The complex world of prostitution in Trenton

The drug trade may fuel the local sex trade, but it is hardly the only cause

By Laura Pollack, Jamie Strickland
Senior Reporters

In a year when the Violence Against Women Act is once more being discussed in Washington and individuals like Malala Yousafzai are making headlines around the globe, what is the status of sex workers on our streets here in Trenton?

“I might have a 23 year old who’s living at home, can’t find a job, and she’s prostituting on Saturday nights for money,” says Ellen Veagle, Director of Counseling and Support Center at Women’space, a local non-profit that aids women who are victims of sexual and domestic abuse. She continues “but [that women] may be a trauma survivor, so I’m trying to make her stop doing that, but I can’t get her money for car insurance...You’re dealing with all of these levels of oppression.”

In an interview with The VOICE, Veagle explained that there are several economic and psychological factors that drive a woman into sex work. Veagle explains that these women are trauma survivors, victims of sexual abuse, drug addicts, or women who just need to make enough money to provide for themselves and their children.

PROSTITUTION IN TRENTON

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Mercer students rolling with “molly”

By Stephen Harrison, Ken Napier & James Reardon-Wells

Senior Reporters

"It peaks for probably 3 hours, 4 hours, where you're rolling face and everything that you touch just feels like an orgasm... the sensation of other people is just ridiculous," says Mercer student Stewart, describing the sensation of the height of a MDMA high, which is referred to by users as "rolling."" 

MDMA is short for Methyleneoxy- methamphetamine, and colloquially known as Molly when in powder or crystalline form. According to a CNN article by Marina Carson from Aug. 2012 entitled "There’s something (potentially dangerous) about Molly," the term "molly"—name shortened from molecule—is thought of as 'pure' MDMA. When pressed into pill form, it is known as Ecstasy, though in this form it is frequently cut with other benign substances or other drugs.

MDMA is typically taken in pill form (by placing the powder inside of an empty gelcap) or by "parachuting" the drug, which involves placing the powder inside a small piece of tissue and swallowing it whole. Less frequently the drug is snorted, diluted in water and taken orally, smoked or taken through an IV. No matter the form, MDMA is a Schedule I controlled substance on DEA's controlled substance list.

"In the last 16 or 18 months the MDMA use just everywhere has definitely gone up," says Stewart.

In a VOICE survey of thirty Mercer students, fifteen said they had used illegal drugs while enrolled at Mercer, fourteen said they had attended class or been on campus while under the influence of illegal drugs, and three said they had purchased drugs while on campus.

Among students interviewed by the VOICE about drug use on campus, MDMA (in particular Molly) was believed to be among the most abused illicit substances along with Marijuana and prescription pills.

A Mercer student, Edward (he asked not to have his full name used), said he used Marijuana, MDMA and LSD. "Marijuana here at Mercer is extremely popular. LSD not as much, but Molly full-time job, we are all over," Edward said.

The popularity of MDMA is evident to Nigel (he also asked to have his last name withheld), a Mercer student who sells marijuana. "MDMA? People go out of their way to get it," he says. When asked specifically about students at Mercer he replied "People ask me all the fucking time if I know where Molly is." According to sociology professor Denise Ingram, who teaches a class on the sociology of drug use, "We have a student population who [MDMA] would regard themselves as smokers, considering the type of drug it is and the environment that [Mercer] is. It think it [MDMA] use might actually be facilitated by the amount of pressure that the students feel on a day to day basis."

When the VOICE asked Stewart why he felt that Mercer students used MDMA, he said "just for shits and gigs.

According to a survey conducted by The VOICE, students at Mercer County Community College are more likely to work longer hours at a job outside of school than students at local 4 year universities such as The College of New Jersey.

Jose Rodriguez, a student and Vice President of Student Government Association at Mercer and full time employee at Horizon Blue Cross/Blue Shield, said that, instead of limiting his productivity, his hyper-busy schedule helps him to stay on track. "Me personally, I'm a procrastinator. If don't feel pressed, I won't get things done. I think it's actually helpful to have a schedule where I'm pressed."

