

## Inspirational PVCC Professor Bruce Robinson Retires

Preview the  
 Student Art Exhibition  
 pages 14-15

Maxwell Walpole, assistant editor

Instantly recognizable by any PVCC student or faculty member for his distinctive neatly-trimmed, starting-to-gray beard, his warm smile and prominent position as the Phi Theta Kappa honor society faculty adviser, Bruce Robinson has been a valued member of the community ever since he began working at PVCC in 1979. Now, after 42 years of teaching, Robinson is preparing to retire on May 14.

When Robinson graduated college, he was not intending to pursue a career as an educator. Robinson served as the assistant manager of a department store before he changed to selling insurance in Charlottesville. “I saw an ad for Piedmont Virginia Community College for an accountant, and so I applied for that job in 1979 and was hired that September,” said Robinson.

Robinson worked at PVCC as an accountant for 12 years before he found an opportunity to

demonstrate his leadership skills. When PVCC updated their phone systems from rotary phones to the current models, he was in charge of training PVCC employees to use the new system. When it was time for Robinson to train the business division personnel, the college chairman was impressed with how easily Robinson connected to the employees he taught and how patient he was with them and asked Robinson if he wanted to become an adjunct professor. At first, Robinson was hesitant. “I thought, ‘Well, I’ve really never taught per se’ and he said, ‘Well, yes, you have and I’ve seen you do it . . . you really do have a knack for it,’ and so I said, ‘Sure. I’ll go ahead and teach a course in Lotus 123,’” said Robinson.

At first, Robinson was extremely nervous when teaching his first class. However, after seeing the student evaluations of his course at the end of the semester, he realized he did not have

*See Robinson on page 4*



Bruce Robinson and David Lerman "twinning" at the PVCC Spring 2020 Convocation. Photo courtesy of Bruce Robinson

### In This Issue

- SGA Game Night -pg. 2
- ENG 254 -pg. 6
- Vaccines -pg. 9
- Staunton -pgs. 10-11
- Sports -pgs. 19-21
- Reviews -pgs. 22-27
- Classifieds -pg. 24

## DATES TO REMEMBER

— Festival of Cultures \* —  
May 7-13, Virtual

— Radiography Pinning Ceremony \* —  
May 11, 6 p.m., Virtual

— Tuesday Evening Speaker Session: Advanced  
Manufacturing \* —  
May 11, 6:30-7:30 p.m., Virtual

— Sonography Pinning Ceremony \* —  
May 12, 6 p.m., Virtual

— Nursing Pinning Ceremony \* —  
May 14, 1 p.m., Virtual

— 48th Commencement Exercises Virtual  
Ceremony \* —  
May 14, 3 p.m., YouTube Live

— Drive-through Graduation Celebration \* —  
May 14, 5-6 p.m., Main Campus

— Summer 10-week Classes Begin —  
May 24

— Fall 16-week Classes Begin —  
Aug. 23

\*Free Event ^Student Vouchers Available

## Fun and Games with the SGA

Maxwell Walpole, assistant editor

On April 2, the PVCC Student Government Association held a virtual game night over Zoom. The entertainment chosen for the event were Jackbox TV party video games, which offered an array of delightfully zany experiences that kept the atmosphere of the event light and playful. Tee K.O., a game in which players create unique t-shirt designs by matching up slogans and drawings provided by the other players and vote on which shirt is best, proved especially popular. Bizarre creations like a grotesque drawing of the cartoon character SpongeBob with the caption “why, just why” below it were among the panoply of horrors created during the event.

In a unique touch, the entire event had an overall costume party theme, with a \$100 gift card prize for the best dressed participant. As colorful posters advertising the event recommended, the attendees came dressed to impress. Costumes ranged from the grizzled monster hunter Geralt of Rivia from the Witcher franchise to nefarious mischief-maker Waluigi from the Mario franchise. Ultimately, Lucas Lockheart won the gift card, and Jané Van Dyk won best dressed for their costume.

According to SGA member Ginger Hood, “Despite not having as much attendance as we would’ve liked, the game night itself actually went really well because we were a little bit concerned when we were planning it that Zoom would have connection issues, or that we wouldn’t actually have enough people to play.”

When asked about other upcoming SGA events, Hood said “The SGA does hope to do the game night again, so it’s going to be recurring.”



SGA Game Night. Screenshot by Maxwell Walpole

# VCCS hosts Student Leadership Retreat

Ginger Hood, assistant editor

On April 16, the Virginia Community College System (VCCS) hosted a leadership retreat on Zoom. With three keynote speakers and seven speakers overall, the retreat lasted from 10 a.m. to approximately 1:30 p.m. (with a few minutes of overtime from the final speaker). Students from all VCCS colleges were invited to attend the Zoom event through Cvent's conference hosting tool CrowdCompass, which required students to sign up beforehand. Through CrowdCompass, students were able to choose which sessions they wanted to attend throughout the conference, leave reviews on different presentations, and read short bios on each speaker. With three keynote speakers and seven speakers overall, the event had several choices depending on what information attendees were interested in.

The first keynote speaker, Tianna Soto, opened the retreat with her presentation titled "Stress, Success, & Duck Syndrome," which put a focus on maintaining college students' wellness. "The whole idea of Duck Syndrome is that you're gliding smoothly along the surface, but beneath the water you're paddling furiously to keep up," said Soto. She shared some of her own struggles with Duck Syndrome from when she was a college student and talked about different ways to cope with school stress, even taking a minute to have the virtual attendees take some deep breaths with her to relax.

Soto also talked about some of the risk factors and deeper problems of Duck Syndrome, such as competitive environments, social pressures, and mental health issues like anxiety and depression. Soto was sure to stress that each and every student could (and should) overcome Duck Syndrome. She said, "It doesn't matter if you're in the corporate world, faculty or staff member, or if you're a student, wellness is for you."

Besides deep breathing, Soto recommended that college students practice mindfulness and self care, take the time to get up and dance to their favorite music, set both academic and personal boundaries, and connect with their friends and communities. She also said that students should not be afraid to seek professional

help, despite the stigma that commonly surrounds it, as many students can genuinely benefit from the assistance of a professional during stressful times.

"College is a marathon, not a sprint ... don't be afraid to slow down," said Soto. "Burnout is not a badge of honor, and ducks need their rest too."

The second time slot of the session held multiple presentations in breakout rooms, one of which was the second keynote speaker, Tisha Evans. The presentation, titled "From Surviving to Thriving: Opportunities in times of Uncertainty," was about students' wellness and leadership skills, with a specific focus on pushing students out of the survival zone.

"I want to speak to the leader in each of us," said Evans. "You don't have to be the president of the student government, but as a person, you are a leader."

Evans acknowledged that the pandemic complicates things for students trying to leave the survival zone. However, she encouraged students to keep pushing themselves forward. "During times of uncertainty, the more you move forward the more momentum you build," she said. "I encourage you all to tap into the resources you have on campus. If you have success coaches, reach out to them."

Overall, Evans wanted to inspire students to keep striving for success: "I want to push you towards that thriving zone. Embrace it, step into it ... embrace someone else along with you."

The final speaker, Darryl Bellamy Jr., also aimed to inspire students to overcome obstacles and become successful. Bellamy has collected over 52,000 students' fears across the country, and uses his analysis of these fears to reassure students that they're not alone.

"You might be thinking, 'am I the only one going through this?' and I can assure you, you're not ... you are never, ever alone in your journey," said Bellamy. Thousands of students had previously shared the same fears: failure, disappointing others, and not being enough, to name a few. Bellamy encouraged students to try to overcome these fears, saying, "The only thing worse than failure is regret."

*Read the full story on [piedmontforum.com](http://piedmontforum.com).*

## Robinson, continued from page 1

to be as nervous. From there, Robinson went back to university and worked hard to earn a master's degree so he could teach full time. After graduating with his degree, he balanced teaching with his job as an army photojournalist until he retired from the military in 1998.

"So it was the military . . . that kind of influenced the way I did my teaching, because I would always tell my students, 'I'm not a control freak, but I'm always in charge,'" said Robinson.

Over the course of his teaching career, Robinson has learned as much from his students as they learn from him. "I didn't have the same people every semester, I had 150 different new students. And so that kind of drove me to learn from them as individuals as time passed, learn new cultures, understand the value and diversity of not only the different cultures, but also the different ages and what students experienced in the class because my classes were technology based," said Robinson.

"[I learned] that they had their own issues, that they had their own lives. And that I had to do what I could to meet them where they were. Regardless of how many times you repeat it, I think some students didn't learn it that way. So the job for me was to not let that frustrate me, and not let it frustrate the student, and give the student confidence that regardless of whatever it was they thought they did not understand that I would always be there to push them to be able to learn," said Robinson.

Outside of teaching, Robinson worked for many years as a faculty adviser for the Phi Theta Kappa honor society. As an adviser, Robinson helped students develop their leadership skills, answered questions related to PTK projects, and helped register PTK students for the regional conferences they attend. "He has been the heart and soul of Phi Theta Kappa at PVCC since, well, forever," said fellow PTK faculty adviser and Professor of Spanish Kit Decker. "[He] has given untold numbers of club officers a baptism of fire in student leadership and he has chosen them with insight, kindness, and an unerring knack for unleashing potential."

Robinson formed strong friendships within the PVCC community. He maintains a close friendship with Director of Student Success and Retention David Lerman. On memorable

occasions, Lerman and Robinson have even taken to wearing matching outfits.

"He is one of my very good friends and though I am very happy for him to reach this milestone, I will greatly miss having him as a colleague," said Lerman. "He was such a wonderful professor, such a fine leader for PTK, and such a good role model for students, staff, and faculty. He took immense pleasure in the lofty accomplishments of our college's most high-achieving students, quite a few of whom won awards as the top community college students in Virginia. But he also was one of the most gentle and encouraging guides a student could possibly have, truly meeting our students at their level and working with them to achieve mastery of skills that would provide not only career possibilities but also pride of accomplishment and a growth in their self-confidence. Furthermore, he took it upon himself to reach out to all PVCC's male students of color every semester and emphasize his pride in them and his availability if they wanted someone to talk to."

