Learning to be a Leader

LESHAY JONES
News Editor

Forty-three students piled onto a Coach bus in April to attend Bergen Community College’s annual Leadership Weekend in Parsippany.

This special weekend is organized by the Office of Student Life and has been going on for the past 20 years. According to Greg Fenkart, Coordinator of Student Development, the purpose of the weekend is to provide an intensive yet inspirational learning experience in which students are exposed to leadership information and ideas in ways that might not occur inside the classroom.

Students have the opportunity to interact with faculty, staff, and outside presenters in a more direct and personal way than they would in another environment,” Fenkart said.

This year, the focus was on unity and leading with compassion, and was centered around a Star Wars theme, courtesy of Fenkart who is a diehard fan of the franchise.

There were many insightful presentations from BCC staff and faculty and even one from Pace University.

One of the first presentations, given by Ronald McKnight, the director of Multicultural Affairs at BCC, was on networking and building impactful relationships.

In his presentation, he spoke on the importance of networking and how it is essential for leaders to be able to network effectively. “You will not get the best fruit of your labor if you do not know how to network,” McKnight said.

There was also a presentation on civic leadership given by John Reinhardt, Coordinator of Leadership Initiatives at Pace University. In this presentation, Reinhardt explained the importance of following your civic duty and helping the community around you and getting involved. He explained that this is one of the first steps in leadership.

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Tedx Returns to BCC

ADRIANNA CARABALLO
Editor in Chief

TEDx has once again given Bergen Community College students a reason to file into the Anna Maria Ciccone theatre.

On March 7th, between the hours of 9:00 and 4:00, BCC hosted yet another successful TEDx event. There were 3 breaks for coffee, lunch, and lunch between the event.

TEDx usually consists of various speakers giving short motivational speeches to their audience, which can range from 3-12 minutes. The audience will go deep into their personal lives to convey an important message to their audience.

The theme this past year was all about change. How do we change ourselves? How do we change our world? How do we change the world itself?

These are some of the questions the TEDx speakers hoped to answer for those struggling with forgiveness, forgiveness being one of the hardest things a person can do for themselves; it’s always easier to hate than to forgive.

The event started with Rebecca Schreff, an author, well-being coach and mother. Her main focus was having compassion and understanding for oneself and those around you. She addressed the issue of body image and hating oneself, something especially difficult to handle for a college student.

The event ended with Nick Maccarone, an actor who has appeared on multiple popular shows like Law and Order SVU and Scandal. His talk was formed around 6 principles that can help those getting into the entertainment industry.

In the middle were other inspiring and personal speeches delivered by the various TEDx speakers. Subjects ranged from sexual abuse to family issues to becoming successful.

Many people outside of Bergen Community College have jumped online to watch these Ted talks.

“We just found out that our videos have surpassed 6 million views, which is unprecedented for a two year college,” said Ellen Rosner Feig, professor, founder and coordinator of TEDx Bergen Community College.

It is no doubt that TEDx has been a success at BCC, but how did it all start?

“TED offers licenses for ‘X’ events which are like franchises for the larger TED organization. I applied for the TEDx license for BCC five years ago and received it which made us the first community college in the country to have a TEDx event,” said Feig.

Ever since then BCC has been putting on yearly TEDx shows that have benefited students in many ways more than one.

“The student volunteers really get to experience the process of doing a TEDx event, learn to work as a team, get to meet the speakers and interact with them and meet other students that they would not necessarily meet,” Feig said.

Valuable lessons can be obtained both from listening to the guest speakers on stage and the hands-on experience of volunteer work.

“One of my greatest joys is watching a group of students who didn’t know one another before that morning become friends,” said Feig.

Creating a TEDx event is a yearlong process that takes a great amount of time and effort from both student volunteers and faculty.

“As there is no pay involved, this effort is really one of love, a love of the experience and a love of helping students expand their world. This event is important for the college as it puts us on the map worldwide,” said Feig.
Bergen Community College held one of its annual art exhibitions, displaying various kinds of artwork from eleven professional artists from New York, New Jersey and Massachusetts.

This exhibition displays various kinds of artworks from paintings and film pieces, to handmade sculptures. The goal of the exhibit was to provide students with a better understanding of art and the messages it brings. The artists, many of them local to the area, were more than pleased to have their work displayed to the student body.

“I really enjoy the company of the other artists that are here. I think it says something about at least a current movement in art that employs color, shape and form as vibrantly as the title says. [There’s a lot of] activity and energy in the work, so I’m really glad to be a part of it,” commented James Pustorino, an artist whose work is displayed at the exhibit.

The exhibit lasted from February 15 to March 31 and was curated by Professor Claire McConaughy, whose teachings involve visual and fine art, along with graphic design.

McConaughy helped curate the event, which took seven months to organize and visited many art galleries in trying to pick out what pieces of artwork would be the best fit for the exhibit. “Since I curated the exhibition [and] since I chose all of the artworks that would come together here, I had an idea that I wanted to fill the gallery with vitality,” Professor McConaughy said.

Testifying to the variety present in art, the exhibition presented many events such as discussions of Gregg Biermann’s video called the “Abstraction Galactica and Abstraction in Film” on March 22. They also held lunchtime movies and documentaries about the abstract artists, which included Gerhard Richter, Joan Mitchell, Agnes Martin and others.

Learning to be a Leader

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Justice professor at Bergen, Farhat, being another diehard Star Wars fan, gave students a Star Wars Leadership Style test to help students find out even more about the kind of leader that they are.

