BERGЕН COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENT NEWSPAPER
IGNITING STUDENTS TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE
TORCHBCC.COM
MARCH 2017

The Bergen Community College’s Board of Trustees welcomed five new members to the board: Joseph Barreto, Patrick Fletcher, Mark Longo, Carol Otis and Sheetal Ranjan.

The new trustees took the oath of office on Feb. 7 and each will serve a term of three years, with the exception of Mr. Barreto, who will be filling in for Germaine Ortiz. Mr. Ortiz has been elected as a Bergen County freeholder and his term will end on Oct. 31, 2017 according to the BCC website.

Board members James Demetrakis and Irene Oujo also took the oath of office to renew their terms.

Each new trustee brings their own set of unique qualifications in education and trade to the board. Barreto, of Hackensack, has 30 years of experience in working as a high school guidance counselor in East Harlem. His dedication to the field paid off and he received the Manhattan High School Counselor of the Year award. He is also currently serving as the president of the Latino American Democratic Association of Bergen County, as well as treasurer/secretary of the Bergen County Board of Social Services.

Fletcher, of River Edge, started off as the superintendent of schools in the River Dell Regional School District in 2006. In 2014 he won the New Jersey Association of School Administrator’s Northern Superintendent of the Year award.

Longo, of Cresskill, is currently working as the executive director of the New Jersey Building and Construction Trades Labor Management Council.

Otis, of Teaneck, previously served on the board from 2007 to 2012 and has returned for another term. She co-edited a textbook entitled “World of Food” that won the National Family, Career and Community Leaders of America Distinguished Service Award.

Ranjan, of Teaneck, is currently a criminal justice professor at William Paterson University. She also is strongly involved in research on domestic and campus violence and has helped the University in receiving a $600,000 federal grant in order to implement the Campus Violence Prevention Program.

All of the new members of the Board of Trustees bring some promising traits to the table.

BERGEN GETS ITS WINGS

A 16 foot long single seat Onex was obtained by Bergen Community College via the College’s foundation.

The plane was independently appraised for $65,000 and will be used by those in the Aviation programs and potentially be used by STEM students.

The plane’s previous owner was Woody Saland, who spent 1,500 hours building it. After 40 hours of flight time Woody thought it was best that his plane be used for another purpose and then sought out for a non profit organization that can use his plane.

With this in mind, he eventually came across the Bergen Community College Foundation and donated his plane. The plane was officially accepted at the main campus in December.

The Onex’s home will be in the TEC building at the main campus. The TEC building also has two flight simulators.

The plane itself has its engine effectively “fixed.” However, the instruments in the cockpit still function properly. Students may even be able to look at the engine if not the entire plane itself for mock repairs or maintenance.

Since the plane’s engine has been disabled it won’t be flying anytime soon. There won’t be any major maintenance; if anything there might be small time maintenance to make sure the plane can be used for class. This may cause someone to ask how the college may show off the plane if it chooses to.

The original owner, Woody, has donated the trailer to the college as well. This allows the college to throw some logos on it and take it to a fair or something of that nature. This allows for a interesting conversation starter when one brings a plane to a fair. This is yet another thing the college has added to stand out in the crowd when it comes to colleges of a similar caliber.
The Torch

BCC Staff Organizes
Hate Has No Home Here Peace Rally

FERNANDO VAZQUEZ
Staff Writer

It's been more than four weeks since the new president of the United States, Donald Trump stepped into office, which put flame to a fuse.

President Trump is stripping people of their rights and has signed executive policies. But President Trump is stripping people of their rights and has signed executive policies. The first official week of Trump in office began with an enormous worldwide support of the Women’s March through the intolerant and abhorrent Trump administration policies.

The demonstration took place in the eleventh-hour with a steady crowd, people supporting, some people walking by and others looking with curiosity but with support.

"I didn't know this happened. Now I have to focus on this class. I would have supported" the march, said Daniel Jones, a General Science major running late for class.

People held wonderful posters of anti-hate and support for unity and with great hosts from former and current students and the professors of BCC organized a wonderful rally “Hate Has No Home Here” on campus.

But President Trump is stripping people of their rights and has signed executive policies. He's been in an ongoing fight against racism and religious discrimination. Davenport describes the No Ban No Wall protest at Rutgers, saying, “It’s powerful but I want more to be done for Muslims and other targeted communities.”

On January 31, hundreds of students and New Brunswick residents rallied at Rutgers University and even put out a blue plastic sheet to give as much comfort to those who wanted to pray. Balkan has worked to bring this movement to Bergen Community College.

Bergen Community College isn’t going to stand by and let these things happen. Professor Balkan brought this to the Faculty Senate in November. Deans Victor Brown and Ilene Kleinman and Academic Affairs Vice President William Mullaney unanimously agreed to start the process to make Bergen Community College a sanctuary, according to Balkan.

Our sister school, Rutgers University, started their movement only on an symbolic level that shows compassion towards religion, race, and human rights. But the movement has changed to make the school a sanctuary that guarantees its students’ safety by upholding the individual’s right to refuse police requests for records.

Creating places that show unity and love is a great feeling that should be passed to every single soul.

Rutgers student Courtney Davenport has attended a rally at Rutgers and has been in an ongoing fight against racism and religious discrimination. Davenport describes the No Ban No Wall protest at Rutgers, saying, “It’s powerful but I want more to be done for Muslims and other targeted communities.”

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April Adams, founder of the movement, has encouraged other facility members Brian Cordell and Balkan to get involved in HHNHH (Hate Has No Home Here) movement.

JASON RAMOS
Contributing Writer

Each person has the right to feel safe going to school to learn and better oneself. But President Trump is stripping people of these rights and has signed executive orders to deport illegal immigrants.

These strict orders are destroying peoples’ lives by tearing families apart and destroying them financially, and it is upsetting America. Students and school administration, however, have stepped up to the cause to counterstrike these orders.

“The senate executive committee, including Brian Cordell, is working with the administration on this important initiative” Stacey Balkan, a professor at BCC, said.

She introduced that safety is needed in Bergen Community College. She feels that everyone deserves to feel safe coming to this institution. She also doesn’t want any student to feel uncomfortable.

