming to a startling halt, the group faces a dire challenge.

If there is one message that Professor Wieland passes on, it is that you, the students can help. Statistically speaking it takes 2.5 percent of a population to invoke true change. “2.5 percent of the population can flip the entire paradigm for 100 percent of the people. It all starts with that 2.5 percent the believers, the visionaries, the game changers. I have seen that percentage of students, faculty and staff here at BCC that really care that we create long-term sustainability, through vision, action and financial stability. I know here at BCC we’re going to flip this paradigm,” Wetland said.

One option being proposed is to have a “Green Fee” added to the tuition of all BCC students. Raising the fee by $1 would not only revive the Green Team and its ambitions but help it thrive. Wetland said “I want to see us thriving, let’s put our ethics to good use, I’m ready.” College is an investment. We take out loans to pay our tuition with the premise that after we graduate we will earn back a larger percentage of what we paid in. BCC students must ask themselves is it worth the investment and tuition prices being raised a dollar to benefit the green movement on campus? The fate of our planet, our world, our home is in our hands.

Student Leaders at Bergen Community College

CLIFTON TAULBERT
BEST-SELLING AUTHOR & GUEST SPEAKER AT BCC

In my work as an international consultant, most often I am working with business leaders within the commerce and non-profit sectors. However, a few weeks ago I had a rather nice deviation from my norm. Instead of senior leaders of industry and academia, I had the pleasure of spending a full day with those identified as student leaders. I was struck by their sense of commitment to their respective posts. As our work progressed throughout the day, they were present; not just occupying a seat, but really there. Of course, this is required if they are to be the face of the college and its representatives to the administration of Bergen Community College and the other New Jersey community colleges that were present.

First and foremost I wanted each leader to understand that their roles carried more weight than maybe originally felt. I wanted them to understand that their positions also made them partners in creating an environment for success. As leaders, I challenged them to embrace the accountability and commitment that were essential to carry out the functions of their respective positions. They were in some respect, the feet on the ground, mingling with and interacting with their fellow students; thus exposing their leadership ideology on a daily basis.

It was interesting as we talked about various ideologies of world leaders and what was good, as well as what was missing. I wanted them to understand that their fellow students would be expecting the best of them, and rightly so.

To that point, we talked about their commitment to building community through the Eight Habits of the Heart as tools (Nurturing attitude, responsibility, dependability, friendship, brotherhood-sisterhood, high expectations, courage, and hope) to buttress their specific leadership assignments. As they progressed through the eight habits, I feel that they caught the vision of their responsibility as partners.

Our discussions were lively and insightful. Students are often the masters of their own creative works of art appeared as they provided a clear picture of how an environment would look, if certain positive habits were present or absent.

We ended our day giving each leader an opportunity to reflect upon the day and to decide in writing what they would STOP, START, or ACCELERATE to continue along a progressive and inclusive path of leadership. These responses will be provided for the next class of student leaders. It was indeed a joy to be part of their enthusiasm. If this enthusiasm continues, their fellow students will be the long-term beneficiaries.
They were normal people. They had children, families, friends, jobs, homes, hobbies, money, and lives. They were just like us, until one group, the Nazis, destroyed 6 million of them. Imagine wiping out all students here at Bergen Community College and multiply that number by 350, that was the ungraspable amount of Jews murdered by the Nazis.

Miryam Suserman, A True Survivor

Miryam Suserman is 80-year-old woman born inParis, France, and one of the few survivors of the Holocaust. She was almost 8-years-old when the war hit home.

Her mother and father emigrated from Poland to Paris and brought five children into the world, three boys and two girls. Suserman’s father was a tailor who tailored military clothing which he had to deliver as well. One day, in 1941 he walked outside in the street to deliver some of the clothes he made. During this time, Jewish people had to walk around with a yellow Star of David on the front of their shirt so that others could identify them as Jews. All Jewish people standing with him at the bus stop were being watched by the French police. That was when he was arrested. Someone was yelling ‘Open the door!’ We opened the door and the French police were there. That was when they took us away.”

As described by Miryam, “The screams in the street were unbelievable, babies were crying, children were yelling, mothers were screaming. I remember a cacophony of noise and despair, it was unbelievable. We were being shoved into trucks that were lined up on the street. They drove us to a center close to where the Eiffel Tower is today. We were given [a little] cabbage and [a little] potato a day. We had one piece of bread that was supposed to last us a full day. Water was close to impossible to get while toilets were only my little brother, my sister, and I. My middle brother and older brother were not in the house at the time, they were out selling gloves. All of a sudden there was a knocking on the door. Someone was yelling ‘Open the door!’ We opened the door and the French police were there. That was when they took us away.”

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As a college student, the last thing on one’s mind is focusing on their health. The truth is, most students focus on school, tests, and the possibility of a social life. Our health seems to always take second to our already busy schedules. If only our school provided classes which would educate students about our health and prevention.

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Miryam Suserman, A True Survivor

Thetorch

Miryam Suserman speaks about her experiences as a child in the Holocaust.

As time moved on, both her sister and her mother were taken away as well. All that were left were her and her little brother. At night her little brother Henry had an attack of appendicitis; he was taken away, and she never saw him again. She was alone, frightened, hungry in ways one could not even understand. As a little girl, Miryam listened. She hugged the lady and they cried together, and that was the very last time she saw her.

The next morning, she and four or five other people left the camp. They walked in the heat and hid by the road. They stole fruit from the trees and ate roots from the ground. As Miryam said, “By now, all of us had shared heads and infectious bites all over our bodies. We had pus-filled pimples and were bleeding all over.” They finally reached the outskirts of Paris and someone was nice enough to pay for them to go on the Metro.

When Miryam reached her station, she crossed the street and rang the doorbell to her house. Her brother Robert opened the door. He looked at her and she said “It’s me.” He picked her up, threw her in the air and they cried. From there on, for six months, her brothers were taking care of her with the help of doctors from the World Health Organization.

