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Link and Thompson address recent quarantine controversy

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The college has implemented new safety protocols, including the Gator Pledge, which made national news after students claimed President Hilary Link violated the protocols by attending a soccer game on Sept. 12.

The new health policies, such as the Gator Pledge, are intended to limit disease exposure for the 2020 fall semester amidst the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

"Everything that (the college) is doing is meant to keep our students, our campus community and the local community as safe as possible while also keeping the campus open," Link said.

The Gator Pledge is Allegheny's set of prerequisite guidelines for a safe return to campus and was signed by all students upon arrival to campus. The Gator Pledge stipulated that students must practice proper hand-washing, sanitization and social distancing procedures. The pledge also emphasized that gatherings of any size were not permitted. Other protocols specified in the Gator Pledge that any greeting could not involve touching of any kind. The pledge also went on to explain various travel restrictions, including the prohibition of traveling to high-risk areas — as well as preventing any guests from visiting over the course of the semester.

The initial quarantine plan specified that all students were to remain on campus until Sept. 15.

In an email to the campus community on Sept. 10, Link and the Allegheny College Health Agency's Gabrielle Morrow announced the indefinite extension of campus-wide quarantine following a spike in positive COVID-19 cases on campus.

"Because (the college) uncovered, during last week's tests, a cluster of positives among a connected group of students, and because we have understood that this arose due to travel off campus, effective immediately, and until we have evidence through testing that we have contained our cluster situation, we are adding the precaution of extending the on-campus quarantine period until further notice," Link and Morrow wrote. "This means students may not leave campus for any reason — including, for example, trips to area businesses, jobs, or any other off-campus locations. While this is disappointing for all of us, given the current status of our clustering, we believe that this is the best way to maintain safety for the entire community."

The extension of the campus-wide quarantine provoked backlash from the campus community.

"When this outbreak began, I was not comfortable returning home, so I went out on a limb and got a job and an apartment here in town," Noah Bebee, '21, said during the campus quarantine. "I have been here the whole summer and I had to quit my job because of the Gator Pledge. I also took the smallest meal plan with the intent to provide for myself like I have been doing all summer, but now I cannot provide for myself and my job is at a loss without me."

Students working in the Meadville area, like Bebee, were instructed to leave off-campus jobs.

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SAMI MIRZA/THE CAMPUS

A recently-installed security camera mounted on an exterior door of Ravine-Narvik Hall.

Security cameras on campus

First cameras installed following December assault

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Trigger warning: Sexual assault, gun violence

The college installed security cameras on campus over the summer following the violent sexual assault in Ravine-Narvik Hall in December 2019.

"I was not aware (that cameras were installed) until I saw the news article and story from the Campus Instagram," Andre Cabrera, '21, said. "Honestly, (the installation of security cameras) surprised me. I was not even aware that they were considering it. The last time I even thought about security cameras on campus was last semester and that has been a while so (installing cameras) 'under the table' without saying anything, at least to my concern, was disappointing."

The campus community has yet to receive an official email from the college acknowledging the initial installation in July.

"We had a consultant come and meet with us to talk about physical safety on campus and give us recommendations for physical safety improvements in January and February," said Vice President of Student Life & Dean of Students April Thompson. "One of the improvement recommendations was to have more safety monitoring systems, particularly around the residence halls … Our emphasis is on our residence halls and the two pilot projects (with cameras) at Baldwin and Ravine are the launch of what we hope will be more cameras and safety systems outside of our residence halls."

According to Thompson, security cameras were installed on the exterior doors of two residence halls, Ravine-Narvik Hall and Baldwin Hall. Cameras were also installed in parking lots as well as in areas where sensitive lab equipment is stored.

"We have a committee of students, faculty and staff known as the Campus Life and Community Standards committee, which has student representatives from ASG as well as the faculty so the feedback and process of getting input for the next phase will go through that committee as part of their regular business," Thompson said. "I believe it will be later this semester that we try to work with the students to get input and then make decisions about future cameras and policies around cameras, including monitoring cameras."

Students will receive an official notification from the college if additional cameras will be installed on campus, Thompson indicated.

Last semester, students expressed concerns regarding the potential for racial discrimination and profiling when reviewing the footage during investigations.

"(Discussions about security cameras) had mixed responses, but a lot of students were against cameras because (students) thought it was a huge invasion of privacy, which I also agree with," former Class of 2022 President Kathryn Phillippe said. "(Security cameras) also give way to a lot of racial discrimination and profiling."

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New Meadville grassroots groups to organize for election

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With their roots stemming from the soil of Meadville, two groups of activists and organizers emerged to create a groundswell of community-wide mobilitization for this year's election.

Crawford County United and the newest branch of the NAACP Chapter of Meadville — called the Youth & College Committee — were formed.

These groups were, in large part, inspired by the November 2019 general election, when Meadville City Council was met with two newly elected councilors, Larry McKnight and Autumn Vogel. This duo worked cooperatively with a coalition of local activists to campaign for issues such as fair housing, equitable governance and more green spaces.

"The election is not that far away, and I don't wanna wake up on Nov. 4 and feel like I could've done more," George Ackerman, '21, said. "That's like my worst fear."

Along with being the external activism director for Students for Environmental Action on campus, Ackerman is the data team organizer and phone-banking lead for CCU.

Every week CCU has hosted events in a variety of ways to have a direct impact on local voters. These events are all virtual, and are through phone-banking, text-banking and deep-canvassing. Every volunteer is trained on these methods, and the events are usually three hours at most, but sometimes it takes less time to get through a certain list of voters.

"I think now is the perfect time to get involved, there's so much to do, and (CCU) has a lot of opportunities to talk to people who don't necessarily agree (with your political opinion), and have deeper conversations," Ackerman added.

Phone-banking is a method of reaching voters and collecting data by calling a list of registered voters, such as registered Democrats within a specific neighborhood, and having a light conversation to gauge whether or not they will be voting, for example. Another effort is called deep-canvassing, which is similar to phone-banking, but one would have a much more in depth conversation with a voter. Text-banking requires less direct conversation with local voters, but still is an easy and effective way to reach people.

"It's a real way to get involved, see the process and not just talk about doing stuff, but actually do the stuff," Ackerman said.

Lindsey Scott was born and raised in Meadville, and along with being the program specialist at The ARC of Crawford County, she is a core organizer for CCU and currently manages the communications, and leads the text-banking sessions.

Recently, the group has solidified their mission statement as a grassroots volunteer organization that is building political power for multi-racial working-class families in Crawford County.

Scott added that these methods of voter outreach are important because "people can be persuaded, we just have to really try to talk about the big message, which will sway them to vote for progressive candidates."

Scott states that her reason for helping form CCU, is to "appeal to (Elizabeth) Warren and Bernie (Sanders) supporters who felt left out of the (Joe Biden) platform, but also for the working class and working families. This is a fight about systemic racism and (for) solidarity."

According to Scott, it is the day-to-day local policy that has the truest effect on voters. She added that for disaffected Donald Trump voters "this is the conversation that will solve that, the real policies that will actually help you."

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IN THIS WEEK'S CAMPUS

RELEASED FROM PRISON
Former Allegheny faculty member Kirk Nesset found guilty of child pornography charges released from federal prison.
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IN DEFENSE OF PRESIDENT LINK
President Hilary Link posted an Instagram photo at son's soccer game while student's are forced to quarantine.
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ALUM BECOMES ASSISTANT COACH
Alumnus Zach Zoll, '20, was hired as an assistant coach of the college's basketball team.
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FRIDAY — H: 78° L: 55° — Rain: 10% — Sunrise: 7:12 a.m. — Sunset: 7:12 p.m.

SATURDAY — H: 76° L: 60° — Rain: 10% — Sunrise: 7:13 a.m. — Sunset: 7:10 p.m.

SUNDAY — H: 78° L: 61° — Rain: 10% — Sunrise: 7:14 a.m. — Sunset: 7:08 p.m.

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The college intends to collaborate with students to create policies and protocols that will prevent racial bias, Thompson said.

"We would like to involve students and others in conversations about where we go next and how to make sure that the monitor system and follow up actually address (how to prevent racial bias)," Thompson said.

Students are required to wear a mask at all times while on campus, according to new safety protocols put in place by the college. Students raised concerns about the potential of Public Safety not being able to use the cameras to identify people and questioned how the department expects to identify students, whom they may never have met.

"With everyone wearing masks, identifying someone off of a camera will be more difficult than ever so there is a lot of room for misidentification and rumors could spread," Cabrera said. "I hope that (Public Safety) would not jump to conclusions regarding who did what."

Last semester, students were vocal about their concerns of privacy invasion, especially if cameras are installed near the residence halls, to members of the Allegheny Student Government.

"(Video cameras will be placed by) exterior facing residence hall doors only," clarified former ASG President Jason Ferrante, '20, during the Feb. 4 general assembly. "They're not going to be in your residence halls. They're most certainly not going to be in your rooms. That's a huge invasion of privacy."

The college installed the security cameras on the exterior of the residence halls to prevent privacy concerns.

Some students believe that the installation of security cameras around the residence halls will increase student safety, especially in light of the December 2019 sexual assault.

"The cameras are not an invasion of privacy, they are a safety precaution because there is a lot of crime at the school and around the area," Morgan Libell, '23, said. "The catastrophic event that happened last year set people off — they were upset and scared. (Public Safety) is constantly busy filling work orders and responding to emergencies. (The officers) will not just sit in their offices watching security cameras and I know Public Safety has to do rounds and check every dorm building at least every hour … I really think that our privacy is going to be respected."

Last year, Libell worked for Physical Plant and had frequent interactions with Public Safety. She suggested any students who are concerned that their privacy is being violated should reach out to the college and express their concerns.

