

# THE CATALYST

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"IGNITING THE MIND"

OldWestburyCatalyst.org

## Radio Station Hopes for Installation of New Computers for the Spring

By Kyle A. Berthoud and Kevin C. Horton

SUNY Old Westbury's OWR Radio Station Manager Joseph Manfredi, a key member of the American Studies Media and Communications Department, was elated during pre-Covid, when the station was approved for the purchase of thirty new computers to be used by students. Post-Covid his excitement turned to frustration as he waited for the computers to be set up by the school's Information Technology Services (ITS). He said, "This has been going on since roughly 2019."

As part of its continuing coverage, *The Catalyst* learned that without new working computers and related hardware and software, applied learning, classes, and student activities at the radio station are paralyzed. ITS maintains they have been responsive but obstacles had to be overcome not only for this project but for others throughout the campus.

Mark Lomugdang, of ITS services, who was working on the computers recently, said ITS has been involved in the project since its inception, but blames the current holdup on Covid, availability of personnel, and funding. He said that while the computers were purchased, additional funds have been, and are still needed, to complete the project. "There's a lot of wants and needs, but, in the end, you have to have the money. It's out of ITS's hands," he said.

Manfredi confirms that the funding of the thirty computers was approved by SUNY's former Provost

(Cont. on page 3.)

**SPORTS PAGES 15-16**

## SUNY Old Westbury Holds First In-Person Convocation Since the Pandemic

By Kyle Berthoud



Photo Credit: The Office of Communications and College Relations

First-year, second-year, and transfer students alike gathered into the Student Union building to listen to speeches from Senior Vice President Duncan Quarless, President Timothy E. Sams, PEL Professor Dr. Thomas Delgiudice, and Old West-

bury alumna Delmy Lendof. Dr. Quarless opened the proceedings by giving a speech in which he expressed that the convocation was an opportunity for second-year students to have an in-person experience that they didn't have the last

(Cont. on page 4.)

## The First Issues of *The Catalyst*

By Kevin C. Horton

The word, "EXTRA!" announced SUNY Old Westbury's first issue of *The Catalyst*, in 1973, touting its mission: To provide a voice to the students of SUNY Old Westbury. The announcement of the forthcoming issues appeared on an eight-and-a-half by eleven flyer proudly displaying the name, "*The Catalyst*," dated March 1973.

The flyer headline reads, "Student Newspaper Budget Approved," in all caps. It then announces, "Now that the budgets have been approved, the way is now clear for the operation of our student newspaper. Even though the present academic year is almost over, we intend to put forth a maximum effort so that next year we

(Cont. on page 3.)

## COVID UPDATE

By Laura Francavilla and Kelly Benatti

The administration has not yet decided if surveillance testing will continue in the spring semester. The information is expected in January. An email sent by President Timothy Sams on December 1st stated that proof of vaccination for residential students for the spring 2022 semester must be handed in by January 25, 2022, and January 26 for commuter students. If a student has submitted this information for the fall 2021 semester, they do not need to resubmit proof of vaccination.

Students requesting a religious or medical exemption must submit the required documentation by December 22, 2021. Those granted a religious exemption for the fall semester do not need to resubmit an exemption request for the spring because the exemption will carry over. Medical exemptions do not carry over. Students can contact the Student Health Center in the Academic Village if they have questions.

All students who wished to return to campus for the fall 2021 semester were required to provide proof of vaccination or seek a religious or medical exemption. Among students with an on-campus presence, ninety-eight percent are vaccinated and two percent have medical or religious exemptions. Unvaccinated commuter students were required to be tested weekly and residential students twice a week. Unvaccinated employees were required to be tested weekly.

Despite vaccine requirements, the school has set up surveillance testing of vaccinated students as well. Masks will continue to be worn on

(Cont. on page 4.)

**FEATURES PAGES 7-8, 12**

**THE CATALYST**  
STUDENT PUBLICATIONS NOVEMBER 16, 1973

**♦♦ EXTRA ♦♦**

**THE MASTER PLAN**  
PARANOIDA REIGNS SUPREME  
Herb Goldhaber

The Master Plan of the State University College at Old Westbury has been, is now, and will be for time to come, the focal point of attention and in all too many cases paranoia in dealing with the issues it presents and represents. In trying to enlighten the community as to what is written in the plan, what is implied, and what power, if any, the student body may exercise in the formulating of either this or subsequent revisions of the plan, we at the Catalyst have embarked on our most challenging task in our short history. We intend to do justice to all concerned with particular attention given to the needs and wants of the '4 students.

The explanation of the plan calls for a detailed breakdown and analysis of what is written, what was written in the former plans, and what is implied by the restructuring of the new program detailed in the growing concept of the college. In order to deal with implications, the President of the College was imperative. An analysis of the plan will start in this issue and continue in subsequent issues, until all of the details have been satisfactorily explained and understood from all possible sides. This will be done in both our feature writing and news writing. For the contribution of the News Department in this issue, I will discuss my interview with John Maguire pertaining to the Master Plan and some of the explanations given as to the motivation behind the change.

First let me state to the community that our position in this, and indeed all matters, is that words do not make the measure of a man's worth but action in his deeds does. We believe in the words spoken by Dr. Maguire in our interview, for they seemed to represent the best interests of the student in relation to the now wave of pressure from Albany to modify the concept of this school. However, his words have now proved for him perhaps the most difficult task of his career, and that is justification of his words by his action with students, faculty, and the supreme powers in Albany. While he continues to fight for us in what was ostensibly his brainchild, the students will be his staunchest supporters and allies. When he stops his fight, or without extremely good cause contradicts his intention, we will systematically plan and organize and carry out his decline and fall.

There is no question that there has been a distinct deviation in the concept of the original experimental college at Planting Fields and the concept of the education of the "historically by-passed." This change however, reflects a definite change for the better as it does not confine the system of education of being one which caters only to the gifted student who is able to work in a "classroom without walls" which is the basic theory of Empire State College. The (continued page 3)

SLUG: "Master Plans" A Special Report.  
by Frank Morris

The College at Old Westbury to date has had two "Master Plans" for its growth. These plans are dated April '72 and August '73 with a further revision expected to be completed on or about November 1, '73. The projections in the plan of August '73 for the student of disadvantaged background has changed in critical areas of educational opportunity and in student enrollment capacity for minorities. These expansions in the basic policies involving the minority student are not all to the advantage of the colleges existing racial and economic composition... especially in the area of financial aid.

As of this writing, it is conceivable that the cost of education to the minority student will have to be a combination of public grants, personal funds, and the capacity to acquire a great deal of debt. Admittedly, this is nothing new. But we haven't always had the benefit of a Master Plan.

The author is reminded of an ambitious but poor black student who turned Mama's picture to the wall and ventured off to the "freedom north" to get some "education". Well our boy survived for three years on peanut butter, cold bologna, and a dishwashing job which he shared with his girlfriend, whose financial situation wasn't much (continued page 2)

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### CAMPUS NEWS

#### **PAGES 1-5**

RADIO STATION HOPES FOR INSTALLATION OF NEW COMPUTERS FOR THE SPRING  
SUNY OLD WESTBURY HOLDS FIRST IN-PERSON CONVOCATION SINCE THE PANDEMIC  
COVID UPDATE  
THE FIRST ISSUES OF THE CATALYST  
OLD WESTBURY GRADUATE AND CATALYST WRITER FINDS SUCCESS AFTER COLLEGE  
SUNY OLD WESTBURY NAMED AMONG TOP PERFORMERS IN SOCIAL MOBILITY BY U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT  
TEACHERS RALLY FOR "RESPECT AND BETTER SAFETY PROTOCOLS"

### OPINION

#### **PAGES 6,13-14**

DEMOCRACY IS ON ITS DEATHBED IN NICARAGUA  
MANCHIN BLOCKING BIDEN'S CLIMATE PLAN A STEP BACK IN THE FIGHT AGAINST GLOBAL WARMING  
HEY, SUNY OLD WESTBURY! GIVE ME A SIGN  
VACCINE MANDATES: FOR THE GREATER GOOD  
MY BEST PAL

### FEATURE

#### **PAGES 7-8, 12**

WINTER ACTIVITIES ON LONG ISLAND  
A CUTE AND FLUFFY WAY TO DE-STRESS  
WHY WE LOVE CHRISTMAS MOVIES SO MUCH  
A LETTER TO MY DAUGHTER

### REVIEW

#### **PAGES 9-11**

AFTER SEEING GHOSTBUSTERS AFTERLIFE  
COLD WAR LONG ISLAND  
TAYLOR SWIFT'S "ALL TOO WELL" BREAKS RECORD FOR LONGEST NUMBER ONE SONG  
ALL TOO WELL THE SHORT FILM  
THE BEATLES: GET BACK

### LIFESTYLE

#### **PAGE 11**

DATING IN THE PANDEMIC

### SPORTS

#### **PAGE 14-15**

THE OLD WESTBURY PANTHERS (4-4, SKYLINE 0-1) LOST TO JOHN JAY COLLEGE ON DECEMBER 10TH WITH A SCORE OF 66-67.  
WOMEN'S HOOPS LOSE MOMENTUM IN OT 72-75 TO YESHIVA UNIVERSITY  
MIA ALMONTE ACHIEVES GOAL OF BEING A TEAM PLAYER

## From The Executive Editor

Welcome to the first and last edition of *The Catalyst* for the fall 2021 semester. It has been over a year since we last printed an edition for the campus community due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.

During the time we've been working from home, *The Catalyst* has been utilizing the web more than ever, publishing numerous articles, making our website, OWCatalyst, faster and more accessible. Now that this semester most of the campus community is working in-person again, *The Catalyst* is resuming to print at least one paper edition each semester. Unfortunately, this is a bittersweet moment putting together my final issue as I will be stepping down as executive and web editor by the end of this semester. However, it doesn't exclude the awesome three years I have had as a media and communications major at SUNY Old Westbury.

Throughout my time, I was able to gain fruitful relationships with my peers and professors whom I consider as mentors and exploring my passion for journalism that helped develop me into the person I am today. As graduation is around the corner, I am reflecting on how grateful I am to the people that I have met and worked with who eventually paved the way for me.

First and foremost, I want to thank Faculty Advisor Professor John Friedman for providing me an opportunity to serve as an executive editor and believing in me and pushing me to put out my best work. In addition to being an amazing and wonderful mentor, he has assisted me on a journey towards an aspiring media career. I also want to thank my fellow colleagues Laura Francavilla and Kelly Benatti for allowing me to enjoy my job and for being such a great team.

Last but not least, I do want to thank my fellow interns and contributors for allowing me to serve and mentor you. It has been a pleasure getting to know each of you this semester and during all my years at the college. I will always forever be grateful for the wonderful moments that we shared together.

Old Westbury is a small, tight-knit community that will always feel like home. There are so many great opportunities that the campus offers for students in the short and long term. It's all about how you use the advantages that are offered. Live and appreciate every moment while you are here and don't forget to have some fun.

Brianna Knibbs

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Brianna Knibbs

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Cont. from page 1

## The First Issues of *The Catalyst*

will be able to operate immediately and effectively.”

The brief announcement then goes on to solicit written contributions to the publication from fellow students saying, “EVERYONE should have something to speak out on.”

The flyer also establishes the founding staff’s intention for the newspaper: “It is a commonly accepted fact that a student newspaper can be the most reliable and effective means of bridging communication gaps. UNLESS there is a student-wide publication at Old Westbury to make its student paper a pertinent, relevant, and important mode of expressing the needs and conditions of campus life. *The Catalyst* is doomed to functioning as a ‘traditional’ college newspaper.”

The top of the masthead further displays the founding student’s intentions, “*The Catalyst*, representing and printed in the interest of the student body of the State University of New

York, College at Old Westbury.”

The first edition of the *Catalyst* was then printed on November 16, 1973 in tabloid format on newsprint, with the headline, “The Master Plan or Paranoia Reigns Supreme.” Although the story is presented on the front page of the publication as a news story, the lead and the body of the story reads more in the style of an editorial or opinion piece. The lead reads, “The Master Plan of the State University College at Old Westbury has been, is now, and will be for the time to come, the focal point of attention and in all too many cases paranoia, in dealing with the issues it presents and represents.”