In the middle of the night in 1943, the doorbell rang again. The French police were there again and that time they were there for Robert. Robert was out selling gloves, which is why they took David. They wanted to take Miryam as well but David was able to convince the police man to let him hide her at the house of their father’s good friends.

David was taken away, Robert was gone, her sister was gone, his brother was gone, her mother was gone, and her father was missing. One day, the sister of the man who was caring for Miryam saw her father on the street and told him Miryam was safe with them. Miryam and her father met up, they were the only two to survive the war from their family.

Miryam grew older in Paris and on April 10, 1954, she was married. On January 2, 1956, when she was 22-years-old, her and her husband moved to the United States, where they brought into the world a girl and a boy. She is now a grandmother to four children; two girls and two boys. She survived it. She made it. But she is a living proof that the Holocaust really did happen. It was a horrifying destruction of 6 million people that will never be forgotten and never be erased.
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My Last Letter: A Pleading Cry for Peace

Ricardo Montero-Hernandez
Editor-in-Chief

Money and power have corrupted everything. For as long as humans have had some sort of currency or have tasted a universal phrase that has consumed all of us has always been historically present, waiting for the moment where its insatiable thirst can be quenched once more.

It is unbelievable to me how money and power, like an infectious disease, is able to get by any crease, to fill any crack in this fake network of socioeconomic ranks and mass judgments that we call society. It has drowned great men, it has obscured great men, it has drowned great men, it has obscured great men, it has obscured great men.

Administrations have not had effective negotiations with faculty and staff since June 2013, but instead, felt that it was necessary to pay almost half a million on legal consultants, John Scheips Esq. and Marvin Goldberg, Esq., responsible for making the negotiations effective. That $400,000 could have been used to actually solve the contract negotiations, instead of going to the optical illusion of being more powerful.

In all honesty, if I was paid $44,187.00 for a few days work, just by sitting at a table and arguing, I would keep making that argument as long and complicated as possible.

Tuition is being raised again, faculty and staff continue to work without contracts and the atmosphere in the college could not be more tense. There are obviously excuses as to why, instead of coming to a logical deal with the unions, the administration feels the need to keep on pumping cash into the labor consultant firms that are doing little, to no work to better the financial state or the morale state of the college. All these excuses narrowed down to “We believe we needed someone with his expertise and assist us with labor negotiations,” as quoted by Chairman E. Carter Corronston at the October 2013, Board of Trustees meeting.

This article was not written to criticize the Administration, neither was it written to criticize the decisions that they are making. It is more of an informational outcry of bewilderment, and more than that, it is an expression of disillusionment and disappointment towards the people that are providing me my education.

I am in this college precisely to avoid situations like the one we currently find ourselves in. I came to learn how to effectively communicate and solve problems, to ready myself for the “real world” so I can one day I can provide for my family and be successful. Unfortunately, the adults of this college, people with masters, doctorates and years of education, cannot come together to compromise to something so obvious and simple.

It is pathetic to me that, just because of the human condition, it is forgivable when someone in power forgets what their office is for, and proceeds to carry on with his or her own agenda. May I remind you, the Administration, The Board of Trustees, the faculty and the staff and anyone else who it may apply to, that you are here to educate us, that is the sole purpose of your existence here, so I and my fellow students can get a proper education and graduate.

You all have seem to have forgotten that colleges work as a balanced ecosystem, that revolves around the presence of students, not for your own.

Please understand that without the students, you would be unemployed. However, do not forget that your jobs also involve each other, so instead of locking arms in blindfolded disagreement, it is in your best interest to try peace instead of worrying about factors like money and power, which have done nothing more than corrupt and demoralize this college.

Everyone in this delicate ecosystem affects another one, it is a trickle down effect of positivity or negativity that is felt by all, and it is currently being felt by all, with the tension upstairs, to the sulky, tired faces of the professors to the optical and auditory feedback that the students are receiving. In no case is this good, for anyone to continue this reckless spending and unfruitful labor negotiations.

I ask anyone who is reading this to please cease this Cold War of opposing collegiate powers, to leave pride and dignity and the overwhelming human condition aside and come together for the benefit of all. There is no need for this hostility, there is no need for this negativity and there is certainly no need for this spending if the people involved in this would use common sense. Everyone is being affected by this, and everything is only becoming worse by the minute.

Lastly, I’d like to communicate to the students that caring about BCC does matter. Most of you do not give a shit about what happens or what is being done with your money or how your education is being affected. Leave the thought that community college does matter, it is not beneficial to you or to those around you, and try and care for the present, and value yourself for who you are, not who everyone believes you to be.

This is my last article as Editor-in-Chief of The Torch. I, Ricardo Montero-Hernandez, have hoped that through this interesting year of creation and destruction, my editorial board and I have provided you with the best journalism on this side of the Mississippi, and I hope that we have had some sort of impact in your collegiate career, for you have impacted mine. Love, respect and be patient with one another, enjoy who you are and appreciate what you have, and never let anyone tell you who you ought to be.

Thank you for reading, this is Ricardo Montero-Hernandez signing off. Stay bashed Bergen.
During Bergen County Executive Kathleen Donovan’s State of the County Address, she said, “[President Walter] has been cutting waste and directing dollars to where they help us achieve the primary goal of the college – educating students.”

At this point in time, this statement couldn’t be any less true. While not entirely on Bergen Community College’s very own President B. Kaye Walter’s back, the money hasn’t been directed to educating students. Instead it’s being directed straight to the accounts of two individuals, John Schepisi Esq. and Marvin Goldstein Esq.

While Mr. Schepisi is the acting legal consul of BCC, Mr. Goldstein was brought onboard to help with the labor negotiations with the separate unions at BCC as of this printing.

Over $400,000 found its way to Mr. Schepisi’s company in 2013 alone. If there is any question of the amount of money, you can review the LEGAL BILLS section that is on the Board of Trustee’s section at bergen.edu. Mr. Goldstein’s company has billed BCC over $145,000 over the course of 2013 as well.

