Parkhurst employees' protest proceeds down A-Walk; $0.30 pay increase not enough

Alicia Dye | staff writer

Parkhurst workers at Duquesne University have been fighting for a better wage and a better contract with their employer, Parkhurst, over the last week, leading to a protest on March 23 on A-Walk.

The workers handed out flyers to students March 18, which told students the ongoing issues and encouraged students to stand with the workers as they fight for a better contract.

Parkhurst Dining and Parkhurst employees are still in negotiations for competitive wages and other benefits for the members of Duquesne Dining.

"It has always been, and continues to be, our practice to meet with the union and confidentially resolve our differences at the bargaining table, without distractions. We look forward to continuing to meet and negotiate with the union to arrive at a new collective bargaining agreement," Cindy Simak, the director of marketing for Parkhurst, said in a press release.

The same press release stated that the proposed $0.30 wage raise is already above the living wage for the Pittsburgh area.

The release also said that there were no proposed reductions to paid time off. Additionally, there would be an additional option for team members to choose to enroll in the company-sponsored single health, dental and vision plans under the new contract, compared to the payment to the union for each full-time and regular part-time team member enrolled in coverage that employees currently have in their contract.

"A $0.30 wage increase is an insult. This is a risky job. They are essential workers who deserve a fair proposal," said Ana Tinsley, a Regional Communications Manager for 32BJ SEIU.

The protest on March 23 was not just made up of Parkhurst cafeteria workers, as Pittsburgh City Council members and Allegheny County Council member DeWitt Walton spoke during the protest.

"I am here to say loudly and clearly that Parkhurst needs to step up and offer proposals that show respect for our hard work," Blunt said during the protest. "Know that the proposed offer from Parkhurst just won’t do."

Arnold has worked at Duquesne for almost a decade, and now currently works at the Starbucks location on campus. Arnold wants to be able to feed her family, especially during an all time high of inflation rates in the U.S.

"$0.30 raise, when we can barely afford to put gas in our car or pay the rent, is an insult," Arnold said.

Pittsburgh City Council member Bobby Wilson, who represents District One, better known as ‘I believe that we can win’ and ‘32BJ SEIU.’

Speakers included Parkhurst employees Melissa Arnold, Deborah Byerly and Maria Blunt; Parkhurst employees, spoke out against the current pay wages. In addition, Pittsburgh City Council members Bobby Wilson and Deb Gross; and Allegheny County Council member DeWitt Walton.

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Duquesne follows through with mandate lift

LUKE HENNE
sports editor

After a March 4 announcement stating that Duquesne’s mask mandate was likely coming to an end, the university officially dropped the restriction on Monday.

In a release sent to students and faculty on March 17, President Ken Gormley said that because Covid-19 transmission levels are low – both on campus and in the region as a whole – the university will no longer require masks to be worn in indoor settings for the first time since Covid began sweeping across the nation over two years ago.

“I’ve been informed by our Health Services professionals that the testing following spring break has yielded no positive cases, either in symptomatic individuals for whom cold or flu was the source of symptoms or in surveillance testing of asymptomatic individuals,” Gormley said in the release.

Elizabeth Solenday, a junior majoring in early childhood education, feels that it’s the right time to make masks optional and that the move is a great decision by the university.

“If vaccines were not mandated, I may have a different opinion, but I feel more comfortable knowing that the vast majority of the campus community is vaccinated,” Solenday said.

When the mandate was dropped on Monday, Solenday said that it felt like the campus community "was able to take a deep breath."

"Having connection with our classmates and community without masks is both an odd, yet comforting thing," Solenday said. "I believe that excitement is felt across campus.

"Masks will not disappear completely, however. Exceptions to the lifting of the requirement could occur "in cases where individual faculty members decide to require masks in classes based on safety in the context of class needs for interaction in a limited physical space or other specific concerns related to conducting their own classes."

Nonetheless, students and faculty are afforded the individual choice to wear a mask. Gormley asked that people recognize that some others may choose not to, and that he feels indifferent to the university’s decision.

"Covid seems to be on a relative downturn,” Van Dyke said. “And with it getting to be warmer outside, it’s not a prime time of the year for transmission.”

He also feels that the student body is happy with the university’s decision.

Nonetheless, students who still feel uncomfortable wearing one [a mask], and I hope that they do not feel singled out or intimidated by others who choose not to,” Hamann said.

However, Hamann hopes that people won’t be excluded for the individual choice they make.

"I support students who still feel comfortable wearing one [a mask], and I hope that they do not feel singled out or intimidated by others who choose not to," Hamann said.

