New nurse on campus five days per semester
MCCC makes incremental progress toward health care

By Amanda Knoblock
Senior Reporter

Seven out of the 19 community colleges in New Jersey offer health centers where students can get first aid treatment for minor injuries and illnesses, STD testing, physicals, flu shots, referrals and health and wellness counseling. Until now, Mercer hasn’t been one of them. This semester a nurse will be on campus for a few hours, five times during the semester.

Nurse Ivy Pearlstein, who comes to Mercer from an outsource organization called Hi-Tops of Princeton, has been an off-campus nurse for the James Kerney Campus in the past, but her first session with West Windзор campus students was on February 9. She will be on campus 4 more days during the remainder of the semester.

The services Nurse Pearlstein can offer include free pregnancy tests and condoms, weight and height check, depression and eating disorder screenings, as well as STD screenings and other health inquiries. Students will be assisted with advice and resources for treatments, but the nurse cannot write prescriptions for any medications, including birth control.

Fourth year Humanities and Social Science major James Reihler-Wells and Co-President of the LGBTF (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual, Friends) club sees value in the new nurse services despite the minimal days she will be on campus. “It’s definitely unfortunate that her resources and her powers are limited but in comparison to the fact that up until this semester we didn’t have a nurse, it’s definitely a good step forward. To have somewhere to go and someone to go to is really the important part. That touches the bases of an actual service,” says Reihler-Wells.

Mercer’s LGBTF club has been instrumental in getting a nurse on campus. Second year Communications major and LGTBf member Joseph Mydlowski said, “I contacted Ivy Pearlstein to see if there could be a mutual agreement where if we needed condoms for students we could get them from the [Hi-Tops] clinic. I wanted to do it immediately. We don’t have a nurse here so to have one would be awesome,” says Mydlowski.

Dean of Students Dr. Diane Campbell is overseeing the alliance with Hi-Tops. Campbell says, “This is a partnership of Mercer and Hi-Tops where their mission is to improve the health of people between 16 and 24. We have that population here during the day so what better partnership for them.”

Campbell also said, “It gets in the way of student success if you’re sick, you’re pregnant, you have any other kinds of discomforts that you are not taking care of because you don’t have access to health care and we need to try to fix that.”

In terms of medical emergencies, however, the new nurse is not an option. According to Campbell, students and faculty are to call security for any emergency that happens on campus. “We call our security and they are trained in emergency response.”

Legislators vote to cut funding for STARS II students
NJ’s strongest students invited to Trenton to witness vote to cut their funding

By Laura Pollack
Senior Reporter

Student ambassadors from the nineteen community colleges in New Jersey gathered at the state house in Trenton on Monday, March 5 to watch legislators vote on bill A1176 which would drastically cut their scholarship funding once they transfer to four year colleges.

The students, including three from Mercer, watched as state legislators, lead by Representative Pamela Lampitt from the sixth district, heard testimony and then voted the bill to proceed out of committee and wait passing by the assembly and senate. Although no students were invited to testify in support or objection to the bill, all of the students that were in attendance may lose 4,000 dollars in funding for their higher education.

These students are part of the NJ STARS program which provides full scholarships to community colleges for students who have graduated in the top 15 percent of their public high school classes. If they maintain a GPA of 3.25 or higher and transfer within two years, they qualify for the NJ STARS II program. If the student’s GPA is between 3.25 and 3.5, they receive 6,000 dollars per school year. If the student’s GPA is higher than 3.5, they receive 7,000 dollars per year.

Under the newly proposed legislation, upcoming NJ STARS II students will only receive 2,500 dollars per year toward their four-year college tuition if they maintained a GPA above a 3.25. The STARS II scholarship would only be able to be used toward tuition, not tuition and fees like it is under the current law.

If the legislation is passed, students currently in their third year of college enrolled in the STARS II program would still receive the old amounts of 6,000-7,000 dollars in funding for their fourth year. All other STARS students would get the newly proposed 2,500 dollar tuition scholarship per year.

Alexa Beyer, Vice President of the NJ STARS club at Mercer, was one of the three Mercer students in attendance to watch the assembly committee cut their STARS II scholarship. “At that meeting we listened to different assembly members proposing new bills. All the members of the assembly seemed to think this was a great idea. This was appalling to all of us,” said Beyer. She continued, “I was extremely angered by the situation. They were glorifying a bill for a cut in higher education funding. They knew STARS students were sitting in there and listening and acting like this bill was a great thing in favor of the students.”

From Left: Mercer students Adrian Olmeda, Alexa Beyer and Fatou Diaw with MCCC president Dr. Patricia Donohue at the NJ STARS Ambassadors Day event in Trenton, NJ on March 5, 2012.
Q: If legislators ask NJ residents to vote on whether or not NJ should allow gay marriage, will the law pass?

"I would truly, sincerely hope it would pass but I can see how it might not. People tend to be more conservative than liberal. Apparently 50 percent of marriages end in divorce so I don't think there is anything and I don't really see how... not wanting people to be happy does anything to affect the sanctity of marriage. I think it would actually improve it."

-Erich Petersen, second year Communications major

"I don't think it will 'because they denied it before, so I think trying again is pointless. I'm not one way or another about gay marriage, ya know it's freedom."

-Corey Audson, first year Communications major

"Gay marriage is a civil rights issue, and I don't feel those civil rights should be placed on the general population to decide. You would hope that if the legislators are representative of the people, you would hope to expect that the constituents would vote for the peoples desires, but I honestly don't know what would happen, but I would that the voters for NJ would keep an open mind for other peoples civil rights."

-Dr. Susan Onahlis, Counseling Specialist

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**With gay marriage veto Christie puts equal rights up for vote**

On Thursday, February 16, NJ's Assembly passed a bill with a vote of 24-16, to legalize same sex marriage statewide. Governor Chris Christie, as promised, vetoed the bill shortly after it arrived in his office.