"I know that people are worried about an invasion of privacy and I think it is all right to protest (security cameras) being installed in the halls, but for places like the stairwells or even the main lobby, (cameras) will ensure that unwanted guests do not get in the dorm," Libell added.

Libell resided in Baldwin Hall and recalled the large amounts of vandalism, including racial and homophobic slurs being written on the walls. She also recalled the frequent urination in the stairwells of Schultz Hall.

Other students believe that cameras could be an invasion of privacy.

"Crime will exist regardless of whether there is a camera in place," Cabrera said. "One could argue that having cameras on campus could make us feel safer but I think the widespread consensus on campus from what I have heard from other students is that (the cameras) are an invasion of privacy — (the dorms) are where we live. I do not think that Allegheny really has a large enough campus to warrant constant surveillance of the residence halls. I think that there could be better decisions made that do not affect our mental well-being with (students) being able to feel private and not watched all of the time, especially with our dorms."

Concerns also arose last semester about how the college intends to use the cameras. All discussions in February were hypothetical.

"If they are going to be installed regardless, we have to have a very specific policy that they are only used to protect students from violent attacks," said former senator Quinn Broussard, '22.

The college intends to use the cameras as an investigation technique for Public Safety instead of as an active policing measure, Thompson added. The college is also in the process of determining how long the footage will be stored by Public Safety and viable to use in an investigation.

"The camera footage can be used for investigatory purposes, but I will say that with a caveat that using (the cameras) for investigative purposes for things that compromise safety is their primary function," Thompson said. "I can assure you that the college has no interest in following or tracking down every student who might be intoxicated. We do not have curfews and we want students to have the freedom to come and go."

The cameras will be utilized at the college's discretion if a student is visibly intoxicated and in need of medical assistance.

"(The college) will use (the camera footage) if something compromises health and safety of the community and of students — that is why we have (cameras)," Thompson clarified.

The college starts with an educational and health-based approach rather than immediate punishment to handle situations, such as alcohol poisoning. The college is more concerned with ensuring students receive medical attention if required as opposed to immediately punishing students who engage in these activities, Thompson said.

"At least, if cameras were installed outside of the dorm halls or outside of the academic buildings, I would feel more safe," Libell said. "I know that (the college) has taken a lot of precautions to ensure the safety of the students so the video cameras do not really make a difference for me, but if (the cameras) are going to help the college prevent an event like (the December sexual assault) from happening again the I am for them. No one ever wants (the sexual assault) to occur again."

Libell alleged that several students attempted to break into her room while she and her roommate were present in the room last year. They contacted Public Safety, but officials were unable to identify the students, Libell added.

Other students believe security cameras are not required on the campus due to the relatively small size of the student body and campus.

"I, personally, do not think that (security cameras) are needed here," Cabrera said. "Allegheny College really is not that large of a campus and if Allegheny believes that the Public Safety department can do a good enough job to keep us safe then I do not think that cameras are necessary. If anything, what they should focus on is fixing the basic infrastructure that was in place when that heinous crime happened last school year."

The college has installed new security measures to increase student safety in residence halls and on campus, including new locks for doors, ID scanners and peepholes.

Students questioned the purpose of security cameras when the college has a mandatory Statement of Community that all students are required to abide by.

"The Statement of Community only applies to our community," Thompson said. "We are worried about not just our community, but also guests to our community, who students bring and outside people, who visit the campus."

Security cameras are an industry standard for residential areas, including college campuses, Thompson added.

"The overwhelming response from every area was that (the college) needed cameras as much for outside members of our community as for inside members of our community," Thompson added. "Students would feel safer and more secure knowing that these monitoring systems, for safety, were actually in place. We heard this loud and clear from student sessions, from families, from faculty and staff that our residence halls are such a critically important piece of our campus that we owe it to students, in particular, to make sure that we are monitoring them in all the ways that (the college) can to keep students safe."

PLEDGE *from page 1*

"I really do appreciate everything that the college has done to keep us safe, but this is not just a health issue at this point, it is also a social issue," Bebee said.

The Sept. 10 email to the campus community also announced that the college will take a strict approach to handling violations of the Gator Pledge.

"Given the clustering and ongoing reported violations of the Gator Pledge, effective immediately, we will no longer give warnings to those students who are found to have violated the pledge," Link announced in the Sept. 10 email. "There is simply no room for non-compliance, and our response throughout the semester has been and will continue to be quick and firm, with no room for leniency. (The college) urges families to remind your students to comply; if not, they risk jeopardizing the on-campus experience for every single Allegheny student and our faculty and staff."

Students also expressed concerns about the inability to purchase medication and groceries during the quarantine. Many students voiced their concerns on Instagram and sent emails to the college. Students reported to have gone off-campus would be subject to Gator Pledge violation procedures.

"Students' access to food, medications and resources were absolutely a priority for (the college)," said Vice President of Student Life & Dean of Students April Thompson. "Before coming to campus, we had communicated to students that we would be under quarantine until Sept. 15th, so the vast majority of our students had already planned to have enough resources available to them to get to the 15th. (The college) did make exceptions for students who needed to go off campus for medical appointments and medications so there were exceptions made. (The college) went through (ACHA) and the health agency worked with students to make sure that they followed precautions. It was never such a lock-down that students could not get their medications."

The quarantine was not intended to prevent students from receiving medications, Thompson clarified. The college made arrangements for medications to be delivered to Winslow Health Center for students to retrieve when required.

"(The college) has some really great systems with our local prescribers to be able to get medications into the health center so there really was not a reason that students had to go off campus to get medications because (the college) could have them brought (to campus)," Thompson added. "The same with groceries and Door Dash, yes, (the college) knows that there is a fee and we have been trying to work with students about navigating expenses and navigating the new meal plans, both in terms of new ways to get food and with the accumulating balance instead of a declining balance. (The college) was absolutely working on plans to get food and other (resources) to students and make grocery runs - those were all being put in place in case we had to go past the 15th."

Students had the opportunity to make an appeal to the college using the form linked in the email to leave campus for necessities, such as doctor visits or prescriptions. The college received hundreds of appeals by students requesting to leave campus before deciding to revoke the campus quarantine extension.

The college provided all of the residence halls with snacks to enable students to have access to food outside of the dining halls.

"In residence halls right now, (students) will see that (the college) has stocked residence halls with snacks because that was one of the biggest things that students had concerns about," Thompson said. "Even though (the college) decided to open the quarantine, we are still concerned that students have enough food to eat and that students have enough funds."

Any student in need of additional financial support during the COVID-19 pandemic can apply for a Gator Success Grant. Thompson advises any student to reach out to their resident advisor or members of the faculty to fill out the online form.

"Your academics need to come first and you should not have to navigate food," Thompson said. "There are several systems in place and students should talk to their RAs or faculty advisors to fill out the form. (Students) do not need to be hungry, (the college) has options."

While ACHA announced on Sept. 14 that the campus-wide quarantine was lifted effective 9 a.m. on Sept. 15, the college intends to continue a strict approach to handling Gator Pledge violations.

"(The college) was facing a cluster effect of positive COVID-19 cases as well as several reports of violations of students having parties, events and going into large groups," Thompson added. "There were way too many of those things happening at that moment. (The college) was at a very serious risk of closing campus and when we went into meetings talking about 'is this the point where we now have to close and send everybody home to protect the safety of our campus?' … We thought a strict approach would be one way to keep our campus open."

On Sept. 12, Link posted an image of her at her son's first varsity soccer game on Instagram, which received backlash when hundreds of students commented on their dissatisfaction with Link's post.

"It has been saddening to me to see the very strong backlash towards something that I was in no way trying to hide," Link said. "I was attending my son's first ever varsity soccer game — fully masked and very physically distanced with about twenty people in an empty football stadium."

The college has approximately 460 staff and employees in addition to commuter students who do not live on campus, according to Link.

"I live with my family," Link said. "I am a mother. I am a mother of three kids and I was following all of (the college's) regulations for staff and faculty who live off-campus. There was actually nothing wrong with what I was doing. I have said that it was not my best choice to post the photo because I understand how people might see (the image) without understanding the context — it was not the right moment because we had just extended the lockdown."

The Gator Pledge for non-residential members of the campus community is slightly different in terms that the individuals live in the surrounding area and interact with community members, Link clarified. The same safety measures still exist in terms of masking and social distancing, but the campus-wide quarantine was intended for residential community members.

"(Upsetting anyone) was in no way my intention," Link added. "Honestly, I was posting as a working mother, who was following all health and safety guidelines, and I was actually following the pledge that employees and staff that live off campus have agreed to follow."

Within three hours of the post, students and alumni began expressing their discontent with Link's actions in the comment section.

Students' comments ranged from derogatory comments toward Link to health and safety concerns for the community. In a six-hour span, the post amassed hundreds of remarks. Students called for Link's resignation and some even requested former Allegheny College President James H. Mullen Jr. be reappointed.

"(The Instagram post) was a little discomforting to see from someone who has been preaching to us this whole time, especially (Sept. 12-13), to stay safe and locked down and be very careful that we are not a part of the problem," Bebee said. "When (Link) posted the picture, I did not agree with the comments that were put on (the post) — (the comments) got pretty out of hand. I do not think she deserved to be bashed like that, but at the same time she should have recognized that she is a part of the gator community and that students on campus have been complaining."

The image was subsequently removed from Link's Instagram page. After the image was removed, students began commenting on an earlier post.

"It was pretty hurtful to be honest and I am just being really honest," Link said. "I am a very strong leader, but I am a person and I have feelings and nobody wants to go through that ... I posted that photo in a moment of pride and I was supporting Allegheny … I will be frank that I did not anticipate (the backlash), but I probably should have because I understand the depth of people's frustration and anger with what they are living through."