In the announcement, Gormley encouraged unvaccinated and vulnerable individuals to continue wearing masks, while also saying that the campus community has "come quite a long way to arrive at this point."

"It’s wonderful to be able to relax some protections and finish the academic year on a more positive note – something we’ve hoped would happen for a long time," Gormley said. "I’m reminded yet again of the power of our Duquesne community when we work together to overcome the adversities that we’ve faced.”
Food trucks back to fuel staff and students  

NICHOLAS Zotos  
staff writer

Spring has officially sprung once again here on the Bluff. Last week, students from all across campus journeyed out of their dorms to enjoy the warm sun. To compliment this shift in weather, food trucks have returned to campus.

Students took advantage of the food trucks last Thursday positioned on A-Walk. Many of them were excited at the prospect of the returning variation of food which offered an alternative to daily dining options. Additionally the trucks provided a dining venue in the warm sun.

"It is such a nice day outside and we are sick of all the other food options. We wanted something different, and we both love Italian food," Haley Dilullo, a freshman pharmacy major, said.

Even the food truck owners were just as excited as the students to return to campus. Forlini’s Kitchen, an Italian cuisine food truck, appealed to many students.

"We are elated to be back on campus. I have been in the restaurant business for over 35 years and I recently started my own food truck business. It is easier and I have the freedom to go where I want," said Lou Forlini, owner of Forlini’s Kitchen food truck.

Scott Richards reached out and many of the food vendors are here because of him," said Scott Richards, Assistant Vice President for Auxiliary Services at Duquesne, was excited to have food trucks back on campus as well.

"We had such a great success with the food trucks last semester—just made sense to bring them back again," Richards said in an email.

Food trucks will be back on campus weekly for the remainder of March and April, with the exception of Easter week, according to Richards. Trucks will return Thursdays March 24 through April 7, and Fridays on April 22 and 29.

Specific food trucks lined up for the upcoming weeks include PGH EATZ, Auntie Anne’s, Sinkers and Suds, Nakama and Sushi by the Yard.

Loui Forlini, owner of Forlini’s Kitchen food truck, happily holds his food creation as he prepares to give it to a student. The control room houses many of the technological components of the Broadcast Center, including several monitors, which showcases the main studio. This room also houses the TriCaster, mixing board and other equipment.

Lights, camera, action on Union broadcast

see STUDIO — page 1

where the clear glass gives anyone walking by a clear view of the broadcast center. The impressive space resembles that of a live news station.

The control center is equally impressive, filled with brand new equipment and technology. The small sound-proof room mirrors that of a professional production with eight monitors and two giant screens that display both broadcast centers in the Union and College Hall.

Chief studio engineer and senior, Joseph Philippe, said the abilities that the Union Broadcast Center has is more than its technological capabilities.

"The thing that I found most valuable about college isn’t that it is about academics, it is about the connections you make and the practical experiences you get while you are here, and you get both of those things in this studio," Phillippe said. "You get the state-of-the-art practical experience you’re not going to get anywhere else."

Representatives of various media and communications organizations such as Duquesne Student Radio, Duquesne Student Television and the Institute for Ethics and Integrity for Journalism had tables set up in the Africa Room. The groups were there to advocate for student engagement through their various programs. The broadcast center provides an ample opportunity for the storytellers of the university to work on and distribute their craft.

"Media isn’t just broadcast. It is definitely print. It is digital. It’s anything you can tell a story," said Tara Bradley-Steeck, the directing fellow of the Institute for Ethics and Integrity for Journalism.

The station manager for Duquesne Student Radio, Jade Zalewsky, has had experience working with the Union Broadcast Center. In February, WDSR along with DSTV hosted the "Sweet Streaming" event that showcased students not live on YouTube.

"I feel like the Broadcast Center is really great because it’s a union of the two, whereas even if you’re just doing radio and there’s no cameras on you, students are still able to walk by and see you, which is what I feel like something that WDSR never had before," said Zalewsky.

"I think the Union Broadcast Center is really great because the production teams have some friends who will meet up and go where I want," said Lou Forlini, owner of Forlini’s Kitchen food truck.

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Hope wins NCAA DIII WBB national title

Grace Heidinger and Spencer Thomas

staff writers

This past weekend in Pittsburgh, the NCAA crowned its champion for its Division III Women’s Basketball Championship for the first time since 2019. With a 71-58 win over Wisconsin-Whitewater in Saturday’s title game at UPMC Cooperator Fieldhouse, Hope College captured its third-ever national title and its ninth championship in Division III.

