

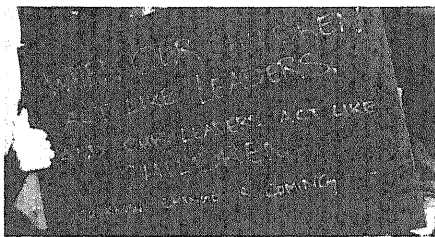
THE BANNER

The Official Newspaper of the College of Staten Island

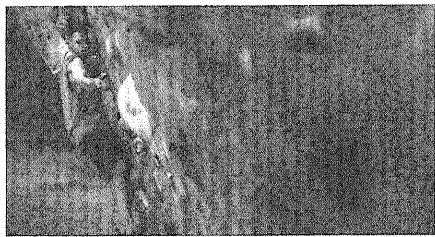
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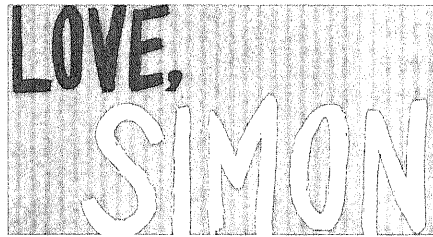
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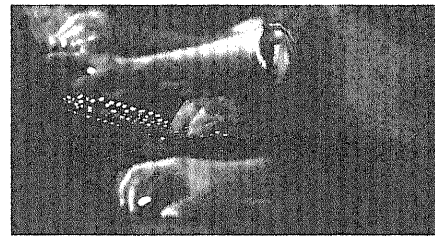
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Joey Cipoletti Reveals What's Behind the Curtain in 1P

Tech Guy by Day, Local Music Hero by Night

BY: LUCIA ROSSI

There's a lot you don't see that makes a show happen in our Center for the Arts.

It's a little more complicated than just switching on lights and turning up the sound.

"What do you think is going on back there? We're making sure that shit works," said Joey Cipoletti, a member of the tech crew and college assistant at our performing arts building.

For large shows, there are usually at least four people working the theatre to make sure everything runs smoothly. There's someone who does the sound, the lights, the production manager, and one or two people who are deckhands to help move the heavy equipment.

During the Core class, you may see one of the 10 crew members wearing black clothes working the theatre, so professors can show their PowerPoints and video clips.

During the summer season, they will be certainly working overtime with all of

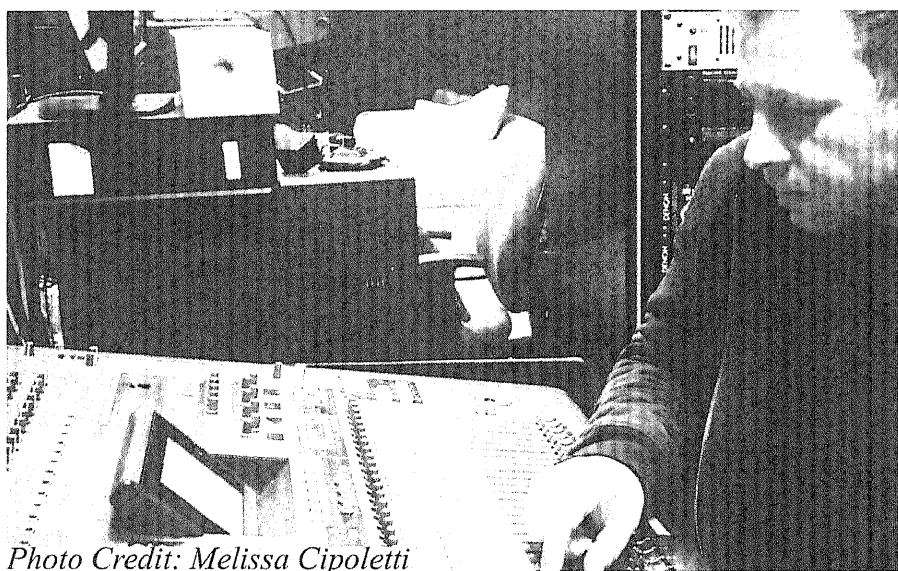


Photo Credit: Melissa Cipoletti
Joey Cipoletti working the sound in the Williamson theatre.

the dance recitals. As mentioned previously, Joey Cipoletti not only works as a tech crew member, but as a college assistant as well. This means he sets up classrooms, press conferences, and orchestra placement plans, if he's not doing the soundboard

or working as a deckhand.

Cipoletti enjoys his job because, "It's a lot of fun meeting all the different people who come through here," he said. "A couple of months ago we had Paul Mc-

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CSI Hosts Town Hall for Our Lives

Shooting Survivor Ryan Deitsch Speaks Out

BY: VICTORIA IFATUSIN

The students behind the March For Our Lives protest in Washington D.C. are taking their message on the road and have arrived here at CSI.

Organized by Michael Arvanites, a March for Our Lives representative, the Town Hall took place on April 7 at the Recital Hall in 1P at the College of Staten Island, with over 150 people attending the event.

The panel included Ryan Deitsch, a student from Major Stoneman Douglas High School, students from schools around the area, government officials such as Councilwoman Debi Rose and State Senator Diane Savino, and candidates running to represent Staten Island in Congress. Congressman Dan Donovan, who was invited to the event, did not attend.

The "March for Our Lives" took place in Washington D.C., just four weeks after the shooting, organized by Deitsch and his peers from Stoneman Douglas. The event's purpose was to voice the ideas and steps that need to be taken to eradicate gun violence.

Lindy P. Crescitelli, the chairman of the event, credited the people who contributed to having people from Staten Island, Syracuse, New Jersey and other places in the area travel to Washington with seventeen buses.

The town hall began with reading the names of the seventeen students and teachers who were killed at the Stoneman Douglas High School shooting in Florida. It was then followed by a moment of silence, as seventeen seconds were spent remembering the each of the the fallen.

Before the members of the panel spoke, former Staten Island resident and mother of victim Alyssa Alhadeff, Lori Alhadeff, shared her account via Skype of what she experienced when she heard her daughter was shot on that fateful day.

Alhadeff began with saying that it was Valentine's Day, a day that her daughter was looking forward to.

After dropping Alyssa off at school and telling her that she loved her, Alhadeff was alarmed by a text message she received, saying, "Shots fired at Stoneman Douglas High School."

Without hesitation, Alhadeff made her

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Vote Now for Your Student Government Officials

College of Staten Island Student Elections for Spring 2018

BY: VICTORIA IFATUSIN

With the construction that has been overwhelming the CSI campus, students may be wondering what officials are doing about it.

It has affected students who try hard to get on campus to attend classes. Some students even get to class late on behalf of the construction.

The power is now in the hands of the student body to vote for the officials who will dedicate their time to fix this recurring problem.

The Spring 2018 Student Government voting takes place on campus from Tuesday, April 17, 2018 to Saturday, April 21, 2018. Candidates are urging students to listen to their manifestos and elect the person who is qualified for their vote.

The two teams—Good Looks and the Underground Elites—are going head to head to claim their seats in office.

For Good Looks, running for SG President is Terry Kong, a Malay-

sian-Chinese American senior studying Economics and Finance.

The candidate was moved to "do something" himself after seeing no change from former administrations that were in government for four years.

"Each had their promises, none of them were fulfilled, each said this and that, and I'm just tired of it," said Kong.

According to Kong, his decision to run for president wasn't planned, but because of the "love" he has for the school, he made the bold move.

His leadership skills from his military career also moved him to run.

"I have so much experience in leadership that I could actually bring," he said.

With Kong in office, he made the promise of fixing the infrastructure of the school, saying that "there needs to be a 24-hour maintenance, someone to survey the area."

"Students are working hard enough for a degree and should not be going

through the nonsense," Kong said.

Alongside Kong is Aaisha Qaiser, a senior running for the Vice President seat.

The Marketing and Management student is a Pakistani-American who was motivated to run for the seat after acknowledging that Terry Kong was also running for the top seat.

Qaiser is already a member of the Student Government as a senator and plans to "further my [Qaiser] services to CSI students more effectively as a Vice President."

Other students that are running on this team are: Manpreet Kaur (Sophomore), Desiree Carona (Sophomore), Mannar Musleh (Sophomore), Kwan Ho (Sophomore), Akeem James (Junior), Brian Gandlin (Junior), Hatice Razi (Junior), Brendan Pirando (Junior), Kevin Saldarreja (Junior), Kyle Huang (Junior), Tony Aye (Senior), Tarik Arabi (Senior), Maliha Mowla (Senior), Beren

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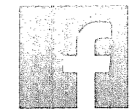
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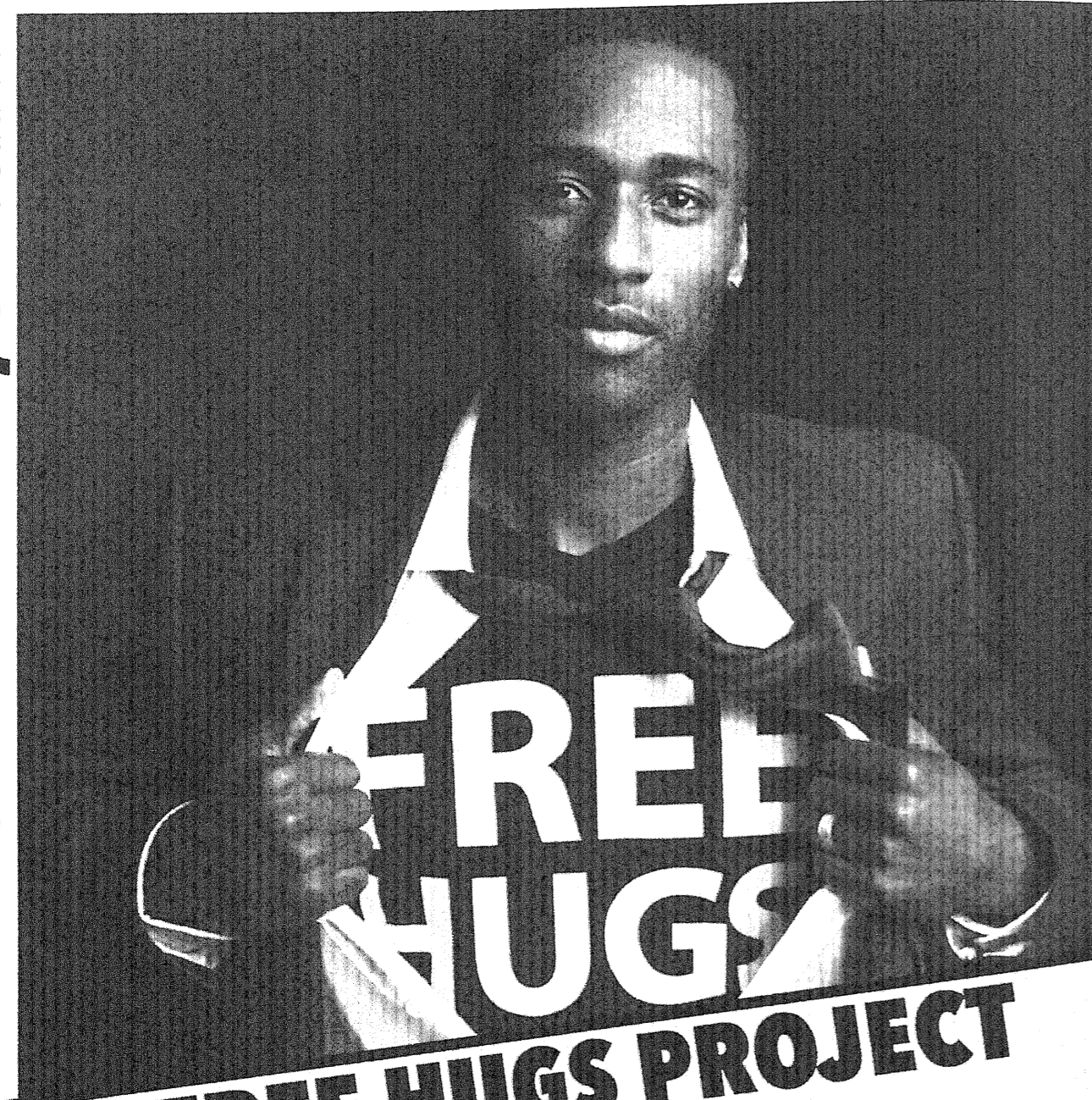


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BANNER POLITICS

March for Our Lives Protest in New York City

An In-Depth Scope at the March for Our Live Protest in Manhattan

BY: LUCIA ELMI

New York City showed up to March for Our Lives.

