Parkland Shooting Catalyst in Fight for Gun Control

By Ausma Palmer | Off-Campus Editor

The shooting that occurred at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, FL last month has again brought the gun control debate to the forefront of American politics. This time, however, students are leading the fight.

The shooting took place around 2:21 p.m. on Feb. 14, when 19-year-old Nikolas Cruz arrived at the school in an Uber. Using an AR-15 semi-automatic rifle, he fired at teachers and students for six minutes, after which he stopped and left the school. Around 3:40 p.m. he was stopped by police at a local Walmart and brought into custody. The shooting left 14 students and 3 staff members dead.

Cruz, a former student of the school, was known for being emotionally unstable and frequently discussing gun violence. According to CNN, he had a history of posting racist and homophobic remarks in private Instagram messages. Several people reported Cruz to the F.B.I. and to local law enforcement as far back as November; one person expressed fears that he was a “school shooter in the making,” according to The New York Times. In total, Cruz was reported to the police 39 times, according to The New Yorker. The F.B.I. did not investigate the tips further, citing lack of evidence, and several calls to the sheriff’s department went unreturned.

The gun control debate became the center of national attention after the shooting, this time with students taking a leadership role. Students from Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School created the “Never Again” movement with the goal of passing legislation to reform the background check system, according to The New Yorker. The F.B.I. did not investigate the tips further, citing lack of evidence, and several calls to the sheriff’s department went unreturned.

The next step for the Never Again movement is the National School Walkout on March 14, when students and teachers will walk out of school for 17 minutes in honor of the 17 Parkland shooting victims. Following that, the “March For Our Lives,” a March for Our Lives, will take place on March 24 in Washington, D.C. The march was organized by Marjory Stoneman Douglas students and will be focused on getting gun control legislation passed. The event has already drawn significant attention from celebrities: George Clooney pledged $500,000 for the march, which Oprah Winfrey and Steven Spielberg said they would match. Similar marches have already been organized in dozens of other cities, including Manhattan and Huntington.

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President: Blake Gifford

In a world where the media sells disfunction, crime, and destruction, I am here to sell you a world composed of righteous people accomplishing deeds out of sincerity alone – they are known as the Lazarus Rising Club.

The club's mission, according to the President Blake Gifford, is to “provide [the necessary] job placement skills to the homeless, in order to prepare them for employment.” These skills range from interviewing skills to writing an effective resume. How does the club do it? Well, on top of their Wednesday meetings, the Lazarus Rising Club meets at soup kitchens to serve the homeless population – a population starving for physical and emotional sustenance.

The students of the club have found that homeless people are very uncomfortable around strangers and, moreover, won’t accept much from people they don’t know. Through the simple gift of food, the volunteer students build a rapport with the homeless populace that they hope will transition into job placement training — that of which will grant them a job and figuratively bring them back from dead.

And, in essence, that is where the name of the club derives from: the Biblical story of a man that Jesus of Nazareth brought back from the dead. Though it should be said that the club has no religious association, the nomenclature originates from its mission.

The club started at Suffolk in the fall of 2015 when a Suffolk student recognized the shortcomings of his resume for future employment. He imagined that if he was struggling to build a resume with all the resources in the academic community, how could the homeless do it? Thus, the inception of Suffolk’s Ammerman Lazarus Rising Club.

The club’s president Blake Gifford organizes the dates and interactions with the homeless people, through places – most recently – like St. Gerard Majella Roman Catholic Church in Port Jefferson. Gifford truly exemplifies what it means to be a student involved in the Lazarus Club. “It’s all about serving and giving back to the community that has blessed me so much,” he says. This kind of serving quality is what Gifford believes every student should demonstrate – both in and out of the club. The club’s president makes this relationship so beautiful one cares about themselves. What makes this relationship so beautiful derives from its union-like structure, through the gifts of time and energy, one receives priceless tangible and intangible rewards.

One of the tangible benefits for the club’s students is that every student officer for the Lazarus Rising Club has won Suffolk's Distinguished Student Achievement Award. And despite the great honor it is to have won that award, President Gifford reiterates that “the accolades only enhance the experience,” for the joy of seeing a man or woman go from aimless and homeless, to living in a home with meaning is a joy like no other. Moreover, it is a joy that all of the members of the Lazarus Rising Club hope every student can experience.

If this article has caught your eye and you are considering joining the Lazarus Rising Club, contact Blake Gifford at giffb57@mail.sunysuffolk.edu and check out the organization's website at http://www.lazarusrising.org/.

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Military Mondays

Calling all Veterans, current Reservists, and National Guard service men and women –

Come down to The Babylon Student Center Starbucks for a complimentary coffee and snacks to be with other veterans and service members to just hang.

Every Monday afternoon from 3-4 the veteran resource center will be holding a casual gathering for veterans to connect with other veteran students on campus.

The idea all started with College Director of Veterans Affairs – Shannon O’Neill wanting a place for veterans to casually connect on campus. O’Neill saw a video online about vets connecting over coffee and thought it would be a great idea to bring something like Suffolk. Thus, the inception of Military Mondays.

If you or someone you know is a veteran or a currently serving student -- the veteran resource center highly encourages you to come down Starbucks for “Military Mondays” as well as the veteran resource center itself, located in the Southampton Building room 126. For further questions contact Suffolk campus wide Current Director of Veteran Affairs: Shannon O’Neill at (631) 451 - 4869.

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Nothing Happened Here: solo photography exhibition by Jeremy Dennis

Calling all Native American history buffs and art connoisseurs, since February 8th (and until March 15th) the Southampton building's Flecker Gallery has set up a solo artist photography exhibition by local artist Jeremy Dennis; he creates and displays an aura of stark images of the Native American peoples.

Dennis is an indigenous artist who was raised and continues to live and work on the Shinnecock Indian Reservation in Southampton, New York. His large-scale photographs displayed in the showcase offer a fictional narrative that challenges our historical script. Dennis’ work derives from his experiences with the everyday challenges of modern indigenous life.

These powerful photographs will not be up for long as the exhibit terminates on March 15th. I highly encourage you to explore the exhibit even if just for a few minutes passing by in the Southampton building. You will not be disappointed.

The exhibit is in the Flecker Gallery Southampton Building Monday - Thursday from 10 am until 4 pm until March 15th.
On March 19 and 20, Middle States site visitors will be making their way to SCCC on the Ammerman Campus for student and faculty forums. This is an important occasion done every 10 years across colleges and universities nationwide. Student involvement is highly encouraged for this informative event.

In order for educational institutions to be given the right to grant degrees, provide scholarships, and have a transfer system, colleges and universities must first get accredited. Accreditation is given to institutions that meet the seven main standards of a college. Once colleges obtain this accreditation, it must be renewed every 10 years in the form of self-studies done by the institution.

Self-evaluation documents are written up for the accreditation council that state exactly how the stated institution has met the seven standards over the past 10 years. The specific accreditation group for the Eastern Seaboard is named the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, or Middle States. Once those documents are submitted, site visitors for Middle States comes to visit the campus in order to do evaluations and personally see how the institution meets the seven standards.

Middle States is always interested in student opinions in order to obtain accuracy for their reports. Therefore, student involvement in the visit is incredibly important.

Professor Dan Linker is an English professor at SCCC and also serves as a Co-Chair of the Middle States steering committee. He helps run the process of committees and sub-committees within the Middle States program. Linker advises all students to come to the student forum and open up about their feelings towards SCCC.

“You are valued,” Linker said. It is important to note that this is not necessarily a town hall-style meeting for people to project specific complaints about SCCC. This conference is more about the students’ overall experience in the school and what they think the school can do to improve.

If you are interested in attending, the Middle States Student Open Forum will be Monday, March 19, 3:45pm, Babylon Student Center, Eaton’s Neck Room.
Advice Column: Trying To Live Healthy, While Also Being A Broke College Student With No Time

By Paula Schultz | Editor-In-Chief

I’m not proud of the amount of times I had to go on the hunt for the nearest (and cheapest) drive-thru restaurant I could find. I am also not proud that I pay for a gym membership, but I haven’t gone there in months. With college work piled high to the ceiling, family calling every hour, friends and loved ones needing attention, and work hogging my precious time, just the idea of pursuing a healthy life seemed almost impossible to me.

After months of relying on fast food to get me through the day, I began to feel the negative changes. My motivation started to decrease and my energy levels were low. Acne, which I never had before, appeared on my face and my weight was rapidly increasing. As soon as I realized these changes, I knew I needed to change my lifestyle quick.

I started out pretty good, making healthy meal-prep lunches every Sunday and taking daily long walks. I pretended to enjoy the food and my new healthy lifestyle, until time got the best of me and I drove to my favorite Wendy’s drive-thru less than a week later.

“There has to be a way to do this,” I kept telling myself. There has to be a way I can be a healthier person that doesn’t interfere with my time. I looked into every possible time frame and any hope I could find that could tell me how I can live a healthier life.

Turns out, it wasn’t time that was the culprit here. It was motivation.

This sudden realization came to me after a random desire to try kickboxing. This sport has been recommended to me several times for its great benefits: toning, stress relief, and weight loss. After stumbling across a $10 trial period for 3 classes at a local kickboxing studio, I figured “what do I have to lose?”

Once I tried my first class, I instantly fell in love. Kickboxing definitely challenged me, I was incredibly tired afterwards and I was sore for days, but it was ultimately worth it. I immediately felt my mood improve and I got excited to transform my life and body. Even though I probably cannot afford a membership, just trying out the first two classes is what made me realize that being healthy can be fun and easy. My confidence and motivation finally came back.

Pro Tip: If motivation is your biggest issue when it comes to exercising or eating healthy, try a fitness class, even if it’s just once. Attend a class that has always interested you, or even better, one that is completely out of the box and alien to you.

Having that motivation made it so much easier for me to find the time to go to the gym, pack healthier lunches, and get moving as much as I can. My complaints about having no time were all an excuse; there is always time.

Whether it’s in the morning before your day begins, late at night when you’re out of work, or even just during your lunch break at school, there is always time to get moving if you have the true desire and motivation to better yourself.

As far as healthy eating goes, go to the grocery store once a week and buy some quick and easy healthy snacks that don’t require much preparation. I rely on mini Babybel cheese, Kind bars, grapes, and mandarins.

For meals, look up some healthy recipes online and take a couple hours out of your week to make meal-prep containers. If you’re more simple, making some quick and easy healthy snacks that don’t require much preparation. I rely on mini Babybel cheese, Kind bars, grapes, and mandarins.

By Paula Schultz | Editor-In-Chief

If you or someone you know has an idea for the advice column, please email the Editor-In-Chief at compassnewspaper@hotmail.com
Student Government Positions AT EACH CAMPUS

College Wide Student Trustee

IMPORTANT DATES:

March 16
SGA and Student Trustee Applications Due

April 9
12:00AM Elections Open Via Student Portal

April 12
Elections Close 11:59PM

Student Trustee Application:
http://www.sunysuffolk.edu/Students/949.asp

SGA Application:
The Office of Campus Activities & Student Leadership
“Since we didn’t learn it in school then nothing could have happened,” the young photographer said.

He was referring to the history of Native Americans in the United States. Continuing on, he said that “growing up...I didn’t know my own history until many years later.”

Artist and photographer Jeremy Dennis was born in Southampton, New York and raised on the Shinnecock Indian Reservation. He graduated with his Bachelor’s from Stony Brook University in 2013 and then with an MFA from Pennsylvania State University in 2016.