Aside from faculty, Robinson also approaches each male African-American and Hispanic student each semester and offers to mentor them. "To me, being a mentor to students who look like me because they get to a point where they have communicated that they never saw a whole bunch of African-American male teachers, even in high school. They may have seen a coach or two, but once they get to college, they don't see any African-American male instructors. And so I wanted to make sure that my face was out there for them to be able to count on me if they needed me. And so that, to me, is what I want my legacy to be," said Robinson.

"I've had several [mentees] come back to visit and just pour their hearts out to me that if I hadn't been there, that they wouldn't be where they are. I will say that it's a well-rounded group of people, not just African-American males or Hispanic males, but particularly [students] who have moved on to four-year schools and say later in life that they remembered me telling them that they could do what I do. That . . . my parents didn't finish high school . . . I was the first one [in my family] to go to college, I was the first one to graduate high school and certainly the first one who was going to be a college professor. And as I

tell my story to them, they kind of held on to some of that as they moved on with their lives and that they would either share that with a phone call by my office or they would actually let me know that they had children who are coming to PVCC and they wanted me to look out for them,” said Robinson.

Robinson does not regret his choice to retire, but it was a tough decision. While he still plans on teaching at PVCC as an adjunct faculty member, Robinson immediately knew what he would miss the most about teaching full-time at

PVCC. “I’ll miss everyday interaction with, again, each individual student, because when I go into the classroom after three or four weeks I’ve become familiar with the goings on of each individual student. Whether they’re really quiet, or whether they are talkative, whether they have a lot of questions, whether they need additional help,” said Robinson.

Undoubtedly the PVCC community will miss Robinson, too. “Bruce didn’t just talk about education, empowerment, and social change. He lived it,” said Lerman.

## Bridging the Political Divide with Dialogue

Ginger Hood, assistant editor

On March 24, a diverse assortment of faculty members and students gathered on Zoom for PVCC’s Deliberative Dialogue, “A House Divided,” as part of PVCCs’s recent Civic Engagement Conference. The National Issues Forums Institute (NIFI) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that publishes issue guides for deliberative dialogues. NIFI defines “deliberation” in the context of these dialogues as, “a process of thoughtfully weighing options ... an unbiased kind of talking that starts where the problem starts—with your experience of it. It’s not a bunch of abstract backroom negotiations, but real, genuine, human struggles of which we are a part.”

This is what a deliberative dialogue is hoping to achieve. Attendees’ reasons for participating ranged from those planning to go into politics as a career to those who simply wanted to learn more about different perspectives. Participants were sorted into two Zoom breakout rooms to make it easier for everyone to get a chance to talk, as a deliberative dialogue is designed to encourage talking; though, as co-host of the dialogue and PVCC English Professor Jennifer Koster said, “Listening is as important as speaking.”

Even with the emphasis on listening, there was hardly a silent moment, though there were no arguments or raised voices. Questions were encouraged and answered kindly, clashing opinions were mutually considered, and multiple points of view were presented on each proposed solution to the issue.

“We all learned about seeing different points of view. A lot of things came up that I hadn’t

thought of,” said Paula Morales, a student who attended the dialogue.

The dialogue’s topic of deliberation was “A House Divided: What Would We Have to Give Up to Get the Political System We Want,” and the dialogue focused heavily on how to fix the inflammatory rhetoric that saturates America’s current political system. There were three proposed solutions to this issue, with each solution given its own list of upsides and drawbacks. Solutions included adding more moderation to online spaces, making news organizations give equal amounts of time to different candidates and parties, and giving more power to local governments to make laws as they see fit for their individual citizens. The dialogue overall lasted approximately an hour and a half, with each proposed solution given an approximately equal amount of time.

When the time for deliberation was up, participants were once again ushered into the main meeting room. There was time for closing thoughts, so the note takers for each group and many of the respective group’s participants shared their comments, compliments, and conclusions. While the conclusions were not the most solid, there was a general agreement that it was a positive experience for the participants, and it opened, and even changed, some people’s minds. Koster agreed with this sentiment, saying “learning more about how others think is one of the most interesting parts of a forum.”

For those interested in learning more about deliberative dialogue, the National Issues Forums Institute’s website has a variety of resources. For more information on this deliberative dialogue issue, visit the issue guide page.

# Examine Black American Literature in ENG 254

Isiah Cowan, staff writer

In the 402 years following European colonization and the enslavement of Africans, the dominant literary voice in America has been extremely homogeneous. With the inception of Black literature, American literary spaces have benefited from a more diverse and intersectional perspective of life in the United States of America. At PVCC, Survey of African American Literature II (ENG 254) shines light on the multiplicity of Black literature.

Taught by Associate Professor of English Dr. Justin Wert, the course surveys Black-American literary works ranging from the colonial period to the present. Students can expect to read and interact with a broad spectrum of African American writers including Richard Wright, Ralph Ellison, and Maya Angelou.

With a diverse set of literary pieces such as biographies, memoirs, poetry, slave narratives, and works of fiction, students will engage thoroughly with Black-American literature while also satisfying the PVCC writing-intensive degree requirement.

When asked why PVCC students should take this course, Dr. Wert said, “Black literature is worth studying for a litany of reasons. The variety of literature helps one properly assess the historical story-arc of America. African-American literature acknowledges the rather arduous journey people of color have taken to tell their stories while also working to achieve similar constitutional freedoms compared to their European-American counterparts.”

The course is being offered on Zoom during the upcoming summer semester of 2021 for students who have completed ENG 112 as a prerequisite. The course lasts for a duration of seven weeks from June 14 to Aug. 4, 2021, and meets on Mondays and Wednesdays 2:45- 5:45 p.m. for a total of six in-class hours a week. The course is 3 credits and it satisfies PVCC’s writing intensive graduation requirements for degree-seeking students.

According to Dr. Justin Wert, students should expect to encounter assigned reading, critical responses, discussion posts, quizzes, as well as two papers, during their time enrolled in English 254.



Justin Wert poses with BSA. Photography by Kellyn Torres

# PVCC Introduces The Panther10 Podcast

Ginger Hood, assistant editor

“How do we continue to tell students when they've had to enroll at a distance — who may have never set foot on campus — that we are still here and that we still care?” This was the question that Student Development Instructor Meg Foster and Director of Academic Support Services Todd Parks were pondering halfway through this spring semester when the first seeds of PVCC’s new podcast The Panther10 began to sprout.

The podcast, which was Parks’ idea, was created in an effort to make students aware of the resources offered by the college in an easily digestible, fun, and accessible way. With only half a semester to put it together, a multitude of PVCC services to choose from, and the help of the SGA, The Panther10’s first season began in April 2021.

As the title suggests, each episode of the podcast is approximately 10 minutes long, though those ten minutes go by quickly when each guest starts to talk about what resources they have available for PVCC students.

While each episode focuses on a different PVCC service, the first season of The Panther10 had a clearly defined overarching theme: student success.

“Piedmont has so many resources available for students. We just want more and more students to know of those resources,” said Foster, the podcast’s faculty adviser. “We had to ask ourselves, if we could only make six episodes,

what were six resources we wanted students to know about?”

Hosted by SGA members Ana Doder and Ashab Alamgir, the podcast’s guests so far have included Parks, Amanda Key, Emily Kingsley, Shelley Moss, Tamara Whyte, and Ruth Yoder. Each guest took an in-depth look into what services they provide at PVCC, as well as sharing tips for students trying to succeed.

“All of the staff and faculty we spoke to really talked about the community at piedmont,” said Foster. “I really do enjoy being able to listen in on our initial season and where the students went with the questions,” she added. “It was all very fun.”

Though the first season did not have much time to blossom, Foster is hopeful that The Panther10 will continue to grow in the fall.

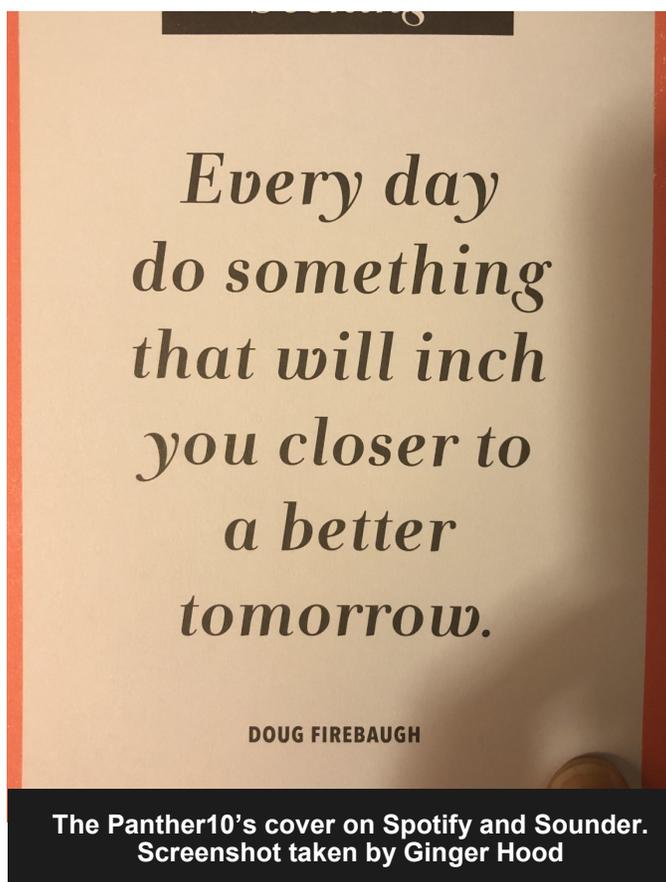
“We’re a really simple operation at the moment, and I hope to get more students involved so we can become more sophisticated,” said Foster. “In the fall, we might have entrance music.”