Some do not believe that Christie vetoed the bill due to his being anti-gay, but because of his political ambitions as a Republican.

In an interview with The VOICE, NJ Assemblyman Daniel R. Benson, who represents the 14th district (which includes Hamilton and much of Mercer County), said that part of the reason for Christie's veto of the bill came from his political aspirations. "If he does decide to run for higher office he would be the first Republican governor to approve this type of bill."

Mercer Professor of Business Johnathan Rowe, who is both a gay man and a lawyer, echoes assemblyman Benson's views saying, "I don't think Christie is anti-gay, but it is dangerous, politically, especially for a Republican who may have national political ambitions, to come out in favor of full marriage equality for same sex couples."

Instead of agreeing to the bill that was passed by the legislature, Governor Christie has decided the the best way to decide on gay marriage in New Jersey is to put it to a referendum vote on the ballot this November. He has said that an "An issue of this magnitude and importance, which requires a constitutional amendment, should be left to the people of New Jersey to decide," according to Kate Zernike's New York Times article titled "Christie Keeps his Promise to Veto Gay Marriage Bill."

Issues put forth in a referendum are typically not issues involving individual or constitutional rights, however. Legal scholars have argued for decades that issues like civil rights would never have passed referendum votes in much of the country when they were originally enacted by President Johnson back in 1964.

Benson expressed his disagreement with Christie's idea of a referendum. "I think it sets a really dangerous precedent when you do a referendum on giving rights to a minority group. It's really not the proper place for it to be done. It should be done through the legislature."

-Assemblyman Daniel R. Benson

*I think [Gov. Christie's plan for a referendum vote on gay marriage] sets a really dangerous precedent when you do a referendum on giving rights to a minority group. It's really not the proper place for it to be done. It should be done through the legislature."

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**New Jersey governor Chris Christie, who was elected in 2009, has drawn support for gay rights in the past, but vetoed a gay marriage bill this month. Polls suggest that is due to his political aspirations toward a future presidential or vice presidential nomination.**

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**CAMPUS & LOCAL**

**By Kellie Rendina**

Senior Reporter

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New Jersey's governor Republican Chris Christie, who was elected in 2009, has drawn support for gay rights in the past, but vetoed a gay marriage bill this month. Polls suggest that is due to his political aspirations toward a future presidential or vice presidential nomination.

Christie's veto put an end to legislative action for the present. An override will have to be achieved by noon on Jan. 14, 2014 since this is the end of this legisla- tive session. When asked if he thinks equality for same sex couples will be achieved by this deadline, Benson expressed high hopes.

"The goal is to override the veto before the ses- sion ends. The senate [still needs to gather] about three votes to override it. They would need to flip two Dem- ocratic votes and maybe one more Republican. That is go- ing to be a hard hurdle to be- gin with, but I think it's pos- sible."

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**The VOICE FILE PHOTOCOLLEGE**

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**NEW YORK TIMES**

New Jersey's governor Republican Chris Christie, who was elected in 2009, has drawn support for gay rights in the past, but vetoed a gay marriage bill this month. Polls suggest that is due to his political aspirations toward a future presidential or vice presidential nomination.

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**FOLLOW THE VOICE**

The CollegeVoiceNJ.com
MCCC spends $160,000 on big new signs
Bright digital displays installed at campus entrances

By Laura Pollack
Senior Reporter

This spring the college has installed two large digital signs at both entrances to the West Windsor campus. "When I see that sign I keep expecting some Vegas show girls to pop out from behind it. Is there a casino on campus somewhere?"Anonymous faculty member

Law makers say it was cut funding or end STARS NJ legislators vote yea on bill to cut STARS II scholarships to just $2,500 a year

"In a way, these scholarship programs have been victims of their own success in tough economic times. In light of the higher education cuts these past few years, we hope these adjustments will provide more predictability and stability to these successful programs. Ultimately, we hope to retain New Jersey's best and brightest students who plan to pursue higher education in one of our state's great colleges and universities."-Assemblywoman Pamela Lampitt

The legislation also changes where the student's NJ STARS II funding comes from. Under the proposed bill, the scholarship will be paid fully by the state, as opposed to the current law that says the funding must be paid evenly by both the state and the college. Mercer's President Dr. Patricia Donohue believes that this legislation will make it easier on the universities. In an interview with The VOICE Donohue said, "When they created STARS II, I think people wanted to do wonderful things for students, but they didn't think through the process. The state only paid a certain amount toward that STARS II scholarship and they just assumed that the colleges and universities would make up the rest." She continued, "It was really problematic for the universities about how much of their budget they can dedicate to this with no revenue."

This isn't the first time STARS funding has been cut. Originally STARS funding went to students in the top 20 percent of their high school class, but the law was revised to include only students in the top 15 percent. "I do think [the new bill] is going to hurt STARS students coming to Mercer or other community colleges because the funding for STARS students coming to community college is still the same as it has been for several years," said Donohue.

The bill does make small changes to the STARS I funding, which affects students using the scholarship at Mercer and other community colleges. The scholarship would only cover tuition, rather than covering the cost of tuition and fees. Under the newly proposed legislation, community colleges will also be encouraged to bring in representatives from New Jersey's four-year colleges to talk about the STARS II program at least once a year.

"I think the biggest thing here is to make sure that a good program continues even during a time of tighter budgets, and hopefully with the changes more students will be able to take advantage of it. Personally, my hope is that if this is successful over the next couple of years, we can work to try to increase the benefit of it for the long term." -Rizzo

"It's only ever moved in one direction and that's the direction of decreased funding," said Rizzo.

Despite the hope to add more funding in the future, current STARS students are rethinking staying in the program and in state for their education.

"If the funding is cut, I will go out of state and NJ will lose a good student. The more important to them, they will lose money. They will not only lose my money, but the money of hundreds of kids who are angered by this bill," said Beyer.
Digital format slashes textbook prices for owners of expensive devices

By James Reslier-Wells

Nick Occhipenti couldn’t wait any longer for his consumer Orientation textbook to arrive at Mercer’s bookstore.