The tournaments were canceled in both 2020 and 2021 due to COVID-19, which only added to the powerful emotions throughout the weekend. Play opened with semifinal action on Thursday afternoon, when UW-Whitewater — arguably the most al\norative team in the country — bested Amherst 55-51.

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Pittsburgh welcomes March Madness to town

LUKE HENNE | Sports Editor

For the first time since 2018, Pittsburgh and Duquesne University hosted NCAA Division I Men’s Basketball Championship First and Second Round action this past weekend at PPG Paints Arena.

Eight teams came to the city with hopes of beginning their journey for a national title. But after six games and a weekend packed with high-stakes competition, only two teams are leaving town with their goal still a reality. The First Round games – all of which fell in the bracket’s South Region – got underway Friday afternoon, when No. 7-seeded Ohio State took on No. 10-seeded Loyola of Chicago.

Coming off a run to the Final Four in 2018 and a trip to the Sweet 16 a season ago, the underdog Ramsblers were a popular pick to pull an upset over the higher-seeded Buckeyes. However, despite making just one of 15 attempts from beyond the 3-point line, Ohio State managed to hold Loyola of Chicago to under 45 points for the first time this season.

E.J. Liddell, who scored 16 points and added 10 rebounds, paced the Buckeyes.

“They [Loyola] play good defense. They’re a top-20 defense nationally,” Liddell said. “And [I] felt like they came out there and competed, and we did as well. So this is a great defensive game, not a high-scoring game, not a big highlight game.

“But, I mean, we just had to make those extra-effort plays on [the] defensive end, and I feel like we did that tonight.”

Loyola of Chicago Head Coach Drew Valentine, a 30-year old in his first season as the head man, didn’t want to let one loss be symbolic of a season in which his squad went 25-8 with a Missouri Valley Conference tournament title.

“I was at a loss for words after coming into the locker room because there’s so many different emotions,” Valentine said. “But I think the main thing that I want to focus on is [that] the program’s in a lot better spot than it was when a lot of these guys got here five years ago.”

Friday’s second game featured No. 13-seeded Delaware and No. 2-seeded Villanova. In 2018, Villanova’s run to a national championship began with two victories in Pittsburgh.

The Wildcats didn’t let any thought of an upset prevail, as they bested the Fightin’ Blue Hens 80-60 behind game highs in points (21) and assists (six) from Justin Moore.

“We were reading the ball screen coverage and if they were coming to help, who was helping,” Moore said. “Once we figured that out, we were able to figure out when we could take our open shots, make that extra pass and find the big man posting up.”

Delaware Head Coach Martin Ingelsby was proud of his team’s will to win early, but knew that Villanova’s 13-made 3-pointers was the difference in the game.

“We battled. We got after it,” Ingelsby said. “I thought we got off to a really, really good start in the first half and put a little scare in them. I think the end of the first half and early part of the second half they were able to really extend that lead, and we were battling uphill from there.”

The weekend’s closest game opened up Friday’s evening session of games, when No. 4-seeded Illinois survived a score from No. 13-seeded Chattanooga in a 54-53 contest.
Goodbye Yellow Brick Road, hello smooth jazz!

On Sunday, March 20, the Duquesne University Jazz Ensemble and Jazz Vocal Ensemble “crocodile” rocked the night away to celebrate the on-going legacy of pop artist Elton John.

Taking the main stage in the Power Center Ballroom, featured soloists dazzled audiences with John’s storytelling and vigor, impressing many with classic hits and hidden gems alike.

Beginning with Goodbye Yellow Brick Road’s opener, “Funeral For A Friend / Love Lies Bleeding,” the night’s repertoire led the way with instrumental, wispy welcomes to the crowd, transporting the room almost effortlessly. Halfway through the piece, the background vocalists became vocalists, and the mood was set for the rest of the night.

Balancing heartfelt ballads with dance anthems, the crowd was alert, but never ready. From a saxophone’s licks, a horn’s impressive upper register or a vocalist’s option up in the chorus, the show was full of surprises.

Vocal soloists included Lindsey Vernon, Grace Furman, Nathan Sekela, Eamonn Mailey and Ryleigh Shoff. According to Shoff, senior music therapy and vocal music education major, the jazz combo and jazz composition, Luketich was able to incorporate much of the night’s repertoire, according to Shoff, the ensemble started preparing for the concert on Wednesday — a mere four days before their performance.