Afterwards, the student facilitators -- who were there to help the advisors get students talking and make sure they felt it was a safe space -- gave a presentation on how each of them are becoming leaders. Surely, the Leadership weekend was a very insightful and inspiring experience for students and staff who have attended, and there was a lot that was to be taken away.

“The main takeaway I would like for students to have from the weekend is that they not only have the ability to create change and improve the world, but the responsibility to do so,” Fenkart said.

When closing his presentation, Reinhardt said, “Leadership is a process, not a position.” Bergen’s very own Joli Nelson, Department Secretary of Student Life, led a discussion on leading with compassion. She had some students participate in an improvisational skit on the differences between and an authoritative leader and a compassionate leader.

Philosophy and Religion Professor Peter Dlugos gave an interactive presentation on cultivating compassion through mindful presence and led the group through a guided meditation.

Ian Wolfe, Coordinator of Student Conduct & Information, gave a presentation on individual leadership and offered students a leadership quiz called, “True Colors.” Students were able to find out more about who they are and how they behave as leaders.

One of the last presentations was given by Mecheline Farhat, a Criminal
Student Group Feeds Hungry Kids

IAN HARTMAN
Contributing Writer

Phi Theta Kappa, the honors society at Bergen, held a snack pack event on Friday Mar. 17.

The snack pack program was born after a teacher noticed that her students were coming into school suffering from lightheadedness and other symptoms of hunger. Without the free food provided by the school lunch program, millions of children face a “weekend of deprivation” which the snack pack program aims to eliminate.

The program provides poor children with healthy snacks that can keep them going over the weekend, despite the lack of a regular lunch. The BCC students gathered to help in the last step of the program, filling plastic bags with a variety of healthy snacks.

These bags were distributed to hungry children across the county by The Center for Food Action, a local food bank. The event, Phi Theta Kappa’s first collaboration with The CFA, was funded by money raised during the club’s Valentine’s Day bake sale.

Childhood hunger is a major issue in New Jersey, with one in seven families across the state struggling to put food on the table. In 2014, 375,000 children suffered from food insecurity in our state.

According to Agatha Rodolfa, a spokesperson for PTK, the group filled 90 snack packs that will provide nutritious food for students at schools including Grecco Elementary in Englewood and Washington Memorial Elementary in Little Ferry.

Rodolfa noted that hunger has a negative impact on students’ cognitive abilities, making it harder to learn.

By providing students with healthy snacks, the club hopes they can make a big difference in the lives of children at the bottom of America’s economic system.

Phi Theta Kappa Welcomes Spring Inductees

THEA OH
Copy Editor

A rush of pride and anticipation filled the air as hundreds of students, guests, and former inductees filled the BCC’s gymnasium.

As the induction ceremony commenced, almost 300 inductees took their place among an ever-growing community of peers.

Phi Theta Kappa is an international honors organization that recognizes the achievements of students in two-year colleges. At any point in time, Bergen boasts approximately 1,000 members, who in turn represent Alpha Epsilon Phi, one of the top 30 most active chapters of PTK in the world. Amidst a student body 15,000 strong, these new inductees represent the top 5% of Bergen students.

Alumni speaker and former PTK President David Kawash addressed the crowd with words of encouragement and advice, “Get involved right away,” he stressed, and “network, network, network!”

Meanwhile, the keynote address, given by Dean of Health Professions Susan Callahan Barnard, celebrated the diversity and grit that lies within every inductee. Imbuing her address was the idea that excellence is wrought from “lessons learned,” risks taken, and plenty of hard work.

For these inductees, the challenge begins here, as being part of PTK is no easy feat. In order to qualify for membership and moreover, to keep their status as members, students must maintain a GPA of 3.4 or higher at all times or part-time, or with membership and moreover, to achieve a GPA of 3.25.

As part of PTK, members will learn to foster the four hallmarks of excellence: scholarship, leadership, fellowship, and service.

At the same time, these new inductees will be met with open doors like never before. As part of PTK, members will learn to foster the four hallmarks of excellence: scholarship, leadership, fellowship, and service.

Describing his experience within PTK since his induction last year, residing member Alex Czuchnowicz, notes, “Immediately, you notice you have a lot more opportunities to get social capital.” In ways big and small, he explains, there are networking advantages that come with getting involved in an organization like PTK.

“Even just walking around campus, you say ‘hi’ to people more.”

Being part of an organization that puts positive social change and student activism at the forefront of its vision comes with rewards. Members are encouraged to get involved in outreach programs, community service, and campus events, and are challenged to pursue leadership opportunities within BCC.

This semester, BCC has witnessed PTK in action during their recent blood and bone marrow registry drive, Bergen Salon session, TEDx and snack pack events, and many more programs.

Incoming members can expect a proactive community of high-reaching peers to guide them along their path through Bergen. Roxa Canomori, a freshman international student and incoming PTK inductee, said that, although making the cut was “double the work because I had to speak English 24/7,” she knows the efforts will pay off in the form of leadership, community service and social opportunities.

Of the induction ceremony, she exclaimed, “I was so excited I was shaking this morning.”

Congratulations to all of Bergen’s Spring Phi Theta Kappa inductees.
Immigration Lawyer Advises BCC Students

FERNANDO VAZQUEZ
Contributing Writer

Immigration and Nationality Lawyer David H. Nachman from Visaserve Law Group hosted an important forum for the BCCs International F1 students and the people in common. The presentation was organized by the International Students Center’s office and its staff. Nachman gave a thoughtful insight on immigration laws such as the controversial IRAIRA immigration law, the confusing executive orders of President Donald Trump’s travel restrictions, how to apply for a provisional waiver and whether or not it’s appropriate to travel abroad.

