Hate crime hits too close to home

By Matt Williams

Two openly gay Mercer students were assaulted outside of the Broad Street Diner in Trenton around 2:30AM on Saturday, February 21. The students, who wish to remain anonymous and will be referred to as student A and student B, are both members of Mercer’s Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgendered Friends (LGBTF) club.

The two students attended the previous night’s Late Night Series which was hosted by the LGBTF. The theme of the night was Mardi Gras; those who dressed up were given free admission and all others were charged five dollars to enter. The students who were assaulted believe that they were attacked because of their attire.

Student A left the LNS and went to the diner with two friends. Student B stayed back after the LNS was over to help clean up and planned on meeting student A at the diner once he was done. Once student A was inside, he was harassed by two large individuals, one with a confederate flag tattoo on his arm. “One of them called me a f*cking faggot and hit me on the back of the head,” says student A. Student A believes that the man hit him accidentally, but was aware of it and did not apologize.

After stepping into the parking lot to have a cigarette, student A was approached again by the man with the confederate flag tattoo. This time the man punched him in the side of the face, tearing his earring out and leaving him bleeding. The two began to get involved in a verbal confrontation. Student B witnessed the assault take place upon arriving at the diner.

After numerous unsuccessful attempts to calm the man, student B called 911 and was told by the attacker that “you and all of your faggot friends can’t stop me and neither can this nigger” referencing an African American individual who witnessed the assault.

As student B was placing a call to 911, the two assailants sped away in their vehicle.

Student B spoke with the Hamilton Police Department dispatcher and stated that neither he nor Student A needed medical assistance. Student B also informed the dispatcher that they were unable to obtain the assailant’s license plate number.

According to student B, the dispatcher informed him that there was nothing more that could be done and then told him that the two could come down to the station and file a complaint.

No officers responded to the diner after the call was placed and no complaint has been filed.

When asked about the incident, a detective from the Hamilton Police Department stated that “I can’t comment on that issue.” A phone call placed to the Hamilton Criminal Investigations Bureau was unanswered.

After going inside to eat, student A asked his waiter repeatedly for ice for his drink, and was repeatedly denied. Both student A and student B feel that this was in response to their sexuality.

Students A and B did not report the incident to the diner staff nor the management. Bill Stathopoulos, the owner of the Broad Street Diner, said that neither he nor his wife, who also co-owns the diner, knew about the assault that took place on their property. “This is the first time I am hearing about this,” said Stathopoulos when asked about the events that took place in the early morning hours of February 21.

Student B said he was verbally assaulted by patrons at the diner at a previous visit for not only gay but for having a gay African American friend with him.

Chadene Jiamon, a person who was with the LNS group that evening at the diner, said that the man with the confederate flag tattoo appeared intoxicated. Alex DeFazio, faculty advisor for the LGBTF, drafted a letter containing a list of events that occurred on the morning of February 21. The letter was addressed to the students, staff, and faculty of Mercer as well as the surrounding community in order to educate people about the amount of violence against LGBTI individuals.

DeFazio met with the two students shortly after the assault took place and said he was “extremely disturbed.” DeFazio also expressed concern, saying that “we need more counselors on campus so when things like this happen students can have someone to talk to.”

DeFazio and English Professor Diane Rini, who is also a lawyer, will conduct a workshop on what to do if you see or are a victim of a hate crime. The event will take place on April 16. For more information check the VOICE website.
No, Rutgers does not have its own strain of gonorrhea

**By Ron Russell III**

Rumors about sexually transmitted diseases at New Jersey universities, Rutgers in particular, have been circulating for years. Rutgers, considered a party school by some, has been rumored to have its own strain of gonorrhea and to have very high rates of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) in general. One anonymous Mercer student, when interviewed about the issue said, “...be careful when you go to the parties...you don’t want to hook up with any of those crazy Rutgers people.” Is there any truth to the rumors?

According to Dr. Melodee Laskey, M.D., Executive Director of Health Services at Rutgers University, “Rutgers does NOT have...higher levels [of STIs] than any other college or university.” As for having its own strain of gonorrhea, that urban legend is also “not not not NOT true,” says Dr. Laskey emphatically.

According to Laskey, all of the rumors are “because of [the study]...” published in the New England Journal of Medicine in 1998. The study Dr. Laskey refers to, researched the Human Papillomavirus (the most common STI) among 608 women attending Rutgers over a three year period prior to the release of the HPV vaccine. Although the study’s findings did not indicate Rutgers women were any more likely to have an STI than the average young female in the United States, misunderstandings about the research appear to have fostered the rumors.

The reality is that STI rates among teen and college aged women in the United States are high in general. As reported in the April 21, 2008 issue of the VOICE, a recent large-scale study showed that 25 percent of girls aged 14 to 19 may have an STI. The National Health and Nutritional Examination Survey showed that teen girls are experiencing an epidemic of STIs with up to 3.2 million teen girls in total having a sexually transmitted infection nationwide.