The second issue of the *Catalyst* printed the following semester, continues to show the student-run newspaper’s staff’s willingness to take on controversial issues. The headline of the issue dated April 6, 1973, reads: “DISCRIMINATION Student Accuses Administrators of Prejudice.” The

front page is then dedicated to the reprinting of a letter of resignation with the lead reading giving the details for the reason for the reprinting. At the top of the story is a quotation from the College handbook: “The College at Old Westbury is committed to an absolute firm policy of nondiscrimination... The college will not condone or be involved in any action by individuals or groups which may be contrary to this policy.” The *Catalyst* then goes on to point out, “Up until now, this Old Westbury College policy has never been challenged. However, recently brother James McBride, who has worked as a groundsman, has encountered substantial on-the-job racism to now challenge the policy.” The paper then went on to print his entire letter which pointed out the injustices he endured.

The third issue of the *Catalyst*, printed April 30 of that same year, continued the theme of activism,

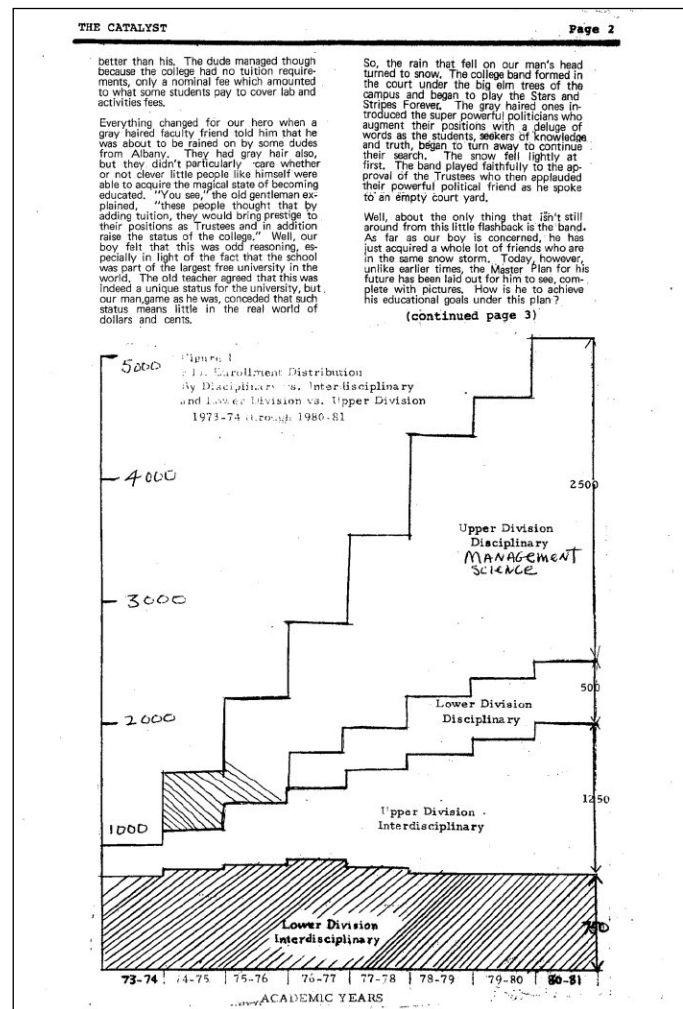
with a headline reading, “Spirit of the New World.” The story announces, “The Black Student Union of Old Westbury College will present a festival. The theme of the week is ‘Spirit of the New World’ because we would like to create a new world at Old Westbury, a world where there will be peace and love between the brothers and sisters at Old Westbury... where one of our brothers or sisters will not have any problem dealing with an aspect of the college without the help of his or her fellow brother and sisters.”

Since its launch in 1973 through today, the *Catalyst* has continued to be the voice of the students at SUNY OW. The times have changed, the footprint of the campus has changed, staff and students have changed, but the message and dedication established at *The Catalyst*’s birth has remained the same: To provide a voice to the students of SUNY Old Westbury.

**THE NIXON SCHEME**  
...the future of Old Westbury College  
By: Gene Gilliam

**ILLUSIONS**  
By: Garland Ested

**Festival de Primavera**  
Esten esperando un festival en Mayol! Alianza Latina y La Union de Estudiantes Negros presentara una semana de peliculas y conferencias. Tambien un BAILE!!! Mandelil estare aqui y La Orquesta F.M. Para todos y mas informacion sigan leyendo el CATALYST.



Cont. from page 1

## Radio Station Hopes for Installation of New Computers for the Spring

Dr. Patrick O’Sullivan. Everything was essentially already paid for. Manfredi said there were many obstacles in the process that needed to be overcome and in cooperation with ITS they were identified. The installation of software and hardware are not the only technical needs that still need to be executed.

Lomugdang said they are working diligently on this and other projects within the school. “COVID changed everything.... This is the first semester we’ve been back. It’s a big undertaking, because it’s not just the radio station we’ve been dealing with, it’s the whole campus. We have

ten other buildings on campus. Priorities are set by the college, not ITS.”

The other issue the station is facing, according to Manfredi, is the actual number of computers that are currently at the radio station. While thirty computers were approved, only twenty are currently there. “Ten of the thirty machines were reallocated to the library and (are being) used in the library starting in the spring of 2021, so, of the thirty machines we were supposed to acquire, ten are in the library being utilized, and the twenty here serve zero function right now.”

Manfredi’s goal is to have the

twenty computers up and running before the spring semester when he expects “50 plus students to be enrolled” in radio station courses. With the twenty computers currently at the station he says the only thing they are now lacking is the software and internal, network connectivity needed for them to be used by students.

Brandon Natale, a senior, said, “There are a lot of computers. It’s a shame that none of them work. Classes have been affected. This is my life. This all should have been resolved sooner.”

Manfredi said: “Due to the lack

administrative privileges on our own machines, it doesn’t help student success and meaningful learning which is just unexplainable... So, every single time I need to change hardware or software, I have to put a service ticket in and then wait when I could have probably done it in fifteen or twenty minutes myself.”

Lomugdang said, “It’s an undertaking, and to do it with Manfredi--his time is limited too.”

Manfredi said he is trying to help ITS as much as possible: “I know that, during Covid times, I’m sure that ITS is overextended and possibly understaffed.”



Cont. from page 1

## COVID UPDATE

campus regardless of vaccination status, as well as testing for students with approved exemptions.

“We’re very happy to welcome students back to campus,” said Cristine Tesoriero, director of the Student Health Center and a member of the campus COVID-19 Safety Workgroup. “Our primary focus is ensuring the health and safety of our entire campus community.”

She added: “I want to compliment the students since the overall majority are very compliant. They are very happy to be back on campus. I think everyone recognizes the importance of being able to return to in-person classes and having the opportunity to engage face-to-face rather than being in a remote environment. So, while this is our new normal, I’m encouraged by everyone’s active participation in ‘Defending the Den’ as we’ve titled our campus COVID-19 campaign.”

Tesoriero noted that although there has been “a little bit of pushback from students asking why they need to participate in the surveillance testing since they are vaccinated, I would say 99.9% of the students have been extremely cooperative. Those that do not participate in testing are issued email reminders from the Office of Student Conduct since failure to test is a violation of the College’s COVID-19 Safety Protocols.”

Some students, however, expressed concern about paying for the tests. “I think the idea was good

because as we know being vaccinated we can still get COVID and spread it,” said one student, who wished to remain anonymous. “However, receiving bills from the labs after the fact for over \$100 is a bit extreme. We aren’t choosing to do this ourselves. We wear masks, have a mandatory vaccine requirement, and now are required to get mandatory COVID testing. If I don’t have a choice, charges and payments should not be charged to us.” (Tesoriero said that any student who receives a bill from Enzo Labs should contact the Student Health Center. Students are not responsible for any bills from Enzo Labs. All testing services are charged to a student’s insurance. If the student does not have insurance, Enzo Labs will submit the claim to NYS for reimbursement.) Other students feel the testing should be more frequent. “I get the intentions, and I think it’s a good start, but I’m not sure if I agree with the timing of the testing,” said Kyle Berthoud, a senior. “There probably needs to be more frequent testing so that you can actually catch when someone gets COVID.”

Testing is located in the Student Health Annex in the Academic Village and is conducted by Enzo Clinical Labs using a PCR “short nasal swab” test. This test is not a rapid test and results will be available to participants within 2-3 business days after their test is conducted. For the remaining weeks of the fall semester, a schedule to get tested has been set

in place. The first letter of one’s last name dictates when that student should arrive for testing. Students can also opt for off campus testing but are required to provide their results to the Student Health Center. On the college’s COVID Dashboard page, students and staff can see a weekly report with COVID statistics that are updated each Friday. As of the latest report, between December 3rd and December 9th, there were twelve active student cases (campus testing results and self-reported) and four cases reported through campus testing. The school administered 413 tests in the same week with a 0.30% positive rate among all students, faculty and staff with expected on campus attendance. As of December 9th, there were no students in on-campus isolation or in on campus quarantine.

“Our positivity rate, which I’m very happy to report, is extremely low,” Tesoriero said. This surveillance testing works hand-in-hand with on campus protocols that students and staff should be following. “Everybody has been extremely cooperative with mask wearing, social distancing, and adhering to the safety guidelines which I think have been instrumental in helping keep the rates so low,” she added.

The school has set in place a color coded engagement system with a green level allowing for normal campus functions and yellow/amber with staggered classes and reduced density on campus when the positiv-

ity rate is between 2.5% and 4.9%.

If it is reported that 5% or more of the campus population tests positive for COVID-19, then the level of engagement becomes red with the campus operating in a fully remote fashion “for 14 days until the positivity rate drops to the green or yellow/amber range,” Tesoriero noted. “Surveillance testing results dictate our campus level of engagement.”

Tesoriero stresses the importance for students and staff to continue to follow the requirements. “This [surveillance testing] helps us see the rise and fall of campus positivity rates so we know our level of functioning and engagement,” she said.

Other colleges close by have set up their own testing and surveillance programs as well. Nassau Community College does not require its students to participate in surveillance testing and after they submit proof of vaccination they do not need to complete a daily COVID screening. Long Island University requires its students to use the COVID Self-Check App each day and an ID is shown to come onto the campus. Masks must also be worn in any public place on campus. Molloy College requires proof of vaccination with medical and/or religious exemptions subject to approval, and masks must be worn unless an extreme medical condition dictates otherwise.

Cont. from page 1

## SUNY Old Westbury Holds First In-Person Convocation Since the Pandemic

school year because of COVID-19-related shutdowns. He also said about Old Westbury, “We endeavor to stimulate a passion for learning.”

Quarless also referred to the university as a “vein of excellence,” and how SUNY was recognized by Money Magazine for its “quality education at an affordable price,” as well as by other institutions for its diversity. He also thanked the students in attendance, saying, “You are why we are here,” and iterating that he is looking forward to the class of 2025, when the students could take a “step forward” and “go...out there” with a “unique educational experience.”

President Timothy E. Sams stepped to the podium and spoke to the group of students, bringing up a story of when he went to Africa years ago, he saw as a “confirmation of all the things he knew about himself to be true,” as a way to inspire the stu-

dents to remember all SUNY. OW will teach them, because “everyone here has something to teach.” He ended his speech by thanking the students for choosing the college, and the staff for making it possible for students to receive a “world-class education.”

Dr. Thomas Delgiudice, who, much like President Sams, also educated the students with a story, of when he visited his brother, a wildlife biologist, far away from SUNY Old Westbury, and witnessed the birth of a cub, something that he said was completely different from when he saw the birth of his own son.

He used this specific story to stress that “evolution has brought about a species where the big head [it is born with] is key to its survival,” and that this can have a huge influence on decisions people make in life, particularly in college. He concluded his speech by telling the stu-

dents to “be honest with (themselves),” “take small steps,” “do [their] work every week,” “build (themselves) up.” He urged “critical thinking” as the key to success and “camaraderie,” not only for those at SUNY Old Westbury, but also the “people on our planet.”