Nachman spoke of the constant calls he has been receiving from employees of major multi-national companies worried about their visas and whether they have to apply for a provisional waiver.

Nachman said “It’s been one of the most confusing years. The United States used to be an immigrant country, but now under Trump’s administration, the platform was anti-immigrant.”

One of Trump’s controversial executive orders was the travel ban, which prohibited people from seven Muslim-majority countries from entering the United States. The ban caused an uproar from the people in the U.S. and concerns from people overseas. Federal courts blocked the ban.

“For now, there’s no travel ban, but tomorrow, we will never know if there will be another controversial restraining order,” Nachman said.

Indeed, the Trump administration rolled out another travel ban in early March, which was also blocked by federal judges.

In light of the confusion surrounding non-citizens travel status, Nachman suggests that “if you don’t have a misdemeanor, a DUI or a serious minor offense, find an immigration lawyer, whether or not to travel abroad.”

According to serious reports, permanent U.S. residents are getting detained and unfortunately getting extradited to their country of origin from an offense that was on the person’s record.

“If getting detained, do not sign anything and insist to see your own lawyer. Find an immigration lawyer, Nachman said.

While the country is witnessing the most difficult and chilling times, Nachman gave wonderful advice.

“We’re in a period of time where enforcement is going to get established, and scrutiny is going to step up, where telling people to be careful and make sure you’re doing very well and obeying the laws and make sure to find good guidance and information,” Nachman concluded.

Over 45 Bomb Threats and Incidents of Vandalism Since New Years

IAN HARTMAN
Contributing Writer

A wave of Anti-Semitic, racist and Islamophobic incidents have left communities across North America reeling. Ranging from bomb threats against Mosques and Jewish Community Centers, the distribution of racist and far-right propaganda on college campuses, such incidents are part of a general spike in far-right attitudes and militancy.

Allison Tate from Today.com reports that 54 Jewish Community Centers, most of which provide preschools for children as young as 3 years old, have been shut down due to bomb threats. New Jersey alone has seen 21 such threats as of Feb 28, according to a report by S.P Sullivan published on NJ.com. In addition, the Council on Islamic-American Relations has documented 23 incidents targeting Mosques, including bomb threats in Ohio and Cincinnati, according to Jack Jenkins at Thinkprogress.org.

In addition to threats, several incidents of vandalism have been documented. Vandals kicked over headstones at Jewish cemeteries in at least three cities. Several Mosques have also faced serious vandalism, including an arson attack on a Mosque in Tampa, Florida.

While the fire was contained by the prompt action of emergency personnel, the attack was the second incident of arson against a Mosque in Florida. The September 2016 firebombing of The Islamic Center of Fort Pierce in Orlando was investigated as a hate crime by the local sheriff’s office in conjunction with the FBI, according to Al Jazeera America.

Alongside anonymous threats and lone wolf vandalism, far-right and racist organizations have stepped up public recruitment and propaganda activities. The New York Times reports that far right groups have engaged in recruitment and propaganda activities at over 100 universities since the start of the semester in September.

Hackers at Vanderbilt University made several school printers churn out anti-semitic flyers, according to The Tennessean. Activists affiliated with the racist Identity Europa Organization put up “all right” and Neo-Nazi flyers at several universities in Atlanta, Georgia according to Atlanta Antifa, an organization that monitors hate groups.

These recruitment activities represent a concerted effort by organized hate groups to build on the momentum of the Trump campaign. Emboldened by what they understand as an endorsement by a majority of voters for an explicitly racist and nationalistic political platform, these groups are looking to move off of online forums and into the physical world.

By using vandalism and threats against those they see standing in the way of their vision of an all white, male dominated America, these hate groups are attempting to create a climate of fear in which they can enact their program with minimal resistance.
The Muslim Ban 2.0

DAVID PEREZ  
STAFF WRITER

This is more of a hands on approach and a legal document known as a “legal filing” that the new Muslim ban would harm Hawaii’s educational institutions, private business and discriminate against families with relatives overseas.

The first Muslim ban was undeniably unsuccessful and was also shut down by the courts within a week or so of its application. After this, they took him to a room and then proceeded to ask him the same questions even though he is an American citizen.

He explained how he went to Manchester, England a year ago and had more or less the same experience. He was with his mother then added that she had come from Paris, France two weeks prior to the event at the airport, she was alone and no one had bothered her at all.

One of those differences between the new and old ban is that it has six majority-Muslim countries instead of seven, Iran now excluded.

The New Front...In Syria?

DAVID PEREZ  
STAFF WRITER

Northern Syria could be seeing more of the American Flag soon if the early plans that the U.S. military has drawn up get approved.

This approval would come from Defense Secretary Jim Mattis and President Trump and the details of the plan would come from Gen. Joseph Votel, the head of U.S. Central Command, according to The Washington Post. This could potentially double the amount of troops in Syria overall if this were approved.

The Washington Post’s article “U.S. Army’s 82nd Airborne Division, from which 2,500 troops are headed to Kuwait” The Washington Post’s article said. This is more of a hands on approach to the situation in Syria. There would also be a plan B so to speak in this matter. This plan B would be potentially pushing US forces into direct fire and into combat. These forces could also be supplied by United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and Jordan.
The Un-United States

ADRIANNA CARABALLO
Editor in Chief

From the minute Donald Trump was elected president of the United States, the country split into two. This is not even about Democrats and Republicans, nor liberals and conservatives. This is about Trump supporters and non-Trump supporters.

