Moldy walls force Trenton school to close

By Amanda Knoblock

The children of Jefferson Elementary in Trenton started their first day of school in a building warranting health risks. Parents walked into a slum, finding the conditions of the building were dangerous to their children. Runners of moldy ceilings, unclean water and unsafe walls were among these dangers.

As stated by Cecilia Ramos in an interview conducted by Trentonian reporter L.A. Parker, “There’s mold, rust, no furniture, water leaking out of the ceiling. Should I go on? It’s just amazing.”

These health hazards forced parents to remove their children from school until health codes were up to par.

In a rush to meet school deadlines, Jefferson Elementary opened doors before meeting building standards. Parents claimed bathrooms were disorderly with filthy toilets. Parents also claimed that some of the water faucets dispensed unclean, brown-colored water.

In the same interview view by L.A. Parker, Trenton Education Association Grievance representative Janice Williams stated that, “We’ve got kids throwing up over here. Some of them have asthma and they are finding it pretty hard to breathe with the smell in this building.”

So what pushed Jefferson Elementary School to reopen its doors after being closed for more than a year? Only roughly three weeks prior in mid-August, state officials closed down its third charter school, Trenton Community Charter School, due to the “school’s failure to boost student achievement levels,” as reported by Erin Duffy of The Times Newspaper.

The abrupt close left four hundred and fifty students without education, forcing Jefferson Elementary School to restore their halls to a safe and welcoming learning environment whilst struggling to meet opening deadlines set by the Department of Education.

In a video produced by the Times film producer Martin Griff, Trenton school Board President Reverend Toby Sanders announced a public apology to parents and asked them to have more understanding of the issues Jefferson Elementary faced in reopening the school under such challenging conditions.

Sanders says, “The state requires that we have a certain number of days in class and so there was a pressure between what the laws are and what the realities are.”

Despite the conditions of the building, Superintendent Raymond Broach confirmed that the school did pass health inspections.

Mercer graffiti a window into the college’s soul?
Mercer students bad spellers but more politically engaged than expected

By Erich Petersen

To view a society’s true feelings, look no further than the graffiti they leave behind. The ancient Romans are well known for what they etched onto their walls. Similar revealing information can be found on the walls of Mercer’s bathrooms and smoking huts.

To start with, it’s worth noting that the spelling, grammar and punctuation in Mercer graffiti will affirm many people’s stereotypes about the lack of literacy among community college students. Beneath the misspellings, however, lies a world of personal revelation, philosophical thought and political debate.

Near toilets you get toilet humor, references to sex and genitals. “I fucked ur mom” and “Gays suck d*cks, Lesbians sucks” are typical examples. A team of VOICE staffers—including both men and women—examined the bathrooms and compared notes. Turns out, there are fewer penis references and fewer racial slurs in the women’s bathrooms, but ultimately the differences are minor.

For example, “Here I sit broken hearted. I came to shit but only farted” appears in both.

But for every penis and racial slur philosophical statements occur, such as “When the power of love overcomes the love of power, the world will know peace” and “Humans will not be free until the last king has been strangled by the entails of the last priest.”

In between the scribblings of “WEEDLE 4 LIFE,” “Hi” and “Talyor Swift” there are debates that support Mercer students are more politically engaged than some might expect. In the men’s bathroom of the Communications building this conversation...
Can you graduate MCCC in two years?

By Ken Napier with Kathleen Hirschfeld

While many students transfer before graduating, and lots of people attend for personal enrichment without the intention of completing a degree, the title “two-year college” may be an incorrect way to refer to Mercer. According to the most recent statistics available from the New Jersey Higheredcution Commission, 52 percent of first-time full-time students at Mercer graduate in two years. The numbers are worse for minority students than Caucasians. The three-year graduation rate for Caucasians is 19.5 percent, while for African Americans it is only 4.1 percent.

In the 2009 article by Robert Ronstadt, “Community College: Savings Or A Trap?” on Forbes.com, the author says that “the average time to complete college is now 6.2 years—meaning that a significant number of our 18 million college students are taking more than six years to finish what should be four years of college.”

Mercer’s course catalog indicates that most degree programs require 60-65 credits. Using the Liberal Arts program as an example, the degree requires a total of 21 classes, meaning an enrolled student must take at least five to six classes a semester, possibly needing to include summer/winter courses in order to graduate within two years.

Working while attending college makes taking five to six classes per semester an even greater challenge. The article, “What You Don’t Know About College Students Today” by Cindy Wedgeworth on Online-Education.net, indicated that 60 percent of community college students work more than 20 hours a week. Many work even more than that. When employment is on the line, students often sacrifice study time for work time; the result can be failing or withdrawing from courses, further reducing the chances of graduating in two years.