“A student of mine shouldn’t have to worry about whether she is safe. No student should be subjected to illegal searches of their records. We are not breaking the law, we are upholding the Federal Law. We can't necessarily control what happens beyond our campus, but we ought to make every effort to prevent hate and discrimination at BCC,” Balkan said.

She is making it known that Bergen Community College isn’t going to stand by and let these things happen. Professor Balkan brought this to the Faculty Senate in November. Deans Victor Brown and Ilene Kleinman and Academic Affairs
New Articulation Agreement with Bellevue University

In addition to more than 40 transfer partnerships with colleges and universities in- and out-of-state, Bergen Community College has recognized a new articulation agreement with Bellevue University. Articulation Agreements make it easier for community college students to transfer to four-year schools, providing opportunities such as transferring all credits earned when graduating with associate degree, receiving scholarship opportunities, and many more.

Located in Nebraska, Bellevue University is a private, non-profit university focused on skills to performance. The university offers approximately 75 undergraduate and graduate degree programs, offered in campus and online.

Out of the 13,000 students enrolled, about 10,000 are online students. Programs are focused mainly on working adults and are geared to customize the educational experience for more flexibility.

On campus, their student-to-faculty ratio is 10-to-1. There are also a lot of international students on their campus, and they have a partnership with Guangzhou College of Commerce in Guangzhou, China.

Bellevue University is for students who are looking for a personalized approach to their academic learning experience. They will have their own dedicated financial and academic advisor called a Student Coach, who will guide them throughout their academic journey in Bellevue.

Students will also have their librarian who will mail required textbooks to their house. The university also offers Skype tutoring for different subjects such as science, mathematics and writing, done by professional tutors who have already earned their degrees.

Because Bellevue is an open access university, meaning they don’t require testing, and there is no in- and out-of-state tuition and fees. It is based on what kind of program a student will be enrolled in.

“Part of our performance metrics and our goals are to graduate as many students with as little to no debt as possible,” said Erica James, Bellevue University’s representative on Bergen Community College’s campus.

Transfer students who attend Bellevue University with their Associate’s Degree in hand will have already completed at least the 60 credit hours out of 127 required to get a Bachelor’s Degree. Bellevue accepts all credit hours earned, including Ds.

“It’s an opportunity for students who may have had some challenges academically and looking for a chance to build their academic record,” James said.

Transfer students who did not earn their associate degree may do a transfer audit where the classes they’ve taken will be reviewed and considered based on their area of study. Students who already obtained their bachelor’s degree and are geared toward a second degree may still transfer.

Bellevue also offers the Accelerated Cohort program to those who have their associate degree or have earned at least 60 credits. In this program, students will join classmates who have the same degree track as them, and will go through the entire academic program with the same peers.

The main advantage of this program is that students only need to register for their courses once; they won’t have to worry about classes filling up and being waitlisted for the next semester.

To earn a Bachelor’s Degree at Bellevue University, transfer students will need to complete 40 credit hours under their major, 18 credit hours of electives, and nine credit hours of Bellevue’s Kirpatrick Signature Series.

The Kirpatrick Signature Series is a requirement for all Bellevue University students, and it focuses on the institutions and traditions of Western Civilization, which Bellevue considers an essential learning for adults in America today.

Since Bellevue is an accredited university, transfer students are eligible for state and federal financial aid and scholarships. Students who have a 2.5 GPA or above may be eligible for a $1,500 transfer scholarship, while Phi Theta Kappa members may receive up to $2,500. Additional scholarships are available to admitted transfer students.

Asian Club Offers Scholarship

The Asian Club at Bergen offers unique educational opportunities through their scholarships, which celebrate students of many cultures, including Japanese, Filipino, Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, Indian, and Muslim. International students who are either full-time or full-year are eligible, as are Bergen students of any background or location including African, Hispanics, and Asians.

College loans are no joke; the national average for student debt is close to $40,000. Even at Bergen, paying back loans can be a years-long hassle. That’s why scholarships are essential to students. They can be used to pay for any or all courses that are taken in the semester.

Some scholarships require a personal essay and application which can be extensive and time-consuming. Others are specific to certain majors. Some even allow students to study abroad.

However, some eligible students can skip the application and compete in an art contest sponsored by the Asian Heritage Committee.

“Each year, the Asian Heritage Committee allocates part of the Asian Heritage Committee’s budget, which was coming from Multicultural Affairs Office and this is the first time that this contest is held,” said Mina Ahn, associate professor in the department of psychology and the advisor of Korean club.

The Asian Club Offers Scholarship

Students were encouraged to take part in the art contest through posters around campus, and through advertisements in the Bergen College Foundation page and student e-mail. Students were directed to the scholarship page, which was the first place winner was awarded $2,500, second place $2000 and third place $100.

The students are to be awarded on April 18 at the annual Asian Recognition luncheon, in which many students are invited to celebrate and recognize their talents,” said Ahn.

The audience will also include Board members of the BC, who are either staff or faculty members. The student who is awarded first place for the contest is set to give a speech at the luncheon, while James Dao, the op-ed editor of The New Yoretime, will be the keynote speaker of the event.

Scholarships can come in all sizes and forms. Students should be on the lookout for opportunities like the one the Asian Club presents each year. The student artwork that was submitted is now up in the halls of West Hall’s third floor.

Beyond the prizes, contestans could gain multi-layered experience and a deeper understanding of their background. This is a major avenue for students to learn and express their ideas, show off to rest of the campus and also pick up a few extra dollars for school.

Those who are interested in general scholarships can visit the Bergen Community College Foundation page and use the search tools. Once directed to the scholarship website, students have to login with their BCC IDs and fill out the general application describing necessary skills and aptitudes. They will then get confirmation through their e-mail.

Students of Bellevue University. //Wikipedia Commons

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HEINEKEN QUEEN
STAFF WRITER

PURNA SAHA

Asian Heritage Committee Sponsors:

"I am Local: Multiple Layers of Identity ART CONTEST"

Asian Club Presents Each Year.

There were no specific talents required for this scholarship. Students must simply present a creative and artistic expression of who they are.