“We had an hour to rehearse on Wednesday, and we had a dress rehearsal at 3 p.m. [on Sunday],” Shoff said. “It was absolutely worth it though. It was so fun.”

Director of Jazz Studies Mike Tomaro was the primary conductor, and is a renowned Pittsburgh composer and arranger. For much of the night’s repertoire, Tomaro was able to incorporate the skillsets of his ensemble and add those instruments to John’s pieces. According to Tomaro, roughly 200 of his pieces have been produced through the Hal Leonard Corporation.

“It’s a bit of a commitment I enjoy doing,” Tomaro said. “I have pieces of mine scattered all around the world.”

According to Tomaro, this event is recurring each March to give the jazz students an opportunity to expand their repertoire for their future careers. Past pop concerts have included covers from Stevie Wonder, The Beatles, Sting, the Police, 80s pop and Steely Dan.

“We pick the artists who have a great body of music, and Elton was the one this time,” Tomaro said. Tune into the Jazz Ensemble’s next concert on Tuesday, March 29 at 7:30 p.m. in the PNC Recital Hall.

Duquesne’s jazz ensembles helped audiences remember when rock was young.

Aquarius
Is it funny? But was it funny? Did you laugh? Please tell me you laughed.

Gemini
Needing validation as a means of basic survival

Libra
You can’t remember when rock was young! You weren’t there!

Cancer
Taylor Swift’s "Fifteen" was written about you.

Scorpio
Wait, Duolingo isn’t sponsoring me?

Pisces
Is there any acutal difference between Thursday and Friday

Capricorn
Mean Girls Movie Night
March 24 8 p.m.

Camping Queen Movie Night
March 25 8 p.m.

Mean Girls Movie Night
March 24 8 p.m.

Get your pink on and go to College Hall Lawn for an outdoor movie night featuring a 2000s classic.

Karaoke Night
March 25 9 p.m.

Join Towers MPR for singing, snacks and more!

Murder Mystery Night
March 25 8-10 p.m.

Join the Forensic Science fraternity in a game of solving and sleuthing! Winners will receive a basket and free food.

Pure Thirst’s Water Walk
March 26 8 a.m.

By participating in this 5k walk, funds go toward providing clean water for women in Africa.

Carmen
March 26 8 p.m.

Enjoy The Pittsburgh Opera’s production of Carmen! Tickets available on Cheap Seats.
Spring is in full bloom at Phipps Conservatory

**CAROLINE KUCKO**
staff writer

Following an exceptionally gray winter here in Pittsburgh, Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens’ Spring Flower Show is in full bloom. According to Director of Marketing and Communications Joe Reed, the staff at Phipps settled on a colorful and uplifting theme for this year’s show: “Sunshine and Rainbows.”

Phipps opened its doors to the annual spring event this past Saturday, March 19. Lasting only four weeks, the Spring Flower Show will run until April 17. Tickets cost $19.95 for adults and $17.95 for students with a valid ID. The Spring Flower Show, a longstanding Pittsburgh tradition since the 1890s, is an immersive aromatic experience that showcases tens of thousands of spring blooms, according to Phipps’ website. The various displays include a myriad of crowd-favorites such as lilies, daffodils and tulips as well as more obscure blossoms including New Guinea impatiens and lobelia.

“Those with a real eagle eye will see some new varieties of blooms that they’ve probably never seen in our shows before,” Reed said.

Since there is merely a two-week turnaround between shows, staff members worked tirelessly throughout the month to cover the conservatory in spring color. “Not only are we changing out the show to move into spring, but then each day, bulbs need to be changed out,” said Reed. “It’s a constant changeover.”

Phipps’ vibrance brings an array of color to the dreary Pittsburgh springtime.

“We’re always looking for a theme that will put a spring in people’s step,” Reed said.

The show features a jaw-dropping display in the South Conservatory of a faux cloud and rainbow with cascading flowers of all colors. This display stole the show and quite literally caused visitors to stop in their tracks and take in the scenery. The show also includes a towering prop tulip and glowing sun in the Palm Court.

Among the most popular blooms in the show this year is the Himalayan blue poppy. This particular flower is incredibly difficult to grow and has a very short life span. However, Phipps grows them reliably and brings them out each spring. The Himalayan blue poppy turns heads due to its striking electric blue color.

For employees, putting together the Spring Flower Show is not the easiest process.

Not only can visitors take in the sights and smells of the Spring Flower Show, but they can also explore the Tropical Forest Hawaii exhibit, which was just switched after a lengthy three years of the Cuba exhibit, which was just switched after a lengthy three years of the Cuba Room. This 12,000 square foot, 60-foot high exhibit includes a wide variety of native and endemic species, according to Phipps’ website.

