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THE DUQUESNE DUKE

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BSU Harlem Night event tackles topic of Black love with guest speaker Ronald Taylor

Fourth annual African-American Read-In

EMMA POLEN AND NICK ZOTOS

The Duquesne Duke

Duquesne University hosted its fourth annual African American Read-In (AARI) event sponsored by Michael P. Weber Learning Skills Center.

On Wednesday, about 30 students, faculty and community members met online through Zoom to listen to literary artists of Duquesne and Pittsburgh recite works that represented African American heritage and resilience.

"Literacy is a significant part of Black History Month," said Josephine Rizzo, the coordinator of the event and Pennsylvania Acts Advisor.

The founder of the African American Read-In initiative, Jerrie Cobb Scott, is said to have had a passion for connecting youth with representations of their life experiences.

"The purpose of an African American Read-In is to get young people engaged. It is important for all of us to see ourselves in books. Black students need to know that some of the characters are African Americans, just like some of them are. Seeing ourselves in books is important because that encourages us to read in a different way and encourages us to write more" Rizzo recounted Scott saying.

Every year, the read-in showcases and celebrates literary accomplishments of African American artists through cre-

READ-IN page 2



MARY LIZ FLAVIN | NEWS EDITOR

Ronald Taylor, head of the Black Burgh Love page on Instagram, works on celebrating Black love throughout the City of Pittsburgh by increasing the representation of African-American couples. Taylor said he feels it is important to see representation both in the media and in relationships we see in our everyday lives.

MARY LIZ FLAVIN
news editor

With students dressed to the nines, a live jazz band performance and an array of food, the Power Center Ballroom was transformed into a celebration hall as the Black Student Union celebrated Black Love Day: Harlem Night. The night was dedicated to the conversation of black love where guest speaker, Ronald Taylor, spoke about what it means to support and represent Black love in our city.

Taylor, Director of Training and Development for The California University of Pennsylvania, and creator of the Instagram page Black Burgh Love, spoke on the importance of Black love.

"Why is [Black love] important? It breaks down generational curses. When we change the narrative it changes the stereotypes that are put onto you guys, your parents and your

family," Taylor said. "We want to show love in a positive way, we have the power to control the narrative and influence what we see."

Taylor said that growing up he always looked up to his grandparents and the way they showed their love for one another. He connects Black love with a sense of home and security, which is something that he wants to transfer to the 'Black-burgh' community - to build a foundation that has strong family ties. Taylor also stresses the importance of committed relationships that we see ourselves and our friends in.

These examples of Black love not only appear in our personal connections to family and friends, but extends to the media and television as well. Taylor gave the examples of Martin and Gina from "Martin," Uncle Phil and Aunt Viv from the "Fresh Prince of Bel-Air" and Randal and Beth from "This is

Us." These were just a few couples that we saw represented on TV that showcase a strong relationship with Black love.

"It helps to have someone to look up to. With these couples we sometimes see on TV, it gives someone who maybe doesn't have a mom or dad someone to look up to. They know these are things they can still have one day," Taylor said. "It gives us hope, if you have hope you have something to strive for."

Not only can we control the narrative in our own lives, but the media can help shape what we see and the type of relationships that are represented. This is the core of Black Burgh Love which was created last May by Taylor with the hope of increasing the representation of African American couples in the city of Pittsburgh.

Taylor and Dr. Anthony Kane, Director of Diversity and Inclusion, had a conversation with their friend group

about the under-representation of Black love in the city - thus, the Instagram page was born. Taylor relates the beginning of the page to that of one of the characters in "Bridgerton," he would anonymously ask his friends and others to submit photos of them with their significant others along with their story. Within weeks, the page grew to where couples all over the city would send in responses to the Black Burgh Love account.

The vision for Black Burgh Love is to continue to grow and in the spring launch their own website. Taylor's final remarks reminded students that with love they are never alone in the world. There is someone out there who wants to support and love them.

Duquesne student Soren De-Niz said that the event was incredible and felt very personable. In addition Taylor's **LOVE page 1**

EMAIL TIPS

We want your input!

The Duke's news section would love to hear from you about stories that you want to see in print. Know a talented professor or accomplished student? See something on campus that just doesn't make sense? You can send your tips and story ideas to Editor-in-Chief Colleen Hammond at hammondcd@duq.edu.

COVID-19

NUMBERS



More Black History Month Events

Feb. 24, 4 p.m.

Black History Month Dinner
Rev. Sean Hogan Dining Center

Feb. 24, 6 p.m.

Saving Selves While Saving Others

Discussion led by Dr. Atiya Abdelmalik

Sponsored by Duquesne University School of Nursing Diversity and Inclusion Council
Virtual Event-Zoom

Feb. 24, 6 p.m.

Pass It On-Diverse Alumni Advice Panel for Students

Sponsored by Office of Alumni Engagement, Center for Career Development, and the Center for Excellence in Diversity and Student Inclusion

Virtual Event-Zoom, RSVP via Handshake

Feb. 25, 11 a.m.

Conversation and Culture
Union 302

Feb. 25, 12-2 p.m.

Black Friday-Black Business Expo

Sponsored by Black Student Union
Student Union

Feb. 28, 2 p.m.

Black Cultures Impact on Science
A Panel Discussion Led by Dr. Andre Samuel

Virtual Event-Zoom

Feb. 28, 8 p.m.

Black Culture Movie Night

Sponsored by NAACP-Duquesne Chapter
Bayer Pappert Lecture Hall

Representing Black love throughout the city of Pittsburgh

LOVE page 1

remarks were impactful.

"I think Mr. Taylor was really focused on sharing the love and showcasing it. I thought it was really interesting, there needs to be more representation and that starts with the small things," De-Niz said.

Re'naye Waletski, vice president of programming for BSU enjoyed the experience of setting up the Harlem Night event. For Waletski, it was about coming together with the other members of BSU and creating a one-of-a-kind night.

"Picking out the theme, the attire, how are we going to bring this together. We haven't had this event in two or three years, knowing that we had and the potential of it was a challenge but nonetheless we persisted," Waletski said. "It was more bonding than anything, because of those challenges like Mr. Taylor was saying, it only made us stronger."

The night concluded with special awards and acknowledgements such as best Black entrepreneur, most passionate student, distinguished female leadership award and distinguished male leadership award. Three to four students were nominated and the winner re-

ceived an award in the designated category.

For anyone interested in learning more about Black Burgh Love follow @blackburghlove on instagram



MARY LIZ FLAVIN | NEWS EDITOR

Eric Swain Jr., Anothony Kane, Lindsey Harris and Joshua Branker, officers of the Black Student Union, wrap up the night with a few closing words.



MARY LIZ FLAVIN | NEWS EDITOR

Students load up their plates with dinner prepared by Parkhurst Catering with everything from chicken to peach cobbler.

Teaching young readers to see themselves in literature

READ-IN page 1

ative and expressive performances of poetry, excerpts, music and dance, Rizzo said.

"This event is meaningful because our youth must realize that literacy is a significant part of Black History Month," Rizzo said. Black artists were given an opportunity to share original compositions and impactful renditions of others' work.

Natalie St. Hill, a sophomore Mary Pappert School of Music voice major, sang poetry accompanied by school of music student pianist Katelyn Denman.

Duquesne alumni Crystal McCormick Ware also spoke at the event. McCormick Ware is the newly appointed Inaugural Chief Diversity Officer at Duquesne and Special Advisor to President Ken Gormley on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.

The poem she read, "I am a Black Woman" by Mari Evans, shared both the courage and pride it takes to be a woman of color. "Look at me, I am a Black woman," it ended.

Sabali Daye, a co-founder of local artistry collective Poets of Steel, provided a unique connection to the audience with spoken-word poetry he authored himself.

Daye shared three of his works: Spoken words "Oh, Black Clan" and "Maafa Charter," and music piece "Message to Royalty."



COURTESY OF LINDA DONOVAN

The photo above showcases cloth featuring a variety of Kente colors. Each color signifies something special, for example: pink and purple are associate with the female essence of life, red and green symbolizes spiritual moods.

Daye's rhythmic lines told their own story "Against corruption, we are the disruption," he said in "Maafa Charter."

The sung piece was done a cappella, the same lyrical rhythm carrying the story of a man who must overcome the challenges of the life of a Black man.

An excerpt from the book "It Was Nothing at First," was presented by its original author, Akmed Khalifa. Khalifa's audio rendition of the story was accompanied by a video with sound effects and a series of photos relating to the content of his story.

