



14,500 Afghan refugees were 20 miles away

MCCC and local organizations are helping with resettlement

By Ashley Jackson and
Elijah Parkman-Williams
Senior Reporters

The last of the 14,500 Afghan refugees housed at Joint Base McGuire-Dix Lakehurst, NJ left on February 19, just four days after the goal established by Homeland Security.

The tent city, just a half hour's drive from MCCC, was known as Liberty Village and was established following the chaotic exodus of Afghans fleeing their country August 24, 2021. The U.S. military was withdrawing and the rule of the hard-right Taliban would soon make remaining in the country dangerous for thousands, especially those who had aided U.S. forces during their 20 year effort as part of the "War on Terror," which began under President George W. Bush.

The US plans to take in more Afghan refugees over the next year, but at a location still to be determined. Homeland Security issued a press release celebrating the pending closure, and said that until the new safe haven begins operations in the coming weeks, the safe haven at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst will remain open



An Afghan girl looks on at temporary housing in Liberty Village on Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst in New Jersey, U.S., December 2, 2021. REUTERS/Barbara Davidson/Pool

and operational in a limited capacity, and will continue to welcome Afghan families who arrive in the interim through Operation Allies Welcome.

Workers have begun disassembling the 24.6-acre tent city that housed the influx of evacuees. Residents had access to multiple resources onsite, such as: medical, dining, and athletic facilities, classrooms, and even a beauty parlor and culturally appropriate clothing center.

The Reformed Church of Highland Park Affordable Housing Corporation has an initiative to provide housing and programs for refugees in Central Jersey through Interfaith-RISE (Refugee & Immigrant Support & Empowerment).

Wendy Jager, English Language Director for Interfaith-RISE says "I think that one of the challenges is that many refugees need to learn English, but they also need to financially care for their families that they have brought here and many refugees are also financially supporting extended families that have not been able to leave their country."

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GOT A NEWS TIP?

MCCC lifts mask requirement

By Bruna Camara
Reporter

MCCC administrators have announced that as of March 7, the college is lifting the mask mandate for students. Students can still wear masks if they prefer, but they do not have to. This decision comes after Governor Murphy announced that the mask mandate for K-12 schools would be lifted on the same date.

Mercer's president Dr. Wang announced the new policy to faculty and staff in a Zoom meeting on March 2.

She said, "We are receiving CDC new guidance that is based on 3 new factors or metrics or indicators: one is hospitalization cases, another is hospital beds availability, and the last one is the percentage of cases per 100,000 in the previous week. Using those metrics

the CDC has issued ranking from low, medium, to high for all local municipalities."

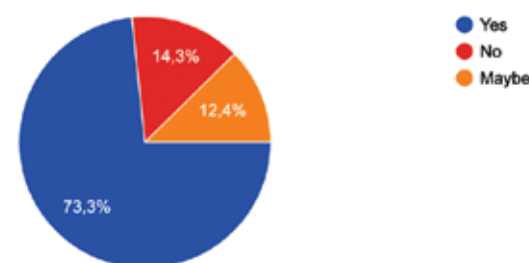
President Wang showed a diagram and said that "because the college falls into the green zone, indoor masks will not be required."

She noted the college's low rate of COVID infection saying that the college started testing on January 4 and has done close to 9,000 tests with only 12 coming up positive.

In an online survey conducted by The College Voice, 105 people including students, faculty, and staff were asked if they would feel comfortable if masks become optional on campus. Almost three-quarters (73.3%) said they would be comfortable, another 12% said they weren't sure, and 14% were opposed.

During Dr. Wang's Zoom meeting several faculty

Would you feel comfortable if masks become optional at MCCC?
105 responses



PIE CHART | BRUNA CAMARA

73% of 105 surveyed were comfortable with mask optional policy.

and staff members pushed back against the change in policy.

Professor Holly Kaiser expressed concern for students who chose to continue masking responding, "There should be no tolerance for harassment, intimidation, bullying or retaliation against any individual in relation to their decision regarding wearing masks."

This reinforced what

Governor Murphy said past month, "any student educator, student, staff member or visitor who chooses to continue masking up while indoors, may freely do so, and we expect the school to take swift disciplinary action against those who may try to demean or bully anyone who chooses to wear a mask. We will not tolerate anyone being put

See MASKS page 2

Contact us at mcccthevoice@gmail.com
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MCCC mask requirement lifted as of March 7

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down by exercising their choice to mask up.”

Professor Avery-Natale questioned the decision saying that students had paid for classes based on the college's assurance of masking being in place.

Dr. Wang answered him saying that the choice to wear a mask “is never taken away from [the students] to mask themselves.” She noted that she plans to continue to wear a mask on campus in part because she has a mother-in-law who is extremely immunocompromised and lives next door to her.

In terms of student response to the change one student who asked to remain anonymous told The VOICE, “I feel as for me personally, I would wear the mask, but if anyone wants to not wear the masks it's their decision, you know: their body their choice. I really get paranoid so I would wear the mask.”

Another student who answered the survey said they disagree with the school ending the mask requirement saying, “I feel that masks are helpful to prevent the spread of the virus and just the common cold as well. So I disagree in a way meaning I think it is just too soon to lift the mask mandate.”

While some were concerned, most students shared their support for the decision of masks being optional.

Nursing student Gloria Otto Adusei said, “I think it is good because having masks not required and not being so strict it's okay. It allows some people to be able to [take masks off and] not get choked. You don't get in trouble or sent home because you don't have a mask.”

Ama Abban Baidoo a biology major student said, “I like the idea of masks being optional for people who are fully vaccinated and also they need boost it up because I feel like some people that are not vaccinated they kinda don't want to get it because it is optional, so I like the idea for people who are vaccinated, but not for those who are not.”

MCCC will keep its cleaning and sanitizing protocols in place and while it will no longer force people on campus to get vaccinated or to wear masks, Dr. Wang says she strongly recommends they do so.

“These are the best protective measures for us and the tools we have at our fingertips,” she said. ■



STUDENT SUCCESS COACHING

the path to success

Students ask: where is everyone?

Student service positions have been empty or slow to be filled

By **Elijah Parkman-Williams**
Senior Reporter

Students looking for support from Transfer Services and Success Coaches have had a tough time this year. Two of the three Success Coaches on the West Windsor campus have resigned and the Transfer Services department had no advisor throughout the fall term when many students were looking for help managing transfer applications.

Now Transfer Services has one advisor in a department that used to have as many as three and there is one Success Coach serving Liberal Arts in an interim capacity though his primary position is in Health Services.

Athena Patwary, the new Transfer Services Advisor, was just hired two months ago having previously worked as a recruiter and transfer counselor at other universities including Pace and St. Peter's.

“Back then my role was to go out there into community colleges, build, sort of a network, meet students and then guide them through the transfer process from outside. But here at Mercer my role has been reversed,” says Patwary.

Patwary said, “I am the sole transfer person right now,” adding, “At this very moment I don't think there is any initiative being taken to expand the department.”

Another setback has been the need to move all the services online.

Patwary says, “Unfortunately when we returned from the [winter] holiday, we had a huge rise in COVID numbers.”

Dr. Latonya Ashford-Ligon, Director of Center for Retention and Completion, says, “In the absence of the [Transfer Services] positions students have made their way over to our area.”

Other stop gaps have been put in place while the multiple Success Coach positions remain empty.

Honors Program Coordinator, Eugene Mok, is taking on some of the overflow responsibilities.

Angel Agyeman, a Business Administration student,

“It's very successful when the Success Coaches and the faculty are on the same page. The collaboration can be very beneficial to the student, to the faculty, to the division, to the graduation rate, it's beneficial for everyone.”

-Jehan Mohamed, Former Success Coach for Business and STEM

“We have talented, talented people here who are still serving the needs of students. They're doing everything they can to meet your needs.”

-MCCC President Dr. Jianping Wang

“I think when it came to registering, and dealing with summer courses and stuff, I was very grateful to have Eugene, but I think the original Success Coaches could've helped me with the whole process, especially when I first started.”

-Angel Agyeman, Business and STEM student

is one such student who was switched to Mok. “I think when it came to registering, and dealing with summer courses and stuff, I was very grateful to have Eugene, but I think the original Success Coaches could've helped me with the whole process, especially when I first started.”

Mok says, “The Liberal

Arts students were being split up between myself and Mr. Medina.”

Emanuel Medina, Success Coach for the Math, Science, and Health Professions Division is also serving as interim Success Coach in Liberal Arts.

One Success Coach who resigned from her role is Jehan Mohamed who worked in the Business and STEM Division.

According to Mohamed the position is valuable. She says “It's very successful when the Success Coaches and the faculty are on the same page. The collaboration can be very beneficial to the student, to the faculty, to the division, to the graduation rate, it's beneficial for everyone.”

But Mohamed says the position had limitations. “I was looking for growth and there was no opportunity for me to grow as a Success Coach.”

Now Mohamed is working as an adjunct professor while also completing a doctoral degree.

Dr. Ashford-Ligon says she has asked the college to refill all of the Success Coach positions, “because the positions are so important to the academic support for our students.”

She adds, “I always like to have a staff of Success Coaches, and even the entire department, that depicts the diversity of our students.”

College President, Dr. Jianping Wang, says efforts are being made to refill the positions but the reason the jobs have been or remain empty extends far beyond MCCC.

“Country wide, we have more vacancies than the people looking for the job. Statewide, we have the biggest workforce shortage in recent history. College wide, we have the same experience with severe work shortage,” Dr. Wang adds.

She adds, “We have talented, talented people here who are still serving the needs of students. They're doing everything they can to meet your needs.”

Eugene Mok, the Honors Coordinator, says, “Hopefully there will be a trend towards hiring more advisors who are case managers, and you know, being able to reduce those caseloads so that each and every student can get more [of the] in-depth counseling that they should get.”

It's pothole season: AAA tips for safety

By **Willena Mah**
With support from
the Staff of The College VOICE

Welcome to Pothole season! According to the New Jersey Department of Transportation (DOT) pothole season started on February 28. The loads of salt put on local streets and highways this winter, followed by the scraping snowplows, followed by meltwater expanding and contracting in the road cracks during the winter has left drivers with an obstacle course of danger.

Hitting potholes can cause all kinds of problems. According to the AAA auto club “Pothole encounters can wreak havoc on car tires, wheels and suspensions. Most pothole-related repairs cost less than \$250, but in some cases, the bill can exceed \$1,000; the average repair cost is \$306. Even worse, hitting a pothole - or taking the wrong measures to avoid one - could cause a crash and personal injuries.”

