Bitter faculty contract fight comes to an end
Junior faculty’s morale and financial futures take the brunt of the feud

By Stephen Harrison with Kevin Xavier & Carl Fedorko
Senior Reporters

For the last seven months Mercer’s faculty union and the college’s administrators have been locked in a heated negotiation over the contract. Along the way there have been protests, firings, hearings, bickering and collateral damage.

When the Board of Trustees finally voted to approve the new contract on February 27, the faculty seemed to release not so much a sigh of relief as of general fatigue. A tenure track professor, we’ll call him Prof. Lamb, who asked to remain anonymous for this article) spoke to The VOICE: “I will certainly continue to develop loyalty to my students and my colleagues, but it will be difficult to develop loyalty to the college and its administration given that they have shown they are willing to use my career as a pawn or a message to be sent to others.”

What Prof. Lamb is referring to is perhaps the most controversial aspect of what occurred during the contract negotiations, the firing or non-renewal of contract, depending on who you ask—and rehiring, or “reinstatement,” of four faculty members who were about to receive tenure this year. From the tone of communications between the administration and the union, it appeared that further pink slips might be looming.

It was in the wake of this event that a contract was eventually hashed out.

THE DISPUTE

To understand what lead up to the firing/non-renewal it is necessary to go back to June 30, 2013 when the faculty’s three year contract expired.

The most recent contract, which governs everything from pay to course loads, maternity leave to promotion criteria, had been brokered by math Prof. Schwartz, who has taught at Mercer for 45 years and has lead the faculty contract negotiations for decades.

A new lead negotiator, also a math professor, Don Reichman represented the faculty during the early months.

As is customary, the faculty continued to work under the conditions of the previous contract while Reichman took key points of concern to the negotiating table.

According to Reichman, the primary obstacle in early negotiations was financial compensation, which was further complicated by the passage of New Jersey law chapter 78, PL. 2011, a controversial health care bill.

See CONTRACT pages 10-11
Life as a Homeless Vet in Nj
Veterans in local shelters struggle to find the path out of homelessness

By Stephen Harrison
Senior Reporter

The reality of being a homeless veteran

Note: Names of all Rescue Mission patrons mentioned in this article have been changed at their request; some feared that people knowing they were homeless could prevent them from getting jobs, others had not told family members that they were homeless so that they would protect their privacy.

The office of support services for the Trenton Rescue Mission sits in an old building downtown. The organization provides emergency shelter and counseling services to the local homeless population. The off-white walls and tiled floor are worn, the furnishings plain.

Veteran Ray Carter sits in the Mission’s waiting room listening to the hum of the ventilation system and muffled conversations snaking their way through the walls. Occasionally a staffer rushes through the room purposefully. Carter, a 53-year-old army veteran, wears jeans, sneakers and a gray hoodie. He is medium height, muscular, with short gray hair, an angular weathered face and piercing gray eyes.

Having been asked if he can be interviewed about his experience as a homeless veteran, Carter leans in slightly, his voice low, and says: “This is not a place anyone wants to be.” Carter is one of the 57,849 veterans nationwide that the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) estimates is homeless on any given night.

According to the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans (NCHV), website, approximately 12 percent of the adult homeless population are veterans, but it notes that “...unofficial counts are impossible to come by” because “the transient nature of homeless populations presents a major difficulty” in gathering data.

The NCHV estimates that “About 1.4 million other veterans, meanwhile, are considered at risk of homelessness due to poverty, lack of support networks, and dismal living conditions in overcrowded or substandard housing.” As of November 19 2013 Ray Carter had lived at the Rescue Mission for ten weeks.

“None of my friends know where I am... because I ashamed of myself. It’s embarrassing, a man my age. Veteran’s day just went by and I’m a homeless veteran? I mean give me a break” he says with a sigh. “I couldn’t get a cup of coffee. So it’s hard... It’s as low as it can get. I mean literally” he says.

Carter served in the army for six years. He was in the 508th Airborne Rangers before finishing his career in the National Guard armory. In 1983 he was deployed to Grenada as part of Operation Urgent Fury.

As of November 19 2013 Ray Carter had lived at the Rescue Mission for ten weeks. He was one of the 57,849 veterans nationwide that the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) estimates is homeless on any given night.

According to the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans (NCHV), website, approximately 12 percent of the adult homeless population are veterans, but it notes that “...unofficial counts are impossible to come by” because “the transient nature of homeless populations presents a major difficulty” in gathering data.

The NCHV estimates that “About 1.4 million other veterans, meanwhile, are considered at risk of homelessness due to poverty, lack of support networks, and dismal living conditions in overcrowded or substandard housing.” As of November 19 2013 Ray Carter had lived at the Rescue Mission for ten weeks.

Carter suffered from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), which he was diagnosed with after the war. He had flashbacks to being on the deck of an aircraft carrier, scared to death, because you don’t know if a submarine is going to hit you, or a torpedo, you don’t know if something from the sky is coming.” Jackson says.

Anthony Oakes, a Licensed Rehabilitation Counselor and Director of Veteran Housing at Community Hope, a non-profit organization that provides transitional housing for homeless veterans, estimates that he works with up to 500 veterans a year. He believes a key risk factor for veterans is psychological trauma.

“Generally what we’ve found is a veteran will become homeless—anyone will become homeless— for a hundred different reasons, but why a veteran might be more apt, is they tend to not ask for help until they’ve really exhausted everything. It all even stems from that... some might call it pride, some might call it a variety of other things, but in reality it is the concept of a veteran.” Oakes said in a recent interview with The VOICE.

After losing his home Carter took up residence with friends, exchanging labor for a place to stay. “I basically removed myself from those situations because it’s just a burden for the people. So it works for a little while, but I just didn’t want to lose any friendships over it” Carter says continuing: “Most people mosh off you as much as they can and then you have a handful of enemies instead of still having friends to fall back on.”

According to Oakes: “Veterans feel you have the ability to do anything and everything, and you should be able to do it. If you can’t, you’re weak. And so that’s the problem. It becomes a never-ending cycle; I can do this, I can do this, I can do this. And then eventually they tend to ask for help, but they’ve already dug themselves a pretty deep hole” says Oakes.

“Every veteran that I’ve talked to that might know other veterans struggling will say that that’s the issue, that they don’t want to ask for help, they see it as weakness.” Oakes concludes.

Ray Carter says that the pride he felt about owning his own home is at least part of the reason that he finds himself in his current situation. “I just loved the house too much. People told me to dump it like five years prior to this and that was right before the housing market crashed, but I wanted the house. I loved the place, I had so much put into it... If I wasn’t as stubborn and so proud of my freaking house... and now I don’t have it, I don’t have anything, I kick myself in the butt every day.”

Director of Veterans Services for Mercer County Community College and former Marine Sergeant with the 2nd Battalion 25th Marines, Drew Daddio says: “Some veterans get this idea that they’re the only ones suffering with the problems. Especially in the military mindset you always want to be the alpha, you don’t want to show any weakness so you don’t want to say ‘hey I’m having this problem right now?’”

One person Daddio works with on campus is Tyler Jackson, a current Mercer student who is receiving assistance from the G.I. bill. Jackson, who served in the Navy from 1982-1992 and then was discharged after three years of reserved duty, was evacuated from his Philadelphia home in 2005. He ended up living in cars, shelters and missions, for years afterwards, though he is not homeless now.

While not officially diagnosed, Jackson believes he suffers from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). “I do have flashbacks to being on an aircraft carrier, scared to death, because you don’t know if a submarine is going to hit you, or a torpedo, you don’t know if something from the sky is coming.” Jackson says.

Leslie Young of Cornerstone...
**THE UNCERTAIN FUTURE**

Carter, who lost his DD214 in a house fire, has encountered this problem with trying to get the document replaced. He says, "I contacted them (the VA) September fourth... they just got back to me today (November 19th). If you're going to be that leg blown off, your hand blown off, you're shuffled to the back with the VA, they don't do hardly anything." Carter says, "I get a job, I'm set."

When all the problems pile up, Carter describes his future prospects about it, but for someone who's trained in how to survive in very dangerous situations, coming back here brings a lot of triggers." Internal statistics at the Trenton Rescue Mission indicate that 68% of the veterans who stayed at the mission in the past reported a mental health problem. Lynzie Zimmerman is the Director of Support Services at the Trenton Rescue Mission and works closely with many homeless veterans, helping them in enrolling in various veterans assistance programs.

