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Professor brings more than just music to Ukraine and other countries in need

Stephen Benham stands with his team in Irpin, Ukraine, during a 2019 music camp. Several members featured above are currently engaged in the humanitarian efforts that are happening all over Ukraine. Irpin is one of three cities (Bucha and Hostomel) that was at the epicenter of the recent battles around Kyiv.

**MARY LIZ FLAVIN**

news editor

At the age of 15, Andre was adopted by his new family and was set to leave Ukraine on March 10 of this year. Before he could begin his new life, the Russian invasion began on Feb 24, pulling young Andre away from his new parents. Over the next few days, Andre’s parents actively searched for their son, but being split between two parts of the world made it a challenge— all they had left was hope.

Through social media, the family reached out to the Music in World Cultures (MIWC), a nonprofit organization that brings music and aid through missionary programs. Though divine intervention and the work of many, including the United States Embassy in Poland, Andre arrived a few days later and was reunited with his parents in the U.S.

Andre’s story is just one example amongst many families that Stephen Benham, professor of music education and chair of the performance department, along with MIWC has helped through their efforts in supporting Ukraine.

It all began around 1992 when Benham and his wife, Kris Benham, became more involved with their church. At the time the parish began hosting Ukrainian refugees after the break-up of the Soviet Union. Over time, through their efforts, the Benham family got connected with a family who were victims of Chernobyl.

The father worked at Chernobyl during the time of the explosion and had lost everything; they were from southern Ukraine. Through correspondence, the two families stayed in touch until in the spring of 1996, when the family invited the Bemphasis to visit them. What seemed like fate, Benham received a call from his father asking if he was interested in going to Ukraine because they were in need of a music educator.

“That was just a clear message to me from God that I need to do this, and had I known at that time what that would mean 30 years later and what that would mean in terms of taking 60 trips during that time...” Benham said. “Now expanding that ministry into all countries throughout Eastern Europe, Central Asia, Africa and Nepal, I don’t know if I would have got on the plane the first time. I would have been overwhelmed by the magnitude of everything.”

Benham joined his father’s nonprofit organization, Music in World Cultures, where through cross-cultural ministry, musical education programs bring the world of music to those in need. Currently MIWC is working directly and with partner organizations in more than 25 countries across five continents. They have formed a coalition of internationally recognized musicians, teachers and other professionals committed to providing education, experience and more, according to the MIWC website.

According to Benham, the Ukrainian people were hungry for life and spiritual revival, and music spoke to them and brought life to them in ways other things couldn’t. After that trip, Benham and his family moved from Oregon to New York to help more and begin to establish musical programs in local churches and communities in Kyiv, Ukraine.

“We worked to grow an orchestra ministry over there. Over time, I began to understand Ukrainian tradition, and I began to understand their history;” Benham said. “Russia tried to destroy Ukrainian culture, language and created myths. I was entrenched in culture but my heart moved from music education to wanting to advocate for these people.”

The first music camps were held in the Transoline zone in 2015 and have continued for several years. Not only have camps been held but multiple children’s programs, conferences and workshops for teachers. A major international conference called Ministry, Creativity and Mission was established to empower people to use creativity throughout their church and community.

With the recent attacks and upheaval that Russia has caused in Ukraine, the mission behind what Benham and his team established quickly shifted from a need to bring music to communities to an organization that provides humanitarian aid. Due to their large network of people both here in the U.S. as well as teams in Ukraine they were able to make their services mobile.

A new mission began with help...

**see AID — page 2**
Thursday, March 31-

Three resident students were referred to the Office of Student Conduct after throwing trash out of a window in Des Places Hall.

Thursday, March 31-

A student came into the Duquesne University Police Station asking for assistance in filing a Protection From Abuse Petition (PFA). Shortly after, the student was escorted to Night Court to obtain the PFA. This case is still ongoing.

Friday, April 1-

An unaffiliated, intoxicated male was found in his car blocking the gate to the administration parking lot. No damage was done to university property, and the male was taken into custody. This case is still ongoing.

Benham goes beyond to give aid to Ukraine

The children featured above are from the city of Ivankiv, Ukraine, which is just north of Kyiv in the Chernobyl zone. Teams on the ground are providing aid to those opportunities, aid to those in crisis and faith to various communities.

Benham said he has found that these experiences have shown how God brings miracles and blessings into people’s everyday lives.

PRSSA gets to the point with a district conference combo

see PRSSA — page 1

The Power Center Ballroom, where Pittsburgh-based public relations specialist Deanna Tomasselli discussed her experience in the influence marketing industry.

Tomasselli shared tips about succeeding as an influencer. Among her tips were being consistent, knowing your audience and being authentic. She also emphasized the importance of passion in her line of work, noting that “if the passion is there you are going to succeed.”

After Tomasselli’s keynote address, participants attended a networking session where they had the opportunity to mingle with each other and Tomasselli.

Tomasselli stressed the importance of networking during her address, saying that “even 15 years into your career you need to network.”