Dr. Lendof congratulated the audience on their hard work. She called the convocation a “celebration of the perseverance and resilience that got (them) here,” and noting the students’ dedication, hard work, and ability to adapt, despite the circumstances of the pandemic and the challenges that some of them may be facing.

She assured the audience that not doing well in an academic environment isn’t “a sign of failure,” but rather, a sign that one may need help from their professor. She backed this up by sharing her own academic

experience, one in which she was able to graduate high school in just three years, despite not having a high likelihood to go onto college, with the help of a professor who believed in her more than she believed in herself.

Finally, Dr. Quarless concluded the proceedings by having the students in attendance take part in an exercise in which he had them look at the person they were sitting next to, introduce themselves, and say what interests them.



## SUNY Old Westbury Named Among Top Performers in Social Mobility by U.S. News & World Report

For the third consecutive year, SUNY Old Westbury ranks among the leading institutions for social mobility in the annual U.S. News & World Report Best Colleges rankings. SUNY Old Westbury ranked 11th in the publication's "2021 America's Best Colleges" this year among more than 170 universities in the Northeast.

Introduced in 2019 as part of the U.S. News Best Colleges rankings, the social mobility category considers the degree to which an institution elevates its low-income graduates to a higher standard of living. As rankings leaders such as U.S. News have adjusted their formulas in the past few years, they increasingly consider

social mobility among the leading measures of higher education success.

"Education is a powerful means to change your life," said College President Timothy Sams. "While our students do most of the heavy lifting, we at SUNY Old Westbury are proud to provide a transformative liberal arts education that helps our students own their futures."

Since its founding, Old Westbury has focused its mission to provide access and opportunity to students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Recognized as a Minority Serving Institution by the U.S. Department of Education, the College is widely rec-

ognized among the most diverse institutions in the nation with more than 60 percent of its student body made up of people of color. Approximately 40 percent of its student body were Pell Grant eligible in 2020-2021, the latest year for which complete figures are available.

"To be the socially responsible leaders our society needs, students must prepare themselves to live and work with people of differing races, creeds and cultures," said Sams. "For that reason, Old Westbury's learning environment, which offers interactions with people from all walks of life, is incredibly valuable."

## OLD WESTBURY GRADUATE AND CATALYST WRITER FINDS SUCCESS AFTER COLLEGE



By Kyle Berthoud

A former student and media and communications major at OW and *Catalyst* intern, Karina Kovac is finding success after college.

Discussing why she chose media and communications as her major at SUNY Old Westbury, Kovac said that she did so because there were "so many options" to "communicate the language (of print and images) in a more detailed way." She also cited her work with professors like John Friedman, Laura Chipley, and Karl Grossman. Kovac, who graduated in May, viewed her time at Old Westbury positively, saying that while she didn't take her education seriously, it helped make her into the journalist she eventually became. "It just transformed me. Just having...all these great minds surrounding you and being able to bounce ideas off of them was really...a once-in-a-lifetime experience...It really transformed me, because it's where I honed in my craft, and where I was just really able to expand my knowledge."

Talking about how she came into her current position at the *LI Herald*, she said that she was stuck at a crossroads at some point after having left a previous job. "It was soul-crushing, and I feel like I lost myself along the way," said Kovac. "This is not how I imagined myself to be." Three months later, however, while looking for jobs, she found an open job position at none other than the *LI Herald*.

After submitting a job application, soon after the *LI Herald* responded saying that they were interested in an interview. After an interview with five different people, she got a response just a couple days later, saying she had received the position.

"They said, 'You got the job, when do you want to start?'"

"I'm like, 'I'll see you tomorrow,'" Kovac said smiling. "Within...five days, I was able to get that job...It was luck, it was just pure luck."

At the *Herald*, Kovac enjoys two things: the incredible people she has met and the different feeling of every week at the job. "It really goes by quickly, because you're getting a story, [the] deadline is due, and then, you're already on to the next," she said.

## Teachers Rally For "Respect and Better Safety Protocols"

By Kevin C. Horton

Seeking, "COVID safety and respect for our members," SUNY Old Westbury teachers and staff gathered, signs in hand, outside the NAB building on November 16. Their main concern expressed by those gathered was, "instructors need to know if there has been [even one] case of COVID in their classrooms," according to United University Professions (UUP) President Martha Livingston. The current protocol is that if there are two positive cases of COVID diagnosed within a class the class can go remote for a period of ten days. The union's position is that the instructors should be given the option and notification if one student has been diagnosed.

UUP Vice President of Academics Peter Ikeler, said, the instructors, "don't need to know who it is, but just that there has been a case and they need the option to take the class remotely for 10 days as a result. One case is too much... we've seen with this virus that it can spread pretty quickly within a contained space."

David Tomanio, Interim Director, Human Resources said there are currently no plans to adjust the procedures currently in place. He said that when a positive case is found, contact tracing is conducted by the College and the Nassau County Department of Health to identify those close contacts who are most at risk based on a variety of factors and conditions. "Because ours is a highly vaccinated environment, the College does not subscribe to the idea that those not deemed close contacts need to take further action. However, when a second case arises involving someone not originally deemed a close contact in the same class and within a few days of the first case, we do



believe it's prudent for our academic leaders to consider other options."

Livingston, who is a Professor of Public Health at OW said, "We're not trying to say that the administration isn't concerned... obviously everyone is concerned, but we want to make sure that we are safe on the job."

Both Ikeler and Livingston attest that working and teaching remotely wasn't ideal and they prefer to be in the classroom rather than online. At the start of the pandemic, classes began to be taught remotely during the Spring of 2020. Classes continued online for the Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 semesters. "Totally not my favorite thing to do," said Livingston, "I like teaching in a room with people. I want to be in the classroom... I prefer it." Ikeler agreed, saying remote teaching is, "not ideal, it has limitations. We're not saying we only want to do remote by any means, but [during those semesters] we still did accomplish our classes. Students learned."

Livingston noted that also pres-

ent at the rally was representatives of the CSEA (Civil Service Employees) which represents the secretaries, office workers, etc. Ikeler said, many of the CSEA employees were able to work remotely during the shutdown and made it work. Since the school re-opened, no system has been put into place for those employees to continue to work from home. "We've seen throughout the pandemic that professionals and staff have worked excellently from home and kept all the important functions going for the college," Ikeler said.

Each week students, staff and faculty are e-mailed a Campus COVID report giving the status of cases on campus. On the OW web site the campus guidelines are posted reading, "SUNY Old Westbury continues to follow all public health and state guidelines for the COVID-19 pandemic as we seek to provide an engaging, dynamic educational experience for our students while maintaining the safety of our campus community as our first priority."

"Given the still fluid nature of the spread of COVID-19 and shifting federal, state and local guidance and policies, the College will continually monitor campus and local conditions. Should revisions or additions to the requirements and guidance outlined here be warranted, such information will be announced to the campus."

Ikeler said the bottom-line purpose of the rally was the members, "felt that the campus in general and admin[istration] in particular, just needed to hear that faculty and staff, in concert with students, want more respect, want autonomy and better safety protocols."



# Democracy is on its Deathbed in Nicaragua

By David Paiz-Torres

On November 7, Daniel Ortega of Nicaragua was re-elected for a fifth term as president in an election that was fraught with corruption, intimidation and fraud. President Ortega and his wife, Vice President Rosario Murrillo will now lead the Central American nation for another five years despite mass protests calling for Ortega's resignation in 2018.

This past October, Ortega was condemned by Anthony Blinken, the US Secretary of State, for "preparing a sham election devoid of credibility, by silencing and arresting opponents, and . . . attempting to establish an authoritarian dynasty," according to the Wall Street Journal. Blinken's comments came after a "wave of arrests" that saw political opponents, critics and journalists imprisoned.

Supporters of the Ortega regime may argue that Nicaragua's recent elections are proof that Nicaragua is still a functioning democracy and is not on a path toward dictatorship. However, those claims ignore the fact that there was no real opposition in the Nov. 7 elections.

According to the Wall Street Journal, the five candidates who were on the ballot were all Ortega loyalists. They were simply on the ballot to give the appearance of a democratic elec-

tion. All of the real opposition candidates have called for a boycott of the election from exile.

Ortega has also been criticized by Human Rights experts for his violent repression of protests. According to the BBC, Ortega oversaw a violent 2018 crackdown on protests after they took to the streets to demand the withdrawal of a pension reform bill and eventually, the resignation of Ortega.

Ortega did eventually withdraw the pension reform bill, but did not resign or show any signs of loosening his grip on power.

Ortega's violent crackdown on student protestors saw scores of activists imprisoned or killed for speaking out against Ortega and his government's policies, Al-Jazeera reported. The imprisonment and silencing of political opposition, critics and journalists in the leadup to any election, anywhere in the world is an unacceptable breach of democratic values and a violation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Ortega's silencing and arbitrary detention of critics prove that he is committed to ruling by force and display his complete disregard for the Universal Declaration of Human



Photo Credit: BBC

Rights.

Ortega was first elected President in 1984, in the aftermath of the 1979 ouster of the US-backed Somoza Dictatorship by the Sandista's. He was voted out of office in 1990 and after several unsuccessful bids was re-elected in 2007. He has served 3 consecutive terms since his 2007 victory and is currently tightening his grip on power.

The current political crisis in Nicaragua began in 2018 and has led to over 108,000 Nicaraguans fleeing to neighboring countries, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees reported. A Nicaraguan news

outlet, Confidencial, says that 718,000 Nicaraguans had emigrated by mid-2020.

The international community should increase its assistance to Nicaraguan refugees and asylum-seekers. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees concluded, "pandemic-related restrictions have forced many Nicaraguan refugees and asylum-seekers to go hungry, eating only once a day or sometimes not at all."

International leaders must come together and find ways to support the refugees and asylum-seekers of Nicaragua.

## Manchin Blocking Biden's Climate Plan A Step Back in the Fight Against Global Warming

By Kyle Berthoud

Over the past few decades, climate change has proven to be one of the biggest, if not the biggest obstacle that not only Americans, but the entire world faces, as it threatens not only animals and species in danger of being extinct, but also humanity.

One person who seems to recognize this is President Joe Biden, who ever since being sworn into office in January, has made it his mission to fight the ongoing threat of climate change. This includes bringing the United States back into the Paris Agreement, an agreement shared between countries around the world that looks to help mitigate global warming, and attempting to pass a \$3.5 trillion Clean Electricity Performance Program (CEPP), which, according to Slate.com, is an "ambi-

tious proposal" meant to require power companies to cut their emissions.

While Biden's efforts have, for the most part, been in good intentions for the future of our planet, not everyone seems to be on board with his plan, as the CEPP was unable to be passed due to United States Senator Joe Manchin of West Virginia blocking Biden's electricity program. Also, Manchin has reportedly worked to preserve billions of dollars in subsidies for fossil fuel companies, such as in the oil and gas industry, per The Intercept. As everyone who knows about climate change probably knows by now, fossil fuels are probably the biggest driver of the climate crisis.

So obviously, if you even care

remotely about not only the future of our planet, but also the future of humanity, you know that this move by Manchin can only mean bad things for our planet. The idea that someone in politics could even think of blocking a plan meant to help mitigate climate change, especially given the data we've been given by experts and scientists on this particular issue, is insane and completely disregards the future generations who are most at risk to the crisis (looking at you, Trump).

Politicians are supposed to protect us, and as we've seen throughout the years, they have simply failed to do so. In fact, one of the first times we actually saw someone in U.S. politics actually address the issue was when Barack Obama was command-

er-in-chief. We took a huge step backwards during the presidency of Donald Trump, as he seemed to favor the fossil fuel industries in most, if not all, of his policies, and Biden has been refused his big step forward by someone in his own political party.

If anything, politicians should take this as a lesson to be learned, and start to actually recognize the situation at hand. Because, if they don't, it will be too late. The man in charge of our country seems to be taking this issue head-on, but he still needs more help to see his vision of a brighter future come true. So, let's get out there and rally the people in office to do what they should be doing and protect the very Earth they inhabit, and have been ignoring for far too long.