Other featured speakers included Dessie Bey and KL Brewer from the Langston Hughes Poetry Society of Pittsburgh.

Wednesday's event provided a safe and inclusive environment for African American artists to share their creations.

"Job well done," April Wade, the event's emcee, said at the conclusion of the read-in.

There will be other opportunities until the end of the month, both in-person and virtually, to celebrate Black History Month with campus activities.

Students are welcome at the Black History-themed dinner at Hogan on Thursday, Feb. 24. A "Saving Selves While Saving Others" discussion, led by Dr. Atiya Abdelmalik, held virtually and a Black "Friday" Business Expo, sponsored by the Black student Union on Friday from 12-2 p.m.

"It is important for all of us to see ourselves in books."
Dr. Jerrie Cobb Scott, founder of the African American Read-In

Jazz Vespers features renowned artist Deanna Witkowski

ANDREW CUMMINGS
multimedia editor

The smell of incense permeated the chapel as an offering made its way to the front of the room. It was presented in front of the cross, while Deanna Witkowski played contemplative jazz chords on the piano. The crowd was laid-back, but attentive to her renditions of biblical canticles.

Duquesne students gathered in the Chapel of the Holy Spirit on Wednesday to participate in a Jazz Vespers service that featured Witkowski, a nationally-renowned jazz artist.

"I thought it was really nice, it was a break from studying. And it was really nice to just be able to praise and worship and to have that nice guest who was really good at singing and the piano," said Grace Reitz, one of the student attendees of the Vespers.

"It was really interesting to hear jazz music in prayer," said Gina Sabol, another attendee.

Performing alongside Witkowski were four students from Duquesne's Chapel Choir, including Lea Fanizzi and Jonah Hanlon on vocals, Alex Weibel on bass and Soo Jin Park on percussion.

"As a music student myself, it's very nice to be able to work



ANDREW CUMMINGS | MULTIMEDIA EDITOR

Deanna Witkowski (piano) played meditative jazz music as Jonah Hanlon (vocals), Alex Weibel (upright bass), Lea Fanizzi (vocals) and Soon Jin Park (percussion) performed along side her.

the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra," according to promotional material for the event.

Witkowski is a second-year doctoral student in jazz studies at the University of Pittsburgh. She moved to Pittsburgh from New York City while researching one of her musical influences, jazz pianist and composer Mary Lou Williams.

"With her rich knowledge and experience, I thought

would contact churches and see if we could do a concert or play in a service," Witkowski said.

Soon after, Witkowski began to sell sheet music of her compositions to churches.

"I started writing out full piano scores for all my sheet music. So now I sell sheet music on my website and I have a couple of recordings where the recordings go with a companion sheet music book. So there's a lot of churches where I haven't played but where they use my music now too," Witkowski said.

Witkowski released a new recording in January of 2022, titled "Force of Nature." It serves as a companion piece to her biography of Mary Lou Williams that was published in September of 2021.

The prayer at the event is known as Vespers, which is a special form of evening prayer.

"There are different periods of the day where the church offers specific prayers so that we are always engaged in our prayer life with God. The most common ones are morning prayer, evening prayer called Vespers and night prayer called Compline...Vespers occurs at sunset," Forish said. "It's a way of giving thanks for the day and to prepare us for rest and the evening, so that we can again glorify the Lord the next morning."

During Vespers, participants sing and pray using songs and canticles. The event on Wednesday notably incorporated jazz, which created a meditative atmosphere.

"I think it's a very peaceful way to close the day, but also to bring people together that aren't necessarily just Catholic or just one denomination," Witkowski said.

Forish noted how jazz works well with Vespers.

"Jazz is an art form that involves improvisation. It involves the heart, it involves

the soul and so it lends itself well through these experiences," Forish said.

He encourages people to try Vespers.

"I want people to be able to come with an open heart and open mind and a curiosity about the profound, about our celebration of life and prayer through music," Forish said.



ANDREW CUMMINGS | MULTIMEDIA EDITOR

Deanna Witkowski composed several albums and wrote a book titled "Mary Lou Williams: Music for the Soul" which was published in Sept. 2021.

with someone outside of who I normally get to work with. Especially someone of such a high caliber of musicianship," said Hanlon.

Witkowski could be seen cracking a grin as she played intently, exchanging looks and smiles with the other musicians.

"Witkowski has worked as a guest music leader in over 100 churches across the United States. She has presented at the Kennedy Center, Duke University, Fordham University, St. Olaf College and perform as a featured guest with

that this would be a grand opportunity for students to be exposed to other forms of a prayer that we do here at The Chapel of the Holy Spirit at Duquesne," said Eugene Forish, the director of music and liturgy for Duquesne Spiritan Campus Ministry.

Witkowski began writing music for church congregations when she worked as a church music director. After she left that job, she realized that she had a lot of music that other churches could also use.

"When I started touring with my trio, we would play at a jazz venue or a jazz club, and then I



ANDREW CUMMINGS | MULTIMEDIA EDITOR

Incense and offerings were presented before an iconographic crucifix during the service.

Ash Wednesday Schedule

ASH WEDNESDAY, MARCH 2, CAMPUS SCHEDULE

In the University Chapel

7:45 a.m. Mass
12 p.m. Mass
4:30 p.m. Prayer Service
9 p.m. Mass celebrated by Bishop Zubik

Other locations on Campus

9 a.m. Department of Theology, 6th floor, Fisher Hall
9:30 a.m. Department of Facilities Management, Bushinski Building
10 a.m. Gumberg Library, 4th Floor, Outside the Popular Reading Room
11:30 a.m. Second Floor Atrium, Duquesne Union
11:30 a.m. Mellon Hall Basement
1:30 p.m. The Multi-Purpose Room in Towers
2 p.m. Second Floor Atrium, Duquesne Union
2 p.m. Canevin Hall, 2nd Floor Lobby
2:30 p.m. Towers, Spiritan Campus Ministry Center
3 p.m. Des Places Living Learning Center, 2nd Floor Lounge
3:30 p.m. Power Center, 2nd Floor Lobby

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Second-place finish for swim/dive team

LUKE HENNE
sports editor

The Duquesne women's swimming and diving team took home a second-place finish on Saturday in the 2022 Atlantic 10 Swimming and Diving Championships at the SPIRE Institute in Geneva, Ohio.

After finishing the event with a score of 509 total points, the Dukes finished behind only the George Washington Colonials, who secured the top spot with a score of 701.5 to-

top three at the A-10 Championships. In what has become a program of consistency, Head Coach David Sheets has guided the program to either a championship or a runner-up finish in six of the last seven seasons.

"It's extremely rewarding and hasn't come easy," Sheets said. "I've been here for 21 years. There was a time when we weren't able to talk about competing for conference championships. We were more concerned with not finishing last."

"Once we got over that hump and started

school record with a time of 49.28 seconds, also a personal best.

Despite her individual success, her team's achievements took precedence.

"Everyone on this team has worked hard this year," De Rooi said. "Even though they might not have won or placed [in the] top three, they still swam well for themselves, and I think that is what's important."

Hanna Everhart, who competed in the championship final of the 100-yard freestyle, finished with a time of 50.69 seconds, good for fourth place.

"In the moments after each of my races, I love to look at my teammates, coaches and family and friends in the stands, who are all so supportive of me," Everhart said. "I love to understand in that moment that all my hard work, early mornings and sore muscles were worth it."

Everhart said that this weekend's success wouldn't have been possible if not for a collective relentless work ethic throughout the course of the season.

"Our team reaps success due to the countless 20-hour weeks we all put in together," Everhart said. "It makes it that much more sweet because we earned this success. Maintaining that level of success requires diligent hard work. However, [my teammates] should be confident in their abilities because it has been and will be attainable for years to come."

Haley Scholer earned a third-place finish in the 200-yard backstroke event with a time of one minute, 56.71 seconds. Her time, which was a personal best, subsequently allowed her to reach the podium.

"When I found out I got a medal, I started crying," Scholer said. "After all those long practices and not hitting my best time this season, it was rewarding to see it all pay off in the end."

"My training partner [Reagan Linkous] had done the math and just this season we had done over a million yards. So to have everything come together after [all of] those yards is all I can ask for."

Scholer echoed Everhart's thoughts, knowing that the success was due in large part to the comradery in the locker room.

"When you spend every day with the same people and you all get to have that feeling of success at the same time, it's something that can't be replicated," Scholer said.