Students were upset with the circumstances and Link mentioned that she understood their frustrations. Students even began reporting Link for allegedly violating the Gator Pledge to the college.

"I say this as a person, I say this as the college president and I say this as a mom, who is watching her three kids: everyone in our campus community, state, country and the world is struggling right now," Link said. "People are frustrated. (People) are angry with the world … We are all just doing the absolute best that we can to keep the community safe both our campus community and the Meadville community and to keep the campus open because we know that this is a huge privilege to allow students who want to, to be able to live and learn in person on campus."

In addition to students, parents expressed concern regarding the decision to attend a nonessential outdoor activity, according to the Meadville Tribune.

"I had not seen any public apology," Kimberly Cahill said. "(Link) had supposedly apologized to Fox News but not to her own students and expected some sort of mass email at the very least."

Cahill is a mother of an Allegheny student and expressed concerns regarding her student's inability to acquire necessities such as groceries, medication or toiletries.

"(President Link's son's soccer game) was not an essential event," Cahill said. "(My son) cannot even go get groceries or water."

Cahill was recently quoted on a Fox News article first reported by the Meadville Tribune covering Link's Instagram post and alleged violation of the college's safety protocols.

"What I am trying to say to all parents who have written (to the college) is that we are all doing the very best that we can in an unprecedented situation," Thompson said. "(The college) welcomes your feedback and input … We really are listening to the context in which we are making decisions. (The college) has never made decisions like this before — no one has. So we want to hear from families and students to understand the impact of all of our decisions both on health and safety in the moment and in long-term abilities for a student to be able to engage with their academics."

Despite Link's Instagram post receiving national attention from Fox News and the Washington Times, the college has done well and is optimistic about the rest of the semester, Link said.

"This entire situation has actually drowned out the successes that all of our students have contributed to and our faculty and staff have worked so hard to maintain, which is that (the college) is open," Link said. "(The college) is doing really well for being open amidst a global pandemic and we have contained a cluster, tested everyone, and will begin with systematic testing soon."

Former faculty Kirk Nesset released from federal prison this week

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Trigger warning: Sexual assault, child abuse

Former Allegheny College Professor of English Literature Kirk Nesset, 63, was released from federal prison this year. Nesset was transferred to a federal prison in Phoenix, Arizona. Toward the end of his sentence, he was relocated to a federal halfway house, Residential Reentry Management Phoenix, where he awaited his release on Sept. 24.

Nesset was arrested and prosecuted on three counts of possessing, receiving and distributing child pornography in 2014, following an FBI and Pennsylvania State Police investigation.

As part of his original sentencing, Nesset must remain on the sex offender reigistry after release and must report to sex offender and mental health therapy. He is permitted to have a computer as well as access to the internet, but his usage of the computer will be monitored. Nesset is not permitted to be near children for prolonged periods of time.

According to the National Sex Offender Registry, Nesset is a registered sex offender in Flagstaff, Arizona. His plans following release are unknown.

Former Allegheny College President James H. Mullen Jr. issued a statement in 2015 to The Erie Times-News addressing the charges and the shock and outrage that followed from members of the Allegheny College community.

Nesset pleaded guilty in April 2015 to all charges against him. U.S. District Judge David S. Cercone sentenced Nesset in Feb. 2016 to six years and four months in federal prison and 10 years of probation.

According to the Meadville Tribune, Nesset testified he had depression and was obsessed with child pornography. He underwent treatment following his arrest and was actively seeking mental health treatment before his arrest, according to his attorney, Meagan Temple.

"I am very full of shame and sick with regret about what I did up to the time I was arrested," Nesset said before being sentenced.

The FBI and Pennsylvania State Police searched Nesset's Meadville residence and found over half a million images of child pornography, child erotica and child modeling on his computer, according to the Meadville Tribune. The images and videos were acquired from Nov. 2005-Oct. 2014. These images included the rape of infants as well as sexual abuse of older children.

"This case is unbelievable," Assistant U.S. Attorney Christian Trabold said during Nesset's Feb. 2016 sentencing. "It is the most child pornography that I have seen in 15 years as a federal prosecutor."

At the trial, Temple stated that Nesset did not molest the children; instead, he stored and shared images of their abuse. She claimed that hoarding the content was the result of his mental illnesses and was a side effect of the illnesses, despite the content being organized in different files on his computer.

"Nesset persistently led a double life working as a college professor while concealing his ongoing interest in the sexual abuse of young children," Trabold said.

Upon arrest, Nesset told police that he sorted the content into labeled folders and discarded the content that he did not want. He also admitted to having a preference for young children, aged 10-13, and said he would use the images and videos to masturbate.

"(They) are pedophiles," said leader of the Crimes Against Children Task Force in Pittsburgh Tom Clinton to the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette. "This is a person whose sexual preference is for children, whether (they) act on it or not."

Several Allegheny College professors came to Nesset's trial and a few stood when asked by the judge if anyone would stand in support of Nesset's character. Former friends and colleagues of Nesset declined to comment to the Campus.

Three adults, acting on behalf of eight girls seen in the child pornography found on Nesset's computer, sued Nesset in Dec. 2016 over the children's emotional distress and invasion of privacy, according to Marsh Law Firm PLLC.

The plaintiffs sought a minimum of $150,000 for damages, compensation, court costs and additional relief. They were represented by Katie Shipp of Marsh Law Firm PLLC in New York and Carol Hepburn of Savage Law Firm in Seattle. The law firms specialize in sexual assault and victim compensation.

While Nesset did not take the images or videos himself, he did share the images online. Court records indicate that the distribution of the images is anticipated to have a lasting impact on the victims, especially in their marriage(s) and interactions with children.

"Victims of child pornography are constantly aware that their child sex abuse images will never disappear," Hepburn and Shipp wrote in the complaint. "(They) will be repeatedly victimized by individuals like (Nesset) who endlessly participate in the market for child sex abuse images."

According to an article written by the Campus in 2018, the Trauma Symptom Checklist for Young Children indicated that "Fiona," a pseudonym for one of the victims of child pornography, displayed signs of post-traumatic stress, including anxiety, anger and depression. Mental health professionals stated concerns about "Fiona" potentially engaging in substance abuse as a coping mechanism.

The terms of the settlement were not disclosed to the public, but the law firm records indicate that the children received compensation in the civil lawsuit. Nesset's case was closed in 2018, after appearing in court before the U.S. District Judge Susan Paradise Baxter.

GRASSROOTS *from page 1*

Crawford County is a historically Republican voting district, with the City of Meadville leaning far more Democratic than the outlying county.

"People have been left out of the process, and we need actual political education," Scott said.

CCU already has a strong base of support and volunteers. Since its inception, CCU social media accounts have gained hundreds of followers, and over 75 people have attended their events and trainings. CCU sees new faces every week, and they have a dedicated core membership of 20-25 volunteers, according to Scott.

However, Ackerman and Scott made it clear that to win in November, everyone in Crawford County needs to participate, including the college.

"We want to bind the students with the community and create new ideas of engagement to get the students out to vote ASAP," Scott said. "(Students) can go tomorrow to the courthouse, register to vote, request their ballot and could even vote right there at the courthouse."

"Any issue you care about is reason enough to vote," Scott said. "For me, it's all about corruption. There's no such thing as a fair election with how much money is involved. We have to hold (elected officials) responsible and people in power accountable. Our voting system and rights, and knowing the process of how things work, like school boards, that is how you make change."

Joining CCU does not mean a volunteer is limited to only engaging voters. According to Scott, college students are also disenfranchised, and the group could use help with social media, content management and the promotion of proper voting information.

"We could have poll watching training for students, and have the students be a drive for youth voting," Scott said. "It is so necessary."

To contact CCU, their email is crawfordcountyunited@gmail.com. Students can contact Ackerman directly as well.

"A lot of people disregard the voices and input of young people," Maria Rosado-Husband said. "I disagree with that. They are not fools, they understand what's going on around them … I want them to use this as a platform and a voice, use the hell out of it. Use it and turn it into the future."

Rosado-Husband is an active community organizer, and serves as the current chairperson of the The NAACP Youth & College Committee.

The NAACP Youth & College Committee is a nonprofit and strictly non-partisan group that seeks to engage, educate and mobilize youth. The committee is a branch of the local NAACP Chapter of Meadville chaired by Drake Parker. The Youth & College Committee is set to have its first meeting on Saturday, Oct. 3, at 1 p.m. via Zoom.

Rosado-Husband and Don Goldstein, retired Allegheny economics professor and member of the local NAACP Chapter, helped create the group.

Neither Rosado-Husband nor Goldstein are considered to be youth or college-aged.

"We are looking for people who want to grow themselves and their leadership," Rosado-Husband said. "(People) who want to fight for racial justice and are enthusiastic, motivated young people."

"Me being a chair is just me being a facilitator," Rosado-Husband said. "I really want to see the youth take the foundation we lay and build something beautiful and strong, that'll last. Bring me your young people so that we can make beautiful things happen."

As a former professor, Goldstein alluded to the diverse backgrounds and communities that Allegheny students come from, and acknowledged that there may be a bit of a shock factor when students of color come to Meadville for school. Students have a real opportunity to play an important role in local youth engagement and their leadership development, he added.

"There's so much value in the exchange that'll take place between (Allegheny) students and Meadville community kids," Rosado-Husband said. "So many (Meadville kids) are not getting the direction or guidance they need in order to take that step to go to college. From my experience, (Allegheny students) are phenomenal, you're my heroes. I think there's just so much that, on a peer level, you guys can give these kids."

Despite not having their first official meeting yet, the committee has organized a collaboration with the national Rock the Vote campaign, to ride in a bus around town on Saturday, Oct. 10. McKnight will drive the bus, and the tour is set to make stops at local schools and neighborhoods with all the materials, music and fun necessary to register to vote.