As a Native American raised in the modern U.S., Dennis was not always acutely aware of his culture and its societal implications. Unfortunately, his minority is not one that often receives a lot of publicity, and if and when it does, that attention is not always favorable. Instead of viewing Native Americans as a progressive group with a rich, distinctive culture, many people see them with the illusions of preconceived notions straight from history textbooks. Sitting Bull, the Trail of Tears, and the French and Indian War are more often than not the greatest extent of knowledge people have of Native Americans. And while those things are significant and historical, they are not the only aspects of the ethnic group that should be highlighted and spoken about.

For Dennis, this particular exhibit of photographs he took entitled “Nothing Happened Here” seeks to shed light on the stereotypes and prejudices that people associate with Native Americans. All of his pictures in the show display a single person – some alone in nature and others in mundane settings like a gym – pierced with a range of arrows. Though their faces and body positions betray nothing of pain or even acknowledgement of the arrows, the sharp points stick through them at all angles and from all directions.

Dennis explained the idea behind his work, saying that “there’s some sort of fear of Native Americans uprising, a fear of [them] uprising based on colonization,” so the series is “based on if that uprising actually happened – arrows coming out of nowhere, the mental process of that.”

Despite the clear message in his exhibition, Dennis has hope for Native Americans and the attitudes of society towards them. When asked what he thinks the future for them looks like, he said that “from personal experience: travel sovereignty. Most tribes are trying to reinforce and work on economic independence and self-reliance and self-representation.” Dennis also added that he wants them to “export their own meaning and culture within their own culture, language, and presence.” And regarding people’s attitudes and treatments towards them, he remains hopeful and thinks “they will change attitudes.” Because although the images on display may show a sort of drastic and even garish visualization of thoughts, there is an underlying tone of somber hope and the possibility for growth and change.
“there’s some sort of fear of Native Americans uprising”
Michael White finds stories that could’ve been portrayed with the bitter reality of a sour lemon and turns them into a cold Long Island Iced Tea. He seems to have found a niche for writing uplifting Long Island news articles.

White visited Suffolk County Community College’s Ammerman campus on Feb. 14 to share insights about his web-based news outlet, GreaterPatchogue.com, with Professor Corry’s journalism class. White said he felt an obligation and duty to help guide fellow journalism students.

A Long Island native who graduated from St. Anthony’s Roman Catholic High School in 1977 and earned a master’s in journalism from Columbia University, White was a police reporter for the Daily News, but now manages Greater Long Island Media Group LLC.

While driving through Patchogue, he was inspired by the village’s revitalization project. He foreshadowed that Patchogue would become reminiscent of a Stamford, Connecticut community. He described feeling an energy and vibe in Patchogue that he wanted to have a “piece of.” That’s how GreaterPatchogue was born.

This project isn’t just a newspaper but a positive force for the Long Island community to escape the mainstream media’s perpetual negative headlines. One article that demonstrates an inspiring anecdote is a story about a family owned record store – Looney Tunes – located in West Babylon. The story shows a creative solution to the cost of Suffolk County’s new plastic bag law. Going further east, GreaterPatchogue covered a story called, “Fighting human trafficking through arts & music in Patchogue.” The article highlights how Patchogue utilized local artists in order to bring awareness to this modern-day slavery. According to Ed Adams, who serves as the chairman of Long Island Against Trafficking, “the arts have the power to start conversations we might not otherwise have…circumvent politics and ideology and bring us together to shine a light on dark topics that we otherwise don’t want to see.”

Certainly, he has achieved success in all areas of life. He has a loving wife, two beautiful children, and is the editor of GreaterPatchogue, as well as the publisher, marketer, and reporter. The success of his launch has led to the birth of his other sites which include GreaterBayShore.com, GreaterBabylon.com, and GreaterPortJeff.com.

According to White, a feeling of inadequacy was the secret to his success. This attribute is commonly seen in some of America’s most celebrated individuals such as Alexander Hamilton, Oprah Winfrey, and Bill Gates.

Ideally, White wants to see the Greater Long Island Group LLC grow into an even larger platform. It is clear, whether you are a millennial or senior citizen, that White will continue the narration of positive articles for Long Islanders that all began as a vision while cruising through Patchogue.
The Turkish Invasion into Afrin, a Call for Jihad, Mass Arrests, and Expelling Kurds from Northern Syria

By David Osorio Jr. | Contributing Writer

With Turkish soldiers deployed on the Turkish-Syrian border in late January heading towards the city of Afrin, guerilla fighters of the Syrian Democratic Front (SDF) and the People’s Protection Unit (YPG) stood their ground and waited for their enemy to expose themselves into the line of fire. Swarms of bullets soon began whistling by, hitting casualties between the opposing belligerents.

One female YPG Kurdish guerilla, Zuluh Hemo, charged towards an incoming Turkish tank with a grenade, climbing on top of the tank with intent of destruction. Hemo pulled the pin to activate the live grenade before tossing it down the long-nosed barrel of the turret cannon attached to the tank, killing two Turkish soldiers inside and herself when the explosion consumed the tank.

Despite her sacrifice and her comrades’ stiff resistance, the Turkish military had advanced past the YPG’s station and attacked and then captured the strategic point of Mount Bursa. With the fortified mountain under Turkish control, Turkey gained an access route into Aleppo and Afrin to expel their Kurdish rivals from the region.

Turkish Parliament speaker Ismail Kahraman had called for Jihad into Afrin following the invasion was engaged, Turkey’s Director of Religious Affairs requested clerics all over Turkey to recite chapter 48 of the Quran – known as the chapter of conquest.

Since the 1980’s, Turkey has been at war with a Kurdish guerilla group, the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK), and believes that the Kurdish de facto state of the Democratic Federation of Northern Syria – also known as Rojava – uses its border as a strategic point to move PKK insurgents in and out of Turkey from Syria.

Conflicts between Kurds and Turkey stem back to the establishment of the Turkish Republic following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. Turkey has subjected Kurds to various massacres in its history, such as the killings of 15,000 Kurds in Zilan, while also banning the Kurdish language, and even classifying Kurds as “Mountain Turks” until 1991.

The PKK is considered a terrorist organization to Turkey and NATO states. The PKK maintains relations with Rojava as the various militant groups found in Northern Syria share ideological similarities with the PKK, such as libertarian socialism, gender equality, and Kurdish nationalism. But following the announcement made by Yildirim, 70 shells had been fired upon Afrin from fighter jets, with the Turkish Republic beginning its offense in Afrin.

Since Turkey’s invasion into Afrin, news on Syria has been littered with multiple press coverages of confirmed kills on both the Kurdish and Turkish sides – Kurds downing Turkish helicopters, American airstrikes on Syrian soldiers, and even Russia blaming the United States for permitting the fighting between Rojava and Turkey.

Both Turkey and Rojava are allies of the United States government, and both are opposed to Bashar Al-Assad – Syria’s current administration.

The United States’ reaction to the Afrin offense has varied from official to official, but with no one in the U.S. government supporting for intervening in the conflict. Sputnik International reported that U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson had no plans of deploying U.S. soldiers on the Turkish-Syrian border to contain the violence. Pentagon Spokesman Adrian Rankine threatened to cut aid for the Kurds if they continued to fight Turkey. Heather Nauer, the spokesperson for the U.S. State Department, demanded for Turkey to not enter Afrin when Turkey first announced the offense.

President Donald Trump had contacted Erdogan to call off its invasion and escalate tensions. But in the middle of the talks, Rojava had gained an unlikely relationship with Assad, as both have a mutual goal in averting Turkish advancements into Syria. According to Reuters, Assad allowed for indirect means of support for the Kurds by giving them easy route access in and out of Afrin to move SDF reinforcements from locations that the Syrian Arab Army (SAA) are holding. This, however, does not mean that Rojava and the Syrian Arab Republic are on the same side. On Feb. 7, SAA launched a coordinated attack consisting of 500 soldiers and tanks on the SDF headquarters in Khushma, according to Politico. American coalition advisers were present in Khushma and had requested for U.S. airstrikes on the invading SAA, killing about 100 soldiers.

The relation between Kurds and the Syrian state have been poor due to discrimination against the Kurds that consists of banning the Kurdish language, banning Kurdish names, and even removing the status of citizenship for Syrian-Kurds, according to Human Rights Watch. Reception to Turkey’s operation in Afrin has been widely condemned, with various countries calling Operation Olive Branch unjustified, while also expressing concern for civilians in the combat zone. NATO, Qatar, and the U.K. displayed support for Turkey, as they believed Turkey had a right to intervene a threat on their border.

In Turkey, however, many individuals – including politicians and journalists – had criticized the invasion of Afrin, resulting in Turkish authorities resorting to mass arrests of those who speak against the government, according to BBC. Over 300 people have been arrested on charges of spreading “terrorist propaganda,” by posting critical anti-war messages on social media.

The arrests began when the Turkish Medical Association said entering Afrin would cause a humanitarian crisis. Erdogan responded by calling the doctors in the medical department “terrorist lovers” and ordered for them to be detained.

“There are some who are uncomfortable [with the killing of terrorists] like the so-called ‘Kurdish Medical Association,’ and they want to carry out a campaign saying no to war. We have never heard these terrorist-lovers ever say yes to peace up to the present day,” said Erdogan.
Cape Town’s Water Crisis is a Sign of Problems to Come in a Warmer World

By Ausma Palmer | Off-Campus Editor

Cape Town’s water crisis is a sign of problems in a warmer world. The harsh effects of climate change are being felt in the South African city of Cape Town, where residents are enduring a drought so bad that they are expected to run out of water by June 4.

This date, referred to as “Day Zero,” after which residents will have to line up to receive rations of water at checkpoints secured by armed guards, was pushed back from the original date of April 16. Farmers and other agricultural organizations have already used up their annual water quota, which allows more water to be used in urban areas, according to a statement made by the City of Cape Town.

Cape Town has been experiencing a severe drought for the past three years, and the heavy rains of winter they can usually expect have not come. Several factors have influenced the severity of this drought – not least of all, climate change. The Climate Change Reality Project explains that when more greenhouse gases are released into the environment, temperatures increase, and therefore, more moisture is taken out of the air. This causes hot, dry areas to become even drier, resulting in longer-lasting, more severe droughts, as has been seen in California and now South Africa.

The sheer size of Cape Town’s population has also exacerbated the water crisis: the population grew by one million people over the past 15 years, making it the most populous South African city with four million residents, according to The New York Times.

Another reason the situation has reached such a critical point is because of poor infrastructure and inaction on the part of the government. According to The Atlantic, climate scientists have warned officials of this problem for decades, but to no avail. They cautioned that relying on the six dams that feed Cape Town’s water and heavy winter rainfall could be dangerous if climate change affected the environment, causing warmer temperatures and fewer winter rains.

Theewaterskloof Dam – the largest of Cape Town’s dams – has been drying up since the winter rains. Theewaterskloof Dam is a dam in the Western Cape Province of South Africa that supplies water to Cape Town. It is one of the largest dams in the world.

Issues of class will also play a part as the problem worsens. It’s only been 27 years since apartheid ended, and inequality remains a huge problem in South Africa. Mostly wealthy white people inhabit Cape Town’s city center while thousands of poor people live on the outskirts of the city in shacks, and the government expects all residents to use the same amount of water. According to The Atlantic, problems have already arisen because of this: many wealthy urbanites have refused to conserve their water usage to 13 gallons daily simply because they can still afford to use so much, worsening the crisis. When and if Cape Town reaches Day Zero, accessibility to water will be a problem for the city’s poor. The police plan to categorize water checkpoints as “low risk” or “high risk” depending on the area’s crime rate and gang activity. Many impoverished people’s water checkpoints are likely to be in “high risk” areas, and they may struggle to get any water at all because of conflicts between gangs and the law.