The scholarship’s purpose is to explore the whole identity and to inspire creation through ethnicity and culture, reflecting the theme of this year’s contest: “I am Local: Multiple Layers of Identity.”

Students could submit more than one entry of original artwork. Each piece had to be (two-dimensional), with a maximum size of 24 x 35 inches and be in a JPG file format. As long as there is funding available in the Asian Heritage Committee, the contest will be held annually.

Based on the masterpiece they submit, students were notified individually by e-mail on Feb 25.

There were three separate levels of recognition. The first-place winner was awarded $300, second place $200 and third place $100.

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Financial Literacy Center Opens for Business

YASMEEN BROWN
Contributing Writer

It seems that the quote “a new year new me” doesn’t only apply to individual people, but to the staff here at Bergen Community College as well. With the recent opening of the Financial Literacy Center, located in room A111, the college is looking to teach students financial responsibility.

Michelle Anders, who works in the office, said, “Financial literacy is not a life skill that’s being taught,” meaning that students aren’t being given the proper foundations to help them build financial security as young adults. Anders went on to elaborate how understanding finances as a student is important for the future. If a student takes a loan out for school, there must be an understanding that it will need to be paid back in full.

Anders further went into how students need to budget themselves by jotting down their “needs versus their wants.” Budget yourself with the things you need in moderation. The award is given out to the team who is the most friendly and most fair played out of all the teams competing in the tournaments.

This achievement is also seen as beneficial for the students who are credited for their performance at the tournament.

For the student, it means that their hard work and effort paid off because these students pushed themselves to compete,” said Mecheline Farhat professor of criminal justice and supervisor for the Mock Trial Club.

“This is the first team that ever competed outside of Bergen before, so this award is a really big deal for us,” said Columbo.

This led the club to have a month late December.

This year’s Bergen Community College’s Mock trial club //Courtesy of Mecheline Farhat
White House Website Removes LGBTQ Page

NICK COWLING  
Contributing Writer

The page dedicated to the president’s policy and position on LGBTQ activism has been removed from the official website of the White House.

The section tab simply labeled “ISSUES”, features several problems and challenges deemed noteworthy by newly elected President Donald Trump. However, the site makes no mention of the previously acknowledged civil rights issue.

Outrage from gay rights activist groups followed this purging with great concern. In a nation still experiencing division on this subject, the removal of a pivotal human rights concern alarmed supporters of gay equality.

Also removed from the site was a statement made by former Secretary of State John Kerry detailing regret made over the department’s past history of removal of employees based on suspicion of sexual orientation.

This remorse was in response to actions taken in the 1950s known as the “Lavender Scare.” These actions were pervasive dismissals of homosexuals from government positions that were deemed as a safety measure against what was considered sexual delinquency.

The apology read, “On behalf of the Department, I apologize to those who were impacted by the practices of the past and reaffirm the Department’s steadfast commitment to diversity and inclusion for all our employees, including members of the LGBTQ community.”

This removal is consistent with positions held by Vice President Mike Pence regarding the gay community. In March of 2015, Pence, the governor of Indiana at the time, signed into effect a measure known as Indiana’s Religious Freedom Restoration Act.

LGBTQ organizations sharply opposed this signing, feeling a potential for increased discrimination against the demographic.

Concerns over other issues, such as gay adoption and transgender bathroom rights, remain high. Exit polls showed that those who identified themselves as part of the LGBTQ community voted overwhelmingly against Donald Trump in the 2016 election.

During the Republican National Convention, in the wake of the mass shooting at a gay nightclub which left 49 dead, Trump spoke briefly on the community:

“As your president, I will do everything in my power to protect our LGBTQ citizens from the violence and oppression of a hateful foreign ideology. Believe me.”

Whether this protection extends to threatening domestic ideology remains to be seen.

The pride flag is the most prevalent of LGBTQ imagery. /Wikipedia
It is no secret that Trump has described the media as being “the enemy of the people,” a very totalitarian statement. He later cleared up his statement by saying “I called the fake news the enemy of the people and they are.”

You can always count on Trump to backtrack, what he said and blame the other person, and in this case that other person would be the media.

It shouldn’t be a surprise that Trump is at odds with the media, since the goal of the media is to uncover the truth, while the goal of Trump is often to sweep his indiscretions under the rug with alternative facts and strong rhetoric.

Oh, you better believe it’s working. The media and the people of America hold onto every word he says, even if it’s obvious what he is saying is untrue.

He is the king of discretion and he is terrifyingly entertaining, which is probably why the media covers him 24/7. I can’t look at my phone without seeing some sort of news alert that both scares and amuses me.

Even before his presidency, Trump was constantly covered by the media and received more coverage than Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders. The media might have served Trump his presidency on a silver platter.

If that is the case, then why does he dislike it so much? It’s simple: he loves it when it’s helping him and hates it when it isn’t. All he can do in turn is damage the reputation of the media by calling it fake news.

The term fake news is being thrown around now for fun and is being repeated by citizens, like a lot of what Trump says. We need to understand that there is a big difference between deliberate fake news and honest mistakes.

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Surviving Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is any kind of abuse that is emotional, rather than physical, in nature. It can include anything from verbal abuse and constant criticism to more subtle tactics, such as intimidation, manipulation, and refusal to ever be pleased. Emotional abuse is like brainwashing in that it systematically wears down a person’s self-confidence, sense of self-worth, trust in perceptions and self-concept. It can be done by constant berating and belittling or by intimidation, the results are similar. Emotional abuse can be experienced by anyone at any age, but all sense of self. Emotional abuse cuts to the heart of a person, creating scars that may be deeper and longer lasting than physical ones.

In 2012, I met a boy by the name of Billy, on a popular blogging site at the time. We both shared similar interests and we fast became pretty good friends, but as time went on, I developed feelings for him. Eventually I built up enough courage to tell him how I felt, in hopes that he’d like me back. This boy flat out told me that I was not pretty enough for him.

I then went online and saw that he continued to say some very hurtful things towards me, saying she was stunning. I thought that maybe if I looked like that girl, then maybe he would like me. I changed my interests and we fast became pretty good friends, but as time went on, I developed feelings for him.