She also believes that being picked to finish fourth in the conference's preseason poll added a little bit of extra motivation.

"I think that it really shows what we are able to do when we just work together and put our heads down and race," Scholer said.

With such a foundation for success already in place, the team has a blueprint for more success in the coming years.

"We can always be better, and as a staff, we have to continue to figure out how to get the most out of every single one of our swimmers and divers," Sheets said. "How can each one experience the success they want? How much are they willing to work and sacrifice?"

"Once we do that, then we are growing as a program because now the athletes are growing. Winning becomes a byproduct of growth and all of the pieces falling together at the right time in February."

For now, they're going to savor this moment.

"I truly believe our team is a family," Everhart said. "We work hard together, celebrate successes together and fight through failures together."

"Understanding that you have a group of girls, coaches and athletic training staff to support you when you get up behind the block contributes to a winning mindset for the race ahead. We know who we're doing it all for."



COURTESY OF DUQUESNE ATHLETICS

Coaches and members of the Duquesne women's swimming and diving team gather for a picture after finishing in second at the Atlantic 10 Swimming and Diving Championships in Geneva, Ohio.

tal points. They were able to finish slightly ahead of the Richmond Spiders, who finished in third place with a total score of 487 points.

With the second-place position, Duquesne earned its eighth-consecutive finish in the

to put the recruiting pieces together and establish our team identity, it got easier. We began creating our own success."

Mendy De Rooi took home a gold medal in the 100-yard freestyle, breaking the

WLAX handled by No. 25 Penn State

BRENTARO YAMANE
layout editor

Penn State has been known for many years as a powerhouse football school, but it could be argued that the school's women's lacrosse team has been just as successful as its football team.

Since Missy Doherty got the head coaching job at Penn State back in the summer of 2010, she has been able to establish a winning culture at the school. Doherty, the 2015 Big Ten Conference Coach of the Year has guided the school to

two Big Ten Conference titles and seven NCAA Tournament appearances.

Doherty reached a new milestone by winning her 200th game as a head coach on Wednesday afternoon, when the No. 25 Nittany Lions defeated Duquesne 18-4 at Rooney Field.

"It was awesome. I couldn't pick a better team to have this win with," Doherty said. "They're just a great group of girls and hard working."

"And you know, it's been nice after going through a whole pandemic to finally get back to normal, have normal practices, normal interactions. It's just been a breath of fresh air this year."

Since 2012, Penn State has taken care of business against Duquesne, winning all 10 matchups while scoring 10-plus goals in every victory.

"It [the loss] was a really good lesson to learn and we were expecting it to be a bit closer," said Duquesne Head Coach Corinne Desrosiers. "Going through these lows is just going to make us much better."

After the Nittany Lions lost to No. 19 Drexel on Feb. 16, they had an entire week to prepare for the matchup against the Dukes. The team applied pressure from the very beginning and never relented.

Brooke Hoss started the scoring party for

the Nittany Lions, scoring the game's first goal less than two minutes into the game. Although she scored a game-high four goals, nine other players were able to find their way into the goal column, making it a true team win.

"I think, from our last game, we wanted to just be a little more efficient shooting," Doherty said. "In our previous game, we didn't quite put the ball away."

"So that was one of our objectives, which was if we work it down [the field] and we get a good shot off, try to put it away. And I think they did a good job of that today."

Penn State, which outshot Duquesne 31-12 in the game, held a commanding 7-0 lead by the end of the first quarter. The Dukes started in a zone defense, but eventually switched to a man-on-man defense. Regardless, the Nittany Lions kept on scoring.

"Penn State's just a really good team. We came in knowing how tough it was going to be," said Duquesne defenseman Tina St. Clair. "It's only our fourth game of the season. They're definitely the toughest competitors we've played against, so it just kind of showed holes and where we need to improve."

"I think throughout the game we were able to adjust a little bit to where we started off slow."

Penn State led 13-0 at halftime and

pushed that lead as high as 17-0 during the third quarter.

The Dukes were able to get on the scoreboard for the first time at the end of the third quarter when Sam King scored on a free position shot, which was able to set the Dukes up to go on a 4-0 scoring run. However, the game was all but decided by then. The Nittany Lions would add on another goal to cap off the game's scoring.

Penn State goalkeeper Cayden Jarvis recorded her first win in her first collegiate start, making three saves in the victory.

Duquesne goalkeeper Rachel O'Toole started the game, allowing 12 goals in nearly 22 minutes of action before being relieved by Mady Piersielak, who allowed five goals in just over 23 minutes. Lauren Bonino also allowed a goal in her 15 minutes of playing time.

Duquesne will have a week off before it returns to action. The Dukes, who are 2-2 on the young season, will travel to Lewisburg, Pa., where they'll take on Bucknell on March 2.

Desrosiers plans on using the next week to get her team back on the right track.

"We need to do a better job executing and running the game plan," Desrosiers said. "This loss doesn't impact our ability to compete within the rest of the conference and doesn't affect our ability to be a playoff team."



BRENTARO YAMANE | LAYOUT EDITOR
Chloe Sankovich battles for a loose ball in Wednesday's loss against No. 25 Penn State.

MBB falls to Davidson, drops 13th in a row

LUKE HENNE
sports editor

Behind a game-high 27 points (6-of-9 from 3-point range) from Hyunjung Lee, Davidson cruised to a 74-50 win over Duquesne on Wednesday evening at the UPMC Cooper Fieldhouse.

The Atlantic 10 Conference victory, which pitted the Wildcats and Dukes against one another for the second time in nine days, helped Davidson retain sole

with a 1-13 record in A-10 action.

The Dukes kept it close in the first half, trailing by just three points (36-33) at halftime. However, Davidson put its foot on the gas in the second half, outscoring Duquesne 38-17 to turn a competitive game into a victory of 20-plus points.

"They [Davidson] know how to play the game the right way," said Duquesne forward Kevin Easley Jr., "Their coach [33rd-year head coach Bob McKillop] is a legend. He has them playing at a great pace."



PETER BOETTGER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Duquesne's Tre Williams is helped off of the court after sustaining a knee injury in the first half of Wednesday's loss to Davidson. Williams scored five points and posted two rebounds prior to the injury.

possession of first place in the conference. The Wildcats pushed their A-10 record to 13-2.

On the other side, Duquesne has now lost 13 games in a row and remains buried at the bottom of the conference standings

Easley led Duquesne with 16 points. Tyson Acuff put up 15 first-half points for the Dukes, but was held off the scoreboard in the second half.

"It's been a struggle this season," Acuff said. "We're trying to just progress slowly,

take it step-by-step and not hit home runs, take it one hit at a time."

Acuff said that it's "frustrating" to try and improve the little things when the results aren't showing in the win-loss column.

"We've got a group of patient guys. We're all frustrated at the outcome of this season right now," Acuff said. "As a leader, I'm trying to keep everybody's head up and be the positive guy around."

With 1:02 left in the first half, Duquesne big man Tre Williams went down with a right knee injury. He was unable to walk off on his own power, but returned to the bench on crutches during the second half.

"When it rains, it pours. We had no chance once he [Williams] gets hurt," Dambrot said. "... It doesn't look good. I don't think it's necessarily bad, but I don't think he'll play [for the rest of] this year."

The Dukes have lost seven straight games at the fieldhouse, having not won a home game since Dec. 11, when they narrowly edged New Hampshire.

For a team that was decimated by the transfer portal this past offseason, Dambrot suggested that although the results aren't showing, the locker room culture is in a better place.

The response came just one night after Sincere Carry, who transferred from Duquesne to Kent State, scored 42 points for the Golden Flashes. Players like Lamar Norman Jr. (transferred to Western Michigan and averages 19.7 points/game) and Tavian Dunn-Martin (transferred to Florida Gulf Coast and scored 43 points on Wednesday) are also thriving elsewhere.

"There's no question I overcorrected [when building this season's roster]," Dambrot said. "I still think I did the right thing by morals' and ethics' standards, but I hurt myself, and I hurt our school, and I

hurt our team. So, I overcorrected.

"We had too much [expletive] that went on [with teams in previous seasons] and I had enough ..."

Duquesne will be back in action when it takes on Rhode Island at the Ryan Center in Kingston, R.I., on Saturday afternoon. The game will be nationally televised on USA Network.

The Dukes have won three of their last four games against the Rams overall, but have not won a road contest against Rhode Island in their last three attempts (last win came on Feb. 15, 2014).