The survey also found that students at community colleges have much more in terms of obligations to things such as work and family versus students at four year universities.

"It's all about selling it to your employer that it's good to have an educated employer," said Rodriguez about convincing your employer to allow for a work schedule that can coexist with your school schedule. "With my job, they're pretty flexible with my schedule, but obviously there are times that I am worrying about getting everything done." Rodriguez guessed that, working security, being a student, and representing the student body, he works between 50 and 70 hours a week.

Even with all the hours worked at school and outside, Rodriguez believes that it is better to work while you are a student. "I suggest working when you go to school," Rodriguez said. "It's a lot cheaper long-term."

"It's a higher-functioning substance—you still can think and whatnot," After telling The VOICE about students "tripping" in Physics class, Edward told of his stance on such activities. "Substance abuse and school don't really go hand in hand that well, but you know every once in awhile, it turns out okay.

Mercer students work more than peers at four-year colleges

The number of hours that Mercer students work outside jobs affects on their academic prospects

By Zac Santanello and Dan Povio

Senior Reporters

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Sex workers in Trenton struggle to escape the life

Continued from page 1

That's why people cut, or drink, or use, and the sex serves the same function. It's a complete distraction even though it's retraumatizing them it feels like something they need to do sometimes.

Not all women who get involved in prostitution do so because of trauma. According to Veagle, the economy is also a factor because "people really don't have money."

"We're just seeing more common everyday women prostituting because they're desperate for money..." she said.

Alison Daks, Coordinator of Sexual Assault Services at Womenspace, said, "There are lots of women who get money for sex because they need to pay for things for their kids. There's lot of different ways that it can happen, and it looks very different."

Daks said.

GETTING OUT

Leaving the sex work industry presents numerous challenges.

According to Daks at Womenspace, "One of the barriers is getting out of prostitution and human trafficking is not an easy step. It could be dangerous and we understand that and that's one of the reason that Womenspace and some other agencies around the state have really started to look at human trafficking as a component of the work that we do."

She continued, "It takes a long time. It's not easy. Our hotline is available to talk that through with. It is confidential. It can be anonymous if people don't wanna give their name. We do whatever is necessary to keep the person safe."

Womenspace offers counseling for women along with providing emergency shelter for those who need a safe place to stay. Through the 2010-2011 fiscal year, Wentworth had 35 women in their emergency shelter.

According to Daks, everyone who stays in the shelter has their own room and is able to get treatment for whatever they need. "They work with a case manager on whatever narrative they may have. So it may be looking for housing, applying for social services if they're eligible... if they need medical attention we would work with them on that. It really is dependent on what individual the person needs," she said.

The women do not have to be out of prostitution or the abusive relationship in order to go to Womenspace. "If they need a place where they're ready or it's safe for them to stop doing that they don't have to do that in order to come for counseling services," said Daks.

Womenspace does ask for the police to pay for what the women can, but no one is turned away because they don't have the money and they report that only 25 percent are able to pay.

"If somebody wanted to meet with a team member they can do so by going to another of the local police departments and ask to speak with a domestic violence response team member who can then talk about their options and help them with some safety planning," Daks said.

According to a survey conducted by the VOICE on December 5th, 2012, students seem to be satisfied with the Wi-Fi on campus. When asked to rate the connection on campus, 75 percent rated it as pretty good or excellent, 18 percent said it is fair and 31 percent feels it is poor or very poor.

At present, the places on campus where students can enjoy a strong Wi-Fi signal include the Student Center and Library. The second floor Student Success Center has little to no signal. The bookstore has a great connection, however, it is impractical to store the bookstore to do work online.

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"One of my non-thinking moments was, like really dumb-dumb moments is, I met this guy at the [strip] club, he was like, 'Hey you want to go out?' and I'm like, 'Yeah let's go out.' I mean kind of like, you know we did previ- ous dates... He introduced me to godiva choco- lates, which I ended up being addicted to. Like he really got me addicted to them... They were delicious. They were happiness in a little gold wrapper. They were great for me. So it's like yeah we're gonna go to New York, we're gonna get a room, we're gonna do this this and that. And I'm like 'This is going to be awesome!' My dumbass, being 18 or 19 and not thinking. Don't be having a good time, we did some stuff around the room, whatever, but then he leaves and like locks me in the room for 4 or 5 hours."

