

Putin's Invasion of Ukraine: Sunflowers Bathed in Blood

Visit the Memorial
 Gallery in Dickinson
 pages 14-15

Laurel Molloy, assistant editor

The University of Virginia Center for Politics organized a talk, "Crisis in Europe: The Russian Invasion of Ukraine," held on Feb. 25 to talk about the recent events in Russia and Ukraine.

As many people know Russia invaded Ukraine early Feb. 24 and have continued to wage war against Ukraine's soldiers and civilians alike since then. According to a Washington Post article "Civilians are dying in Ukraine. But exactly how many remains a mystery," it is hard to tell how many Ukrainian citizens have died, but "The U.N. office said Saturday that it had documented 240 civilian casualties, including at least 64 dead, while acknowledging that was almost certainly an undercount." These civilian casualties are only from the first three days of this conflict and most likely underestimated.

UVA's hosted talk went from 3-4 p.m. on Feb. 25 over webinar. It was an online panel discussion with the moderator Chris Krebs, resident scholar for UVA Center for Politics, and two discussion panelists, Dr. Alina Polyakova, president and CEO for the Center for European Policy Analysis (CEPA), and Professor Jeff Rossman, director of UVA Center for East European and Eurasian Studies.

The livestream Webinar was held by The AV Company. As the discussion started and everyone was introduced, the number of people watching grew from 100 to soon almost 900 people watching.

They started their discussion by exploring Russia and Ukraine's history together and the past that built up to this war. They touched on the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the North

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Sunflowers are the country flower of Ukraine.

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DATES TO REMEMBER

— Club Days —

March 2 and 3, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., Bolick Student Center

— Spring Break —

March 7-13, All Day, No classes

— Richmond Ballet —

March 9, 7:30 p.m., Dickinson Building Main Stage

— Live Virtual Trivia —

March 15, virtual

— Free Movie Friday: *Shang-Chi and the Legend of Ten Rings* —

March 18, 7:30 p.m., Dickinson Building Main Stage

— Guest Speaker: Eric O'Cain —

March 24, noon, Bolick Student Center

— Deliberative Dialogue —

March 25, 1:30-3:30 p.m., Main Building Room 229

— 38th PVCC Annual Job Fair —

March 30, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Main Building

— PVCC Theatre presents "The Mystery of the Muhammad Ranch" —

April 1 and 2, 7:30 p.m., April 3, 2:30 p.m. Dickinson Building Main Stage

— One Mic Stand —

April 14, 7 p.m., Dickinson Building Maxwell Black Box Theater

— Free Movie Friday: *Dune* —

April 15, 7:30 p.m., Dickinson Building Main Stage

— Annual Student Exhibition and Eighth Annual Chocolate Chowdown —

April 15, 5-7 p.m., Dickinson Building Galleries

— John McCutcheon —

April 23, 7:30 p.m., Dickinson Building Main Stage

— 18th Annual Academic and Leadership Awards Convocation —

April 28, 4 p.m., Dickinson Building Main Stage

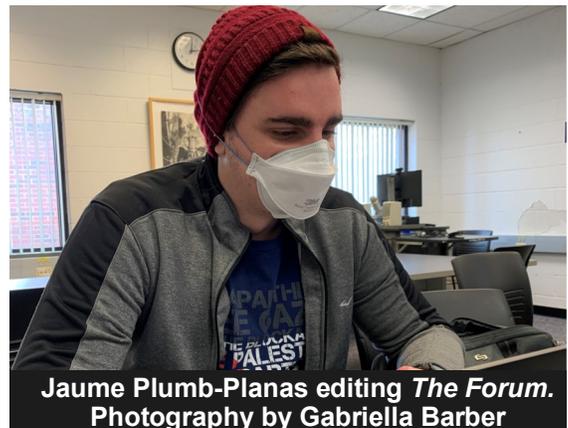
Editor's Note

Jaume Plumb-Planas, assistant editor

When I first started attending classes at PVCC in 2019, I was originally part of the Engineering program, so a class like ENG 121 - Introduction to Journalism would not have been something on my radar. After the COVID-19 lockdown, I began reconsidering my career and degree options and decided to switch my major to Liberal Arts so I could transfer to Communications at a 4 year school.

Prior to taking ENG 121, my main writing experience had exclusively been essay writing for school and extracurricular activities such as Virginia High School League (VHSL) Speech and Debate. Since taking this course my interviewing, writing, and editing skills have improved dramatically. As a result of writing for *The Forum*, I have also been able to build a great journalistic portfolio, and I have begun doing journalism work for other media outlets.

Writing for *The Forum* has provided me with the opportunity to have a deeper insight into the world of journalism and the issues surrounding it. Balancing working, school, and writing for *The Forum* has been a challenge, but one I have enjoyed tremendously.



Jaume Plumb-Planas editing *The Forum*.
Photography by Gabriella Barber

Ukraine, continued from page 1

Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO) expansion, and the Russo-Ukrainian War where Russia invaded parts of Ukraine in 2014.

Ukraine gained independence from the Soviet Union in 1991, following its dissolution, but Krebs said that Russian President Vladimir Putin never saw it that way. Krebs said that Putin "talked about Ukraine as if it wasn't a real country." Putin still sees Ukraine and its people as part of Russia even though they are their own country with their own flag, laws, and government.

Rossman said that NATO's expansion could have caused Russia to fear the blanket of protection NATO was creating. He said that Putin has "anger at Russian weakness." Polyakova added that Putin's end goal is probably to create a "sphere of influence" and control for Russia, a sphere where Russia expands and controls all those around and within itself where other countries can look to Russia for help and power. But Ukraine is not willing to bend down to Putin's power and influence; they are willing to fight for their country and people.

The last part of the discussion was about cybersecurity and cyberattacks. Krebs, who said he "recently served as the director of the US cybersecurity and structure security agency in the US government," said Russia has the capability to effectively attack Ukraine's cyber systems and make them go dark to the rest of the world. But Russia has not done this, and he explained a probable reason for that being that Putin wants everyone to see Russia's might.

If that is the reason, it has backfired tremendously. They mentioned how many stories of strength and determination have come from Ukraine. One story they mentioned was written about in an article titled "Ukrainian Woman Confronts Russian Soldiers, Hailed As 'Fearless'" about a Ukrainian woman. She went up to a Russian soldier and asked why he was there and then said, "Take these [sunflower] seeds and put them in your pockets, so at least sunflowers will grow when you all lie down here." The sunflower is Ukraine's national flower.

A Russian citizen wrote on Instagram that many of Russia's people do not want this war either. Writing that it is all because of an "insane old man" hungry for power and control not

because of the will of Russian people. They urged people to support Ukraine in any way possible but expressed their fear at actively helping Ukraine themselves. They said many people feel powerless in Russia because any resistance against Putin's regime may be met with brutal consequences. They wrote, "The truth is a crime in Russia."

Many Russian citizens agreed that this war is senseless and wanted to voice their opinions. There have been protests in Russia, and according to *The Guardian*, over 1,800 Russian protestors have already been arrested.

In *The Guardian* article called "Prominent Russians join protests against Ukraine war amid 1,800 arrests" it said, "Hours after Putin announced the military operation, protests broke out on the streets of Moscow and St Petersburg and more than 50 other Russian cities on Thursday evening." The article wrote that many Russians stated their hate for this war and "feel it is their duty to speak out whatever the consequences."

There is another discussion about Russia and Ukraine being hosted through webinar on Thursday March 3 from 3-5 p.m. It is called "Home and Abroad Public Forum: U.S.-Russia Relations," and it is being presented by the Council on Foreign Relations. It has speakers Ivo H. Daalder, Fiona Hill, and Mary Elise Sarotte as well as the President of the Council on Foreign Relations Richard Haass as the presider. It is a free event but anyone looking to watch or join in on the Q&A part of the discussion needs to register through "Home and Abroad Public Forum: U.S.-Russia Relations" online.

In the UVA webinar talk, they said that the stories are in Ukraine's favor from bombed kindergartens, to people rushing into Ukraine to help, to a single woman handing a soldier some sunflower seeds. But this is not solely about stories; this is about war and hundreds upon hundreds of lives that can change as easily and as fast as plucking a flower petal.

According to the *Washington Post* article "In Video, a Defiant Zelensky Says, 'We Are Here,'" Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said, "Our army is here, our civil society is here, we are all here ... We are defending our independence, our state, and we will continue to do so."

Teaching the History of the Majority

Jaume Plumb-Planas, assistant editor

Scottish historian Thomas Carlyle once said, “The history of the world is but the biography of great men.” But history, and more specifically women’s history, “isn’t about the female greats of American history in a female version of Carlyle’s history of great men. It’s about ordinary women and women activists and their multifarious, collective, organized efforts to move history in particular directions,” said Associate Professor of History Dr. Jennifer Tomás. This is what she teaches in her civic engagement class, History 127: Women in American History.

Tomás, who has been teaching American history at PVCC since 2013, said, “I don’t think that history is owned by any one particular group. Traditionally, European and American history, has been presented as the history of the rich, the powerful, and the politically enfranchised. So that created for centuries a sort of skewed, biased way of looking at the past.”

History 127 is not a typical history course either; With its thematic emphasis on civic engagement, it is not simply limited to the pioneers of civil rights or the history of the women's rights movement. Rather, it covers the wide array of people who worked from distinct ideological and cultural frames of reference in their efforts to influence the society in which they lived, in a broad array of social, civic, and political movements. Students do not get a sanitized version of history, which means covering everything, uncomfortable or otherwise.

