

## President Obama Proposes Free Community College Education

JOSEPH CIRILO  
FEATURES EDITOR

Late night Thursday, January 8, President Obama announced, via a 6-second Vine post, his wish to see the first two years of community college “free for those who are willing to work for it.”

According to the New York Times’ report, the proposal, which was officially announced at a Tennessee Community College on Friday, would cover half and full-time students who maintain a 2.5 grade point average and who “make steady progress toward completing a program,” White House officials stated.

White House officials have acknowledged in a conference call with reporters that the program is unlikely to win fast approval in Congress. However, they have stated that, in proposing it, President Obama was seeking to press states and community colleges to beef up their investments in high-quality education in ways that would have a lasting effect even before federal legislation was enacted, according to the New York Times’ report.

“We don’t expect the country to be transformed overnight, but we do expect this conversation to begin tomorrow,” said Cecilia Muñoz, Director of the Domestic Policy Council.



President Obama speaks at a news conference in the Brady Press Briefing Room on Friday, Dec. 19, 2014, in Washington, D.C. Photo courtesy of MCTcampus.com Olivier Douliery/Abaca Press/TNS

This would apply to colleges that offer credit toward four-year degrees and occupational-training programs that award degrees in high-demand fields. The federal government would cover three-quarters of the average cost of community college for students who qualify, and states that choose to participate would cover the remaining quarter.

A culmination of all states opting into the program to grant free education to young people transcending into higher education, the administration estimates, would cover as many as nine million students, and saving each an average of \$3,800 a year.

The program, of course, would need congressional approval, and was detailed in his budget for the coming year in his State of the Union address on January 20. This initiative is estimated to cost \$60 billion in federal spending over 10 years and another \$20 billion from states that opt in. Mixed reviews have been received from both students and administrations across the country who believe payment for the program will come in taxes levied against graduating students who had previously benefitted from the program.

New Jersey Congressman Bill Pascrell, a former history teacher in Paramus High School told Torch reporters, “Today, the college degree is the new high school diploma,” and added that he applauded the president and college administrations that partake in this initiative.

“Community college and technical schools are the two engines that drive economic growth,” Congressman Pascrell added.

Obama’s ambitious plan to make community college free is modeled after Tennessee’s free community college program, Tennessee Promise, which will be available to students

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## From Food Pantry to UN, BCC Fights Hunger



Bergen President, B. Kaye Walter (bottom row, fourth from right), signed the “Presidents’ Commitment to Food and Nutrition Security” pledge at the U.N. Dec. 9.19, 2014. Photo courtesy of Auburn University.

MELISSA PEREZ  
STAFF WRITER

“Our world is one of terrible contradictions. Plenty of food but one billion people go hungry,” Ban Ki-Moon, eighth and current secretary of United Nations said. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) estimates 842 million people are unfortunate enough to not be able to fend for themselves and are going hungry. In 2013, Feedingamerica.org said 49.1 million Americans lived in food insecure households, including 33.3 million adults and 15.8 million children.

On December 9, 2014, Bergen Community College and 55 other universities from all over the nation banded together at the United Nations Headquarters in New York City to sign a pledge to take on the challenge of stopping world hunger. BCC was the only community college to sign the pledge, involving us in a global issue that can help millions of lives.

BCC President Walter feels very passionate about the matter, and when the subject was brought up to her she immediately took to it. President Walter had personally signed the pledge at the U.N., joining the Presidents United to Solve Hunger. She explained

her reasoning and her motivation when this past summer, she realized how many of her own Bergen students were having troubles of their own with food and how their hunger affected their academic performance, leading to the opening of the food bank on campus.

Auburn University first initiated the idea, bringing up the matter to the table. Their idea has spread like wildfire, uniting colleges and people everywhere. The issues of children going to school hungry, families not being able to put food on the table, and thousands of people on streets begging, unsure of their next meal, have made officials open their eyes. “We, the undersigned - presidents, chancellors and leaders of universities-acknowledge hunger, malnutrition, and food insecurity to be a critical threat to a sustainable world.” It states in the pledge.

“Hunger has been a priority of colleges, students who are hungry cannot focus. Colleges have, for years, tried to pull hunger out of the equation. It’s a barrier for completing school,” said Larry Hlavenka Jr., Managing Director of Public Relations at Bergen.

The pledge unites the humane efforts of 55 universities, and thousands of educators and students. The schools vow to support the pledge by providing and discovering research for the cause. The Pledge comes with an action guide, detailing strategies and plans. President Walter’s executive team has now gotten the plans in their hands and are getting ready to take action. “Dr. Gonzalez-De Jesus and I have a meeting scheduled with Laura Hoyos coming up about next week to begin planning with her how to get students involved,” said President Walter.

World hunger is an epidemic that affects so many lives in every corner of the Earth, and dictates millions of lives. Bergen has big plans forthcoming, starting off with holding a conference with students to encourage ideas from the student body, readying to stand by the pledge together as a school this spring.

**“We, the undersigned - presidents, chancellors and leaders of universities- acknowledge hunger, malnutrition, and food insecurity to be a critical threat to a sustainable world.”**



# The Great Dusting or the Blizzard of 2015?

ADRIAN YLLATOPIA  
NEWS EDITOR

Maybe the word “dusting” is more of an exaggeration than an actual description of what happened. In some New Jersey towns, a considerable amount of snow did actually accumulate. In comparison, the city of Buffalo, New York was hit with five to seven feet of snow this past November, so they might as well laugh at us for the rest of this winter.

The nor’easter of January 2015, better known as “Winter Storm Juno,” reigned terror upon the tri-state area and New England, with predicted snowfall to have amounted to around two feet. In typical fashion, supermarkets and convenience stores were filled up to the brim with panic-ridden shoppers.

After receiving nearly half as much than what was expected, the mildly white-coated state of New Jersey was left with explaining to do. “We did what we thought was best, based on the predictions we were getting,” Governor Christie told CBS on Tuesday morning. Once the travel ban that was instituted on January 26th was lifted, New Jersey Transit was left to abide by federal law to have inspections on 850 rail cars, 107 locomotives and 593 miles of track, said Nancy Snyder, a spokeswoman for NJ Transit.

The aftermath of Winter Storm Juno brought much criticism to meteorologists predicting the massive amounts of snow. In a rare happening, the chief of the National Weather Service that serves Mount Holly, NJ, Gary Szatkowski, went on Twitter and provided an apology for the blizzard bust. “My deepest apologies to many key decision makers and so many members of the general public,” said Szatkowski in his apology. He continued tweeting, including that while the nor’easter did provide trouble for the rest of the Northeast, it was the forecasts in New Jersey and the Philadelphia metropolitan area that were mislead.

New York governor Andrew Cuomo decided that Winter Storm Juno would be when he would make some history. For the first time in its 110-year history, Governor Cuomo shut down operations of the city’s subway system. The announcement came to the surprise of many transit workers, residents and even New York City mayor Bill de Blasio. The next day, transit workers steadily went back to work to have the subways back in operation.




The snowfall accumulation prediction that never was.  
Photo Courtesy of Twitter (The Weather Channel, @theweatherchannel)

Bergen Community College originally announced, on Jan. 26, that the college would be closed for the following two days. As the mild snow impact came and went, the college then announced through student emails and its Facebook page that classes would be in session for Jan. 28, to the dismay of many Bergen students, as seen through comments on the post.

Going forward, maybe the state of New Jersey can take this experience as something to hold on to. In the end, Mother Nature is never fully predictable. Now, what to do with all the bread and milk we don’t need anymore?

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## Izod Center, Site of Bergen Graduations, to Close



The Izod Center, located in East Rutherford, New Jersey.  
Photo courtesy of magresourceinc.com

ADAM GRASSANI  
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

The Meadowlands will soon be losing another one of its many venues. The Izod Center Arena will be closing sometime during the spring of 2015. With newer arenas such as the Prudential Center in Newark and the Barclays Center in Brooklyn, it’s not unreasonable for the arena to be closing.

The Izod Center hosted many events during its 34-year lifetime, including concerts, WWE wrestling, and multiple “Disney on Ice” events. The arena hosted New Jersey (now Brooklyn) Nets basketball up until 2010, and New Jersey Devils hockey up until 2007. It was even the site where the Devils won two of their three Stanley Cup Championships.

However, most importantly to us as students, the Izod Center was the host of Bergen’s graduations. This leaves Bergen’s upcoming Spring 2015 graduation with no clear venue. “It’s incredibly inconvenient for us, as you can imagine,” Gregory Fenkart, the Coordinator of Student Life, said on the upcoming closing. He continued, “We were scheduled to have commencement there. That’s my main thought about it.”

“They will not be held there anymore, obviously,” Fenkart said, “We’re looking at a number of options right now. I cannot name them at this time. There’s a bunch of people looking at different things so we wanna make sure we know where we’ll be. We’re gonna know soon, I will tell you that because we have too. We have to get this locked down. You guys will know very soon,” he added.

While we do not know the location of the Spring 2015 graduation, BCC President Walter did mention, in a recent edition of “This Week at Bergen”, that the graduating class of Spring 2015 would receive the same “big day” that every graduating class prior to them received.

Please note, the Paramus-Meadowlands shuttle will not operate on the following days:

Thursday, February 12

Monday, February 16

Friday, April 3





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# NEWS

## The Torch

### Je Suis Charlie!



(Left) A sequence of events following the Charlie Hebdo attacks on January 7th. Photo courtesy of MCTcampus.com  
(Right) Je Suis Charlie, a message of solidarity, went viral shortly after the attacks. Photo courtesy of twitter.com (@jeanjullien)

**MICHELLE PEREZ**  
STAFF WRITER

It was a Wednesday morning like any other when two gunmen entered the offices of Charlie Hebdo, a satirical newspaper in Paris, and brutally murdered 12 people. According to the French newspaper Le Monde, “gunmen dressed in black and wearing bulletproof vests forced their way into a building two doors down from Charlie Hebdo asking where to find the magazine.” The gunmen then went into the newspaper’s building, killed a security officer and forced a cartoonist employed by the paper to direct them to the correct office. Once inside, the gunmen barged into an editorial meeting, separated the men from the women, began calling out names of their selected targets, and began their killing spree. Dr. Gerald Kierzek, who treated and wounded survivors, told news sources the men shouted “Allahu Akbar,” which translates to, “God is great,” in Arabic, before fleeing the scene. Some of those within the

offices made it outside to the roof where they were able to capture video footage of the men leaving and shooting into the distance. The suspects, later identified as Said Kouachi and Cherif Kouachi, then killed a police officer several blocks away and disappeared. The media and artists worldwide quickly heard of the vicious attacks and flooded social media with the hashtag “#JeSuisCharlie,” French for, “I Am Charlie.” A vigil was held for the victims that Wednesday night, January 7, while police released photos of the two suspects. The Kouachi brothers continued on their rampage of violence and crime well into Thursday, where they were spotted at a gas station. The brothers, 34-year-old Said and 32-year-old Cherif, stole supplies and threatened a man while at the gas station before fleeing once more. Nearly two days later, Friday, Jan. 9, the brothers were killed when the police stormed a printing firm’s building

in Dammartin en Goele, just 22 miles from the Charlie Hebdo offices, where they were said to have been located. Meanwhile, in the Paris city gate of Porte de Vincennes, another gunman entered a kosher supermarket taking 19 hostages and killing 4. The gunman was said to be the same person who killed a police officer in Montrouge earlier. French authorities made the connection between the Charlie Hebdo attacks and the killing of the officer, naming Amedy Coulibaly as the gunman. He was killed shortly after police surrounded the supermarket, but his accomplice, Hayat Boumeddiene, got away as the hostages were released. She is still at large and being pursued by authorities. 3.7 million people, including leaders from around the world, joined together on Jan. 11, in France to march for the 17 victims and to take a stand against terrorism.

### Not With A Whimper, But A Bang

**BLAIR DELONG**  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

In 1947, the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists (BAS) announced the creation of the Doomsday Clock, initially setting it for 11:57 p.m., or three minutes to midnight. Midnight represents a global catastrophe, or in other words, nuclear war. On January 22, 2015 the clocks now stands three minutes to midnight once again, at its original position, after the first atomic weapons were used. The closest the clock has come to midnight though, was in 1953, when the hydrogen bomb was first tested, and was moved to two minutes to midnight. The clock is symbolic and has been maintained by the BAS since 1947. The group was founded in 1945 by University of Chicago scientists who had helped develop the first nuclear weapons in the Manhattan Project. This project was responsible for the development and eventual use of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan. These two events are what prompted the BAS to create the Doomsday Clock. Using the imagery of apocalypse (midnight) and the contemporary idiom of

nuclear explosion (countdown to zero), to convey threats to humanity and the Earth. On Jan. 22, Kennette Benedict, the executive director and publisher of BAS announced at a news conference in Washington, D.C. said, “It is now three minutes to midnight.” It was most recently at five minutes to midnight, or 11:55 p.m. The last time the clock stood at 11:57 p.m. was in 1984 at the height of the Cold War, when the U.S. and Russia were embroiled in a nuclear arms race. The furthest the clock has stood from midnight was in 1991 when it was set to 17 minutes until midnight, but since then the clock has slowly crept toward midnight. There has been some speculation in part of other scientists, like Michael Oppenheimer, a professor of both geosciences and international affairs at Princeton University, who said, “I suspect that humans will ‘muddle through’ the climate situation much as we have muddled through the nuclear weapons situation...”

Not only is nuclear annihilation an issue when it comes to the Doomsday Clock, but also unchecked climate change. Via a statement issued by the BAS, “In 2015, unchecked climate change, global nuclear weapons modernizations and outsized nuclear weapons arsenals pose extraordinary and undeniable threats to the continued existence of humanity,” hence the “time” being changed. “Human influence on the climate system is clear,” Richard Somerville of the Bulletin said, “each of the last three decades has been successively warmer than any preceding on record.” Can this be the way the world ends? Could T.S. Elliot have been wrong in his final stanza of “The Hollow Men”? This is how the world ends, This is how the world ends, This is how the world ends. Not with a bang but a whimper. Humanity has two choices, be killed by the very planet that has given rise to our race, or annihilate ourselves and our planet with the tools of war we have made ourselves. It’s our choice, a whimper or a bang.