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To see the rest of this interview visit mcccvoice.org

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INFOGRAPHIC | MATTHEW GRANT ARNOLD

"SARAH" TALKS ABOUT HER EXPERIENCES AS A PROSTITUTE IN TRENTON:

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"VOICE: Did he tell you where he was going?

"No, there was no I'll be right back, nothing. For all I know he coulda went and got the chainsaw and came back and cut me up, but at the time I wasn't even thinking... I was bound, because he was into bondage and everything, luckily for me he came back...after a very long time."

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The Mercer fitness center is free to students and staff, costs $35 per month for locals and includes a multi-purpose workout area for strength training and cardio, a swimming pool, and large basketball gymnasium. The VOICE set out to review the school’s fitness center and to see how it stacks up to other area gyms.

In terms of convenience, Mercer’s fitness center certainly can’t be beat. It is located on the West Windsor Campus, right across from the Communications building and Kelsey Theatre, and has its own parking area that backs up to the tennis courts and Mercer County Park just beyond.

The price is also right, especially for students, but the school is evidently counting on most students not using the facility because it couldn’t possibly handle the needs of even a fraction of Mercer’s 9,000+ students. The cardio and weights area has a capacity of 35 people, the pool only has three lap swim lanes, and Zumba and yoga are the only two fitness classes offered. While the pool and basketball courts in the gym are recently renovated and well maintained, the equipment in the main workout room is old and dingy and there are not enough weights for serious lifters.

Second year Criminal Justice major, Shane Miller, who used to be on the baseball team, said of the fitness center: “There was enough stuff to use to get a good cardio workout as a team, but there clearly isn’t enough to get a good lift in. No way I would go here on my own time when I could just go to the gym in my town.”

Dedicated body-builder Matt Delgado, a second year Mercer student, has attended both Pennington Swing Athletic Center (PEAC) and Mercer’s fitness center to workout. He says that PEAC is far superior to in terms of space, variety, and equipment. “It’s not even close,” said Delgado.

Here’s a basic comparison: PEAC has three free weight flat benches and Mercer has one. PEAC has over 50 aerobic machines, Mercer has 20. Mercer has four yoga balls, PEAC has hundreds.

Mercer’s main fitness center and pool have been run for the past five years by Mike DeAngelis who is also the women’s soccer assistant coach and teaches Health and Physical Education (HPE) classes at Mercer. DeAngelis told The VOICE, “We plan to add more free weight equipment and a few more treadmills.”

The trouble is, there’s just not enough space to add much more equipment to the main cardio and weights room. The room would have to be expanded into adjacent areas in order to make it competitive with even the low cost local gyms such as Retro in Hamilton and WoW (Work out Work) in Robbinsville.

When asked what he thinks of Mercer’s facilities compared to local fitness centers, Mike DeAngelis said, “We don’t have all the bells and whistles. Robert Wood Johnson has, but this gym has everything to offer and our swimming pool sets us apart. Not many gyms offer that swimming pool.”

It is certainly true that the low cost gyms like Retro do not offer a pool. And high end centers that do have pools, like Students, faculty and staff are able to use Mercer’s fitness center without additional charge.

SPORTS

REVIEW: Mercer fitness center vs. the competition

By Kyle Kondor
Reporter

By Steven Bassin
Reporter

What looked to be a season of disappointment and failure turned around for the Mercer men’s Vikings soccer team that ended the season with a regional championship. The Vikings soccer team is lead by first year coach Widmarc Dalce. Dalce comes from Haiti. He was a member of the Haitian soccer team in 1991 and 1993 and graduated with an associate’s degree from Mercer County Community College in 1998 with a degree in humanities and social sciences. Dalce was also a member of the Mercer Vikings soccer team in 1997 under coach Charlie Inverness.

The Vikings started the season 3 and 7 and through its first 10 games and the team seemed to be in turmoil. “The season didn’t start out well for us” said Coach Dalce. “We had a lot of injuries and players playing new positions. This made it tough for us to play well as a team.”