“Every time I went back they were out. So he decided to forgo not only the bookstore, but also the print edition altogether. Occhipenti downloaded a digital edition of the text from Amazon.com’s Kindle market, and in doing so, not only saved time, but also about $80 dollars. According to the College Board’s “Break Down The Bill” webpage, an average student pays $500 dollars each semester for their books, including used sales. A recent VOICE survey found that 75 percent of text books used in many common 101-level courses at Mercer averaged around $270 dollars. The same survey revealed that the majority of students’ textbooks—about 75 percent—are purchased from the Mercer Bookstore, and most of the remaining books are ordered online from services such as Amazon.com to tend to the cheaper prices and offers free two-day shipping for students.

For those students who own an e-reader, tablet, or laptop computer, there may be another option. In 2011, major textbook publishers such as Pearson, Houghton-Mifflin began releasing digital editions of many of their textbooks.

For those same students, they are just beginning to embrace e-format,” says Pamela Price, Director of Library Services, “not all of them across the board are yet doing so.” A digital edition is essentially a PDF, or an electronic version of the original text and images that can be viewed on most of today’s portable devices.

Many such devices are not cheap, especially if the user desires greater capability. A new iPad, for instance, starts at $450 dollars, and upgraded models can bring the price to around $800 dollars. For those seeking less computational power, but who want still like to be able to read ebooks, many e-readers, such as the Amazon Kindle and Barnes & Noble’s Nook, sell for anywhere from $80 to $120 dollars, depending on features like touchscreen capability, 3G support and advertising.

However, digital editions of textbooks could offer students an enticing way to mitigate the high cost of such devices. Preliminary surveys by the VOICE have found, that on Amazon’s Kindle market, digital editions for textbooks used in many common 101-level courses at Mercer averaged half the cost of their print counterparts sold in the campus bookstore.

The versatility of the more expensive devices, too, could prove useful for students. Nick Occhipenti can bring up many pages of notes on his Asus Transformer Prime, all taken with his onscreen keyboard.

Portability is another major pro for Occhipenti. Also enrolled in Mercer’s aviation program, one of his books last semester was a 2,000 page, 50 pound regulations book. “I picked it up in the bookstore, and I couldn’t even wrap my hand around it,” Nick said. “I’m like ‘screw this, I’m getting it onto my tablet.”

Associate English Professor Diane Rizzo agrees that capability is one of the strongest selling points for tablets. When she first started using a store of iPads which were made available for Mercer faculty to borrow and test, she was “really underwhelmed,” but after realizing how she could apply their functionality to the unique needs of her own life, decided to purchase a personal iPad and admits, “Now, I really don’t know what I would do without it.”

There are many reasons why most students would choose to purchase their books from the campus bookstore. Some texts such as the IST 101 book, Technology in Action, are created from chapters that are ready-made by the publisher and compiled ad-hoc by instructors or program directors to fulfill specific course requirements.

Additionally, many course books now include CDs or support access codes that link students to required course content. These instructional materials can cost 80 dollars or more to purchase independently, and are not necessarily included with digital textbook downloads.

Diane Rizzo admits that despite her excitement, the technology has not yet reached a stage in its development where students and faculty can expect to see it used as a more standard learning aid, particularly mindful of the economics of the technol- ogy, especially in the context of cash-strapped students.

“If there was some way to bundle the publications to the e-readers, that would make the cost almost equivalent to what students are spending now,” she says. “Those devices could pay for themselves.”

She also warns, however, that technology in the classroom has to be used with care. “If we only think about the technology as a substitute for the antiquated book,” she says, “then we’re not going to get very far, because we will not have tapped out the potential of it.”

Mercer’s strongest students now have a place to study

By Zac Santanello

Two years ago Mercer’s Honors Lounge was forced out of its location in the Liberal Arts building to make room for the satellite office of William Paterson University. Space has been tight on campus, and Mercer’s best students did not have a specific study area for several semesters.

As of February 8, a new Honors Study Space has been opened in SC 137A, adjacent to the cafeteria. The space offers students in the Honors, Phi Theta Kappa, and the NJ STARS programs a place to study, conduct group projects and collaborate with other intellectually rigorous students. The room has keycode-only access and a private WiFi network.

Creator and Co-coordinator of the Honors Program Dr. Dan Bork worked to get the new space without using another group’s room. The space is going to be shared during the Summer. Prof. Bork said it has only heard good things so far about the influence of the Honors Study Space.

“Since collaborative work is essential in a lot of the honors program, it is important for them to have a space in which to do work,” said Bork. “The space is great. It is helping students do their best work.”

Miranda Horn, a second year Communication major, is a member of the New Jersey STARS program, which provides scholarship for students in the top 15 percent of their high school class to attend community colleges in New Jersey. She said she was completely unaware that NJ STARS students are allowed in the Honors Study Space.

“I don’t go to the STARS meetings, and until recently, I didn’t hear anything about an Honors Study Space opening in the school,” said Horn.

When asked what she thought about the concept of an Honors Study Space, she said, “The idea is there because it is rewarding hardworking students taking on Honors classes for their dedication, but unless you are on a friendly basis with the other people there, why would you want to hang out there?”

Not everyone agrees with the addition of the Honors Study Space. Connor McAdams, a first year music major, says, “I think it rewards intelligence in a way that not only separates those select students from the common students giving them higher status but does so in a way that is unfair and degrades the rest of us.”

Dr. Bork noted that, “The lack of space dedicated for students is unfortunate. I think it would be great if there were more spaces around campus accessible to more students. It could be used as a model for something we could ultimately provide for all students.”

In 2005 Prof. Bork formed a volunteer committee to investigate the possibility of forming an Honors Program at Mercer which would be similar to successful programs already available at many community colleges around the state. In Fall of 2006 she was named a coordinator, and the first semester to offer Honors courses was the following spring. Students in the Honors program must have a high GPA and be prepared for smaller class sizes and more rigorous work.

