Chinese New Year celebration shows solidarity

By Dew Mumich & Maria Ramos
Senior Reporters

Amid the dancing dragons, glittering with thrown confetti, accompanied by the sound of booming drums, many minds were on politics as celebrants welcomed the Chinese Year of the Dog at the nineteenth Annual Lunar New Year Parade in New York City on February 25th.

The festivities started at noon with the singing of the national anthems of both the United States and China. Then the parade began, started off by members of the NYPD followed by participants carrying the American and Chinese flags.

Chinatown was filled with performers wearing traditional Chinese celebration clothes featuring symbols of good fortune like dragons and the color red.

Beneath soaked ponchos and rain jackets celebrants wore traditional garb of glittering gold and red, lucky colors in traditional Chinese

MUSIC REVIEWS
We review performances by Jordan Rakei, Charles Larita and Noel Gallagher PGS. 6-7

WHAT'S IN THE STARS?
Special Chinese New Year horoscope tells if you are luck your not! PG. 20

New VP says first priority will be listening

By Jasmine Santalla
Senior Reporter

Mercer has a new Vice President of Academic Affairs Dr. J. Brandon Shaw. He has served in academia for more than 20 years in various capacities. He has been an adjunct Professor in the sciences; a program coordinator for Allied Health, Life and Physical Sciences; and, most recently, Dean of Science, Engineering, Mathematics and Health at Lord Fairfax Community College in Middletown, VA since 2016. Dr. Shaw began at Mercer on March 1st.

The search for a new Vice President started in October, following the sudden departure of previous VPA Dr. David Edwards. Dean of Students Dr. Diane Campbell led the search committee as co-chair with On-Site Coordinator and Advisor for William Paterson University at Mercer, Leonard Winogora, who is also an adjunct professor here.

As is typical, the search committee consisted of 15 representatives from various academic departments across the campus. This included administrators, student affairs and faculty members.

Dr. Campbell told The VOICE about the process saying the committee evaluated 30 applicants. From there each member selected their top ten applicants based on the prospects’ resumes. Next the committee interviewed the top six applicants through Skype in order to identify their top three picks.

Mercer President Dr. Jianping Wang told The VOICE, “The committee recommended several candidates to me and then we invited them to this campus for an open forum. So the faculty and staff all had a chance to meet with these candidates.”

When asked what as-

Participants braved wet weather during New York City’s annual Chinese New Year parade and celebration on February 25, 2018.

See CHINESE NEW YEAR page 10

New VP says first priority will be listening

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### ACADEMIC CALENDAR CHANGES

Starting in Fall 2018, Mercer will be shifting from a standard semester length of 15 weeks to 14 weeks, with the starting date for classes being September 5, a week that is a bit unusual. This will be the new norm.

The shortened semester doesn’t mean less class time, however, as up to the difference, most classes are being lengthened by a few minutes while the time to get from one room to another on campus is being shortened.

In a survey of 50 students, The VOICE found that 75 percent either like the change or don’t care, while 25 percent are against it.

Derek Jovian, a freshman year student studying communications, says, “One week is a big difference, I think it is a good idea.”

Another positive view was expressed by Tamaryn Auld, a nursing major, who said, “I like the idea of having an extra week in the summer, I can spend more time at the shore.”

Of the students surveyed who were against the calendar change, their concerns centered on completing all their work with one less week.

One student wrote on the survey, “When you are taking high level math and science classes, making semesters shorter means less class time to cover material, making it a lot harder.”

On the other hand, Mercer’s offer ten week sections of most classes and five week sessions in the summer that are fully enrolled, so there is a possibility for teaching in shorter time frames.

The student survey showed, overall, that students were not well informed about the change. Eighty percent hadn’t heard about it. Those who did said they were informed by their professors.

Keighley Web, a sophomore education major, said, “I love the idea of starting after Labor Day, so I can make plans for my Labor Day weekend, but I have heard of having longer periods. As of now with an hour and fifteen minutes I’m already gone by the end of the period.”

A concern about the way the change was made was a central theme among faculty members.

Professor of Communications Allyn Haywood said, “We were surprised that the change was taken in action so fast. I hope this was made to benefit the students and not for other reasons.”

Another faculty member who asked to remain anonymous said, “According to the president this is a good idea. I am not completely sure but I hope so for all students. I don’t think they took this decision based on data and not enough thoughts were put in. Many decisions have been made by administrators without consulting faculty. They did it again and here we are trying to figure out how to teach enough minutes per credits.”

Art Schwartz, Mathematics Professor and President of Faculty Association says, “What I get upset about is when administration wants to make a change, they can’t make a change because you need to make a change, make changes for good, changes can be bad or it can be bad. When you make a change tell me why. If there is a problem, okay let’s talk about it, [say] don’t make a change because you first you need to know the problem. There problem was to start school after Labor day and to finish before Christmas break. Their solution was the 14 week calendar.”

Some faculty members acknowledged that the process had been flawed and felt they knew why.

One faculty member who asked to remain anonymous said, “A hand full of cranky old professors are passed off about the new schedule, but they are cranky anyway. Did the administration bungle the roll out? Yes, but it’s just part of the overall ineptitude of our leadership. Most of them got here about five minutes ago. Maybe at some point they will learn to ask us for help, but in the meantime, most of us have just more work to do. Can it be the end of the world?”

Tracy McCarthy, a Professor who teaches Public Speaking and Human Communications classes sees specific benefits. She says, “I see this as a good change because when a student is not done with their vacation or their summer job and they have to skip the first week of classes, this [change] solves that problem. We need to make sure we can’t make in the end of the world.”

Another faculty member who sees the change as a minor shift is Carol Borik Professor of English. She told The VOICE, “A fourteen week academic calendar is not a problem. I think it’s a good idea. Many other colleges do the same. It is going to take some time for faculty to figure out how to break down the curriculum, but that’s not going to be a big problem.”

Meanwhile, Susan Zambrio Assistant Vice President of MCCC told The VOICE via email that being in line with most of the community colleges academic calendars in New Jersey didn’t play a significant role in this decision.

On the other hand, some faculty members do see problems.

Michael Dorneman Professor of Science told The VOICE, “For the Science classes involved, trying to put together the lab periods and align them with the old calendar is going to be a challenge. I am worried that students are not going to have enough time to study all the material that is required for these types of courses. The lab periods are already one week long. Adding more minutes is just going to make students overwhelmed.”

A major concern voiced on campus was whether or not the schedule with the updated time periods would be made available on time for students to get advising and be registered for fall.

Professor Schwartz said, “I hope we get a master schedule soon so the program coordinators, the deans and faculty will know what course we can start signing students in [to classes] in early March as we usually do.”

Administrators say these concerns are being addressed.

Dean of Liberal Arts Robert Kleinschmidt told The VOICE, “All we want to do is to help students to graduate on time and to have better opportunities, and if starting after Labor Day is better for them...then we are helping them to succeed.”

CAMPUS VOICE: “All we want to do is to help students to graduate on time and to have better opportunities, and if starting after Labor Day is better for them...then we are helping them to succeed.”