The entrance to the new exhibit feels like a breath of fresh air. Guests can also see the From the Same Bulb exhibit, a photography showcase of a single plant over the span of 17 years. Additionally, Phipps offers a wide variety of virtual events such as virtual classes and film series. A trip to Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens is the perfect way to step into the new season and experience spring in its full glory. Tickets can be reserved on the Phipps Conservatory website.

The Pittsburgh Humanities Festival offers conversational art

**MIA LURBANI**
staff writer

The Pittsburgh Humanities Festival offers Pittsburghers the chance to step out and partake in a series of intellectually stimulating events. The festival began on March 21 and will run until Sunday, March 27, in the Pittsburgh Cultural District. Here is a list of opportunities for students, kids and adults to come together and discuss relevant cultural events.

**What is it?**

The Pittsburgh Humanities Festival events take place specifically at the Byham Theater, Greer Cabaret Theater and Trust Arts Education Center.

There is a carefully curated array of presentations planned for the audience. These talks will maintain more of a conversational tone, allowing viewers to contribute to the discussion along with professionals.

Topics of discussion are both relevant and varied for anyone thinking about heading to the Cultural District. Pittsburgh’s history, policies, politics, racial inequities, drag culture, Shakespeare food, art and more is expected to be included in the event throughout the week.

**How much?**

It only costs $10 for a “conversation ticket,” allowing buyers access to 14 events with one purchase. For students, the conversation pass only costs $5 to learn about Pittsburgh’s interesting content.

**What’s up next?**

Some highlights include Shit-faced Shakespeare presenting A Midsummer Night’s Dream on March 25. This play, presented at the Byham Theater, is a comedic twist on the original Shakespearean story. The cast will also be holding a conversation about the process of engaging with the work of Shakespeare on Saturday, March 26 at 3 p.m.

Live music is also being offered in the Greer Cabaret Theater on Wednesday, Thursday and Sunday of the festival.

Tickets are available on the Trust Arts website.
editorial staff

editor-in-chief Colleen Hammond
news editor Mary Liz Flavar
opinions editor Zoe Stratos
features editor Emma Poten
arts editor Capri Scarcelli
sports editor Luke Henne
multimedia editor Andrew Cummings
layout editor Brentaro Yamane
social media & ads Erin Cartbone

administrative staff
adviser Paula Reed Reed
email us: theduqduke@gmail.com

THE DUQUESNE DUKE
113 College Hall
600 Forbes Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15282

OPINIONS

CZIA Thomas placed last in the 100-yard freestyle swim in the NCAA championships on Saturday. Last place in a collegiate competition typically wouldn’t reach newspaper headlines, but the University of Pennsylvania swimmer is a trans woman, and has been at the center of controversy regarding the eligibility to compete in women’s events.

The controversy over Thomas’s first and last swim as a swimmer at UPenn came to a climax last week when she became the first openly trans athlete to win a Division I title in any sport. She placed first in the 500-yard freestyle in both the 2019 and 2020 seasons, and finally placed eighth in the 100.

With the win and two losses, Thomas was found not to be the best in the sport, despite claims of unfair advantages hailing from students, politicians and everyday Americans alike. Instead, Thom- as’s achievements show a huge advancement in sports inclusivity, and so far biology hasn’t been proven to have a significant advantage.

Women’s sports have been at the convergence of segregation and equality. Sports, unlike restaurants, bathrooms, etc., are a social institution in which segregation is upheld due to biological difference, though equality is also upheld through opportunity — all due to Title IX.

Transgender individuals are a newer subject to be added into the fold, but we should be celebrat- ing inclusion, as well as Thomas’s “first” in wins... and losses.

However, policy regarding trans athletes isn’t as new as we think. The NCAA approved its first policy on the inclusion of trans athletes in collegiate athletics in 2011. It allowed trans female student-athletes to compete in women’s sports if they had been treated with testosterone suppression for at least one year.

A recent update in January 2022 places the responsibility for eligibility on an individual sport. The update coincides with the United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee, and the International Olympic Committee. These poli- cies also assert an athlete’s right to participate without discrimination and are committed to diversity, in- clusion and gender equality.