The fledging program has expanded every year, now there are roughly a dozen Honors classes offered each semester.

She said, “Honor’s students do really well, with a much higher (degree) completion rate.” She later mentioned that scholarship money and easier acceptance into transfer programs are among the benefits of taking the harder courses.

Honors courses

Dean of Liberal Arts Dr. Robin Schore mentioned that “the college needs more places to hang out.” He believes that the “space is tight” the new Honors Study Space is “a great thing for the students.”

Second-year Mercer Honors student and Liberal Arts major Dan Povio states, “The Honors Study Lounge is definitely a welcoming atmosphere; there’s no music blasting or people yelling, except for [the occasional political argument. It’s a relaxing room to get work done and have nice conversation with your honor- orable peers.”
The nurse is in...occasionally
LGBTF club organizes effort to bring nurse to campus

Continued from page 1

So say if a student hurt their ankle [security] would probably wrap it up until they can call an ambulance. We don’t have any health services on campus. We can call the ambulance, security can call the ambulance, our emergency response is that we always call security no matter what it is,” says Campbell.

In the past, however, even getting an ankle wrapped until an ambulance came wasn’t something students could count on. In a May 2008 article in The College VOICE entitled “No-where to go for bandages, aspirin or for shots” report- ers Susana Sanchez and Alex Hough told the story of a stu- dent, Katie Forlano, who fell during Mercer’s Spring Day festivities and wrenched her right knee badly. At that time security said they wouldn’t call an ambulance because she was a minor. In the end, her friend Zachary Zeiter, made an icepack for her knee and called an ambulance himself.

In the same article Sanchez and Hough inter- viewed the Dean of Mercer’s Science and Health Profes- sions division, Linda Martin, who said she was planning to attend a leadership train- ing session in June of 2008 to investigate possibilities for establishing some sort of “wellness center” at Mercer.

In a follow-up in- terview conducted by The VOICE this month Martin says of her investigations, “We did do the survey and there is a wellness center available on campus. However, what we did find was that most students [said they] wouldn’t be using it for their regu- lar medical types of things. What they were looking for was activities related to well- ness, some education about nutrition, basically seminars on wellness-type behaviors.”

In contrast to Mar- tin’s findings in 2008, however, a new poll of 30 students con- ducted by The VOICE found that while 57 percent said they would visit the new nurse for the limited health services she will be providing during her 4 days on campus 87 percent said they would visit the nurse if medications like birth con- trol, aspirins and allergy med- ications were offered. It must be noted, however, that those students said they would visit the nurse only if it was at no additional cost to them. After gathering her data in 2008 Martin decided not to pursue the idea of a wellness center on campus. Instead, she and and twelve other faculty members started up a Wellness Committee, of- fering services such as yoga and zumba (offered for free through the SGA) for Mercer students and staff.

Both Martin and Mer- cer’s president, Dr. Patricia Donohue, cited financial diffi- culties as the main reason that a wellness center at Mercer was considered back in 2008. “I’m glad that [the new nurse] is here at least 4 times [this semester]. It seems kind of odd that there’s no nurse or any kind of health profes- sional on campus particularly considering we have a nurs- ing program here.”

The Robert Wood Johnson Founda- tion specifically offers grants to institutions and organizations that provide healthcare to what they call ‘vulnerable populations,’ which would include the low income populations served by community colleges like Mercer. In particular they tend to give money within the state of New Jersey and they offer continuing support, not just seed-money for start-up costs.” - Alex Hough & Susana Sanchez

According to Middle- sex County College’s health and safety information posted online, health services are similar to Mercer’s, providing students with health counsel- ing, first aid treatment and screenings. In addition, how- ever, Middlesex provides stu- dents with medications, sports physicals and immunization shots beyond the common flu.

In regards to the fi- nancial challenges of provid- ing health care to students at Mercer, Sanchez and Hough noted back in 2008 that “The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation specifically offers grants to institu- tions and organiza- tions that provide

healthcare to what they call ‘vulnerable populations,’ which would include the low income populations served by community colleges like Mercer. In particular they tend to give money within the state of New Jersey and they offer continuing support, not just seed-money for start-up costs.”

It turns out that The Robert Wood Johnson Foun- dation is still offering the same types of grants, includ- ing one called “Roadmaps to Health: Community Grants” which will award 20 grants of up to 200,000 dollars each to be spent over four years for projects that “span multiple sectors and perspectives [in- cluding] business, education, public health, health care, community organizations, public policy, advocates, foundations, and policy-makers. Applicants must engage community members in the planning and implementation of projects, and must collaborate with organizations having exper- tise in improving the health of the public.”

While Mercer stu- dents’ reactions to the new nurse are mixed, in inter- views with The VOICE many note the unusual fact that the college has a well-regarded nursing program but has, until now, offered no nursing services for many years. One student who noted the dis- crepancy is second-year Cu- tinology major Amber Hin- shaw who told The VOICE “I’m glad that [the new nurse] is here at least 4 times [this semester]. It seems kind of odd that there’s no nurse or any kind of health profes- sional on campus particularly considering we have a nurs- ing program here.”

The new nurse will be available on the West Windsor campus from 10-2 pm in room SC 236 on April 12, 26, and May 10.
To raise money for Special Olympics, a dip in the icy Atlantic

By Noelle Gilman
Reporter

Richard H. (he asked not to have his full name used for this article) doesn’t shake hands nor does he touch Mercer’s computer keyboards. Instead, he has grown accustomed to giving awkward fist bumps for greetings and wearing mechanic’s gloves to face the computers and quiet his fear of germs.

Richard struggles with paranoia, the result of both a family member’s mental illness and several traumatic encounters with the police when he was younger. At the slightest sound outside his home, he checks both doors and windows.