According to Sascha Haeker, a defender on the team, “We just didn’t have everything together on the field.” He added “injuries really added to the problems on the team during the first half of the season. [Also] having guys, especially younger guys, playing new positions made it tough for the team to gel and play together on the field.”

Although the team was 3 and 7, beginning in October, the team rallied to win seven straight games including a win against Burlington County College in the regional XIX finals. This was the team they lost to in the regional finals last season.

“We just kept playing as a team,” said first year player Bumba Baty, erault.

Haeker noted, “Guys came back healthy and we were able to get on a roll…Beating Burlington in regional’s was a high for the sophomore class.”

Losing to those guys last year really put a damper on the season and coming back this year to beat them and to win back the regional championship was very satisfying to all of us on the team.”

For Coach Dalce, the successful rebounding of this season owed to the captains and senior leadership keeping the team together. “Many teams who started out the way we did would give up and throw away the season, but our guys, especially the second year players, kept the team together and kept working to get us back on track.”

After winning the regional championship, the Mercer Vikings moved on the Northeast District championship where they lost 2-0 to Monroe College in a contest that remained tight until the last period.

“It’s really tough to be that close to making it to nationals and lose a game where you completely outplayed the other team” said Coach Dalce.

Haeker said of the game, “At the end of the day we did not capitalize on our opportunities and they did…It would have been nice to make it to nationals. From the start of the season that was our number one goal, but when you look at how our season began and how we finished with winning a regional championship makes this season a successful one and one that I will always be proud to be a part of.”

Men’s soccer coach, Widmarc Dalce, talks to the team during half-time during a fall 2012 game.

THE COLLEGE VOICE | FILE PHOTO

Men’s soccer coach, Widmarc Dalce, talks to the team during half-time during a fall 2012 game.

"In junior college it’s hard to lose second year players to 4-year colleges, especially these players, but you have to look at the freshman coming up and the new players coming in for next year. But that’s how it is in junior college."
Fifty Shades of Grey is a novel by E.L. James, and the latest in a long trend of pop culture universe targets by advertising-yet-sexually incompete- tent teenagers with gender-neutral haircuts as sex icons. Jamie's Fifty Shades trilogy is targeting an older crowd (at least, I hope it is). Jamie's best-seller is the story of a young college student named Anastasia Steele who, by a chance encounter, meets the "control freak" named Christian Grey. Grey is the "mega-industrialist tycoon" of "the enigmatic Grey Empire". The book, was popularly discussed, "feminist nightmare". The story, which was turned into a movie, has become a phenomenon for the kink community to refer to as "theenegrey". The novel is considered one of the most popular books of the 2010s. The story revolves around the relationship between Grey and Steele, the heroine of Fifty Shades. The novel is set in a world where BDSM relationships are the norm, and the main characters, Grey and Steele, explore the boundaries of their relationship.

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This semester, students in the Hotel, Restaurant, and Institution Management program have presented several “restaurants” in the eatery space in ES 111. They have created meals that can be enjoyed by students, faculty, and the broader community for 8, 10, and 12 dollars respectively. Patrons have been able to enjoy high calibre meals that are far superior to what is offered in the cafeteria while giving Mercer students an opportunity to hone their cooking skills.

The students have offered three meal services throughout the semester. On Mondays the Advanced International Class has been delivering lunches inspired by various regions of the world. Tuesday’s dinners have been prepared by the American Regional Cuisine class, featuring American cuisine, and Tuesday’s lunches have been created by the Food Preparation II class.

Unlike the other two classes, students in Food Preparation II enjoy full creative control of their service, making it the most inventive of the three and certainly worthy of review. “All menu items are created by the class,” said culinary Professor Frank Benowitz. “The students spend the first three weeks proposing dishes and voting on them. Every semester it’s different: different dishes, different themes.”

This semester, the theme chosen by Food Prep II was “Harvest Lunch,” featuring rustic dishes like pumpkin crusted lamb and honey ginger beef. A typical day at the Harvest Lunch was October 23 when The VOICE paid a visit. The “restaurant” space in ES 111 was packed and waits were long but the food was worth it.