-Dean of Liberal Arts & Communication Bob Kleinschmidt

### CALENDAR CHANGE COMPARISON

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### CALENDAR DETAILS

2018-2019 - CALENDAR DETAILS
Student services adds help group for alcoholics

By Lia Viteri

Peer Student Academic Success Coach, Terry Smith, told The VOICE, “I stayed in Mercer even after I graduated so that I could bring awareness to substance abuse and help the students who are suffering from it.”

He explains how he enrolled in Mercer’s spring of 2016 with the sole purpose of picking up his studies and obtaining his diploma last May. Through his friendships made on campus, he learned that many students were dealing with addiction and no one was talking about it.

Smith says he has his own experiences with alcoholism and has been sober for 13 years. Seeing himself reflected in the students, he talks about his decision to stay active in Mercer and his efforts to address the problems of youth substance abuse.

Final fall he worked with Student Services to implement the “One Day at a Time” program on campus, reaching out to students who are struggling with any addiction and providing a safe space for them to communicate, confront and learn about their personal troubles. An Alcoholic Anonymity program has been sought for years and speculated about for years, though.

In 2010, the article “How AA Meetings Offered at MCCC” was published by The VOICE, reporting that, “In a survey taken on campus, seventy-five percent of students said that AA meetings between twelve-step meeting would be very helpful.”

Dr. Diana Campbell, Executive Dean of Students, told The VOICE, “When you have a college campus with a lot of things going on, it’s from all walks of life and they all have kinds of things going on in their lives… We started this program that is set up so if a student has a drug or alcohol issue, there’s a place where they can come and talk about it.”

Mercer’s Director of the Center for Retention and Completion, Dr. Latunya Ashford Ligon, explains that this new addition to the student services was a collaborative effort. She said, “The initial meeting to discuss the program involved multiple success coaches and Dean Campbell, who actually came up with the acronym O.D.A.T.”

In a survey of 35 students done by The VOICE, roughly five percent of students admitted they are currently wrestling with alcohol and/or marijuana dependence. More than 68 percent reported having at least one friend or relative suffering from it.

Dr. Campbell says he hopes to educate participants on coming addiction. The main goal is “to provide a support process that we’ve got involved in activities and find alternative ways to have fun,” he says.

A Business major, who asked to remain anonymous, told The VOICE, “My best friend has been an alcoholic for two years now. He always liked drinking, but after graduating Mercer last year it was nonstop for him. I wish he’d have known about this program. Who knows, maybe it would have helped.”

According to information presented by the Scientific American on their website, what occurs during AA meetings can vary considerably. Further, about 40 percent of AA members drop out during the first year.

The statistics show that the more people who participate, the higher the rates of success. Increasing the size of Mercer’s ODAT meetings is a key goal. Flyers placed on bulletin boards all over campus are aimed at drawing students in need to the program.

Smith says, “Sometimes ten people will join [the meetings], sometimes only one student attends and sometimes none. I’ve had students call me at 3 PM asking for help when they feel temptation, I want them to know I’m here for them.”

Andrew Cosma, told The VOICE, “I didn’t have any direct, obvious addictions but I had other personal issues that I wanted to get a handle of… I went to talk therapies and that didn’t really work out for me. I like ODAT because it’s more conversation instead of just sitting in a corner hearing people rant. I actually get to build connections and friendships with the people in the program.”

Dean Campbell added, “Student services and people are working with students. We are listening and we are trying to remove the barriers that would get in the way of students’ success. Academics and Student Affairs all work together to do this.”

ODAT meetings are held in room SC11 every Monday and Wednesday at noon.
Community offers hope for suicidal youth

By Griffin Jones
Senior Reporter

As MCCC’s surrounding area faces a spike in suicide among youth, school districts are trying to figure out how to address the problem, while teens are looking for better ways to support one another.

"I feel as if even at the time when I didn’t want to be taken seriously, I think it’s really important for people to notice signs of these type of things and be taken extremely seriously, even if the person’s unwilling to see that they’re in that trouble." - STUDENT (C) WHO HAS FACE SERIOUS DEPRESSION

Recently, a number of suicides of young people from the Mercer Area has had experts worried.

Dr. George Scott, a teen suicide expert with the Traumatic Loss Coalition (TLC) of Mercer County, spoke to The VOICE about the recent deaths. “There have been seven known and declared, meaning the medical examiner, in those deaths, determined it was a suicide death” Dr. Scott said, “However, there have been some other deaths that I’m still waiting for the medical examiner’s ruling.”

The New Jersey Youth Suicide Report for 2017 marked 12 suicides of youths between 10 and 24 in Mercer County between 2013 and 2015. With at least seven in the past 20 months the numbers seem to be on the rise.

When asked about subpopulations within the youth demographic at risk, Dr. Scott said “Number one, that group, students that leave high school and go off to college or some other career or some other post high school, are at great risk. Our college kids who are under a lot of stress who go off to college are very vulnerable.”

He continued to explain, “For people who are vulnerable, transitions are very difficult. So think about a kid who is breaking up in a relationship, that’s a transition, going off to college, that’s a transition, and everybody stays in a school system where everybody knows them, where it’s predictable, where there’s a safety net under them, where they have access to people who keep an eye on them and then they give all that up, that safety net gets given up when they go off to college.”

When asked about the recent report and whether those students were going through that transition, Dr. Scott told The VOICE, “In that timeframe, the number of deaths is alarming, and there are two that happened at college, but they were Mercer County kids.”

This is not the first time that youth deaths have swept the Mercer County area. “Back at the founding of the TLC, in 1995, we had approximately 8 youth, 3 serial clusters in 18 months,” said Olsen, “At that point, Mercer had the highest rate in the country.”

Dr. Scott said of the TLC’s founding, “That was a number of suicides that there was a response from a number of really well-intended, good hearted and smart people that created the Traumatic Loss Coalition.”

Olsen also said of that time, “We found in the research that there was a relational element. Through discovery, each youth somehow knew another youth that had completed suicide.”

The number of deaths has also caught the attention of other local officials. The joint superintendents of the Mercer County area have joined together to combat the rising levels in what they term a ‘Call to Action.’

The Superintendent of Robbinsville schools, Dr. Kathryn Foster, one of the organizers of the Call to Action project said, “Well, sadly, we’ve seen a dramatic increase in suicides themselves, attempted suicides. Certainly mental health has emerged as a large concern for us ... not only our students, but also our young adults as well. So I think that’s really what prompted this initiative.”

The first result of their Call to Action was a public information session held at Rider University on January 9th. The session was attended by representatives from the Traumatic Loss Coalition, including Dr. Scott, was intended to “serve as a first step in raising a countywide focus on mental health,” according to a letter written by the Mercer superintendents.

Dr. Scott said of the session, “Many of those superintendents, have been alarmed previously and are doing in-house things with their own staff and their own parents to provide the information necessary to do suicide prevention.”

He continued, “What you saw at Rider was the first kind of collective of all the united superintendents saying we need to raise the level of concern about what we’ve already done.”

Dr. Foster, said, “The purpose was to begin those difficult conversations around mental illness and try to address some of the root causes. I think providing resources to parents and school communities is really going to be the next step.”

There are a number of resources available to those in need of them. The college has three counselors that can assist students with problems.