Trying to fit more courses in without missing time at work has lead to an increase in the number of students taking online courses. It turns out, this “solution” may slow students down even further.

An article entitled “Community College Students Perform worse online than face to face” by Ryan Brown which appeared in the July 2011 edition of the Chronicle of Higher Education, Brown reports, “Community-college students enrolled in online courses fail and drop out more often than those whose coursework is classroom-based, according to a new study released by the Community College Research Center at The Teachers College at Columbia University.”

In the same article, Brown goes on to note that “The study, which followed the enrollment history of 51,000 community-college students in Washington State between 2004 and 2009, found an eight percentage-point gap in completion rates between traditional and online courses.”

Even Mercer administrators are not optimistic about students’ chances of graduating in two years. In an interview with The VOICE Dean of Students Dr. Diane Campbell said, “When you look at sectors of higher education, this sector is called a two-year sector...there is no meaning in a two year, in a community college.”

Student perceptions of their graduation odds seem to mirror reality second year Criminial Justice major Brian Harris, says “I’ve been in two year college if you divide by four.” Another student, Theater major Parker Harris, says “It’s high school take two the next four years.”

Students and administrators alike are clear that the two year time frame is the exception, not the rule.

By Chris Rossi

“I never thought I’d be dishing out potato salad to rich people,” says Justin Rossi, 25, as he talks about his job hunting experiences.

Rossi graduated Magna Cum Laude from Mercer County Community College in 2006, with an Advertising Design degree, and also earned a Fine Arts degree in Graphic Design 2008 from Mason Gross School of the Arts at Rutgers University, with honors.

After being unemployed for two years, he got a part time job at McCaffrey’s, an upscale Princeton supermarket that paid nine dollars an hour. After a few months of deli work, Rossi finally landed another part time job through Craigslist, this time in his field. He worked for a yearbook company as a graphic designer at 12 dollars an hour.

After a year, Rossi got a tip from a friend. He interviewed for his friend’s old job and got it - a three month contract full time job as a web designer at an up and coming web design firm. His salary jumped to 25 dollars an hour, but he still had no benefits and no promise that the job would last. Rossi is still living in his parent’s basement, and his plans to marry his fiancé, Danielle, are on hold.

Danielle Duran, Rossi’s fiancée has suffered similar job woes. Now 27 years old, Duran graduated in 2008 from Rutgers University with a double major in Art History and Fine Arts. Even though she had gained years of experience in gallery, office and retail work from laboring part time to put herself through college, the only job Duran got after graduation was in credit repair. Then she was let go because of the economy. She is now working to find work and struggling to pay her bills with unemployment benefits.

Rossi and Duran have both applied for many positions and have gone on countless interviews, but say they have been disappointed with the results. Usually, they don’t even hear back from prospective employers.

“I can’t believe it’s taken me so long to get a real full time job, although it’s just contract work,” says Rossi. His frustration is felt by thousands of other recent college graduates who assumed that all their hard work would pay off with the reward of a good job after graduation and now find that despite all their researching and cramming, good jobs after college aren’t guaranteed.

What can grads do to increase their chances of finding full-time employment following college? Dr. Susan Onatiss, Counseling Specialist in the Office of Special Services at Mercer County Community College, recommends volunteering as a way of gaining experience that can enhance a resume and better a graduate’s chance at getting a job. Through the Dream Program, Mercer offers students the opportunity to tutor and mentor developmentally challenged students. Onatiss says that this experience allows students to gain on-the-job knowledge and people skills.

Dr. David Berry, a Professor of History at Essex County College and New York University and Executive Director of the Community College Humanities program, recommends that students get experience through internships and travel. “Foreign travel can change one’s life,” he says.

Prof. Berry believes that experiences outside the classroom like travel and internships broaden a student’s perspectives and adds to their skill set. He also suggests that students network with former classmates and keep in touch with former teachers.

Berry and Onatiss’ suggestions may not resonate with many Mercer grads. As one Mercer student who spoke on the condition of anonymity for fear of alienating future employers said, “Who are they kidding? Do they really think I can drop everything and go backpack around Spain for a year? I don’t even have a train ticket to New York, much less a plane ticket to Europe. Oh, and the idea that being in touch with my former classmates is a laugh. It’s not like they went off to Fortune 500 companies. They’re slogging hash at burger joints. Honestly, everyone who I graduated with is shit out of luck.”

Even successful Mercer grads struggle to find employment.

Current Mercer students contemplate their future employment prospects.

Student James Reslier-Wells started at Mercer six semesters ago.

Can you graduate MCCC in two years?
**Is the force still with George Lucas?**

By Dan Asnis

Senior Reporter

George Lucas’s six Star Wars films were finally released in the Blue-Ray High Definition disc format on September 16.