# Winter Activities on Long Island

By Katie Tolentino

As our semester comes to a close, the holiday season begins. It can be tough to make that transition from finals to the winter break so if you're looking for things to get you into the holiday spirit, here's a collection of some fun activities within 30 minutes of the SUNY Old Westbury campus!

The Town of Oyster Bay Ice Skating Center at Bethpage Community Park is an indoor ice skating center. They hold 2 hour public sessions at varied times throughout the week. Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 4-6pm; Tuesdays and Thursdays 10am-12pm; Saturdays and Sundays 1-3pm and 3:30-5:30pm. Skate rentals are available for \$5 per session. The Skating Center also has programs and lessons available if you're interested.

If outdoor ice skating is more

your style, Syosset-Woodbury Community Ice Park Rink is open Friday-Sunday for 2 hour public sessions. Skates are available to rent on location. More information on both indoor and outdoor skating rinks can be found on the Town of Oyster Bay website.

Go kart racing at RPM Raceways in Farmingdale is a great option to get out of the house this winter. Not only do they have racing, but also an arcade including virtual reality games and bowling. For racing, adult and non licensed drivers must be 4'10" and at least 13 years of age. Junior drivers must be 4' and at least 6 years old. Pricing varies depending on your amount of races and games, but all information can be found at rpm-raceways.com.

Rock climbing at Island Rock in

Plainview is a great option for those looking to stay active during the cold seasons. To climb freely they do require a belaying class but with their Quick Start Package (\$48) you get the 2-hour belay class, day-pass, harness and shoe rental. The belay classes are 15 and older and require a reservation. Groupon often has discounts for the Quick Start package if you want a few bucks off! You can call or visit islandrock.com for more information.

Bayville Adventure Park is holding their annual Winter Wonderland. Tickets are \$24.75 and have add-ons like an arcade card, a Santa experience and dinner at Shipwreck Holiday Tavern. The base level ticket includes Santa's Toy Factory, Holiday Train Ride, Ice Skating, Rock Climbing, Arts and Crafts, and Character

Meet and Greets.

If you wish the spooky season would last longer, the park also has Haunted Christmas Attractions at an additional cost.

If snow ever falls this winter, there is sledding at Bethpage State Park, a timeless winter activity. The park only allows steerable sleds, and no inflatable ones. There's a vehicle entrance fee for the park that is \$8 and they request that you call the park before your arrival.

Not all activities in the winter are holiday related, and can be enjoyed throughout all of winter. There is an activity for everyone of all ages, and new memories waiting to be made with family and friends.

## A Cute and Fluffy Way to De-Stress

By Alexander Campanella

Finals will soon be coming. This is a very big week and you can feel the pressure building up. Luckily for you, there are therapy dogs to help you relax and wash your worries away.

Testing time at college can be a pretty stressful time, but SUNY Old Westbury offers activities to help those who need time to breathe de-stress.

In October, the Student Government Association (SGA) and the Division of Student Affairs hosted De-Stress Fest Week events. These included many Old Westbury athletic games, their annual Stay Up at the Union event, and lots more.

But the event that grabbed the most attention: therapy dogs.

Therapy dogs are dogs that have been trained to give people affection, comfort, and support. They are often found at hospitals, disaster areas, retirement homes, nursing homes, and in this case schools.

They are not like service dogs, which are trained to help people with physical disabilities perform tasks they struggle at, according to the American Kennel Club.

There are many benefits to having therapy dogs on campus. The Alliance of Therapy Dogs (ATD) states

that the dogs can lift people's spirits in a room, occasionally to the point of laughter.

"A visiting therapy dog promotes greater self-esteem and focused interaction with other students and teachers," said the ATD when describing the social benefits. These benefits can be very helpful in a college setting, especially around mid-terms or finals week.

When describing how therapy dogs have been used in college the ATD said, "A growing number of colleges across the country offer pet therapy programs that bring therapy dogs to students that need a break from the pressures of school. Many college students are living away from home for the first time and appreciate the comfort brought by therapy dogs."

The Division of Student Affairs who ran the event with the SGA was reached out to for comment about the therapy dog event on campus but gave no response to questions that were asked.

A student commented on an Instagram post about De-Stress Fest Week, which showed the therapy dogs. "I remember when the pups would come on campus," she said. At this time, the Instagram post has



gained about three hundred and forty-three likes.

The therapy dogs will be brought back to campus. When exactly? There is no official date yet. But SUNY Old Westbury encouraged users on its Instagram post to download the Panther Connect app to keep an eye out for the fun and relaxing event.

"In case you missed it and want to know the next time these adorable pups will be on campus, download the Panther Connect app!" said the

campus.

Finals weeks can be very difficult times for college students, especially this year with a pandemic weighing us down. But our cute and fluffy best friends on campus will help give us a bone to pick with stress and anxiety.



# Why We Love Christmas Movies So Much

By Kyle Berthoud

Well, Christmas is almost here, and, for all you movie fans out there, you know what that means! Christmas movie time! Every single year, we can always count on sitting on the couch by the fireplace, and watching some holiday classics.

However, some may be asking: What exactly is the appeal behind these movies? While there are a lot of Christmas movies out there that are considered holiday classics, some others don't work for a good amount of people, including *Christmas with the Kranks*, *Deck the Halls*, and *Surviving Christmas*.

While it's true that Christmas movies aren't exactly high art most of the time, they're just fun to watch because they capture the feeling of the holidays. From Santa Claus to elves to stockings to Christmas decorations, these films really capture what the holiday season is. They can also bring families together and give them a reason to get together on Christmas, just in case the actual feeling of being with family isn't enough.

There are some Christmas movies out there that are bonkers, enjoyable, or just really great movies in general, so allow me to sit down and give you some personal recommendations of mine, based on what I find myself watching and enjoying every holiday season, that you may enjoy as well:



**Christmas with the Kranks:** Yes, I know I just mentioned this movie as one that doesn't work for a lot of people, but I actually find this movie to be pretty enjoyable, and my mom and I watch it every Christmas. Tim Allen and Dan Aykroyd give pretty funny performances, and, while the premise is ridiculous, there are actually some moments that will make you laugh.

**National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation:** One heck of a wild ride with hilarious moments and lots of Vacation-isms that are sure to satisfy lots. If you want to see a movie where a turkey disintegrates, a squirrel jumps out of a Christmas tree and is chased around a house by a dog, before attacking a woman, an old man goes flying from an explosion, and Clark Griswold attacks Christmas decorations in a fit of rage, this is right up your alley.

**How the Grinch Stole Christmas:** All three versions of the Grinch are worth watching, in my opinion. The 1960s special with Boris Karloff is cute, sweet, and has a very heartwarming ending. The 2000 feature film with Jim Carrey, while decidedly divisive, is visually stunning and features a very funny performance from Carrey himself as the green grump. And, the 2018 animated film is once again very sweet, cute, well-animated, and has endearing characters at its center.

**Home Alone 1 and 2:** Sure to be a holiday classic for many, the first two Home Alone movies are endlessly hilarious and feature great work from Macaulay Culkin, Joe Pesci, and Daniel Stern. The first movie is insanely quotable ("Keep the change, ya filthy animal!", "You guys give up, or are you thirsty for more?" "Why the hell are you dressed like a chicken?"), has a great soundtrack, and features a surprisingly heartwarming finale that you are sure to remember for years after watching it for the first time. The second film ups the ante, changing the setting to big, spacious New York City, features pretty nice supporting performances from Tim Curry and Brenda Fricker, and has everything that fans of the first film are sure to enjoy.

**Santa Claus is Comin' to Town:** A Rankin-Bass special for the ages, this cute claymation special has great voice acting, likable characters, catchy songs, a surprisingly funny villain, and is sure to give you that warm Christmas feeling, even when the darker tone of its story kicks in. Also, try not to fall in love with Topper the penguin.

**Miracle on 34th Street:** This is a warm-hearted Christmas story for all ages. The story takes place between Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day in New York City, and focuses on the effect of a department store Santa Claus who claims to be the real Santa. The film has become a perennial Christmas favorite.

**Jingle All the Way:** Yes, it's a very silly movie, but it can actually be pretty funny. Arnold Schwarzenegger in a Christmas movie is probably all you need, but, in my opinion, Sinbad steals the show with a very funny performance as Myron the mailman. And, for fans of Arnold's more action-oriented movies, he fights a bunch of Santa Clauses in a warehouse at one point. You're welcome...

**A Christmas Story:** A holiday classic so much so that it runs on TNT and TBS all Christmas Day every year, the story of Ralphie and his desire for a Red Ryder BB gun is funny, quotable ("You'll shoot your eye out, kid!", "Oh, fudge!", "He looks like a deranged Easter Bunny"), and features memorable moments that are sure to stay in your stocking years after watching it for the first time. From the pink bunny suit to the pounding of school bully Scut Farkus, and the heartwarming message that manages to seep through even some of the meaner moments, this is a holiday classic that should satisfy any Christmas lover.

**It's a Wonderful Life:** Perhaps the Christmas movie with the most uplifting ending on this list, Frank Capra's *It's a Wonderful Life* takes a nice look at how important life is, and how much of an impact one can have on those around them, even if they don't notice it. It teaches a great lesson about life, and is sure to lift your spirits, especially for those going through troubling times during the holidays.

**Elf:** My personal all-time favorite Christmas movie, *Elf* features a very charming and likable character at its center in Will Ferrell's Buddy the Elf. All you need is one watch of this movie, and you're sure to be rooting for Buddy. Ferrell is just that magnificent in the role, and he sells the naivete of a childlike elf to perfection. Also, his interactions with the more cynical world of New York City represent the best this movie has to offer. Like *Home Alone*, it's also insanely quotable ("He's an angry elf", "I like to whisper too", "I'm in a store and I'm singing!", "Son of a nutcracker!"), and features pretty funny side performances from James Caan and Peter Dinklage to boot. Please check this movie out if you haven't already. You'll thank me later, trust me!

And, those are my Christmas movie recommendations. If you are looking for some nice Christmas entertainment, these should be right up your alley. I hope you check out at least one of the movies at some point, and that you all have a very Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays!



## After Seeing *Ghostbusters Afterlife*

By Kevin Horton

Days after seeing *Ghostbusters: Afterlife* I realized I was disappointed... Oh, not in the movie that I enjoyed. My disappointment was in myself and the person I went to see the movie with.

Here is what happened: The movie ended with a scene that was so great, people in the theater, myself included, clapped with delight. Then, as the well-known theme song began to echo from the sound system and the credits began to roll, people instinctively gathered their coats. Feeling the movie had come to a satisfactory conclusion, we, along with our fellow movie goers, got up from our seats, stretched, nodded to each other that we enjoyed the movie and exited the theater in darkness as the credits rolled. We enjoyed the movie but at this point we were done. Besides, the massive bucket of sugary-syrup-soft-drink I had consumed began to request departure from my kidneys and I needed to oblige.

So, what exactly led to my disappointment days later? No, it wasn't a departure from a diet of popcorn and sugar. It was the fact that I learned that we missed two end credits sequences that many fans of the franchise are radiant over! These shorts, as RadioTimes.com notes are, "brimming with secret cameos and sequel

hints long after the main story has ended." Ugh. So, my message to you is a warning, a plea, to not make the same mistake I made, ignore the call of nature and remain in your seat.

Okay, with my warning and whining out of the way, let me speak of the actual movie and its ties to the original franchise. The original *Ghost Busters* movie was released in 1984 as a supernatural comedy written by Dan Aykroyd and Harold Ramis (both also starred in the film). The film became a cultural phenomenon and has been viewed and enjoyed by many. The original film starred Bill Murray as Peter Venkman, Dan Aykroyd as Ray Stantz, Harold Ramis as Egon Spengler and Ernie Hudson as Winston Zeddemore. The reason I recount the original cast is because they all make an appearance (to the delight of the audience) at the end of the *Afterlife*.

With the amazing success of the franchise which included a sequel and a television series, and massive merchandising, it's a wonder, yet a great relief, that they didn't just recast and re-enact the original script. Instead, *Afterlife* is a direct follow-up to the original film bringing in the next generation of fans and characters. *Afterlife* is directed by Jason Reitman, the son of Ivan Reitman



Photo Credit: Ghostbusters.com

who directed the original two films, *Ghost Busters* and *Ghost Busters II*. Jason co-wrote the *Afterlife* screenplay with Gil Kenan and does a great job at paying homage to the original storyline while creating a new, interesting one.

