

# Students lead nationwide rallies

## Millions attend March for Our Lives rallies demanding stricter gun legislation

By Maria Ramos & Sean O'Connor  
Senior Reporters

While more than 200,000 protesters went to Washington DC according to Digital & Imaging Service Inc. to call for greater gun control and demand action from their legislators, over an estimated of 800 parallel marches were held across the country, including every state of the union. An estimated 5,000 people attended the March for Our Lives rally in Princeton that filled up Hinds Plaza by the public library, according to one of the event's co-organizers, Reverend Bob Moore.

Princeton High School senior Dzyana Zubialeovich, who spearheaded the rally in Princeton and collaborated with Reverend Moore told The VOICE she expected only 500 to 800 people to show up.

"I had no idea it would be this successful. It's amazing to see how many people support this issue," she told The VOICE in an interview.

Mobs of faces could be seen peering through windows of the second and third floors of the Princeton Library, taking pictures of the rally below and holding signs. People in the lofts above Witherspoon Grill also stood outside their balconies to watch. One older couple posted a sign that read "thank you" on their railing.

Several people at the rally- both speakers and those who came simply to protest- have

See **PRINCETON RALLY** page 9



PHOTO | DREW MUMICH

Inspired by the leadership of the students from Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, FL who survived the February 14 school shooting that took the lives of 17 of their friends, protesters lined the streets of New York City to advocate for stricter gun legislation at the March for Our Lives on March 24, 2018, including teens and elementary school children who spoke out

# Mercer student shot to death, found in creek



PHOTO | FACEBOOK

Mercer engineering student Daniel Diaz-Delgado, 20, was found dead in Hamilton on March 24.

By Griffin Jones  
Senior Reporter

The body of Mercer student Daniel Diaz-Delgado was found dead on the banks of the Assunpink Creek in Hamilton on March 24. According to authorities, when the body was recovered Diaz-Delgado had his hands tied behind his back and his face wrapped with duct tape. He had gunshot wounds to the head, torso and leg, according to a press release from the Mercer County Prosecutor's Office.

Diaz-Delgado was 20-years-old and was studying engineering at Mercer.

An article by Rebecca Everett on nj.com says that divers from the Trenton Fire Department spent around two hours recovering evidence from the scene. Additional reports indicate that several bags of evidence were removed from the crime scene.

When asked whether the police had any leads, Olga Diaz, Delgado-Diaz's mother, told The VOICE in an interview given in Spanish and translated by VOICE Editor-in-Chief Maria Ramos, "They do [have leads], but they told me not to talk about it."

Casey DeBlasio, a public information officer with the

Mercer County Prosecutor's Office says there is no indication that the death was the result of a hate crime.

Christian Hernandez, a close friend of Diaz-Delgado's, said of his disappearance, "What the mom told me was when they came back around 4, about 5:30, he said he was going to set out to buy something for his little brother. His little brother told me that he might have been down around PA or Philly or Cherry Hill, but how he ended up in Hamilton, it's just weird to me"

Olga Diaz says she got

See **STUDENT SLAIN** page 2



**STUDENT PROFILE**  
Mercer grad Adam Hillman creates art that has gone viral on the Internet - PG. 6



**THEATER REVIEW**  
Halcyon Days off Broadway provides timely critique in short run PG. 14

Campus & Local .....2-4  
Arts & Entertainment.....6-7  
March for Our Lives.....8-11

In Focus .....15  
Viewpoints .....16-17  
Sports .....18-20



# Friends of slain student say they want no more gun violence

Continued from page 1

worried when her son didn't text her, as he never stayed out late. She says she went to hospitals and the police station when he didn't return home, but because she's a non-native English speaker she had difficulty communicating her problem.

The Intersarsity Christian Club at Mercer, in which Diaz-Delgado was heavily involved, organized a remembrance ceremony for their friend on March 29. At the memorial friends described Diaz-Delgado warmly, reflecting on his kindness and good nature.

Denise Mosquera, who says she knew Diaz-Delgado since they were in seventh grade, told The VOICE, "He wanted to make everyone feel included. If you had a bad day he would always make you feel better...He always kinda took care of you, you know?"

Jonathan Zahn, another friend of Diaz-Delgado's through their shared love of martial arts, said, "There were different hard times in my life, just as there are different hard times in his where like, I struggled with being suicidal and like a couple of our other friends as well, like we struggled with being suicidal and he helped pull us off of that ledge."

Jonathan Chan, who has known Diaz-Delgado his whole life since they were in daycare together, said of him, "His life wasn't the easiest. You know he was always struggling with something at home or school or whatever the case may be, but he would always show positivity. He would always try to keep going, no matter what the problem was or the situation he was in."

Zahn spoke of Diaz-Delgado's passion for martial arts. "Martial arts, especially taekwondo, ATA [American Taekwondo Association], the community that was one of the other family outlets, like...he

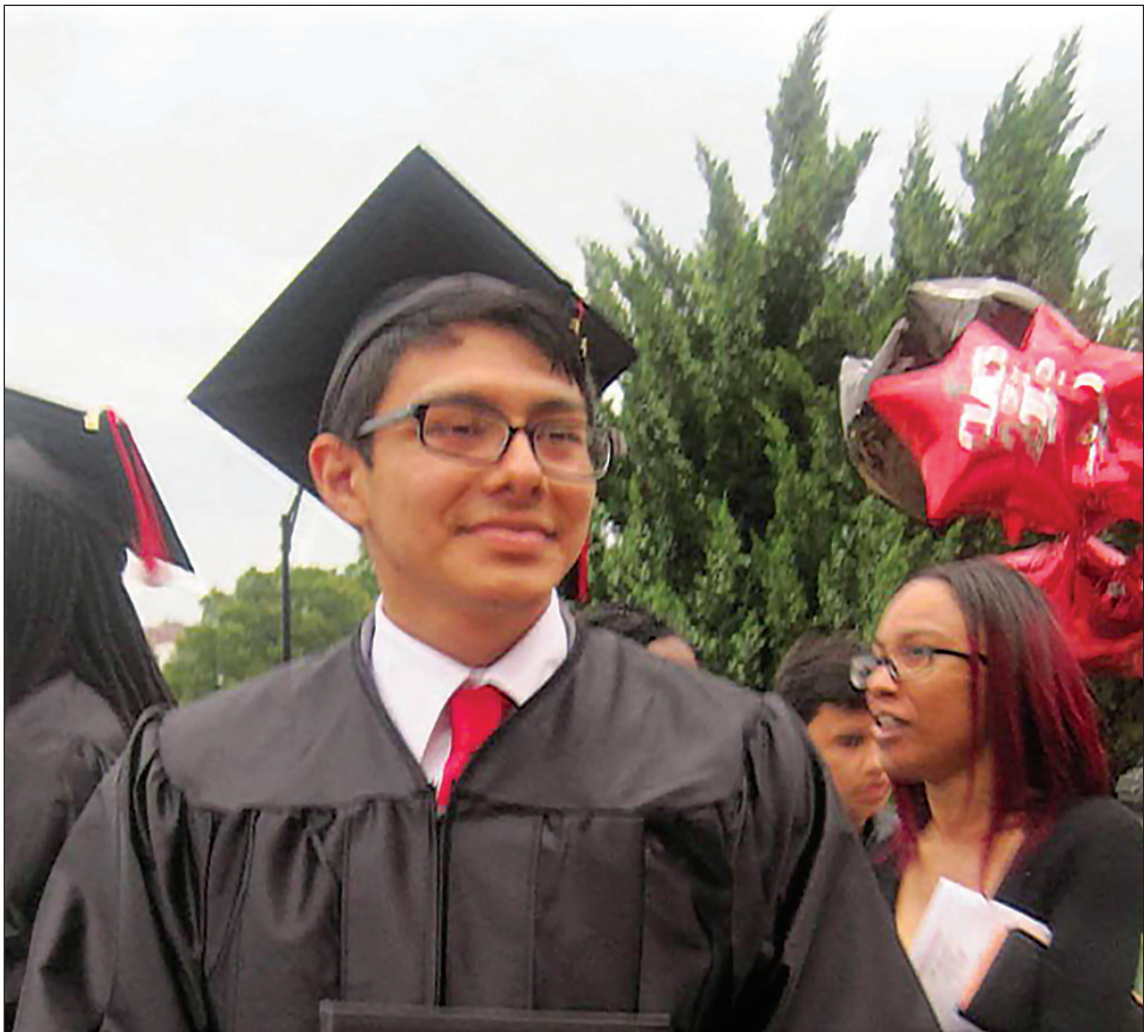


PHOTO | FACEBOOK

Slain Mercer student Daniel Diaz-Delgado on his high school graduation day in 2015.

has family, he has family from martial arts," he said.

He also said of his friend, "No matter how many obstacles were in his way, he overcame every single obstacle in only ways he could."

On Diaz-Delgado's Facebook page, which has been turned into a memorial, is a picture of him and his little brother from 2015 following a martial arts tournament.

The caption reads, "On Saturday, it was my little brother's first tournament!!! He didn't place but me and my parents are still proud of his performs and that's what's more important!"

Zahn told The VOICE, "He was big on family. He was

*"Danny should be the last case that is affected by gun violence. And I don't know what my friends and I are going to do, how we're going to get the community, or even if it's just five people marching outside the State House. We will be there. We will be chanting the names that have been lost to gun violence, not just Danny, but everyone's name."*

**-Denise Mosquera**

always there for his brother. his brother looked up to him like a superhero."

Mosquera also mentioned Diaz-Delgado's love for his family. "He left behind a little brother that he loved so much, and that he was always taking care of in the sense that

he would always make him feel included wherever he went, like his little brother always came along."

In addition to martial arts and his family, Diaz-Delgado was also involved in the church.

Zahn said of Diaz-Delgado's involvement, "That was one of Danny's other visions. He wanted to help reach out to people through his faith, through religion and all."

Following the announcement of Diaz-Delgado's death, Mosquera and other friends set up a GoFundMe page to help pay for his funeral costs.

She said, "I just wanted to help his family alleviate the cost of going through a tragic

event."

She added that within 17 hours the page, which can be reached at [www.gofundme.com/remembering-our-friend-danny](http://www.gofundme.com/remembering-our-friend-danny), had already raised \$1,360.

In addition to the warm remembrances, Diaz-Delgado's friends say they feel a sense of frustration.

Zahn said, "It makes no sense...it makes no logical sense. He had no enemies. He had no one he ever hurt. It would almost feel better if the story was different. If he did have an enemy there would be a different type of closure."

Chan said, "He was never doing anything bad, and I would know, because I was always with him. He would always tell me everything."

Diaz-Delgado's mother told The VOICE, "I want justice for my son and God is good."

The day Diaz-Delgado was found was the same day that marches against gun violence were taking place across the nation. The fact that Diaz-Delgado was lost to gun violence was not lost on his friends.

Mosquera told The VOICE, "I think, I honestly think that this should be the last straw. Danny's death should not just be another name thrown out in the wind and be forgotten. I think that it should stop here."

She added, "Danny should be the last case that is affected by gun violence. And I don't know what my friends and I are going to do, how we're going to get the community, or even if it's just five people marching outside the State House. We will be there. We will be chanting the names that have been lost to gun violence, not just Danny, but everyone's name."

Police ask that anyone with information about the incident call Sgt. Gary Wasko or Detective Michael Castaldo at (609) 989-6406.

## Gunman shot in Princeton Panera

By Griffin Jones & Maria Ramos  
Senior Reporters

Just four days before five thousand people would gather in Princeton to protest gun violence, a shooter ran into the Panera Bread restaurant on Nassau Street and barricaded himself in.

Patrons and employees fled to safety but what followed was a four and a half hour stand-off with police during which time negotiators tried, unsuccessfully, to talk the man down.

He was shot by the police and pronounced dead

at the scene. No one else was injured.

Authorities later identified the man as a Lawrenceville, NJ resident, 56-year-old Scott Mielentz, an Army veteran and former IT worker who filed for disability benefits in 201. There he described suffering of anxiety, depression and keeping himself away from social situations according to an article published by nj.com.

Janeth Paz, who works at the State Farm located above the Panera, was caught in the events.

She told The VOICE, "You don't expect it to happen to you, so you're like, you don't even know what to feel,

you're just like oh my God. I didn't say bye to my mom, I didn't say bye to my kids, I was like 'Oh my God, I'm going to die.'"

While Princeton University, which is across Nassau Street from the Panera where Mielentz holed up, was on spring break, the main thoroughfare was closed down all day, several University buildings were evacuated and Princeton High School (PHS) was placed on a shelter in place lockdown that lasted from mid-morning through to the end of the day.