Though it is probably worth the investment for a real Star Wars fan to get the HD versions of the entire saga, they would be better if they included the original theatrical versions. Unfortunately, this set only includes Lucas’s re-edited so-called “special” editions, which have themselves been reedited and tinkered with numerous times. The last time the original versions were offered was on the secondary discs of the 2006 DVD release, and even then they weren’t the same resolution as the material contained on the primary discs.

The Blue-Ray set does feature a collection of outtakes feature a collection of outtakes and unaired versions of Star Wars including treatments from Wierd Al, That 70’s Show, and Saturday Night Live. Unfortunately the set does not include the famous 1978 CBS Star Wars holiday special, which has long been a favorite of Star Wars geeks, but which has been systematically suppressed by Lucas, who has said he wishes it would disappear like it never happened. Attempts to rewrite history have become recurring theme with Lucas over the past two decades.

Many wonder why Lucas made any changes to his films in the first place. Most people agree that there was nothing wrong with the films in their original configuration, and the box of extra numbers reflects that. It is unclear whether Lucas keeps changing his movies thinking it will encourage people who purchased a previous edition to buy them once again? Mercer Professor of English Dr. Edward Carmien, who teaches the college’s science fiction and fantasy literature courses, does not think Lucas changes his films to sell more units. “I don’t think that kind of change helps sell new versions. It’s my getaway,” says Puliti.

“Christ is so good, I really look forward to his act each week,” says Puliti.

Performing a majority of his own original material, as well as an occasional Madonna cover, Lopez performs along to his catchy songs, clapping along to the beat during “Cloudy with a Chance of Sunshine,” one of his most popular songs.

“I want to be a singer-songwriter and make records that people relate to. Open mic is a way to get my music out there,” said Lopez.

Lopez’s music is energetic and matches the whimsy and boisterousness of his eclectic cross dressing attire. The start of the OpenMic Night marks the start of Happy Hour at the bar, offering drinks as low as $3.50, and their late night menu becomes available.

Particularly good are their soft pretzels that are four for five dollars, and the basket of sweet potato fries that are eight dollars.

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Sarah Scarantino of Mercerville said on a recent open mic night, “I love coming here every week and being able to sing along to songs that I’ve come to know. It’s my getaway.”
Ribbon cutting ceremony for hospitality program’s new kitchen

By Tara Davis-Scholle

To celebrate the opening of Mercer County Community College’s new teaching kitchen, a ribbon cutting ceremony took place on September 14, 2011. The building of the new kitchen was done to help accommodate the growing number of students that are entering into the college’s hospitality and culinary programs.

The kitchen, made possible by Federal Perkins grant funding, was decorated with hors d’oeuvres prepared with the help of current culinary students. The ceremony’s special guest was Sam Morgante, a former White House military chef. Attendees of the ceremony had a treat when Morgante joined Mercer instructor Frank Benowitz in creating one of former president Bush’s favorite meals, Texas flank steak. The dish was prepared with New Jersey seasonal vegetables. When asked what it was like collaborating with Morgante, Benowitz replied, “We have worked together before, and it’s always a fun time.”

“The kitchen opening ceremony was definitely an eye opener to the Mercer culinary department, and it was nice to meet a White House chef,” said Mercer television student Zohair Zaidi.

After sharing the Texas flank with the guests, Morgante and Benowitz joined with Mercer President Dr. Patricia C. Donohue and associate professor Doug Fee, to cut the ribbon. After the ribbon cutting, Chef Morgante presented Dr. Donohue with a gift of knives for the teaching kitchen, which were engraved with the presidential seal. With the new kitchen all done, this will sure attract even more students to the hospitality and culinary programs.

Continued from page 1

appears:

“F*ck Obama’s health care a privilage Its not a right”

“Why you tryin’ to kill Grandma?”

“I’m sorry? Good health isn’t a right”

The same politically minded bathroom featured the name “Obama” with a hammer and sickle inside the O, next to which someone has written “Ohm sup Glenn Beck. I didn’t know you went to MCCC.” That comment was followed by “Hipperbole, much?”

In the women’s bathroom in the Communications building, things are more philosophical. One person wrote “GOD IS LOVE,” to which another responded, “Dont shove your morals on my face.”

One category of graffiti can best be described as inscrutable, featuring slogans such as: “VAGAN!” It’s not clear if this is a celebration of egg and meat free eating, or a species of aliens featured in Star Trek.

The smoking huts of Mercer have received truly ornate adornment. The hut located near the east student parking lot features graffiti based on the drug counter-culture. The entire site is multi-colored and filled with lots of various drugs, pictures of mushrooms and pensies intertwined with cryptic phrases such as “quack,” and “S.O.T. got da dankiest of dem all.”