"I went into the season thinking we could reboot it [the program] in one year and be pretty good, and then I tried to keep patching it," Dambrot said. "And, at some point, you realize you're not going to be good. So you might as well take a two-year reorganization business plan rather than a one-year [business plan]..."



PETER BOETTGER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Kevin Easley Jr. scored a team-high 16 points for the Dukes in Wednesday's 24-point loss.

Last-second shot downs WBB at La Salle

SPENCER THOMAS
staff writer

Despite strong offensive performances from Duquesne's Amaya Hamilton and Libby Bazalak, a basket from La Salle's Claire Jacobs with 0.2 seconds remaining helped the Explorers sneak past the Dukes 67-66 in Philadelphia on Wednesday evening.

On Jan. 30, Duquesne played what Head Coach Dan Burt considered to be one of its best games of the season in a home win over La Salle. The success was driven by allowing just 49 points to a team in the Atlantic 10 Conference's upper half.

While the defense remained strong on Wednesday, it was nothing near what they showed just under a month ago.

Offensively, the Explorers relied heavily on Kayla Spruill, who was perhaps the largest difference maker between the two meetings. After being held to just seven points in the Jan. 30 matchup, she scored 17 points in Wednesday's contest.

"Defensively, we played much tougher against them at home," Bazalak told *The Duke* following the game. "They just hit some timely shots, and it came down to the last possession."

Bazalak, who had a triple-double when the teams met in Pittsburgh, scored 10 of the Dukes' 25 first-half points on Wednesday, while the rest of the team shot just 6-of-17 from the field.

In need of an offensive spark, the Dukes were aided by Hamilton. She exploded for 14 points in the second half, seemingly trading buckets with Bazalak.

"[Hamilton] has been working on her game a lot, and it's really showing," Bazalak said.

The teams would remain in a tight battle for the majority of the game, with a key moment coming just over three minutes into the fourth quarter, when Megan McConnell found Hamilton for a 3-pointer in the corner that gave Duquesne a five-point lead (55-50). Bazalak hit a jumper with 4:37 left to put Duquesne's lead at six (59-53).

However, the Explorers hung around and found a way to climb back into the game. With 1:17 to go, Jacobs completed a three-point play to give the Explorers the lead.

Bazalak, who fouled Jacobs on the prior possession, drove to the rim, drew a foul from Jacobs, and made the shot with 59 seconds remaining. The basket put Baz-

alak's point total at 25, which set a new career high for her.

However, she missed the free-throw. Despite entering the game shooting 70% from the charity stripe, Duquesne finished just 8-of-15 from the line.

La Salle's Molly Masciantonio drew a foul with 19 seconds left and connected on both free throws to give the Explorers a one-point edge.

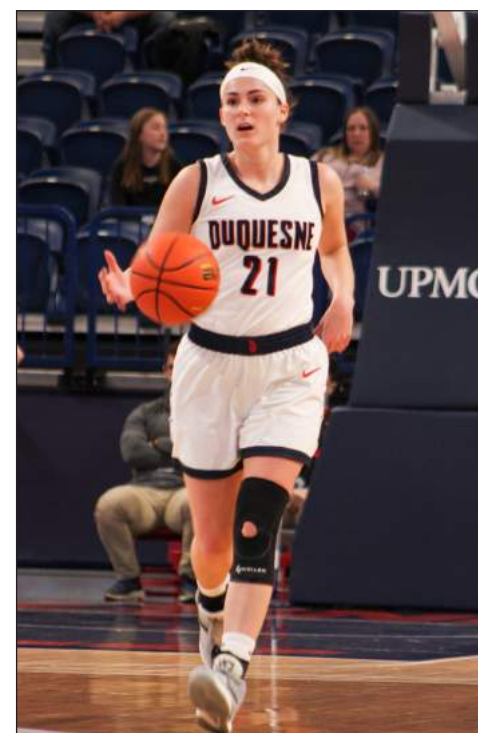
On the ensuing possession, rather than attacking with Hamilton or Bazalak, McConnell looked inside and found Precious Johnson, who shed her defender and hit a go-ahead shot with just seven seconds to go.

However, La Salle and Jacobs had one last breath in them.

After a missed 3-pointer in the corner, Jacobs snatched the rebound and, in the same motion put the ball back up. The ball momentarily lingered on the rim before dropping through the hoop.

Duquesne will have one more game prior to the A-10 tournament, when it hosts Saint Joseph's on Saturday afternoon.

"We'll focus now on our last game and the tourney," Bazalak said. "We know we can beat any team in the league, so we are confident [that] we can make a run."



BRENTARO YAMANE | LAYOUT EDITOR

Libby Bazalak, seen here on Jan. 19, scored a career-high 25 points in Wednesday's loss.

6 ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

The show must go on: Red Masquers' Mamma Mia!

ZACHARY PETROFF
staff writer

Pittsburgh's oldest amateur theater group, the Duquesne Red Masquers, are a true testament to the timeless adage that "the show must go on." The performing arts group will be debuting their rendition of the jukebox musical "Mamma Mia!" on Thursday, Feb. 24 in the Genesius Theater. The show runs until March 5, and tickets are still available on the Duquesne Red Masquers website.

The initial debut was scheduled for Feb. 17, but due to health concerns stemming from Covid-19, production was pushed back one week to prioritize the physical and mental health of those involved in the production.

"I have never felt so helpless in a theater production before," said Justin Sines the show's director and the Genesius Theater's technical director, who had Covid-19 earlier this month.

According to stage manager Elysse Dalzell, the rehearsals usually run Monday to Friday nights from 6-10 p.m. Dalzell said this show has been a special instance incorporating weekend rehearsals as well.

"We were able to take each day and break it down. With these specific actors, we would have them working on blocking and acting parts, and then later in the night we would do dancing or singing and were able to split it up so not everyone is here all the time. It is a pretty big time commitment," Dalzell said.

One of the challenges facing this production was the use of masks during the performance.

"What we were planning to do before the Covid outbreak was to wear clear masks, like shields. With the Covid outbreak, we decided to have everyone wear a black mask. That is a part of the costume now," Sines said.

While it appears that having performers with such obvious

love, independence and various examinations of relationships. Through the music of ABBA, "Mamma Mia!" is able to avoid taking itself too seriously, while giving the audience a chance to both laugh and cry.

"This production specifically has so many moving parts, and it is so interwoven," Music Director Aaron Thompson said. "The forefront has to be the sound."

Navigating theater arts through a pandemic would seem to make this type of show impossible, but the Red Masquers saw this as just another hurdle that comes with the typical chaos it requires to perform their art.

"I just have to applaud how hard these students have been working and their dedication and their passion," Choreographer Katherine Hess said. "Growing, learning, being flexible, being adaptable - that is just the nature of theater in general. Of course Covid is really giving us a run for our money."

Shortened schedules, health concerns, inclement weather and basic student life all impacted the process of rehearsals. Rarely was the entire cast together for rehearsals, according to the production staff. The show's success is a direct correlation of the cast and crew's ability to step up and meet the varying challenges.

Freshman Rachel Lewandowski was originally cast as part of the ensemble and Ali's understudy, though found herself taking over the role of Donna a little over a week ago. With the support of her fellow castmates, Lewandowski was able to take command of the character in merely 48 hours, allowing her hard work to provide a seamless transition to one



COURTESY OF JUSTIN SINES

Duquesne Red Masquers says "Thank You For the Music" to the cast and crew!

of the lead roles.

"I think we give the characters dimensions. I hope that shows in our production because we have worked on it so hard," Lewandowski said.

The Red Masquers' production of "Mamma Mia!" provides young and talented students an avenue to showcase their dedication and craft. This show enables the audience to be immersed in a colorful world filled with catchy songs, funny one-liners and impressive dance features.

Tickets can be purchased at duqredmasquers.com.

Editor's Note:

Please be advised that members of the editorial staff are involved with the Red Masquers and this production of "Mamma Mia!"



COURTESY OF JUSTIN SINES

"The Winner Takes it All" for Lewandowski's quick turnaround as Donna.

campus events

Dance Marathon:
Cheesin' for Children
Feb. 24 @ 11 a.m.

Help DuqAthon raise money FTK with on-the-go mac and cheese! \$5 per person on the 2nd floor of the Union

Black History Month Dinner
Feb. 24 @ 4 p.m.

Join Hogan Dining Center with a special-edition dinner for Black History Month!

Succulent Night
Feb. 24 @ 9 p.m.