Students from the school say that despite the shelter in place they were not particularly worried.

Ninth-grader Hugo Balavoine told The VOICE, "Everyone was kind of joking about it, honestly. I wasn't worried. It wasn't like the Panera guy was going to walk over here."

Asked to describe his experience, ninth-grader Orie Bolitho said: "Nobody really knew what was happening in my class, at first I thought it was something bigger. The vibe around school was kind of gloomy and weird, it didn't really feel right."

In the wake of the Parkland, FL shooting last month, PHS students and faculty alike shared strong views on guns in schools.

Elizabeth Sullivan-

Crowley, a PHS freshman, said of the recent suggestion by the president that the way to stop gun violence in schools is to arm teachers, "I think it's a bad idea and not a very helpful way to end gun violence by adding more guns to these scenarios."

Paz said, "My sister said 'It's Princeton, how does this happen in Princeton?'"

Mielentz is survived by a wife and two children.

The restaurant is closed for the time being. Multiple signs from people who attended the March For Our Lives now cover the windows and doors with messages including, "Protect kids, not guns" and "#Enough."



# County prosecutor gives Distinguished Lecture on human trafficking

By Maria Ramos  
Senior Reporter

Young girls from West Africa were brought to the United States legally but held against their will and compelled to work long hours in East Orange, New Jersey. They were forced to do work in a salon doing braids every day and were living in poor conditions. This story was reported by By Scott Bronstein, Amber Lyon and Alexandra Poolos and published by CNN in 2010.

This is just one of the many cases of human trafficking, otherwise known as modern slavery, which is a multi-billion dollar criminal enterprise that can happen anywhere, to anyone.

Mercer County Prosecutor Angelo Onofri spoke about the business of human trafficking in New Jersey as part of Mercer’s “Spring 2018 Distinguished Lecture Series” on March 20. Prosecutor Onofri, who has served as acting prosecutor since March 2015, has worked on several cases related to modern slavery in this area.

In 2017, 8,524 cases of human trafficking were reported by National Human Trafficking Hotline (NHTH) in the United States. 161 of those cases were from New Jersey, which is 14th in the nation for human trafficking. First place is held by California, followed by Texas.

Prosecutor Onofri went over the frequent forms of

slavery and human trafficking, such as labor, where individuals are forced to work against their will and most of the time under threat of violence, domestic servitude, where the victims usually perform housekeeping tasks and/or childcare for a very low payment, and commercial sexual exploitation, where victims are forced to perform commercial sex against their will and with multiple persons.

He also mentioned how many times the victim doesn’t know that they are a victim. Often they assume that’s just the way things work, especially in cases where the victim is brought from another country into the U.S.

Human trafficking can happen anywhere. Most of the time it happens in places that we visit frequently and we never realize it. For example, Prosecutor Onofri mentioned there are kitchens in multiple restaurants that have undocumented workers who are paid around 10 or 15 cents per hour.

“Usually these workers are afraid of speaking out for fear of being turned to immigration officials,” he added.

Alejandra Fernandez, a criminal justice student at Mercer, told The VOICE, “It was very interesting to learn about something. It’s an eye-opener for me and I feel like now I am going to be more careful of who is around me.”

New Jersey is well known as the Garden State for all its farms and crops that it

produces, yet many farm workers are treated as slaves, having to work very long shifts for less than the minimum salary.

According to a 2015 report from the American Immigration Council Organization, 1.3 million immigrant workers comprised the labor force in New Jersey. Roughly 45 percent are involved in the farming, fishing and forestry industry. Usually, these workers are brought from another country and have difficulty speaking or understanding English, leaving them voiceless and unable to report or claim what the fair regulations should be.

However, many cases of human trafficking also apply to US citizens who are “chosen” to be part of these crimes. A documentary by CNN entitled “Chosen” explains how this happens to young, smart and regular girls who ended up getting sexually exploited.

These are students who most of the time fall for an older guy or the person known as the “pimp” who later becomes their boyfriend and starts getting them expensive gifts or taking them places to make them feel happy and special. This is to create a dependency on this person.

The pimps usually try to isolate the girls from their families and/or friends. As a result of the isolation, the girls will depend only on the pimps, and they end up being forced to do sexual things against their will, not only with the pimps



PHOTO | MARIA RAMOS

Mercer County Prosecutor Angelo Onofri spoke about the business of human trafficking in New Jersey as part of Mercer’s “Spring 2018 Distinguished Lecture Series” on March 20, 2018.

but with multiple men.

Prosecutor Onofri told lecture attendees that most of the time these types of cases are brought to light because other citizens contact the police when they see something weird going on. In 2017, 8,524 cases of human trafficking were reported. About 71 percent of cases became known due to local

citizens tipping off the police, according to an NHTH report from 2017.

Nairuby Garay, a criminal justice major who attended the Mercer lecture, said, “It’s impactful to believe that this can happen in the state of New Jersey. We actually need to open our eyes and be aware of the people who are around us.”

## New Jersey passes new gun legislation

The day after millions of people took to the streets for the March of our Lives rallies across the nation, New Jersey’s Democratic majority in the state Congress passed six pieces of legislation tightening gun restrictions in the state. Although NJ is already known for it’s relatively strict gun laws, this action fulfills a campaign promise presented by the state’s new Governor Phil Murphy.\*

A1217



\* A1217, which would create restraining orders in the state allowing family members and others to ask a judge to have a person’s guns seized and ban them from buying weapons for up to a year.

A1181



\* A1181, which would mandate law enforcement in the state to seize a person’s guns if a mental health professional determines they pose a threat to themselves or others.

A2758



\* A2758, which would strictly define that state residents need to show a “justifiable need” to obtain a permit to carry a handgun -- meaning they must show they face a specific threat to their own safety.

A2757



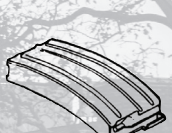
\* A2757, which would require all private gun sales in the state to go through a licensed dealer who can perform an additional background check at the point of sale.

A2759



\* A2759, which would create an outright ban in the state on possessing armor-piercing bullets.

A2761



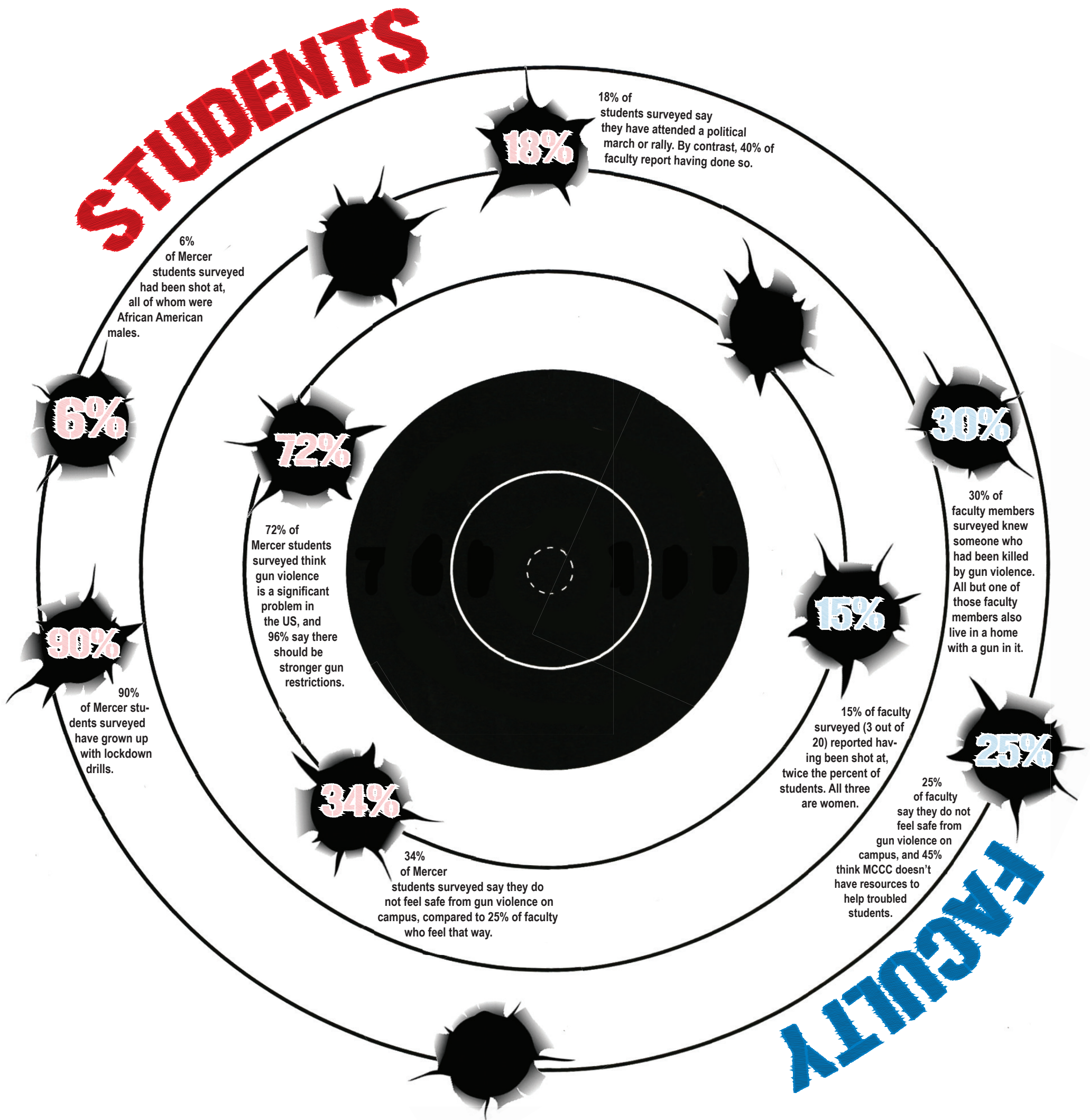
\* A2761, which would ban magazines in the state that hold more than 10 rounds, with some exceptions.

\*Information drawn from state legislature records.



# EXPOSURE TO GUN VIOLENCE CAMPUS SURVEY RESULTS

The VOICE surveyed 50 students and 20 faculty members at Mercer to find out about their experiences with guns and gun violence, and their views on the subject. Here are some of the key results and what you had to say.







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# THE ART OF ARRANGEMENT

## PROFILE: Adam Hillman

By Chelsey Johnstone  
Reporter

Picture hundreds of gummy bears arranged in concentric circles by color, or Q-tips spiraling into an intricate windmill, or a checkerboard pattern of strawberries and Nutella covered toast squares, and you begin to get a sense of the art of former Mercer student Adam Hillman.

Since graduating Mercer in 2016 with an associate's degree in Art History, Hillman's work has taken off through his Instagram site @witenry.

"It all started with Facebook," Hillman told The VOICE in a recent interview.

After joining a Facebook group entitled "Unedited Smartphone Aesthetic Pics" Hillman began to pursue photography. He had no background in it, only a natural instinct that told him to "Do something to the objects themselves than take a photo of that arrangement" Hillman added.

"I got sort of a notoriety in the group as the person who posts the stuff that gets the most likes" says Hillman. Soon he landed an inter-

view with Paper magazine which increased interest in his work.

As his number followers increased, Hillman wondered, "Could this [type of art] do well outside of this closed environment?"

The answer? Definitely.

Now with 252,000 Instagram followers and counting, Hillman has inspired multiple other artists.

Emily Kathleen, one of Hillman's followers from Ontario, Canada told the VOICE, "I love that he takes mundane things and turns it into something so remarkable...I really end up trying to put myself inside his brain."

Margherita Crippa, a @witenry follower and User Interface (UI) designer from Milan, said in an interview that Hillman's artwork, "makes me feel quiet and peaceful."

She continues, "The attention he gives to every single detail is reflected in the whole work, giving it a real coherent connection within all the elements."

Asked to describe exactly what he does, Hillman says, "For me, arranging is taking usually some kind of everyday object, and moving things around until it gets to a certain composition I am looking for."

Inspired by early abstract art from the 20th century, Hillman says he is creating art arrangements based on simple geometry.

"I draw inspiration a lot from minimalism and a lot of art historical movements" Hillman explains, continuing, "I like the idea that one line

changes everything."

Companies have started seeking Hillman's work, including PureWow, a women's lifestyle media network, Story, a gallery and boutique in New York and Super Deluxe, the television and media network based in Los Angeles.

Before the start of this career in the arts, Hillman debated whether college was the right path for him. He stated, "I figured, [Mercer] would be a good place to meet people."

One Mercer instructor who particularly inspired Hillman was Professor Yevgeniy Fiks, teacher of drawing, digital media art and design.

"I think especially

what he taught me in 2D design really clicked. I'm sure that that had a huge impact on me." Hillman says.