As would be expected, graffiti is prohibited on campus. Article M2 of the Student Conduct code includes in the “Prohibited Activities” section: “Damage, destruction, or defacement of college property or property of a member of the College or visitor.”

Like a number of other Mercer policies that are virtually un-enforceable, the security logs show not a single instance of a student being busted for writing graffiti, but bathrooms are routinely repainted following out breaks of hate graffiti such as the anti-Semitic drawings reported on by Tricia Bitetto in the article “Graffiti of Hate” that appeared in the March 9, 2009 issue of The VOICE.

In that same article, Director of Campus Safety Byron Marshall is quoted as saying that in general incidents of bathroom graffiti are “done randomly” and are “not a major concern.”
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Debut game is 8-0 blow out
Future looks good for women’s soccer

By Val DaGrain
Senior Reporter

With 13 games behind them and five games remaining in the regular season, the 5-8-1 Lady Vikings have won five out of those last six, and still have a fighting chance for a crack at the post-season, after starting of the 2011 season 0-8 with one tie.

Former Mercer tri-athlete, a first year coach, Michelle Ogborn-Haywood was unable to earn a win in the first eight games of her inaugural season. The Lady Vikings dropped some close games, including a loss against Rockville, MD on September 11. In that game, the Lady Vikings lost due to a last second goal that ended the game at 2-3, Rockville. Other games weren’t as close, notably the season opener on August 27 where the Lady Vikings lost 8-0 in Rochester, NY to Monroe of the Bronx. During these first nine games Mercer averaged 1.25 goals a game but was giving up an average of 3.5 goals a game.

“Coach is doing a good job in her first year, she’s a great motivator, and she always makes us work hard,” said second year forward Amanda Lutz (#7).

On September 17, Mercer played our neighbors to the South, Gloucester County College. Wing and team captain Nicole Tarlow scored two goals that night and forward Amanda Lutz added one of her own, but it wasn’t enough to capture that elusive first victory. Starting Mercer goalie and first year player Jess Larsen injured her knee on a play where she was red carded for tackling outside the box.

“ Injury has played a huge role in the first half of our season, but we are putting those games behind us, we have a roster full of healthy, aggressive, athletes” said Ogborn-Haywood.

Injury might be one of the causes of the girls early woes because nine players out of twenty four that were active at the beginning of the season were at one point on the injured reserved list so far in the 2011 season, eight of them starters.

Injury was so much of a problem that Haywood got five women that weren’t on the roster at the beginning of the season, to join the team to fill out the roster so the women could be allowed to compete. Showana Paul, and Malory “Muf” Williams are basket-ball players and expected to play for coach Mike Tengahi’s basketball team in November. Sarai Soto, Roselyn Gonzalez, and Susana Herrara, of Hightstown who is the daughter of former pro soccer player Guirerno Herrara, round out the five new players.

In their debut game with the Vikings they helped secure Mercer’s first win in an 8-0 blow out against Camden County College in front of about 50 cheering Mercer fans.

MCCC baseball star goes to Cubs

By Laura Pollack
Senior Reporter

This past summer, James Pugliese became the first Mercer Viking to get drafted in over a decade when he was picked in the 18 round by the Chicago Cubs.

Pugliese, a right handed pitcher, spent June 7 in front of a computer screen watching the draft, not knowing which round his name would appear or what teams would contact him.

The draft is a quick process, which Pugliese called “overwhelming”.

When a player’s name gets called in the draft, the teams that are interested immediately contact the player.

“ I was watching the draft going on and it kept going through the rounds and then the 18 round came up. Once that came up three teams called me, the Mets, the Braves, and the Cubs all at the same time,” he said.

Pugliese answered the draft, but due to the haste of the draft he did not have time to answer the Mets or the Braves. Despite not being able to talk to the Mets or Braves, Pugliese is pleased with the Cubs offer.

“I talked to the Cubs and I said I’d take you right now. They put a number out moneywise, and we came to an agreement. We signed that night,” he said.

“I didn’t know when I was going to get drafted, but I was pretty excited about all of it,” said Pugliese. He continued, “I’m really happy I signed this year.”

Pugliese is not a new face in the Cubs organization. He has played for the Class R Arizona League Cub’s before getting promoted up to the Class A Boise Hawks in the Short-Season Northwest League.

“I enjoyed every moment of it, and I am still happy I made the decision to go and play because this is what I really want to do,” he said.

Last season for MCCC, Pugliese went 6-1 with a 1.27 ERA in 54.2 innings pitched. He allowed 30 hits, 27 walks, and struck out 71.