# Integrity in Death: Journalists Killed in 2014

ZACH MCDEVITT  
LAYOUT EDITOR

Violence, it is said, perishes at the tip of a pen as well as a sword; both men of words and of weapons fight to quell the wickedness of the world, and both are all-too-prepared to give the ultimate sacrifice. In 2014, 61 journalists, as well as 11 media workers, were killed as a direct result of their vocation, and 19 other journalists’ deaths are under investigations of causation, according to a global report published by the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) last December.

While quantitatively lesser than many previous counts on file with the CPJ, 2014’s journalist death toll nevertheless forms the current tail-end of a three-year average—beginning in 2012— which, statistically, is the deadliest since at least 1992, when the CPJ began recording media-related casualties; these casualties have been heavily centered in the Middle East, reflective of and the result of a multitude of sociopolitical conflicts.

Syria, four years deep into a brutal civil war, saw the deaths of 17 journalists in 2014, increasing its total since 2012 to 79, the most of any country over a similar period. 76 percent of journalists’ deaths were suffered in military crossfire, reflecting the severity of violence between Syrian civilian forces and governmental military forces. ISIS’ intervention and eventual formidable presence in Syria notoriously resulted in the deaths of two American freelance journalists, James Foley and Steven Sotloff, by beheading— captured on video and, to the abject horror of the American public, promoted through various social media outlets.

The Middle East, in 2014, additionally housed the deaths of four journalists and three media workers in Israel and Palestine, the highest quantity ever recorded by the CPJ for that region, congruent with the region’s highest casualty count in its decades-long history of violence; 88 percent of journalist deaths were resultant from crossfire between warring political groups, indicative of the shocking frequency of Israeli/Palestinian attacks.

Certain countries in the Middle East showed a decline, rather than an increase, in journalist mortality. One journalist was killed in Egypt last year, comparative to the six killed in 2013 during a time of severe social and political unrest, when Egyptian army chief Abdel Fattah el-Sisi fronted a coalition that staged a military coup, successfully ousting President Mohamed Morsi from power. Libya, similarly, saw the death of a single journalist, as opposed to six in 2011 during the violent Libyan Civil War and subsequent coup of Gaddafi.

Despite a predominance of sociopolitical unrest in the Middle East, one of the highest counts of journalist deaths in 2014 occurred in the Ukraine, where five— along with two media workers— perished in the chaos of the Crimean crisis, amidst violence, protests and retaliations between Ukrainian separatists, loyal to and supported by Russia, and those aligned the Ukrainian government. This is the first recorded instance of journalist homicide in the Ukraine since 2001.

2014 was notable for the continuation of changing trends in the way information is related and received, as well as a reflection on a growing diversity of journalistic media. 44 percent of journalists killed in 2014 were active in internet-based journalism, marking the fourth consecutive year - as well as the only four years in which that number has exceeded 10 percent. This indicates a growing legitimization, as well as a more comparable global presence, of online correspondents and news outlets, as more print and broadcast media conglomerates increase their internet-based activity and send more online journalists into the world’s action.

A grimmer statistic, unique to 2014, is its rate of torture. Of all journalists who lost their lives, 15 percent were tortured at the hands of their enemies beforehand, the highest percentage since 2011, due in part to the increased power and activity of ISIS, a group inclined to torture.

Not to be ignored are those individuals involved in the art of journalism that, while still alive, have nevertheless suffered for their profession. 221 journalists were imprisoned in 2014, including 44 in China and 30 in Iran - one-third of the total in two countries, alone, according to statistics compiled by the CPJ.

John Danizewski, vice-president of the Associated Press, mourns the loss of such men and women, dedicated to the perseverance of information and awareness throughout the globe: “2014 was a tragic year for journalists worldwide... they remind us of the daily courage and sacrifices made by professional journalists to bring back the news and information that so many rely on and take for granted.”



Illustration by Noura Dakka

## Obama: Free Community College

Continued from pg. 1

graduating high school in 2015, drawing in around 58,000 applicants; twice as many as was expected.

Bergen Community College offers a wide variety of disciplines and programs that cover a wide range of educational opportunities, including general education for transfer, journalism, accounting, business and even aviation training. Likewise, courses in nursing, veterinary technician and other similar hands-on practical training courses that yield licensing and certificates to go straight into the workplace are also offered.

Though the proposal may be unlikely to win over a congressional vote, citing displeasure with the affordable healthcare act as an example of disagreements between Obama’s ambitious reach and the Republican point of view, this proposal has, with any luck, set the stage for serious reform in higher education.

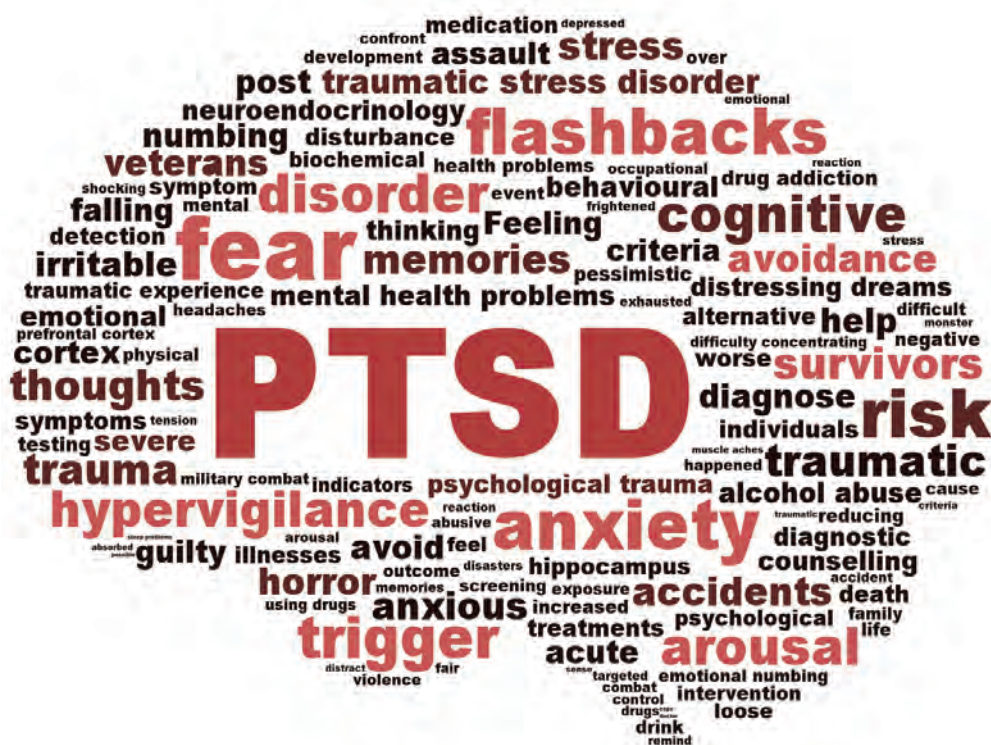
**A culmination of all states opting into the program to grant free education to young people transcending into higher education... would cover as many as nine million students... saving each an average of \$3,800 a year.**

Their names, their association, and the dates and locations of their deaths. From left to right:

- Leyla Yildizhan (Deniz Firat), Firat News Agency  
August 8, 2014, in Makhmur District, Iraq
- Mahran al-Deeri, Al-Jazeera  
December 10, 2014, in Sheikh Miskeen, Daraa province, Syria
- Steven Sotloff, Freelance  
August or September, 2014, Unknown, Syria
- Rami Rayan, Palestine Network for Press and Media  
July 30, 2014, in Shijaiyah, Gaza, Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory
- James Foley, Freelance  
August 19, 2014, Unknown, Syria
- Camille Lepage, Freelance  
May 2014, in Bouar region, Central African Republic
- Simone Camilli, The Associated Press  
August 13, 2014, in Beit Lahiya, Gaza, Israel/Occupied Palestinian Territories
- Luke Somers, Freelance  
December 6, 2014, in Shabwa province, Yemen
- Mayada Ashraf, Al-Dustour  
March 28, 2014, in Cairo, Egypt
- Andrei Stenin, Rossiya Segodnya  
August 6, 2014, in Snizhne, Ukraine
- Aung Kyaw Naing, “Par Gyi”, Freelance  
October 4, 2014, in Kyaikmayaw, Burma
- Pedro Palma, Panorama Regional  
February 13, 2014, in Miguel Pereira, Brazil
- Shan Dahar, Abb Takk Television  
January 1, 2014, in Larkana, Pakistan
- Robert Chamwami Shalubuto, Congolese National Radio and Television  
December 26, 2014, in Goma, Democratic Republic of the Congo
- Fernando Raymondi, Caretas  
November 9, 2014, in San Vicente de Cañete, Peru



# PTSD: Whose War is It?



BLAIR DELONG  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Image courtesy of harvestoftempe.com

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder is the new shadow war. Not only does it invade the minds of returning veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan, but also rape survivors and survivors of natural disasters, as well. David Morris, a former Marine Infantry Officer as well as the author of *The Evil Hours: A Biography of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder*, says, "Only one percent of the American population join the military. 12 percent of those returning end up with PTSD." But returning veterans aren't the only group of people that are affected by the fourth most common disorder in the U.S.

Morris, who came to read from his book on January 28, 2015, said, "Not only are veterans, but rape survivors are afflicted, as well." PTSD has had many names over the years, such as shell shock in World War I, battle fatigue in World War II, and post-Vietnam syndrome after Vietnam. With so many names, it also has many symptoms that are hard to diagnose, making it a tricky disorder to identify. According to the *The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM)*, there are many criteria that can be met- and not every person exhibits these criteria or symptoms.

To explain PTSD in a very rudimentary term, it is a

type of anxiety disorder. It can occur after a person has gone through an extreme emotional trauma that involved the threat of injury or death. While this threat of death is the core of warfare and the men and women that wage it, soldiers aren't the only people in the U.S. that are afflicted by this disorder. Dean G. Kilpatrick, Ph.D., at the Medical University of South Carolina's National Violence Against Women Prevention Research center said, "Almost 31 percent of all rape survivors in the U.S. have developed PTSD, either after the event or later in their lives."

"With over 27 million cases in the U.S. alone... rape survivors aren't thanked for surviving like soldiers returning home from combat." With the amount of people afflicted by this disorder, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has become one of the vanguards of research and treatment methods of PTSD. Morris said, "The VA spends over \$3 billion a year for research and treatment for returning veterans diagnosed with PTSD."

With any person who survives and lives with PTSD, Morris said, "These disorders can become people's identities...it's a disorder of pain." Morris explained his own feelings about living with PTSD, saying, "I felt as

though I lost control of my memories... you begin to believe in things you wouldn't believe in the states... The war had hurt me, I wanted the country to see that hurt." Suicideoutreach.org said in the first quarter of 2014 alone, there were 74 suicides by active duty personnel alone; this isn't even counting the unknown number of people that take their lives that haven't seen combat, as opposed to those who have survived rape, natural disaster, and other traumatic events.

Although PTSD has had many different names and many different diagnoses over the years, in the war against this disorder that is so hard to identify and treat, there is hope. The VA runs Peer Support Groups within their own health system to help treat our returning soldiers, but there are also civilian groups, such as Meetup.com's PTSD meetup groups as well as private psychiatric practitioners. In the case of the military, the movie *Platoon*'s tagline was "The first casualty of war is innocence." This can also be said for survivors of rape and other traumatic events. When innocence is taken or lost, we lose a part of ourselves, but we are never alone. YOU will never be alone. This is our war to fight.

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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 property of THE TORCH.

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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.

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As an open public forum, The Torch welcomes guest opinion pieces and letters to the editor from any member of the Bergen Community College community. Materials should be submitted to [eic@gmail.com](mailto:eic@gmail.com) or delivered to The Torch office, SC-111. Such submissions must include the writer's name, contact information and affiliation with the college. Students should include their major; faculty and staff should include campus title or position. Opinion pieces are limited to 600 words and letters to the editor to 200 words. The Torch reserves the right to edit and to refuse publication of any submission.

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# Times, They are a-Changin’



*Look to the skies, and see that even the stillest stars are bound to change.*  
*Noura Dakka/The Torch*

**BLAIR DELONG**  
*EDITOR-IN-CHIEF*

Change is inevitable. Change is so intrinsic to our very lives, we hardly notice it at all sometimes. Whether this is your first semester at Bergen Community College, or you are a returning student continuing to follow your dream of getting that little piece of paper that says you’re qualified in your chosen field of study, change will forever be watching and waiting for that perfect time to strike.

Don’t be afraid of change, though- it’s a natural process in life and should be embraced with a smile and open arms. Sometimes it comes when you least expect it, while other times you are the force that starts the events for change to take place. No matter how it comes, you have to take it in stride. For the new students arriving in BCC this semester, you have chosen to make a change in your life. You have chosen not stay at that infuriating retail job or waiting tables for the rest of your life, but have chosen to better your life; chasing a dream that you have for yourself.

To attend an institute of higher learning, is a change that can’t be taken lightly. Contrary to what you see in movies and TV, college isn’t about drinking and the search for the “epic party,” it can and will be hard work. You will have to buckle down and actually do work. If you don’t, then you can kiss your financial aid, scholarship or your very own money goodbye. As with everything in life, there is a balance that must be struck.

