

“Truth, No Matter The Cost”

The Torch

BERGEN COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENT NEWSPAPER
IGNITING STUDENTS TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE
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2018 Flu Epidemic: What to Know

JEREMY NIFRAS
STAFF WRITER

The 2018 flu season has statistically been the worst in recent years, with many Americans dying from the virus nationwide.

Compared to past seasons, this year's flu virus is a strain with an irregular resilience to the current vaccine, which the Center for Disease Control (CDC) says is only 36 percent effective.

As of February 2018, 97 children nationwide have died from the flu, and 48 states altogether have experienced widespread cases.

The main culprit behind this recent epidemic is the H3N2 influenza strain, which is known to cause a strong reaction in the body's immune system, and can even lead to severe breathing problems and inflammation of the lungs.

These cases may prove to be deadly if medical care is not received quickly. The H3N2 strain notably caused problems for many Australians during their winter season in 2017.

To make matters worse, this flu season has both influenza A and B strains



This year's flu season has led to many deaths across the country. // U.S. Air Force photo/Senior Airman Areca T. Wilson

going around simultaneously.

Typically, the A strain dominates earlier in the season before B takes over later on, but the presence of both the A and B influenza strains creates a highly problematic situation for many Americans at risk.

So the question remains: how can one prevent getting sick?

The most obvious method of flu prevention is getting vaccinated. Although this

current vaccine is not nearly as effective as in past years, skipping the shot is a risk you shouldn't want to take.

More ways to avoid contracting the flu are frequently washing your hands, coughing or sneezing into your elbows, avoiding sick people around you and cleaning your work/study environments on a regular basis.

Although all of this sounds scary, there's evidence

the deadly epidemic may be slowing down.

According to the CDC, deaths relating to pneumonia and influenza fell nearly 9.5 percent in the week of February 3 compared to the previous week, and flu-related hospitalizations have steadily decreased in recent weeks.

Despite these facts, you should still take certain precautions to make sure you don't get infected.



The Republican Tax Plan Widens the Wealth Gap

pg. 2



Let's Talk About Feminism

pg. 4

DACA and its Effects on Immigrant Youth

FARAH ALHABLAWI
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

In June 2012, the Obama administration introduced the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA). This immigration policy protected those who came into the United States illegally as minors and were in jeopardy of being deported. The policy also made these immigrants eligible for a work permit.

DACA gives those who applied for an extended permit a renewable two-year period of deferred action. This deferred action does not grant legal status, but means the applicants have an indefinite delay on their deportation.

Over 800,000 immigrant youths are protected by

DACA, and plans to slowly get rid of the policy are being implemented by the Trump administration.

According to DACA terms, those who can apply must have come to the United States before their 16th birthday and were under 31 years of age as of 2007.

Applicants must also have a high school diploma or equivalent. These requirements make approximately 1.7 million people eligible, including many Bergen Community College students.

The policy came to life on June 15, 2012 when the Office of Homeland Security announced that certain people

coming into the United States illegally as children would be protected from deportation for some time.

As of September 2017, President Trump has ended DACA, meaning the administration will not be accepting new applications, and those protected by DACA will start losing their status and work permits come March 5, 2018.

While March is the deadline, it was in September that the program ended. The six month period was meant to give Congress time to come up with a permanent solution for the immigrants living here illegally.

In June of last year, many right-leaning states, such as Texas and Arkansas threatened to sue the Trump administration unless steps were taken to end DACA before the end of the year.

Many senators and advisors felt that helping undocumented immigrants find jobs, and protecting them from deportation hurts the "America First" agenda that the Trump administration has promised.

Trump so far has used the ending of DACA and the amount of people it has protected as leverage to build the wall on the Mexican border.



The Benefits of Travelling Abroad

pg. 12



Protest in response to plans to phase out DACA in New York City on September 9, 2017. // Wikimedia Commons



FIFA WORLD CUP
RUSSIA 2018

Powerful Players for Potential FIFA World Team?

pg. 14

NEWS

The Torch

Bergen's Intercultural Conversation Partners

FARAH ALHABLAWI
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Coming out of your shell is always difficult, even more so when you don't speak the same language as many of your peers and the people surrounding you.

This is the case for many of Bergen's ESL students. That's where the Intercultural Conversation Partners Program comes in.

The Intercultural Conversation Partners, or ICP program for short, pairs a native English speaker with a student who has English as a second language and is currently learning it.

It helps the ESL student get a better grasp on the language since they are focusing on grammar in class. They learn more about American culture, slang and a more natural form of speaking as they are hearing it in a relaxed environment.

Overall, it helps create a more friendly and culturally accepting atmosphere around Bergen, as it pushes people out of their comfort zone.

It gets students talking to individuals they normally wouldn't talk to because of the language barrier.

The conversation partners get a whole new way to look at the world, learn about other cultures while helping the Bergen community, make new friends, improve their hearing skills and earn service learning credit from the college.

Most volunteers initially think they would be too nervous to do well as conversation partners.

However, as they get to talking and acquaint themselves with their partner a little more, they find it to be a very rewarding experience.

"Many times students are nervous or hesitant at first, but when they see how much they help the international

students, they really feel good about the experience. It pushes them out of their comfort zone," said Professor Costa.

The program was started over five years ago by Professor Lieb and Professor Costa. It was meant "for ESL students to give them practice in English conversation with native speakers" said Professor Lieb, who is in charge of ESL

speaking and listening.

"Practice with native speakers means they are going to build their confidence."

The program usually takes place Tuesday through Thursday from 11:00 to 2:00 in the English Learning Resource Center.

Students are encouraged to

volunteer as they are always welcome and wanted.

Students will get a richer learning experience with cultures as it is done firsthand by speaking, and will gain credentials that look very good on a college transcript.



An ESL student and their conversation partner. // Professor Pongracz

Republican Tax Plan Widens Wealth Gap

OWEN MCCLOSKEY
COPY EDITOR

The news of the new tax plan, which passed over two months ago, has been completely shrouded by recent events.

In the wake of the Parkland shooting, a gun-control debate needs to take precedence, but we must not let it distract us from the fiscal policies spearheaded by our Republican-controlled Congress.

The passing of the tax plan seemed like a win for Congressional Republicans, who promised higher wages and cuts for the middle class.

In an interview with NPR's Steve Inskeep, Speaker of the House Paul Ryan argued that the average family would get an average tax break of over \$1,000.

However, this is not the case. Lily Batchelder of NYU looked over the Joint Committee of Taxation's review of the plan, and noticed that nearly 100 million American households would get either no tax break, or actually pay more income tax.

This is in a stark contrast to the corporate tax rate, which is cut from 35 percent to a measly 21 percent.

Many Republicans would argue that the lowering of a corporate tax rate would make the American market more competitive, thus drawing corporations back to the U.S. economy — but data from the U.S. Department of Labor's Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) Program found that since Trump took office in 2017, more than 93,000 jobs moved overseas, a slight increase of the



// whitehouse.gov

past five years' 87,000.

So why cull the corporate rate? It seems that it has done nothing for increasing business and has given less tax breaks to middle-class families.

In fact, families with large estates will see a significant decrease in

taxation. The GOP wants to keep the Estate Tax, which taxes 2 in 1,000 American households, of whom make a very significant amount of income.

The Republican Tax Plan is going to put more money in the pockets of wealthy individuals and is going to

make life harder for most Americans, and they have already passed it, right under our noses.

Apple Slows Down Phones

PURNASREE SAHA
SPORTS EDITOR

Apple is common all around the world now, but there are many problems going on with their phones. Some people who were using iPhones last year complained that their device would shut down suddenly even though there was still battery power left.

A letter was published by Apple apologizing for the misunderstanding of older iPhones being slow and wanting to make battery replacements cheaper. Starting in late January through December 2018, the company is offering customers with an iPhone 6s or higher battery replacements for \$29.

According to an article from The Verge, "Apple Apologizes for iPhone Slowdown Drama," Apple will offer \$29 battery replacements, and they are also promising to add features to iOS.

It will provide more information about the battery health, and will debut in early 2018. When iPhones first came out a decade ago, Apple said that batteries did not have to be changed, but now there is a significant change toward iPhone batteries.

Most iPhone owners believed that Apple slowed down older phones to drive new sales. As the iPhone 6, 6S, SE and 7 got older, they had much slower peak performance, so the battery was then not able to provide as much power to the processor.

A year ago, an announcement was made by the Apple company regarding the change to performance associated with iOS 10.2.1.

There were unexpected shutdowns with repairs to problems of the iPhone 6. It was then expected that older batteries could not provide enough power to the processor.

Apple thinks that it's not the slow down of phones, but could be with managing phone performance to maximize the lifespan of iPhone batteries.

It is possible that iOS may manage the the maximum performance of some systems dynamically, and this includes the CPU and GPU, which will prevent unexpected shutdowns.

There may be other types of problems with older batteries, including screen dimming, lower maximum speaker volumes and camera flashes.

When a lot of people thought that Apple slowed down their iPhones, this news was a big data point confirming that for Apple.

Some other countries also complained that Apple slowed down their phones. According to CNN, in the United States there were about 30

people who went to different courts and denounced that Apple slowed down their phone without their permission.

Apple and its subsidiary were sued by the advocacy group in South Korea. There was a suit in which more than 120 people joined, and it sought \$2.2 million won in damages per plaintiff.

There was also a complaint that was filed by a group that included prosecutors. There was then an investigation launched by the police, which was being overseen by the prosecutor's intellectual property crime unit.

In Paris, there was an inquiry that was opened by the public's prosecutor's

office after a consumer advocacy group filed a complaint regarding the iPhone slowdown.

There was a law in Paris in which the lifespan of products could be deliberately shortened that will allow consumers to buy new ones.

A lot of students at Bergen Community College have different reactions on iPhone 5, iPhone 6 and iPhone 7.

Volodymyr Kucher had the iPhone 5 for two years and he thought it was amazing.

"iPhone 7 has better upgrades such as the camera and headphones. During the summer, iPhone 7 gets overheated and turns up. The screen of the iPhone 7 could also break easily because iPhone 5 was dropped twenty times and it never broke," said Kucher.

Yessica Mejia thinks that there is no difference between iPhone 6 and iPhone 7.