The Rutgers study in 1998, as presented in a New England Journal of Medicine article, showed that approximately 20 percent of the females tested had HPV at the beginning of the study, with more than 60 percent contracting HPV by the study’s end. While these numbers may frighten some, Dr. Laskey states that, “most of these [HPV] infections will have cleared quickly...And as [females] become sexually active, they are more likely to get HPV...so it’s kind of what you would expect.” But Laskey notes that it is also what you expect at “every other college campus.”

Laskey is sure of this because Rutgers “collect[s] data annually...” This data is then submitted to the American College Health Association, who publishes the national survey of 128 colleges and universities (the results of the 2007 survey can be found by clicking the STI link on the College VOICE homepage at mcccvoice.org). The 2008 data was not yet available at press time.

Despite the rumors, Mercer students interviewed noted that they would not let STI prevalence on campuses determine their transfer college of choice. One student who asked to remain anonymous remarked: “I’m very cautious, whether I’m in a school environment or any other environment.”

Recent blood drive is no blood bath, but still a success

**By Amber Zahn**

Over half of the Community Blood Council of New Jersey’s desired number of blood donors from Mercer showed their support in giving back to the community by donating blood on campus March 26 during Mercer’s semi-annual blood drive. Although the CNCB only meet 50 percent of its initial expectations of gathering 50 units of blood, members are not the least bit disappointed. When asked if the blood drive was thought to be a success, Kozette Mingo, a Registered Nurse at Community Blood Council of New Jersey, responded “Anytime you come in [to a location] and get a unit, you’re successful.”

The Community Blood Council of New Jersey’s “Bloodmobile” traveled to Mercer’s West Windsor campus from their blood bank in Ewing with hopes to decrease the on-going shortage of blood currently facing New Jersey.

At 3pm the number of people from Mercer who made a donation was 23. One of those 23 was Mercer student Steve Defilippo who explained his participation saying, “My friend had Leukemia. He said without people donating [blood] for him, he wouldn’t be alive.”

Donors like Defilippo must fill out paperwork before giving blood, however, donation time usually take less than an hour. After the donations are made, the blood travels to the blood bank where it is broken down into three parts, red blood cells, platelets, and plasma, and undergoes a series of 27 tests to ensure that it is safe to use on patients during blood transfusions and surgeries.

For more information about blood donation visit the Community Blood Council of New Jersey’s website at www.blooddrivenj.com or call 1-866-2-GIVENJ
Kelsey’s Godspell resonates more with younger crowd

By Sam Grindlinger

The lights fade, the stage is dark. Through the shadows a voice booms, “Ye snakes and vipers, brew!” The lights begin to reveal and urban landscape. Blacktop masks the stage floor; construction equipment, trash cans and no trespassing signs complete the atmosphere. Then through the darkness comes Jesus Christ wearing a pair of American flag boxer shorts.

Godspell is the latest musical to arrive at Kelsey Theatre. The show is a retelling of the biblical Gospel of Mathew as a musical with color and pop-culture references thrown in. The Kelsey production starred Thomas Coppolecchia as Jesus and Mike Schiumo as Judas in the college voice.

Godspell was an ordinary game, but little did the Vikings know it would prove to be one of their biggest tests of the season.

Mercer found themselves in a hole right off the bat. In the top of the first inning right-hander John DeGroodt was trying to work out of a bases loaded no out jam. It didn’t faze the sophomore from Orange, New York; he rallied to strike out the next two batters and escaped the inning allowing only one run. It was a cold day and the Vikings’ bats took time to heat up. Mercer’s offense was blanked in four consecutive innings.

Meanwhile, Coach Matt Wolski found himself in a juggling routine with his pitching staff. The Vikings put seven different pitchers on the hill that evening, each throwing for a max of two innings. However, Gloucester didn’t have trouble facing the Vikings staff and were already up 3-0 in the bottom of the fifth inning. Finally, Mercer struck for a run in the bottom of the fifth. Trailing 3-1 it seemed as if the Vikings were poised for a comeback, but that was quickly put to rest when Gloucester was able to score two runs in the top of the sixth vs. left-hander Doug Grey.

Now trailing 5-1 things looked bleak for the men in green and gold. “If our intensity was as high as it was at the end of the game throughout the entire game, we would find ourselves in a much better position to win ball games,” said Coach Wolski.

The pressure was on, but the Vikings didn’t back down. Mercer rallied to score two in the seventh as well as a run in the eighth and ninth innings. Energy was high and Mercer found themselves in a brand new ball game as it went into extra innings. The Vikings took care of business in the top of the tenth, and now it was up to the offense to seal the deal on the comeback victory. However, the Vikings failed to score a run and the game now headed to the eleventh inning. Gloucester put up three runs in the eleventh to put the Vikings away 8-5 in a crushing defeat. The loss dropped the Vikings record to 10-6, and Mercer knew they had just let a very winnable game slip through their fingertips.