Here are some tips on how to protect yourself from the AAA official “Potholes and Vehicle Damage” webpage:

- keep tires properly inflated,
- eliminate driving distractions,
- look ahead for road hazards,
- be wary of puddles that may hide potholes and keep a safe distance from other vehicles.
- Check your surroundings for collision threats before you stomp on the brakes or swerve suddenly to dodge a pothole.
- If you can't avoid one, slow down, but release the brakes and straighten the steering wheel just before impact to help minimize any damage.

According to Stephen Schapiro, a NJ DOT spokesman, they have repaired more than 37,000 potholes on state and interstate highways between Jan.1 and Feb.15, which is 3,000 more than they filled during the same time last year.

Trenton, where MCCC's downtown campus is, always has issues with potholes and locals frequently take to social media to complain. The situation is so bad that the current mayor included filling potholes as part of his campaign promises when he ran for office.

He equated filling potholes to adding jobs saying, “As for the remaining Public Works, I will ask that the department's focus be on filling the potholes; cleaning the alleys; creating a new and innovative recycling program — all of which will mean new jobs for our city residents,” in a July 2018 speech.

DOT crews work from 9-3 pm during pothole season and try to avoid working in travel lanes during commuting hours. Pothole repair locations will be posted on the 511NJ website.

Ukrainian student describes war

By Ben Levitt & Sierra Azara
Reporters

Despite repeated calls for Russia to stand down from President Biden and other world leaders, in the early morning of February 24, the citizens of Ukraine awoke to bombs falling in multiple locations including Mariupol and the capital, Kyiv.

It is estimated that 644 Ukrainian citizens were injured during the initial attacks, and another 198 were killed.

MCCC student Oleksii Mykhalchuk, who is from Kyiv said that a large-scale invasion of the country was not expected. He said that since 2014 there has been ongoing pressure from the Russians, but that they only started getting worried about a full invasion in "January, after the new year."

So, what does Putin want? Officially the Russian President says, "The purpose of this operation is to protect people who, for eight years now, have been facing humiliation and genocide perpetrated by the Kyiv regime. To this end, we will seek to demilitarize and denazify Ukraine, as well as



bring to trial those who perpetrated numerous bloody crimes against civilians, including against citizens of the Russian Federation."

He has also said that he didn't want Ukraine to be allowed to join NATO, the group of countries formed after World War II that agreed to work together and support one another if any of them were attacked.

Mykhalchuk says the real reason is "[after the fall of the Soviet Union] Ukraine was always moving towards the Western countries in NATO and the EU, and I guess Russia

didn't like that. So now they are trying to hold us near them."

Countries around the world, including the US, are imposing economic sanctions on Russia which have had a serious financial impact on the country's economy, but Putin's Army is moving forward, heading toward Kyiv.

It's not clear what Putin's end game might be. Are we looking at nuclear war or worse? After all, Putin has 6,257 nuclear warheads at his disposal according to the Nuclear Threat Initiative.

Videos are circulat-

ing on social media of normal Ukrainians throwing Molotov cocktails at armored vehicles and troop carriers in an effort to disable or destroy them. There are diagrams in Ukrainian telling people where to throw these improvised devices in order to inflict maximum damage.

Mykhalchuk's father and younger brother are still in Ukraine. His brother is having trouble with the current situation.

His father's response is different. He says, "Whenever you call my father right now, he'll be like, 'oh, we are fine.' Like, nothing is happening. Because even though the Ukrainian civilians are at war, they were already mentally prepared for this. They think of it as their civic duty to help."

Although Mykhalchuk says his professors have been accommodating given his current situation, he says, "I am freaking out. In Ukraine, life stopped; so everyone and everything is focused on the war. Here I have exams, I have classes, I have to do my stuff. But for me life stopped like it did for all of Ukraine. It's hard for me."

MCCC and others work to help local refugees

Continued from page 1

To combat this issue, Interfaith-RISE partnered with Margaret Gould, MCCC Program Director of Center for Community Education and Training, at JKC to teach English to Afghan refugees.

Jager says, "I'm very excited about the partnership and I look forward to building it and continuing it in the future. We're off to a great start."

Rev. Seth Kaper-Dale of The Reformed Church of Highland Park says "It's like a match made in heaven. The teachers love the students, the students are very driven because they all need to learn English to get the jobs they want, and the county college has offered to work with Afghans all around the state. So, it's not just folks who are resettling in Mercer County, but all around the state Afghans are benefiting from Mercer."

Gould says "Refugees are here because they want to rebuild a life that was torn apart, not by their own choosing. They just really want to re-assimilate, re-build, and re-belong to a community."

A shortage of affordable housing and cutbacks to refugee programs under the Trump Administration has made resettlement efforts tricky.

According to the Migration Policy Institute, President Trump's administration increased vetting procedures and reduced the number of refugees accepted annually to record lows.

Some families left without assisted placement because of the long wait times, others because they didn't want to be moved across the country and lose access to the schools, hospitals, and legal support they were already receiving.

"There is frustration," a 30-year-old Afghan man who left the base with his pregnant wife and two sons, one of whom had epilepsy, told The New York Times. "People are upset. The day that I left, there was a big line of independent departures."

The man who was a US combat translator for over a decade spoke on the condition of anonymity out of concern for the safety of his relatives still living in Kabul.

He and his family have been living in temporary housing in Montclair, NJ so that his son could receive treatment for his epilepsy at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia.

Rev. Kaper-Dale says "Hands down the thing that's most distressing to everyone is the traumatic and just gut wrenching division in family that has occurred...A man is here without his wife and kids, kids are here without their mothers, a couple is here without all their children."

According to the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration many of the refugees who waited for relocation support were placed in existing Afghan communities in Northern Virginia, the Washington area, Texas, and Northern California.



PHOTO | MADHAVI STEINERT

The Reform Church of Highland Park, NJ houses programs that are among the key local service providers who specifically help refugees.

Gould says "They come to the United States because they had to flee some horrific situation in their country and it is beyond rewarding to give people the opportunity to help them find the opportunity to build a life for themselves and for their families while they're here."

At its peak, Liberty Village was receiving upwards of 3,300 refugees every week. They were the last location to accept new arrivals. Over 40% of those fleeing the violence were children, with more than 100 additional babies being born at the base.

The US admitted over 84,600 refugees as part of Operation Allies Welcome, in what has become the largest resettlement effort in the country in decades.

As global tensions mount surrounding the Russian

invasion of Ukraine, Gould is prepared for any influx of new arrivals to the program.

Gould says "Not all of our refugees are Afghani refugees. We have refugees from different places in the world, including; Pakistan, Turkey, Iran, African countries, Syria, Central and South American countries like Ecuador, Guatemala. So we're not just helping refugees from Afghanistan, "We're also building and planning ahead for any Ukrainian refugees."

Gould continues "That's the real reason why I'm in this section of education, why I find so much power, energy, and passion in this segment of education. Because we're actually impacting, changing people's lives."

For more on the world of I.Rise and Global Grace see pages 8-9

Biden's State of the Union pivoted to Ukraine

By Ken Fantry
Reporter

On Tuesday, March 1, President Biden delivered his first State of the Union address. The speech that advisers originally indicated would focus on his economic agenda, and Supreme Court nominee Ketanji Brown Jackson, pivoted to the invasion of Ukraine by Russia.

Many lawmakers in attendance wore blue and yellow to show support for Ukraine as the Ukrainian ambassador sat with the first lady. The President described measures including sanctions and the closing of US airspace to Russian planes. He also announced humanitarian aid to Ukraine but was clear that while American forces will be mobilized to defend NATO allies, they will not be sent to Ukraine.

Biden, who is known for his gaffes made a notable slip up during his big speech when he referred to Ukrainians as "Iranians."

Domestically President Biden's mention of the American Rescue Plan drew both boos and cheers. House members Lauren Boebert and Marjorie Greene repeatedly heckled the President. Boebert specifically heckled him while he was talking about veterans and his deceased son Beau.

White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki responded to Boebert and Greene's heckling in a comment during a briefing on Wednesday saying, "I think that says a lot more about them than it does about how important these priorities are."

The occasion also include a farewell to Supreme Court Justice Stephen Breyer who received a standing ovation.

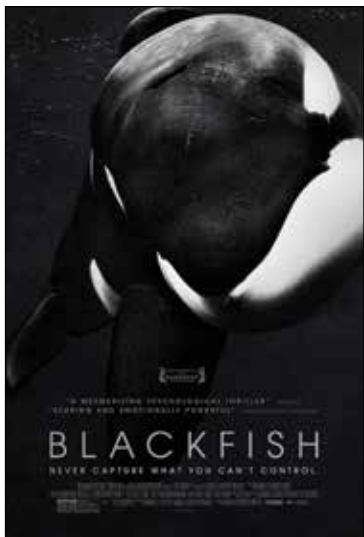
Biden emphasized investment in domestic manufacturing to improve the economy as well as measures to reduce expenses for American families.

The President also announced a chief prosecutor for pandemic fraud investigations and new less stringent mask guidelines. The White House and Congress lifted mask mandates on Monday and Biden did not wear a mask at the State of the Union address.

Biden called on Congress to pass a raft of legislation including The John Lewis Voting Rights Act.

"The State of the Union is strong because you the American people are strong," Biden concluded.

PHOTOS COURTESY FILM PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS



ABOVE: *Blackfish* poster. LEFT: *Don't Look Up* promo content.



ABOVE: *An Inconvenient Truth* film promo content.

Do crisis movies change us at all?

By Aniela Kzeminska
Reporter

Released on Netflix in December of 2021, *Don't Look Up* focused on the struggles of two scientists trying to warn humanity about a planet-killing comet that was going to destroy earth. Despite their best efforts, it ends with the destruction of all life on earth. The film received critical acclaim and was lauded as an example of our own real-life impending climate crisis.

However, what role do these types of films play in changing our attitudes and, more importantly, inspiring action towards environmental issues?

One such example of a movie inspiring action can be seen in the 2013 documentary, *Blackfish*.

The documentary, focused on Tilikum, an orca whale kept in extreme isolation at SeaWorld for decades, led to public outcry. Attendance at SeaWorld parks dropped by 5% and California state Assemblyman Richard Bloom, inspired by the film, worked to have the Orca Welfare and Safety Act passed in California in 2019.

For an environmental issue that is focused on a specific issue, change is easier to come about. But what about something as all encompassing and complex as the climate crisis?

Former US Vice President Al Gore's Oscar-winning, *An Inconvenient Truth* shocked moviegoers with the grim reality of the climate crisis in 2006. At the time it was applauded for raising public awareness of the climate crisis and breathing new life into long dormant envi-

ronmental activism.