Things are not getting any better since nothing is being done to unite the people. Trump has not made any efforts to sooth the concerns of those that may not agree with his ideals.

"Trump does what he wants and if you don’t like it, then too bad"—that’s the attitude that is being displayed on a daily basis. Trump is losing his supporters and he’s not gaining any new ones, yet the supporters lost aren’t running to the other side.

What is occurring is reminiscent of a sports game: neither side wants to abandon the game, but are running to the other side.

If Trump is the president of the United States, then he needs to do something. Trump supporter’s attitude that is being displayed is not creating unity. Trump’s way of speaking is not uniting the people. The Un-United States.

Dear Student Body,

I hope that everyone has had a great academic year so far. In this month’s letter, I’d like to give everyone some advice, tips and locations of services that you can use to further your own benefit. I also seek to ensure that you all learn from my mistakes and the mistakes of others rather than repeating themselves.

The first and most important thing is registration. Registration for Fall classes begins April 1st online and in Room SC-111D, 400 Paramus Road Paramus, NJ 07652-1595 from my mistakes and the Bergen Community College community. Materials should be submitted to eictorch@gmail.com or delivered to The Torch office, SC-111. Those 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 position or opinion. Opinions are limited to 600 words and letters to the editor are to 200 words. The Torch reserves the right to edit and to refuse publication of any submission.

The Torch offices are located in Room SC-111D, 400 Paramus Road Paramus, NJ 07652-1595 201.493.5008/5007 eictorch@gmail.com

I sincerely hope that these tips will help you in your journey here at Bergen. With that being said, if you have any tips, tricks or strategies that you’ve come up with, e-mail me at SGAPresident@my.bergen.edu that way I can share them with the rest of the student body.

Have a great rest of the day and good luck with your educational journey!

Sincerely,

President David DeLizio

For more information go to www.bergen.edu
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WHY DREW IS GOOD FOR BERGEN COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS:

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- International opportunities spanning the globe.
Contemporary Color Makes It To The Stage And The Big Screen!

By Byrne created this event, co-founded with Toronto’s Luminato Festival, and commissioned by the Brooklyn Academy of Music and Winter Guard International. "My first thought was ‘what the hell is this?’" said rival Black Watch Color. "I started watching it and my jaw dropped." Byrne said when describing watching color guard for the first time. "My first thought was ‘what is this color guard? Is this really happening? How does she manage to do that?’"

Contemporary Color was started by a high school simulation asking Byrne for permission to use his music because he saw that they were just a high school color guard, also known and dubbed as the sport of the arts. He asked only for a favor: that he show them a video of their championship performance.

Months passed and Byrne completely forgot about this color guard until he received in the mail their video of their world championship performance in Dayton, Ohio. Upon viewing the performance, Byrne was blown away by the artistic stylings of the group and decided to supply them with previously recorded background tracks.

Contemporary Color first premiered in theaters on March 1, 2017. The documentary Color Makes It To The Stage And The Big Screen! was at first, said Black Watch Color cast member Todd Watson, "but I had no idea what it [Contemporary Color] was all about," and David Byrne was happy with the reception. Byrne was so great and fun." Whether there is to be a second Contemporary Color or not, many members are all for doing it again. "If there was a second Contemporary Color, I wouldn't even question doing it again." Said Juers about the subject. "I would love to say yes! I would do Contemporary Color again."
“You’re Donald Trump” were the words that were shouted at my father while walking down the street in New York City recently. Why so? He looks nothing like Donald Trump, other than the fact that he is white. My father was a victim of reverse racism.

I also know the feeling all too well. When I was eight-years-old I went to a mostly Hispanic school in Queens, New York, PS19, also known as Dutch-Kills.

While there, I was ostracized by both teachers and students. One teacher in particular would not give me cookies if I didn’t complete my homework or answer a question correctly. My parents confronted her on the matter and her response to them was, that she was hard on me because she expected more out of me since I was white too.

These “labels” on children are unfair and need to be stopped. No child is better than another because of their skin color. And then, there is bullying, ridicule and name calling. Why are children subjected to that?

Any sort of racism is mindless and primitive. Haven’t we moved passed this? Sadly, no. Society needs to learn to embrace other cultures and ethnicities, not just in the United States but around the world in order to progress.

People who are bi-racial, a massive part of the population, feel the brunt of this hatred. You don’t quite fit in with one side and you don’t quite fit in with the other.

I am Puerto Rican, Irish and Colombian, but all people see is the Irish side of me that makes my skin white. There was a time when the Irish were not even considered white, but no longer. I, and many others who are bi-racial, should be proud of all their sides instead of trying to be accepted by one or the other.

Do I consider myself to be Hispanic? Yes. Do I consider myself to be Irish? Also yes, and that’s okay because that’s what I am. Be proud of who you are.
Living with Siblings

LESHAY JONES
News Editor

Living with siblings is a complete train wreck. Take it from someone who has two siblings and is stuck in the middle.

For most of my life, I have been the middle child in my family and trust me, it is just as traumatizing as it sounds. From growing up with siblings, this is my basic understanding of how the “sibling chain” works.

We are born as the queen/king: The first born has it worst in the sense that they have a lot to live up to. When you are the first born your parents have extremely high expectations in regards to your grades, maturity and overall behavior.

However, the oldest is also the one who calls the shots when your parents aren’t around. They are automatically left in charge when mom and dad decide to go out and try to relive the thrill they felt before they had kids. My older sister is the queen of the house, or so I was told.