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Garfield to be far more worse then the death of my own father, for whom he attended the wake. By this time, not only did I have a self image problem, I now had a self confidence problem and it was affecting my performance in school with my grades, with my peers, and how I treated myself in general.

I kept to myself and was more reserved towards the end of the relationship because I didn’t want to say something that may either offend him or have him say something to make me feel less than I actually was. I just let Billy do all the talking while I just kept silent. We broke up via Snapchat on Feb. 23, 2015, with him telling me that he loved me but wasn’t in love with me, and that he was going to stay with me but probably not for much longer. This boy gave our relationship an expiration date. I broke up with him right then and there because why wait when you know it is inevitable anyway. Because of how poorly I was treated in the relationship, all I could think was “What did I do that was so wrong?”.

To this day I still remember what Billy said to me, and it hurt me and it has seriously affected me emotionally and mentally. It’s been pretty difficult trying to build up the courage to ask another guy out in fear that my past is only just going to repeat itself. A lot of people don’t realize that what you say and how you treat people can seriously affect how people think and feel about themselves especially if you treat them in a mean way constantly.

Often you can see and say you treat people because you never know whether you are causing emotional damage or not. Billy didn’t know.
Residents from far and wide are coming together to help a baby girl born with a rare and incurable skin disease. Mackenzie Cadmus, of Teaneck, who’s close to a year old, was born with a disease called Dystrophic Epidermolysis Bullosa, or DEB, that causes her skin to be extremely sensitive.

“Obviously we were in shock, but we knew from the moment of her birth she had absent skin on her leg and her hands, so we knew something was dramatically wrong,” said Liz Cadmus, mother of Mackenzie. Despite her troubles, Mackenzie is not alone in this fight both of her parents, Liz and Nick Cadmus, have taken upon themselves started their own campaign called “Rock the Socks.”

This campaign aims to raise money and spread awareness of the disease in hopes that it will get the media’s attention and the funding it needs so they can get the research they need to find a cure. The campaign aims to spread awareness by having many people post photos of themselves with socks covering their hands on their Facebook page. Over a thousand photos were posted onto their pages ranging from relatives, friends, and even the Jacksonville Jaguars, an NFL football team.

What started out as something small later received a much larger audience, bringing in thousands of dollars each month, something that Liz and Nick Cadmus were surprised about.

“Initially it started out as an idea where we wanted to bring some awareness or some attention to the disease, and it has grown dramatically since then,” said Liz.

The Rock the Socks campaign has brought in over $40,000 with help from the special needs trust and individual donations made through online, which aims in reaching $200,000. The donations will help fund Makenzie’s bone marrow transplant, along with bandages and ointment that are needed in her daily life.

The DEB causes the skin to blister and become increasingly fragile. With the skin being in such a fragile state, it can be injured easily, causing painful blisters to form and inflicting serious problems if infected. The National Library of Medicine, operated under the federal government and the world’s largest medical library, said 6.5 per million newborns are diagnosed in this country alone. And like cancer, DEB has no cure. However it has said that mild forms may improve with age. Treatment for the disease focuses on addressing the symptoms, such as infection, itching, internal blistering, and difficulty swallowing.

For Makenzie’s parents, Rock the Socks is more than just a name: It originated from their time spent at the Columbia Presbyterian Medical Center in New York City, where they learned how to wrap the bandages around Makenzie’s infected arms. However, bandages would always come off due to Makenzie’s continuously rotating her arms.

The nurse soon pointed out that socks would help keep the bandages in place. While wearing her colorful socks she would receive attention from many of the nurses, who said, “go rock those socks, girl!” From that point on, people would ask questions behind the sock on her hands, which the parents saw as spreading awareness.

Despite what all has been done for Makenzie, the pain certainly hasn’t gone away. To take care of a child like Makenzie requires hours of maintenance. With all that, her attitude hasn’t changed. “Mackenzie is a trooper. I think Mackenzie is probably one of the strongest people I’ve ever met in my life,” said Nick Cadmus. And even the tough times proved no challenge for her. “When it’s really bad week, if she has blisters in her throat or she’s throwing up blood and losing a lot of skin on her leg and is just really sore, she smiles through it all.”

With the help and support from other people, the parents want their daughter to live a life full of confidence and strength and the courage to never slow down; in hopes that she will overcome this disease.

“Initially it started out as an idea where we wanted to bring some awareness or some attention to the disease, and it’s grown dramatically since then”

-Liz Cadmus
Transgender Veteran Inspires BCC

LESHAY JONES

The LGBTQ community has come a long way over the years and now, more than ever, people show their support. At a BCC PRIDE meeting on Feb. 14, Jennifer Marie Long told her heartwarming story about her transition from male to female during a time where people were not as accepting as they are today.

Long was previously known as Sergeant Major Edward Long and served more than 30 years in the United States Army. Throughout many of those years, she was in the middle of transitioning from male to female.

“I remember when I decided to start taking hormones. I sat there and looked at the bottle, thinking to myself ‘this is a new beginning,’” Long said. He described taking hormones as “going through a second puberty as a grown adult.”

During her 30 years of dedication and service in the U.S Army at the highest rank, Long tried to hide who she was, until one day she decided to stop hiding and be who she felt she was; a woman.

“There was so much ugly in my life, but I finally realized that I cannot not be myself, and eventually I stopped hiding,” said Long.

A lot of times when soldiers serve for as many years as Long did, they get some kind of honorable recognition for their service. However, after her 30 years of service and surviving four combat tours, Sergeant Major Long was asked to retire quietly.

“No one really even wanted to talk to me after they found out, but it did not matter to me because I was happy. I was me,” Long said.

Coming out to one’s family is no easy task, and for Long, it was just as hard. She had the hardest time coming out to her mother, Marie Long.

“My message to you is to follow your heart because it will lead you to happiness.”

Hate is History

March is Women’s History Month; a month of celebrating all women that have made a difference in today’s society as well as back in the day. This has helped shape the person we are and because of what they instilled in us, we can fight for our rights. This rally was formed so that BCC can be a safe place for all students, no matter what race, religion, or orientation they may have, and to make sure they cannot be targeted because of their skin tone, ethnic background, or religious affiliations. Hate Has No Home Here took place Feb 7, 2017, in the Student Center of the Pitkin Building.