Cape Town’s water crisis is just one of the many global problems to arise from a warming Earth, and could act as a warning sign for other cities at risk. In 2014, The Nature Conservancy surveyed various cities around the world and their water supplies, and found that cities like Mexico City, Tokyo, and New Delhi could be in danger of running out of water because of their large populations. Los Angeles is one of the top 10 at risk as well, in part due to its nearly four million people, but mostly because of the high rate of wildfires and the extreme drought the city has experienced over the past five years.

What this data shows is that in a warmer and more populous world, problems with water shortages will become a problem for countless cities, and global solutions are going to have to be made to ensure that Day Zero never comes.

“The Mission of Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter”

To celebrate the annual STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) month, a public speech about the “Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter” will be given by the NASA Solar System Ambassador Volunteer, Malmi Kirivanda-lage. The speech is scheduled to take place on Wednesday, March 14th at 11:15 am in Huntington Library, Suffolk County Community College, Ammerman Campus Selden, NY.

The Solar System Ambassadors Program of NASA’s Jet Propulsion Laboratory offers information and excitement about real missions that explore our solar system. Volunteer ambassadors in communities throughout the country are selected by JPL based on their backgrounds and on their plans for public outreach activities. JPL provides ambassadors with educational materials and training. However, the opinions of Ambassadors are not necessarily those of NASA or JPL. Further information about the Solar System Ambassadors Program is available at http://www.jpl.nasa.gov/ambassador. JPL is a division of the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena, California.
OFF THE BEATEN PATH

By Bethany Weniger | Managing Editor

Though it sometimes seems like the news is constantly bursting with tragedies and subtle agendas and far too many people, places and politics that don’t make sense, there are also stories of triumph, humor, and the bizarre. Lesser known events and moments that make the world a little less cutthroat, a bit more confusing, and a lot more interesting. These occurrences are a reflection of the best and worst sides of human nature and our (sometimes lovable) idiosyncrasies and mistakes. Here are some of the highlights from 2018 so far:

Back in January, the French supermarket chain Intermarché put out a massive sale on Nutella, lowering the price from €4.50 to €1.40 – a 70 percent discount. At this sudden drop, riots broke out in the stores with French people all over vying for the coveted hazelnut spread. Fighting, pushing, hair pulling, and all other sorts of animalistic behavior occurred in grocery stores across the country.

One Girl Scout was feeling exceptionally entrepreneurial and set out to sell her cookies outside a weed dispensary. She successfully sold over 300 boxes of cookies in six hours outside a shop in San Diego, California.

An order for eggs got lost in translation, resulting in 15,000 of them being delivered to the chefs for Norway’s Olympic team. Instead of the desired 1,500, they were met with 15,000. Luckily, the chefs were able to return the excess eggs to the grocer, bringing them down to the initial amount wanted.

A lawyer in Germany received more than 100 unwanted pizzas. All delivered to his office anonymously, the police are investigating the mystery. Later on, the lawyer – Guido Grolle – received more unwanted orders, this time of Currywurst and sushi. Though it seems like a potentially harmless prank, using someone’s personal data to order goods is a form of harassment under German law.

In Saudi Arabia, 12 camels were disqualified from a beauty contest after their owners tried to change their looks with Botox injections. At the King Abdulaziz Camel Festival, thousands of camels were paraded around, being judged on their humps and lips, with judges looking for “perfectly placed humps, muscular physiques, and leathery mouths,” according to the BBC. The festival also includes camel racing and camel milk tasting and offers prize money of $57 million. Judges stepped in when they discovered the camels that had been altered. Before the festival, a vet had also been called to giving camels plastic surgery, changing the sizes of their ears and injecting Botox. This festival – which was first held in 2000 – is treated very seriously, as the camel is the “symbol of Saudi Arabia.”

HUMANS OF SUFFOLK: ANDRES RIVAS

By Vincent Cavallino | On-Campus Editor

Did you know that the country with one of the highest murder rates in the world also has the highest inflation rate? That country is none other than South America’s Venezuela, and this is Andres Rivas, a man who has lived through that economic and social mess of Venezuela and now resides in Suffolk County, NY at tending SCCC. How did he get here? This is the incredible story of one of the many incredible students here at Suffolk County Community College: Andres Rivas.

Rivas is a man of many titles. To some, he is just an 18-year-old journalist major starting off his secondary education at Suffolk’s community college, and to others he is a phenomenal sports writer for publications like Axcess Baseball as an intern, and the Long Island Advance. Of course to me and this article, he is a man with a history worth telling.

That history began in Miami Beach, Florida, 18 years ago when Rivas was born – the second son of two Venezuelan immigrants. Rivas describes his early youth growing up in Miami as “rewarding,” since he always had to work for whatever he wanted. He describes an instance when he was in the fourth grade wanting the video game Mario Kart, and “many kids I knew got what they wanted when they wanted it, but I had to work for what I wanted. In the fourth grade I made sure I got straight A’s and was rewarded with Mario Kart.”

He spent his first 10 years in Miami, living a steady life – speaking English in school and Spanish at home, which prepared him well for an extremely unexpected turn in his life: a move to Venezuela.

In 2009, the day came when his family was forced to move back to the country of their descent. Rivas had never been. Before the festival, a vet had also been called to giving camels plastic surgery, changing the sizes of their ears and injecting Botox. This festival – which was first held in 2000 – is treated very seriously, as the camel is the “symbol of Saudi Arabia.”

In Venezuela, life was a lot different than in his in hometown, Miami Beach. Despite his Hispanic descent, Rivas was now the “English speaking gringo” but quickly learned to adapt to this new world, speaking the Spanish he learned at home in Miami beautifully in the Venezuela schools and continuing to excel in his education. However, the country he was living in was traveling on another course: completely faltering at the hands of a corrupt government regime. Rivas says that he didn’t go out at night for fear of death. “In 1999, Hugo Chavez was elected for president and ever since then, Venezuela has been corrupt,” Rivas summarizes to explain the shape of Venezuela to those not informed. “He was supposed to be our savior, and now look at Venezuela – it’s arguably the most dangerous country in the world.”

Rivas was not spared from Venezuela’s danger as his family cruelly fell victim to it when his father was kidnapped and held at gunpoint. His parents didn’t speak of it much so as not to scare their son, but now as he grows older he understands not only the severity of that instance, but also the severity of the state of Venezuela – a state he once called home. “I mean, in what place is it normal to spend lots of your time talking about your corrupt government at 13-years old?” Rivas added. Protests were also common, anywhere and everywhere you looked – in one instance, even closing his school down for 48 hours. And cops were no help either as they consistently shot down people in the streets in attempts to control the madhouse – ironically adding flame to the venous fire.

Fortunately for Rivas, his journey in Venezuela ended before it was too late, and he moved back with his family to the United States to Long Island, NY in the August of 2014. Back in the U.S., Rivas continued to not take anything for granted, living by that work hard mentality yet again. It is here where he started to really write, writing for his high school baseball team, covering the team as it won its first championship in over 55 years. There were 16 guys on the team, but they all said there were 17 – including their personal reporter, Rivas.

Rivas now attends Suffolk County Community College writing about sports (mostly baseball) and aspiring to one day be the next great sports reporter. He sees Stony Brook as his next target to continue his education and further this dream of his. Rivas thanks God every day for the humbling life he’s lived, as it’s brought him a sense of perspective that only few have been blessed to have.
Death to Societal Dignity: A Decline in Culture

By Bethany Weniger | Managing Editor

During Hollywood’s Golden Age, stars like Audrey Hepburn, Vivien Leigh, Humphrey Bogart, and James Dean graced the silver screen, whisking audiences away to Romanticism and Epic drama, bringing classics like “To Kill a Mockingbird” and “ Gone With the Wind” to life. On Broadway, Rodgers and Hammerstein dominated the pit orchestra with quintessential shows like “The King and I,” “Carousel,” and “The Sound of Music.” Meanwhile, the 2018 entertainment industry consists of far too many unoriginal teen romance plots, unnecessary action-packed car chase scenes, and films like “The Emoji Movie” and “Angry Birds.” It is safe to say that the industry has actually regressed rather than progressed over the years, despite the advancements made in areas related to the making of these entertainment forms. While on a technical level, we have made much progress cinematically, our substance matter has declined greatly. Gone are the days of Fitzgerald, Steinbeck, and Rodgers and Hammerstein, ushered in is the age of animated trolls and Legos and portrayals of Spongebob on the same stage that was once graced by “An American in Paris” and “West Side Story.” In the evolutionary process, humans seem to have become less cultured and creative as opposed to the assumption of becoming more so. In our desperate attempts to go forwards, we have accomplished only the opposite.

In 2017, the top grossing movies were “Star Wars: The Last Jedi,” “Fast and Furious 8,” “Transformers: The Last Knight,” and “Despicable Me 3,” all of which are sequels to already established and successful films. Other movies in the top 10 grossing list are “Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Men Tell No Tales,” “Spider-man: Homecoming,” “Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2,” and “Justice League.” Again, the recurring theme being: sequels. Looking at those rankings, it is easy to see that we have become a franchise culture, eager to play it safe and make money off sequels and series rather than taking a risk with original ideas. Because of this, we are on a fast track of descent into a homogenous, creatively-suppressed society. What we produce, watch, and invest in is a reflection of our culture. Many of the things brought to the screen and stage today are lacking, and couldn’t the same thing be said about the various aspects of our lives and our society?

We used to value creativity, originality, and innovation. Our society was in a rat race to be the best, brightest, and boldest, challenging each other to see who could come up with the grandest, most avant-garde ideas, the most eye-catching and enthralling. Now, we look for revenue and box office records and what will make the biggest underlying political statement, regardless of the actual movie plot. Our screens are a conglomerated mass of the same emotions and storylines, just different names and faces – although, even those don’t tend to display much variance. It’s a world of status quo and coloring inside the lines, seeking safe, mediocre success over risky, meaningful advancements.

We once treasured quality in its many forms – today it seems that only quantity in the expression of dollar signs matters. This idea can also be seen in the newest installments to this season’s Broadway shows: “Mean Girls,” based off the Lindsey Lohan movie of the same name, “Spongebob,” inspired by the long-running cartoon, and “Frozen,” from Disney’s hit animation. All of these presentations are unoriginal, poorly constructed productions that don’t have to try to excel because their already established reputations will insure their success. Despite the actual execution of these shows, if they do well financially – which, unfortunately, they most likely will – then their statuses are cemented and kept on stage longer, preventing other more unique, significant shows from having the opportunity to move past the green room and into the spotlight.

Disney’s “Frozen” currently runs in the St. James Theatre, a building that previously housed the new American musical “Bandstand,” starring Laura Osnes, Corey Cott, and featuring original music by Richard Oberacker. It tells the story of WWII veterans returning home and struggling to find their place in the changed society. To make their mark on the world and bring light to the realities they face, they get together and form a musical group that competes in a national battle of the bands. Effusing with humor, romance, brilliant choreography by Tony award winner Andy Blankenbuehl, and a depth that emits from every character and word, the show was Broadway gold. It opened on April 26, 2017 and unfortunately, closed on Sept. 17 of that same year – giving it less than six months on stage. Similarly, the August Wilson Theatre where “Mean Girls” is opening once held the new American musical “Bandstand,” starring Laura Osnes, Corey Cott, and featuring original music by Richard Oberacker.

One look at our current entertainment choices contradicts that. We are a society on the way to our demise, but perhaps most tragically, we are not going down fighting, raging against the dying of the light, but rather, we have leapt into Death’s arms with easy acquiescence, a limited run, the show only sold tickets through June 2017. All three of these shows were original and, given enough time, could have become classics, perhaps ushering in a new golden age for theater in the process.