With student hosts and a focus on student success, The Panther10 is mostly student-driven — even the name was chosen by students.

“Students can really help us create content that’s engaging and meaningful to them,” Foster said. “I’m always looking at how we can elevate students’ voices — it’s the work of my heart.”

The Panther10 is available on both Spotify and Sounder.

“It’s here for student learning and support. Use this resource!” said Foster. “There are people at this college who care about you.”



# Career Services Talk with Cville Professionals

Jessica Coyle, staff writer

PVCC has taken their usual career chats online this year, speaking to multiple different Charlottesville professionals about their experience in their fields. As part of PVCC's Wednesday career panels, February 24's Education Employer talk was centered around finding employment and networking, particularly in the world of teaching.

Gigi Davis, who is the job and internship coordinator for PVCC, began the meeting by introducing herself and her guest, Assistant Director of HR for Charlottesville city schools Mitsuko Clemmons-Nazeer.

They began the talk centered around teaching as a profession and how they each found their way to career services. Nazeer spoke frequently about how her early indecisiveness had a lot to do with her career choice and need for help from career services after graduating from Virginia Tech.

Nazeer highlighted the issues most students face when it comes to finding a career path and knowing what to do with your skills and education. When asked about what she as an employer looks for in hiring, she said, "I pay particular interest in and focus on the activity section because I think the activity section can lend to an understanding of one's interest, their pride, and their passion towards specific interest groups or bodies of work...So I think that it's important that you are able to kind of create as

much of a holistic picture of a person and in the form of a candidate." She went on to explain that employers only see so much, and you want to make sure what they see is good.

Nazeer had other suggestions, about how to prepare for and make yourself attractive for an interview and how you can always learn more about your career path. She suggested finding connections in any way you can and even participating in similar fields as your experience and skills can transfer over. Experience and

networking were key for the talk. Nazeer pointed to opportunities like internships and volunteering as ways to solidify and exemplify your interest in a certain field and make connections, saying it is less about the degrees you earn "as it is about the learning and experiences you've gotten."

Nazeer put special emphasis on the idea that learning is "lifelong" and that using resources like career services and similar opportunities give you an advantage in knowing what you want to do. Defining yourself as a professional in your area takes real

interest and credentials, but they can come from unexpected places.

As Nazeer said near the end of the meeting, "There's no one way to pursue a career of your dreams, and there're so many different ways to reach your goals ... I am still learning what I want to be when I grow up."



**Mitsuko Clemmons-Nazeer.**  
Photo courtesy of  
PVCC Marketing and Media Relations

# Blue Ridge Health District Vaccinates Virginia

Ginger Hood, assistant editor

Under glittering fluorescent lights and between sectioned off fitting rooms, the Blue Ridge Health District's (BRHD) vaccination clinic in Fashion Square's former JCPenney is equipped to vaccinate hundreds of people each day they open their doors. The inside of the formerly deserted store is now divided by winding lines of belt barriers between its mirror-covered pillars; leftover advertisements and shelves are scattered between signs directing vaccine recipients through the various stages of the vaccination process.

The volunteer personnel are friendly but efficient, making the vaccination process run smoothly. No insurance or payment is required to receive the vaccine — all that is needed is an appointment (which can be made online) and a photo ID. Upon arrival to a previously scheduled appointment, recipients can enter through the JCPenney door facing Route 29. Recipients under 18 must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian.

After checking in, recipients receive a card that denotes which vaccine they will be getting — on a Moderna and Pfizer day, the cards are either pink (for Moderna) or green (for Pfizer). After a quick temperature check, recipients proceed



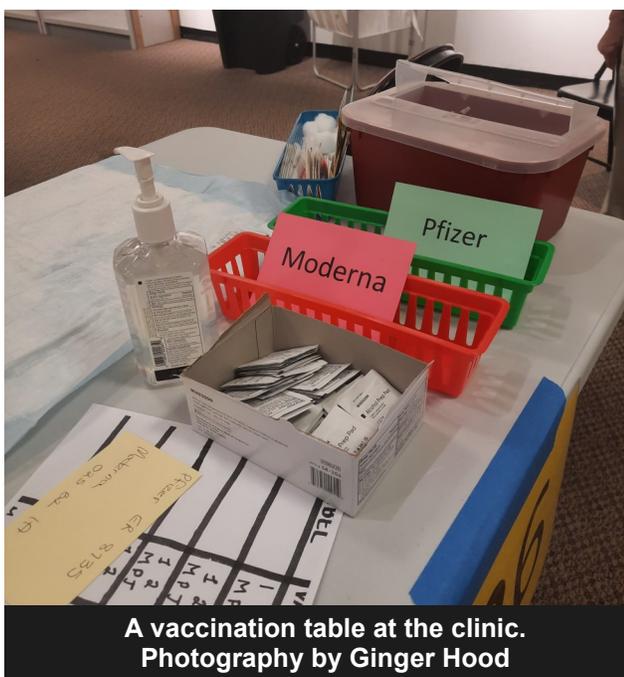
straight back to the registration tables where IDs, birthdates, and vaccine types are all sorted out in a matter of minutes.

After registration, the slightly longer wait begins. “The line moved, so there wasn’t a lot of standing around and waiting,” said Lillian Hood, a PVCC student who got vaccinated at the clinic. “It probably took 30 minutes to get through the whole process.”

The line flows back and forth in 6-foot increments, inching towards the eventual goal: the vaccination area. Tables equipped with alcohol wipes, cotton balls, band-aids, and vaccines stand in neat rows between empty shelves. Filling out the pre-vaccination questionnaire helps to speed up the vaccination process itself; however, each vaccination table is equipped with a computer where recipients can fill out the questionnaire.

The vaccination itself only takes a few moments — after a swab of an alcohol wipe on the injection site and a quick pinch of the needle, recipients can proceed to the observation area. After 15 minutes — ample time to schedule a second dose online — recipients are free to leave or to schedule a second dose appointment with a volunteer.

For more information on vaccinations in Virginia, visit the Virginia Department of Health's website or the Vaccine Appointment Management System (VAMS). For more information on the Blue Ridge Health District's vaccination process, visit their vaccination webpage or call the BRHD COVID-19 Hotline at 434-972-6261 (open Monday-Friday 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.).



A vaccination table at the clinic.  
Photography by Ginger Hood

# Visit Staunton's Frontier Culture Museum

Jessica Coyle, staff writer

The Frontier Culture Museum in Staunton, Virginia, offers locals the chance to slip back in time and explore 17th and 18th century life through exhibits and demonstrations. Seemingly unaffected by the events of this past year, the museum has been open year round and is gearing up for another busy summer season.

Being almost an entirely outdoor exhibition, COVID-19 guidelines at the museum are few, and the pandemic has had little to no effect on the museum as a business. Masks are required indoors, but the sheer space the museum occupies means visitors can go mask-less and not worry too much about social distancing.

The visitors center hides a massive compound of different exhibits. Covered in greenery and pastures with livestock, the exhibits and animals sit along a loop of trail that visitors navigate with a museum map. Shuttles run from designated stops within the exhibit loop for convenience, and \$25 golf cart rentals are even available for a speedier trip between the different sights.

Employees man the authentically recreated homesteads, demonstrating common practices of the time and answering questions from the public. Despite the American "frontier" connotation, the museum is home to six different renditions of early life from cultures all over the world, from a Nigerian village to an Irish iron forge. Nature trails also split off from the main loop, allowing the public a chance to explore the rest of the grounds or find a quiet bench for a rest.



Photography by Jessica Coyle

This week, starting on April 24 was wool week at the museum and offered a glimpse into the process of shearing sheep and using raw materials; it also meant the debut of this season's lambs. Cows, pigs and goats populate the pastures around the grounds and play a large role in the recreation of life pre-industrialization. The German homestead featured a 18th century cottage made with natural materials and exposed beams. It was also home to one massive pig that had previously been napping in the sun.

A trip to the Frontier Culture Museum can easily fill an entire day, so visitors are encouraged to bring blankets, chairs and snacks, as the grounds have plenty of space for picnicking out front and between exhibits. Snacks and drinks are available in the visitors center among gift shop items, and food trucks often occupy the parking lot for special events and occasions.

Museum tickets are \$12 for adults, \$11.50 for seniors, \$11 for students, and free for children, with guided tours on the hour every hour. Check out Staunton's hidden gem of a museum any day of the week from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., rain or shine.

# First Live Performance in a Year at Blackfriars

Jessica Coyle, staff writer

After over a year of heavily regulated gatherings and the cancellation of almost all public events, things are beginning to look more normal. As vaccination rates climb and the weather gets warmer again, venues like the Blackfriars Playhouse in Staunton are opening back up just in time for summer. Their first performance since early April of last year, *The Winter's Tale*, took place Monday, April 26 at the Blackfriars Playhouse in front of a live and virtual audience.

In partnership with the Mary Baldwin University Shakespeare and Performance Graduate Program, the Blackfriars Playhouse is home to most performances by the school. The playhouse is also unique as it houses the American Shakespeare Center. Monday was the student's first live performance since the start of the pandemic, but guests still followed strict virus guidelines. All viewers were seated in groups, distanced from each other, and wearing masks. The cast also wore masks for the performance.

The live romantic comedy seemed particularly timely as crew members drew similarities between the 16 year gap in the play and the 13 month gap in their lives. The story of love, jealousy and the eventual re-uniting of a broken family hit close to home for the student actors as they're finally back together on-stage after a long hiatus.

Amber James, student director and class of 2021, told the audience how the cast was supposed to put on an identical show a month before COVID-19 closures began. Explaining that the show was the effort of returning original cast members, James referred to the play as a "long lost production" and thanked the audience profusely before the play began.

