



Asian Heritage Committee Presents James Dao as Keynote Speaker

CHRISTOPHER MOLINA
STAFF WRITER

For Asian History Month, Bergen Community College held an annual event inviting James Dao, Op-Ed Editor of the New York Times.

The event took place in the Ciccone theater, where it was full of students, and professors. During the event, Dao talked about the work of being the Op-Ed Editor for the New York Times, including covering controversial topics that many of his writers tend to write about, only to face a backlash by its readers and critics.

“But that’s the daily risk we face each day as we try to present brighter viewpoints on very difficult subjects everyday,” said Dao.

With that came questions, mostly centered around Trump and the things he’s done as the United States President. Some of the students in attendance were journalism majors, and were concerned with the behavior of President Trump, calling many news agencies “fake news,” and wondered how to counteract this dilemma.

Aside from that, many people in attendance enjoyed their stay and had learned a lot from his speech. And at the same

time, Dao who also enjoyed his stay as well, was surprised by the large number of people who attended and participated at the event.

“I thought it was lovely, I was really gratified that a lot of people came out on a beautiful day and I think that there were a lot of smart and interesting questions,” said Dao.

One of the major aspects of this event was for the people to learn of the importance of journalism and the work that comes with it.

“What I would hope those people take away, the journalism students [and] the students in general, from it is the importance of open debate and dialogue about major issues and the importance of talking [to] each other [on] whether if we agree with other people we’re talking with about serious and emotional issues,” said Dao.



Bergen welcomes NYT Op- Ed Editor.// Rebecca Karpinski



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Drugs and the Effects on the Young Human Brain

DAVID PEREZ
STAFF WRITER

On the 3rd of April a lecture and film screening occurred on campus about the young adult brain. The keynote speaker, Dr. Sion Kim Harris a Harvard Medical School research scientist.

The program was organized by Tiziana Quattrone and Melisa Salort, both of whom work here at Bergen. The hour-long lecture was focused on the latest information on how drugs affect the brain.

One of the more notable points of her lecture on drug was the information on marijuana that she presented. The information presented came from a report that nearly 100 conclusions on the health effects of marijuana.

Some of the findings that were presented were interesting at the very least. One example would be marijuana and its effects on the brain overall.

There was the effects on the hippocampus and the structure it takes. Testing on mice also show that the hippocampus, the area where memory is stored, is shown to be less developed with the mice that were given marijuana, this is a different story when compared to the mice that were not given marijuana at all.

When looking in detail the hippocampus wasn’t as branched out when compared to the other mice that didn’t take any marijuana. This is only reinforced with saying that this happens with repeated use and not just once.

“Oh yeah, for sure,” replied Dr. Sion Kim Harris when asked if there are going to be any more



studies pertaining to marijuana. “I mean right now we really are very focused on marijuana because of what is happening with all the policy change, but there has been a lot of research that has already occurred too.”

Dr. Harris also shared her opinion on what other things should also be looked into when researching the medicinal uses of marijuana.

“I think the research right



Students learn the real truth behind drugs. //Karina Quintero

now is looking into what are the potential medicinal uses, but I disagree with going about it with the way we have, which is not having controlled trials of particular substances in the plant that may have medicinal benefits. Like there is a lot of different components of the marijuana plant,” Dr. Sion Kim Harris said.

She went on to say that CBD has some of the opposite effects of THC, such as not hav-

ing a mental high. So there is a potential for being prescribed a certain component of marijuana.

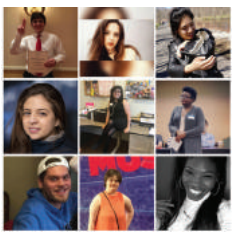
There is a report that was released earlier this year on nap.edu for those who wish to look at it; from there go into the search bar and type in “marijuana” the search result one would select would be the one from 2017 as it is the most recent and has nearly 30,000 downloads as of this writing.



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Asian Festival Brings an Array of Cultures to Campus

PURNASREE SAHA
STAFF WRITER

BCC held an Asian festival in the Student Center, which was sponsored by Student Life and the Asian Heritage Committee.

“The main purpose of the Asian festival was to celebrate the cultural heritage and the diversity of the college,” said Mina Ahn, a Korean Club advisor and associate professor in the department of psychology.

Students were encouraged to attend the Asian Festival through posters displayed around campus and through emails sent by the Asian Heritage Committee.

During the event, there were fashion shows, music, and dance performances by professional Asian artists.

“The role of the fashion show was to display the beautiful and rich cultures of Asia through costumes,” Susanna Lansangan, professor of ESL, said.

Sensei Luis Taboada, who is from Peru and is considered to be a champion in martial arts, was another prominent guest. He trained in Shotokan for nine years in multiple Asian countries including Japan, Hong Kong, Philippines, Thailand and Singapore. After Sensei training, Taboada earned a second and third degree black belt in the Philippines and a fourth degree black belt in New York City.

He has since been teaching Shotokan for 40 years and has won many national and international competitions in the traditional technique. At the festival, Taboada performed various moves and then taught members of the audience.

The Asian clubs and committees, such as the Muslim Student Association, International Student Club, Korean Student Association and Chinese Club, were represented at the Asian festival. The members and advisors of each club wanted the students, staff and faculty to learn and understand the culture and history of their country, while also enjoying a few bites of the tasty food they brought.

“We wanted to give students the history of Turkey and show its traditional foods by offering everyone Turkish delights,” said Zeynep Demirer, secretary of the International Student Club.

Other organizations agreed that the sharing and education aspects were key.



Asian heritage month celebrated in music, dance, and traditional wear. // Karina Quintero

“Students who are Muslims and non-Muslims are capable of joining Muslim Student Association because they could learn more about the religion,” said Alinah Malik, an associate professor of math and the advisor of the Muslim Student Association.

Delicious snacks such as Punjabi cookies and “namak parey,”--a salty fried cracker--and henna tattoos were offered to everyone on campus.

India was also featured in the Asian Heritage celebrations.

According to Nishika Gupta, staff and member of the Asian Heritage Committee, “We want to introduce India to the whole community and spread awareness of the various cultures in India.”

Festival attendees were welcome to see the various cultural outfits that were displayed such as lehengas and kurtis. The Indian members who were part of the Asian Heritage Committee wore saris and salwar kameez at the event.

Samosas, a type of pastry that includes spices, potatoes and peas, and chai were served. Meanwhile, the members of the Japanese program taught audience members how to fold origami.

“Origami is a style of art which could be used for decoration and to express your feelings to others,” Mario Maximous, a Japanese professor at BCC, said.

Thanks to the Chinese club, everyone was invited to try sweet cunzao, pork dumplings and Chinese leek.

With so much to do, eat and see, the Asian festival is one of the most lively and accessible events on campus. Students, faculty and staff members at BCC can look forward to attending it in the upcoming year to learn the nuances between Asian religions and cultures that are often lumped together in common-speak.

According to Ahn, the festival is still getting off the ground. This was only its second year, but the hope is that it will take place annually going forward.