Adam's mother Erika Hillman says, "We have a creative family and raised both our children in and around arts."

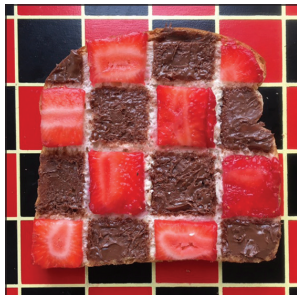
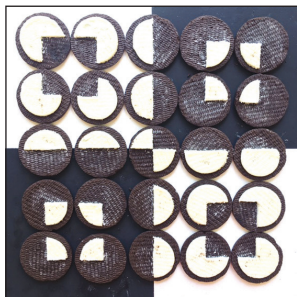
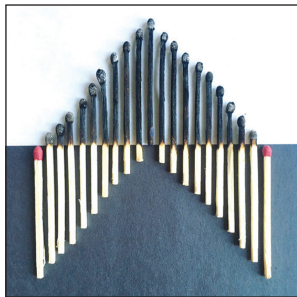
Kylan Hillman, Adam's younger brother and a current music student at Mercer is also a Youtube singer, guitarist and composer. Mrs. Hillman says, "His dad and I are both musical, artistic and dramatic."

"As a toddler..." Mrs. Hillman explains, "... he used to line up his Matchbox cars end-to-end for hours. He was very precise about it." By the age of 14, Mrs. Hillman continues, "He began most of his free time drawing very intricate designs. Each piece took months to complete." At that point, Hillman's mom says she knew he was destined to be an artist.

"He's a perfectionist" Mrs. Hillman states. "I sometimes feel the need to remind him to find balance in his life."

Adam says that sometimes "There is a lot of pressure," having thousands of fans across the globe.

Asked what causes him to stick with it, Hillman says: "It's never been about money for me...It's these patterns that I have and I have to get them out somehow."



PHOTOS COURTESY OF ADAM HILLMAN



# New York's MoMA an opportunity for students

By Chelsey Johnstone  
Reporter

The famous artwork of the past is easily overlooked with the rise of the digital era. "In the digital age, you can find these pictures online anywhere..." stated Leah Mellmer, the student manager of Pacific Lutheran University's Lute Air Student Radio (LASR). However, New York's Museum of Modern Art is still attracting a large crowd to its many exhibits.

For Mercer residents, the MoMA is a short train ride to view exceptional artworks, like the well-known, *Starry Night* by Vincent Van Gogh. The museum gives discount tickets to students with ID's. For 14 dollars, you cannot go wrong.

Mellmer stated, "If we are talking about art museums in the United States, everyone, I feel like, thinks of MoMA. People come here from all over the world." Being based out of Washington State, Mellmer came a long distance to have this experience.

She told The VOICE, "It's an amazing feeling just after knowing something that only had existed in books. It's like now it exists in your world."

In the six-story build-

ing, hours of art surrounds the building's interior. Art you can visually dive into, art you can scale with your fingertips, and art that rattles your eardrums overwhelmed the senses, making for a different experience than the average museum.

The Museum of Modern Art has created an atmosphere that is beyond a framed piece of art on the wall. Exhibits such as *Reanimation* by Joan Jones, includes a wide variety of colorful projections along with delicate hanging crystals. Music, both relaxing and intense, captivates the mood of this artform's overall impression.

"It really took ahold of my attention" Mellmer states. "You walk around the projection, you become part of the projection and the crystals are just kind of mesmerizing and hypnotic. Everything's changing."

When it comes to art, The Museum of Modern Art changes its former meaning. "You can almost feel the presence of the artist and the steps that they took when you're looking at it in person, up close," Mellmer states. No longer is art just something pleasing to the eye, but now a full body experience, and an experience worth fulfilling.



PHOTO | CHELSEY JOHNSTONE

At the Museum of Modern Art in New York City visitors view Tarsila do Amaral's painting titled "Workers" in the exhibit *Inventing Modern Art in Brazil*.

# Local folk duo Jackson Pines gaining attention

By Chelsey Johnstone  
Reporter

The local group Jackson Pines includes singer-songwriter and guitarist Joe Makoviecki and upright bass player James Black. Formerly members of the traditional folk band known as Thomas Wesley Stern, which opened for popular folk bands like Old Crow Medicine Show and Mumford & Sons, the duo branched off into their own storytelling journey in 2016.

Makoviecki says, "Our old band played traditional folk music. Half of our set would be from the 1920's and 1930's. When that band ended, we decided to keep playing music under a new name with totally new songs I've written. That became Jackson Pines."

Named after their hometown of Jackson, NJ, the duo's work features raw acoustic guitar riffs and evokes a sense of small-town longing.

On their first CD, "Purgatory Road," the title track tells the story a woman having her first child, and a preacher scared the world is going to end.

Lyrics such as, "In the town where I was born, where the boys run wild, she waited her whole damn life for her firstborn child," paint an intimate picture.

"I don't write any songs that don't have at least one foot in my real experience," says Makoviecki.

He adds, "Those characters aren't based exactly on real people, but they're based on attributes of people we've met over the years...Every song



PHOTO | CHELSEY JOHNSTONE

Joe Makoviecki and James Black after performing at The Danny Clinch Transparent Gallery on March 16, 2018.

is a different animal. They take root from experiences."

Asked about his songwriting process Makoviecki says "All of our songs exist in a world that we've created; sort of like a collection of short stories...We kind of worked them into these characters to try to say something about the world we are living in now."

Makoviecki notes that folk music has a reputation for preaching a call to change, but that that is not his musical agenda.

"What we are trying to do is sing a song that is honest and makes you feel something deep down, without trying to lead you in a certain direction," Makoviecki says.

When they first started playing as Jackson Pines in 2016, Black and Makoviecki's work attracted the attention of Simone Felice of the well known American folk rock band

The Felice Brothers. Felice offered to record them on Purgatory Road.

"Joe and James reminded me of my bros and I when we first started out, very green but very passionate," Felice told the VOICE via email. When asked what intrigued him about the band Felice stated, "The vibe was heartfelt, melancholy yet positive, a tricky thing pull off."

The duo's second effort was a four-song EP called "Lost & Found" that came out last August. It picks up where "Purgatory Road" leaves off, focussing on life's transitions.

Owner of a music-oriented content platform called Thriving Era, Tyler Harrison, recalls his first experience hearing the group.

"The first time I saw Joe and James play was in 2013 or 2012 with their full band Thomas Wesley Stern...Joe is a



PHOTO | CHELSEY JOHNSTONE

Jackson Pines covering the song "Down by the Riverside" in tribute of Sister Rosetta Tharpe at The Danny Clinch Transparent Gallery.

monster on that acoustic guitar and James Black seems to keep people bumping on that upright bass. Them together is an awesome dynamic."

This year, Harrison will be filming them in a video he says will be, "up close and personal with the music for Jackson Pines."

Makoviecki, whose grew up in a musical household--his father is a music teacher and full-time musician--says, "My whole life has been

this conversation with music."

He adds, "The difference between everybody else and a songwriter is the only way they can express it is by molding it into a three to five minute song string of rhythm and sound."

Starting in April, Jackson Pines will be going on a short tour including Nashville, Tennessee and Virginia, before coming back to New Jersey. They will play the Wonder Bar in Asbury Park on May 1.



# Princeton March for Our Lives rally



A student from Princeton High School holds up a sign during the Princeton March for Our Lives on March 24.

*Continued from page 1*

been personally affected by gun violence.

Diane and Gerry Novik of Hamilton told The VOICE their grandson attends Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School where 17 students were killed last month in the shooting that led teenagers to start a movement. Though their grandson went unharmed, they were inspired to take up the cause.

"Nobody needs guns. Especially assault rifles," Gerry Novik said. When asked if he had a message for lawmakers Novik added "Keep us safe. The law should have been changed years ago."

Glenda Torres Scott, the mother of Benjamin DaVila, who back in 2012 was shot and killed at the age of 23 in Trenton, spoke at the rally. She is a member of Mercer Mom's Demand Action, an organization committed to "gun violence prevention." "I did not just lose my only son. I lost the opportunity to see him be a father, to see him mature, achieve all his goals," Scott said.

Ben Bollinger, a leader of The Princeton Against Gun Violence at Princeton University, spoke at the rally about a former classmate of his who took his own life with a gun.

"There's something strikingly raw about the first time you lose someone you considered your peer. Something that makes the frailty of life much more tangible than you ever realized," Bollinger said. When he heard about his former classmate's suicide he said he "drove home and cried in the driveway."

Joe Redmond, a senior at Princeton University who is studying chemical and biological engineering, survived the

"I get the feeling that nothing is changing, but when I saw the students of Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School standing up, I felt inspired by them and I said, enough is enough."

**-Joe Redmond**

2013 shooting at Arapahoe High School in Colorado. He is also part of the Princeton Against Gun Violence group and spoke at the rally. He shared his story and said he believes it's time to take action and change things.

Fighting tears, he said "For the longest hour of my life I crouched in fetal position frantically texting my family and friends that I loved them and that things would be okay without me. The fire alarm blared as the library of my school caught fire. I clasped my friend's hand in a desperate attempt to stop hyperventilating. I was 18 and I felt the ceiling of death hovering over me. This wasn't how it was supposed to end, I thought. I hadn't even gotten into college yet"

"I get the feeling that nothing is changing, but when I saw the students of Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School standing up, I felt inspired by them and I said, enough is enough," Redmond said.

Not everybody at the rally shared the same view on what to do about the country's gun violence crisis.

Assemblyman Roy Freiman of the 16th Legislative District, who spoke at the rally, said he is a gun owner, and this proved to be a matter of controversy.

"Turn in your gun!" people yelled multiple times while Freiman was speaking.

A mother and daughter from Hopewell, Christina Schell, 47, and Emily Schell, 19, told The

VOICE they own guns, however, believe in responsible gun ownership.

Christina, who is an employee of the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, said people should be "trained to use them" and said she thought there should be national mandatory background checks.

Emily, who is a journalism major at Montclair State University, but taking some time off, said "It's not that we're trying to take away your guns. We're just trying to make the world a safe place. I don't see how anyone can be against that."

A Mercer student who preferred to stay anonymous wrote in a survey of 50 students conducted by The VOICE, "Gun violence is not an issue, mental health, poverty, bullying, illegal arms trade, government corruptions, and media misinformation are. Guns aren't bad in good hands."

Seventy-two percent of students surveyed said they think gun violence is a significant problem in the US. 96 percent said there should be greater restrictions. These numbers reflect and, in fact, exceed overall US trends. According to a recent POLITICO/Morning Consult poll, 68 percent support stricter gun laws.

Angie Reyes, a Mercer student majoring in business wrote in the survey, "You must be pretty blind to say that USA does not have a gun problem."

One speaker at the rally and co-organizer, Reverend Bob Moore, who for decades has been a gun control activist in New Jersey, acknowledged the political divide over gun policy in general and urged people at the rally to be patient, remain hopeful and seek bipartisan solutions.

"We can't be absolut-



Protesters of all ages participated in March for Our Lives rallies across the nation.



Joe Redmond, a school shooting survivor and senior at Princeton University, gives a speech at the Princeton March for Our Lives on March 24.

ists and say that we've gotta get everything we ask immediately, or nothing is worthwhile," Moore said.

"We want everyone to do the right thing, whether they're Republican, or Democrat, or any other party!" he shouted.

The rally in Princeton did not consist merely of speeches. There was also music.

Beverly Owens, the Director of Music at the Witherspoon Presbyterian Church opened the event by singing "We Shall Overcome."

Later, Guy DeRosa, Mercer professor of Political Science played harmonica, accompanying Bucks County Community College Professor of Philosophy and Religion David Brahinsky, who played guitar and sang "Lean On Me" as part of the demonstration.

Professor DeRosa wasn't the only person from Mercer present at the rally. The manager of Mercer's eatery, Adele Staab was also there. "Enough is enough!" she said, expressing concern about her daughter who teaches second grade. She said

of the students spearheading the "March for Our Lives" movement, "They're so articulate. So adult." She compared their activism to the civil rights movement of the 1960s.

Sixty-eight percent of Mercer students who participated in The VOICE survey are registered to vote, and another 24 percent are eligible to register but have not yet registered. A third of those who could register didn't plan to and six percent of those who are registered don't plan to vote. Another 8 percent cannot vote because of immigration status or age.

Zubialevich told The VOICE she wants to see more people exercising their right to vote. "I hope that the event today and the events all over the country encourage young people to go out and vote in the next election because historically there have been low voter turnouts for young people and, my generation, people my age, so I think it would be great to increase that and have our voices heard through marches, rallies, elections and any other ways possible," she said.