Despite this, awareness is merely the first step and on its own is not sufficient to translate to significant action in the face of a global crisis.

A 2010 study conducted by University of Scranton Professor Jessica Nolan found that people became more aware and concerned about the climate crisis immediately after viewing *An Inconvenient Truth*, but this did not present itself in changed behavior a month later. Nolan explained one reason for the hesitancy towards long-term change.

She says, "although providing knowledge about the harmful effects and consequences of global warming in general, greenhouse gases in particular result in significant awareness and willingness among people, they cannot transform these into practice or

life styles easily."

It is no surprise that the greater we perceive the changes needed, in this case, significant changes to our lifestyle, the less willing we feel to tackle the crisis staring back at us.

Studies have shown that as a society we overvalue benefits in the short term when compared to any potential benefits in the long term. Harvard Business Review explains that, "Individuals do not have to make changes in the cars they drive, the products they buy or the homes they live in if they ignore the influence their carbon footprint has on the world."

Similarly, the climate crisis for many can be seen as an abstract issue. Most people don't find themselves having to face the results of the climate crisis head on every day (for example; extreme weather events). Due to this, it is ex-

tremely difficult to motivate people to act and change their everyday behaviors.

In the Fledgling Fund's 2008 report on creative media's impact on social change they acknowledge that once the public is aware of the impact of an issue and its accompanying solutions there needs to be more than just talk and fleeting moments of inspiration. "There needs to be an infrastructure in place that encourages individuals, organizations, and/or communities to act."

Overall, films like *Blackfish*, *An Inconvenient Truth* and *Don't Look Up* are all great tools for sparking a dialogue around the issues that face our world. However, what matters most in facing an environmental crisis is what actions and changes we are willing to undergo as a global society long after the credits roll.

Dr. Wonder offers great comics and collectibles

By Ben Levitt
Senior Reporter

Stephanie Colletti and her son Walter Allikas started their comic book collection when Allikas, who is now 25, was still in high school. In 2015 Colletti bought a house in Cranbury that became the first location for Dr. Wonder Comics and Collectibles, one of the largest collections of old comics in the area.

"We bought a house on the corner of [North] Main Street and Park Place East which would make it possible to have a store in the house, because it was a separate entrance," Colletti said. The previous occupant had been the Cranbury Bookworm, a used bookstore that had been there for 42 years.

They have since moved Dr. Wonder across the street to 33 North Main, a spot with a big glass storefront window full of lifesized R2-D2, Laura Croft and Spiderman cardboard cutouts.

Colletti explains that when they moved to their new location locals started walking into the store because they saw

that there weren't only comics, but also toys.

The store is broken up into multiple sections including records and music, general toys and collectibles, old comics, rare comics, a dollar comic section, video games, graphic novels, and more.

When asked if locals are a main part of their business, Alikas said "The town of Cranbury itself accounts for a very small portion of our business. It's mostly people from out of town who are the [regulars]."

One of these regulars is Rich Treichler, who has been coming to the comic store for about two years. Treichler said of his reasoning for coming to this store, "I think it's a really eclectic mix of stuff here. Other stores you go to it's either all new stuff or a very limited selection, where here... I've bought a Batman pennant from the 1960s TV show, and Big Bang Theory figures in Star Trek uniforms."

Treichler added, "I would highly recommend it to anybody. Anybody to come in that might be looking for some-



COLLEGE VOICE | FILE PHOTO

ABOVE: *Dr. Wonder's Comics and Collectibles* sign on North Main Street in Cranbury fits in with the rustic local decor while setting itself apart with its bright green font.

thing vintage, something old... I really enjoy coming here."

Colletti says they plan to expand their offerings with more events like Dungeons and Dragons sessions, Pokémon tournaments, and book readings.

Asked about the future of Dr. Wonder, Colletti said, "I could never sell the store because people would be heartbroken."



COLLEGE VOICE | FILE PHOTO

The storefront display of *Dr. Wonder's Comics and Collectibles* on North Main Street in Cranbury, NJ.

Basketball teams had a rough season

By Christopher Patti
Reporter

It has been a difficult season for Vikings basketball, which welcomed players back to the court after last year's entire season was scratched due to COVID-19. This year, the women's team finished with 15 losses and 2 wins, beating the Morris County Titans 60-50, and the Ocean County Vikings 69-28. The men's team ended with 24 losses and 2 wins, with victories against the Essex County Wolverines 66-57 and the Rowan College of Gloucester County Roadrunners, 68-64.

Players had a lot working against them this season; injuries, illness, undermanned teams and last minute game cancellations.

According to Mercer's Athletic Director John Simone, "If another team had a [COVID] exposure, we couldn't play." He added, "We had one trip this fall where we were about ready to get on a bus at 10:30 in the morning and at 10 o'clock we get a call saying that they had an exposure down there, don't come. So here everybody's dressed and ready to go to get on a bus and [we have to] turn around, we're not playing. It's frustrating."

The women's team saw four postponements and ten cancellations. Coaches say the constant shift in schedule affected players' focus and morale.

Simone said, "Because of closures or shutdowns or not playing today, it causes a lot of angst. Everybody gets into a routine and you like to have a routine; time of day, day of the week that you have games and practices."

The men's team schedule had less disruption with one cancellation and three postponements but were operating



PHOTO | CHRISTOPHER PATTI

LEFT: Mercer Isiah Rice takes a shot in Mercer's men's basketball away game at Raritan Valley Community College on February 16 in which the team lost 69-74. BOTTOM: Coach Howard Levy talks to his players during the game working to keep the energy up despite a season of illnesses, injuries and last minute game cancellations.



PHOTO | CHRISTOPHER PATTI

with a roster of seven that started as eighteen.

Men's basketball Head Coach Howard Levy said, "Of the team that I expected to have, probably within the first month we probably lost five or six guys. There's almost always attrition and sometimes you'll lose guys after first semester grades. A couple of guys got hurt, got sick, so we were really left with seven active players. There wasn't much margin for error. Of all your seven guys, they all had to be playing well and playing hard. I gotta give them credit

because it was rough."

"I'm just so happy that we were able to compete this year because we weren't able to last year, as you know, because of COVID," says Simone. "You have to be resilient in life and in sports. Because you're not

always going to win. There was so much stuff or so many things or obstacles that we had to figure out just to get the season and we got it in. We didn't have a winning record but we got it done and students were able to participate."

LOOKING AHEAD - SPRING SPORTS

Softball, lacrosse and baseball have busy seasons

As The VOICE reported at the end of last spring's athletics season, 2021 had a number of highlights. The lacrosse team reported through their social media that players Sam Hensler, Brandon Guios and Peter Pinto were all selected for the All Region XIX Team for 2021, with Jake Filor also receiving co-player of the year, Hunter Locke being Defensive player of the year, and Coach Rob Siris being Coach of the Year. Lacrosse ended that season 4-2.

Softball ended last season with a record of 29-8 showing strong focus despite a fully freshman roster, no international players, and 8 game cancellations due to COVID.

Baseball was perhaps the hardest hit with cancellations in 2021, starting the season with a 55 game schedule that got cut down to 34. Practice also had to be canceled 10 days after a student was exposed to the coronavirus. Nevertheless, the team saw outstanding play. One standout was Greg Delgado. At the end of the season last spring, Delgado was given 3 titles by the NJCAA. He was the "First Team All-American," "Garden State Athletic Conference Player of the Year" and "Region 19 Player of the Year." Delgado started at Nova Southeastern in Florida this past fall and continuing to play baseball.

SOFTBALL

DATE	DAY	OPPONENT	TIME	PLACE
March 8	Tue	RCSJ/Gloucester OH	3:00 PM	A
12	Sat	Monroe College OH	12:00 PM	A
15	Tue	Chesapeake College	1:00 PM	A
18	Fri	Buffalo CC OH	3:00 PM	H
22	Tue	RCSJ/Cumberland OH	3:00 PM	A
24	Thu	Harford CC OH	3:00 PM	H
28	Sat	Del Tech CC OH	12:00 PM	A
29	Tue	Brookdale CC OH	3:00 PM	H
31	Thu	Coast CC OH	3:00 PM	H

LACROSSE

MARCH				
8	Wed	Williamson Trade	7:00 PM	H
12	Sat	Carroll	12:00 PM	H
19	Sat	Nassau CC	1:00 PM	H
27	Sun	Harford CC	1:00 PM	A
30	Wed	Union CC	9:00 PM	A
APRIL				
6	Wed	Sussex CC	5:00 PM	H
8	Sat	Del Tech CC	12:00 PM	H
13	Wed	Anne Arundel	5:00 PM	H
20	Wed	Howard College	5:00 PM	H
23	Sat	CCBC Essex	12:00 PM	A

BASEBALL

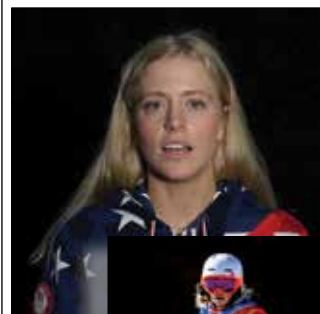
DATE	DAY	OPPONENT	TIME	PLACE
March 11-15	Fri	Myrtle Beach, SC OH	TBA	A
18	Sat	Harford CC	12:00 PM	A
20	Sun	RCSJ	12:00 PM	H
23	Wed	Monroe College	3:00 PM	H
24	Thu	Salem	3:30 PM	A
26	Sat	Potomac State OH	1:00 PM	A
27	Sun	Potomac State OH	12:00 PM	A
30	Wed	ASA	3:00 PM	H



How did NJ's Olympians do this year?



Olympic Bobsledder, **Hakeem Abdul-Saboor**, who lives in Virginia but was born in East Orange, NJ came in 13th in both the 2 and 4 man bobsleigh events in Beijing.



Snowboarder **Meghan Tierney**, who grew up in Rumson and Little Silver, NJ--came in 12th in the women's snowboard cross event in Beijing.



USA men's hockey--including player **Kenny Agostino**, originally from Morristown, NJ--was knocked out in the Olympic quarter finals by Slovakia in a penalty shootout.

Is the law protecting us from sex offenders?

By McKenna Miller
Reporter

Tier 2 level sex offender, Mitchell Richtman, was arrested for the ownership of thousands of images of child pornography and animal cruelty in his home in East Windsor, New Jersey on January 27. Richtman is facing charges of second-degree possession of child pornography and fourth-degree animal cruelty.

Richtman was arrested under Megan's Law, a law that was created to keep the community aware of sexual predators after seven-year-old Megan Kanka was raped, beaten and murdered by her Hamilton, NJ neighbor, Jesse Timmendequas in 1994. Her body was shoved in a toy box and dumped next to a portable toilet in Mercer County Park, less than a mile from MCCC's West Windsor campus.