When asked about the College prepared for this peaceful protest, Sara Mastellone, Mathematics professor at Bergen Community College, who spoke at the rally said the following.

“Dr. April Adams sent an email to the faculty of the college suggesting that a group form to help support members of our community adversely affected by the current political climate of people. Responded. A meeting was held on Thursday, Feb 2nd. “The details that needed to be addressed were identified in the Tuesday meeting. Participants at that meeting needed to take responsibility for the identified tasks.” She explained. “The tasks included writing a statement for the press (Bergen Daily), procuring safety pins and Hate Has No Home Here pins and posters, reserving the rally space, making the College President and the Office of Public Safety aware of the rally, managing the finances of the rally, and organizing the speakers.”

There were also issues that concerned faculty and staff, such as those pertaining to Muslims, Jewish and the LGBTQ Community. When asked about messages addressed specifically towards women, Mastellone told The Torch.

“While women were not particularly mentioned in the rally, every issue is a women’s issue,” Mastellone said when asked about messages addressed specifically towards women safety, economics, health care, issues of immigration and the travel ban. All effect women and therefore, are women’s issues.”

Mastellone was also asked if it is important for women of different backgrounds to be recognized. She explained that,

“Women’s History Month highlights the contributions of women, including Black, Muslim, Jewish, and those involved in the LGBTQ community to events in history and contemporary society. More so, the International Women’s Day, which is celebrated on Mar. 8 throughout the world, is a day for recognizing women’s achievements while at the same time recognizing that, in many ways and in many places, women do not have equal rights.”

By linking Women’s History Month and Hate Has No Home Here, the rally has brought awareness to Bergen Community College and has defined its culture as one of acceptance.
As Wendell E. Berry said “Nobody can discover the world for somebody else. Only when we discover it for ourselves does it become common ground and a common bond and we cease to be alone.” Studying abroad may be one of the most beneficial experiences a college student can have. By studying abroad, students have the opportunity to study in a foreign nation and take in the allure and culture of a new land. You can create the experience that fits your needs, schedule, budget, and major.

There are several benefits to studying abroad. Firstly, one of the biggest reasons you should consider a study abroad program is the opportunity to study a foreign language. Thirdly, when you finish your study abroad program and return home, you will return with a new perspective on culture, language skills, a great education, and a willingness to learn. Fourthly, one of the biggest benefits of studying abroad is the opportunity to meet new lifelong friends from different backgrounds. Last but not least, for most students, this time may be the only opportunity they ever get to travel abroad for a long period of time.

I attended a Study Abroad information session on February 6. There were general explanations, vivid examples, and several Q&As. It is highly recommended that students who are interested in Study Abroad should attend this session. If students prepare their needs, schedule, budget, and major in advance, it will be better chance for getting information. Above all, you should start planning at least a year in advance. Of course, you must check BCC’s requirements to participate in Study Abroad.

As we see last participants, in Spring 2017, one student went to Spain, in Fall 2016, three went to Japan and one went to Italy, and in Summer 2016 one went to Spain and three went to Italy. I would like to introduce the participant testimonial of Cassandra Brochers who studied in Tokyo, Japan as the KCP International Program for a 3 month Fall semester 2016.

“I stayed in a single apartment-like dorm provided by the school. I chose to study abroad because I knew it would be a great opportunity to expand on my life experiences and the timing was right,” said Brochers. Brochers continued to explain her destination of choice and her experience in Japan.

“I chose Japan because I enjoy the language and Tokyo happens to be known to be one of the most interesting cities in the world. An interesting part of my semester was the trip to a rural town very close to Mt. Fuji. During the overnight stay, a traditional and regional meal was served by the staff and traditional dress called yukata was provided to sleep in,” said Brochers.

As much fun as it can be going to another country, it is important to educate yourself with where you’re going.

**Bergenstages Presents: The Duprees**

**ADAM GRASSANI**

It was yet another Saturday night performance at Bergen Community College’s own Ciccone Theater. However, this night was more special than the rest as, performing in part with Bergen’s own Curtain Up series, the famous romantic singers “The Duprees” took the stage in front of a sellout crowd, their first performance in one and a half months.

The Duprees are world-renowned for their interpretations of love songs; making old songs good as new. The group originated in Jersey City in the 1960s with their first major hit being Jo Stafford “You Belong To Me” in 1962. It was the group’s first hit to sell a million and one of the highlights of the show. More of their major hits made an appearance in the show as well, including “My Own True Love” and “Why Don’t You Believe Me?”

One worry that one could possibly have going into the show was if the music would be too romantic, to the point of being overly cheesy. Turns out this was not the case at all as none of the songs gave off this feeling; they nailed the romantic aspect of the show perfectly. Furthermore, there were non-love songs, such as “Somewhere, Beyond the Sea.” The song selection is definitely one of the strongest points of the performance.

The biggest issue with the show comes in the quality of the audio; it’s very inconsistent in terms of clarity. Sometimes, the audio is completely fine and you’ll be able to hear all songs clearly. However, other times it can be very difficult to understand what lyrics are being sung, which made the show hard to follow at times.

On the other hand, probably the most entertaining part of the show actually comes in between each song, where lead singer Tony Testa, as well as the rest of the band would talk and interact with the audience, providing some entertaining adult humor which is guaranteed to get a laugh out of you. Furthermore, during one of the songs, Phil Granno went front stage to sing and do some crazy dances moves, which got the full energy out of the crowd.

However, the highlight that came out of this was when Testa went down into the crowd to interact and talk with the audience directly; he would ask questions with folks who would answer them into the microphone so everyone can hear. He even invited former Bergen Community College student Laure up onto the stage to assist in a song.

“A little bit, but I got over it right away.” Laure said when asked if she felt nervous heading onto the stage “I was kind of nervous like everyone else. I was very comfortable.” The performance ended with the Duprees receiving a near standing ovation from the crowd, with Laure describing the show as “fabulous.”
GOING GAGA FOR GAGA

REBECCA KARPINSKI  
Photo Editor

From a bullied high school student performing in dive bars, Lady Gaga has made her mark on Earth as one of the most influential superstars to ever hit the music industry.