First the culinary students offered a bread basket filled with scones. The scones smelled freshly made and were crispy on the outside with a savory seasoning, unfortunately, however, the salty crust overpowered the rest of the flavors. Further, the scones were served with a cranberry maple butter that clashed with the savory quality of the scones themselves.

The appetizer was a pumpkin chili with Kobe beef. The chili was warm and inviting, a light buttery scent wafting from the crock. Every bite revealed the clarity of the flavor and consistency of the pumpkin, tempered by spices and vegetables. The melange was punctuated with lumps of juicy Kobe beef, as the chili beans, already so tender, liquefied with the slightest pressure. The experience of that chili was absolutely the high point of the meal. The entree was pork served on a bed of shredded apple and spiced gnocchi smith apple, with sides of risotto and vegetables. The chop was minimally seasoned, but had been overdone and came out tough, which is too bad, since Prof. Benowitz noted that the pork was locally sourced from Cherry Grove Farm in Lawrenceville and was very high quality.

As for the sides, anyone who enjoys watching cooking competition shows knows that risotto trips up many contestant’s game. The Food Prep II class did a good job with their risotto; it had an element of buttery smoothness, a hint of sweetness. The vegetables featured mostly beets and they would have been overpowered were it not for the fresh pepper which that tempered their severity.

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Desert for this meal was a gingerbread trifle that was exceptionally good. The whipped cream was perfectly light, the custard was rich and just sweet enough and the dense ginger cake was perfectly dark and spicy. This piece of heaven was followed by Local Grover’s Mill coffee to conclude the meal.

According to Prof. Benowitz, student chefs rotate through kitchen duty, meaning that any dish may have been the first attempt of any student. With that in mind and considering the price was only eight dollars, I can overlook a chewy pork chop—especially when it’s part of a four-course meal that included the extraordinarily good chili and trifle.

Student Government President Anderson Monken says he started going to the restaurant last year. “I was astonished to find such good food at such a low price here at Mercer,” Monken told The VOICE. “It was great to discover that I had some dining options.

The Harvest Lunch service has ended for this semester, but Prof. Benowitz said that the program is planning more meal services for the Spring 2013 Semester.
HILLY'S POD RESTAURANT PROVIDES PRICEY PAN-ASIAN PERFECTION

The vibe was like The Jetsons meets Sex in the City. The long room is primarily white with neon accents and a fluorescent effect. A soft plastic red couch sits in the middle of the room. As you enter, the bar is just a few steps down take you into the dining area where different seating options are available depending on the size of your group. Elevated along the wall to your right are built Princeton's PJ's Pancakes shi bar with a conveyor belt of sausage links and stool seating. There are "pods" for larger groups to the left is a su pod customer Eileen Hope from Newtown Pennsylvania. According to first time customer Eileen Hope, from Newtown Pennsylvania, "absolutely." said Hope. "The meat was so tender, the fish was very enjoyable. One would think that 28 pieces was plenty for three people, but that was not the case here at Pod. The side of bacon ($4.75) was soft, hot and seemed to be cooked just enough that they were not overcooked or burnt but had a slight crisp texture on the outside. They were soft on the inside and very easy to chew. The side of bacon ($4.75) was served on a large wooden dish with soft shredded crab meat, very enjoyable. One would think that 28 pieces was plenty for three people, but that was not the case here at Pod. The room had a com vibe. The roll was big at the table. The shrimp tempura roll was by far the best. The combination of the crispness of the rice made the roll very enjoyable. I ordered “Pink, “ ($9) a mixture of champagne, pineapple and cranberry juice. It was served in a frosted martini glass with colorful changing lights and stool seating. The bubbles from the champagne were refreshing while the juices gave a sweet, tangy taste. It's definitely a dangerous drink; it tasted more like juice than alcohol. The side of sausage links ($4.75) were very enjoyable. One would think that 28 pieces was plenty for three people, but that was not the case here at Pod. The side of bacon ($4.75) was served on a large wooden dish with soft shredded crab meat, very enjoyable. One would think that 28 pieces was plenty for three people, but that was not the case here at Pod. The side of bacon ($4.75) was soft, hot and seemed to be cooked just enough that they were not overcooked or burnt but had a slight crisp texture on the outside. They were soft on the inside and very easy to chew. The side of sausage links ($4.75) were served on a large wooden dish with soft shredded crab meat, very enjoyable. One would think that 28 pieces was plenty for three people, but that was not the case here at Pod. The side of bacon ($4.75) was soft, hot and seemed to be cooked just enough that they were not overcooked or burnt but had a slight crisp texture on the outside. They were soft on the inside and very easy to chew. The side of sausage links ($4.75) were served on a large wooden dish with soft shredded crab meat, very enjoyable. One would think that 28 pieces was plenty for three people, but that was not the case here at Pod. The side of bacon ($4.75) was soft, hot and seemed to be cooked just enough that they were not overcooked or burnt but had a slight crisp texture on the outside. They were soft on the inside and very easy to chew.
Do students with learning disabilities get the support they need?