It has been 27 years since Megan Kanka's parents, Maureen and Richard Kanka were able to get the sex offender registry law that became known as "Megan's Law" enacted in New Jersey, yet sex offenders like Richter still threaten the safety of the community

Megan's Law was passed in 1994 and made it pos-

sible for the public to view internet information regarding sexual offenders on the sex offender registry.

For a Tier 2 offender like Richter, Megan's Law permits law enforcement, schools, licensed daycare centers, summer camps, and registered community organizations to be notified of the presence of someone who has committed sexual assault. But it is unclear if the system is applied consistently.

In one notable example from 2017, a tier 3 ("high risk") sex offender named Adam L. Woolf, who was taking classes at MCCC was arrested and accused of posing as a campus employee and luring 12-year-old children who were using the pool for swim practice into the showers telling them the chlorine level in the pool would damage their bathing suits and enticing them to shower with him. Woolf later pleaded guilty to three counts of endangering the welfare of a child, in the third degree. It is not clear whether MCCC was informed of his presence on campus, as Megan's Law would have required, or why he was allowed to enroll given the college shares a campus with The Joseph F. Cappello School, which serves students between the ages of three and seven.

Nicole Foulks, principal

of the Ethel Mcknight Elementary School which is located about four minutes away from Richtman's house, declined to say if the school was notified about Richtman living nearby saying she was "not at liberty to discuss" the issue.

If the school was notified, it's not clear what their proper course of action could have been. If they were not notified, it suggests putting people on a sex offender registry list is not adequate for protecting people, especially children, against sexual violence.

The U.S. Department of Justice conducted a study analyzing Megan's Law, found that the law "has no effect on reducing the number of victims involved in sexual offenses."

The study goes on to say that the cost of enforcing the law was prohibitively high given its lack of effectiveness.

When asked if sex offenders can change their behavior Dr. Kelli Palfy, a psychologist specializing in victims of sexual abuse and sex crimes says, "I think they need monitoring and intensive therapy, and the desire [to succeed] and a lot of support."

Steven Ing, a licensed marriage therapist and experienced treatment provider for sex offenders for over twenty-two

years says, "Instead of Megan's Law, which I think is highly flawed, which I think is entirely reactive, we could actually get out front if we care about victims; we could prevent people from ever becoming victims."

Ing continues, "If you can understand sex offenders, then you can predict sex offending. And you can prevent sexual criminality. It's for the most part, preventable."

He explains that most of his clients fail to develop the required social skills needed to form appropriate and consensual relationships which is the reason they push their sexual attractions on unwilling individuals.

In the U.S. Department of Justice, Sex Offender Management Assessment and Planning Initiative research paper, author Dominique A. Simmons reinforces Ing's position explaining that many child abusers possess the same trait of poor social skills which then creates unsuccessful relationships that can provoke loneliness as well as anger.



A study conducted by the United States Department of Justice Bureau of Statistics titled *Recidivism of Sex Offenders Released from State Prison: A 9-Year Follow-Up (2005-14)* found that "Rape and sexual assault offenders were less likely than other re-



PHOTO | MERCER COUNTY PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE
Mitchell Richtman has been charged with child porn and sexually abusing a horse.

leased prisoners to be arrested, but they were more likely than other released prisoners to be arrested for rape or sexual assault." It also found "Released sex offenders were more than three times as likely as other released prisoners to be arrested for rape or sexual assault." If there was an encouraging finding it was that 67% of sex offenders were arrested after release compared to 84% of those convicted of other crimes.

Dr. Palfy says she doesn't force her religious beliefs on her clients but says "I think God is the only one who can truly change us."

Student life presents


OPEN MIC LUNCH HOUR

WITH SPECIAL GUESTS FROM MCCC'S SOCIETY OF UNUSUAL LITERATURE (S.O.U.L.)

TUESDAY, MARCH 8TH @ 12:00PM, ROOM SC104 AND IG LIVE

EVERYONE IS WELCOME. BRING YOUR TALENT TO AN AUDIENCE!

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The L.E.A.D. Program presents:

Successful Women Panel Discussion

March 30th

12pm SC104 & Zoom





Women's History Month Panel

Discussion Outline:

- Journey to Success
- Obstacles
- Tips & Tricks
- Takeaways and Q&A

Follow us on social media!





COLLEGE VOICE | FILE PHOTO

Trenton's mayor, Reed Gusciora has faced a hostile City Council since he took office in 2018 and has now gone through 6 different Police Directors while the city faces a record breaking homicide rate.



During COVID lockdown the United States saw spikes in violent crime after a four-year decline. Trenton, where homicides had been trending downward, was particularly hard hit, with more than double the homicides of 2019. COLLEGE VOICE | FILE PHOTO

Trenton mayor and City Council spar over policing

The problem is nationwide but in 2021 Trenton faced a record 41 homicides

By Ken Fantry
Senior Reporter

During COVID lockdown the United States saw spikes in violent crime after a four-year decline. Trenton, where homicides had been trending downward, was particularly hard hit, with more than double the homicides of 2019. But a contentious relationship between the Trenton Mayor and the City Council, particularly surrounding the appointment of Police Director Wilson, has impacted the response.

William Skaggs, Public Information Officer for Trenton Mayor Gusciora tells The VOICE, "The FBI put out some statistics a few months ago showing that homicide has gone up like 30% nationwide. The reason why it's so unique in Trenton is Trenton was not trending that way when the mayor first became mayor."

Mayor Gusciora narrowly won the mayorship to become Trenton's first openly gay Mayor as well as Trenton's first white mayor since 1990, rendering his position immediately contentious. He inherited a Trenton Police Department with approximately 240 officers, down from 371 when 131 positions were cut in 2011. Then 2020 brought COVID-19, worsening the factors which contribute to homicides.

Skaggs says the "major factors contributing to

the violence" in Trenton as a, "ready supply of illegal weapons, historic neighborhood conflicts, increased economic hardship from Covid-19, and persistent health and addiction problems."

Lt. Jason Woodhead, the Community Affairs liaison says, "Trenton is the hub where all these social services go, and a lot of it is concentrated downtown. So, a lot of these vulnerable populations that are coming in for mental health or help with drug addiction issues are all concentrated in certain areas."

The Mayor has attempted to address these varied factors on multiple fronts, including appointing Police Director Steve Wilson, a nearly 30 year veteran of the Department.

Trenton City Councilman Santiago Rodriguez says "All the officers will be opposing the Director whoever it is, unless it's coming from their ranks."

Director Wilson was confirmed to his position from retirement, but Lt. Woodhead says "[Wilson] was a seasoned veteran officer when he retired, and he didn't retire that long ago."

Mr. Skaggs says, "Listen, when we needed a Police Director Steve Wilson came to us... I mean he was a Lieutenant with almost 30 years with the department."

Councilwoman Rob-

"I was in the military, I was in charge of a unit. With 250 soldiers I could have won a war, if you use them wisely. Trenton is 7 miles by 7 miles...250 police officers should be more than enough."

-Trenton City Councilman Santiago Rodriguez

in Vaughn, who has faced criticism for what has been described by Mayor Gusciora as a "laughing attack" during a presentation by Director Wilson, and having previously faced criticism for calling the Mayor a "drug addict pedophile" and a "b**ch-ass" during a coronavirus conference call last May, also objects to Director Wilson, and was the sole vote against extending Wilson's tenure last October.

Asked via email what changes she would like to see brought to policing in Trenton, the councilwoman said, "The City of Trenton needs to diversify its police force, rank and file, and executive-level officers," adding, "the demographics do not represent the community they serve."

According to Census.gov Trenton's population is 40.9% White. Data provided by the office of the Police Director shows that as of Oct. 2021, the Trenton PD was 44.5% White. There is according to the data, a lower percentage of Black Officers than members of the general Trenton population.

Councilman Rodriguez has repeatedly indicated that Director Wilson is underqualified.

"Mayor Gusciora put him there because of the black votes. That's it, that's it, for his re-election," Rodriguez says.

Lt. Woodhead says "[Wilson is not underqualified] when it comes to policing. The Police Director is a veteran officer who has worked the streets."

Police staffing and budget are other issues upon which the Council and the Mayor disagree. On Monday the department concluded a recruitment drive seeking 20 new officers. Still, the department has not recovered from the staffing cuts in 2011.

Detective Tamika Veal says, "We need more. Twenty is not enough, we need more... We need as many people that live in the city that care about making the change in their community."

Councilman Rodriguez disagrees saying, "I was in the military, I was in charge of a unit sometimes...

with 250 soldiers I could have won a war. If you use them wisely. Trenton is 7 miles by 7 miles...250 police officers should be more than enough."

The Mayor's office and Director Wilson, often utilizing partnerships with other agencies, have overseen reforms aimed at reducing the factors which contribute to homicide.

Skaggs points to Trenton's new Real Time Crime Center, which Skaggs describes as a "Wide open major communication section where they basically can... collect and process intelligence that they're receiving from multiple different law enforcement agencies."

There is also Director Wilson's Daytime Task Force which seeks to address the many quality of life issues within the community that contribute to the homicide rate, which according to Skaggs, the community "felt were being ignored."

Additionally, the Office of Returning Citizens, which aids the formerly incarcerated in finding employment has been expanded.

Skaggs says, "We have a system of government that balances powers and responsibilities... obviously that system works a lot better when there's some sort of agreement, some sort of willingness to cross the aisle."



PHOTO | MADHAVI STEINERT

Global Grace Cafe and Marketplace, located in the Reformed Church of Highland Park, NJ sells home made and authentic fair trade goods from the countries where its refugees and asylees hail.



Global Grace Cafe

Where local refugees serve

By Madhavi Steinert
Senior Reporter

Sidra Inam came to the United States from Pakistan in 2019 to join her husband who came and took asylum two years prior. She has been working at Global Grace Cafe for eight months now, all while managing Global Grace Marketplace and Alterations as well.

“Someone called me from this church, from I. Rise, and asked if I could sew, so I said yes, I can do that. I started with sewing masks when COVID came, and after one month they offered me the manager position of Global Grace Marketplace and Alterations.”

I. Rise, short for Interfaith Rise, is the corporate entity for Global Grace Ventures which runs a cafe, and marketplace including alterations, farm, and health. The business is located in Highland Park, New Jersey, in the same

building as the Reformed Church. According to the Interfaith Rise website, they “are committed to resettling refugees in central and southern New Jersey, assisting asylum seekers, and supporting local faith and civic groups as they advocate for and work with refugees in their own communities.”