Go to the NiteSpot for your very own potted plant!

"Black Friday"
Feb. 25 @ 12 p.m.

Join the Black Student Union for free food, and a chance to explore Black-owned businesses in Pittsburgh!

ACS Iron Chef
Feb. 25 @ 4:30 p.m.

Go to the Africa Room to learn how to make homemade salsa! Containers provided.

capri's kind words

You are the best version you can be

Think about it: you've come a long way. Every change you make, though small, gets you closer and closer to where you want to be.

The thing about self-growth is that the growing pains are pertinent on the bad days and weightless on the good days, but we don't often look at the overall progress of a month, a year, or even a span of years.

That being said, how much change have you willed into existence that you are not giving yourself credit for?

You are a product of every moment that has come and gone. You are a portrait of every pencil-mark and coffee stain you've made.

You have gotten yourself this far, even if it feels no different at all. The journey, however, is something to be thankful for.

-- Capri Scarcelli



COURTESY OF JUSTIN SINES

Take your "Honey Honey" to Red Masquers' Mamma Mia! Thursday-Sunday.

"I was stuck at home in bed. I couldn't leave my house, and the show was happening. I just had to trust my technicians, my staff, my stage management team and the actors because the show was going to go on whether I was there or not," Sines said. "Theater doesn't happen in a vacuum."

"It required a lot of different people with a lot of different talent coming together at the same time at the same place to put the show on," Sines said.

"Mamma Mia!," a campy, goofy experience that shines through the actors' performances, should leave spectators in awe with the level of preparation that went into the production.

masks would be a hindrance or a focal point of the performance, the actors are able to emphasize their facial expressions and movements to keep the audience immersed in the musical.

"I've always been taught when people can't see your mouth moving, they can't hear you well and I am not experiencing that," Sines said.

"Mamma Mia!," debuting in 1999, is the story of the wedding of Sophie and her outrageous plot to solve the mystery of who her father is. Her mother, Donna, the fierce yet vulnerable single-parent, finds herself in often heart-felt situations, trying to navigate themes such as lost

Freshman's unsung songs turn to published poetry

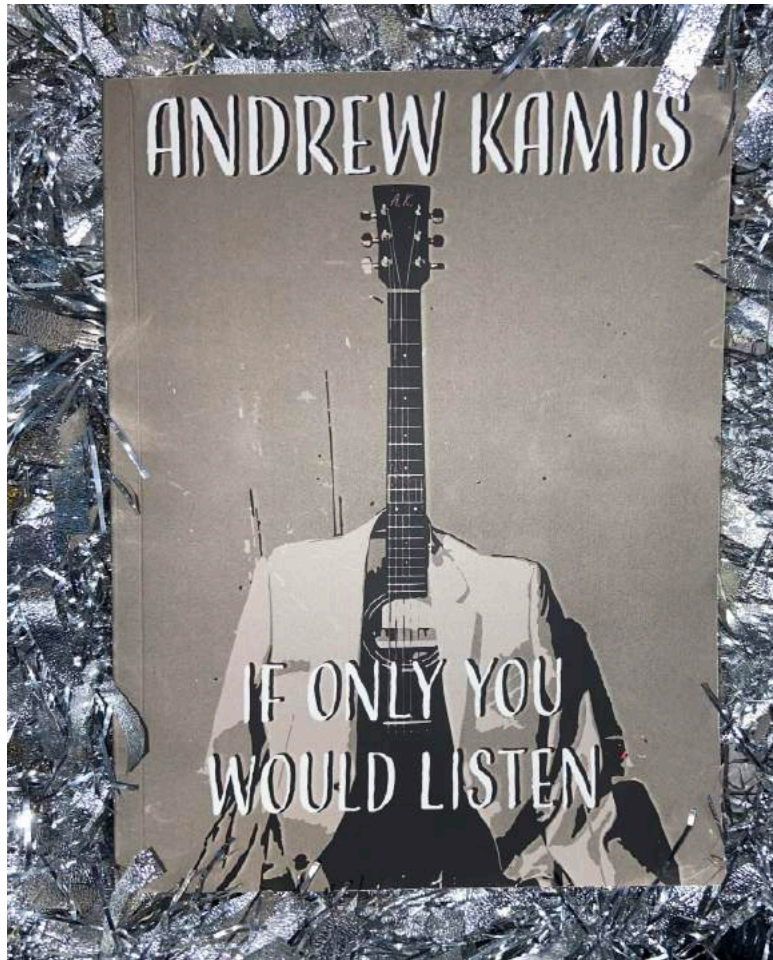
CAPRI SCARCELLI
a&e editor

With contemporary poetry taking the media by storm in recent years, young aspiring authors are taking advantage of the opportunities before them to build a platform for themselves — including freshman Andrew Kamis.

The English education major's self-published poetry book, "If Only You Would Listen" tells the vulnerable tales of young love and its hardships. Accompanied with illustrations on every page turn, Kamis creates a reading experience that immerses the audience in more ways than one. Over 150 pages in length, Kamis' collection of poetry shows a sense of maturity and self-growth in finding one's worth after the pain of heartbreak.

"This book is inspired by what I've been through, and I hope it will inspire other people going through similar situations to help them see the light at the end of the tunnel," Kamis said. "I went through a bad relationship in high school, and so [this book] represents how I was feeling at the time: unimportant and not listened to."

Kamis' first introduction to creative writing was a short story he



COURTESY OF ABBY LANZELOTTI

Kamis' poetry grapples with themes of young love, heartbreak, self-worth and growth, making his writing relatable to all audiences.

wrote for his mother at 5-years-old — a little book called "My Fat Cat." Kamis has been actively writing poetry since his junior year of high school; he recalled his senior prom, where he wrote over 80 poems in one sitting. Typically, Kamis favors anaphora, repetition and metaphor, creating a blunt narrative voice. He said he enjoys poetry as something he can easily commit his time to, especially while watching friends and family interpret his works. He takes inspiration from modernist poets such as Emily Dickinson and Walt Whitman, as well as contemporary authors like Atticus and Rupi Kaur.

"Sometimes I will reread my poetry, and it will bring me back to that moment, but not in a bad way," Kamis said. "It gives me a chance to reflect."

Writing poem after poem throughout the fall semester, Kamis published his book through Amazon on Jan. 20. According to Kamis, self-published authors are responsible for purchasing the copyrights and ISBN codes, but Amazon offers 60% royalties to authors on print copies after meeting a certain threshold. This way, authors are able to get the atten-

tion of publishing companies.

Kamis also made his own artwork through Adobe, where he would take a photograph and use software tools to make the images — such as the front cover with his suit jacket and guitar — look more like a painting. He would also doodle in a sketchbook and scan them to give some dimension to the pages.

Originally, Kamis was going to publish a different poetry book with a more conventional, modernist feel. The book is a more personal look into his life, including family-oriented themes. Though he said he will return to this, he is looking forward to writing a play called "Wishes for Willow."

"I want to write a lot. Right now I am working on a play, which Dr. Engel is helping with, to hopefully get out to the Pittsburgh theaters," Kamis said. "The plot is a little morbid, but it's about a single dad and his daughter who passed away, and he keeps her wish journal with him to carry out her wishes in her honor."

Until then, Kamis' "If Only You Would Listen" is available on Amazon for \$9.99. For more information on Kamis' future works, visit his website: andrewkamis.com.

MARINA concert dazzles Stage AE

CAPRI SCARCELLI
a&e editor

Welsh singer-songwriter MARINA, previously known as Marina and the Diamonds, graced Stage AE on Feb. 19 to kick off the beginning of her "Ancient Dreams in a Modern Land" tour.

With doors opening as early as 6 p.m. to VIP guest-access ticket-holders, lines wrapped around the block until opening act Tove Styrke welcomed the excited crowd at 7:30 p.m.

Styrke is a Swedish electro-pop singer-songwriter, who strutted the stage in a high-low wedding gown. Starting the set off with songs from her debut album, she had the audience swooning over a cover of ABBA's "Super Trouper," leaving the venue in a silent awe.

Mid-performance, Styrke asked the audience to pull out their phones to donate to an LGBTQ+ charity called OutRight Action International, which helps advocate for human rights around the world. Donations made by fans at the show meant they were eligible to enter a raffle for an "on-

line hangout" to meet the singer virtually.

After a kiss and a wave goodbye, there was a brief intermission, where fans began to push toward the front of the pit to get a better view of MARINA's opening entrance.