Pugliese graduated from Steinert High School in 2010, where he went 3-0 with seven saves his senior year. He also pitched out of the bullpen during the 15-year-old Bath Ruth World Series for Nottingham.

Pugliese will spend the off season on a tight work out and diet program before heading to Arizona for spring training.

When should
MCC baseball star go to Cubs

By Kathleen Hirschfeld
Reporter

After being hit in the head twice while playing soccer this past summer, nineteen year old Mercer student Megan Constance joined a large percentage of athletes who keep playing despite having concussions.

According to the article, ‘Concussion Center for Children and Adolescents’ found on the Saint Charles Health System website, “41 percent of athletes that suffered a concussion reported back to sports too soon.”

During the first game of the season, Constance suffered a severe concussion after being hit in the eye.

“I couldn’t see and honestly don’t remember much of what happened,” said Constance.

However, Constance shook off the blow and never reported the injury. She recalls, “It’s not a visible injury, so I didn’t take it to be serious.”

Two weeks later, after constant headaches and increased irritability, Constance was hit in the head again during a game. After being taken off the field, her teammates explained the previous injury to her coaches and she was promptly given a concussion test behind the bleachers, which failed.

Despite the seriousness of a concussion, athletes often brush their head injury off to be nothing important. Many students do not see the severity of their injury, whereas as some students, like Megan Constance, do not want to report an injury for fear it will take them out of the game.

Constance, not speaking up about her injuries with, “I just wanted to keep playing.”

An athlete may see the blow to their head trivial compared to their will to play the game, but a concussion can interfere with the brains ability to function normally.

According to the AANS, ‘Article Sports-Related Head Injury’, “a concussion results from shaking the brain within the skull, and if severe can cause shearing injuries to nerve fibers and neurons.”

In a pamphlet created by the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) and the Center for Disease Control (CDC), it is stressed that to recognize an injury there must be a “forceful blow to the head…and any change in the student athlete’s behavior, thinking or physical functioning.”

The symptoms of a concussion include moving chaotically, answering questions slowly, appearing dazed, head aches, nausea or vomiting.

Despite the symptoms of a concussion often being overlooked, they are frequent among athletes. In the article, ‘Sports-Related Head Injury’ found on the American Association of Neurological Surgeons (AANS) website, it’s reported that “an estimated 446,788 sports-related head injuries (were) treated at U.S. hospital emergency rooms in 2009.”

The NCAA pamphlet stresses that when it comes to concussions, “It’s better to miss one game than the whole season. When in doubt, get checked out.”

James Pugliese who wore jersey #5 during his Mercer baseball career was drafted to the Chicago Cubs on June 7, 2011.
an athlete worry?

Women’s cross country becomes a team

By Laura Pollack  
Senior Reporter

This season, the women’s cross country team became the first scoring team at MCCC in twenty years.

Last season the women’s cross country team only consisted of two runners, and in order to officially score in the race a team has to have at least five members. This year the team has expanded to seven athletes, which according to Sierra Downs has contributed to the team’s success.

“It isn’t that the girls on the team really embrace that team mentally which isn’t something you find all the time,” said Downs, who came in fourth at the Dukes Invitational. She continued, “Everyone’s very supportive of one another. We’re all at different levels, but we just all have a lot of fun. We’re like a little family.”

Erin Cahill is in her second season of coaching women’s cross country for Mercer, and has not changed her coaching style along with the roster that has expanded.

“It’s a similar approach. You have to focus on each individuals abilities and each situation,” said Cahill. She also knows how important team mentality can be for success in Cross Country.

“You’re not just running for yourself. You’re running for the team as well,” she said.

Cahill credits the team expansion to “word of mouth” as well as for a few that wanted to do it in the spring.”

Jacqueline Goncalves wanted to join the Cross Country team last season, but was unable to find the time.

“I asked about the cross country team, but because of my class schedule I couldn’t join,” she said.

Sierra Downs and Ana- jae Register had run cross country before and wanted to continue running at college.

“I wasn’t aware that Mercer actually had a team,” said Downs, who officially found out about the team through her high school cross country coach.

The seven women on the team have roots ranging from Brazil to Brooklyn.

Cahill believes that the diversity of the team only creates a stronger bond.

“There’s a good mix of international girls and local girls and they both want to learn from each other. They want to do well for each other,” she said.

Cahill said the team has had a “pretty good season.”

“It’s hard. Some meets have been stronger than others,” said Cahill.

Their strongest meet came on September 17 at the Dukes Invitational at Cumberland County College where they placed second.

Charlay Dingle, who has never played Cross Country before this season, said that this sport “is not for the weak hearted.”

Each race is a different length. Some are 6k while others are 5k. Some meets also consist of D1, D2, and D3 teams from various two and four year colleges.