"It's hard. The doors open at four PM and you stand in line so that you can get checked in and then you are served dinner and you can go to bed... You can watch TV or go to bed. Most people are going to bed because they're tired from being outside and wandering the streets all day." While the shelters such as the Trenton Rescue Mission can provide "shelter, food, and social activities," they are on their own once the next day has begun.

"They're out the door at 8 am and they have all day to figure out what to do... Some people work, so they're leaving and going to work and some people are in programs and some people are actively seeking employment." Zimmerman says.

Getting people help by enrolling them in assistance programs such as the Trenton Rescue Mission can be complicated because there's no guarantee that an individual will continue to stay at the Mission, as there is no obligation to do so.

Zimmerman says, "It's difficult in this kind of environment to get people to move through, because I can grab you and sit down with you and talk to you today and say 'this is our plan of action and what we have to do.' That doesn't mean that person is going to be here tomorrow, or next week, or be here long enough to follow through with that. Because nothing happens right away, nothing." Zimmerman says it is important for people seeking to be enrolled in programs designed to give aid to homeless veterans to confront him he was waiting to get inside. "This kid got in my face and then I warned him, I said 'Gonna warn you, don't do it.' And he did it, and I knocked him out right on the spot."

Carter continues, "I've got combat experience. I was an expert in hand to hand combat, I'm not afraid and I can take care of myself even at my age, but some of these other [shelter residents] need people with combat experience, I was an expert in that department, and I could take them out on the spot."

Zimmerman explains that often times people need one form of ID to get another form of ID, which can be especially difficult for homeless veterans. "I am not a veteran and I have a birth certificate, if you're born here it's twenty bucks, not terribly expensive but it could be."

Complicating matters further, Zimmerman explains that oftentimes people need one form of ID to get another form of ID, which can be especially difficult for homeless veterans. "I am not a veteran and I have a birth certificate, if you're born here it's twenty bucks, not terribly expensive but it could be.

In situations where you will be in harms way I was in a shelter in Newark, it was supposed to be a religious shelter, but it was and individual in there were really down on their luck. And they took it on you, I mean you could not have a place to sleep and they just left you like this, obviously, because you're next door neighbor, they're homeless and their mad, and I'm homeless and I'm mad, so there's conflict."

Standing out in the elements, even if he had a vehicle at the time, was always difficult for Jackson, especially in the cold. "The one thing they really could save would be time to time I could go to the VA hospital... It was always a good thing in the back of a mind to know that I could go to the VA and try and get medical treatment for maybe I had frostbitten toes, which happened to me countless times" says Jackson.

"He's a veteran and he feels as though his country has turned its back on him." Lynzie Zimmerman Dr. Support Services, Trenton Rescue Mission

**THE GOOD DATA AND THE BAD**

3,964 homeless veterans statewide on any given night

14.5% are Veterans*

12% are Veterans

12% are Veterans

14.5% Veterans

2013, Trenton Rescue Mission processed 129 veterans

in various states of homelessness in to veteran assistance programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Documents Needed to Qualify for Assistance Programs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Program 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copy of DD-214 showing Honorable Discharge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current medical facility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copy of DD-214 showing Honorable Discharge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100% compliance to VA medical facility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photo id</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identification of  evidence of health diagnosis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychiatric treatment card</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violent history of assault</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social security card</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A photocopy of all military discharge papers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal benefits card</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 months proof of income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100% compliance to VA public assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 days photocopy of birth certificate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>129 veterans staying there, only 60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43 people turned their back on their service</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Served 1,815 in November and December 2013, 2,593 veterans statewide on any given night

**THE DAILY VAGABOND**

The Rescue Mission can provide shelter and a bed for the evening, but the other residents can be challenging.

"People will test you, you know these guys are all Bloods or gang related and they'll test you just to see how far they will push you or see if they'll be able to control you" Carter says of his experiences at the mission.

Even standing in line can be hazardous he says, recounts a story of his experiences at the mission.

Getting people help by enrolling them in assistance programs such as the Trenton Rescue Mission can be complicated because there's no guarantee that an individual will continue to stay at the Mission, as there is no obligation to do so.

Zimmerman says "It's difficult in this kind of environment to get people to move through, because I can grab you and sit down with you and talk to you today and say 'this is our plan of action and what we have to do.' That doesn't mean that person is going to be here tomorrow, or next week, or be here long enough to follow through with that. Because nothing happens right away, nothing." Zimmerman says it is important for people seeking to be enrolled in programs designed to give aid to homeless veterans to stay, because the primary obstacle preventing veterans from getting assistance is their documentation not being in order, and getting the documents in order takes time.

"[The ad programs] need you to have an ID, birth certificate and social security card. You may just think that's a normal thing that everybody has but when you are homeless there's not a thing that you have, because you've probably moved multiple times and it got lost or your bag got stolen." Zimmerman explains.

According to information at the Mission, out of the 129 residents staying there, only 60 had any monthly income, earning, on average, 349 dollars, with some earning less than a dollar overall. The most common sources of income are social security, disability insurance, and general public assistance.

When you have no income or you have very low income, it's very expensive to replace those things. Getting an ID here in New Jersey is a nightmare with the whole bunch of identification. A birth certificate, if you're born here it's twenty bucks, not terribly expensive but it could be.

Complicating matters further, Zimmerman explains that oftentimes people need one form of ID to get another form of ID, which can be especially difficult for homeless veterans. "I am not a veteran and I have a birth certificate, if you're born here it's twenty bucks, not terribly expensive but it could be.

In situations where you will be in harms way I was in a shelter in Newark, it was supposed to be a religious shelter, but it was and individual in there were really down on their luck. And they took it on you, I mean you could not have a place to sleep and they just left you like this, obviously, because you're next door neighbor, they're homeless and their mad, and I'm homeless and I'm mad, so there's conflict."

Standing out in the elements, even if he had a vehicle at the time, was always difficult for Jackson, especially in the cold. "The one thing they really could save would be time to time I could go to the VA hospital... It was always a good thing in the back of a mind to know that I could go to the VA and try and get medical treatment for maybe I had frostbitten toes, which happened to me countless times" says Jackson.

"He's a veteran and he feels as though his country has turned its back on him." Lynzie Zimmerman Dr. Support Services, Trenton Rescue Mission

**THE UNCERTAIN FUTURE**

Carter, who lost his DD214 in a house fire, has encountered this problem with trying to get the document replaced. He says, "I contacted them (the VA) September fourth... they just got back to me today (November 19th). If you're going to be that leg blown off, your hand blown off, you're shuffled to the back with the VA, they don't do hardly anything." Carter says, "I get a job, I'm set."

When all the problems pile up, Carter describes his future prospects about it, but for someone who's trained in how to survive in very dangerous situations, coming back here brings a lot of triggers." Internal statistics at the Trenton Rescue Mission indicate that 68% of the veterans who stayed at the mission in the past reported a mental health problem. Lynzie Zimmerman is the Director of Support Services at the Trenton Rescue Mission and works closely with many homeless veterans, helping them in enrolling in various veterans assistance programs.

"It's hard. The doors open at four PM and you stand in line so that you can get checked in and then you are served dinner and you can go to bed... You can watch TV or go to bed. Most people are going to bed because they're tired from being outside and wandering the streets all day." While the shelters such as the Trenton Rescue Mission can provide "shelter, food, and social activities," they are on their own once the next day has begun.

"They're out the door at 8 am and they have all day to figure out what to do... Some people work, so they're leaving and going to work and some people are in programs and some people are actively seeking employment." Zimmerman says.
Not all research done on online education leads to the same conclusion about the overall quality of online education. For example, SRI International--which defines itself as an "independent, non-profit research institute"--found that "instruction combining online and face-to-face elements had a larger advantage relative to purely face-to-face instruction than did purely online instruction."

Mercer's Coordinator of World Languages, and assistant Professor of Spanish Daniel D'Arpa, has been instrumental in finding ways to offer additional language classes to learners using an online model. D'Arpa told The VOICE in a recent interview that he thinks "combined instruction may certainly be optimal. I am counting on it with my own teaching style."

When asked why SRI International's findings differed from hers, Dr. Capra said: "unfortunately, most of this research has a tendency to be based on high performing students, accelerated programs rather than typical college semi-students, and students at the 4-year level. Research that has specifically examined community college students has found that online learning leads to increased failure and withdrawals."

One example can be found in an article for The Chronicle of Higher Education, written by Ryan Brown. In his article "Community-College Students Perform Worse Online Than Face to Face."