Simultaneously on Oct. 10, the committee is also planning an online event for voter education in coordination with CCU.

To join the Meadville Youth & College Committee NAACP Chapter #2271, there is both an online and paper registration, and to be a member, there is a one-time yearly fee. For youth — ages 20 and under — the cost of membership is $15 per year, and for those over 20 years old, the cost is $30 per year. The fees go to the national organization, but a percentage of funds are allocated to the local chapters. There are also scholarship funds available to help pay dues.

To join the first monthly meeting via Zoom on Oct. 3, the email address for the committee is naacpmeadvilleyandc@gmail.com, and their Facebook page is Youth & College Committee NAACP Chapter #2271.

Classroom changes create challenges for students

By **ALANA SABOL**
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During the first weeks of the fall semester, students experienced the various changes and challenges with both online and in-person classes during the COVID-19 pandemic firsthand.

Before classes began this semester, faculty made significant changes to the way students would be taught in order to adhere to the federal and state guidelines. Many professors expressed concern about technological challenges but still remained hopeful that an authentic academic experience would be preserved.

After three weeks of classes, students have experienced varying degrees of normalcy, whether they are taking classes all online, in person, or a combination of the two.

Jacob Boord, '24, explained that the majority of his classes are on a rotating schedule in which half of the students attend class in-person while the other half attends online. This makes it difficult to remember his schedule at times, Boord said.

"One day I could have three in-person classes and the next (day) I could have none," Boord said.

Students also experienced new difficulties with the online component of their classes. Online classes produce a lot of distractions, which makes online learning more challenging, Emily Mullen, '24, said.

"(During online classes) I feel like there are a lot of different things that you have to be thinking about. Like, is (my) microphone working? Is (my) WiFi working?" Mullen said. "In in-person classes, you can just go and the only thing you have to worry about is just being there and focusing on your work."

Alton Caylor, '22, also encountered new challenges related to asynchronous learning.

"I've been finding it a lot harder to learn from recorded YouTube videos. Even just digital lectures are a lot harder to focus on," Caylor said. "There's something really different about sitting in a classroom and listening to somebody talk. It gives you another layer of focus that is hard to get when you're just looking at a screen."

Boord, who takes the neuromarketing class, ECON 230: Neuromarketing and Consumer Behavior, attributed difficulty focusing on or learning from online classes to the barrier between the student and the professor.

"I am taking neuromarketing and we kind of know and understand how the brain works," Boord said. "That physical barrier that's between us, which is our computer and the screen between our learning, is a huge deterrent when it comes to retaining information."

According to students, learning online also affects the flow and quality of class discussions. Mullen explained that the technological barrier makes it difficult to have a completely natural discussion in online classes.

"You have to unmute (your microphone), which is kind of an awkward way of speaking," Mullen said. "Also, sometimes you might have a (small) comment like, 'I agree with that,' (but) you don't really feel like unmuting yourself to say something like that."

With that awkwardness comes some voices not being heard in online discussions, Boord said.

"I feel some students are just nervous to turn on their camera and talk, and that's okay," Boord said. "But I feel as though that we lose voices and discussions are weakened, and that's something that is a key part to our learning experience,"

However, there are still unexpected challenges in in-person discussions as well due to the mask mandate. "Even in the in-person discussions with a mask on it's hard to find that (personal) connection," Boord said."

For the full-length article, visit alleghenycampus.com

CRIME BLOTTER

Editor's Note: The weekly Crime Blotter is compiled using the Daily Crime Log available on the Office of Public Safety's web page. Crimes reported may still be under investigation. Crimes listed below are collected the Thursday before publication.

Sept. 23, 2020
Theft
Schultz Hall

Sept. 24, 2020
Rape
Brooks Hall

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Western wildfires and politics

A foreshadowing of climate catastrophes

By GEORGE ACKERMAN
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Throughout last week, hazy skies descended across the North American continent as record-breaking wildfires continued to burn throughout the West Coast. The wildfires have caused activists, scientists and politicians to speak out about the ongoing climate crisis with some warning that this is only a foreshadowing of what is to come. This environmental catastrophe should concern many people, not just those who follow environmental news.

The wildfires and resulting poor air quality issues should come as no surprise to the American population. We have collectively ignored the recommendations of experts and now we will face certain consequences.

That does not mean that we should give up hope and accept the new reality of more and worse natural disasters. It also does not mean that we should focus on individual actions which are so often centered in discussions of environmental sustainability — specifically, I mean the narrative which stated that if enough individuals reduce their environmental impact enough our environmental problems will disappear or be mitigated.

While this narrative is compelling and individuals can make a small impact, we should make no mistake in naming responsible parties and holding them accountable for their actions. To be more specific, the large corporations and the politicians they have bought are accountable for the destruction we have seen and will see in the coming years.

Our political system is bought by those who rely on polluting to maximize the profits of their firms. For example, let's take a look at who funds one of Pennsylvania's senators, Pat Toomey.

According to the Center for Responsible Politics, one of the largest individual sources of Toomey's campaign funding from 2015-2020 comes from individuals employed by or owners of Apollo Global Management. Apollo is a private equity firm that owns a host of oil and gas companies including American Petroleum Partners, which is based in Pittsburgh and dedicated to developing oil and gas development in the Appalachian Basin.

These campaign contributions provide Toomey with a pretty big incentive to allow these companies to pollute our environment, causing increased carbon dioxide emissions and further exploitation of natural resources. This is ridiculous and should not be allowed because the interests of Apollo Global Management do not align with the interests of Toomey's constituency, but nonetheless there is a strong incentive for politicians to take these donations. After all, if they do not do it, someone else will.

So, what can average Americans do about this? Is there a way for us to combat the organized money and powerful special interests that have caused?

A common answer to this is changing the politicians who represent us. I know I have seen a lot of voting advocacy on social media. But at the same time, many are skeptical of our electoral systems as agents of positive change. This can be seen in low voting turnout rates even in 2016 which was a very consequential election.

I am not at all arguing against voting; rather, I am recognizing legitimate skepticism of voting as a means of substantial political change. If both parties' politicians are bought and sold before voters have a real say I think it is legitimate to ask what the point of voting is in the first place.

I think a good way to look at it is that voting should be just part of advocacy and organizing efforts. The idea that all we need to do is vote for the right people and our problems will be taken care of does not lead to the transformative changes we need to mitigate the multiple crises we face.

So with the 2020 election looming, how should those who like breathing clean air and drinking clean water react?

Well, the answer is complicated; it seems as though Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden has signaled a willingness to spend on climate-related actions. Many environmental organizations, such as the Sunrise Movement, are advocating for Biden with an asterisk — that is, as soon as a democratic presidential victory comes, they will hold Biden accountable. This also assumes a Biden victory, which is by no means a given.

To be clear, if we take actions that continue to prioritize unlimited economic growth over preserving our ecosystem services, then things like smoke covering a continent are bound to keep occurring at a rate and severity that is not normal.

It is clear that something needs to be done soon. The record breaking Western wildfires can be a moment in history where things changed. We need an effective environmental movement which is able to force those in power to listen to the demands, recognize the intersectionality of environmental issues and stand up for those who are affected by these preventable natural disasters. Environmentalists need to change what is possible at every level of government to avoid more severe fires, more frequent hurricanes, less stability in food systems and an extinction crisis which may threaten ecosystems across the planet.

Mourning the loss of an icon

Ginsburg leaves behind a legacy for everyone

By SARA HOLTHOUSE
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It is not often that I feel a connection to a famous person that is not a fictional character. But Ruth Bader Ginsburg was one of those people that I could not help but feel some sort of connection to, even though it is one that I can not quite explain.

I learned about Ginsburg growing up in high school. She was someone who was always there and was one of the only people in the government that I actually fully respected, even though I did not learn a whole lot about her life until much later.

As a woman, I have so much in my life that I owe to Ginsburg, though not directly. Ginsburg was a champion for gender equality, and she was the first one to prove that both women and men can be discriminated against because of their gender. There are plenty of books written about Ginsburg, along with one movie, "On the Basis of Sex." It was not until I first watched this movie that I learned everything about Ginsburg, like how she was one of the first women to go to Harvard University, where she took both her classes and her husband's after he was diagnosed with cancer. She then transferred to and eventually graduated from Columbia University.

Ginsburg's husband died in 2010, after the two had been married for over 50 years.

Ginsburg was the second woman to become a Supreme Court Justice. Throughout her whole life, just like most other women, she was discriminated against because of her gender. But because of Ginsburg, so many discriminatory laws no longer exist.

Before Justice Ginsburg, it was legal to fire a woman for being pregnant. It was legal to deny one a job for being a woman. Because of her, these laws do not exist anymore.

It is due to Ginsburg that I can be fully confident in that I can graduate from a good college in a few months, and step out and aim to be successful in a few different areas that have been typically seen as male-dominated fields. If it was not for her, I would not be able to become a farmer, a novelist and a journalist after I graduate, as in most of those fields I probably would not have been hired because of my gender. Only 65 years ago, I probably would have been told no.

Because of Ginsburg's life's work, I do not have to worry about not being taken seriously because I am not married. That is not to say that discrimination will not come up in my life — in fact, it already has. But because of Ginsburg, it is no longer legal for employers to turn me away because "my husband should be able to provide for me."

After her death on Friday, Sept. 18, I have seen a lot of posts circulating social media concerning Ginsburg, teaching me things that I did not know even today. Some of that includes quotes from her. One of my favorite ones is, "women belong in all places where decisions are being made."

Another one is "fight for the things that you care about, but do it in a way that will lead others to join you."

Ginsburg was not just a champion for women; she was a champion for immigrants and disabled people, too. Everything she dedicated her life to was for others and by trying to win equality for everyone. She was not just a Supreme Court justice; she truly was an icon. So many things in her life make her relatable to any woman today, young or old. Ginsburg went through a lot in her life, as shown in "On the Basis of Sex." No life is without struggle, but Ginsburg used her struggle to help others, and to help the country.