Now, I’m not saying that you should burn yourself out studying for hours upon hours every night, ditch your friends and not have any contact with the outside world. I’m trying to

tell you that balance can be achieved, and with this balance, a much healthier change can take place. The balance of a healthy lifestyle that fits you is one of the most important aspects of attending college. There are days you won’t feel like getting out of bed, but you have to find the discipline to peel yourself out of the covers and get to class. There will be days that classes are just killing you and you need to blow off steam with some friends; this isn’t a bad thing. Go have that beer, go dance until your legs want to fall off, but don’t ever forget the reason why you are here. You decided to make a change in your life, for the betterment of yourself and your future.

In order to succeed at anything, including school, discipline plays a very large part. As a student, discipline will be the lynchpin of your change to a successful young adult. What you accomplish and the grades you attain are all up to you, not your professors, not your fellow peers - just you. With discipline, you as a student can not only strive to make yourself a better student and make the grades you desire, but also help the change you have made for yourself. Take this seriously - do not think school is a joke. What you will get from this experience is what you put into it.

Welcome to your first step into real life. This school will test you and who you are. Your classes will test you, both literally and figuratively. Just remember this, you brought this change upon yourself, do with it what you will. Pass or fail, it doesn’t matter to me, because at the end of the day, you only have one person you have to answer to, the person staring back at you in the mirror. Good luck and godspeed folks, welcome to the first day of the rest of your lives.

# BCC Spoiled Me

**ADRIANA SZABOOVA**  
*FORMER CO-EDITOR*

Many of you may know me as the blonde girl on the Student Center Wall. Yes, I graduated Bergen Community College in 2012. Yes, I did transfer out. Yes, I am back again. I come back with so many lessons learned that I wished someone had prepared me for.

I graduated BCC with an Associates in Science. I was a former Torch Co-Editor in Chief, Model UN Treasurer and an active member of a myriad of student clubs. I left BCC fully ready to take on a four-year school. What I wasn’t prepared for, was how spoiled BCC made me.

BCC is a large school with many functioning parts that somehow all fit together to give you an amazing college experience. If you frequent certain offices enough, people begin to know your name. They say hello in the hallways and even inquire about your family and life. Professors know you. The classes are small enough that you get a personalized education experience to where you know your fellow

classmates and professors on a more personal level. If you join a club or two, you make so many lifelong friends and gain so much knowledge you probably would have never gotten on your own.

In short, BCC is spoiling students in a fabulous way. We become so accustomed to these amazing perks that you truly notice a difference. When I transferred out to a state school, I was fully expecting the same. I quickly came to realize that this was not the case. I was in classes of 200 people, where you could not even see the professor. Offices would not even use your name, only your student ID number. Yes, it had its perks as well, such as dorming and a wider range of clubs, but I began to realize how lucky I was to have gone to BCC.

*(continued on pg. 9)*



First Place Awards: General Excellence, Layout & Design, Column/Opinion 2011-2012  
Winner for, Enterprise/Investigative Reporting 2011-2012  
Winner for News & Arts and Entertainment/Critical Writing, Features, Sports Writing, 2011-2012  
New Jersey Press Foundation Better College Newspaper Contest

First Place Awards  
Society of Professional Journalists: Breaking News Editorial, Editorial Writing, Best All-Around Non-Daily Student Newspaper







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CENTERFOLD:  
Behind the Scenes of  
The Miracle Worker  
pgs. 12-13



# OPINIONS

## The Torch

### Is it Really Islamophobia?



NOURA DAKKA  
PHOTO EDITOR

What lies behind that mask is the real fear.  
Photo courtesy of pamelageller.com

Pamela Geller, President of The American Freedom Defense Initiative, has launched many anti-Muslim campaigns in the past couple of years. Geller's campaigns are known to be closed-minded and full of hate. Her most recent one, "Islamophobia?" which can be found all over buses in New York City, is by far the most prejudiced and misleading of them all. In this campaign, she uses verses from the Holy Qur'an to overthrow the religion of Islam, with pictures resembling a terrorist to represent the image of a Muslim. Geller claims that the goal of her campaigns is "to raise awareness of the true nature and magnitude of the jihad threat," while she clearly has no idea what she is attacking.

Through an interview via email, Geller was asked many questions to which she never really gave a proper answer. She had copied and pasted verses from the Qur'an that she had gotten off the website [www.quranbrowser.com](http://www.quranbrowser.com). The problem, however, isn't the unreliable website. The problem is that those verses weren't studied properly. On one of the ads, there is the verse "when you meet the unbelievers, strike the necks..."

The Qur'an contains historical stories and morals that were brought upon the Muslims at that time. Every Surat in the Qur'an serves a purpose, whether for the present or the past. You can't take one word from any religious book and just consider it as it is. There is a matter of reading in between the lines. There is more to it than just the words. You can say it's just like poetry, it can have an authentic meaning or a virtual meaning. Geller said "It would, of course, be impossible to reproduce the entire

Qur'an in the space of a bus ad," yet, she evaluates a whole religion from one phrase she doesn't even understand.

The whole Islamophobia campaign is hatred or fear towards Islam because Geller believes that Muslims are the the biggest corruption in the world. It looks like she doesn't know what's going on around her. Okay, we get it, a lot of terrorism comes from so-called Muslims. Yet, I repeat myself again, not everyone who declares to be a Muslim really is one; its not about calling yourself a Muslim, its about acting like one. It's just like saying, I'm an atheist but I believe in God, or I'm Hindu and I eat beef. I can say I am whatever I am, yet I show the complete opposite. We all can agree that corruption happens everywhere by any person. How come she is so against Muslims when ISIS is not even Islamic? Geller once again, convinces me with her answer, "I am not against Muslims. I am against oppression, violence, hatred, murder, anti-Semitism, misogyny, female genital mutilation, honor killing, etc." Does she not know that all those things happen anywhere in the world by any type of person?

Geller asked, "If you claim I do not understand the Qur'an, how do you explain the many Muslim clerics -- men who have dedicated their lives to understanding the Qur'an properly -- who call for violence and even commit violence in the name of Islam?"

First, let me just say if you are referring to the men of ISIS or other terrorist groups, then you need to reconsider your judgment. I feel like you are so blinded by their concept that you are blaming the whole religion for their doings. These terrorists live

to sabotage the image of Islam. It's pretty obvious. To understand or study any religion in the world, you must at least appeal to it, otherwise, why bother seeking it. "I have no interest in what is the real Islam and what isn't," Geller said when she was asked if she ever went into the depth of the Islamic religion instead of just judging it impulsively. So she is telling us, that she has no idea what she is opposing. How can you hate something if you don't know what it is? "I don't care if you worship a stone; just don't stone me with it," she continued. No one is coming towards you, Ms. Geller. If you say you don't care what they worship, then let them be. It's not like they are following you around all day, threatening your life. I am dumbfounded by your ignorance.

"The problem that the world faces is that the Islamic State claims it represents the real Islamic religion. Several thousand Muslims from Western countries have found their claims so compelling that they have gone to join them," said Geller, thinking this is relevant. There is a difference between being compelled and being brain washed. Besides, every country has their traitors, and some people are just moronic. Plus, the major issue here is the name: The Islamic State. It needs to be changed. It doesn't represent Islam, as a matter of fact all Muslims don't support ISIS and want to end their wars. It's just like Geller said, "No one should be offended by the truth. If anyone is, the problem lies with him or her, not with the truth."

Basically, Pamela Geller, you shouldn't be offended. That is the truth.

## JOIN THE TORCH

Meetings every Tues., 12:30 p.m., SC-111C-D





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# BCC Spoiled Me

*Continued from pg. 6*

Some people have asked me why I loved BCC so much. BCC gave me the opportunity to meet some truly amazing people and do some truly amazing things. I had the opportunity to have dinner with several UN ambassadors, become friends with a former UN secretary general’s daughter, write for an amazing paper, work with some great faculty and professors, and learn how to achieve what I want.

Many of you may be preparing for graduation, to transfer out, or even for a health care related job where you need to apply. But, before you become too comfortable in your final choice, take a step back and reevaluate your options.

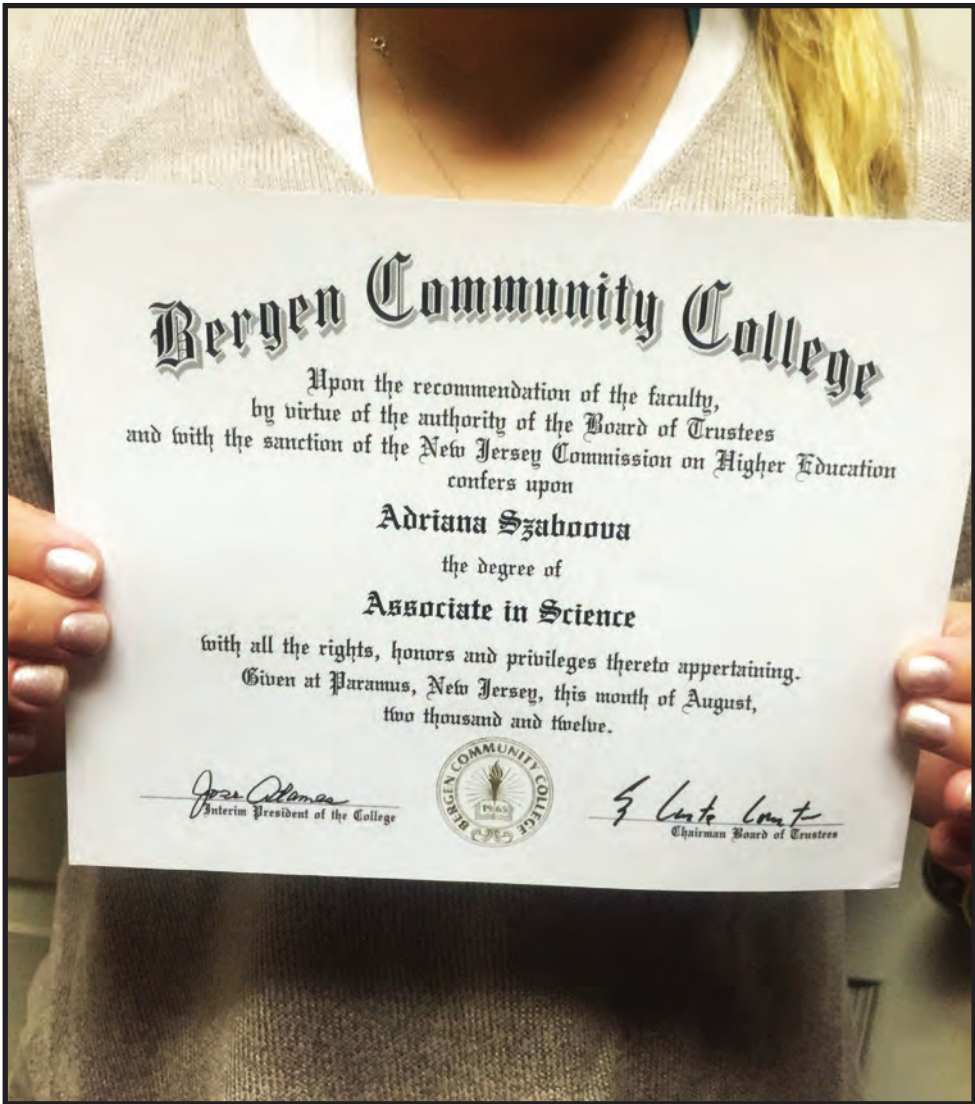
Be sure you have visited all the schools you’ve been accepted to. One of the biggest regrets for transfer students, is they wished they had more time on the campus. They were idolizing their dream school, but didn’t look at the pros and cons of that school. They end up hating and regretting their choice.

Also, be sure that if you receive financial aid, all your paperwork is in order. You may end up needing to pay more money on top of your financial aid that you did not need to before. Also, apply for scholarships; some schools do not offer transfer students scholarships, so be sure to check that out.

Having a back-up plan is also a good idea. Many of us say we will definitely get into our top choice school, but in reality, not everyone does. Have a plan B that you are happy with or spend a semester boosting up your GPA and résumé. It’s no longer only about academics, your after school activities, like volunteering or an internship, give you an added boost to your application.

Finally, for all you health care profession seekers, double- even triple- check your prerequisites and if they parallel the school you want to go to. Some classes may be a 100 or 200 level at BCC and be a 300 level at another school.

Once you are happy in your decision, fight for it! Don’t get lazy, or let your grades drop, or forget deadlines. Staying organized will help you in every aspect of your life. Who knows, you may end up right back at BCC, like me because you decided to change your career choice. Have a wonderful semester, BCC!



Noura Dakka//The Torch

## Êtes-vous Charlie?

ROGER S. ECHEGOYEN  
FORMER FEATURES EDITOR

The recent events in Paris involving the fatal shooting of 12 people and injuring 11 people due to a cartoon of the prophet Muhammad from the satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo has brought a wave of panic, fear and solidarity to the world.

The initial reactions to these attacks were of shock and disgust. When the events first started, and the message was that these radicals were fighting against the freedom of expression, the media reacted to the attacks by posting the hashtag #JeSuisCharlie, which translates from French to “I Am Charlie.” The hashtag would represent a unity among those who won’t be oppressed by any idealism or group that will clash with our basic freedoms.

The hashtag spread among celebrities, writers,

cartoonists, and to the general public. People would proudly write #JeSuisCharlie to show their support, and any who oppose to the hashtag just didn’t care about their freedom of expression. But, was it really about our freedom of expression? If you were to google Charlie Hebdo and find the page with the cartoons they published, some would find the cartoons to be offensive. Some depict religious idols committing sexual acts, other drawings criticize religious leaders, and some drawings have some offensive racial undertones. Overall, a publication like this would meet its share of controversy and criticism.

So, why would someone post “I Am Charlie” if the cartoons are offensive? One likely reason could be that most people would post a hashtag right after

an international incident due to emotions, or perhaps “because it was trending.”

The people who posted the hashtag were reacting to the events in Paris without fully understanding the issue. The illogical motives behind this attack are inconceivable to say the least. But even if the attacks did not happen, then would you support a publication that vulgarly criticizes peoples’ faiths and beliefs?