Brown reports on a study released by the Community College Research Center at the Teachers College at Columbia University, which found that "Community-college students enrolled in online courses fail and drop out more often than those whose coursework is classroom-based."

Capra's research uncovered another piece of information that runs counter to expectations. Common sense suggests that young people who have grown up with the Internet doesn't necessarily mean that students prefer that medium for learning. Additionally, it confirms that nontraditional students have nontraditional needs when it comes to higher education."

Doug Doherty, an undeclared first-year Mercer student, is one example of someone who has grown up with the Internet but doesn't want it to replace the traditional classroom. He said he has no interest in taking online classes. He told The VOICE: "If I am sitting in the house, I have less motivation." Whereas, he said that if he is at the college library, he knows what he's there to do.

In an NPR article published just this last New Years Eve, titled "The Online Education Revolution Drifts Off Course," The Chairman of San Jose State's philosophy department, Peter Hadreas offered his opinion on why online learning appears more advantageous for some people, and not for others. He says, "the people who do well in these kind of courses are people who are already studious."

Dr. Capra's findings back up this. She pointed out that the students who participated in her study devoted a significant amount of time to it, and received "minimal compensation" for their efforts, which included face to face meetings with her, on a weekly basis, responses to bi-weekly writing prompts she gave them, and a survey. In her view, this may well have been a self-selecting group of highly motivated individuals.

Some students are happy with the online courses they took.

For example, former Mercer student, says that when she attended Mercer she enjoyed the interaction and seeing people face to face. When she later attended Thomas Edison State College online, she loved how convenient it was, but she says she missed seeing people face to face.

Professor D'Arpa acknowledges both the pros and the cons of online education.

He says online education is best suited to students who already have good time management habits and good study habits before taking their first online class. A student who works very little outside of their job should take an online course without first changing these habits."

- Prof. Daniel D’Arpa
Coordinator of World Languages and Professor of Spanish

"Online education is best suited to students who already have good time management habits and good study habits before taking their first online class. A student who works very little outside of class should not take an online course without first changing these habits."

- Prof. Daniel D’Arpa
Coordinator of World Languages and Professor of Spanish

"Online education is best suited to students who already have good time management habits and good study habits before taking their first online class. A student who works very little outside of class should not take an online course without first changing these habits."

- Prof. Daniel D’Arpa
Coordinator of World Languages and Professor of Spanish
Mercer's fashion program growing steadily

By Nicholas Signora
Reporter

Asia Mack, a second year fashion design student at Mercer, wasn't sure what to major in when she finally picked fashion. She considered accounting, a choice she says seemed safer and "more practical."

"A lot of people want to go into fashion," says Mack, "but a lot of people are afraid because their parent might not want them to do it."

Ultimately, she took a chance and began studying fashion when the program was first offered at the college in 2012. Mack says this one of the best that she ever made.

"I love the fashion program. I really do love it. I had always wanted to go away for college, but the program here is so family-like. I'm glad I didn't go away." Mack says.

The growing fashion program, which includes both fashion design and fashion merchandising, is gaining momentum as the first students to complete the program have either earned their Associates degree on time or successfully transferred to a four year school of their choice.

The core of the fashion program is Allegra Ceci who had full time and given the task of starting up the new program. Ceci had worked for Calvin Klein and Coach and had college level teaching experience prior to coming to Mercer.

"Allegra is very mentor-ship," Mack tells The VOICE.

"Every class with her keeps you engaged with unique projects and work. She tries her hardest to push for the program, even though the higher up fashion schools might ignore Mercer!" In an interview with Ceci she said: "It's very interesting, hearing from a lot of people, especially independent study with me where we're converting their physical portfolios to digital."

The program has doubled enrollment in the past two years, from 25 to 50 students.

"Some changes to financial aid and student aid, and a usual community college turnover rates have presented setbacks, but Ceci has been flexible and hasn't significantly affect the program."

For Asia Mack, one of the major problems the program faces is how people perceive the James Kenerly Campus which where all the classes are held.

"There's a stigma related to Trenton and to the James Kenerly Campus that we have to break. I've lived in the area my whole life and the way that people talk about it is exaggerated," Mack says.

As the program has developed a strong focus on merchandising, Ceci's specialty, there has been talk of offering some courses at the West Windsor campus, although the Trenton campus has more dedicated resources for the students.

During the protracted and bitter negotiations this year, the college decided not to renew the contracts of some faculty members -- a move that since been reversed -- and at the height of the struggle it appeared that other newer hires, such as Ceci, might also receive pink slips. Such a move would have devastated the successful program but was ultimately avoided.

PROFILE: Nursing student fights through cancer

By Jamie Strickland
Reporter

Sarah Poinsett was 26 and a nursing student in Mercer County Community College when she was diagnosed with stage three colon cancer.

"I told her I had cancer, and she knew I was sick, but she didn't really know what cancer meant," Poinsett says.

"The thought of me leaving [my child] and hurting her was enough for me to do what I had to do. It wasn't an option for me not to get through it," Sarah Poinsett said.

Sarah Poinsett was 26 years old, working full time in a day care, raising her six-year-old Kayla, on her own, and going to Mercer full time to study nursing when she was diagnosed with stage three colon cancer.

Poinsett said she had been sick for years, but hadn't had a diagnosis that seemed to fit. She was used to the constant stomach pains, vomiting, and weight loss. She'd managed to find a way to keep going with work, parenting and studies despite it.

Poinsett found her primary support coming from her young daughter.

"I still remember Kayla coming over to me and rubbing my head and saying, "It's ok Mommy" it was the sweetest thing," Poinsett told The VOICE.

As Poinsett went to doctors multiple tests were done though no diagnosis seemed to stick. According to Poinsett's mother, Sally Ruth of Hamilton Township, she thought her daughter may have had the flu or a similar illness but it was hard to tell because Poinsett would feel horrible and still get up and do what she needed to for the day. Ruth says she figured if it were anything more serious the doctors would have discovered it.

"I thought I was nuts," my family and the doctors made me feel like I was exaggerating and making it up," said Poinsett.

"I started asking myself 'am I stressed out that I'm making myself sick?'" When Poinsett's symptoms stubbornly continued Ruth ultimately became more and more worried. She says her grandfather had had colon cancer and she began to think his symptoms seemed similar to her daughter's.

Poinsett was finally able to find the money to get a colonoscopy but the doctors somehow missed a massive tumor and sent her home with more questions than answers. Angry, frustrated and still feeling horrible Poinsett was found support from her 25 year old boyfriend, Mike Bernhardt, who was enrolled in the police academy. He helped get her to the hospital.

"The thought of me leaving my child and hurting her was enough for me to do what I had to do. It wasn't an option for me not to get through it," Poinsett said.

"The thought of me leaving [my child] and hurting her was enough for me to do what I had to do. It wasn't an option for me not to get through it," Sarah Poinsett heard," said Ruth.

"I told her I had cancer, and she knew I was sick, but she didn't really know what cancer meant," Poinsett says.

On October 12, 2013 Poinsett was found support from her 25 year old boyfriend, Mike Bernhardt, who was enrolled in the police academy. He helped get her to the hospital.

"The thought of me leaving my child and hurting her was enough for me to do what I had to do. It wasn't an option for me not to get through it," Poinsett said.

"The thought of me leaving [my child] and hurting her was enough for me to do what I had to do. It wasn't an option for me not to get through it," Sarah Poinsett heard," said Ruth.

"I told her I had cancer, and she knew I was sick, but she didn't really know what cancer meant," Poinsett says.

On October 12, 2013 Poinsett was found support from her 25 year old boyfriend, Mike Bernhardt, who was enrolled in the police academy. He helped get her to the hospital.

"The thought of me leaving my child and hurting her was enough for me to do what I had to do. It wasn't an option for me not to get through it," Poinsett said.

"The thought of me leaving [my child] and hurting her was enough for me to do what I had to do. It wasn't an option for me not to get through it," Sarah Poinsett heard," said Ruth.

"I told her I had cancer, and she knew I was sick, but she didn't really know what cancer meant," Poinsett says.

On October 12, 2013 Poinsett was found support from her 25 year old boyfriend, Mike Bernhardt, who was enrolled in the police academy. He helped get her to the hospital.

"The thought of me leaving my child and hurting her was enough for me to do what I had to do. It wasn't an option for me not to get through it," Poinsett said.