“Part of that is structuring the course by selecting materials that reflect a lot of different perspectives, even ones that I find disagreeable. To be fair, to be realistic, to be honest you have to present an array of views, even if some of those views are counter to what people might find the overall lesson of women’s history is,” said Tomás.

History 127 is definitely a reading intensive course. Students should expect to be ready to discuss their opinions of the reading, and be ready to back them up with evidence from the sources.

“What I’ve found is that by cutting back on the number of the formal writing assignments students are freed to devote more time to close, careful reading and are therefore usually more

able to participate in class discussions. This, in turn, usually improves their performance on formal writing assignments. When I can get students engaged and discussing that’s very exciting to me, I love to talk, but I love it when students have important things to say and offer different viewpoints on those topics,” said Tomás.

History 127 was first introduced as a Civic Engagement (CE) course in 2019 as part of the Quality Enhancement Plan at PVCC, so an intrinsic component of the course talks about civic organizing of different social movements. The record of women’s active participation in American public life over the last 200 years meant that the history of American women was an easy fit for the CE program.

“Now that History 127 counts as both a history requirement and a Civic Engagement requirement I’m looking forward to being able to offer it more regularly,” said Tomás. Previously, the course only counted as an elective.

“Now History 127 is coequal on degree sheets as an option for fulfilling the history requirement. It offers an alternative to the standard history surveys in United States History, African American History, World History, and Western Civilization. As a bonus, it fulfills the Civic Engagement requirement and can still be used as a transfer elective. All of this has stabilized enrollment in the course significantly, even in the face of the pandemic, so that I can offer it 1-2 times per academic year,” said Tomás.

“My job as a history professor is to provide students with a narrative framework, and beyond that it’s to get students to be thinking like historians,” said Tomás.

As a student who has taken this course, I would highly suggest History 127 to anyone who is looking for a challenging and engaging course that will fulfill history, CE, or transfer requirements. While it is a reading intensive course, there are usually minimal assignments, and class discussions and lectures are engaging and will help broaden your knowledge of US history overall and possibly challenge some of your existing viewpoints. History 127 is typically offered in both the fall and spring semesters, with the class being held twice a week in 1 hour and 15 minute sessions. The course number is 40436.

PVCC Health Sciences Programs Expo

Luca Gett, staff writer

Just before 6 p.m. on Feb. 22, prospective students of the PVCC health sciences programs made their way to the North Mall Meeting Room. They were there for the presentation on surgical technology given by Linda Starks, the program director and associate professor for surgical technology. Starks was only one of seven faculty presenters at the PVCC Health Sciences Programs Expo, an informative event for those interested in studying the health sciences at PVCC. The event was held in the Main Building from 6-8 p.m., with presentations occurring in the North Mall Meeting Room and information booths set up in the Bolick Student Center.

While critical bits of information such as prerequisite course requirements, testing, and application deadlines were included in all of the presentations held, each presenter showcased their respective program differently. Stephanie Gentry-Reynolds, an instructor and the program director of radiography, emphasized the investigative qualities of this occupation with a simple case study. Ethan Clark, the program director of Emergency Medical Services, repeatedly mentioned the flexibility of the Emergency Medical Services Program, much like the occupation itself.

Linda Peffley-Firer, the associate dean of nursing, forewent the use of a slide presentation entirely. After giving out general information, she called attention to the strong friendships that students in her cohorts develop with one another and the usefulness of medical knowledge outside of the workplace, just two of the many aspects of the program.

In the Bolick Student Center, tables were set up where attendees of the event could meet the faculty of the health sciences programs, talk to them one-on-one, and grab information booklets. UVA and Martha Jefferson, two local employers of graduates of PVCC health sciences programs, had tables and staff at the event. Towards the end of the event, many attendees took the time to meet their potential instructors and learn about future information sessions at PVCC.

Those that attended the event varied greatly in age and background. There were adults completely new to PVCC and interested in career



changes, local high school students, as well as current PVCC students. Many chose to attend multiple presentations, with those on diagnostic medical sonography and radiography and advanced medical imaging being two of the most popular.

On the subject of who shows up to these events and who actually ends up in these programs Peffley-Firer said, “I have talked to some highly motivated high school students and their parents. The median age [in the nursing program] is about 27. Some students have just graduated from high school, even beginning associate’s degree coursework before then. Others are returning to school after having put their career on hold for whatever reason.”

Peffley-Firer was almost exactly correct, as, according to Brittany Resmann, director of Institutional Research, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness, the mean age in the nursing program at PVCC was 29 in the fall of 2021.

Also according to Resmann, 7% of degree-seeking students at PVCC are in healthcare programs, with many more in the process of completing prerequisites and applying. Those pursuing the health sciences are just as unique as their respective programs. Diagnostic medical sonography might attract natural problem-solvers, while nursing and practical nursing might be best for those with an exceptional ability to connect with people. Because of these differences, each presenter made an effective effort to emphasize the unique aspects of their program and associated occupation.

Still, one thing each of the presentations at the expo had in common was that they all mentioned the unstoppable growth in demand for healthcare professionals and the flexibility that comes with nationally recognized medical credentials.

Mental Health on College Campuses

Laurel Molloy, assistant editor

The struggle with mental health takes many forms. People can be held in its tight grasp one day then feel like nothing is wrong the next. Everyone experiences it differently. According to John Hopkins Medicine over 25% of adults in America suffer from poor mental health and almost 10% struggle with some form of depression.

David Lerman, director of student success and retention at PVCC, said, “Many students at PVCC do struggle with mental health issues ... during my twenty plus years here supporting students, I have certainly seen a lot struggling with these issues.”

Mental health problems, which more and more people face every day, take many forms from anxiety to depression and insomnia. In college, students must navigate social life, assignments, deadlines, and self-discovery.

Lerman suggested two things to help handle anxiety and stress, “One, try to stop yourself from making things worse by avoiding problems and stressors, [instead] try doing something about them ... Doing assignments when assigned instead of procrastinating, simple as it sounds, actually reduces stress and moves people forward in their academics.”

The second thing Lerman recommended was to try and reduce time spent on computer and phone screens. “Studies show that college students are spending 8-10 hours per day on their screen, many checking social media accounts more than a hundred times during the day,” Lerman said. He recommends that students “Limit that to twice a day, maybe three times a day, and not within an hour of the time you go to bed because it affects sleep. Get some exercise, go outside, engage in face-to-face contact with people, have real conversations.”

PVCC offers resources as well. TimelyCare is a new tele-health program that is free for students to explore and reshape their mental health. It

supplies support, counseling, group yoga, and meditation sessions, and more information can be found on the PVCC mental health services page. There are many resources online like 7 Cups which provides a free counseling and support site, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration’s (SAMHSA) National Helpline at 800-662-4357, and emergency resources online as well like the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 800-273-8255.

“Whether we’re talking about psychosis or schizophrenia, stress or anxiety, or other debilitating mental stress disorders, the struggle is very real. And unfortunately, despite gains in recent years, mental illness still very much carries a stigma,” Lerman said.

On the National Alliance on Mental Illness website it said “Suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death among people aged 10-34 in the U.S.” yet talking about mental health and receiving treatment is much rarer than it should be.

MentalHelp.net found that “approximately 60 percent of adults with a mental illness don’t receive any mental health services.” Many people go untreated and unheard because they do not know how to reach out, do not have support, or simply do not believe they need help. But asking for help is not a weakness.

After being asked what he would tell anyone struggling with mental health, Lerman encouraged students saying, “You are very much not alone and there are people who can help. It’s not easy to change but it can be done, and it can radically improve your life.”

He instructed people to seek professional help if they feel they need it. He asked all those struggling with anxiety, depression, and anything else to stay strong and take courage. Things may be hard, but everyone can change and grow. Unhappiness does not have to hold people in its unyielding grip, everyone can escape it and find their own happiness and truth. Lerman said, “We at PVCC really do care about you – and that includes your mental health.”



New Mental Health Service at PVCC

Morgan Jarvis, staff writer

The focus around mental health is growing exponentially at PVCC. Helping their students with the stress of classes, as well as everyday life, PVCC's latest focus to help address the mental health crisis in the United States involves an online therapy service called TimelyCare. This program is free for students and accessible through their student portal, and it offers appointments with licensed counselors.