Since the loss to Gloucester, Mercer has been on a roll. The team is 3-1 in their last four games, improving their record to 13-7. There’s still a lot of ball left to be played, including five home games in the month of April, and a rematch with Gloucester on Tuesday April 28.

Kelsey’s Godspell production differed slightly from the original production by adding its own interpretations and flavors to create a unique spin on a well-known performance. Rather than Jesus Christ appearing as a clown leading apostles like a company of circus performers; Jesus appears as more of a pop-culture superhero, wearing a superman t-shirt and spreading the gospel mixed with references to Law & Order and hip-hop music.

The first act is light-hearted, blending the shows classic tunes with hip-hop, blues, funk and rock music. The second act takes a much darker and more serious tone. Jesus is forced to face those who doubt him. He begins to see what the world around him and the people he is trying to save truly value. To play up the visual differences, Judas, the apostle who betrays Jesus, appears wearing a blood red scarf and a batman t-shirt and spreading the gospel mixed with references to Law & Order and hip-hop music.

The act climaxes with the last supper scene and Jesus telling Judas that he should “Do quickly what you must.” Judas blows a whistle, and Jesus is strapped to an electric fence where he is killed. The scene ends with the apostles carrying the body of Jesus off the stage.

While the cast does a good job interacting with each other and the audience, the performance might not have been for everyone. Obviously people who do not enjoy religious or Christian themed musicals would not be interested. Another issue is the pop-culture references; the costumes in colorful adaptations of hip-hop, punk rock, and rave culture, along with urban dialog, might have alienated some of the older or more conservative viewers. “I saw this play 20 years ago, they definitely went out on a limb, but this is a radical representation of what I first saw. I think if this performance was to come to the theatre again I would pass on it,” said one older audience member after the show.

Younger ticket holders, however, seemed to identify with the cast and their references. They reacted to the audience participation, character interaction, and humanity. “The actors build a rapport with the audience. Every character stands on their own, playing on each other’s strengths,” said Dorothy Adam, a Kelsey Theatre patron.

“We were amazed by the great singing voices and acting. This is an amazingly talented production. It was catching from the first time that Jesus appears in his boxers,” said Melanie and Phil Wood, two younger patrons returning to Kelsey Theatre for their second time.
How convenient is the James Kerney Campus overall?

By Mabel Duran-Sanchez

During the summer session of 2006, right after she earned her high school diploma, Adrienne Cameron began taking classes at Mercer’s James Kerney Campus (JKC). “I chose James Kerney because it is a whole lot closer and whole lot more convenient for me to commute,” she says. However, she admitted, “If I were to listen into my deciding grees, there weren’t lab classes I could take at James Kerney.”

Cameron, like many other students who began their studies at the JKC, was unable to fulfill all the college’s requirements simply because the college was unable to offer all courses.

“If it was up to me I would have taken all of my classes at JKC... [Getting to the West Windsor campus] is only an inconvenience for those who are not fortunate enough to have a car,” says Brown-Joseph.

According to Cameron, students have to switch to Mercer’s West Windsor Campus (WWC) if the course is not offered at JKC. “In fact, out of 10 students who began their studies at JKC, was unable to participate in radio labs, computer classes, or classes offered only at Mercer’s West Windsor Campus (WWC).”

Brown-Joseph says, “The two campuses are noticeable. West Windsor is Mercer’s main campus, and as in any other college, the main campus offers advantages over the other. For example, West Windsor has 292 acres of land, there are plenty of recreational areas, a fitness center, a swimming pool, tennis courts, a greenhouse, and a theatre. By contrast, JKC is limited to two buildings, the first occupying an acre of land while the latter occupies 19,000 square feet offering none of the previously mentioned amenities.

Brown-Joseph says, “The two campuses are not really connected,” Brown-Joseph says. The shuttle schedule from campus to campus is limited, making it difficult for students from either campus to take early morning or evening classes. In addition, there is no shuttle during summer sessions.

“In addition, there is no shuttle during summer sessions,” Cameron commented on the importance of JKC’s, “the stereotype that West Windsor Campus is not true, students at either campus to take early morning or evening classes. In addition, there is no shuttle during summer sessions.”

“Students make use of JKC’s computer lab.”

Honors classes give motivated students extra opportunities

By DeChole Covington

The 14 students in Professor Fran Davidson’s Honors Poetry class are sitting around a conference room table discussing the poem “Do not go gentle into that good night,” by Dylan Thomas. The students examine the poem in depth, discussing its structure and organization and what they felt the writer’s thoughts and emotions were while crafting that particular poem.

Every student participates; all are engaged. The environment is more comfortable than the regular Mercer classroom and no one is ignoring the professor and yawning under the table. The professor listens and gives feedback when needed, but in general the students, rather than the professor, are leading the class.