It calls into question whether many of the supporters of rapidly growing and viral internet movements are in it for the support of something important, or rather, just to be noticed as a small part of a much bigger event. We may be in an era that flocks to violent and intriguing events just to be noticed on the internet - especially when the scope of these events become a much larger and more obscure whole.

For this writer, I would not support a magazine like this. I will stand for freedom of expression or any other freedom that we all take for granted, but to support something or someone abusive is not justifiable. I am for freedom of expression, but I am not Charlie.

**It calls into question whether many of the supporters of rapidly growing and viral internet movements are in it for the support of something important, or rather, just to be noticed as a small part of a much bigger event.**

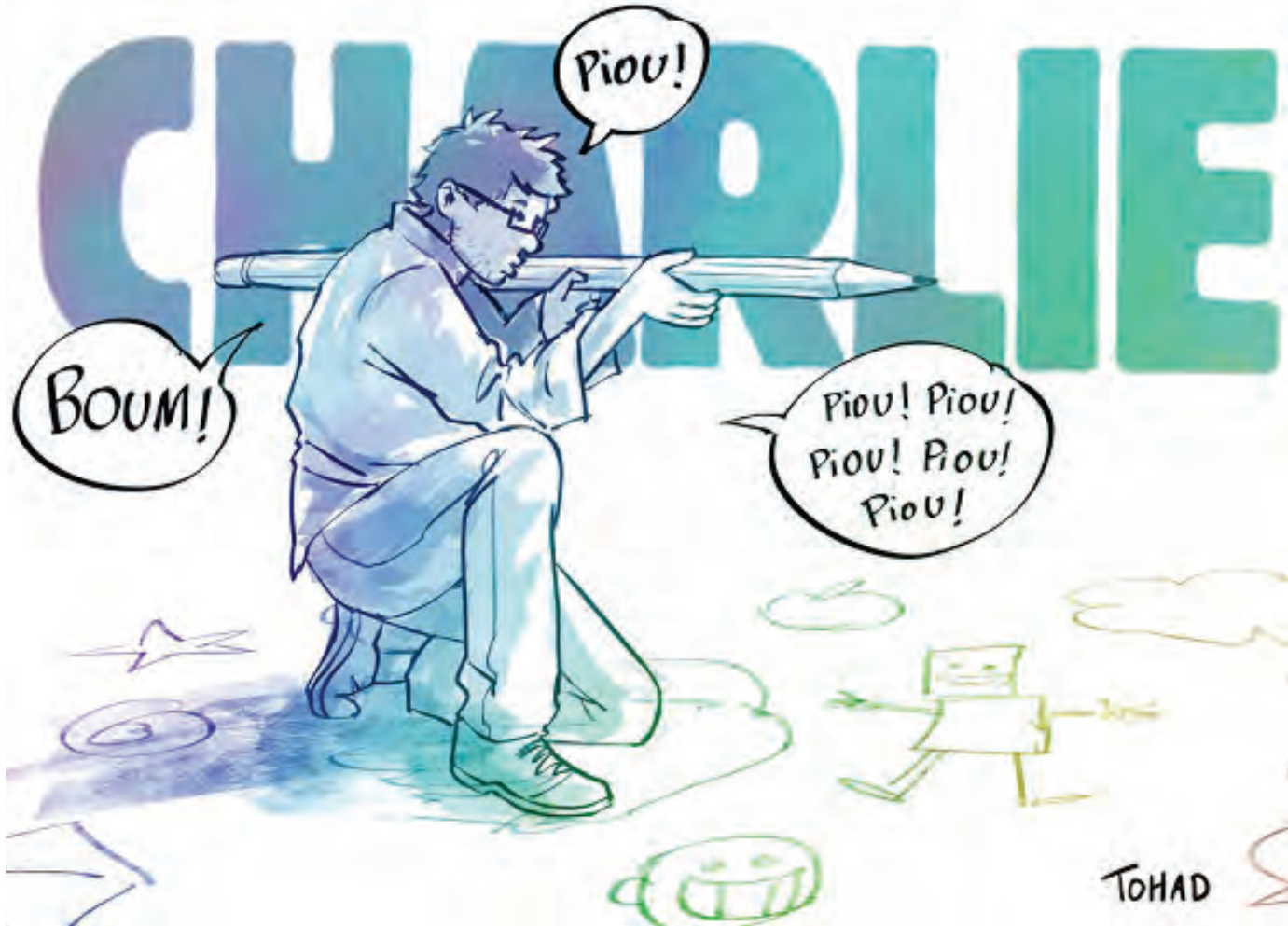


Illustration by Tohad  
Courtesy of dizdatwhatzthat.com



# INTO THE LABYRINTH: *A Calling for Creative Artists*

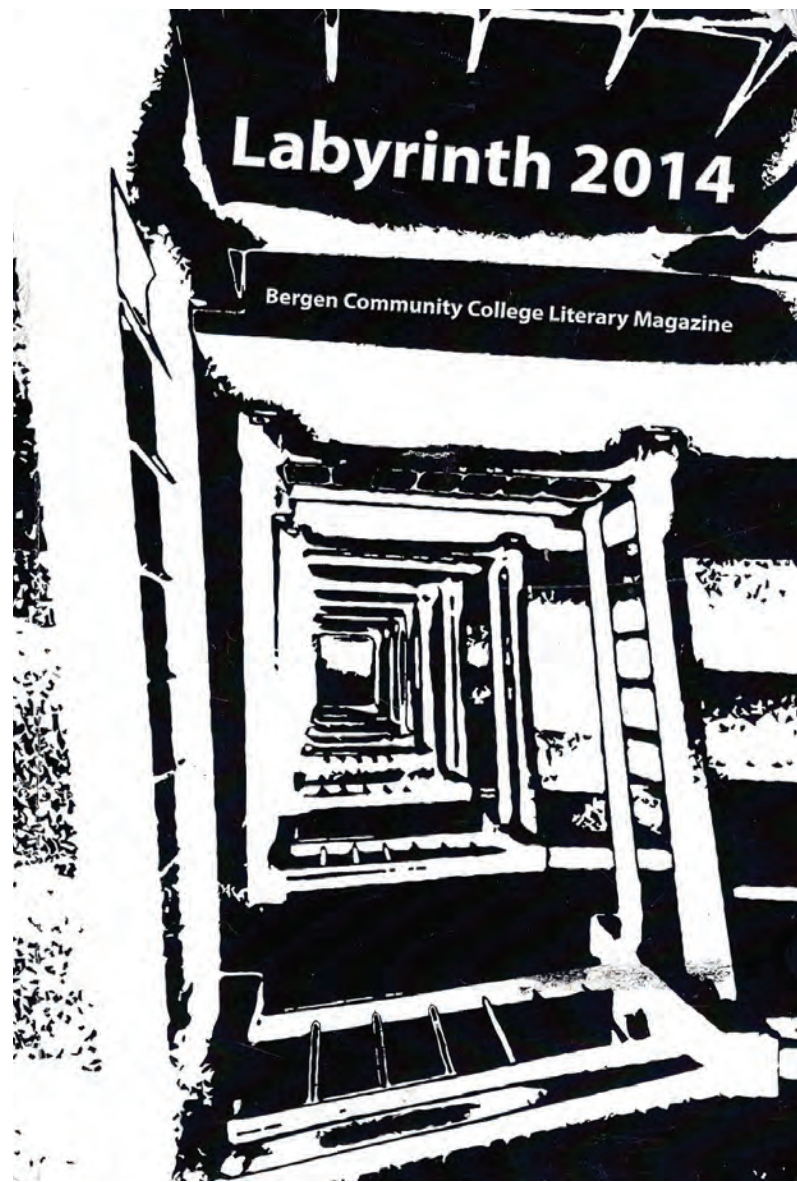
SHARI FRIDMAN  
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Bergen Community College has approximately 17,000 students enrolled within its walls. Hidden amongst this community of overachieving future doctors, lawyers, nurses, teachers and accountants, we have talented students that have a brilliant knack for a craft. They also hold revolutionary visions in their minds and embedded in their hearts that can change, bend and brighten our world for the better with their art. These people of whom I speak are aspiring artists, singers, musicians, writers, novelists, playwrights, actors, actresses, photographers and poets.

We see these people in the Student Center, sitting on the front steps by the mini pizzeria downstairs, or on one of the couches, with their prized guitars in their hands and smiles on their faces. Sometimes, we stop to listen before we rush home or to our classes, and we enjoy hearing them play, because their hearts are worn on their sleeves. But, what else can these talented, extraordinary and brilliant people do to get more exposure or recognition to share their gifts with the world, to be seen and heard, and to broaden their portfolios?

By submitting their poetry, short fiction, one-act plays, creative essays, artwork and photographs, to BCC's Spring 2015 issue of *The Labyrinth*. In addition to having your submissions accepted for publication, accepted works will automatically be considered for the 8th Annual Creative Writing and Visual Arts Contest, sponsored by *The Labyrinth* in association with the Bergen Community College Creative Writing Program, Bergenstages and the Bergen Community College Art Department. This information can all be found on flyers that are posted around school on the bulletin boards.

If having your works of visual or literary art published into the literary magazine, *The Labyrinth*, doesn't interest you yet, then how about the fact that if you do submit your written works and works of art, you have a chance to win one of the \$100 prizes for Best Fiction, Best Poetry, Best One-Act Play, Best Creative Essay, Best Visual Art and Best Photography. The deadline is March 1, 2015, and submissions are only able to be sent via email addressed to Professor James H. Zorn at [jzorn@bergen.edu](mailto:jzorn@bergen.edu) with the subject line [Your Last Name/Title of Work/*Labyrinth* Submission].



*Labyrinth covers frequently evoke themes of endlessness and wrong turns.*

*Illustration by Zach McDevitt*

According to the former editor of *The Labyrinth* and current President of Bards and Scribes, Zach McDevitt: "The submission process is a simple one. One may submit five poems, three plays, three short stories, three creative essays, three photos, and three works of visual art, if they so wish. That is the limit. One must email submissions one at a time - so, if they wish to send the maximum each category, that would amount to twenty separate emails sent to [jzorn@bergen.edu](mailto:jzorn@bergen.edu). Each submission is sent to all editors, who then read over and consider each piece."

McDevitt said, "All editors choose their individual favorite submissions, and, in coming together, work in tandem to discover which submissions caught the most eyes." On what he, and the other *Labyrinth* editors, looked for in their submissions, McDevitt continued, "Mainly, something that sticks out. Something stylistically unique, something technically brilliant - anything that, by its nature, makes itself stand out from the crowd. Photography and visual arts are treated much the same, judged mostly for their compositional and aesthetic strengths, if they can easily fit on a portrait-alignment, and if they mix particularly well with certain stories, plays or poems. We are always on the lookout for cover art, as well - it needs to represent the idea of a *Labyrinth*, either realistically or abstractly."

For some, *The Labyrinth* is a place to express your emotions, help fulfil one's dreams, sharpen and improve one's craft, and escape from everyday life. *The Labyrinth* collects the best of the best that are hidden amongst the Bergen Community College public, and archives their talent in an issue that you can own by finding one in Bergen Community College's library, or wherever you can find a copy.

"*The Labyrinth* is a collegiate literary magazine," McDevitt continued. "In this regard, there is a dual purpose - that of separating groundbreaking and exceptional works from the mundane, but also inspiring all students, regardless of their skill level, to develop their narrative voice, gain confidence in their artistic abilities, and develop a greater passion for the arts, in general. We seek, in this regard, to represent the spirit of the Bergen Community College - that of support,

## TRIUMPHS IN AFRICAN AMERICAN EDUCATION

MELISSA PEREZ  
STAFF WRITER

Thanks to the vision of former President Eisenhower and hundreds of peoples' sacrifices, we now have an education system that every single American can rightfully take advantage of. Everyone has the right to better themselves, and thankfully, in our generation, education is no longer beset by barriers segregated by the color of one's skin. Knowledge is a right that belongs to every human being, and that right was finally achieved through anguish and perseverance in the face of tyranny.

In 1837, Richard Humphreys opened the Institute for Colored Youth, the first institute in the U.S. specifically for African Americans. Inspired by the race riots of 1829, Humphreys changed his will and donated \$10,000 of his estate to build the institute known today as Cheyney University.

Nineteen years later, Wilberforce University opened; it was the first to be owned and operated by African Americans. The president of Wilberforce, Daniel A. Payne, was the first African American University president in the country.

By 1869, the first law school for African Americans opened, known as Howard University. Then, Meharry Medical College opened its doors in 1876, becoming the first Black medical school in the country. However, the progress did not stop there; African American women opened their own campus, The Spelman College, in 1881.

After creating their own facilities, the African American community took larger steps that have had some of the biggest positive impacts on society. William Leo Hansberry taught the first African civilization course at Howard University in 1944, and Frederick D. Patterson created the United Negro College Fund the same year. The African American community was establishing itself and making the nation know that they needed to be recognized as intelligent and equal people.

In 1954, equality first started to bloom when the Supreme Court case, *Brown V. Board of Education of Topeka*, Kansas ruled that segregation in public schools was unconstitutional. The victory sparked a wave of change and President Eisenhower selected nine African American students to attend school at the previously all-White central high school in Little Rock, Arkansas.

This all led to San Francisco University creating a Black Studies Department in 1968, as well as the donation of \$1 million from the Ford Foundation to Morgan State, Howard University and Yale to create courses in African American studies a year later.

Every effort was brave, selfless and for the good of humanity, only to be met with harsh backlash, hatred and violence. The action of these people were valiant; they were revolutionaries, whose courageous actions brought on one of the biggest changes in American history.