Born Stefani Joanne Angelina Germanotta, now mostly known by her screen name, Lady Gaga. The inspiration for her name came from the famous Italian drag queen and singer, Carole Bayer.

Lady Gaga was born in central Texas on Aug. 28, 1986. She was the daughter of Joanne and Joe Germanotta. Her parents cared deeply about education and the bullies she had experienced at school.

Lady Gaga performed in the city's public schools and won several piano competitions. At the age of 11, she started taking vocal lessons from Christina Aguilera’s singing coach, Don Lawrence. As a kid, she learned classical piano and took full days of acting classes.

In school, Gaga had to deal with merciless bullying. People would always ask her, “Why are you so strange, why do you do your hair that way, are you gay? Do you really have to look like that for school?” She was constantly slut-shamed and many times, she didn’t even want to go to school.

But Gaga gives credit to those bullies. For better and for worse, she overcame those harsh words, stating that, “Bullying really stays with you your whole life and it really never goes away. I was never the winner, I was always the loser. And that still stays with me.”

Though grateful for her education and the bullies she had growing up, Gaga wasn’t afraid to take risks. After surviving high school, Gaga enrolled in NYU Tisch School of the Arts. It was during this time when she dropped out to become a pop star.

It seemed like she was about to become very successful very quickly.

At 19 years old, Gaga signed to Def Jam records. But after three months, the label dropped her.

To her father’s dismay, Gaga had moved to the Lower East Side, where she dabbled in cocaine and danced in burlesque dive bar shows, performing onstage in nothing but a bra and a thong, lighting hairsprays on fire, go-go dancing to Black Sabbath and singing songs about oral sex.

But in 2008, Rob Fusari, Gaga’s boyfriend at the time, brought her to Interscope records as a songwriter, where she wrote songs for New Kids on the Block, Fergie, the Pussycat Dolls and Britney Spears. While singing a reference vocal for a song she had written, Gaga caught the ear of Akon, an acclaimed R&B songwriter, who signed Gaga to his own label. Within the year, Gaga had released her first album, The Fame, to critical and popular acclaim. Thus came the start of her superstardom.

On February 5, 2017, Lady Gaga headlined the Super Bowl LI halftime show, taking her performance on the roof of the NRG Stadium in Houston Texas, singing parts of “God Bless America” and “This Land is Your Land” and reciting an excerpt of the pledge of allegiance before diving through the air suspended by wires to the stage. Her halftime show included a medley of her iconic songs including “Edge of Glory,” “Poker Face,” “Born This Way,” “Telephone,” “Just Dance,” “Million Reasons,” and “Bad Romance.”

Gaga has been many things in her career; fashion icon, sex icon, and provocative pop artist. But she has been, most importantly, a singer and a resilient star. Her latest Super Bowl performance earned her hard-won praise for being a fantastic musician. The performance proved that Gaga doesn’t need anyone’s approval to be a superstar. That’s something she does for herself.

Texas is a big state—in fact, it’s bigger than the entire country of France. And all those 260,000 square miles are filled with history.

Let’s start with Dallas, the heart of the state, located in the northeast part of the state. Downtown Dallas is the location of Texas, a park city park and National Historic Landmark that marks the site where President John F. Kennedy was assassinated. Right next to it is the Sixth Floor Museum, which is where Lee Harvey Oswald is thought to have taken the shot from.

A concrete monument of John F Kennedy is also displayed in the city. The capital city of Texas, and currently the most popular among out-of-town transplants, is Austin. The capital building rises 300 feet above the city.

A beautiful view for a great adventure. // commons.wikimedia.org

Houston is the next stop after San Antonio. The Gulf-side city has a rich museum district, but its biggest attraction is the NASA Johnson Space Center, which houses some of the original astronauts into orbit and the moon. The center also highlights achievements in space by walking or by riding the tram. Visitors can explore exhibits on space by walking or by riding the tram. They even get a chance to see the scenes at Mission Control, which is open 24/7, along with the astronaut training facility.

All of these fascinating attractions, plus the comfortable weather and fun cuisine, make Texas a top winter vacation spot. Each city tells a story and sets a beautiful, memorable scene.

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History Behind St. Patrick’s Day

CHRISTOPHER MOLINA
Staff Writer

Most people don’t know the history behind St. Patrick’s Day. A lot of people know this holiday by watching parades, going out for drinks, and partying. Every year on March 17, the Irish and the Irish-at-heart across the globe celebrate St. Patrick’s Day. What started as a religious feast day for the Patron Saint of Ireland has become an one of the largest international festivals, that involves celebrating Irish culture with parades, dancing, special foods, drinks and a whole lot of green. Besides the holiday being celebrated in their native origins, the Republic of Ireland, and Northern Ireland, the holiday has reached as far as South America, in countries like Canada, Great Britain, the United States, Argentina, and New Zealand. This religious holiday can be traced back to as far as the feast day of St. Patrick and the day he was believed to be died in 460 A.D. which the Irish have been celebrating this religious holiday for thousands of years. St. Patrick which he was commonly known was a fifth-century Romeo-British Christian missionary and bishop in Ireland, which earned him the title among the Irish as the “Apostle of Ireland”. In the early 17th century, Saint Patrick’s Day was made an official Christian feast day and that is observed by the Catholic Church, the Anglican Communion including the Church of Ireland.

This holiday commemorates Saint Patrick’s arrival to Ireland along with converting that land to Christianity and celebrates the vibrant culture and heritage of the Irish in general.

The Celebration usually involves public parades, festivals, and wearing a lot of green. Aside from that, the holiday is more than just a celebration. It is also for a time of attending church services. In a recent poll, conducted by Behavior and Attitudes for RTÉ on Election Day, questioned people on their religious affiliation and church attendance. In Ireland 79% identified as Catholic, while 9% described themselves as “not religious other responses included Protestant (3%), atheist (4%), and agnostic at (1%). This celebration has greatly influenced the world particularly in North America. However in recent year with all the excessive partying there has been criticism of Saint Patrick’s Day for having it become too commercialized and creating negative stereotypes toward the Irish.