Caitlin Jefferson, a member of PRSSA that worked as the sponsorship coordinator for the conference, said that she was happy with the turnout.

“I think it’s going very well so far. It’s exceeded all of our expectations.”

We’ve met our goals for sponsorships, had some great speakers. And we had a really good turnout today for the agency tours and for the conference in general,” Jefferson said.

The remainder of the event on Saturday was hosted at Point Park. Starting at 10 a.m. and continuing throughout the rest of the day, there was a variety of public relations-related keynote addresses, breakout sessions and panels. They addressed topics like remote work, building a personal brand and diversity in public relations.

The events on Saturday included:

- Keynote addresses titled “Mission Driven: How AHN’s PR and Social Media Teams Navigated the Covid-19 Pandemic” by Candace Harrington from Allegheny Health Network, and Megan Emmons and Catherine Clements from Highmark Health and “Networking. It’s Awkward, Unnatural and 100% Essential” by Dan Ayer from Oyster Creative.

- Breakout sessions titled “Agency & Corporate vs Nonprofit Jobs. What’s the difference?” by Hollie Geitner from Duquesne Light and Ananda Miles from Giffords; “Lessons Learned After Graduation” by Robin Rectenwald from BCW; “Taking the Show on the Road: An IMC Approach to Restarting the Arts in Pittsburgh” by Jeanna Lo Castro from Oyster Creative; “Tik Tok Success at the Red Cross” by Jessica Buckholz from Red Cross National; and “Embedding and Elevating Diversity & Inclusion in Your PR Storytelling” by Angelica Perry from DICK’S Sporting Goods.

- A panel of young professionals made up of Sydney Bauer from the Pittsburgh Penguins, Courtney List from The Terminal, Emily Stock from Matter Communications and Anton D. Johnson II from Oyster Creative.

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

Reverted back to nature through reflection and philosophy

Mary Liz Flavin

news editor

On Monday and Tuesday, Duquesne held an Integrity of Creation conference in the Power Center Ballroom that covered the topics: climate residency, collaboration, adaptation and action.

Over the course of two days various presentations, receptions and workshops educated students and faculty about pivotal issues revolving around climate change, research and public awareness.

One of the presentations, Re-wilding: A Hegelian Reflection, tackled the philosophical idea of rewilding - a process in which nature reverts back to a wilder form.

Jennifer Benham, professor of philosophy at Duquesne University, led the discussion by viewing rewilding through the lens of philosopher G.W.F. Hegel.

“There are lots of bio-diverse gardeners and we are all members of an increasing number of locally evolving phenomenological garden,” Bates said. “I am going to argue an unorthodox reading of Hegel that the culmination of phenomenology presents experience as a dialectic becoming that develops through receptivity to preservation via biodiversity.”

Out of the gate, Bates compared the audience to gardeners each in their own metaphorical garden. By comparing the garden to Hegel’s idea of the preservation of biodiversity, she began to introduce the concept of rewilding. In addition, one of the less obvious concepts that was portrayed throughout the discussion was the idea that we as humans are observers in this process.

According to Hegel, the self-knowledge spirit knows not only itself but also the negative of itself and its limit. To know one’s limit is to know how to sacrifice oneself. The sacrifice is the externalization in which spirit displays the process of becoming spirit in the form of free contingent happening, intuiting its pure self as time outside of it and equally its being as space.

The spirit he is referring to is the spirit of nature, including both humans and the rest of the natural world. What Hegel is saying here is that in order to better understand the natural world, we must externalize our experience with it. Bates’ interpretation was that there is a limit to our experience and a portion of that interpretation that is foreign to us. There is a duality in which we realize there is a limit and that we are simultaneously reflecting on this experience.

Through the duration of Bates’ presentation, she compared Hegel’s findings to a variety of other philosophers as well as various scientists.
Reverting back to nature through reflection

**see NATURE — page 2**

in the environmental community. In addition she applied her own philosophical conclusions and interpretations to allow the audience a better understanding of the topic. Circling back to the idea that we as a society are a part of a phenomenological garden, Bates brought in the idea that on a much larger scale we are not only gardeners but are both receptive to and perceived by other gardeners. Hegel’s dialectic requires the process of taking abstract ideas and making them concrete through reflection, according to Bates. “I sat in my garden until I could see the multiverse of the buzzing and active goings-on. At least in this one spot nature was coming back to life. Flowers, birds, millions of bugs and yes, pesky deer, would make their way through my tiny yard leaving ticks and eating some of my favorite flowers,” Bates said. “Again, I did nothing. It was an experience of sacrifice and the ongoing challenge of the preserving idea.”

In order to apply her philosophi-cal findings on Hegel’s applied principles of rewilding, Bates allowed her backyard to become overgrown. In this process she found that many new plants and a variety of creatures began to thrive that weren’t there prior to the overgrown state. In addition, by allowing her garden to be overgrown, it was a sacrifice on her end because instead of containing ing the forces of nature in her backyard she had to permit it to grow in whichever way it chose.