*Champions of American Civil Rights across history.*

*Illustration by Noura Dakka*





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Music Shaming  
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LEISURELY  
DIVERSIONS  
pg. 19



# FEATURES

## The Torch

# HEALTH PROFESSIONS BUILDING?

BRANDON RENO  
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Upon arriving at the Paramus campus, almost every student and faculty member will view the metallic husk planted across from Pitkin Education Center. The new \$26 million Health Professions Integrated Teaching Center formally began construction in the summer of 2013, accompanied by a groundbreaking ceremony attended by Bergen Community College President B. Kaye Walter and former Bergen County Executive Kathleen Donovan.

Since that day, little has been made known about the new center outside of its initial announcement. An informal poll of students around the Paramus campus suggested that a fair amount of respondents had little to no knowledge of what the Health Professions building included, or even the entire purpose of the building whatsoever.

A review of the Bergen website shows rather little evidence that the new Health Professions building is even under construction, outside of a long buried press release which gave general details on the layout. A 121-page document stored on the Bergen website details the cost of the building at \$17 million dollars, with \$12.75 million covered by the state “Building our Future Bond Act,” approved in 2012 by 64 percent of Bergen County

voters. The \$9 million discrepancy between the figures shown in the document and the figures in the press release posted on the Bergen website, as well as picked up by NorthJersey.com, could not be explained.

The three story, 65,000 square foot center will be comprised of a Dental Hygiene clinic offering low-cost preventative care to the community at large, Radiography and Dental Hygiene laboratories, and a classroom for Diagnostic Sonography, will round out the first floor. The second floor will be mixed faculty preparation and educational, with classrooms, labs and offices for the day and evening nursing classes. Notably, one of the skill labs will be operated in conjunction with Kean University, a partner of BCC in the Bachelor of Science in Nursing program. The remainder of the second floor will house mixed classrooms and laboratories for Surgical Care, Respiratory Care, Medical Office Assistance, Patient Care and Nursing Assistance programs, as well an operating suite and prep room.

A simulation center for all health programs will sit on the top floor, allowing students to get first-hand experience working in and responding to the situations they will face in their chosen occupations. A debriefing room, video control room and computer labs will

accompany the simulation center. Radiation Therapy, EKG/Phlebotomy and Pharmacy Technician classrooms will also be located on the third floor, along with the Dean of Health Professions, administrative support staff, and the Admissions Office for Health Professions. While the new Health Professions Center is impressive, questions remain over what will be made of the current classrooms utilized by the various healthcare professions around campus. Though a mention is made of some current equipment transferring over to the new building, nowhere in the document or the 2010-2020 Master Plan published by the college in 2009 does it say what will be done with the currently utilized space. Moreover, if the space vacated by the health professions is left unused, at what point does the college decide to expand other programs or introduce new ones, and where will the funds be found to facilitate these expansions?

As of today, work continues on the Health Professions Center at a steady pace and any student or faculty member can watch as the building takes shape. The center is scheduled to be completed by the beginning of the Fall 2015 semester, and will hold over 1,000 students enrolled in the medical professions at BCC.

Girders and steel beams form the skeleton of the health professions building.  
Noura Dakka//The Torch

# GET A DEGREE, SEE THE WORLD, OR BOTH?

YAIDELISSE ROMAN  
AD MANAGER

Greece, Italy or Spain, these are only three of the 31 different countries and 80 programs Bergen Community College has associated itself with for a new international study abroad program. It will be open to all students in Bergen County, provided they meet the requirements. BCC’s Dean of Arts and Humanities Amparo Codding, Dean of the Humanities, Arts and Wellness, coordinates the study Abroad Program. Usually, only about six Bergen students go abroad each semester.

BCC has decided to join a nationwide movement to get double the number of students to study abroad every semester. According to Larry Hlavenka, BCC’s Managing Director of Public Relations, “The U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs estimates 295,000 students studied abroad in 2011 and 2012.” For any student wanting to travel to another country, make an appointment with Dean Codding. Going abroad is a one-of-a-kind experience.

Some of the few requirements to actually travel abroad are: 2.5 to 3.0 GPA, good academic standing, a BCC transcript, and at least one full semester completed. The 80 programs provided by the CCIS, College Consortium for International Students, suit all majors. Unfortunately countries like Japan may only offer language courses.

Thessaloniki, Greece has a more broadband selection of humanities and requirement courses for the students. Each country is different; the best way to find out where you belong is by talking to Dean Codding directly.

One important detail about the study abroad program is that it is a bit pricey.



An entire world lies in front of you; will you avert your eyes?  
Photo courtesy of <http://www.szygy.org.uk> (Szygy Missions Support Network)

Countries like Greece and Spain sometimes cost over \$10,000. Luckily, BCC has some access to scholarships to help accommodate students within the abroad program. At the beginning of the Spring 2014 semester, student Blyss Molina Ayala earned a scholarship of \$3,500 from the Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship Program to study in Spain; she was the fourth student from Bergen to win one of these awards.

Go today and set up an appointment with Dean Amparo Codding and see if you meet the requirements for this wonderful and possibly life changing experience.



# Behind the Scenes:

ZACH MCDEVITT  
LAYOUT EDITOR

## Part I: Inanimate Objects

Later this month, dozens of lights will illuminate dozens of actors, reciting hundreds of lines memorized over 54 days upon a fully furnished set built over the same period. Ender Hall's laboratory theater will act as a lens into 1880's Alabama, and 100 audience members will bear witness to a story of rebirth and personal resurrection, related through just as many whispers and pauses as screams and violent tantrums. Backstage commands will work in tandem with onstage actions, and the illusion of theater will be as organic and sentient as the bodies that bring it to life.

It doesn't happen overnight.

My hands are freezing, and I can barely grip the front door. My bus, the 175, stops at Pitkin and I have to walk that oblique and treacherous Siberian nightmare of a cross-campus trek over to Ender Hall. Before classes began a few weeks ago, that particular part of campus was completely dead, the absence of its usual foot traffic and busied noises leaving behind a surreal and unsettling milieu. There was less color in the air, almost as if all the foliage in Paramus went through a brooding depression, and the only bodies to be seen were the pallid and sluggish ones of my theatrical comrades - the fellow actors who had journeyed here from their cozy homes to rehearse on a bleak Sunday afternoon.

The laboratory theater, also known as a black box theater- noted for its small size and intimacy between performer and viewer- is in complete disarray as we walk through the double doors a janitor unlocked. Just two short months ago, the stage was fully built, engrossing audiences in 1930's Brooklyn during the autumn run of Brighton Beach Memoirs. Now, it looks apocalyptic- like every playwright, technician and thespian perished off the face of the earth.

All great things, of course, must begin as virtually nothing at all. Before the stage becomes the Keller household, the set must be designed and built. Before props embellish the set and complete the immersive nature of another world, as would small brush strokes upon a canvas, they clutter up the prop room, a fantastical space akin to a madman's boutique, a curio shop with no walking space, overwhelmed by dreamlike colors, textures, and an absurd amount of rotary telephones. Before any of this, the stage must be barren, the director must be late to rehearsal, and the actors must be exhausted from starved sleep schedules. And so, rehearsals begin in a state of theatrical nudity - acting without a set, costumes, props, or a full realization of the director's vision, holding onto our scripts like our lives depend on it; at this point, we feel all too mortal.

"This is the biggest role I've ever played in my life," mentions Sophia Lee, who plays Anne Sullivan, famed teacher to Helen Keller, "and the pressure to be able to do well - to really portray Anne - scares me a little bit." Nerves are of no consequence, however, for the show must go on.

TOP: Sarah Sangregorio (left) and the rest of the cast pass the time in between scenes.

BOTTOM: Dakota Librescu, Elizabeth Stawicki and Allen Garcia rehearse an argument. Sophia Lee and Katelynn Bailey nosh at the table. Mary Clifford, director, cheats to the camera. Greg Alders//The Torch



BERGEN COMMUNITY COLLEGE PRESENTS  
THE BERGENSTAGES PRODUCTION OF

# the miracle worker

By William Gibson



Directed by Mary Clifford

**February 27, 28, March 5\*,  
6\* and 7 at 7:30 p.m.**  
**Matinee performances on February  
28 and March 7 at 2:00 p.m.**  
**Ender Hall Lab Theatre**

\*Special sign-interpreted performances

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online at [tickets.bergen.edu](http://tickets.bergen.edu).  
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(201) 447-7428.

## Part II: Blowing Away the Dust

The Miracle Worker, like all Bergen Community College productions, begins well before it begins, in the proactive hands of Jim Bumgardner, Bergen's resident silver fox and producer of Bergenstages.

Before even thinking of putting on a play, a company must acquire the rights to perform a copyrighted script, which isn't always easy.

"If it's on Broadway, you can forget about it in this area. They're supposed to be bringing The Miracle Worker back [to Broadway], so I made sure to get it early," Bumgardner says. "Normally, I'll contact all the publishers to get it before anyone else does."

With the legal issues of performance handled, a play undergoes its first stages of technical and creative development, beginning with the director's vision. "One of the most important responsibilities of a director is to tell the story that lives in the text, clearly and organically, staying true to the intention of the playwright," says Mary Clifford, director of The Miracle Worker.

The importance of telling a story complete with themes, motifs and character arcs is a collaborative process, manifested through stagecraft, set and lighting design as much as through the onstage actors. Tom O'Neill, manager of the Ciccone Theater and veteran to many directorial and technical corners of Bergenstages productions, sees these inanimate aspects of a show with considerable more soul than meets the eye. O'Neill said, "a great lighting design is differentiated from a good one by its ability to create an atmosphere that supports the emotions and mood... set in motion by the script." He then added, "a set helps create an environment that will transport the audience to the time and place of the play."

Each element of the set is built, more or less, from scratch in the woodshop, and a team of carpenters - often BCC students employed by the school - work alongside faculty to realize, as perfectly as possible, the set designer's vision of a tragic family living in post-war Alabama. John Ehrenberg, lighting designer, will soon hang lights from a metallic ceiling grid and program them into a computer system. This will allow him to, at the click of a button, differentiate between nightmare and reality, and adorn each scene with an appropriate feeling.

Rehearsals for The Miracle Worker are three-hour affairs, and, toward the beginning, wrought with a grueling torpor: The scripts are faintly printed and full of typos, and we tend to struggle through our dialogue, not yet attuned to our characters' subtleties. Long periods of repetition and idle hands brings out the inner child in many, and stage manager Ashley Waldron, who acts as the record keeper of a director's notes and the mediator between all disparate parts of a production, often bears the brunt of this jagged progress. "If there's one thing that will always drive me crazy, it's when we are focusing on a scene and people are talking loudly while I'm trying to write down what I have to," she states.

Working on either a skeletal set - subject to immense changes in the coming weeks - or a complete lack thereof, much of the play's atmosphere has yet to settle, which takes its toll on the actors' abilities to immerse themselves in the story. For Elizabeth Stawicki, who plays Kate Keller, Helen's mother, "Fully understanding and developing a character can take weeks, or perhaps the entire rehearsal process," she said.

Thirteen year-old Katelynn Bailey, who plays Helen Keller, faces the unique challenge of having to evoke character without the use of words: "I blindfold myself at home and walk around to feel what it's like not being able to see. I also don't speak and, without American Sign Language, try to communicate with my little brother and sister," she said.



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# Bergenstages’ Production of *The Miracle Worker*

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Were a student to observe rehearsal through a crack in the door, they would see disjunction, frustration, and actors spending more time playing trivia games on their phones than bringing immortal characters to life. While an accurate sight, to a degree, they would fail to realize the enriching and unforgettable experience beneath, which perseveres in spite of and because of these difficulties; putting on a play is a thrilling, enriching, and altogether human experience. Defying the notion that too much time spent in close proximity will drive men to murder, we have chosen to embrace our absurdities, instead. “There is a lot of time spent together with cast members during rehearsal, and with that comes inside jokes and funny moments that only we can understand,” says Lee.

Being part of the same artistic endeavor, we all share in both its successes and its impediments, and gain an unwavering sense of community by simply keeping each other company as we labor to bring the show to life. Mary Clifford, an actress herself, understands and shares in the camaraderie, explaining that “The cast and crew frequently become like a family and develop into an ensemble. It is a joy to be part of such an experience”.

As the weeks roll on and our frequencies - both as actors and people - begin to align, William Gibson’s characters and settings begin to spring to life before our eyes. Scenes play out with staggering efficiency and emotion, and each performer begins to show their unique light. The first instance of rapture amongst the cast occurred two weeks ago, while watching Sophia Lee and Katelynn Bailey rehearse the legendary fight between Anne Sullivan and Helen Keller.

All side conversations and sundry subterfuge came to a screeching halt, and everyone’s eyes - whether part of the scene or not - were pinned to the two actresses, spitting food, throwing punches and tossing pitchers of water, completely impassioned, both out of breath by the end. The combat is so deeply involved and weathering that the two wear protective elbow and knee pads underneath their costumes.

We began, at that moment, to realize the script’s power, and certainly became privy the story’s significance beyond the simple prospect of escapism. Jim Bumgardner understands the play as especially relevant to educators, saying, “The Miracle Worker is about [Anne Sullivan] thinking outside the box, that there’s not just one way to teach somebody. You’ve got to look at each student and help him or her to learn... It just tells teachers do what you do; think outside the box; try new things.” Mary Clifford, in discussing her relationship to the script, relates a story of her husband’s experiences in shutting down the Willowbrook State School, an abusive asylum similar to those in the late 19th century, and witnessing the atrocities firsthand that Anne Sullivan experienced while blind, and that Helen Keller almost suffered. “Had Helen Keller not been spared this fate, the world would have lost this great woman,” Clifford explains, “that, in itself, was a miracle.”

## Part III: Birth of a Vision

The dressing room is filled with shoes of alternating genders and variety, more coats and blazers than any person would ever fathom needing, and, strangely, two styrofoam mannequin heads, purposed for holding wigs that likely no longer exist in space and time. However, through the mess, everything we need to rehearse with is in there.