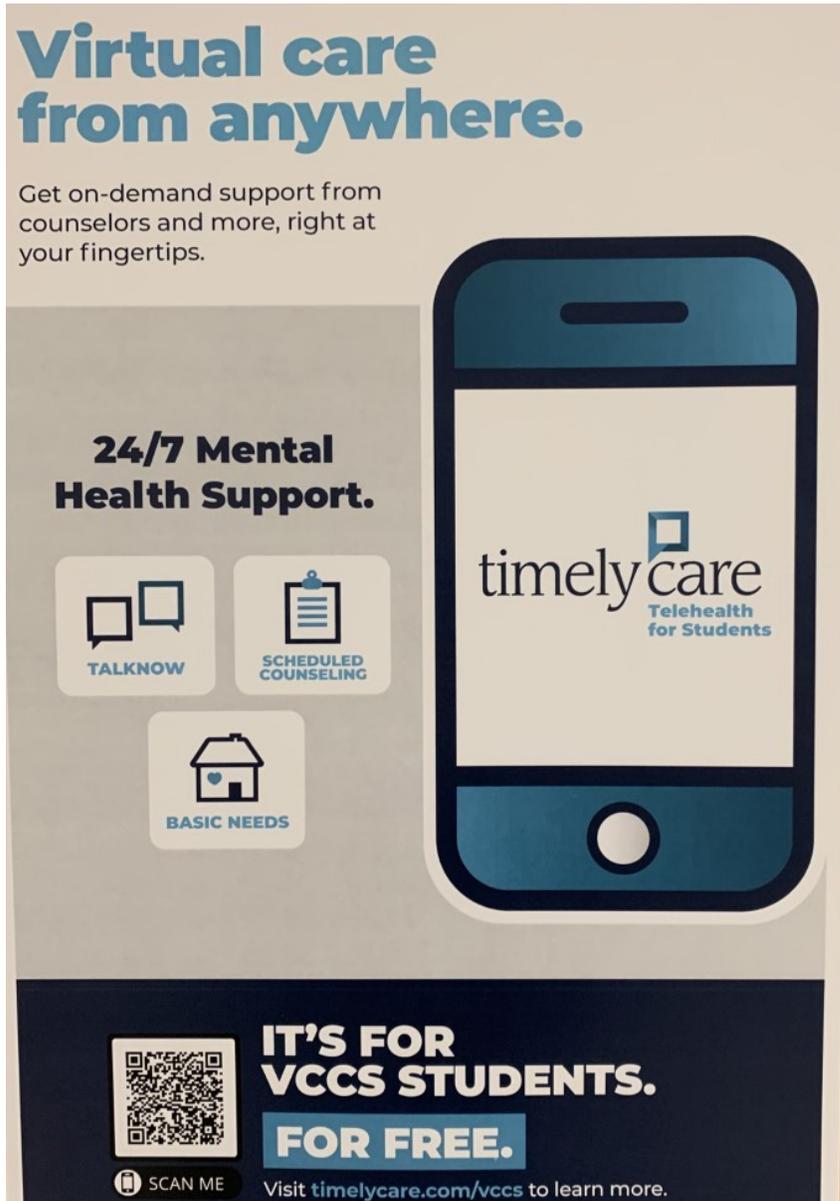
According to David Lerman, director of student success and retention at PVCC, this new service is something students should be taking advantage of. He encourages students to "Use TimelyCare as if it were an in-person service. Give it an open try and prepare to get mucky with your problems." Lerman states that the best outcome for the trial of this service is "an improved sense of well-being for students and encouragement to live their best possible life."

With this new service comes a different way of assisting students while they navigate their problems. Luckily, the program does not make it that difficult to reach out to someone. When logging into the student portal, simply look for the TimelyCare icon and click on it. Students will be prompted to make an account and enter some personal information, such as what medications are currently being taken and how a therapist can best contact them. Students have the option of scheduling an appointment at a later date or signing up for an on-demand session, where a counselor will get in touch with them as soon as they are available.

Afterwards, students are asked why they are reaching out. They are given a few options to choose from, such as depression, anxiety, relationship issues, mood issues, and more.

TimelyCare then displays a list of therapists to choose from as well as the specializations that each has. The list I got when looking at the service was long and made me feel as if I had a lot of opportunities to find someone I could talk with.

This new service at PVCC is not just a way to help students; it is also a way for students to feel like they have a voice when it comes to their problems being solved. It might help more than you know. If you are on the fence about trying the service, in the words of Lerman, "What have you got to lose?"



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TJACE Helps Community Find Careers

Kristofer Jones, staff writer

Thomas Jefferson Adult Career Education (TJACE) @PVCC is a great resource for helping adults get a GED or high school diploma. The TJACE program is for adults who have not finished high school but want to continue their education. Programs for people at all levels of education can get help at TJACE.

The TJACE has offices in Albemarle, Charlottesville, Fluvanna, Greene, and Louisa. TJACE has many programs available for those seeking help and will help you find your area of interest. From professional cooking to web technologies, there is a program for all who apply. The TJACE not only helps students from here but also abroad, helping our foreign-born citizens with classes taught

in Spanish.

TJACE has free programs and some that do need to be paid for. The National External Diploma Program (NEDP) for those students who want to have a high school diploma instead of a GED costs \$50. A GED is a general educational development test in which you can receive help from TJACE. TJACE provides an opportunity for adults to get a GED or diploma that suits the person.

TJACE also has a program to help people with their future careers.

A volunteer said, "I always walk away feeling that I just helped someone achieve something that she could not have achieved on his or her own." This is the goal of the TJACE: helping a community of people in continuing their education.



Interlibrary Loan Broadens Research Horizons

Lillian Downey, staff writer

Our interlibrary loan system connects PVCC students to more works than could possibly be contained within the walls of a single library. This free service gives students access to libraries across the world.

The interlibrary loan system is a reciprocal service which allows libraries to borrow works between themselves. This could be a fantastic resource for any student who has found the perfect book that our library does not have. The item will either be shared in an online format (such as with an article) or physically. As explained by Crystal Newell, the director of library services at PVCC, students will most likely be borrowing the item from one of the college's sister schools here in Virginia. However, so long as there is no monetary fee attached to accessing the work, then it would be possible to gain access to a work from farther away than just Virginia. If students plan to use the system for something with a time limit, it is important not to wait until the last second, as it

can take some time for the item to arrive. According to the interlibrary loan webpage, books can take between 2-4 days to ship. Items that are being shared electronically will be available as soon as the request has been processed.

Although the librarians are always available to help with a request, it is something that students are capable of doing on their own. From the PVCC homepage, go to Student Services and then from there to the Library page. From there go to the Interlibrary Loan Request page. This page gives step-by-step instructions for submitting a request.

This page also has a section detailing the rules around the use of this system; there are some limitations. One important thing to note is that the request has to be for academic work. If students want to submit a non-academic request, it would need to be done through the Jefferson Madison Regional Library.

The interlibrary loan system means that the exploration of a topic can range as far as a student wants to take it. As Newell said, "It basically opens up all libraries...to PVCC students."

Finding the Wider PVCC Community

Laurel Molloy, assistant editor

Most students and faculty are familiar with the steep climb up College Drive to PVCC, the bustling Panther Cafe, and the sites and people that wander around the main campus, but PVCC is not only located there.

PVCC has a large community extending across the main campus as well as satellite campuses. These satellite campuses include other locations where classes take place such as the Jefferson School Center in Charlottesville and local high schools. Many of the students and teachers from those locations do not know where the 800 wing is, or have even been to PVCC before, but they are still a part of the PVCC community.

Dual enrollment faculty teach PVCC classes to high school students in the area. Adjunct Professor Tamara Showalter is one of around five dual enrollment faculty at Charlottesville High School (CHS). Many schools including both private and public from Greene to Fluvanna are part of this far ranging PVCC community. These classes give students the knowledge of college classes and the resources provided by PVCC.

Dual enrollment students both on and off main campus have access to PVCC's resources. Off campus students have access to the PVCC gym, academic tutoring, math center, and more. Those students also have resources at their own high schools. At CHS, Showalter runs the CHS writing center to help students achieve their goals.

Showalter teaches dual enrollment English 111 and 112 at CHS. She has been a teacher for close to 30-years and has been teaching dual enrollment classes for around 15-years. Showalter said she tells her students "The best way to be successful [is to] come to class

every day, meet deadlines, do the assigned work." She explained that to flourish in college, it is important to communicate well, participate, do the work on time, and to trust the teacher. Things have been tough on teachers and students alike, but there are also many resources to help students thrive.

Dual enrollment classes give students credits in both high school and college so they can learn and get ahead even while not on the main campus. These courses also help prepare students for the challenges of college and get ahead academically. They benefit high school students by letting them gain confidence while staying at a familiar place. Showalter said, "It gets their feet wet with a lot of support."

PVCC's influence reaches far, from high schools to the main campus itself, and the community beyond. Showalter said her dual enrollment classes have a wide range of students and are overall a great opportunity to learn and grow.



Professor Showalter. Photography by Laurel Molloy

Financial Aid, an Important Part of Student Life

Gabriella Barber, staff writer

Across the PVCC campus, students can see flyers that read “FAFSA” across them. The school has put effort into catching the eyes of students, but why? For one, this month is financial aid awareness month. Secondly, in order for a student to get financial aid, it is imperative that a student fill out the FAFSA first.

According to PVCC assistant director of financial aid Nathaniel Riddle, it is very common for students not to fill out the FAFSA for various reasons. One reason that Riddle mentioned was parents. Many students have trouble with getting their parents to fill out their part of the FAFSA. However, this can be helped through students meeting with advisers. Riddle mentioned that there may be a way to override the system for certain situations having to do with parents not being able or willing to help with filling out the FAFSA. It is important to meet with financial aid if you are having these problems because the youngest that a student can be considered independent without being married is 24, so finding solutions without a parent's help can be difficult and has to be managed by advisers with experience.

The process of filling out the FAFSA “typically takes 30 minutes,” according to Riddle. This can vary depending on how much information a student is able to initially fill out.

The FAFSA can be saved and returned to later, but it is important to fill it out as soon as possible. This means not to wait until the week before the semester you are hoping to use financial aid on. For directions on filling out the FAFSA, the PVCC website offers step-by-step directions. On top of that, the FAFSA itself contains a helpful function called the “Data Retrieval Tool” which allows the FAFSA to pull tax information from the IRS on a student, or parents. The financial aid office at PVCC typically will receive a finished FAFSA application within 1-2 business days after it is finished and sent in, after that they then begin the process of helping the student find grants,

scholarships, and loans that are available to them.