Thirty two years after the original film we are introduced to a single mother "Callie" played by Carrie Coon and her children "Trevor," played by Finn Wolfhard, and "Phoebe," played by Mckenna Grace, as they move from their life in the city to a broken-down farmhouse in the middle of nowhere, which Callie's estranged father owned and died in. Her father, we learn, was "Egon Spengler," the former Ghostbuster originally played by Harold Ramis, who died in 2014.

The movie pays homage to the original film with the kids discovering many tools and Ghostbusting para-

phernalia from the original film true fans will recognize. Included in the classics is the Ectomobile, the 1959 Cadillac ambulance conversion used in the original film.

While the film has its Hollywood stars including Paul Rudd who plays a science teacher named "Gary Gruberson" it is the child actors that thrive in the movie. Phoebe and her friend "Podcast" played by Logan Kim are perfect in the leading roles delivering one liners and showing true character.

*Ghostbusters: Afterlife* is definitely a film to see... from beginning to end... yes, all the way to the end of the credits! The film is a delight in its own, with a fantastic cast that will keep new and original fans entertained. Original film fans will delight in the nostalgia while new fans will find delight in the new story.

### BOOK REVIEW

## *Cold War Long Island*

By Katie Tolentino

*Cold War Long Island* authored by SUNY Old Westbury's very own Professor Karl Grossman along with co-author Christopher Verga discusses how Nassau and Suffolk counties were home to secret nuclear missile sites and classified government laboratories. To my surprise, Long Island was home to hubs for military technology, government laboratories, and much more. As the authors state, "World War II birthed modern Long Island, but the Cold War defined the region."

The authors reveal how towns like Lake Success, Hicksville, and Levittown had hidden histories. Grossman and Verga interviewed witnesses who provided first-hand accounts of Long Island during the Cold War. The book follows the island's history from the 1930s to the early 2000s examining its role in the

Cold War and afterwards.

As the publisher notes: "By the close of World War II, Long Island had transformed from a rural corridor to a suburban behemoth. The region became a nationally recognized manufacturing and innovation hub for the military and possessed one of the fastest-growing middle-class populations in the country. But behind the manicured lawns and cookie-cutter cape homes, locals were adapting to new Cold War conflicts and facing anxieties of a potential nuclear fallout."

Furthermore, "Secret nuclear missile sites and classified government laboratories were established on the outskirts of Suffolk County, often among unaware residents. Soviet spy rings traversed across the island, seeking to steal industry secrets and monitor military installations."

*Cold War Long Island* is highly readable and informative. I recommend it to all lovers of history or nonfiction who want to gain insight to the historical development of Long Island.

Along with being a professor at SUNY Old Westbury, Karl Grossman has authored other books, including *Cover Up: What You Are Not Supposed to Know About Nuclear Power* and *The Wrong Stuff: The Space Program's Nuclear Threat to our Planet*. For thirty years he has hosted a nationally-aired TV program, *Enviro Close-Up with Karl Grossman*, and he has received multiple honors for his work in journalism. Christopher Verga is an instructor at Suffolk County Community College and is the author of *Saving Fire Island from Robert Moses* and other works.

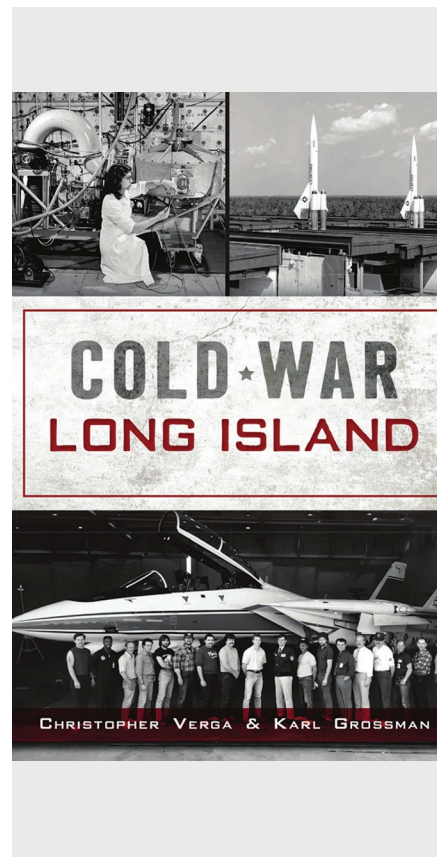


Photo Credit: Amazon



# Taylor Swift's "All Too Well" Breaks Record for Longest Number One Song

By Kelly Benatti

Taylor Swift's rerecord of her album *Red* has been all the craze and talk lately. The album, now titled *Red (Taylor's Version)*, was released on November 12th and contained thirty tracks. The album featured collaborations with artists Ed Sheeran, Phoebe Bridgers, Chris Stapleton, and Gary Lightbody. This album is a part of Swift's process of re-recording and releasing her first six studio albums, in order to own them herself following the situation where the music had been bought out from under her. Swift speaks about the importance of owning her own music writing in an Instagram post "Artists should own their own work for so many reasons, but the most screamingly obvious one is that the artist is the only one who really knows that body of work."

Although the entire album has been receiving praise and charting well, one specific song has been making history. "All Too Well" is a track from the original *Red* album that has been a fan favorite for years. It's an emotional track in which Swift sings about the iconic relationship

with Jake Gyllenhaal and the intricate details of the feelings that came along with the ups and the downs of it all. The song is infamous among many for mentioning the scarf that Jake had never given back to Taylor.

So why is this breakup track so important to fans old and new? Years ago, Swift revealed that the original version of the song pre-release was over ten minutes long, but of course she was advised to cut it down so that it could make the original *Red* album release (October 22, 2012). Since then, the fandom has been begging for its release, and when Swift announced that she would be putting out *Red (Taylor's Version)*, she also announced that she would be putting out the original and full ten minute version of the song.

Since the album release, "All Too Well" has been doing incredibly well. So well, in fact, that it has officially broken the record for Longest Number 1 Song. According to Gary Trust from Billboard, the record comes from the fact that the track is the longest song to reach the spot by



Photo Credit: NBC

more than a minute, beating out the previous record holder "American Pie" by Don McLean. "American Pie" had been holding the record for almost fifty years.

McLean commented on the loss of his record according to Billboard, "Let's face it, nobody ever wants to lose that No. 1 spot, but if I had to lose it to somebody, I sure am glad it was

[to] another great singer/songwriter such as Taylor."

Swift thanked the fans for the success of the track, sending out a tweet saying "I'm so proud of this song and the memories I have with you guys because of it, You truly chose this one and now you did this?! I'm floored—a 10-minute song is at the top of the Hot 100."

## All Too Well The Short Film

By Julia Becchinelli

Taylor Swift has taken a large leap from songwriting and performing to tackle the task of production and directing. On November 12, Swift re-released her album titled "Red." In June of 2019, mainstream media reported that Scooter Braun acquired the American record label Big Machine, which in turn gave him the ownership of Swift's masters.

Swift decided to promptly re-record her early albums, and in turn release never-before-heard songs that she says are "From the Vault." A popular song of Swift's that was originally released in 2012 is titled "All Too Well" which soon became a classic, even now. She released a ten-minute version of this song that fans have never heard. And along came a fifteen-minute short film with it. This was surprising to fans as Swift has never produced something more than a music video.

This short film stars 30-year-old actor Dylan O'Brien and 19-year-old

actress Sadie Sink. The meaning behind the film can date back to 2010-2011 when Swift dated actor Jake Gyllenhaal. There were issues in the relationship which can easily be detected in the "All Too Well" short film.

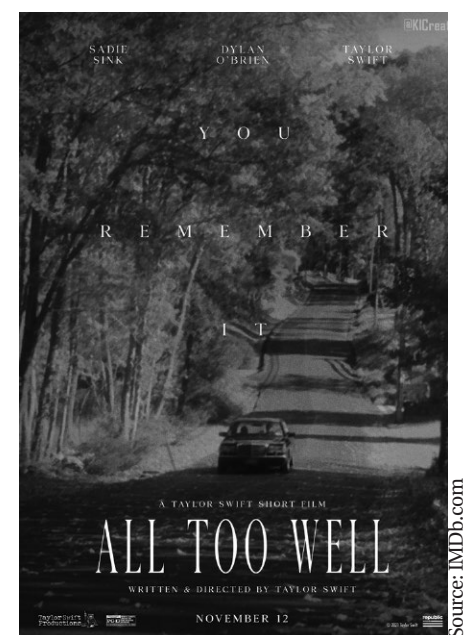
The acting by O'Brien and Sink in this short film was impeccable. Although it was a sort of music video to go along with the lyrics of the song, there were breaks with dialogue. The two actors pursued their parts with such emotion that you seem to forget they are acting.

The amount of attention that was given to small and seemingly unnoticeable details throughout the short film was phenomenal. It is commonly known amongst Taylor Swift fans that Swift and Gyllenhaal dated when he was 29 and she was 20. This large age gap between the couple caused issues that are mentioned within the song; but Swift went even further and chose to cast O'Brien and Sink

because they are 11 years apart, which is similar to the age gap in her past relationship. This small yet important detail shows the amount of thought that went into the production and casting, making it just that much better for fans.

Another hint made by Swift to ensure that fans knew this song was about Gyllenhaal was seen in the credits. She listed the character of "Him Later," which is the male character in a scene that takes place a few years ahead, as "Jake Lyon." Although Sink, who plays Taylor Swift's character, never even says the name 'Jake Lyon' throughout the short film, this was a nice touch and made fans go crazy.

Overall, "All Too Well: The Short Film" was very well executed and has reached an astonishing 51 million views on YouTube in less than a month. Swift also broke several streaming records with the re-release of her album *Red (Taylor's Version)*.



Source: IMDb.com

This album became the most-streamed album in a day on Spotify by a female artist with more than 90 million global streams. This outperformed the previous record which was Swift's album *Folklore* in 2020 with about 80 million streams.



# The Beatles: Get Back

By Laura Francavilla

After months of waiting, Beatles fans were finally able to watch the new Beatles documentary, *The Beatles: Get Back*, which started on November 25 on Disney+. This documentary is split into three separate episodes all released the day after the previous one. The documentary is made with over 60 hours of previously unseen footage and 150 hours of unheard audio during the band's Get Back sessions in January 1969. The series is directed by Lord of the Rings director Peter Jackson.

The documentary works hand-in-hand with the accompanying book, *The Beatles: Get Back*, which was released in October. The documentary was made from footage filmed for director Michael Lindsay-Hogg's 1970 film, *Let It Be*. Along with this footage, the beginning of episode one gives a brief history of The Beatles year by year up until 1969.

Episode one of *Get Back* shows footage of The Beatles at Twickenham Studios attempting to collaborate on new music for a new album and live performance. From the start, it is clear to see that the band is struggling to come up with new material. However, as the episode progresses, the band comes up with new lyrics and song ideas. However, they often clash over the location for their live performance, as well as how certain songs should sound.

Episode one ends with George Harrison abruptly leaving the band, with episode two picking up from there. In the beginning of episode two, viewers see only McCartney and Starr show up to rehearsal, with Lennon arriving later. An interesting bit of episode two is the secretly recorded private conversation between Paul and John regarding George's leaving the group and the band dynamics. "You've always been boss," McCartney said to

Lennon.

Showing that the band is willing to work together, they convince George to return and agree to change how they've been handling the Get Back sessions, as well as abandon the live TV concert. Episode two also sees the band move from Twickenham Studios to the basement of the Apple building, where they will now record their new songs with Harrison returning. There is a notable change in the band's demeanor after these events occur, and everyone seemed to be more engaged in the sessions.

Episode two ends with the band's decision to perform an unannounced concert on the roof of the Apple building after other locations fell through. Part three of the series brings the Get Back sessions to a close, and begins with a wholesome moment between George and Ringo working on the Abbey Road song "Octopus's Garden." Heather McCartney, Linda McCartney's daughter, and Paul's later adopted daughter, is also present, spreading joy and engaging each Beatle in adorable childlike conversations and activities.