The Volunteer and Donation Coordinator for Interfaith Rise, who asked to remain anonymous, named certifications in food safety being one of the many skills Global Grace provides. Refugees are more equipped with this credential to find a better paying job as they resettle further.

“Global Grace provides career options and skills for our refugee clients so they can feel safe,” she said.

The Cafe is one way Interfaith Rise carries out their mission, providing refugees with pre-employment experience, teaching them the procedures of the workforce, building their skills for them to take to another better, future job, and even helping them learn English.

Another service, Interfaith Rise, who, an anonymous, said, “arriving in the U.S. is a trauma. I never anticipated the experience because of the trauma. It can re-traumatize. We provide mental health services that’s for them to take care of.”

Inam began working towards resettlement. Executive Director of Interfaith Rise, Pastor Seth Kaper, made the first phone call.

“My church provided support to her and her family. Sidra and his children came. When they arrived, it was just so impressive for our family. When we visited in summer 2020, I started to employ Sidra,” Kaper said.

Since working at the Global Grace Cafe, Inam says she thinks that the cafe helps to show the community from around the world.

“On Monday we serve Nigerian food, on Tuesday it’s Afghani, on Wednesday it’s Guatemalan, on Thursday it’s Afghani again, and on Friday it’s Indonesian. Pakistani is also a special favorite.”

BELOW and FAR RIGHT - Mosaics supporting immigration and community building adorning the brick wall outside the Reformed Church of Highland Park, NJ where Global Grace Cafe is located.



PHOTO | MADHAVI STEINERT



On Monday Global Grace Cafe serves Nigerian food, on Tuesday it’s Afghani, on Wednesday it’s Guatemalan, on Thursday it’s Afghani again, and on Friday it’s Indonesian. Pakistani is also a special favorite.



FOOD PHOTO COURTESY OF GLOBAL GRACE



PHOTO | MADHAVI STEINERT



PHOTO | MADHAVI STEINERT

Cafe & Marketplace

...ve up ethnic cuisine daily

Locals frequent the Global Grace Cafe at the Reformed Church of Highland Park, NJ. Tables are full throughout the business hours of 11:30-2 PM, Monday through Friday as people enjoy ethnic foods from Nigeria, Guatemala, Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Senior official at In-
... asked to remain
..., "Most refugees
... nited States have
... ask what they ex-
... se it doesn't mat-
... matize them. We
... ealth services, but
... work on."

... an working to-
... n when the Ex-
... of Interfaith Rise,
... r-Dale, made that

... ch gave a lot of
... husband before
... dren were able to
... y got here, I was
... d by their whole
... got to early sum-
... d looking for ways
... he said.

... king for many of
... e ventures, Inam
... e core mission is
... munity traditions
... world.

... ay we have Nige-
... sday it's Afghani,
... s Guatemalan, on
... an again, and on

Friday it's Indonesian. Sometimes I
make a manager special that's Pak-
istani food, maybe once or twice a
week, whenever I have time," she
said, laughing through her mask.

Each cuisine is made by
someone from those countries, all
either refugees or asylees training
for the workforce, learning Eng-
lish, and earning money to support
themselves and their families.

The same senior official at
Interfaith Rise said, "We do pay at
least 15 dollars an hour for every-
body, and we expect then to place
the chefs and other staff at the cafe
in the jobs that pay that and more
in the restaurant industry."

Jackie Simon, a patron and
volunteer from Metuchen, New
Jersey, has been supporting Global
Grace Cafe by coming in for lunch.

"I come in here on and off.
The prices are reasonable, and you
get a full lunch," Simon said.

The coordinator said they
even provide lunch to those who
cannot afford it, continuing their
outreach to the homeless popula-
tion in the area.

Elizabeth Pallitto of Metuchen,

New Jersey, said, "I bought my
Christmas presents here."

Some of the merchandise
available to purchase includes
hand-crafted earrings, shoes, wo-
ven baskets, and even coffee and
tea. Not only can these items be
purchased in person, but they are
available online on their website.

Including new community
members, whether they be patrons
or volunteers, is a core goal.

"We have internships as
well. Kids from Rutgers help with
case work to become familiar with
the processes, but really you can
make it whatever you want," the co-
ordinator said.

Rev. Kaper-Dale sees the
Cafe as the centerpiece of his com-
munity, saying, "Having multicul-
tural food speaks to the newly ar-
riving cultures. It seems to have hit
the spot."



PHOTO | MADHAVI STEINERT

GRACE CAFE - USED WITH PERMISSION

BREATH MINT TASTE TEST

We tried 3 varieties: here are our results

By Staff of The College VOICE
Reporters

The masks are starting to come off as COVID restrictions wind down and that means now you're not the only one who can smell your breath. Maybe masking made you more oral hygiene conscious than ever, but no matter what, now is the time you want the person who is suddenly **"*NOT*"** sitting six feet away from you to enjoy your minty clean breath. You can't brush before every class, so mints are your go to. But which mints?

Nine VOICE staffers set out to taste test three popular brands: TicTacs, Ice Breakers and Altoids. They made our eyes water, they made our tongues burn, but we would never let our readers down. Here were our thoughts.

WHICH TASTED BEST?

It's hard to believe that 6 out of 9 of us preferred the **Ice Breakers** considering what we had to say about them.

Ken Fantry, Senior Reporter: "It tastes like Tiger Balm on tofu."

Kyle Goldware, Senior Reporter: "It's got a nasty aftertaste, like drinking orange juice after you just brushed your teeth."

Liam Simonelli, Art Editor: "It is like having hot steam in your eyes."

WHICH TASTED WORST?

There was a lot of hate to go around when it came to taste and plenty of staffers made a bee line for the trash can to spit things out.

Christopher Patti, Junior Reporter, said of the Altoids, "It was like you dared to lick a chalkboard tray and then sprayed bleach in your mouth."

McKenna Miller, Junior Reporter, said the Altoids tasted like "liquid antibiotics" and had the texture of dirt.

Liam Simonelli, said the Altoids tasted "sterile, like a hospital."

Kyle Goldware said the TicTacs tasted like "the face you make when you eat black liquorice."

WHICH LOOKED BEST?

Across the board we agreed that the **Ice Breakers** were the best looking of the lot.

McKenna Miller: "They look like blue jays eggs."

Ashley Peng, Senior Reporter: "They look like the movie Frozen."

Ken Fantry: "They look like a Newark trolley seat cover." (We're not sure if that's a good thing exactly.)

Ashley Jackson, Co-Editor in Chief: "It looks like a TidePod you could [safely] eat."

WHICH LOOKED WORST?

The TicTacs and Altoids fought it out all the way to the bottom in the attractiveness category.

TicTacs:

Kyle Goldware: "It rolls off my tongue. Literally."

Ken Fantry: "They look like if the Apple store started manufacturing medication."

Altoids:

Kyle Goldware: "These are not worth buying. They are bitter and cracked liked the sidewalks of Trenton."

Liam Simonelli: "It's like it has dandruff."

WHICH WOULD KEEP YOUR BREATH FRESHEST?

If you were worried about your breath because you were sitting next to someone you liked and took your mask off, the team agreed you'd be best off with the Ice Breaker than any of the other options if only because it was least disgusting. Although Sierra Azara, Junior Reporter, noted that the Ice Breakers' taste got stronger the longer you kept it in your mouth.

OVERALL WINNER:

Ice Breakers were deemed the best of the worst overall. There may be something to be said for keeping your mask on, mandate or no mandate.



LAURIE'S CORNER



By Laurie Gallagher
With support from
the Staff of The College VOICE

St. Patrick's Day is for everyone

This Saint Patrick's Day everyone can get as green as a shamrock or a leprechaun, even if they are not Irish, though the Irish are especially associated with this holiday!

On March 17 you will see people wearing green and celebrating at home or a bar. St. Patrick's Day often includes drinking and people sometimes even dye their beer green for the occasion. A few drops of blue food coloring will do the trick. (Don't drink if you are not 21!)

Traditional foods to eat include Irish soda bread and corned beef and sometimes a ham for dessert, or green jell-o with cool whip. There are good Irish movies to watch such as "The Commitments," and parades to attend including the one in NYC's 5th Avenue which is happening this year (www.nycstpatriksparade.org/).

People like to get creative and some even tie dye their pets' fur, though it is probably better to tie dye a nice shirt with swirls of green and then let your dog wear it. You can put on green nail polish for yourself.

Did you know that these celebrations came out of Irish pride during waves of immigration to the US? Also, the original St. Patrick wasn't even from Ireland. He lived in the fifth century and was actually born in Roman Britain!

We surveyed some MCCC students and found out that most of them are not of Irish decent but that they do enjoy celebrating St. Patrick's day.

One of the best things to do on St. Patrick's day is find some Irish neighbors to hang out with. Maybe your neighbors aren't from Ireland, but their family tree might stretch back to the "Emerald Isle." You might be able to identify a few by their common Irish last names including O'Mally, Byrne, O'Sullivan, O'Connor, Walsh and even, yes, Gallagher!

Tips for making your Mardi Gras King Cake

By Ashley Peng - Senior Reporter

King Cake is a bread-like type of cake eaten during Mardi Gras, which means Fat Tuesday in French. Mardi Gras is held right before the start of the period of lent that leads up to Easter. Many Christians give up something during lent, often sweets, so Mardi Gras is the time to have some good cake. That's a good idea whether you celebrate Easter or not.

A King Cake is made from a soft dough that is filled with cinnamon sugar, decorated with sweet icing and covered in sprinkles of purple, green and gold, the traditional Mardi Gras colors.



The King Cake typically also has a plastic tiny baby baked into the cake to symbolize baby Jesus. It said that whoever gets the baby in their piece of cake is king or queen for the day and has to bring the King Cake for next time. If you want to make a King Cake here are some tips:

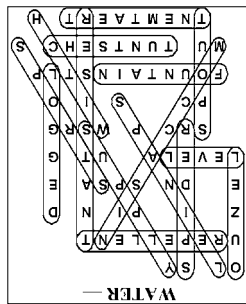
- For extra flavor add lemon and/or orange zest into the dough.
- If desired, walnuts or cream cheese can be added to the filling.
- Unless you have a revenge plot, make sure the tiny plastic baby is food safe. An alternative to the plastic baby is to use a large bean, like a fava bean.
- Make sure the baby is not too small. Trust me.
- Check before you eat.