Although the set remains unfinished, certain heavy props will eventually be replaced, and we have yet to memorize all of our lines, what we need to realize is that the play is already there. The foundation for theater, and perhaps the power of illusion, exists within the bonds between the actors, the directors, the designers and the managers, and we all know each other’s first names. From this point onwards, the theatrical process will entail smoothing out various rough edges- polishing furniture, cleaning up food props- pound cake and bacon- from the floor every night, naturalizing the spaces between bits of dialogue, and pushing ourselves to delve further into our characters’ heads. The ensemble, however, has come together.

When the actors take our final bows, the set will be struck. Two months of creative laboring and emotional writhing will be undone with power tools, and the theater will be returned to its barest roots. New specks of dust will settle slowly on the lights and props, the seats will be restacked - most likely haphazardly - and we’ll all begin to forget our lines. However, the experience will not dissolve quite as easily.

For most theater students and actors in Bergenstages, performing and working in the theatrical arts is a passionate, lifelong affair.

“Theatre is a magical thing for me. It’s a place where I get to be someone else for three hours every night,” Elizabeth Stawicki said as we left a particularly late rehearsal one night.

Being an educational company within the guise of community theatre, Bergenstages is a country of recurring, familiar faces - actors, directors and technicians who return, year after year, to continue advancing themselves in the company of a newfound family.

“It’s what I look forward to most every day,” Ashley Waldron explains, when asked about her work in the often-unsung technical side of theater, “Not many people know where they belong, but I know this is what I was meant to do.”



TOP: A wooden fish in the prop room. No one knows if it’s ever been used.

MIDDLE: The prop room is home to whiskey jugs, glass antlers, and banjos alike. Everything, really.

BOTTOM: Bailey, Stawicki, Garcia, Lee, and Librescu rehearse a dinner scene with real bacon, potato bread and pound cake.



# INDIE VS. MAINSTREAM



Illustration by Noura Dakka

**BLAIR DELONG**  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

A quiet war has been raging for quite some time. Which developers are better: independent development studios, who rely on platforms such as Steam and Kickstarter, or the triple-A developers that bring blockbuster games to our PC’s and consoles year after year? While this war between who is best has raged on the internet and between friends for some time now, the winner isn’t as clear cut as you might think.

Triple-A developers such as 2K Games and Gearbox pumped out *Borderlands*, a much loved tongue in cheek first person shooter, while other companies such as EA and Bioware have developed titles like the *Mass Effect* series and the *Dragon Age* series, and have the money to make large and impressive games, but they have to play it safe. Bigger companies may tweak small gameplay ideas and visuals, but, in the end, they have to stick to a formula that will keep the general public buying. While some of these new releases have been financially successful, others have been slammed by critics for their refusal to take chances by trying something new.

That’s where the indie developers come in. Take a team of three people and have them toil away at something new and fresh. Have them take chances, and in cases such as Dean Hall’s *Day Z*, a mod of *Arma 2*, you have something that totally eclipses the big development houses. In *Day Z*’s case, the developers were able to gross over \$5 million in the first 24-hours of the game’s release. There have been other critical successes over the years such as *Bastion* and *Limbo*, both released on PC and consoles, and conversely, there have been absolute messes. For the indie developer, it’s all about rolling the dice and hoping they succeed.

While this argument has no end in sight, one thing is certain. The general public still want popular mainstream titles like *Borderlands*, *Dragon Age* and the yearly sports titles such as the *Madden* franchise. On the other hand though, more and more people are going the route of the indie releases for the fresh new ideas and a chance at something different. Like most things in life, it’s all about perspective.



# KANYE.

**MICHELLE PEREZ**  
STAFF WRITER

Most of the students here on campus might agree that Kanye West has an eye for the unusual and makes music for himself above all others. On January 24, 2015 Mr. West was finally granted an award for all that he calls “godly” while at the Black Entertainment Television Honors Awards in Washington D.C.

Kanye arrived decked out in a classy all black Balmain suit with a fitted black shirt and dress shoes. Of course, wife Kim K. West coordinated her look with the Honoree, covering up in an all black floor length Balmain gown. The only inch of skin shown was from a cutout on her right side. The TV personality wore a dewy contoured face and hair straight and sleek which complimented the detailing of her dress.

Damon Dash introduced the award, ironically, as he is known to have trashed the “visionary” during past interviews as the two did not “see eye to eye.” The pair previously worked together at Roc-A-Fella Records.

During West’s acceptance, viewers immediately started quoting him in tweets saying, “Creativity is a fight. You can’t be the kid in the back of the room being made fun of. Get up and smack somebody.” He also could not help himself from mentioning that his wife has “dated broke black dudes” then saying, “it’s not about the money.”

The relevance of all of this to the purpose of the award is questionable, but we will all just have to watch and see on Monday, February 23, at 9 p.m. on BET, when the awards are set to broadcast.

West was one of five honorees celebrated for outstanding achievement in the categories of art, business, technology, music and theatre. This year the show will be hosted by comedian and actor Wayne Brady.

Kim Kardashian and Kanye West attend the 2015 BET Honors.  
Courtesy MCTcampus.com. Olivier Douliery/Abaca Press/TNS



# Film Review: SELMA

HELEN MAFINEJAD  
STAFF WRITER

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was the voice for all African-Americans during his time, and a quintessential figure in the Civil Rights Movement. Though the Civil Rights Act of 1964 legally desegregated the South, discrimination was still uncontrollable in certain areas which made it very difficult for African-Americans to register to vote. One of the most talked about movies of 2015, starring David Oyelowo as Dr. King, “Selma,” released publicly on January 9, tells the true story of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and his triumphant campaign to secure equal rights, which included an epic march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama.

Directed by Ava Duvernay and produced by Christian Colson, Dede Gardner, Oprah Winfrey and Jeremy Kleiner, “Selma” received widespread critical praise for its gripping appeal and historical accuracy, and has been nominated for an Oscar for Best Picture.

In 1965, Selma, Alabama became the city of the battleground in the fight for suffrage. In defiance of violence, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. (David Oyelowo) and his followers pressed forward on an epic march from Selma to Montgomery, and their hard work and efforts concluded in President Lyndon Johnson signing the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

David Oyelowo was the right choice to star as Dr. King Jr., epitomizing him in both resemblance down to the way he looked, spoke, and dressed, and his commanding presence.

The movie was a bit tiresome and tedious in certain areas. At times, it felt the producers added extra scenes just to drag it along and build up to a more climactic moment. Though the acting was superb from the star-studded cast, the film was much longer than may have been necessary and could’ve been condensed into a much shorter picture.

There were a number of fantastic moving scenes that kept me on my toes. The scene that was the most heart wrenching part to watch was the Edmund Rettus Bridge incident.

On March 7, 1965 the Edmund Rettus Bridge attack occurred. The incident began when 600 Blacks left the Brown Chapel AME Church for a 50 mile march into Montgomery. The march was led by Southern Christian Leadership Conference’s Hosea Williams and John Lewis.



100 state troopers, commanded under Major John Cloud, blocked the opposite end of the bridge. Williams tried to speak with Cloud twice, but the major said, “There was no word to be had...You have two minutes to turn around and go back to your church.” Within a minute, the marchers were attacked with tear gas and charging horsemen. The horrific incident was seen on national television; 16 marchers were hospitalized and 50 others received emergency treatment.

The most astounding scene was when Judge Frank Minis Johnson ruled in favor for King and the marchers allowing their march to take place from Selma

to Montgomery. President Johnson and Alabama Governor George Wallace met over the ordeal.

President Johnson later held a press conference where he made a statement to announce that he is sending a bill to Congress to eliminate the restrictions on voting for the African-American community. This announcement came with great praise to people around the world. The activists all gathered for the final march to Montgomery and in the movie it shows actual footage of the march that took place on that day.



ONE DREAM  
CAN CHANGE THE WORLD

SELMA

(Above, Left, Below) Scenes from the film. Selma is cornerstoned by its depic-  
tions of famous historical moments, as well as intensely personal characters.  
Photos Courtesy of imdb.com





# WHY DO YOU LISTEN TO THAT

INESS RABAH  
STAFF WRITER



Julio Sabangan//The Torch

Music exists in every society, and each society has its own distinct style. We are all unique individuals, and no two people have the exact same preferences in anything. This is one of the beautiful things about human nature. However, whether we’d like to admit it or not, we’ve all judged someone based on his or her musical preferences, secretly or otherwise. But a song that one considers trash could be someone else’s favorite. So why is it that we continue to consciously and subconsciously musically shame others if we don’t particularly enjoy their taste in music?

There are a number of reasons for music shaming. Of course, music isn’t the only thing; people also judge and receive judgement for food, movies, and books they like. The reason music shaming differs in our society compared to other things is because there is no set norm for what a music standard should be in American society.

For example, a group of friends can decide on where to eat pizza or what movie to watch fairly easily - those are two things that people can generally agree on. When it comes to finding a concert the entire group wants to see, things get a little more complicated. There are stereotypes prevalent with every style of music due to their various depictions throughout different forms of media.

Experts who study the psychology of music often agree on the idea that the Big Five is the reason for people having the musical preferences that they have. The “Five” refers to five traits that are said to make up personality. Openness, Agreeableness, Neuroticism, Conscientiousness, and Extraversion are the five traits. Various music preference studies correlate music preference with this theory.

“Openness was positively related to a preference for ‘reflective and complex’ as well as ‘intense and rebellious’ music, whereas Extraversion was related to both ‘upbeat and conventional’ and ‘Energetic and Rhythmic’ music.” This conclusion is drawn by musicology research professors Jonna Vuoskoski of Oxford and Tuomas Eerola, of Durham University. It is an example of why people are drawn to certain music styles over others.

Often times, it’s all a part of the culture and the environment we are brought up into. If a person grows up around friends and family that only listen to rap, chances are they won’t like country music very much, and won’t understand how others can like it, either. As a result, most of the time, people believe their taste in music is far superior to those who don’t listen to it.

These days, mainstream music, mostly radio or MTV music, has been more and more often regarded as uncool. People are too embarrassed to sing that Taylor Swift song they find catchy, and force themselves to listen to “underappreciated” indie-rock. Sure there are a limited number of styles that can be found on the radio, but that doesn’t mean the songs that are playing are wrong to like.

Radio music brings up another point. We all can think of one song off the top of our heads that sounded really cool when it first played on the radio. But then after the hundredth time, it gets old, and you hate it. Overplayed music usually ends up in the mental trash bin. Once it’s in there, it’s not coming out and you die a little when a friend starts humming it. This is yet another reason for music shaming.

No one should be ashamed of liking a song. Who decides what music is good and what isn’t?

Often times, it’s all a part of the culture and the environment we are brought up into. If a person grows up around friends and family that only listen to rap, chances are they won’t like country music very much, and won’t understand how others can like it, either.

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ALWAYS ON



# DIY math



Students hard at work in the Math Walk-In Center, located in the Technology Building.  
Noura Dakka//The Torch

**MELISSA PEREZ**  
STAFF WRITER

Remedial classes are a burden disguised as a blessing, without a doubt. Bergen Community College is one of the top community colleges in the state, and the classes offered are exceptional. However, remedial classes can make a student feel dozens of things: disappointment, failure, insecurities, even embarrassment. In spite of this, remedial classes are great refresher courses where students can not only improve but also build up confidence in themselves and their skills.

A phenomenal remedial class is MAT-011. In comparison to other courses, it definitely is what one would call unconventional. The class is not just any regular lecture, the professor does not pace in front of a dry erase board while the pupils furiously scribble down notes trying to catch every word down on notebook paper.

"The course is more visualized, it takes the instruction away from the teacher being in the center stage to the student," said Dr. Linda Kass, Assistant Chair of the Math Department. "A student becomes more of an independent learner, and takes ownership of their work and their own grade and their own success. And we find that the student excels," Dr. Kass explained.

"The student picks their grade, the students

decides when they want to take an exam, the students chooses when to hand in homework," Dr. Kass told her 9:30 a.m. remedial class on the first day of class. MAT-011 is a mastery self-pace class; no tests are set in stone, and students have the option of finishing the course quicker and moving to a higher math class free of charge, or taking their time without pressure.

The basic mathematics class is designed to ensure a student's success. The class meets twice a week, but goes hand in hand with an additional support class, MAT-010. Students in the class have access to Tec-114 located in the Technology building of the Paramus campus, also known as the HUB. The HUB is a computer lab that accommodates two full classes, and is equipped with staff members to assist at a moment's notice.

The HUB is like the school library and tutoring center combined for a student's benefit. Every single day, professors open the HUB from 9 a.m. until 9 p.m., for the sole purpose of supporting the students in the remedial course. The HUB is also open on Saturday mornings to help students, with the staff ready to guide, while even serving bagels and coffee for the weekend warriors. If an undergraduate misses a class, they are able to make up the absence in the HUB; or, if they

decide to take a test or just need extra time, the HUB is always open for a student.

The course thoroughly covers all basics of math, quickly reviewing subjects from whole numbers to fractions to percentages, and reteaches methods and terminology. The undergraduates use MyMathlab.com, where they have access to online textbooks, in depth videos of professionals, reviews and helpful instructions to ensure they pass.

"This particular class, the guided self-paced mastery class is offered to all students in the college including a choice of a traditional class," Dr. Kass explains. She continued, "The class allows a student to accelerate if they choose, or to go slowly if needed. We say it is a stress free environment. We try to encourage to finish the course early, which is a benefit from the self-pace class and then the students can move into the next class; the algebra class free of charge."

MAT-011 proves the math department wants students to pass in their math classes and support the student body. With an abundance of helpful professors, a facility specialized to the course available all day almost everyday of the week, and MyMathLab.com it makes it pretty hard for a student to fail.