For those who would like to fill out the FAFSA, PVCC’s financial aid office can be found in room M132 from the hours of 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. (Wednesdays 9:30 a.m. to 7 p.m.). The financial aid office is also doing FAFSA workshops at the end of the month on Feb. 22 from 8-10 a.m., Feb. 23 from 5-7 p.m., and Feb. 24 from 12-2 p.m. in room 155. These workshops are in honor of Financial Aid awareness month, and with 4,738 FAFSA already submitted as of Jan. 31, the Financial aid department is excited to help more students fill out their FAFSA and receive financial aid.

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Bringing International Awareness to PVCC

Lillian Downey, staff writer

Kristine Swanson, known as Kris to her students, is the assistant professor of French at PVCC. She has brought humor and kindness to the linguistic education of her students since she began teaching at PVCC in 1984. In her classes you will find students singing and playing games in French. Not only can students expect to learn about the French language, they will gain a grasp of French culture. Swanson's other role as the coordinator of international education brings a vital awareness of international issues to the campus.

Swanson was first introduced to French when she was 8 years old. As a self-described language person, Swanson says she fell in love with learning languages from that point onward. She said, "It was a game, it was so fun. I've always loved words ... and it was so much fun that I just kept doing it."

But being bilingual was not just fun. According to Swanson it has also opened the world to her in unique ways. She has forged international friendships and relationships and

gained a deeper understanding of the world. She believes that learning another language, "Expands you as a person."

Swanson's belief in the power of international awareness is evident in her role as the coordinator of international education. The main component of this job is the facilitation of international awareness on the PVCC campus. Sometimes it means bringing international speakers (or speakers on international topics) to the campus. Swanson helps faculty plan international trips and works on outreach to students.

Above all else, PVCC wants to get its students out in the world. Swanson said, "We want students to go."

Swanson became filled with emotion when asked about the experience of bringing students out of the country into places that they have never even considered before.

She said, "Oh it's so wonderful. I've been with students who have basically not traveled. One who had never been out of Virginia. So to see their eyes open, like, oh my gosh I'm in Paris, you know? I'm standing at the Eiffel Tower. It's so satisfying to see...this is why we do it."



Kris Swanson in Monet's garden. Photo courtesy of Kris Swanson

Harmony Through Music and Sardines

Carlos Banda Montes, staff writer

PVCC has a music club once again. The organization was put together to promote and celebrate the musical arts. With the help of PVCC's Coordinator of Student Activities and Campus Engagement Rory Lee-Washington, the club was able to host their first listening party of the Spring semester, on Feb. 11. Students got together and listened to the new Mitski album *Laurel Hell*.

At that meeting, after setting up the Sony 2.1 sound system and laying out canned delicacies and mints, we started with a little spiel about the musicians that produced the featured record. As *Laurel Hell* began to play, the students started to settle in. Into the second track, "Working for the Knife," a student had something to say. She paused the song and let us know that the music made her want to crawl into bed and be sad.

Soon after, Jhen Sullivan (@millennial.sketchbook on Instagram) and Drew Dunn (@Strychn9ne.otb) joined the meeting. The two are artists at our school and have been part of the club since before its initial meeting. Adam Cohn, one of the club's student contacts, could not make it physically that day but attended the party via speakerphone.

Being a club for students interested in any style of music makes for a great learning environment. Some students, truthfully, let us know Mitski's music was not their style. So, we all discussed what we liked to listen to and played music ranging from hip-hop, dance, experimental, to rock. This is what we hoped to get out of Music Club. To not only create in our community, but also share. And, through our Discord server where we all communicate online, students have been able to share their interests and ideas with each other 24/7. I, as a member, have already gained so much.

That day, the sounds of music and pleasantries were just that, pleasant. Anna Ralls had never tried a sardine and was hesitant to. The small, oiled cut of sardine sat on the plate, cold, getting warm, actually. After a little encouragement, she pinched her nostrils and took the plunge. She likened it to tuna but was still not hooked on the



Students at the Mitski *Laurel Hell* listening party. Photo courtesy of Anna Ralls

sardine.

Since I forgot to bring a can opener, I thought that "La Sirena's Sardines in Tomato Sauce" would not be enjoyed and instead we would have to go with the backup tab-canned "Bumblebee Sardines in Water." Luckily, one student brought a knife to the party and managed to peel off the top, to reveal the carcasses of some very meaty fish. The three large headless sardines swam in a red tomato and oil bath. They were scrumptious, especially on a salty cracker.

Dunn said, "Music Club is badass. We got sardines. We got artists of all calibers, all shapes, sizes, and colors. We are a diverse and inclusive community. ... We got big things coming."

Cohn added, "We have delicious sardines. We listen to albums. We talk about music in the community, how to get involved as a student, perform in Charlottesville, and we're really excited to hear what people want out of Music Club. We want to hear your ideas."

Sullivan said, "You don't have to be a musician in order to be in Music Club. You just have to have the sheer appreciation for music and the want to support other artists and, maybe, even learn an instrument or two."

"You can be terrible. It's okay to be bad. It's art. It's all about creating," said Dunn.

Anyone interested in getting involved with Music Club can contact any of the student contacts, Adam Cohn (ajc3295@email.vccs.edu) or myself (cb20647@email.vccs.edu). It meets every week. The faculty adviser is Dr. Bridgid Eversole.

Local Choir Director Learns about His Past

Gabriella Barber, staff writer

Horace Scruggs may be known to students at PVCC as a choir teacher they previously had. He has worked with many public schools in our area, such as: Fluvanna county, Madison county, and Louisa county public schools. Scruggs also worked at PVCC for a few years but has since retired from teaching.

In the last few years, Scruggs has continued doing part time work at the Trinity Presbyterian church here in Charlottesville. He has been working with them since 2018 as a choir director. According to Scruggs, he has enjoyed working with them, but COVID-19 did make meetings difficult.

He explained how COVID-19 “shut musicians down,” and how he ended up doing nine months of Zoom meetings with the church choir. Scruggs has also done research with Virginia Humanities that he hopes to be sharing with the public soon.

Last year, he and Hannah Scruggs (his daughter) started taking trips along the James River to create a documentary for Virginia Humanities. The purpose of the documentary will be to go over how to navigate the river and go over the African American history that occurred on the plantations along the river.

The documentary for Virginia Humanities is estimated to be 10 minutes long and will be out in May. Virginia Humanities supported the Scruggs family in this venture to help “promote history, culture, and the human side of Virginia,” according to Scruggs.

Scruggs is planning to have an expanded edition of this documentary for personal use. The reason he is making an expanded version is because there is a significant amount of information that he found out about his own family heritage, including the fact that he and Hannah Scruggs both had ancestors who had worked the plantations of Bremo Bluff.



Horace Scruggs. Photo courtesy of Horace Scruggs

Posthumous Gallery Opens in Dickenson

Lillian Downey, staff writer

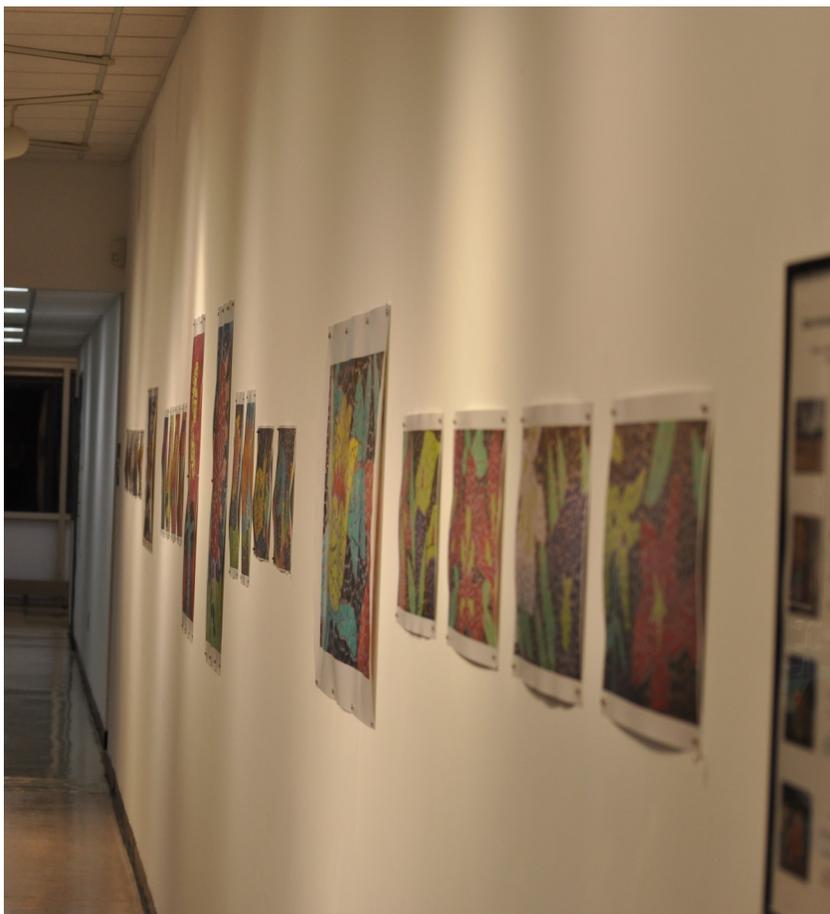
Outside it was gray and darkening, but inside the Dickinson Building at PVCC there was the glow of light and connection as students, faculty, and members of the community gathered to remember the late PVCC Professor of Art Beryl Solla through her creations.

Interspersed among the pieces were tables loaded with snacks, drinks, and computer screens showing even more of Solla's work. These spots became focal points as people connected over their shared memories.