By Dan Assis
Senior Reporter

Mercer has a total of 650 of students with unique learning needs. These students have various resources within the college, from tutoring to special accommodations, to help them succeed in their academics. The only thing missing is well prepared professors to handle these students in class.

The VOICE conducted a survey of 16 professors that showed that most of them have never received any specific training by the college to teach classes with students with learning disabilities. When asked how prepared they feel to have these students in class, the professors said that they don’t feel prepared.

“It can be difficult sometimes to take the time to provide the one on one attention often needed. The student may feel left behind,” says a professor who prefers to remain anonymous.

First Thirty Coordinator and professor at Mercer, Dr. Amy Vondrak, told The VOICE that the faculty members attend “Professional Development every semester. “Dr. Vondrak also said that the Support Services Arlene Stinson explained her.

Out of class, students with learning disabilities have some services designed to attend their needs, such as the Learning Center and the DREAM program.

Director of Academic Support Services Arlene Stinson explained that “The learning center sees approximately just under 1000 unduplicated students each semester.” The Support Services Learning Center is open to all MCC students, whether they have a disability or not. Stinson also said that special accommodations can be provided upon proper documentation.

“If the students choose to access support and provide us with documentation from a qualified professional, we can provide academic accommodations including sign language interpreters, extended time for testing, access to calculator and word processor and alternate test formats,” explained Stinson.

Mercer student Dan Woods, a Liberal Arts major, has been enrolled at MCCC since the fall of 2009 after attending Mercer County High School. “I get a mentor for my classes who help me take notes. I also get individual tutoring and in what they call the DREAM program.”

According to Program Director Dr Sue Onaitis, the DREAM program is designed for students with severe developmental disabilities. “The DREAM program is a program for young adults that are typically between the ages of 18 and 25 when their admitted, who have an intellectual disability and want a college experience.”

When needed, class aids are available to assist DREAM students in classes to both take notes and review lessons with them. The program also focuses on building work skills and communication strategies.

Dr Onaitis also said that the advisement center could do much more to steer students to the instructors who are most compatible with their learning needs. “I don’t think anybody tells the students that there is a big difference between ENG 101 the way 1 teach it in an ordinary class and the way other people teach it using word processors.”

Dr. Otten also said that “Certain teachers are much more compatible to give time and help than other people. Not everybody teaches the same way and not everybody looks at students the same way.”

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Chem prof. Oberly Weber offers air of adventure

Adjoint Professor of Physics at Mercer Philip Oberly Weber grew up in Texas and spent 22 years at Continental Airlines where he flew 767’s and 727’s around the world to destinations such as Tokyo, Hawaii, Papua New Guinea and Guam. When asked what the most interesting thing he has seen in his travels might be he responded “[I] stumbled on Japanese Zeros from WWII in the jungles of Papua New Guinea.”

The 59 year old professor says he had his first flying lesson when he was 11, and by 14 he was mowing lawns and painting houses to pay for more flying lessons. In high school he says he flew his buddy and their dates to the junior prom.

Weber and his wife, whom he married in 1989, spent four and a half years living together in Guam and have two adopted children, a Vietnamese boy who is twelve and a Chinese girl who he describes as “eight going on thirty-eight.”