"The thought of me leaving [my child] and hurting her was enough for me to do what I had to do. It wasn't an option for me not to get through it," Sarah Poinsett heard," said Ruth.

"I told her I had cancer, and she knew I was sick, but she didn't really know what cancer meant," Poinsett says.

On October 12, 2013 Poinsett was found support from her 25 year old boyfriend, Mike Bernhardt, who was enrolled in the police academy. He helped get her to the hospital.

"The thought of me leaving my child and hurting her was enough for me to do what I had to do. It wasn't an option for me not to get through it," Poinsett said.

"The thought of me leaving [my child] and hurting her was enough for me to do what I had to do. It wasn't an option for me not to get through it," Sarah Poinsett heard," said Ruth.

"I told her I had cancer, and she knew I was sick, but she didn't really know what cancer meant," Poinsett says.

"The thought of me leaving [my child] and hurting her was enough for me to do what I had to do. It wasn't an option for me not to get through it," Sarah Poinsett heard," said Ruth.

"I told her I had cancer, and she knew I was sick, but she didn't really know what cancer meant," Poinsett says.

"The thought of me leaving [my child] and hurting her was enough for me to do what I had to do. It wasn't an option for me not to get through it," Sarah Poinsett heard," said Ruth.

"I told her I had cancer, and she knew I was sick, but she didn't really know what cancer meant," Poinsett says.
Hot on D Spot: a local taste of Trinidad

By Logan Paul

The second step you enter the door of Hot on D Spot Roti Shop you’re transported from Hamilton, New Jersey to Trinidad. The sound of crystal clear water and a warm, tempered sun. The mouthwatering smell of hot oil frying home-made roti dough and sizzling chicken is immediately audible. Beef and shrimp being tossed together into vats of hot peppers, chickpeas, potatoes, pumpkin and spinach – all prepared in mere minutes after ordering.

Relax and wait comfortably watching a cricket match on the screen above a large Trinidad flag.

Alwas in the pursuit of odd flavors and spices Hot on D Spot is a wonderful tropical destination for local foodies. Located at 1469 Nottingham Way.

By Chelsea Wells

A mixture of Caribbean and soul food can be found at C&C Cafe which is located on the bottom level of Carriker Arms on 333 West State Street in Trenton.

Delina Gardner, Charlene Walker, and Chris Matthews, owners of C&C Cafe, have found an unusual but popular combination of tastes that set their business apart from all the others in the state capital area.

“We chose the mix of caribbean and soul because in this area you can’t find anything like that,” said Gardner.

Matthews, one of the owners and also the cook, told the VOICE why he opened the restaurant. “I came up with the idea of C&C Cafe because I enjoy the feeling of owning a restaurant and being able to cook for the public.”

Matthews also told the VOICE about his experience in the kitchen. “I have 10 years of experience from working side by side with the soldiers overseas. I owned a former restaurant called Casavera Tree, and also have experience from] schooling in New York.”

The restaurant offers short order items such as fried chicken and fish, french fries and more Caribbean inspired dishes such as oxtail and jerk chicken. The menu also includes traditional diner breakfast items and beverages.

For a main course the oxtail, rice, peas and sweet potatoes is an excellent option. The jerk sauce has a spicy sweet flavor to it. The chicken is very moist and so tender that it fell off the bone with ease.

For a main course the oxtail, rice, peas and sweet potatoes is an excellent option. The jerk sauce has a spicy sweet flavor to it. The chicken is very moist and so tender that it fell off the bone with ease.

A local customer since C&C’s opening in August, Nadirah Emmanuel of Trenton told the VOICE, “I have tried a bunch of the items on the menu and one of my favorites is the C&C burger. It is huge, and has all the toppings that any fast food would offer but with better portions and a more homemade taste.”

“Almost all of the ingredients I buy from Brooklyn and Queens because of the great Trinidad population there,” Roy said. He will pile on more of Scorpion pepper hot sauce and offer you to try some if you’re feeling daring. “I can get all the fresh foods I need there and bring them back here for you and my other customers,” Roy said.

The preparation process for creating such authentic cuisine doesn’t come easy, though. “It usually takes us about 2-3 hours to make a batch of roti,” said Seeta Hayban, Roy’s wife. Seeta works everyday in the restaurant, preparing and compiling the homemade cuisine.

“We where I come from, after school, we come back home and help their mothers make food for the rest of the family. It is not easy. It takes time and practice to do well,” Seeta said. “Usually, my mother would expect me to be able to cook something perfectly only after three times of practice. My mother loved to cook for festivities, and I always by her side to help.”

For the patrons it is worth every second. The combination of homemade roti, curry and spices tossed in lightly with precision creates an authentic Trinidadian dish you won’t soon forget.

A hidden haven for Caribbean food in Trenton

By Elouise Kelley, a long time resident from Trenton says: “I have recommended this place to many of my friends and family members and haven’t heard any complaints.”

Elouise Kelley, a long time resident from Trenton says: “I have recommended this place to many of my friends and family members and haven’t heard any complaints.”
Up and coming local rock band No Reason has been playing frequently in the area lately. Founded in January 2011 as just a couple friends getting together to play a couple of covers at a birthday party, they are now played shows with as many as 2000 people in the audience.

The band has just finished recording the first single off their first full-length album at Dancing Pepper Studios in Nazareth, PA, entitled “Every Path Has a Purpose.”

The band consists of Andrew Hartrell on lead vocals, Adam Delgado playing the lead guitar, Travis Humza playing the rhythm guitar, Mike Oleniacz on bass guitar and vocals, and Christian Jackson banging the drums and singing some vocals.

“We have been together as a full band for 3 years now, but to be honest it feels like we have been together making our own. “Oleniacz goes on to say.

According to Christian Jackson, drummer for the band, “We are always writing new music. This new album will consist of 9 of our own songs and a cover that we spent a lot of time making our own.” Oleniacz goes on to say.

The band members say they were treated like rock stars, with many audience members asking for autographs and pictures.

Future concerts will be scheduled in the summer months.

Standing in the crowd surrounded by 50,000 cell phones recording the live performance on the stage, Dean Graziano had already begun planning his newest business adventure.

Dean Graziano, founder and CEO of the Lively app and former resident of Mercer County wanted to create a way for attendees of events like concerts or comedy shows, to be able to focus on the event itself instead of the screen of their phones or cameras.

The Lively App, a new smartphone application, allows individuals to relive a live event by downloading the app. The app became available to the public on May 4th, 2013. The app itself is download free, and audio sold for $4.99 and videos sell for $9.99.

To ensure artists earn from each download, the profit is split 70-30; 70% going to the artist and 30% to the company.

Graziano says “with each download a share for that artist appears on the consumers Facebook page giving exposure for that artist.”

Graziano also discussed the independent musician partnership with Lively. Artists are able to record their shows and upload their music to the app on their own to make a profit. Instead of fans having to purchase a CD of a band at an event they are able to purchase it right on their phones.

Based on the reviews section on the Android App store as well as the iTunes app store and found that many people are enjoying this app. One of the first reviews of this app came from a user who says “I cannot believe someone didn’t think of this sooner,” and another, “Love it! Discovering new bands is so easy with Lively!”

“While this app has only been active for a year it is still rapidly growing. With more artists and additions being added Graziano is confident the app will continue in this direction.

Music on your phone just got a little more Lively
In the fall of 2012 Bergen Catholic and Paramus Catholic played their annual Thanksgiving Day football game. The game, normally a source of pride in athletics for the state of New Jersey, became a stain on its reputation. During the course of the game Bergen Catholic fans and students taunted the Paramus players and coaches with racial slurs.

Students were suspended but the New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association (NJSIAA) wanted to send a clearer message: "the days of taunting, baiting, and trash talking are over," according to a NJSIAA press release.

The measures taken by the NJSIAA, the governing body of high school athletics in NJ, were dramatic. Under the new sportsmanship guidelines, any player using malicious or profane language, or language interpreted as 'driven by bias' are immediately ejected from the game and are subject to suspension.

In the fall of 2012 Bergen Catholic and Paramus Catholic Field Hockey Coach Christine Cabarle gave a glimpse into how the students are reminded of their sportsmanship obligations. "Before every game the refs read a prepared statement informing the coaches and the captains that no derogatory language should not be tolerated and if it happens it results in automatic disqualification."

When asked how she felt about the rule Cabarle said:"Sports are a microcosm of life. So, I think it is important to teach our athletes respect for others. I also believe most coaches have been doing this since before this state-mandated rule came out."