While the documentary had nice moments such as these, other moments, such as John Lennon's future wife Yoko Ono screaming into a microphone were less than ideal to see or hear in the middle of all the talent on screen.

Many well-known songs are performed in the series as the band is creating them. Some of these include "Let It Be," "Get Back," "The Long and Winding Road," and "Don't Let Me Down," among many others. Famous Beatles friends, confidants, and collaborators are also seen throughout the documentary including George Martin, Billy Preston, and Mal Evans, as well as others.

There are some sweet moments caught on film, such as Paul McCartney sitting with his then girlfriend, later wife, Linda McCartney (née Eastman) in an intimate conversation that was not picked up by microphones. Other scenes show John Lennon dancing with Yoko Ono as the rest of the band plays music. Maureen Starkey, wife of Ringo Starr, also makes an appearance as does George Harrison's wife Pattie Harrison (née Boyd).

A definite highlight of the whole series was the famous final concert on January 30. This was the final performance The Beatles gave as a group, a surprise to passers by on the street below. Fans of all ages can be seen climbing onto the nearby rooftops and crowding the streets for a glimpse at the biggest band, showing just how historic this moment was. It was nearly stopped by the police, but fortunately was not and they could continue playing. "I'm all in favor of it!" one man said of the concert to the filmmakers.

The concert is an important part of the documentary and Beatles history. No one had seen them perform live to an audience since 1966, and many probably thought this was a new beginning for The Beatles. "I reckon they give a bit of life to London," one older onlooker said to the camera. Sadly, The Beatles would never perform to a crowd together again.

Looking back 50 years to the downfall of arguably the world's greatest band is an interesting experience. The intimate nature of the footage and open discussions about the future of the band makes one feel as though they are sitting in the studio with The Beatles. Fans can finally be a part of the tense, fascinating, and often comical sessions in Twickenham Studios and Apple Studios. Despite the obvious tension, the members are able to joke

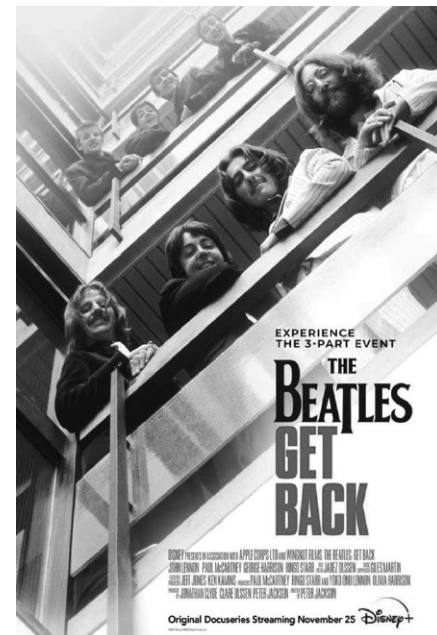


Photo Credit: IMDb

with one another and work together, changing the idea of what really went down all those years ago. "It's going to be such an incredibly comical thing 50 years time..." McCartney said.

Paul McCartney summed up the new documentary better than any other person could. "For me it's lovely because it brings back to me; my mates, my fallen heroes, you know who aren't here," he said in a speech posted to his Instagram account from the day of the London Premiere of the film. "... It's great to see them on film—to be able to study them... I love it... I love The Beatles, great group."

At the end of the rooftop concert, John Lennon famously quips "I'd like to say thank you on behalf of the group and ourselves, and I hope we've passed the audition."

Yes, John. I think you guys passed.

## LIFESTYLE

# Dating In The Pandemic

By Jonathan Smith

The Covid-19 surge flipped the world of dating upside down. Unlike the traditional usual after-work drinks, daters were forced to experiment with virtual dating with masked walks. All forms of physical contact, including a hug, needed a long-term conversation first to assess the partner's condition beforehand. Several daters self-quarantine for months before having indoor meals with their counterparts. The procedure took a lot of work and thought, which created a set of frameworks that has since altered the world of dating for the most part.

The fact that Covid-19 is spread through saliva droplets prompted doctors and researchers to advise singles to avoid physical contact through greetings. The act of kissing practiced by individuals while dating has remained a threat to contracting the virus. David Cox, the writer of BBC the life project, explains that

many people who feel more concerned about the risk of contracting Covid-19 transform their dating approaches as a self-protection mechanism. For instance, people have adopted online dating apps and video chatting due to social restrictions and severe consequences associated with the pandemic.

According to a BBC work-life article, a behavioral scientist known as Logan Ury admits that as a director of the Hinge dating app, she has noticed a transformation in how people approach online dating. Before the Covid-19 pandemic, individuals could utilize the app to move from one partner to another constantly. However, due to the pandemic's social restrictions, people began spending more time in the virtual world trying to get to know each other before physical meetings.

The article suggests that the pandemic has added a sense in the value

of online dating. After a long period of video calls and chats, the individuals finally meet in person, making the little time they share physically to possess more meaning and importance in their lives. Moreover, people have gained more knowledge of what they are looking for in life partners because of the introspection that most individuals have experienced during Covid-19 lockdowns. People have had enough time to think about when the lockdowns would end and when the subsequent lockdown would begin, which has made them have a more intentional way of dating.

The Covid-19 pandemic prompted the long-term prospects of most dating individuals. This resulted from lockdowns in most countries, which left long-term daters to spend longer without face-to-face bonding. During this time, people started valuing the presence of each other as loneliness

was the order of the day. Communication became essential, and for those couples who were dating and fell victims to the Covid-19 virus, their relationship became more robust after surviving the deadly infection.

Strategies such as video calling among dating partners are here to stay even when the situation normalizes. People will have to engage in knowing individuals via the virtual world before physical dating. Health care personnel acknowledge that dating is essential, and a meeting is also crucial. Still, if individuals must continue with physically meeting, they need to adhere to the safety precautions protocols such as wearing face masks as well as social distancing. Thus with the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic, the dating strategies have changed, with many people embracing technology to assist them in their dating behavior.



# A Letter to my Daughter

By Katherine Birmingham

Dear Ella,

I hope you value family. The people who raise you will always be by your side in times of happiness and in times of hardship. Family will always be your foundation, your identity, and your home. In time, you will come to learn that family is responsible for teaching you these key values and many more.

I hope you value health. I believe that this is the single most important value in life. Without a healthy body and mind, nothing else will fall into place and the balance of life will always be off-center. Your health should always come first. Do not be ashamed of taking the necessary steps towards cultivating a healthy life.

I hope you value forgiveness. With forgiveness comes the wisdom to know when to forgive. It may take time, but you must learn to forgive others. There will also come a time in life where you will have to forgive yourself, for the poor choices you make and the mistakes that may follow. Holding in your emotions will only hurt yourself. Choose forgiveness instead.

I hope you value creativity. Create art, whether renovating an old piece of furniture, creating a scrap book or painting a landscape. Be creative, be inspired, and be bold. Never let your lack of confidence or insecurities hinder your creativity.

I hope you value the little things in life. Cherish a simple hug, a kind word, a warm smile. Never hesitate to try new foods, listen to foreign music, and dance like no one is watching. Never take the little things in life for granted.

I hope you value nature. Enjoy the wind blowing against the leaves, find solace in the songs of the birds in the early morning, and marvel at the ocean and mountains. Drink in the sunrise and sunset. Admire the myriad of colors. Find comfort in the splendors of every season. Live in the moment and cherish nature's beauty.

I hope you value travel. Traveling gives you wisdom. Traveling lends perspective. Embrace the diversity of cultures, ask questions, continuously learn, voraciously read. Allow your experiences and travel to lend understanding and wisdom.

I hope you value time. Take the time to be in the moment. Often, we look to the future, focus on our goals, dream about our aspirations, and forget to enjoy the present.

I hope you value friends. Place

your faith in friends. They will be your support system. Friends will not judge you. They will love you unconditionally, and they will share many of the same values. Friendship, you will learn, may come and go, but true friends will stand the test of time. Value friends who support you not only in the best of times, but also friends who stand beside you at your darkest hours.

I hope you value yourself. You can accomplish anything. You have the tools, support, and confidence to set goals, pursue them, and achieve them. Dream big. You are the only thing standing in your way. Value yourself.

I hope you value adventure. Although you may have a plan in mind, do not be afraid to be spontaneous, be bold, be brave. Allow serendipity to intervene and sweep you off your feet. Allow yourself to be adventurous, without any plan, guide, or instruction manual.

I hope you value moments. Some moments you can never get back. Value the moments, where you can stop time and just watch a beautiful moment, whether good or bad. Learn from these moments.

I hope you value growth. I am referring to your growth and development. Be mindful that who you are now is not always the same person you once were. Take the time to notice the changes in yourself. Be proud and value personal growth.

I hope you value love. Love for everything. Love for your hobbies, love for your friends and family, and love for the partner that you choose. Love and respect go hand-in-hand.

I hope you value understanding. Try your best to understand not only other people, but also yourself. Understand what holds you back, and what keeps you moving forward. Often this is friends and family, or your own insecurities. Understand that everyone is different, people may not have the same values as you, but you must accept, respect, and be understanding of them.

I hope you value honesty. There are different types of honesty. Sometimes we are untruthful for selfish reasons; this could be for attention or a way to get ahead. Sometimes we are dishonest to protect others, and tell white lies. Other times we are not honest with ourselves.

This is where blame can come into play. Sometimes we blame others for our problems which is easy. Instead, value honest and look-

ing within yourself. Be honest, seek the truth, and look inwards for answers.

I hope you value kindness. Be kind to others and accepting of their kindness. An act of kindness can be in the tiniest of forms. No matter how big or small an act, kindness is always appreciated. Take the time to tell someone how you feel about them, give them a hug, send them a card, or make them a cup of coffee. No matter how it is demonstrated, kindness is vital to yourself and to others.

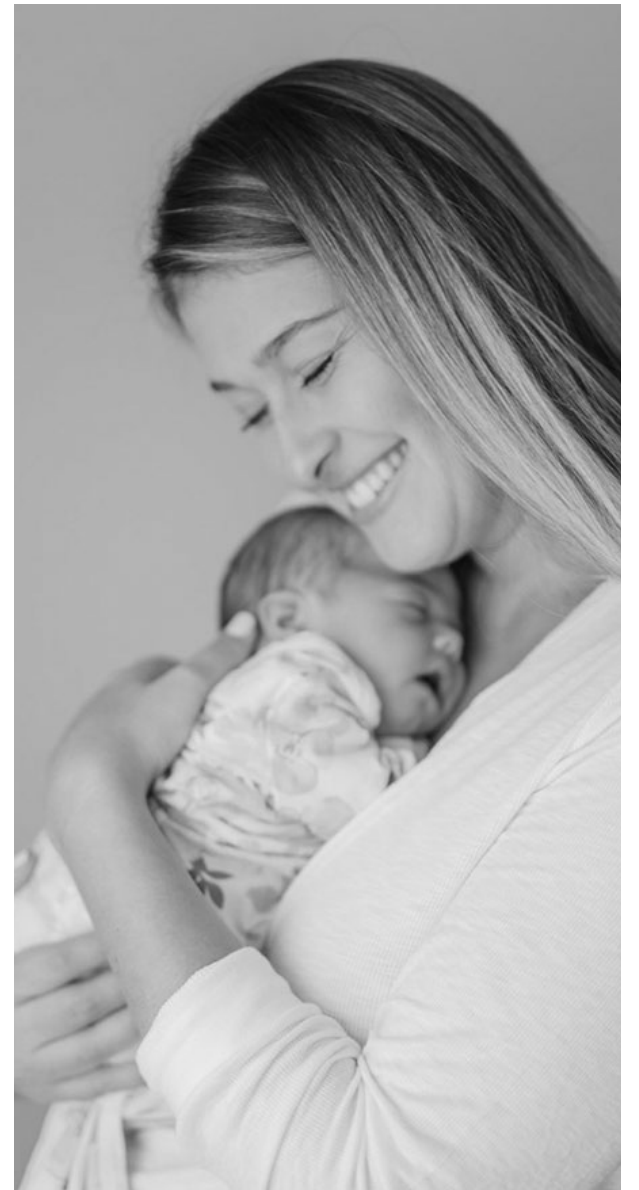
I hope you value independence. Believe in yourself and that you can achieve anything on your own. Have the strength and confidence to reach for your goals, without depending or leaning on anyone else. Try to not to confuse support and dependency. These are two separate things. Do not be afraid to ask for help when times are rough but remember that you are the key to your own success.