During this time, the faculty and other support staff here on campus have been working without a contract since June of 2013. While at first the negotiations were only being handled by Mr. Goldstein, Mr. Schepisi’s company has gotten involved with the negotiations. According to a source in the Faculty Association, as of March 1, 2014, Mr. Goldstein’s firm has profited over $156,000 and Mr. Schepisi’s firm since coming in to help with negotiations against the very people that are here to help us in our collegiate studies has been paid $190,000.

I don’t like being referred to as a “customer” and my tuition (I’m studying on the GI Bill and quite frankly have paid for my tuition in blood) referred to “revenue.” I hate the fact that my money is finding its way into the pockets of the some of the members of the “Good Old Boys,” Mr. Schepisi and Mr.Goldstein.

Ladies and gentleman, we have found ourselves a leak. I’m afraid that if it isn’t fixed quick enough, we’re going to find ourselves sinking deeper into obscurity and the trappings of a joke of a Bi-Partisan Board of Trustees as they continue to let their strings be pulled by the very same person we have payed almost a half a million dollars to.

We as students should be aware of how wasteful BCC has become with the money we play to study here. We as students should stand up for those men and women who work tirelessly to give us the best possible education they can provide us. It only takes a spark to ignite a fire. This, my fellow students, should be that spark. Stand up and make your opinions heard. Don’t let this administration stifle our words, don’t let this administration think it can do what it wants. Remember this above all else, we as students are the majority. It is, we the students, who have the loudest voice. It’s only right that our collective voice is heard and not stand for these actions against us and our educations...Frag out.
10 Reasons to Transfer to Centenary

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Navigating Through Scholarship Applications

EMANUELE CALIANNO
STAFF WRITER

"The school gives out up to 200 scholarships each semester, but we never get more than 500 or 600 applications out of 17,000 students." Administrative Assistant for the BCC Foundation Nicole Rivera is not hesitant to voice her disappointment at the amount of applicants for scholarships, and along with the rest of the department, she has been working to bring the numbers up.

The Foundation occupies itself with raising funds to support scholarships, faculty and student development, and construction among other services. It relies on the support of groups and individuals from the public and private sector, whose donations make it possible for many of the services offered to be available. For students, this means that the flux of donations influences the amount of scholarships available each semester, along with the amount awarded. But as Ms. Rivera points out, most of these end up not being applied for anyway.

According to her, the reasons why students do not fill out forms vary. Some feel they don't have a chance because they already receive financial aid, while some are reluctant for the exact opposite reason; they believe scholarships are only for those in financial need. A lot of students are also discouraged by previous rejection, which Ms. Rivera admits is not uncommon. Even students with a GPA of 4.0 may not qualify at a specific time if they do not meet the financial requirements, or have not shown involvement in campus activities. At times, even the most involved of students with a low income may simply be beaten out by other applicants. "People apply once, and if they see they didn't qualify for any scholarship, they don't bother again. But it's a definite possibility they may the right candidate for it the following semester."

Scholarships are awarded either solely based on merit, financial need, or a combination of the two, according to the terms of the grant stipulated. Most are applied for by filling out a standard application, which after examination by a committee of faculty and administrators, gets sorted into groups according to what scholarships one may qualify for.

The range of awards shifts from semester to semester, but it is always so varied, that there is always a chance to be selected. "We have scholarships for very specific people. We have one laying around for a Puerto Rican woman studying to become a doctor, but no one like that ever applies," she says.

The NAACP is also looking for new members who want to make a change in the world, and one way we are doing that is by informing people about important issues like VRA Section 4. Please, if you feel that voting is a right that all people should have, do your part by calling your local congressmen and ask them to co-sponsor the VRA bill. Get informed more and letters of recommendation requested. Further information and application forms may be found online and at the Foundation’s office in room L-340.

Ivan Wei
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

The Voting Rights Amendment Act Section 4 was replaced with Section 5 last year and the National Association for Advancement of Colored People is trying to get Section 4 back. Section 4 of the Voting Rights Amendment Act was part of the law that stops voter suppression. By replacing section 4 with section 5, voter suppression can be done more easily and without consequences.

Voter suppression can be done by making people get Voter ID cards which can be no larger than $15 in some states, change polling locations without warning, have early voting days that might not be announced to all people, not getting early ballots out to voters, 'blacklisting' people and more. All of these ideas are ways to suppress people from voting. The people that certain lawmakers are working to suppress are the people who are voting, which in turn only hurts one side of the voting spectrum. They are hoping that they can keep Section 5 around for a while.

But the NAACP is working hard to inform people about the VRA and trying to get Section 4 reenacted. The right to vote was earned by the people of this country through unfortunate wars. We should honour those that fought and died for us to have the chance to make our voices heard at the polls. That is going to be very difficult if some of the legislators in congress are making it harder for a select group of people to vote. They tell us that the people, the government have not shown involvement in campus activities. At times, even the most involved of students with a low income may simply be beaten out by other applicants. "People apply once, and if they see they didn't qualify for any scholarship, they don't bother again. But it's a definite possibility they may the right candidate for it the following semester."

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They come from all over the world to study at Bergen. Our school’s International Student Center counts more than 650 students currently enrolled under F-1 study permits, and a total of over 1,000 international students. The center reports most students begin their academic journey with ESL courses, and then continue to pursue their major. Their places of origin couldn’t be more diverse: with the exception of Antarctica and Oceania, there are hundreds of students coming from each continent.

The main reason for coming here is obviously education. “Everybody who wants to succeed comes to America,” says Computer Science major Arion Ndrigjoni from Albania. But finding success has a different meaning for each of them. For Clarence Ramothibe, it meant giving up a comfortable life, and taking a leap of faith. Working as a bank manager in Namibia, he made the decision to move to New Jersey to have new experiences, and has now chosen a career in paralegal studies. “I was well off in my country, and it’s not to say that once I’m done studying here I will be doing better than I was back home,” he says, “but it’s a decision I took, and it was the best I could make for myself- it’s made me grow a lot.”