Tens of thousands marched down the streets of Manhattan from Columbus Circle all the way to Times Square to rally for gun control in schools across the United States.

The event was sparked by a school shooting on February 14 at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, which was responsible for taking the lives of seventeen students and injuring seventeen more.

The nation-wide protest was held on March 24, just six weeks after the deadly massacre. Calls for reform on gun control quickly inflated into a world-wide phenomenon, sparking thousands of people around the world to march the streets holding posters, calling for an end to the senseless gun violence on children and innocent lives as a whole.

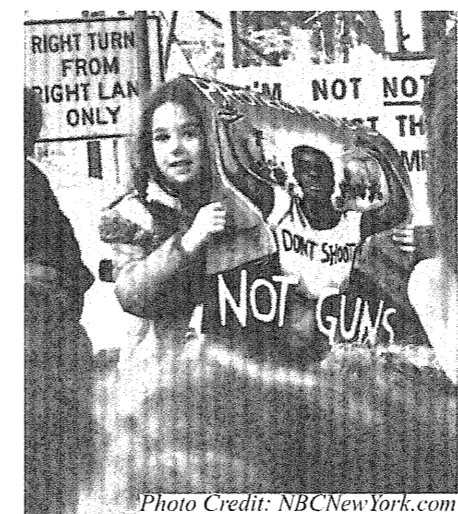


Photo Credit: NBCNewYork.com

Protesters packed onto the Staten Island Ferry as early as 7 AM, determined to beat the early morning rush hour. Subways in downtown Manhattan were packed to the brim with eager protesters, hustling to get to Columbus Square, the heart of the protest.

MTA staff did their best to direct the traffic of protesters in and out of the subways, announcing relevant train departure times to protesters and having MTA workers on site to route the busy traffic as orderly as possible.

As tedious as the commute was, people attending the march maintained a positive and patient attitude during their travels.

The event began with a rally in Central Park where speakers took the stands to voice speeches for gun control and offer sympathies for those that perished in gun violence throughout the many instances of mass shootings that have happened in just the past few years alone around the country.

Amongst the speakers at the rally in Central Park, were survivors from the Las Vegas and Sandy Hook shootings.

Those standing alongside the protesters marching in the streets were former Beatles member Paul McCartney and the governor of New York, Andrew Cuomo.

Also among the marchers, were band marchers and local charity organizations were also amongst the crowd of peaceful protesters.

However, there were counter-protests that gathered in Columbus Square near Trump International Hotel & Tower alongside those that were heading to join the march for gun control.

Despite the clash of polar opposites, protesters kept to themselves without any significant backlash from either side.

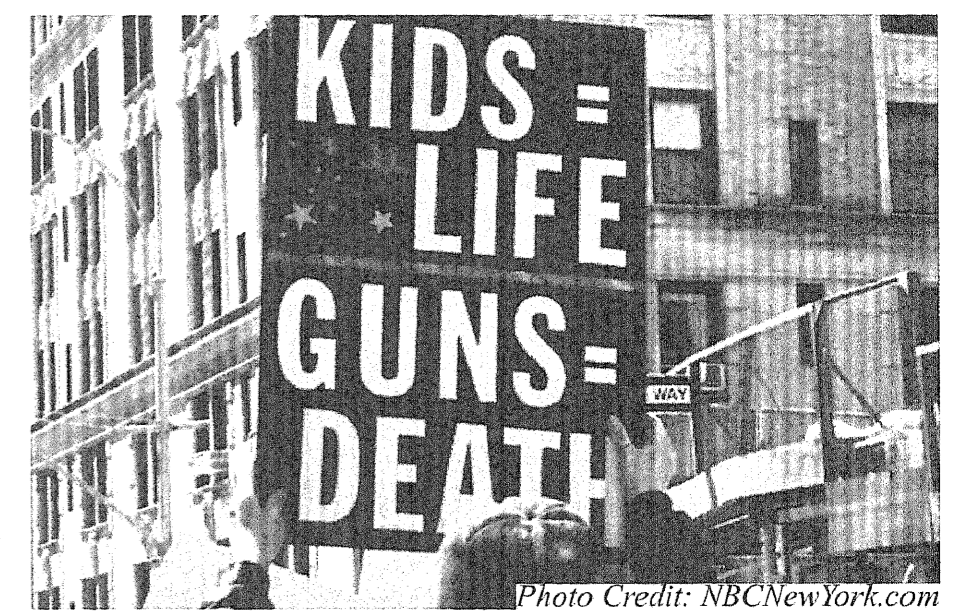


Photo Credit: NBCNewYork.com
Homemade protest signs that filled the streets of New York City.

Although the march has been a largely student-sparked event, a wide variety of faces were seen in the crowd of protesters marching together to end gun violence. Among them were the younger and older generations, who despite having different viewpoints, joined together as one.

There were also men and women of every race, religious background, and sexual orientation. Families came with their young children and even the elderly tagged along throughout the streets holding up homemade posters and chanting for change in gun laws.

The Parkland school shooting surged an outcry for reform from a diverse group of people that were victims of gun violence.

Many people marching the streets were

family members of those who were subjected to the brutality of gun violence through other events other than school shootings, such as gang violence, racial bias or from being killed from the use of guns during domestic disputes.

Those victims included children and especially women of color, who are statistically one of the highest groups of people at risk for being killed by a gun.

One woman's poster read, "Guns have more rights than my vagina." Another read, "I wish women had as many rights as guns."

This historic event had an overwhelming turnout of people, which could possibly pave the way for continued activism in the ongoing perusal of gun control in the United States.

She's Just Not That Into You, Governor

Cynthia Nixon's Campaign Exposes Cuomo's Progressive Weaknesses

BY: STEVEN MORRIS

What was once thought to be an uncontested race for the Democratic nomination in New York, is not the case anymore.

Actor and activist Cynthia Nixon is vying for the Democratic nomination to be the Governor of New York, going up against Governor Cuomo.

Nixon, famous in her role as Miranda Hobbes from "Sex in the City", is not pleased with how the government of New York treats the people of the middle class and the people who suffer in poverty, especially under Cuomo's watch.

According to Nixon's campaign website, she's running to be the Governor of New York "because I love this state. New York is the only place I've ever lived, and I wouldn't have it any other way. But I know that we can do better. We need a New York that works for all of us - a New York for the many, not just the few."

On her campaign website, she admits that she voted for Governor Cuomo eight years ago, but according to Nixon, "Governor Cuomo has shown us his true colors. He let the Republicans gerrymander their own districts to suppress Democratic voters, especially voters of color. Then, when Democrats still won a majority, he cut a backroom deal that allowed Republicans to take over the State Senate through the Independent Democratic Conference (IDC) - a group of breakaway Democrats who voted with the Republicans to hand them

control, and with it, the power to block almost all of our key Democratic legislative priorities."

Like the campaign Bernie Sanders ran in 2016, Cynthia Nixon will not be ac-

cepting any corporate contributions to her campaign but only donations made by her supporters.

cepting any corporate contributions to her campaign but only donations made by her supporters.

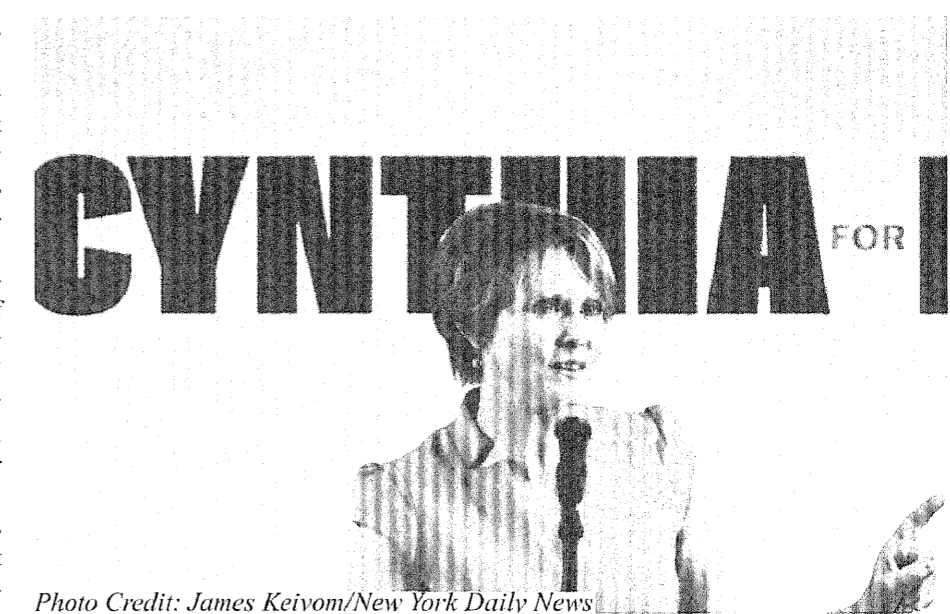


Photo Credit: James Keivom/New York Daily News
Cynthia Nixon during her campaign for Governor of New York.

cepting any corporate contributions to her campaign but only donations made by her supporters.

In a speech that she made at an event hosted by the Progressive Change Campaign Committee and Our Revolution on April 13th, she said: "The time is up for corporate Democrats, for politicians who

campaign as Democrats but govern as Republicans... It can't just be business as usual anymore. I know that our country can do better. We have to turn the system upside down."

Even though Governor Cuomo still holds a wide margin over Cynthia Nixon, a month after she announced her candidacy, Nixon has gained some ground.

A new poll released April 17th by Siena College, shows that among registered democrats in New York, Cuomo leads 58% to 27% margin. A margin that used to be 66% to 19% last month, before Nixon announced her candidacy.

Recently, Nixon won the endorsement of the Working Families Party, a political party who supported Cuomo twice before, but now supports Nixon, citing Cuomo as "not liberal enough".

Cynthia Nixon is part of a larger group of progressives throughout the country who are entering the political process and running for office against establishment candidates, which are forcing many established candidates, mostly republicans, to not seek re-election.

The gubernatorial primaries will be held on September 13th to decide who will represent the Democratic and Republican parties on November 6th.

BANNER NEWS

"Joey Cipoletti"

Continued from Front Page

-Cartney's step-mother and step-sister. That was wild because there's this little old lady she had to be in her 80's and she had the foulest mouth on her."

Cipoletti also said, "I didn't know how much I was going to enjoy covering Core. I had no idea what core was, but sitting here listening to a professor talk about history? I'm down."

Thanks to his job, Cipoletti has made many friends who are faculty and staff. "Almost everybody on the crew came to my house a couple of years ago for a barbeque when my kids graduated. It was nice because I never really worked a job where I formed friendships like that," he said.