MAGIC MAZE ● WATER —

P R O L J G D A X V S P N K I
 F O L C S Y A X V S Q O L J H
 E U **REPELLENT** C A X V
 T Z R P I N L P I J N H D F D
 B E Y X D N V S P S A T E R P
 O L E V E L A M K U T I G G E
 D L B S R C Z P X W S R G W U
 T R W P C Q O N S L I J O I G
 F D F O U N T A I N S T L P C
 A Y M U F T U N T S E H C X S
 W V T T N E M T A E R T S H R

Find the listed words in the diagram. They run in all directions forward, backward, up, down and diagonally
 Unlisted clue hint: FRESHWATER AQUATIC BIRD

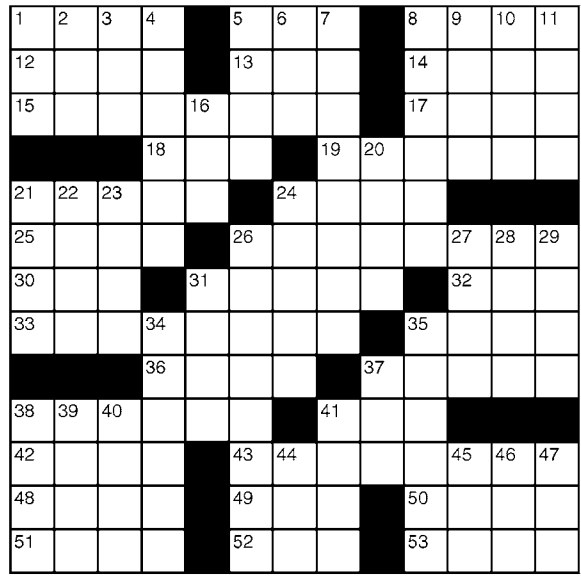
- | | | | |
|----------|-----------|---------|-----------|
| Chestnut | Moccasin | Spaniel | Supply |
| Fountain | Ouzel | Spider | Treatment |
| Level | Repellent | Sports | Witch |
| Logged | Resistant | Spout | |



King Crossword

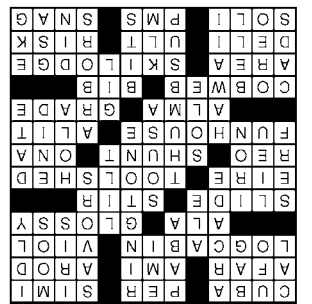
ACROSS

- 1 Havana's land
- 5 For each
- 8 — Valley, Calif.
- 12 Miles away
- 13 Parisian pal
- 14 Former Yankee slugger, to fans
- 15 Abe Lincoln's first home
- 17 Cello's ancestor
- 18 In the style of
- 19 Shiny, as a photo
- 21 Trombone part
- 24 Swizzle
- 25 Ireland
- 26 Backyard structure
- 30 Old shop
- 31 Move to one side
- 32 — roll (winning)
- 33 Theme park attraction
- 35 Landed
- 36 Mater lead-in
- 37 Test score
- 38 Spider's creation
- 41 Spill catcher
- 42 Location
- 43 Cozy spot on the slopes
- 48 Sandwich
- 49 Last (Abbr.)
- 50 Jeopardize
- 51 Pieces for one
- 52 Evening hrs.
- 53 Hose woe



- tune
- 8 Relishes
- 9 Eye part
- 10 Cattle calls?
- 11 In a lazy way
- 16 Hearty quaff
- 20 Joyful tune
- 21 Lowly worker
- 22 Stead
- 23 Press agent?
- 24 "The March King"
- 26 "OK" gesture
- 27 Spanish greeting
- 28 Oklahoma city
- 29 See socially
- 31 Only
- 34 Aloha State
- 35 Garden shelters
- 37 Baseball's Hodges
- 38 Scoundrels
- 39 Sandwich treat
- 40 Phone inventor
- 41 Morsels
- 44 Carrier to Amsterdam
- 45 Cacophony
- 46 Fed. property manager
- 47 Heart chart (Abbr.)

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GO FIGURE! by Linda Thistle

The idea of Go Figure is to arrive at the figures given at the bottom and right-hand columns of the diagram by following the arithmetic signs in the order they are given (that is, from left to right and top to bottom). Use only the numbers below the diagram to complete its blank squares and use each of the nine numbers only once.

	x		+		22
x		x		÷	
	x		+		33
+		-		+	
	x		+		17
28		18		16	

DIFFICULTY: ★★

★ Moderate ★★ Difficult
 ★★★ GO FIGURE!

1 2 3 4 4 5 7 8 9

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GO FIGURE! by Linda Thistle

The idea of Go Figure is to arrive at the figures given at the bottom and right-hand columns of the diagram by following the arithmetic signs in the order they are given (that is, from left to right and top to bottom). Use only the numbers below the diagram to complete its blank squares and use each of the nine numbers only once.

	-		x		25
+		x		x	
	x		-		21
x		+		+	
	x		+		25
26		16		24	

DIFFICULTY: ★

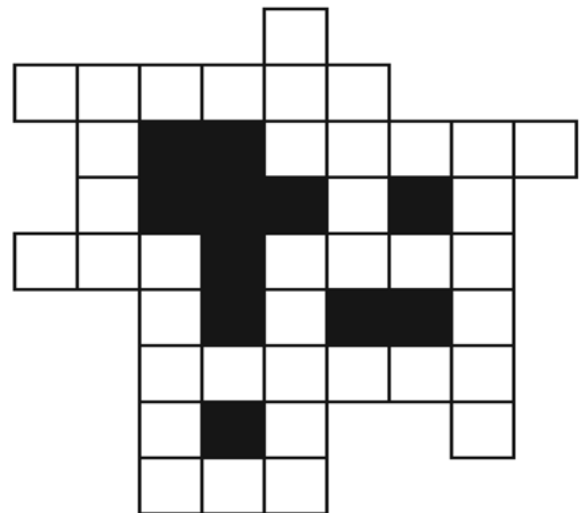
★ Moderate ★★ Difficult
 ★★★ GO FIGURE!

2 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

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- INY
- FRIOPT
- ♥ARNLE
- ATIX
- HEYROT
- TLE
- ♥ERRA
- ♥SYANT
- ♥PNA
- ♥ROFEAL
- LUTPI
- ♥EVLI



Unscramble these twelve letter strings to form each into an ordinary word (ex. HAGNEC becomes CHANGE). Prepare to use only ONE word from any marked (♥) letter string as each unscrambles into more than one word (ex. ♥RATHE becomes HATER or EARTH or HEART). Fit each string's word either across or down to knot all twelve strings together.

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How MCCC eliminated racist nursing textbook

By Kyle Goldware
Senior Reporter

A few years ago, Mercer's nursing program used a textbook titled *Nursing: A Concept Based Approach to Learning Vol. 1, 2nd Edition* from Pearson publications that contained racial and ethnic bias.

In one example marked "Focus on Diversity: Cultural Differences in Response to Pain" the book said that "Blacks often report higher pain intensity than other cultures. They believe suffering and pain are inevitable. They believe in prayer and laying on of hands to heal pain and believe that relief is proportional to faith" (161).

Professor Elizabeth Mizerek, Director of Nursing and a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion committee member, says, "When [the bias] came to our attention, we went back and right away looked at it and we were like 'oh God this is awful, this is not what we want.'"

Professor Mizerek says the nursing program evaluates its curriculum regularly to avoid that kind of bias and misinformation.

She says, "That's part of what we're working on just looking at the books and saying is this the best book? Is this the best resource?... Does it meet our needs to support student learning?"

For decades many medical textbooks have treated racial and ethnic minorities, particularly Blacks, as impervious to or more

tolerant of pain and the results have impacted how doctors and nurses treat patients and the level of care they receive.

According to a study in *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, (PNAS), "...patients were asked to report how much pain they were experiencing, and physicians were asked to rate how much pain they thought the patients were experiencing. Physicians were more likely to underestimate the pain of black patients (47%) relative to nonblack patients (33.5%)."

Another PNAS study of nearly one million children diagnosed with appendicitis "revealed that, relative to white patients, black patients were less likely to receive any pain medication for moderate pain and were less likely to receive opioids."

Elizabeth Baur, a white first-year Nursing major at MCCC, says "I do not believe black people have thicker skin than white people or any other ethnicity and this definitely does not make them more tolerable to pain."

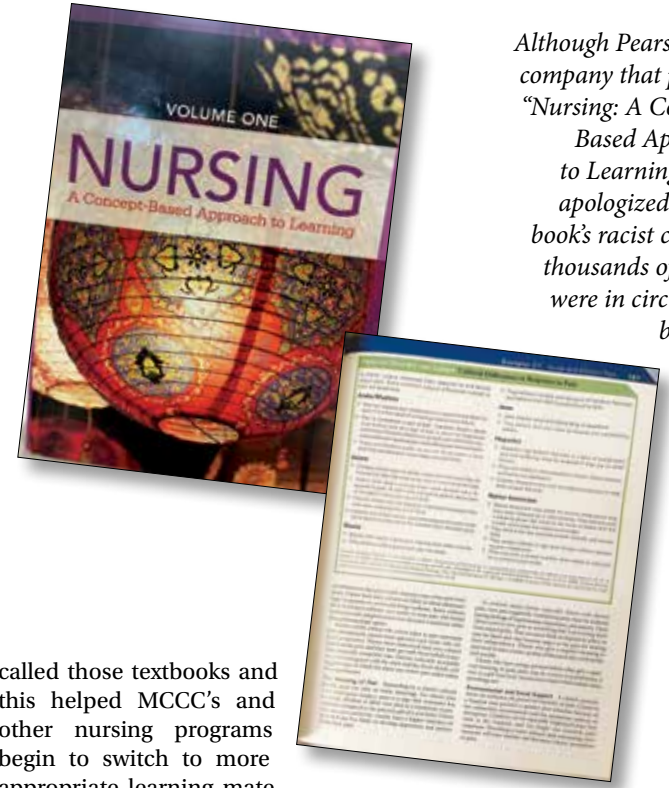
Nevertheless, countless students at MCCC and at colleges nationwide have been exposed to the Pearson book and others like it.

Dr. Pamela Price, MCCC's Library Director, who is Black and also serves on the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee, says, "Yes, [the librarians] are concerned. We're concerned and this

is something that's talked about on a national level through the American Library Association." She continues, "I think that we have also taken a look at ourselves personally, a look at ourselves professionally to see how collectively the library community works with matters such as this."

According to the article "Anger Over Stereotypes in Textbook," from *Inside Higher Education* in 2017, "Onyx Moore, a wellness advocate, appears to be the person who first spotted the material and shared it online in a post that has been widely shared on social media." The article added, "Many others quickly joined in, saying that they were stunned that a major nursing textbook could be teaching such stereotypes. People involved in health professions education were particularly vocal."