"Sometimes the screen would freeze on the iPhone 6. Downloading the apps and the screen seems to be faster on the iPhone 7," Mejia said.

Destinee Silva had the iPhone 6 for a year, and the battery kept dying.

"I got a new battery for \$84.00 and within a month it was having the same problem. When the iPhone 8 came out, I got it right away and the battery lasted longer," said Silva.

Overall, it seems that Apple slowed down customers' iPhones on purpose, yet they are trying to redeem themselves by offering cheaper replacement batteries.

If customers say that their iPhones are still going slow with the new battery provided, they should complain to the Apple company. They could also go to court and explain what's causing problems on their iPhones.



// pixabay.com

Demi Lovato to Give Free Therapy to Fans

DERRIAN DOUGLAS
NEWS EDITOR

Demi Lovato has a lot in store for concert-goers this coming spring, when she kicks off her Tell Me You Love Me Tour. She's also planning something else for fans - free therapy before the show.

Lovato spoke with Robin Roberts on Good Morning America in late January about her upcoming tour, which starts on February 26 in San Diego, CA. During her interview, she revealed that she'll be giving back to her fans in a big way.

The Grammy-nominated singer will be offering free therapy, speeches and wellness workshops preceding her concert.

This isn't the first time she has offered these services. In 2016, Lovato teamed up with CAST Centers for the Future Now Tour, her shared tour with Nick Jonas, to precede the concert with the same counseling.

Bergen Community College Professor of Philosophy Peter Dlugos believes that Lovato's involvement in mental health awareness is extremely beneficial.

"There is still so much stigma surrounding mental health problems, and as a consequence, we tend to avoid learning about them and acknowledging them in our own lives," Dlugos said.

"She is not just talking about the issue, she is going a step further and actually providing the services," he continued.

However, Lovato isn't just helping her fans to recognize their struggles, she is also helping them to recognize the struggles of others: their family, friends, classmates and neighbors.

But why is it important for students to be subject to the benefits of therapy and wellness?



Lovato's newest album, "Tell Me You Love Me" reached the top 10 in many countries including the United States. // Wikimedia Commons

Professor Dlugos shared a statistic that "20 percent of all Americans have a diagnosable mental health problem."

He also shared that in some estimates, "this number doubles when it comes to late teens and young adults."

This lack of communication about mental illness and the importance of caring for oneself affects what Dlugos mentions as "mental health literacy."

Lovato is working to normalize the conversation of mental illness and raise awareness of these problems.

By doing so, Dlugos said this could "get people started on the path to taking

care of themselves."

Aside from the offered counseling and workshops, which are not mandatory but are encouraged, the singer shared that there will be speakers from all over the world and booths where charities will be raising money for different international issues.

Lovato described it to Roberts as an "incredible, very moving and inspiring experience."

When considering the range of ages Lovato attracts, one wonders what age young adults should begin being taught about self-care.

Although some may argue that elementary school children shouldn't be subject to the reality of mental illness, others will note that mental illness doesn't discriminate with age.

"This should start at any early age - as early as a child can begin to provide any care for themselves," Dlugos said.

Noting that this varies from child to child, Dlugos believes introducing the topic at an elementary school level is a good start but feels "we need to be lifelong learners in this area."

Lovato has been an advocate for mental health since 2011 after being diagnosed with bipolar disorder, and suffering from depression, an eating disorder, self-harm and the aftermath of years of bullying.

Talking to Robin on January 24 Lovato said, "I think that it's important for me to use my voice for more than just singing."

The singer and activist has been more than open about her own diagnosis with bipolar disorder and an eating disorder.

"I just know how important it is to use my platform to help others and to share my story in hopes that it inspires people to either get into recovery or better themselves. Whatever it is, I just want people to know they're not alone and I'm here for them," Lovato said. She told Roberts that the stigma of mental illness needs to be broken.

Professor Dlugos offers meditation practice every Thursday from 12:30-1:15pm in C-315.

Demi Lovato's Tell Me You Love Me Tour kicks off on February 26 in San Diego with guests DJ Khaled and Kehlani.

OPINIONS

The Torch

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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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Let's Talk About Feminism

LESHAY JONES
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

I am going to be completely honest here. I have not always been a feminist and I did not even know what it really meant until about two years ago.

Yes, I said it. There were times when I would claim to be a feminist and I didn't fully understand what it meant.

I used to just think, "I'm a woman. Feminists are women. Therefore, I am a feminist."

However, I quickly learned that this syllogism of mine was very flawed. I had a vague idea of the concept of feminism.

According to the dictionary, feminism is "the advocacy of women's rights on the basis of the equality of the sexes."

It seems simple enough, right? Women should be equal! We want equal pay! We can be CEOs, doctors and presidents, too!

However, I learned over the years that feminism is much deeper than that. Not all feminists are men-hating crazy women. Feminism is not just about equality for women; it's equality for all of the sexes.

So, yes, women want equal pay, we want to be recognized for our hard work, we want to rid of the stereotypes of women in the kitchen and, most of all, we want respect.

I shouldn't be afraid to walk home at night with the fear of being assaulted. I

shouldn't feel uncomfortable walking down the street past a group of men catcalling. I shouldn't be objectified.

With that being said, as a feminist, it is important to take into consideration that, believe it or not, these things happen to men, too. I am more than willing to admit that many women do objectify men.

Another common misconception is that men cannot be feminists, which I believe is complete nonsense. The goal is for women and men to be equal in most aspects, and if a man supports this idea and is an advocate,

then he is a feminist.

Now, I said that women want to be equal in most, aspects, and I cannot stress this enough.

Most, if not all, women want to be equal to men when it comes to pay, job opportunities and so on. However, there are some traditions and stereotypes that women carry with them.

One example would be marriage proposals. Traditionally, men propose to women, and though there are some cases where the roles are reversed, it is very rare. Would women at BCC propose to a man?

"I wouldn't only because of tradition. In Spanish culture, the men propose," BCC student Natalie Rosario said.

What about when it comes to bills? Should the man be responsible for the for most of the bills, while the woman takes care of the housework?

I had a debate with my older sister a few months ago about this situation. To her, the man should be responsible for the mortgage while she takes care of some of the smaller bills and housework, such as cooking and cleaning.

I, on the other hand, completely disagree. When you are living with someone, and when you are married, it is a partnership. Everything should be equal.

Let's come up with a compromise to split the expenses evenly. Whoever gets home first cooks dinner, or let's cook dinner together.

I feel like if women want equality, it has to be in every sense of the word. We can't want to be equal in some areas and not in others.

Feminism does not have to be a negative thing. We can all strive so that we are equal in all aspects of the word no matter our gender, race, ethnicity or whatever else you can think of.

At the end of the day, we are all human and we all deserve to be treated with the same respect.



// unsplash.com

More Security at Bergen

TIFFANY MARIE VELEZ
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

On Valentine's Day, a day dedicated to spreading love, the news broke across the nation that the eighteenth school shooting of the year occurred in Parkland, Florida.

"Congress needs to do more," said Melissa Falkowski, a teacher at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, "not only do we need stricter gun laws, we need more security on school campuses."

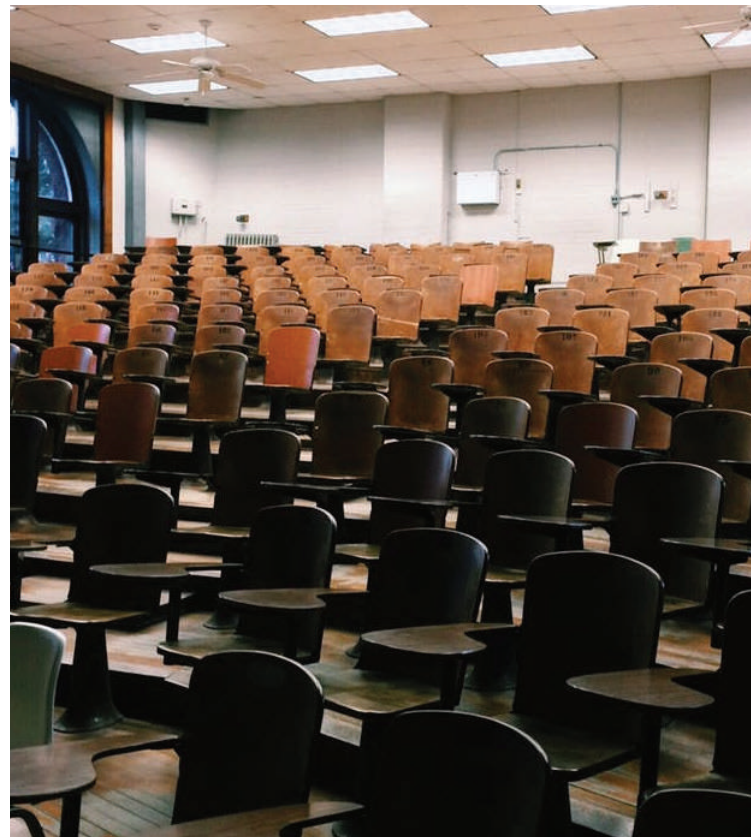
There are more mass shootings in the world today than Kylie Jenner lip kits. Gone are the days of being innocent and naive for children.

Sadly enough, safety isn't promised anywhere, so hug your loved ones and tell them how much you love them while you have them.

Taxes should be taken out of every person's pay in the United States to provide students with a safer and more secure campus.

Something needs to be done! The same security used to board a plane should be enforced in schools. Guns and knives are not on the 2nd grade school supplies list.

At Bergen Community



// pixabay.com

College, as soon as a student walks in, they should be required to scan their student IDs, and if they bring a guest, they should have to be signed

in.

Metal detectors should be implemented in the school. Bergen has a fairly big campus with lots of

land, several halls and many students and teachers. Police presence is on-site, but more needs to be done. Prevention for tomorrow will make for a better today.

According to Everytown for Gun Safety, a movement dedicated to fighting for reforms on gun violence, seven children and teens (age 19 or under) are killed with guns in the U.S. on an average day.

There's always a routine that follows after a school shooting: thoughts and condolences are given to the victims' families from across the world, the government stays silent and refuse to mention guns but will bring up mental health.

After a few days, less conversations are had about the tragedy and nothing ever changes.

American schools should be a safe haven for students and teachers.

There's so much work that needs to be done to reach that point, but as a country we are eager to see that happen.