Although Cipoletti has been working for CSI for about 3 years, he's been a local musician for much longer.

"I think I was in 7th grade. Our house in Brooklyn was pretty big; it had 3 floors and a basement. One night, I was sleeping, and I had school the next day. My dad came bombing into my room, screaming at the top of his lungs 'get the f*ck downstairs and clean the basement!'," said Cipoletti.

"I finally get down to the basement and there's a drum set. What a way to give your f*cking kid a drum set. That was actually a couple of nights before my birthday."

He played drums until high school at which point things changed when he took an instrumental class. His teacher told him he could either play clarinet or guitar, to which he responded with, "Well there's no freakin' way I'm playing the clarinet."

When he played his first chord on the guitar, Cipoletti said it was like a switch flipped for him. Two weeks later, he started his own band and he was hooked.

Cipoletti got his first electric guitar for \$35 but claimed that it was the start of his G.A.S. or Gear Acquisition Syndrome. He said this means, "You just want to constantly buy shit."

Over time, Cipoletti has been in several cover bands but according to him, "Cover bands largely don't go anywhere other than cover shows. There's only so much a



Joey Cipoletti playing solo at Jimmy Max cover band can do."

He was in a U2 cover band called UL-traviolet, a cover band that played dance music called On the Rocks, and the Bruce Springsteen cover band Saints in the City.

Cipoletti said most cover bands do bar gigs for their performances, which he doesn't mind. "That's really what a cover band can only do. I wouldn't do corporate gigs. I'd rather be on stage in front of people that are paying attention to you... somewhat. It's a bar after all."

Now, Joey Cipoletti is mainly focused on his consistent solo acoustic gig at Jimmy Max. He's booked to play there every other Friday of every month until December.

Cipoletti's stage name is Joey Thomp-

son, to which there is also a Joey Thompson Band which is currently on hiatus—whose other members consist of a pilot and a carpenter.

In support of him, his wife and son have created a website for him- thejoeythompsonband.com.

Cipoletti chose the name Thompson because it was his mother's maiden name and was the last name of a friend of his who passed away. He also didn't want to use his real name because, "My Italian last name, let's be real, it translates to little onion," he said.

As Cipoletti has gotten older, his dreams of being famous changed.

"I'm 42, I don't hold any reservations of becoming a "rockstar" but I don't know,

there's a part of me that would love to be like this 'local hero'," said Cipoletti. "It's a narrowed down dream."

It was difficult for him to describe why he loved music but the answer he gave was quite profound.

"I don't think a person who's a musician plays music because they're complete. I think you always have to have something missing. There's a reason you want to stand in front of a group of people and scream your heart out. There's a hole somewhere and it's a big one," he said.

"I think that's why I love music because it gives you something back whether it's a room of people applauding or it's just one guy saying, 'that song was great!'"

cess for the students of CSI through the curriculum, scholarships and other opportunities that are offered to the school.

"We must protect critical thinking, curiosity, and creative expression," Paige said, as he explained the importance of a welcoming environment not only for current students, but future students, as well.

Voting results will be revealed by the end of April.



Photo Credit: Facebook.com

"Vote Now"

Continued from Front Page

Sabuncu (Senior), Richard Valiente (Senior), Samantha Wong (Senior) and Mohamed Mahmoud (Graduate).

The Underground Elites' Nardeen Soliman is the student running for the President seat from the team. She is an Egyptian senior student who moved to the United States five years ago.

She was moved to become the president to have "voices between students, faculty and professors" to be heard.

"I want to become the president to better enhance our campus," said Soliman.

With her past experience in Student Government, Auxiliary Services, College Council, and other programs, she depicts herself as "well-rounded" with the resources the campus has to offer.

She promises to work on the available library hours, transportation on campus,

and the protection of student activity fees. Following Soliman is Marina Nashed, a sophomore hoping to get into the medical field. The Egyptian student was very involved with politics once she started school at CSI.

"I've seen a lot of things that are wrong on campus," Nashed says, which includes the poor groundwork of roads, unfair treatment of students with professors and so on.

Before the student graduates as a junior, she vows to ensure communication between students and the Student Government.

"We are out there for the students and we are altogether trying to fix this school."

Other students running with their President and Vice President are: Samson Balogun (Freshman), Michael Sorensen (Freshman) Alphonso Frazier (Sophomore), Mohammed Bhatti (Sophomore), Chermo Toure (Sophomore), Melissa Sione (Sophomore), Samuel Mina (Soph-

omore), Sandra Mettry (Sophomore), Justin Batatucan (Junior), Gabrielle Brown (Junior), Daniel Kallini (Junior), Ellaesea Domingo (Junior), Joseph Mule (Junior), Elton Vojka (Junior), Christopher Sorensen (Senior), Nicholas Vitale (Senior), Batoool Shirazi (Senior), Brandon Fridman (Senior), Tarik Arabi (Senior) and Lucia Rossi (Graduate).

Besides the two teams is one student who is running for President on his own.

Ernest Paige, a licensed social worker, has been giving handouts on campus to students that describe his own manifesto and what he plans to do for CSI.

"I believe we are in a crucial moment of understanding and combating political apathy, both on and off campus," Paige said.

His mission is to obtain high standards in the methods of learning, teaching, research and scholarship. He embraces also the diversity seen on campus.

Paige has the vision of achieving suc-

BANNER NEWS

"CSI Hosts Town Hall for Our Lives"

Continued from Front Page

way to the school, then to the hospital in hopes to see her daughter - but to no prevail.

"I was screaming," she said. "I was grabbing myself, putting my nails into my skin because I had this sense of loss that something is wrong with Alyssa."

After waiting for hours to see her, Alhadeff called her daughter "beautiful" with pale closed eyes.

"I started screaming to God," she said. "Why? Why would you take Alyssa? Alyssa is one of the great ones!"

On the day of her funeral, items that belonged to Alyssa was put into her casket, and as the casket lowered, Alhadeff couldn't let herself go from touching the coffin.

This moved Alhadeff to start a non-profit organization called "Make Schools Safe" with the mission of ensuring that all schools are safe with practices that can be implemented for children's safety.

"...Because if one child dies on the school's watch, nothing else matters," she said.

Ryan Deitsch was introduced by a video that included his outspoken question to Senator Rubio, "Why do we have to march on Washington, just to save innocent lives?"

Deitsch was happy that the room had no empty chairs but showed his anger towards the government officials for not coming.

"All that we've been through," he said. "And a representative would not show up to meet with his own people."

He told the audience of his experience with the town hall he had in Florida and called it "a waste of time," saying that the people who attended were "light-minded people."

It was at that town hall where the decision to make students wear clear plastic backpacks was implemented.

Deitsch's sister uses the bag herself and has expressed her right to privacy being exploited by the transparent bookbag.

He went on to point out an obvious problem with the town hall: only democratic supporters were in the audience.

"That's the issue," he said. "We need to sit down together, we need to talk together."

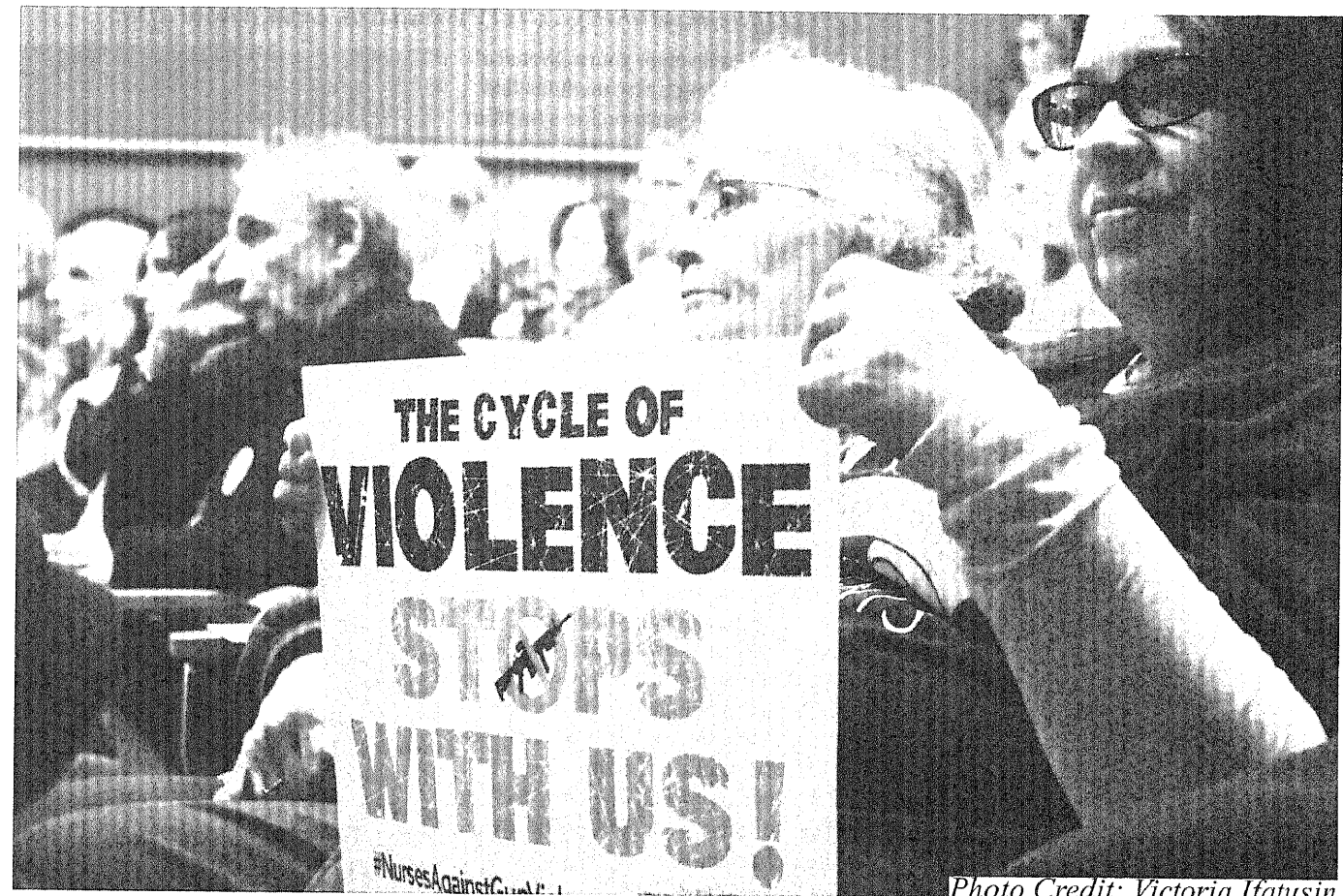


Photo Credit: Victoria Ifatusin

We need to sit down at the table instead of throwing chairs."

He mentioned that there are problems that need to be addressed, but the government is rather slow and may decide to not reform anything at all.

Deitsch gave an example of the "No Fly, No Buy" bill, where a person who is on the terrorist watch list will be denied the purchase of a gun and the right to buy a legal weapon. Although, such bill has not been put into place.

Deitsch reminded everyone the importance of voting.

Other students like Nicholas Chin, John Papanier, and Devyn Sword also made an appearance and further expressed the importance of fighting for our lives.

Chin demonstrated the issue as a "human lives issue." When it came to voting,

Sword stated, "If you don't stand with us, you are against us, and you will be voted out." Papanier also stated how people like Ryan, Emma Gonzales, and other youth leaders as an "inspiration" for him to also fight for his life and the lives of others.

Senator Diane Savino also took the stage by commending the youths at the panel, encouraging them to not stop fighting. She acknowledged the acts that were put in place for the New York State and how it is saving the citizens of New York.