Ginsburg was diagnosed with cancer at least three separate times in her life since 1999. She fought it for as long as she possibly could, and still continued to help others and stayed on the Supreme Court until her death.

We can only hope that they wait until after the election to find her replacement, but whoever they find will never be as good or as much of an icon as Ginsburg was. But no matter what, women in America have a lot to thank Ginsburg for. I am glad that she is back with her husband now.

There is no one that deserves a statue in Brooklyn more.

As they say in "Game of Thrones," we will never see her like again.

> "If it was not for her, I would not be able to become a farmer, a novelist and a journalist after I graduate, as in most of those fields I probably would not have been hired because of my gender."
>
> —SARA HOLTHOUSE
> Class of 2021

In defense of President Link

By SAMI MIRZA
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"Allegheny students and employees are committed to creating an inclusive, respectful and safe residential learning community that will actively confront and challenge racism, sexism, heterosexism, religious bigotry, and other forms of harassment and discrimination."

That is the Allegheny College Statement of Community, something every Gator pledges to follow when they arrive on campus. And it's something that fell apart when President Hilary Link posted a photo of herself on Instagram at her son's soccer game two weeks ago.

To recap: on the afternoon of Sept. 10, President Link and the Allegheny College Health Agency sent an email to all students stating, "we (the college) are adding the precaution of extending the on-campus quarantine period until further notice. This means students may not leave campus for any reason — including, for example, trips to area businesses, jobs, or any other off-campus locations." The email also stated, "There is simply no room for non-compliance, and our response throughout the semester has been and will continue to be quick and firm, with no room for leniency."

Two days later, President Link posted an image to her Instagram page showing her at a soccer game with a mask on, with the caption reading "Representing the (Gators) even while supporting the Bulldogs!"

Almost immediately, Link was criticized for leaving Allegheny's campus for something as trivial as a soccer game, while students were restricted from leaving for any reason, including for "essential items" like toilet paper, medication and alternative sources of food. Before its deletion, the Instagram post amassed hundreds of comments from students outraged at Link's apparent flaunting of the school's policy regarding on-campus quarantine. Memes flew left and right. Parents and students reached out to The Meadville Tribune with their complaints, resulting in a story carried nationally on Fox News.

The most common criticism was that Link was being hypocritical — that she was setting a different standard for herself than for the students. Despite instructing students to stay on campus, she left campus to attend a child's soccer game. But first and foremost, Hilary Link is not a member of the campus community in the same way that students are. She works here, yes. She can be seen around campus, yes. But she does not live in one of the college's residence halls. She does not share a bathroom with other students. She does not attend in-person classes on a regular basis, or, at all. She has no obligation to stay on campus, and, indeed, it would be unreasonable to ask someone who lives off-campus to do so.

However, it's true that Link has responsibilities to this community. She has to stay six feet away from others. She has to wear a mask. Allegheny has different regulations for on-campus students, commuting students and employees. The rules for employees and commuting students say nothing about staying on campus. And in her post, Link appears to be following those guidelines.

Another common criticism was that students were barred from leaving campus for "essential items," like toiletries, food and medication while Link was able to go to a non-essential event. If she can go to a game, why can't we pop over to the store once or twice?

My question is: of the 1,500-odd students on campus, how many of them are just going to go to Walmart? How many of them will follow the guidelines? And how many of them will go to off-campus parties? How many of them will contract COVID-19 from NOT following the guidelines? The answer lies in Link's email from September 10.

"Because we uncovered, during last week's tests, a cluster of positives among a connected group of students, and because we have understood that this arose due to travel off campus ... we are adding the precaution of extending the on-campus quarantine period until further notice," the ACHA wrote.

While some students argued that the guidelines were unfair, others were just outright ignoring them. And while it's tempting to argue that the majority of students are going to follow the rules, it is important to remember that we are in a pandemic right now. All it takes is one student to contract and spread the virus, not a majority of students. When Link goes out into the community as she did, she is responsible for making sure that she does not spread the virus.

Likewise, when we as the Allegheny student body go out into the community, we are responsible for making sure that we do not spread the virus. If we expect to be let out in the community, we must account for the students at this college that flaunt the rules. If we as a student body want to be let off campus, we should be responsible enough to do so.

Of course, these points are, for the moment, irrelevant. On Tuesday, Sept. 15, the Allegheny College Health Agency announced that the on-campus quarantine was lifted except for active positive cases that needed to be isolated. The quarantine order had been extended only one day.

The question that then comes to my mind is: where is the problem here? Why do people need to go buy essential items if the quarantine was extended only one day? There was no ambiguity on this front: Allegheny repeatedly stated that students would not be allowed off campus until at least Sept. 14, if not later. Did students not read the schedule?

And if students did read the schedule, why was this a problem in the first place? Why didn't students plan ahead? Why didn't they reach out to Allegheny to make accommodations? Why is our immediate reaction to post angry comments on an administrator's Instagram page?

And where is our student government in all this? Article 1, Section 2 of the Allegheny Student Government Constitution states, "ASG shall endeavor to reflect, represent, and crystallize student opinion … and to collaborate effectively with the faculty and administration in areas of common concern to the Allegheny community." Why didn't our student body president and vice president take this issue up with the administration? Why didn't they take the lead in having a serious and informed discussion about the needs of students and the health of the Allegheny community? Why are all of these complaints coming to a head in the comments section of Link's Instagram?



Photo contributed by President Link's Instagram

By attacking Link on social media, we are attacking the Statement of Community that we claim to uphold. We are not committed to "... creating an inclusive, respectful and safe residential learning community" We are not choosing to " ...actively confront and challenge racism, sexism, heterosexism, religious bigotry, and other forms of harassment and discrimination." We are actively creating a community where harassment is used to express the opinion of the student body, rather than a community where these discussions are held with mutual respect and dignity.

Yes, there are times when we need to speak up and make our voices heard. Yes, we need to fight injustice and tyranny wherever it may be. But this is not a case of an out-of-hand dictator, or even of an administrator flaunting the rules set for herself.

This is a case of overreaction, of immaturity, of a failure on the part of the Allegheny student body. Rather than examine the evidence and respond appropriately, we lashed out in rage. There are established channels through which our voices can be heard, channels that don't create rifts within the college community. Channels through which we as students can act with poise and maturity, not with anger and reckless abandon.

Should Link have made that post? Should she have gone to the game? Should she have apologized to the student body? Those questions are all irrelevant. We as Alleghenians and as young adults should comport ourselves with dignity, respect and intelligence. If we see a problem in our campus community, we should speak out against it. But we should do so in a way that creates solutions to the issue, not more problems.

Small worm, big awards

How Caenorhabditis elegans took the world of biology by storm

By **JAIME CANTILLO**
Contributing Writer
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South African Microbiologist Sydney Brenner began his 2002 Nobel Prize lecture for the discovery he made with two other colleges concerning genetic regulation of organ development and programmed cell death (apoptosis) with the use of the then newly discovered microorganism known as Caenorhabditis elegan.

"The winner of the Nobel prize this year is Caenorhabditis elegans," Brenner said. "It deserves all the honor but, of course, it will not be able to share the monetary award."

Years of groundbreaking scientific research would stem from this moment, leading to two more Nobel prizes to C. elegans' name.

The first of which came in 2006 for the discovery of RNA interference and gene splicing of double-stranded RNA known as RNAi, a method that can be used in cancer treatments by silencing oncogenes — a mutated gene that is cancer-causing.

The third and last prize came in 2008 for the discovery of green fluorescent protein tagging using C. elegans, a versatile bioluminescent that has the ability to light up specific genes and cells.

According to the Harvard School of Public Health, C. elegans is a non-parasitic nematode worm typically found in rotting soil or vegetation. Today, they have become a staple in hundreds of biology labs around the world for their reliability, efficiency and their biological composition.

According to WormAtlas, a typical C. elegans is between 1-1.5 millimeters long, making it easy to farm large batches in a small petri dish.

They have four major stages of development once they have fully hatched into larvae — which can take a total of 13.3 hours — known as the L1, L2, L3 and L4 stages.

The L1 stage begins with gonad, neuron and coelomocyte development. L2 and L3 are the continuations of neuronal and reproductive development. The final stage, L4, is where they reach full sexual maturity 72 hours post-hatch, after which they have a life cycle of about two weeks.

> "It deserves all the honor but, of course, (C. elegans) will not be able to share the monetary award."
>
> —SYDNEY BRENNER
> Winner,
> 2002 Nobel Prize for
> Medicine and Physiology

In addition, C. elegans are hermaphrodites, meaning they possess both male and female reproductive organs. With the ability to self fertilize, they are able to lay up to four-10 eggs every hour, according to WormAtlas.

All that is required to maintain C. elegans is E. coli cultures for substance, a Nematode Growth Medium to maintain constant moisture and a consistent temperature of 20C, according to WormBook. Any temperature above or below that and a low food source will force them to enter an alternative L3 embryonic stage called a Dauer.

A Daurer, according to WormAtlas, is "developmentally-arrested" — they do not eat or produce any waste, but maintain the ability to move, similar to hibernation. Daurers are in no way immobile. They can be seen moving and interacting with the environment around them. Even with no food and a less-than-ideal habitat, they live almost four to eight times longer than the typical two week lifespan of a C. elegan.

C. elegans is the first animal to have its entire genome mapped out. Every single neuron has been identified and named. Because of this, the process of cellular decision is understood at every step of the animal's life span. However, how the cells interact with each other and the different cellular pathways between neurons for the stage of a Daurer to occur is still not completely understood, leaving more to the unknown.