After all, the United States of America is home of the free and land of the brave.

Safe Spaces: A Blessing or a Blight?



Safe spaces are inhabiting college campuses. Are they beneficial or detrimental to students? // pixabay.com

DAVID JOO
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

According to Merriam-Webster, a safe space is “a place (as on a college campus) intended to be free of bias, conflict, criticism or potentially threatening actions, ideas or conversations.”

While some have lauded the concept, there are others who abhor it. I stand on the side of the latter, because the concept of a safe space on a college campus is not only immature, but also detrimental to a student’s college education and transition from adolescence to adulthood.

I feel that the University of Chicago worded my stance best in its letter to its incoming U.C. Class of 2020 stating, “Our commitment to academic freedom means that we do not support so-called ‘trigger warnings,’ we do not cancel invited speakers because their topics might prove controversial, and we do not condone the creation of intellectual ‘safe spaces’ where individuals can retreat from ideas and perspectives at odds with their own.”

In short, the letter is stating that, in an academic environment, knowledge should not be suppressed by those who feel that the content may be deemed “controversial”.

Why must students, professors and faculty members be silenced in an environment where the core concept of that place is to enrich, educate and express ideas and opinions?

Why must one side be subjected to being suppressed while the other side has the authority to do so?

Essentially, colleges, universities and other academic institutes that condone the creations of “safe spaces” are allowing students to sit in a day-care center with the only difference being that this one requires one to pay up to numbers as high as \$40,000 to \$60,000 every year.

I am not against the concept of support groups. They are necessary in the incessant torrents of life. I am not against the idea of finding peace and comfort from friends, family members, professional help or even solitude.

However, I do have a problem when academic institutions cater to students and create “safe spaces” for them in order to shield them from the harsh realities of life or from differing opinions and ideas.

How does the creation of safe spaces advocate for the growth and development of students?

Is it not ironic, then, that these places promote against the very ideologies of colleges and universities: academic freedom and learning?

Considering that a majority of enrolled college students are between the ages of 18 to 24, how are students supposed to transition from adolescence to adulthood if they block out the very knowledge and lessons that would help them mature?

Dealing with situations, patience and open-mindedness are vital skills in the workforce that can only be cultivated by involving oneself in an environment that tests those abilities.

Learning and evolving to create one’s own “safe spaces” is a skill that will further students’ learning and maturity as they leave college and enter the working world.

Rather than creating safe spaces, would it not be more beneficial for students to attend counseling sessions where they learn life skills and habits that they could incorporate into their daily lives in order to face and overcome adversities?

Whether it be a matter of sexual identity, gender identity, religion, world views or something else, safe spaces will be more harmful than beneficial

to students who wish to cover their eyes from reality.

After those four or more years end in college and a student has to take the first step into the working world, how resilient and mature will one be if one spent time seeking escape rather than stepping forward onto new ground?

While I may not be in the position to make a statement to college authorities, I heavily implore, as a college student and as a person living amidst a confused and constantly changing generation: abolish safe spaces from colleges and universities.

Give students the tools to progress intellectually and maturely through situations, not sanctuaries that will only limit students’ drives to manifest. Do not silence voices merely for the fact that they sing different tunes to others.

Show students worlds outside of the ones they live in and let them explore and inhabit them.

It is your responsibility, as educators, to give students the necessary tools to create a more civilized and more educated world.

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- Money Magazine

Technology Takes Over Kids and Affects Toys R Us

KAYLEE ALZAMORA
STAFF WRITER

Do you remember growing up and going to the store to play with the toys? Or maybe when your parents went to the store to get something and you saw the toy section, you would run to it and say, “5 minutes please, I’ll be quick?” Who doesn’t remember a time when toys were all the rage?

That’s something I remember with clarity; watching all the infomercials on TV just to see what the latest toy was. Or waiting for the weekend to come around to get the newest Toys R Us booklet just to see what was in it and circle my favorite things to add to my list for when Christmas or my birthday came around.

Those are things that many kids nowadays don’t really get to experience, and probably never will. Toys R Us, one of the most well-known toy stores amongst adults and kids of all ages, filed for bankruptcy back in September of 2017 and is now closing down 182 of their locations nationwide, including 14 in New York and 12 in New Jersey.

This is devastating for many people- adults and children - because this was a place where adults would go and buy their gifts for kids and where kids could have their “I’m in toy heaven” experience. Although not all locations are closing down, it will make it harder to find one close by for some people.

Hearing this just adds to the realism of how the generation is changing, and how the newer generation is losing all that fun interactive stuff that our generation had. It seems that kids are turning to technology more and more for entertainment.

It’s sad to see how the newer generation spends their time opposed to how we spent ours.

I was born at the very end of the 90’s, but I still got to experience what it was like to play with toys and go outside and play with other kids. I



Toys R Us closing down. // flickr.com

feel old when I say it, but seeing how things are in this generation, I really do believe that those were the golden days.

I can say that I spent more time outside enjoying everything around me than inside stuck on technology.

Growing up, cellphones really weren’t a thing, and if you had one you had a flip-phone which you can call from and at most send a simple text, and we were fine. We had landlines where we would get our calls from, huge brick-sized computers that took ages to load and barely had any storage.

Back then, we didn’t have the ability to log on to our computers, go on Netflix and watch the movies that we wanted. You had to go to the store and rent the movie for a certain amount of time and then return it. We didn’t have YouTube, where we could look up how to do things or watch hair or makeup tutorials.

This is why many women have those horrible “when I first started

wearing makeup” stories, but they’re great stories you can now tell.

We didn’t have as many things that kids in this generation have now and we survived. And quite frankly, they were better and easier times.

If things had to be said they were said face to face and not behind a screen, we actually talked to one another rather than just sending a text with a bunch of cute emojis to have a conversation.

This is why stores like Toys R Us are closing down, because kids nowadays would rather be behind a screen playing games, watching videos, listening to music, etc. than go outside and get some fresh air.

Not too long ago, I went back to the place where I grew up. A place where when I was young, was a buzz of joy and laughter of kids playing outside, catching fireflies at night. But now, it was nothing but isolated front yards and an empty park.

Not only that, but back in September I remember going to my

5-year-old niece’s Back-to-School night for kindergarten and having to hear the principal tell the parents to make their kids leave their cell phones at home because it was a distraction in class.

At 5-years-old I was thinking about the newest Barbie at the store, not the newest cell phone on the rack.

It’s sad to see how kids at such a young age become so reliant on technology that they don’t get to experience the real world. The only childhood they have is based off a screen. And because of this, stores like Toys R Us are being forced to close because kids aren’t having that “let’s go to Toys R Us to look at the new toys” craze anymore. Rather it’s “let’s go to Apple to look at the newest phones.”

Whether or not you’re a parent of young kids, you have probably heard a younger kid say “that was in your time, you’re so old school.” We even do it to our parents nowadays, but when it comes to this generation versus ours it means a whole lot more because there was a huge leap of improvement and advancement.

It’s sad to see that these kids never really got to experience everything we did growing up and see how you didn’t need all the latest technology to have fun. All you needed was a ball and great group of friends, and you were set.

Technology is great, don’t get me wrong, but when it’s used for advancement not backtracking.

These kids shouldn’t have to feel so reliant on their devices that they can’t move forward or live without them. They are the newer generation, the ones that will keep moving forward and bettering the world.

But how do we expect them to make this world a better place when we are depriving them from the real world and sticking them in a virtual one?

Music as a Commodity

OWEN MCCLOSKEY
COPY EDITOR

I’m a musician, I play piano, sing, write songs and I listen to a lot of music. From McCoy Tyner to Radiohead to Anderson .paak, I love all types of music and nothing else gives me a warmer feeling than listening to a perfect song.

I’ve recorded two studio albums and I’ve spent years practicing, playing shows and learning music, but my interest in music has since subsided.

Recently, I’ve taken an interest in journalistic writing and editing, because the music industry is no longer merit-based, nor is it talent-based.

An increase in technology has brought a newfound necessity for instant gratification, and I believe this is reflected directly in all types of media, not just music.

However, this is not going to be an opinion piece that chimes “all new music is trash” over and over again. Rather, I’d like to inform the average reader or music listener on how being a musician has changed in the Information Era.

Technology has changed the music industry drastically, and it is the sole factor in why musicians are losing money.

From the 1940s all the way up to the early 2000s, most musicians made their money through record sales. If you wanted to listen to a song, you had to buy a full CD, and the artist you purchased the CD from would make a large percentage of the sale.

For decades, this is how musicians made their money, it’s why artists such as Paul McCartney and Diddy have net

worths of hundreds of millions.

However, this is no longer the case. When was the last time you bought a song or an album? When was the last time you actually paid \$8 to buy a combination of songs by your favorite artist?

The truth is, streaming providers like Apple Music and Spotify are slaughtering the music industry.

Artists make money through streaming services per play, meaning that Spotify nor Apple Music actually pay the artists anything but their per-play streaming salary.

An artist makes (literally) less than one cent per play on a streaming service, and because nobody buys

records, this is the sole source of income for artists.

You might be thinking, “But artists aren’t doing so badly! Taylor Swift has a net worth of 230 million dollars!”

The truth is, Taylor Swift has probably billions of plays cumulatively throughout her discography, but if she were selling albums, she would make a lot more money.

Big artists like Drake and Taylor Swift make most of their money touring, selling merchandise and doing advertisement deals. The money is simply completely diminished on the topic of album sales.

Startup musicians have it much

harder due to the fact that recording is not cheap by any standard (it can cost \$125 for a day in the studio), and without an influx of album sales, it is nearly impossible to make any money writing a full studio album.

This brings me to my next point. How often have you listened through a full album? For a while, most artists have gained popularity and money through one hit song.

Every artist has one song that most people want to listen to. If you think of Drake, you think “Started From the Bottom.” If you think of The Killers, you think “When You Were Young.”

Many people just stream one song from artists, which diminishes their revenue flow. Most artists only make money off of one song, and it used to be that people would buy the entire album to listen to that song.

However, now that streaming services have taken the forefront, having only one single is detrimental to the whole business. After all, who can make their money from the plays from one song?

Technology hasn’t all been bad when it comes to music. It has helped artists create amazing sounds, beats,] and songs.