Despite these fears, however, Richard, who goes by the stage name Henry the Archer (also the name of the protagonist in a book he is currently writing) has chosen a career that forces him to maintain a very public persona. He is a well-regarded musician who performs live and has also received recognition for his work on an international scale.

Richard, who is a full-time corporate security manager and second-year Education major at Mercer began writing music at the age of sixteen. Recently, his indie-folk-Americanica music was used in a commercial for MTV’s “Teen Mom 2,” reality show which chronicles the lives of teenage girls from all over the country.

His music has also been used in a commercial for Stella Cove, a brand of high-end beachwear sold in North America and Europe.

In discussing he started as a musician at sixteen, Richard says, “[That year], my best friend went on a...trip to Florida. While she was gone, I felt like a part of me was missing. I realized I liked her-liked her, so I traded someone my roller blades for a guitar so I could write her a song. I haven’t stopped writing songs since.”

Love continues to inspire his music, however, his lyrics are no longer so optimistic. The subject of “Not Just Yet,” off his first album “Space Suits For the Modern Astronaut,” speaks of the moment when one realizes they’ve had enough of trying to make a relationship work. The upbeat tempo of guitar strums, accompanied by tambourine jingles, hand claps, and whistles, are an ironic, yet triumphant, musical pair to the song’s lyrics “I’ll wait no more...it’s not your heart to break: no more/That’s right, I’m over you.”

It is the mix of serious versus whimsical tone that Caitlin Bensel likes about his music. She is a former classmate of Richard’s and is very involved in the Special Olympics. “He’s a really genuine person and is very involved in the Special Olympics, in several embarrassing moments across campus in the ES building and the library. The solution proposed by several interviewed for the article was a simple one, get a second machine and put one next to each set of printers.

Two days after the article hit news stands word came from the Dean of Liberal Arts that the college’s administrators have decided to install a Vend Print card dispenser in the Library and move the Vend Print card dispenser currently installed in the Student Center to the ES Building.

They are still sorting out the details but you can count on The VOICE to continue its coverage of this story.

Look for a follow up article in our May issue.

By Sierra Downs
Senior Reporter

Nearly 6,000 beach-goers gathered on the coast of the Jersey shore on February 25, 2012 to participate in the “Polar Bear Plunge.” By jumping through treacherous winter waves and bearing the freezing, bone-chilling winds in Seaside Heights, avid supporters of the Special Olympics of New Jersey raised well over 14 million dollars for the non-profit organization, according to their official website, www.soj.org.

Seaside Heights was the fourth plunge for second-year Mercer student Clant Coleman, a Hotel Restaurant and Institutional Management major. “It’s really not as bad as it sounds,” says Coleman. “You’re only in the water [for] a few seconds, and it’s a total adrenaline rush. So great.”

Coleman explains that his good friend and roommate, who participates and is very involved in the Special Olympics, is a huge part of his inspiration. His other compelling reason to jump into the freezing ocean simply comes, he says, from “the Special Olympics in general.”

The Special Olympics of New Jersey provides year-round sports training and Olympic-type competition in 24 sports for more than 22,000 children and adults with intellectual disabilities. Thanks to numerous fundraisers, all training and events are offered completely free of charge.

“I definitely would recommend that other students and staff take the plunge,” explains Coleman. “It is just an awesome experience for a great cause.”

Second-year Mercer student and Liberal Arts major Dan Povio agrees. “The [Polar Bear Plunge helps] to fund the events and training for the athletes, so it’s all for a really great cause.”

Povio, who has participated on his brother, Nick Povio’s team for the last two years, took the “plunge” in Wildwood this past January.

“Our team was sponsored by Beach Haus Beer [a local brewery]. The atmosphere at the Polar Bear Plunge is fantastic. Police Departments and Fire Companies from around the state always participate and raise tons for the plunge.

Both of the plunges are sponsored by the Law Enforcement Torch Run, a volunteer effort by the Law Enforcement community of New Jersey to raise funds and awareness for Special Olympics New Jersey. The Law Enforcement Torch Run for Special Olympics New Jersey raised more than $2.7 million in 2011.

According to Povio, the Polar Bear Plunge is distinct from other traditional fundraisers in “one quintessential way.” “[It] ends with jumping in the freezing cold Atlantic in the middle of winter!”

“Anyone who doesn’t mind a few moments of shaking cold and general discomfort should absolutely try to participate in the Polar Bear Plunge,” claims Povio. “It’s a really great event supporting an organization that pays the funds you raise to great use.”
Homeless youth benefit from local charity ride

500 miles, seven days, 180 cyclists: a benefit ride from Staunton, VA to Trenton, NJ

By Jamie Strickland

"It's hard when you are cold and don't have a place to sleep at night and know you can't go home," said Felix Green, outreach counselor at Anchor House, an organization that has been helping homeless and at risk youth and their families since 1978.

Prior to calling Anchor House his employer, Green called it his haven. As a youth, he was not able to live with his parents or count on them for support. According to Green, he spent time in two out of the five Anchor House programs: The Anchor Link, which is a street outreach program for ages 18-21, and The Anchorage, a housing program for young adults.

"It was hard," said Green.

"How do you trust strangers when you can't even trust your own family?"

After making it through the Anchor house programs, Green's counselors thought he would be a perfect addition to their staff and encouraged him to apply. He has been a live-in counselor at the Anchor House for seven years now.

Along with counseling, Green also participates in the Ride for Runaways, a seven-day, 500 mile bike ride that raises money for the Anchor House.

This year's application for the Ride for Runaways shows that all participants are required to pay a 100 dollar application fee and raise a minimum of 750 dollars in pledges. Kathy Drulis, the ride coordinator, said 78 percent of the proceeds go to the Anchor House, and the remaining 30 percent covers the costs needed to organize the ride, which includes hotels, equipment costs and transportation.

When asked if he thought the Anchor House benefited from the ride Green said, "A whole lot. Money is one thing, but it also brings awareness to the House itself."