“My Hegelian reflection is part of not knowing and not doing which for a philosopher and a gardener is a sacrifice. If there is a wild it was already something we thought and something with which we were enthralled,” Bates said.

This exact principle was at the heart of Bates’ discussion, that on a much larger scale we should act as observers and allow nature to resort back to a ‘wilder’ form in order to help the planet reach a healthier state. Bates proposed that to experience this phenomenological process, Duquesne should fence off a portion of the campus and allow it to become overgrown and compare that section to the rest of campus. An additional idea was that the School of Osteopathic Medicine should incorporate liberal arts elements in order to promote different kinds of environmentalism. Bates concluded by asking the audience to reflect as she had on the natural world around them as if they, themselves could view the world as gardens and gardeners.

**BOGO Bookstore is back-in-action in the Atrium**

ZACHARY PETROFF  
staff writer

The entrance to the PNC atrium has once again brought back the feeling of nostalgia as the Scholastic Book Fair returned for its spring buy one get one (BOGO) sale. The semi-annual event that has taken place at Duquesne University for around 20 years is giving students and faculty a chance to purchase books, posters, colored pens, bookmarks and other various trinkets reminiscent of the beloved youthful pastime.

“If you stand around and listen long enough, you’re going to hear students say things like ‘Oh my goodness, do you remember when...’ and it is always a positive memory. Whether they were readers or non-readers in school, it was always a positive memory,” Danielle Henzler, the Curriculum Center director, said.

Henzler, who has been with the Duquesne for 21 years, is excited to see the popularity of the make-shift book fair continue. It was almost a decade ago when many independent bookstores were closing, but this book fair shows that people still desire to have printed books.

“One of the things that blew me away was how many college kids were shopping for themselves. I kept hearing them say things like ‘Oh my goodness, I needed this, this week.’” Henzler said. “They’re buying books for themselves. Self-care can be in the form of getting a young adult book that they want to read, or if that’s in the form of a fuzzy pencil that makes them smile when they’re taking notes, I don’t think it matters, but I saw more of that than I have seen in 10 years.”

In order for one to qualify for the BOGO sale, customers are asked to either donate a children’s book or donate $1. At the conclusion of the sale the donated profits are used to buy books from the Scholastic Book Fair and donate them to the community.

Plans are being made to support August Wilson House in the Hill District in honor of August Wilson’s birthday.

Henzler said that this sale does not create a profit for Duquesne or the Curriculum Center “I’m doing it because I love books.”

While the Scholastic Book Fair centers around children and young adults there is a diverse enough selection for all ages and backgrounds.

“We’re selling a lot of books around refugees because of the Ukraine Crisis. We have more picture books and graphic novels about refugees and immigration. We’ve actually sold a lot of trinkets and gadgets. We have these multicolor pens that people really like to take their notes in different colors,” student employee of the Curriculum Center, said Zoe Neff.

With the Easter holiday just around the corner the children’s book “Good Egg” and “Bad Seed” are popular titles. While “The Hate U Give” and “They Both Die at the End” have been popular young adult titles.

Posters of sports cars have been another popular item this season.

Sophomores and education majors Ireland Kennedy and Ma rissa Feeney are using the book fair to purchase books for their future classroom.

“Right now I’m looking for a book that teaches a lesson. I think it’s great that they have it here for future teachers to pick up,” Kennedy said.

The Scholastic Book Fair will run until Friday April 8th. The hours are Monday through Thursday 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Friday 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

For the BOGO sale, customers are asked to either donate a children’s book or donate money. Donations are used to buy books and give them to the community.

**ZOE STRATOS**  
opinions editor

On March 30, the university announced that eligible students will be able to receive their second Covid-19 vaccine booster on campus.

According to an email sent to students, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention announced new recommendations for Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna boosters for those at higher risk of disease, hospitalization and death.

For now, individuals 50 years of age or older, or immunocompromised individuals who are four months past their first booster, may receive it. The university has not announced when the rest of the population can.

“Duquesne follows CDC guidelines in determining how we manage vaccinations,” said Gabe Welsch, vice president of marketing and communications.

“Right now, we offer vaccines and first boosters to everyone. The guidance does not yet open up access to the second booster shot to the general population. We do not know when the CDC will change that guidance.”

Individuals can choose to receive either shot, Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna, with clinics available on campus. According to the email, they will be offered Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., and Fridays from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. in room 109 in the Student Union.

These boosters are just available to students, but also eligible family members, according to the email, and community members can contact the Center for Pharmacy Care to schedule an individual appointment in the Muldoon Building.

According to Welsch, the university has administered the second booster to approximately 1,000 people, with staff easily managing the campus demand.

As for testing, clinics for asymptomatic individuals will continue sporadically.

“The clinics for asymptomatic students and employees are open at specific times in order to manage resources. Demand has been light,” Welsch said. “Per CDC guidelines, if you are vaccinated and exposed but asymptomatic, you do not need to get a test. Ninety percent of campus is vaccinated. Individuals can get home tests in the event they wish to obtain a test at a time when the clinics are not open.”