# NYC March for Our Lives rally



By Drew Mumich  
Senior Reporter

Since the Columbine High-school Massacre in 1999, 187,000 students have experienced the effects of gun violence at school according to an article in the Washington Post by John Woodrow Cox and Steven Rich.

To combat this threat, schools created what is known as a lockdown drill. These drills are made to ensure student safety, for if and when an intruder, mainly an active shooter, enters the school.

As Cole Montplaisir, a building construction technology major from Mercer, whose first lockdown drill was in ninth grade explains, “The lady in the main office would say this is a lockdown drill, it may be real, it may not be, so shelter in place and depending on where you were, if you were in a classroom, the lights went off, the shades went down, the doors were closed and locked, and hid behind the filing cabinet, or the dividers.”

With this in the back of every teenager’s mind, and the recent event of the Parkland, FL shooting, at the forefront of their mind. The youth of America flooded the streets of Washington DC to protest Congress to put in stricter laws on gun control on the national level.

Washington DC wasn’t the only city to have a march through, with dozens of sister marches, one of the larger ones was held next to Central Park in Manhattan of New York City.

Men, women and children poured into Columbus Avenue by bus, car, boat and train, to support the recent victims of the Parkland Shooting.

The official march began with a rally at 11 A.M. on 72nd street, though due to the enormous crowds, the marchers pushed the parade’s beginning all the way back to 86th street.

The crowds were separated like a dam by the New York City Police by metal barricades. These opened much like a levee letting the let the crowd trickle down to the next city block as the let protesters from the adjoining streets flood into Columbus Avenue.

Even with the recent events of Parkland FL, the atmosphere was anything but melancholy, as protesters danced, cheered and chanted all the way down Columbus Avenue.

As 20-year-old Jullie Sharps from New York City told The VOICE, “This has been happening since I have been in high school, and nothing has been done on a federal level, and it’s disgusting to see how many politicians are in the pocket of the NRA.”

With chants like “Bullets not bullets” and “No more silence, end gun violence.” The protesters were emotional and determined to take a stand. As



PHOTO | DREW MUMICH

The election of Donald Trump prompted the Women’s Marches. Since then, women in particular have are becoming vocal advocates on the political issues that concern them most. The gun control movement #Enough has prompted teen women to become even more motivated to participate.



PHOTO | DREW MUMICH

The sound of the NYC March for Our Lives was dominated by chants lead by women on megaphones, and the fervent beat of drum corps.

Julia Betancourt, a high school senior from Long Island explains, “It makes me feel hopeful for the future because our generation is the next one that is going to be voting.”

The marches around the nation demanded change in gun legislation on a nationwide scale. The last major gun reform was the implementation of the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) in 2007 by former President Bush.

The Giffords Law Center explains it “provided financial incentives for states to provide to NICS (the database used to perform a background check when a firearm is purchased from a federally licensed dealer) information relevant to whether a person is prohibited from possessing firearms, including the names and other relevant identifying information of persons adjudicated as a mental defective or those committed to mental institutions.”

There are federal laws created to ensure a broad sense of gun safety but is ultimately left up to each state. California has the strictest gun laws, while Louisiana has the most lenient gun laws, according to deseret-news.com.

Diane Rizzo, an English Professor who had an experience in Los Angeles with an active shooter in 1986 told The VOICE “If you think that policy decisions will help change a culture, then policy decisions are the way to go. But I think things have to change at the cultural level, that people have to have to have a different relationship to gun violence than they currently do, and I’m not sure what would change that.”

In the end, New York was one of the larger marches in support of stricter gun legislation, and protesters came far and wide to support the cause.

As David Orlando, explains “I think this moment is

## #MarchForOurLives



Over 800 March for Our Lives rallies were held on March 24 with one or more in all 50 states.

“If you think that policy decisions will help change a culture, then policy decisions are the way to go. But I think things have to change at the cultural level, that people have to have to have a different relationship to gun violence than they currently do, and I’m not sure what would change that.”

-Prof. Diane Rizzo

unique, in that there has been more momentum than in the past, it seems that in the media cycle, there is a protest three weeks after the initial event, with is when it normally dies out, but I think this is helping keep the it rolling in a way that hasn’t happened before.”

Rachael Westbrook and Maria Ramos contributed reporting for this article.

RIGHT: Sisters participated in the NYC March for Our Lives carrying their homemade sign reading “Speaking for those who can’t...stop gun violence.”



PHOTO | DREW MUMICH



# Washington, DC Map



PHOTO | GRIFFIN JONES

*An attendee at the Washington DC March for Our Lives is brought to tears by the story of student activist Edna Chavez.*



PHOTO | GRIFFIN JONES



PHOTO | GRIFFIN JONES

*ABOVE: A girl sits on a tree to get a better view of the March for our Lives rally in Washington, DC on March 24, 2018.*

*LEFT: An African American teen draped in an American flag bearing the names of young black men who were the victims of police gun violence, stands before the Capitol Building in Washington DC as part of the March for Our Lives protest rally.*



*Young people of different backgrounds, races and religions came together to protes*

**By Griffin Jones**  
Senior Reporter

Over 200,000 people of all ages descended on Washington DC to support gun reform initiatives on March 24 according to Digital & Imaging Service Inc.

Following the death of 17 students in Parkland, Florida at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School on February 14, surviving students began to push for stricter gun laws.

Their activism caught the attention of EMPOWER, the youth branch of the organization behind the Women's Marches.

The March for Our Lives on March 24 was the result of their efforts thus far.

A number of celebrities performed at the event between powerful speeches given by student activists telling their own stories of loss that brought many in the audience to tears.

Often the topic was not only about school shootings but also about the urban violence faced by many black and Latino youth, such as when student activist Edna Chavez spoke about the loss of her brother Ricardo Chavez.

In a survey of Mercer students conducted by The VOICE, it was found that half of all black students surveyed knew someone that had died due to gun violence.

But the most powerful moment of the rally came when Emma Gonzalez, the face of the Stoneman Douglas survivors, came on stage.

Following a powerful speech, during which she listed all of the things her fallen classmates would “never again” do, she suddenly fell totally silent.

In that instant the crowd fell absolutely silent, barely a single sound escaped from the hundreds of thousands gathered there. The National Mall was transformed into a sacred space and Gonzalez into a priest leading a wake.

Confusion soon spread in the crowd, with various cheers of support coming up at various times. It was unquestionably an awkward moment, as all present wondered what Gonzalez was doing. Yet she stood resolute, tears in her eyes, with unwavering determination.

Finally she spoke, "Since the time that I came

out here," she said.  
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Famous  
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“I’ve been here since I was little.”

dad," she told The  
Eight y  
to gunmen in the

confronted by two men, one of whom was armed, when he refused to get into the car, they abducted him and drove off.

That was  
gun violence, he  
high school was

a student with a  
were proven false  
County police, C



# March for Our Lives rally



Test gun violence during the March for Our Lives in Washington DC on March 24, 2018. PHOTO | GRIFFIN JONES

...said, “it has been 6 minutes and 20 seconds. The shooter has ceased shooting and will soon be arrested. Blend in with the students as they escape free for an hour before arrest.”

...with that the crowd at once began to cheer and as if suddenly all realized that they had reached a historic moment.

...ents from Newtown High School, the high school district that Sandy Hook Elementary School in, were present to support their fellow students.

...y Hook was the site of another mass shooting, where 20 children and 6 adults lost their lives.

Albee, a student at Sandy Hook High School, shared his thoughts about the two schools in a video, writing “The thing that’s different between Sandy Hook and Parkland is that in Sandy Hook, the grief of parents of victims, but the children lived- the children who had to realize how young they are- were kept silent.” He continued, “After Parkland, the survivors came into the spotlight and they’ve been working to right the wrong they experienced first hand.”

...ous mass shootings were not the only focus, however, as many came bearing signs and photos of those they lost to guns, faces that have been etched on the news.

...ng them was Paula Chaves, a 17-year-old student at Lake High School in Reston, West Virginia, holding a poster with a picture of her father.

...been waiting for an opportunity like this to speak, because of what happened with my father. The VOICE.

...years ago, she says, she lost her father at their then home of Puerto Rico. He was shot by two men outside an ATM, she says, and he was forced to hand over the money they wanted, and he was shot.

...wasn’t the last encounter Chaves had with guns, however. On March 9th of this year, her father was placed on lockdown due to reports of a gun on campus. Although the reports were false later, according to a tweet by Fairfax County, Chaves says, “Nobody knew what was

going on for 40 minutes, we were in the dark for 40 minutes.”

She also said, “I was just thinking in my head, ‘I’m going to be the next person in my family that’s shot and killed,’ and it was just very terrifying not knowing anything, because when you’re in that situation, when you’re inside, you don’t know anything. And so I was texting my family and my friends, just saying our good-byes just in case anything did happen.”

A recurring theme throughout the rally was that the March’s efforts were not going to end when the day did. Repeatedly speakers called on the audience to register to vote.

When David Hogg, another Parkland survivor, took the stage, he started his speech by attaching a price tag to his shirt labeled “\$1.05.”

He said of the gesture, “I’m going to start off by putting this price tag right here as a reminder for you guys to know how much Marco Rubio took for every student’s life in Florida.”

In a page entitled “Don’t Put a Price on Our Lives” on the March for Our Lives website, the movement claims “There are 3,140,167 students enrolled in Florida. Marco Rubio has received \$3,303,355 from the NRA. That comes out to \$1.05 per student.”

Marco Rubio is a senator from Florida, where Parkland is. Hogg’s message was clear, support gun control or be voted out. He finished his speech by saying, “To those politicians supported by the NRA that allow the continued slaughter of our children and our future, I say get your resumes ready.”

Tappan Vickery, a volunteer coordinator with HeadCount, an organization that helps to register voters at events was there striving to ensure that.

Throughout the mall there were seven stations set up by HeadCount, and over 800 volunteers spread out across the area, Vickery said. Their goal was to collect a thousand total new registrations by the end of the event. At just the station she was at she noted they had registered about 200 new voters.

She noted that most of the new registrations were for young voters, and a number of those too young to vote had pre-registered so that they can vote once they turn 18.

She told The VOICE, “It’s so awesome to see these kids excited about wanting to engage.”



PHOTO | GRIFFIN JONES

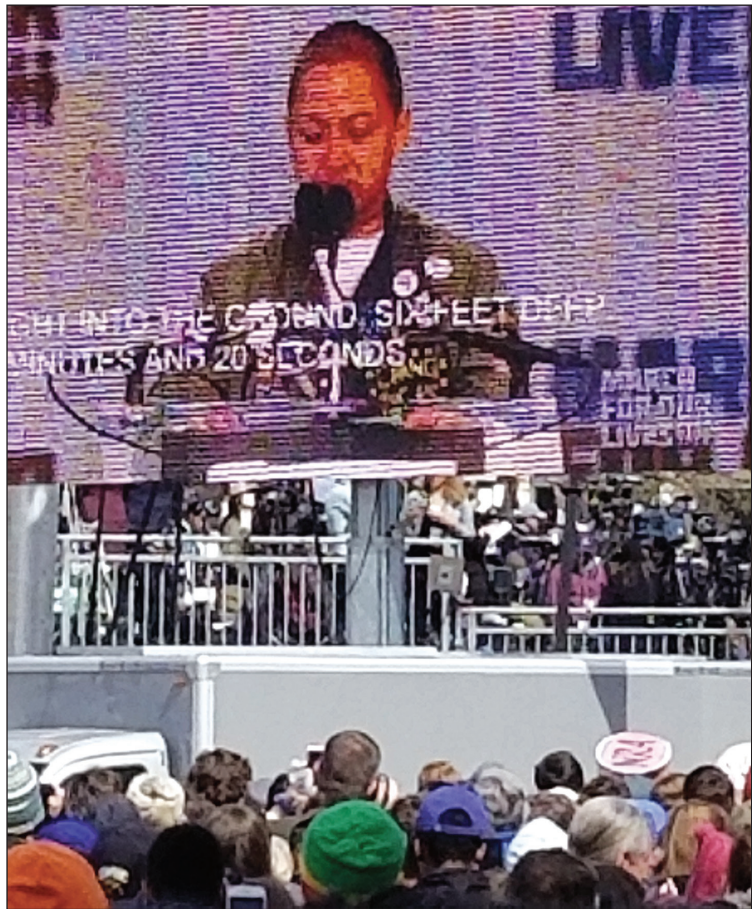


PHOTO | GRIFFIN JONES

TOP: Many protesters at the March for Our Lives carried creative and politically charged signs. ABOVE: Attendees watch Emma Gonzalez on one of the many screens spread throughout the National Mall. RIGHT: The Newseum in Washington DC set up a wall asking protesters to write why they chose to participate in the March for Our Lives.