Jason Mavivululu, who came from Switzerland in 2011 and studies engineering, says he came here “because you have to make experiences, you know? And I love it here. I used to watch NBA games all the time back home, so it was easy learning the culture, and now I play for the basketball team here.”

Still, some had some trouble adjusting to life in the States. “I remember going to a supermarket for the first time,” says Seul Lee, a Business major from South Korea, “and looking at how big everything was. And I thought, wow, this is America!” Almost none of them had heard of a community college prior to coming here, and many make note of the opportunity Bergen is giving them. “I never thought I would be able to continue my education in South Korea. Over there, you only have one shot; if you don’t get into a university right away, you don’t get another chance easily,” says Hyun Shin, an East Asian Studies major. For some however, coming to our school didn’t mean having a second chance, but rather the opportunity to see a different side of education.

Sanah Peerbhai lived in her native Lesotho and in India prior to coming here. Since moving to the States in 2010 to study Architecture, she has studied at Parsons in NYC and also taken summer courses at Harvard before enrolling at BCC last winter to study Accounting. Despite attending such prestigious schools, she says she enjoys the environment here. “I like the experience I’ve had here better. At big schools, you don’t have that connection with people. Here you can walk into an office or classroom and build relationships. The classes here are also much smaller, so it helps establish a connection with the subject and the professor.”

Whatever the reason may be that pushes so many foreign students to enroll at BCC, none of them take this lightly; they all say to be here is to pursue the opportunity of a lifetime. “In America, everything depends on you, nothing can stop you if you’re stubborn enough,” says Bulgarian Business major Aleksandra Gavazova. And their stubbornness has made for one of the most unique communities in an institution already recognized and praised for its ethnic and cultural diversity.
Global Communities at BCC

Arion Ndrigjoni
Albania
A Computer Science major.

Jason Mavivululu
Switzerland
Engineering major.

Sanah Peerbhai
Lesotho
Accounting major.

Erlan Nyssanov
Kazakhstan
President of International Student Association

Clarence Ramobithe
Namibia
Paralegal Studies
En una nación con más de 40 millones de Latinos, aprender español no es solo un requerimiento de la secundaria, sino una necesidad para entender la propia cultura Americana. En esta ciudad se está combatiendo. En este país, la mejor manera de aprender español es a través de una inmersión cultural, hecha de frases y palabras que hacen más de un meseros y meseras que hacen lo mismo, cuando un cocinero, que muchas veces gana casi la mitad de un burro. Y así como otras frases que no están apropiadas para estas páginas.

Yo aprendí español trabajando en un restaurante en donde todos los cocineros son Mexicanos. Siendo italiano de nacimiento, pude aprender el idioma gracias a ellos en cuestión de meses—sin contar los errores gramaticales. Al fin de cuentas, no son profesores o eruditos. Pero aunque no me hayan enseñado el castellano de la Real Academia de la Lengua Española, trabajar con estas personas me ha ayudado a crecer, y ver la desigualdad que existe en este país. Esto se debe a que la industria de los restaurantes representa más que cualquier otro lugar, el estilo de vida y la estructura social de los Estados Unidos.

Trabajar en un restaurante puede ser esotérico, y esto es a causa de la exigencia fenética por la comida preparada que, además de ser la más alta de cualquier otro país, requiere a menudo calidad de gourmet a precios bajos. ¿Y lo que es más triste es que junto a los clientes, hay muchos meseros y meseras que hacen lo mismo, cuando un cocinero gana casi la mitad del mesero, se le lleva preparar algo o si un cliente deja una mala propina. Y cuando la paciencia los cocineros se agota, están etiquetados como vulgares e ignorantes. Ahora, no voy a tratar de alabarte a los trabajadores de las cocinas de todo el país por sus buenos modales y encanto—me han dicho demasiadas malas palabras como para creer esto. Pero al igual que su lenguaje, estos hombres son a menudo mal entendidos. Si pudieran comunicarse con el resto del país, no serían tratados con tan poco respeto.

También, otros serían capaces de comprender historias previamente no consideradas. Verían la tristeza de un cocinero que dejó México a los 15 años, y nunca regresó a su casa, ni siquiera para ver el funeral de su padre. La ansiedad de un viejo lavaplatos que se preocupa por ser despedido. La amargura de un joven cocinero que se obliga a hablar Inglés solamente, y se muere por ir a la escuela nocturna. Día a día, sus esperanzas se hacen más pequeñas, mientras todos somos conscientes de que el único inglés que leerá estará escrito en los pedidos de comida. Pero si ellos no van a ser capaces de aprender mi idioma, he pensado que voy a hablar el suyo, y aprenderé todo lo que pueda sobre el mundo al otro lado de la ventana de la cocina.

Si la gente se toma el tiempo para hacer lo mismo, tal vez pudieran ser capaces de aprender más de lo que se imaginan, y reconsiderar algunas cosas sobre sus estilos de vida.

The Biggest Days of the 21st Century, Nobody Talks About it, Why?

JEFF CARBONE
COPY EDITOR

Sunday May 1, 2011: one of, if not the, most important days in modern American history. Do you remember where you were? Or what you were doing on that day? Do you even remember why the date has any significance?

It’s okay if you don’t; I asked many people if the date meant anything, and very few had any idea why I was asking. On May 1, 2011 at a little after 10:30 p.m. EST, President Barack Obama announced from the East Room of the White House that a group of highly trained military personnel had captured and killed Osama Bin Laden.

Bin Laden was the man behind the most deadly attack on American soil, responsible for the death of almost 3,000 people, an attack that launched us into two decade-long wars.

The capture of Osama Bin Laden is a news network and websites dedicated to telling the identity of the bombers, eventually leading to the complete shutdown of the city of Boston.