Cuomo Offers Free College Tuition To The Middle Class

IAN HARTMAN
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

New York Governor Andrew Cuomo recently signed into law a bill to create the Excelsior Scholarship, which would pay for the full tuition of “middle class” students attending CUNY or SUNY schools.

Students using the scholarship will be required to live and work in New York state for at least four years after graduating.

The program is being touted as the first statewide program to provide free college, with former Democratic Presidential candidate Hillary Clinton calling it “a win for progressives.”

Conservatives are angry about this policy because it will cost taxpayers money. Right-wing website Townhall estimates that the program will cost 163 million dollars in the first year.

Governor Cuomo defended this policy saying, “why should New Yorkers

pay for your college if you just move to California?”

Left-wing and liberal groups have also condemned the legislation, albeit from a very different direction.

The Campaign to Make CUNY Free Again, a student and faculty run organization that campaigns for free higher education, released a statement condemning the scholarship describing it as “a bill of goods... that will take from the poorest students to fill the coffers of the state.” They accuse Cuomo of using the scholarship as a “smokescreen to cover a \$1,000 tuition increase.”

According to the New York Times editorial board, the scholarship is aimed at “that one slice of the middle class.” According to one estimate, the program will only reach around 32,000 students.



Governor Cuomo Addresses crowd.//Wikimedia Commons

School Shooting Shakes San Bernardino

NICK COWLING

STAFF WRITER

A lone gunman opened fire in a California school on Monday, April 10 killing two before turning the weapon upon himself.

North Park Elementary School in San Bernardino, California was encroached upon by 53-year-old Cedric Anderson who was in search of his estranged wife, teacher Karen Elaine Smith. He had entered the school and signed in at the front office reportedly telling faculty members that he wanted to drop something off for his wife.

Upon arriving at the classroom she was teaching in, he withdrew a high caliber handgun and fired upon Smith, striking her and two students in the process before killing himself. The two students struck in the attack were eight-year-old Johnathan Martinez, who died at a local hospital after being airlifted for treatment, and 9-year-old Nolan Brandy who was listed in a stable condition.

Anderson does have a criminal background as noted



Students walk to safety after the shooting. // tribkta.files.wordpress.com

by San Bernardino Police Chief Jarrod Burguan. He had faced criminal charges in the past for crimes against public peace, brandishing a weapon and assault. All of these charges were either dismissed or were not recipient of further prosecution. Anderson also had two temporary restraining orders filed against him previously.

Anderson and Smith were

married this past January after four years of dating. Smith's mother Irma Skyes spoke of the relationship stating, "We thought he was a fine person....and then he showed the other side of him which we had never seen before."

After continued warnings Smith received from her parents, the couple separated shortly after lasting all of seventy-two days. While

Anderson's motives are not explicitly known, his actions speak loudly as "He came in, and very, very quickly upon entering the classroom started shooting," as told by Police Chief Burguan.

This school reopened on Monday the 17th with increased security standards including fingerprint identification for visitors. School Superintendent Dale Marsden spoke in a

video message saying, "As you know our children need us now more than ever. We're their role models, teachers, companions, support. We'll endure and make it through this heartbreaking ordeal together as a family."

The entire district was encouraged to wear red in honor of the healing North Park Elementary School.

American Comedy Show About China Censored in Hong Kong and Taiwan by Apple

CHRISTOPHER MOLINA

STAFF WRITER

Apple introduced the new TV app, "Apple TV" offering a unified experience for discovering and accessing TV shows and movies from multiple apps.

However, one show will not be experiencing this opportunity. Apple Inc., one of the world's biggest companies, has blocked an comedy YouTube show called China Uncensored from its Apple TV app store in Taiwan and Hong Kong as well as mainland China. China Uncensored is an English-language television comedy show on YouTube produced by New Tang Dynasty Television in New York City. In which many viewers sees it as "like The

Daily Show, but about China"

New Tang Dynasty is a non-profit television station founded by Chinese Americans to be an alternative voice to China's state-run propaganda media.

China which is ruled by the Communist Party, has a history of human rights violations and censoring anything that they see is a threat to their regime.

"I totally understand why we're blocked in mainland China. We're clearly disrupting the Communist Party's harmonious propaganda," said Chris Chappell, creator and host of China Uncensored.

The controversy that brings is that the show is blocked in regions outside of the Communist Party's

control. Such as in Hong Kong and Taiwan, Taiwan which shares the same culture and language like in the mainland, but sees itself as a country with its own government, currency and military. The show is also blocked in Hong Kong, a special administrative region south of China, that was handed over after 99 years of British rule but retained unique rights and privileges. "But Hong Kong and Taiwan are not supposed to be under Chinese law," said Chappell.

In March 2017, China Uncensored was approved by Apple for availability in most of the world, but removed it from app stores in mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan. In response, the team from China Uncensored sent a

letter to Apple CEO Tim Cook requesting to add the show back to app stores in Hong Kong and Taiwan within a 30 day period or face legal action.

"Is Apple so scared of the Chinese Communist Party that it would censor China Uncensored in Hong Kong and Taiwan, just in case?" Chris Chappell said. "Or is Apple just confused about which places belong to China and this was all an accident? They should probably consult a lawyer, like we've done."

Apple, like many foreign companies doing business in China, has to follow the government guidelines in order to continue doing business there. According to data released by Consumer Intelligence Research Partners,

China has been the world's largest market for iPhones, at the end of 2015 there are an estimated 131 million iPhone users (The U.S., the world's second-largest market, is estimated to have about 100 million iPhone users). However, the team of China Uncensored claims that they'll continue their push for the show to appear in Hong Kong and Taiwan by establishing a petition. Which aims to reach ten thousand signatures. In hopes it'll be enough to persuade Apple to uphold the freedom of speech and press around the world.

To sign the petition, go to www.chinauncensored.tv/petition



Apple is eating the truth and our trust. // Rebecca Karpinski

The Torch

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

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

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Editorial: What I've Learned

ADRIANNA CARABALLO
EDITOR IN CHIEF

With the semester coming to a close many students are graduating, including those on the editorial board. Those that are graduating include layout editor Karina Quintero, Co-editor Adam Grassani, and sports editor Anthony Kehlil.

All three of them did their job to the best of their ability and will have plenty of experience going forward. Many students, including those three, go onto four-year colleges to further their education.

I am also planning on going to a four-year college after graduation, for those considering on doing the same I have some advice for you. I can honestly say that joining a club doesn't just look good on paper, it is a good way to discover yourself.

If you're just laying on the couch after school there's nothing there to test your skills or your limitations. Joining a club, especially the Torch will teach and refine important real world skills such as communication, motivation, delegation, creativity, responsibility and leadership.

Boy did I learn a lot about leadership this semester. Prior to becoming the EIC of The Torch I had no real experience in leadership besides being News editor the previous semester.



Last look at the Eboard of Spring 2017. //Courtesy of the Editorial Board

As a child, I wasn't all that ambitious in fact quite the opposite. My grades were not the best and I was that person laying on the couch, leaving the responsibility up to someone else.