**MARY LIZ FLAVIN | NEWS EDITOR**

**Students need vaccinations**

According to the university, each student is required to be vaccinated. Due to the recent changes, however, the university announced that students will be able to receive their second booster on campus.

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WLAX loses to VCU, drops fourth straight

**Benjamin Gottschalk**

staff writer

In a back-and-forth nail-biter that went down to the wire on Sunday, Duquesne's women's lacrosse team was leading for nearly the entire game before VCU scored six goals in the fourth quarter to win by a 17-10 mark, handing the Dukes their fourth loss in a row.

Duquesne got out to a very strong start, scoring two goals and contributing to VCU's nine turnovers during the opening quarter.

Dukes attacker Delaney Rodriguez-Shaw said that the turnovers were crucial because, from the beginning, Duquesne was able to capitalize and get out in front. She also said the turnovers contributed to finding a level of play early on.

"Once we were able to have the ball, stay calm and play our game, I think it worked out well to get that 2-0 lead at the beginning of the game," Rodriguez-Shaw said.

She opened the second-quarter scoring, pushing Duquesne's lead up to three.

The Rams caught up to the Dukes, evening the score at four heading into halftime. VCU neutralized Duquesne's scoring attack thanks, at least in part, to goalies Alex Grato-Fawaz, who made 10 of her 12 saves on the afternoon during the game's first half.

"Going into the game, our coach [Head Coach Corinne Desrosiers] told us that she had a great percentage for saves, so we really worked on our shot selection and our fake-high, shoot-low, and really make sure we are moving around before we get a good shot," Rodriguez-Shaw said.

The Dukes used the third quarter to their advantage after two goals from Julie Cassidy and one goal from Ciara Curtis put Duquesne up 7-4 about halfway through the quarter. Curtis, who ended the day with three goals, said that she's adapting to a new role.

"I recently got moved to midfield this year. I've been a defender my whole life," Curtis said. "In practice, I've been working with my coaches and my teammates, who have been helping me out with shots, shot placement and being confident."

"It's definitely been a great learning experience for me, and I've learned to have confidence in myself," Rodriguez-Shaw said that Curtis' new position suits her well.

"It's great that Ciara has started to become a dominant player on the attack since she has always been a defender," Rodriguez-Shaw said. "I believe that the draw controls that we won that game." Rodriguez-Shaw said that Desrosiers was proud of the team for "their" will to never give up even through all the things that were going wrong in the game."

After Sunday's loss to VCU and a 17-8 defeat at the hands of No. 17-ranked Richmond on Friday, Duquesne left Richmond, Va., without a victory.

The Dukes will return to action on March 4, taking on No. 18-ranked Butler at 1 p.m. at VCU's Stuart C. Siegel Center.

The Dukes are now 0-3 on the season and 0-2 in Atlantic 10 play. They face VCU for the second time this season on March 4, with the first meeting ending in a 17-10 loss for the Dukes.

Football team holds spring scrimmage

**Spencer Thomas**

staff writer

Although the calendar said it was April, the atmosphere at Rooney Field during the Duquesne football team's spring scrimmage resembled an October, game-like feeling.

The Dukes capped off a series of spring practices by dusting off the pads, donning the game jerseys and playing an intrasquad spring game.

After a sloppy offensive start, the red team — led by 2022's backup-turned-starter quarterback Darius Perrantes — broke the scoreboard first with a field goal.

However, Perrantes — the first ever Northeast Conference quarterback to beat an FBS team — found his form, and connected with Nick Leopold for a pair of touchdown passes. The latter of the two completions came with 56 seconds to go in the contest, bringing the red team's deficit to one.

Opting not to take a scrimmage to overtime, the red team kept its offense on the field. Perrantes found Leopold once again for the 2-point conversion, as the red team completed the comeback and took an 18-17 lead that they wouldn't relinquish.

It may have been a strong showing, but that wasn't apparent from the celebration that ensued, along with taunts and trash talking from the red squad.

After such a strong performance, Leopold received high praise from Head Coach Jerry Schmitt.

"We have a lot of young guys that are battling and fighting and getting better, and he's one of those guys," Schmitt said. "It's good to see that."

Schmitt also gave props to Macklin, whose ability to draw out plays was a thrill to watch for fans and players alike.

However, the game wasn't finished just yet. Macklin and the red team marched down the field. With 30 seconds left, a crossing route led to a big hit by the near hash, and each team traded shoes and insults in a heated moment, just as Migos' "Fight Night" harmoniously played from the public address system.

After action resumed, it came down to one final play. A game-winning, 45-yard field goal attempt by the red team sailed wide left, and the red team stormed the field in celebration.

"I liked how the game transpired," Schmitt said. "We got a little bit of excitement at the end. It was pretty good."

Attention now turns toward regular-season preparation. The Dukes will open the 2022 season on Aug. 27 in Tallahassee, Fla., against Florida State. Duquesne will also play at Youngstown State and Hawaii in non-conference action.

Acuff enters transfer portal

It's become an all-too-frequent occurrence for the men's basketball program, as another one of its players has declared his intentions to find a new home.