The biological composition of C. elegans has been one of the most useful features to scientists from the mid-'90s to now. A C. elegans only has 1000 cells in their body, 959 of them being somatic cells, and they are all transparent. This, coupled with green fluorescent protein tagging, allows scientists to monitor specific cell function, the exact location of genes and witness protein synthesis in real-time as the tagging makes the proteins glow bright green under a microscope. About 38% of the genes in C. elegans have human ortholog, giving us a complementary approach of how to solve a range of human diseases.

Margaret Nelson, professor of biology and biochemistry, commented on the usefulness of C. elegans as a model organism.

"C. elegans is fairly cheap, easy to grow and has a fairly short lifespan," Nelson said. "It's clear so you can see what's going on, and you can do a lot of genetic manipulation. This was important because in the time of Sydney Brenner's work, this was simply too hard and or too expensive using other organisms."

Nelson explained that she uses C. elegans both in the classroom and further commented on their implementation for today's research.

"In my introductory biology setting and junior seminar I talk about work done on C. elegans studying signal transduction pathways, a kind of intercellular relay race," Nelson said. "In the worm, it's important for certain cells to take on a particular role. It may not seem too important to humans, but this has allowed scientists to construct some pathways and understand signaling which has a correlation to cancer."

This usefulness and versatility led Bradley Hersh, associate professor of biology and biochemistry, to choose C. elegans to study apoptosis and specific cell death for his doctorate thesis at Michigan Institute of Technology,

"When I was in graduate school, I was most interested in the genetics of development of how an organism goes from one cell to a lot of cells," Hersh said. "At MIT, there were lots of labs that were studying that in flies, worms, mice and frogs… but C. elegans seemed like a simple yet elegant system in which I could do that work."

> C. elegans seemed like a simple yet elegant system in which I could do that work."
>
> —BRADLEY HERSH
> Associate Professor of Biology and Biochemistry, Allegheny College

The tools created alongside C. elegan, like green fluorescent protein, are still being used all over the country to see the actual biological function happening in real-time.

"With C. elegans it's really quite cool because they are transparent," Hersh said. "You basically can shine an ultraviolet light through them and see glowing green neurons running from one end of the body to the next. It's really quite beautiful work."

"C. elegans show us that we can learn about the human body by studying simple things," Hersh said.

Today C. elegans are being used in neurobiology to try to understand the neurodegenerative disorders known as Alzheimer's disease — the sixth leading cause of death and number one cause of dementia in the U.S for the elderly, according to the CDC. Scientists do this by tagging neurons with the aforementioned GFP tagging and watching them die, they can then see what genes cause this process to happen.

Asteroid to pass by Earth before election day

Yes, apparently 2020 capable of getting worse

By **ROMAN HLADIO**
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A little under a month ago, news broke that an asteroid will be nearly missing Earth a day before the presidential election, further fueling the havoc 2020 entails.

The asteroid, named 2018VP1, should not weigh on the minds of citizens unless they are hoping to catch a glimpse of it burning in the Earth's atmosphere, according to Jamie Lombardi, professor of physics at Allegheny College.

"This particular object is not something to be concerned about," Lombardi said. "There's about a 0.4% chance that it would get close enough to strike the atmosphere of the Earth, and it's small enough that if it does strike the atmosphere, it's going to burn up — there wouldn't be any major consequences. This may make a nice little fireball across the sky, but it would need to be several or more times bigger for it to cause windows to shatter or to have any kind of shock wave that would cause the damage."

While 2018VP1 is closer than many other objects, it is considerably less threatening than the asteroid which passed Earth in February and received a similar or lesser amount of attention, according to Lombardi.

"The object back in February was 15 times the distance to the moon — we're talking something like 400 to 500 Earths away, whereas this object will pass just a little bit inside the moon's orbit," Lombardi said. "The one back in February was about a thousand meters across, though. This new object is only about two meters across."

> This may make a nice little fireball across the sky, but it would need to be several or more times bigger for it to cause windows to shatter or to have any kind of shock wave that would cause the damage."
>
> —JAMIE LOMBARDI
> Professor of Physics, Allegheny College

While unable to cause mass destruction on Earth, as was the case with Asteroid 2002-PZ39 in February, similarly small objects present a different set of challenges for NASA to deal with.

"These asteroids, they don't create their own light," Lombardi said. "They're just reflecting light that shines on them from the sun. If they're small, there's not a lot of area to reflect that light, so they're very dim. It makes it hard to get precise measurements on their locations."

Lombardi explained that dim objects are hard to track, making their paths unpredictable to experts.

"To monitor something, you really need to be able to make multiple measurements over a long period of time," Lombardi said. "Each measurement hopefully will allow you to precisely say where the object is. But if you have a lot of uncertainty with your measurements, it's hard to nail down."

Lombardi explained that NASA tries their best to catalog and track every celestial object possible, but there will always be those that slip through the cracks. Large, unpredictable objects are the most threatening because once they are detected near Earth, scientists have a very brief reactionary period before a potentially catastrophic event.

"NASA is charged with trying to find as many objects as they can, especially those that are more than 150 meters in size, but what could be dangerous would be a big asteroid that we've missed," Lombardi said. "Even more dangerous, a comet that comes from the outer portions of the solar system — or from outside our own solar system — because those comets might have orbital periods, which means we've never seen them before."

Although NASA confirmed that 2018VP1 poses no threat to Earth on the NASA Asteroid Watch Twitter account, mainstream news outlets such as CNN toted headlines that seemed to imply the object may somehow interfere with the presidential election, scheduled for one day after the object either passes or burns up in the atmosphere.

"There shouldn't be any concern," Lombardi said. "It's an independent event. There may be some conspiracy theorists who think that this is somehow connected, and that may affect those individuals' decisions about voting, but there's no reason that it should affect anyone's decision."

Professor and Robert G. Seddig Chair in Political Science Brian Harward explained that while natural disasters and other phenomena do impact voting sometimes, the event is not nearly large enough and there should be no delays.

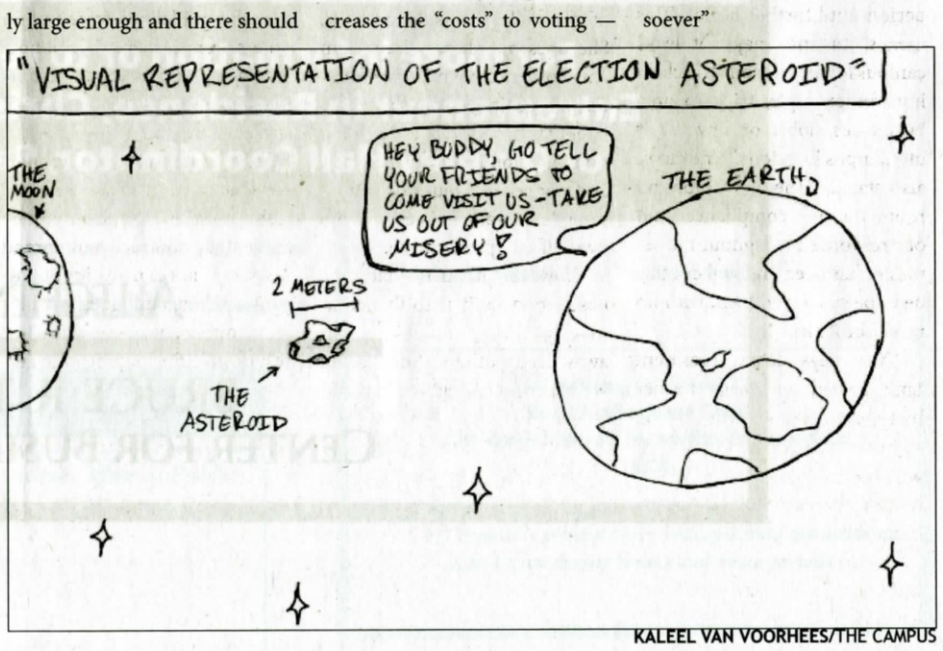
"(It is) probably not a concern for turnout, unless it hits the U.S. and affects polling locations," Harward said in an email to The Campus. "Natural disasters have hit just prior to elections, like Hurricane Sandy in 2012. I'm sure that depressed turnout, but I don't recall the numbers. I think the (New York) and (New Jersey) Secretaries of States permitted voters to vote absentee in that circumstance."

While disasters — even pandemics — do change what voting looks like, common things lead to decreases in voting more than those on larger scales, according to Harward.

"Mundane things, like rain and snow — anything that increases the "costs" to voting — are typically what affect turnout," Harward said. "Historically, rain and snow increase the costs of voting, resulting in a modest — though sometimes important — decreases in turnout, especially among Democrats who feel the costs of voting more heavily than GOP voters."

Although 2018VP1 should not lead to a decrease in turnout, Harward suggested there may be some validity to the theory.

"There's an old saying in elections, 'Republicans pray for rain on election day,' and there's some evidence that the GOP benefits electorally from inclement weather," Harward said. " I can't imagine an asteroid near-miss would play out the same way. It would likely have no effect whatsoever"



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ALLEGHENY COLLEGE

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Remembering Ruth Bader Ginsburg

Community members reflect on RBG's passing

By **SAMI MIRZA**
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Associate Justice of the Supreme Court Ruth Bader Ginsburg passed away last Friday, Sept. 18, from metastatic pancreatic cancer at the age of 87. Ginsburg was the second woman to join the court and a key member of the court's liberal wing.

"Even those students who might not have agreed with her position on the issue saw her as a role model and someone who they might emulate," said Brian Harward, Robert G. Seddig Chair in political science.

Prior to joining the Supreme Court, Ginsburg worked with the American Civil Liberties Union, working on cases against gender discrimination. In 1980, she was appointed to the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit. In 1993, President Bill Clinton appointed her to the United States Supreme Court, filling the seat left open by the retirement of Associate Justice Byron White.