Janet Haag, Executive Director of the Mercer branch of the National Alliance on Mental Illness told The VOICE about what people should do if feeling suicidal. “Talk to somebody, tell somebody, what they’re thinking and feeling because if they can do that, and preferably someone who is going to be in a position to actually assist,” she said.

She continued, “Now you know that could be a trusted friend, but hopefully if we’re talking about young people here, we’re talking about kids or adolescents, the hope would be that the trusted friend will direct them towards getting the professional help that they need, like talk to the counselor at the school.”

When asked what led to getting help, C said “Being close with my professors here at Mercer. They noticed I was kind of off and they just all assumed I was tired, many times when you’re sad you’re just like ‘Oh I’m tired, I’m tired’ and it got to a point where I was really tired of people telling me I need to go to sleep so I just blew up on one of my professors.”

She continued, “I told them ‘It’s a suicidal kind of day’ and it really freaked them out and so I had to sit down with them and then I had to go with them to Martha Gunning [one of the college’s counselors].”

Gunning, C said, called the Crisis Center at Capital Health to do a mental health screening.

Eventually C was hospitalized to help her recover.

C says that “Right now I feel a little more hopeful. Beforehand I just felt as if this is how life is, this is how everything’s going to be for the rest of my life, and right now after meeting people in the hospital, struggling from God knows what, to meeting people ... who have really similar issues as me, who’ve actually become friends of mine, I feel like there’s a chance, which helps tremendously just living daily.”

C also said “I feel as if even at the time when I didn’t want to be taken seriously, I think it’s really important for people to notice signs of these type of things and be taken extremely seriously, even if the person’s unwilling to see that they’re in that trouble.”

Haag told The VOICE about what to look out for, saying “When people are behaving or talking in ways that are unusual or that seem particularly concerning then it’s worth exploring that a little bit more. What is it that’s going on to get at whether or not it might be creating suicidal ideation.”

Experts stress that everyone can help. Michele Madion, a Mercer county mental health coordinator that oversees the Traumatic Loss Coalition, and Olsen, recommend that everyone, both professors and friends, use a technique called QPR - Question, Persuade, Respond. According to Olsen, the steps are:

1. Question the individual’s desire or intent regarding suicide,
2. Persuade the person to seek and accept help and
3. Refer the person to appropriate resources.

Importantly, the two TLP experts told The VOICE, is if you believe suicide is imminent, is to not leave the person alone. “That person has to be safely been brought to a trusted authority that can help.”

When asked about advice for others in the situation C was in, she said “I would just say for people to just listen to themselves, it’s really easy to ignore what you’re actually feeling and it’s really difficult to pay attention to your emotions than you need when you’re dealing with something like that but, one of the biggest thing I’ve found that’s helpful is realizing ‘Hey I feel this way, this shouldn’t be this way and I should do something about it.”

Haag also offered advice, she said “It’s a message of hope, that people are not alone, there are lots of other people that struggle the same way and that there can be very resilient and that recovery is truly possible.”

She concluded, “If you’re not alone then that means that there are people that care about you, to whom your life matters, and that the truth of the matter is that whatever the struggle is that you’re going through, whatever it is that you’re facing, whatever it is that you’re afraid of, whatever it is that is making you feel life is hopeless, there can be hope there and you need to reach out to find your way.”

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Plagiarism’s impact on students at Mercer and beyond

“We really don’t want to kick people out. But then we don’t want them graduating [from Mercer] and going to another school and all of a sudden the penalties are severe. They will get kicked out of whatever program they’re in. They might get kicked out of that college.”

-Professor Ellen Genovesi

By Sean O’Connor & Maria Ramos

That class was so hard! My boy- 
friend wrote that essay for me!” A student made this confession to Ellen Genovesi, Head of the Academic Integrity Committee and Professor of Biology at MCCC, during an interview with The VOICE.

“When I bought that paper they promised you would get at least a B on it.” That’s what another student told members of the Academic Integrity Commit- tee, according to Nichol Killian, who is also on the com- mittee, a Professor of Anthro- pology and serves as a success coach at Mercer.

“I can’t fail this class,” the student added, according to Genovesi.

“You’re gonna fail [English] 102 if you can’t write the essays for 101,” Genovesi says she told the student.

These students, who Genovesi and Killian could not reveal the names of, as a re- sult of the Family Educational Rights Privacy Act (FERPA), a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records, are among many who find themselves committing acts of plagiarism, whether on purpose or inadvertently.

Although there are various forms of plagiarism, it is mistakes with in-text citation in particular that students seem to struggle with the most, according to Mercer’s Library Director, Pam Price. She says, “Sometimes that phrase throws a student off.”

Trouble with citing sources, and plagiarism more generally are two things Mercer students, faculty and staff deal with according to a survey of 30 students conducted by The VOICE.

The survey found that 10 percent of students said they would pay someone to do their assignment. Six percent con- fessed to plagiarizing at one time or another.

English Professor Gwen Jones shared with The VOICE her experiences with student plagiarism at Mercer. “Every semester I catch some- one plagiarizing intentionally. Every semester. Sometimes two or three times a semester,” Jones said.

To get a sense of what students know about the Aca- demic Integrity Policy at Mer- cer, we included a question about it in The VOICE’s survey and found 85 percent of MCCC students said they had never read it.

The actual term “pla- giarism” is not mentioned in Mercer’s academic policies as explained on its website, and addresses instead what it re- fers to as “Academic Integrity,” which it defines as “the honest, fair and continuing pursuit of knowledge, free from fraud or deception.” Despite the term appearing, however, in faculty syllabi.

According to Professor Genovesi, “They may not have a really good idea of what’s considered plagiarism, and what’s not considered plaga- 

Genovesi says she sometimes tries to just the student’s not quite sure how to do a cita- tion, so I mean we’ll work with them.”

English Professor Dr. Carol Bork told The VOICE, “I don’t think citation is diffi- 
cult to grasp.” She added that she “spend[s] time clarifying the rules of citation, a pro- cess which she says is “taught in steps.” Still, she says she en- counters plagiarism. In most cases it is “accidental,” she says.

When asked how to reconcile her view that citation is not “difficult to grasp” with the number of instances of “ac- cidental plagiarism” Professor Bork said, “I’m going to get re- ally philosophical here. There’s a difference between knowing something and being able to do it, that takes practice.”

When The VOICE asked Mercer why they plagiar- 
ized study participants all said they did it “because of pro- 
cression.”

Professor Killian has made a similar observation. She says, “I think time management is a big factor in this.”

Professor Genovesi said, “They don’t have good time management, and that causes a lot of problems. When you’re rushing, you start to panic, and you make poor decisions.”

The internet in particu- lar has become host to a variety of websites that serve as a plat- form for students either to write papers other students can use, or papers they can purchase for their own use, a fact that Genovesi describes as “disturbing.”

She continues, “There’s websites where you can like leave a paper, take a paper, or get a prewritten paper. That’s also been detected of- ten.”

An Education major Clare Clancy, who says she has used the Internet to plagiarize, told The VOICE, “It’s wrong but I also think that a lot of people have the same ideas and when they post them on the Internet they shouldn’t be concrete so there shouldn’t be an extreme punishment. I think that ev- erybody plagiarizes in their life, whether it be on a paper or in a speech.”