The youngest, aka the spoiled brat: The youngest probably has it best, considering the fact that they can practically get away with murder. When you’re the youngest, you are more than likely the apple of your parents’ eyes, their precious little baby. I like to think of the youngest as the demon child that can do no wrong, cute and sweet on the outside, pure evil on the inside.

The middle child, aka the ghost: Have you ever wished you were invisible? Just wish to become a middle child. Being the middle child is almost exactly like being invisible. I remember times where my older sister would be out with my mom, my little brother would be out with my dad and I, well, I was stuck cooking in the kitchen with grandma.

Being invisible, I mean the middle child, has its perks. Number one is that no one ever really wonders where you are. I can shut myself in my room for a full 24 hours and have no one bother me. Middle children are also sometimes considered the “peacekeepers” of the siblings but in my experience, that’s a load of nonsense.

Now, with every group of siblings comes a “it’s like living in the wild and each of you is a different species hunting the same antelope.” You may not feel like you compete, but trust me, you do, from who is the best at UNO to whom is mom’s favorite.

My siblings and I are extremely competitive and none of us really likes to admit it. There were times when we used to fight over who loved mom or dad more, and trust me, those fights can turn brutal.

Despite the middle-child syndrome that I have extensively suffered from, living with siblings isn’t all that bad and it definitely has its perks.

Once, you get lifetime best friends. For me, no matter how much we argue and fuss, we’ve got each other’s backs, we can tell each other almost anything and more than anything else, we love each other.

You can’t live with them, but you can’t live without siblings. // Rebecca Karpinski

More Than Melancholy

NICK COWLING
Staff Writer

“Snap out of it.” “Smile more.” “There are a lot of people who have it worse.” These phrases share the common misunderstanding of the incredibly difficult subject that is mental health.

Physically intangible but consisting of serious circumstances, illness of the mind is a silent and pervasive disease still in its infancy of understanding. Many of the symptoms associated with a mental illness begin to boil during the end of adolescence and into adulthood.

It’s a frightening reaction to an anti-depressant medication and it put me into a hyper-agitated state of mania that kept me running at a maximum speed for days on end.

I was to learn my diagnosis of bipolar disorder that changed my life forever. Self-harm, suicidal ideation and hospitalizations have all been part of my existence in the last few years. My knuckles and arms still bear the scars, a permanent reminder of my strife.

Medication has aided me greatly but not without its downsides and side-effects. I experience tremors and I often have difficulty with memory and concentration. A tradeoff, but a worthy one.

My story is not unique, nor is it special—far from it. I’ve been through clinical group therapy sessions with a variety of people who have experienced everything from social anxiety to attempted efforts to kill themselves to paranoid schizophrenia. All of us shared a common goal and that was to get better, to understand why we experience what we feel.

The point I wish to get across to anyone reading this piece, who find their mind taking them to unexplainable places that they don’t understand, is to realize that there are victories that can be accomplished in this ever-present battle.

You need to speak up. You need to take initiative. It’s scary, I know, but to walk in masonry is a recipe for dangerous actions and a life of burden. Utilize your resources: family, friends, a professor, or colleague. Set appointments with doctors and therapists.

Cultivating inner strength is taxing, but it’s invaluable and your best instrument to adequately prepare for periods of depression or anxiety or hallucinations or any symptom across the spectrum.

To those reading without a disorder; there is an obligation to educate yourself for the betterment of your loved ones. You would never tell a diabetic to simply “get over” their condition, so why would you do it when it comes to someone’s brain? Never invalidate a person’s struggle simply because you don’t understand. We need your support, not scorn.

There is no magic pill. There is no grand epiphany where everything succeeding it becomes perfect. The struggle of mental illness is a life-long war with peaks and valleys. There are times to be adamant, and what better time to fight than when no one is watching.

Reach out. Someone will extend their hand for you to grasp and when they do, pay it forward. Someone may need it more than you realize.
Holi 2017: Carnival of Colors

On Phalgun, the day after full moon in early March, many throughout areas of India, Nepal, Pakistan, Malaysia, Sri Lanka and South Asia celebrate the festival Holi. Holi is the festival of colors and happiness, and is meant to represent the triumph of good over evil. The main purpose of the Holi festival is to welcome the beginning of spring, share compassion with others and to honor the Hindu god Vishnu. This festival has spread throughout Europe and North America. In India, Holi is celebrated for two days. Dhiuleti and Holika.

On the day of Dhiuleti, Hindus gather together and light up a bonfire to practice religious rituals. They also sing and dance. Holika is the day during which people, youth and adults throw colored and scented powder solutions known as gulal powder at others, which causes their clothings and skin to get messy. Many adults also smear the colored powders on others’ faces. Children also throw water-filled balloons and use water guns to throw color at others during Dhiuleti.

Holi could be played on open streets and parks, and outside of buildings and temples. Many people laugh or gossip and like to dance to music provided by a DJ while they are playing Holi. At the end of Holi, people wash up and change into clean clothes to visit their family and friends.

Although the actual date of the Holi festival was on March 12, 2017, the Mahwah Hindu Samaj Mandir, located in Mahwah, NJ, held its annual Holi celebration on March 25, 2017. The word mandir represents temple for Hindus. This celebration was open to all children and people of different cultures and religions. People were publicly encouraged to attend the festival through social media, and through posters hung up and handed out by priests.

At the beginning of the celebration, many children were entertained by fun events such as arts and crafts, henna tattoos, face painting, bouncy rides, balloons and a magic show. Adults were able to volunteer, sponsor and contribute to these events. If adults wanted to volunteer they had to contact carnival@hindusamajmandir.org.