"After Sandy Hook in 2012, the New York State enacted the New York State Safe Act, the toughest gun control law in the country," Savino said.

She also noted the policy in which a citizen with a mental health problem cannot purchase a gun in New York City. With the event that happened on February 14,

she promises that the New York State government is going to fight for the lives of their citizens.

Councilwoman Debi Rose also attended and further explained the importance of voting.

"We are sending the wrong people to Washington who are tone deaf to what the people are saying," she said. "You don't have to violate the constitution to make people safe."

Many attempts have been made to eradicate gun violence, Rose said, but they keep saying "never again" and more attacks are taking place.

"So, when does never ever come?" she asked, to which the audience replied, "Now!"

After the students and government officials spoke, questions were asked by the audience and the topic of guidance counselors was brought up.

A member of the audience, who is a guidance counselor at an elementary school, said that she is only funded to work for two days within the school week. This limits the time she has to see students who need assistance, as well as the fifth graders who are supposed to be getting prepared for junior high school.

This gave an opportunity for those running for office who attended to state their views and what they would do for the state of New York. Those congressional candidates being Max Rose, Michael Devito, Zach Emig, Paul Sperling and Radhakrishna Mohan.

After the event, Deitsch was asked if his career path has changed due to all that he has experienced. He replied: "I wanted to be a comedian." He was never a fan of being serious and mentioned that he would tell jokes to others to make them smile.

He had the plan of being near The Second City, an improv comedy troupe that is located in different areas in the country. Famous comedians such as Steve Carell and Stephen Colbert are alumni of the troupe, and Deitsch wants to be one of them.

Although, with the series of events that have taken place, Deitsch simply said, "Now, I have no idea what I want to do!"



Photo Credit: Victoria Ifatusin

LIFESTYLES

Goodbye Cold Weather, Hello Allergies

Tips on Making Allergy Season Less Miserable

BY: ROSEANNE CASSAR

Allergies - that dreaded spring side effect that many of us suffer through after a long winter.

Now that April is in full swing, warmer weather is finally on the horizon.

Hopefully, more rainfall will help keep the widespread number of allergens low.

A majority of poor souls deal with allergies year round, or if one is lucky, seasonally. There are various types of allergies that a person may suffer from - indoor allergies, and outdoor allergies.

Indoor allergens include black mold, dust mites, cat dander, and dog dander. Outdoor allergies consist of tree pollen, leaf mold, grass pollen, and ragweed.

When allergy season start to kick in, you need to fight back. With a few simple tips, even the worst allergy sufferers can find relief this season.

First, determine if what is causing your lack of energy and congestion is indeed allergies.

At first, the sudden swing from cool to warm weather can make it hard for you to tell if it is an allergic reaction, or the cold/flu.

If your eyes, nose, and the top of your mouth itch, this might be a sign of seasonal allergies. Also, the absence of fever and body aches is yet another clue that you may have allergies-- and not something that is cause for more concern.

Do not suffer through your seasonal allergies without trying a few methods first.

Head to your drugstore for symptom relief. If your go-to medication suddenly fails to work any longer, a visit with a physician is recommended for some allergy-related prescription drugs for relief.

If this does not quell your symptoms, do some research and consider trying immunotherapy shots for long term relief.

Give salt water a go. Gargling with salt water can soothe a sore or scratchy throat. Do this once or twice a day throughout allergy season to ease your battle with congestion.

Being cautionary does not hurt when dealing with some serious allergies. Take off your shoes and work clothes as soon as you get home, as this only drags unnecessary allergens throughout your home.

Take your shoes off outside your door, throw your clothes in the hamper, and slip into comfortable loungewear. Even indulging in a warm shower at night can help remove lingering pollen from the skin.

If you need to get in that daily cardio, it is best to move your fitness endeavors indoors. Spending time outside may only worsen your physical conditions and make it hard to breathe during your workout.

Importantly, you should check pollen counts with your preferred source of weather information. This can help you determine when you should do your errands.



Photo Credit: Google.com

Prepare yourself for a season filled with congestion.

Typically, pollen tends to be highest in the mid-to-late afternoon. So, in the mid-day, try to remain indoors.

If you are allergic to pollen, keep the windows closed and run an air conditioner.

On the flip side, if you are allergic to indoor allergies such as mold and dust, thrust the windows open and let in the fresh air.

Wear a mask for outdoor chores. When you are tending your garden or fixing up your backyard, a surgical mask can help minimize and filter out exposure to pollen particles.

Remember, it is in your best interest

to take allergy symptoms seriously. You can brush off your nasal congestion or a lingering headache as "just allergies," but the truth is, allergy symptoms take a toll on your well-being.

So if you feel completely lousy, listen to what your body is telling you. Rest, go to bed as early as you like, or even take a sick day. Running around when you do not feel well will only make you feel worse.

Surviving Mother Nature's way of introducing spring again is a challenge. With these tips, you will start to breathe a bit easier, and enjoy the long-awaited sunshine.

Springing Forward Into Time Management

Tips for Spring After Spring Break's End

BY: MOHAMED MAHMOUD

In modern society, we tend to delay our most important tasks and spend more time relaxing and scrolling through Instagram.

Now that spring break is over, it is time to put your phone down and tackle your procrastination head-on.

One of the biggest problems surrounding procrastination is lying to yourself. Believing that you can finish an assignment the next day instead of now only prolongs this process.

If you have no concrete reason postpone a task, today is the day to tackle it.

Not only will accomplishing your job lift a weight off your shoulders, it will also enable you to spend more time relaxing or doing things that you love.

This mindset not only goes for small simple tasks, but has been shown to be effective for managing school work.

A general study tested to see whether or not deadlines helped students combat procrastination.

Specifically, students were assigned to write three papers in three weeks.

The first group was given the opportunity to turn in all three papers in at any point during during those three weeks. The second group, on the other hand, had strict weekly deadlines for each paper.

The results showed that the students with the best grades were the ones given a deadline.

It is known that humans are not the best at regulating themselves. When it

comes to procrastination, you have to trick your mind into getting the job done.

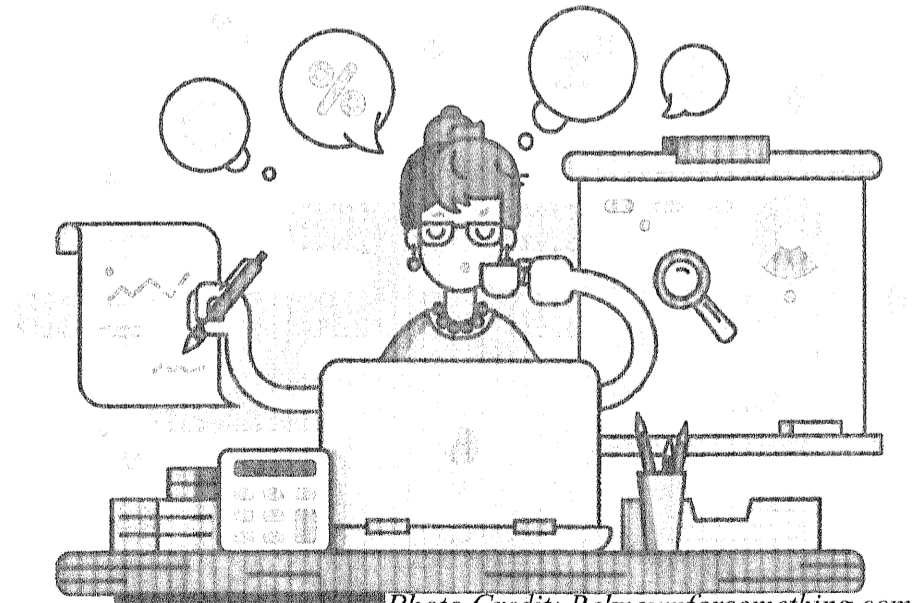


Photo Credit: Beknownforsomething.com

Balance life's tasks with ease by eliminating procrastination.

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A helpful tip is to set reminders in your phone, or kick it old school with an organization planner.

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LIFESTYLES

Ketogenic Diets: The Not-So New Diet Fad

Cut Out Carbs and Cut Down Pounds

BY: JESSICA SCARIMBOLO

As Americans, we are always interested in keeping ourselves as good-looking as possible, causing any new diet that surfaces to spark our interest.

This time around, the newest diet people are trying out is something known as a "ketogenic diet."

Often referred to as the keto diet, it focuses on intaking foods with less carbs and more fat. If done correctly, your body will begin to produce ketones in your liver, which are used as energy, sending your body into ketosis.

Eating something that is high in carbs makes your body produce glucose and insulin; glucose, the easiest molecule for your body to convert to be used as energy, is chosen over any other energy source that could be used to fuel your body.

Because your body cannot store that much glucose, the remaining gets converted into fat, and in turn, is stored and stick to your body, causing weight gain. Lowering your intake of carbs will take your body into ketosis, where your body burns fat from your liver, instead of carbohydrates.

Though it may seem dangerous to

some, it is not exactly starvation for your body, it is just the elimination of carbohydrates.

Just like every other famous diet, celebrities are among the many people trying it out and often finding their trials successful.

As a gorgeous 50-year-old actress and mother of two, Halle Berry attributes her incredible body to a ketogenic diet. She says that her diet consists of lots of avocado, coconut oil and butter, without the intake of sugar.

Even athletes such as Kobe Bryant are on a ketogenic diet, avoiding all sorts of sugar to maintain a healthy and functional system. Bryant's decision to begin a keto diet came from his understanding of the importance that food and health has in a person's energy levels.

In fact, the entire Lakers team has followed in Bryant's lifestyle change and have cut their carbohydrate intake significantly. Former Lakers trainer Gary Vitti stated that Bryant is an incredibly diligent athlete, taking his body and preparation incredibly seriously.

So where can one start and what is there to eat?

Similar to other diets, you cannot eat whatever you want while living on a ketogenic diet. On the bright side, once your body enters ketosis, your cravings will begin to diminish, making you less likely

to indulge in foods you usually can't put down.

If you start your diet in January because of your brownie and chocolate chip cookie problem, being on the keto diet for a little while will make you forget about those cravings.

While surviving on keto, it is important to stay away from certain foods: grains, sugar, potatoes, yams, legumes and believe it or not, even certain fruits. While this is typically a go-to snack for other diets, fruits such as apples, bananas, and oranges actually contain sugar.

However, on keto, you are free to enjoy foods like meats, leafy greens, above ground vegetables, high fat cheeses, cream and butter, nuts, seeds and avocados.

Before considering starting this diet, you should be aware of the side effects it could have, such as cramps, constipation and heart palpitations.

Please remember that the side effects occur in rare occasions and typically, the benefits of a ketogenic diet significantly outweigh the few negative possibilities.

Remember that while this works for many, it may not be the best option for you...and that is okay. Due to its mass amount of success, it is definitely worth a try.

So get ready to drop the carbs, and before long, your pants size will drop, too.