It has expedited the recording process. However, streaming services have absolutely dismantled the industry, and artists are finding it very difficult to make money doing what they love.

Music is dying, so please, if there is an artist you want to support, buy their album instead of streaming it.



// maxpixel.com

Irish Dance is Still Irish - Just Add Sparkle

KATY TEMPLE
STAFF WRITER

What began as simple dresses, curled hair and traditional choreography, has evolved into costumes encrusted with crystals, wigs accessorized with tiaras, and tricks that are designed to walk the line between impressive and unsafe.

Competitive Irish dance has taken a new form that incorporates just as much performance as it does athleticism, and people on the outside are skeptical.

The community often faces criticism for the pageantry aspect of the sport. What people don't see is how these costumes and other norms within the sport have become dire necessities given the circumstances under which dancers are competing with.

At competitions, dancers are on stage with at least one other dancer, sometimes two. At major competitions like the regional, national and international championships, stages are large and elevated with hundreds of lights pointed directly at competitors.

Five judges sit below, taking up the entire width of the stage, and cameras are often broadcasting competitions on monitors to ensure that the audience can see.

With that kind of stage on that high level of competition, there's no doubt that every dancer competing has the skill and technique to be the best.

When that happens, it comes down to who can hold the judges attention the longest. If a dancer has perfect technique with beautiful choreography, but goes unnoticed by the judges, her technique doesn't matter.

Dancers have all of two minutes

to ensure that they grab every judge's attention for enough time for them to be given a high placement. What better way to stand out than with a glitzy dress and big hair? No one wants to be washed out or invisible on stage, so that's where tan legs and makeup come into play.

Fionola Merideth of the Belfast Telegraph published an article entitled, "Vulgarity of Irish Dancing Culture Takes Away From the Terrific Talent on Stage" in which Merideth compares young dancers to drag queens, and questions the traditional roots that Irish dance has supposedly lost touch

with.

This rightfully sparked outrage from the community, as Merideth strictly focuses on the surface level of competition, without a basic knowledge of what goes into it.

There's nothing traditionally Irish about Swarovski crystals and orange legs, but the idea and general style of dresses- long sleeved and short with a high neck and triangular skirt- has remained untouched.

The emphasis on legs and leg muscle has stayed in tact; it just so happens that judges can't see pale legs on a lit up stage the size of a

gymnasium.

As for choreography, basics are still the most important thing. Turned out feet, crossed legs, elevated heels and straight knees, are an absolute necessity, as they were in traditional times.

But, as dancers get better, choreography gets harder. Jumps get higher, footwork gets trickier, rhythm gets louder and dancers work on performance just as much as they work on their steps.

The main question that dancers always have for the individuals who wish to undermine their passion remains the same; if a football player has a helmet, a soccer player has cleats, ballerinas have their costumes and actors have their makeup, why is Irish dance subjected to such criticism when other athletes are essentially doing the same thing?

That "thing" being using the equipment they need in order to be the best athlete they can be.

Dresses, wigs, makeup and tanner all seem like superficial things that take away from traditional Irish culture, but the fact that Irish dance has evolved into a more mainstream sport is something to be proud of in and of itself.

After an unimaginable lengthy time of oppression of Irish culture in America and in Ireland, it's a breath of fresh air to see the modernization and pure existence of Irish dance stay relevant.

These competitors are dancing on an olympic level, and preserving the culture of Ireland while doing so, just with a little more sparkle.



Dancers in the 21-23 year old age group at the All Ireland Championships in Killarney Ireland compete to qualify for the 2018 World Championships in Glasgow Scotland. // Katy Temple

We Need To Talk About Suicide

KARISSA ROSEN
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

No one ever likes to address the elephant in the room, but we need to talk. We need to talk more about suicide and how it's an epidemic not only throughout our country, but throughout the world.

Suicide is a choice with a permanent and disheartening ending; not only for the ones who choose that path, but for the family and friends who are deeply affected by such a tragedy.

Life is tough and we all hit rock bottom, but we all need to realize and reassure one another that it'll pass, and that life is already too short as it is.

According to the National Center for Health Statistic, "from 1999 through 2014, the age-adjusted suicide rate in the United States increased 24%, from 10.5 to 13.0 per 100,000 population..." and the rate is still rising.

Suicide is the 10th leading cause of death in the United States of America. Just about 45,000 Americans commit suicide annually, and for every attempt, there are 25 deaths.

That means on average there are around 123 people who commit suicide per day on U.S. soil.

That's 123 deaths per day that could've and can be potentially stopped, which is why we all need to talk.

All one needs to do is reach out, listen and respond. Make sure everyone that crosses your path knows that they aren't alone in this world.

From depressed middle school kids with their whole lives ahead of them to veterans with major PTSD, no act of suicide is justified and we shouldn't just block it out because it's real, and it's happening too frequently.

Since 2016, death by suicide has rapidly increased from ages 15 to 85. The increases in deaths are decreases in our future as a whole.

These people who have taken their

"From 1999 through 2014, the age-adjusted suicide rate in the United States increased 24% from 10.5 to 13.0 per 100,000 population..."

- the National Center for Health Statistics

lives could've been the ones to cure cancer or the next all-star basketball players, but we will never know because they didn't know that they had someone out there to simply listen to them.

Suicide is not something new, but it's something that is, unfortunately, becoming more and more prominent amongst people. There are hundreds of thousands of suicide attempt stories and you're about to read one of them.

Ms. Jackson, a 27-year-old mother of two, is a former drug addict and prostitute on the cold harsh streets in the Bronx.

Ms. Jackson was born and raised in the Bronx and lived her whole childhood under the poverty line with no father figure in her life. Her mother was the one who essentially introduced her to heroin when she was at the young age of 16.

Ms. Jackson had four brothers and one sister, two of her brothers died from drug overdoses and her sister has been and still is serving a 20-year jail sentence for possession of narcotics, possession of illegal firearms and another charge which Ms. Jackson refused to mention.

The struggle, loss and heartbreak in Ms. Jackson's life lead her down a road of drug abuse and prostitution. She saw her own mother shoot up almost every day throughout her childhood and even though she knew it was wrong and ugly, she decided to start shooting up as well at the age of nineteen.

She moved around from house to house with different boyfriends who were addicted to drugs as well, and

eventually found herself on the streets with her son. She would leave him on a street corner with a blanket while she went around prostituting herself for money, drugs and food.

After seven months of working the street corners in New York, she ended up pregnant with her second son. She lived in a shelter until she had her second son and ended up getting clean in her first trimester.

Once her second son was born she began job hunting and had realistic goals in mind like renting a room and saving up to buy a car. She applied to eight different bodega jobs and didn't land one of them.

Ms. Jackson said that was the lowest point in her life. She couldn't seem to find a way to pull herself out of this deep, dark pit.

After three weeks of endless job hunting and no luck, she went back to her old ways of shooting up dope and prostituting.

She would leave her sons at a church in the Bronx and go out at night to get high and make money. The drugs covered up all the pain she held inside until one night the pain was just too unbearable to handle anymore.

She bought \$60 worth of heroin and decided to shoot up as much as she could until she passed out. The next thing Ms. Jackson remembers is waking up in a hospital two days later. Ms. Jackson overdosed and nearly died.

Fast forward five years later, she has been clean for four years, has both of her sons in her life, has a job at a local dry-cleaning store and rents an apartment with her soon-to-be

husband in Brooklyn.

Ms. Jackson said, "being clean four years and going to therapy has been a lifesaver. The man who saved my life that night and brought me to the hospital is now my fiancé and he taught me how to live, love and work hard. I see my boys every week and I love my job. God has truly blessed me and has given me a second chance. To anyone who is suffering out there, know that you are not alone in this world. Reach out, it's okay to ask for help. It's okay not to be okay, but it's not okay to end your life because that isn't up to you to decide."

Ms. Jackson, a 27-year-old mother of two with such a horrific past is now a happily engaged strong woman with a story.

Ms. Jackson's story is just one of thousands but she truly represents hope, and the thought that with willpower and someone who cares, a tragic ending could be a happily ever after.

Everyone deserves a happily ever after. Keep in mind nothing is perfect, but no one should ever have to feel like death is greater than living life. No one should ever feel like they're all alone in this world, because they're not.

No one should ever have to get to the point of even thinking about suicide, and we as a human race can prevent this awful mindset and tragic endings by simply reaching out to one another.

Dig deep, listen, show you care and be a shoulder to cry on because everyone needs that and no one needs to die before it's their God-given time.

Talking, we all do it every day, so all we need to do is talk more about the subject of suicide.

By simply being there for someone and raising awareness, we can change the world one step at a time. We need to talk, and we need to start right now.

FEATURES

The Torch

BCC Greenhouse: A Hidden Gem

LIZBETH LAGE
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

When you hear the word plants, you immediately think about the old tree in front of your house or those things you water to keep alive and green.

Aside from the aesthetic environment that plants establish, many people are unaware of the beneficial factors of growing and handling plants, not just in their homes but as well as in their workplace.

In a world where some live only on a dollar a day, so much produce and fruits become in demand and without the branches of agriculture and horticulture, it would not be possible to supply.

If you didn't know it already, horticulture is the science of cultivating and handling vegetables, fruits, nuts, flowers and ornamentals.

Bergen Community College offers a Horticulture program, ranging in a variety of classes. The horticulture program began 40 years ago alongside Dr. Fischer, a Botany professor.

Over the course of four decades, the Horticulture department located at Ender Hall has provided students a state of the art computer controlled greenhouse on campus that has given students the opportunity of hands on labor with floral design, botany, landscaping, etc. that not only has enriched the minds of the students but provided the hands on experience that has helped many find jobs straight out of BCC.

The Greenhouse on campus was installed to serve two purposes; to



The Greenhouse welcomes visitors to stroll for a look inside. // Edriel Fimbres

house a collection of plants for both Botany and Horticulture classes, and to provide the school a source of plants.

While the Horticulture department offers a number of classes for its

students, it stands out for its weekly participation in providing the school with numerous arrangements for different events held on campus and source of plants for the interior decor

of the school.

Every student at BCC is required to take a natural science course to graduate, and while many enjoy the traditional Biology lecture, many others don't and Bergen's Horticulture Departments offer students a people plant relationship class Botany course that satisfies a natural science course.