In a statement posted to social media on Saturday, Duke guard Tyvon Acuff announced that he'd be entering the transfer portal. Acuff spent two seasons at Duquesne.

"To my guys/teammates, the bond created will never allow me to forget the moments we shared together," Acuff said in the statement. "I am thankful for all of the relationships that have been created from simply being a Duke."

The Detroit native appeared in all of Duquesne's 30 games in 2021-22, seeing his name in the starting five in 16 of those contests. He averaged 5.7 points per game and led the team in 3-point percentage (39.4%).

Acuff became the third Duquesne player to enter the transfer portal since the team's season ended on March 9, joining Toby Okani and Jackie Johnson III.

Pens swept by Avs in home-and-home

With what was arguably as strong of a litmus test for the upcoming Stanley Cup Playoffs as possible, the Colorado Avalanche swept the Pittsburgh Penguins in a home-and-home pair of games.

The action got underway at Ball Arena in Denver on Saturday, with Colorado edging Pittsburgh 3-2. The Penguins kept up with one of the National Hockey League's favorites to win the Stanley Cup, but a goal from the Avalanche's Devon Toews with 4:26 left in the game put Colorado ahead for good.

The series turned to Pittsburgh and PPG Paints Arena on Tuesday. Although the Penguins trailed by just one goal (3-2) heading into the third period, Colorado used three goals to gain a comfortable edge, ultimately winning by a 6-3 tally.

Pittsburgh has another pivotal game on Thursday night. For the third time in less than two weeks, they'll clash with the New York Rangers, whom they trail by four points in the Metropolitan Division standings.

-Luke Henne, Sports Editor
The Pirates began the 2020 season with a 6-10-1 record, earning a last-place finish in the National League Central division for the third season in a row. Although more roster turnover dominated general manager Ben Cherington’s offseason plans, there are still some core pieces for third-year manager Derek Shelton to build around in 2022.

The catalysts for this team, in all likelihood, are going to be: center fielder Bryan Reynolds, third baseman Ke’Bryan Hayes and relief pitcher David Bednar. Reynolds earned the first MLB All-Star Game appearance of his career, and his hitting in the season’s final 24 games was an impressive .283 with six home runs and recorded at least 65 RBIs. It’s his three seasons at the MLB level, Reynolds earned his first MLB All-Star Game appearance and his second MLB Fielding Award as the league’s best defensive third baseman. With room to grow offensively and his defense already proven to be high-caliber, Hayes appears to be ready to take the next step in his growth as a franchise cornerstone.

The Pirates have identified this talent and are looking for a long-term contract extension for him. Last week, MLB Network insider Jon Heyman reported that Pittsburgh offered Hayes a long-term contract extension. In the bullpen, Bednar appears to be one of the few household names.

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Em Collins’ small business, Entree Bath and Body, centers around plastic-free, sustainable bathroom products.

The Car Bazaar did not disappoint for a Downtown cement parking garage filled with vendors’ boxes. The Car Bazaar did not disappoint for vendors’ boxes.

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Daniel Franzese performs comedy, talks about Mean Girls career

Megan Trotter | staff writer

A monochromatic array of pink could be seen inside the Union Ballroom on March 31 as actor, activist and comedian Daniel Franzese put on his comedy routine, proudly titled, “Yass Things Are Amazing.”

In addition to his performance, the event also featured refreshments, a merchandise table, a raffle, a Q&A and a personal meet and greet with Franzese himself.

Organized by Duquesne Programming Council (DPC), roughly 125 students attended the late-night event, and masks were provided to students who chose to participate in the meet and greet.

In setting up the event, incoming Arts and Entertainment Director Alaina Baker said that DPC offered Franzese refreshments as he waited on the sixth floor in preparation for his Q&A.

Students who were quick to buy tickets received a free pink t-shirt with the movie slogan, “On Wednesdays, we wear pink.”

Best known for his role as Damian in “Mean Girls,” Franzese spoke a lot about the cultural shift his character had across the world. When asked if he feels his role as Damian overshadowed his other works, Franzese said that he “never tire of it.”

“T’ll always lean into it. It’s such a gift that keeps on giving,” Franzese said.

During the Q&A, Franzese revealed that he hopes to put the gift card toward a Palm Tree shirt and a jean jacket vest as he danced around the stage, frequently knocking over the microphone stand for comedic effect.

Franzese joked about stressing out the tech guys with all his commotion.

Stirring up some gossip in his routine, Franzese mentioned popular ex-co-star, Lindsay Lohan, joking that she was off kidnapping kids in Syria. When asked who his least favorite cast member had been from the set of “Mean Girls,” Franzese said while he did not want to say it was Lohan, since she was also only 16 years old at the time of filming. He said that he “loves the current modern-day version of her.”

The comedy set covered jokes about everything: from Franzese’s fear of Pompeii; to him acting out the plot of Paranormal Activity; to several impressions of his mother and what it’s like growing up in an Italian household.