LA LA LAND REVIEW

ALEX CENTENO
Contributing Writer

La La Land is a 2016 American musical drama written and directed by Damien Chazelle and starring Ryan Gosling and Emma Stone as Sebastian and Mia, a musician and an aspiring actress who meet and fall in love in Los Angeles.

The film starts off with a traffic jam on a freeway. As people begin to flutter with frustration, all of a sudden, commuters begin to jump on their cars and start dancing and singing Another Day Of Sun (An original music score for the film). The colors of the dresses imply that there is a theme of fairy tales.

The film displays how achieving a dream can become an obstacle. Sebastian and Mia both go through many obstacles to achieve their dreams. Sebastian’s dream is to open a jazz club, while Mia’s is to become an actress. But both characters begin to go through multiple setbacks. Are there throwbacks in life? Yes, there are! Mia and Sebastian are both examples of that.

Most of the emotions within Mia and Sebastian are displayed through musical and non-musical themes. For example, when Mia and Sebastian go on their first date, a musical dream sequence appears, showing how they typically imagined how their date turned out. That is where the theme of fairy tales comes into play because normally fairy tales are all about “happily ever after.” But La La Land shows that sacrifices must be made in order to achieve one another’s objectives. The film typically displays the message of “Hello. This isn’t Disneyland.” In other words, things won’t always turn out the way you’d want them to turn out.

The film displays a good message on how a lot of people wants to view life as fairy tales. The real tension of the film is the conflict between ambition and love. It keeps its foot on reality despite its melodrama.

Logan is a Beautiful End Note of the Wolverine Trilogy

TREVOR GIOIA
Contributing Writer

The best “X-Men” movie ever, with a western feeling and a road trip movie combined to make a film that is an awesome ending; Logan is about the Wolverine in a world where there are no more mutants and him dealing with the character of X-23 who is much like Logan.

It takes place in a future that was reset by Logan in the end days of future past. This film has a great story, really good dialogue and character moments that will actually make some people cry.

A theme throughout the film is the importance of family and that what a person makes can be what person needs. This is felt though the relationship between Logan and Charles Xavier feels like a father-son relationship. And with X-23 being a lost person with no home; Charles takes a liking to her.

If you like a movie that has a last ride to it, or if you have seen all the X-men movies this is one movie I would suggest to go and see. This movie feels like an ending for a trilogy of Wolverine movies... It leaves Hugh Jackman on high a note.

The director James Manigold conveyed a film that felt real and interesting about old man Logan and X-23. In my opinion I thought this movie was amazing and well written. So I would give this movie a five out of five stars.
Michael Vick Announces Retirement

Nick Cowling
Staff Writer

After a 13-year career, quarterback Michael Vick is set to officially retire from the National Football League. A former first overall pick in the 2001 NFL Draft, Vick spent most of his career with the Atlanta Falcons but also found himself playing for the Philadelphia Eagles, New York Jets and Pittsburgh Steelers.

One of the most physically gifted players in the history of the position, Vick revolutionized the way in which the sports world defines a mobile quarterback. Incredible elusive and possessing unparalleled speed, Vick amassed over 6,000 rushing yards reaching its crux in 2006 with a record breaking 1,039 rushing yards in a mere 123 attempts. Complementing his gift of speed, Vick also had admirable throwing talent and was considered to have one of the strongest arms of his generation. Humorously considered the most unfair player in sports videogames due to his speed and cannon arm, Vick was responsible for the fracturing of many friendships.

Initially inargued Vick’s career but nothing found itself more damaging to his employment in football than the dog fighting ring that he ran, known as “Bad Newz Kennels.” The ring was a dog fighting ring that he ran, known as “Bad Newz Kennels.” The ring was deemed responsible for the fracturing of many friendships. Vick was found to have been personally involved in the killing of several dogs.

Vick was offered a plea bargain and pleaded guilty to several charges. He was sentenced to 23 months in a federal prison. Upon Vick’s release, he returned to the NFL to malignant criticism. In 2009 he signed with the Eagles and found himself in a backup role. The following season saw Vick overtake the starting quarterback role as he started in twelve games, leading the Philadelphia to the postseason and garnering himself a position in the Pro Bowl.

His career trajectory slowly dipped as he saw his starting time diminish and he was eventually regulated again to a backup role by the end of the 2012 season. Following his departure from the Eagles, Vick was primarily used in a depth role for the Jets and Steelers. Between his final two seasons, he only conjured a 3-3 record and less than 1,000 yards passing. Vick was not signed to any team for the 2016 season and announced his retirement on Feb. 6, 2017. Though his playing career is marred by a terrible crime, Vick expresses remorse and has worked with the Humane Society of the United States to tackle the issue of dogfighting.

How history will treat Vick is up in the air. Regardless, his talents were something to behold and the standard of the quarterback position has been greatly influenced by his presence. He finishes with over 20,000 passing yards, 175 total touchdowns and a 63-54-1 record.

Charles Barkley vs LeBron James: Trash Talkers Go Head To Head

Trevor Gioia
Contributing Writer

Words are powerful weapons. Sometimes, we can say things that have unintended consequences.

Last year, the Cleveland Cavaliers won the NBA championship. This season, however, has been rocky for Cleveland. Their record is nowhere near the expectations of three-time champion LeBron James.

James said regarding the Cavs recent struggles, “We’re not better than last year. From a personnel standpoint, we’re a top heavy team.” On the TNT NBA tip off show, James’s comment sparked a comment from Charles Barkley. Barkley, on LeBron James’s comment said, “Whiny. Inappropriate. All the above. The Cleveland Cavaliers have Lebron James and spent a lot of money on him, this notion of him being the best player and not wanting to compete.” Charles Barkley believes James does not compete as hard as he should. This comment has caused a rift between Barkley and James.

Lebron James came back at Charles Barkley saying, “He’s a hater. What makes what he says credible? Because he’s on TV? I’m not going to let him disrespect my legacy.” Lebron went onto comment that he would never do the bad things Charles Barkley has throughout his career, like spitting on fans and accruing Las Vegas gambling debt.