MARINA's performance felt like a play in one act — articulate, succinct and meaningful. There were no costume changes, no major choreography, but the set had a sense of purpose that brought an audience together, one hit after another.

She incorporated classics from her debut albums "The Family Jewels" and "Electra Heart," though mostly sung songs from her newest album "Ancient Dreams in a Modern Land." There was something for everyone there, whether a diehard fan or someone who remembers "Oh No!" from *JustDance* on Wii.

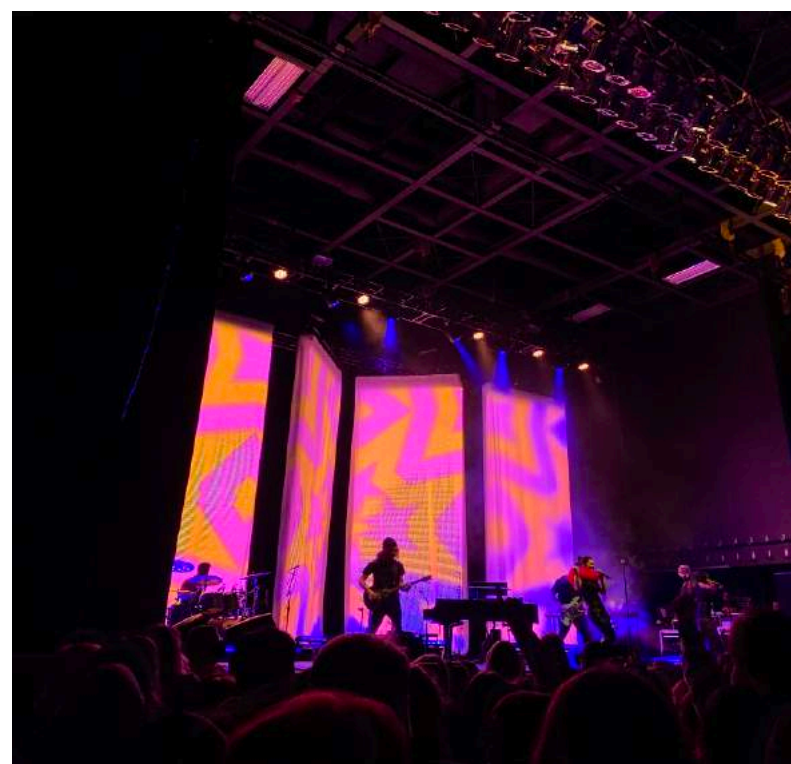
My personal favorite moments from the show were "I Am Not a Robot" and "Venus Fly Trap" just because of the high energy of the crowd and seeing MARINA giggle with delight over her enthusiastic fans. Each song went right into the

next — there limited time to process the concert song-by-song because it was a smooth-transitioning compilation of works.

Audience members were decked out in bright neon and funky patterns as homage to the artist's glowing stage presence. MARINA herself was adorned in leather pants and a sparkly red top with a long bubble ponytail, and the colorful backdrop of the stage and the rainbow of lights made the venue all the more radiant.

Each song was one upbeat bop after another, with only three ballads throughout the set. MARINA said on-stage that she wanted the crowd to "leave it all behind" and enjoy the present moment. MARINA was very inclusive throughout the set, asking everyone how they were doing, singing "Happy Birthday" to a fan in the front row and asking fans on the balcony whether or not they could see.

Toward the end of her performance, a fan fainted toward the back of the pit. Audience members on the balcony were able to flag down MARINA to stop the show, waiting for security to help the individual before continuing.



CAPRI SCARCELLI | A&E EDITOR

A show as bright as diamonds, MARINA wows the crowd with her set list.

MARINA thanked the audience for "being so observant," but fans thanked her right back for taking the time to prioritize safety.

MARINA left the stage with "I Love You But I Love Me More," giving a grace period before encouraging with the soft ballad "Goodbye."

Fans waved their flashlights in the air and swayed with the music until MARINA said "I love you, goodbye Pittsburgh."

Look out for more concerts coming to Stage AE at promowestlive.com.

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"I think the way to
become the best is to
just have fun."

SHAUN WHITE

You just read | Now tweet
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BENJAMIN CRAWFORD | STAFF COMIC ARTIST

Snapchat's new 'Live Location' feature: dangerous or genius?

According to PBS, at Virginia Tech, four sexual assaults were reported in one November week, University of North Carolina linked one individual to three sexual assaults over three months, and school police have been investigating more than two dozen cases at Indiana University.

Many college students returned to in-person learning for the 2021-2022 school year, with attendance rising to pre-pandemic levels. For some sophomores, it was their first time on campus, making them freshmen in a social and cultural sense.

But even before students returned to campus, advocacy groups, such as End Rape on Campus (EROC) and It's On Us, were expressing concerns about the "red zone" period from August to November, where approximately 50% of sexual assaults occur at a university in a given year. Even though there aren't official statistics, universities have been seeing a surge in cases.

New students are typically at higher risk of assault, so with the pandemic delaying campus life for sophomores, and interrupting the routine of juniors and seniors, EROC called this unprecedented time the "double red zone."

The situation led It's On Us to partner with the popular social media app Snapchat to create and promote a new feature called "Live Location." While there are some concerns of privacy, as with all location sharing apps, the feature can save someone from attack, or even save their life.

Live Location, similar to the iPhone's "Find My" network or the Life 360 app, works in tandem with "Snap

Map" to provide a precise location with "trusted friends and family" for short and controlled periods of time. Snap Map previously only showed approximate location, and only updated when the Snapchat user opened the app, not in the background.

Most of the concerns following the launch of Live Location were of privacy, but Snapchat implemented safeguards to prevent stalking or harassment of their users. Live Location is not enabled 24/7, nor has an option to

could become problematic. The stalking safeguard isn't 100% foolproof.

But these risks can be outweighed by the potential benefits. Snapchat is readily accessible for students, being that they already have the app. It also allows for cross-sharing between Android and iPhone users.

According to a survey conducted by the company, 78% of its U.S. users wouldn't hesitate to share their locations on Snap Map, and most do it as a safe way to connect with others. Over 250 million users currently utilize Snap Map, and Live Location only enhances that feature.

Within the five years of Snap Map's availability, many lives have been saved in missing person cases, natural disasters and suicide attempts, according to news sources across the country.

One example, of the power of Snap Map, covered by CNN, is a case of a missing 14-year-old girl in California back in 2020. She used the app to tell her friends she'd been abducted, but didn't know where she was. The girl's friends found her location using Snap Map, called 911 and shortly after, officers found the girl in a motel room.

During Hurricane Harvey in 2017, Snap Map became a major resource for people trying to keep tabs on the storm in Houston. It also allowed worried family members to check in on their relatives' homes and track their moment as the storm moved in.

Live Location is only an enhanced version of the Snap Map feature, but time will tell if it will be used in a positive way. Conceptually, it provides a means for people to ensure a safe walk home for friends.



ZOE STRATOS
opinions editor

enable it for all of your Snapchat friends. The purpose is to share a live location with a trusted friend or family member for anywhere from 15 minutes to eight hours, just so you can get to wherever you're going safely, or feel safe while at a certain location.

The feature could be hugely beneficial, especially given the widespread use among college audiences. But there are also risks that Snapchat couldn't account for. Domineering partners could force their significant other to share their location, and disobedience

STAFF
EDITORIAL

How young is too young to compete for gold?

As the Olympics concluded this week, supporters across the nation are left with many concerns after the disaster in Beijing: from disqualifications, to fake snow to Covid-19 concerns.

But with all of these issues that caught our eyes during these 2022 Winter Olympics, the most alarming of all was Kamila Valieva's positive drug test.

The Russian Olympic Committee (ROC) skater should not have been skating at the games. Not because of the failed drug test taken on Christmas Day, but because Valieva is only 15 years old.

Valieva is no doubt a star in the world of skating, but it's time that the committee raises the minimum age in figure skating from 15 to 18, not only for the physical health of these young athletes, but also their mental health.

The case has brought the 15-year-old face to face with intense focus and scrutiny during the games, and was even seen crying during a practice session prior to the women's individual event.

Expected to win gold in all competitions, the ROC figure skating star failed to place in the free skate event, falling (literally) and figuratively from first to fourth as the night went on.

When the routine was over, she buried her face in her hands and left the ice in tears, with no support from her coaches or team.

In regular everyday sports, we don't often see children competing alongside adults at a professional level such as the Olympics; children compete against children, adults against adults.