During his time on stage, he pointed out his mom, Denise Franzese, in the audience and shared that she was her birthday. The entire room erupted in cheers.

Encouraging the celebration, Franzese surprised his mom with candles and two slices of a birthday cake. Everyone in attendance joined in to sing “Happy Birthday” so she could blow out her candles.

“Being a part of DPC and meeting Daniel Franzese was amazing. He was very open to answering our questions and seemed genuinely excited to meet everyone,” DPC board member Isabella Niccolai said.

“The fun continued with a raffle for a $100 Amazon gift card. Raffle winner Alexandria Wiseman said she was inspired to come to the event because of "Mean Girls." I love that movie,” Wiseman said.

According to Wiseman, she hopes to put the gift card toward a new iPad for herself.

During the Q&A, Franzese revealed he is happy to be at the point in his career where he can afford to be particular about his work and what he wants to act in. According to Franzese, he said he is lucky to have the opportunity to be a part of so many different projects.

“I am very grateful we were able to host Daniel [Franzese], and we couldn’t have had more fun,” Niccoli said.
Keeping away from people who try to belittle your ambitions. Small people always do that, but the really great make you feel that you, too, can become great.

MARK TWAIN

You just read | Now tweet our thoughts | us yours.

@TheDuquesneDuke

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Letters to the editor must be typed, double-spaced and include the writer’s name, school/department and phone number for verification. Letters must be no longer than 300 words and should be delivered to The Duke office at 113 College Hall or e-mailed to theduqduke@gmail.com by 5 p.m. Monday. The editors reserve the right to edit any and all submitted copies. All letters must be verified before being published.

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**OPINIONS**

**STAFF EDITORIAL**

Violence in Pb: How do we protect the vulnerable?

Last week, multiple instances of violent abuse against children made headlines in Pittsburgh. Dayton Vickers, a 15-year-old kid from Homewood, was shot and killed on Wednesday, March 30. His friends and family gathered to hold a vigil, but they were frustrated with the lack of police information about the homicide that côtent to reports about it happening again.

A number of violent crimes have made the news in Pittsburgh recently. In Homewood alone, there have been eight homicides since New Year’s Eve, reported the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette. While these stats might not necessarily show changes in trends and stabbings in Pittsburgh compared to years prior, the number of child victims is certainly troubling.

On Friday, April 1, two young boys were transported to a hospital in critical condition after allegedly being stabbed by their own mother in the bathroom of their home.

The person who is accused of the violent act was the very person responsible for protecting these children from the dangers of the world.

Helping the most vulnerable in a community is the responsibility of everyone. These awful crimes are unfortunately not only the instances of violent abuse against children in the city, but at least with the media attention these cases are getting right now, community leaders are making it known how citizens can help.

Mayor Ed Gainey called this a “pandemic of gun violence” in a statement following the shootings of Vickers and Devonte White, a 29-year-old Wilkinsburg man, the night of March 30.

Gainey’s suggestion for illegal firearm trafficking is promising, but like any “pandemic,” it takes the active involvement of everyone capable of contributing. And when it comes to keeping our city safe, that contribution can come in many forms, including those of parents who might be feeling helpless after these recent events.

Last weekend at a neighborhood meeting held in the Tree of Life Open Bible Church, Gainey told community members to report suspicious activity to the police through phone calls or anonymous complaint forms. He recommended taking photos and video footage when possible, and especially of license plates. He encouraged us, we encourage students to help, too, by donating time and resources.

Community outreach designed for children in Pittsburgh, including Jeremiah’s Place, provide a space for children of families dealing with crises. One converted home in Homewood, APTO, is available for children to enter into a “creative sanctuary” where they can paint and sculpt safely away from the stress of what they are experiencing.

While these neighborhood solutions do not directly solve the problem of violent abuse, they certainly help community members to be more aware of how they can contribute to the wellbeing of their city when things feel the most helpless.

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**Defining student loans: the solution to our growing debt**

President Biden recently revealed that millions of federal student loan borrowers could have their payments frozen until Aug. 31; it is the sixth time the date has been moved back since the pauses began early in the pandemic.

As a student, the continued moratorium is a godsend, but no one is really pleased with the prolonged but temporary solution: Many see it as unnecessary, and the rest want to see outright loan forgiveness.

However, as an NPR investigation discovered, the true nature of the student loan debt problem is a borrower’s income, and the mismanagement of income-driven repayment plans (IDR). Large debts owed by high-income borrowers are often affordable, while smaller debts of lower-income borrowers enrolled in for-profit schools are weighing them down. A change must be made to the IDR plan, and the Biden administration must enact that change, with follow-up from the Department of Education.

According to Statistica, student loans are the largest body of consumer debt, following that of mortgages. What’s most frightening is that it’s concentrated among a small percentage of the population.

So far, proposals to forgive some amount of student loans — $10,000 suggested by the president, $30,000 suggested by Democratic members of Congress — are problematic, but simple.

First and foremost, in the political sense, there are arguments over whether the president or the education secretary even have the authority to forgive any amount of student loans. It could be seen as a form of unauthorized spending by the administration.