Now, as an adult I've acquired a hunger to be the best person I can be and better others, however, that drive can also be a big downfall. A big part of leadership is knowing

your limitations and knowing when to take a step back.

If you're like me, then you are your worst critic. Nothing ever satisfies you and you often feel like you could've done better even if you did your best, sound familiar? It is important to not think this way. Your best is your best. Although it is important to have standards, setting unrealistic standards will

drive a person insane.

My advice is to shoot for the stars, but don't shoot so high that you get lost in space. Learn how to rely on others when needed and don't feel ashamed for doing so. Lastly, take everything one day at a time. If there are a million things to accomplish this week, focus on that single day and then go from there.

SGA Corner



Left to right: Sibora Peca, (top) Thomas Lotito, Nicole Cacciatore, (bottom) Doreta Biba, Alicia Moran. //Bergen.edu

As the 2016-2017 school year comes to a close, the Student Government Association is preparing to welcome their new Executive Board for the upcoming school year. According to the current SGA Vice President, Angelica Flores, 1,169 out of the 13,005 students currently at Bergen voted in this year's election, breaking the record of most votes the SGA has received since the 2013-2014 elections. Here are the results:

- President- Sibora Peca
- Vice President- Thomas Lotito
- Treasurer- Doreta Biba
- Chief Justice- Alicia Moran
- Executive Assistant- Nicole Cacciatore
- Board of Trustees Alumni Representative- Peter Zalakostas

Congratulations to the new 2017-2018 SGA Executive Board and The Torch wishes you the best of luck.



Comic coming soon. //Rebecca Karpinski

Introducing "It's Me Becky!" Follow Bergen Community College student Becky as she deals with everyday situations that only Bergen students would understand.



First Place Awards: Editorial Writing, News Writing, Enterprise/Investigative Reporting 2016-2017
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New Jersey Press Foundation Better College Newspaper Contest

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





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OPINIONS

The Torch

The Possibility of a French Donald Trump

OWEN MCCLOSKEY
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Home of Europe's largest military, according to GlobalFirepower.com, the greatest cultural epicenter on Earth and, of course, delicious buttery croissants, France has been a major talking point recently. On May 7, the French will hold the second round of elections for their new president, and this is important for a slew of reasons.

Many of the upcoming electorates are proposing a French exit from the European Union, which could be detrimental to the world economy. Without the booming economy of France, the EU would be rendered useless.

With no European Union, France would have to abandon its currency and lose many benefits that come with a succinct flow of trade between other European countries. Unfortunately, the current frontrunner for the candidacy not only advocates for leaving the EU, but is far right, xenophobic, and downright racist.

Marine Le Pen, daughter of infamous founder of France's conservative National Front Jean-Marie Le Pen, is steadily rising in the polls at 21.34% of approval from voters according to CNN. This doesn't come as a surprise, because her partisan rhetoric is very attractive to many French voters who felt snubbed by the policies of current president Francois Hollande.

Jean-Marie Le Pen was later kicked out of his own party, ironically by Marine, for anti-Semitic comments and overall hateful speech, and although his daughter has tried to repair the National Front's image, she shares many of the same views as her father - who, by the way, is known as being a



Trump, Le Pen, or they are just one person. //Photo courtesy of wikimedia illustration Rebecca Karpinski

Holocaust denier.

Although France has initially been a nation that accepts refugees of war-torn countries like Syria and Yemen, Le Pen may change that dynamic.

In the wake of the ISIS-orchestrated terror attacks of the past year in Paris and Nice, many French citizens have

felt a wave of xenophobia sweep across the country. This xenophobia and fear of terrorism might play right into the hands of Le Pen, who has said that she would not only ban the use of turbans in public, but constrict the flow of refugees and hinder globalization.

According to BBC, Le Pen said

she would not be lenient on illegal immigrants, stating, "As for illegal immigrants, they have no reason to stay in France, these people broke the law the minute they set foot on French soil."

Wake up, France! Does this not sound a bit familiar? Donald J. Trump, an orangutan who by some happenstance inherited a business empire, ran on many of the same platforms that Le Pen is now. Le Pen even called Donald Trump a "building block for a better future."

What is happening with this new boom in populism? Le Pen has a serious chance of winning this election, despite her toxic rhetoric.

And Le Pen may be in even better shape due to the fact that her main challenger, Emmanuel Macron, (former banker and economic advisor to Francois Hollande) holds true to centrist policies that make him an unattractive candidate to the right and left of the French voting populus.

Macron is currently leading in the polls, but I don't need to remind you that Hillary Clinton had a commanding lead in the polls in September and October of 2016, before the great American embarrassment that we had witnessed on last year's election day.

With Le Pen on the rise and the first round of elections coming up in just a few weeks, it is imperative to consider the repercussions of this major decision that could affect the entire geopolitical landscape of the world.

How Screens are Brainwashing Your Children

OWEN MCCLOSKEY
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

What has become of the age of toys, treehouses, imagination and creativity? When did children decide to abandon Power Rangers and Polly Pockets and replace them with iPads and Apple TVs?

The digital age has affected American children, but not for the better. Go to any mall, restaurant, park or town square and you will witness a sea of small, lit-up faces and children wielding iPads in strollers while their parents ineffectively stand by on their cell phones.

Television used to be a source of enjoyment for children when viewed in moderation. Now, with the development of portable tablets, their faces are constantly buried in screens, everywhere they go.

A BBC study revealed that, on average, children ages five to sixteen spend six and a half hours with screens (tablets, computers, phones, etc.), compared to a mere three hours on average in 1995. The time children spend using screens is dramatically rising and this is not good for their brain development.

In 2014, studies out of Japan's Tohoku University found that children between the ages of five and 18 who

watch TV or YouTube for an average of four hours a day experience a gradual decrease in IQ and test scores, as well as verbal language function.

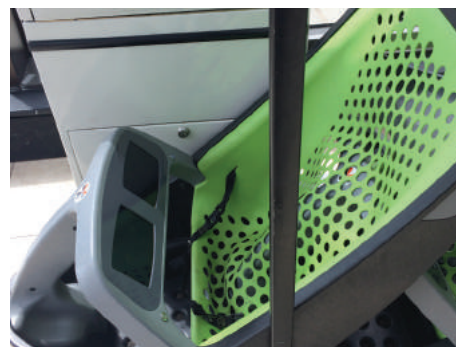
And if only four hours of screen usage a day affects kids' growth and development, imagine the havoc six and a half hours can wreak upon one's development. It is no question that kids need to spend more time away from screens and in parks, playing tag, running and getting exercise.

While walking through the Westfield Garden State Mall in Paramus, NJ, I stumbled across something truly eye-opening: strollers for rent by tech company Velochi, featuring two tablets in front of where the children sit, further bringing them out of reality and into the void of the screen.

This is horrendous. A simple solution would be to remove the presence of screens in a child's life. As you know, however, this just isn't feasible.

Parents need to monitor how much their children use screens. It is imperative for the growth of children.

If children are continually distracted by the digital world, he/she will not be able to find any hobbies, interests or things that stimulate their brains in the way they deserve to be stimulated.