As of Feb. 11, 2018, the highest grossing Broadway shows included “Come From Away,” “Dear Evan Hansen,” and “Hamilton” in their top 10. All fairly new shows with distinctive stories, an original score, and unique, specific technical elements that add to their quality and success. Between the three of them, they received 29 Tony award nominations, winning a total of 18 of them. Though these shows premiered in the previous two Broadway seasons, their rankings still hold strong. This is a clear example of original musicals being able to not only survive but thrive on stage if given the chance. Unfortunately, those chances are few and far between, and many shows are never given that opportunity, but instead, due to a lack of publicity, profit, and popular opinion, are kicked to the curb after only the smallest of chances to prove themselves. Now, anthropomorphic sponges and franchise princesses are making dance and sing alongside teenage girls who have a diary anointed the “Burn Book.” Yet, still argue that our culture is on the upswing and evolving nicely – far more advanced and progressive than our ancestors and generations before us.

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“Macro tracking” refers to calorie counting with deliberate emphasis on hitting a specific macronutrient ratio. Macronutrients are any of the nutritional components of the diet that are required in relatively large amounts: protein, carbohydrate, fat, and minerals such as calcium, zinc, iron, magnesium, and phosphorus. Protein, carbohydrate, and fat contain calories. One calorie (kilocalorie (kcal)) is the amount of energy required to heat 1 kilogram of water by 1 degree Celsius. The calorie is thus a measurement unit of heat/energy. Your “maintenance” calorie intake is the calorie amount that you need to consume in order to maintain your current body weight.

The first law of thermodynamics states that when energy passes, as work or heat, into or out from a system, the system’s internal energy changes in accord with the law of conservation of energy. Humans are thermodynamic systems and as such, changes in body energy stores are dependent on energy balance. Consequently, if you consume more calories than you burn, then you gain weight/body mass, and if you consume less energy than you expend, you lose body mass. Macro tracking is a viable strategy to manipulate body composition over time because it necessitates calorie tracking. However, the skill of reliable macro tracking takes time to develop and one may struggle in the beginning. This guide should help with setting macronutrient targets as a beginner.

Step 1: Establish your baseline food intake
The first step to tracking macros is to establish the habit of journaling your daily food intake. I recommend using either the FitGenie or MyFitnessPal app to begin journaling dietary intake. Habitually keeping track of what you eat is the essential first step to macro tracking. You cannot manage what you cannot measure, thus if you plan to manipulate your food intake, you must first record your food intake. I recommend logging your food intake for at least 4 weeks before making dietary changes. This habit takes time to establish, but writing down what you eat is crucial to developing proper nutritional habits.

It is easier to track food as soon as you eat it, rather than at the end of the day, because memory may fail you. Further, planning meals ahead of time prevents the stress of making decisions ad libitum. Tracking intake works better with a food scale, especially for beginners. You need not carry a scale around publicly if you are eating out, but to properly assess your caloric intake, you need to know what you ate (food type) and how much you ate (in food weight). It is helpful to weigh your food before you eat it (when possible) so you can learn what a given quantity of any given food looks like. When eating out, taking pictures of your food to track later can help you better estimate your caloric intake.

Step 2: Establish your baseline body weight
I recommend you establishing the habit of weighing in on a daily basis. Again, you can’t manage what you can’t measure, and weight is the primary (surrogate) measure for tracking changes in body mass. You should establish a weekly or bi-weekly (baseline) average weight to ensure that changes to energy intake are reflected in the scale when you alter food intake. If daily weigh-ins are impractical, then you should weigh in at least 3 times per week. To properly weigh-in, use the same scale, wear minimal (or no) clothing, and weigh in under similar conditions each day (after using the bathroom, before eating/drinking anything, at roughly the same time). Do not weigh in after eating/drinking, at random times, or with different scales. Also, note that weight fluctuates considerably on a daily basis, so do not freak out over an unexpectedly high/low weigh in. Changes in body mass (usually) take ~1 week to show on the scale. Note the trends in your weekly average weigh-ins and make dietary adjustments accordingly. Once you have 4 weeks of food intake and weight-ins recorded, you can estimate your maintenance calorie intake (based on changes in weight over time).

Step 3: Learn the basic nutritional values of foods
While establishing your average daily food intake and average daily body weight over the weeks, it is prudent to learn basic nutrition. To track your macros, you need to know the calorie and macronutrient contents of various foods, especially if you eat them commonly. The most relevant macronutrients are fats, carbohydrates, and proteins. Fats contain ~9 calories per gram, while carbohydrates and protein contain ~4 calories per gram. Fat intake is necessary to ensure proper endocrine function over time. Protein is necessary to some extent and beneficial in higher amounts. I recommend consuming between .73 and 1 gram per pound of bodyweight of protein to ensure optimal muscle mass retention. Assume you weigh 150 pounds and want to maintain your muscle mass and/or gain muscle mass (with strength training), then you should consume between 109 and 150 grams of protein per day. Carbohydrates help maintain muscle glycogen levels, which plays a role in supporting athletic performance and muscular endurance. Additionally, vegetables/fruits are carbohydrate sources and there are numerous health benefits to consuming them (given their high antioxidant, vitamin, mineral, phytochemical, and polyphenol contents).

Some healthy fat sources include avocados, cheeses, eggs, fatty fish (i.e. salmon, mackerel, trout, sardines, or herring), most nuts, most seeds, olive oil, olives, baking chocolate, and full-fat dairy products. Fats are easy to over-consume given their caloric density, thus you should track intake when consuming fatty foods (such as oils) to ensure that you do not eat more calories than you intend. To You may want to keep fat lower than 30% of calories due to its effects on post-meal blood glucose and insulin response when consumed with carbohydrates. It is likely healthy to supplement fish or consume fatty fish (at least 2x per week) to reap the benefits of omega 3 (EPA/DHA) consumption. Lastly, minimize trans fat consumption. Eating more trans fats is associated with higher risk of heart disease, infertility, and diabetes (among other health detriments), while trans fat consumption is not necessary for bodily function. As such, you should mostly avoid eating (highly) processed foods, since processed foods often contain trans fats.

Some good protein sources include poultry (such as chicken and turkey), fish (such as flounder, tuna, aforementioned fatty fish, shrimp, and tilapia) (moderate intake according to these guidelines; 2-3 servings per week is generally recommended), egg whites, peas (nut power, protein powder/other protein-enriched products, greek yogurt, and most lean meats or dairy products. Protein sources are highly satiating, thus adding protein to your diet is likely beneficial for weight loss via hunger reduction, increased thermic effect, and decreased energy efficiency. Additionally, protein helps ensure greater muscle retention (for equivalent caloric intake) as compared to carbohydrate or fat during weight loss.

Some healthy carbohydrate sources include bananas, all berries, any green leafy vegetables, rice, lettuce, carrots, celery, brussels sprouts, grapes, potatoes, various beans, oats, green (string) beans, and any other fruits (other than avocados), vegetables, or legumes (other than peanuts). Eating a widely varied diet with many of the mentioned foods should help ensure that you consume sufficient micronutrients.

Practice tracking this month and read next month’s paper to learn how to adjust your calories and macros according to your goals!
Across the Pond and Other Places

By Bethany Weniger | Managing Editor

“So, why England anyway?” My professor looked at me, a deep wondering on his face.

It was an early Monday morning, and we had just finished a lecture on the Crusades. As everyone else swept out of the classroom, I stayed back to ask him about a letter of recommendation.

“I’ve always wanted to study abroad,” I said. “Their programs are much more focused and intensive than in the U.S., they have better internship options, and it will look really good on a transcript.”

I was applying to five schools in the U.K., looking to transfer a foreign university after finishing my associate’s degree at Suffolk. There, I would get my bachelor’s degree, have the opportunities to experience more things in a different country, and broaden my worldview and resume.

All of those benefits are what most students hope to achieve and receive if and when they study abroad, whether it be for a short or long-term program. While many people have chances to travel and study for a semester in their later years of college, those are typically only for a few months, and most people who go to another country wish to stay there for a longer extent of time. Unfortunately, the majority believe that studying abroad for your entire college education is not an attainable option, and that going to get your bachelor’s or master’s degree in another country is too expensive and difficult.

With research and devoted time though, you can quickly see that that is not always the case. Applying to foreign schools is simple, and some universities are of equal or lower cost than some colleges in the U.S.

To apply to universities in the United Kingdom, only one application website is used and required. UCAS – or the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service – is similar to the U.S. Common Application, where you can add the schools you wish to apply to and then all of your information and uploaded documents can be seen by them. Unlike the Common App though, this site is far simpler and contains all the universities in the U.K. Only one personal statement (essay) is required, one letter of recommendation, and everything only needs to be filled out once, not multiple times for different schools with varying application process preferences. Additionally, though I applied to five universities, the entire application only cost me £35, or about $50 – a far cheaper option than when U.S. schools ask for multiple fees, SAT/ACT scores, and applications. All of these applications are then monitored and updated through UCAS Track, which notifies you of acceptances and offers from the prospective universities.

When looking at the cost of universities abroad compared to ones at home, the difference is not all that drastic. Though some schools like Harvard, Yale, and Cornell. On average though, the price of attending a university in the U.K. is sometimes less than in the states.

For example, American University in Washington, D.C. can range from $30,000 to $34,000 a year for a full-time student, with that price ranging from $30,000 to $34,000 a year for a full-time student, with that price tag including tuition, fees, housing, and the meal plan. Brunel University in London comes to about $29,000 a year for full-time tuition, fees, and living expenses.

Another thing to consider when looking at schools abroad is the amount of time required for the programs. In England, most courses are only three years, the exceptions being if a student chooses a study abroad option or a work placement (internship) during their later years. However, the typical span of time is three years, resulting in it costing less than when graduating from an American college after four years. Additionally, within these three years, students are pursuing one degree in their specified field. Instead of applying to a school and declaring a major later on, students apply to a university and a certain program within that school. From the very start, they are being taught in their field, leaving unnecessary subjects and electives behind like those needed in American colleges, where even a degree in a STEM topic will require them to take a certain number of art electives. This focused study is great for students who know exactly what it is they wish to do and who don’t want to waste valuable time and money on other classes that will not help advance their degrees or skills.

Studying abroad in England is not the only option though – there are countless universities all over the world that are eager and willing to accept foreign students. Recently, Germany was offering free tuition for international students to come and study at their colleges. Due to a population imbalance and poor employment ratio, the country was looking to entice young students, hoping that once they finished their education and received their degrees, they would want to stay, thus helping the society’s population and economy. Though not all universities in Germany are still participating in this deal, many are offering low tuition fees and a college education for a fraction of the cost.

According to a New York Times article titled “A Guide to Getting a Bachelor’s Degree Abroad,” in many countries like “Turkey, Thailand, Brazil, Iceland and some in continental Europe, college is either free or virtually so, with tuition less than a couple thousand dollars.” Furthermore, “many other universities offer a bachelor’s degree for under $7,000 a year,” and in most countries, there are opportunities to receive financial aid from both foreign universities and your home country. Some countries charge nothing for tuition fees and students only have to cover their living expenses, and while these tuition-free countries often have high costs of living, it ultimately evens out.

So, in addition to saving money, going to a foreign university offers students the opportunities to travel more, enhance their resumes, learn a new language, immerse themselves in a different culture, and have more unique experiences. Though the thought of living in another country for three to four years may seem daunting to some, the pros generally outweigh the cons. And who wouldn’t love an apartment near the tour Eiffel, or to pass by the London Eye or Westminster Abbey every day?
What’s happening? The question that haunts the minds of people everywhere. We could dive into the specifics and the particular ancillary questions, but the central inquiry that we all have is exactly that; what’s happening?

Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida suffered through a devastating mass shooting that killed 17 people on Valentine’s Day. Former student Nikolas Cruz, 19, who was expelled from the school and did not graduate, walked through the doors of the school with an AR-15 assault rifle and put the entire country in mourning. It did not take long after the shooting for social media to erupt and call for change amongst the country’s executives. The outcry for new gun control laws and the banning of commonly used warlike weapons was blaring. However, should any of us really be shocked by that outcome?

Along with the call for modification, the blame game reached overwhelming levels. You had outspoken liberal democrats that could not have looked more quick on their feet and the conservative republicans doing whatever they can to suppress the attacks and get on the defensive. For example, former Hillary Clinton delegate Rachel R. Gonzalez, who is also the youngest DNC delegate at 19 years old, sent out a tweet that gave direct responsibility to the administration for the tragic occurrence.

The tweet stated, “The school shooter today didn’t act alone. He was assisted by the President, 52 Senators, and the NRA.” This post was sent in the middle of the afternoon on Valentine’s Day.

As disgusting as this tragic event is, it doesn’t help where people’s mindsets are. We were a mere two hours separated from the release of the original report and the first thing that jumps to the minds of Americans is the political narrative. We could not take the following 48 hours or even 24 hours to mourn the lost and to support those who had lost. God forbid we treat people like people.

The left is calling out for banning everything that has the word, “gun,” associated with it while the right is suddenly calling for teachers and professors to carry firearms. In a time where the nation should be coming together, we can’t help, but drift even further apart. I have news for both sides: you’re both wrong.

Taking away the gun from the good guy does not help anyone, but the people causing these horrific crimes and arming teachers will only drive the fear for students through the roof. The argument that does not get commonly entertained could easily be the most effective. Retired police officers and military personnel who are thoroughly trained in this area should be stationed in every school building across the country. The officer or veteran that the school plans on hiring would have to go through mental testing to see if it is safe for them to be around children and school staff with a weapon. Not only would it help prevent a tragedy, but it would create jobs for people that come home with nothing.

The country is sick and tired of being sick and tired. It creates stress which creates anger which creates blame which creates a moral war. We all need to clear our head and actually see things through a clear lens. Kids are frightened of school already and now that school shootings are embossed into the lining of their brains, teachers who these kids trust most carrying firearms would not help the problem. However, banning these weapons does not solve anything either. People will always find a way to get guns. Put it into perspective. When was the last time you heard a school shooter say he got his gun at a Dick’s Sporting Goods?

PUTTING IT INTO PERSPECTIVE: PREVENTING SCHOOL SHOOTINGS

By Mike Guido | Features and Opinions Editor

Join Us for Our 2nd Annual Out of the Darkness Walk
Sunday, April 15, 2018
Ammerman Campus
Registration begins at 9:30am. Walk begins at 10:30am.
Register at afsp.donordrive.com/event/sunysuffolk

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You're going to die no matter what you do with your life. How do you want to be remembered? How do you want to feel about yourself on a daily basis? Is the life you're living worth all its suffering?

I think the meaning of life is to establish meaning in life, for he who has a "why?" can bear any "how?" Something with meaning is "of importance or worthwhile in quality," and the most essential facet of human sentence is the belief that your existence is important. To live a meaningful existence is to conduct yourself in a manner that justifies life's suffering. This sentiment is generally construed as unity with the divine (perhaps religiously); however, the sense that you take action for a cause greater than yourself is crucial no matter your background.

Why not pursue happiness? I have previously asserted that the meaning of life is happiness, because if you are happy and satisfied with your state of being, then what more do you need from life? I have since revised my opinion. Happiness cannot be the meaning of life because its nature is transient. Happiness will wax and wane throughout life (even within a single day), but meaning will sustain you. Happiness will always fail because being is rich with suffering. If you believe that happiness is the meaning of life, then how do you react when you're diagnosed with cancer? How reliable is happiness at tragedy's strike?

Happiness fails when tragedy manifests because joy is too shallow to sustain you. Tragedy is an inevitable part of existence and as such, it need be planned for. If not today — then assuredly someday — pain will debilitate you or a loved one. This is why establishing meaning is crucial. When you have a purpose in life that overrides impulsion, then there is always sufficient reason to carry on despite life's harshest rigors. When every day of your life is spent working toward a goal worth dying for, then you are unstoppable. No matter the challenge or the consequences, with meaning you can overcome inherent weakness to accomplish your sacred goals.

Why establish meaning? Meaning is difficult to establish because it requires you to accept the burden of tragedy and suffering throughout life. It is difficult to find meaning because it necessitates setting a goal and committing to it with every morsel of your being. This often means that you need to complete difficult tasks, solve difficult problems, and struggle all the while.

So, why not just carry on chasing happiness and fulfillment, taking on challenges and responsibility when one can freely lay idle? Life is suffering, so why not selfishly take every opportunity to lie, cheat, steal, elude, and manipulate people for impulsive pleasure? You die alone and so does everybody else. What difference would it make if you did so? Your world returns to dirt no matter how much you accomplish in your life. Why ever do anything at all?

These questions have troubled humanity for thousands of years: “Short and sorrowful is our life, and there is no remedy when a man comes to his end, and no one has been known to return from Hades. Because we were born by mere chance, and hereafter we shall be as though we had never been; because the breath in our nostrils is smoke, and reason is a spark kindled by the beating of our hearts. When it is extinguished, the body will turn to ashes, and the spirit will dissolve like empty air. Our name will be forgotten in time, and no one will remember our works; our life will pass away like the traces of a cloud, and be scattered like mist that is chased by the rays of the sun and overcome by its heat. For our allotted time is the passing of a shadow, and there is no return from our death, because it is sealed up and no one turns back.”

“Come, therefore, let us enjoy the good things that exist, and not use the gift of the creation to the full as in youth. Let us take our fill of costly wine and perfumes, and let no flower of spring pass by us. Let us crown ourselves with rosebuds before they wither. Let none of us fail to share in our revelry, everywhere let us leave signs of enjoyment, because this is our portion, and this our lot. Let us oppress the righteous poor man, let us not spare the widow nor regard the gray hairs of the aged. But let our might be our law of right, for what is weak proves itself to be useless.” -Wisdom 2 (Revised Standard Version) of the Bible

The above argument is compelling and beautifully written, but I think it’s wrong. If all were to live as described above, then there would never be incentive to achieve anything. Why would you ever strive to create something knowing that your peers would disregard it or steal it for their own pleasure? This mode of being only exacerbates suffering because every individual with this attitude is both selfish and unproductive. This model inevitably leads to tyranny because in pursuing your own pleasure you are forced to take from others.

Then what do you think we should do?

I propose that making sacrifices for yourself and others is the antithede to human suffering. To spend today working for a better tomorrow will continuously fulfill you and improve everyone's quality of life. To put yourself first, however, today brings peace tomorrow and multiplies your pleasure exponentially over time. Living impulsively only potentiates society’s decay, for when you pursue transient glee, you fail to support the social structures that enable such pursuits. To work is to decide that the fruits of your labor are better borne tomorrow than today. This indicates that life is worthwhile because you can improve the future no matter how wretched you are now. To be fulfilled by your daily tasks, you must believe that your actions are not taken in vain. You will never accomplish anything if you deem all pursuits meaningless because you’ll never make the appropriate sacrifices. However, the more you sacrifice today, the better your future. Continuing this process over time creates consistent improvement and a sense that your existence is worthwhile. Failure to do so generates misery because those who neglect responsibility never succeed and thus, grow resentful. You won’t build self-efficacy if you don’t challenge yourself.

Responsibility for your actions is nested in sacrifice. I urge you to set a goal and endeavor to reach it before you perish. If you continuously shoot for the stars, then you may eventually reach them. It is always convenient to put off work for expedient pleasures, but this will not fulfill you. Life is going to kill you no matter what you do, so make the most of it. Determine the greatest good you could possibly pursue, then take action to realize your vision. There is no such thing as wasted time when you have a purpose. To take responsibility for all your future actions and accept the worst imaginable consequences is the feat of every hero.

Why me? How can I help improve this world? Countless others have moved mountains in striving toward a goal. Why can’t you do the same?

You’re going to die no matter what you do with your life. How do you want to be remembered? How do you want to feel about yourself on a daily basis? Is the life you’re living worth all its suffering?
10 Underrated Movies

Michael Fuzie | Reviews and Arts and Entertainment Editor

3. “The 6th Day” A Schwarzenegger film that has interesting concepts and has one of the more accurate versions of the future. It also features an incredible score by Trevor Rabin.
4. “Star Trek: Nemesis” This movie’s rating is surprising. The antagonist Shinzon (Tom Hardy) is fascinating. This film does go against some continuity, but it is an interesting film with interesting themes.
5. “The Chronicles of Narnia: Prince Caspian” The return to Narnia is fascinating, given how much has changed. We are given an interesting story with interesting politics and great character moments.

7. “Pitch Black” The best movie out of the “Riddick” franchise shows just how fascinating an old-fashioned monster movie can be.
8. “The Day After Tomorrow” The storm movie before 2009’s 2012. Looked amazing and had decent enough characters that carry the story. The score is also incredibly fitting and well done.
9. “Mars Attacks” This movie is a fun time. It has some hilarious and memorable moments, and the Martians’ language is comedic on its own.
10. “The Matrix” sequels While not great, they are so far from the worst movies – which, ironically, is what they are rated closest to.
Review: “Black Panther”

By William Hiner | Staff Writer

The time has finally come! Fans of the Marvel Cinematic Universe have long been anticipating a Black Panther film. In development since the early 1990s, this movie has been waiting to hit the big screen. It seems that 2018 could’ve been the perfect time for the popular African American superhero to hit the big screen. Diversity seems to be neglected in today’s film industry, but now we finally get a Black Panther standalone film – a character that has been part of the successful MCU since his debut in 2016’s “Captain America: Civil War.”

The film is about T’Challa (Chadwick Boseman), the protector and king of Wakanda. He is faced with an impossible task to face against a powerful warrior, named Erik Killmonger (Michael B. Jordan).

Critics everywhere have called this movie “revolutionary” and “unique,” but to me, that’s not the case. It’s mediocre at best and stale at its worst. This movie is not bad, nor good either. It’s in the middle. A decent film at best. The good things that could be said about this film are met with equally bad aspects.

I thought acting from Chadwick Boseman was pretty good. I loved his sister, Shuri (Letitia Wright). She basically plays a younger version of Tony Stark/Peter Parker, who all play the smart nerd in this universe. She was funny, had charisma, and was a welcomed addition to both the movie and the very popular universe that is the MCU.

As for the movie, Serkis was also good in this movie. He plays a gun dealer named Ulysses Klaue. He was insane, funny, and an overall fun character. Some of the Wakanda CGI was incredible to look at but also hideous.

This is the point in my review where I mention the negative aspects of the film. While the CGI in the Wakanda city looked unique, the ships looked weak in comparison to the city. There were certain scenes where characters would walk on a mountain or on top of a waterfall, and you could tell they’re performing in a green/blue screen set. Michael B Jordan’s character had a motivation that made sense, but once he had his super villain plan it got really stupid. Because this is an MCU movie, they adhere to the Marvel formula. Here is pretty standard – the good guy has to fight the bad guy, it sets up the next movie in the MCU, “Infinity War,” and then move over.

This movie’s story had way too many plot points for me to follow, and it’s messy throughout. Mediocre at its best and stale at its worst. Overall, this movie gets five potatoes out of 10. Nothing horrible, but nothing special either.

Review: “Black Lightning”

By Dylan Ramsay | Sports Editor

Jefferson Pierce (Cress Williams), better known as the superhero-vigilante Black Lightning, hung up his super suit and has taken a full-time job as principal of Garfield High School. Pierce spends his days helping his students do more with their lives than end up working for the local gang the 100. But when the 100 starts terrorizing his neighborhood, his high school, and especially kidnapping his youngest daughter Jennifer (China Anne McClain), it’s time to put the super suit back on and bring justice back to the streets of Freeland.