The class is taught by professor Dr. Fischer and Dr. Birnback as a natural science class on Campus that provides two professors in the classroom at the same time, a psychologist and a horticulturist.

As Dr. Birnback, Psychology professor stated, "you get a science that is practical for everyday behavior".

This is a course that redefines interdisciplinary skills for people and teaches you how to be a person.

During the spring semester, the greenhouse at Ender Hall located in room E-186 hosts an annual spring orchid sale and Herb sale where students and staff members are allowed to hand pick from a number of beautifully healthy and pocket friendly plants.

The Horticulture Department has been super beneficial for Bergen Community College the past 40 years, serving as a fundraiser and laboratory for classes.

While you're at Ender Hall, Dr. Fischer permits students to visit the greenhouse with the guidance of Landscape technician Garrett Planten and student Interns located at E-186.

The Name of This Generation

KAROLINE SANTOS SOUZA
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

The action of naming a generation started years ago when people identified members from the same family by knowing their last name.

After that, the use of naming a generation was associated with a social contest, where the government could have more control over the civilization.

The word "generation" includes individuals who were born around the same time, or individuals that passed through the same situations and tend to have some particular similarities.

For example, being a Baby Boomer meant that you were born between 1946 and 1964, during the Civil Rights Movement in the United States.

Countries can usually have different names for each generation, based on what this group of people have in common.

In the United States, we have around 10 generations names, starting in 1890 to present day.

The most recent generation, known as Generation Z, is comprised by those who were born between 1990 and 2000. However, neither the name nor the year of this generation is official in America.

Our generation is a big question mark for sociologists, scientists and even the government. This group of young adults is associated with internet, social media, technology and much more tolerance.

Our generation does not have an official name yet, but some speculations are being made. For instance, the term 'millennials' has been thrown around for a while.

The letter Z came about because the two earlier generations were Gen X and Gen Y, or Millennials. But not everyone has agreed with these names.

Some people call this generation iGen, which is nonsense; why should a whole nation be associated with

a brand like Apple? Others believe the government should stop naming individuals as if they are objects.

The problem with the name and ages go deeper than this.

We are living in a century where people do not want to be treated as numbers or labels anymore. We are not a mere letter. We are not after something and we are definitely not defined by a technology company.

This generation is changing opinions, stereotypes, standards and politics. These individuals are expanding communication, breaking chains and opening borders.

We are the generation that no longer accepts the rights and wrongs of society. We do not accept disrespect, racism, sexism, homophobia or other types of discrimination.

We want to destroy walls, not build them.

We want to see people being whatever they want to be, doing what they love, going where they want to. We want to see them being happy. We want to use the technology in the best way to bring people together.

The government can still try to define us, stamp our skin and label our nation. But we are not going to change.

We are the change. The world is far from being a good place to live, but we are the generation that wants to alter that.

Institutions can call us whatever they want to, but we do not have to accept this name because we do not have only one name, we do not have one face, one body, one language and one culture.

Even though we were born in the same time period, we are not one person and we never will be. We are a generation, but we will not be one with a label.

10th ANNUAL SPEECH COMPETITION



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"SPEECH IS POWER: SPEECH IS TO PERSUADE, TO CONVERT, TO COMPEL." ~ RALPH WALDO EMERSON

Competition: April 12, 2018; Pitkin Education Center, 12:00 to 1:30 p.m.
Final Round: April 26, 2018; Room C-211, 4:00 to 5:00 p.m.
Awards Ceremony: April 26, 2018; Room C-211, 5:00 p.m.

All currently enrolled students are invited to present a six-minute informative or persuasive speech.

Students are encouraged to discuss contemporary issues of significance.

For more information or to register, please visit www.bergen.edu/speechcompetition or A-336 in person. The deadline for registration is April 1. For general inquiries, please contact Kathleen Williams at kwilliams@bergen.edu.



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JCPenney Casualty of Online Shopping

PURNASREE SAHA
SPORTS EDITOR

JCPenney has closed down 138 locations, and closed on March 10, 2018 at Westfield Garden State Plaza after sixty years.

The company will try to help roughly 160 employees find work outside of JCPenney.

According to the New Jersey website, like most brick-and-mortar stores, JCPenney has been hurt by online competition, especially from Wal-Mart Inc. and Amazon Inc.

In 2014, JC Penney began closing stores nationwide. The company announced that it has plans to close down 31 more stores across the country.

Retail stores are going out of business because online shopping is easier than in-store shopping.

According to the article, "Online Shopping Has Exploded Is Taking Down Retail—Here's How You Benefit," from the capitalism website (www.capitalism.com), 50 percent of the 1200 malls across the US are expected to close by 2023 and 1200 retail storefronts are expected to close in 2018 alone.

The explosion of online sales allows customers to shop easily. Customers have an in-depth understanding of their goals, fears, frustrations and desires.

Shoppers know their products and why it's better to buy from one outlet instead of a competitor. Online shopping provides friendly and competent support and continues to expand. This is changing e-commerce for the better.

Convenience is important for customers; they don't have to wait on long lines, especially during the holidays when parking is also a huge issue.

Online merchants offer discounts, promotions and rebates. Free shipping is becoming more common, and gifts can be sent directly to friends and family no matter where they live.

Shopping online rids of the temptation to spend more money at a mall, restaurant or a fast food place.

Many students at BCC offered different opinions on their feelings about JCPenney closing and their

reaction toward online shopping.

"Whenever I need something, I would go to JCPenney and see the department store. I feel that it's a loss to retail since a lot of people shopped there. Online shopping depends on what I need," said Daneiah Nasser, a writing tutor at BCC.

Brenda Vonlenger used to shop at JCPenney as a child with her mother and there were a lot of brands that she could choose from.

"Online shopping has its parts. Some companies, such as Sephora,

could sell free items and I feel excited for the closing sale at JCPenney" said Vonlenger.

Maitte Lugo saw on Facebook that JCPenney is closing down, where her mother would always go shopping for the sales.

"I feel a little upset because there were good deals and it was a good store for men, women, babies and household stuff. JCPenney should come back because I do online shopping for clothes sometimes" said Lugo.

It is easier for customers to purchase

gifts and most products such as clothing, accessories and shoes online. JCPenney was busy during Black Friday weekend because customers wanted to get a ten-dollar coupon, so the line was so long, that it went outside of the door.

Before JCPenney closes down, it will probably be extremely busy due to the promotions that will be offered, so if a customer needs anything, just order online instead of feeling stressed by standing on a long line.



// flickr.com

JUDITH K. WINN SCHOOL OF

HONORS WEEK

MONDAY, 4/2

MEET AND GREET
HONORS FACULTY & STUDENTS

WHEN & WHERE:
12:30PM - 1:30PM
*STUDENT CENTER

LECTURE BY
SEAN WILENTZ

PROFESSOR OF HISTORY
AT PRINCETON AND
THE OFFICIAL BIOGRAPHER
OF BOB DYLAN

WHEN & WHERE:
12:30PM - 1:30PM
WEST HALL, ROOM W-226

TUESDAY, 4/3

BERGEN SALON
III

A CONVERSATION ABOUT
COMMUNICATION
COMPETENCE LED BY
DR. KATHLEEN WILLIAMS

(READINGS AVAILABLE
IN ROOM S-347)

WHEN & WHERE:
12:30PM - 1:30PM
*ROOM C-313

WEDNESDAY, 4/4

VISIT TO
RAMAPO COLLEGE

ATTEND RAMAPO'S HONORS
CONFERENCE & TRANSFER
WORKSHOP. CONTACT
DPIRO@BERGEN.EDU FOR
TRANSPORTATION DETAILS.

WHEN & WHERE:
2:30PM - 6:00PM
RAMAPO COLLEGE

THURSDAY, 4/5

8TH ANNUAL JKW SCHOOL OF
HONORS CONFERENCE

CONFERENCE BEGINS
AT 8:30AM. PANEL
PRESENTATION OF
STUDENT PAPERS FROM
9:00AM TO 12:15PM.
LUNCH AND PRESENTATIONS
FROM 12:30PM TO 2:00PM.

WHERE:
ROOM C-313

*LIGHT REFRESHMENTS WILL BE SERVED.

We May Be Living in a Simulation

ROBERT C. MCDERMOTT
AD MANAGER

Life and consciousness are two of the biggest mysteries that humans have yet to figure out completely. All we know is that we were born into this world with almost no guarantee of knowing where it all came from.

Science tells us that everything came into existence after the Big Bang. The Big Bang Theory states that the universe was so hot and dense that it expanded violently. The end game of this theory is when the entire universe is so spread out and cold, it will be lifeless and end in the Big Freeze.

A way to avoid such a catastrophe — or delay it significantly — would be to put consciousness into a quantum computer. Yes, this sounds like something you would read in a science fiction novel, but considering the fact that we aren't undoubtedly sure about our existence, it could be possible.

Think about virtual reality, or games so realistic that it matches what we see in base reality. This could fool anyone into thinking the simulation is real; granted, they have a consciousness. Man could theoretically make this possible with more advanced technology.

To get to this point, mankind would have to be much more advanced in computing and technological knowledge. Computers are getting smarter and the limit of a computers potential knowledge is likely unlimited so long as they have humans to keep using them.

The similarities between humans

and computers are evident in our processes. Like computers, humans have memory, can transmit and receive data and have electrical signals. Computers have antivirus, humans have an immune system.

If humans are in a simulation, it might also explain why intelligent life on other planets in our solar system have yet to be found.

The Fermi Paradox states that our own galaxy could be traversed by an alien race in only a matter of a few million years. This number seems big, but compared to the age of the universe, which is almost 14 billion years, it's quite a short amount of time.

In the Milky Way Galaxy alone, there are billions of stars and around 100 billion planets. The probability that one of these planets have intelligent life that could pursue interstellar travel are high, yet humans have never come into contact with any.

It might seem strange to credit simulation theory for this, but as humans in an expansive universe, all we can do is keep coming up with answers that lead to more questions.

Elon Musk, CEO of SpaceX and Tesla believes that there is a billion to one chance we are in a simulation. This theory is growing in popularity, but still needs to be proven. The argument is based off of human potential.

Technology might be so flawless in the future that we might be able to simulate ourselves, but this raises the question, did we already?