Pearson's President Tim Bozik sent out a series of tweets apologizing for the content and saying the material would be removed. He also expressed his apologies in a YouTube video posted in October 2017. Bozik said, "Hello, I'm Tim Bozik and I lead Global Product Development at Pearson, and I want to apologize. In an attempt to help nursing students think through the many facets of caring for the patients, we reinforced a number of stereotypes about ethnic and religious groups. It was wrong." Pearson ultimately re-



Although Pearson, the company that printed "Nursing: A Concept-Based Approach to Learning" later apologized for the book's racist content, thousands of copies were in circulation before it did so.

called those textbooks and this helped MCCC's and other nursing programs begin to switch to more appropriate learning material.

MCCC Nursing faculty member Professor Adena Romeo-Ratliff says, "We did not switch right away but the company put out a retraction and correction in their ebook version of the text that our students then could access for free... We then switched hard copy textbooks once the new version became available which I believe was 2 years ago." Pearson recalling their

old version of those textbooks plus the efforts of the nursing program to improve their curriculum may help future nurses take minority groups' pain seriously in the medical environment.

Elizabeth Baur says, "No one should be afraid that a doctor or a nurse is going to dismiss their pain... It is the job of doctors and nurses to listen to the patient and believe them."

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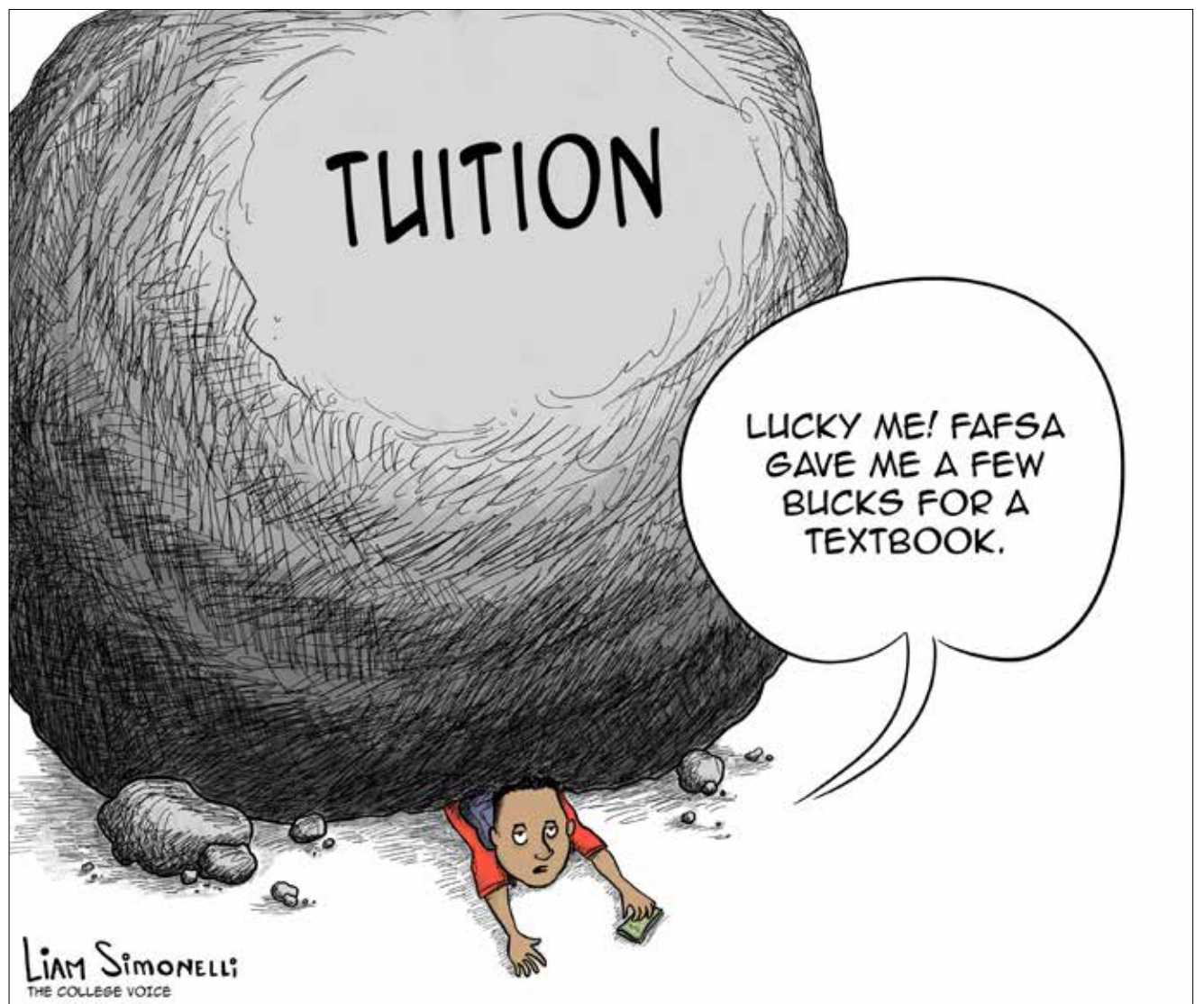
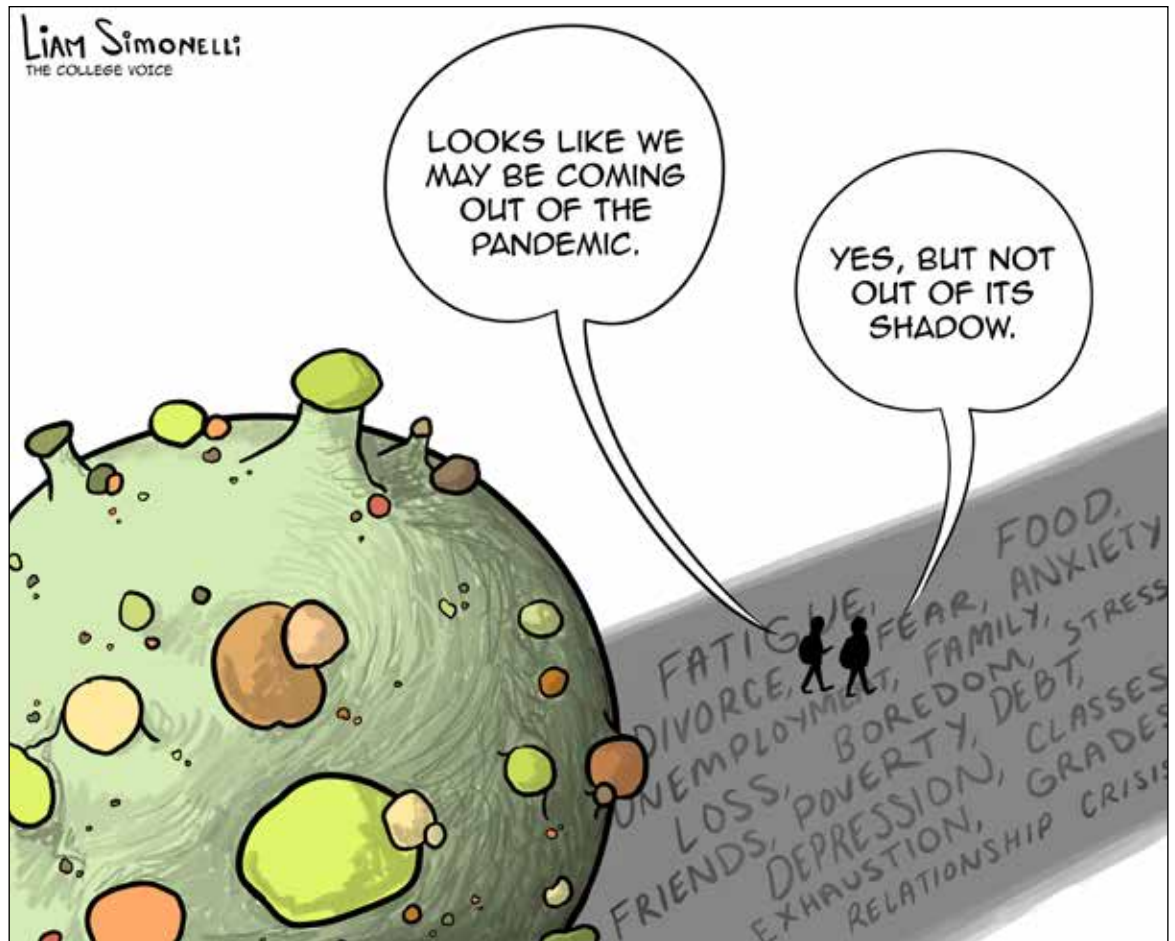
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Giving students a VOICE



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Does HBO show have a drug problem? No. *Euphoria* is not turning us into junkies

VIEWPOINTS



Maya Chell

The HBO hit show *Euphoria* follows a 17-year-old girl named Rue—played by Zendaya—on her journey as a drug addict in high school. It first aired in 2019 and just finished its second season. The depiction of drug addiction in the show set off a firestorm of responses.

Initial reactions by some viewers suggested they thought the show's depiction of drug use was laughable.

One TikTok trend specifically made fun of how unrealistic the show is at portraying teens and drug addiction. The TikTok known "Euphoria High" showed a typical high school student walking into the frame dressed in everyday clothes. Then a cartoonish voice would ask "And why aren't you in uniform?" at which point, the student would come back into the frame wearing bright, colorful, revealing clothing with glittery makeup, an exaggerated version of the way the characters look on the show.

On the other hand,

groups like The Drug Abuse Resistance Education program, or D.A.R.E said the show glamorized drugs.

If the show was glamorizing drug use, it would be understandable to criticize it. After all, according to drugabusestatistics.org, 8.3% of 12-17-year-olds reported they had used drugs in the last month. 11.2% of overdose deaths are people aged 15-24 years old in the US alone.

But anyone paying attention can see the show is not making drug use look appealing.

When season 1 ended and HBO announced there would be a season 2, it caused a storm of conversations on social media, particularly surrounding the show's depiction of drug use.

Multiple times throughout the first season Rue is seen overdosing, suffocating, and surrounded by puke. In season 2, more heartbreaking parts of addiction are shown. In episode 5, Rue is seen going through withdrawal. She screams at her family to tell her where they hid her pills, and when they don't, she escapes.

Rue even goes to lengths to go into her friend's house and go through his grandmother's medications.

According to healthdirect.gov, some signs of withdrawal include irritability, changing moods, and vomiting.

All of these were portrayed in the episode of Rue's

withdrawal.

The director and writer Sam Levinson is a former addict himself, giving the show a first-hand perspective of addiction.