“Black Lightning” not only depicts our protagonist Jefferson Pierce’s story, but the individual stories of his daughters, his mentor Peter Gambi (James Remar), and of the big bad men behind the 100 – Tobias Whale (Marvin Jones III). Jefferson is facing the challenges of being a retired superhero, his love life, family and protecting the innocent. He is known throughout Freeland as “Black Jesus,” because he kept the local gangs at bay from attacking his students. Now that the 100 are back, he will choose between living a normal life and becoming Black Lightning once again.

Jefferson’s daughter Jennifer is struggling with being the daughter of the most popular man in Freeland. To cope, she takes to doing rambunctious activities her father would not be proud of, like partying, smoking, and drinking. Her actions lead to the first domino of Black Lightning’s return to fall. Jefferson’s other daughter Anissa (Nafessa Williams) can’t resist protesting against gang violence in the neighborhood – little does she know that she inherited powers from her father’s genes. Anissa also can’t come to grasps with her love life after her girlfriend leaves her – two stories that individually could be their own TV shows.

As for Peter, Jefferson went to him for guidance with his lightning powers, so much so that Gambi helped create the Black Lightning suit Pierce wore, as well as being his computer genius and running a command center to aid in Black Lightning’s help to fight crime. With Black Lightning’s absence, Gambi’s been working on upgrades: surveillance to aid Jefferson’s “eventual” return to heroism. Finally, you have the big bad man Tobias Whale. It was thought that Black Lightning had killed Whale, and vice versa. Whale is trying to run Freeland into his own gang empire. He is so aspired to have Freeland under his control that every time his “boys” fail him, he either a) shoots a harpoon in their chest or b) stab them to get a job done, and he is determined to make sure Black Lightning is eradicated from the South Side completely.

Black Lightning does a fantastic job with its characters and plot. Only halfway through the 12-episode first season, Black Lightning looks like he will be staying around in CW’s superhero lineup alongside “The Flash,” “Arrow,” “Supergirl,” and “DC Legends of Tomorrow.”
Review: “Darth Bane: Path of Destruction”

Michael Fuzie | Reviews and Arts and Entertainment Editor

Star Wars has had a tough time recently with their latest films seemingly disappointing many. So much so that they have had to retreat from their now uncanonized expanded universe and adapt those into films, but are those even worth the efforts, or are they just glorified stories? The “Darth Bane” trilogy has been called one of the E.U.’s best, second only to the “Thrawn” trilogy. Is it a good story or is it just a glorified mess? “Darth Bane: Path of Destruction” – the first book in the trilogy – is one of the best pieces of Star Wars ever written. It is honestly better than the films. The book was written by Drew Karpyshyn, writer of the legendary Knights of the Old Republic Game. A game notorious for its incredibly interesting characters and story. Karpyshyn has delivered some of the best modern stories to date, and his ability to tell an interesting story is on full display with his first entry to the Darth Bane trilogy. This book takes a different approach – instead of following the usual Star Wars heroes, it follows Darth Bane from his low beginnings to his rise and eventual creation of the Sith’s Rule of Two.

What’s most incredible, is Karpyshyn’s ability to characterize. Bane is a wonderful character who perfectly drives the story. He is – in short – an amazing character. You fully understand his motivations and side with him. The fact that you are rooting for Bane throughout the book despite his horrific actions is stunning. Bane is a human, whose actions you can understand – though there is a point where he crosses a threshold and you find it odd that you’re still rooting for him. But that’s a credit to Karpyshyn’s writing. Karpyshyn also treats us to a plethora of interesting characters. In the entire book, there are probably one or two annoying characters who thankfully are not focused on. In addition, we are given P.O.V. characters on each side of the conflict. We see both Jedi and Sith during a war and the lengths they’ll go to destroy each other. When one gets an edge in the war, we feel the devastation the other feels. If there is one book that successfully greys a black and white universe, it’s this one.

Karpyshyn’s attention to detail in this book is also perfect – especially the action sequences. The descriptions paint a complete picture of the environment, the characters, their movements, and their state of mind. Arguably the best written part of the book is a duel in the rain.

The best part aside from the characters is the exploration into the philosophy of the Sith. Because the book follows Bane during his rise, we see how he learns and learn it with him. We also question it with him. The amount of depth this adds to the plot is unprecedented.

Karpyshyn also manages to provide insight into the dark side – something we’ve heard countless times in the films, but never understood. Because it’s a book, Karpyshyn had the ability to show and tell, which he does – especially in the writings of the dark side.

Overall, “Darth Bane: Path of Destruction” is a testament to Drew Karpyshyn’s writing. It’s incredibly written, has great characters, and its plot is one of the most perfectly paced I’ve seen in a long time. It also has an audio version which adds so much to the already great story.

It gets nine potatoes out of 10.

Disney and Lucasfilm should take notes from this book and perhaps adapt it into a film. It’s that good.

Obscure Horror Cinema

By William Burns | Faculty Advisor

For some reason – probably financial – the late 70’s/early 80’s found many of Hollywood’s former greats “slumming” in big budgeted horror films. Not that this trend started during this time period, but it seemed to reach its apex (or nadir – depending on which side you’re on) at the turn of the decade. Everyone from Orson Welles to Tony Curtis to John Cassavetes to Bette Davis appeared in some ultra-bizarre (and not always in a good way) horror movies as their stars continued to dwindle. One of the oddest detours into horror has to be the genre work of legendary director John Huston. Son of the great actor Walter (who played the Devil in “The Devil and Daniel Webster”) and father of actress Angelica, John Huston directed quite a few of the contenders for greatest horror in the history of cinema: “The Maltese Falcon,” “The Treasure of the Sierra Madre” (my pick), “The Asphalt Jungle,” “The African Queen,” “Moby Dick,” and “The Night of the Iguana.” Perhaps the finest American filmmaker ever, Huston was a true maverick, an uncompromising artist who demanded the best from his cast and crew, and most of all, from himself. Of course, this high level of integrity and quality control would eventually be his undoing and so by the 1970’s, Huston had problems getting financing for his films, though he would eventually make two of the 70’s best: “Wiseblood” and “The Man Who Would Be King.” In order to make a living between directing gigs, Huston acted in some great films (Chinatown), some bad films (“Battle for the Planet of the Apes” and some WTF films “Tentacles,” “The Visitor”). With the popularity of slashers and thrillers in the early 80’s, Huston got a directing job, helming the Hitchcockian horror film “Phobia.” The film stars Paul Michael Glaser (Starsky!) as a psychiatrist who is pre- scripting some unorthodox treatments for curing his patients’ phobias. When the patients start turning up dead, killed by the very phobias they suffered from, the good doctor has to clear his name before he becomes a victim too. Situated somewhere between Brian DePalma’s postmodern thrillers and John Boorman’s technicolor noirs, “Phobia” gives Huston an interesting premise (written by Hammer icon Jimmy Sangster, Gary Sherman of “Raw Meat” fame, and Ronald Shusett, who had a hand in “Alien” and “Dead and Buried”) as he stages some innovative but strange scenes, especially when depicting the sadistic techniques that are supposedly deprogramming the doctor’s phobic patients – like showing a woman with sexual inadequacies video footage of a sexual assault. Not exactly following the Hippocratic Oath, “Phobia” is a prime example of an old school director trying to adapt to the then current brutal themes of the genre with interesting results.

Speaking of slamming actors, Jack Palance had one of the strangest careers in Hollywood. Starting off as Marlon Brando’s understudy in the Broadway production of “A Streetcar Named Desire,” Palance would appear in many films, most notably in an Oscar-nominated performance in “Shane” and as a manic film producer in Jean Luc Godard’s “Contempt.” Palance would win an Oscar for his role as Curly in “City Slickers” and would give one of the most memorable acceptance speeches by dropping down and doing one armed push-ups. In between these two career triumphs were years spent making horror films to pay the bills, including his portrayal of Dracula for Dan Curtis’s adaptation and the imprisoned narrator in Jess Franco’s DeSade adaptation “Deadly Sanctuary.” One of his most interesting excursions into horror was “Craze,” a 1974 British film directed by the extremely underrated Freddie Francis. “Craze” is the story of Neil Mottram, an antiques dealer who is also the leader of a cult worshiping Chuku, an African god who demands blood sacrifices. Mottram starts to connect random events with his increasing murderous devotion to his god. Palance is known for his glorious overacting and his scene-cruelting prowess, and “Craze” doesn’t disappoint. His switch from suave business owner to wild-eyed ax murderer in a fetish mask is a delight to behold. Another interesting aspect of “Craze” is the depiction of the last gasps of Swinging London, the wilting of the Flower Children into the dead-eyed, self-absorbed 70’s. With an equally compelling performance by the great Diana Dors, “Craze” deserves a special edition release, but until then, check out the wonderfully mad analysis of the devastating delirium of belief on YouTube.
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If you have any questions please contact Danielle DiMauro-Brooks at dimaurd@sunysuffolk.edu.
Comfort Food Recipes: for Those Whose New Year’s Resolutions Have Failed

By Paula Schultz | Editor-in-Chief

We are finally a couple months into the new year and I hope your New Year’s resolutions are still going strong. In the last feature, I shared with you all some delicious and healthy recipes so you can kick-start your New Year’s goal of being healthier. If, however, you fell prey to temptation and gave up on the idea, that’s okay! There’s always tomorrow. Here are some not-so-healthy comfort food recipes that you can enjoy before you start up your New Year’s resolution again:

**CHICKEN BACON RANCH BUBBLE-UP BAKE**

*Recipe courtesy of Skinny Taste*

**Ingredients:**
- Cooking spray, for pan
- 6 slices bacon
- 3 tbsp. butter
- 3 tbsp. all-purpose flour
- 1 1/2 c. whole milk
- 1 large head broccoli, cut into small florets
- 1 1/2 c. shredded Cheddar cheese
- 1 1/2 c. shredded chicken
- 1 (16.3 oz) can refrigerated biscuits
- 1/2 packet ranch seasoning

**Directions:**
1. Preheat oven to 350°. Grease a large baking dish with cooking spray. In a large skillet, cook bacon until crispy, about 8 minutes, then drain on a paper towel lined plate. Wipe skillet clean.
2. In the same skillet over medium heat, melt butter. Whisk in flour and cook until bubbly, about 1 minute. Gradually stir in milk and bring to a simmer. Cook until thickened, about 2 minutes. Whisk in cheese and cook until melted, about 3 minutes. Season with salt and pepper and stir in broccoli. Remove from heat.
3. Spread broccoli mixture into the bottom of a large baking dish, then top with chicken. Cut each biscuit into eighths and scatter on top of chicken. Chop bacon into small pieces and scatter on top of biscuits, then sprinkle with ranch seasoning.
4. Bake until biscuits are golden and cooked through, about 25 minutes. Garnish with parsley, and serve warm.

**MAC & CHEESE PIZZA**

*Recipe courtesy of Delish*

**Ingredients:**
- 1 box macaroni and cheese, plus ingredients called for on box
- 1 c. shredded cheddar, divided
- 1 c. shredded mozzarella, divided
- 1 lb. pizza dough
- Extra-virgin olive oil, for brushing
- 1/4 tsp. garlic powder
- 1/4 tsp. Italian seasoning
- Freshly ground black pepper
- Freshly chopped parsley, for serving

**Directions:**
1. Preheat oven to 450° and line a large baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. Prepare macaroni and cheese according to package instructions, then add ½ cup cheddar and ½ cup mozzarella to the pot. Stir until cheese is melted.
3. Stretch and roll pizza dough into a large round, about 12" wide. Transfer to the prepared baking sheet. Brush the top of the dough with olive oil and sprinkle with garlic powder. Bake until the crust begins to turn golden, about 10 minutes.
4. Spread the macaroni and cheese on top of the baked crust in an even layer, leaving a ½" border for the crust. Top with remaining cheddar and mozzarella and bake until the cheese is melted and the crust is golden, about 10 minutes more. Garnish with parsley and serve warm.