Everyone the VOICE spoke to regarding this topic was in agreement that racial slurs or biased language should not be tolerated and that is not a new policy. Bertoli added, "most schools and athletic departments encourage a culture of respect and sportsmanship...already!"
Men's basketball overcomes injuries, reaches region final for first time in 13 years

By Kevin Xavier

In early January the Mercer Men's Basketball team was floundering. Their roster was down to six players to begin the month due to academic eligibility issues which forced Howard Levy's squad to play five games with no more than two players on the bench.

Instead of packing it for the season, the Vikings 2nd leading scorer 13.1 PPG and shot 56 percent from the floor in 2013-14. Looking ahead to next season, the Mercer Baseball team was floundering. Their roster was down to six players to begin the month due to academic eligibility issues which forced Howard Levy's squad to play five games with no more than two players on the bench.

Instead of packing it for the season, the Vikings 2nd leading scorer 13.1 PPG and shot 56 percent from the floor in 2013-14. Looking ahead to next season, the Mercer Baseball team was floundering. Their roster was down to six players to begin the month due to academic eligibility issues which forced Howard Levy's squad to play five games with no more than two players on the bench.

Instead of packing it for the season, the Vikings 2nd leading scorer 13.1 PPG and shot 56 percent from the floor in 2013-14. Looking ahead to next season, the Mercer Baseball team was floundering. Their roster was down to six players to begin the month due to academic eligibility issues which forced Howard Levy's squad to play five games with no more than two players on the bench.

Instead of packing it for the season, the Vikings 2nd leading scorer 13.1 PPG and shot 56 percent from the floor in 2013-14. Looking ahead to next season, the Mercer Baseball team was floundering. Their roster was down to six players to begin the month due to academic eligibility issues which forced Howard Levy's squad to play five games with no more than two players on the bench.

Instead of packing it for the season, the Vikings 2nd leading scorer 13.1 PPG and shot 56 percent from the floor in 2013-14. Looking ahead to next season, the Mercer Baseball team was floundering. Their roster was down to six players to begin the month due to academic eligibility issues which forced Howard Levy's squad to play five games with no more than two players on the bench.

Instead of packing it for the season, the Vikings 2nd leading scorer 13.1 PPG and shot 56 percent from the floor in 2013-14. Looking ahead to next season, the Mercer Baseball team was floundering. Their roster was down to six players to begin the month due to academic eligibility issues which forced Howard Levy's squad to play five games with no more than two players on the bench.

Instead of packing it for the season, the Vikings 2nd leading scorer 13.1 PPG and shot 56 percent from the floor in 2013-14. Looking ahead to next season, the Mercer Baseball team was floundering. Their roster was down to six players to begin the month due to academic eligibility issues which forced Howard Levy's squad to play five games with no more than two players on the bench.
Signed into law by Governor Chris Christie on June 28, 2011, the law requires faculty at state institutions to pay at a minimum 1.5% of their base salary into a health care plan, and that number will increase to a minimum of 6% over a span of four years.

SUMMER INTO FALL

Months of negotiation failed to bring about an agreement. In a November 12 interview with the VOICE, Donald Ritchman said that the contract negotiations had reached an impasse and a third party mediator had been assigned.

According to Schwartz: "They only met I think once [with the mediator] which is very unusual. Normally they meet more than once because...based off the feeling that they got off the mediator with regard to the other side, there wasn't going to be any movement."

Schwartz, indicated the broad consensus was that the mediator's proposed contract would never pass a union vote. Indeed at the end of the fall semester the faculty association (FA) rejected the mediator's proposal by a count of 97-4.

Schwartz told The VOICE in an interview on January 30: "The faculty was not willing to take a lower raise because of the increase in payments to the health care plan [due to chapter 78, P.L. 2011]. If the raise isn't high enough, faculty --especially those with children, spouses and dependents-- will actually be taking a pay cut…"

FAcULTY TAke ACTION / iNAcTioN

With negotiations stalled out and the mediation unsuccessful, the faculty association voted to perform a job action, which went into effect at the end of September.

The job action took the form of faculty opting out of what they believe the contract identifies as voluntary, non-compensated tasks, such as serving on various committees.

The faculty were adamant that the action not include any reduction in work where students were concerned.

In a statement to the VOICE, the faculty association's NJEA representative Christopher Berzinski said "The faculty's refusal to perform voluntary, non-contractually required duties, was carefully crafted to have no impact on students."

Posters appeared on faculty office doors saying "No contract but still working." There was no strike, no reduction in office hours.

In a recent interview with the VOICE, Mercer's president Dr. Patricia Donohue said "I was concerned because of the job action, about the work that was not getting done here. Service to students, curriculum development, planning for the college, our accreditation process. Those things were all being ignored in order to make their job action."

LEGAL QUESTIONS

The legality or illegality of the job action is a matter of some dispute, and as the events that followed clearly grew out of it, it deserves closer examination.

Labor attorney Joseph S. Fine, of counsel to the Nutley firm Livingston, DiMarzio and Baptista, has been representing union employees for over 25 years including area colleges Rutgers, Columbia, and FDU.

Fine told The VOICE: "In many cases where employees don't have the legal ability to strike they try everything short of striking to get their point across. In terms of legality it's a dicey proposition."

From the faculty perspective, Prof. Schwartz told The VOICE it is not unusual for the amount of committee work to fluctuate. "[The contract] doesn't require you to be on a particular committee, it doesn't even require that you must be on a committee for each and every semester."

Faculty members interviewed for this article cited specific portions of Article IV of the contract as their rationale for the action. That section reads:

Article IV Section C. Subsection 1, item c. "other contributions"
- Participating in College governance and operations through divisional or committee work, and the like;
- Advising extra-curricular student groups or activities;
- Representing the College in professional or community activities, student recruiting, and the like;
- Otherwise voluntarily contributing to the College or the community as an identified member of the College Faculty;
- Developing individual ability for successful performance

According to professor Robert Terrano the NJEA "very clearly" informed the faculty that they were not in violation of their contract.

As fall semester continued, faculty decided to take more substantial action.

Article IV Section A. Subsection 1 "The Board does not expect each faculty member to perform every function every year."

According to professor Robert Terrano the NJEA "very clearly" informed the faculty that they were not in violation of their contract.

As fall semester continued, faculty decided to take more substantial action.

Article continues on facing page.
Instead, Prof. of Criminal Justice and former Plainsboro Police Chief Elizabeth Bondurant, Prof. of Spanish and Coordinating Director of Foreign Languages Daniel D'Arpa, Prof. of Physical Therapy Holly Biechtel, and Coordinator of Engineering Science and Prof. of Civil Engineering Technology George Barlow, who were thanked for their service to the college, wished well in the future and told they would no longer have a job effective June 30, 2014.

President Donohoe followed up the first round of letters with another the next day, sent to faculty association president Robb Pugh and then cced to all full-time faculty.

The second letter, read in part: “The BOT is on record stating that the faculty members are not fulfilling the roles and responsibilities of the position as defined in the agreement between the FA and the BOT. As faculty members are not fulfilling all the agreed-upon duties of their positions, it is not reasonable or possible to expect the satisfactory performance ap- praisals requisite for reappointment and promotion.”

The four faculty members were not being rehired all had stellar reputations and had completed the steps necessary to receive tenure, including being evaluated by senior faculty multiple times a year for five years, being recommended for rehire every year during that time, and making significant contributions to the college.

Prof. Lamb said of the situation: “I have heard it said that ‘it’s personal’ but in fact not considering me as a person is as personal as it could get.”

Based on the letters sent by Donohoe, the connection between the job action and not re- hiring the tenured faculty seemed clear.

However, in a February 28 interview with The VOICE, President Donohoe said: “I need to be sure you understand the isue about re-appointments was not because we were in negotia- tions. It was because the faculty declared a job action which is a violation of their contract.”

Regardless of the stated intent of the letters, faculty inter- viewed by the VOICE believed the letters to be a clear attempt to strong arm the FA into a contract settlement.

FACULTY RESISTANCE TO LOSING FOUR OF THEIR OWN

The faculty returned to campus worried that more fridges would be taken away and four professors who were on the verge of receiv- ing tenure. Their tenure was to have been voted on at the board of trustees January meeting.

If those reappointments were rescinded, including many who are the sole coor- dinators of key programs such as Fashion and Game Design.