I hope you value wealth. Be grateful for the money you have. It does not matter how much it is, understand how fortunate you are to have all that you have. Your wealth gives you flexibility and should empower your life. Still, understand that most live a life with none.

I hope you value freedom. Know that you can choose your own path and express yourself however you want. You have the freedom to pursue any choice you want to make.

Your values will change throughout the course of your life. Some things that were once of critical importance will not be priorities anymore. You are the only one who can decide what you value and determine the values you choose to live by, there is no wrong answer.

Life is all about balance and harmony. If you focus on only one of your values it usually, is at the detriment of the others. When you are out of balance; greed, selfishness, insecurity, and ego can take over. Unfortu-



nately, this will happen, but remember to catch yourself and that there is always time to make changes and adjust course. Life is always up and down; it is up to you to try not to go too far either way.

In sharing these thoughts with you, my beautiful daughter, I want you to know that I am still learning. I am still changing, growing, and learning to value and appreciate more. I do not think it ever stops. Continue learning from your surroundings and never lose your drive to achieve and grow. Ask questions and be curious, it is the only way to build wisdom.

Remember my sweet girl, knowledge is power and wisdom is built over time. F. Scott Fitzgerald wrote, "I hope you live a life you're proud of. And if you find that you're not, I hope you have the strength to start all over again."

Love,  
Mommy



# Hey, SUNY Old Westbury! Give me a Sign

By Kevin C. Horton

Hey, SUNY Old Westbury! Give me a sign... any sign... big... small... on the door... any sign at all!... let me explain my plea.

I'm a new SOW student in the MALS program seeking my masters. I started last year with all the classes online. This semester is my first year on campus and I approached my first day with anticipation along with some expected trepidation.

I live near the SUNY Old Westbury Campus and I have frequented the campus's picturesque trails and even used the expansive parking lots to teach my wife how to drive a stick-shift car. For these reasons, I figured I knew the campus and felt that I was familiar with all its twists and turns. My first class on campus was to start at 4:45pm. At 3:45pm I turned off of Route 107 and onto campus, confident that I would find my class with ample time.

As I traversed the entrance drive, I looked down at my schedule, it read "NAB- New Academic Building." I slowed all the green wood road signs, reading what I could as seemingly all-knowing fellow students whizzed

by me quite possibly cursing, "dumb freshmen."

As I passed the last green sign, still not seeing anything about a "New Academic Building" I realizing I was now heading off another side of campus- time was ticking by. I started to talk to the dashboard of my car, "Well it obviously can't be called, new academic center forever... did I miss a building called, 'academic center?'" The dashboard, not surprisingly, didn't answer my question though its analog clock picked at my anxiety with every sweep of its hands.

I decided driving through the woods of the back campus wasn't going to get me anywhere close to the academic buildings. BTW, do you know there are horse stables on the far side?... There are, I found those! They are really beautiful- but clearly not the "New Academic Building." I backtracked and decided to park in one of the parking lots near some seemingly classroom-like buildings. Clutching my schedule in my hand, scanning each building, hoping for a beacon of a sign, I found nothing. I approached a student and asked with

desperation my question of the day, "do you know where the 'New Academic Building' is?" Her response summed up my situation with great accuracy, "Oh, my-friend, you are sorely in the wrong place." She then proceeded with great care as if she was talking to a baby (or a typical guy with clearly no directional sense) turn-by-turn how I was to get back to the academic area of campus. "Sorry my directions are a little confusing," she said with a shrug, "but that's the way." I thanked her and headed to my car. I preceded to pass more buildings. Still, none of them said, "New Academic Building" but I decided to park in one of the bigger lots and walk (run) to the buildings, time was wasting. I was about to be that student running into the classroom dazed-and-confused on the first day, surely setting a bad first impression on my new professor.

I started to ask around again- anyone I passed- obviously desperate, I wanted someone to grab my hand and say, "this way" and drag me as if it were Pre-K.

I was pointed from building to

building and even through buildings. At last, I made it to a brick building that looked fairly "New." I spotted someone that looked like a professor, my words halted with my heavy breathing. "That's it, right there," he answered, pointing at the building. I took his word for it... yet my head instinctively panned up in search for letters at the top- Nothing. I looked to the right of the door, nothing. I looked to the left of the door, still nothing. I even looked for a piece of paper taped on the door telling myself, "Well, it is the new academic center... maybe it's so new they didn't get a chance to put up a real sign so simply hand printed one..." Nope, still nothing, but I went in.

Once inside I realized I was in the right place. It was clearly, state-of-the-art, and I was clearly in the "New" Academic Building... but I'd like to backtrack to the direction of this piece: A simple plea from a new student, "give me a sign... any sign... big... small... on the door... any sign at all..."

# Vaccine Mandates: For the Greater Good

By Alexander Campanella

A vaccine mandate is in place. Even with the mandate, thousands of New York City (NYC) municipal workers defied the mandate and are now on unpaid leave.

According to a very recent article from *ABC News*, Mayor Bill de Blasio said in a statement that an estimated nine thousand city workers were put on unpaid leave. The workers called out sick in an apparent protest over the requirement.

Even with the vaccine's proven effectiveness against COVID, resisters still refuse to get vaccinated.

"About nine in ten city workers covered by the mandate have gotten vaccinated and there have been no disruptions to city services as a result of staffing shortages," said de Blasio to reporters at his daily news briefing. *ABC News* states that New York has more than three hundred thousand city employees.

Despite the protest, de Blasio has maintained a positive outlook for NYC, thanking workers who decided to get vaccinated. "I want to thank everyone who got vaccinated," de Blasio said. "Thank you for getting vaccinated. Thank you for doing the right thing. Thank you for moving us forward."

In NYC, many people, including

workers have put up a strong and formidable resistance to receiving vaccinations that city officials are fighting.

According to *ABC News*, as of October 31, "One in four of the city's uniformed firefighters still hadn't gotten a first dose of the vaccine, as required. About one in six police personnel and one in six sanitation workers were still unvaccinated."

From a personal standpoint, these vaccine mandates are needed. It is true that they can pose an inconvenience, such as not allowing people into certain restaurants unless they show proof of vaccination (vaccination cards). These inconveniences, however, would be for the greater good. They would help all of us in the long run.

I find the debate about inconveniences pertaining to vaccines to be similar to the discussion involving masks.

Resisters do have genuine reasons for not getting a COVID vaccine such as an allergic reaction to the ingredients and autoimmune conditions.

There are, however, myths such as the one that vaccines in general do not work, when in fact they are the reason smallpox worldwide has been eradicated.



Photo Credit: Associated Press

There is also the myth that COVID vaccines are causing variants when it is really the virus itself that produces them.

More of these debunked myths can be found on this article for *Healthline*, a provider of health-related information.

In addition, fierce resisters like to bring up their freedom of choice. While it is true people can choose not to get the vaccine, their choice does

not protect them from the consequences. For example, do not expect to be hired for some jobs, or expect to be fired from your place of work for not following the mandate.

It is important for all of us to do our part so we can fight this pandemic, make sure the virus cannot get more dangerous than it already is, and bring life back to normalcy.



# My Best Pal

By Mariam Olowa

Two peas in a pod, that's what they called us. There was no Kyrie without Auston and no Auston without Kyrie. My first memory with Auston had to be us on our preschool playground. He was a weird almond-colored kid with bright ginger hair and thick red framed glasses. He was intriguing. I watched as the other kids ignored him like he was a bench at the playground. I watched him as he sat in the sand pushing ants around with a stick.

I felt sorry for him and in that same moment found my feet shuffling towards him.

"I'm Kyrie," I uttered to Auston.

"I'm Auston," he replied.

He looked up at me with the weirdest squint, blinded by the sun glare beaming from his red frames, grinning from ear to ear. I remember playing with Auston for hours. He wasn't an adventurous kid. We did not play on the monkey bars or race from fence to fence. He was simply content with his stick, his sand, and his ants.

As the years went on, my intrigue turned into appreciation. Auston was my best pal. He was awkward and didn't ask for much. He was loyal and did not complain. I found myself pushing him to explore more, live more outside of his shell. He almost always listened to me, and we always had fun.

I was successful at school as the years rolled by. Now in middle school, I shot up a couple feet and my shoulders broadened. Auston kept his same squinty face and slinky body. The only thing that grew bigger on Auston was his crazy curly Afro. I joined sports teams and got good grades with Auston's help. My circle of friends grew but Auston remained my best pal, his only pal. Auston did not get bullied. Not that he would walking the halls with me. But even without me, bullying was never a concern for Auston. Despite his outrageous hair, he was easy to ignore. And with that he was content.

I continued to blossom throughout the years, and Auston remained content with being that fly on the wall. I always included him in the group activities I was invited to, and the other kids always forgot to invite him to. One evening, I rode my bike to Auston's house excited to invite him to the latest gathering.

This was a big deal! I was the only sophomore invited to the annual senior bonfire down by the train tracks. My best pal had to be there.

I hopped off my bike and threw it across his lawn. Auston was sitting on his roof with a handheld telescope looking at the stars. He already spotted me from down the block before I even approached his house. Before I can ask him if the door is open,

Auston stretched his legs around the tree branch hovering over his roof and monkey climbed his way down onto the lawn.

We met in the middle of his lawn, and I had the biggest grin on my face.

"Guess what?"

"What?"

"We got invited to the senior bonfire...down by the train tracks! Saturday!"

"You got invited to the senior bonfire," Auston said without a blink.

He had no expression of sadness or anger on his face. His face was blank, indifferent even. Then as if he was done with the conversation he dropped down on the lawn and sat with his legs crossed, twirling a blade of grass.

I sat down right in front of him and grabbed his shoulder.

"I'm not going anywhere without you bro," I assured him.

"Promise?"

"Promise."

Auston grinned and he jumped up, he started to run towards his house but then stopped abruptly. He spined around and asked, "Kyrie, what's a bonfire?"

I grinned the hardest I ever did, then sat in the grass and explained the awesomeness we had in store.

Saturday came quickly. Auston and I rode our bikes down to the train tracks. We were met by every type of senior there was, except seniors like Auston. There were the athletes, theater kids, cheerleaders, and student government seniors. But no star loving, grass twirling, ant observing seniors. Despite sticking out like a sore thumb, Auston looked comfortable.

As we approached the mass of students surrounding the roaring fire, Auston whispered, "My hair matches the fire."

Everyone greeted me with open arms and exclamations. I made sure Auston wasn't forgotten. It was awkward at first, but the fist bumps and smiles started to roll in. Then the fun began. Auston never drank but endured the three gulps of beer. His face twisted in agony, as if he were sucking on lemons. But the crowd cheered. I was shocked, but weird enough, I was then overcome with pride. That was my best pal.

The night rolled on and everyone was enjoying each other's company. Then the idea of jumping carts flooded the crowd. The largest males in the group jumped up excited ready for a good competition. I was invited to join. I beamed in excitement but remembered Auston, running and jumping was not his thing. My heart sank, but like all our other adventures, I convinced him to join.

Like a pack of wolves, we ran into the night, weaving in and out of the

empty train carts. One by one we jumped into the empty train carts preparing to jump further than the next kid. Once I made it onto the first cart, I noticed Auston could not quite make it onto the cart. His lack of upper body strength was working against him. I grabbed Auston by his arm and helped him into the cart. I can hear the other guys whooping and laughing at us to catch up, they had a good head start.

"Do not let go of my hand," I said to Auston.