PHOTO | GRIFFIN JONES



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**Help is here!**

Where were you when Mrs. Peacock was murdered?  
-Wadsworth the Butler

Dear Wadsworth, I was in the dining room wondering why my lasagna hadn't yet been served. Tell me, Butler, where were YOU?!

-The VOICE

Dear Voice, Why does it seem like offices are always moving at Mercer?

-Mazed and Confused

Dear Mazed, Because this is Hogwarts! Have you not seen the moving staircases yet?

-The VOICE.

Dear Voice,

What is your favorite book?  
-Li'l Bookworm

Dear Bookworm, See earlier reference to HP.

-The VOICE

Dear VOICE, What should I do if a ninja attacks me on the way to the parking lot?

-Crouching Tiger

Dear Tiger, Don't worry, our security guards are ready for anything. Call ext. 3503

-The VOICE

**NOTE: THIS FEATURE IS FOR ENTERTAINMENT PURPOSES ONLY. ANY RESEMBLANCE TO ACTUAL PROBLEMS IS PURELY COINCIDENTAL.**

Dear Voice, I saw a student peeing on a tree at the edge of campus? What's that about?

-Skeeved Out

Dear Skeeved, The bathrooms aren't what they used to be, but we recommend holding it til you get home. There are some ferocious looking squirrels out there.

-The VOICE

Classic Peanuts



HOROSCOPES



**Capricorn**  
Dec. 22 - Jan. 19

It is time to focus on that project you have been neglecting for a while. Put in the effort now and you will be rewarded later.



**Aquarius**  
Jan. 20 - Feb. 18

Times may be rough now but don't give up, it will work out in your favor. However, if you give up now you will be doomed for the rest of the month.



**Pisces**  
Feb. 19 - Mar. 20

You may feel things are not working out for you, but something good is coming your way in the next few days.



**Aries**  
Mar. 21 - Apr. 19

Relationships are the focus this month. Some conflicts with family members will affect you and everyone around you.



**Taurus**  
Apr. 20 - May 20

You are centered and grounded as usual this month. Keep it up and focus on family and don't be afraid to let loose.



**Gemini**  
May 21 - Jun. 20

You have trouble trusting people sometimes, but now is the time to take a risk. You need help right now and someone is offering.



**Cancer**  
Jun. 21 - Jul. 22

Don't stress so much, good news is on the horizon. Work may be the area of change for you. All the changes will be good!



**Leo**  
Jul. 23 - Aug. 22

It's time to de-stress. Head for the shore or maybe a spa day, even yoga can help. Take a breather before you loose it.



**Virgo**  
Aug. 23 - Sept. 22

Big news that you have been waiting for arrives around the 14th. We can't promise the outcome but at least the wait will be over.



**Libra**  
Sept. 23 - Oct. 22

Celebrations are in the works. Don't party too hard, the consequences could be undesirable. On the other hand, it's not going too far to wear a pirate outfit to work on the 4th.



**Scorpio**  
Oct. 23 - Nov. 21

Get your pincers ready, you will need them in the next few weeks. People will need to be put in their place. You are the only one who can keep them well behaved. Use your skills well.



**Sagittarius**  
Nov. 22 - Dec. 19

The weather is improving and so is your mood. Expect to see improved health this month and a resolution to something that's been hanging over your head.

SUDOKU

Difficulty: 3 (of 5)

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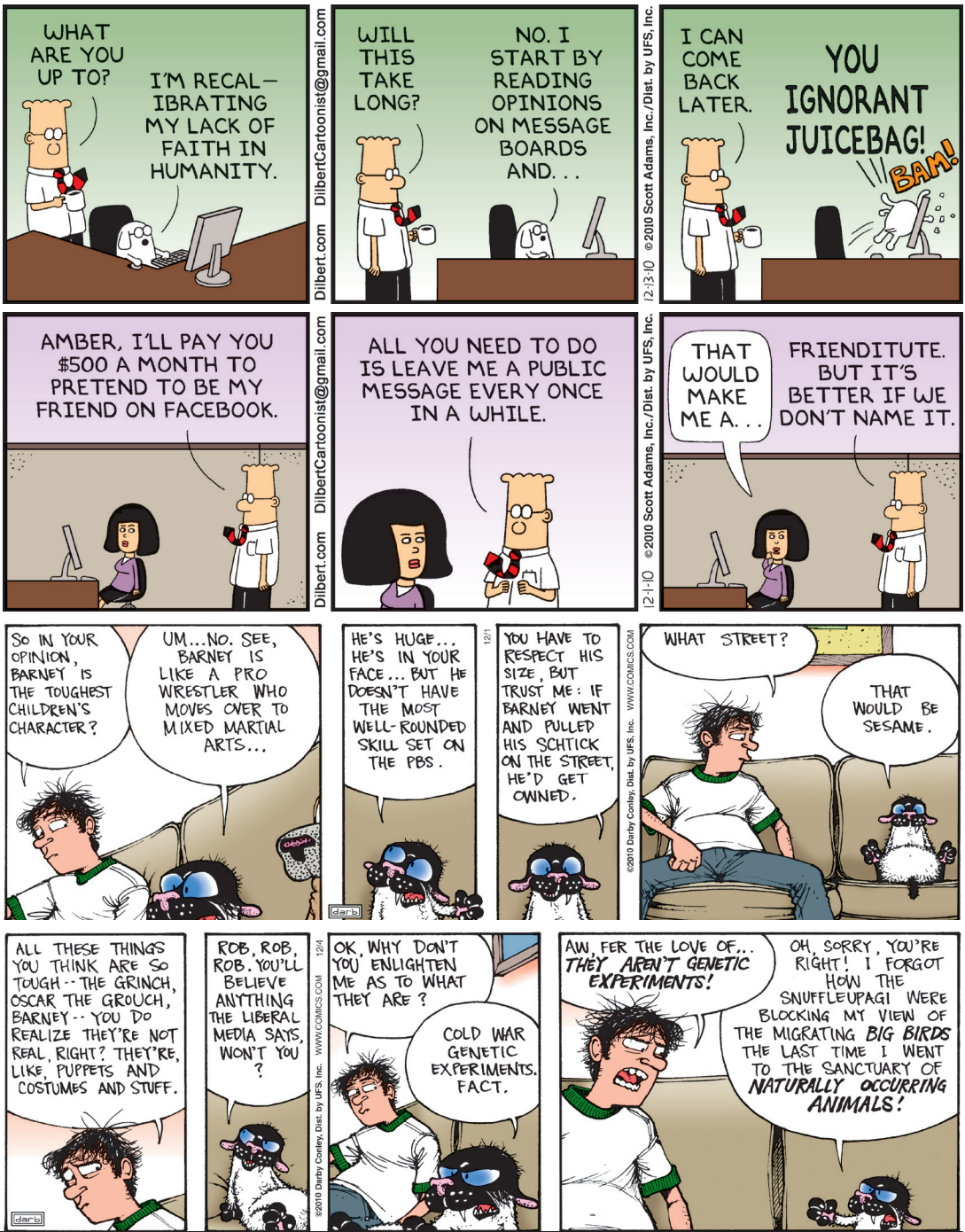
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PREVIOUS SOLUTION

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4	3	8	6	7	2	9	5	1
2	6	1	5	9	3	7	8	4
7	5	9	1	8	4	3	6	2

**HOW TO PLAY:**  
Each row, column and set of 3-by-3 boxes must contain the numbers 1 through 9 without repetition.

2X DILBERT AND GET FUZZY





## Off-Broadway show Halcyon Days uses 1980's to critique today

By Griffin Jones  
Senior Reporter

For those willing to brave the nor'easter raging outside, the Alliance of Resident Theatres in New York City had a warm surprise. Greeting those that came to see the performance of "Halcyon Days" by the Oberon Theatre Ensemble was a different world from the frigid tundra caused by the storm.

A small lobby had been transformed into a vibrant slice of the Caribbean island of Grenada, complete with vividly decorated flags, colorful lights, music featuring the steel drum, and a miniature Tiki bar (for which drinks were, thankfully, only by suggested donation).

Brad Fryman, the artistic director for the production explained. "As soon as you walked into the lobby, you would hopefully stop thinking about the blizzard outside,"

The play focuses on the US invasion of Grenada of 1983 and the events leading up to it. Two interconnected narratives play out as Washington attempts to find a justification for their planned invasion and manipulate the public support, while simultaneously those in Grenada are pulled into their plotting.

The tone of the play was satirical, with moments of levity in between powerful scenes about the United States and its imperialist nature. Funny and tragic in equal measures, the play maintains a perfect balance that manages to both make a salient point while keeping the play entertaining and not overly serious.

Despite the proximity of the venue to Penn Station and Times Square, only a scant three blocks from the former, not a tourist was to be seen. Instead, the theater was packed with New York City actors and artists, offering a pleasant break for those seeking to escape the typical Midtown crowd.

The theater itself was unlike any other. Only slightly larger than the lobby itself, it holds roughly 80 seats.



PHOTO | GRIFFIN JONES

Hannah Jane McMurray, as Patricia, speaks to a cardboard cutout of Ronald Reagan in a production of "Halcyon Days" on March 7, 2018 in New York City.

Non-traditional in many ways, the stage was pulled as close to the audience as possible to accommodate the NYC apartment proportioned room. From the first row, one was only arm's length from the actors.

Upon walking in the audience was brought into the 80's via projections on the back wall of the set. The display alternated between different clips of cartoons from the time period such as "Thundercats" and "Scooby-Doo" while music from 80's bands filled the air.

Director Alex Dinelar said of that choice, "I try to juxtapose the frivolity of the 80's with the gravity of what these men and women were doing."

Although it was the final day of previews for the performance The VOICE was able to attend, the performance ran smoothly, with only a few minor tics here and there that did not distract from the produc-

*"I try to juxtapose the frivolity of the 80's with the gravity of what these men and women were doing."*

-Director Alex Dinelar

tion itself.

Being so close to the actors allowed for a completely different experience than the traditional Broadway play. The experience was decidedly personal, even intimate. I felt less like a member of an audience and more like a participant in the events unfolding before me. I was no mere observer but a Washington insider or Grenadian citizen, depending on the scene.

The actors all excelled in their performances, which was no surprise given that all but one are members of the Actors' Equity Association. Their

acting was the same quality one would expect of a Broadway performance, but at a reasonable price, only 20 dollars for students.

The standout performance was Ralph Guzzo as Raper, presidential adviser to Ronald Reagan. It was difficult to tell he was even acting as he seemed to genuinely believe he was the character. He spoke with an authentic anger and conviction in his words, and his movements were wild and exaggerated, even violently so.

Most impressive was his eyes, which one was able to look into due to the proximity of the stage to the audience seating. They held a genuine, righteous anger within them that showed the depth of the actor's ability to control the window to the soul itself.

As the play drew to a close, a fake election poster was projected on the walls of the stage, reminding the audience

of the relevance of the performance to contemporary events. The image showed the smiling face of Ronald Reagan, reading "REAGAN FOR PRESIDENT: Let's make America great again."

The political message was clear. Patricia Perales, an actress from Brooklyn, said, "It's a bit depressing to see how we're being deceived in terms of false reality but hopeful in terms of we're writing about it. You can apply it to a lot of things going on now."

Following the performance, the audience was informed that there would be a "very casual" talkback with the cast and crew at a nearby wine bar. To be able to interact directly with those that made the play possible in such a relaxed setting, as well as speak to the actors The VOICE had spent the last two hours watching in their true personas, was an extraordinary experience.

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- Money Magazine



# Brazilian martial art finds home in New York

Mohammad Wiswall  
Reporter

Walking into the Marcelo Garcia Academy (MGA) in Midtown, Manhattan, the noise of the street dies out as you walk up three floors of gray cement stairs. The first thing to hit you is the smell of sweat and the muddled sound of thumps and loud music ranging from Wu-Tang to the Red Hot Chili Peppers. Step through the door and you'll see what may look like a bunch of sweaty students aggressively hugging and wrestling each other, at least if you're unfamiliar with Brazilian jiu-jitsu.

Brazilian jiu-jitsu is a martial art system of joint locks, choke holds, throws and pins on the ground. It has origins on the battlefield of feudal Japan. It's purpose was to be used by a disarmed combatant, because strikes would be useless against the hard armour of samurai warriors.

By the late 1880's a refined version of jiu-jitsu known as judo was developed by a man named Jigoro Kano. One of his students, Mitsasu Maeda, decided to leave Japan to fight overseas in the Americas, eventually settling down in Brazil, where he crafted what is now known as Brazilian jiu-jitsu.