This gallery opening focused strongly on participation. Solla's distinctive, bright pieces filled the hallways, and in the center of the left hallway was a box where people could arrange several sections of Solla's unfinished ceramic works. Anyone who wished could take a moment to explore their own artistic tendencies. Attendees were then encouraged to post their creations to social media.

A wide range of Solla's mediums were on display. Many pieces were ceramic, some embroidered or beaded cloth, and some created from tile. All of them boasted Solla's distinctive bright style. There were several pieces that, despite being vivid in their own right, were substantially more subdued. These had visitors shaking their heads with good humor. The many comments about how toned down and calm the pieces were, spoke to the vibrancy present in all of Solla's works.

Several students, past and present, attended the event. Many knew her outside of PVCC as well, some living in places that display her artistry. When asked about the gallery opening



one past student, Marla Kos, said, "It's definitely her."

Kos spoke fondly of Solla. She remembered her as an encouraging and extremely present teacher. But above all else, Kos expressed a sentiment that Solla had shared many times with her: "We can all do art."



All photography by Lillian Downey

Aboriginal Art on Display at UVA

Kristofer Jones, staff writer

With a free 30-minute tour, guide Ed Miller walks visitors through the past, present, and future of Aboriginal art at UVA's Kluge-Ruhe Aboriginal Art Collection. The tour of the 84-year-old colonial revival style house begins with an acknowledgment of the original inhabitants of the majority of the Piedmont and parts of the Blue Ridge region of Virginia, the Monacan Indian Nation, who walked the land for 10,000 years.

The aboriginal people of Australia have some of the most sought-after art in the world. According to the Kluge-Ruhe Aboriginal Art Collection, the tradition of Aboriginal art is the oldest known art tradition in the world. It is believed that Aboriginal people of Australia have been making artwork as far back as 55,000 years. An Aboriginal person is anyone from Australia or the Torres Strait Islands, while the word aboriginal without a capital A refers to any indigenous person from any place.

The first exhibit "Past, Present, & Together," tells the story of the origins of Aboriginal art. It was started in a small indigenous community of Australia named Papunya, in the late 1950s. Papunya is a settlement set up by the Australian government for displaced Aboriginal people. This settlement grew quickly and there were conflicts between different groups of Aboriginal people. In 1971, not wanting to lose their traditions, a small group of men got together and started to paint. Painting stories of where they were originally from, stories that had been handed down from generation to generation. Aboriginal people do not have a written language, so their history is passed down orally and through the arts.

Geoffrey Bardon, who worked at the primary school in Papunya, saw that the art

was more than just paintings on canvases and started to promote artists in Papunya. He began providing them the canvases and art supplies. In 1972, the pace of painting started to pick up at even greater speed and the art center Papunya Tula was started. This art center would provide paints, canvases, and a space for artists to paint. Kaapa Mbitjinpa Tjampitjinpa was one of the artists on display, has been acknowledged as the artist that helped to popularize Aboriginal art

One of the concepts in Aboriginal art is called "The Dreaming." The Dreaming is a big encompassing concept of spiritual beliefs, a moral code of living, connection to the land, and ancestors. The Dreaming has nothing to do with actual dreaming; they are stories of creation.

The exhibit explains that even though the Aboriginal

people have been painting for 50,000 years on the body and natural surfaces, canvas and board are relatively new mediums. Dots are a common feature of Aboriginal art used to infill designs, but dots are also used to obscure information within Aboriginal art. Another concept that comes up in Aboriginal art is a sense of country. For them, this means having a connection to where they are from. It is also a connection to the sky, cosmos, and the landscape. Many paintings use earth tones because they are using pigments from what materials are around them.

The tour ended with a modern look at Aboriginal art. Our guide tells us how any form of art can be Aboriginal art if it is done by an Aboriginal person. This art exhibit was works from 1971 to 1994. In Papunya Tula, most of its art was done by men, but this was not done on purpose. In part two of this exhibit that will start in March will feature a lot of the female Aboriginal artists. The second show will showcase work from 1994 to the present day.



"Dreaming at Makati" by Kaapa Mbitjinpa Tjampitjinpa. Photography by Kristofer Jones

Creating Realms of Magic and Expression

Laurel Molloy, assistant editor

Art is different for everyone. Fenella Belle, associate professor of art at PVCC, tries to make it accessible for all. She said there are countless ways to take reality and make something unique and beautiful from it. Belle has had art around her for most of her life.

Her mother was an artist and art teacher, and Belle found herself drawn to teaching art as well. She started teaching art over 30 years ago in Philadelphia. She said, “What I’ve found is that the urge to express or create is a human instinct, but many people either don’t allow themselves to try or ... know how to get started.” She tries to guide people of every profession and line of life to express their true selves through art.

This semester Belle is teaching ART 100 - Art Appreciation and ART 131 - Fundamentals of Design I both online and in person. Art Appreciation is a three-credit course about the history and different types of art like photography and sculptures. Fundamentals of Design is a four-credit class that features looking at color and 2D and 3D design.

Belle said that there is magic in art. It can touch people so deeply and meaningfully. For her, “art is fundamentally about creating something new, expressing ourselves, and connecting with others.”

Belle talked about how she takes inspiration from nature and the walks she goes on. Nature has boundless variety and beautiful patterns within it. She has tried a variety of art forms herself. She does light installations, fabric painting, and site-specific artwork. She does not have any big installations planned to come soon, but she has an itch, as she puts it, to create something.

Belle’s art can be seen on her online portfolio.

She does ethereal looking artworks with shadows and plants to colorful and bright pieces that embody the spirit of childhood. She has a studio at the McGuffey Art Center, which is near the Downtown Mall, and does workshops through the McGuffey Art Center as well as the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts.

Many people, like Belle, find art important because it is so versatile, creative, and expressive of one’s true self. Belle lived in an old house when she was young that underwent many renovations and found that art can take many forms. The house was always having makeovers and things moved. She saw how creative architecture and carpentry was. Belle said, “I think because of this I’ve always considered ‘creativity’ to be something that can be practiced in many fields.” She said that art and expression can be practiced in any line of work or way of life.

Belle said that students must get to know themselves. She said, “Your voice is important. The world needs to hear from you just as much as you need to speak your truth.”



Photo courtesy of Fenella Belle

Let Nature Help You with Unwanted Animals

Gabriella Barber, staff writer

On Jan. 29, King County Wastewater Division (WTD) hosted their third class on Zoom in their sustainable yard care series. The class titled Living with Wildlife gave many examples of how to deal with different unwanted wildlife.

This class was presented by Kristen Covey, and Monica Van der Vieren who work for WTD in Washington State. Sarah Rocero of Snohomish Conservation District, which partnered with WTD for these classes presented as well. Covey said the overall goal of this class is to “Work with nature, not against it.”

The class went over many different animals that can be a bother in yards, gardens, or homes: rats, coyotes, cutter bees, deer, moths, and rabbits. There were many different solutions for working with these different animals, such as letting nature help you, barriers, and lethal removal.

The idea behind letting nature help you, is for people to encourage wildlife that will help get rid of animals that are unwanted near or around your home.

One example was the raptor perch which is a tall perch for larger birds like owls and hawks. These larger birds often eat unwanted bugs, rats, and rabbits. This encourages larger birds to thrive, and discourages smaller animals from staying near your home.

Barriers were the most mentioned solution to bothersome animals. These are anything that can be used to keep wildlife from getting into unwanted areas. Barriers went hand in hand with consistency while Racero and Van der Vieren

were talking. In order for barriers to work, they have to consistently be checked up on, and maintained.

Last to be mentioned while discussing each individual animal, was lethal removal. This is because although sometimes it is necessary they wanted lethal removal to be looked at as a last resort. While speaking about Coyotes Van der Vieren said, “Culture shapes our view on wildlife” and explained how American author Mark Twain sparked fear and loathing of coyotes. This attitude supported ongoing mass hunting of coyotes, which caused rodent and rabbit populations to increase, causing damage to crops and gardens.

Although Coyotes are often seen as dangerous, Van der Vieren has simple tricks for dealing with coyotes: to yell at them to scare them away, or to keep her distance while they are in mating season. This is why they often recommend researching the animal before killing it, to understand whether the animal is dangerous or carries diseases. Van der Vieren summed up her opinion on lethal removal, “Although I prefer living with my neighborhood coyotes, I would consider lethal removal for sick, habituated, or unusually aggressive animals.”

This class can be found through Eventbrite or can be found and registered for on the King County WTD events page. This class was filmed in Washington State near Puget Sound and does focus on animals that are common in Puget, all presenters go over animals common to many other locations.

For those interested, the classes may not be held again next year, but previous classes can be found on the King County WTD YouTube page.



Deer in Kristen Covey's yard.
Photo courtesy of Kristen Covey

The Weekday Offers a New Take on Skiing

Lillian Downey, staff writer

Anyone lucky enough to make it to Massanutten on a weekday will be facing freshly groomed snow, a serious lack of lines, and cheaper lift tickets.

People who ski or snowboard in Central Virginia are likely to have heard of Massanutten. If the name is not recognizable, then the description of the mountain on a weekend might be. As at many other ski mountains, there are lift lines that seem more like concert mosh pits. The snow, which was freshly groomed before the day began, is torn to shreds within a few hours. Although some may enjoy skiing down the mountain in a crowd of people, for others it is simply overwhelming and cramped. For those able to get to the slopes during the week, these issues will be gracefully avoided.

On a Monday, the lift lines are barely there. The most one might have to wait to get on a lift is about 90 seconds. The speed with which one can get on the lift is aided by their newly installed RFID pass scanners. Having one's pass scanned is as simple as skiing up to the gate and then through once your card has been successfully read.