"This has been a true labor of Love and sheer persistence and we are honored to have you all here".

*The Winter's Tale* was brought to the next level by the famous venue, Blackfriars Playhouse,



The famous bear scene of *The Winter's Tale*.  
Screenshot taken by Jessica Coyle

and the cast used the stage to interact with the audience on multiple occasions. The playhouse is the only recreation of Shakespeare's original Blackfriars Theater from the 13th century; with a two story stage and wooden rows of small padded seats. Student actors would go through the audience to the stage while playing instruments and using props like swords and fake babies, they even sang one of the songs to the tune of Jolene, which the entire audience enjoyed.

What stood out most surrounding the show was the excitement of both the students and the audience after being deprived of in person events for so long. The majority female cast later agreed in the Q&A that the production took a lot of effort from everyone involved but was worth the time.

Monday's performance was one of two and had a limited in-person audience while the play was live-streamed to MBU's Facebook page. The second performance of *The Winter's Tale* will be open to the public on Tuesday April 27 as well as the recording of the play being posted for viewers.

Luckily, there will be plenty of other opportunities for entertainment and lots of events taking place at the Blackfriars Playhouse this year in their "Actors' Summer Renaissance" featuring the theater's own troupe of actors. Featured Shakespeare plays this year include *Macbeth*, *All's Well That Ends Well*, and *Henry V*. Visitors can now enjoy Shakespearean classics in person again, breathing new life into actors and students let down by the pandemic.

# Carter Mountain is Ready for Summer

Jessica Coyle, staff writer

After nearly a year of canceling events, socially distancing and requiring tickets for entry, Carter Mountain and other Chiles Family Orchards have finally restarted regular business.

During the height of the pandemic, Carter Mountain was vigilant about social distancing and health guidelines. Visits earlier this year were by ticketed slot only, and guests were required to stay within their fruit-picking time with their group, wearing a mask any time they got close to or faced someone else.

Pets were kept from visiting the orchard during the pandemic, and the food options were limited due to staff cuts and quarantine guidelines, but Carter Mountain tried to maintain some kind of normalcy throughout the pandemic.

The Bold Rock tap room was opened periodically through the last year but is now open every evening, with a new selection of Carter Mountain-made wine coming out later this year. Their Mountain Grill has their usual choice of savory comfort foods like fries and pulled-pork sandwiches and a new apple cider slushie all for

usually under \$10. However, to visit guests must continue distancing.

The orchard is also restarting its Sunset Series, taking place every Thursday evening starting on May 7. Carter Mountain as well as its sister orchards, Chiles Orchard and Spring Valley Orchard, have said that they may continue doing ticketed events, especially when it comes to live music as the country slowly creeps out of quarantine. Ticketing shows means crowds can be relatively small and the orchard has more control over the exposure of their employees. It's also a means of extra revenue for businesses hit hard by the pandemic.

Any visitors still weary can visit the socially distanced orchard or visit one of Carter Mountain's pop-up locations like the one on Ivy Road or in the Seminole Sq. Farmer's Market for fresh pies and cider. Carter Mountain's online order/curbside pick up is also a great option. Customers can view products online and have them brought to their cars on arrival at the Orchard contact free. Visitors can find everything everybody loves about Carter Mountain from fresh produce to their famous apple cider donuts.



The view from Carter Mountain. Photography by Jessica Coyle

# IX Art Park Farmers Market now Open



Photography by Danny Talbert

Danny Talbert, staff writer

For many years, Charlottesville has had the privilege of having a local farmers market. Located at the Water Street outdoor parking lot, the market became a local favorite each spring. Each week the farmers market would be packed to the brim with customers and vendors. When the COVID-19 pandemic hit in spring 2020 the market had to be briefly shut down. After a short hiatus, the market switched locations to Pen Park and was changed to an order ahead and pick up system, which lasted the rest of the season. This year, the organization that runs the market, Market Central, moved the farmers market back near the downtown mall in IX park. Market Central's goals, according to their website, are to "support local farms, farmers markets, and entrepreneurs and connects them to the community to benefit our health, the environment, the local economy, and to promote social and cultural diversity." The Market and the organization survives off of donations that can be made on their website.

The new location is behind Three Notch'd Craft Kitchen & Brewery in IX Art Park. The market runs from 8 a.m. to noon every Saturday this spring. When I went to the market, I knew I wanted to try as many things as possible. The

market was a bit crowded, but none of the lines were too long of a wait. Everyone was also wearing masks and trying their best to social distance. The market offered food from all different types of backgrounds like local farm goods, sweets, coffee, and hand-crafted products. I decided to get a JBird dark roast coffee and a mini chocolate pie from Family Ties & Pies and more. Previously, I had never heard of either company, but I thought both the coffee and pie were a delicious combination.

My brother purchased a pound of Appalachian yak from Nature's Bridge Farm. We made burgers out of the meat for our first yak experience and it didn't disappoint.

Most of the vendors accepted cards, and all of them accepted cash. SNAP and SNAP Match can also be used at certain vendors in the market; the list is updated weekly on their Facebook page.

The farmers market is a great event that supports local farmers, vendors, and the community. It's great for all ages and the market has something for everyone. Go check it out for yourself, I couldn't recommend it enough.

Where: IX Art Park

522 2nd St. SE, Charlottesville

When: Saturdays 8 a.m. to Noon

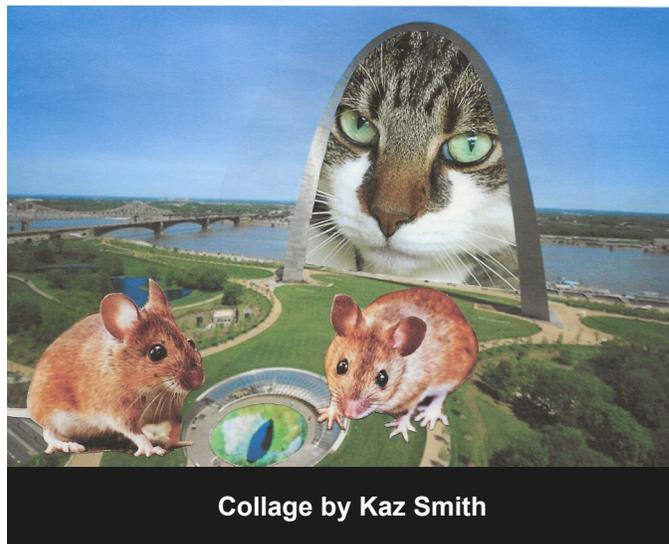
Website: <https://www.marketcentral.org/markets>

# Explore Student Art with PVCC

Ginger Hood, assistant editor

Each semester, PVCC assembles a collection of student art to showcase the hard work and dedication of students taking various art classes. Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, it has become a bit more complicated for students to take in-person art classes or have their works displayed in their usual gallery in the Dickinson building — that is why PVCC’s annual Student Art Exhibition 2021 is available online.

“This year, the students and faculty had the ongoing challenge of translating studio art classes



Collage by Kaz Smith



Ceramic Cats by Daisy Dudley

to a virtual format while also making special accommodations so that some classes could safely return to in-person teaching,” says Fenella Belle, a fine art faculty member at PVCC, in the exhibition’s introduction. “Everyone has had to be flexible, understanding and patient. Yet, in spite of ‘the Covid challenge,’ our students have persisted in making interesting and quality work, all while practicing their newly learned artistic skills. See for yourself the results of their grit, determination and talent in our second virtual student exhibition.”

Rather than guests perusing hallways full of picture frames, display cases, sculptures, and video displays, a virtual collection on PVCC’s

website showcases student art with five pages of clean, professional pictures. From ceramic cats, polygonal pigeons, and digitally edited lightsabers to illustrated haikus, pixel art, and painted portraits, the Student Art Exhibit is an impressively diverse collection.

Each piece, made with a different medium, style, and artistic vision, gives insight into the various lives and minds of students throughout PVCC.

Though showcasing art online presents unique challenges, it also has unique benefits. A virtual exhibition is accessible from one’s own house — no need to travel to campus to see it. For students



Miniature Teapot with Saucer by Claire Zilmer

with far away family members or limited transportation, being able to see their work displayed from the comfort of their own homes can be a blessing.

“We hope this virtual format allows you to share this exhibition far and wide with friends and family,” said Belle.

As PVCC mourns the death of Professor Beryl Solla, the Student Art Exhibition is a valuable continuation of her work and passion for art.