In addition to being a pilot he says he is a master scuba driver trainer, competes nationally in pistol shooting competitions, is an astronomer, and speaks German, Spanish. After 9/11 he was one of an elite group of pilots appointed by the Department of Homeland Security who were Federal flight deck officers trained to carry a firearm in the cockpit.

These days Weber can be found in the classroom rather than in the air. Along with his regular class presentations he offers students words of wisdom gleaned from his many interesting experiences. In Prof Weber’s Physical Concepts class he tells students that “The principles of physics are principles of life.”

Stevenson Michel, a current student or Professor Weber told The VOICE, “I like how he teaches. He’s really cool, makes the class fun. I like the lab experiments.”

Chemistry Professor Michael Dorneman, describes his colleague saying that Prof. Weber is: “A great fellow. He loves his subject matter and this comes out when he’s teaching.”

When Prof. Weber was asked what he would like students to take from his class. His response: “Take your time at everything. Slow down!” – a lesson he seems to be living by leaving his previous high-octane career to come teach at Mercer.

HONORS PROGRAM
Mercer Honors Program includes opportunities for science students interested in conducting serious research. To learn more about Honors visit: www.mccc.edu/programs_degree_honors.shtml

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EDITORIAL: To cure poverty, empower women

During the most recent presidential election cycle, pundits on both sides of the political aisle insisted that voters paid too much attention to “social issues” and not enough attention to economic issues. The truth is that the “social issues” often are economic issues, a fact made clear in our cover page story on the forces driving prostitution in our home town of Trenton, N.J.

In Hanna Rosin’s recent book The End of Sex she argues that women in the United States are enjoying increased standing in society in part because they now make up the majority of those going to college and earning degrees at every level. It is certainly true that more women are going to college and graduating in greater numbers than men—even at Mercer, the student body is 54 percent female—but the status of women in this country is nowhere near as positive as Rosin would have us believe.

There is, in fact, a war being waged against women. Red states have been working hard to curtail access to abortion and contraception through a variety of duplicitous means such as imposing mandatory vaginal ultrasounds for those seeking an abortion (yes, we’re looking at you, Virginia), forcing women to pay for their own forensic testing kits after a rape (Alaska), and shutting down abortion clinics that cannot meet building codes suited for research hospitals (Kansas).

On the one hand, it might seem we can take comfort that Mitt Romney’s “binders full of women” comment and former senator Todd Akin’s “legitimate rape” notion didn’t lead to them getting elected, and women helped give Obama a substantial margin of victory in the presidential election. But plenty of right-wing misogynist nut-jobs found their way back into office, including Paul Ryan, Michelle Bachman and others. There is a broad facade that maintains significant power and seeks to overturn Roe v. Wade and ensure that women enjoy no reproductive autonomy.

Oddly, this is a group that also puts great faith in free market capitalism. In attempting to curtail women’s rights, they are acting against their own interests.

“The best known cure for poverty that we’ve come up with is something called the empowerment of women,” said Christo- pher Hitchens, the late columnist, and author of the Messenger Position, in a 2010 interview with Jeremy Paxman.

“If you give women control over their cycle of reproduction, you don’t keep them chained to an animal cycle,” Hitchens said. His point is a simple one and one that has been borne out when a country liberates women, that country is able to enjoy economic prosperity.

An article in AARP The Journal entitled, “Women As Economic Drivers,” by Melanne Verveer cites a Goldman Sachs study showing that “a reduction in barriers to female labor force participation would increase the size of U.S. economy by a $9.5 trillion in 2012 as compared to the actual product (GDP) by 9 percent, the Euro-Zone’s by 13 percent, and Japan’s by 16 percent.”

There is no shortage of additional data that backs up these claims. According to a study done by the Guttmacher institute, which seeks to “advance sexual and reproductive health through research, policy analysis and public education,” 64 percent of those surveyed said that being able to take birth control allowed them to keep their current jobs or have a career.