Screen your kids while you shop. // Owen McCloskey

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DREW



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*Meet The Core to
the Next Yankee
Dynasty*
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FEATURES

The Torch

Pride Prom Celebrates BCC's Diversity

ALYSSA BLUNDO
Features Editor

Bergen PRIDE danced the night away at their Annual PRIDE Prom that was hosted by Bergen PRIDE and The Office of Student Life on Friday April 21st 2017 at the Ender Hall Courtyard. This fun filled dance lasted five hours, between 5:00 and 9:00 PM with scrumptious food: such as, mozzarella sticks, wontons, spring rolls, and meatballs in red sauce. It's music was provided by a skilled Disc Jockey and it's music blasted from speakers that could be heard from the Ender Hall front driveway. When asked about his favorite part of the "A Midsummer Night's Dream" themed dance, Charlie Leppert, Bergen PRIDE's Secretary and freshman at Bergen Community College, told the Torch

"My favorite part of the dance was seeing all the people who came".

Though there were no stars to be seen in the night sky at PRIDE Prom, everyone still had a fun time talking, laughing, eating, and dancing the night away, especially the LGBT students.

"It's like a second chance for them [the LGBT students] who did not attend

their high school prom" says, Leppert.

By having this dance, it allows all participants to celebrate each other's differences whether they are straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender and to accept each other for the way they are. It gives students the ability to be included in an event on Campus, where they feel safe and welcome.

According to Leppert, "It's a place where they can be themselves".



Students enjoying PRIDE Prom that was hosted by Bergen PRIDE and The Office of Student Life // Courtesy of Linda Seidman

The Bergen Room Brings The Heat

ALYSSA BLUNDO
Features Editor

The Bergen Room, a three-course dining establishment run by students of the Hospitality and Culinary Department, is a minimally decorated bistro located in Room C-210. Its intimately-sized room boasts 10 tables dressed in off-white tablecloths, and ethereal white curtains that hang beautifully on their grey paneled walls.

The light classical music playing in the background quickly diminished as the night went on, drowned out by conversations that could be heard throughout the bistro. The time at that point was 7 pm, which was their busiest hour.

As for their service, it was impeccable, although slow at times. Jordan, the server who took our orders, was very attentive to detail, calm, and gracious. He was very personable and welcoming.

When it came to the food, their crusty yet soft Ciabatta was perfectly paired with traditional olive oil. It also came with garlic olive oil, though it was overloaded with garlic flavor. Beginning the round of appetizers was a spoon of creamy Ricotta topped with a juicy cherry tomato, which was really good. Their arugula, citrus, and fennel salad was plain, but came accompanied by a meaty and peppery slice of artichoke, zesty slice of orange, a sliver of watermelon, and very sharp Parmesan cheese. The Bergen Room's



Bergen Room was run by students of the Hospitality and Culinary Department. //Thea Oh

gazpacho was full of flavor and it was really good. The tomato based cold soup was chock full of carrots, celery, thyme, red onion, and cucumber, with a cucumber garnish as well.

The main course was pan seared cod topped with peach and mango mojo. The fish was well-seasoned and prepared. The peach and mango flavor, however, overpowered the dish. It came with an equally delicious mashed sweet potato and fermented zucchini, but the

zucchini patty that accompanied it was soggy and greasy and looked like it didn't belong on the plate.

An alternate entree choice was a Sirloin steak with a red wine and balsamic shallot sauce, which was scrumptious, if a bit tough. This also came with mashed sweet potato and fermented zucchini as well as a zucchini patty.

Dinner would not be complete without dessert, honey poached pears

and vanilla ice cream had to be the highlight of the whole dinner. The pear was presented in a fan shape with its angled edges spread out, and the vanilla ice cream was so creamy that it looked like soup, but it was to die for.

The whole experience costs only \$12 per person and runs every Thursday at 6:45 until 9 pm. To make a reservation, please call (201)-447-7222 and leave a detailed message.

The Tale of Charlotte the Spider Plant

ADRIANNA CARABALLO
EDITOR IN CHIEF

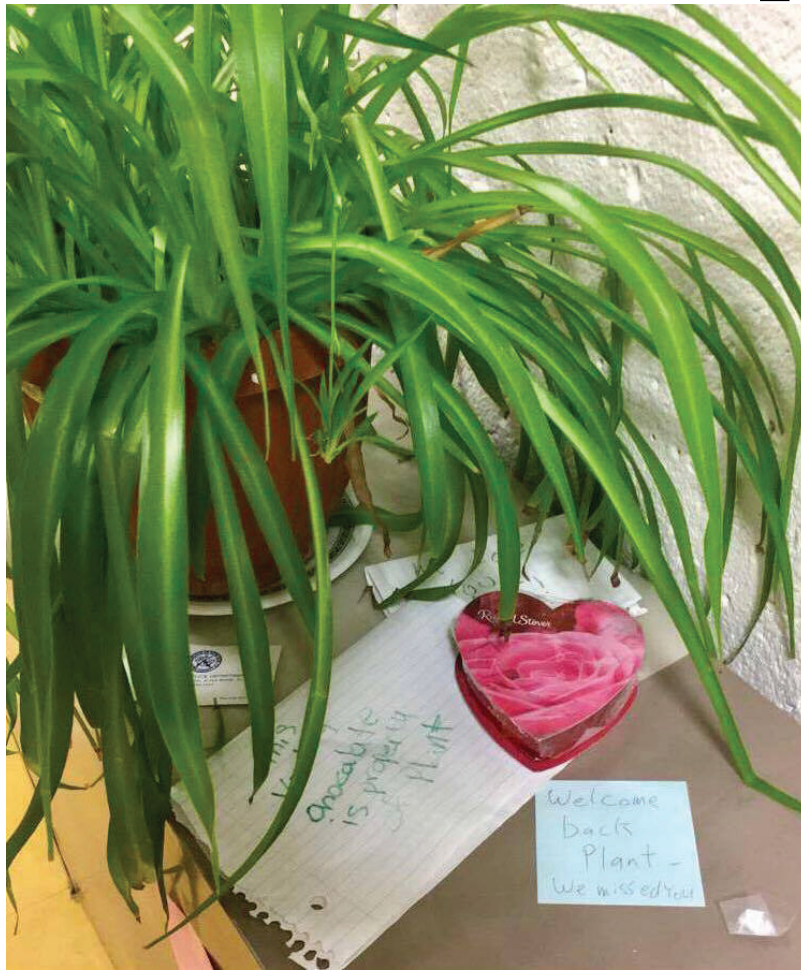
While walking to class on the third floor of Pitkin, in the B-wing side of the building, you might notice something peculiar on your way there.

A large spider plant can be seen at the end of the hall as students and faculty round the corner of the A-Wing. What's so peculiar about a spider plant? Nothing. It is, rather, the history of this plant that make its story so unique.

In September, after the Health Professions moved to their new building, many of Bergen's faculty, including the Mathematics Department, were moved into the B-Wing in the Pitkin building. To brighten up the new space, members of the faculty brought in the spider plant.