Professor Fran Davidson’s Honors Poetry class began in the spring of 2007 under the leadership of the Honors Program coordinator, English Professor Dr. Carol Bork. Her vision was to give motivated students, with a GPA of 3.5 in 12 or more college-level credits, a chance to excel academically among like-minded peers. In each Honors class there are usually 10 students, so they get more one on one time with the professor. Classes are held around a single oval table while sitting in comfortable chairs.

The Honors Students are given more challenging, but not more work than students in regular sections of a class. So, for example, an Honors student might have the same assigned reading for an English class; but have to lead class discussion and write an essay on a more challenging topic than students in the regular section.

“I like the smaller class size and everyone has input. It is because there are no other people’s opinions. The classes are harder and more work, you have to be engaged in the class. Taking Honors courses has made me a better student and improved my study habits,” stated second year Liberal Arts major Victoria Covert.

Students who complete the program get a special Honors designation on their Mercer diploma. Being an Honors student makes you a stronger transfer candidate after graduating from Mercer. Students exiting the program in the past two years have gotten into highly selective and prestigious colleges such as Mount Holyoke and Hampshire among others, and several have received full ride scholarships.

To enroll in an Honors Class, students must contact one of the instructors or coordinators, fill out an application and meet the GPA requirements. At present the majority of the Honors classes offered are in courses that work for a Liberal Arts major, though there are plans to expand to include more courses in other divisions. There are currently about ten Honors classes running each semester; a number that is likely to increase each year the program continues.

By Mabel Duran-Sanchez

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By DeChole Covington

The 14 students in Professor Fran Davidson’s Honors Poetry class.

By Mabel Duran-Sanchez

TIMELINE

1890 Trenton’s Evening Drawing School opens.

1898 School is renamed Trenton School of Technical Science & Art.

1901 Becomes School of Industrial Arts

1947 Trenton Junior College and School of Industrial Arts (TIC) is founded as a college-level institution.

1966 The State Board of Education authorizes a 292-acre site in Assunpink Park for the West Windsor Campus.

1967 TJC and Mercer merge.

1972 Inauguration ceremonies take place for the West Windsor Campus. In addition, the James Kerney Foundation of Trenton donates an acre of land on the corner of North Broad and Academy streets to house Mercer’s James Kerney Center.

1974 Inauguration ceremonies took place for the James Kerney Center.

1998 The James Kerney Center became the James Kerney Campus of MCCC.

By Mabel Duran-Sanchez

How convenient is the James Kerney Campus overall?

By Mabel Duran-Sanchez

The 14 students in Professor Fran Davidson’s Honors Poetry class.

By Mabel Duran-Sanchez

Students make use of JKC’s computer lab.

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Students make use of JKC’s computer lab.
EARTH HOUR A WORLDWIDE SUCCESS

On March 28, 2009, people around the world turned out the lights for one hour, in an event called Earth Hour. According to earthhour.org, people in more than 4,000 cities and 88 countries participated. Even in West Orange, New Jersey, the birthplace of Thomas Edison and the light-bulb itself, the lights were turned out as a vote for the health of the planet.

In New York, the familiar sight of the lit up needle atop the Empire State Building was turned off for the event. Across the country, in Los Angeles, the mayor kicked off the event by throwing a huge light switch. Even the Las Vegas strip was dimmed for the occasion. Earth Hour began in Australia in 2007, when 2.2 million people turned off their lights. The next year the idea caught on and more than 50 million people participated. This year’s event drew the support of over a million participants.

Do the Math:

1 recycled tin can = 3 hours of TV
1 recycled plastic bottle = 25 minutes on the computer
70 percent = amount of energy saved recycling paper compared to making it from raw materials
60 percent = amount of rubbish people throw in the trash that could have been recycled instead

Source: www.recycling-guide.org

LOCAL EVENTS

GO GREEN

Go Green is a Mercer club for students who want to learn about green initiatives, sustainability and eco-friendly behaviors. Go Green will also help students improve the awareness of the community and the college regrading the environment.

Go Green meetings:
At JKC: April 9 and April 28, 12-1PM in KC 334.
On the West Windsor Campus: April 15 and April 29, 12-1PM in room BS 208.

Earth Day Festival
A day of bikes, programs and education offerings and sales on a wide selection of merchandise $3-$5. Date: April 18, 2009. Time: 8-5PM. Venue: Plainsboro Preserve: 80 Scotts Corner Road, Cranbury, NJ 08512.

Earth Day Fair at Princeton U.
Join Princeton students and campus partners in celebrating Earth Day 2009! Fun activities and lots of information about what Princeton is up to to make the campus and the world a greener place.
Location: Frist Campus Center, 100 level 1-5PM. Sponsor: Greening Princeton

New Jersey Ranks Seventh Greenest State in America

In October of 2007, Forbes.com created a list of America’s greenest states based on six equally weighted categories, including: carbon footprint, air quality, water quality, hazardous waste management, policy initiatives and energy consumption. New Jersey took a surprise seventh place, beating out states such as Massachusetts and Colorado (placing eleventh and thirteenth, respectively).