Fast forward decades later and this sport has spread



PHOTO | MOHAMMAD WISWALL

Students at Marcelo Garcia Academy in New York City practice jiu-jitsu.

and found a home in NYC.

According to Bjjheroes.com, Marcelo's Garcia's record is 86 wins and 17 losses in his professional grappling career. He has won multiple world titles. He retired back in 2013 however, and now puts his focus and emphasis on his students to become the world's next top competitors.

Another instructor at MGA, Joel Burgess, one of Marcelo's students, is also well decorated and has competed at the highest level. His accomplishments include winning some of jiu-jitsu's most well known competitions, the New York Open and No Gi Pan Ams multiple times, No Gi Worlds and Europeans. Also in various North American Grappling Association and Grappler's Quests.

Additionally, he fought in the Mixed Martial Arts

(MMA) ring twice and won both by submitting his opponent. In an interview with The VOICE, Burgess spoke about being an instructor at MGA and how he approaches the challenge of teaching jiu-jitsu.

"There is what is taught to people and then there is actually what is done so one thing I've always found interesting and challenging is trying to teach people what is actually done. And don't get me wrong,

I teach what is standard or the way traditional people teach too but especially against more advanced or for more advanced students I try to ..... Especially for when I'm teaching the stuff I know, I try to teach the stuff I exactly do teaching them what I do exactly and exactly what Marcelo does."

He was also asked what is it like being a competitor. What is his mindset going into a



PHOTO | MOHAMMAD WISWALL

Highly accomplished athlete Joel Burgess is an instructor at Marcelo Garcia Academy and also one of Garcia's most successful students.

competition. "I've always been a very competitive person so it was natural I was gonna compete. But for a long time I had a hard time with the nerves," he continues to say. "What I found best for me and what I feel still works for me is to not think at all."

Also, Burgess has the perspective of being a student. He often talks about his teacher Garcia and what kind of advice he gives him. He recalls Garcia once saying to him "Don't remember the loss remember the mistake."

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\* National Public Radio, September 2015



NONTRADITIONAL: I started college at age 16

AS I SEE IT



Rachael Westbrook

My first and only nickname at Mercer has been “the fetus.” It was given to me during a meet and greet activity in Spanish 102. We had to go around the room and find people that had certain attributes, one of which was to find someone younger than you. When the other students found out I was only 16 one said “wow, you’re like a fetus!” and the name stuck. It didn’t bother me. I understood it was unusual.

It wasn’t hard to qualify to be a dual-enrollment stu-

dent. I simply had to get permission, register, and take the placement test. Then I just followed the same process everyone does. I got a school ID and registered for classes.

The first thing I learned at Mercer was that I didn’t look as young as I felt. Most of the time if I didn’t mention anything, I could easily pass as the average college kid who procrastinated and complained about homework. But once I get to know people I don’t mind telling them I’m a homeschooled high school kid who got a jump start on college.

It hasn’t always been easy. There are struggles that come from having started college early. Often things other students think is common knowledge is news to me and vice versa. For example, during my first semester at Mercer, I learned plenty of students come to class late and even without homework, something that terrifies me as a person who has always had to live with

the teacher who had the ability to ground me and take away all my privileges.

The ability to work around difficult teachers and other students was also lost on me. Group projects, especially ones where no one does their work, are still a challenge. On the other hand, I’ve blended right in with the team at the college newspaper.

The biggest learning curve was realizing that if I wanted information, I had to seek it out instead of having it handed to me. The problem was, it was hard to reach out in a place that was so different from what I am used to. I would often try something and wait to see if anyone stopped me rather than asking if I was doing the right thing.

I didn’t know if I could use the gym or the tutoring services. I didn’t know if my student ID somehow marked me as different since I didn’t know what anyone else’s looked like (answer: identical). I wasn’t

sure I was even allowed to join the college newspaper.

Mercer has helped me learn how things work, but I also love homeschooling because it is flexible. It has let me explore different kinds of hobbies like being able to snowboard on Fridays in winter. It has let me travel. I have family all over the world and have been able to visit most of them.

I don’t remember the first time I traveled outside of America because I was 9 months old. Imagine my surprise when I learned that most people don’t have passports and don’t fly regularly.

Being a dual-enrollment student has allowed me to prove to myself that I can do college level work. Next semester I transfer to a four-year college on the other side of the country and I am not afraid. I’ve learned how to ask, learned how things work and learned how lucky I am to have done it this way.

Growing up with Downs

THE WAY IT IS



Laurie Gallagher

When I was born in April 4, 1974, the doctor told my mom I had Down Syndrome and that I would never be able to make it to college or have a regular life. Forty-four years later here I am in my second year as a college student working towards my associate’s degree in Communication at Mercer County Community College.

I remember being bullied and teased by my other classmates during my elementary and high school years just because I looked and sounded different than them. I grew up on Long Island in New York with my 4 siblings and my parents. I don’t know what I would have done without my family. They never stopped believing in me, and they never stopped fighting for me to get the best education possible, even though we never had a lot of money.

Despite the setbacks, I kept on learning and taking my classes.

My family helped me develop as an adult. They taught me everything they could to help me succeed and become independent despite my differences.

When my dad got a job offer in New Jersey in 1980 we moved to the Garden State. I started to work when I was 13, I had all kinds of different part-time jobs. I worked as a bagger in a supermarket, and at Bristol-Meyers Squibb helping out with the mail. I also helped at the desk of the YMCA. Then in 2002, I got a job at Target. I had this job for about 8 years. That’s when I decided to start my education in Mercer. I told my parents that I always wanted to go to college and I was ready for it, so they supported me as always and they told me they would help me to pay for school.

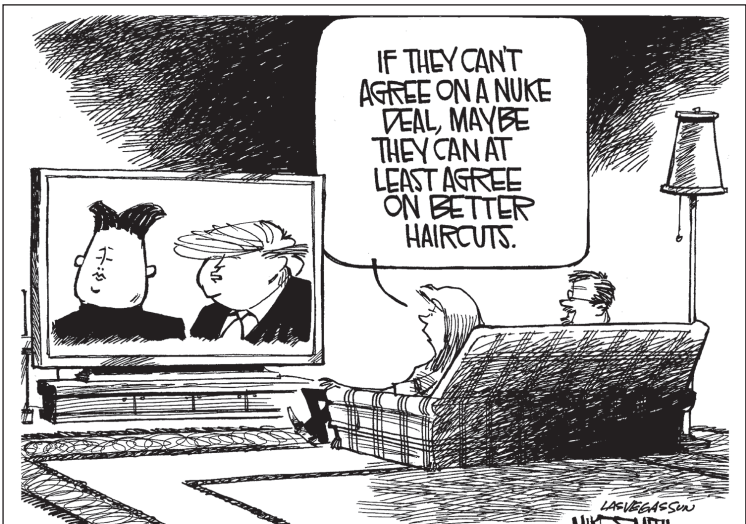
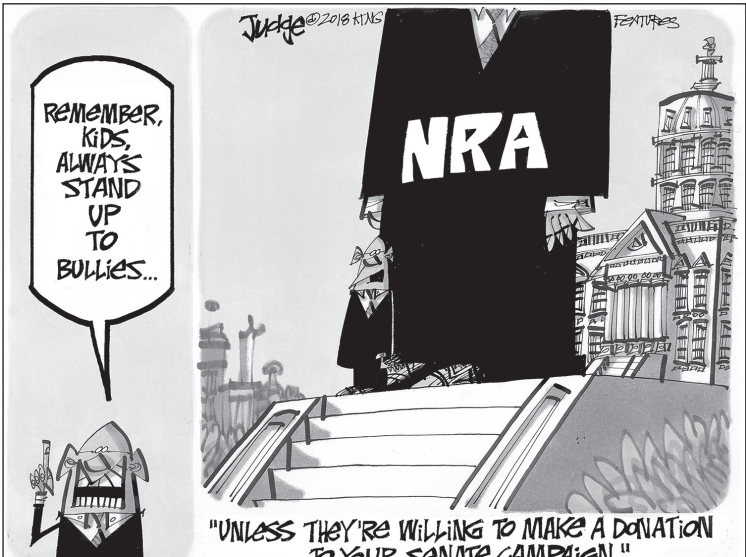
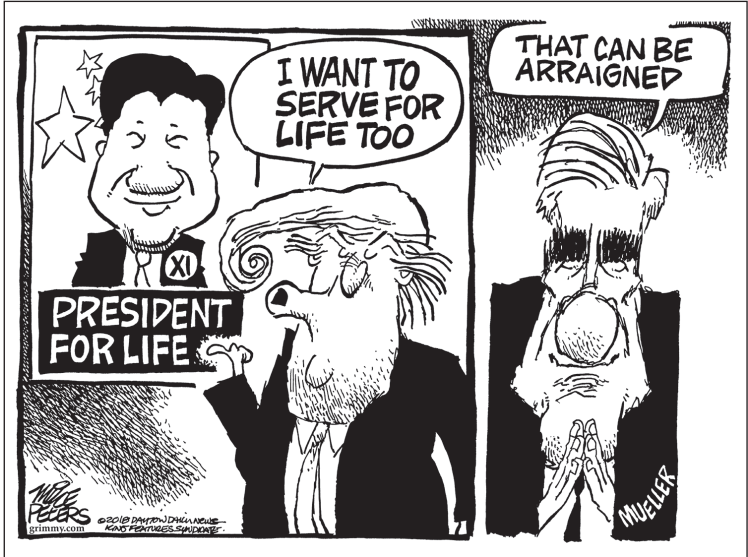
This is my second year at Mercer and I feel thankful for the opportunity to be a college student and to defy the odds that the doctor who brought me into the world gave me. At college, I can talk to other people and learn a lot. All of my professors are always very welcoming and helpful whenever I ask for something.

When I learned that the school had a newspaper I wanted to join them and learn more about writing. Now as part of The College VOICE I have been learning about how to write articles, improve my interviewing skills and work with all kinds of people. The staff always help me and work with me on the writing.

Everything that I am learning in my day to day life at Mercer and with The VOICE is helping me to achieve my dream. I hope one day I can become a writer for a magazine or newspaper.

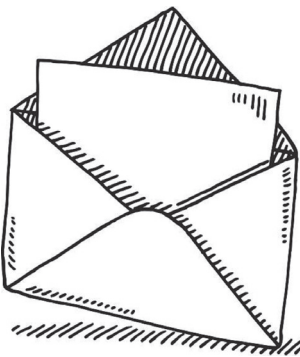
*\*Maria Ramos also contributed to this article.*

EDITORIAL CARTOONS



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# NONTRADITIONAL: I'm 32 and still in college

## PERPSECTIVES



Sean O'Connor

In order for you to understand why I'm 32 and still working towards my Bachelor's degree I must tell you the ironic story of how I came to despise college and then fell in love with it.

Though I always hated school I looked at the world in a very philosophical, intellectual way. For example, my friends and I used to debate the existence of God. We also liked to debate the question of what makes art "good" or "bad." My mom often remarked that if I directed just some of the thought and energy I invested in questions about God and art into school work I would get good grades.

But alas, my mother's wisdom was ignored. I evaded homework so diligently that it earned me an F in Math when I was in fifth grade. I did bring the grade up to a C+ the next marking period and won an award for "most significant improvement" which was good enough for me. Getting C's and B's would be my tepid academic aspiration throughout middle school and high school.

In 2004 I enrolled at Kean University to study English, hoping to hone my craft as a writer. Outside of class I spent a lot of time studying a variety of writers. Among them, Jack Kerouac was the one I related to the most. Though I sped through his novel "On The Road" and contemplated it deeply I wasn't getting any college credit for it. Coursework was to me what Louise is to the speaker in Bob Dylan's "Visions of Johanna": "She's all right, she's just near."

Ah, but Kerouac! In his novel "On The Road" a guy named Sal Paradise takes a series of road trips across the United States, experiments with a variety of drugs, has long, "intellectual" conversations and writes in between it all. Sal made the nomadic, minimalist, debauched approach to life appear romantic and absolutely necessary.

I contemplated dropping out of college to travel the

country like Kerouac however my father managed to change my mind. He suggested I transfer to a college someplace I would like to travel. This way I could do something both practical and adventurous. So the next semester I transferred to Florida Gulf Coast University.

The campus was stunning. There were hundreds of acres of wetlands and marshes and boardwalks passing through them. Palm trees were ubiquitous and alligators- so exotic to my eyes- swam and walked around. The novelty of it all was certainly enough to inspire a young poet. Unfortunately school itself was still a bore. Even the electives couldn't compete with my growing infatuation with Allen Ginsberg, Arthur Rimbaud and Bob Dylan.