The study also said that “Every dollar spent to provide publicly-funded family planning services saves almost $4 that would otherwise have to be spent on pregnancy-related care for the woman and medical care during the first year of the infant’s life.” But as the empowerment of women reduces poverty, the disenfranchisement of women corresponds to economic ruin.

Women in Trenton are not becoming prostitutes because they wake up one day and think “Oh, that looks like fun.” They are trapped by poverty and surrounded by violence.

As Mercer expands its Trenton campus, perhaps it will make education available to some of the women who want to get off the streets. But the college will be forced to grapple with the social traumas and economic pressures facing these women. Mercer will have to decide if it will provide the kinds of health and child care services needed to ensure that our women can make it to class and stay in college long enough to graduate and have a chance at a better life.

New Jersey is a hub of sex trafficking because of its proximity to the I-95 corridor and major metro airports including Newark, Philadelphia and LaGuardia.

According to the US State Department an estimated 1.2 million children, the majority of them girls, are sexually exploited in the multimillion dollar commercial sex industry. An estimated 1.2 million children are trafficked each year (UNICEF).

An estimated 2 million children, the majority of them girls, are sexually exploited in the multimillion dollar commercial sex industry. An estimated 2 million children are trafficked each year (UNICEF).

In the last quarter of 2011, 25 percent of all child sex tourists around the world are U.S. citizens according to the US State Department.

To cure poverty, empower women.
ASK THE VOICE: GOOD ANSWERS TO TOUCH QUESTIONS

Dear VOICE, I’m having my crazy, overly sexual in-laws over for Christmas dinner. What are some things I could say to set them off guard?

Meet The Fockers

Dear Meet,

When they come in for a hug, smack them away and scream “leave room for Jesus!”

-The VOICE

Dear VOICE,

I heard about prostitutes running rampant in Trenton. Is there a brothel on campus?

Hot for Her

Dear Hot,

Not yet, but the Trenton campus is expanding...

-The VOICE

Dear VOICE,

I’m having my 30 year old men selling me dope in the Mercer Cafe.

Sam

Dear Sam,

A man’s gotta eat.

-The VOICE

Dear VOICE,

Why is there an extension of the semester if all of my professors are ending on the original date?

Curious

Dear Curious,

The VOICE Managing Editor Dan Povio on a canoe reading Fifty Shades of Grey.

-The VOICE

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

Classic Peanuts

Capricorn

Dec. 22 - Jan. 19

You may be experiencing a need to start anew. Just keep in mind that good things are coming your way and there is no need to worry.

Virgo

Aug. 22 - Sept. 22

The future is bright, don’t miss out on upcoming opportunities!

Libra

Sept. 23 - Oct. 22

Your life will soon become entangled with a person of mystery. Proceed with caution, they may be harboring a shocking secret!

Scorpio

Oct. 23 - Nov. 21

Charity towards others will be repaid twofold over the holiday season.

Aquarius

Jan. 20 - Feb. 18

Romantic prospects over the winter look bleak, perhaps better luck during the spring season!

Pisces

Feb. 19 - Mar. 20

The future is bright, don’t miss out on upcoming opportunities!

Cancer

Jun. 21 - Jul. 22

A great deal of sadness is on its way.

Leo

Jul. 23 - Aug. 22

Visit an elderly member of your family, every moment together is precious!

Sagittarius

Nov. 22 - Dec. 21

Romantic prospects over the winter look bleak, perhaps better luck during the spring season!

Taurus

Apr. 20 - May 20

Mystical forces are coming to get you.

Gemini

May 21 - Jun. 20

Try not to focus on the things that are stressing you out. Just remember that nothing matters at all.

Sagittarius

Nov. 22 - Dec. 21

Romantic prospects over the winter look bleak, perhaps better luck during the spring season!

Leo

Jul. 23 - Aug. 22

Visit an elderly member of your family, every moment together is precious!

Sagittarius

Nov. 22 - Dec. 21

Romantic prospects over the winter look bleak, perhaps better luck during the spring season!

YOUR LIFE WILL SOON BECAME ENTANGLED WITH A PERSON OF MYSTERY. PROCEED WITH CAUTION, THEY MAY BE HARBOURING A SHOCKING SECRET!