Circling back to the capture of Osama Bin Laden and its historical importance, when reported on the same level of biased stories, it almost certainly loses credibility. In the wake of the Boston Marathon bombing, CNN and The New York Post both reported completely factually incorrect stories about the identity of the bombers, eventually leading to the complete shutdown of the city of Boston.

The problem with this is twofold: on one hand, it leads to confirmation bias; on the other it leads to a rush for immediacy over factual correctness.

If you’re a liberal, there’s a news network and websites for you to hear how everything is the dirty conservative’s fault. If you’re a conservative, there is a news network and websites dedicated to telling you how everything is the fault of the hippy liberal agenda. There’s no reason to challenge your own views or opinions, just dozens of voices “reporting the news.”

The bigger problem though, might be rushing to be first to print, and the casualty being factual correctness. In the wake of the Boston Marathon bombing, CNN and The New York Post both reported completely factually incorrect stories about the identity of the bombers, eventually leading to the complete shutdown of the city of Boston.

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Circling back to the capture of Osama Bin Laden and its historical importance, when reported on the same level of biased stories, it almost certainly loses value. How could it not be? When the voices reporting something of such extreme importance are the same voices telling us conservatives are killing the country, or President Obama is a communist from Kenya, or two completely innocent kids wearing baseball caps attacked the Boston Marathon, it’s impossible for you to consciously or unconsciously not take it less seriously.

This isn’t a problem that you, or I, or any one person can solve. This is an identity crisis we as a society are facing. We all need to make a conscious effort to look for better news, to challenge news writers on TV, online, and in newspapers to deliver not just facts but, important facts. Otherwise we’ll do our best to look elsewhere.
The Threepenny Opera Is Priceless

Bergen Stages’ production of the 1928 classic musical “The Threepenny Opera” delivered one of the funnest and most immersive presentations in recent memory at Bergen Community College. Directed by Bergen Stages producer Jim Bungardner, Threepenny is essentially a musical “hate mail” towards 18th century Victorian London’s staggering inequality, deception, prejudice, and hypocrisy -- yet it is oh so funny!

Threepenny’s plot revolves around the marriage between Mack “The Knife” Macheath, played by Philip Hackett, and Polly Peachums, played by Amanda Zaccone. Mr. Jeremiah Peachums, Polly’s father (LJ Hickman), does not take news of this lightly, as he and his wife (Elizabeth Marsh) devise a plan to eventually end the life of Macheath.

Strickland), and the Prostitute (Rosa Martinez) are what stand in the way of Polly’s parents plan to successfully end the life of Macheath.

The show wasted no time in immersing the audience and filling us in on what was to come, as beggars who would later be characters in the show interacted with the crowd, asking for spare change prior to starting time. This breaking of the 4th wall would occur throughout the show as well, and made for some unique and entertaining scenes. It gave a sense of participation from the crowd and added a new layer that is not typical of performances.

A musical is only as good as the melodies performed, and Threepenny succeeded in doing just that. The orchestra’s execution was stellar, the tunes were catchy, and the vocal performances throughout the cast were outstanding. The sound was great for the most part, yet it never became a hindrance to the show. (Note: It was Bergen Stages first instance in micing the entire cast)

The show's sets were appropriate for what Threepenny set out to do; it was not overly produced, and it was successful in establishing time and setting. The illustrated London Street backdrop was an exceptional set piece that brought the Victorian-era setting to life.

The characters of “The Threepenny Opera” were perfectly cast; the actors added their own flavor to their roles that gave each individual character a purpose in this play. That theme of individualism is found throughout the show, as there is no clear cut character to get behind or a protagonist to get invested into -- and thats okay. Threepenny is not a heartwarming story, nor does it try to be. It succeeds in doing what it set out to do: making social commentary whilst not taking itself too seriously; Bergen Stages rendition of Threepenny managed to capture and deliver that essence oh so well, and so The Torch gives “The Threepenny Opera” a 9/10.

Bergen Studio Looking for Local Artists For New Exhibit

The Sandy exhibit featured artwork that displayed the devastation the super storm wrought on New Jersey. The exhibit featured pieces from Susannah Sayler and Edward Morris, who are apart of the Canary Project and Greg Brophy.

When asked about the how she felt the reception for the new exhibit would be, Dr. Boettger said, “I think the public will be intrigued and stimulated to think about their own relations, as represented by what they eat and the materials they wear.”

The exhibition will open in September/October of the 2014 fall semester. For additional information, contact Julie Kirkpatrick at jkirkpatrick@bergen.edu.
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“So good you can’t resist.” With such catchy slogan Blue Star Burgers, located in Tenafly, has left quite an impression on customers ordering their favorites off the menu. Blue Star Burgers has become the new “hangout spot” among Tenafly’s youth who appear to have found a place with a cool and very intimate atmosphere, allowing them to socialize. Although its small size gives the restaurant a crowded feel when the masses arrive, the ambient is really comfortable. Not only is the restaurant popular amongst the youth, but it is also charming enough to attract adults at any age with their hip atmosphere.

It is simply impossible to leave or even visit without trying their mouthwatering and affordable burgers. They are prepared fresh daily with new oil and are well presented with, every bite you indulge in leaves you wanting more with their unique classic recipe. Unlike the sloppy preparation of other restaurants, Blue Star makes burgers that are easy to eat and soft to the touch of a finger so you won’t need to panic in horror wondering if your shirt will be stained with ketchup once you savour your last bite.

Not only is this restaurant famous for burgers, but also for their Blue Star fries, which are seasoned lightly with rosemary and salt, and served in large portions with a soft texture in each bite. Also included on the menu are their famous milkshakes made with natural flavors for a smooth and rich texture. The milkshake has a delicious flavor, created only at Blue Star. Owner Jason Greenfest guarantees that the friendly customer service skills his staff introduces to the customers will definitely keep you coming back to this restaurant in search of more delicious items to dig into.