**PAULA TIP:** Top with additional favorites. I recommend ground beef and/or bacon.

**EDIBLE COOKIE DOUGH**

*Recipe courtesy of Delish*

**Ingredients:**
- 1 1/2 c. unsalted butter, softened
- 1 1/2 c. brown sugar
- 1 tbsp. vanilla extract
- 3 1/4 c. crushed graham crackers
- 1 c. milk
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1 1/3 c. mini chocolate chips

**Directions:**
In a large bowl, use an electric mixer to beat butter, brown sugar, and vanilla until light and fluffy. Mix in graham crackers, salt, and milk. Fold in chocolate chips.
By Ausma Palmer | Off-Campus Editor

The 2018 Academy Awards are set to be one of the most exciting in recent years. With so many great films released in 2017, each category is stacked to the brim. While some categories have had the same winners all awards season long, others are up for grabs and just about anyone could come away with the big prize.

Never underestimate the Academy’s ability to shake things up either — we may very well see some dark horses emerge to take the win. Here’s a rundown of the biggest Oscar categories, who’s been winning the awards in each so far this season, and some predictions on who could sneak in and surprise us all.

Best Supporting Actor:

The favorite: Sam Rockwell, who plays a vicious cop who undergoes a dramatic change of heart after getting a taste of his own medicine in “Three Billboards Outside Ebbing Missouri,” has been sweeping this category all award season long. So far, he’s won the Golden Globe, Screen Actors Guild (SAG) Award, and the BAFTA (British Academy of Film and Television Arts) award for his performance, so he seems like the clear favorite to win at the Oscars.

The dark horse: Critics have lauded Willem Dafoe’s performance as a motel manager in “The Florida Project” since its release — GQ called it “quiet but masterful” — and Dafoe has picked up a few awards at smaller film festivals. If anyone can snatch the prize away from Rockwell, it’s Dafoe.

Best Supporting Actress:

The favorite: Allison Janney is the obvious choice to win the award for her performance as Tonya Harding’s abusive mother-turned-coach in “I, Tonya.” Like Rockwell, Janney has also won the majority of awards in her category this season, including the Golden Globe, SAG, and the BAFTA.

The dark horse: It’s hard to say who could be the surprise winner of this award since Janney’s performance has received the highest praise out of all of them. Octavia Spencer has perhaps the best chance, simply because she is the most decorated of the bunch, having already won an Oscar for “The Help” in 2012.

Best Actor:
Nominees: Timothée Chalamet (“Call Me By Your Name”), Daniel Day-Lewis (“Phantom Thread”), Gary Oldman (“Darkest Hour”), and Denzel Washington (“Roman J. Israel, Esq.”).

The favorite: Gary Oldman is another actor who’s received the majority of this season’s awards in his category. He, too, has won the Golden Globe, SAG, and the BAFTA for his performance as Winston Churchill in “Darkest Hour.” Biopics are popular among the Academy — three of the Best Actor awards in the past five years have gone to actors depicting real people — so it looks likely that Oldman will win the Oscar as well.

The dark horse: Daniel Day-Lewis has always been a favorite with the Academy: he’s won two Oscars for Best actor in just the past 10 years and has the most ever wins in the category. As such, there’s always the possibility that he’ll pull off yet another win — this time for his performance as a domineering, perfectionistic clothing designer in “Phantom Thread.” Daniel Kaluuya has received much acclaim for his breakout performance in “Get Out” and just a few weeks ago won the BAFTA EE Rising Star Award — though that was an award determined by a public vote.

Best Actress:

The favorite: Frances McDormand is the obvious choice for the Oscar, and she’s swept the three main awards of the season. McDormand is known to play tough, rough-around-the-edges, determined women; Mildred, the character she plays in “Three Billboards,” is no different. With her performance as the grieving mother of a murdered daughter who will go to any length to see that justice is served — described by director Martin McDonagh as a Brandon-type character — she has reached the pinnacle of her career. Already highly awarded for the role, the Oscar for Best Actress is basically already in her hands.

The dark horse: Though it’s probably safe to say Frances McDormand will win this one, you never know what could happen when Meryl Streep is nominated. And Saoirse Ronan’s been nominated twice in the past 10 years, which leaves her overdue for a win — will the Academy surprise us with this one?

Best Director:

The favorite: Here is where predictions start to get tricky, and in this category, it’s really anyone’s game. Among our nominees, we have veteran nominees like Christopher Nolan, Paul Thomas Anderson, and Guillermo del Toro who’ve yet to have their glory and first-time directors like Jordan Peele and Greta Gerwig who could pull off surprise wins. Although del Toro has been picking up a majority of the awards in this category this season — including the Golden Globe and the BAFTA — he has recently been the subject of some controversy. The son of Pulitzer prize-winning writer Paul Zindel is suiting the writers of “The Shape of Water,” which includes del Toro, alleging that they stole the story from Zindel, whose play, “Let Me Hear You Whisper,” bares glaring similarities to the film. If the Academy takes this suit into consideration, del Toro may not have the win in the bag.

The dark horse: All of these directors are masters in their own right, so the Oscar could really go to anyone. Peele and Gerwig are first-time nominees who’ve been picking up lesser awards from independent film festivals, whereas Nolan and Anderson have been nominated for various Oscars several times before. If Gerwig won, she’d be the second woman to ever win the award; if Peele won, he’d be the first black director to ever win. If this season’s trend doesn’t continue and del Toro doesn’t get the Oscar, it’s hard to say whether the Academy will go with fresh faces representing the changing nature of Hollywood or with the familiar titans who’ve yet to have their moment in the spotlight.

Best Picture:

The favorite: “Three Billboards” is the obvious favorite — it’s won the Golden Globe for Best Drama and two BAFTAs: one for Best British Film (director Martin McDonagh is British-Irish) and one for Best Picture. It also picked up the SAG for Outstanding Performance by a Cast — unsurprising, given McDonagh’s and Rockwell’s wins all season long. Of course, that trend doesn’t always carry through to the Oscars — last year, “La La Land” won the Golden Globe for Best Picture — Musical or Comedy, so it should not be counted out.

The dark horse: Best Picture is usually the hardest category to predict, because you never know how the Academy will vote. Will they go with the favorite, the one that’s been winning the most awards this season? Will they go with one that relates a political struggle of our past to one in our present — in this case, “The Post”? Will they go with the coming-of-age picture that depicts the confusion of teenage years, like “Call Me By Your Name” or “Lady Bird”? Or with an indie favorite that comments on race relations in America in a uniquely different way, like “Get Out”? Will they choose a historical picture that reminds us of where we’ve been, like “Dunkirk” and “Darkest Hour”? Or will they award a tale of love and torment, like “Phantom Thread” and “Shape of Water”? It all depends on what kind of statement they’re looking to make. We will just have to wait and see!

The Academy Awards will be held on March 4. A full list of nominees can be found at oscars.org.
It’s barely three months into 2018, but the Internet has already come up with so many viral memes that have become social media gold. Whether it involves the consumption of laundry detergent (Tide pods anyone?), the selfie kid from the Justin Timberlake halftime show, or the Justin Timberlake halftime show, whipping your hair to ‘New Freezer’, or being inspired by the attitude of a sassy cheerleader; popular memes are in demand and social media is more than ready to supply.

**THE TIDE POD CHALLENGE**

Challenges are nothing new to the average social media user. We’ve seen people dump buckets of ice water on themselves to support ALS funding, eat large amounts of cinnamon, and attempt to dance like Lil’ Kim. Now, it’s gone to a whole other level. People, mostly teenagers, have been posting videos of themselves consuming Tide pods onto YouTube and other platforms. The consumption of the Tide product involves chewing and gagging on the pods, as well as cooking the pods before eating them. In the wake of this hazardous challenge, Facebook and YouTube have actively removed any videos of people consuming Tide pods. Even Tide themselves have paired up with Rob Gronkowski to officially tell people that they should not eat the pods. The mess! Doesn’t everyone know the medical hazards associated with eating laundry detergent? This challenge can be summed up by some words of wisdom from Gronkowski himself: “What the heck is going on, people? Use Tide for washing. Not eating. Do not eat.”

**THE NEW FREEZER CHALLENGE**

Speaking of challenges, one would think that the “New Freezer” challenge would consist of teens sticking themselves in freezers and posting videos of it to Twitter. The “New Freezer” challenge is arguably more simple than the Tide pod challenge. It involves participantsVideoing themselves often in a group, swaying side to side and whipping their heads to the song ‘New Freezer’ by Rich the Kid & Kendrick Lamar. If you have a group of people to do this with, this could be a fun challenge to participate in. The most notable video of this meme is a clip of employees and customers participating at a Georgia Waffle House.

**THE SUPER BOWL SELFIE KID**

In a championship game between the Eagles and the Patriots, the winner was arguably 13 year old spectator Ryan McKenna. Justin Timberlake’s Super Bowl halftime show performance was met with a number of very polarizing reactions. However, one almost instantly meme-able moment happened when JT went into the Bank Stadium audience during his halftime show performance and noticed Ryan McKenna on his phone, presumably recording from the front facing camera. In an iconic move, that’s when Timberlake decided to make McKenna the envy of just about everyone and decide to snap a selfie with him. But it was the moment after, where McKenna appeared to look on his phone after the selfie was taken, that went viral. The image of McKenna looking through his phone had social media buzzing with theories such as: he was searching who Justin Timberlake was, his phone dying, his phone not having enough storage, and or he was searching for the latest This Is Us updates. McKenna explained to ABC: “At first I tried to get a selfie with him, and my phone died, and then it turned back on.” He also explained to the St. Paul Pioneer Press; “Then all of a sudden I’m up on the jumbotron and everyone is talking about me. I can’t believe it.” Now only one question remains, who’s the more popular Super Bowl meme; Selfie Kid or the Left Shark?

**AWKWARD CARDI B IS ALL OF US**

Giuliana Rancic couldn’t be less ready for a very candid Cardi B, even if she wanted to. When media personality Giuliana Rancic interviewed hip hop recording artist Cardi B for this year’s Grammy’s, social media had a field day with the awkwardness. Giuliana appeared to be more than a little uncomfortable at Cardi B’s explicit candidness. Not only that, Giuliana also seemed to be mixing and matching her hip hop trivia, much to Cardi’s confusion. Social media users went into overdrive with memes and captions from this interview to use for awkward situations such as: “I went to school with you and we had class together” or “When you ask the teacher for help and still don’t understand.” This meme-able interview is definitely everyone’s go to gif for “pretending to listen.”

During a championship cheerleading competition, who knew that a certain cheerleader’s game face would almost break the internet? Senior Elite and Cheer Extreme cheerleader Ryan Cummings became the perfect go to meme for when a situation calls for a bit of attitude and confidence. Addressing the haters? Professors thought you weren’t paying attention but you actually knew the answer? New year, new you? This cheerleader’s expression says it all. Social media is on fire with the memes this year, and it’s only three months in! With many countless memes this early in the year, in the wise words of Twitter user @Memeprovider, “@2018 bout to be wlddd.”
Behold, the trainwreck that was Fergie’s national anthem performance at the NBA All Star game. Everyone knows how bad it was, and our ears will take time to recover. It wasn’t the Fergalicious singer’s most glamorous moment, and the memes made from the performance are priceless. #SingItLikeFergieChallenge, anybody? However, this is not the first time a recording artist gave a less than stellar performance. Before we know it, another singer will butcher their performance and have social media users foaming at the mouth with memes. Let’s take a look at these past pitiful performances.