In January, the plant was stolen. In response to the theft, faculty members put up signs asking for the thief to please return the plant. One sign stated that public safety was looking at the video tapes.

Two weeks later, the plant thief returned the plant to its spot on the small table. This was when faculty and students began to turn this plant into something more special. The plant received a name: Charlotte, after



Charlotte surrounded by notes of adoring fans. //Rebecca Karpinski

Charlotte's Web.

Notes have been delivered to the plant saying "We love you," or even, "We missed you." On Valentine's Day, BCC student, Julia Young gave Charlotte the plant a small box of heart chocolates.

"On Valentine's Day, I saw Charlotte sitting there, notes of hope since her kidnapping. I felt, after all her trauma, she deserved to have a Valentine. I couldn't "leaf" her be," said Young.

Thought the faculty has since eaten the chocolates, the heart box remains, symbolizing how much everyone loves Charlotte.

Now, students stop and take pictures of the iconic plant on their way to classes. She has even become a favorite subject to talk about among students.

"It's pretty funny. [Charlotte's adventure] reflects how things around us can go on this journey we have no idea about," Young told The Torch

Charlotte went from being an ordinary plant for decoration, to a beloved character in BCC.

"I hope she gets sunlight, nutrients, and love," said Young.

Must See: Summer Movies

TREVOR GIOIA
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

As summer begins, ask yourself what movies look good. Though May is a slow month for movies, there are two that are going to be fun to watch. On May 19, "Alien Covenant," which is a sequel to "Prometheus" directed by Ridley Scott. It's about a ship full of couples going to a brand new planet. On May 23th two movies that are coming out. The first is "Pirates of Caribbean: Dead Men Tell No Tales", and the second is "Baywatch" Movie, which is Rated R. The Pirates movie is about commandant taking revenge on Jack Sparrow. The Baywatch Movie is based off the 1990's TV drama about lifeguards.

June which is a little better with some movies that are unique and some universe starts. Get ready for a brand new universe with "The Mummy" which comes out on June 9. This is about ancient princess coming back to life. On June 16th the Tupac movie "All Eyez On Me", a biography film about the rapper Tupac Shakur.

July is packed with most anticipated movies of the summer. On July 7th, Spider-Man swings back into theaters with Tom Holland being the youngest Peter Parker portrayed on film, called Spider-Man: Homecoming. "Hail Caesar" on July 14th, "War for The Planet Of The Apes" comes to screens with a last battle for humanity. "Hope is a weapon" a World War Two that is made by Christopher Nolan, called Dunkirk about a beach in France during the war on July 21. July is packed month of movies that will be interesting to watch because of each film has a feeling of summer movies. So that's all for the movies I feel are interesting in the summer.



A roundup of movie posters for upcoming summer films. //Courtesy of multiple movie studios

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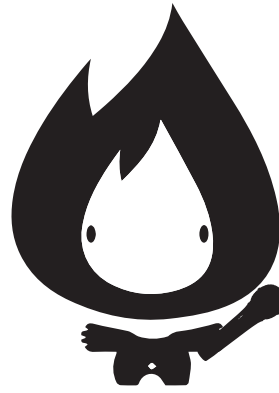
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Roving Reporter: SUMMER PLANS

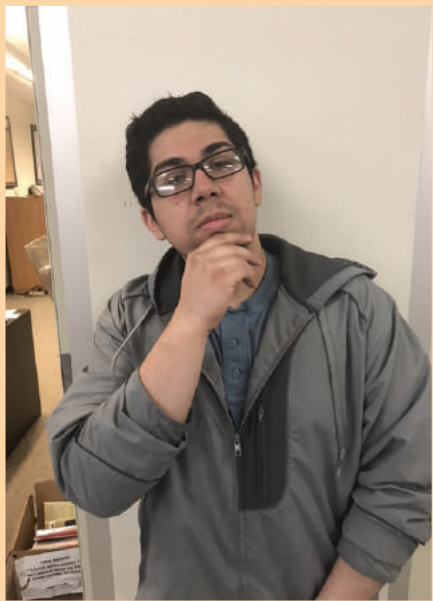
LESHAY JONES
NEWS EDITOR



Mahmoud Mahgoub
Major: Business Management
“My plan is to enjoy my summer before the big transfer. I want to hang out with friends and visit my dad in Egypt because I’m moving up to the next big stage in my life.”



Ashley Cruz
Major: Cinema Studies
“I will be road tripping all of the East Coast all summer. I plan to go to Boston, Virginia, Florida and so much more. You name it and I’ll probably be there.”



Daniel Ortiz
Major: Cinema Studies
“Well, I mostly plan on working at the iPic theater all summer. Oh, and I’ll be going to Miami, Florida for a week!”



Shamar Gill
Major: General Studies
“Mostly I plan on working on my artwork and building up my portfolio, applying for a few internships and just relaxing before the transfer to Chicago.”



Joseph Sanchez
Major: Liberal Arts
“I plan on enrolling in the Fire Academy over the break and also start working on my career in brokerage.”



Christiana Aghjayan
Major: General Studies
“I’m taking a baking course over the summer here at Bergen and I will hopefully be lounging on a cruise with my cousin.”

Students share their plans as the warm weather comes closer. //Leshay Jones

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

THE HISTORY OF CINCO DE MAYO

PURNASREE SAHA
STAFF WRITER

On May 5, people from Mexican culture celebrate the Festival Cinco de Mayo in many different parts of United States and in Mexico. Cinco de Mayo is the Spanish term for 5th of May. According to the article "History of Cinco de Mayo: History of Puebla" on the History Channel's website (www.history.com) this festival celebrates the Battle of Puebla, which was the Franco-Mexican War that started in 1861 and ended on 1867. In 1862 at the Battle of Puebla, the Mexican Army was successful enough to defend themselves against the French. Benito Juarez was the president of Mexico which was struggling with their economy and were not able to pay their debts to foreign governments. There were naval forces shipped to Veracruz due to the response from France, Spain, and Britain to claim reimbursement. Spain and Britain withdrew when they had a negotiation with Mexico, but France did not. The History Channel's website also states that "France was ruled by Napoleon III and then decided to sculpt a dependent empire out of Mexican territory". Veracruz was attacked by the French soldiers in 1861 and this caused President Juarez and his government to retreat. In Puebla de Los Angeles, which is a small town in east-central Mexico, General Latrille de Lorencez allowed 6,000 French troops to attack. President Juarez had new headquarters in the North and he allowed 2,000 loyal men who were either Indigenous Mexicans or of mixed ancestry to go to Puebla. There was large number of poorly supplied Mexicans that was led by Texas-born General Ignacio Zaragoza, that was

prepared for the French attack and was able to support the town. The article also states that on May 5, 1862, General Lorencez's army was well-provisioned and included large firearms during the Battle of Puebla. The battle occurred from daybreak to early evening and there were about 500 French soldiers that were killed and less than 100 Mexican soldiers killed during the battle. Therefore, the French soldiers retreated from the battle.