"Once she was appointed she was certainly one of, if not the most important voice for expanding our understanding of equal rights at least since Thurgood Marshall," Harward said. "Not just in gender discrimination but in terms of expanding our understanding of equal justice to include people with disabilities, immigrants, workers, minorities. She was in many different cases integral to our expanding understanding of equal justice before the law."

Despite her strong stance in favor of equal rights, Ginsburg's methodology was far from earth-shattering, according to Harward.

"One of the reasons I think people ought to pay attention to Ginsburg's legal writing is (that) it's a window into an approach to constitutional interpretation and the power of the judiciary that we ought to be mindful of," Harward said. "She wasn't about, as one scholar called it, 'earthquakes' in the law, she was about 'nudging' the law."

For some, Ginsburg — and her passing — represented more than a 27-year career on the bench of the highest court in the United States.

"When Justice Kennedy retired, that was sad, because we knew Trump was going to pick another nominee, said Ryan Valerio, '22, president of the Allegheny College Democrats. "This is different, because people know Ruth Bader Ginsberg, and she's basically a feminist icon, so it was sad in a different way. It wasn't sad because we knew Trump was going to replace her with someone conservative. It was sad because of who she was and what she stood for. "

Though an icon for many on the left of the political spectrum, Ginsburg was respected across the spectrum for her courtesy and politeness. The Allegheny College Republicans wrote in a statement released Friday on Instagram that, "Justice Ginsburg left an indelible legacy of inspiration and intellect. Known for her powerful and fervent dissents, Justice Ginsburg nevertheless displayed civility throughout her whole career."

Ginsburg was well-known for her friendship with the late Justice Antonin Scalia, with whom she was awarded the Allegheny College Prize for Civility in Public Life.

"Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Antonin Scalia won this year because, while they were on opposite sides of the spectrum politically, they were still able to be friends outside of the court," said Royse Bachtel, '18, a member of the Center of Political Participation when the award was given in 2017. "It's important to recognize others who are respectful and talk to those with opposing views in a cordial way."

This civility is something Harward sees as a great message in an age of polarization and partisan divide.

"There's a lot of lessons to be learned from Justice Ginsburg and one of them is her capacity for understanding that others with whom she might disagree had equal worth and value," Harward said. "Though she was insistent on principle and insistent on integrity with respect to her personal life (and) legal life, that didn't mean that she couldn't learn from others and that she couldn't enjoy others."

Ginsburg's passing and departure from the court comes a month and a half before the general election on Tuesday, Nov. 3, leading many to draw comparisons to the passing of Antonin Scalia and the subsequent political fight over his replacement. President Barack Obama nominated Merrick Garland for the seat in March 2016, but Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell refused to consider the nomination, arguing that since the vacancy had occurred during an election year, voters should be able to have a voice in the selection of Scalia's replacement. Four years later, McConnell has vowed to replace Ginsburg before voters go to the polls. Despite the politically charged environment, Professor Harward doesn't see this as a deciding factor in the upcoming election.

"I think it certainly becomes another major issue that campaigns will certainly be reminding voters about, but we're pretty locked in … in fact, we're already voting," Harward said. "So I think most voters have already made their decisions."

As of Tuesday, Sept. 22, 53 Republican Senators have now committed to considering Ginsburg's replacement on the floor of the Senate, meaning that McConnell now has the votes to bring Trump's nominee to the floor of the Senate for consideration. While this does not guarantee that said nominee will be confirmed, it does pave the way for the vacant seat to be filled.

Though this is a national conversation, it is still one that Allegheny students can participate in by reaching out to their representatives in Washington.

"Whichever way (students) feel compelled to take action, I think contacting their Senate delegation would be important," Harward said. "If they feel that this is something that ought not be decided prior to the election or the inauguration of a new president, or the inauguration for a second term of the current president, they ought to make that feeling known to their Senate delegation."

Students can also attend the Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg Quigley Town Hall on Friday, Sept. 25, which will start at 12:40 p.m. and will be held in the Quigley Auditorium. A link will also be available through myAllegheny for community members to participate remotely.

COMEDY COLUMN

By **KALEEL VAN VOORHEES**
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Last Thursday, while searching for sea glass, a 47-year-old man discovered, washed up along a Wisconsin beach, a brain wrapped in tinfoil. The brain— a little larger than the size of someone's hand, does not belong to a human, but also cannot be identified as to which animal it belongs to. So, let me get this straight: from a sea of knowledge, a brain-wash(ed up) to make the authorities a bit … nerveous? Sorry guys, the joke practically wrote itself.

The Emmys just finished its award ceremony this past weekend, with Schitt's Creek winning seven awards— breaking the record for most won awards in a single season of a comedy series. The other nominees could be heard off-air uttering, "Well, Schitt."

During a virtual Zoom class at Houston University, a lecture was interrupted by a student who entered the meeting proclaiming bomb threats against the school and his association to ISIS. When authorities tracked down the student, Ibraheem Ahmed Al Bayati claimed he was joking until the federal authorities found ISIS material on one of his phones. A new term has emerged: 'Zoombooming', in which bomb threats are made during a zoom meeting (be wary: oftentimes login credentials are compromised). Al Bayati if you're listening— your joke really bombed. It almost wiped everyone out.

Despite President Trump's initial declaration to ban Tik Tok amid Chinese spyware suspicions, a new deal has been made with Trump's blessing (hours before the Commerce Department was preparing to take action to remove the app). In this new deal, Oracle will partner with Tik Tok's parent company, ByteDance, to continue its U.S. presence, temporarily lifting the ban. A huge relief to Sway house and all those Gen Z-ers cashing out on the app, Tik Tok is no longer "tick-tocking" out of time.

The head of the Russian space corporation Roscomos, Dmitry Rogozin, has recently claimed Venus as a Russain planet. According to the European Space Agency, Russia's research between the late 1960's until 1987 has stood as the foundation for pioneering research on the planet. So, traveling to a land that has extreme temperatures, hazy overcast, and a heavy atmosphere … indeed, Venus does sound like an extension of Russia's terrain. Those astronauts will feel right at home.



Campus Crossword: RBGedition

By **KALEIGH WHITE**
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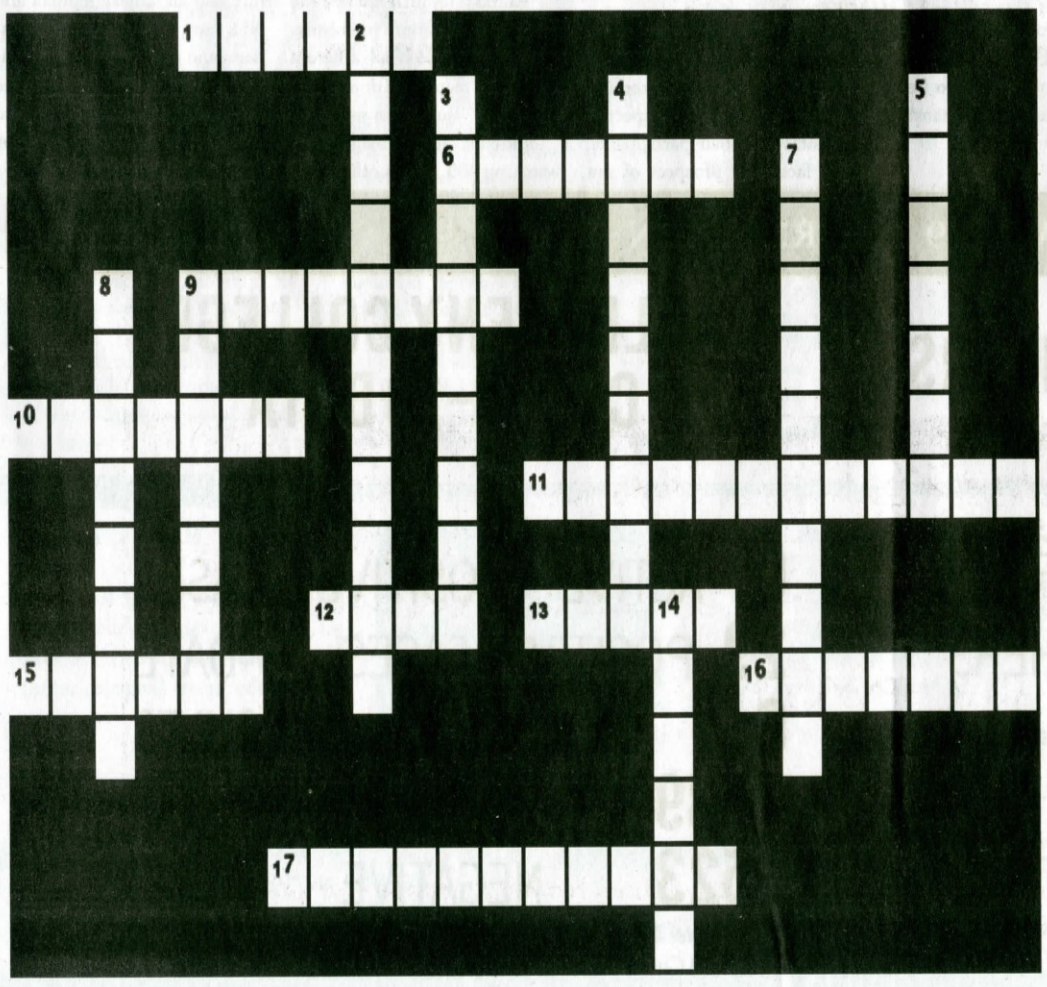

This week's theme is in remembrance of the late Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg.The answers to this week's crossword are online at alleghenycampus.com.

Suggestions for puzzle themes can be submitted to Kaleigh White, features editor, at whitek2@allegheny.edu.