There are factors that encourage students to take this perspective. Essay writing com- panies operating on the inter- net are targeting students, en- couraging them even on Twitter. Chris Quintana report- ed about the problem in an arti- cle last January for The Chronicle of Higher Education. He gave an example of Twitter user “Alex_ 

Writer,” who claims to be avail- able for prospective plagiarizers “24/7.”

The fate that befalls students caught plagiarising varies, according to Professor Genovesi: “It depends on the course levels. So if they’re in a foundation course, then you know, they’re more likely to not know how to do it correctly so the professor might even just give an opportunity to re-write the paper.”

While a student might get a second chance for pla- giaring in English 101, that may not fly in English 102.

“By the time a student is in English 102 they should rea- 

ly know how to do proper cita- 

Professor Genovesi said.

English Professor Carol Bork shares this expectation: “Most students plagiarize on the first draft of their first essay [in English 101] but I don’t bust them the first time.” However, she said she “wouldn’t be that lenient in [English] 102.”

Even if students caught plagiarizing are not in a founda- tion course, the goal in address- ing the issue, according to Pro- fessor Genovesi, “Is to not have to be as punitive but have it be more instructive.”

She continued, “We re- ally don’t want to kick people out. But then we don’t want them graduating [from Mercer] and going to another school and all of a sudden the penalties are severe. They will get kicked out of whatever program they’re in. They might get kicked out of that college.”

Professor Genovesi says since she has been on the Academic Integrity Committee there have been no expulsions for plagiarism at Mercer.

There are several ex- amples of how Mercer takes an “instructive” approach to addressing and preventing pla- giarism. Success Coach Nichol Killian told The VOICE she en- courages students to visit with her or one of Mercer’s other success coaches.

Another resource is the Mercer Library. “I’ve always said that the library is the exten- sion of the classroom,” Director Pam Price told The VOICE.

At the library students can get help using various re- sources that show exactly how to cite something, both in text and in the bibliography, depending on the style. For example, Price says she helps students identify which citation style they need to use, and shows students the Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL) and bibme.org.

Students also have ac- cess to tutoring services which are offered at three locations: LB 214: The Learning Center, LA 227: The Writing Center, and at the James Kerney Campus in Trenton.

Students should be mindful however, that tutors cannot write their papers for them, and that the tutor’s job is not to do cold edits. English Professor Carol Bork says, “If your tutor corrects your gram- mar and that’s all the tutor does, that’s plagiarism.”

Professor Bork adds, “but if the tutor helps you un- derstand how to fix and find your own mistakes.”

And professors will likely figure it out, if the student is relying too heavily on the tu- tor’s work, or if the student is plagiarizing through some oth- er form, according to English Professor Gwen Jones.

She says, “Some stu- dents think that we don’t know what we’re looking at when we read their essays. I can tell you unequivocally we may not catch you now but we will catch you later.”
By Trevor Anglin

Australian crooner plays smooth jams in Fishtown

Jordan Rakei played the Fillmore in Philly on February 25.

Australian based jazz-artist Jordan Rakei gave a smooth and soulful performance at the Fillmore in Philadelphia on February 25.

The Fillmore, just off 95 in the Fishtown district, is a relatively new venue. It was built in 2015 at the sight of the old Ajax Metal company, the 1,500 seat venue combines a factory look with style and comfort in a kind of steampunk meets living-room way. For example, you can see a large furnace visible beside the stage, but on the second level is a bar with some cozy couches.

Rakei, who is 25 years old, plays the stage, but on the second month, but if you happen to be in Tisno, Croatia you can catch him there in July. Other upcoming acts at the Fillmore include artists such as Taylor Bennet, Saba, and Jorja Smith.

Rakei is playing on the west coast this month, but if you happen to be in Tisno, Croatia you can catch him there in July. Other upcoming acts at the Fillmore include artists such as Taylor Bennet, Saba, and Jorja Smith.

Local band Charles Laurita and the Mischief gain fan base

By Chelsey Johnstone

Straight out of Hamilton, NJ, Charles Laurita and the Mischief

Charles Laurita and the Mischief have constructed a mashup of two classics, and brought them back to the rock scene of 2018.

Although Laurita has a voice of strong passion, the weakest part of the album seems to be the lyrics themselves. Overused phrases such as, “with open arms,” “take my hand” and “round and round in circles” are used. The album itself could be taken to another level if certain phrases were avoided.

Throughout the entire album, Charles Laurita and the Mischief have constructed lyrical Fortuneteller, there is a sense of repetition with rhythmic patterns and overall style. For many, this constant sound is sought out and desired. However, for some, a loss of interest can sink in with repeating ideas.

For example, each song has a similar form. There is a specific instrument highlighted within most songs classified by an eight measure solo or more. The instrument could also be highlighted by a specific riff that drives the piece.

Each song on the album has harmonies lying within either the horn section or a strong lower vocal. Either way, track six stands out on the album for better or worse.

“Bass Player Need” sign was a draw between songs, and the vocals went well over crisp, mellow instrumentals. A long break between Douinia’s performance and Rakei’s and his band taking the stage. The crowd’s anticipation began to border on frustration, but then the performance and Rakei’s vocals went well over crisp, mellow instrumentals.

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At the February 25 concert, Rakei’s opening act was R&B singer Dounia from New York. She got shouts of approval from the crowd with some of her singles such as “Casablanca,” “Sway” and “Deep Down.” Her toneful vocals went well over crisp, mellow instrumentals.

Rakei is the kind of music people sway to, gentle and full of soul. The crowd alternated between hooting for more between songs, and peacefully chilling once he started up again.

“I never heard his music before, but after seeing him I am definitely a fan” said Cait Sweeney, Special Education and Art major at The College Of New Jersey.

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Noel Gallagher played to packed house in Philly.  
Electric night of music during post Super Bowl Eagles mania

By Mike LaFisca

Noel Gallagher, former songwriter and guitar player of Oasis and leader of The High Flying Birds, packed the Merriam Theater in Philadelphia on February 13, 2018 with his Who Built The Moon? Tour to promote his new album of the same name. This being the second show of the tour, and the Eagles winning the superbowl just 10 days before, the room was filled with excitement.

Walking on the stage with rockstar attitude, Gallagher kicked off his set with the first track of his new album, Fort Kaus, an tribal dance sounding sound that features female singers singing over the main riff while the drums keep the pulsing beat, and the bass grooves in the spaces between. Along with Gallagher’s chants throughout the song, it features one of the new “instruments” on Gallagher’s new album, the alarm clock. Piercing loud on the record, the alarm clock blared through the 1,800 seat theater.

The fact that this album was recorded with a different producer, David Holmes, known for his soundtracks to films such as the Ocean’s Eleven series, gave it a completely different sound than anything Gallagher has done so far in his 27 year career. Adding a horn section, instrument loops, and inspiration from older records, together, Gallagher and Holmes created a record with a classic Noel Gallagher sound and adding a splash of a new, fresh 2017 vibe.

Gallagher spoke to Radio X DJ, John Kennedy, in the video “Noel Gallagher discusses Who Built The Moon? Track by track” posted on Radio X’s youtube page on November 24, 2017, the day the record came out, about his vision for the upcoming tour.