According to the article’s authors, Brian Wingfield and Mariam Marcus, New Jersey achieved its ranking not because it excelled in any specific area, but rather because it received relatively high marks in all areas. Marcus and Wingfield noted that “In only five states did people travel fewer miles in their vehicles than they did in New Jersey in 2005, the most recent year for which government data is available. That same year, 42 states exceeded their Clean Water Act permit limits by levels greater than New Jersey did, according to the watchdog group U.S. PIRG. And 33 states managed more toxic waste per capita than New Jersey.” In other words, despite the industrial waste issues that are clearly visible from the New Jersey turnpike, our state is actually coming up green.

Rank  State & Score
1  Vermont 43.6
2  Oregon 43.6
3  Washington 43.4
4  Hawaii 41.3
5  Maryland 40.4
6  Connecticut 39.9
7  New Jersey 39.5
8  Rhode Island 38.7
9  New York 38.1
10  Arizona 37.9

Source: www.forbes.com

GREEN GENERATION CAMPAIGN

According to earthday.com “Earth Day 2009, April 22, will mark the beginning of the Green Generation Campaign! This two-year initiative will culminate with the 40th anniversary of Earth Day in 2010. With negotiations for a new global climate agreement coming up in December, Earth Day 2009 must be a day of action and civic participation, to defend the Green Generation’s core principles:

1. A carbon-free future based on renewable energy that will end our common dependency on fossil fuels, including coal.
2. An individual’s commitment to responsible, sustainable consumption.
3. Creation of a new green economy that lifts people out of poverty by creating millions of quality green jobs and transforms the global education system into a green one.wws

Source: www.earthday.net
ANATOMY OF A HATE CRIME -- Two hate crimes that have changed the way we think

Brandon Teena

Brandon Teena, born Teena Brandon, was born female but lived as a man as an adult. Teena grew up in Nebraska. He stated that he planned to save up money for sex reassignment surgery. On Christmas Eve, in 1993, two males, John Lotter and Tom Nissen, with whom Teena had been friends, discovered he was physically a female, they revealed this fact to Teena's girlfriend, then raped and assaulted Teena. Teena went to a hospital where a standard rape kit was administered, but this evidence was lost. Teena was convinced to file a report with the police, despite being warned by her attackers not to do so. The Richardson County Sheriffs, Charles Laux, questioned Teena and was apparently referred to him as “it” and asked grotesque questions that made Teena refuse to answer. Three days after filing it, Lotter and Nissen found out about the report, tracked Teena down and killed him. Teena's mother successfully sued Sheriff Laux for failing to adequately protect Teena. Teena's story is the subject of the Academy Award winning film Boys Don't Cry.

LGBT Fast Facts

Sexual orientation is not considered a motivation for bias in the hate crimes laws of 18 states, including Pennsylvania.

Mercer's handbook states that students have the right to "be free from sexual and gender harassment." Sexual orientation is not mentioned.

More hate crimes survey results

Vital statistics:
Of the 58 students who took the survey the follow was true:
Part time Students = 6
Full-time students = 52
Male = 23
Female = 33
Transgender = 1
Other = 1
Homosexual = 7
Heterosexual = 42
Bisexual = 9
Other = 1
African-American = 6
Asian = 3
Hispanic = 3
Caucasian = 35
Native American = 1
Other = 5
15-19 years old = 30
20-25 years old = 24
26-30 years old = 2
31-35 years old = 2

Interesting findings:
When asked if they felt Mercer is a safe environment in general, 53 of the 58 respondents indicated that they felt Mercer was either totally (30) or somewhat (23) safe. Of the students who felt they had been abused based on their race, gender or sexual orientation, anger was the most widely reported response with 23 people feeling angry as a result of racial bias, and 13 feeling angry as a result of gender and sexual orientation bias. Depression followed anger as the next most widely felt feeling following a perceived hate crime. Three respondents reported having been suicidal as a result of the hate abuse they had suffered.

Of the 18 minority students surveyed 80 percent said they had been verbally abused and 20 percent said they had been physically abused as a result of their race.

Of the 33 female students surveyed 60 percent said they had been verbally abused and 9 percent said they had been physically abused as a result of their gender.

Several white men felt they had been the victims of hate crimes directed at them based on their race or gender. One wrote, "Most, if not all, of the verbal or physical abuse I have experienced was directed at the Caucasian population (or a single Caucasian person) by a person who considered themselves to be art of a particular race.

Conclusions:
Although the data gathered relies on subjective reporting, it is clear that while many students feel safe enough at Mercer, a significant proportion of students feel they have experienced hate bias and it has had a major psychological impact on them.