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Questions? Visit Almida Hernandez, FDU's on-site advisor, Monday-Friday at the Pitkin Education Center, Room A126-b
alhernan@fdu.edu or BCC-FDUScholars@fdu.edu
 201-493-4088

LEARN MORE
fdu.edu/bcc

Mental Health Help: Hope in Medicine

KARISSA ROSEN
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Prescribed medications were scientifically created for multiple reasons; like depression, anxiety, PTSD, bipolar disorder, ADHD, ADD and many more mental health disorders.

Many people nowadays are against taking medication, but little do they know that most people need medication to simply stay sane and survive.

Not everyone needs medication, some might resort to medical marijuana, meditation, praying or other forms of "healing," but those who need medication will continue to use it.

Often times, young adults or pre-teens who are prescribed medication are embarrassed but, just like water, medication can be an essential part of one's life.

It's okay to not feel okay. Everyone needs help at one point or another in their lives so mental health and prescribed medication are nothing to be ashamed of.

Brilliant and famous people have battled mental health issues for hundreds of years. Abraham Lincoln was diagnosed with clinical depression and anxiety, yet he became the sixteenth president of The United States of America.

Vincent van Gogh, a Dutch painter in the top five of the world's most famous painters was believed to have depression, bipolar disorder, epilepsy and schizophrenia yet he is in every single art history textbook and created amazing masterpieces.

Having a mental health disorder is not embarrassing nor should it prevent one from succeeding his or her full potential and goals.

Mental illnesses are extremely serious and should not be taken lightly. Suicide and suicide attempts are one of the tragic events that stem from mental health issues.



// unspalsh.com

Around 43.8 million adults in the United States alone experience some type of mental health issue annually, that's just about one in every five grown Americans.

Not just adults, but one in five children ages 13 to 18 will experience severe mental health issues at any given point in their lives and unfortunately, it's becoming more and more common among the youth.

If those numbers don't trigger something in your heart, I don't know what will. Prescribed medication can and will help people deal with their day-to-day life and prevent tragedies.

The lack of proper treatment costs the U.S. about \$193.2 billion every year. Not only does our country lose billions of dollars annually, but we lose our friends, family and peers by the thousands.

Every single day, 18 to 25 U.S. veterans will take their own lives, and more than 90 percent of children who commit suicide have a mental health disorder.

So many lives can be restored and saved by the simple task of going to a professional and getting prescribed the right medication.

Although medical marijuana, meditation, praying and other forms of "healing" work, prescribed medication works as well and if one does need it, it shouldn't have to be an embarrassing task.

People with mental disorders, just like anyone else needs to be supported, cared about and loved. Just because someone takes medication with their morning cup of coffee and you don't, does not mean you are superior to them.

Never feel ashamed to seek out the proper treatment in order to feel okay and live life like one is intended to do.

A Different Kind of Pleasure in Technology

LIZBETH LAGO
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

For many years now, technology has been at the forefront of many of the greatest discoveries in science.

It has taken us on a ride through history's greatest achievements that have shaped and changed the way we view and use technology, not just in the work environment but also in our everyday lives.

Over 90 percent of Americans who own cellular devices fall into the 77 percent that own smartphones. 69 percent own televisions, and 77 percent own desktop computers or tablets, the other percent own idiosyncratic and strange technological devices.

While Apple releases their new iPhone and Samsung releases their virtual reality consoles, companies like Realbotix have invented a sex robot that now provides the user a different kind of pleasure in technology.

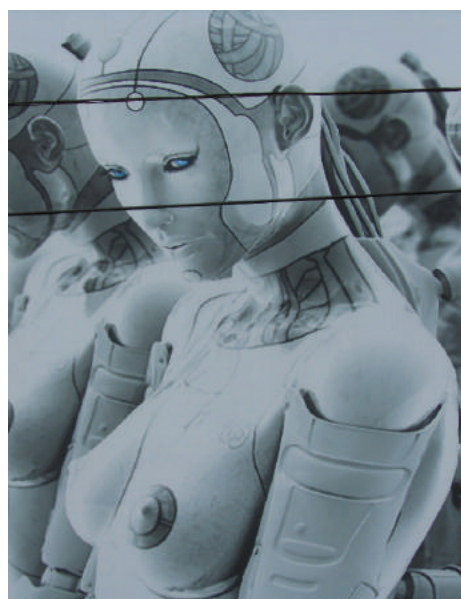
The cultural phenomenon in the world of technology derives from the influence of society. While the influence of selfies led companies to create tools like tripods, selfie sticks and drones in order to obtain better quality selfies, the continued subjugation of women in history has sadly brought evolution as far as sex robots.

Realbotix released Harmony, an anthropomorphic invention whose main function is to perform sexual acts, as of January 2018.

Although Harmony is considered a sex robot, the piece of technology that Christopher Trout exposed to the public cannot function like a normal woman.

Some disadvantages of Harmony include her inability to walk, respond to any physical acts, or perform any chores.

Aside from Harmony, sex robots have been on the come up for the



// flickr.com

past few years due to the fact that the technology manufacturing has increased over the past few years.

As it has been passed onto the hands of several manufacturers, Realbotix has gone beyond the norm in technology and will even be releasing an app that allows you to control the robot yourself as opposed to the buyer performing all the work.

As new technological advancements like Harmony rise, the continued engineering of more sex robots will be placed on the pedestal of technology.

While the prices do vary depending on the manufacturers and location, converted to American U.S. dollars, Harmony ranges from \$13,000 to \$14,000. The app will be released in early April.

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The Benefits of Traveling Abroad

DERRIAN DOUGLAS
NEWS EDITOR

It's so easy to talk yourself out of traveling internationally when you're young.

You think you'll have a lifetime to visit the Sistine Chapel, or see Big Ben in person or take a canal tour through Amsterdam. But your youth is actually the perfect time to travel.

During your youth, you're still learning to navigate the world while simultaneously trying to find yourself. Deadlines are knocking at your door; the uncertainty of your career path is breathing down your neck.

Even though traveling may seem like a foolish way to utilize your time while needing to make such crucial decisions, you'll find that traveling is able to teach you something nothing else ever could.

The most obvious benefit is that traveling internationally will uproot you from your comfort zone.

Students are so accustomed to their regular routine that they rarely venture out to experience something new and different.

Your ability to navigate yourself around a foreign country will bring you a new sense of confidence in yourself.

Amparo Coddling, a BCC International Student Counselor and Study Abroad Advisor, says it's important to travel because "you need to learn how to resolve problems on your own."

While abroad, you'll be faced with everything from different languages, to street signs, to public transportation schedules, and you'll be forced to navigate yourself through those obstacles.

When you've overcome that hurdle, you will learn to appreciate the cuisine, the mannerisms, the norms and the lessons of the country you're visiting. Embrace the discomfort. Explore the unknown.

Have you ever heard of the saying, "open mind, open heart?"

This isn't just a yoga mantra, people. This is a traveling mantra as well. One of the greatest benefits of traveling internationally is the open-mindedness you return with from immersing

yourself into another culture.

But, you must remind yourself to think with an open mind even before you arrive.

BCC Professor Win Win Kyi is the daughter of a UN official; it is no surprise she travelled and lived abroad for most of her life, and throughout her years of visiting other countries has realized that "the world, we are one."

In her eyes, she believes that if every student went to another country with that same idea, they will be considerate of the culture with which they're experiencing.

You also need to have a sense of cultural sensitivity.

Wherever you are traveling, be aware of the cultural norms of that community. Understand why they do what they do, dress the way they do, speak the way they do, hold the roles that they do.

In high school, American students are rarely taught of international news and affairs, whereas American history and current affairs are embedded

into the curriculums of international schools.

By being sensitive to another country's culture, you'll gain a better understanding of international affairs and conflicts.

Traveling will most definitely teach you more than that World History class ever did.

Finally, having traveling experience is extremely appealing to employers. Employers look for well-traveled employees with an understanding of international affairs and business.

You get bonus points for knowing more than just your native language as well.

No matter what field you wish to go into, employers enjoy having someone who has witnessed the customs of other countries because you will mostly likely need to travel at least once no matter what your job description is.

Globalization is a large part of a company's expansion, especially now in a world that is so technologically-driven.



Radcliffe Camera in Oxford, England. Many scenes of the Harry Potter franchise were filmed in Oxford. It's quite a magical place. // Wikimedia Commons

As a potential employee with a background in traveling and the ability to speak another language that is not your own, employers will be begging you to work for them.

This past winter break, I traveled to England by myself for three weeks. I've wanted to go to England my whole life, and I decided a year ago that I was going to transfer to a school in the UK after leaving BCC.

As someone who has never traveled internationally, doing it for the first time alone was a huge test for me.

I wondered how I'd learn the tube system, how I'd navigate myself around the bustling streets of London and if I'd make it obvious that I was a tourist.

I was hoping to prove to myself that when I got into a school abroad, I would be able to hold my own. I didn't understand how much I'd gain before leaving.

Traveling from the north of England to the south was the most eye-opening experience of my life. I proved my independence while learning about a place that I thought was so similar to my native country.

Spoiler alert: it's not.

England is unlike anything I could have imagined. I came back with open head-space, a broader understanding of international cultures - England is a massive melting pot, rich in different ethnicities - and the confidence in myself that I knew would stick with me for a lifetime, whether I ended up studying abroad or not.

A month after returning from England, I got accepted to Cardiff University in Wales, UK. I can't wait to become a Cardiff University Dragon this fall.

When I spoke to both Professor Coddling and Professor Kyi, they both advised that students "be the observer, not the observed."

With that advice, I encourage everyone to venture out of their comfort zone, observe the locals, ask questions, be curious.

Dive into the beauty of the unknown, you won't regret it.

Fifty Shades of Predictability

YOO RA KIM
FEATURES EDITOR

Fifty Shades Freed was incredibly predictable and hilariously overdone in terms of the sex scenes.

I tried to view the film with an open mind, seeing as I already watched the first film and half of the second one.

The Fifty Shades of Grey series is known for its overtly sexual and BDSM-themed plotline. I knew I was about to witness a ton of cliché scenes when the movie started off at Ana and Christian's wedding.

Before I begin to dissect the film, let me enlighten those of you who may not be familiar with the Fifty Shades movies.

They are essentially about a young, brooding billionaire named Christian Grey with a traumatic past. He meets a woman named Anastasia Steele (Ana for short) who is the definition of docile and shy.