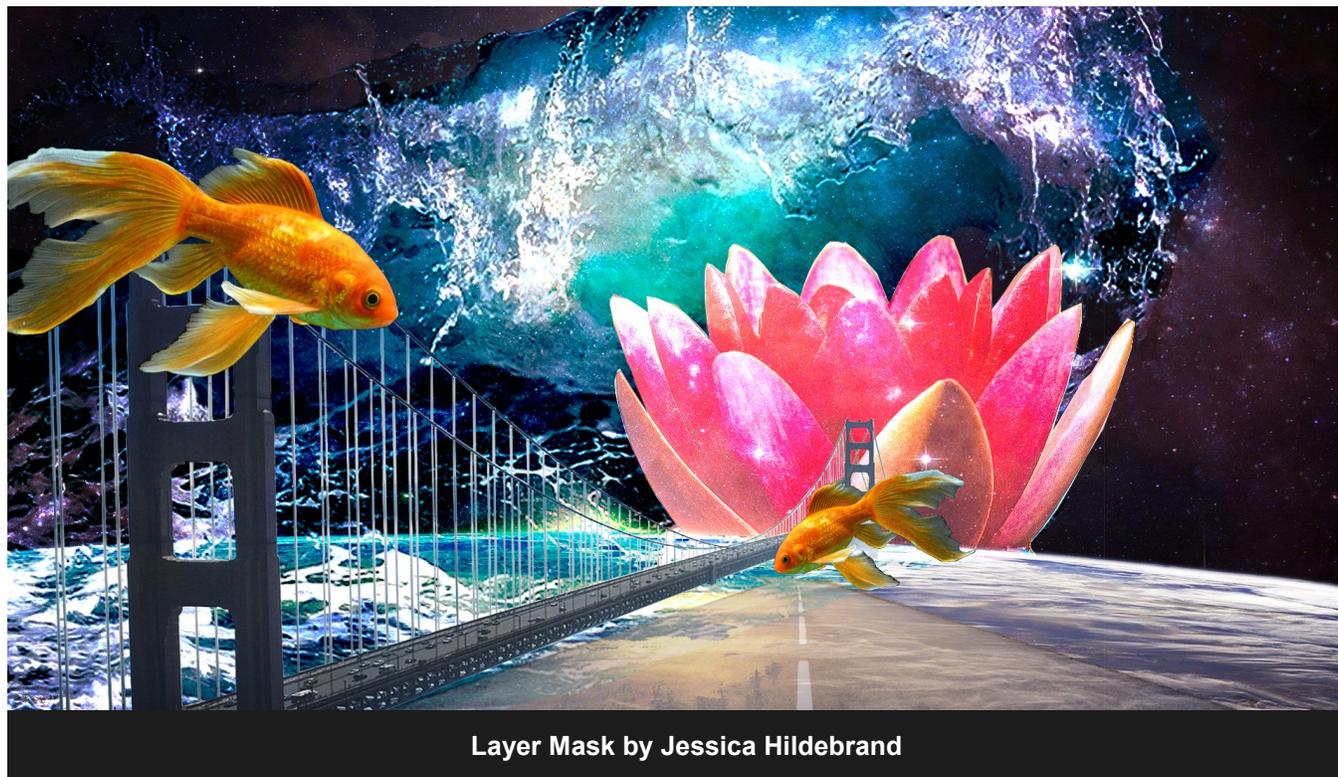
Belle acknowledged this aspect of the exhibition, urging virtual guests to keep the tradition of art and chocolate alive.

“We are proud to highlight and celebrate the

beautiful and indomitable creative spirit of our students and Beryl herself,” said Belle. “I highly recommend sitting down with your favorite piece of chocolate and feasting!”



Digital Illustration by Gail Sullivan



Layer Mask by Jessica Hildebrand

# UVA Women's Center is Committed to Cville

Isiah Cowan, staff writer

To honor Women's History Month, this article highlights the University of Virginia's Maxine Platzer Lynn Women's Center and the resources they provide to the Charlottesville and UVA community.

The Women's Center, founded in 1989 and named after Maxine Platzer Lynn (Curry '51), provides support and counseling services to all regardless of their identity.

According to current Director, Dr. Abby Palko, the Women's Center's counseling services are their best known resource. "We provide free, trauma-informed counseling for the UVA community ... We also have a year-long internship for undergraduate students; our interns learn how to develop programming that works for gender equity from an antiracist, intersectional feminist, social justice-oriented perspective," she said.

Though affiliated with UVA, the Women's Center serves as an asset to the greater Charlottesville community as well. Palko said, "In addition to our counseling services and experiential learning opportunities, we offer events and lectures during the academic year to highlight gender-based issues that impact our community. Many of these events, including our annual Community MLK Celebration speaker, are open to the public."

As a cisgender man, I asked what it means for me to be an ally to women. Palko said, "Being an ally to women means recognizing first, their humanity and second acknowledging and working to undo the ways that our culture harms or disadvantages them."

Palko suggested three actionable steps men could take saying, "A key step to being an effective ally is to work to understand [women's] reality — in group settings, pay attention to how often you're talking and how much (or little) the women in the group are talking ..."

Palko also added, "A third concrete action that men can take is to make a difference in all-male settings. When the Access Hollywood tape was released in the fall of 2016, the rhetoric was dismissed as 'locker room talk.' When men insult and degrade women to each other, how do you

react? Do you let it pass, go along with it, join in? Or do you offer a 'that's not cool'?"

Men are often associated with their masculinity. However, not all forms of masculinity are healthy expressions. "Healthy masculinity accepts and embraces the full spectrum of human emotion ... In a committed relationship and family, healthy masculinity means men are full active participants in their relationships. They don't leave all of the emotional labor to women in their life, nor do they deploy learned helplessness ... Healthy masculinity is confident in its choices when measured against their own values, not against cultural norms of what a 'real' man is or does ... Healthy masculinity views women as people, not objects," Palko said.

With March being Women's History Month, we are reminded of the countless contributions of women throughout history. With that in mind, I wanted to ask Director Palko about some of her favorite transformational leaders during the 20th century.

She said, "There are some women I think of immediately — like Eleanor Roosevelt, Patsy Matsu Takemoto Mink, Sylvia Rivera, Shirley Chisholm, Sacheen Littlefeather, and Joan Baez who lived their lives refusing to follow what the gender norms of their moment would have dictated."

While these women's legacies may live on, Palko added the importance of the unnamed women who fought for gender equity in their everyday lives.

"I'm drawn to the women whose names we'll never know. For every woman who broke down a barrier, many others pushed against it. And those are the ones I really want us to think about," Palko said.

The Maxine Platzer Women's center is located at 1400 University Ave. The main office phone is (434) 982-2361.

For more information visit their website <https://womenscenter.virginia.edu> or email [womenscenterservices@virginia.edu](mailto:womenscenterservices@virginia.edu).

Additionally, to find community resources, visit the Resource Navigator on the Women's Center website

# ELECTRIFICATION IS THE FUTURE



Screenshot taken by Jessica Coyle

## Electrify Charlottesville

Jessica Coyle, staff writer

Charlottesville, like countless other cities across the country, is facing an energy crisis. An organization called the Community Climate Collaborative (C3) has partnered with the Local Energy Alliance Program (LEAP) to help Charlottesville residents and businesses transform their energy usage. The joint program includes fundraising for non-incentivised upgrades and panel talks for anyone interested in learning about switching their energy to electric.

The program offered a free event led by C3 executive director Susan Kruse on March 30, titled Electrification is the Future. The talk centered on switching home energy usage from gas or fossil fuels to electric appliances. Kruse was joined by several other professionals in the Charlottesville area, but the main leader of the meeting was John Semmelhack, owner of a local contractor specializing in energy efficient home-projects called Think Little.

Semmelhack began the event with a virtual tour of the work he had done to switch a client's home heating system, water system and cooking system to electric energy. He outlined the changes that needed to be made to the previous systems and how common inefficiency is. "Most houses have a furnace that is three times bigger than what is needed for the size of the home," Semmelhack said.

By switching to electric energy, he explained, homeowners and business owners would be saving more money and living more comfortably.

Another main point of discussion was the motivation for switching to electric energy and what kinds of electric energy would be best to invest in. Semmelhack explained what he thought the best option would be in a limited environment. "In the long run, switching your home appliances from gas to electric is more sustainable and more possible with limited resources than putting up solar panels or other options," he said.

Semmelhack continued to uproot the full benefits of switching to electric energy which aren't limited to saving money. Improved air quality, less audible noise and maintenance, as well as more consistent temperatures for heating and cooking are all reasons for switching. These changes are also safer for the environment and those living in the home.

The only obstacle in switching to more sustainable energy is the lack of accessibility and affordable resources available for those willing to switch. The government does not subsidize or incentivize switching, and rebates for old systems are rare or nonexistent, making it hard for consumers to make the switch.

But Semmelhack had this to say in response to questions of the real-world possibility of a full switch to an electrical grid, "Virginia's grid will be entirely electric by 2050: it is going to happen either way."

Learn more about LEAP and C3 and their efforts to further renewable energy on their websites: [theclimatcollaborative.org](http://theclimatcollaborative.org) and [leap-va.org](http://leap-va.org)

# Speaking Truth Through Fiction

Jessica Coyle, staff writer

Every March, people flock to Virginia for the Festival of the Book: a two week event that Publishers, authors, and editors all come together for to talk about the importance and impact of literature. Moderated by Courtney Maum, author and writing coach, *The Art of the Short Story* was presented by the festival this past weekend on March 22. Focusing on fiction, the guest speakers were two published authors whose material covers a range of subjects from cultural diversity to the effect of modern technology on our lives. One of the main points of this talk was that art, and literature in particular, helps us come together as people and bridges basic understanding.

Te-Ping Chen, the author of *Land of Big Numbers*, was the first to read a sample from her short story collection. She spoke at length about using real-life as her inspiration for fiction and grounding her work in things she knows. She also brought up the discussion of cutting work down and getting to the grit of a story, and how sometimes the inspiration can be entirely different than the finished product. This echoed a similar point made by Maum, that although sometimes unfortunate, authors have to focus on what their readers will find interesting and meaningful.

Chen said, “What had led me to the story originally which was just really my feeling of

fascination ... As soon as I read through again it was very clear, this has nothing to do with the story.”

Interestingly, the second guest, John Lanchester, had similar points of issue when writing, even with the dramatically different subject matter. The author of *Reality and Other Stories*, Lanchester puts emphasis on the idea of “presence without presence” and the thought that everything is somehow connected. Providing his example of how someone noticed all his work includes technology without him himself noticing. The idea being that themes and relations are drawn between things in literature and life without even trying. Lanchester spoke about the difficulty of re-reading and sometimes finding those inconsistencies that clash with the story he was trying to tell.

Both authors ended up coming to relatively the same point: literature can aid understanding. And although a lot of thought has to be put into what is interesting for the targeted readers and what material will illustrate a point, creative and fictional writing is more than just a hobby.

Maum, the day’s moderator captured the sentiment of the panel perfectly “The power of art and literature is to connect people and to allow people to get to know others that they might not meet, and understand cultures they might not get a chance to know intimately.”