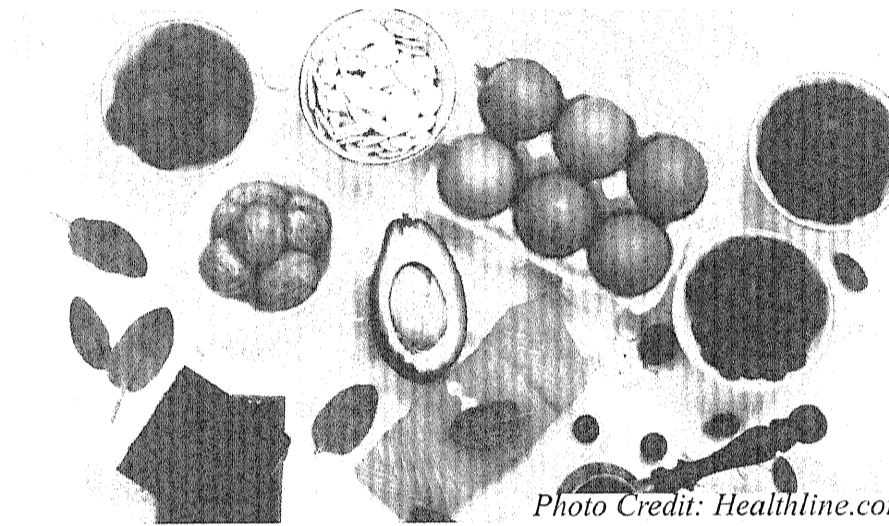


Photo Credit: Healthline.com

These are key foods within a ketogenic diet.

Rock Your Bod: Ditch the Cardio for Climbing

Rock Climbing Helps to Reach Your Own Peak

BY: VERONICA PISTEK

Finding a workout that is adventurous and effective can be more exhausting than doing the physical activity itself.

Fitness is a journey for your health, mind and body. Why settle for exercising on the treadmill and elliptical every day when you can spice up your daily activity with a thrilling challenge?

Rock climbing is a task that takes strength and endurance, but do not be discouraged.

If you are an adrenaline junkie or just someone who is seeking a dynamic lifestyle, rock climbing will easily become a source of physical activity and personal pride that will overall enhance your confidence.

Of course, it would be awesome to travel to the mountains to scale some boulders every week—but with a constant busy lifestyle, indoor rock climbing has benefits equally as exhilarating.

Rock climbing focuses on your core muscles and will test every other part of your body.

When navigating the hand and footholds, you are use the entirety of your arms, hands, and upper body to pull yourself higher than before.

Tackling this challenge even strengthens your grip and can lower your body weight. Climbing also allows your body to perform a number of physical tests.

By building muscle and stamina, you enable yourself to engage in intense cardio and strength training.

As a result, your body is working toward a balance that demands adaptability and flexibility.

Climbing can even improve your blood circulation, range of motion, and of course,

burn off all of those unnecessary calories.

Shockingly, becoming a climber does not mean you need washboard abs or the biggest biceps. All you need is dedication, mental flexibility, and an internal fuse.

When climbing, the isolation can be beneficial - it's just you, your mind, and your body. Being the force of your own height is overwhelming, yet empowering.

A study from Indiana University discovered that rock climbers who completely immerse themselves in the climb enter a mental state of euphoria that releases dopamine into the brain and ultimately pain signals become blocked.

This leads to how rock climbing is a mental obstacle that helps you conquer your doubt and gain an overwhelming sense of self-reliance and limitless potential.

Fear is an inevitable part of being human. One of the most common fears held among people are the fears of heights.

Rock climbing indoors is a wonderful way to aid in conquering this fear. There is no need to worry with the safety of a harness and mats below on the ground.

Not only can you put up a battle with your fears as you climb, but also you can reduce the daily stress that comes along with life.

Climbing immerses your body in the flow of activity, focusing on the present and enables you to prioritize reaching for your goal.

Rising higher and moving toward a peak consequently lowers stress levels, as climbers are exposed to a motivational mindset and the encouragement to succeed.

Another major benefit that comes along with climbing is enhancing your



Photo Credit: Google.com

Rock climbing is a physical and mental challenge that benefits your body along with your mind.

problem-navigating skills.

Travelling through a path that involves specific judgement, you must utilize your energy accordingly.

If you put too much energy during the beginning of the course, you will lack the motivation to strive for higher levels toward the peak.

Furthermore, rock climbing also calls for planning skills and coordination.

In life, when faced with an obstacle, it is essential to lay out a strategic plan and utilize all of your judgement to overcome the boulder and reach your goal.

Before you start your journey of discovery, remember that this is just the beginning. Your goal is to overcome chal-

lenges and recognize each achievement as you progress.

Take time to learn the proper ways of climbing and safety precautions to ensure you will be having the most effective workout possible.

If you potentially become serious about improving, watch mentors and experienced climbers. Witnessing their techniques can inspire you and aid in your journey.

Rock climbing will have you literally thinking on your toes. It's one of the few workouts that can burn calories, sculpt your dream body, and prepare you to deal with life's most difficult challenges with strength - it's certainly worth a shot.

BANNER ARTS

“Love, Simon” Has Everyone Talking

This Rom-Com Will Change the Way You View All Types of Love

BY: JESSICA SCARIMBOLO

It is 2018 and it seems only right that the movie industry has finally released a romantic comedy revolving around a gay couple. “Love, Simon” was released in theaters on March 16, making nearly \$50,000,000 in its opening weekend.

The film tells the story of a 17-year-old boy named Simon whose life seems to be completely normal for that of a high school student, except that he is battling with coming out as gay all while falling in love with an anonymous classmate online.

Spoiler alert: by the end of the film, Simon comes out to his family and friends, defying his fears that the people who love him would not except him.

While staying true to himself, he also goes on a date with a classmate who he has developed a strong relationship with after a few months.

Every single queer person should see this film. If you are battling with your sexuality or struggling to find the courage to come out to those around you, get ready to fall in love with “Love, Simon”.

Simon’s journey and anxiety around coming out to his family and friends is a completely rational fear that closeted people have, specifically adolescents.

If you are in this position, this film will hopefully inspire you to come out and be yourself in your truest form.

While it may seem that “Love, Simon” only targets people in the LGBTQ+ community, the film is absolutely essential for everyone to see. While it tells the story of a gay high school senior, it also tells the story of bravery.

For many, their sexuality threatens aspect of their life, perhaps their family or home situations.

Similarly, it could change the way peo-

ple view you, though it doesn’t change you as a person. Unfortunately, closeted people often have the fear that their family and friends will no longer want to be associated with them.

Because of this, coming out requires bravery.

“Love, Simon” also demonstrates strong family values. It can absolutely be assumed that parents of a closeted child could have a hard time with their son or daughter coming out at first, simply because they are now finding out about a huge part of their child’s life that they have been hiding.

In the film, Simon’s parents, played by Josh Duhamel and Jennifer Garner, demonstrate an example of the way that parents should react to their child coming out as gay.

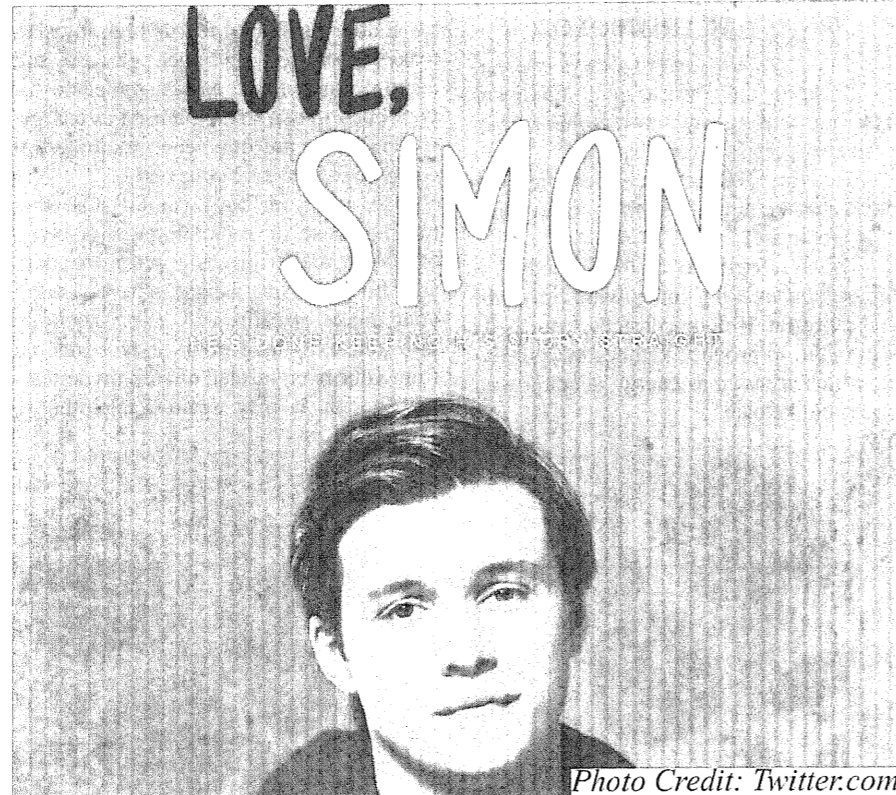
Though he remains a bit quiet and distant at first, Simon’s father talks with his son explaining that he wouldn’t change anything about his son. “I just want you to know that I love you. I wouldn’t change anything about you.”

His mother’s character also notices a change in Simon’s behavior after he comes out, which should be something liberating for a queer person. “You get to exhale now, Simon. You get to be more you than you have been in a very long time.”

The scenes that involve Simon’s mother and father coming to a place of true acceptance with their son’s sexuality had the entire movie theater in tears, including yours truly.

Interestingly enough, the film does not ignore the fact that though we are living in a progressive era, there are still homophobic people in society, specifically in schools, who will bully those who are gay.

The homophobic bullies in the film use



Poster for “Love, Simon”

derogatory terms, ultimately getting them in trouble by school authorities.

Hopefully, the inclusion of these characters will speak to those bullies and inspire them to be more open-minded to those who are different than they are.

Another beautiful aspect of the film occurred at the end when Simon ends up with Blue, the guy he spent months emailing with and getting to know. Simon emails Blue and asks him to meet him on the ferris wheel if he wants to expose himself and start a relationship with Simon.

Luckily, Blue does meet Simon on the

ferris wheel, showing Simon and the audience who he is, something we are unsure of throughout the entire film.

After meeting him on the ferris wheel, Simon and Blue kiss, which make all of their classmates yell in excitement, similar to everyone in the seats of the movie theater.

“Love, Simon” is a film that should be watched and rewatched. For all people, not just those in the gay and lesbian community, this film should be talked about. It promotes love in every form: romantic, family, and friendship.

Photo Credit: Twitter.com

BANNER ARTS

The Golden Hour of Pop-Country Has Finally Arrived

Kacey Musgraves Describes Her Newest Album As “Replenishingly Transformational.”

BY: BRIELLE SPARACINO

(*Note: the words “song” and “record” are used interchangeably.)

Kacey Musgraves has been a staple in the country music scene for years, but it seems her career has picked up even more speed upon the release of her latest album, Golden Hour.

Musgraves, a born-and-raised Texan, got her first taste of Nashville, Tennessee after placing seventh on Nashville Star, the country version of American Idol, back in 2007. She signed to Universal Music Group Nashville in 2012 and released her first single “Merry Go ‘Round” shortly after.

“Merry Go ‘Round” belonged to Musgraves’s upcoming first album, Same Trailer, Different Park which would debut in 2013. Both the single and its counterpart would go on to win Grammys, as well as receiving even more awards from the Academy of Country Music, and the Country Music Association, according to an interview with Musgraves on texas-monthly.com.

Since then, Musgraves has penned two more LP’s and opened for prominent country music acts like Lady Antebellum and Little Big Town; she’s even opening for Harry Styles on the North American leg of his world tour in June.

Golden Hour is Musgraves’s fourth album and possibly her most unique one yet. In her previous albums, she’s alluded to more controversial topics like smoking pot and same-sex relationships- topics that aren’t as popular in country music.