What to do if you are a witness to a possible hate crime.

Seek safety, away from the attacker.

If you are injured, seek medical care.

Contact law enforcement and or report the hate crime and that you would have witnessed.

Write down any information you have before you forget. Write down a description of the attacker and any information that may help law enforcement.

File a police report. Give as much detail as possible.

If it is not offered automatically, contact the victim's support groups, the media etc.

Speak out against hate.
AtoMY of A HaTE cRIMe -- two hate crimes that have changed the way we think

Matthew Shepherd

Matthew Shepherd was an openly gay student at the University of Wyoming. On October 7, 1998, Shepherd met two men, Arron McKinney and Russell Henderson, in a bar in Laramie. McKinney and Henderson offered Shepherd a ride, but on finding out he was gay, they robbed, pistol whipped and tortured him, then they tied him to a fence in a remote rural area. Shepherd hung on the fence for 18 hours before being discovered by a jogger who initially thought he was a scarecrow. Shepherd was taken to a hospital and died, five days later, as the result of his injuries. Henderson pleaded guilty and agreed to testify against McKinney in order to avoid the death penalty. Although Wyoming had no hate crimes statute, the jury deliberated as to whether or not to impose the death penalty for McKinney. Shepherd’s parents stepped in, asking that the death penalty not be considered, as they felt more killing would bring no good to the situation. McKinney received two consecutive life sentences instead.

The Matthew Shepherd Act -
In 2007, then President George W. Bush vetoed the Matthew Shepherd Act. The act would expand the 1969 United States federal hate crimes law to include crimes motivated by a person’s actual or perceived gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability. Current President Barack Obama indicates on his website that one of the goals of his administration is to pass the Shepherd Act.
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Almost everyone hates us, according to political cartoonist Joe Szabo

On March 10, Joe Szabo, an internationally recognized political cartoonist, gave a Distinguished Lecture at Mercer called “Image of America,” a lecture he has given across many universities in the country. He focused on the political image that people and political cartoonists around the world have about America. Szabo is a former editor, art director, and cartoonist with national newspapers and magazines. His most recognized works include The Finest International Political Cartoons of Our Time and his publication, WittyWorld International Cartoon Magazine that has reached 103 countries for over a decade.

Szabo has traveled to 67 countries to find out what people think about America in the political arena. In every country Szabo interviewed people from all walks of life. Most of the people Szabo talked to were college graduates and were not affiliated with any particular political party.

In his lecture, Szabo explained that he did encounter people who had positive views about America but negative opinions predominated. When he asked people from other countries to describe America in one word, he received responses such as: two-faced, fascist, evil, hegemonic, violent, a political whore house, and a landfill. An Al Jazeera correspondent, Samir Omar said, “American is double-faced like a woman promoting freedom and democracy on the others, [but] supports dictators who lick their toes.”

Even more polemic were the responses to the question why 9/11 happened. In Spain, a county where he found most overt hostility toward Americans, the common answer to what caused 9/11 was that “The American intelligence was behind it. The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) organized it to give America a reason to attack the Arab world.” This view was supported in other countries as well.

The Distinguished Lecture audience was composed of students, some from the International Relations course, and some senior citizens. Few attendees were pleased with Szabo’s findings. During the question and answer section, one lady said, “they don’t remember how the U.S helped Europeans win World War I.” Another audience member said, “what do they think about their own countries?” People murmured in angry tones about the views people around the world hold about the U.S. They wanted to express their opinions, but there was no time left for more comments.

Szabo said that the response of the audience members was not a surprise to him. He says that wherever he presents his lecture he finds all kinds of reactions. He says that for the most part younger audiences are more critical of the U.S than older people.

Brian Kaplan, a second-year Liberal Arts student, said that in contrast with other audience members he liked the lecture because “it was not sugar coated.” Kaplan adds that he could get a perception of what other people really think about policies that Americans think are great.

Szabo has a travel blog where he comments and posts pictures of the countries he visits, http://www.joeszabo.us. Image of America is a book planned for publication in a year.
Drinking age change would make us safer

Sloshed, toasted and get drunk! These common terms for drinking excessively have become part of American youth vocabulary and culture. Every weekend, many underage high school and college students look forward to getting dangerously drunk. Here’s a radical notion: perhaps this would be less likely to occur if the drinking age was lowered to 18.

Drinking ages vary by country, with many having an drinking age lower than the 21 years required by US law and some have fewer drunk driving accidents per capita. Although the current law was put into effect to curb excessive drinking in teens, it is counterproductive. At the age of 18 one cannot drink legally, but one can eat a president, get married, buy a home and fight in a war. If young Americans are treated as adults in some circumstances, why not all? Why is the drinking age set at 21? Moreover, what makes young Americans want to binge drink in the first place? Is there a possible connection between the illegality and the desire for those under 21 to drink? The very fact of outlawing alcohol sales to those under age 21 may make young adults more tempted to drink as a form of rebellion. In 2005, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) conducted a survey called Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance. This assessed risky behavior in young adults that could result in harm. The results indicated that 49 percent of teens drink, 26 percent binge drank and 29 percent have ridden in a car that was driven by a drunk driver.