Those who oppose the inclusion of trans women in women’s sports, most notably Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, argue that there is an unfair competitive edge that takes away the hard work and opportuni- ties presented to cisgender women athletes. DeSantis released a state- ment declaring Emma Wyant, who came in second place at the champi- onships, as the winner. It also com- mented on the so-called unfair ad- vantage destroying women’s sports:

“The NCAA’s actions serve to erode opportunities for women athletes and perpetuate a fraude against women athletes as well as the public at large,” the statement read. “Florida rejects the NCAA’s efforts to destroy women’s athletic- is, disapproves of the NCAA el- evating ideology over biology and takes offense at the NCAA trying to make others complicit in a lie.” However, these assumptions are not grounded in scientific evidence.

The claims cloak transphobia in the convergence of segregation and gender equality. The claims cloak transphobia in the discriminatory intent. They are elevating ideology over biology and so far biology hasn’t been proven to have a significant advantage. DeSantis recently released a statement with the same goal. He called on the NCAA to update its policy and include provisions for transgender athletes.

DeSantis’s plan includes transgender athletes competing in women’s sports if they have undergone treatment with hormone therapy. The policy would also allow transgender athletes to compete as “women” if they meet certain criteria.

This policy proposal has faced criticism from organizations and individuals who argue that it would be harmful to transgender athletes and perpetuate a fraud on the public.

Critics argue that the policy would be detrimental to transgender athletes’ mental health and could lead to discrimination and marginalization.

The NCAA has not yet responded to DeSantis’s proposal, and it remains unclear how the organization will address the issue.

Lia Thomas’s story is a reminder of the progress that has been made in sports inclusivity, but there is still work to be done. We must continue to support transgender athletes and ensure they have equal opportunities to compete.

Maya Angelou

“Is it time for parents to teach young people early on that in diversi- ty, there is beauty, and there is strength.”

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STAFF EDITORIAL

We should help Ukraine in more ways than one

As Ukraine is continually bombarded with Russian ag- gression, the United States as a part of NATO has decided to intervene. One way in which the United States can aid is by providing the proper form of security assistance. But how far is the U.S. willing to go to help their allies?

According to whitehouse.gov, President Biden announced that an additional $800 million in security assistance will be added to the total amount of $1 billion that has been set aside to aid Ukraine. This as- sistance package includes grenade launchers, rifles, pistols, machine guns, and an array of other military supplies.

“The United States continues to expedite the authorization and fa- cilitation of additional assistance to Ukraine from our Allies,” ac- cording to whitehouse.gov.

With one of the largest militaries in the world, it makes sense that the U.S. would be able to aid Ukraine in this way. In addition, with a military defense budget that spans about $777 billion, we have the funding necessary to help. The base budget alone for the Depart- ment of Defense is $740 billion. We should be utilizing what we have in order to help the cause.

Additional aid that will be sent to Ukraine includes anti-aircraft systems, tactical unmanned aerial systems, helicopters, counter-artillery, high mobility multifunction wheeled vehicles (HMMWs) and a plethora of multi-faceted equipment.

As a part of NATO, the U.S. along with the other 30 member states from North America and Europe, are obligated to contrib- ute to peace and security on the international stage. According to nato.unmission.gov. If diplomatic efforts were to fail, together they have the capacity to act as a positive force for change and meet the security challenges.

“Article Five of the treaty states that if an armed attack occurs against one of the member states, it should be considered an attack against all members, and other members shall assist the attacked member with armed forces if neces- sary,” nato.unmission.gov said.

The U.S. is implementing secur- ity assistance. Many of the NATO allies should follow suit and consider either sending mili- tary aid - if they have not already done so - or aid in another fash- ion since an attack on one is an attack on all.

We should continue to help Ukraine, not just militarily, but in other ways as well. President Biden, in an effort to halt Russia’s plans, has imple- mented several actions as a means of stopping them. But will sanctions be enough to delay Rus- sia’s plans? A team effort is neces- sary in order to help the cause and mend what has already been a devastating situation.
**Access to vaccines: Let pharmacy employees give more shots**

Mohammad Sajjad  
Staff columnist

Think about the last time you received a vaccine. Chances are, it was administered by either a pharmacist or another pharmacy employee. With 90% of Americans living within five miles of a pharmacy, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, pharmacies have proven to be accessible to the mass of the population.

Due to the pandemic, pharmacists, pharmacy technicians and pharmacy student interns in Pennsylvania have had the opportunity to vaccinate patients as young as 13 years old through federal and state-issued emergency waivers. Prior to the pandemic, in the pharmacy sector, no pharmacist was permitted to vaccinate patients above the age of 89. Additionally, only professionals in the pharmacy who were allowed to administer these vaccines was the pharmacist. Unfortunately, the pandemic’s waivers are set to expire at the end of March, which means that many pediatric patients will lose convenient access to vaccines.