Although the battle between the Mexican and French soldiers was not a strategic win, the Mexican government had a great symbolic victory that was represented by Zaragoza's success at Puebla. Due to the military support and political pressure from the United States, France withdrew after six years because the US was finally in a position to aid its besieged neighbor

after the end of the US's civil war. In 1864, on the same year France withdrew, Napoleon named Austrian Archduke Ferdinand Emperor of Mexico and in Juarez's force Ferdinand was kidnapped and murdered. General Zaragoza passed away from typhoid fever after his historic victory in Puebla. According to the article "Cinco de Mayo in Mexico" on the History Channel's website (www.history.com), Zaragoza's death was what caused other parts of Mexico and Puebla to celebrate Cinco de Mayo. Military parades, reenactments of the Battle of Puebla and other festive events occur during Cinco de Mayo in Mexico. Cinco de Mayo was not named a federal holiday for Mexicans, so all stores and banks are open in Mexico.

According to the article "Cinco de Mayo in the United States" on the

History Channel's website (www.history.com), when Cinco de Mayo is being celebrated in the United States, it represents a celebration of Mexican culture and heritage. The celebration includes parades, parties, and mariachi music where there were Mexican folk dancing and traditional foods being eaten such as tacos and mole poblano. Houston, Chicago, and Los Angeles hold the largest celebration of Cinco de Mayo. However, according to the article "Confusion with Mexican Independence Day" on the History Channel's website (www.history.com), many people outside Mexico believe that this holiday refers to Independence in Mexico, but this was celebrated on September 16.



Cinco de Mayo celebrated with joy and music. //Karina Quintero

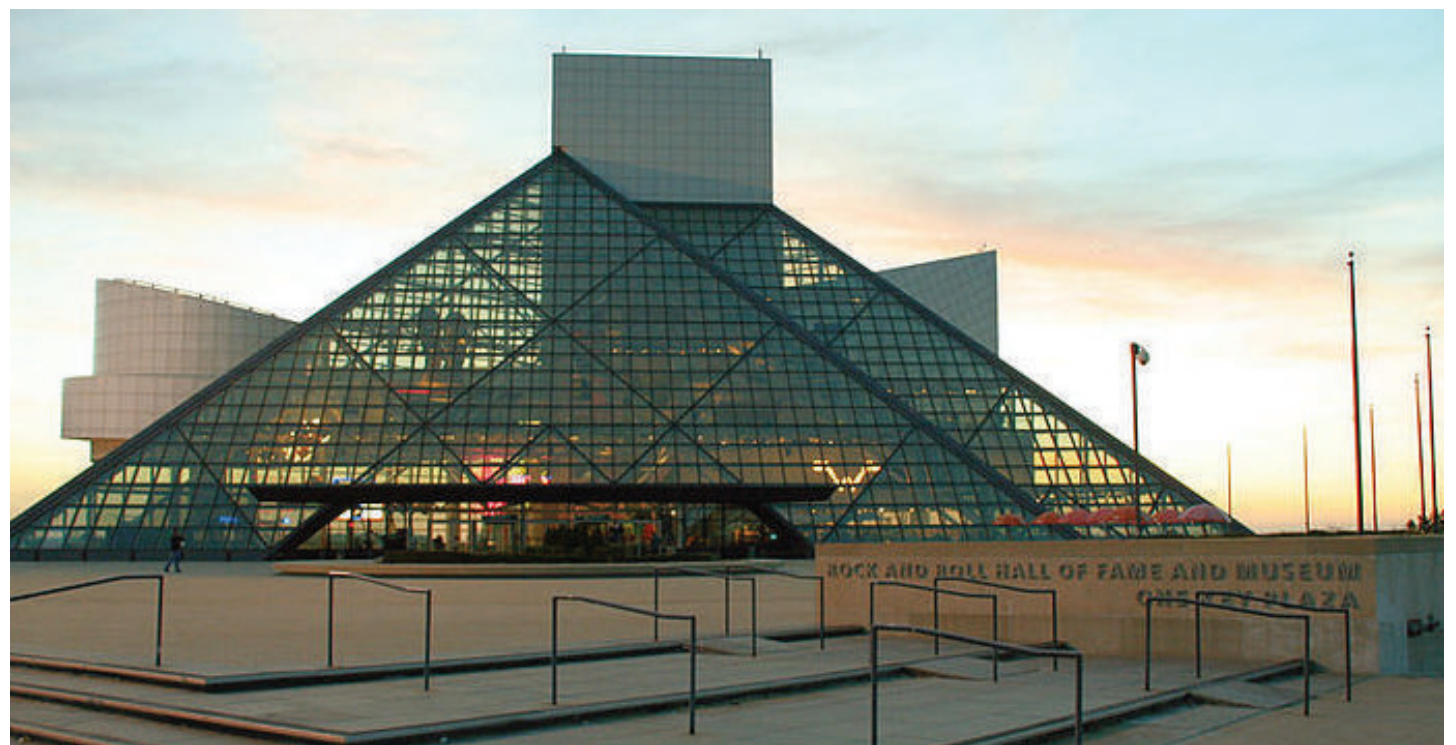
ROCK AND ROLL HALL OF FAME 2017 CEREMONY

ZACK FRIEDMAN
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

The evening kicked off with a tribute to the late rock and roll pioneer, Chuck Berry, with inductee Electric Light Orchestra performing "Roll Over Beethoven," which was also a hit for ELO back in the early 1970s. After performing "Evil Woman" and their signature song "Mr. Blue Sky," ELO was honored with a speech by Dhani Harrison, the son of ex-beatle and lifelong friend of ELO frontman Jeff Lynne, George Harrison. Dhani Harrison praised ELO's timeless songs, lavish concerts and Jeff Lynne's production work, while working with music legends such as Dhani's father, George, Tom Petty, Roy Orbison and Eagles guitarist, Joe Walsh. Drummer Bev Bevens and keyboardist Richard Tandy were unable to attend the ceremony. Founding ELO member, Roy Wood, attended the ceremony to accept his award alongside Jeff Lynne, despite not performing with him during the preceding set.

Jackson Browne honored folk singer Joan Baez for her memorable songs such as "Diamonds and Dust," her renditions of Bob Dylan's "God on their side" and The Band's "The night they drove old Dixie down." Browne also praised Baez on her contributions to the civil rights movement and her effect on humanitarian causes. After her speech, Joan Baez performed a small set of songs with the Indigo Girls and Mary Chapin-Carpenter which included a cover of Woody Guthrie's "Deportee," the traditional hymn "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot" and "The Night the Drove Old Dixie Down."

Alex Lifeson and Geddy Lee of Rush did the honors of inducting Yes into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. Alex and Geddy cited Yes as a major influence on their band while admiring Yes' complex body



The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. //Wikimedia Commons

of work, excellent musicianship and extravagant live performances. All the surviving members of Yes attended the ceremony with the exception of original keyboardist, Tony Kaye and late bass player and co-founder Chris Squire, whose award was accepted by his family. Yes later performed two of their signature songs, "Roundabout" and "Owner of a Lonely Heart."