Economically, the $10,000 or $50,000 blanket loan forgiveness presents fairness concerns for current and future loan borrowers: higher-income families would end up receiving too much relief, while those in lower-income families may still need to pay a substantial amount.

The obvious answer is to enroll in the IDR plan; however, the plan is less than adequate, and is not the default plan for borrowers. Many are unaware of the option, and the federal loan servicers don’t ensure that they know about it.

The immediate problem could be easily fixed by Congress by suggesting that repayment of all federal loans be done on an IDR plan and directing the IRS to share the tax returns of all federal loan borrowers with Federal Student Aid loan servicers.

The student loan moratorium debate itself is controversial across party lines, but there’s been bipartisan support for IDR reforms in the past: The first major expansion of IDR happened under the George W. Bush administration.

The next part of the issue is the IDR plan itself. Several iterations between servicers — PHEAA, CornerStone and MOHELA — did “not have an IDR forgiveness payment counter” to track borrowers’ payments, as the same article said.

These irregularities carry into how servicers count payments:

“If a monthly payment of $100.01 is owed but a borrower pays just $100 — one penny shy of the required amount — three servicers (Great Lakes, Nelnet and EdFinancial) said they would still count it as a qualifying payment, while two others indicated they would not.”

After passing legislation to rework the federal loan program and IDR plan, the Department of Education must streamline and fix these irregularities between servicers. Also, streamlining the plans into one income-based plan, or automatically enrolling borrowers into the IDR plan unless they opt out would make the complex process much less confusing. Not only would it make the process easier for borrowers, but also for the variety of servicers with different regulations.

Those who opt out, too, would still benefit from the fixed payment option, as if nothing ever changed. With a streamlined system and better communication, borrowers won’t be left stranded in a pile of debt.

While reforms will help moving forward, the slump is already done for past borrowers. There may be disagreement about the solution, but one thing is certain: IDR, Congress, FSA and the Department of Education have failed students.

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**ZOE STRATOS**

opinions editor

I didn’t have time to make a comic today, so I asked my good buddy Tim to fill in for me, but don’t worry because this guy is hilarious, he’ll do something funny I’m sure...

Hey everybody, I’m Tim! Hey, how ‘bout that pizza they serve at Hogan, eh? Am I right, or am I right?

BECCHERI CORMOY | STAFF COMIC ARTIST

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L will never forget when one of my closest mentors and father figure gave me a brief tour of Akron, Ohio. It was the day before Thanksgiving, and the dealership we worked for was playing against our rival dealership in a “friendly” football game. As we drove through the desolate part of the city, he made sure to point out all the shuttered businesses and abandoned buildings.

Halting, he mentioned that the reason that the city had become so barren was due to “your people,” a phrase he often used when mentioning liberals. He informed me that the reason so many businesses left was because unions had caused the price of production to go up so high that it forced various businesses to leave town, leaving the city of Akron in an economic downturn.

Though it has been years, that conversation has stuck with me. We have a much larger society, and one that is built on the doings of someone I had grown to admire. He helped craft my views on leadership, professionalism, and offered me guidance in a time of my life when I felt like I already knew everything. When he spoke, even if I did not heed his advice, I listened.

Upon reflection, I have come to understand his and many others’ stance on labor and labor rights. I do not believe it comes from a place of malice, but rather from a slew of misconceptions and archaic perceptions. It’s brainwashing.

The way we view corporations, who have hoarded a massive amount of profit, seems almost satirical. Mitt Romney, during his campaign for presidency in 2008, made the claim that “corporations are people too.” In 2010, the Supreme Court ruled in a landmark decision that under the first amendment, corporations could contribute, and thus influence, without limitations, how much they give to political contributors. In 2016, we elected an under-qualified billionaire without any political experience to the highest office in the country.

We have a cult-like attitude when it comes to CEOs. We put men like Jeff Bezos, Elon Musk, Tim Cook and Steve Jobs on an adorably pedestal while often villainizing those in the workforce. Words like labor unions, socialism, strikes and profit-sharing are often met with disdain and distrust.

Labor is changing. It needs to change. Too long in this country corporations have exploited various members of the working class with low wages and unreasonable demands all while asking for their blind loyalty, which we have given to them willingly.

The work force is being asked to do more for less compensation in several sectors. This is most apparent when it comes to jobs where less qualifications are required: retail, the service industry and manufacturing employees are being asked to do more with stagnant compensation.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics has studied productivity trends from 1987-2015 finding that “the share of income going to workers has declined in 77% of industries since 1987... These industries also saw a large rise in output and productivity in this period, in contrast, labor share increased.”

The working class is being asked to do more for less. Wages have remained stagnant while wage inequality continues to grow. The right of the people to come together and have their voices heard is American. The right to collective bargaining allows the working class not only a voice, but a chance to be recognized and to put the power of industry back into the hands of the people. As legislation has failed to recognize the rights of workers, it is up to the people to come together and demand that various levels of exploitation need to be corrected.