I had come to believe college was a waste of time because all this so called "knowledge" they were teaching us really amounted to nothing more than fascist attempts to turn me into a boring, thoughtless robot. Regardless of that, I actually didn't think whether or not I was in college was up to me anyway. As Bob Dylan put it: "sooner or later one of us must know/ You just did what you're supposed to do." If fate would have me stay in college, something would compel me to stay, yet nothing did. Instead, I assumed it was likely my fate that I would soon become a rich and famous poet.

While I was waiting for fame to just find me, I succumbed to a combination of severe, nihilism induced depression, and audacious cockiness. One English professor, who disliked the obscenities packed in some of my poems, called me a "little punk." Well, I didn't need that close-minded criticism because I knew better than anyone, except maybe Dylan, what was what.

It was time, I thought, to escape the monotony of college.

At one point in my new life as a college dropout I ended up living at a hostel in Tampa and was almost homeless. While at the hostel, despite the fact that my funds were limited, for the most part I evaded the need to get a job. Even when I did not evade it, I did nothing to woo employers. In one interview I landed for a job as a busboy at a restaurant a few blocks away, the man conducting it took one look at me and said, "Come back shaved, with a haircut and a nice shirt. Then I'll interview you."

But I could not afford

a "nice shirt," and to hell with him if he was going to make me shave my beard and cut my hair to please corporate America. I thought this guy was as close-minded as the English professor at Florida Gulf Coast University who called me a "punk."

Nobody was going to tell me what to do! Never mind the fact that my obstinance would come at the cost of another self-made poverty spell, like when I was in South Beach half a year earlier and sometimes had only spoons full of peanut butter for food, and a few gulps from a jug of water to hydrate. I was doing it again. One day at the hostel it got so bad that I had to sell my own clothes to someone for extra cash so I could buy ramen noodles at the nearby Asian market.

Eventually I ran out money and could no longer afford to stay at the hostel. Since I was not on speaking terms with anyone in my family at this point and my friendships were not in fantastic shape, I had no one to turn to for a loan and no roof I could afford to sleep under. Were it not for the kindness of the man who owned the hostel and let me stay, I would have lived on the streets. That fact is forever embedded in my mind, though it failed to teach me anything for years.

I did address relationship problems I had with my family and made it back to New Jersey where I spent seven years working as a cashier. Scanning items and asking customers if they have their shoppers' club card over and over, while trying to contemplate what I deemed to be much more important (some issue of epistemology or the political state of America), started causing panic attacks.

I felt as if my intellectual thoughts were locked in a safe of steel, each one like a jellyfish tentacle trying to burst through the thick, impenetrable walls. This caused my heart to race, the sides of my head to feel pressed in a vice, my body to start sweating, my hands to shake and this was all accompanied with the very paranoid conviction that I must be on the verge of an aneurysm or a stroke.

Customers often looked like they were in a rush, expecting their items to be scanned and bagged quickly and did not notice. It got so unbearable that I'd ask to go to the bathroom where I could have my nervous breakdown in private. Sometimes, after I started to feel confident I wasn't about to die, I would pray to God and beg for a better job, one in

which I would be permitted to use my mind for intellectual, rather than monotonous, purposes.

When I was not miserably scanning and bagging items I was trying to establish myself as a public intellectual and artist. I tried self-publishing a book, blogging on philosophy and politics, making Youtube videos and running for public office. All that came of it was endemic failure.

I was in a long-term relationship with the woman who would become my wife and she and I discussed my career struggles. We jointly reasoned that the fact is it's hard to get by without a college degree (something friends and family members insisted to me for years!). If I wanted to advance in life, either politically or as a writer, college would increase the odds of my success.

Though I knew returning to college was the right thing to improve my life economically, my heart was not in it at first. I was still preoccupied with my blog and Youtube Channel. But then something interesting happened. I spent less time worrying about becoming famous as soon as possible and more time trying to prove to myself I could be competent academically. This meant I had to invest a lot of time in studying.

In the midst of all this studying I realized I wasn't just memorizing trivial stuff. I was learning how to cite textual evidence to support a point of view. This became my bliss and gave me a budding sense of self confidence. I discovered that college is not an institution of fascist brainwashing but rather a sanctuary of knowledge empowering individuals to "change the world" and make it a better place.

Now I am 32 years old, and I am still in pursuit of my bachelor's degree. Although it doesn't bother me that my wife is the breadwinner (It's the twenty-first century and I'm thrilled to see women thriving economically) the fact is I do wish I was getting along with my career about now.

There is some consolation though. As much as I wish I was a professor already, with numerous books published, at least I am in my ideal environment: college. Here my intellectual inclinations, now tempered with humility and patience, are free to develop, and I finally understand what John Lennon meant in his song "Mother" when he sang: "Children don't do what I have done/I couldn't walk when I tried to run."

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**INSTEAD OF EATING**  
**AT MERCER**

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2. Villa Maria Pizza
3. Your mom's house
4. Indian Hut
5. Costco
6. Dunkin
7. Panera's
8. Bobby Flay's Burger Palace
9. Subway
10. The VOICE office (ramen and pop tarts!)

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# Viking Lacrosse enters final phase of recruiting

By Jackson Thompson  
Reporter

With over 20 committed recruits, a growing coaching staff and less than a year to go, the Mercer County Community College men’s lacrosse program is full steam ahead to their inaugural season. Once the team breaks ground next spring in their first game, it will conclude a near four-year process and the construction of Mercer’s first new athletic program since the inception of the men’s cross country team in 2014.

However in comparison to the creation of the men’s cross country team in 2014, and the women’s team four years earlier, the creation of this program is larger in scale, ambition and investment according to Athletic Director John Simone. “It’s a lot bigger,” Simone says, adding, “It has a structural impact, like a new locker room. We had locker rooms available for the other two teams because those are small teams of seven or eight players, this could be a team of 30.”

The investment required to finance this new lacrosse team eclipses that of the cross country teams as well. According to Simone the program’s startup budget is close to \$50,000. It is a budget that accounts for supplies like helmets and gloves, as well as the structural factors mentioned by Simone, like a new field and locker room.

According to Mercer’s Executive Director of Financial and Accounting Services, Brian

McCloskey, the demand for college lacrosse in the Mercer County area was a key factor in the decision to greenlight and financing this program. After the first year the cost to maintain the program on a year-to-year basis will shrink significantly, and a growing local interest in college lacrosse is expected to make the program lucrative going forward.

“We have a model that projects a certain number of students that will come here that would not have come here had we not had the program to offer,” McCloskey said. “It is expected to be self-sufficient in year one.”

The program’s budget can also support a staff of up to three coaches, which Simone and head coach Rob Siris are already acting on. They have recently added coach Matt Serfass, a former linebacker at Shippensburg University, to serve as the defensive coordinator on Siris’s staff. Serfass has worked alongside Siris in the past, as he served the same role for Siris during their tenure at Hopewell.

“He’s got a great rapport with the men on the team already,” Siris said. “He was a college linebacker, so for him he has a lot of experience in understanding what it means to be a collegiate student athlete.”

According to Siris, Serfass also brings a breath of experience with speed, agility and strength training, assets the staff is already taking advantage of as they prepare their players for game action a year from now.

“We’ve been bringing them to practices a few days a week, skills and drills to try to see



PHOTO | DREW MUMICH

Lacrosse Player Cameron Gomez practices outside the PE building on Wednesday, March 27.

what their ability level is and trying to form a team building and team bonding aspect,” Serfass said.

The process of building the team is ongoing as Siris and Serfass are still actively adding talent from around New Jersey and beyond. The roster as it stands now is offensively headlined by top recruits Justin Brown, a senior at Cherry Hill East who is committed for next spring, and Ocean County transfer Sam Buck.

On defense goalkeepers Colin White from North Brunswick and Hayden Lions out of Northern Burlington are key recruits for Siris, who places heavy value on depth at the goalkeeper position.

While the likes of Brown, White and Lions are seen as the marquee players for the program now, Serfass believes that the nature of building a talented roster at the collegiate level can be an inexact science.

“It’s totally different at

the high school level. Not only that, but different areas have some stronger lacrosse than others. So you could have a defender that stands out amongst his peers in one place that maybe wouldn’t even be in the starting six at another place,” Serfass said.

As the final phase of the recruiting process begins, Siris will also look to add another coach to the staff at some point in the summer to coordinate the offense.

# Men’s Tennis team starts the spring with a win

By Jackson Thompson  
& Nnamdi Achebe  
Reporters

After a series of early season weather cancellations, the 2018 Mercer men’s tennis team got on the court for the first time this Spring in a win against Illinois Valley on Monday, March 26. Despite losing two of the three doubles, Mercer-outplayed Illinois Valley in the singles winning four out of six, yielding a final match score of 5-4.

Despite being at an elemental disadvantage, sophomore Noah Reyes defeated Illinois Valley’s Ryan Coon 6-0 in both of the final two singles matches to secure the win for Mercer. “I’m not playing outside much the only issue was the wind which didn’t really affect my game much,” Reyes said. “I expected tough opponents against players that play outside more times than I have especially in colder weather so I figured that would be a little more of a challenge,”

The duo of Reyes and Greg Del Favero would be the only pair to get a win in the doubles match, as the pairings of Seven McGlotten-Bonds/Bennett Sherr and James Bueno/Aaron Burt both fell to Illinois



Sophomore Noah Reyes practices doubles form at the Mercer County Park tennis facility on Thursday, March 29.

PHOTO | JACKSON THOMPSON

Valley duos of Aaron Pellican/Mason Clark and Joe LaShonse/Nick Needs.

“[Doubles] are a little more difficult in the sense that there’s a whole other player on the other team so there’s a lot of different types of shots that you have to play,” Burt said. “Its very individualistic for singles so if you make a mistake you know what you did wrong, in doubles if your partner makes a mistake you have to depend on them,”

While the win marked Mercer’s first match against an opponent all season, Illinois Valley was playing their third match in three days. Illinois Valley was also faced with a substantial amount of traveling in that three day span as they traveled to and from Maryland with matches against Harford and Rowan. Illinois Valley head coach Julie Milota claims that her team has enjoyed the traveling and values playing as many

matches as possible.

“A match means something, practice doesn’t so sometimes for players it’s hard to go from practice to match play, so whenever you can do matches always better for the player because they can get more attuned to the intensity level,” Milota said

Fortunately for Mercer, the intensity level that Illinois Valley experienced the past couple days wouldn’t be

enough to put them over the top in this match. Mercer head coach Marc Vecchiola liked what he saw out of his players in their first match especially considering the scheduling circumstances of the first part of their schedule.

“They’re just trying to keep it simple right now, and footwork is always a key and just trying to keep their emotions under control is important,” Vecchiola said.



# Unexpected snow days help baseball team refocus

By Jackson Thompson  
Reporter

Head Coach Kevin Kerins and the 2018 Mercer County Baseball Vikings were not where they expected or wanted to be when they returned from Myrtle Beach on March 15. Even with a winning record of 9-8, the team was off to one of its slowest starts since Kerins took over the program in 2012.

“We’re off to a slow start but we got a lot of new pieces. We’re getting to learn who’s going to be our producers, who’s going to be guys that we can trust in big spots,” Kerins said. He added, “Getting guys to learn how to play the style that we want as coaches takes time.”

Eighteen games into the season, the program was at its lowest win total since 2011 according to MCCC’s Athletics. But with 18 games played, the most by any team in the region at that point, it gave the coaching staff ample opportunities to test out a number of lineup strategies before settling on one that has now spearheaded the team to six straight wins.

“I think we settled in on a lineup ... I think we have some really talented players, it’s just a matter of us putting them in the right spots,” Kerins said.

A three game win streak to finish to the Myrtle trip parlayed into the team’s homecoming against Borough of Manhattan. The Vikings picked up two more wins and outscored their division III opponents 21-5.

And then the snow came and when all was said and done the Nor’easter that occurred on Wednesday, March 21 may very well be remembered as a turning point in the Vikings 2018 season. Following their wins against Manhattan, the team was dealt with a 10 days break from game action, a circumstance that sophomore catcher Jimmy Versage claims can swing either way for a team trying to get back on track.

“We had a bit of a rough of a first half of the season, so this break might be a positive or a negative, so we’re hoping it’s gonna be a positive,” Versage said. “We had a couple really good practices where the coaches were really hard on us, so I think that kinda changed everybody’s outlook,”

For the time being it has worked into the Vikings favor. Against ASA the team was able to pick up another win and ‘tune back up’ against an opponent that the program hasn’t lost to in Kerins’ tenure as head coach.