These RFID scanners are just one of many of Massanutten's new improvements. The resort, which is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year, recently announced a four-year expansion and

improvement plan. Including the new lift ticket system, they have announced plans for several new trails and terrain parks as well as an improved and revitalized snow making system.

This new system has had a noticeable effect. Through its use (and an unusually cold winter) Massanutten has achieved practically total snow cover. This means that the trails are exceptionally wide this winter, giving everyone plenty of room to find their own way down the mountain. The combination of wide open trails and few other skiers makes it feel like it really is just you and the mountain.

In addition to the different skiing environment, weekday lift tickets are substantially cheaper. They cost \$59 for an 8-hour pass on Monday compared to the \$86 pass available on a Saturday or Sunday. For students, Wednesdays and Fridays offer even bigger discounts. Tickets only cost \$45.

For anyone interested in heading out there, the conditions on the mountain are currently as good as you can find on the East Coast. It is practically devoid of the ice which often plagues those attempting to ski on this side of the country. According to one lift rider, "This is the best snow we've ever had, and I've been skiing here for 18 years."

Due to the ever changing nature of temperature and weather, the snow conditions at Massanutten shift regularly.



A green circle slope at Massanutten. Photography by Lillian Downey

Cider and Loving Gifts for Valentine's Day

Gabriella Barber, staff writer

Albemarle CiderWorks played its role in Valentine's day this year with a Pop-Up Market. The event lasted from 2-5 p.m. this past Feb. 13. The snow was coming down, but that did not stop Albemarle CiderWorks from hosting an event that offered presents for loved ones, live music, and cider for those over 21.

Initially, there were four areas to look through. The bar was to the left, with an array of different ciders to try. Directly in the middle of the room was a concession stand with different collectibles for Albemarle CiderWorks. Concession stands for The Glass Turtle, and Cville Candy Company stood behind either side of the collectibles for Albemarle CiderWorks, each offering affordable presents for loved ones on Valentine's day.

The Glass Turtle is run and owned by Debra Susan Abbot. Her jewelry selection included bracelets, necklaces, and earrings. The jewelry, as described on her Facebook page, is "handmade jewelry using gemstones, pearls, wood, metals, fibers, recycled and Czech glass." When asked what materials she enjoyed using most, she said, "I love working with turquoise and all kinds of jaspers." Prices varied, depending on what piece of jewelry was chosen: earrings priced at \$8-12, bracelets ranged between \$20-26, and necklaces ranged from \$28-70.

The Cville Candy Company concession was run by David Shalloway. He immediately handed guests that arrived "Valentines." These were individually wrapped chocolates made by the Cville Candy Company. Each package had the candy's name, and the ingredients written and attached to them, including a warning, "Made on Equipment also used to process tree nuts, peanuts, and wheat." There were many different chocolates available. A significant amount of the chocolates were mixed with either a form of nut, fruit, or berry to make the sweet treat. Prices on the chocolates can be found on the Cville Candy company website, and vary between \$4 and \$14, depending on the size and amount that is being bought.

The bar area did not have many different ciders out to see, but the menu offered 19 different drinks to choose from, three were only available by the bottle. Bottles were available for \$12-20, glasses were available for \$5-8.

Irish music filled the air in the seating area. The four men playing the music within the first hour of the event were: Wally Farrell, Craig Dubose, Aaron Owell, and Seamus Wade. These four are not a band, they gather more people to play as they go, and often they send out invitations for different occasions, so they don't end up with too many people playing the same instrument. This group often meets at Albemarle CiderWorks every second Sunday of the month and plays well known Irish music.

Albemarle CiderWorks has many upcoming events open to the public. These events include: Trivia in the Orchard on March 3, Grafting Workshop on March 12, and live music events on March 12 and 13. More information on these events is available on Albemarle CiderWorks' Facebook page.



Front of Albemarle CiderWorks Tasting Room.
Photography by Gabriella Barber

Milli Coffee Roasters Hits the Spot for Students



Milli Coffee Roaster's store front. Photography by Lillian Downey

Lillian Downy, staff writer

Milli Coffee Roasters opened in 2012 and began their in-house roasting operations in 2015. They have all the classic coffee shop wants with the fun addition of waffles, soups, and sandwiches. They have affordable pricing and plenty of space; for students, Milli's Coffee Roasters could be a solid addition to their homework haunts.

Milli's has a modern rustic aesthetic. The space has industrial bones with a concrete floor and metal struts overhead. What could be a rather cold environment is warmed and softened by the wood that makes up the counters and tables. Coffee in burlap sacks completes the rustic vibe while fresh cut tulips grace the countertop. The outside patio offers several tree shaded tables. There is a lot of space to spread out which means it is a great place to work. However, for those who are easily distracted, headphones will be necessary as Milli's music tends to be rather loud and generally has lyrics.

They have several food options for those wanting more than just a hot drink. They cover their bases in terms of quality and deliver solid, hot, made in-house food. However, those looking

for more elevated choices or higher quality sourcing may be left wanting. Their grilled cheese (\$4) contains generic yellow cheddar which walks the line between mellow and bland. Their waffles (\$5) have delightful flavor and plenty of toppings to choose from but lack the crispness and delicacy that some might be looking for. Milli's also has several drinks to pick from for those who do not like coffee or want to switch things up. Their chai latte (\$4.25) was delightful. Chai lattes have the unfortunate habit of being sickeningly sweet, which Milli's drink avoided. Although lacking the robust chai flavor that I personally look for, it had plenty of thick creamy foam on top and was scrumptiously hot.

Milli Coffee Roasters is on par with the rest of Charlottesville in terms of pricing. Their drinks range from \$2.50 to \$8, and their various food options hover around the \$6 mark. They have a small parking lot which is shared with several other businesses. Some spots are reserved for Milli customers, some for the other businesses, and some available on a first come first serve basis. Towing is enforced so it is important to check the signs before you leave your car.

Milli's is located at 400 Preston Ave. and is open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. every day.

The Superhero the Movie Industry Needed



Spider-Man. Photo courtesy of 2021 SONY Pictures Digital Production Inc.

Kristofer Jones, staff writer

After delays and COVID-19 protocols, the third installment of the joint Marvel and Sony studios *Spider-Man: No Way Home* is finally in theaters. Watch as Peter Parker, played by Tom Holland, navigates living a normal life, with the unwanted notoriety of his alter ego.

With a great supporting cast, this is not just a movie about Spider-Man versus the bad guys. With Zendaya as MJ and his always loyal best friend Ned Leeds, played by Jacob Batalon, this roller coaster blockbuster will not disappoint Marvel fans. Marisa Tomei as Aunt May gives one of the most heroic performances as a secondary character Marvel has ever seen. Her motherly presence is needed to combat Peter's chaotic lifestyle. Happy, played by Jon Favreau, gave the cool uncle vibe as always.

No superhero movie is complete without a good villain, and in this movie, the studios have provided five. None more impressive than Willem Dafoe as Norman Osborn. His portrayal of the psychotic goblin would easily make him one of Marvel's best villains ever. Jamie Fox as Electro puts in an outstanding performance. Bringing

back Alfred Molina to play Dr. Otto Octavius was unexpected by Marvel Studios. These villains were not wasted characters like so many other Marvel films in the past.

If you want a Marvel movie full of surprises, look no further than this movie. Tobey Maguire and Andrew Garfield are back in their respective roles as the friendly neighborhood Spider-Man. Benedict Cumberbatch also makes an appearance in the movie as Doctor Strange. Without their contributions, this movie would not have been the success it is today.

Trying to move to a post COVID-19 world can happen. I think that this movie proves that with the second highest North American opening weekend of all time at \$260 million. *Spider-Man* is the kind of franchise the film industry needed to show that they can still put out a product that people will be willing to go see in theaters, rather than just staying home watching streaming services or waiting for the Blu-ray Disk to come out.

According to Box Office Mojo, *Spider-Man: No Way Home* has crossed the \$1 billion mark and over \$700 million domestically, making it the highest grossing movie of 2021.

Harrisonburg Italian Restaurant Takes the Pie

Morgan Jarvis, staff writer

Nestled in a little shopping center not too far from the college campus of James Madison University, Vito's Italian Kitchen almost always seems to have a full parking lot. My curiosity finally got the best of me one night, and I picked up my phone. It was easy to find their number by Googling the restaurant's name which brought me straight to the restaurant's webpage.

The website was very user friendly and easy to navigate. It offered their restaurant hours, 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Wednesday to Monday, and closed on Tuesdays.

Glancing at some of the tabs at the top of the page, they also list catering options, specials, and photos of their food. Sadly, the only thing that I could not find upon looking at their menu was a list of desserts. However, I was excited to see that the prices were not as expensive as some of the other experiences I have had with seemingly comparable establishments, such as the popular chain Olive Garden.

My phone call was answered within three or four rings. Unfortunately, upon answering, the server then asked me to hold. I obliged, but after five minutes I was wondering if they had forgotten about me and my hungry stomach.

By the time someone picked up the phone to take my order I had the classical music song they play for their on-hold customers stuck in my head on a loop. It was shocking to be on hold on a Monday night when most restaurants are not at full capacity.

Another person answered the phone and took my order of a chicken piccata (\$15), a classic Italian meal. I inquired about their desserts, which I could not find online. It was a pleasant surprise to find out garlic knots came with the meal. With my curiosity satisfied, I decided against the tempting desserts. However, no wait time was given to me before the person hung up, and I was left wondering when my food was going to be arriving.