This time around, she’s settled into the topic of love quite nicely, as well as the magic of the world we live in. As with her previous albums, she’s served as a co-writer throughout the entirety of her new LP, but without further adieu, here are some of the best songs on Golden Hour, though one could argue that every song tells its own



Photo Credit: Stereogum.com

version of Musgraves’s personal story.

“Space Cowboy” was Musgraves’s first single off of this album and this song, along with every other, takes you to a different world. With her buttery vocals and a simple acoustic/percussion accompaniment, Musgraves reminds her listener that they can’t make a relationship work if both people aren’t in it.

A true lyricist, Musgraves sings, “suns sets fade, and love does too” on this record, showcasing her 90’s angst vibes through and through.

“Butterflies” was Musgraves’s second single off Golden Hour, and was written about her current husband, Ruston Kelly, when they first met back in 2016. In the article on Musgraves from texasmonthly.com, she describes opening the door of her home to greet him for their first songwriting date.

“It was just like when Dorothy opens a door in the Wizard of Oz, and the world turns into color from black and white,” said Musgraves.

“Slow Burn” is the opening track for Golden Hour. On her Instagram, Musgraves calls this mellow record “one of [her] most autobiographical songs,” and with lyrics like “Born in a hurry/Always late/Haven’t been early since ‘88,” we get an unapologetically intimate glimpse into Musgraves’s life.

“Mother,” according to Musgraves herself, is “the shortest song on the album and maybe the most meaningful.” While

this record only lasts a little over a minute, the lyric and melodic minimalism speaks for itself.

Musgraves croons, “I’m just sitting here thinking ‘bout the time that’s slipping/ And missing my mother, mother/ And she’s probably sitting there/ Thinking ‘bout the time that’s slipping/ And missing her mother, mother,” and it makes you want to call your own mother just to tell her you love her.

Last but certainly not least is the album’s title track, “Golden Hour.” In her album’s opening notes, she writes “There are different masks that we all wear to represent different sides of ourselves. None of them are solely us and yet they all are.”

“There’s the lonely girl - the blissful girl - the new wife - the daughter missing her mother - the hopeful girl - the selfish girl - the sarcastic, rhinestoned Texan - the shy girl and the life of the party - the winner and the loser.”

“They are all characters on this record. None of them alone are me and yet they all are. The golden hour is when all the masks come together as one and you can see, in perfect light, the whole picture of me.”

It is on this song in particular that we see a softer, more vulnerable version of Musgraves declaring her love in the most poetic way: “You’re my golden hour/ The color of my sky/ You’ve set my world on fire/ And I know, I know everything’s gonna be alright.”

While the album’s genre is classified as country, Musgraves has created a compilation of songs that speak to every soul. This album projects warmth, love, a little sadness and a lot of gratitude towards the mere fact that we all even exist.

Golden Hour is an existential, magical masterpiece that makes you want to believe in good again. Here’s hoping that it will be nominated for the 2019 Grammy Awards.

Archie Comics Take on a Dark Plot In CW’s “Riverdale”

The Addictive Series Has Fans Dying for More

BY: BROOKE PRICE

The television show “Riverdale” portrays the Archie Comics series in a darker light.

The series takes place in the fictional town of Riverdale, in which the first season revolves around the mysterious death of Jason Blossom, and the tragic events that led up to his death.

The show contains a murder mystery concept throughout each season. The viewers guess who the killer could be, while no character is safe since everyone begins to doubt their closest allies.

Dark secrets are also revealed throughout season one and the current season, season two. Forbidden secret romances, long lost relatives, murders, hidden secrets, and the corruption of the seemingly perfect

town of Riverdale are all themes that are continuously explored.

The show encompasses a diverse group of characters. Some of these characters include redhead Archie Andrews, played by KJ Apa, a high school jock, who is close friends with Jughead Jones, a member of the gang, the South Side Serpents, played by Cole Sprouse.

Lilli Reinhart portrays Betty Cooper, the intelligent blonde, who appears to be from an ideal, perfect family.

Camila Mendes plays Veronica Lodge, the rich city girl from New York, who moves to Riverdale and prepares to become involved in her family’s secret business.

Ashleigh Murray portrays Josie McCoy, leader of the band “Josie and the Pussycats,” and the mayor’s daughter.



Photo Credit: Comicbook.com

The main characters of “Riverdale” (from left to right): Veronica Lodge, Jughead Jones, Josie McCoy, Cheryl Blossom, Kevin Keller, Betty Cooper, and Archie Andrews.

Madelaine Petsch plays the wealthy and manipulative Cheryl Blossom, who isn’t afraid to speak her mind.

Casey Cott plays Kevin Keller, who is openly gay and Betty’s best friend. He is also the town sheriff’s son.

Throughout the seasons, each of the main characters undergoes a story arc in which they uncover truths which have been hidden from them. They continue to learn more about themselves as each season progresses.

Season 2 introduced some new faces to the screen, including the addition of the mysterious businessman, and father of Veronica Lodge, Hiram Lodge, who is played by Mark Consuelos.

Some other characters include Toni Topaz, a Southside Serpent, played by Vanessa Morgan and Chic Cooper, Betty’s devious half-brother, played by Hart Denton.

If you are wondering what to expect, here is a brief rundown.

The first season revolves around the mysterious death of Jason Blossom, Cheryl Blossom’s twin brother. The characters later investigate and discover the dark truth of the town of Riverdale.

The show is currently airing episodes of it’s highly anticipated second season.

In this season, the malevolent perpetrator called the Black Hood brings chaos and hostility to the quaint town of Riverdale, causing characters to act in such ways that

were once seemingly impossible.

There will even be an upcoming musical episode in which the characters of “Riverdale” put on a production of Carrie the Musical.

“Riverdale” has garnered a massive cult following. Many fans tune in on the CW network to watch the captivating show and live tweet every moment.

“Riverdale” has such a large following, that a company called Creation Entertainment has planned an official Riverdale Convention in Chicago and New Jersey. The company has announced that most of the cast from the show is coming to the convention.

The convention will take place on April 28th to the 29th and will be held in the Hyatt Regency O’Hare in Rosemont, Illinois. The company has also planned to have another “Riverdale” convention on October 6th to the 7th, which will be located in the Hilton Parsippany in Parsippany, New Jersey.

At the convention, fans can ask questions to the “Riverdale” panel, dress up as characters from the show, and pose for pictures and receive autographs from the actors.

As season two progresses, viewers can expect drama, gory, shocking secrets, and cold-hearted truth. So, get ready to dive into the dark town of Riverdale and hope to never return.

A New Course Of Santa Clarita

Taking a Bite Into Season II of “Santa Clarita Diet”

BY: MOHAMED MAHMOUD

Season 2 of “Santa Clarita Diet” was released on March 23rd on Netflix with a whopping number of 10 episodes.

For those of who are new to the series, Santa Clarita Diet is a dark comedy that revolves around a sociopathic realtor of a mother who recently turned into a murderous cannibal and must find a way to maintain her urges and still keep a normal life.

Going into the second season there is a warm atmosphere and it is entertaining as the series continue to progress.

Within a lot of the scenes, you may find yourself enjoying a good laugh on behalf of some of the jokes.

The series writing is funny and quirky. The interactions between Joel who plays the role of the husband, Sheila, who is the main character, and their child Abby is more than just entertaining.

In this new season, Eric Bemis has been given a bigger story arc.

As opposed to the previous season, he was practically a regular in most episodes. Eric was even able to find a love interest in this season.

Though it is hard to contain the excitement surrounding this show, spoilers will be avoided.

The most interesting thing about this show is that since it is a comedy show, it is expected to not take itself very seriously.

However, the screenplay itself is exceptional. Despite the twists and turns of the plot, the storyline follows through coherently.

The writers behind this series are well aware that this is a cop-out show. Thus, many characters need to cover up bodies, lies and fake situations - all which kind of mimics a sense of Dexter.

Let’s not forget that there is also a bit of a fantasy lore element.

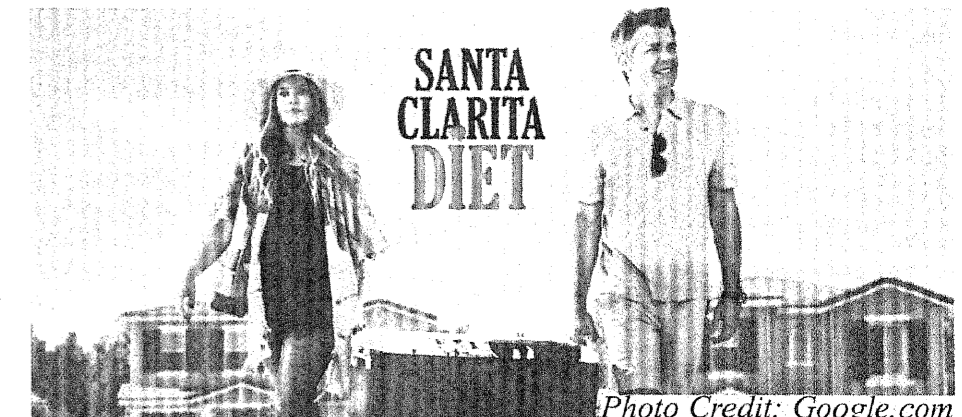
In season two, there is some complex Serbian stuff that deals with an ancient book. As the plot thickens, more of this fantasy is explored.

Not only will you witness some peculiar creatures, you will encounter more on the lore of the zombies throughout this season.

There were also some defining computer-generated image scenes. The images of some creatures combined with severed limbs and other gory scenes are sure to keep your interest.

The makers of this series create these scenes that strike the watcher as unbelievably real.

Even though you are well aware that



The new season of Santa Clarita Diet.

a person’s fingers do not bend so far back, it is shocking to witness this happen to a zombie.

Overall, the cast generally remained the same for season two. You might encounter a couple of new faces, as well as the return of Joel McHale to the series.

So, while watching season two, you can expect to be shocked by a few interesting cameos, as well as new character cameos.

Throughout these ten episodes, the viewers get to know what actually caused the people to transform into zombies. Fans also get a taste of some of the cures and get

to see whether or not the cure will remain permanent.

Not going unnoticed, there is a very compelling cliffhanger at the end of episode ten, leaving the viewer wanting season three already.

Season 2 definitely brought fully on intensity, along with a multitude of important events, despite the many filler episodes that were included in the first season.

Viewers can expect to be intrigued from start to finish.

Hopefully, Santa Clarita can continue strongly into season 3, answering the questions and interests of the raving fans.

BANNER OPINIONS

"Roseanne" Breaks the Mold by Supporting Trump

Trump Politics Polarize the Entertainment Industry

BY: KENNY VELEZ

Donald Trump has been a polarizing figure, especially since he became the President of the United States in 2017.

In Hollywood, the reaction to Trump has mostly been negative.

Starting with the 2017 Academy Awards, President Trump was a punchline for actors who oppose his positions. In that year's Academy Awards, host Jimmy Kimmel mentioned Trump by name, one of the few people at that event to do so.

Others made reference to Trump, his politics, and his Twitter account without mentioning him by name. Among the things that were said there: "Dividing the world into the us and our enemies categories creates fears," said by Anousheh Ansari, from a statement written by Asghar Farhadi.

She continues, "[F]ilmmakers can turn their cameras to capture shared human qualities and break stereotypes of various nationalities and religions. They create empathy between us and others. An empa-

thy which we need today more than ever."

"I work around the world and this is for all the immigrants," said Alessandro Bertolazzi, one of three people who accepted the Academy Award for makeup and hairstyling for their work in "Suicide Squad."

Several stories released over the past few years have referenced Trump and his administration. Notably, only one has attempted to portray Trump and his supporters in a positive light.