A tenured track professor who was among those in fear of being let go told The VOICE that he would respond to such an event told The VOICE: “I love the pro- gram that I’m in and I see infinite possibilities in how to grow, and I would hate to be taken away from the students that I’m working with, because I love them, I think they’re awesome and I get blown away by how talented and special the students are, so it would be re- ally heart breaking.”

At their first meeting of the semester the union heard from their NJEA representative Berzinski who told the fac- ulty that what they had done was not illegal but that college’s re- actions were illegal. Based on the legal advice given by the NJEA, Prof. Pugh sent a response to Donohoe that also went out to the rest of the faculty. He said the administrations ac- tion constituted an Unfair Labor Practice that sought “to create a ‘chilling effect’ on the exercise by faculty members of their First Amendment rights” under the US and NJ Constitution, respec- tively.

Pugh continued in the letter saying the faculty was: “Out- raged that the administration has chosen to intimidate and bully faculty members who have chosen not to perform vol- untary tasks that are both uncom- pensated and not contractually required.”

The administration did not offer the faculty a free sabbatical and FA did not, apparently, move to sue the college. Instead, negotia- tions started again with Pugh and Schwartz continuing to broker a deal. Word was given to the facul- ty that they should attend the start of semester all school assembly, though there had been discussion of not attending. Faculty did so.

In an interview with the VOICE, Donohoe said “I need to be sure you understand the issue about re-appointments was not because we were in negotiations. It was because the faculty declared a job action which is a violation of their contract.”

Asked again later—af- ter negotiations had concluded—whether or not she felt the non rehiring letters sent to the fac- ulty members were impacting the morale of the faculty, President Donohoe said: “I don’t know. Are you talking to her? Another group of appointment (or non reappoint- ment) letters—for those profes- sors who were not yet in their fifth year of teaching—was scheduled to go out in mid February follow- ing that month’s board meeting.

THE FINAL CONTRACT

At the end of February Schwartz and Pugh brought a new contract to the faculty for their approval. The new contract, which included reappointment of the faculty who had been let go, will give faculty a 2% increase for two years and is retroactive to last June, also included a smaller lower rate of increase in promotional pay for those yet to be promoted. When asked how he felt about the contract, Schwartz ex- plained that the salary raise of 2% “just barely” offset the new health care costs. “Paying for the health benefits, the minimum it will cost a faculty member is 1.5 percent of their salary. It’s almost a wash…” So when you look at everything, you’re pretty much looking at we held ground, for this year and for the next year.”

As the lead negotiator for the FA, Schwartz character- ized the newly ratified contract as: “Something that we can both live with. Obviously we think we should have considered better. They probably felt they gave us more than we could have or could have. That’s the way it is. It’s like a divorce, neither side is going to walk out happy.”

A BRAIN DRAIN?

Indeed, like a divorce, a number of faculty members, both full and part time, have told The VOICE in recent interviews that they would leave Mercer if an oppor- tunity arose. They described the atmosphere at the college as “tox- ic,” “dishheartening,” “awful,” and “miserable,” among other words.

The unprecedented ac- tions and treatment of the faculty by the trustees and administra- tion have had clear residual ef- fects.

Professor Pugh who has served Mercer for twice as long said the same: “My love of the place was never low- est it’s ever been, at this point.”

Pugh says Mercer has already lost faculty: “It’s kind of like a brain drain at Mercer. Some of our really bright, smart people are leaving because… the work environment itself is not really conducive to people being real happy. I think they’ve taken that away from us.”

Professor Haywood not- iced the “brain drain” as well. In a recent interview with the VOICE he said, “We have a lot of the ten- ured people who have left, because they aged out, so much as they just didn’t feel it was worth their while to stay here, given what they perceive to be poor leadership.”

During the course of the VOICE’s reporting efforts were frequently made to faculty members actively seeking work elsewhere. At least five faculty members will retire at the end of this year. A substantial reduction in the faculty size will have effects that ripple throughout the body as they look for advancement, academic support and vocational direction going forward.
Th e DREAM Act, a bill which allows access to in-state tuition benefits for undocumented college students, was signed into law by Governor Christie in December 2013. Th e Act enjoyed bipartisan support in the State Legislature and was taken to the vet's office.

"When Chase was brought to the stadium, he hadn't been up to eating anything before and yet when he got there, he went right up to his water bowl and started drinking from it like nothing was wrong. This just goes to show how much at ease he was being there," Cook told Th e VOICE.

Chase had been originally trained for two years by Jeff Marchal, before he made his on-field debut in 2002. Chase would go out into the field during the first inning and carry in the bats and balls with his mouth. Though some people worried that Chase would leave marks on the bats and balls, it turns out he never did. Golden retrievers—a hunting breed—have been used to fetch birds, shut by hunters, and are naturally careful not to puncture the catch. Besides carrying bats, Chase also carried a basket out onto the field filled with water bottles for the umpires. Held fetch Frisbees for the fans between innings, and for everyone he caught a fan won a cash prize of $20. Chase seldom failed to catch one.

Chase even had his own spot near the team's dugout where he would stay before assuming his duties. At the end of a game, he would go out to the front to greet his fans and afterwards he would head home with one of the staff members who took care of him. In recognition of Chase's many years of service he got a special invitation from the New York Yankees General Manager, Brian Cashman to come to Yankee Stadium (the Thunder are a feeder team for the Yankees).

On July 5, the day of Chase's retirement party, the Yankees celebrated him as did his fans who were even allowed to bring their dogs with them to the party. In 2008, Chase became a father to two sons, Home Run Derby “Derby” and Ollie. Derby is taking over his father's position as the Thunder's, while Ollie is heading off to be the bat dog for the Hampshire Fishercats. Though Derby has big paws to fill, local baseball fans are looking forward to greeting him and seeing him carry on Chase's legacy.

Christie shifts weight behind DREAM Act
In-state tuition now available for children of undocumented citizens

Gov. Christie shifts regarding the DREAM Act, enabling children of undocumented citizens to attend college with in-state tuition rates.

“Christie's move toward immigration reform perfectly illustrates why he has more appeal to Hispanic voters than any other national Republican.”

The article goes on to call Christie “the man to watch in presidential politics.”
Zinna’s Bistro is a family-owned and operated Italian-American bistro that opened in January 2010. At Zinna’s, we believe good food is simple food made with the freshest, highest quality ingredients available including a variety of produce that grows in our own on-premise garden.

We are a B.Y.O.B establishment with an eclectic menu full of homemade pastas, classic Italian favorites, homemade desserts, and more.
**This is Russ**

Russ is a New Media major at Mercer and pays the bills working at Petro Lube in Bordentown. But as a staff reporter for The College VOICE he covers the arts and entertainment scene, interviewing local bands, covering ComicCon in NY for his blog, even checking out the local ostrich farm looking for stories.

“Joining the VOICE helped me find purpose and direction for my life and career. It also lead me to meet some of the most excellent people in the world.”

-Russ Chizek

**NOW RECRUITING - WRITERS - PHOTOGRAPHERS - DESIGNERS**

To learn more stop by a training meeting: Mon. at noon in ET 127 or Wed. at noon in ES 131 or email johnsonh@mccc.edu.

---

**OUR FOCUS IS Always ON YOU**

Earn your bachelor’s degree with the support you need. At Peirce, everything we do is built around you.

That’s why we offer up to $3,000 in renewable scholarships for eligible Mercer County Community College associate degree graduates transferring to Peirce College.

*Earn a bachelor’s degree in:*

- Accounting
- Business Administration
- Healthcare Administration
- Health Information Administration
- Human Resource Management
- Information Technology
- Paralegal Studies

And, ask about Peirce’s new **Degree Completion Program** that allows you to transfer up to **90 credits**.

For more information, visit [www.peirce.edu/transfermccc](http://www.peirce.edu/transfermccc)

**Work. Life. A Bachelor's degree.**

Facebook.com/PeirceCollege  @PeirceCollege  888.467.3472, ext. 9000
ARE YOU READY...
TO FINISH WHAT YOU STARTED?

5 Reasons to Transfer to Centenary

1. Seamlessly transfer up to 72 credits
2. Numerous scholarships and grants available
3. Join a strong community of transfer students
4. Degrees like Fashion and Sports Management
5. Finish your degree on time

TRANSFER OPEN HOUSE
Saturday, April 12 • 9AM-11AM • Hackettstown
To learn more or register: CentenaryCollege.edu/Mercer

JUST A DEGREE AWAY

CENTENARY COLLEGE
1867
New Jersey
Invest in your future with a degree from NJIT

An NJIT degree gives you an edge
• NJIT ranks 6th in the nation among public universities and colleges for return on educational investment.
• Our graduates are recruited into the best-paying jobs at a rate that is twice the national average.
• We offer degrees in today’s hottest career fields – engineering, applied science, design, business and computer science.