Rapper Snoop Dogg had the honor of inducting his late friend, Tupac Shakur, into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. Snoop's speech was very personal as they were friends from the beginning of their careers to Tupac's tragic death in 1996. Snoop Dogg accepted the award on Tupac's behalf and later joined Alicia Keys and T.I. for a medley of Tupac's greatest hits.

Pat Monahan of the band Train was next to induct. He inducted Journey into

the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. All the members of Journey, including ex-members, drummer Aynsley Dunbar, keyboardist Gregg Rolie and singer Steve Perry, were in attendance. After their speeches, Journey took the stage to perform "Separate Ways," "Lights" and "Don't Stop Believing" with their current singer, Arnel Pineda. Steve Perry, who was kicked out of Journey in 1998, did not participate in the performance.

The last inductees of the night was the grunge rock band, Pearl Jam. Former talk show host David Letterman, filling in for an ill Neil Young, gave Pearl Jam a rousing speech, complementing their stance against commercialism, their humanitarian efforts and their loyal fanbase. All the current members of Pearl Jam, including former drummer Dave Krusen, accepted their award and

performed a few of their hits including "Alive," with Dave Krusen behind the drumkit and "Better Man." The night ended with an all-star jam of Neil Young's "Rockin' in the free world."

Also honored was Chic-frontman and legendary producer Nile Rodgers who was inducted by Nile's "Get Lucky" co-collaborator, Pharrell Williams. The induction was bittersweet as Nile Rodgers was nominated 11 times as a member of Chic before getting inducted into the Hall of Fame for the Musical Excellence award. Also nominated last year was punk bands Bad Brains and MC5, R&B singers Janet Jackson and Chaka Khan, Electronic pioneers Depeche Mode and Kraftwerk new wave band, and The Cars, among others.

LaVar Ball's "White Guy's" Comment Misunderstood

ANTHONY KHELIL
SPORTS EDITOR

UCLA star Lonzo Ball's father, LaVar Ball, who has been in headlines of late due to his series of outrageous comments, turned heads when he suggested that UCLA's white players were at fault for their March Madness loss.

After being accused of making racist comments, Ball suggested that his comments were "twisted." He said on ESPN 710 LA, per ESPN.com, "I am not saying I don't like the white guys and we lost because of them [...] No—that's how they twisted it up." Ball has made news with many of his comments and claims, such as those insinuating his son plays better than Stephen Curry, him being able to beat Michael Jordan and Charles Barkley one-on-one, and even asking for a billion dollars for his sons to sign a shoe deal.

On April 7th, Ball said, "Realistically, you can't win no championship with three white guys because the foot speed is too slow [...] I told Lonzo, 'One of these games you might need to go for 30 or 40 points.' It turned out that was the one game. Then, once they get to the Elite Eight, they're right there." This comment, like many of his others, caused quite the controversy.

UCLA's tournament run came to an end against Kentucky in the Sweet 16 with a 86-75 loss. Bryce Alford, TJ Leaf and Thomas Welsh, all starters for the team, and all white, were praised by Ball after his comment. "I love Bryce because he's Alford's son and he's always been nice to me. TJ Leaf—Zo's friend, always nice and respectful. Thomas Welsh—one of their most intelligent players. Very



LaVar Ball focused on the play or what to say. // Wikimedia Commons

nice. Respectful."

UCLA's loss was not only on the hands of the "White Guys," as LaVar's son Lonzo struggled in the game, scoring only 20 points on 4-10 shooting. "I blame one person every time they lose and it's the same person all the time," LaVar Ball said Friday. "It's my son."

As LaVar Ball continues to make headlines with his comments, the attention now turns to Lonzo Ball, who sets his sights on the NBA, declaring for the NBA draft after UCLA's Sweet 16 loss.

Tony Romo Throws in the Towel

LESHAY JONES
NEWS EDITOR

After a 14-year career, former Dallas Cowboys quarterback Tony Romo is throwing his hat into the retirement rink.

That's right, Romo has retired from the Cowboys, handing over the legacy to current quarterback Rayne Prescott and signed a contract CBS to pursue a career in broadcasting.

Romo was first drafted into the NFL in 2003 and became the starting quarterback for the Dallas Cowboys in 2006 after Peyton Manning signed on to the Denver Broncos.

Throughout his career, Romo has played a total of 156 games and has a total of almost 3,000 completed passes with a total 34,183 passing yards.

The football star was recently released from the Cowboys and now has the privilege of signing somewhere else whenever he wants, as long as it is within the boundaries of his contract with CBS.

However, Romo has yet to officially file any papers that will seal his retirement and people are dying to know why.

According to ESPN staff writer Todd Archer, it doesn't seem that Romo has any plans on doing so anytime soon and this leaves the option open for him to continue playing if he so chooses.

Since Romo was released from the Cowboys, this also allows him to sign with any other NFL team that he wants.

In response to Romo's retirement, Quarterback Dak Prescott said, "From a fan of yours to being your teammate: Thank you for the advice on and off the field to making plays that I'll never forget!"



Tony Romo smiles with his team's beanie. // Wikimedia Commons

Meet the Core of the Next Yankee Dynasty

ADAM GRASSANI
CO-EDITOR

Going into the 2017 season, the New York Yankees now have one goal in mind, which was made clear during last year's trade deadline. They are rebuilding through the farm system, developing their new, highly thought-of prospects, and relive the same glory days of the late 1990s and 2000s Core Four era, hopefully sooner rather than later. Now it's take a look at some of these prospects who hope to become the next Core Four, or Fab Five, or Super Six, or Terrific Three, you decide.

Leading off is outfielder Blake Rutherford; the 19 year old out of Simi Valley, California was drafted by the Yankees in the first round of the 2016 draft at 18th overall. Rutherford grew up a Yankees fan, idolizing future hall of fame shortstop, Derek Jeter. He has a smooth left handed swing with plenty of bat speed to boot; Rutherford has a chance to hit for both average and power at the big league level. During the minors last season he batted .351 with a .415 on base percentage in 33 games. All of this lands Rutherford at the number 37 spot on MLB.com's top prospects list. He undeniably has the heart of Yankee, and hopes to bring that to the major league level in a couple of years.

Next we have right handed pitcher James Kaprielian out of UCLA. The Yankees drafted him in the first round of the 2015 draft at 16th overall. His fastball is his primary pitch, having touched 99 miles per hour at times. All of his other pitches can be considered a solid secondary option as well, including his curveball, changeup, and slider, the latter topping at 90 miles per hour. In 2016, he posted a 1.50 ERA in three starts with 22 strikeouts, giving him the number 58 spot on MLB's top prospect list. His story's the most tragic out of the bunch as in 2014, he lost his mother after a 14 year battle with breast



Gary Sanchez is one of the key members of the future core of the Bronx Bombers. //staticflickr.com

cancer. So you better believe he's on a mission to do her name justice.

Up next is Venezuelan shortstop Gleyber Torres, signed by the Chicago Cubs as an international free agent. Near 2016's trade deadline, he was traded to the Yankees as the headliner for Aroldis Chapman. He was then assigned to the Scottsdale Scorpions of the Arizona Fall League. There, Torres lit it up, leading the league in batting average (.403), and on base percentage (.513), earning him AFL MVP honors, the youngest in league history. Even at the young age of 20, teammates have admired his maturity in handling big league baseball. Now, Torres enters a new season ranked as one of the top three prospects in all of baseball.