Farewell From Your Spring 2014 E-Board

Valerie Batista
Photo Editor

Paola Baez
Ad Manager

Ricardo Montero-Hernandez
Editor-In-Chief

Roger Echegoyen
Features Editor

Jeffrey Carbone
Copy Editor

DIANA ROSARIO
STAFF WRITER

All illustrations by Leslie Martinez//The Torch
What Are Your Plans For The Summer?

**Roving Reporter**

**Daniello Carimidid**

**Biology**

“I would never regret studying, because that way I will get my degree and hopefully become a dentist that has been my dream since I was little. I know that by studying I will achieve it.”

**Madzany Phazo**

“I just signed up for summer one and summer two classes, they are pretty easy classes but are interesting too so I am looking forwards to that. I am planning on taking four classes, one of them is theater and another communications class.”

**Felice Alli**

“My plans for the summer are to work Monday through Friday at the Summer Fun Camp at my school. I will also be working at Staples. Hopefully I get to go to Florida though!”

**Kevin Reyes**

“My plans for the summer are to volunteer at Holy Name Hospital, work a lot, Ramadan is also coming soon so I will be fasting for that.”

**Fullbridge**

“For the summer, I am going to classes during summer session one. After finishing this part of the summer I am planning on going to six flags, going to LA, and also I would really like to go to the Disneyland.”

**Julio Schowenges**

“My plans for the summer is to continue working on my acting career. I also want to make sure I work a lot, that is really important for me as well.”

**Kevin Li**

“For this summer I am planning to move to Santa Rosa in California to be able to study at the Bergen University of Canine Studies which I will be transferring to around August after finishing my second semester here at Bergen Community College. I will need time in California to get used to my surroundings while focusing on getting my degree in Dog Psychology.”

**Fatima Abdelsalam**

“My plans for the summer are to volunteer at Holy Name Hospital, work a lot, Ramadan is also coming soon so I will be fasting for that.”

**Fellix Lyu**

“Although many might think The Torch is not a club, they are wrong. Although there is no president, The Torch has a different leader, carrying a title known as Editor in Chief. The Torch is a group, a family, an organization; a thinking mind that works to create a beautiful final product: our baby, the paper.

Our leader is Ricardo Montero-Hernandez, known to me as just Ricky. He is a Colombian immigrant who is currently 18 years old. This is Ricky’s fourth semester at BCC where he considers “wonderful.”

As the Editor in Chief of The Torch, Ricardo finds himself doing almost anything. Between writing articles, laying out the paper, dealing with the printing company, to managing his staff. As Ricardo said “my greatest responsibility is printing the greatest, most accurate, best piece of printed journalism on this side of the Mississippi.”

As an Editor in Chief working with fellow students, professors, staff, and any other person walking around our campus, there are many things to like and dislike about having such an important position. As he said “I’ve learned to love most of the things that I thought I would hate. I love communicating with my staff, writing articles, teaching workshops, editing articles, and everything in between.” Some things he mentioned as things he disliked are commonly overlooked when thinking about fulfilling a position like his. He finds himself working long hours while sitting in front of a computer screen for days at a time. Mostly, he hates the “infectious procrastination that all college students seem to have in common.”

As a dedicated writer myself, and a full time student, I must agree that procrastination is an infection all of college students suffer from. But even though many of us writers take our time, the final result of our work is usually very pleasing.

Being an Editor in Chief means the position must follow up into one’s life. Ricardo believes his personal life stopped once he took over this position. “At times, I catch myself editing things on the street or get into ‘journalism mode’ in regular conversations.”

When I asked Ricardo what it was he liked about the people he gets to work with, his answer was very honest and true. He said he loves every single one of his coworkers and how much they care about The Torch as an organization. It was also important for him to clarify that this is totally his opinion and not scripted in any way. A very important thing about being Editor-in-Chief is knowing what the overall goal to the position is. As he said “My main goal as EIC, and as everything else in life really, is to leave a positive legacy behind, to be remembered for my work, and to improve The Torch; not just because I was EIC, but to make an example of our current Torch to future EIC’s.”

I personally love writing for the paper because I like expressing myself in written words, especially when others get to read them. Ricardo is on the same page as me. He finds the fact that his thoughts are being read and analyzed by readers as a reward on its own. He loves seeing his name on the newspaper because it makes him feel like his voice is being heard. Also, when publishing your own works in the paper, you are leaving a stamp and producing a work that will be eternal and forever printed in the paper. As a very involved writer, I wanted to know what would be one solid piece of advice Ricardo would give to the following EIC’s making their way up.

His advice was very simple and to the point which is what I loved about it. He expressed in just a few words the way he has been dealing with his position ever since I met him when I joined The Torch. He will carry it forwards with me on my way to accomplish my own dreams.

Even though many might think The Torch is not a club, they are wrong. Although there is no president, The Torch has a different leader, carrying a title known as Editor in Chief. The Torch is a group, a family, an organization; a thinking mind that works to create a beautiful final product: our baby, the paper.

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Being an Editor in Chief means the position must follow up into one’s life. Ricardo believes his personal life stopped once he took over this position. “At times, I catch myself editing things on the street or get into ‘journalism mode’ in regular conversations.”

When I asked Ricardo what it was he liked about the people he gets to work with, his answer was very honest and true. He said he loves every single one of his coworkers and how much they care about The Torch as an organization. It was also important for him to clarify that this is totally his opinion and not scripted in any way.

A very important thing about being Editor-in-Chief is knowing what the overall goal to the position is. As he said “My main goal as EIC, and as everything else in life really, is to leave a positive legacy behind, to be remembered for my work, and to improve The Torch; not just because I was EIC, but to make an example of our current Torch to future EIC’s.”