State senators and representatives have drafted House Bill 1535 and Senate Bill 511, which would give pharmacy employees full vaccination authority. The bill’s become unable to reach the floor for a vote.

Pharmacists, technicians and interns in Pennsylvania should be granted full authority to vaccinate patients above the age of 3. Not only are they fully capable of doing so, but granting them this authority will improve patient outcomes and decrease health care costs.

Pharmacy employees undergone extensive training to be able to vaccinate patients. Through the American Pharmacists Association (APhA), they undergo accredited training, which includes learning hands-on injection techniques and how to recognize and treat emergency reactions to vaccines. Depending on the pharmacy, there may be additional training required for employees.

Aside from being qualified to vaccinate patients, giving pharmacy employees full authority to vaccinate will improve patient outcomes and decrease health care costs.

**The benefit of the doubt is reserved for men**

Zachary Petroff  
Staff columnist

This weekend, we saw a quarterback who is accused by 22 separate women of sexual assault receive an $80 million contract. It is the most guaranteed amount of money in the history of the National Football League. But it just to be clear.

The Cleveland Browns - the team that picked up Deshaun Watson - was able to construct his contract in a way so that when he is undoubtedly suspended for a portion of the season, there will be little economic impact on him.

Watson is going to gross very close to $250 million. He will not be charged with a crime. A grand jury did not believe that there was enough evidence to charge Watson, but several civil suits are still pending.

As someone who was a winner in the economic/genetic lottery, the realm of the benefit of doubt increases. There is a hypothesis to this. Former NFL QB and known creep Ben Roethlisberger was my favorite player. I had a signed autograph picture prominently displayed - One of my favorite things to do was wear my Roethlisberger jersey in bars in Northeastern Ohio just to be a goon. Every March 2, I would post on social media to remind people to wish Big Ben a happy birthday.

I justified his actions. I read the police reports and was able to craft an argument in which he was able to adamantly support a man who by all accounts did horrible things to very young women and walked away with very few repercussions. I did this because he played a sport for a team that I like.

As someone who was a winner in the economic/genetic lottery, there are times when it feels that my privilege knows no boundaries. This is not what some would classify as white male guilt but rather an acknowledgement of how things are right now.

It is gross, I was gross. The level of hypocrisy that comes with supporting a QB who sexually assaulted a woman while claiming to be a forward, progressive thinker is laughable. I have sisters and nieces who I claim to adore, but how is that possible when I was actively promoting a man whose existence in popular culture is a slap to the face of every woman who has faced sexual trauma in their life?

It is so hard to prove sexual assault in trial. It is an emotionally taxing experience that makes it almost impossible to prove. Imagine having one of the worst things ever happen to you, then you have to try to prove it.

The benefit of doubt will always go with the man. Again, thinking otherwise is foolishly ignorant.

How important is our entertainment to us?

I understand the significance that sports play in our lives. The lore that is sports is remarkable and impactful. Sports can transcend a community, bring platforms, shape public discourse and inspire us to be a version of ourselves that we want to be. There is a clear romanticism in sports.

Yet as these young athletes become more celebrated and accessible to the masses through social media, at what level do we hold them accountable for their actions?

It would just be nice if we could extend the benefit of the doubt to the victims. I find it very telling that there was more of a public outrage against a college swimmer than a man who committed sexual assault. Maybe if Lisa Thomas would have committed sexual assault we could look past the horror of a trans woman participating in college athletics.
Culture at Duquesne: African Marketplace brings international influence to the Pittsburgh community

Duquesne’s Center for African Studies hosted their biannual African Marketplace on Wednesday, March 23, featuring several African-themed businesses and vendors.

Dozens of people filtered through the Union Atrium, avoiding the afternoon rain as they stopped to take a look at the many products and companies that set up shop.

In the past, The Center for African Studies put on Africa Week, which focused on the promotion and teaching of African culture, according to Cassie DiBenedetti, a student aid at the Center.

The purpose of these events is to encourage students to major or minor in African Studies, she said.

Since the marketplace had always been a big hit, they decided to “rehbrand” and have the popular event take place more frequently.

The Center for African Studies partners with companies all over Pittsburgh, hoping to help with business promotion and cultural learning events.

As part of the fun, Melissa Jenkins, a dance instructor and founder of Afro Love PGH brought together, “so I can share the love that I have for this culture and dance.”