Even though many young people wish to see the drinking age lowered, few lawmakers support any change in the law and many adults do not support the idea. In a recent Gallup poll, 77 percent of people polled said they would oppose a law for lowering the drinking age to 18 and 60 percent wanted stricter drinking laws.

During the 1970’s, the drinking age was lowered to 18. The result was an increase in the number of deaths associated with drunken driving among America’s youth, so the act of lowering the drinking age seemed to fail in the eyes of the government. Consequently, in 1984, the drinking age was raised to 21. However, there are few statistics showing how many deaths or serious injuries are annually caused by drunkenness among people older than 21. Few studies compare U.S. youth drinking statistics with those of countries where the legal drinking age is lower.

Without looking at these facts, the arguments made for maintaining the drinking age at 21 are based on things that happened in the 1970’s and are, quite simply, incomplete. If alcohol was legal, the excitement of doing something rebellious would wear off. Of course some teens would still drink to excess, but many would surely abandon the practice. Furthermore, fewer teens would commit the felony of using a fake ID. The drinking age is being done in some states and some jurisdictions, as was reported in the Voice’s December, 8 2008 issue. It is time for the federal courts to take the issue up again and consider if the consequences of lowering the drinking age would be the same now as they were 30 years ago.

CORRECTIONS

IN THE MARCH 9 ISSUE, in the front page article entitled “Shorter Semester, Later Start,” by David Hoyt, it was indicated that Mercer’s new 15 week inclusive semester would not start until after Labor Day, which is incorrect for fall 2009. Because Labor Day falls so late in 2009, classes will start before Labor Day, however, the semester will end a week earlier. The following year, 2010, the semester will, indeed, begin after Labor Day.

IN THE MARCH 9 ISSUE, in the front page article entitled “Shorter Semester, Later Start,” by David Hoyt, it was stated that Mercer does not offer a Differential Equations class. In fact, a Differential Equations class is offered. It is MAT 252 and is currently taught on Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 5:15-6:55PM by Prof. Yvonne Greenbaum.

IN THE FEBRUARY 16 ISSUE article “Mercer’s Sports Announces, Craig Coenen” by David Pa- trylow, it was stated that Prof. Coenen drives 85 miles to and from work each day. In fact, he drives 170 miles to and from work each day.

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The College VOICE wins six NJPF awards

The College VOICE beat out all other New Jersey community college newspapers in its class to win the top honor of General Excellence in the New Jersey Press Foundation annual awards. In addition, the VOICE picked up five other awards including:

HARD NEWS WRITING - SECOND PLACE -
David Hoyt (article on prison graduation)
FEATURES WRITING - FIRST PLACE -
Tricia Bitetto, Staff Writer
PHOTO | MICHAEL DALTON

The winners will be honored at an awards ceremony held on Saturday, April 18 at the Trenton Marriott following the NJCP spring conference.

EDITORS POLICY: The College VOICE is written and edited by students of Mercer County Community College and published every 3 weeks under the advisement of a faculty adviser. The material printed in The College VOICE be it articles, advertisements or opinion pieces, does not necessarily represent the views of the editor, the faculty, staff, administration or the board of trustees of Mercer County Community College.

THE WAY IT IS

Katrlna Brophy

Drunk driving accidents per capita. Although the current law was put into effect to curb excessive drinking in teens, it is counterproductive. At the age of 18 one cannot drink legally, but one can elect a president, get married, buy a home and fight in a war. If young Americans are treated as adults in some circumstances, why not all? Why is the drinking age set at 21? Moreover, what makes young Americans want to binge drink in the first place? Is there a possible connection between the illegality and the desire for those under 21 to drink? The very fact of outlawing alcohol sales to those under age 21 may make young adults more tempted to drink as a form of rebellion. In 2005, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) conducted a survey called Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance. This assessed risky behavior in young adults that could result in harm. The results indicated that 49 percent of teens drink, 26 percent binge drank and 29 percent have ridden in a car that was driven by a drunk driver.

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Dear Voice,

I think you are really pushing the limits of what your HPE professor is willing to tolerate. Your grades are dropping, you are missing class, and you are constantly searching the internet for answers to your homework. This is not the way to learn, and it is not helping your understanding of the material. You need to take responsibility for your own education and stop relying on others to do your work for you.