Green began as support staff for the ride, making sure everyone stayed hydrated, assisting with supplies and even luggage. For the last two years he rode in the fundraiser himself. According to Green, to get him started, the other riders helped him get a bike and train for the ride. "They not only helped me during the race but year-round," said Green.

To get ready for this year's race, which will start in July, Green said he will begin training mid-March when the weather is a little warmer. He will build his stamina by riding his bike 20 miles a day during the weekends to build up to the 50 miles a day he will have to do once the fundraiser begins.

While riding, he only thinks about five miles at a time so he doesn't get overwhelmed. Green will also have to get used to riding among obstacles again such as traffic, people and open car doors. Last year while riding he reached speeds of 50 mph so he doesn't get overwhelmed. As a youth, he was not able to live with his parents or count on them for support. According to Green, he spent time in two out of the five Anchor House programs: The Anchor Link, which is a street outreach program for ages 18-21, and The Anchorage, a housing program for young adults.

For the last two years he rode in the ride coordinator, said 78 percent of the proceeds go to the Anchor House, and the remaining 30 percent covers the costs needed to organize the ride, which includes hotels, equipment costs and transportation.

"I love helping people," said Lorenzetti. "I especially love helping children. When you help others, not only do they feel good, but you do as well."

To learn more about Anchor House or apply for the Ride for Runaways visit www.anchorhouseride.org

ANCHOR HOUSE support staff member Felix Green rides 68.3 miles through Virginias, West Virginia and Maryland to Hagerstown, Md during the 2011 Ride for Runaways.

PHOTO COURTESY OF MARTIN GRIFF

Are Mercer students ready for inhalable caffeine?

By Emily Lukaszewycz

Elissa Atabala, a first year Communications major and transfer from Texas, has found it difficult to fit all of her school work into her daily life. Early in her college career, she encountered family issues that affected her ability to study.

"My grandmother was hospitalized while I was taking four classes. Everything seemed to just pile on. I was even sleeping and studying in the hospital because I couldn't leave," she said. She added, "I [stay up all night] probably at least two or three times a week," she said.

How does she get by on so little sleep? "I usually drink about four Cokes or two Red Bulls every time I stay up all night," said Atabala. "Not to mention what I drink to get me through the next day of classes."

Caffeine is the go to substance for worn out college students, but even more so for community college students who typically work and go to school simultaneously. In a survey of 50 Mercer students, 34 of them said that they have stayed up all night to complete assignments for class, and 20 prefer to use coffee as their main source of energy during these long nights.

The college's administrators seem to have gotten hip to the demand for caffeine going so far as to install a dedicated Red Bull machine in the cafeteria as reported in the VOICE's February article which explained how the print vend machine was moved to make way for the Red Bull.

Recently, an even more intense and quick way to get the same intake of caffeine has become available in the form of "inhaleable" caffeine.

David Edwards, a Harvard medical engineer, invented AeroShot, a new inhaler that delivers "puffs" of powdered caffeine onto the tongue, where it is instantly absorbed, according to Maia Stalzavits, a neuroscience journalist, in her article "What We've Been Waiting For: Zero Calorie, "Inhaleable" Caffeine" that appeared in Time magazine.

While 32 of the 50 Mercer students surveyed said they would not try this new quick fix, Kenneth Layton, a second year Communications student, says that he would.

Layton is taking five classes and, he says, "I have a full time job during the day, so the only time I have to study starts at 10 at night."

For those who aren't ready to try the AeroShot, black tea may be a better option than coffee as a typical cup contains 90 milligrams of caffeine, compared to the 60 milligrams in a typical cup of coffee.
Local pet cemetery offers solace to grieving families

The headstone for K-9 Smokey is placed in the front and center of the memorial for deceased service animals. In the background a statue of a service dog can be seen memorializing those who have served.

By Amber Stewart

Before leaving the house everyday, 63-year-old Marie Nock smiles as she walks past the picture frame holding the beloved photo of Peaches, her Pomeranian and Collie mixed pup which reminds her of all the good times they shared together.

On one occasion Peach- es saved Marie's life. Marie had fainted due to a heart condition while at home. At the time Marie was by herself with Peaches and the dog found a way to bark loud enough to alert neighbors and family members living on the same street. The Paramedics told Marie that it was not for Peaches licking and scratching her in the face to keep her conscious, she would have eventually passed.

On Mother's Day of 2009, Peaches passed away at the age of 105 in dog years (15 human years) and was cremated at the Pet Meadows Memorial Park and Crematorium off of Klockner Road in Hamilton Township. After a short moment of silence in deep reverse of her furry companion of fifteen years, Marie began to discuss her choice to use a pet cemetery for Peaches. “Pet Meadows was very caring towards the whole situation and my family.” She also said that she had stayed there along with immediate family members prior to the cremation for several hours to say their final ‘goodbyes’. Pet Meadow Memorial Park has over 9 decades of experience with grievance and the loss of family pets.

According to Debra Bo- jorling the director of Pet Meadows Memorial Park and Crematorium, “The cemetery has been around since 1921, and my moth- er and her sister Linda Makkay brought it in 1998 and it has been a family business ever since.”

There is evidence that displays the Memorial Park and Crematorium’s rich history with a tombstone titled “Beauty” which has been there since the early 1920s. In addition to the older burials there is also a special sec- tion of Pet Meadows that is dedi- cated to service animals such as dogs who work with police K-9 units. Some of these animals have been lost in the line of duty.

Bojorling describes her job saying, “[It] is rewarding when helping families get through the loss of their pets, along with offering ways to remember their pet’s memory.”

The six acre resting site also includes an on site crematory, a viewing room, and private buri- al upon request. There are also po- ems that are available within the viewing room that can be used during the eulogy of the private burial service.

Expenses for funeral services can include a customized casket, head stone, preparations of the remains and other arrange- ments such as flowers or private burial services.