“We’re a JR Division 1 team racing with four year colleges who are division three. We don’t score against them, but we’re still physically next to them and competing with them,” said Downs. She continued, “The goal of a race is to not only to get a personal best time, but to try and pass people that you’re scoring against because if you finish before them then you get more points.”

Cahill hopes that the extra length or the races and competition will help the team.

“Timothying that makes us tougher. You just have to take it meet by meet,” she said.

The cross country team is looking to place in the regional meet at Thompson Park on October 22.

Locals turn out for second annual First Amendment 5K race

By Anna Bosted & Laura Pollack  
Reporters

The VOICE held its second annual First Amendment 5K Run-Walk on October 1. Nearly seventy participants arrived to race that supported Mercer’s award-winning paper and the first amendment.

For Stephanie Nawracaj, the first place overall woman’s finisher with a time of 22:41, the most important thing. It’s a good idea to help out fellow students, “I’m a student too, so it’s always good to help out fellow students,” said Nawracaj, a full-time student at Rutgers University in New Brunswick and who lives in Mercer County.

The first place men’s finisher and the overall fastest runner was Carlos Robles of Trenton, who finished in 18:27. Though he was among the runners less concerned with the cause and more focused on the race, Robles says he was impressed by the atmosphere of the event. “I was more than happy to be here…there’s a family atmosphere, and that’s the most important thing. It’s a good way to start the weekend.”

The First Amendment 5K served as both a fund-raiser for the newspaper as well as a charity event. The money raised through the event helps the news staff upgrade equipment and cover the costs of organizing the paper and participating in national conventions and competitions.

Though the drizzling rain of the previous week had indicated bad weather that morning, and had washed out a portion of the signage directing runners around the course, the race was a success. Clear skies, sun, and cool fall temperatures met the runners.

In addition to the signs, newspapers and other runners around the course, the race was a success. Clear skies, sun, and cool fall temperatures met the runners.

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Carlos Robles of Trenton won the second annual First Amendment 5K run with a time of 18:27 on Saturday, October 1, 2011.
Good times at Colonial Quoits Club in Hamilton

By Emily Lukasewycz
Reporter

“Quit your bitchin’ and start pitchin’!” In May of 2000, this became the slogan for the Colonial Quoit Club, a quoiting league based in Hamilton, New Jersey. The Colonial Quoit Club, now one of the most established quoit leagues in New Jersey, has just wrapped up their 2011 season with Mike Cech taking the championship title.

A fairly inexpensive sport, according to quoitsfactory.com, quoits is a game played with steel discs that are thrown, or “pitched,” at a metal “hub.” According to the same source, quoits originated in Pennsylvania around the 1930’s and continues to be popular in the New Jersey and Pennsylvania area.

Formed by neighbors Nick Lukasewycz and Mark Prekop, both of Hamilton Township, the league started as a bunch of friends getting together from mid-May to mid-September with “a quoit in one hand, a beer in the other,” says Lukasewycz. Over the years, this backyard club had evolved into a more competitive league, with players growing in skill and the competition becoming steeper than ever.

The Colonial Quoit Club, named after the street the club calls home, continues to rise in popularity as the years go by. According to Prekop, the club only has 25 roster spots open, so you have to register early in the season to secure a place in the league.

"The beauty of this game is that almost anyone can play. The club boasts both male and female players with an age range of early twenties to late seventies,” said Lukasewycz. “It’s a game of finesse, as opposed to power, and allows fair competition across the board.”

"It is entirely by chance that we arrived at this point. It has taken ten years of mistakes, tweaks to the format, and trial and error to get to where we are,” said Lukasewycz. According to Prekop, the amount of ringers has doubled since 2000 and the players from this club have won many of the local tournaments that are held each summer in the area.

Opening night of Colonial Quoit Club’s eleventh season was held on Friday, May 7, 2011 with 22 players gracing the pits. According to the club’s web site, Jeff Oryszczuk and Mike Klidzia took the top spots for the evening. The season would go on to consist of fourteen weeks followed by a playoff tournament to determine the club champion. This year, Mike Chech became the second player to become a repeat champion in the league. “Mike was the best player all year long and proved that fact with his playoff performance,” said Lukasewycz.

The finals of the quoit club hardly mark the end of the season for the dedicated “Quoit-Heads” of this league. The players continue to pitch well into the fall months, until the weather or prior commitments interfere, says Lukasewycz. An annual Colonial Quoit Club picnic is also held to mark the end of the season and present awards to the winners. Traditional awards include “Top Dog,” for highest point average, and “Most Improved.”

“The most important award,” according to Lukasewycz, “is the sportsmanship award. This is awarded to the player that most embodies the spirit of friendship and camaraderie in a competitive environment. It is what makes the game enjoyable for me, playing with quality people while still trying to beat the pants off of your opponent.”