Across

1. Where RBG went to research international procedure for a book, and became inspired by the changes she saw there, which greatly influenced her views on gender equality

9. RBG transferred here from Harvard Law, and graduated top of her class

10. The country her Jewish father immigrated from

11. Nickname she picked up that originated as a reference to a rapper known as B.I.G.

12. RBG's born first name; her mother insisted she go by Ruth in school do to the large number of girls that shared her first name

13. RBG's birth month

15. The country her mother's parents were from

16. Where RBG got her bachelor's degree

17. Supreme Court Justice who denied RBG a clerkship because of her gender

Down

2. The conservative synagogue RBG belonged to as a child

3. The planned place for her burial

4. An employment discrimination case; one of the first cases which RBG strongly dissented and showed how powerful she could be; ___ vs. Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co.

5. Columbia professor who pushed for RBG to be hired as a law clerk; went so far as to threaten to never recommend another Columbia grad if they didn't hire her

6. Where RBG first taught as a law professor

7. First woman to serve in the US Supreme Court, preceded RBG, who was the second

9. The President who nominated RBG for the Supreme Court

8. RBG moved to this Oklahoma town where her husband was stationed; here she worked for the Social Security Administration before having her first child

14. The President that appointed her to the US Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit

Campus Conversation

Interview with Zach Zoll,'20; basketball player turned assistant coach

By ADAM COHEN
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Zach Zoll, '20, played on the men's basketball team. After graduation, Zoll was hired as an assistant coach for his alma mater.

Why did you decide to play basketball at Allegheny?

I was looking at a school in Minnesota to play basketball, and was getting heavy looks there. In my senior year, I injured my wrist and was in the hospital for a week. Allegheny was the first and only school that talked to me during the whole week while I was (in the hospital). (I realized) the coaching staff was committed to their recruits and it really sold me to come to Allegheny.

After playing under Head Coach Bob Simmons for three years, how does it feel to work alongside him?

I actually enjoy it. You see a different side of him. I like it because it shows his passion and how much work he actually puts in not just for a two-hour practice, but all day — and sometimes at night, he makes sure everyone is prepared before practice starts. Also, (Simmons) prepares for the upcoming season and then the future seasons to have good gear and snacks for our guys. It is a good work atmosphere.

What was Simmons role in hiring you as an Assistant Coach of the Men's Basketball team?

(Assistant Coach Evan) Bonnaure told me the day before that he was leaving for an assistant coaching job at Washington & Jefferson. He told me to reach out (regarding a coaching position at Allegheny). The next day Simmons called me and said, "Are you interested in a coaching position here? I really like your playing style as a player. Let's do a formal interview." I had a Zoom interview with him over (the) July 4 weekend and was visiting my girlfriend at the time. I brought my suit just in case when I was travelling because I wanted to do some interviews. I interviewed with the Assistant Coach (Greg) Bean and (Head Baseball) Coach (Brandon) Crum, and the interview went well since I'm here (at Allegheny). Since I have been here, he has given me huge assignments to help me get to the next level of coaching and build my experience.

What made you want to become a coach?

My junior year (of college), when I got hurt, I thought, "what can I do to get back to the team?" I really enjoyed (helping out the team). I started studying film and did all this stuff that as a player I never thought of doing before. I was having the time of my life. I was starting my senior project, but did not want to flip my major because I was in physics. I was basically (done with my major), and only had one more class to take along with my senior project. That summer of my junior year, I was in Green Bay, Wisconsin, working with a guy who trained a lot of NBA prospects. I worked with NBA basketball players and I enjoyed that. I wanted to bring (everything I learned) back to the young guys (on Allegheny's team).

What are your responsibilities as an assistant coach?

I do recruiting all day, everyday. We do academic meetings (with our players) to make sure they are prepared for Allegheny's academics. Once the season starts, I watch film with our players. Because I was a 6-foot-8-inch post player, I am going to primarily work with our post players (forwards and centers) with their footwork. I also make sure that if they need anything, they always have my number — 24/7. I make sure all our uniforms are organized so that our uniforms are ready by Oct. 1. It gives me experience in all fields and I want to get to the Division I level. In the Division I level, these coaches are assigned to specific areas, but if I have a role in every single area, I can really expand myself. I wanted to work under Simmons because previous coaches I had (now) work at Chatham, NYU, and Washington and Jefferson, so it proves to me that these guys can get to the next level of coaching.



ZOLL

What were some of your greatest moments as a member of Allegheny's Men's Basketball team?

The most memorable moment for me was my junior year and then senior season. In my junior year, I did not play the whole year because I had surgery on my ankle. I got into coaching that season because that's all I could do. I wanted to help the team, so I started watching film. I did everything so our team could be successful even though I could not play throughout the whole year. Two other memories (were) when Jordan Rawls, '20, got the record-breaking shot (to become Allegheny's all-time scorer), and just playing with the guy guarding him, we were on the bench going nuts. I always love that moment because he got that score. In my senior night game, I told Peter Snipes, '23, that I am going to get to the free throw line and get two shots; a minute in, I got fouled and got two free throws and I was like, "yes, I did it."

What was it like to compete in the playoffs for two consecutive years?

Both times we were facing Wooster. I knew the second time in our senior year that game was going to be really hard to win. The feeling that we got to the playoffs, it made us feel that as a team we can compete with (Wooster). We competed that whole game, but they broke away at the end. Those playoff games honestly proved to me what we are capable of doing. This year, I feel like we are going to break that stride and win those playoff games and hopefully win (a title).

Fantasy football gives NFL fans a chance to lead their own teams to glory

By TRAVIS LUXBACHER
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With the dawn of a new football season, NFL fans everywhere can prepare to have their own respective football seasons. Fantasy football is a means for people to follow their favorite NFL teams while drafting their own rosters of players from teams across the league and competing against their friends and family for the top prize.

Fantasy also provides an opportunity for fans to better understand what is going on around the entire league, rather than just their hometown team. Instead of being resigned to watching just one football game on a given Sunday, fantasy football allows fans and participants to follow multiple games and multiple teams, broadening their understanding of the league as well as providing a fun experience.

According to Cory Wiard, '21, there are many reasons to get involved with fantasy football, with the main reason for most being a love for the sport.

"I got into fantasy due to my love of football," Wiard said. "I had a lot of knowledge around football and I really enjoy competition."

For Wiard, the love of the game was not the only reason he decided to try fantasy football.



Photo contributed by shutterstock.com

"The enjoyable aspects of fantasy football are that it gives you something to root for beyond your team, which is nice for someone like me who has only experienced pain and suffering being a New York Jets fan," Wiard said.

Although picking your own players from different teams is one of the highlights of playing fantasy football, Wiard recognizes the enjoyment in trying to build one's team each week to eventually be the champion of the league.

"I love going through a draft with my friends and have to strategically pick my team," Wiard said. "But there is nothing like fantasy football and the grind of the season — going through the season, making trades to improve my team, watching every game at once to see how your team is doing and winning or losing nail-biting games like last year when I beat my best friend in the championship on a 50-yard touchdown run by Aaron Jones."

Fantasy football brings excitement and happiness to many fans, but it also tends to bring out passion and sportsmanship, as well.

Brian Beck, '22, emphasized that fantasy football brings out a competitive nature amongst him and his friends

"The most enjoyable part is the competition and rivalry created with friends every week of the season," Beck said. "On Sunday, you watch the scoreboard all day in anticipation of what the end results will be."

> "The most enjoyable part (of fantasy) is the competition and rivalry created with friends every week of the season. On Sunday, you watch the scoreboard all day in anticipation of what the end results will be."
>
> —BRIAN BECK
> Class of 2022

The competition, according to Beck, is not the only enjoyable and worthwhile part of being involved with fantasy football. Beck talked about the camaraderie amongst owners of teams in his leagues, and the overall togetherness that participating in fantasy football creates for anyone involved.

"What I get out of fantasy football is the friendship and camaraderie that you create with the people in your league over the course of a season," Beck said.

Beck acknowledged that all of these aspects of fantasy football grouped together makes for an exciting and worthwhile experience.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the status of the NFL season, for a while, was uncertain. For many football fans, especially fantasy football participants, they faced the prospect of not having the sporting outlet this fall, and they will all have been happy to see football season underway again.

One of those fans is Sam Rundquist, '22, who supports the Buffalo Bills. Although he describes himself a massive fan of the team, he highlighted the uniqueness of fantasy football in that it allows fans to compete with each other every week without being concerned only about one team.

"Fantasy football makes the football season more interesting because you watch all different games and teams you don't really care about," Rundquist said.

Rudquist acknowledged that watching NFL teams other than the team he roots for, supporting the players on his fantasy team, is a nice change of pace and it makes the experience more relaxing.

He also discussed what he liked most about participating in fantasy football.

"I like playing fantasy football because of the competition among friends," Rundquist said. "It makes the league more interesting."

Rundquist asserted that to him and all fantasy football and NFL fans, competition, camaraderie and friendship are the ultimate reasons that they choose to participate, and the reasons that they look forward to and enjoy the season each and every year.

COVID-19 INFORMATION

HEALTH & SAFETY REMINDERS

- PROPERLY WEAR A FACE COVERING
- KEEP SIX FEET FROM OTHERS
- STAY HOME IF YOU ARE SICK
- DO YOUR DAILY HEALTH CHECK

ALLEGHENY COLLEGE COVID-19 DATA

0 ACTIVE POSITIVE CASES
29 POSITIVE CASES TO-DATE
0 PENDING RESULTS
3589 COMPLETED TESTS
3523 NEGATIVE TESTS

Editor's Note: The weekly COVID-19 data is compiled using the COVID-19 Case Dashboard available on sites.allegheny.edu/covid19. Case counts listed above are collected the Thursday before publication.