There were also performances done by children and youths on stage. Various food stalls at the festival served South Indian vegetarian foods and sweets such as dosa, sambas, chaat, panipuri, and gulab jamun. Mango lassi, pizza, and soda was also served at the festival. There were also vendors where people were selling various types of jewelry, bags, and clothings such as saris, salwars, kurtis, and long skirts.

As people started to gather around and throw colored and scented powder at others, the festival drew to a close. Holi Festival is different from, but similar to, the Diwali Mela and occurs once a year, people of different religions and cultures should attend it the upcoming year due to the fun entertainment.

Bergen Community College usually holds an annual Holi festival in March, but due to a lack of entertainment, Roshan Patel, Vice President of SAATH told The Torch, “There was no South Asian club this semester. Therefore, if anybody is interested in attending the Holi festival every year, they could find out on social media or google where and when it is happening.”

REBECCA KARPINSKI
Photo Editor

Bergenstages performed Oh, Coward! this past February and March in the Ender Hall Theatre Lab. Oh, Coward! was an extremely witty and fun musical showcasing the work of the late Noël Coward under the direction of Professor Jim Bumgardner and musical direction of Jess Abrams. Oh, Coward! was devised by Roderick Cook and contained music and lyrics by Noël Coward. The musical featured songs such as, ‘London Pride,’ ‘Chase Me, Charlie,’ ‘Mrs. Worthington,’ ‘If Love Were All,’ ‘Dance Little Lady,’ ‘Why Do the Wrong People Travel,’ and ‘Mad Dogs and Englishmen.’

The performance was a sharp 34 song-set musical that was brilliantly performed by eight very talented young cast members: four men and four women. The production was performed by Bergen’s own Angelina Aragona, Emily D’Onofrio, Kevin W. Bergen, Matthew Rella, Sarah Klausner, and Wally Villamor.

The performance was outstanding in every way. They had a very beautiful set that made the very limited spacing they had for this production feel much bigger. The direction, lighting, and costumes were all wonderful and it all worked to perfection.

The musical is filled so much young amazing talent, great staging, acting, and upbeat music that had audience members dancing in our seats and definitely put a smile on our faces.

The cast superbly performed many of Coward’s most beloved songs and it’s kept the visions, voices and magic of a classic play-wright alive on today’s stage as well as in the hearts of the audience.

Beautifully directed and choreographed by Professor Bumgardner, under the skillful musical direction of Jess Abrams, and further enhanced by perfect period costumes, accents, and an imaginatively inspired set, the audience is propelled back in time to a visually rich and exciting place.

Oh Coward! was an extremely witty and fun musical...
SELENA QUINTANILLA REMEMBERED 22 YEARS LATER

REBECCA KARPINSKI
Photo Editor

It’s been 22 years this March 31 since the Tejano superstar Selena Quintanilla-Pérez was tragically shot and killed at 23 years old. Since the “Selena” biopic starring Jennifer Lopez was released in theaters across the country, known as the “Queen of Tejano Music,” Selena was a beloved Latin recording artist who was killed by the president of her fan club, Yolanda Saldivar.

Selena Quintanilla was born on April 16, 1971, in Lake Jackson, Texas. Around the age of 9 or 10, Selena became the lead singer of her family’s band, Selena Y Los Dinos. The band consisted of her older brother A.B. on the bass guitar and her older sister Suzette on the drums. Her father, Abraham, a former member of the old doo-wop group “The Dinos,” managed and produced the young band. The band’s first performances were in Papagayos, the Quintanilla family restaurant in Lake Jackson, Texas.

Selena grew up speaking English as her native language, but her father taught her how to sing in Spanish so she could resonate with the Latino audience. She learned the lyrics phonetically at first, and eventually learned to speak Spanish fluently.

Soon the family restaurant fell apart due to bankruptcy and the Quintanilla family went bankrupt. The family moved to Corpus Christi, Texas, where they piled into an old bus with all their musical equipment.

They played everywhere they could, on streets, and at weddings, but soon all the hard work paid off. Selena recorded her first album in 1984 under the Freddie label.

Because Selena was getting even more popular by the day and the traveling to perform was interfering with school, Abraham pulled her out of school when she was just in the 8th grade. Even though she was not attending school anymore, Selena earned a high school degree from a correspondence school in Chicago.

In 1988, two more Selena albums were released, Preciosa and Dulce Amor, but it was in 1989 when Selena got her big break. That year, she signed with Capitol/EMI Latin label.

By this time, Selena’s concerts were drawing thousands of people and her band was expanding. Pete Astudillo joined Selena Y Los Dinos. A.B., who was already writing most of Selena’s songs, joined Pete and wrote songs for Selena such as her most iconic song “Como La Flor.” Pete stayed with the band for 4 years but left in 1993 to go solo.


In 1990, a fan approached Abraham with the idea of starting a fan club. Her name was Yolanda Saldivar and her wish was granted. She was often referred to as Selena’s biggest fan. Yolanda became a very close friend of Selena’s, but later on, one of her worst enemies.

In February of 1995, Selena sold out the Houston Astrodome with her last concert for the Houston Livestock and Rodeo. A record attendance for any Tejana.

Also in February, trouble started with the Selena Fan Club. Fans were complaining that they weren’t receiving their packets they paid for. The Quintanilla family confronted Yolanda, who by this time, was also manager of the boutiques. Money also started to turn up missing from the Selena Etc. account. Yolanda was stealing from them.

On March 12, 1995, Selena fired Yolanda. On March 30, Selena went to where Yolanda was staying in Corpus Christi, Texas at a Days Inn Motel, to get the missing paperwork. When Selena and Chris got home that night, they found out that some of the papers were still missing.