Christina Aguilera’s 2011 Super Bowl National Anthem Performance:
Fergie was not the first to totally butcher the national anthem. Remember Christina Aguilera’s? She totally butchered hers too. The “Dirrty” singer forgot and rearranged the words, and her overall vocals left something to be desired. At least Michael Bolton had the wits to write the lyrics down on his hand.

Roseanne Barr’s 1990 San Diego Padres Performance:
Fergie’s rendition can’t be as awful as Roseanne’s almost 30 years earlier. While performing at the San Diego Padres in 1990, it was clear that Roseanne set out to give a rather obnoxious performance of the national anthem. She was completely off-key, grabbed her groin multiple times, and spit on the pitcher’s mound. Classic Roseanne Barr. At least Madonna thought she was good?

Britney Spears’s 2007 MTV VMA Performance:
Remember Britney Spears circa 2007? While performing her hit song “Gimme More,” the audience said “gimme less.” What was supposed to be her comeback turned out to be a badly lip-synced disaster and an overall disappointment. Spears seemed to have forgotten some of the lyrics to her song and appeared to be disoriented and confused. Of course, everyone cuts Britney slack now, knowing her meltdown that followed that performance. In fact, she came back even bigger and better. Who’s to say Fergie can’t pick herself up from her own disaster?

Janet Jackson’s 2004 Super Bowl Halftime Performance:
Everyone remembers this one—’nuff said. Hence the phrase: “wardrobe malfunction.”

Miley Cyrus’s 2013 MTV VMA Performance:
Miley Cyrus came in like a wrecking ball when she changed her look drastically in 2013. There was clearly no more Hannah Montana, and she made that clear at the 2013 MTVMAs. During her performance, Cyrus twerked all over the place and on Robin Thick and got rather provocative with a foam finger—all while dressed in a flesh-colored bikini.

Mariah Carey’s 2016/2017 NYE Performance:
Another example of a great performer, not so great performance. In fact, what didn’t go wrong with this performance? Turns out, Mariah actually has some advice for Fergie. When it comes to the harsh criticism, Carey tells her: “Dahling, nobody needs to listen to that.” If anyone could give advice when it comes to this, it’s Mariah. Especially when she just recently got out of hot water due to her NYE performance last year. Maybe Carey should thank Fergie?

Needless to say, there’s no mercy when it comes to the criticism of Fergie’s tragic national anthem performance at the NBA All Star game. At the same time, there’s definitely no shortage of bad performances from popular artists, and even though the “Boom Boom Pow” singer is getting dragged with no end in sight, everyone as a whole will soon build a London Bridge and get over it as soon as the next musical pariah comes along. Until then, #SingItLikeFergieChallenge, anyone?

By Kevin Quinitchett | Staff writer

Photos courtesy of Google Images
You!

Volunteers needed for the FIRST ever Take Back The Night (TBTN) Event!

TBTN is a foundation that seeks “to end sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual abuse and all other forms of sexual violence.” Volunteers and participants are needed for various locations and activities.

The event is on **April 13** in the Sagtikos Building at 6:00pm, volunteers arrive at 5:00pm

To Volunteer or March:

Please sign up for Take Back the Night Event!

Here’s how it works in 3 easy steps:

1. Click this link to go to our invitation page on SignUp.com:
   http://signup.com/login/entry/6130686120127
2. Enter your email address
   You will NOT need to register an account on SignUp.com
3. Sign up! Choose your spots - SignUp.com will send you an automated confirmation and reminders. Easy!

If you have any questions please contact Danielle DiMauro-Brooks at dimaurd@sunysuffolk.edu.
1. Women's hockey: After coming up short in Sochi in 2014, this time was different four years later – the women's ice hockey team got back to the gold medal game and won with a shootout goal by Joce- lyn Lamoureux-Davidson in the sixth round. It wasn’t just her who helped propel them to the women's first gold medal – she had help from her fellow teammates: goaltender Maddie Rooney, forward Hilary Knight, defense woman Sidney Morin, and Lamoureux’s twin sister Monique Lamoureux-Mo- rando. A well-deserved gold medal for the ladies.

2. Chloe Kim: women's halfpipe snowboarding: Kim was already a favorite to win the event, but it was the way she won it. She had gotten the highest score out of all the women in the event, but she wasn’t satisfied. Usually a 93.75 would please any gold medal winner but not Kim. On her victory lap – her fi- nal attempt – she crushed her score of 93.75 and re- placed it with a 98.25. The first Asian-American to win the gold in the Olympics for the U.S. – and in her parents' home country. Only 17-years old and with a gold medal in her snow- boarding career, a promising future awaits Chloe, whether it be with the Olympics or not.

3. Men's curling: For the first time in U.S.A. curling Olympics history, the United States has won the gold. Skipper John Shuster, lead John Land- steiner, third Tyler George, newcomer Matt Hamilton, and alternate Joe Polo fi- nally brought the curling gold to Team U.S.A. Shus- ter, the seasoned veteran of the group, played through three previous Olympics before achieving the goal of gold. Shuster now goes from Captain Choke to Captain Gold. This will be a moment in U.S. sports history that won’t be for- gotten anytime soon.

4. Shaun White: men's halfpipe snowboarding: Shaun "The Flying Tomato" White failed at medali- ing four years ago in So- chi, contemplating retiring afterwards. The burning desire for him to get his third gold at him, so much that he scored a whopping 97.75, silenc- ing his critics that thought his snowboarding career at the Olympics was over. What hails next for "The Flying Tomato?" Only time will tell, but right now, a big congratulation to the Olympic veteran.

5. Mikaela Shiffrin: women's giant slalom alpine skiing: Not only did Mi- kaela win gold in alpine skiing, and silver in the Alpine combine, but she surpassed skiing veteran Lindsey Vonn as the top women's skier in the Unit- ed States. In Vancouver, the U.S. ski team brought eight medals, and in Py- eongchang only three – two of them from Shiffrin. Congratulations and to many more medals in Bei- jing in 2022.

6. Jesse Diggins and Kikkan Randall: women’s cross-country team sprint free: Diggins and Randall copied the men's curling team by win- ning the first cross-country skiing gold medal in U.S. sports history. Diggins, 26, and Randall, 35, pushed themselves through vigor- ous hills, and with one final push they beat the Euro- pean teams. Cross-country skiing was a relatively un- known sport in the United States, but thanks to Dig- gins and Randall it's now a phenomenon next to curl- ing. Congratulations, la- dies to a hard-fought gold.

7. Jamie Anderson: women's slopestyle snow- boarding: not only did Anderson win gold in slopestyle snowboarding, but she also got silver in women's big air competi- tion. Anderson showed the entire world she’s still got it and sent a message to Chloe Kim that she isn’t the only women’s snowboard- er who got gold. Congratu- lations and we will see you in Beijing for another run at the gold.

8. Red Gerard: men's slopestyle snowboarding: another 17-year old, Red Gerard, showed the world and the snowboarding vet- erans that there is a name to fear in upcoming tour- naments, and his name is Red. Being one of the youngest gold medalists, his future in snowboard- ing is a very bright one. He can rival to become the new face of Olympic American snowboarding – assuming Shaun White is done with the Olympics. What is one of the colors of the Ameri- can flag? Red, and now with gold, a big congratulation to the next up and coming snowboarder.

9. David Wise: men's halfpipe freeskier: this isn’t the first gold med- al in Wise’s career and it won’t be the last. Wise is a decorated freestyle ski- ing veteran with now two Olympic gold medals and four X-Games gold med- als. Winning is in his blood. What made his victory ever sweeter was when his kids joined him on the podium, all proud of what their father accomplished. Congrats to Wise and we will probably see him next in the X-Games before we see him in Beijing.

10. Chris Mazdzer: men's singles luge: Mazder didn’t win the gold in the luge, but he did get silver just falling short to Austria’s David Gleirscher. He did achieve a U.S. mile- stone, being the first Amer- ican to win the silver in luge. Silver isn’t as good as gold in the Olympics, but Mazder has another oppor- tunity to win the gold in Beijing in the next Winter Olympics. Still, congratulations on medaling and on the milestone.
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NASCAR 2018 Season Preview and Predictions

By Jordan Flumignan | Copy Editor

If the offseason was any indication, the 2018 NASCAR season will be an eventful and historical season. The season open with Speedweeks annual Clash. The Clash is a non-points event that is held as a preseason exhibition. It kicks off a high-octane week of exciting racing action that culminates in the Great American Racing event, the Daytona 500, which is held on Feb. 18.

The premier auto manufacturer in NASCAR, Chevrolet is switching the body style of their entry to the top flight of NASCAR competition, due to poor sales of their old body style, the Chevrolet SS. The new body style is going to be the sixth generation of arguably America’s favorite muscle car, the Camaro ZL1. However, it is the lack of one of the Ford Drivers that is making the most news this offseason. Danica Patrick, the first female Daytona 500 Pole award winner, will not be competing after the Daytona 500 where she is set to run her final NASCAR race.

NASCAR is – and always has been – a family sport, with families such as Earnhardt, Elliott, Petty, Yates, and Jarrett. The new season will also see a return to prominence of the #9 car, which has been a staple of NASCAR lore since Bill Elliott piloted the #9 car. Now #9 will return to NASCAR prominence and the Elliott family when Bill’s son Chase Elliott takes the helm. Elliott has arguably been the face of the “young movement” in NASCAR. Another point to note is that 2017 NASCAR Xfinity Series Champion William Byron will attempt to return the #24 car to victory lane for the first time in three seasons as he attempts to be the next driver to fill the shoes of one of the greats, Jeff Gordon.

Another driver from NASCAR’s “young movement” will be the replacement for Dale Earnhardt Jr., Alex Bowman. Bowman subbed for now retired Dale Earnhardt Jr. in 2016. Earnhardt dealt with the effects of a nasty concussion that kept him sidelined for two-thirds of the 2016 season. Bowman has been confirmed to take over full time for Dale Earnhardt Jr.

NASCAR’s youth movement will be the biggest story headed into Speedweeks. 2015 NASCAR Cup Champion Kyle Busch has called the attention given to this youth movement “stupid.” Darrell “Bubba” Wallace, a rookie in 2018 who drives the #43 car, fired right back, calling Busch’s comments “stupid.” Wallace added that Busch was once the face of the youth movement.

NASCAR’s youth movement is something the sport is proud of, and the movement is getting more and more minorities involved in the sport. Wallace, who is African-American, along with Daniel Suarez, driver of the #19 car (born in Monterrey, Mexico), are leading the charge of NASCAR’s diversity program and are considered some of NASCAR’s brightest rising stars.

Another thing to look for at the start of the season will be the fallout from the Denny Hamlin and Chase Elliott incident at the end of last season. The incident seemed like it was over when Elliott got back at Hamlin in Phoenix, for the bump and run incident that occurred at Martinsville. The 2018 NASCAR Season officially starts at 2:30 p.m. EST on Feb. 18. NASCAR should have a spectacle on their hands if anything major happens and could have a first-time race winner in one of their “young guns.” We also could see two drivers fight once a race is over, and regardless of what happens, it is going to be a great season. NASCAR’s 36 regular season race schedule will have all 40 drivers going coast to coast from Feb. 18 all the way until right before the Thanksgiving holiday when a new NASCAR champion will be crowned in Miami. All we can hope for is a safe and entertaining season.