The International Olympic Committee (IOC), the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) and the Court of Arbitration for Sport even cater to this reality by abiding by WADA's 'protected persons' selections — which includes minors. Like in Valieva's case, all three agencies agree they should be prosecuted differently because they don't understand the consequences of such actions.

The case of Valieva, and other minors caught in banned medication scandals, such as Romanian gymnast Andreea Raducan, often really don't understand the consequences; they blindly follow the orders of coaches that they feel will give them the best chance at winning.

But the question is: Why are they even there in the first place if they don't understand the consequences?

According to an article by insidethegames, IOC spokesperson Mark Adams argued that he thinks, "What would be disappointing is if we did not allow the opportunity for these athletes to grasp their dreams."

What's even more disappointing is allowing a child to go through rigorous training that puts tremendous strain on their bodies — and an unbelievable strain on their mental fortitude.

An age limitation in the Olympics is long overdue; the young stars will get their chance when they're old enough.

So close yet so far away: Canadian trucker protest misses mark

ZACHARY PETROFF
staff columnist

The “stupid culture war” found a new space for the battleground of sensationalism and counter-productivity these past few weeks in Canada.

Those who may follow the alt-right talking points on social media or watch the senior-citizen aimed background noise of *Fox News* may be familiar with the recent “Trucker Convoy” protest taking place in Canada.

For those unfamiliar, a group of truckers brought nearly 4,000 big rigs to the Canadian capital of Ottawa to protest Canada’s new vaccination mandates and prohibitive regulations on the unvaccinated. The protesters blocked major international roadways including the Ambassador Bridge in Detroit, causing massive hurdles for travel.

This is not the first time the radical side of the conservative party has intrigued me and was able to elicit an initial vote of confidence in their cause. However, just as they have in the past, the radical conservative party has found a way to be a major disappointment paved with ill-intentions, bad information and intellectual laziness.

I very much support the people’s right to protest, it is an American obligation protected by the First Amendment. I believe it to be a fundamental ability utilized throughout American history to evoke the voice of the voiceless. There



COURTESY OF UNSPLASH
Various polling data, including the Angus Reid Institute, implies that most Canadians, about 70%, do not agree with the Freedom Convoy’s message.

is a real beauty when a collective struggle faces off against an elite ruling class. As Thomas Paine once so elegantly put it, “The voice of the people is the voice of God.”

I can think of very few things more courageous than actively confronting an oppressive force — except for maybe driving in Pittsburgh.

I have recently found myself strongly disagreeing, to the point of resentment, with actions that I usually aggressively advocate for. Actions such as protesting, civil disobedience, civic engagement and overall disdain for the elite political class are being hijacked by a manufactured ideology that I cannot stomach, let alone support.

Political labels are pointless. The idea that we as Americans can fit inside one area of the political spectrum is absolute asinine. This practice of sorting ideologies in order to neatly structure morals, ethics, economic values etc. is a gross oversimplification to the individual and excludes the major fibers that are woven to create the real American experience.

Yet somehow, we have managed to let our specific moral viewpoints control our entire political and economic ideology and political representation.

It is worth noting that, according to the Public Health Agency of Canada, 85% of adult Canadians

are vaccinated. Various polling data — most notably a poll done by the Angus Reid Institute — implies that most Canadians — about 70% — do not agree with the Freedom Convoy’s message.

We once again are experiencing a small, loud and intellectually ignorant group of people hijacking a cause with empirically wrong information. It is so ridiculous, that it almost seems like a joke.

The issue with this alt-right movement is that it avoids a certain level of credibility by surpassing historically fundamental and legal steps. The lack of effort by not exhausting every possible avenue gives the “alt-right” movement an absence of substance. It

is as if these “acts of defiance” are crafted for the sake of just being defiant, like an angsty teenager rebelling against their parental figures during puberty.

There is an obvious self-entitlement essence that surrounds that alt-right movement, rooted with white privilege. People of privilege are leading the narrative. It is exploitative.

As we have seen in the past, the real issue is ignored. The American truck driver is severely overworked and undervalued. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics — annual turnover rate averaged 94% between the years of 1995-2017. Working conditions are often vigorous and dangerous. There are serious concerns with failing equipment, over-exhausted drivers and severe drug abuse among drivers.

According to research done by *Business Insider*, when adjusted for inflation the median wages for truck drivers in the 1980s were nearly \$110,000 annually. The annual median wage in 2020 was \$47,130.

Only 10.1% of truck drivers are covered by union contractors.

Perhaps the overall anxiety of the American truck driver has moved them in a blind rage making them willing to cling to any movement as long as it allows them an opportunity to vent their frustrations.

Or: A certain movement that has found notoriety in being loud and overly aggressive has found an ample opportunity to direct their narrative under the guise of blue collar workers.

Red card on the play: Equal pay is long overdue

COLLEEN HAMMOND
editor-in-chief

For decades, the crusade for gender equality in the workplace has sung the battle cry of “an equal playing field.” This week, some of America’s top athletes got one step closer to fair treatment on and off the field.

On Feb. 22, the United States Soccer Federation settled a gender pay discrimination lawsuit with the U.S. women’s soccer team for \$24 million.

Although this issue has been given national attention since the women’s World Cup victory in 2019, their struggle for equal pay has extended back to the team’s inception nearly four decades ago.

In 2016, five U.S. women’s soccer players filed a wage discrimination lawsuit against the U.S. Soccer Federation, alleging that they were consistently paid less than the men’s team. Since the initial suit was filed, snail-pace progress has been made on this issue.

Eventually in 2017, the U.S.

Soccer Federation announced a new collective bargaining agreement with the women’s team that would increase their base pay and bonuses. However, even with this wage hike, the women were still making less than the men’s team.

One reason the particular case of U.S. women’s soccer has been met with an outpouring of public support is because the women’s team has been incredibly successful.

Since the team’s origin in 1985, the women’s team has won the World Cup four times (most recently in 2019). The men’s team, on the other hand, has not reached even a semifinal game since 1930. Fans and general spectators alike found this type of discrimination to be blatantly wrong. Why should the undeniably more successful team be paid less just because they compete under the “women’s” banner?

Although this settlement is widely welcomed, it speaks to larger issues about the gender pay gap and gender-based inequality: Women are consistently expected to outperform their male counterparts tenfold in order to be considered wor-

thy of equal pay.

Time and again, political talking heads love to throw out the phrase “equal pay for equal work.” While this would be an ideal scenario, culturally, we need to acknowledge that there is a widespread expectation that women are to take on more work and, in their work, supersede male colleagues to merit equal wages.

The multimillion dollar settlement from the U.S. Soccer Federation is a great step toward overturning gender wage gaps in the professional sports world, it sets the precedent that women need to prove themselves exceptional in order to be deemed equal.

Equality should not be something women have to earn through World Cup wins, sponsorship deals or cultural fame; it should be seen as inherent.

However, society often treats justice as something that should not be handed out on the basis of human dignity, but something that has to be struggled for consistently. This narrative only perpetuates the



COURTESY OF WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

U.S. women soccer stars, including Megan Rapinoe (pictured) and Alex Morgan, have reached a \$24 million settlement with the U.S. Soccer Federation following a lawsuit over unequal pay with men’s team players.

idea that people need to prove themselves every day if they wish to be treated as a regular member of society.

This line of thinking is detrimental to justice efforts across the nation. We have created an eternally moving finish line in the race for progress, and eventually, no number of World Cups,

seats in government or Olympic medals will measure up.

We need to stop making equality a competition, a badge of honor that must be earned at a great price. We must recognize the innate dignity and worthiness of all people — champions or not — when pursuing efforts toward equality.

A quilty pleasure: Project Linus comforts kids in need

EMMA POLEN
features editor

The best kind of sleep under heaven above, is under a blanket handmade with love.

From the Bluff to Butler, the Pittsburgh community is making special contributions to a nationwide volunteer project, Project Linus, that spreads cuddly comfort to children in need.

The nonprofit's name, Project Linus, is the result of some cartoonish appreciation. However, its mission is anything but comical.

Project Linus' founder, Karen Loucks, was crocheting on Christmas Eve and looking through *Parade Magazine*, when she read about a little girl with cancer who found comfort in a blanket, said Patty Gregory, president and CEO of Project Linus.

Loucks was inspired by the article, and she started Project Linus, enlisting the help of her friends and her family, as a local volunteer initiative for Denver's Rocky Mountain Children's Cancer Center.