45 minutes later, the food arrived. The lemony sauce was creamy with a nice tangy aftertaste that sat on my tongue. The

pasta was cooked al dente, still firm, which was a refreshing touch that is often missed.

However, the chicken that was included with the dish seemed to be of poorer quality. While it was moist it felt chewy, which reminded me of frozen chicken. It is important to understand that this is a \$15 piccata.

I have had chicken piccata that was prepared at a far higher quality, but that also came with a much higher price tag. Overall, I was pleased with their version of the classic meal.

For the price of the meal, considering the free garlic knots with a delivery order, and the taste, this was a meal I would not mind eating again. Despite a long wait time on the phone, being unable to locate their desserts on their website, and not being given a delivery time the experience was a satisfying one. If you are in the mood for Italian and you are ever in Harrisonburg I recommend stopping by Vito's Italian Kitchen. Next time, maybe I'll try the dine-in experience.



Chicken Piccata meal from Vito's Italian Kitchen.
Photography by Morgan Jarvis

For the Love of Music or the Love of Family

Gabriella Barber, staff writer

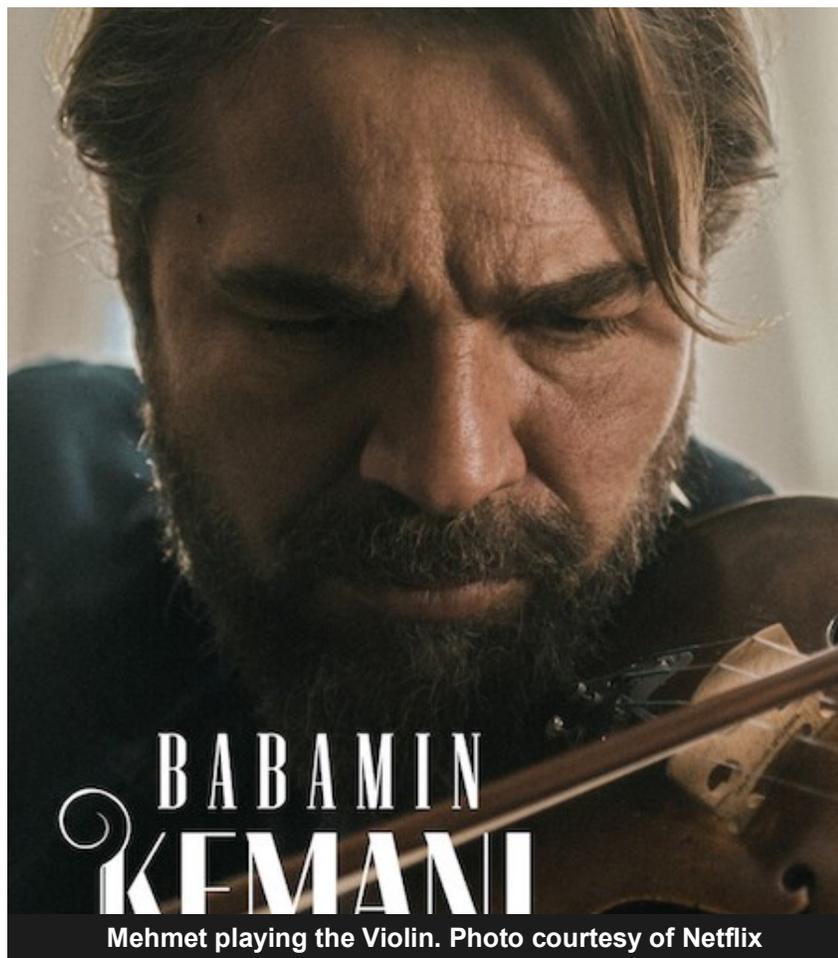
For those looking for a movie full of heartwarming and heart wrenching scenes, Andaç Haznedaroğlu captures those moments beautifully in *My Father's Violin*, originally named *Babamin Kemani*. A young sassy girl named Özlem, played by Gülizar Nisa Uray, with a heart of gold and a passion for playing the violin becomes orphaned at a young age. Her uncle Mehmet, played by Engin Altan Düzyatan, a very successful violinist with no time for feelings is caught off guard when he hears his brother has passed away and has a daughter who needs to be cared for. These two inevitably end up wound together by the strings of the violin that his brother had played on the streets of Istanbul, Turkey.

The movie begins with Özlem dancing happily to her father's music while begging for money. You can hear the passion for music in the

air and feel the family-like love that came from everyone performing just to make enough money to eat. Then the movie shifts the focus to a large stage with musicians orchestrating a piece of work and the spotlight landing on Özlem's uncle Mehmet. Within minutes of the scene beginning a young lady makes a mistake while playing a piece of music, this annoys Mehmet. He then asks her why she made the mistake and she explains that she has a lot to think about with her home life, he dismisses her and sets the stage for the emotional rollercoaster that is the rest of the movie.

Throughout the movie there are many meaningful backstories that must be watched to understand everyone's feelings and actions, especially the relationship between Özlem's father and uncle. Mehmet and Özlem's father had a difficult family relationship when they were younger, but the brothers loved each other dearly. Unfortunately the brothers relationship ends with Mehmet feeling as though he had been "left behind" by his brother. These feelings haunt him and make his relationship with Özlem very difficult at first. These dark feelings also take a toll on Mehmet's relationship with his wife, leaving Özlem and him alone, to get to know each other and become family for the first time ever.

My Father's Violin can only be found on Netflix at this time under the Drama category. Currently, a basic membership for Netflix is \$9.99, but it often offers free trials. The movie itself originates in Turkey and was originally spoken in Turkish as well. Although the movie itself does use subtitles for easier understanding, the inconsistencies with the actors lips moving and the English being heard by the audience is the only real downfall in this movie, but with the stunning street shots, fantastic music and Özlem's moments of comedic relief it seems that this Netflix movie was a success.



Discovering the Depths of D&D

Laurel Molloy, assistant editor

Heroes rise and fall throughout time and stories alike. A new group of heroes have come to television, and what sets them apart is the influence and history they carry. *The Legend of Vox Machina* released its first three episodes on Jan. 28. This animated series is based off of, voiced by, and directed by Critical Role, a group of Dungeon & Dragons (D&D) players and voice actors.

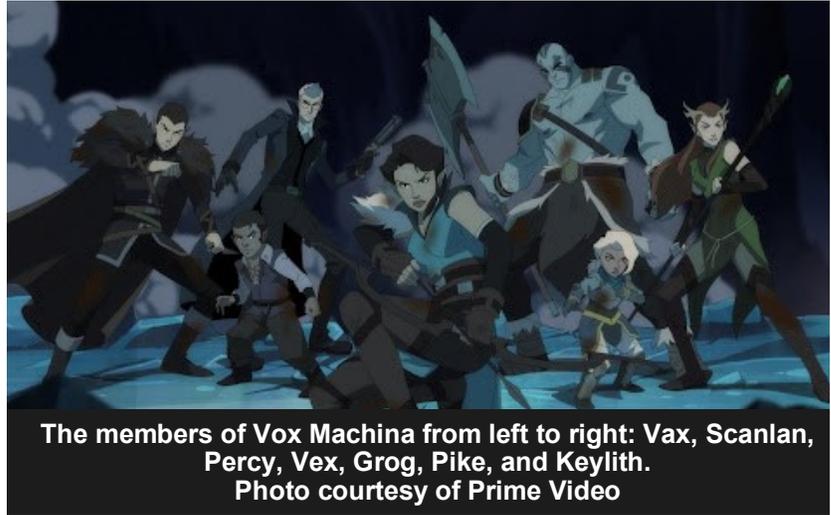
The Legend of Vox Machina takes place in a world called Exandria, derived from that of Dungeon & Dragons with elves, halflings, humans, dragons, and more. It revolves around Vox Machina, a group of chaotic and powerful mercenaries on a dangerous journey. They search for coin, guzzle drink, and struggle with disastrous pasts. These unlikely heroes are trying to save the land as they face many monsters and troubles alike.

They are a unique group filled with spirit and danger. Vox Machina consists of seven members: Keylith, a druid; Vex, a ranger; Vax, a rogue; Pike, a cleric; Grog, a barbarian; Percy, a gunslinger; and Scanlan, a promiscuous bard. There are many other brightly portrayed characters including several voiced by Matthew Mercer, Critical Role's dungeon master (DM). Many of the cast are famous voice actors, several having been in *Fullmetal Alchemist: Brotherhood*, *Naruto: Shippuden*, and other animated classics.

The Legend of Vox Machina is a visually colorful animated TV series. It is being released every Friday in groups of three episodes on Amazon Prime Video until the first season reaches 12 episodes on Feb. 18. The second season is already confirmed.

D&D, sometimes also called DnD, is a popular tabletop roleplaying game (RPG). It has been around since the early 1970s, but it has been growing and reaching greater fame over the last couple of years. This fame is partly because of Critical Role and its influence.

Critical Role started in 2015. The cast came together to play D&D and started recording their campaigns, broadcasting them over Twitch and



The members of Vox Machina from left to right: Vax, Scanlan, Percy, Vex, Grog, Pike, and Keylith.
Photo courtesy of Prime Video

YouTube for all to watch. It is an ongoing endeavor, and so far they have recorded three large campaigns spanning over five years.

The Legend of Vox Machina is a recreation of the first campaign Critical Role taped. For viewers familiar with D&D, it is interesting to see how a stumble of a character on screen could have been a low roll-on dexterity off the screen.