Early the next morning, Selena got up and went to face Yolanda again. There Yolanda told her she had been raped in Monterrey, Mexico and needed to go to the hospital. Being the kind person that Selena was, she took her. After about an hour, Selena and Yolanda returned to the motel and argued, where Selena told her that she just couldn’t be trusted anymore.

At 11:48 a.m., Yolanda took out a gun and fired at Selena. The bullet struck her in her right shoulder. With all her strength, Selena ran towards the lobby to get help. She collapsed on the floor as the clerk called 911. Soon an ambulance came to take Selena to the hospital where she was pronounced dead at 10:01 p.m.

News of Selena’s death spread all over the world like wildfire. Selena fans mourned the loss of their queen, the queen of Tejano music.

The tragic death of Selena created a reaction within the Latino community that pointed the way to the deaths of Elvis Presley and John Lennon.

An enormously popular singer in Latino communities across North America, her music crossed cultural boundaries to touch the lives of young and old women. A flamboyant, sexy stage performer, sometimes hailed as the Latina Madonna, Selena was nonetheless considered a role model for so many people to this day 22 years later.
The NHL playoffs are upon us and the battle for Lord Stanley's Cup witnesses its latest iteration starting this April. A massive change was made before the 2013-14 season creating a new method regarding how teams play each other in a postseason, which caused much confusion. What was once a very simple playoff seeding bracket for the league, a radical change was made to the format to allow for stronger rivalries within the Western and Eastern conference teams. To bring understanding to this relatively new system, an explanatory preview of all the machinations will be presented. Each matchup throughout the postseason consists of a best of seven games series with the higher seeded team allowed home ice.

There are two divisions within each conference. The Atlantic and Metropolitan divisions make up the East while the West consists of the Pacific and Central divisions. Each conference also holds two wildcard spots for teams falling just short of their division’s top three placements creating a total of eight playoff teams for both conferences. The seeding is noticeably a bit more complicated from the previous method. The two division winners will play one of the two wildcard teams. The leader of the two division winners will play the wildcard team with the higher point total. This leaves the other four teams to battle out for the final wildcard spot. Each conference will play a divisional series until the final round where two wildcard teams will meet one at a time. The first team to achieve four wins in a series will move on to the following round of the playoffs. The previous system re-seeded the teams while this new one maintains a strict structure.

Eight teams from each conference will remain for the division final. All four division finals consist of two teams, the winner between the division leader and the wildcard matchup, and the winner between the 2nd and 3rd seeded teams in each division. The victor of each series will advance to their Conference’s respective final. Only four teams are left at this point. The winner of the following series is considered to have won the West or East and is awarded a title for this accomplishment. The West is given the Clarence S. Campbell Bowl and the East is given the Prince of Wales Trophy.

While these honors are grounds for a sturdy sense of accomplishment, the true prize lays in the final round between each conference winner. The Stanley Cup Final. The Final is one of the most exciting championships in all of sports. The process to achieve the Cup is a war of attrition and the blood and flesh shed to attain it is worthy of admiration. Each individual player on a winning team will find their name engraved onto the Cup assuring a permanent reminder of their success. Hall of Fame coach Fred Shero expressed one of the most famous quotes in hockey when he said to the 1974 Philadelphia Flyers before a Cup final game, “Win today and we walk together forever.” Teams will dissolve and players will move on in their careers, but the unity of victory will bind them together in a poetic display of sports lore.

**NHL Playoff Preview**

**New York Knicks Experiment Gone Wrong?**

On Sunday, March 6th, Madison Square Garden decided to perform an experiment as the New York Knicks faced off against the Golden State Warriors. MSG experimented by playing no sound during warmups or anything in the first half of Sunday’s game. In what has so far been a disastrous season for the Knicks it seems odd they would attempt such a thing, especially at this point in the season.

The silence the absence of sound provided did not seem to be an appropriate setting for an NBA basketball game, let alone one that was being nationally televised. Kristaps Porzingis said, “I Didn’t like it,” after the 112-105 loss to the Warriors. During most of the pregame, a message was shown on the overhead video board saying that the first half would include no video, music or in game entertainment so the fans could, “experience the game in its purest form.”

“It felt like an open gym kind of,” Warriors All-Star shooting guard Stephen Curry said after the game. Golden States power forward Draymond Green was not much of a fan of the idea either. “That was pathetic. It was ridiculous. It changed the flow of the game. It changed everything,” he said. “You advance things in the world to make it better,” Green added. “You don’t go back to what’s bad. Computers can do anything for us. It’s like going back to paper. Why would you do that? It was ridiculous.”

There are many ramors as to why the Knicks would experiment with such an idea, especially on the night of a nationally televised game. Some say that it was a result of many of the older season ticket holders who complained the games were too loud, others believe it was because there was a malfunction with arena equipment and the experiment was used as a cover up. Whatever the real reason may be, many of the players as well as the fans found it to be a hard adjustment, as all players and fans of the game have grown so accustomed to in game entertainment.

I was able to speak to a few Bergen Community college students who follow basketball to get their thoughts on the so-called experiment. Richard Rodriguez, a sophomore at BCC majoring in education, and long time Knicks fan did not appreciate the silence, he said, “The in game entertainment is what can sometimes dictate the momentum of the game. It was hard to watch, and hard to get excited for.” Gianfranco Vaccaro, a Political Science major in his second year at Bergen Community college said, “I hope no team tries this again.”

There were not many fans of MSG’s so called first half experiment, and it will be interesting to see if other teams try this new idea. As for the Knicks, instead of focusing on the “game in its purest form,” they should be focusing on making a run for the eighth seed in the Eastern Conference.
What will 2017 have in store?