In the show "Roseanne," the first episode of the season that debuted in 2018 features Roseanne voting for Donald Trump. This causes problems with her sister, who voted for Hillary Clinton, or as Roseanne calls her: "the worst person on Earth."

Then a few minutes later, her sister shows up at her front door wearing a pink Pussyhat from the Women's March in Washington last year. As soon as they meet, they insult each other using political beliefs associated with both presidential candidates.

Roseanne is called out for wrapping the American flag around her. Her husband looks for his gun to avoid the kids finding it after Roseanne's sister insults them over it, which is a reference to recent events revolving around gun control.

Throughout the episode, they both insult each other over their politics, even with their family members around. Roseanne's son DJ is a veteran who recently came home from Syria, and her sister thanks him for his service.

It also turns out that she didn't vote for Clinton, she voted for Jill Stein because of Roseanne's actions getting to her. After that, they come to an understanding.

Usually in modern stories, characters who are Trump supporters are not sympathetic or viewed in a positive light. In fact, they are bad people, according to the writers.

The movie "Black Panther," released earlier this year, referenced the Trump administration in its Stinger.

In it, T'Challa says: "The wise build bridges while fools build barriers." It can

easily be interpreted as an attack on the Trump administration.

"Captain America: Steve Rogers" #1, written by Nick Spencer, also depicts Trump-style politics. Released in 2016 before the Presidential Election, it features an allegory of Trump.

The villain of the issue, the Red Skull, spouts a bunch of lines that can be traced back to Trump. He talks to a bunch of potential HYDRA recruits about various things. Among them: the idea that refugees are "criminal trespassers" who cross the borders of Europe and the United States, and do things such as attack the women of their countries and blow up their cities.

He also says that speaking out against these things will result in you being called a bigot. A fictionalized version of Donald Trump appeared in the anime adaptation of "Inuyashiki" in an episode that was released in December 2017.

In that episode, he dismisses all the lives that will be lost in an upcoming meteor strike.

Sad Rap and Its Even Sadder Consequences

Hip-Hop Culture Fueling a Drug Epidemic

BY: DOMINICK WOJTAS

"I wake up/ I throw up/ I feel like I'm dead," Lil Xan voiced in a melodic, melancholic, yet ironically cool tone.

Lil Xan is just one face in a clan of young musicians categorized as "Soundcloud rappers."

However, the term "Soundcloud rap" is an extreme generalization.

Soundcloud is the go-to platform for up and coming artists to host their tracks and make them public to the world.

The platform contains music of virtually every genre, yet the term "Soundcloud rap" has been discriminately linked to the most recent subcategory of rap to blow up: sad rap.

Also referred to as "emo rap," the tracks listed under this genre feature depressive lyrics, revealing the artist's internal anguish. This is nothing new, for music has historically been an artist's melodious

catharsis.

However, a certain element encompassing the genre is dangerous and in many cases, deadly.

The issue rather niche to this particular wave of hip-hop is its blatant linkage to the prescription benzodiazepine and its most commonly known drug, Xanax.

Philadelphia rapper Lil Uzi Vert, who is twenty-three, is considered a stepfather of the movement. In one of his hit singles, he goes on to say, "She say I'm insane, yeah/ I might blow my brain out / Xanny, help the pain, yeah/ Please, Xanny, make it go away."

Xanny is the hero in this particular verse, however, this hero is a false prophet and behind its mask, its villainous nature emerges.

This song has littered over the air, yet we ignore the fact that Uzi may be standing on death's doorstep anxious to knock, taking Xanax to numb his harrowing mental

state.

In late 2017, Lil Peep, a twenty-one-year-old rapper from Long Island, died overdosing on Xanax and Fentanyl.

"I used to wanna kill myself/ Came up, still wanna kill myself," Peep rapped on "OMFG," a popular track on his mixtape Hellboy from 2016.

The day before his death, Peep posted a photo on Instagram of his torso captioned "When I die you'll love me." His cries were authentic, however, a difficult issue to tackle is sorting these cries of despair as legitimate warning shots, or just a marketing ploy.

Certain artists have even gone on to glorify this deadly element featured so often in their music. In the recent past Lil Pump, a major player in the Soundcloud rap community, celebrated one million followers on Instagram with a cake fashioned as a Xanax tablet.

The false mitigation proposed by this

scene coupled with social media's power of supremely open viewability stirs great concern with me.

Countless studies have shown that music influences our mood, thoughts, and actions; Humans are impressionable.

We let music passively sink into our brains, not fully conscious of the extent its dark themes may have on us.

This detrimental effect resonates even greater within children, as their reasoning capability is not yet fully developed. They will emulate what their senses provide to them as well as what they filter in as "cool." When depression and loneliness come to the front line of popular music, this reaction to stimuli could be as dangerous as the drug itself.

In 2017, 91 people a day died from opioid overdoses in the U.S alone.

Currently, in the U.K, a "fake" Xanax epidemic is taking hold of the country. Shady ingredients sourced from the dark web are being drawn together to form a pill that mimics the effects of Xanax, it's addictive personality and all.

Is society to blame? At least partially, yes.

"In society today there is a lot more pressure on young people to have a certain social status," says Emily, an 18-year-old photography student living in London, wrestling an addiction to benzos.

Leading the youth to understand the trivial nature of social media is crucial. It is also imperative that we wade popular culture away from this trend of self-harm.

We need to bring less detrimental coping mechanisms into the light.

Artists should make fervent efforts to refrain from destructive drug use and voice that drugs are not the answer. Fads may die out, but addiction lives on...#heavexanaxin2017.



Photo Credit: i.guim.co.uk

SEX AND RELATIONSHIPS

Someone Always Catches Feelings

An Account of Friends-with-Benefits Gone Awry

BY: DOMINICK WOJTAS

Friends-with-benefits relationships always look so good on paper.

Two lovers sharing their sensuality, enjoying each other's company and not being restrained by any social construct. Nothing has to be Facebook official. Any incriminating gossip can easily be dodged. At the end of the day, you're both free to establish new relationships unneringly.

It sounds stress-free and yet the entire weight of it usually ends up on one person's shoulders. Emotions pile up and high until they reach a tipping point and come crashing down in a woeful catharsis. I swear, someone's always catching feelings.

The night started off in good fun: two unrestrained lovers going out in the Big Apple. The bar we had chosen took inspiration from the roaring 20's and incorporated many steampunk-esque elements.

It was the type of place where Gatsby would meet Daisy: classy enough to take an affluent woman out for a drink, and in the shadows of intensely dim light. Neither of us were affluent by any means, it's simply good fun to get theatrical at times and play a role that you may never know.

As we were sipping on our drinks, a notification flashed on my phone. It was new, like on Tinder. Unusual, but I had been receiving them all day.

This was an aberration, some unworlly being was sending me a message it seemed. Although it wasn't something I was particularly hiding.

There was a righteous reason behind my blatant transparent behavior: I wanted her to be ok with this, our relationship was defined as friends with benefits. This was what we agreed on.

I was still a free man and not afraid to reveal it.

However, an altered state is known to unleash inner-torments when triggered. This I have witnessed on a handful of occasions but only as a third party, for I had thought I had covered all the basis' - at least initially.

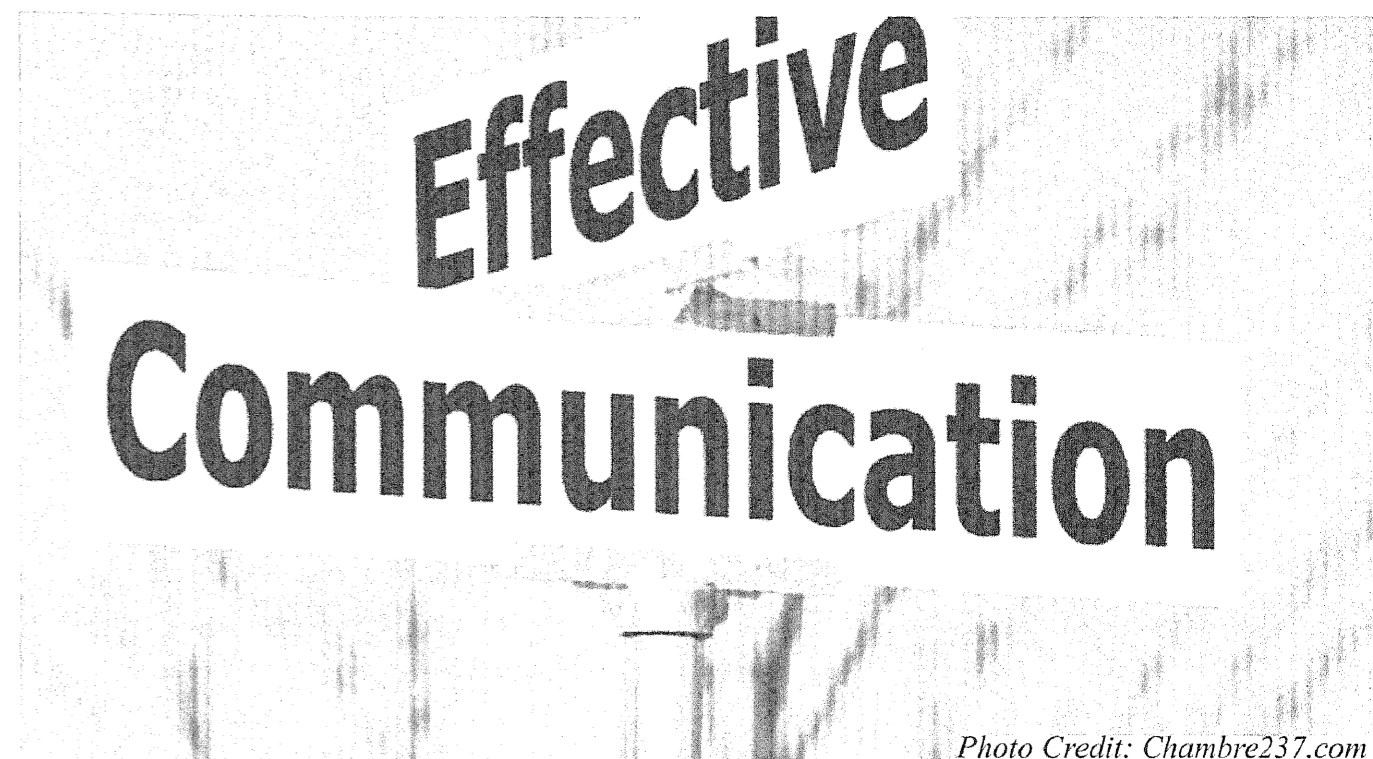


Photo Credit: Chambre237.com

My phone was face up between us when that ill-fated notification lit up the screen. In an instant, before I could even assess the situation, she bolted out of her chair and vanished behind heavy copper doors, now pacing towards the Apples rotten core (Times Square).

I followed this trail of tears down to the street corner where I managed to grab her shoulder with one hand and spin her around into my other, her wet eyes causing a tremor in my heart the instant I caught eye contact. I started:

"My intention was never to hurt you, I was not aware that my polygamy was bothering you so much."

"Every time you receive a message, it's as if a hammer strikes down on this stake that has formed on my heart. I have submitted to this pain without fret for some time now but I don't know how much more I can bear."

The fact that this was articulated rather poetically had only added to my grief.

"I'm sorry but the nature of our relationship entails..." and before I could finish, "I'm very aware but feelings happen and you made me like you and I just..." her eyes had flashed a pinkish red, not an angry red, a significantly subtler hue.

She was tired and wanted to resign. I read this and booked us a night at the Evelyn.

I was not going to let her, in her current state, endure a two-hour commute home alone with her thoughts.