Sincerely,

[Name]

---

**THEME CROSSWORD: CALL IT!**

ACROSS

1. Names in lights  
6. Burkard figure  
9. Tool for leather  
12. Wing section  
15. Cloth  
18. Dugout helper  
23. Tiny insect  
26. Trussed  
29. Precious stone  
33. Ga. neighbor  
36. Silo delivery  
39. Malcontents  
42. Willing answer  
45. Open  
50. Hall of Famer  
52. Composer Strauß  
54. Keno  
57. Weird  
60. butterflies  
64. Galaxies, e.g.  
66. Tiny insect  
69. Choir piece  
71. Sepulcher  
75. Actor Gooding  
79. Blender output  
83. Surgical instrument  
84. Clarinets, et al.  
88. Bust  
91. Lawmakers  
96. Planets  
99. Actress Jennifer  
100. Not that  
103. He had his ups  
104. Lee's troops  
107. Hour after hour  
108. Whip  
111. Lipinski's milieu  
112. Put in a row  
114. Conjunctions  
115. Stockholm ar-  
116. Tenant

DOWN

1. Stuff  
4. Joplin piece  
5. Long story  
8. Public quarrels  
9. Mr. Connery  
10. Jowl  
11. composer  
12. Natural abilities  
13. As you were  
14. Buchanan city  
15. Venerable  
16. 1915 newspaper  
17. Own  
18. Dugout helper  
19. Eyes for  
20. Square root  
21. Roman lover's  
22. Oregon lover's  
24. Lawyer's dog  
25. Classroom aides  
28. Big-wielding crawlers  
30. Source of harm  
31. Faction  
32. Shylock  
34. Pennsylvania port  
35. Melt of the Gaits  
37. Albert's head  
38. butterflies  
40. Physician  
41. Capricorn  
43. Accumulate  
44. Adams, Sir one  
46. Important exams  
47. Ogeon  
48. Hear carefully, with "over"  
51. Growing in  
52. Composer Ste-  
53. Livestock, e.g.  
54. Keno  
55. Individual  
56. They do Windows  
58. Placecard  
59. Amos?  
60. romantic interest  
61. Knows  
62. Scene of a shoot-out  
63. Clarinets, et al.  
65. Cereal plant  
68. Malcontents  
69. Get wind of  
70. Hurt in the cor- 

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**ASK THE VOICE: GOOD ANSWERS TO TOUCH QUESTIONS**

**Ceremony**

**Help is here!**

Dear Voice,

Fighting Mercer to get rid of the HPE requirement for my Liberal Arts degree, but Mercer students are too busy with their lives to protest, what should I do? - Fit Enough

Dear Fit,

All fourteenth graders need gym. Now grab a kickball and get the hell out there! - The Voice

Dear Voice,

I’m graduating and walking in the ceremony in May. I’m so afraid I’m going to trip on the platform. - Help

Dear Help,

Thank positively; tripping can be a great way for people to remember you. - The Voice

Dear Voice,

My professor seems to enjoy resting his package on desks. It really bothers me, but I can’t seem to give the whole lecture in front of him. What do I do? - Transfixed

Dear Transfused,

Look away! Tame the beast. - The Voice

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**Theme Crossword: Call it!**

**Across**

1. Names in lights  
6. Burkard figure  
9. Tool for leather  
12. Wing section  
15. Cloth  
18. Dugout helper  
23. Tiny insect  
26. Trussed  
29. Precious stone  
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62. Scene of a shoot-out  
63. Clarinets, et al.  
65. Cereal plant  
68. Malcontents  
69. Get wind of  
70. Hurt in the cor-

---

**Horoscopes**

**Libra**

Aug. 23 - Sept. 22

You may feel like life is coming to an end, but it’s really not. What seems like a difficult loss will soon prove to have been a blessing in disguise. Good things are ahead for you.

**Scorpio**

Oct. 23 - Nov. 21

Someone near you brings out your inner child this month. Even if your own childhood was less than perfect, let yourself enjoy every minute of the fun.

**Sagittarius**

Nov. 22 - Dec. 21

You are not someone who likes to reveal your vulnerable side, but under the current circumstances, that might just be what you need to find love.

---

**Just 4 Fun**

**Aries**

Mar. 21 - Apr. 19

This month you may feel like you’re being pushed and pulled and asked to put up with a lot. These transitions may be challenging for you, so hold on tight to your lucky charms.

**Leo**

Jul. 23 - Aug. 22

You are in the home stretch. Work and school may feel like they’re going to kick your butt now, but you have more than enough stamina to keep going to the end.

---

**Capricorn**

Dec. 22 - Jan. 19

They have been a blessing in disguise. Good things are ahead for you.

**Aquarius**

Jan. 20 - Feb. 18

If you have been reeling, now is the time to enjoy nature. A nice walk in the park will renew you.

**Pisces**

Feb. 19 - Mar. 20

You may feel like you have become support staff for all your friends. Is it in your fault? You’re easy to talk to and lean on. Those are great qualities, but set limits. You must be heard, too.