Thanks for joining us today for

**The Art of the Short Story**

with John Lanchester

and Te-Ping Chen

*Moderated by Courtney Maum*

Explore our full schedule of  
more than 40 FREE virtual events  
at [VaBook.org/Schedule](https://vaBook.org/Schedule)

Screenshot taken by Jessica Coyle

# Next in Sports Media: Chicago's Pierre Andresen

Isiah Cowan, staff writer

Father, Entrepreneur, recording artist, and ¼ of the Through The Wire Podcast, Pierre Andresen is making a name for himself in the content creation and sports media industries. Andresen, a Chicago native, possesses a deep affinity for the game of basketball. Now at the age of 26, Andresen successfully parlayed a reverence for the sport into a reputation as an up-and-coming media talent.

Andresen is known for his nuanced sport-takes, relentless entrepreneurial spirit, and authentic “not goin’” personality. As a basketball savant, Andresen is on a mission to inspire the next generation of basketball enthusiasts and online content creators.

Many people possess a deep institutional knowledge of the sport of basketball. What sets Andresen apart from other media pundits is his willingness to be nobody other than himself. Andresen's competitive spirit, energy, and Chicago edge gives fans the authenticity that major media outlets often lack. Viewers are drawn to what is considered “real” and that is how Andresen has made his name in an oversaturated media industry.

Andresen co-hosts Bleacher Report's Pregame picks, House of Highlights' Through The Wire Podcast, and participates as a guest-speaker on several other media entities. When asked if Andresen had tips for creators who have aspirations in media, Andresen said, “If it's your passion, give it your all and don't look back ... way before I ever knew it [sports media] could be a career or make me money I gave it everything out of pure love ... when the love is real and genuine, it finds you.”

Andresen continued, “When you have people listening or watching you for the first time, sometimes it's easy to hold back on your real thoughts or opinions because you just want to play it safe or care what people are going to say

about your take ... but after a while and some experience it's like man, being wrong or having a bad take comes with the job.”

Andresen has studied the game of basketball his entire life. When you couple this with the fact that Andresen has a polished demeanor and strong public-speaking skills, naturally his talent translated well into the sports media industry.

Andresen can be seen on the Through The Wire Podcast on a bi-weekly basis. The podcast is composed of Andresen's cousin Kentrell Beachem (@KOT4Q) and childhood friends Darrick Mills (@Dmills\_hoh) and Mike Heard (@Mikebeenhere). Additionally, Pregame picks streams several times throughout the week.

Pierre Andresen is affectionately known as “BigStacksPorzingis,” “Mr. Know It All,” and “The #1 Knicks fan in the world.” Though Andresen enjoys today's brand of NBA basketball, he is a major proponent of both “the worst shot in basketball” — the long two-point mid-range

jumper and the aesthetics from 2000's era NBA basketball. Lastly, Andresen loves 6-foot-5 to 6-foot-9 foot tall two-way scoring wings like Michael Jordan, Kobe Bryant, and Tracy McGrady. He also enjoys watching flashy guards such as Allen Iverson, Baron Davis, Stephon Marbury, and Nick Van-Exel.

Pierre Andresen is a leader of a new wave of creators making a name for themselves and building a lane for others to exist in. Andresen said, “With that kinda influence it's only right that we push the envelope as far as we can for the ones next in line after us.” Plain and simple, Andresen is here to stay, so we should get used to seeing both his mug[shot] and hearing his name for years to come.

Pierre Andresen's content can be found on his YouTube and on Twitter @PeeWeeDaPlug. For business inquiries email: PierreAndresen@gmail.com

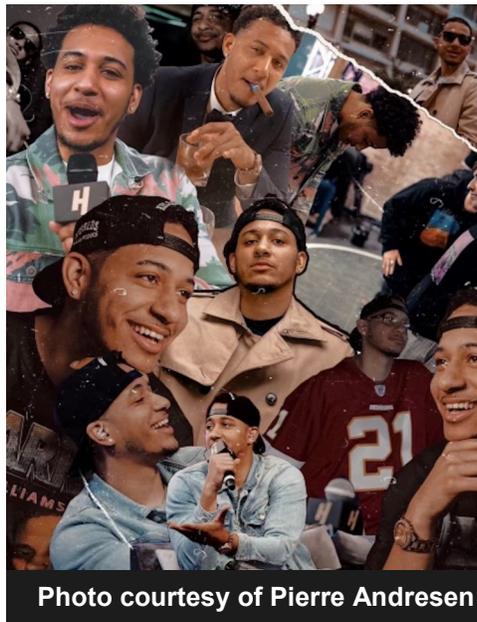


Photo courtesy of Pierre Andresen

# How D3 Virginia Schools kept Athletes Safe

Danny Talbert, staff writer

Playing a college sport is already difficult for student-athletes, with many people comparing it to a full-time job. When the COVID-19 pandemic hit last year, thousands of these American student-athletes had their lives on pause until the NCAA and conferences came up with ways to get students back safely into sports. Most Division III conferences decided to postpone fall sports until spring or cancel the season and wait until fall 2021 to continue. The Old Dominion Athletic Conference (ODAC) decided to postpone the 2020 football season until this spring. The ODAC is made up of nine Division III private and public schools, with eight located throughout Virginia.

To also reduce spread, the ODAC established strict COVID-19 restrictions since last fall. ODAC football players in the offseason were required to fill out daily health forms which were checked by staff to ensure no one playing had symptoms. Also, during workouts like lifting, players and coaches must socially distance, wear masks at all times while indoors, carry cleaning bottles between stations, and also bring their own water.

When full contact started in the spring, each player and staff member had to be tested three times a week on top of all the other rules. If athletes showed any symptoms they would be tested and if positive they must enter a 10-day quarantine at which point they will retest. If negative the player is forced to sit out for a 7-day period that is followed by a physical to ensure that they are fit to return. The ODAC also included that if someone is close contact, like a roommate of the infected person, they must go into a 14-day quarantine and will be tested at the end for COVID.

Playing in the spring was not the only thing different about this season the ODAC also shortened the schedule from a 10 game season to a four game in-conference season where the winners of each side played for the championship. This was meant to reduce the extra spread of COVID from team to team and to prevent spread



from conference to conference.

To protect fans, the ODAC allowed up to 250 fans during games in February and was increased to 1000 in March and then to 3000 in April. I decided to go to the Hampden Sydney v Ferrum game on April 3, 2021, to see what other restrictions were in place to keep fans safe. The first thing I noticed when walking into the stadium was how spread out each group of people was. There were around 800 people, which from what I could tell is drastically different from the normal HSC environment. In comparison, in 2019 HSC averaged 6,949 fans per game, which were ranked first for average attendance in Division III football. Also, fans were required to wear masks inside the stadium when out of their seats and HSC offered hand sanitizing stations around the stadium seating.

This was my first live sporting event since 2019 and at no point did I feel like I was too close to anyone, and didn't see anyone not wearing a mask. I am happy the ODAC was able to figure out a way to keep the season alive while keeping fans and players safe.

# Tap in: WNBA Season is Approaching

Isiah Cowan, staff writer

Twenty-five years ago, former NBA Commissioner David Stern founded the WNBA on April 22, 1996, centered around the marketing campaign “We Got Next.” However, in the year 2021, it is safe to say the WNBA has got now. In celebration of the WNBA’s 25th birthday, the W (as the sport is referred to by fans) will introduce a new basketball, logo, and new Nike uniforms in their launch of the new marketing campaign “Count It.” WNBA Commissioner Cathy Englebert told ESPN, “We want to count all the accomplishments of the league, from a game perspective but also in a culture and society.”

Coming off momentum from the season’s 22 game “Wubble” (women’s bubble) experience at IMG Academy in Bradenton, Florida, the WNBA season will return to a more normalized travel schedule for the season.

While in anticipation of the WNBA’s opening day on May 14, fans of the W had WNBA free agency to look forward to. In free agency, there was an unprecedented volume of player movement. Most notably the headliner was future Hall-of-Famer Candice Parker. Parker chose to leave the Los Angeles Sparks in favor of her hometown team Chicago Sky. Marquee names such as Sue Bird (Seattle Storm), Diana Taurasi (Phoenix Mercury), Seimone Augustus (Los Angeles Sparks), Chiney and Nneka Ogumike (Los Angeles Sparks), and Tina Charles (Washington Mystics) opted to stay put in their respective markets.

In terms of the WNBA’s draft, the league is full of new and exciting storylines. The Dallas Wings positioned themselves for a full-on youth movement by controlling one third of the first round (picks 1, 2, 5). With picks one and two, the Dallas Wings added to their Front Court of Satou Sabally by selecting the consensus number one pick prospect Charli Collier and Finland’s first WNBA player in 6-foot 5-inch Awak Kuier. Picks three through five were Aari McDonald (Arizona, Atlanta Dream), Kysre Gondrezick (West Virginia University, Indiana Fever), and Chelsea Dungee (Arkansas, Dallas Wings).

Samantha Hammer, an avid WNBA fan and former PVCC student, watched the draft with

admiration for the new league members. She said, “Performing at an elite college level while studying full-time and training for the WNBA is no easy feat. I’m excited to see these young players grow and evolve during their time in the league.”

Looking ahead to the 2021 season, Breanna Stewart, Jewell Lloyd, and Sue Bird look to propel the Seattle Storm to repeat as champions and overtake the Houston Comets and Minnesota Lynx in most titles won on their quest for championship number five. The Las Vegas Aces, last year’s runner-up, will attempt to avenge their finals loss to Seattle. The Aces bring back star power in the 2020 regular season MVP A’Ja Wilson alongside Liz Cambage and Kelsey Plum. Former MVP and 2020 DPOTY Candice Parker looks to propel the Chicago Sky from pretenders to contenders.