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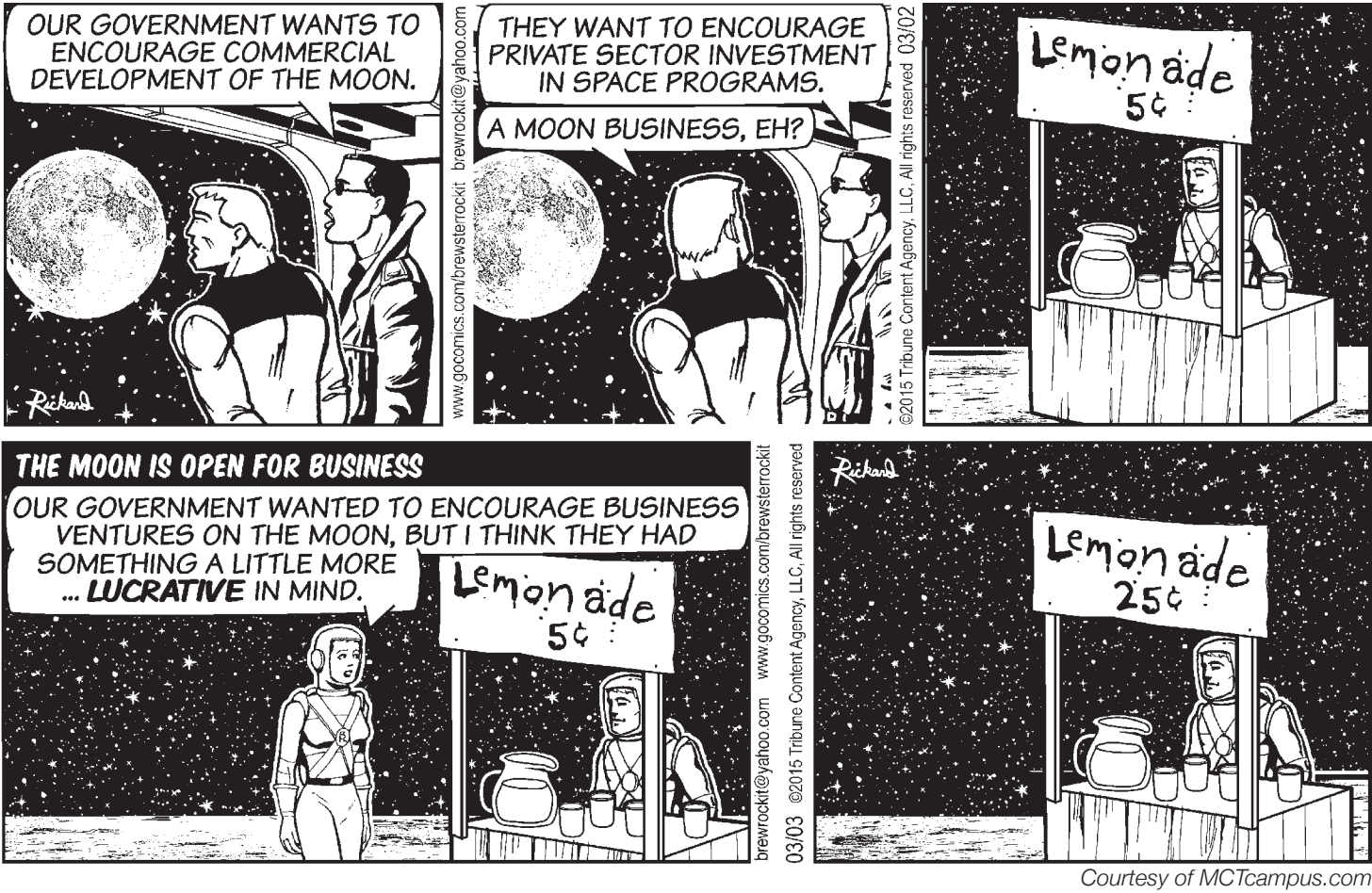


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# Leisurely Diversions!



Courtesy of MCTampus.com

## A LOGIC PUZZLE!

On June 1st, five couples who live in Trumbull will celebrate their wedding anniversaries. Their surnames are Johnstone, Parker, Watson, Graves, and Shearer. The husbands' given names are Russell, Douglas, Charles, Peter, and Everett. The wives' given names are Elaine, Joyce, Marcia, Elizabeth, and Mildred. Keep in mind that no two couples have been married the same number of years. From the clues given, try to determine the husband and wife that make up each couple and the number of years they have been married.

- 1. Joyce has not been married as long as Charles or the Parkers, but longer than Douglas or the Johnstones.
- 2. Elizabeth has been married twice as long as the Watsons, but only half as long as Russell.
- 3. The Shearers have been married ten years longer than Peter and ten years less than Marcia.
- 4. Douglas and Mildred have been married for 25 years less than the Graves who, having been married for 30 years, are the couple who have been married the longest.
- 5. Neither Elaine nor the Johnstones have been married the shortest amount of time.
- 6. Everett has been married for 25 years.

		ELAINE	JOYCE	MARCIA	ELIZABETH	MILDRED	JOHNSTONE	PARKER	WATSON	GRAVES	SHEARER	Years Married	
												Least	Most
HUSBANDS	RUSSELL												
	DOUGLAS												
	CHARLES												
	PETER												
	EVERETT												
WIVES	JOHNSTONE												
	PARKER												
	WATSON												
	GRAVES												
	SHEARER												

## Writing Prompts

Starting with the phrase “Everybody was laughing”, write 500 words from the perspective of someone- from another world, perhaps- who doesn’t understand what humor is.

Compose a poem about winter, but only by describing the sun.

## Try out these riddles. see if you can crack the code.

- With thieves I consort, With the vilest, in short, I’m quite at ease in depravity; Yet all divines use me, And savants can’t lose me, For I am the center of gravity!
- What English word retains the same pronunciation, even after you take away four of its five letters?
- What is the creature that walks on four legs in the morning, two legs at noon and three in the evening?
- If I have it, I don’t share it. If I share it, I don’t have it. What is it?

What does man love more than life  
Fear more than death or mortal strife  
What the poor have, the rich require,  
and what contented men desire,  
What misers spend and spendthrifts save  
And all men carry to their graves?

(Answers on the bottom of the page)

SEE IF YOU CAN SOLVE THESE  
REBUS WORD PUZZLES! FIGURE  
OUT THE COMMON PHRASE  
REPRESENTED.

RAISINGIN  
STA4NCE

(Answers on the bottom of the page)

RIDDLES: The Letter V; Queue; Humans (crawling, walking, using a cane); A Secret; Nothing  
REBUS PUZZLES: Singing in the rain; For instance.  
If you’re having trouble with the logic puzzle, keep at it!





# CAPTAIN'S CORNER:

## Suffering from Mets Fan Syndrome



GABE WANISSIAN  
SPORTS EDITOR

A Met fan's pipe dream.  
Illustration by Gabe Wanissian

The false hope that consumes every Mets fan in the offseason has a lot in common with your average crack head; the euphoric winter highs evolve into the eventual summer comedown. By seasons end, the Mets fan withdrawal reaches its breaking point, so they return to their drug dealer, or, in this case, Mets Upper Management for a fix. Of course the smart drug dealer will give enough to stave off their hunger, but to never satisfy their appetite so they keep coming for more.

Want a little something? Don't you worry, Mets' General Manager, Sandy "Scarface" Alderson will give you some Curtis Granderson, or Jason Bay, hell you might even get an added Michael Cuddyer if you're lucky! But you should know better than to ask for the "real" good stuff, say an All Star like Troy Tulowitzki for example, because that shipment "hasn't come in yet."

These empty promises to the Mets fans have occurred for the past five years, and the Mets fan base has grown increasingly dissatisfied, even bitter. This bitterness isn't directed towards the mediocre roster, the disappointing season finishes, or even the injuries that have plagued key players such as David Wright and Matt Harvey, but it's the corrupt cartel leading Wilpon ownership and Alderson's passive stinginess that has created the "F\*\*\* it now, man" mindset amongst even the biggest supporters of the Metropolitans.

Admittedly so, the current roster isn't all that bad. With the influx of young power pitching and an acceptable offense, if all of the right things line into place, they may be contenders. One may ask, "What's wrong with that?" Well, a closer look reveals a fragile house of cards that can be easily topped down by one jackass. Will Wright and Harvey return to form post-injury? Will Lucas Duda Hit 30 home runs again? Will the addition of hitting coach Kevin Long make Granderson play like his Yankee self again? Was Rookie of the Year winner Jacob Degrom a fluke? Will there be more than 12 people attending Citi Field this season?

Even if all of these questions and doubts were put to rest and the Mets over achieve this season by getting into the playoffs, it would be catastrophic long term, as it would mean that the Upper Management would get rewarded for their piss poor job. It would be better off to see the franchise crumble to the ground. But then, I recall 2006 once again. I remember the high of seeing former Met, Endy Chavez make a game saving catch in the National League Championship Series. I have been chasing that high ever since, like a heroin addict chasing the elusive dragon.

Illustration by Noura Dakka

# Opinion: ESPN's Bias in Sports "Journalism"

CLIFFORD BOAN  
COPY EDITOR

Lebron James, Johnny 'Football' Manziel, Tim Tebow, Jameis Winston, and more Lebron James... What do these players, as well as a certain other few players and teams have in common? ESPN cannot get enough of them. If all of the players on the Seahawks, Tom Brady, Johnny Manziel, Lebron James, Alex Rodriguez, and Tiger Woods threw a party at Yankee Stadium, the station would probably erupt and not be able to function for a couple of months.

Everybody knows it - ESPN is absolutely terrible in unbiased reporting. However, is it the fault of the station and employees, or is it all of us at home who continue to watch, even with all of these 'stories' being played out like a less-funny episode of TMZ? Well, it's a little of both.

During the Alex Rodriguez Steroid scandal, what did you watch to find out what was happening? What about Lebron James 'decision' to go to South Beach to play for the Miami Heat? Even with the most recent "Deflategate", I'm sure that you've tuned into ESPN at least a couple of times to see what's going on. If not, congratulations, you've managed to escape the circus. As long as we continue to consume most of the repetitive garbage that gets shown as SportsCenter, ESPN will continue to get their ratings and own the sports television market.

Of course, the blame can't be put on us completely. ESPN is responsible for putting out the content they do. In fact, they are the only ones responsible for it. As reporters, they should know better than to report with an agenda - especially as the number one sports provider in the country. However, we all know that is almost never the way things are played out, (see: Fox News with politics), as people are still people and love to talk about the things that they are passionate about - and if Jay Crawford isn't all that excited about the Buffalo Sabers talking about trading a third-pair defenceman, well, maybe it won't be talked about during his two-hour time slot.

However, there's a reason that they're attracted to players that always have something going on in their personal lives. These players are what teams call "high-personality players." It's the same reason people know whenever Lindsay Lohan goes out and parties, but have no idea what Leonardo DiCaprio does for fun on weekends. We know Johnny Manziel threw a raging party at his house before the Week 17 game, but can never name Derek Jeter's girlfriend. People who don't want any news about them will not get in the news.

WAIT - DON'T GET YOUR PITCHFORKS OUT JUST YET! There ARE other options for your sports news fix. Another SportsCenter-esque show that you could watch that does not have as much of an agenda that covers much more than SC does in an hour, is Fox Sports LIVE on Fox Sports. The broadcast is more objective overall (unless you like the gossip), and they tend to report on sports much more than stories about athletes. The best option would have to be channels meant for individual leagues. NBA TV, as well as the NFL, MLB, and NHL Networks are all great sources of sports coverage with real reporters that will cover everything that they need to in a day - nothing more, nothing less.



# CM PUNK IS THE STRAIGHT EDGE SAVIOR UFC NEEDS



Photo courtesy of mmaweekly.com

ADRIAN YLLATOPA  
NEWS EDITOR

In the world of sports entertainment, better known as Professional Wrestling, Phil “CM Punk” Brooks is one of the more recognizable and popular stars. Known for his brash personality outside the ring and superb wrestling ability inside it, Brooks had a long and winding falling out with the WWE in the early part of 2014. He walked out from the company in January and went most of the calendar year without making many public appearances.

At UFC 181 on December 6th, Brooks publicly announced that he had signed a multi-fight contract with Ultimate Fighting Championship. The route of professional wrestler-turned mixed martial arts fighter is not an unknown road to those in the wrestling industry. Other notable names include former UFC Heavyweight Champion Brock Lesnar and Ken Shamrock.

As of last year, UFC has been battling declining pay-per-view buyrates as a result of piracy of their events. According to Wrestling Observer Newsletter, the buyrates in 2014 for the UFC drew an average of \$372,727, a decline from the 2013 average of \$420,833.

Can the arrival of arguably the most popular wrestler of the decade make a change in UFC’s financial woes? In the WWE, poster boy John Cena is seen as a character more likable for children, while the CM Punk character had been more amiable for the older demographic that tune in. Later in his tenure, Punk became more and more favored over John Cena overall, and then left.

Still being relevant and popular in the wrestling world, Brooks could be the star UFC needs in order to get over the slump. To get the sense of how marketable Brooks could be, in the summer of 2011 after a memorable storyline with John Cena, a shirt CM Punk wore at a WWE pay-per-view event was in high demand the night after as it was an event-only product. His entrance song “Cult of Personality” by Living Colour, a song released in 1988, jumped to #111 in the iTunes’ Singles Top 200 and #1 on the iTunes’ Rock Songs chart the night he debuted it.

In the past, the promotional strategy of signing well-known athletes with little to no prior mixed martial arts experience has worked financial wonders for the sport. The hype around Kevin Ferguson aka “Kimbo Slice”, the earlier noted Brock Lesnar and Ken Shamrock in UFC, and the signing of former Heisman Trophy recipient Herschel Walker for Strikeforce have greatly benefited the sport.