Their fates intertwine when Ana has to go interview Christian in the place of her close friend. Once Ana meets Christian, her life takes a kinky turn when she realizes that the man she is fond of actively partakes in the BDSM lifestyle.

BDSM stands for bondage, discipline (or domination), sadism and masochism. From there, the pair's unusual and unrealistic romance takes off.

The first scene at Ana and Christian's wedding was sweet, but presents the viewer with nothing new.



// flickr.com

Ana is wearing a typical white gown, Christian is wearing a regular suit, and the two exchange vows as if they are a normal couple. However, as the film goes on, they prove to be anything but.

The main appeal of watching an erotic film such as Fifty Shades Freed are obviously the dramatic sex scenes. Let's not kid ourselves. That's why people line up at the theater and pay money to go see these kinds of things.

There is a particular scene where Ana and Christian are racing through the streets of Seattle because it is revealed that the couple is being followed by an unknown person.

When Ana finally manages to dodge the stalker, she parks in a random parking lot with her husband sitting in the passenger seat.

She proceeds to go over to the passenger side and let's just say things got hot and heavy in the most uncanny manner.

Maybe it's the fact that they had a near-death experience that made them so worked up, who knows. Either way, this movie confirmed that just about anything can get Ana and Christian in the mood. Even a high-speed car chase in the middle of the day.

There was another scene where Christian takes Ana and a few others to his house in Aspen. They go for a short vacation and, from a cinematic viewpoint, to provide a different locale.

During the Aspen trip, Ana finds that she cannot sleep at night so she finds comfort in a pint of ice cream.

Christian just so happens to stroll into the kitchen without a shirt on. Cue the eye roll. Although, I will

compliment Jamie Dornan for his exceptional figure. His toned back muscles and rippling torso are on display for a substantial portion of the film, which I have no qualms about.

The scene starts off innocently enough, with Ana teasing her husband with spoonfuls of ice cream. Then things start escalating fast, ice cream going in places where ice cream isn't intended to go.

They ultimately end up going full throttle on the kitchen table, and this scene might make you lose your sweet tooth for a while.

The movie didn't strictly focus on sex, there is also some action involved. Ana's former boss, Jack Hyde, is out on bail and is back for revenge.

He takes Christian's sister as hostage so that Ana will show up without backup. Without giving away the ending, there is an intense showdown at the end of the film that only bolsters the couple's love for each other.

If you're looking for something that will make you laugh and cringe all at the same time, then Fifty Shades Freed is the movie for you.

Jamie Dornan's unchanging stoic expression and Dakota Johnson's poor acting skills definitely make the movie-watching experience less enjoyable but if you don't want to watch something too serious, I would recommend this film.



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Korea United at 2018 Olympic Games

ROBERT C. MCDERMOTT
Ad Manager

Olympic fans from around the world were excited to finally witness North Korea and South Korea compete together as one team in the 2018 Winter Olympics.

Despite the fact that most North Koreans were able to view the competition, South Korea spent around \$2.5 million so that North Korean Olympians could participate.

Combined, both nations had 35 competitors for only one event — ice hockey. South Korea had 23 Olympians compete, while North Korea only sent over 12.

The unified women's ice hockey team lost to every team in the preliminary round, and finished bottom of the table, unable to make a quarterfinal appearance.

While this isn't the first time North Korea has been in the Winter Olympics, it is a first for the regime to partner up with its neighboring country in the competition.

An interesting showing by North Korean "cheerleaders" was displayed as the women all wore the same clothes and were synchronizing the movement of the flags to near perfection.

This could be a political move



// Wikimedia Commons

from Kim Jong-Un to show the rest of the world the power and unity of North Korea.

If this is the case, South Korean president Moon Jae-in would rather combine teams for the games in his own country and let North Korea flex their muscles in order to have a peaceful 2018 Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang.

According to BusinessInsider, in an exclusive interview with Suki Kim, a Korean-American writer, who went undercover in North Korea, these women did not volunteer to cheer on the Korean Olympic team.

"They've been chosen because the regime put some selection criteria, which has to do with young age, looking pretty, whatever they consider, from a good family, having loyalty to the party and of a certain height, about 5-foot-3 at least," said Kim.

She then went on to compare the selection process of these "army of beauties" to a beauty contest.

The women are not even in the beauty industry, in fact most of them are young students who just happened to fit the specific criteria made by the regime.

Vince McMahon Revives the XFL



Vince McMahon CEO of WWE, and co-founder of the XFL. // Wikimedia Commons

STEPHEN MIGNANELLI
Staff Writer

The XFL is returning after a 19-year absence. In 2020, Vince McMahon, the co-creator of the XFL, is bringing the league back.

The original XFL was a league owned by the WWF and NBC, in 2002, when the original league debuted and the ratings were very strong.

According to Ronald Blum of ABC Sports, "the XFL debut game was watched by 54 million people."

Ratings after the debut game declined fast, and the league ended after one unsuccessful season.

This new version of the XFL will be owned by Vince McMahon's new company, Alpha Entertainment. The reinvented XFL will begin during the spring of 2020 and will have eight teams.

During the announcement event, McMahon said, "We're going to give the game of football back to fans."

He didn't specify how he is giving football back to the fans.

The market for the new XFL isn't entirely clear. The viewership for the NFL has been trending downward for years now.

In an article from Sports Illustrated, writer Richard Deitsch said, "When it comes to viewership: The numbers are heading in the wrong direction."

With NFL viewership on the

decline, there could be an audience for the XFL.

McMahon doesn't want the XFL to be involved in politics.

"As far as our league is concerned, it will have nothing to do with politics and nothing to do with social issues," said McMahon.

In the current political climate this could dissuade some players from joining the XFL. For a new league in a sport struggling to retain viewership, they shouldn't be narrowing the pool of potential players.

The pool of potential XFL players was again narrowed by McMahon.

"If you have a DUI, you will not play in the XFL," said McMahon.

According to USA Today, as of February 11, "881 NFL players have been arrested since 2000."

While most of those players have retired, there are still plenty of active players that have arrest records. When starting a new professional sports league, limiting the pool of players is risky.

It should be very interesting to see how the league performs in 2020. The original league was unsuccessful, and with the NFL's ratings declining in recent years, it's hard to see the new XFL being successful.

Powerful Players for the Potential FIFA World Team?

PURNASREE SAHA
Sports Editor

Between June 14 and July 15, the 2018 Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) World Cup will take place in Russia. 32 squads from around the globe will compete in football's most notable competition.

According to the article "Revealed: When all 32 World Cup 2018 Squads will be Announced" from the Goal website (goal.com), 20 teams will make back-to-back appearances; and this includes the reigning champions from Germany. This is the first World Cup in which Iceland and Panama are competing.

Rafa Marquez, a Mexican defender, qualified for Mexico during the Confederations Cup last summer and then entered the World Cup tournament for Russia 2018.

According to the article, "Mexico's Rafa Marquez, 39, still targeting World Cup amid legal issues."

According to ESPN, Marquez was accused by the U.S. Treasury Department on August 9 for links to drug trafficking, which he has since denied. Marquez has since changed his focus from soccer to fighting the charges. He viewed himself playing on the national team and visualized that it was going to be important to his career.

Coach Tite of the Brazil team announced the fifteen starting players of the team. According to the article, "Brazil Coach Tite Reveals 15 players of his World Cup" from the ESPN website (espn.com), Tite took the unusual step in an interview with UOL Esporte, revealing a partial squad led by four players from Paris Saint-Germain: Daniel Alves, Marquinhos,

Thiago Silva and Neymar.

Luan, who was an olympic gold medalist at Rio 2016, has since focused his efforts for the World Cup series in Russia. At age 18, he started to enjoy sports and desired a future in football.

According to the article "Luan: We've Got Every Chance of Winning The Trophy" from the fifa website (fifa.com), there was a competition that Luan had a memory of and it was helping Brazil climb to the top of the podium and then earn the gold medal. This was considered to be surprising, because Brazil never won the gold medal in the Olympics.

After earning the gold medal in 2016, Luan was considered to be the best in 2017 by collecting the award for the tournament's most valuable player.

A year later, Luan received a runners-up medal that appeared during the FIFA World Cup. With all the effort and hard work that Brazil showed during the game, Luan thinks that his team will win the trophy.

Toni Kroos, a German player, leads the team's midfield position. While he was in high school he was better than any of the boys who played soccer. Today at 28 years he is still an amazing player and is part of the team going to the World Cup.

Kylian Mbappe, a French player who is eighteen years old was considered to be a talented player in the FIFA World Cup. During the UEFA Champions League last season, Mbappe scored six goals.

These talented people are hoping to succeed by making it to the final game and winning the trophy.



FIFA WORLD CUP
RUSSIA 2018

Who qualified for the 2018 FIFA World Cup so far? // whitecapsfc.com

Chief Wahoo No More! Are There More To Follow?

JELSON MONTERO
STAFF WRITER

The Cleveland Indians have recently made news around the baseball world, announcing that the team will no longer wear the Chief Wahoo logo or sell team merchandise that has the chief printed on it.

The Cleveland Indians have been around since 1915, and have always worn the Wahoo logo on their caps and jerseys.

Not to the surprise of many, the logo will finally be discontinued from use in 2019 because of the offensive meaning it has behind it.

The logo is a caricature of a painted red face that is suppose to represent the team name, which is the Cleveland Indians. However, with great push back from Native Americans and sports fans, the logo has been classified as a stereotypical mark on Native Americans.

The elimination of the Chief Wahoo logo can have a huge impact on other sports teams and universities with offensive team names or logos.