"Now we're everywhere," Gregory said. To date, Project Linus has over 300 chapters across all 50 states.

Since its founding, the blanket-making coalition has delivered more than 8.6 million blankets across the U.S., and more than 203,600 blankets in the greater Pittsburgh area's chapter alone.

On Sunday, Feb. 20, Duquesne's Alpha Sigma Tau (AST) sorority hosted a Project Linus blanket-making event in the NiteSpot.

The social sorority's philanthropy is Make a Wish, so Project Linus "correlated with that really well," said Olivia Lavin, a junior nursing student.

Lavin was in charge of planning and putting together materials for the event.

Before she had even purchased the fleece for AST's blanket-making activity, Lavin said she was already feeling the impact of Project Linus.

The woman waiting at the checkout next to her at JoAnn Fabrics saw the materials in Lavin's cart, and upon learning what the fabric was for, the anonymous customer donated \$30 to Lavin's blanket material fund.

"Just like that," Lavin said. "Anyone can do this."

Maddia Tronoski, a freshman psychology major and a new sister of AST, knew she was benefiting a group in need, with some personal benefits as well.

"It's such a therapeutic activity," Tronoski said. "And... you can make someone smile."

Groups across the city meet regularly to contribute to this blanket-making community. Every Saturday, Three Rivers Crochet and Knitting meets in the little meeting room in the back of the Panera Bread on the Boulevard of the Allies.

Carol Rose is a member of Three Rivers Crochet who makes Project Linus blankets on a regular basis.



COURTESY OF PROJECT LINUS & LOIS MISKO

The winner of a quilting contest last September was made by Grammie Ga. Volunteers can come and pick up a pre-prepared "Brown Bag Blanket" at PLACE (Project Linus Activity Center Extraordinaire), make the quilt at home and bring it back completed. Volunteers voted on social media for their favorite quilt.

"I like to crochet, [and] there's only so many blankets you can make for your family," she said.

Rose cannot remember how many years she's been making blankets for Project Linus, but she has maintained the same simple pattern: a white crochet blanket with a splash of color.

"It's comforting for a child to have a blanket," she said. She has already made several for her grandsons, and Project Linus serves as another opportunity for her to do what she loves while also sharing that love with children in need.

Like Lavin, Rose knows her blankets were making a difference, but never intended to see the results of her blanket-making endeavors.

One day, years ago, "I was in JoAnn Fabrics buying yarn to make blankets, and I was undecided about which color yarn to buy," Rose recalled.

There was a woman standing in the yarn area, and Rose asked her what color she liked best for the crochet blanket she was making for Project Linus.

Upon realizing what the blanket materials were for, the woman began thanking Rose and explained her son had received a Project Linus blanket when he was born premature and was in the ICU.

"That's the closest I've ever come to knowing anybody who got a blanket. But it meant a lot to me," Rose said.

St. Luke's Lutheran Church in Saxonburg is one of many churches across Pittsburgh who have been volunteering for Project Linus.

Gayle Gundlach, 75, is head of the sewing ministry at St. Luke's. Last year, the group made over 400 blankets, she said. While Project Linus is a major focus of the blanket-making, the group has also donated to immigrant shelters and nursing homes.

"Everybody gets to make what they want," Gundlach said. "If we know someone that needs a blanket...we're always looking for an outlet."

The sewing ministry meets once every other week from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The group of women, ranging from their 60s to their 90s, has lunch together and then works together to create each blanket.

"It [is] a real social atmosphere," Gundlach said.

Project Linus has already coordinated convenient drop-off locations, so all volunteers need to worry about is making the blankets.

JoAnn Fabrics stores accept Project Linus blanket donations in designated boxes in-store. Participating locations can be found on their website.

The PLACE, or Project Linus Activity Center Extraordinaire, is the main Project Linus hub for the Pittsburgh area and is where all blanket donations eventually go before distribution.

"It's our happy place," said Lois Misko, the Project Linus Greater Pittsburgh chapter coordinator.

PLACE is located in the Shoppes at Caste Village in the South Hills.

They take all the blankets made by volunteers across the city, ensure that they meet their strict safety requirements, label each blanket with a Project Linus tag and then distribute them to the facilities in need of their blankets.

Covid has unfortunately made it difficult for Project Linus to reach out to all of its typical recipients.

Since the pandemic started, "[UPMC] Children's Hospital has not accepted a donation of any kind, [including] toys," Misko said. Unless donations are done through their website, the hospital is very strict about what they allow inside with their patients.

This has not stopped Project Linus from making the most of their steady stream of donations.

Misko began reaching out to social service agencies to provide for families facing difficulties related to Covid, job loss and other difficult circumstances.

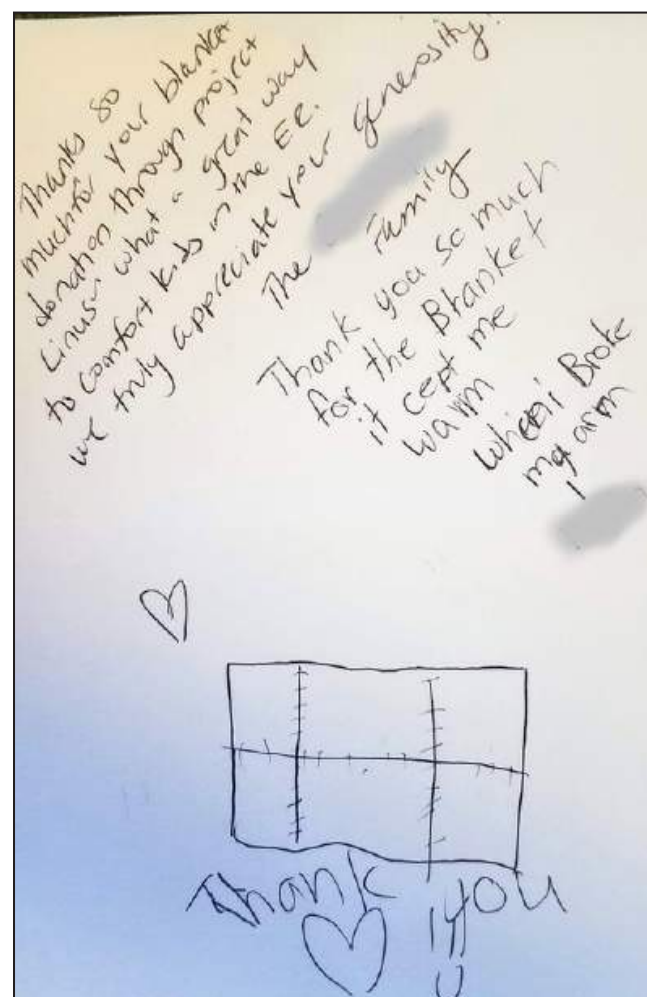
Last year, Project Linus donated around 3,000 blankets to Children, Youth and Family Services, according to Misko.

While there is no way to reach out to a recipient of a Project Linus blanket directly due to anonymity, the PLACE has received countless thank you messages from families who have felt the warm results of Project Linus.

Pittsburgh families who receive the blankets are usually "just so touched that a stranger, a total stranger, would take the time to make a blanket that they received," Misko said.

Some families even go as far as writing a handwritten message to share their gratitude with Project Linus.

"Thank you so much for the beautiful crochet blanket that we received at Children's while my daughter was in for surgery for a broken ankle," one mother shared. "It kept her cozy and warm during her 2 night stay and will be a cherished keepsake once we get home."



COURTESY OF PROJECT LINUS & LOIS MISKO

Parents and the children who received Project Linus blankets send heartfelt, handwritten letters to share their appreciation with PLACE (Project Linus Activity Center Extraordinaire).



EMMA POLEN | FEATURES EDITOR

Kelsey Molitrois, freshman psychology major, and Alyssa Conn, freshman nursing major, show off their completed homemade blanket. Alpha Sigma Tau made a total of 16 blankets for Project Linus during their event at the NiteSpot last Sunday.

The Duquesne Duke

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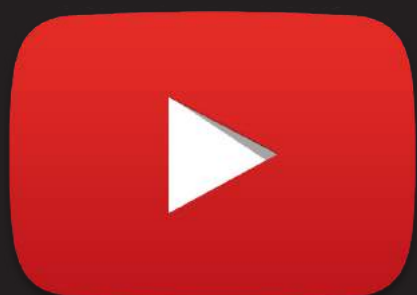
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