The 2019 Champion Washington Mystics are poised to compete as their do-it-all wing Elena Delle Donne looks to re-join her squad after sitting out the 2020 season for precautionary health concerns (Lyme Disease). Lastly, the 2020 WNBA number one pick and New York Liberty Guard Sabrina Ionescu looks to prove that both the pre-draft hype and the Kobe Bryant co-sign is worth the price of admission. This year Ionescu will look to showcase her talents after suffering a grade-3 ankle-sprain that forced her to miss the majority of the 2020 WNBA season.

With the WNBA’s 25th season set to kick off, fans can dive into the women’s game by purchasing WNBA league-pass for \$4.99. Viewers receive access to every game on-demand as well as statistical analysis. Additionally, supporters who are interested in purchasing the W’s new apparel can tap-in at the WNBA Store.

When asked about the new apparel lines, Hammer emphasized the Washington Mystic’s specifically, which honor racial, gender, and LGBTQ+ equality movements throughout history and includes the 19th Amendment etched into the fabric.

“The design of the new apparel as well as the important messages the line represent everything the WNBA has to offer — innovation, equality, new beginnings. I’ll be getting a jersey for sure,” Hammer said.

# New indoor Food Market opens in Cville

Danny Talbert, staff writer

In early 2021, Charlottesville welcomed a new indoor food market to the city. Located at 946 Grady Ave, the market calls the historic Monticello Dairy building its home.

According to the Dairy Market website, the history of the market dates back to the opening of the Monticello Ice Cream Company in 1912. In 1936 the company built the historic Monticello Dairy building which quickly became a place for social gatherings. The same building has been used by many local businesses over the years, and in 2017 Cunningham Quill Architects and Stony Point Development group purchased the building. Since then, they have renovated it to host local restaurants and breweries in a food court style. They also are currently building an apartment complex next to the market. In early 2021 the Dairy Market opened to the public offering 12 food vendors, one full-service restaurant, a brewery, four retailers, and a bar.

When I visited the Dairy Market, I first noticed how surprisingly big the place is. When

guests first walk up from the parking lot, they are introduced to some outdoor patio seating and the entrance to Starr Hill brewery.

Guests can enter from either these doors or continue down the side of the building to the main entrance. Starr Hill has its own dining area and bar where customers are allowed to bring food from one of the other vendors.

The food court is connected to the brewery and is set up in a long hallway with counter service restaurants on each side. At the end of the row of food options, the building opens up to a large room with the Milkman Bar on one side and coffee and ice cream on the other.

I ordered a wrap for \$10 from Dino's Wood-Fired Pizza & Rotisserie Chicken and brought it over to the seating area in Starr Hill. The wrap was huge and delicious, and the beer from Starr Hill was great! There were many options for me to choose among from pizza, sandwiches, and fried chicken to ice cream and coffee. One thing I did notice is that there doesn't seem to be enough seating area available for when the place goes to full capacity. A patron even told me "We were

hoping that there would be more room to just hang out." Which I agree with.

Although it does feel like a lot in a relatively small area I really enjoyed checking out the market. It offers a unique dining experience to Charlottesville and they did a fantastic job keeping the history of the building alive.

Address: 946 Grady Ave, Charlottesville, VA 22903

Hours: 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. Sunday-Monday  
8 a.m. to 10 p.m. Friday-Saturday  
(Vendors vary between these hours).



The historic Monticello Dairy building turned market.  
Photography by Danny Talbert

# A Taste of La Michoacana Taqueria

Danny Talbert, staff writer

Located above Merry Maids cleaning on E High, in what looks like an old white house, is a local culinary gem serving up delicious Mexican food. When customers first walk into La Michoacana Taqueria & Restaurant, they will immediately notice how small the indoor area is. Offering about eight indoor booths with some outdoor patio seating, the place can fill up quickly during rush hour. Thankfully, the restaurant is able to work around this issue by serving food quickly and by having the customers order at the counter, pick up their food, and also fill up drinks and sauces for themselves.

La Michoacana serves a wide range of Mexican food like tacos, a variety of different platters, vegetarian options, and soups, all at a great price. Most of the meals range from \$8-10, with the most expensive item on the menu being \$13. I decided to order three Asada tacos and one Carnitas taco, all with homemade flour tortillas. Each taco is only \$2.5 and offers you the option of homemade flour or corn tortillas and either

“Mexican Style” or “Super Style” as a choice of toppings.

I got the more basic Mexican-style taco, which is topped with cilantro and white onion. After you pick up your food from the side counter, guests are given the option of adding three different types of salsas, ranging from mild to very hot. One of my favorite things about this restaurant is its spiciest sauce. The homemade green salsa seems to be jalapeño based, which adds great flavor and a nice kick to tacos. but if you are not a fan of spicy food, I would stick to the more mild options. I also like how the homemade shells are thicker than most tortillas served at restaurants. The unique style of the shell does a great job holding everything together.

The tacos were delicious with my favorite being the Asada. If you like tacos, check out La Michoacana Taqueria & Restaurant. I give the Tacos 9.3 out of 10

Address: 1138 E High St, Charlottesville, VA 22902

Hours: 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. Mon-Sat. Closed Sunday.



Photography by Danny Talbert



## Step back in time with Decades Arcade

Danny Talbert, staff writer

In late April, I stepped back in time at Charlottesville's Decades Arcade. Located near Meade park and down the street from Beer Run is a building packed with all the pinball and arcade games someone could want.

Decades Arcade proudly offers over 30 different pinball machines built from the 50s to today. Each machine has its own unique theme ranging from The Simpsons, Star Wars, the Monopoly game, and many other flashy retro themes. My favorite thing about the arcade is that they also offer plenty of eighties to nineties arcade games to choose from. They have some of the most popular and fun to play arcade games, from the Pac-Man games, Mortal Kombat, Galaga, Donkey Kong, and many more.

There were many different options to choose from, it's easy to spend a whole day here. Decades Arcade is affordable at \$10 per person, kids under four get

in free, and guests are able to stay as long as they please. They also offer two-hour private events for \$300 and up to 50 people.

To keep customers safe, the arcade only allows 50 people in the building at one time. This can cause a minor waitlist for up to 30 minutes for a group of five, according to their website. When I went there was no wait, but there were

customers enjoying the classic games wearing masks and socially distancing. The arcade also provides many hand sanitizer stations and has set up fans throughout the building to keep the air in circulation.

The Arcade sells water and a variety of Champion beer but only offers snacks from vending machines.

I really enjoyed spending the day at Decades Arcade, and I plan on going back shortly. It is a great place for the family, a first date, or even to

check out on your own; you will not be disappointed!



Photography by Danny Talbert

# Review: *Operation Varsity Blues*

Danny Talbert, staff writer

If I know one thing to be true, it's that Netflix audiences love true crime stories. Some of the streaming services' biggest hits are documentary-style true crime stories like *Making a Murderer*, *Tiger King*, and *Evil Genius*. It has become such a fan favorite that the category titled Documentaries feels mostly filled up with true crime stories. In 2019 when the American college admissions bribery scandal news broke, I knew that it was only a matter of time before Netflix made a documentary about the felony conspiracy. So as soon as I saw *Operation Varsity Blues* this past month it came as no surprise.

The hour 40-minute one-part documentary does a fantastic job retelling the story of William Singer and the American college admissions scandal. Singer was the mastermind behind getting wealthy families into any college of their choosing using what he called the "side door" between 2011 to 2019. The side door involved bribery, falsified SAT and ACT test scores, and creating fictional athletic accomplishments to gain scholarships.

My favorite aspect of the documentary is that they switch between actors reenacting the parents, kids, Singer, and others involved in the scandal. Then the perspective will switch to top American college tutors, students who felt impacted by the

scandal, and even the Stanford sailing coach, John Vandemoer, who was charged with accepting bribes. This gave multiple sides to the story and also a nice visual representation of how Singer did it. I thought Matthew Modine did a fantastic job playing the lead role of Singer. When the documentary switches to the actors it feels very realistic, especially because the phone calls are based on the transcripts from the FBI wiretaps.

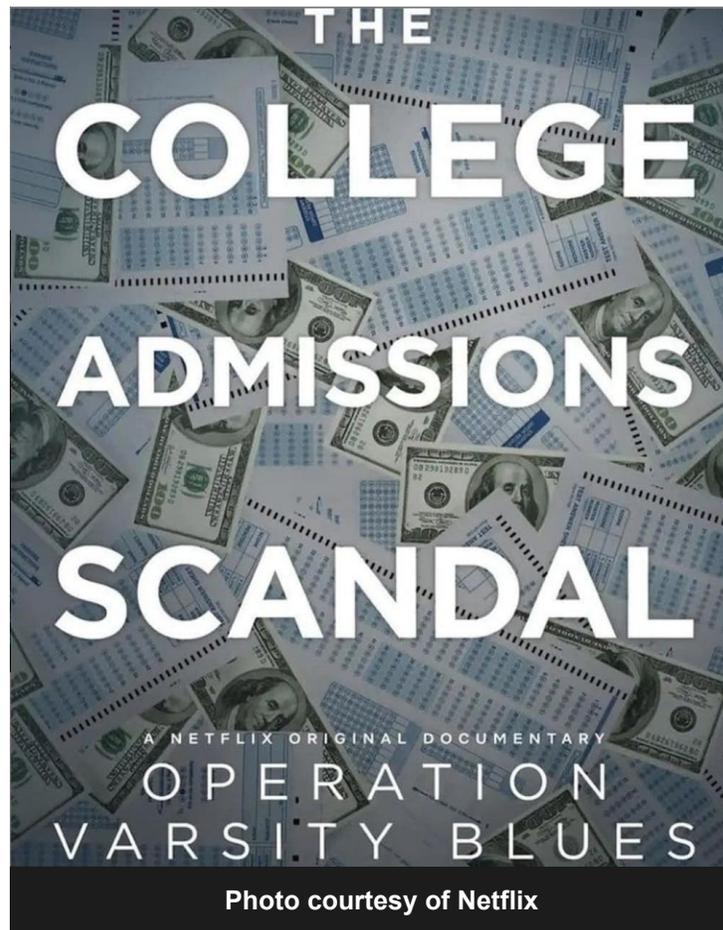
Another aspect that *Operation Varsity Blues* hits on is that it tries to point out the problems with the modern-day higher educational system.