He said “initially now, what the set list is coming out is playing the entire first side in order. Then as the gig goes on, spinning them with a trip of what you done in the past and all that. But the first side of this album is so strong, it feels like they all are going to into each other live.”

Keeping his word, Holy Mountain was next, which was the first single released from the new album which features the high pitched, children like in whistle loop from Ice Cream, a full brass section and a catchy, “German Pop” chorus that will leave you hearing and singing “She fell, she fell right under my spell” for days. When he got to the chorus the crowd chanted right along, clapping and stomping to the beat making the entire theater shake.

In the same interview with John Kennedy for Radio X Gallagher explained how Holmes inspired and brought new ideas to the table saying, “I went to his house and we were having a drink playing records, and he was asking, what do you think of this? He was playing obscure stuff. Then first day in the studio he played me ‘Chewin’ Gum Kid’ by Ice Cream, which I never heard. He took a sample and looped it, and said “you think you can write a song around this?” And I thought if it kills me, I’m gonna do it, cause it’s so annoying. It’s gonna be brilliant. And then one day I nailed Holy Mountain, and it all started to fall into place after that.”

In between guitar changes for songs, the crowd yelled out songs which then lead to an “E-A-G-L-E-S Eagles!” chant anytime there was a moment of silence. This lead Gallagher to say, “Listen, I’m sorry, but you guys aren’t ‘World Champions’, maybe in your world, but not the world. But hey, I’m just glad you beat the Patriots. I hate Tom Brady”.

The crowd roared. He then followed with “Don’t put this on Youtube, I’m gonna be saying the same things about you guys next week.” At some points Gallagher couldn’t even get a word into the mic with the overpowering noise from the crowd which lead him going into songs faster to not the audience take over the show.

Tony Cuenca, a second year Music major from Mercer said, “I feel like his new music is a little too poppy, and doesn’t have the depth like his older music. He was good live, and riled through the set touching on different areas of his career. His band was on point with their harmonies, and music, which made up for the room’s bad acoustics. He also needed subtitles because his accent was so thick, but when he sang, he nailed it.”

- Tony Cuenca, MCCC Music major

Yes, scissors. And it actually worked. Moving along, chopping away to the beat, literally. Marionneau was announced to the crowd which lead into a “scissors, scissors scissors” chant, showing the appreciation for the unique talent and instrument.

Also during the set Gallagher preformed a power rendition of the 1995 Oasis hit, “Don’t Look Back In Anger,” which was an anthem of hope after the 2017 Manchester arena terrorist attack. The song was spontaneously sung during the candle vigil, after the moment of silence, when a woman started to sing, which prompted the crowd to join in and sing together in unity. Until recent events the song was just a “throwback Thursday” to sing at karaoke night but now 22 years later, it has a whole new meaning.

Patrick Doyle from Rolling Stone spoke with Gallagher in his article, “Noel Gallagher on New Solo LP: “It’s about everything the terrorists hate” saying, “I’m sitting in my lounge in the very spot when I was watching the news when there was the minute silence in St. Ann’s Square, and just a lone girl started singing it and the crowd joined in, I don’t get speechless. I’ve gotta say, I sat there and I was like, ‘Holy fuck’ then, as the weeks passed, it kind of reignited my faith in music because regardless of whether it’s my song or not, I was like, ‘Fuck, it is important, man. These people are rallying around this song’ I’m still speechless about it. I wrote that song so long ago and it’s taken on a different meaning now. It’s been adopted by the people like a flag of defiance.”

Yardville, NJ resident, Noah Rusnak said, “Noel put on a good show, and did justice to his new record. Adding a live horn section gave it a bigger sound and more flair. The energy he puts into his live show reflected in the audience’s response, that was already electric due to the Eagles win. He played for two hours”

Ending the night with The Beatles 1967 classic, “All You Need Is Love,” Gallagher paid homage to his biggest influence and leaving the crowd with another powerful message, “Love Is All You Need.”

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- Tony Cuenca, MCCC Music major

Noel Gallagher preforming It's a Beautiful World live for an audience of 1,800 in the Merriam Theater in Philadelphia on February 13, 2018.
Walter A. Webster brought a new twist to his production of "Oklahoma!" shown at the Levoy Theatre in Millville, New Jersey from February 9-18. Director Walter A. Webster exposed the true meaning to this classic play. With his own rustic twist, he was to capture the need for change, love, and true happiness with the help of the emotional cast who lived out his vision.

Because the Levoy Theatre was originally built to present silent films in the early 1900’s, it has an "old-timey" atmosphere that complimented the rural charm of the musical. This historic play usually takes on quaint and elegant features. It is usually very prestigious. However, Webster had a different idea.

"For one, you have to have a vision," stated Webster, the director of the production. "Rustic," as he refers to it; that was his vision. Being that he put on this production 6 times previously, he wanted to change it up.

This specific production showed off a more emotional side to the play. As opposed to the stereotypical "Oklahoma" production, each actor gave their characters individuality. It was as if every single character had their own story. Watching, viewers felt as if they were right there in early 1940’s on Aunt Eller’s farm, interacting with each western cowboy and girl.

Webster included small details in his production that stood out from the ordinary. For example, the facility gained the fire marshal’s approval to use a real gun with blanks during a specific scene. The sound rung throughout the theatre, shocking the entire audience as its smoke filled the air.

Elizabeth Rzasa, current music department teaching assistant and advisor at Mercer County Community College, kept the crowd enticed with every dramatic event her character Laurey Williams went through. The audience lived every event vicariously through the acting.

Every expression tugged at tense hearts as Laurey was yanked around by the abusive character Jud. We all chuckled a little as Mr. Carnes muttered under his breath trying free himself of wedding Ado Annie. Each character thrown to the ground hit an unsettling feeling within the entire audience. Emotions were shared amongst the crowd with this production.

Actor Rocco Barbera (Jud Fry) is this production’s fight coordinator, certified with unarmed and single sword stage combat. Through the intense fighting and disputes he helped staged, Barbera could make a viewer feel as if anger empowered them watching every punch, stab, shove, and kick the love-driven male leads brawled over.

Besides the impactfulness and accuracy or the action-packed moments in this production, the power of dance was explored. Observing, there was more dancing than singing, and extraordinary dancing it was.

Ian Mcardle, who played Will Parker, a secondary lead, brought the stage to life, inviting the audience to the party as he danced throughout the production. With his cowboy entourage supporting him, the audience applauded and clapped along as if they were joining the dance themselves. Desperate to win the true love of Ado Annie, Mcardle as Will Parker won the hearts of the audience through his cheeky smile, determined willfulness, charismatic vocals, and joyful dancing.
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Some participants were handing out hóngbāo, which is a little red bag filled with money, as a means of wishing the receivers good luck, prosperity and wellbeing for the year.

Onlookers stood in awe underneath their umbrellas, with laughter and cheers as the parade passed by. The participants in the parade would shoot off confetti cannons, raining glittering confetti at every moment on every bystander they could.

Some stood fast, as the rain was on and off, more took shelter under any roof they could find climbing on ledges of buildings, clinging to the wall avoiding to get soaked. Others watched from their apartments, windows adorned with Chinese talismans.

Despite the rain, women dressed in glittering garments of yellow and red danced through the puddle-lined streets. The men were dressed in costumes of dragons with bright yellow manes, gold, green and silver scales and as the most predominant color, red.