“We were basically gonna chop up the entire game so that everybody stays fresh and is sharp and available the rest of the week,” said Kerins.

Kerins’ tuneup strategy featured the use of three pitchers over five innings. Chris Mormile, Cole Davis and Dave Stec all combined for a one hit,

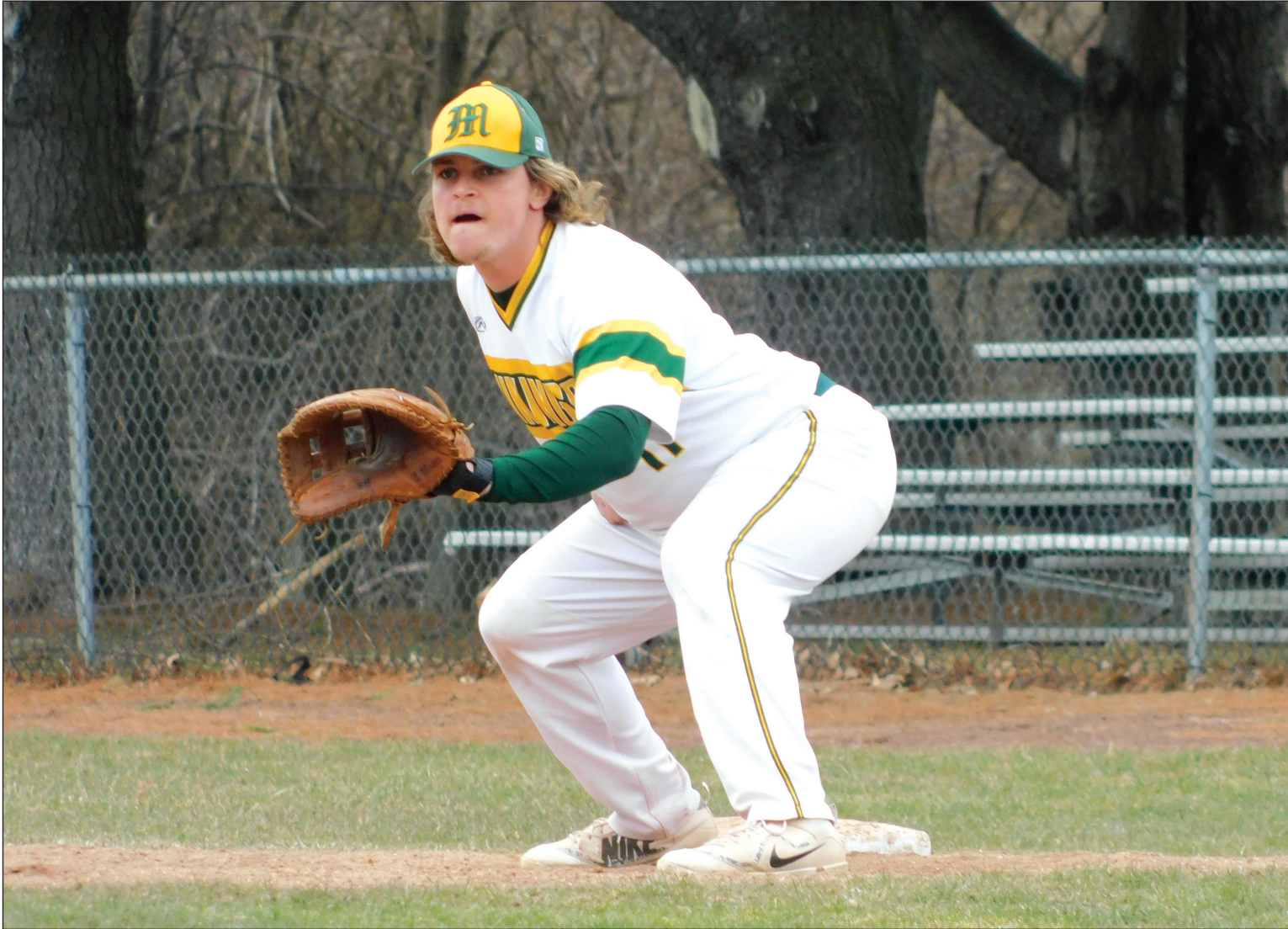


PHOTO | DREW MUMICH

Viking baseball player Jimmy Versage (#11) playing the infield against ASA on Wednesday, March 27.

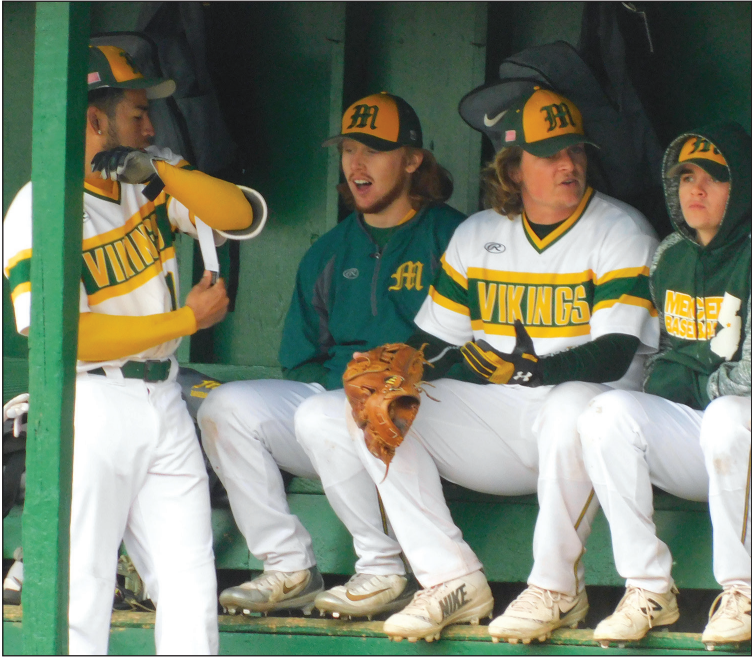


PHOTO | DREW MUMICH

six strikeout shutout performance over the ASA offense that has scored four runs against Mercer in the past four years according to MCCC Athletics.

Versage led the way on offense with three RBIs and a run scored as Mercer only needed five innings to put away the Avengers 11-0 in what Kerins deemed simply a tuneup game.

“Every game matters, they seed the playoffs, they seed the world series but with us not having played in such a long time it was important that we chop up our lineup today so that all of our guys are available Thursday,” Kerins said

In an interview with the VOICE ASA head coach Fran-

“We had a bit of a rough of a first half of the season, so this break might be a positive or a negative, so we’re hoping it’s gonna be a positive.”

-Jimmy Versage

cisco Perez stated the disadvantage the weather presents to his team with several of his key players being transfers from the Dominican Republic, while also giving credit to Mercer and their talent.

“I don’t think we were fully prepared but I can say the same thing for Mercer. It’s tough weather. They do have some tough kids, especially from around here with kids that are used to this weather so it makes it a lot easier, but they got a really good ball club,” Perez said.

Mercer’s continued dominance of the NYC based D1 program will be tested however as they are scheduled to meet two more times this season.

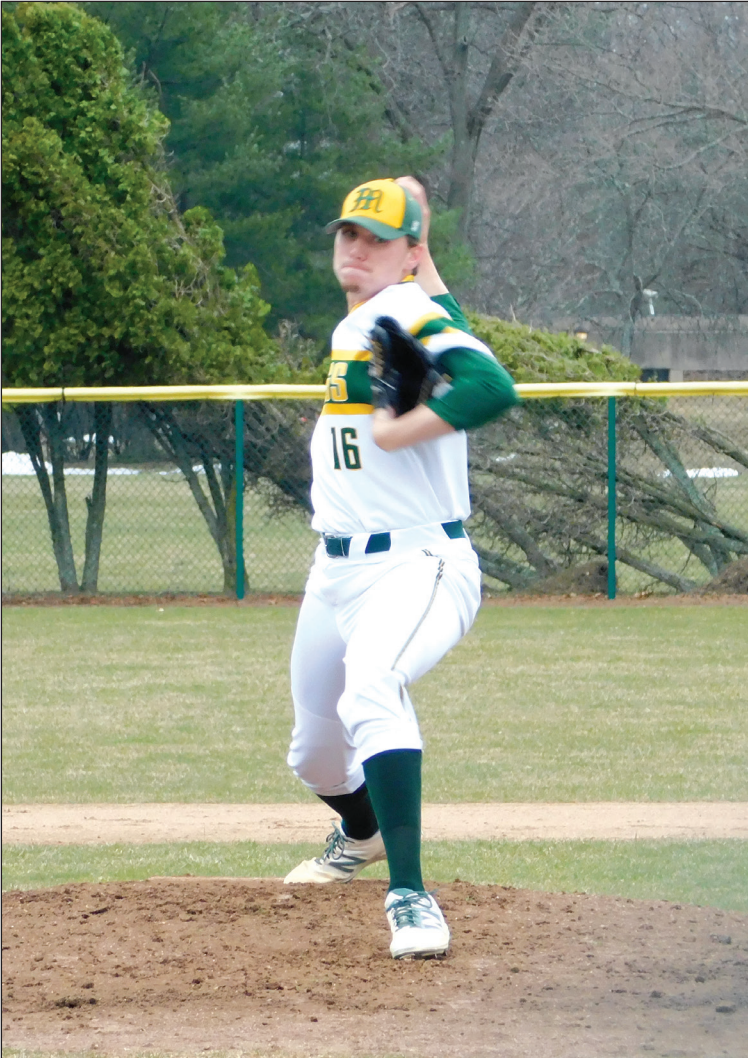


PHOTO | DREW MUMICH

ABOVE: Viking baseball player Cole Davis (#16) pitches against the Avengers of ASA on Wednesday, March 27.

CENTER: On the Bench from left to right Vikings baseball teammates Tyler Knox, Jimmy Versage, Collin Sheehan.



# Vikings hammer Raritan Valley

## Pitcher Tatum Marshall extends the winning streak to eight



PHOTOS | DREW MUMICH

Mercer softball player Lauren Bracco (#6) up to bat against Raritan Valley on Wednesday March 27.

By Jackson Thompson  
Reporter

Head coach Ryan Zegarski picked up two more wins on Tuesday, March 27 to bring his career total to 403, when the Vikings swept a doubleheader against the Lions of Raritan Valley Community College.

"It really means that I've had a lot of great players," Zegarski said in reference surpassing 400 wins. "It's a great honor but I really don't place too much emphasis on stats like that. I'm more concerned with coaching these players for this season."

In game one of the doubleheader sophomore pitcher Tatum Marshall held Raritan to only one run while striking out six. The game was called in the fifth inning after Mercer took a lopsided 18-1 lead.

With the win Marshall remains undefeated as she moves to a perfect 5-0 on the season, and according to NJCAA.org she has pitched to an ERA of only 0.81, the ninth lowest in all of Division II.

"She throws strikes, that's all you can ask out of a pitcher is to throw strikes and keep the ball in play and we're confident that our fielders behind her can make the plays," Zegarski said.

The second game yielded a similar result with Mercer putting up 10 runs in just the first inning. It would be another short affair as the second game would also be called in the fifth inning with Mercer up 13-1. Catcher Gabriella Early went 3 for 3 and racked up five RBIs.

Mercer, which had

been scheduled to play seven straight home games after returning from their annual Myrtle Beach trip, hadn't seen game action in 10 days as five of their scheduled home games were canceled due to the recent inclement weather.

"Sometimes time off gives you time to reflect on the good and bad things you've done already. We did a lot of talking to them about what we've accomplished so far," Zegarski said. "We try to keep up the good and correct the bad."

Meanwhile Raritan suffered a pair of noncompetitive losses in a late start to their season. The weather had cost the Lions the entire early portion of their schedule leaving Mercer as their first opponent of 2018, as they failed to go a full seven innings in either game.

In game one, Raritan sophomore pitcher Amanda Hansen opened her 2018 season with a scoreless first inning before giving up six runs in the second and eight more in the third. She was pulled late in the fourth inning and left the bases loaded.

"I think we all just got a little discombobulated since it was our first game and our first time playing here," Hansen said. "We probably would have been a little bit better if we were able to practice on our field and had more practices in general since the weather did cancel a lot of our practices and games."

Raritan was also at a disadvantage of playing on unfamiliar surfaces. According to Raritan head coach Donald Meister, his team

practices is an indoor facility and plays on an all grass field, a far cry from the dirt of Mercer's home field.

With the pair of wins Mercer's record improves to 13-2-1. They will not get a chance to make up the home games they missed as seven of their last thirteen opponents will be faced on the road.

Pitcher Tatum Marshall remains undefeated. According to NJCAA.org she has pitched to an ERA of only 0.81, the ninth lowest in Division II.