The major issue *Operation Varsity Blues* mentions is that college is becoming too much of a business with opportunities afforded to the wealthy but not available to anyone else.

They also mentioned the issues on how standardized testing holds too much weight in college acceptance today.

They say that this is not a fair measurement since it tends to favor rich and educated families. Being a current college student, it's nice to see a documentary pointing out the issues that have been getting increasingly worse. It also doesn't feel like it takes anything away from the story, but in fact, I think it's important to mention when retelling the *Varsity Blues* scandal.

I really enjoyed this documentary and like how it was one long episode instead of the common multiple-episode style of Netflix.



# Godzilla vs. Kong: Exactly What You Expect

Maxwell Walpole, assistant editor

On March 31, Legendary Pictures released the latest entry in their Monsterverse shared universe *Godzilla vs. Kong*, starring Alexander Skarsgård, Millie Bobby Brown, Rebecca Hall, Brian Tyree Henry, and Demián Bichir. As the title suggests, the film pits the fearsome reptilian kaiju Godzilla against the noble giant ape King Kong. A research team led by scientist Nathan Lind (Skarsgård) and Kong expert Dr. Ilene Andrews (Hall) lead Kong to his homeworld of hollow earth to find a power source for an experimental weapon to defend against Godzilla's sudden, mysterious attacks. Meanwhile, conspiracy theorist Bernie Hayes (Henry) and rebellious teen Madison Russell (Brown) attempt to uncover a conspiracy within the Apex Cybernetics corporation.

The sections of *Godzilla vs. Kong* that focus on the human characters are mainly just there to move the plot along. While it may be disappointing for some that most of the human characters receive little focus or backstory, ultimately most viewers (including me) are just there to see giant monsters batter each other senseless. With a speedy and efficient plot with little to no filler, it does not take long for the film to get to the action.

The real heart of the film is, of course, the monsters. While many of the human characters

feel underdeveloped, Kong, Godzilla, and even their mechanical foe Mechagodzilla are brimming with personality. At first, Godzilla takes a more antagonistic role in the film, attacking humans and kaiju alike with relentless ferocity. He looks meaner, too; his ember-orange eyes smoldering with hate, his mouth locked in a spiteful snarl. In combat, he moves with the confident swagger of a prizefighter and strikes with the savagery and cunning of a crocodile. His sudden change in attitude is understandable. His authority has been challenged, and he is not about to let that slide. On the other hand, Kong is a much more animalistic fighter, contrasting his usually gentle disposition when interacting with humans. Their mutual enemy Mechagodzilla is a sadistic brawler, brutally beating and stomping his opponents into submission.

While a more dramatic approach to giant monsters is

more than valid, if a writer or director plays things too straight, they risk losing touch with the inherent wonderful absurdity of kaiju movies. One of *Godzilla vs. Kong's* greatest strengths is that it wholeheartedly embraces the absurdity that makes kaiju movies so enjoyable, to delightful results. The movie is big, loud, and ridiculous, but most importantly, it is a whole lot of fun.

*Godzilla vs. Kong* is currently streaming on HBO Max. Alternatively, the film is also available to watch in theaters.



Photo courtesy of Legendary Entertainment

# Drake Releases new EP *Scary Hours 2*

Isiah Cowan, staff writer

In the wake of Drake's much anticipated sixth studio album *Certified Lover Boy* — Toronto's finest blessed his cult-like following with the release of *Scary Hours 2 EP* on March 5, 2021. This project is the second installment of the *Scary Hours* series with the first debuting in 2018. The EP is composed of three songs titled "What's Next," "Wants and Needs," and "Lemon Pepper Freestyle." The project showcases guest vocal appearances by artist Quadron, Lil Baby and Rick Ross.

The first song, "What's Next," debuted at the top of the US Billboard Hot 100 and functions as the lead-single of the EP. The chorus utilizes lines from an unreleased song, "What a Time to be a Slime" featuring Young Thug. Producers Maneesh and Supah Mario are the primary architects of the track's sound. Sonically, the production on "What's Next" is comparable to the sounds of Generation X's favorite arcade games such as *Dig Dug*, *Galaga*, and *Pacman* mixed with a traditional trap melody. Over a playful trap melody, Drake keys his audience in on the challenges associated with accruing elite level financial security and fame.

Song number two, "Wants and Needs," is produced by Cardo, Dez Wright and Noah Shebib (widely known as "40"). On the track, Drake and Lil Baby trade verses, rapping about the phenomena of practicing both balance and moderation — in a life filled with wants and needs. Genius.com writes, "Between women, money, inner-circles, religion, and more, both rappers have to balance the importance of many things in life."

What drew the most attention from this song was the last few bars of his verse saying, "Yeah, I probably should go link with Yeezy [Kanye West], I need me some Jesus ... But soon as I started confessin' my sins, he wouldn't believe us." These lines sent the internet into a frenzy and launched public debate amidst Kanye West and Kim Kardashian's public separation. While it is understandable that Drake grabbed headlines with seemingly veiled shots taken at artist Kanye West, many people felt that Lil Baby was the top-performer on this piece. Listening to Lil Baby's

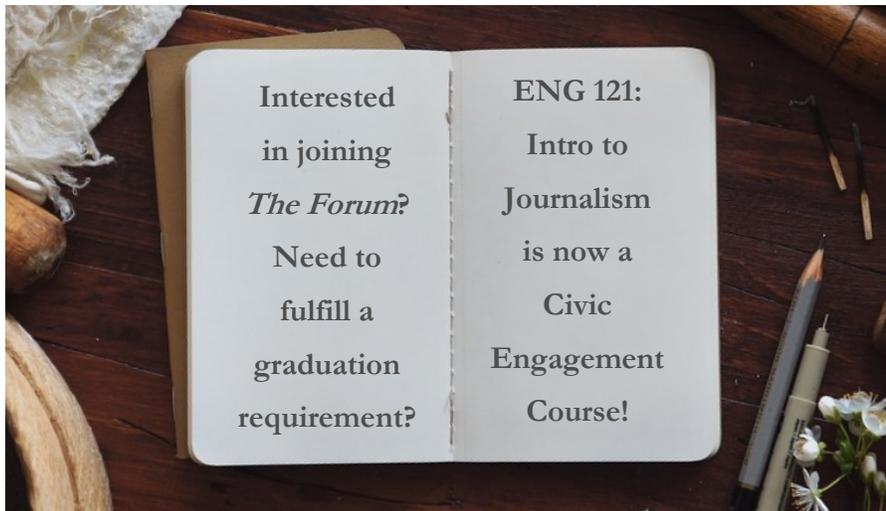
performance was akin to reading your favorite author's novella as there was not one letter, word, or sentence wasted in getting his point across that he is a central figure in the rap game. His most notable bar, "I'm not a G.O.A.T. [Greatest of All Time] but I fit the description," put rap fans on notice that although Lil Baby is humbled enough not to anoint himself as the greatest, he is cognizant of the fact that his talent is unmatched.

The last song of *Scary Hours 2*, "Lemon Pepper Freestyle," is a nod to Rick Ross, a notable WingStop Franchisee and avid fan of the lemon-pepper flavor wing flavor. The track is produced by Austin Powerz, Fnz, Keanu Beats, and Boi-1da with guest vocals from Danish Duo Squadron and Miami area legend Rick Ross. The intro keys in strong feminine vocals from Avant R&B duo Quadron over a harp-filled, 808 drum trap-beat. During his first verse, Ross carefully recites lines detailing his high-end, luxurious lifestyle, while mentioning his growing wealth and multi-faceted financial interests.

Throughout the song's second verse, Drake gives fans roughly four minutes of end-to-end rapping. For fans of traditional rap, this was the proverbial "Drake fix" they have been patiently waiting for: just raps and pure lyrical artistry. Drake starts his verse mentioning his rise from being dressed like Urkel as a youth — to now out earning Kansas City Chiefs Patrick Mahomes (\$477 Billion contract) by more than a couple hundred million. Verse two continues as Drake gives the listeners insight on his unique experience of fatherhood from the perspective of a public figure. He raps, "Dropped him [Adonis Graham] off at school, big day for my lil man ... Teacher-parent meetings, wives get googly eyed, regardless of what they husbands do to provide ... asking if I know Beyonce and Nicki Minaj" ... "Flooded French Immersion [his son's school] with the secret service, it's so obvious it defeats the purpose." From these lines, listeners can assume that Drake's presence is largely a distraction to both faculty and other parents, but this does not keep him [Drake] from fulfilling his duties as an active co-parent.

*Read the full Scary Hours 2 review on [piedmontforum.com](http://piedmontforum.com).*

# Classifieds



## *Journalism classes are getting an update!*

This upcoming Fall 2021 semester, English 121: Introduction to Journalism will be offered as a 12-week civic engagement course. Due to PVCC's new Civic Engagement Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), all students are now required to take at least one civic engagement course in order to graduate from PVCC.

ENG 121 (course ID 18151) is a three-credit class with three lecture hours per week on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 2-3:45 p.m.. It will be held in the Writing Center classroom on campus in the fall as PVCC returns to in-person education. As the Student Information System describes, "[It] introduces students to all news media, especially news gathering and preparation for print."

*The Forum* presents many opportunities to develop journalistic writing skills, learn how to conduct an interview, and become proficient in assembling a newspaper. Join us in keeping PVCC informed this fall!



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The Forum offers classified space to the PVCC community free of charge. Please send announcements along with full name, email, and phone number to: [twhyte@pvcc.edu](mailto:twhyte@pvcc.edu).

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