Former WWE announcer Jim Ross calls the Brooks signing a “solid business.” It could be argued that a considerable amount of WWE fans have never watched a single UFC event. Hearing that the former top star signed up to fight for UFC will be just enough to have them emptying out their pockets. A wrestler who once was able to make waves in the mainstream media, will definitely be able to bring that same attention to the octagon.

## MENS' BASEBALL 2015 SCHEDULE

### February

28th	Prince George	Away	Double Header	12:00PM
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### March

1st	Cumberland CC	Away	Double Header	11:00PM
24th	Raritan Valley CC	Away	Single	3:00PM
26th	Middlesex CC	Away	Double Header	3:30PM
28th	ASA CC	Home	Single	12:00PM
29h	Cumberland CC	Away	Double Header	12:00PM
31st	Union CC	Home	Single	3:30 PM

### April

1st	Sussex CC	Home	Single	3:30PM
3rd	Bucks CC	Away	Double Header	2:00PM
4th	Lehigh Carbon CC	Home	Double Header	12:00PM
7th	Brookdale CC	Away	Single	3:30PM
9th	Raritan Valley CC	Home	Single	3:00PM
11th	Gloucester CC	Away	Double Header	12:00PM
12th	Atlantic Cape CC	Home	Double Header	12:00PM
14th	Middlesex CC	Home	Single	3:30PM
15th	Westchester CC	Home	Single	3:30PM
18th	Ocean CC	Home	Double Header	12:00PM
19th	Luzerne CC	Away	Double Header	12:00PM
21st	Brookdale CC	Home	Single	3:30PM
25th	Camden CC	Home	Double Header	12:00PM
26th	Bronx CC	Home	Double Header	12:00PM
28th	Union CC	Away	Single	3:30PM
29th	Sussex CC	Away	Single	3:30PM

## WOMENS' SOFTBALL 2015 SCHEDULE

### March

14 <sup>th</sup>	Valley Forge CC	Away	1:00	Double Header
21 <sup>st</sup>	Cumberland CC	Away	12:00	Double Header
22 <sup>nd</sup>	Atlantic Cape CC	Away	12:00	Double Header
24 <sup>th</sup>	Union CC	Home	4:00	Double Header
26 <sup>th</sup>	*Northampton Community College	Home	4:00	Double Header
28 <sup>th</sup>	*Middlesex County College	Home	12:00	Double Header
29 <sup>th</sup>	*Camden County College	Home	12:00	Double Header
31 <sup>st</sup>	*Ocean County College	Away	3:30	Double Header

### April

2 <sup>nd</sup>	Brookdale CC	Home	4:00	Double Header
4 <sup>th</sup>	*Luzerne County Community College	Away	12:00	Double Header
6 <sup>th</sup>	RVCC	Home	3:30	Double Header
11 <sup>th</sup>	RCGC	Away	12:00	Double Header
12 <sup>th</sup>	*Montgomery Community College	Away	12:00	Double Header
18 <sup>th</sup>	*Lehigh Carbon CC	Home	12:00	Double Header
19 <sup>th</sup>	*Sussex County Community College	Home	12:00	Double Header

25<sup>th</sup> Reg. 19 DIII Tourn. (1st Round@ higher Seed)  
2-3<sup>rd</sup> Reg. 19 DIII Tourn. (1st Round@ higher Seed)

\* Reg. XIX DIII Opponent



# Graduating From Bergen Community College?

## Spring 2015 College Transfer Information Presentations

- Wednesday, February 4 .....William Paterson University
- Wednesday, February 11.....Baruch College
- Wednesday, February 18.....Rutgers University
- Wednesday, March 4.....Ramapo College of New Jersey
- Wednesday, March 25 .....John Jay College of Criminal Justice
- Wednesday, April 1 .....Montclair State University
- Wednesday, April 8.....New Jersey Institute of Technology
- Wednesday, April 15 .....New Jersey City University

Meet with representatives from area colleges on campus.

12:30 p.m. to 1:30 p.m.  
Main Campus, C-313





# Seahawks' Trash is Pats' Treasure:



GELBER CASTILLO  
STAFF WRITER

Super Bowl XLIX proved that the Brady-Belichick era still runs strong. The Patriots have accumulated an astonishing 4 Super Bowl wins in the 21st century. During this time, Tom Brady surpassed Joe Montana with a record 13 career Super Bowl touchdown passes. For Brady, standing at the podium seemed as natural as another day at the office.

The athletic showdown began as an evenly matched gladiatorial contest throughout the first half. Russell Wilson, despite his disappointing first-half pass attempt/completion rate, redeemed himself later in the game by displaying his true potential. His drive in the second half was reminiscent of their previous playoff matchup against the Packers. Only this time, the Patriots had Malcolm Butler to intercept Wilson’s desperate and potentially game-ending throw.

Our last glimpse of this year’s football action being a scuffle between players summed up the entire season for the league. The argument concerning this foul aspect of the game, with the domestic-abuse scandal still fresh in the NFL’s mind, and the continuing plague of concussions remain contentious topics.

Undeniably, the balance of power in the league has shifted. The Patriots have not only usurped the Seahawks’ seat as the dominant team, they have demonstrated that Brady’s age does not prevent them from meeting the already high expectations surrounding them.

But the Seahawks remain a powerhouse heading into next season. Marshawn Lynch has only improved his trademark “Beast Mode,” while the Legion of Boom, consisting of Richard Sherman, Byron Maxwell, Kam Chancellor and Earl Thomas, remains consistently strong.

There is much to look forward to next year. The upcoming draft will provide better predictions, and, just as the Seahawks lost their title in a split-second, so can the Patriots. For now, Malcolm Butler’s shoving of Ricardo Lockette for the interception will be a recurring nightmare for Seahawks fans, while New England’s faithful will be dreaming well for a longtime.



Pats QB Tom Brady and RB Brandon Bolden celebrate the Super Bowl win.  
Courtesy of Gannet-cdn.com

# Marshawn Lynch's Rocky Road with Press



GABE WANISSIAN  
SPORTS EDITOR

The enigma that is Marshawn Lynch.  
Courtesy of irishtimes.com

An athlete will typically give a post game interview by giving a rundown on the game and their performance; “I’m just here so I won’t get fined,” is all you’ll get from Seattle Seahawks running back Marshawn Lynch. Refusing to cooperate with interviews during the Super Bowl Media Week, footage of Lynch seemingly toying with reporters by responding to questions by repeating the same answer has caused quite a stir amongst fans and detractors alike.

While the “Beast Mode” athlete’s behavior has recently captured America’s attention due to the hype that surrounds the juggernaut event that is the Super Bowl, Lynch’s poor relationship with the press isn’t anything new. Lynch has given rare legitimate interviews granted for Deion Sanders, sportswriter Michael Silver, and a hilarious Skittles Mock Press Conference that was held after signing an endorsement deal with Mars,Inc, the owners of the Skittles brand, but he will not budge for the rest of them.

Lynch was fined by the NFL in both 2013 and 2014 for avoiding press. Many wonder however, what the motive is behind Lynch’s actions. In his interview with Silver, Lynch said, “There are only so many times I can say ‘I owe it to my offensive linemen’ or ‘the credit should go to my teammates’ before it gets run down.”

While some fans and analysts have commended Lynch on social media for not giving generic politically correct answers that many star athletes give on media day, there’s also been a large backlash within the sports journalism community towards Lynch’s purported unprofessionalism for the reporters trying to get their story. Marcus Hayes, Columnist for the Philadelphia Daily News said, “Duty should not be served. It is part of being a professional. It’s part of being an adult. Marshawn Lynch is neither.” Many also maintain the stance that since the reporter brings recognition to the athlete, and the athlete gives the story to the reporter, the symbiotic relationship should therefore, be respected on both ends.

That still doesn’t sway the opinion that many hold in regards to plenty of press conferences held for athletes as Grantland writer Andrew Sharp said, “Does anybody remember what Tom Brady said last week?” Lynch’s recent behavior has seemingly shined light on a system of sports coverage that may need revision. Lynch repeating, “You know why I’m here,” may be a form of protest, or he may simply not care. The world knows about him due to the very thing he despises; the sports journalist.





# The Torch SPORTS



## A Change in Leadership, A Change in Dynamics



**GELBER CASTILLO**  
STAFF WRITER



Jason-Fred Miavivululu (left) and Louis Isern (right) helped lead the Bulldogs to victory against Passaic.  
Photo courtesy of ihigh.com

A lot can be said about a team when they face their rivals, so when Bergen Community College reigned victorious over their Passaic Community College rivals one Thursday night, they exemplified the ongoing 2014-2015 Men's Basketball season: team-solidarity coupled with solid teamplay.

The Bulldogs' victory was more than sufficient in electrifying the gym's atmosphere. White, purple and orange jerseys dominated the court against Passaic, all thanks to the highly passionate head coach, Carlos Quinteros. His fiery game-time display consisted of uproarious remarks on fouls and referee incompetence not only motivated the Bulldogs to victory, but was also mirrored by the players' game-time heat.

Captaining the charge against Passaic was Ruben Acosta (#11), a spirited young player who defiantly broke Passaic's defense. Jason-Fred Miavivululu (#3) stood his ground as an unwavering, towering force to be reckoned with. Doug Palmadessa's (#00) explosiveness broke ankles and scored 22 points, while John Agurto (#10)

could best be described as a playmaker that night.

The Bulldogs paraded into the locker-room with high morale after the victory, but no one expected Coach Quinteros to resign. Taking his place now is former assistant-coach Peter Jablonski. The following Saturday, in his debut game versus Rowan College, the Bulldogs lost 83-73. Jablonski gave no comment post-game.

When comparing coaches, one has to examine their strengths. Quinteros had an aptitude for defense, and his presence from the sidelines motivated the players. Athletic Department staff Francis Osimider said, "The fact that he wasn't here screaming at them, keeping them on their feet, might have affected them one way or another."

It's too soon to determine Jablonski's strengths, but the players are remaining optimistic. When asked about the change in coaches, Bulldogs Forward Louis Isern said, "We still have a lot of hope... I mean, it's [Jablonski's] first game, he's good. It's not gonna be easy, we're gonna have to adjust a little bit."

The current seasonal record stands at 13-9. But, as Isern stated, "Our record doesn't signify who we are." Indeed, despite the loss to Rowan college that Saturday, the team still displayed solidarity and trust in each other's abilities.

As the playoffs loom closer, there is much to be expected from Jablonski. "I think we're gonna get a good seed in the playoffs," said Isern, "We can make a push... We just gotta get the streak and get hot and take it from there."

Quinteros' legacy remains in the minds of our players. "He was really loved by his team," said Andre Jones, an Athletic Department staff member, "I could see how it's affecting them, but they're strong, they push through." The wins against the formidable Brookdale and their Passaic rivals prove that the team has the competence for a deep run in the playoffs. Undoubtedly, the Bulldogs' heat hasn't cooled.

## WRESTLERS BRING BULLDOG BRAVADO



Gabe Wanissian//The Torch



Photo courtesy of ihigh.com

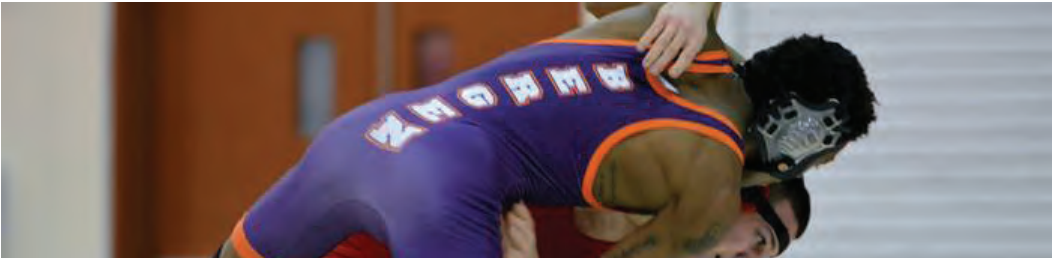


Photo courtesy of ihigh.com

**GABE WANISSIAN**  
SPORTS EDITOR

It's winter 2015, and the Bulldogs' Wrestling team is pushing through the blizzard of opposing teams, one half-nelson at a time. A storm is bound to be filled with plenty of flurries and slush, in this case being wins and losses, but as standout freshman wrestler Khalil Zawaide puts it, "We tend to get better, we get back up, we try our best to win the match. One individual loss does not affect us because we'll try to fight to get the W as a group."

Bergen's performance thus far has reflected as such, a victoriless CMSV Dolphin Invitational to start off the season was quickly followed by a dominating 30-15 victory against United States Military Prep on January 10. Team captain James Henry brought in the most points with a 12-5 decision victory against Henri Noel.

Henry, a freshman, acknowledges their solid start to the season thus far, as well as the potential to improve going forward. "We are doing pretty good. We are really well conditioned, we just need to stay off our backs[On the Mat], that can be the difference between winning and losing," he said.

They lost to Springfield CC (32-18), but it can be an even tougher pill to swallow when close matches fall out of grasp, such as the heartbreaking four-point loss against Centenary College. (28-24) "[Centenary is] a tough team, we were prepared,

it's just they had a little bit more experience with their kids," said Zawaide

10 of the 13 wrestlers on the team are first-year students, making for a relatively young Bulldogs squad. However, NJCAA Hall Of Famer Head Coach Ed Kochajki brings a very dynamic experience that benefits wrestlers in all aspects on the mat. "If there's anything that you're doing wrong he will work on it with you," said Henry.

If there were any situation throughout the season that held true to those words, the landslide 40-14 victory against Sullivan CC On January 22, for the Bulldogs.

The team is young, hungry and poised to make noise towards the final stretch of meets (Notably the Eastern Districts II on Feb 14); Zawaide's undefeated record as of February 2nd gives him a shot to make the NJCAA tournament that begins on February 26.

"The wins we're receiving just makes us wanna win more and more, beating teams 40 - 14 changes you, it raises the teams confidence," said Zawaide.

When one walks on to the mat with 'Bulldog Bravado,' the battle is already won.