Dragons were common sights, as they are symbols of good luck and protection in traditional Chinese culture. Large red dogs made of plastic were also being carried by celebrants to welcome in the New Year of The Dog.

Bangladesh native Subarna Dey, who came out to see the event, said: “I was more interested in the dragon dress dance, and that was very fast, and I loved it, and it is very colorful, and very similar to our culture.”

Throughout the parade many onlookers had gotten confetti cannons, whether they had been thrown to them by paraders or purchased from the local shops for a few dollars. As adults and children alike gathered in the square to fire them, the air was filled with the sparkle of white, blue and green confetti in a display that was fun for all ages.

Onlooker Mark Wergan described all the music, motion and color as “fantastical.”

Good luck charms known as mystic knots hung from street lights as another reminder to welcome the new year with good fortune.

Chinese-Americans are the second largest immigrant population in the States, according to the 2010 United States Census. It is becoming an increasingly common sight to see a Chinatown in multiple cities across the States, like in New York City, Philadelphia, San Francisco and Los Angeles.

With the new year rolling in, it isn’t hard to see why there are so many good luck charms in a few blocks. But in addition to all the festivities, an undercurrent of politics was evident, clear support for Chinatown, with one speaker calling out to paraders, “We know you are under attack in Washington, but we have your back!”

Many people in the streets were waving the Chinese flag alongside the American one to show solidarity with Chinese immigrants.

According to an article written by Jie Zong and Jeanne Batalova on the Migration Policy Institute website, Chinese immigrants are the third-largest foreign-born group in America. The United States is the top choice for Chinese immigrants, making up 22 percent of the almost eleven-million Chinese nationals living outside of China.

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But the
But in addition to all the festivities, an undercurrent of politics was evident. There was clear support for immigrants in Chinatown, with one speaker calling out to participants, “We know you are under attack in Washington, but we have your back!” Many people in the streets were waving the Chinese flag alongside the American one to show solidarity with Chinese immigrants in America. According to an article written by Jie Zong and Jeanne Batalova on the Migration Policy Institute website, Chinese immigrants are the third-largest foreign-born group in America. The United States is the top choice for Chinese immigrants, making up 22 percent of the almost eleven-million Chinese nationals living outside of China. Chinese-Americans are the second largest immigrant population in the States, according to the 2010 United States Census. It is becoming more common sight to see a Chinatown in multiple cities across the States, like in New York City, Philadelphia, and Los Angeles. The new political regime in Washington and the President’s antagonistic rhetoric toward China is having an impact. For example, as Lishan Wu, a Mercer student and Chinese immigrant said, “We used to think American government policy is nice to Chinese to immigrant, we don’t feel comfortable, and in this case, if I am in China and I haven’t immigrated to America, I won’t consider.” Hate crimes against Asian-Americans do not get a lot of coverage by the media even in places where the numbers are high. A report from the Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations found that crimes targeting Asian-Americans tripled in that county between 2014 and 2015. An NPR report by Jenny J. Chen published on February 17 noted that many Chinese immigrant women don’t speak up when they are victims of a hate crime, due to the sensitivity of the hate crimes, making them more vulnerable targets. So statistics on these crimes are likely under inflated. At this year’s parade political sentiment was evident in things like the presence of a Chinese American LGBTQ group, with a long rainbow-colored fabric showing their support and signs in both English and Chinese saying, “We honor our families.” The Asian-Americans Advancing Justice non-profit organization created a new website to document the cases of hate against this population. The website standagainstthatred.org encourages them to tell their stories in order to create more awareness and make them feel comfortable. A major development in China in the last week is the removal of term limits for the country’s president Xi Jinping which has been met with alarm by activist groups who fear a power grab that will propel the country back toward the era of Mao. But despite all this as the backdrop the Chinese community still banded together to celebrate the culture and traditions of their heritage using this unity as one way to face political crises in the Year of The Dog.
If you were to drive by the Princeton Shopping Center four years ago, you would have noticed an Amoco gas station right by a main entrance. Return to what used to be the gas station, and you will see that there have been a few changes to the exterior. If you get even closer, you will be lured in by what smells like the best bread being toasted over a campfire; that is the famous Nomad Pizza oven.

As soon as I could smell the pizza cooking, I knew I had to give it a try. As I entered the former building of a gas station, I admired the spacious main dining room with enough seats for 50 guests. I noticed the family-style tables in the middle of the dining room. Long, glossy wooden slabs with matching benches.

My party ordered three different appetizers to share. The root vegetable salad, which was a special for the night, provided a balance of earthiness and sweet. The beets had the texture of a perfectly baked potato with a hint of a fruity sugariness. They finished the dish with a goat cheese crumble that helped break up earthy flavor and provided a funk to every bite.

The burrata salad was my favorite of the three. It had an amazing outer layer that was firm yet soft like the consistency of the perfect olive. When you break the outside a creamy, milky cheese oozes out.

I liked the meatball appetizer the least. The meatballs themselves are tender like a perfectly moist burger and they are full of flavor. The croutons and salad that come with the meatballs hurt the dish. The croutons that look like bare slices of pizza dough came out like toasted stale bread, and the salad felt like an afterthought.

The pizza at Nomad is the true reason for dining at Nomad. An employee told me the dough takes four days to make, and all that time that goes into it makes it that much better. The pizzas are cooked in one of two wood-fire ovens, which I believe to be the only way to cook real pizza. You get the crispiness of the charred, almost burnt bottom of the pizza with the crust that is chewy with crunchy bits throughout. I would describe the size of each pizza as an oversized personal pizza.

We ordered three different styles of pizza, four pizzas in total. We had one Spicy Sausage, one Classico and two Tartufo. The Spicy Sausage and Classico are more traditional style with tomato sauce and cheese and toppings. The Tartufo is more unique with no tomato sauce. The Tartufo was everyone’s favorite by far. There is so much richness brought by the al tartufo cheese, truffle oil and yolk from the farm egg. The mushroom and garlic toppings compliment the aroma and pungent flavor of the cheese nicely. Biting into the Tartufo is like biting a soft luscious pillow with an explosion of flavor that leaves you begging for more.

Lastly, the service is very homey. The casual vibe of the host and the server makes you feel like you are dining at the house of a family friend. As we sat a little longer than normal while waiting for the last member of our party to arrive, she didn’t pressure us to order nor did she completely ignore us. You can order periodical-ly or all at once which as an underrated luxury when going out to eat with family and friends. The food came out fast, but with care for detail that doesn’t go unnoticed.

If you cannot make it to Princeton for this pizza, fear not for Nomad has locations in Philadelphia as well as Hopewell, NJ. And if you still have trouble making it there, Nomad Pizza will come to you in the shape of a truck with a wood oven built in.

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Netflix just recently released their second season of Jessica Jones on Netflix. Based of a Marvel series it follows the story of Jessica Jones. She starts her own private investigators office. She comes across the case of a missing woman. As she investigates deeper she realizes that this case was all too familiar and she comes across an old enemy. We learn more about Jessica past as the series goes on and what she’s running from. The show does a great job of keeping it interesting and keeping the audience guessing. Questions continue to rise. The first season was great and were expecting more twist and turns and more answers to our questions about who is Jessica Jones.