It is rated TV-MA for it has swearing, nudity, and gore. The three episodes out so far have been adventurous and quick witted. The characters seem to have deep backstories and set, though not altogether good, moral alignments which leads the watchers to always beg the question: what mystery does the next episode hold?

The Legend of Vox Machina has been well received so far. It has a 100% Rotten Tomatoes rating and has gotten much praise. A D&D player in the article "The Legend of Vox Machina Lives Up to the Hype, According to This Dungeon Master: TV Review" said, "Vox Machina packages the essence of this beautiful hobby into a gripping and engaging cartoon, and does so expertly ... It seeps heart and earnest love for the hobby, like any nerd. And it's beautiful."

In a making of the *Legend of Vox Machina* video, Mercer said that many people think since he is the DM, he made the world and realm. However, he said many people created it "me and all the players at the table, and the community that watched this, and all these artists, developers, and designers. This is a continued expansion of that collaboration, and collaboration is key. This isn't my world anymore. This is our world."

Scattering Brilliance Amid Mediocrity

Luca Gett, staff writer

One morning after class, I made my way to the lower floor of the Keats Science Building and to my usual spot. I opened YouTube and found my way to a clip of Anthony Fantano, a popular music critic, reviewing *Kick III*, the third installment of Arca's serial *Kick* albums. He had almost finished the album and played its ninth track. "Señorita" hit me like a ton of bricks. What would follow would be my discovery and eventual liking of Arca but an overall dissatisfaction with the *Kick* series.

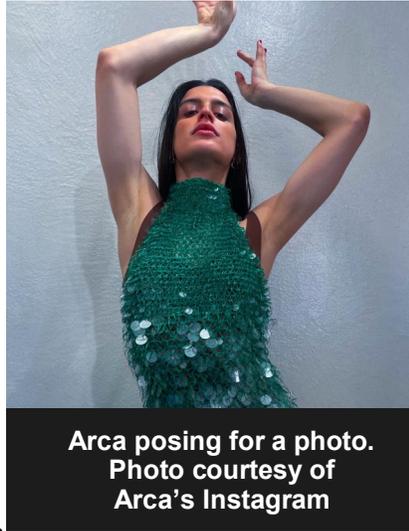
Alejandra Ghersi Rodríguez, known professionally as Arca, is an artist from Caracas, Venezuela, with an extensive skill set and an impressive résumé. She attended the Clive Davis Institute of Recorded Music at New York University and has had collaborations ranging from Kanye West to Björk.

The *Kick* series is a quintet of albums, with *Kick I* being released on June 26, 2020, and *Kick IIII* being released on Dec. 3, 2021. Upon researching her biography, I decided that her music was worth my attention.

Kick I, *Kick II*, and *Kick III* were all multigenre. Arca incorporated elements of experimental, electronic, industrial, pop, and reggaeton. Still, each album held a consistent focus. *Kick I* centered all of its components around electronic music. *Kick II* reimaged reggaeton, a form of Latin music with Puerto Rican origins. *Kick III* was confrontational with its mostly industrial sound. The three albums featured performances and production from Shygirl, Rosalía Vila Tobella, Björk, Sia, Machinedrum, Cardopusher, and the late Sophie Xeon.

I have to make a point. *Kick IIII* and *Kick IIII* are in my way. Let me put them aside by saying that they were both very subtle in sound. *Kick IIII* was more electronic, and *Kick IIII* was an orchestral album. Altogether, the two works left me unimpressed.

Above everything else, "KLK" from *Kick I*



Arca posing for a photo.
Photo courtesy of
Arca's Instagram

and "Señorita" from *Kick III* impressed me the most. Let me be clearer in saying that the beginning portion of "KLK" and concluding portion of "Señorita" were jaw dropping. It was in these two songs that Arca demonstrated a rare ability; She was able to make her music, no matter how unique and experimental, instantly likable. "KLK" held an air of unpredictability. The voice of the featured performer, Rosalía, was treated indifferently among the lovably inconsistent metallic percussion in the song.

"Señorita," with production from Machinedrum, employed outstandingly harsh compression noises. In doing so, the subtlety of the outro was made even more impactful.

So, having described what I liked best, can it be said that the first three *Kick* albums were masterpieces? No. They did well to demonstrate Arca's existing talents. However, they revealed that she needs to develop. I only really liked two songs on these albums. It would be more correct to say that I only liked portions of these two songs.

Arca's expertise could not be found in every song. She could not even present it consistently throughout the entirety of a given song. The brilliantly engineered "KLK" and "Señorita" were almost ruined by unbearably bland pop tracks such as "Born Yesterday."

I underestimated Arca. After discovering her, I have come to like her older work more than anything. In its entirety, her *Kick* series felt like a waste of brilliance. Some moments would leave me excitedly shocked and others would bore me. At first, this inconsistency confused me.

Why would Arca scatter her genius among forgettable pop songs and dully produced experimental tracks? Because, for now, it is all she knows how to do. Intelligently embellishing songs such as "Hold My Liquor," by Kanye West, among many others, is fragmental work.

Arca needs to learn to be consistent and thorough in her music and I trust that she can. I am rooting for her; I want more songs to jolt me awake after math class.

ThinkFast Trivia Time Game at PVCC

Kristofer Jones, staff writer

Ever wonder who the first black actor was to win an Oscar, or who invented peanut butter? Well, ThinkFast - Black History Edition would have been for you. ThinkFast is a trivia game played in a Jeopardy style format, simple to follow with easy questions.

Thinkfast - Black History Edition, presented by Tjohne and sponsored by the PVCC Student Activities Office, was held in the Bolick Student Center on Feb. 9.

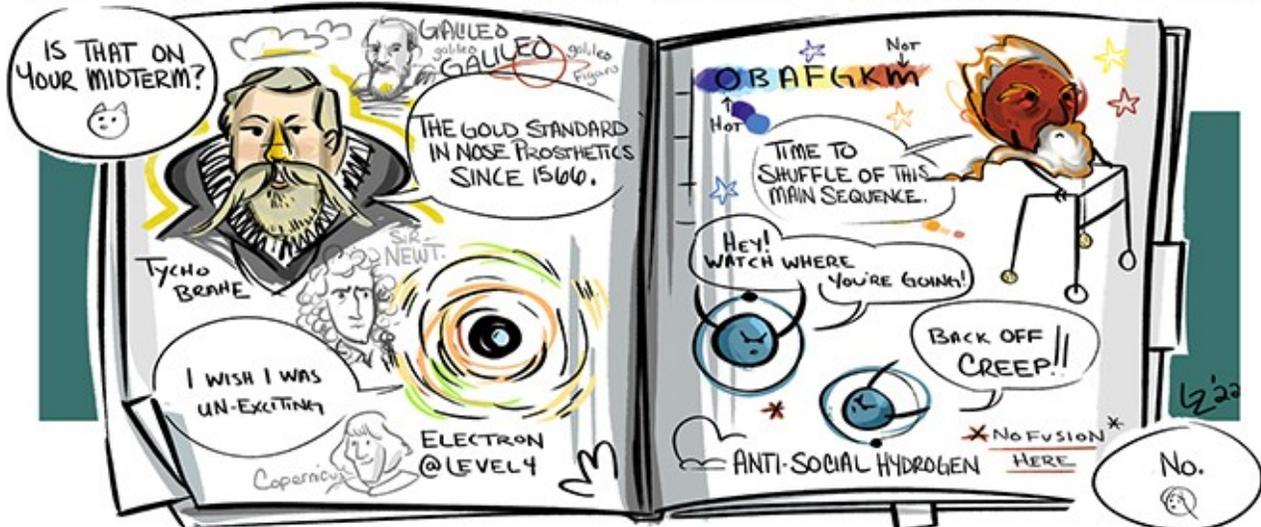
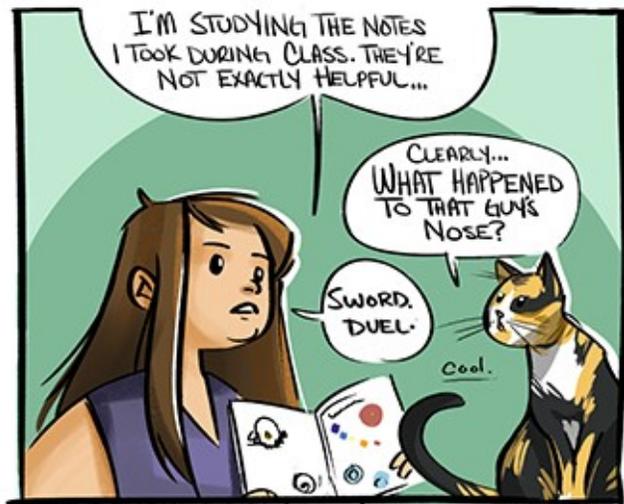
Free pizza was provided to all who attended this student event. In addition, the winner of each game won a \$100 cash prize. There was also a team competition where teams of two or three



Students and staff gather to play Black History Month trivia game. Photo courtesy of Dr. Whyte

players were given buzzers to answer pop culture questions.

Director of Academic Support Services Todd Parks said this event had drawn one of the bigger crowds for an event at PVCC that he had seen since the pandemic started.



Comic by Lauren Cottrell

Classifieds

THE WRITING CENTER@PVCC
PRESENTS

English Conversation Circle Spring 2022



For non-native English speakers
On Zoom

Join us to practice speaking
English in an informal setting.
No homework is required.

Wednesdays, 12-1:00

English Conversation Circle will not be
held on days when classes are not in
session.

Questions? Contact The Writing
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Email ryoder@pvcc.edu
for the link to the virtual meeting.

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