Bittersweet was the remainder of our night. She continued to shed tears but this time she was naked and fully enveloped in my arms.

I figured, as most men do, that I could heal the emotional wound physically, so I curled over her body like a wave, my lips crashing onto her neck. Her body immediately started jerking with passion, squirm-

ing every which way. Even if circumstances communicated the impropriety of my actions her mind was in too feeble of a state to resist.

Tender that night was. Even now I think about that night often, what could've been had I been less of a Romeo. Intertwined, our glued lips are all but a lingering memory on nights when I lay in my bed alone now.

The next morning she vanished into the subway like a ghost. So graceful with the turnstile I fail to believe that any part of her mass actually touched it.

Her direction was uptown. My self-contempt forced me to stretch our distance even further. I fell into the nearest downtown train from where I was stood and retired my bum, sinking even lower.

Next to no one, I hugged the railing at the edge of my seat, never to hear from her again.

Communication Is Key

Helpful Tips for a Healthier Relationship

BY: CLARA PEREZ

While most long-term couples have already navigated through the early communication stages of their relationship, there is always room for improvement for both newbies and veterans.

Some helpful tips may serve as reminders for some or brand new lessons for others on how to effectively talk and listen to your significant other.

Active listening is a communication tip that is essential to any relationship, whether it's romantic or platonic. Sometimes when talking to your partner, you may physically be in the room but mentally, somewhere else.

This impedes your ability to actively listen to what he/she has to say and provide helpful feedback. Especially in the case of an argument, you may just be waiting to share your next point or fire back with an unnecessary remark, which means you are not really hearing what concerns your partner is voicing.

Active listening means making a con-

centrated effort to slow down your own brain and listen to your partner with open ears, heart and mind.

Editing your partner's criticism is vital: we often want to share our opinions with our significant other, but we sometimes unintentionally critique their personal attributes. This can lead to animosity and anger from your other half which can easily spiral into a blowout argument.

However, if we edit the criticism to make it situational and not based on your partner's qualities or characteristics, not only can a fight be avoided but new conclusions may be reached and new ideas may be forged.

Seek first to understand then to be understood; this may just be the golden rule of communication with your partner, or anyone for that matter. We often focus our attention on being understood and getting our point across, but this often blocks the communication pathway for someone else who just wants to reach the same understanding as you.

If we make a shift to focusing our atten-

tion on the feelings of someone else before our own, we may change the dynamic and lead the way for a new and better path of communicating.

Use "I" statements instead of being hostile and confrontational. When upset, we as humans often find ways to blame others and speak using "you" statements, like "you make me feel badly when..." or "you always do this..."

These only project blame on your partner and will probably cause them to find a way to blame you as a response. However, if you begin to use "I" statements like "I really feel badly when..." or "I feel like I can't communicate with you when..." it helps to eliminate the blame game and may be a better way to talk out issues without getting heated.

Asking open-ended questions is another tip to help eliminate the blame game and to strike up a more in-depth conversation between you and your partner. Sometimes without conscious effort, we ask questions that have a simple answer and then wonder why the other person isn't formulating a

conversation.

This is usually because our questions are not open-ended which doesn't allow for further conversation. If you ask questions like "can you think of new ways to...", which can not only start a deep and meaningful conversation, but it can also allow your significant other to openly share their thoughts or feelings with you.

Stay calm and be gentle. Always remember that when you stay calm, it can stop the conversation from going south or getting heated and it may help your partner feel more comfortable sharing things with you. If you can manage to stay calm in a tough situation, it can seriously change your partner's perception of you for the better!

Also, be gentle. Whether you're dealing with a male or a female, we all have feelings even though some of us don't ever want to admit it or show it. Be gentle with your partner despite the façade they may display on a daily basis. Always take their feelings into account because theirs are just as important as your own.

SPORTS

Hornacek Fired by Knicks; NBA Playoffs Begin

Knicks Dump Coach ahead of Postseason

BY: ERIC RANSOM

In yet another changing of the guard, the Knicks have relieved Jeff Hornacek of his head coaching duties after just two seasons.

With a disappointing record of 60-104 in his two years as head coach, Hornacek was informed of his firing shortly after the final game of the season, a win over the Cavaliers.

The Knicks never made the playoffs during that time, despite starting off strong before falling apart halfway through each season.

The Hornacek firing came as no surprise and will result in the Knicks searching for a new head coach for the third time since their last playoff appearance in 2013. The Knicks will join the Brooklyn Nets for a third consecutive season without playoff basketball in New York.

Candidates like David Fizdale, Mark Jackson, Jerry Stackhouse and even former Knicks coaches Jeff Van Gundy and Mike Woodson have emerged as possibilities. Jackson, a former Knicks guard and Fizdale, former coach of the Memphis Grizzlies, are the early favorites.

While the Knicks search for a new leader to build their future, the 2018 playoffs begin with many questions and surprises.

The top seeded Houston Rockets and Toronto Raptors, as well as surprises like the Philadelphia 76ers and Indiana Pacers,

look to dethrone the Golden State Warriors for the 2018 NBA title.

Likely MVP James Harden has his Rockets team rolling and are the best threat to the Warriors' attempts to repeat as champions.

LeBron James is looking to make the NBA Finals for an eighth consecutive season, winning three titles in that span for his

Curry, 30, may return from his injury sometime during a deep playoff run, whereas Irving will miss the entirety of the postseason, leaving two dominant teams in limbo heading into the postseason.

They will face-off against the San Antonio Spurs and head coach Gregg Popovich, looking to continue their dynasty and claim their sixth NBA title.

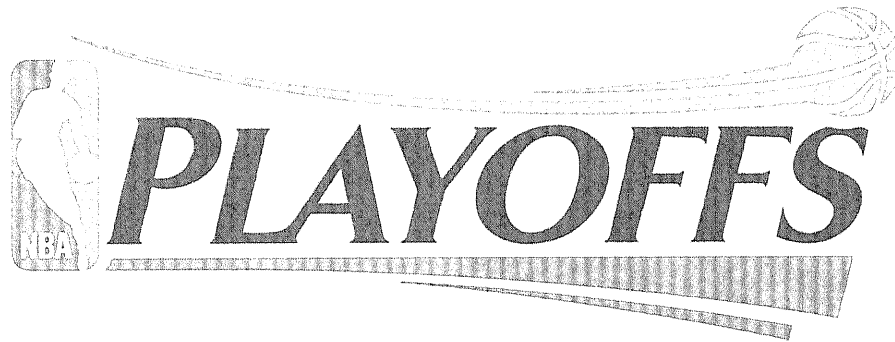


Photo Credit: Ticketmaster.com

In another year with playoff basketball in New York, the Knicks and Nets will be watching the NBA playoffs from home this season.

former team, the Heat, as well as one for the Cavs.

Injuries have put a crimp in the chances of the reigning champs in the form of a knee injury to former MVP Stephen Curry, as well as Kyrie Irving of the Celtics.

The Thunder will be led by the likes of 2017 MVP Russell Westbrook, who finished the regular season averaging a triple-double for the second consecutive year, something no player has ever previously done before.

The surprise teams, like the 3-seed Sixers, have won sixteen straight games and are in prime position to reach the Eastern Conference finals and possibly an NBA Final. The Bucks and superstar Giannis Antetokounmpo aim to defeat the weakened Celtics after being eliminated in the first round last year at the hands of the Raptors.

The 2018 NBA Playoffs may finally be the year in which a Warriors-Cavs finals matchup will not happen, as LeBron and the Cavs have been victim to controversy and inconsistency all season. The Warriors minus Stephen Curry are also in danger, especially with viable threats in the Western Conference like the Rockets and Thunder.

The Cavs will be put to the test by the surprisingly impressive and youthful Pacers, led by the likes of Victor Oladipo and Lance Stephenson.

The Warriors and Cavs have met in the Finals in four consecutive seasons, with the Warriors winning three out of the four. The 2013 Finals between the Heat and Spurs remains the last championship that did not feature the two teams.

The other remaining playoffs teams this year include the Heat and Wizards in the Eastern Conference, and the Trailblazers, Jazz, Pelicans and Timberwolves in the Western Conference.

Despite the injuries and question marks, this year's NBA Playoffs is poised to be one of the most entertaining and unpredictable postseasons yet.

Overwatch Makes the Transition to eSports

Blizzard Combines Gaming and Sports with Overwatch League

BY: STEVEN AIELLO

The gaming and sporting markets are arguably two of the biggest markets at the moment. Enter Overwatch League, the first major stride towards turning gaming into a professional market and a sport similar to the NFL or NBA.

Gaming has been played as a sport for decades previous, albeit in the form of tournaments on a small scale. In recent years, video game companies have made greater strides to expand on the eSports market, with Overwatch League being the next step towards that goal.

Despite lacking a single player mode, Overwatch has received a great deal of attention and success because of its appeal towards both casual and more dedicated gamers. Overwatch also carries one of the most ethnically diverse and egalitarian casts in any game, making the game a prime choice to help expand eSports.

Overwatch League began its inaugural regular season in January 2018 and has since met its parent company Blizzard Entertainment's expectations, increasing interest in both the video game and league. This increased interest might be the result of its format, which mirrors the traditional format of major sports leagues but with Overwatch now at the center of it.

Games are scheduled from Wednesday to Saturday at three games per day, using a format of 'best of four' to determine winners. The full schedule, along with additional information, can be found on the

Overwatch League website.

Each game features two of twelve potential teams as players play one round for all four objective-based modes in Overwatch; any ties result in an extra fifth round being played. Each game is played two hours apart from the last, making for a constant stream of action and gameplay, aside from occasional commercials.

The season is divided into four stages where ten games are played across five weeks. Each team is ranked based on their standings throughout each individual stage as well as their standings throughout the season overall.

Overwatch League features a traditional playoff system based on each team's overall finish, but an additional playoff system is featured at the end of each stage. Based on the standings during each stage, the four best teams will meet in a playoff bracket in which the winner receives a \$100,000 prize payout.

Although relatively inconsequential, these stage playoffs provide an additional source of excitement for fans. An additional source of excitement is also provided through the All-Star Weekend occurring after the end of each season, which is based on players battling through a series of unknown challenges.

Overwatch League features a lineup of over 100 different players from various countries throughout the world, similar to the diverse cast featured within the game. Each player specializes with a particular class of characters in the game, or as any



Photo Credit: Gamingroom.co
Overwatch League is Blizzard's First Attempt to Introduce One of Their Many Popular IPs into eSports class (a flex role) in uncommon circumstances.

Some of the more notable players in League include "Miro", "Mano", "EFFECT", "Seagull" and others because of their high skill levels or general notability. There was, however, slight controversy when "Geguri," one of the most notable female Overwatch players, was not initially signed by any of the twelve teams.

Other controversies that have been involved with Overwatch League include a lack of female players at the beginning of the regular season as well as the suspension of a player called "xQc". The suspension was issued over comments "xQc" made that were deemed homophobic.

Overwatch itself has also received immense scrutiny for its community, which has been deemed "toxic" by various players and personalities. Blizzard has ad-

dressed this problem and staff members have attempted to reduce this toxic attitude towards the game, especially in regards to League.

In spite of some of its controversy, Overwatch League has received hundreds upon thousands of viewers on nearly every broadcast, and companies such as HP, Intel and Toyota have sponsored the event. These numbers could potentially increase with the rise in popularity of the eSports market and in further support for Overwatch throughout the creation of additional content.

Regardless, Overwatch League is one of the first major steps towards creating more eSports Leagues that combine gaming and sports into one amenity. With the upcoming NBA2K League in addition to Overwatch League, eSports could become the next big market.