Coming to the plate now is outfielder Clint Frazier, drafted by the Cleveland Indians with the fifth overall pick in the 2013 draft. This past trade

deadline, he was traded to New York as the top prize for Andrew Miller. While not the team's top prospect, you can make a legitimate argument that Frazier has the highest ceiling. He is considered to be a five tool prospect, showing the ability to hit for power, average, field, throw, and run. Yankee general manager Brian Cashman has described his bat speed as "legendary." One thing that separates Frazier from the rest is his intense workout routine and style. He always tries to outwork everyone around him, playing with a chip on his shoulder, lightning with the bat, on the basepaths, and in the field. The Red Thunder is currently the number 24 ranked prospect by MLB.com.

Last, but certainly not least, we have catcher Gary Sanchez from the Dominican Republic. Shortly after the

2016 trade deadline, he was called up by the Yankees and quickly got rid of the "prospect" label on him. Sanchez burst onto the scene through August and September, hitting 20 home runs in just 53 games with a .299 average to boot. Despite playing in so few games, he was the runner up in voting for the rookie of the year, losing only to Michael Fulmer. Now heading into 2017, Gary Sanchez hopes to pick up where he left off and become that key centerpiece the Yankees need, and possibly much more.

Blake Rutherford, James Kaprielian, Gleyber Torres, Clint Frazier, and Gary Sanchez are just five of the young guns in the Yankees organization. Many other guys such as Greg Bird, Aaron Judge, Justus Sheffield, Aaron Hicks, and Tyler Adams all hope to become pieces of the next Yankee dynasty.



The Torch

SPORTS



BCC's Men and Women's Track and Field Nationally Ranked

ANTHONY KHELIL
SPORTS EDITOR

Bergen Community College has received wonderful news regarding their Men and Women track and field teams. As of week one, the U.S. Track & Field and Cross Country Coaches Association has ranked both Bergen Men and Women's track and field team at number 7 in the nation.

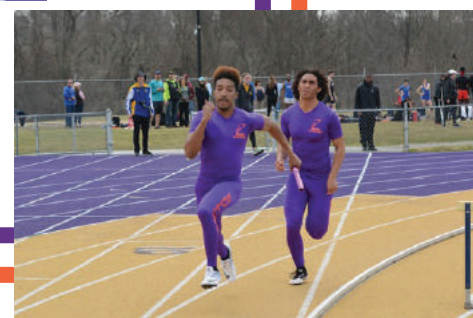
Bergen Community college jumps up four spots from the previous year's ranking when they were ranked 11th.

So far, Bergen has qualified two women and four men for nationals in the first week. Sophomore Camille Calupad of the women's track and field team has qualified for nationals for the second year in a row, for the Pole Vault Event. She is currently ranked number 1 in the pole vault with a height of 2.56m. Calupad is also ranked 10th in the nation for the Javelin event. Freshman Justine Conca, First team Cross-Country All American, also qualified for nationals, ranking 4th in

the nation in the 1500 meter race. She is currently ranked in the top spot in the 10,000 meter race.

As for the Men's Track and Field team, Sophomore Connor McGillick has qualified for nationals in the 10k event. He is ranked number 1 in the 10k meter race, as well as 17th in the nation in the 1500 meter race and 12th in the 5000 meter race. Freshman Mateusz Wierzba qualified for nationals in both Long Jump and Triple Jump and is currently ranked number 2 in the nation in the Discus event and is close to qualifying for the Shot Put event. Freshman Muhammad Ombali has qualified for nationals in the 110 Meter Hurdle race. He is currently ranked 7th in the nation in the 110 Meter Hurdles.

Both Bergen's Men and Women Track and Field teams have many student athletes on the verge of qualifying for nationals as they look to build on a strong core from last year.



Men and Women run toward success. //BergenCCbulldogs.com

Baseball Bulldogs Battle For Playoffs

ADAM GRASSANI
CO-EDITOR

We're in the final stretch of baseball season and your Baseball Bulldogs are in a dogfight to make the playoffs. The team currently stands with a 19-20 record overall, 9-14 in their conference, good enough to leave them only one game out of a spot in the Region XIX playoffs.

It's been a season of both ups and downs for the Bulldogs. They got off to a hot start, coming off their spring break trip to Myrtle Beach with a 7-4 record. However, they were very inconsistent the rest of the season, including suffering a six game losing streak the second week of April. The team suffered similar problems last year as well when they started 8-3, but then hit a nine game losing streak, keeping them out of the playoffs with a record of 17-19.

"That streak hit us a little bit but I told our guys; we understood what we're up against," said head coach Steve Mimms. "This is about adjustments. What they did was they knew there was good competition. We made some adjustments and the next thing you know we find ourselves right back into a tight battle for a good spot. Tough schedule we hit; we hit a little skid. We had a couple of injuries. We lost a good center fielder. But after that, like I said, we rallied up and our guys kept our heads up and understood that it's a long season. I tell our guys 'It's a marathon, not a sprint.'"

Along with consistency, another key concern for the team has been their pitching. The team currently has a 7.62 combined ERA, good for only 75th in the nation. Furthermore, opponents are hitting .323 against them, ranked 53rd. On the other hand, the offense, while being the team's strength, hitting .306 (35th) and an on-base percentage of .402 (36th) isn't completely absolved of any blame. In previous years, Bergen would make up for a lack of pitching with a top 10 offense, carrying them deep into the playoffs, which isn't the case this year.



Student focused on swinging toward success. //bergenccbulldogs.com

While the team faces many weaknesses, there are still just as many strengths at Bergen's disposal. The team is first in the entire nation in stolen bases with 118, while only being caught 10 times. Furthermore, they've only grounded into a grand total of two double plays the whole year, complementing their speed and aggressiveness on the basepaths.

One player on the team that definitely stands out is sophomore first baseman and pitcher Christopher Martucci. Not only does he lead the team in ERA with 5.78 in four starts, he's proven to be quite the productive hitter as well, hitting .341, showing how

he's someone who can produce both on the mound and in the batters box.

However, the standout from the season has to go to freshman first baseman Sway Russell. Russell burst onto the scene this year, as the team's best player. Sway leads the team in runs with 31, hits with 47 and runs batted in with 38. Furthermore, he's eighth in the nation in batting average (.475) and seventh in on base percentage (.574). Sway was recently named Garden State Athletic Conference's Division III player of the week when he went 7-11 with three doubles in three games.

"Oh it feels awesome. Probably the best moment of my life," said Sway.

"It's a lot that I put into to be a player of the week and I feel awesome right now."

As of writing, the Bulldogs have six games remaining in their schedule to secure a spot in the playoffs. They will go on the road to face Rowand Burlington on May 4 and Middlesex County on May 5. Then to finish the regular season, they return home for the weekend for back to back doubleheaders against Middlesex County on May 6 then Bucks County on May 7.