I personally love writing for the paper because I like expressing myself in written words, especially when others get to read them. Ricardo is on the same page as me. He finds the fact that his thoughts are being read and analyzed by readers as a reward on its own. He loves seeing his name on the newspaper because it makes him feel like his voice is being heard. Also, when publishing your own works in the paper, you are leaving a stamp and producing a work that will be eternal and forever printed in the paper. As a very involved writer, I wanted to know what would be one solid piece of advice Ricardo would give to the following EIC’s making their way up. His advice was very simple and to the point which is what I loved about it. He expressed in just a few words the way he has been dealing with his position ever since I met him when I joined The Torch. He will carry it forwards with me on my way to accomplish my own dreams.

**What does it take to be an Editor in Chief of The Torch?**

**NOMI EIJKENAAR**

Even though many might think The Torch is not a club, they are wrong. Although there is no president, The Torch has a different leader, carrying a title known as Editor in Chief. The Torch is a group, a family, an organization; a thinking mind that works to create a beautiful final product: our baby, the paper.

Our leader is Ricardo Montero-Hernandez, known to me as just Ricky. He is a Colombian immigrant who is currently 18 years old. This is Ricky’s fourth semester at BCC where he considers “wonderful.” As the Editor in Chief of The Torch, Ricardo finds himself doing almost anything. Between writing articles, laying out the paper, dealing with the printing company, to managing his staff. As Ricardo said “my greatest responsibility is printing the greatest, most accurate, best piece of printed journalism on this side of the Mississippi.”

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The NCAA Finals Makes Promising Stars Shine

FELIX LYU  STAFF WRITER

As the Final Four approached, UConn was matched up against Florida State, and Kentucky was matched up against Wisconsin. UConn won 63-53 against Florida State, and Kentucky won, with a close 74-73 win against Wisconsin. UConn won 60-54 against the Wildcats, with the score of 60-54, the fans of UConn created an uproar, celebrating winning their fourth championship title. Including their 2014 victory, UConn holds the 1999, 2004, and 2011 championship titles.

The Huskies opened with a slow start of 16 to 5, but went into the half with a 4 point lead over the Wildcats, 35-31. As the second half continued, UConn came in strong, earning 25 points with a total of 60 points at the end. During the entire game, the audience saw the phenomenal effort of Guard, Shabazz Napier and Forward, Deandre Daniels. Deandre Daniels started off strong, and ended the game by scoring eight points and grabbing six rebounds. With an impressive display of persistence, Napier scored 22 points, six rebounds and three steals. Thus, the Huskies achieved victory against the Wildcats, with the score of 60-54, the fans of UConn created an uproar, celebrating winning their fourth championship title. Including their 2014 victory, UConn holds the 1999, 2004, and 2011 championship titles.

A two time WWE Tag Team Champion, David Otunga’s road to joining the WWE started after signing a developmental contract. In nearly two years time, David Otunga found himself appearing on WWE’s flagship program, Monday Night Raw. His current character is a legal advisor, mirroring his real life practice.

Last year, Otunga starred in the thriller film The Call along with Halle Berry. Playing a police officer. Following his speech, there was a question and answer session where he answered questions from small children to avid wrestling fans. Otunga responded to each question with the intelligent and educated flair that he portrayed throughout his speech. By the end of the event, the audience was invited to the next room where they were free to have refreshments and talk with Otunga. Not soon afterwards, a line formed of new and old fans, taking advantage of the autograph and photo opportunity.

David Otunga’s story brought much inspiration to the people who have heard it first hand. After hearing about him being kicked down so many times in his life, it motivates the students at Bergen Community College to pursue their dreams, no matter what anyone else has to say.

A professional wrestler who has been on national television is a professional wrestler who has been on television. Napier of the basketball tournament. Napier of the Huskies had this to say afterwards, “This is what happens when you ban us!” Napier is number 31 on UConn’s all-time shooter list with a total of 1,237 points and a two-time Big East player of the week. Daniel O’Brien, Featured Columnist for the Bleacher Report had this to say. “In just a couple of months, he’ll officially become a professional, as most scouts and experts are in agreement that he’ll be a late first- or early second-round draft pick. With 21.2 points and 4.5 assists per game throughout the Big Dance, he delivered a strong audition for the Association during the Huskies’ championship run.” It seems that the senior has a prosperous future ahead for the NBA.

David Otunga’s road to joining the WWE started after signing a developmental contract. In nearly two years time, David Otunga found himself appearing on WWE’s flagship program, Monday Night Raw. His current character is a legal advisor, mirroring his real life practice.
Meditate Your Way to Victory

JESSIE CASTELLANOS & GABE WANISSIAN
SPORTS EDITOR & STAFF WRITER

When you think of meditation, there is a good chance that athletic performance is not one of the first things that come to mind. It might not even be in the list of things that immediately come to mind. It is a training tool that needs to be re-evaluated, especially considering the fact that many high level athletes have used meditation successfully to their advantage. Athletes like Lebron James, Kobe Bryant, and Phil Jackson are just a few examples of the success that can be achieved through meditation. The key is to incorporate mindfulness meditation as part of their everyday routine.

Notably, NBA hall of famer and legendary coach Phil Jackson, who has lead two legendary teams to 11 NBA championships, is a believer. In fact, during those 11 wins, he incorporated meditation as part of their training. George Mumford, the meditation coach hired by Phil Jackson, states “The opportunity to be in the moment. In sports, what gets people's attention is the idea of being in the zone, or playing in the zone. When they're playing their best, they can do no wrong, and no matter what happens they are always a step quicker, a step ahead. That happens when we are in the moment, when we are aware of what's going on.”

It is hard to argue against when it has been used to such a success. According to studies done by American Psychological Association, meditation has been linked to a number of neurological functions in the brain. Measurable decreases of brain activity in the parietal lobes were found; the location within the brain that is correlated with the fight or flight response. This allows the increase in Alpha waves to occur, which leads to decreased anxiety, and an increased ability to focus.