Overall a great episode. However this March he will be interviewing Malala Yousafzai. We will expect a great discussion between Letterman and Yousafzai. If your interested in her life and how she came to be the person she is I highly suggest you watch the next episode of My Next Guest Needs No Introduction with David Letterman.

The 2016 Ghostbusters reboot with all female cast gets an A for good intentions and featured tour de force individual performances from its team of Melissa McCarthy, Kristen Wiig, Kate McKinnon, and Leslie Jones. However, it didn’t give them enough to do, the plot dragged and it was hard not to compare it to the original which is now out on Netflix. The Bill Murray performance was inspiring and the whole look and tone of the movie was innovative in its day. A lot of the fun is still there on re-viewing, but not every aspect has held up well. In particular Murray’s pursuit of the big screen Weaver character—including breaking into her apartment and surprising her when she gets home, feels squicky in the age of #metoo.
Keiffer had 18 points and 19 rebounds. In a 58-64 loss vs Morris, a 60-42 win over Del Tech. Performance in the Vikings 11-point, 23-rebound performance this season for double-double three times this season for freshman Haylee Kieffer.

By Gabrielle Armstrong Reporter

For the second time this season, freshman Haylee Kieiffer has been named the Garden State Athletic Conference (GSAC) Division II Player of the Week. She earned the honors for the week of Nov. 26, and previously received the honor for the week of Nov. 5-11. Kieiffer had a double-double three times this season for Mercer. This includes an 11-point, 23-rebound performance in the Vikings 60-42 win over Del Tech. In a 58-64 loss vs Morris, Kieiffer had 18 points and 19 rebounds. According to njcaa.org, Kieiffer is currently fourth in Division 2 in rebounds per game with 13.7 rebounds per game, and is top 50 in points per game. Statistically, her weakest categories are field goal percentage, assists, and free throws.

In an interview with The VOICE, Athletic Director John Simone stated that, “It’s been fun to watch both teams play and progress.”

Simone says of Kieiffer in particular, “Haylee is the type of player that requires others to give her the ball, she’s a post player, they give her the ball properly and she scores when she gets it.” Sophomore Jordan Dorwell, who regularly attends games, says that he has seen growth in the players. “Although the season is over it is great seeing how the girls improved this season.” When asked about how he felt about Kieiffer he stated “Haylee is a great player, she stands outs of the team, and does great with rebounds.”

Tommie Neal, a student who also attends Mercer, attended his first Mercer women’s basketball game two weeks ago. He says, “I like to watch basketball, and for me being able to see how talented the girls were even though he lost the game, it made me want to come back and see them next season.”

Player of the Week” three times in a row.

Freshman basketball player Donovan Guess is the only player so far able to say he was named “Player of the Week” three times in a row.

Guess came to Mercer from LEAP Academy High School, in Camden, N.J. Each year at the charter school his stats improved significantly, leaving him with 1856 total career points from 77 games. One hundred and ninety-five of those points were from three-point shots. Guess also made 414 free throws, had 117 steals, and 87 assists. Mercer’s Athletic Director John Simone said he is “Happy with the progress” of the men’s basketball team so far this season. When asked about the ups and downs of the results, he added, “both teams have been up and down, and sometimes over the course of a season you just have to handle the up and downs – but it’s been fun to watch both seasons play and progress.”

When asked about Guess, Simone referred to him as a “gamechanger.” He went on to say “when [Guess] gets the ball he can change the game.” By contributing to the team’s 12 wins Guess helped them get back to the Region 19 playoffs.

When Basketball fan and Mercer student Victoria Cassalino was asked about Guess, she said “I try to make it to as many of the games as I can, and Donovan is always carrying the team. He’s such a good player.”

Mercer student Alyssa Jordan says she has high hopes for the men’s team making the finals this season: “I think they can pull it off...I feel like since their season hasn’t been all they probably wanted it to be they will surprise everybody by pulling this last win out and make it to the finals.”

Eddie Williams, current freshman at Mercer, as well as one of Guess’s teammates, calls Guess “A good teammate and a really strong leader on and off the court.” He added that he was excited for their upcoming game to play and try to make the finals.

Guess will participate in Mercer’s first postseason appearance since the 2014/15 season. While Mercer has clinched a spot in the tournament, there are still other games to be played within the region before brackets are determined and the team knows their opponent.
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* National Public Radio, September 2015
The perspective of a Korean American

The Pyeongchang Olympics: a fleeting and arbitrary moment of Korean unity

By Jackson Thompson
Senior Reporter

This past year in sports news has in many ways been defined by a shift in the role of the medium. A medium that traditionally has played the role of offering a means of escapism has more recently fallen subject to the mainstream demand for political activism that has defined the culture of the Trump years.

In 2018 that shift became even more apparent as it extended beyond the US, to international sports news with the Pyeongchang Winter Olympics, the first Olympic games of the Trump presidency.

The Pyeongchang Winter Olympics was the first instance of a Korean peninsula in its entirety, symbolizing unity between the two states. A unified Korean ice hockey team was even formed with players from both the North and South to represent a united Korean national team. As a first generation Korean-American hybrid, the imagery of this union was surreal. Not even as someone who identifies with the culture, but more so as an American. As an American, the hostile aura of Kim Jong-Un, and the Western mainstream demand for political unifiers in human history.

However the subject becomes even more magnified from the perspective of the local Korean populace. The show of unity did not come without controversy, particularly among South Korean locals. Any association with the Kim Dynasty-led North is a big taboo in South Korean society, similarly to how association with the Trump administration is perceived in the liberal extremism dominated culture of leftist America.

Even with my Korean heritage, I still view the conflict more with the lens of an outsider, which leaves me with the privilege to admire the co-operation of the two sides. Meanwhile for the South Korean natives who have been directly affected by the gruesome reality of the Kim Dynasty, the idea of co-operation with their northern neighbors is a bit of a tougher pill to swallow.

It was a polarizing move, but I see it as a very relieving and compassionate gesture, particularly on the part of the North. To see the Kim regime cooperate in anything international is a rare occurrence.

On one hand, this year’s Olympics, being right in the middle of the Korean heartland, in proximity to both capitals, is an example of the beauty of sports as one of the great social unifiers in human history. In this harsh geopolitical climate, Koreans who may never know relatives on the opposite side of the border, with whom they may share a name and blood with, were gifted with a brief moment where they could cheer together for the same hockey team, and then agonize together after 5 straight defeats.

(No one said Koreans make good hockey players).

And while this story is politically relevant, in the context of when and where it’s occurring, it also proves the role of sports as one of the great social and political distractions in human history. As mentioned before, this is a difficult geopolitical environment, where tensions between the North and South, and subsequently the North and the US, are as heated as they’ve ever been. Sanctions, weapon testing and verbal threats continue, and neither side has shown any interest in moving forward.

While North Korea did agree to “talk” to the US following the Olympics, it would hardly be the first time the two sides would agree to talk before disbanding without any progress whatsoever. The aggression of the Trump administration is unlikely to help bring the two sides any closer to a resolution, leaving that moment of unity as just that, a fleeting moment, a memory that either sours or warms the spirit of loyal Koreans.
The gun crisis has pushed me too far

When you have a generation who has been raised reading books like “Harry Potter” and “The Hunger Games,” with teenagers, boys and girls alike, as the knights in shining armor, saving the adults, it should come as no surprise that when Congress screws us on gun control, letting another 17 students die, we, the (young) people, are going to fight back.