By Emily Lukasewycz
Reporter

Colonial Quoit Club member Frank Sforza pitching a quoit.

PHOTO COURTESY COLONIAL QUOIT CLUB

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Fewer language levels offered at Mercer

By Kellie Randina
Reporter

Most majors at Mercer require two consecutive semesters of a second language. Lately, it seems like the variety of languages has become slimmer and going beyond a 101 level class has become even more rare.

Prof. Daniel D’Arpa, the director of the Foreign Language Department, has some theories as to why the foreign language selection has declined.

“It all comes down to interest - what students are interested in taking. At a two year school, students are in a rush. They have a plan,” D’Arpa said in a recent interview with The VOICE.

In the past, Mercer has tried to boost students’ interest in foreign languages by offering a wide variety of language classes.

“Deans have tried Hungarian, Hebrew, Hindi, Polish, and Arabic,” D’Arpa says, but he goes on to note that these languages are not typically offered since students’ interest in them comes and goes.

Stephanie McMullen, a second year student at Mercer, is not interested in taking a second language. She says, “It’s a waste of time for me to learn a second language. If I’m not going into a career centered around learning a language, I shouldn’t have to take one.”

Other students are more enthusiastic about learning a language, but believe that the lack of foreign language options is a problem. “If a student wants to learn a language, then they should have the opportunity”, says Alexandre Honore, a criminal justice major.

Honore agrees with D’Arpa that interest plays a big part in the lack of languages.

“Nobody seems to care about learning a language here. Students are thinking okay, ‘How will [learning a language] help me?’” says Honore. It is also difficult for students to get into a language class that is higher than 100 level. In some cases, students who are fluent in a language such as Spanish will take Spanish 101.

“There is a rumor going around that advisers have been advising students to take 101 to keep up their GPA,” said D’Arpa. This puts a restriction on students hoping to get into a higher level of a language. If the majority of students only enroll in 101 and 102 language courses, the demand for higher level classes will be smaller and less classes will be available.

D’Arpa tries to mitigate the effect of this problem in his own Spanish classes. He says, “I use these knowledgeable students as a learning tool to help the other students. I really don’t want them there, but the class is better with fluent speakers.”

Honore also had an issue being placed correctly. While registering for classes, her advisors were unaware that she could register for Italian 201. Italian 201 was not well advertised due to the lack of students who signed up for it. She says she was then placed into Italian 102, which is below her level of fluency. She was finally placed into Italian 201 when her professor realized she needed a higher level.

D’Arpa does have some plans for the future of the language department. His main goal is to become better at placing students.

“In place before me, languages were more grammar based. I’ve been pushing hard against the focus on grammar and more for speaking and communication. Grammar gets in the way of fluency,” says D’Arpa.

He has also been planning a second study abroad trip to Costa Rica and considering a trip to Spain.

“It all comes down to interest,” says D’Arpa.

THE COLLEGE VOICE | FILE PHOTO

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Laura Schroeder
Current student & scholarship recipient
These days, our markets are filled with items labeled as Organic or Pesticide Free, claiming benefits from their natural cultivation methods. “I like buying organic food because...” don’t know why I eat organic foods. I think organic food tastes better,” said Christine Gwin, a hippy and junior at Rutgers. Muhammad Ali and Dick Winters didn’t buy organic, and I bet they could kick that hippy’s ass.

Actually, “Organic foods have never been shown to be healthier, more nutritious or more safe than conventional foods, despite dozens of scientific studies. There is no weight that organic is better or healthier for you” says Alex Avery of The Hudson Institute Center for Global Food Issues in a CNN interview.

In fact, organic food might even be WORSE FOR YOU than normally chemically soaked fruits and veggies. Recent studies show the modern farming methods and chemicals that organic foods in favor actually were never in place for a reason.

Let us not forget that pasteurized milk was introduced in the same time frame to prevent citizens from getting sick and occasionally dying from bacteria like tubercle bacillus, also known as tuberculosis, which can be found in raw and untreated milk. America seems to have forgotten that, as the recent trend in raw milk and other raw dairy products like yogurt and cream has led to a lack of understanding nation-wide. Luckily, the sale of raw milk, and products made from it, except for raw chased aged over 60 days, is allowed in New York.

Unfortunately, that may soon change if Assembly Bill 743 and its companion bill 3073 are passed to be as they both aim to allow farmers to sell and distribute raw dairy products.

The cultivation methods, processing and packaging of these foods is a lot of ritual and ingrained at our country, despite accounting for less than one percent of consumed foods. This is because of limitations placed on acceptable fertilizers, leading companies and co-ops to partially rely on human and animal waste to fertilize their crops. Which means your sexy organo-vegan heirloom tomato might just be teeming with angry E. Coli germs waiting to kill you.