The road for workers to gain their rightful share of profit will be a hard one. In 2020 we saw giant tech companies like Uber and Lyft spend a record $205 million to pass Proposition 22 in California, which allowed tech employers to categorize their workers as “independent contractors” instead of employees.

This allows the corporations to not have to pay for unemployment insurance, health care, sick leave and other responsibilities of an employer. Amazon spent $4.3 million on anti-union initiatives last year alone. Other massive corporations such as Walmart and Starbucks have spent years cultivating a culture that terrifies or prevents the unionization of employees.

The monumental labor organization that occurred last Friday at the Amazon facility in Staten Island, N.Y. took two years. There were aggressive and even illegal tactics being deployed to stop the efforts. The trend of malicious attempts to deter workers from uniting will likely increase before sweeping changes occur.

We as Americans should embrace and ready ourselves for the right for the average worker to have a voice.
**FEATURES**

**An egg-stra special gift**

**Duquesne pharmacy students make Easter baskets for the elderly**

**Emma Polen**  
features editor

Duquesne’s Coffee House Readings are back in-person for the first time since pre-pandemic, just in time for an exclusive reading event that brought alumni back across the country.

Members of the present and past Duquesne community gathered inside the Geminius Theater on Wednesday to listen to four Duquesne English alumni present works written throughout their careers. An ASL interpreter was present to illustrate the images of each poet in an inclusive manner.

While all four poets studied at Duquesne, they have since taken their writing talents into a variety of fields. Their invitation to the reading proves, though, that they maintained a connection to their writing in whatever path they chose.

Brian Tierney was featured at the reading for his recent debut collection of poetry, “Rise and Float.” His poems touched on his personal, emotional experiences.

Tierney credits his Catholic upbringing for part of his poetic success. “Catholicism believes in the enchantment of the world,” he said at the reading.

In addition, the writer discussed the heavy topic of suicide — something he admitted had plagued his life and the lives of others close to him. While some of the poems in “Rise and Float” discuss the dark side of deep personal thoughts, the book is also about “deciding to live,” he said.

Tierney’s poetry work followed him to San Francisco, where he teaches a poetry workshop at a community organization part-time.

In college, Tierney studied creative, academic and journalistic writing, which included being an editor for the *Duquesne Duke* where he met his wife.

“For now, [writing styles] are all part of how I approach talking about writing, and I'm able to talk about different kinds of writing, at a higher level than I would have if I had only done maybe one of those things,” Tierney said.

Specifically, Tierney discussed how his journalistic experience influenced the way in which he maneuvers writing about his experiences.

“What I learned in journalism school is how you pay attention to the world,” he said. “I think that has influenced my poems. And the kind of presence of my creative mind that has to do with the kind of journalistic seeing — you’re seeing what other people aren’t seeing.”

Another speaker at the Coffee House Reading, Justin Kishbaugh, is now a professor of legal writing at Roger Williams University in Bristol, R.I.

He noted the similarity between his studies of law and poetry.

“Law, like poetry — you’re trying to locate an ideal abstraction in sort of concrete particulars and specific facts,” Kishbaugh said. “Everything revolves around analogy. And you want to create maximum meaning in the fewest words.”

Kishbaugh presented poems from a 20th century classification of poetry called imagism, which he wrote his dissertation about back in his collegiate years. His reading contained a unique forward motion coupled with rhythmic flow of his poetic measures.

One poem Kishbaugh read, “Black Water,” was written back in 2005 and dedicated to those dealing with the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. It was one of the first poems he wrote and read as a Duquesne student, he said.

The premiere speaker at the Coffee House Reading, Elizabeth Savage, is a professor of English and co-director of Women’s & Gender Studies at Fairmont State University.

Savage recalled the encouragement she received while at Duquesne while finding her passion in an English career.

“Duquesne’s English faculty, especially Dr. Kimnahan and Dr. Michael, prepared me to be a professional in the field,” Savage said in an email. “Their courses and supportive responses to my writing gave me a strong foundation to continue my work as a feminist critic, poet and editor.”

Savage’s collection of poems she read at Geminius Theater represented a range of poetry she wrote over the past couple of years. Themes of long-lasting friendship and wilderness played out in her readings.

“The poems are from a new manuscript, which is an expanded version of the upcoming chapbook "Nowcablel Debuture," which Danceing Girl Press will publish this summer,” she said.

Not all of the alumni readers have wandered far from their creative writing roots at Duquesne. Cameron Barnett has remained in Pittsburgh as a teacher and poet.

He currently serves as an editor for *Pittsburgh Poetry Journal* and as a board member for Write Pittsburgh, according to his website.

Barnett read five pieces of poetry from his first book, *Drowning Boy’s Guide to Water.* His favorite piece is titled “Super Nova.” The poem explores the relationship he had with a child he babysat.

“Super Nova” is representative of Barnett’s dedication to speaking about the Black man’s experience in modern-day America.

“He reminds me how close we are to an explosion,” Barnett read in “Super Nova.”
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