Transferring to NJIT is easy
Our articulation agreements with New Jersey community colleges ensure
• Seamless credit transfer
• Access to advisement resources
• Junior standing when entering with an associate’s degree

Take the next step
• Join us for an Instant Decision Day. Learn more at www.njit.edu/admissions/transfer
• Or apply now at www.njit.edu/admissions/apply

NEW JERSEY INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
OFFICE OF UNIVERSITY ADMISSIONS
UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS, NEWARK, NJ  07102-1982
800-925-NJIT or 973-596-3300

TRANSFER TO SALISBURY UNIVERSITY

ACADEMIC OPPORTUNITIES
• Located on Maryland’s Eastern Shore, SU offers more than 50 distinct academic programs — at a great value.
• Outstanding faculty are mentors for undergraduate research. Students gain real-world knowledge through internships and global experiences.
• A growing collection of state-of-the-art facilities includes SU’s new business school building and residence-retail complex.

NATIONAL RANKINGS
• U.S. News & World Report’s Best Colleges
• The Princeton Review’s Best 378 Colleges
• Kiplinger’s Personal Finance “100 Best Values in Public Colleges”

PROFILE: KATIE
I am preparing for my future
Now that I’m at SU, I’ve discovered that the professors care about your education and want you to succeed. They are incredible! I feel that my degree from SU will thoroughly prepare me for my future academic and professional goals. SU really is a student-centered school.

APPLICATION DEADLINES
• Transfer for Fall: March 1
• Transfer for Spring: October 1
Apply online at: www.salisbury.edu/apply

MORE INFORMATION
Find out about campus visits and the application process:
www.salisbury.edu

A Maryland University of National Distinction

SCHOLARSHIPS!
You May Be Eligible For Foundation Scholarships!
Applications are now being accepted for ALL students.

Learn more at www.mccc.edu/scholarships

*Did you graduate in December? Are you graduating in May or August? Visit www.mccc.edu/scholarships to apply NOW through April 1. Recipients are recognized at the Honors Convocation prior to Commencement in May.
*Are you a continuing or incoming student? Visit www.mccc.edu/scholarships to apply NOW through Sept. 15. Recipients are recognized at the Honors Recognition in October.

Note: You must create a profile in the college’s "MyScholarship" system (for students) to apply for scholarships. Many scholarships require you to list names of the NJIT applicants you believe you can be considered for a scholarship award, regardless of your financial need.

Questions? Call 609-570-3017, email foundation@mccc.edu, or stop by AD 112.
Lady troubles in game land

IN MY OPINION

RUSS CHIZEK

The video game industry has a problem with gender representation. But if the media ever hopes to reach its full potential, game developers and publishers need to stop alienating more than half the planet's population. Females purchase and play video games, but reflective of the patriarchal society we live in, the video game industry is dominated by games that exclusively feature male characters.

Video games are arguably the youngest entertainment media and also the only interactive media. Gender representation in games brings a slightly different and important angle to the debate. It's one thing for an individual to not be able to relate to a character that they watch in a film or read about in a book but it's another thing altogether to not be able to relate to a character who is being virtually inhabited by the person playing the game.

By taking one glance at mainstream video games, it would seem like an obvious assertion to surmise that men are the only people who play video games, or at least that they comprise the vast majority.

Walk into a game store and take a look at the shelf. You'll be assaulted by constant depictions of men wielding guns, swords and striking overtly masculine poses. If there weren't a single female in the world that enjoyed playing video games there might not be an issue. But the number of women picking up controllers is increasing year after year and yet the video gaming industry remains stagnant.

According to a report by the Entertainment Software Association, 45 percent of all video game players in 2013 were women. This shows an increase from 2006 when the same study showed that only 38 percent of video game players were women. Unfortunately, much of this comes down to the fact that the video games industry is a business and sales numbers indicate that a game with a female lead simply won't sell as well as one with a male lead.

While writing for The Penny Arcade Report, editor Ben Kuchera contacted Geoffrey Zakian, Chief Operating Officer of EEDAR, a video games research and consulting firm. In this article, Kuchera said, "In terms of pure sales numbers, in the first three months of availability, games with only a male hero sold around 25 percent better than games with an optional female hero. Games with exclusively male heroes sold around 75 percent better than games with only female heroes."

This is why the change needs to come from below; from people without dollar signs in their eyes and without obligations to stockholders.

There has been significant progress seen throughout the independent video game community, but with each stride forward comes backlash from those who don't believe that any change is necessary.

The most prevalent example of this occurred when feminist Anita Sarkeesian set up a Kickstarter campaign to fund production of a web series dedicated to exploring the depiction of women in video games. "When she first set up the Kickstarter campaign to raise money for the "Tropes vs. Women" series, the sheer amount of vitriol she inspired was astonishing. Her social media accounts were flooded with hate mail, and someone even designed a video game where players could punch her in the face," said Gavia Baker-Whitelaw in a March 9, 2013 article for The Daily Dot.

We might be able to catalyze more positive change if we go a layer deeper and look to game design students to begin setting a new precedent for gender representation in games.

"Admittedly, I'd fallen into the trap of defaulting towards male characters and hadn't really put much thought into gender. Creating characters of your own gender is an easy way for the creator to share a connection with their character: Is this good character design? Certainly not, but it's the easiest and often the most natural way to create a character," said second year Game Design major Raymond Hess. Simply having females as characters in a game isn't the only issue; however, it's also important to have females represented in a positive and realistic way.

Hess said, "Even when female characters are present, they're often represented poorly. Physically, female characters are often ridiculously proportioned and sexualized."

Crystal Jeffery, another second year Game Design major at Mercer said, "I only pay attention to gender if it will make a major difference in the story." Also a second year Game Design major, Mike Albert said, "If the story isn't directly impacted by gender, I think you should include both genders as an option."

The danger with this sort of thinking is that is that it's operating under the flawed logic that a certain kind of story absolutely must star a male character. When we let our preconceived notions determine the way that we write characters and stories we are really just unknowingly perpetuating the very stereotypes and tropes that we need to push back against in order to achieve equality.

As a medium, video games have the ability to tell a story and provide an experience unlike any other. However, games are still growing and in order for them to evolve in the right direction and to be taken more seriously by society, the industry needs to work to better include everyone.

Hess said, "It's a designer's responsibility to ensure that anyone can relate to their character, and that should transcend gender. Characters should have enough personality that you can relate to them whether they are male, female, human, alien or anything else." It would be crazy to believe that it's possible to change this trend overnight but if there were a way to make shifts in thoughts and actions from the ground up perhaps we could eventually live in a world where Princess Peach could rescue Mario more often and it would be all that strange.
How many years does it take to get out of here in "2" years?

CALL US! WE'RE HERE TO HELP!

MCCC FINANCIAL AID OFFICE
Higher Ed and the money shell game

Earlier, the Bursar had falsely accused me of owing money from last semester. “A scholarship covered my tuition last semester.” They didn’t care. They pushed the ‘Fuck you, pay me’ button that comes standard on every non-student Mercer computer, and were not going to relent until I walked the bureaucratic Bataan Death March that is clearing up a financial error at the college.

Leaving campus that night I got to thinking, a potential way to undercut them: “I can’t be the only one who thinks the college system feels a lot like a robbery.” Education meant bettering myself, but true self-improvement wouldn’t feel like getting ripped off, I thought, as I drove home.

I bet this is how guys thought on my drive home. “The book you won’t buy this book back at the hundred bucks. You know you didn’t need a receipt to hold would earn $112,342 a year, according to the US Census Bureau. That’s the scam. Lenders don’t care if you can find a job when you graduate. They’re looking for you to pay what you owe.

Massive lending institutions like Sallie Mae have been accused of making a purposeful effort to increase student loan debt through the practice of forbearance. Here’s an example of forbearance: you hypothetically owe $50,000 to Sallie Mae. If they push back the day your loan comes due by a year, it sounds like you’re getting a break. But that’s not true. When long-term debt is new Poll Tax. Debt is no longer financial aid pass their college bills to the future, unsustainable. The American financial system ensures the people who most benefit from the status quo are the least inclined to change it.

Education has its unquestionable benefits but if you have to borrow money to pay for it, it’s easy to think the only way to win this game is not to play it, and you might be right.