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Write to The College VOICE! Do you have something to say? The College VOICE accepts letters to the editor. Submissions should be no more than 300 words; longer submissions may be shortened. Submit materials in electronic format, and include your name and status at Mercer (major and year, faculty or staff position or alumni). All materials submitted become the property of The College VOICE, which reserves the right to reject or edit material based on length, taste or clarity.

How to contact us: E-mail: abo@delge.com phone: (609) 586-4800 ext. 3594 write to: The College VOICE Mercer County College PO Box 8 Trenton, NJ 08690

The cultivation methods are not even environmentally friendly, despite claims by proponents of organic farming. Chem-free farms underline how organic growing methods currently yield 50% less than conventional modern farming per acre, leading to unnecessary deforestation as organic growers are forced to clear more land to provide the same amount of product.

Modern farming methods are products of scientific progress. The average farm’s acre yield has seen a 200 percent increase over the last century, giving healthier goods to more people.

Non-organic, industrial farming has led to a decline in the spread of infectious diseases in our country, and it seems to be due to the increased life expectancy, thereby promoting better living through science.

Do not give in to the organic propaganda. Instead, remind its proponents that the extra money they spend on their tech-nophobe food fad sponsors slash and burn deforestation and Listeria outbreaks. So arm yourself with the power of knowledge and fight the organic propaganda. Instead, reef in favor absolutely nothing but the truth: The cultivation methods, processing and packaging of these foods is a lot of ritual and ingrained at our country, despite accounting for less than one percent of consumed foods. This is because of limitations placed on acceptable fertilizers, leading companies and co-ops to partially rely on human and animal waste to fertilize their crops. Which means your sexy organo-vegan heirloom tomato might just be teeming with angry E. Coli germs waiting to kill you.

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Dear Voice,
I heard that a student was caught peeing in a fountain on campus? What’s that about?
-Skeeved Out

Dear Skeeved,
Sounds like someone should switch to soda. They’re low in urination and high in making it through history class.
-The VOICE

Dear Voice,
Where were you when Mrs. Peacock was murdered?
-Wadsworth the Butler

Dear Wadsworth,
I was in the dining room wondering why my lasagnah hadn’t yet been served. Tell me, Butler, where were YOU?!
-The VOICE

Dear Voice,
What is your favorite bong?
-Little Drummer Boy

Dear Drummer,
My 3 foot, handmadeglass-blown bong hiding in the closet.
-The VOICE

NOTE: THIS FEATURE IS FOR ENTERTAINMENT PURPOSES ONLY. ANY RESEMBLANCE TO ACTUAL PROBLEMS IS PURELY COINCIDENTAL.

SUDOKU

Difficultly: 3 (of 5)

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PREVIOUS SOLUTION

2X DILBERT AND GET FUZZY

GROOMING

YOU IGNORANT JUICEBAG!

YOU THINK I’M A PRO?

WILL THIS TAKE LONG?

WHO KNOWS ABOUT THAT?

I CAN COME BACK LATER.

YOU THINK I’M A PRO?

I’M RECALCULATING MY LACK OF FAITH IN HUMANITY.

ALL YOU NEED TO DO IS LEAVE ME A PUBLIC MESSAGE EVERY ONCE IN A WHILE.

THAT WOULD MAKE ME A...

THAT WOULD MAKE ME A...

FRIENDSTITUTE BUT IT’S BETTER IF WE DON’T NAME IT.

WHAT ARE YOU UP TO?

NO, I START BY READING OPINIONS ON MESSAGE BOARDS AND...

AMBER, I’LL PAY YOU $500 A MONTH TO PRETEND TO BE MY FRIEND ON FACEBOOK.

WHY WON’T YOU COME HOME?... IT’S NOT IN YOUR FACE... BUT IT’S NOT IN YOUR FACE... I REGRETS... I THOUGHT I REGRETS... I THOUGHT I HAD TO GET ON THE TIP.

WHAT STICKS?

OK, WHAT DON’T YOU THINK THAT TURNED BAD...

YOUR TIPS ARE ALL OVER THE PLACE...

YOU THINK I’M A PRO?

YOU THINK I’M A PRO?

YOU THINK I’M A PRO?

I’M NOT IN YOUR FACE... I’M NOT IN YOUR FACE... I’M NOT IN YOUR FACE...

WHAT WOULD I DO?

OF COURSE I’M A PRO.

I’M NOT IN YOUR FACE...

I’M NOT IN YOUR FACE...

IF I’M NOT IN YOUR FACE...

YOU THINK I’M A PRO?

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