When asked what was the most that a customer spent on their beloved pet’s funeral ar- rangedment at Pet Meadows, Bojorling said it was approximately 4,000 dollars. Pet Meadows offers contacts for pet bereavement coun- seling, along with various books such as “The Loss of a Pet: A New Revised Edition,” by Wallace Sife, Ph.D.

On the website for Pet Meadows there is a link that al- lows clients to leave a memorial comment about their pet. One typical note reads, “Dear Psycho I miss you very much, when every- one would leave to go to work ev- eryday you would come in by me cause you didn’t like to be alone. I still look for you and I miss talk- ing to you during the day. I feel alone without you and I miss you so very much. –Grandma, the Roa Family.”

There are currently fifteen different Pet Cemeteries within the state of New Jersey, however, Pet Meadows is the oldest known pet cemetery in the state.
COMMUNITY FOCUS

solace to grieving families

A peaceful pond has been constructed in front of a large headstone showing a depiction of the deceased pet. This memorial is more grand than many designed for humans, showing just how much pets mean to all of us as members of our family.

The grave marker for Fluffy Kee Kat is simpler than many at the Pet Meadow, but the family of this beloved feline has adorned the grave with objects -- including a half buried scratching post -- from their cat’s life.

This grave stone is one of the older ones in the cemetery dating back to 1964. Behind it lie even more graves, some dating back to the 1920's.

The grave for Peppy is almost ten years old and shows signs of care. The family brings new toys for Peppy, presumably to keep him happy even in the afterlife.

PET INFORMATION


“Three-quarters of dog owners consider their dog like a child or family member and more than half of cat owners say the same.”

-“It’s ‘Reigning’ Cats and Dogs: How Many Pets Are in the U.S.?” www.petplace.com

There are approximately 78.2 million owned dogs in the United States. There are approximately 86.4 million owned cats in the United States.

-The following statistics were compiled from the American Pet Products Association 2011-2012 National Pet Owners Survey (humanesociety.org)

95% of cat owners admit they talk to their cats.

J. Cole, David Rush and African rhythms inspire Alpha Diop’s music

Mercer student Alpha Diop, an aspiring rap artist, has been mentored by J. Cole and others.

By Julissa Guadagni
Senior Reporter

Mercer student Alpha Diop, a Communications major from North Brunswick, NJ who goes by the stage name ADH, has been rapping for five years and has created and produced three mixtapes: “Tristate Dilemma,” “Stay in Good Company” and “I Am.”

After “I Am,” he says that people became more aware of his work. He was heard by rapper David Rush whose work has been promoted by the famous rapper turned record producer Pitbull. Diop says, “[I Am] caught the eye of Pitbull’s artist, David Rush [who is represented by Universal Republic Records and Mr. 305 Inc.]. Once he heard that we linked up, did a couple songs.”

It turns out that Rush is not the first celebrity to hear Diop’s music. Diop’s cousin knows famous rap artist J Cole before Cole became famous. The cousin helped Cole when he was working on his mixtape “The Come Up” and later asked him to listen to Diop’s songs.

Diop said, “Maybe four months ago, before I released Alpha, [my cousin] let me know, ‘Yo, I let Cole hear ‘Bionic Man,’” which is the song on my LP, and Cole gave me some advice on it.” He adds that J. Cole told him, “The flow is dope, the beat is crazy. He felt like the song was hot but it didn’t take him to another level where it blew his mind. And that’s very understandable when you listen to his sound. Every four bars is different, whether it’s in his beats of lyrics, it changes. So the song was a little too moderate, it didn’t peak really. So you know I found it as a compliment. So I’m taking his advice on everything we work on.”

While working on Alpha, Diop took this semester off and went to Africa where he recorded beats and some of his music video for his song “BAM.” In the video, Diop is seen playing the African drums which can be heard in the background.

His lyrics are typical of the hip hop genre, but his music pushes further, including the unusual rhythms with the electric guitar; all these sounds together separate him from other rappers. When asked what’s his favorite things to rap about are, Diop says, “Everyday life, everyday occurrences, like personal experiences. Sometimes I like to write from another point of view and sometimes when I hear that music I hear like, ‘Oh snap that’s like me.’”

He goes on to say, “I like telling other people’s stories, I like making up stories, my own little world kinda. Most of my lyrics come from a personal place, either coming from me or someone or something that I know.”

Diop was born into music because his father is an international artist who was signed to SONY/Electra and his mother is his motivation.

He says, “It’s crazy because she never really liked when I was rapping, she’d be like ‘What are you doing? Like, get yourself together.’ [Later] she’d give me the mom pep talk. She would listen to someone on the radio and be like ‘No, you sound 10 times better than that.’ But just her confidence and how she believes in me inspires me and coming from a musical background, it was kinda like I was born to make music in any kind of way.”

Diop says he understands that it is a competitive field to get into, but he feels that with his motivation and the great opportunities he’s had so far, the future is looking promising.
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we are all in NJ but...

Do Mercer students look like Princeton students? Can you tell which are which?

Think you know who is who? Check your work online at: www.mcccvoice.org
Since last April I have lost over 94 pounds using the Weight Watchers point system. The real challenge has been to find the right foods, ones that have a manageable number of points. This has become even more challenging whenever I have tried to find food in MCCC’s cafeteria.

On a typical day this semester I was hungry and went to the cafeteria for a salad. I used my Weight Watchers bar code app to learn the number of points for a serving of the available salad dressings. Unfortunately the only low-fat dressing was a flavor that did not interest me. A serving of the Italian dressing they were offering was 4 Weight Watchers points. Currently my points limit is 45 points a day and for many others in my program it is just 26 or 29 points per day. In contrast, at Wendy’s, Burger King and Arby’s I usually can find a dressing that only has a value of 1 or 2 points.