I’m not so arrogant as to think I have the solutions to all the problems I see, or even worse, to try and tell you what to do with your life. I know that being informed and choosing a career does nothing to improve the plight of those afflicted; charity will never be as effective as reform, our generation has the duty to either change an unfair system or admit that we found a pathology more attractive than involvement. I know which side I want to be on. You decide for yourself.

Editorial Policy:
The College VOICE is written and edited by students of Mercer County Community College. The opinion expressed in the College VOICE is not necessarily the opinion of the editors, the faculty, staff, administration or the board of trustees of Mercer County Community College.
ASK THE VOICE: GOOD ANSWERS TO TOUGH QUESTIONS

Dear Voice,
I hear my professor might be one of the ones getting fired. Will this happen before or after I get my final grade?

Need to get an A

Dear Need an A,
-Need to get an A

Nickels, increase? What do I get in return?

Rubbing two Nickels

Surely you jest.

Refund? Bahahahahah!

Dear Po,

- Po’ Boy

fail the class now. How do I get my final grade?

Dear Elsa & Anna,

- Elsa & Anna

I needed help with my research paper got destroyed. I'm going to destroy. I'm going to fail the class now. How do I get a refund?

Dear Rubbing two Nickels

in return?

Aquarius

Jan. 20 - Feb. 18

The ship may be going down, but you have the oars and the lifeboat. Safe whatever can and then paddle like hell. Don't get sucked into the vortex.

Pices

Feb. 19 - Mar. 20

The Chinese year of the Horse has begun and it will bring you strength and determination. The road may not be smooth, but your steed will be sturdy.

Aries

Mar. 21 - Apr. 19

They say all is fair in love and war, and it looks like you are out to prove it. Go for the love you want, but don't forget who your friends are. Romance can be fleeting.

Leo

Jul. 23 - Aug. 22

Why do people come to you with problems you know nothing about? Let people know the friend is in but the fixer-upper is out. Guard your time. You need it for yourself.

Virgo

Aug. 23 - Sept. 22

Someone you don't know well admires you and has been spreading good words about you lately. When you figure out who it is, tell him/her thanks and go for a coffee. Friendships will be made this month.

Libra

Sept. 23 - Oct. 22

How many times did your parents tell you to stay away from gambling? Probably a few. Nevertheless, this is the time to take a day off, grab a bucket of nickels and head to Atlantic City. You need some cheap fun.

Scorpio

Oct. 23 - Nov. 22

The letters H and V brings surprises and a vortex. Don't get sucked into the road may not be smooth, but don't forget who your friends are. Romance can be fleeting.

Sagittarius

Nov. 22 - Dec. 21

Time to get out that project you promised in your resolutions you got to but has still been collecting dust these past few months. There won't be a lot more time, but just enough for you to focus on your project.

Capricom

Dec. 22 - Jan. 19

Too many hens in the hen house. Time to get away from large groups all trying to get their own piece of the pie. Go it alone or find something interesting guys to work with.

Taurus

Apr. 20 - May 20

It's like living on the side of a volcano some days. You never know when something around you is going to explode. Just make sure it isn't you. Keep your cool this month.

Gemini

May 21 - Jun. 20

Who you gonna’ call? Maybe Ghostbusters. That sound you've been hearing above your head at night might not be squirrels or the wind or your neighbors. Darker forces may be at work.

Cancer

Jun. 21 - Jul. 22

Ten times a day you hear people saying ignorant crap. Sometime soon someone's going to say something you really can't live with and you'll have to engage or compromise yourself.

Leo

Jul. 23 - Aug. 22

Why do people come to you with problems you know nothing about? Let people know the friend is in but the fixer-upper is out. Guard your time. You need it for yourself.

Libra

Sept. 23 - Oct. 22

How many times did your parents tell you to stay away from gambling? Probably a few. Nevertheless, this is the time to take a day off, grab a bucket of nickels and head to Atlantic City. You need some cheap fun.

Scorpio

Oct. 23 - Nov. 22

The letters H and V brings surprises and a vortex. Don't get sucked into the road may not be smooth, but don't forget who your friends are. Romance can be fleeting.

Sagittarius

Nov. 22 - Dec. 21

Time to get out that project you promised in your resolutions you got to but has still been collecting dust these past few months. There won't be a lot more time, but just enough for you to focus on your project.

Capricom

Dec. 22 - Jan. 19

Too many hens in the hen house. Time to get away from large groups all trying to get their own piece of the pie. Go it alone or find something interesting guys to work with.

Taurus

Apr. 20 - May 20

It's like living on the side of a volcano some days. You never know when something around you is going to explode. Just make sure it isn't you. Keep your cool this month.

Gemini

May 21 - Jun. 20

Who you gonna’ call? Maybe Ghostbusters. That sound you've been hearing above your head at night might not be squirrels or the wind or your neighbors. Darker forces may be at work.

Cancer

Jun. 21 - Jul. 22

Ten times a day you hear people saying ignorant crap. Sometime soon someone's going to say something you really can't live with and you'll have to engage or compromise yourself.

Leo

Jul. 23 - Aug. 22

Why do people come to you with problems you know nothing about? Let people know the friend is in but the fixer-upper is out. Guard your time. You need it for yourself.

Libra

Sept. 23 - Oct. 22

How many times did your parents tell you to stay away from gambling? Probably a few. Nevertheless, this is the time to take a day off, grab a bucket of nickels and head to Atlantic City. You need some cheap fun.

Scorpio

Oct. 23 - Nov. 22

The letters H and V brings surprises and a vortex. Don't get sucked into the road may not be smooth, but don't forget who your friends are. Romance can be fleeting.

Sagittarius

Nov. 22 - Dec. 21

Time to get out that project you promised in your resolutions you got to but has still been collecting dust these past few months. There won't be a lot more time, but just enough for you to focus on your project.

Capricom

Dec. 22 - Jan. 19

Too many hens in the hen house. Time to get away from large groups all trying to get their own piece of the pie. Go it alone or find something interesting guys to work with.

Taurus

Apr. 20 - May 20

It's like living on the side of a volcano some days. You never know when something around you is going to explode. Just make sure it isn't you. Keep your cool this month.

Gemini

May 21 - Jun. 20

Who you gonna’ call? Maybe Ghostbusters. That sound you've been hearing above your head at night might not be squirrels or the wind or your neighbors. Darker forces may be at work.

Cancer

Jun. 21 - Jul. 22

Ten times a day you hear people saying ignorant crap. Sometime soon someone's going to say something you really can't live with and you'll have to engage or compromise yourself.

Leo

Jul. 23 - Aug. 22

Why do people come to you with problems you know nothing about? Let people know the friend is in but the fixer-upper is out. Guard your time. You need it for yourself.

Virgo

Aug. 23 - Sept. 22

Someone you don't know well admires you and has been spreading good words about you lately. When you figure out who it is, tell him/her thanks and go for a coffee. Friendships will be made this month.

Libra

Sept. 23 - Oct. 22

How many times did your parents tell you to stay away from gambling? Probably a few. Nevertheless, this is the time to take a day off, grab a bucket of nickels and head to Atlantic City. You need some cheap fun.

Scorpio

Oct. 23 - Nov. 22

The letters H and V brings surprises and a vortex. Don't get sucked into the road may not be smooth, but don't forget who your friends are. Romance can be fleeting.

Sagittarius

Nov. 22 - Dec. 21

Time to get out that project you promised in your resolutions you got to but has still been collecting dust these past few months. There won't be a lot more time, but just enough for you to focus on your project.

Capricom

Dec. 22 - Jan. 19

Too many hens in the hen house. Time to get away from large groups all trying to get their own piece of the pie. Go it alone or find something interesting guys to work with.

Taurus

Apr. 20 - May 20

It's like living on the side of a volcano some days. You never know when something around you is going to explode. Just make sure it isn't you. Keep your cool this month.

Gemini

May 21 - Jun. 20

Who you gonna’ call? Maybe Ghostbusters. That sound you've been hearing above your head at night might not be squirrels or the wind or your neighbors. Darker forces may be at work.

Cancer

Jun. 21 - Jul. 22

Ten times a day you hear people saying ignorant crap. Sometime soon someone's going to say something you really can't live with and you'll have to engage or compromise yourself.

Leo

Jul. 23 - Aug. 22

Why do people come to you with problems you know nothing about? Let people know the friend is in but the fixer-upper is out. Guard your time. You need it for yourself.