Practice makes perfect and meditation may help with incorporating techniques learned in training at a faster rate. A study done by the University of California at Santa Barbara observed 48 undergraduate students under go 10 to 20 minutes of mindfulness meditation practice daily whilst learning taught juggling. The group practicing meditation learned juggling techniques 15 percent quicker than the control group. It is theorized that the increase in Alpha waves in meditation leads to better sleep cycle in which REM, Rapid Eye Movement, sleep is reached more often and for longer periods of time. Sleep and meditation incorporates the new information it collected throughout the day such as when one learns how to juggle.

According to a study published on Pubmed, meditation has been linked to the ability to maintain optimal bodily motor function even in times of sleep deprivation. The little amount of sleep subjects were getting was better quality sleep overall, reaching deep stages such as the 3rd (REM) and 4th stages of sleep. Increased Alpha and Theta waves activities in the brain that are associated with relaxation and rejuvenation are increased by meditation as well. This is something that would benefit both traveling world-class athletes that have trouble finding time to sleep, and for students cramming the night before an exam.

The benefits of meditation can be seen as the small factor that can win or lose a game. Staying calm and focused in high pressure situations allows an athlete to perform at their optimal level; often times the deciding factor is a few seconds lost on the clock to score, that's when it matters the most.

4. Is there a correlation between spirituality and meditation? if so how so?

There are many, many styles and techniques of meditation, corresponding to various goals and religious traditions. You can find some form of meditation in every major world religion, and in some ancient philosophical traditions. So that's great, but it's more useful to you if you're also a “secular” tradition of mindfulness meditation—no “belief” necessary—which has its historical roots in Hinduism and Buddhism. "Mindfulness" is practiced by people of all faiths—and no faith—for cultivating inner peace and other personal and social benefits.

But aside from religious roots, it's important to emphasize that while these practices may be secular, they are not value-neutral. Kindness, patience, and non-judgment are universally emphasized. But requests for a small donation are acceptable, you should not be asked for a lot of money. There are also many guided meditations available online for no cost. If you continue, work with a teacher.

6. Any suggestions/tips for beginners on beginning the practice of meditation?

Be clear about your purpose, even if it is just curiosity. That's, go in knowing what you want to get out of it. This will help you evaluate your experience. Also, don't get discouraged if you find it difficult to quiet your mind initially—everyone experiences this, and you can always come back to the practice another time. Also, any skill that requires cultivation and practice. It becomes a habit and something you look forward to.

Also, as I've said, there are many traditions and practices, with different ends goals. So do some research beforehand, and know—at least a bit what you are doing. If you attend a public meeting, inquire about the background of the person leading the meditation. While receiving a small donation are acceptable, you should not be asked for a lot of money. There are also many guided meditations available online for no cost. If you continue, work with a teacher.

7. Anything else you'd like to share with the public?

In addition to Logic and Reasoning classes, and Introduction to Philosophy, I teach an Eastern Philosophy course and a new Buddhist Scriptures course. In the 4 years of teaching the course to tradition-specific meditation practices, in small (and always optional) ways, largely because a taste of the practices typically makes one's academic understanding of the traditions so much more rich, I've heard(and seen) near instantaneous changes in these traditions so often involve meditative insight. Many students have also reported that it has helped them personally, in unexpected ways. That rave me the idea of offering a weekly drop-in mindfulness session for anyone on campus, which I've been doing every Wednesday May from 12:45 to 1:15 in Room C-315. It's very basic instruction, and does not require any experience. And come as you are—there's no need to be calm or relaxed or joyful before you attend—which happens as a result of the practice.
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Bergen’s Track Bulldogs Fighting for Nationals

DEANA DEO
ONLINE EDITOR

As the season winds down there are only a few more meets left to qualify for nationals. Bergen’s track team has been hard at work, getting stronger, faster and fighting through multiple injuries, but how close are they to nationals?

This reporter will be going as a sophomore to Gloucester Community College and took home a double loss. First game ending in a crushing defeat, 8-0, and the second with 8-4. Overall the boys are having a pretty good season this year.

Student athlete of the month was Kevin Benjamin. The sophomore 3rd baseman put up a pretty good fight with everyone. This move hurts me a lot because I feel like I’m letting the team down. I really wish I could be here but unfortunately I can’t. All I ask for is for you guys to do work. Do it for Bergen track. Remember what Perry Williams said ‘it’s not about the beginning, it’s about the end’ so kill it towards the end of the season everybody! Thanks for everything!”

With the boys first two games of the Bergen Bulldog’s baseball season cancelled and the next two after postponed. Their season finally kicked off on March 18 during their spring trip to Myrtle Beach, SC where they went against Mohawk Valley Community College, and left with a victory of 14-2.

During their trip to Myrtle beach, the boys earned three more victories against Chesapeake Community College (10-9), Garrett College (7-5), and Ancilla College (9-5). On March 20 they suffered their first two defeats against the College of Southern Maryland (7-8) and Chesapeake College (3-13).

The Bulldogs finally came home and unfortunately racked up three more losses, two against Cumberland Community College. The first game ended with a score of 0-7 and the second game ended 2-15. The last loss was given to them by ASA Community College (3-4) which also sparked their upcoming winning streak.

The second game against ASA CC ended in a victory with the scoreboard showing a clear 10-8 win. The boys picked up the pace again with a seven-game winning streak, with four games cancelled due to weather by April 9. Their victories include wins against; Union Community College (9-6), Luzerene Community College (3-2), Middlesex Community College (8-1), a second win against Union CC (4-3), and Atlantic Community College suffered two losses against Bergen’s Bulldogs. First game ended with a score of 9-4 and the second 4-2, the last win was against Raritan Community College, with a close call of 15-14.

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Student athlete of the month was Kevin Benjamin. The sophomore 3rd baseman put up a pretty good fight during this semester. He’s 27th in the nation in batting average, hitting .455 and 37th in RBI. He played the hot corner like it was second nature. Keep rooting for the boys to finish up the season strong!