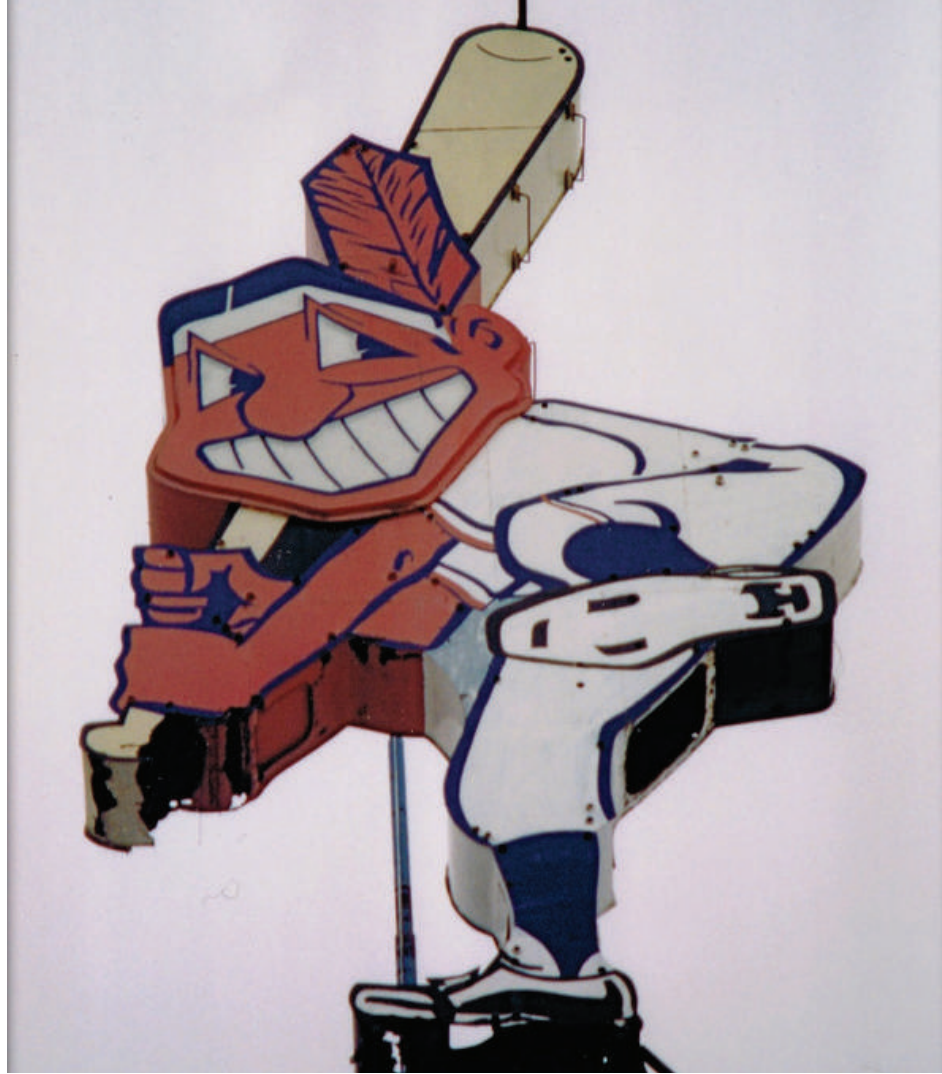
In fact, the Washington Redskins and Florida State Seminoles have two of the most offensive team names and logos towards Native Americans.

The Florida State Seminoles football team acquired their name from the Seminole tribe that originated from Florida.

Although the Seminoles have tried to honor the tribe and stay away from offensive terms, their mascot does not seem to grasp the concept.

The Seminole mascot rides around on a horse with white and red paint around his face portraying a Native American from the Seminole Tribe.

The University's mascot remains offensive, and it would remain to see



// flickr.com

what the type of initiative the university takes.

The Washington Redskins have

had a long lasting battle with the public and Native Americans regarding their team name.

The term "redskin" is a slang word that inappropriately represents Native Americans because of their use of paint on their faces.

The question remains to why it has taken so long for this football team to change their name, but it seems that the Cleveland Indians actions to eliminate their Chief Wahoo logo will impact the decision for the Washington Redskins.

Many students at Bergen Community College feel that the Cleveland Indians made the right choice by taking action.

Mariah Calvano, who is a student in her first semester at BCC said, "I don't know much about sports, but I do know that this was long overdue. The team logo was offensive and should have been taken down years ago. Hopefully other teams or schools with offensive names can think about the impact they have."

Erimir Vargas, a student in his fourth semester at BCC said, "It's surprising that it took so long for the logo to be eliminated. Having a logo that has a painted face and certain color to portray a race or group of people is simply wrong."

The Cleveland Indians are the first to take action; however there can be more to come.

The Washington Redskins and Florida State Seminoles are now on the clock and have an easy choice to make from the eyes of students, sports fans and Native Americans.

The decision made by the Cleveland Indians should not only impact those teams, but any other team or school across the country with an offensive name and logo attached to them.

Overwatch League Stage 1 Closes, Shanghai Dragons Sign First Female Player



Overwatch, Poznań Game Arena, Poznań 2016 // Wikimedia Commons

NICHOLAS CONTRERAS
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Blizzard Entertainment's latest gaming phenomenon, Overwatch, is a purely online team-based FPS that draws elements from other genres.

Launched in 2016, Overwatch has had a meteoric rise in popularity since, hosting 35 million players online daily, according to Blizzard Entertainment.

With previous promotional hype, constant content updates on top of an incredibly well-done base game to always better the overall experience, the Activision-owned company clearly designed the title to take the gaming community by storm and to keep them engaged for as long as possible.

A competitive scene was inevitable. Seeing not only its global

success in sales, but also large eSports organizations like Cloud 9 and Team Solomid beginning to form rosters, signing prominent and in-game ranked Top 500 players to compete, the Overwatch team themselves formed a Blizzard-sponsored competitive league.

Composed of the best players of every respective server region (many who formerly competed for eSports organizations prior), the Overwatch League is made up of 12 city-based teams that battle for in-game dominance over a course of several games of varying game modes.

As the five-week Stage 1 came to a close on February 10th with a victory for the London Spitfire,

spectators and analysts expected team roster changes and announcements in the downtime before the competition would commence to Stage 2 on February 21st. Unexpectedly, but receiving much praise and positive reaction, the Shanghai Dragons signed Kim "Geguri" Se-Yeon into their team.

Geguri (both her ingame moniker and social media username) is a South Korean professional player who originally competed for a minor team called UW Artisan, has consistently topped in the Korea region's rankings, which is nearly a league in itself and whose incredibly technical ability even became a point of controversy.

When Overwatch first launched

in 2016, Geguri's performance with not only a non 'meta' character at the time, but ability overall was so good she was accused of hacking and using third-party services to give herself an advantage. The claims, however, were very quickly found to be false, and her accusers even resigning their pro-careers in shame after.

Much of the excitement around her introduction into the Overwatch league is due in part to her unbelievable skill, her triumph over false accusations following her debut into a pro circuit and more simply because she'll not only be the first female competitor in the Overwatch League, but a professionally signed female competitor in the realm of eSports.



The Torch

SPORTS



Bergen Wrestling Update

ROBERT C. MCDERMOTT
Ad Manager

The Bergen Community College wrestling team competed in the NJCAA Championship at Council Bluffs, Iowa.

Anthony Romero qualified at 133 pounds during the National Championship and went 1-2. The team is looking solid this year with a variety of competitions already finished that took place in many locations.

The team currently has six athletes on the roster. This is a small, but tightly knit group of players who consider each other family.

Wrestling coach Chris DiSanto believes the athletes are driven with the will to succeed.

"Bergen has a long tradition of wrestling. The program has been around for over 25 years. Each year has to ups and downs pertaining to the roster. We are a community school, so kids aren't here to specifically wrestle. The kids that do wrestle have been committed to the sport during their years at Bergen and after they graduated from Bergen. We as coaches do our best to make practices fun as well as have a serious attitude during the season," said DiSanto.



Anthony Romero with Coach DiSanto. // bergenccbulldogs.com

Coach DiSanto stresses the importance of conditioning and technique as the most important aspects of the team. The team does not have a special diet, but are encouraged to eat healthy foods and have daily workouts outside of training.

2018 MLB Season Predictions

STEPHEN MIGNANELLI
Staff Writer

With every Major League Baseball team currently in spring training, it's time to predict the season.

Last season concluded with the Houston Astros winning their first World Series against the Los Angeles Dodgers. Both the Astros and Dodgers could make it back to the World Series, but teams in their divisions have improved.

The Astros will probably win the American League West. The Angels are the most improved team in the AL West and pose the biggest threat to the Astros. They signed highly touted Japanese hitter and pitcher Shohei Otani. He helps solidify their offense and pitching staff. The Angels should be in the AL wild card hunt this coming September.

The next division is the American League Central. The AL Central is a very weak division.

The Cleveland Indians are probably going to win the AL Central. They had the best record in the American League last season with 102 wins.

The second best team in the central was the Minnesota Twins, a team that was 17 games behind the Indians in the division. The Indians didn't make any major roster changes during the winter, but they are still a very good team.

The American League East will be the most competitive division in the AL this season. The division has three teams that could make the playoffs.

The Boston Red Sox, New York Yankees and the Toronto Blue Jays could all win the AL East.

The Red Sox won the division last year, and could repeat winning the division. The Yankees have drastically



Chase Utley in the batter's box during spring training. // Wikimedia Commons

improved their team though.

The Yankees and Red Sox have one of the oldest rivalries in American professional sports, and the team that doesn't win the division will have a really good chance of playing in the wild card game.

The National League will be much more competitive in 2018. While the American League has teams that dominate their divisions, the NL teams are closer together in the standings.

The National League West is the best example of the competitive

National League. The NL West had three of the five teams make the playoffs in 2017.

The Dodgers won the division and the Diamondbacks and Rockies played in the wild card game and this could easily happen again.

The San Francisco Giants have made trades for Andrew McCutchen and Evan Longoria, which makes them another possible playoff team from the NL West.

The National League Central got better this offseason. The Chicago Cubs added Japanese ace Yu Darvish.

The Milwaukee Brewers added Lorenzo Cain and Christian Yelich, two of the best outfielders in baseball.

While the Cubs have dominated the NL Central since 2015, the Brewers and the always playoff relevant St. Louis Cardinals could also win the division.

If the Cubs do win the division, the Brewers and Cardinals have a chance of taking one of the two wild card spots.

The final division to predict is the National League East. The Nationals won the division the past two seasons and have a good chance of repeating in 2018.

The Braves, Marlins and Phillies are still rebuilding, but the Mets have a chance at winning the NL East.

With the Mets, it all depends on the health of their pitchers. Noah Syndergaard and Jacob DeGrom are regarded as two of the best pitchers in the sport.

If they can stay healthy and the offense preforms, they have a good chance of winning the division or the wildcard.

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