ANTHONY KHELIL
Sports Editor

In 2016, The Chicago Cubs finally broke the curse of the Billy goat, capturing their first World Series championship in 108 years. After losing key pieces from their championship team such as Aroldis Chapman and Dexter Fowler, the Chicago Cubs are still among the league’s elite, and widely considered to be favorites to take home yet another championship. The question everyone’s asking is, who will dethrone the mighty Cubs?

The defending American League champions, the Cleveland Indians, look even stronger, with the acquisition of slugger Edwin Encarnacion and a healthy starting rotation, the Indians look to once again be contenders in the A.L.. The Boston Red Sox will likely make it back to October once again, and look primed for a great run with the offseason trade acquisition of star pitcher Chris Sale from the White Sox, adding to an already deep rotation. The Texas Rangers who also made it too the playoffs last season certainly look like they will be back, keeping their star studded lineup intact over the offseason and having Cy Young caliber pitcher Yu Darvish for a full season.

The National League will be very interesting this upcoming MLB season. The Los Angeles Dodgers look to make it back to the playoffs again after retaining all three of their major free agents this offseason, Kenley Jansen, Rich Hill and Justin Turner. The Washington Nationals look for their star studded lineup intact over the offseason and have Cy Young caliber pitcher Max Scherzer and 2015 Cy Young winner Madison Bumgarner.

The New York Mets whose playoff appearance was short lived after reaching the World Series in 2015, retained their MVP Yoenis Cespedes and look to finally show off their rotation stock piled with young flame throwing arms. The St. Louis Cardinals, who missed the playoffs the previous season look to make a deep run into October with their balanced roster consisting of veterans such as newly acquired Dexter Fowler and up and coming stars such as Randal Grichuk.

The 2017 Major League season will certainly be a roller coaster of a ride. Fans anticipating the start of the season, can look forward to opening day, April 1st, where many of their questions will finally be answered. There will be many teams who surprise, like the New York Yankees, a team in transition, building for the future. Will the infusion of youth spark a playoff run? Or possibly the Milwaukee Brewers who are stockpiling young talent. The Detroit Tigers and Kansas City Royals both have many question marks but have a chance to contend. The Royals, a small market team, will be facing a tough decision at the trade deadline, as the core of their team are all in the last years of their contracts, and they will not have the funds to re-sign all of them. If it seems like they are out of contention will they begin a fire sale? The Toronto Blue Jays, even with the loss of Edwin Encarnacion, will look to slug their way into the playoffs. With all the offseason drama involving star center fielder and team captain Andrew McCutchen keep the Pittsburgh Pirates from contention? Will the Chicago White Sox continue to deal major league talent, in route to strengthening their minor league system? What team will underachieve and who will this year’s cinderella team be? April 1st will be the start to answering all these questions. Major League baseball is finally back and will certainly have something special in store.

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On Monday, March 6th, the All-Garden State Athletic Conference Division III women’s basketball team was announced, and on the list of honorees was one of Bergen Community College’s own Cherie Smedile. Smedile, who serves as a combo guard for our Lady Bulldogs, earns a spot on this list as a freshman.

Smedile started all 28 of the Lady Bulldog’s games and was a workhorse for her team, leading the team in minutes played with 38.4 mpg. Smedile averaged nearly 21 points per game along with 8.1 rebounds and 3.4 assists per game. She also provided a presence on the defensive end, averaging two steals and one block per game. Cherie Smedile did it all for the lady Bulldogs, stuffing the stat sheet for her team, providing one of the few bright spots for the Bulldogs this season.

ANTHONY KHELIL
Sports Editor

Cherie Smedile posing for the bulldogs. //BergenCCbulldogs.com

Smedile is an education major formally from Saddle Brook, New Jersey, where she played shooting guard for her high school, leading them to a 17-8 record in her senior season. Throughout her high school career, Smedile earned many awards such as Honorable mention all league in the 2012-2013 season, Second team all league in the 2013-2014 season and First team all league in the 2014-2015 season. Maybe the greatest of all her feats, in her senior season, Smedile racked up her 1000th point in a win against Palisades Park in February of 2016.

Smedile has proven to be a valuable asset to the Bergen Bulldogs success down the line. She now can add first team ALL GSAC to her list of accolades.

As the spring semester continues, the many sports teams at Bergen Community College are preparing themselves for the upcoming 2017 spring season. Of these sports, one team to focus on is Bergen’s track and field team.

Since October, the team along with head coach Erika Czjiko and first year assistant coach Deana Dedovitch have been preparing for the upcoming season. Both the athletes and coaches are eager to make their mark on this season and believe that this year’s team has a lot of potential.

The team will have their first meet on Saturday, March 25th, in West Chester, Pennsylvania at West Chester University. “They are ready to get on the track and shows us what their made right now,” said Coach Czjiko.

The track and field program has a history of success through every season, such as defeating bigger schools and having many of their athletes participate in Nationals, and they look to repeat that this season.

Assistant coach Dedovitch, who’s also the head coach of the Women’s Cross country team, is getting used to the transition to assistant coach. “It’s extremely different from cross country, just because there are so many skills to work on and they’re all different, but different is a good thing so I’m good for the [spring] season,” said Dedovitch.

Last season’s assistant coach Angel Solors left the program at BCC to become the head coach of his own high school track team. The team continued that season without a replacement. Despite what could have been a major distraction, the team and the head coach were able to perform well during the season and have some of their athletes compete in nationals.

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