In bringing in choreographers directly from Africa she hopes for her studio to be a space where anyone can feel comfortable to learn and to create bridges between cultures.

Many of the vendors at the marketplace were non-profits, with a majority of their staff made up of volunteers.

One of the non-profits, The Shepherd’s Door, Bellevue, was started around 40 years ago by a retired schoolteacher.

“Part of our mission is to continue to be that light,” said Peggy Heartman, the current store manager.

Oftentimes, Heartman explained, people come in just to pray or give. She said one of her favorite things about Shepherd’s Door is the mix of people that come together—regardless of their own personal denomination—and work to refer those struggling to places that can help.

The same inclusivity could be seen across the market, where the vendors themselves were of a variety of backgrounds, but each inspired by and dedicated to sharing African culture.

Justin Forzano, the founder and CEO of Open Field, a youth development organization, works to promote life skills, leadership, female empowerment and community development.

With over 1,000 kids in the program, Open Field helps support immigrant refugee youth.

During one of his many trips to Cameroon, Forzano said he was inspired by the colorful African shirts. He decided to bring a few back to sell and “share the love” with the students of Duquesne.

Freshman Maria Weideman said that while she had no idea the event was going on until passing by during a coffee run, she thinks it is really cool that Duquesne is exposing students to these types of organizations and making everyone more aware of other cultures.

The other businesses at the marketplace included New Hope, Ten Thousand Villages, PSquare Scents and City Grows LLC. Each vendor brought a unique message of diversity to the market, some supporting cultural traditions from around the world.

For those students who enter the Union expecting just to get some homework done or maybe grab a coffee, they left instead with a collection of jewelry, plants, books, coffee and a greater understanding of African culture.

Duquesne University and Point Park University Host “Get to the Point” PRSSA District Conference; Share Professional Tips

Pittsburgh’s Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA) is hosting its annual conference at Duquesne and Point Park universities on April 1 and 2. This year’s conference, themed “Get to the Point,” will teach local college and high school students, as well as young professionals, skills for navigating the ever-changing world of public relations.

“Attendees will hear from professionals in the PR industry,” said Alyson Huth, president of the PRSSA chapter at Duquesne. “They can engage in a panel with young professionals and ask questions about their careers, and they will have the opportunity to network with public relation professionals in the community of Pittsburgh.”

Over the span of two days, PRSSA student organizers from both Duquesne and Point Park will lead attendees across campus-wide activities that will prepare them for a career in the field of public relations and advertising. Activities will include keynote addresses, breakout sessions, agency tours, networking, and a young professionals panel featuring Duquesne alumni.

The event begins Friday, April 1, at Duquesne.

From 2 p.m. to 5 p.m., PRSSA student volunteers will lead attendees through agency tours of Downtown Pittsburgh BCW, Red Havas, Highmark and Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership.

Following registration at 6 p.m., a keynote address by Deana Tomaselli from Motherhood Partners will end the night at 8 p.m.

On Saturday, April 2, attendees will start with registration at 8:15 a.m. at Point Park and a keynote address by Paul Furiga, president of WordWrite. Saturday will also feature multiple speaker sessions by public relations professionals from around Pittsburgh until 4:15, when attendees are invited to converse with the young professionals panel.

The district conference will conclude at 6 p.m. with a final keynote address about networking by Dan Ayer, co-founder, writer, director of PR and social media at Oyster Creative.

The event will bring together influential individuals from across the Pittsburgh public relations community.

“The public relations community in Pittsburgh is very strong. They really support students and their efforts to enter the field,” said Camille Downing, faculty advisor of PRSSA at Point Park. “Having that time to meet face to face is invaluable.”

The networking portion of the conference will be beneficial to students looking to expand their connections in the professional PR world.

Public relations professionals will be there for a variety of reasons, and some might be searching for potential job candidates.

“Networking is one of the most important aspects of the PR field,” Huth said. “Most of the time it’s not what you know, it’s who you know. You never know who’s hiring, and maybe you’ll come out of the weekend with a job!”

Guest speakers will be discussing a variety of interesting emerging PR techniques.

“Students will learn about selling your story and network, TikTok and Social Media, PR During the Pandemic, Non Profit Communications, Remote PR, and Successful Campaigns,” said Huth, naming a few of the events that students will have the chance to listen to at the conference.

The PRSSA 2022 Get to the Point District Conference is open to anyone looking to gain knowledge of the ever-changing PR industry.

Registration is open through March 30, and attendees can purchase a full-access ticket for $40 at 2022gettothePoint.com.
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