He held on to my hand tight and tried his best to keep up. We made our way through 5 carts, jumping from one dark tin box into another. The further we ran, the larger the gaps between carts became. But we did not care. We laughed and screamed and jumped like we never jumped before. I never seen Auston so alive. The lead the other guys had on us started to dwindle. I became determined to gain the lead. I ran faster. I no longer heard Auston's laughter or the sounds of our good time. Only the beating of my heartbeat working overtime to become victorious.

We finally caught up and this was the biggest hurdle yet. Looking forward into the dark abyss, the glistening silver train tracks peeked through the darkness. We must jump high; we must avoid being swallowed by the darkness. And with Auston still holding on I jumped but was the only one among the six boys on the other side. I panicked! Where is Auston? I scanned the darkness looking for my best pal. Did I pull him too hard? Did he yell hold on? Did I not hear him? Where is my best pal?

I heard agony rise from the train tracks below. Once my eyesight adjusted to the darkness, I saw Auston laying face up sprawled across the tracks. He had tears streaming from his eyes. Through his despair I can hear his muttering words, forcing them past his lips, "I can't move."

We all jumped down from the train carts desperate to lift him up, bring him to his feet. He only screamed. Then I heard the dreadful words leave his lips, "I can't feel my legs." My heart sank, I felt frozen in time. My vision became warped from the flood of tears invading my eyes. I felt so sorry, this was my best pal.

The years rolled by for Auston in his new life in a wheelchair. Finishing high school, he went from invisible to the poor boy who fell on the train tracks. People signed his leg casts and stuck flowers in his chair out of pity but never really put in effort to be his friend.

I remained his best pal. Guilt ate me alive throughout the years. I helped him with everything. I

wheeled him across our graduation stage. I quit sports to hang out with him after school. I needed to make sure he knew I'm not going anywhere. I am his friend. He never blamed me for the accident, we never spoke about it. Auston continued to look at the stars, fiddle with the grass and ant watch all from his wheelchair.

Passing up numerous scholarships, I went to a local college to remain close to Auston and be able to spend time with him. I did not make many friends because I always spent my weekends with Auston. I did not mind, he needed me. I needed him to know I was not going anywhere.

The years passed by, and I found my social circle just as small as Auston's. We only had each other. Auston inherited his family home, and I conveniently purchased the home next door. We always had a grand time together, but I found my need to reassure my companionship was becoming a burden. My guilt started to hold me hostage. It started to blind me with a world wind of emotions: anger, sorrow, regrets.

Until one day, during afternoon tea it exploded.

"I can't keep doing this," I muttered.

"Doing what?"

"I want other things; I want other friends."

"You should."

"How can I? Look what I did to you!"

"But -"

"I pushed you too hard, I made you fit in, I didn't pay attention! I pulled you onto those tracks! But I can't keep feeling so guilty, so sorry. I gave up my life for you."

I got up to leave, tears in my eyes.

Auston just looked out the window, watching the summer breeze sway the trees.

In silence I proceeded to leave, as I turned the knob and stepped outside, Auston said,

"I never needed your pity."

"Auston -"

"I just needed my friend."

"I was."

"I never needed a caretaker; I needed my friend."

"I was." "I was always happy and fine, because you were my friend."

"I created a burden."

"I was never your burden."

"Auston, I didn't mean..." "That night on the train tracks, I tripped on my shoelaces."

And with that Auston turned from the window he was sitting in and proceeded into his bedroom. Forever leaving his best pal in the summer breeze.



## SPORTS

# THE OLD WESTBURY PANTHERS (4-4, SKYLINE 0-1) LOST TO JOHN JAY COLLEGE ON DECEMBER 10TH WITH A SCORE OF 66-67.



The teams spent the first 10 minutes of the game running both sides of the floor unable to score many points. During this action Old Westbury was ahead 11-4. The second 10 minutes of the game was a different story. Old Westbury shot 30% and John Jay shot 35.1%. Carl Damour provided offense for the Panthers off

the bench producing 10 points (FG 3-6, 3-Pt 1-1, FT 3-4). At the final seconds of the 1st half the score was Old Westbury 30 and John Jay 29. The John Jay Bloodhounds started to find their groove during the beginning of the 2nd half outscoring the Old Westbury Panthers. Jonathan Jamieson (16 points) brought the Panthers

ahead by one with his drive to the basket 64-63 on a 10-1 run against John Jay. Additional points scored by Charles Wingate (7 points, 2 rebounds, 1 assist, 1 block, 3 steals) and Jonathan Jamieson (16 points, 8 rebounds, 2 assists, 3 steals) were not enough as SUNY Old Westbury losses 66-67 to John Jay College.

Zachary Cummings lead the Panthers with 18 points, 5 rebounds, 5 assists and 2 steals in the loss as Old Westbury was out rebounded 52-38. Carl Damour finished the night with 12 points, 2 rebounds, 1 assist and 1 steal.

## WOMEN'S BASKETBALL - CHERISH FRANCIS SCORES 31 POINTS IN THE LOSS TO SAINT JOSEPH'S COLLEGE BROOKLYN

The SUNY Old Westbury Women's Basketball team hosted St. Joseph's College Brooklyn in a Skyline match-up on December 12, 2021. The Old Westbury Panthers (1-3, 1-3 Skyline) lost to St. Joseph's Brooklyn (2-7, 2-4 Skyline) with the score of 57-68.

The Old Westbury Panthers shot successfully from the floor scoring 22 points in the first quarter, shooting 50% from the floor

and 66.7% from the foul line. Old Westbury held a 1st quarter lead 22-17 to St. Joseph's College Brooklyn. Old Westbury shot only 23.8% in the second quarter as St. Joseph's College Brooklyn was able to surge past Old Westbury with the score of 34-37. Despite the scoring contribution from Cherish Francis totaling 31 points for the game (FG 11-26, 3 Pt. 5-12, FT 4-7, 4 rebounds, 3 assists, 2

steals) the Panthers shot 1-13 from the foul line for 7.7% creating a 3rd quarter score of 41-53. During the fourth quarter Old Westbury had narrowed the margin to 6 points 56-64 but were unsuccessful to overcome the scoring of St. Joseph's College Brooklyn. Samirah Akinwunmi 12 points (FG 6-26, 3 Pt. 0-4, FT 0-4, 10 rebounds, 2 steals) and Ja'nya Flash 12 points (FG 5-20, 3

PT. 0-4, FT 2-8, 17 rebounds, 2 assists). Kasiobi Okenwa 10 rebounds and Ashley Cattle game high 19 rebounds each scoring 1 point for the afternoon. Final score 57-68.



# MIA ALMONTE ACHIEVES GOAL OF BEING A TEAM PLAYER

By Kevin C. Horton

“I wanted to be a part of a team, and not just in individual sport,” Mia Almonte, a member of the women’s soccer team, says. It is this team sport mentality that has helped Almonte excel through her three years tenure on the team.

Athletic all her life, Almonte says her devotion to soccer came, “later in life,” compared to her teammates. She started at age 12 in her hometown of Freeport with the PAL soccer program. Once in high school, Almonte found herself running track and field, but found the sport to be too isolating and longed for a more team focused sport.

At SUNY Old Westbury, she once again turned to soccer and the team connection she sought. Almonte, who is in her third year of pursuing a Psychology degree joined the OW Panthers NCAA Division 3 Women’s Soccer Team her freshman year. “I really enjoy being with my teammates,” says Almonte who this last season served as Team Captain. Her role as captain is to make sure her teammates, “heads are straight before a game,” she says, “but also to remind them to have fun too.”

Almonte’s role as morale

booster was pushed to the test during COVID, but she said the team prevailed. She said the team didn’t play during the 2020 season but the members, along with the coach, met every week via Zoom. With the encouragement of Coach Betty Bohringer the team played online Zoom games and interacted with each other in order to keep the team chemistry alive. Almonte feels the practice worked, “We were a close team, we all got along and we were able to put that chemistry onto the field,” for the 2021 season.

The 2021 season, which started in August and just completed, was also “less traditional” than Almonte’s freshman year. Because the Student Athletics Center is currently being used as a COVID Vaccination site, the team had to use another field and facility at Farmingdale State College. Training, playing and practicing every day, the commute from Old Westbury to Farmingdale added to the player’s already hectic schedule, but according to Almonte, they “made it work.” Always the optimist, she said, “At least we had a place to play.”

When asked about the team’s coach, Almonte beamed saying, “I love her.

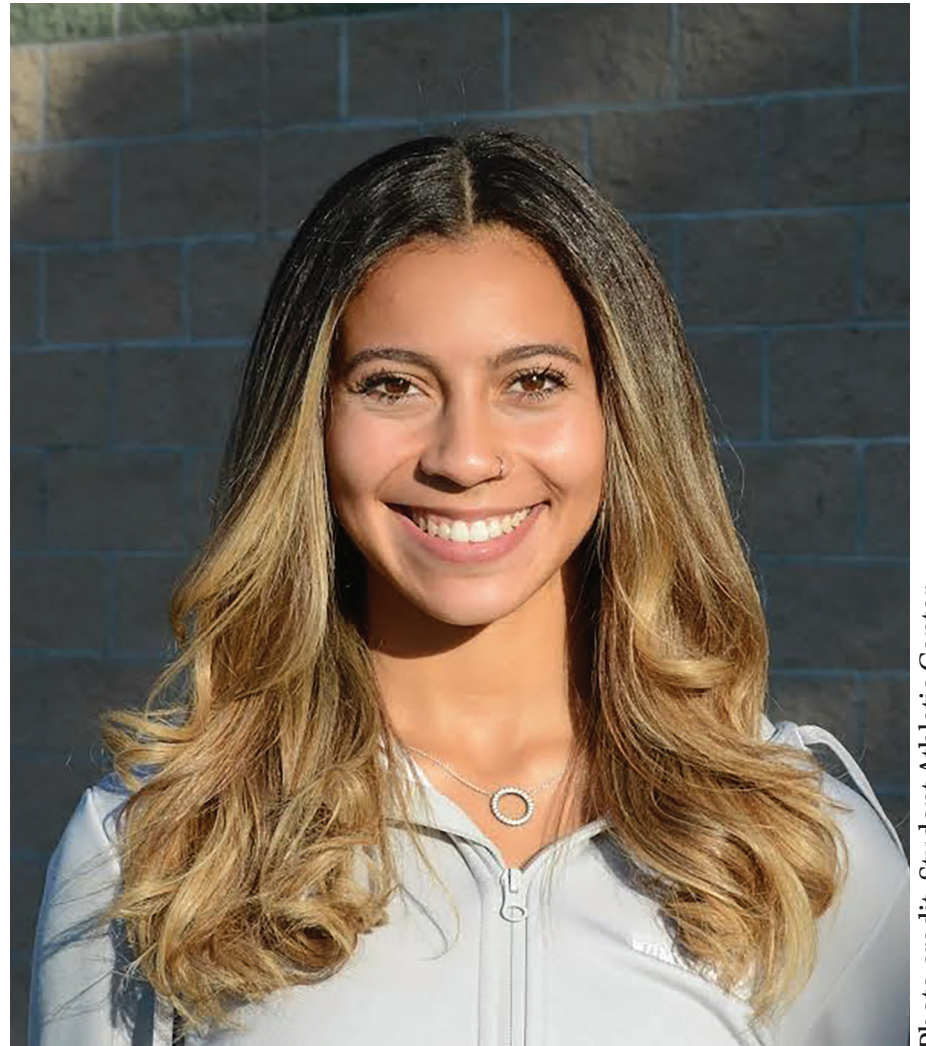


Photo credit: Student Athletic Center

She’s very sweet and very lenient... She is very motivational for the team.” Coach Bohringer had similar accolades for Almonte saying she leads by example. “Mia is an intense player that plays every moment as if it is her last,” Coach Bohringer said. “There aren’t enough words that I could express my appreciation for everything she has accomplished on and off the field.”

When asked of her greatest achievements as an OW Panther, Almonte noted making it to the Skyline Conference first round of playoffs

in 2019. In 2019, she also had nine personal goals but it is her 2021 season she seems to be most proud of. Almonte assisted in many goals throughout the season, including four in one game. Solidifying her team player spirit, she said, “I like helping assist as much as getting goals.”