How much has Congress screwed us with this? Well, simply type into Google, statistics on Mass shootings since 2012, click the New York Times link that says “After Sandy Hook, More than 400 People Have Been Shot in Over 200 School Shootings,” and see for yourself.

Done? Note that this is six years after someone took a gun to 20 children - children defined as 12 and under. In that time there have been 239 school shootings, 438 shot and 138 killed.

That’s how many times Congress has failed us, 438 times. And that’s just the people who are in schools. We are not counting the mass shoot ins/appears, circa 2011, or before 2012 with Virginia Tech and Columbine.

The “young people”, the millennials, Generation Z, of this country are sick and tired of people walking in with semi-automatic weapons, rifles and handguns, and shooting up our schools like some sadistic form of “Call of Duty,” and who’s going to blame them, the shooters, the older generations? We are living in a world where teens are taking on the dark form of evil become a reality that couldn’t and shouldn’t be stopped.

As a college kid whose campus is the literal definition of a public forum, anyone can come in, make themselves at home in the cafeteria, pull a AR-15 and do God knows what. The students of this nation are planning walkouts, sit ins, protests and marches because we are refusing to accept Congress’ erion of our gun crisis. Who is going to stop us? The National Rifle Association? Hell no.

We were fed with a healthy diet of dystopian futures, of kids being braver than adults, and America puts us up against a government so cartoonishly evil that it would be criticized for being too cliché if this were a work of fiction.

Control, over 21,386 gun deaths in 2014 were suicides and 11,008 were homicides, 14 of which died in mass shootings.

According to the think tank, the Center for Disease Control, there were 18,800 gun deaths in 2014. We are taking about 90 guns for every 100 million firearms – approximately 90 guns for every 100 people.

That’s 90 guns for every 100 Americans! Let that sink in. I want you to know that this is not just about the recent events where everyone decides to give their own opinion for 3 weeks, and then drops it like Congress does bills for gun control. This is a problem, a massive one.

The Giffords Law Center to Prevent Violence gives us does give us at least some good news. Between 1977 and 2015 the amount of homes that have guns dropped from 53 percent to 32 percent, meaning that 32 percent of Americans own 270 million firearms. That means the average American gun enthusiast owns about 3 guns in their household, one for him, one for the wife and one for the kid.

Let’s talk gun control, and before gun advocates start to scream “No!” do keep in mind I’m using the word “control” and not the word “ban.” Just to be clear here, “control” as defined by the Webster dictionary means “To reduce the incidence or severity of, especially to innocuous levels.” To “ban” - according to the same dictionary means “To prohibit especially by legal means.”

So I am saying let’s discuss reducing easy access to guns, not totally prohibiting the right to purchase and own them.

That being said, if gun violence continues to escalate in the USA, it is very easy to imagine how many mothers, fathers and friends will cry for a complete ban, and who is going to have the heart to deny them their guns when many people die.

This begs the very logical question of “What is the gun problem?” Let’s start with an alarming and sobering statistic from the Giffords Law Center to Prevent Violence, which describes itself as “A policy organization...a mission to save lives from gun violence.” According to the think tank, “Americans own an estimated 270 million firearms – approximately 90 guns for every 100 people.”

That’s 90 guns for every 100 Americans! Let that sink in. I want you to know that this is not just about the recent events where everyone decides to give their own opinion for 3 weeks, and then drops it like Congress does bills for gun control. This is a problem, a massive one.

Sure, some people may break the law, drive drunk, teach and drive, fail to wear seatbelts, or drive without a license, but at far less a rate than before laws regulating driving and auto industry. That’s exactly what we hope to achieve, because who wants their child to become just another statistic?

Here is my plea, my little bit of advice to the Senators, and Representatives, in our legislature: Consider me in 1 month when you forget what happened in Florida. Consider the fact that I am your future.

Consider the fact that I am not going to be another statist or just another statistic, in an article, that the college and high school students who are told they are too childish to question their government are standing together as one and if you want to take on the future generation of your country, remember, we, your constituents, hold your paycheck in the palm of our hands, and we can take that away from you as fast as Adam Lanza took the lives of 20 children, as fast as Stephen Paddock took 58 lives, as fast as Nikolas Cruz took those 14 students and three faculty from us. Don’t believe me, don’t believe us, keep gun laws the way they are and see how long you last.
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Viewpoints Reporter

Muslim life in Trump’s America

Mohammad Wiswall

After a year of travelling overseas, being back in the States was a relief. The weather didn’t scorch my skin and the air didn’t smell like burning garbage and diesel. It was the first time seeing so much green and it almost hurt my eyes.

But what I missed the most was the diversity of the United States of America, where crowds are filled with people from different nationalities and backgrounds. However, it’s not the same everywhere.

In Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, for the most part if you were an immigrant from West Africa you would stay with other immigrants, and if you were an Arab you would stay with the Arabs.

If you were a Yemeni Arab you would stay with other Yemenis. If you were a Pakistani or Afghan the same applied. So this put me and my family in a strange place, as I’m biracial.

My father is white and of British descent and my mother is Bengali. In Jeddah I could blend in with my dark hair and tan skin. I could easily be overlooked as a local. However for my father it was a bit harder because people would mistake him for a light skinned Pakistani or Afghan.

When we visited...
Get Fuzzy

Dear Voice,

Tuition is going up again! WTF?

-Broke Back Student

WTF?!

Dear Voice,

Tuition is going up again?

-Dear Wikipedia4Life

Dear Broke,

Tuition is going up again?

-Dear Definitly

Capricorn

Dec. 22 - Jan. 19

Warm weather will bring thoughts of friends you haven't seen in a while. Reach out and see if you can arrange a gathering. You won't regret it.

Aquarius

Jan. 20 - Feb. 18

Spring break is on the way. It can be tempting to sit around in your pajamas eating PopTarts, but you’ll be happier if you get ahead in your work. Start projects early.

Pisces

Feb. 19 - Mar. 20

Everyone has a friend or two whose mood swings can be draining. This month you have to protect yourself from being depleted by other people. Turn off your phone for a while.

Aries

Mar. 21 - Apr. 19

Little things may start to bother you around the middle of the month. Now more than ever you have to do breathing and mindfulness exercises to keep balanced. See YouTube for help.

Virgo

Aug. 23 - Sept. 22

A new friend appears around the end of the month, but may come in a strange disguise. Be open to new possibilities. Things aren’t always what they seem.

Libra

Sept. 23 - Oct. 22

Time to get lost in a new friend. You were thinking of changing something, maybe your major or job, but were afraid of the upheaval. Take the chance. Now’s the time.

Scorpio

Oct. 23 - Nov. 21

Finally you get some wind in your sails. A problem that was lodged in front of you becomes unstruck. Good fortune and happiness follow.

Sagittarius

Nov. 22 - Dec. 21

Good news comes around the third Thursday of the month. A friend has unexpected information to share that will be a blessing for you both.


classic peanuts in a jar

DILBERT

Scott Adams