One of the nice things about our cafeteria is that you can get a custom made sandwich or wrap but unfortunately the line can get very long. Sometimes I may only have time to grab a pre-made sandwich or wrap from the sandwich case but unfortunately there is not much variety. You can get an Italian hoagie but not an Italian wrap. You can get a smaller Kaiser club sandwich with ham or turkey but not roast beef. At both the sandwich concession and the refrigerator, wheat hoagies are nowhere to be found.

According to cafeteriast General Manager Frank DiBella, many of these healthier alternatives such as whole wheat hoagies and wheat pizza crust at the pizza station have been slow movers when the cafeteria has offered them in the past.

“We have a very intricate register system that tracks each serving of food when it’s purchased and how many are purchased, so we have a history of what’s called a menu mix and that tells you the popularity of foods,” DiBella said. “Said wheat rolls weren’t selling as well as Kaiser rolls.”

DiBella says, “We get account daily of what our menu mix is. Who’s buying how much of what.”

This means if healthy option is not popular it will likely get cut. DiBella went on to explain, “The popularity of an item doesn’t dictate whether we back on it or not. We will try different things again. But if we have a failure rate on a specific item on a regular basis, we tend not to continue to offer that.”

The cafeteria has added specialty food stations over the past few years, such as the Mongolian Grill. Some of these provide healthier options but they are daily or weekly rotating concepts, making it hard to plan when you’re thinking about how to allot your daily points.

Sometimes you see nutrition experts on TV asking the higher calorie low nutrition foods and beverage options to be eliminated from cafeterias such as the one found here at Mercer. This is not what I’m asking for. I am not just asking for healthier low calorie foods to still be available. Even if I still eat more calorie foods from time to time, but only in moderation, and only when I can justify budgeting points for them.

My feeling is shared by John Kalinowski, coordinator of Mercer’s nutrition programs as well as the Exercise Science Program. "[This] makes Fluke a slut, right? It makes her a prostitute.”

But of course, Limbaugh offered a solution to those wild and crazy women suggesting coverage for contraception, “Have you ever thought of not having sex so often?”

Contrary to Limbaugh’s opinion that one should simply be having “lots and lots of sex” if the rule is instated, Stephen Colbert, host of the Colbert Report, pointed out that Limbaugh doesn’t seem to understand how the process actually works. “Yes, because that’s the only reason one should have sex for one for sperm.”

As Fluke noted, oral contraceptives are often prescribed for the prevention of heart disease, as well as health related reasons for prescribed birth control, such as preventing the growth of ovarian cysts.

As Fluke noted, oral contraceptives are often prescribed for the prevention of heart disease, as well as health related reasons for prescribed birth control, such as preventing the growth of ovarian cysts.

Contraception is something a woman has to pay for every time she has sex,” he said.

According to an article published on March 2 by MSNBC reporter Julie Appleby, Insurers wrote to the Department of Health and Human Services in September saying that “it is unclear what specific over-the-counter products are to be included.”

However, Stewart has agreed personally that his disobedience was not clear what specific over-the-counter products are to be included.

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Dear Sick,

- Sick & Broke

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The voice... the college... the college

Jan. 21 - Feb. 19

When you learned how to drive you felt totally free. Nowadays time spent in cars, busses and other forms of transportation may feel oppressive. Try listening to music to make the rides more endurable.

Dec. 22 - Jan. 19

When was the last time you took any time for yourself? You've cooked, you've cleaned, you've kept things running smoothly for everyone else. Now it's time for that massage you need.

Aquarius

Jan. 20 - Feb. 18

When was the last time you took any time for yourself? You've cooked, you've cleaned, you've kept things running smoothly for everyone else. Now it's time for that massage you need.

Pisces

Mar. 20 - Apr. 19

The most heartbreaking part of everything that has happened to you lately is that no one knows how much you've been struggling. It's okay to share your woes with a trusted friend.

Aries

Mar. 21 - Apr. 19

That resolution you made back at New Years may not be panning out. Don't admit defeat just yet, just reevaluate your goal. If all you wanted was to feel healthy maybe it is okay to lose 5 lbs instead of 10.

Leo

Jul. 23 - Aug. 22

You've let yourself indulge some bad habits lately and you will need will power to turn things around. The good news is you have more strength and willpower than any one you know.

Jan. 20 - Feb. 18

Although you may not know it, there is someone in your life who thinks you are attractive, funny and smart and who loves you. You can pick up the phone when all of a sudden that friend calls.

Scorpio

Oct. 23 - Nov. 21

You have been out of touch with a friend and now you have a chance to reconnect. You may feel bad that you let the friendship lapse but don't worry. You can pick up where you left off.

Cancer

Jun. 21 - Jul. 22

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Taurus

Apr. 20 - May 20

You've been open to new adventures for ages, but nothing exciting ever comes your way. All that is about to change. Get ready for a wild ride!

Gemini

May 21 - Jun. 20

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Virgo

Aug. 23 - Sept. 22

Daydreams keep you from focussing on the present and part of you feels guilty for being distracted. Forgive yourself, those dreams are a better place for your thoughts right now.

Libra

Sept. 23 - Oct. 22

Fertility comes in many forms and it will surely find you this month. You can expect to see the fruits of your labor before summer comes. With new life comes new responsibilities.

Sagittarius

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You've been open to new adventures for ages, but nothing exciting ever comes your way. All that is about to change. Get ready for a wild ride!

Jun. 21 - Jul. 22

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Virgo

Aug. 23 - Sept. 22

Daydreams keep you from focussing on the present and part of you feels guilty for being distracted. Forgive yourself, those dreams are a better place for your thoughts right now.

Libra

Sept. 23 - Oct. 22

Fertility comes in many forms and it will surely find you this month. You can expect to see the fruits of your labor before summer comes. With new life comes new responsibilities.

Sagittarius

Nov. 22 - Dec. 21

When you learned how to drive you felt totally free. Nowadays time spent in cars, busses and other forms of transportation may feel oppressive. Try listening to music to make the rides more endurable.