On the following TNT NBA Tip Off, Charles Barkley defended his words, saying that they were more about the basketball game, not the player. He went on to say, “LeBron is great player, probably the greatest. If I see Lebron I will hold nothing against him and shake his hand.” Could this statement from Barkley prove that he realized he was in the wrong?

Astros compensated for Cardinals hacking scandal

Anthony Khelil
Sports Editor

The St. Louis Cardinals will finally be punished for their involvement in the hacking scandal of the Houston Astros proprietary Ground Control database. After nearly two and a half years of being punishment free, the St. Louis Cardinals have been fined $2 million, and must forfeit their two top draft picks in the coming Major League Baseball draft.

The MLB has yet to see a punishment of this magnitude, as it is unprecedented for strip a team of two draft picks. The picks the Cardinals will be handing over to the Astros will be at slots 56 and 75.

The commissioner of Major League Baseball, Rob Manfred, recently discovered that Cardinals employee Carlos Correa, acted alone in the hacking of Carlos Correa had access to the Astros database for nearly two and a half years. In addition to the charges that Correa faced a few months ago, he is permanently banned from the MLB.

The positive to come out from this is that the MLB can finally put this scandal behind them and focus on improving the game and making changes they hope will speed up the game. There are still many questions that have and will be left unanswered.

Did the commissioner do a thorough enough investigation to assure no other Cardinal employee was involved? And is the penalty strict enough to keep future teams from trying to attempt something similar?
Place your bets. The fight for boxing bragging rights between two giants of their sports in this decade, Conor McGregor and Floyd Mayweather may actually happen. Conor McGregor is the current UFC lightweight champion and the former UFC featherweight champion. On the other hand, Floyd Mayweather is a professional boxer with 49 wins and no losses over the span of his career. These two athletes are considered giants in their respective sports.

Conor McGregor is no stranger to controversy, and Floyd Mayweather consistently trash talk one another as this fight has been rumored for about three years. Back in June of 2015, Conor McGregor on the Conan show when asked about the possibility of fighting Mayweather said, “Duh! If you’re asking would I like to fight Floyd Mayweather, I mean, who would not like to dance around the ring for $800 million?” These words by McGregor sparked many rumors in the sports world, of whether or not what would be a highly anticipated fight could possibly end up happening.

This would be a rivalry for a cross brand fight between a boxer and UFC fighter. The anticipation for this fight is high on the list of many avid sports watchers, basically to see the outcome of these two getting in the ring.

Floyd Mayweather has put up a offer to make the fight happen. He threw out an offer of 15 million dollars. This was taken as joke that Conor McGregor was offered that price. Dana White the president of UFC stated in interview with Colin Cowherd on this offer saying, “Listen here is my offer, we pay Floyd Mayweather $25 million and Conor McGregor $25 million. And then we’ll talk about pay per view prices.”

This shows how much potential money would be involved with a fight of this magnitude. The fight has been two years of rumors, heated words, and backstage offers who knows when it’s going to happen.
Men’s Basketball Ends in Disappointment

Yet another season of basketball has come to an end for the Bulldogs men’s basketball team. Unfortunately, it was not exactly a season that the team would like to remember, as the men went 7-21 overall and 6-14 in their conference, going from making the semifinals of the 2016 NJCAA Region XIX tournament last year, to not even making the playoffs this year. Adding insult to injury, the team was blown out in their final game against Sussex 89-61 at home. Head coach Bobby Morgan was disappointed not necessarily by the record, but mostly by the effort from his bulldogs.

“It was a disappointment, not because of the win-loss record,” coach Morgan said on the season. “The team as a whole has to give a better effort every night. We didn’t get that. We didn’t get that all season so that’s what was disappointing. Not even the record. After a 19-20 win season last year, it’s very disheartening that (the team is) not really working hard towards winning basketball games.”

Neither the offense nor the defense is more or less to blame for the Bulldogs losing season; both had their faults. The Bulldogs scored only 72.4 points per game, good for only 78th in the nation, while allowing opponents to score 81.6 points per game against them, 83rd in the nation. Bergen was outscored by a total of 9.2 points per game, good for only 78th in the nation, while allowing opponents to score 81.6 points per game, good for only 78th in the nation.

Furthermore, the team also had an issue making their shots, shooting only 41.2 percent from the field, 81st in the nation. On the other hand, opponents shot 48.2 percent, 97th highest in the nation. Lastly, rebounding wasn’t a strength either, only grabbing 36 boards per game, 72nd in the nation, 10.9 offensive and 25.1 defensive.

“We had more talent last year,” said Morgan. “Kids that were supposed to come back; I was supposed to have 10 players back from that team. Our best player transferred cause he got a scholarship. You know we don’t give athletic scholarships here. My second best player had to go to school for work. So, you know, life gets in the way. Basketball is not end-all-be-all for a lot of kids. Our kids have jobs. They have families. Some of them have children. So, you know, the talent level was different from last year to this year.”

That’s not to say there were no positives to take away from the season. One key positive was the team’s ball control and movement; they were 35th in assists, with 16.5 per game, and had the 27th fewest turnovers with 12.9 per game. However, the biggest was the play of sophomore guard Matthew Ospala. He led the team in points (17.7 per game), assists (4.4 per game), and free throw shooting, (81.1 percent). Speaking of, he was 21st in the entire nation in free throw shooting.

“The positives that I take from the season are some of the relationships I built with the players,” said Morgan. “Matthew Ospala has interest from New Jersey City University, and Robert Williams III has interest from Malamata Centenary College.”

Coach Morgan, along with assistant coach Robert Glover, plan to “pound the pavement;” That is, to recruit heavily to add some much needed talent to the roster. Despite this only being his second season as head coach of the men's basketball team, Bobby Morgan is getting comfortable in his role fast.

“It feels good,” said Morgan. “I’m getting a lot of traction. I’m knowing the region inside and out. But you need talent to compete here, because there’s no nights off and the region has so many good teams and you have to have players every year that can compete if you don’t wanna be in the bottom of the standings like we were this year.”