At the 2019 premiere for the show, Levinson told interviewers, "I spent the majority of my teenage years in hospitals, rehabs, and halfway houses. I was a drug addict, and I'd take anything and everything I could until I couldn't hear or breathe or feel."

With this perspective and Zendaya's (Rue) acting, it makes addiction raw and real, something that would make someone never want to touch a drug.

Marcell Rév, who was the cinematographer for the first few episodes of *Euphoria*, in an interview with *Deadline*, that the show's look is "not really based on realism. We called it 'emotional realism' that's more based in the characters' emotions, and not how the world around them really works." Essentially he's saying drug addiction isn't all snorting coke off of your high school textbook with glitter on your eyes, the whole point is that's just how Rue is seeing herself.

Armand Carignan, a Hamilton resident who has faced drug addiction says that when he started doing drugs "I was just bored bro. I was like life is fucking vanilla as fuck, so it's like, let me pop a lil xan let me pop a perc."

Asked what he thinks about *Euphoria* Carignan says,

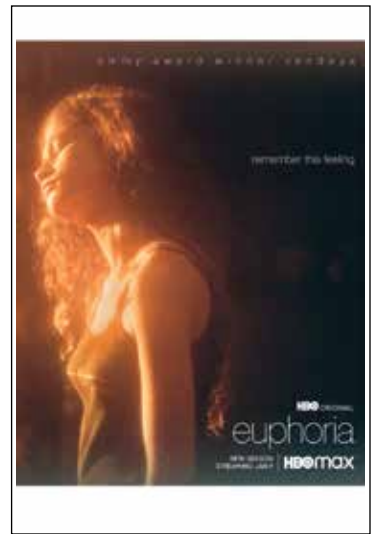


PHOTO - HBO PROMOTIONAL MATERIAL
Zendaya plays Rue in HBO's hit show *Euphoria*.

"They think it's all sweet."

But the show doesn't depict addiction as sweet and the glittery aesthetics aren't confusing viewers.

In an anonymous survey of more than 30 Mercer County Community College students familiar with the show, 69% said they did not think *Euphoria* promotes addiction.

One student said, "I think it's doing the complete opposite actually. I think *Euphoria* shows teenagers what drugs can do to your body and the negative effects mentally that can be developed from substance abuse. If anything, I would expect it to help steer teenagers away from drugs because of the observed behavior of the characters from the show."

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

From Student Government President Christian Perez

Fellow Students,

My name is Christian Perez, your President of Student Government Association. I am writing to you for a very special reason: the election of a new Mercer County Community College President.

I urge all of you to take this seriously, because you have an opportunity afforded to you that not every student gets. You can be a part of a hopefully transformational process at our college. It all starts with attending and engaging with the upcoming visits and open forums with presidential finalists Patrick Tompkins, Deborah Preston, Matthew Reed and Warren Haynes on the week of Monday, March 7th.

As you may have read in the paper, I had the opportunity to represent all of you and your interests in the hiring process that narrowed down these finalists- something that I wish could've been afforded to more faculty and students. While I cannot discuss the details and deliberations of the committee due to a nondisclosure agreement, I believe they are all strong candidates- though I am admittedly most interested in Dr. Tompkins and Dr. Preston- and have arranged luncheons with each of them that

club presidents and members of student government will attend next week. However, it matters just as much if not more that you all engage with them individually and prod them with questions me and other student leaders may not have considered.

If you are a first or second semester student, it is even more important that you take this seriously, because you will feel the impact of the beginning of their term. Your input matters- understand and embrace that. Don't rely on me to be your voice for this- be your own voice, and a voice for your peers, and shine a light on the best and worst qualities of these candidates during the brief window you have with them, because it may cost all of us down the line if you don't.

Sincerely,
Christian Perez

President of the Student Government Association
President of the Rainbow Alliance

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FAST JLAW FACT

When a movie comes out, the marketing team provides images the media can use to go with articles. Using those images does not violate copyright law.

STRANGE BUT TRUE

This is the 87th print edition of The VOICE made since 2008 when the paper was revived. But there has been lots of online only content published too.

JOURNO LINGO

The VOICE relies on two key fonts: Utopia and Gotham which are the same ones President Obama used for his campaign materials.

GREAT NEWS

Former VOICE Managing Editor Drew Mumich covered the January 6 insurrection and survived. His description of the experience has been published.

ADVICE - ASK THE VOICE

HELP IS HERE!



Dear VOICE, I think I missed the Add/Drop period and now I'm stuck with a class I don't want. I can't afford another withdrawal on my transcript. What should I do?
-Stressed AF

Dear Stressed AF, Sadly, you're only option is having a twin or a clone go to the class for you, so you should probably start with a Bio class.
-The VOICE

Dear VOICE, My professor won't grade my history paper because it's "too long." What do you

think I should do?
-Sick of This College

Dear Sick of This College, Write an even longer response on their end of semester performance evaluation. That'll teach them!
- The VOICE

Dear VOICE, I feel like I'm about to pass out. I am so tired of my mask suctioning to my face as my lungs are dying. How do I get to class without having to lie down every step.
-Need an Ambulance

Dear Need an Ambulance, If I were you I'd enjoy laying down and not breathing Mercer's moldy air.
-The VOICE

Dear VOICE, I'm so done with hiding in bathroom stalls or

pretending to eat in the Student Center so I can take my mask off. Where can I go for freedom. PS - Somewhere I won't freeze my ass of, either. Thanks.
-Secret Unmasker

Dear Secret Unmasker, Two words: supply closet.
- The VOICE

Dear VOICE, I want ombre nails but am too broke for a salon. Suggestions?
-Unpolished

Dear Unpolished, Take your cheap self to Walmart for some Sally Hansen polish and hit YouTube for DIY tips. You're welcome.
-The VOICE

NOTE: THIS FEATURE IS FOR ENTERTAINMENT ONLY. ANY RESEMBLANCE TO ACTUAL ADVICE IS ACCIDENTAL.

HOROSCOPES



Capricorn
Dec. 22 - Jan. 19

Capricorn, my advice to you this month is to let go of what no longer serves you. This will leave space for the new opportunities that have been waiting patiently for your attention.



Taurus
Apr. 20 - May 20

Time is precious Taurus, and this month you may find yourself giving too much time to those things that no longer serve you. It's time to let go and allow yourself to grow.



Aquarius
Jan. 20 - Feb. 18

This month is all about communications, and expansion. Your instinct will be to fight it; however, I recommend embracing it. Challenge yourself this month, Aquarius.



Gemini
May 21 - Jun. 20

You may encounter a surprise visit from an old flame this month. Be careful, nothing is ever what it seems. Keep your eye on the prize Gemini, don't get distracted.



Pisces
Feb. 19 - Mar. 20

Pisces it seems your luck is finally turned around! If you hear of any opportunities, take them. This could lead to a life changing experience. Have faith, this year is your year.



Cancer
Jun. 21 - Jul. 22

Cancer, this month go with the flow and learn how to find happiness in the little things. There's beauty all around us.



Aries
Mar. 21 - Apr. 19

You may find yourself pondering on life's meaning this month. Try to get out and socialize. Widening your perspective will ultimately widen your scale of opportunities. Be a go-getter this month.



Leo
Jul. 23 - Aug. 22

For the last few months, you've been putting in the work to accomplish your goals, and this month you could very well hear some good feedback about it! Keep going, this is only the beginning.

Just Like Cats & Dogs by Dave T. Phipps



SUDOKU

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	7		5					3
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Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each small 9-box square contains all of the numbers from one to nine.

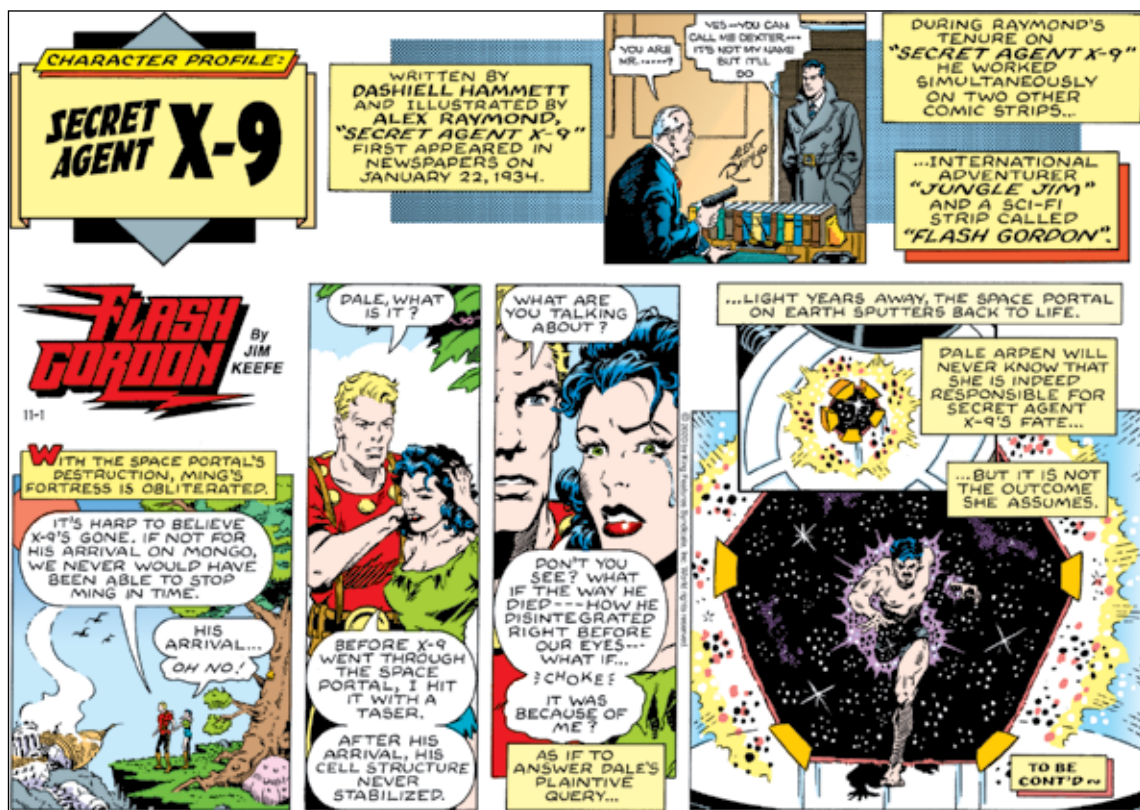
DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ◆◆◆

◆ Moderate ◆◆ Challenging
◆◆◆ HOO BOY!

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5	6	9	1	8	9	2	4	3
8	3	4	2	6	5	9	7	1
2	6	1	2	3	4	7	9	5

Answer

FLASH GORDON



GET FUZZY

