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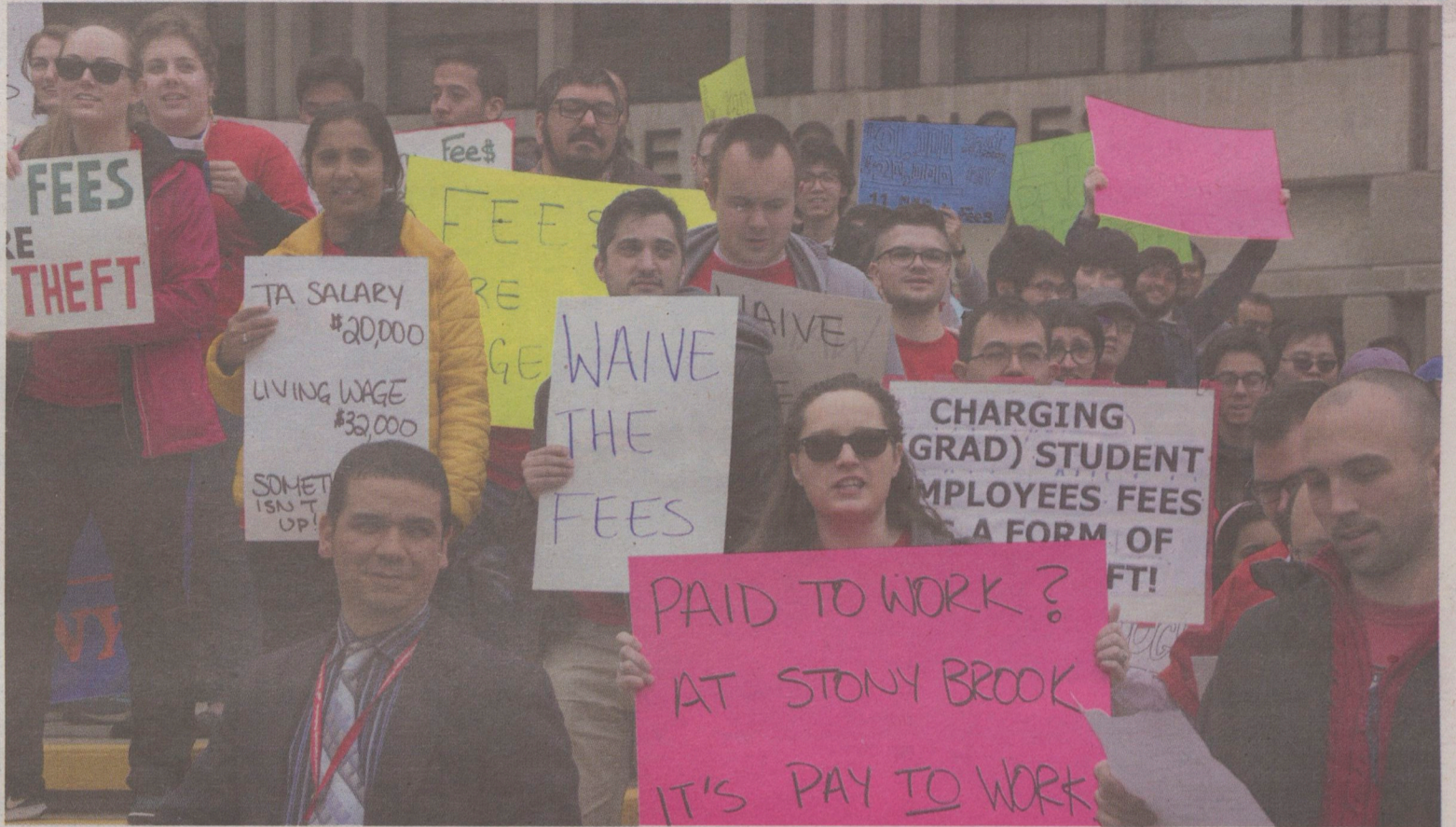
Graduate students protest fee increases

By Samantha Robinson
Contributing Writer

Members of the Graduate Student Employees Union (GSEU) led a march from the Earth and Space Sciences building to the Administration building on Wednesday, May 1 to deliver a list of demands following the university's proposed hike in fees.

The university announced a \$90.25 fee increase per semester for graduate students starting this fall. Graduate students say the nearly \$1,600 worth of fees they are being charged per year are not sustainable for them. Graduate employees make an average annual salary between \$20,000 and \$25,000, which is below the cost of living in Suffolk County. The fees equate to around a month's pay.

"We're protesting the unfair increase in fees," Lisa Crawford,



EMMA HARRIS / THE STATESMAN

Members of the Graduate Student Employees Union protesting on May 1, 2019. Graduate students are protesting a \$90.25 fee increase per semester, which they say now totals a month's wages and isn't sustainable.

a Ph.D. student in and the mobilizer for the School of Marine and Atmospheric Sciences, said. "We don't think that the increased fees do anything for us as graduate students. We don't use a lot of the services that the

fees supposedly cover. Every year, we pay back a month's wages for these fees that supposedly go to services that we never really use or see. So we're protesting the high cost of fees and the increase of recent fees."

Graduate students said that they ultimately want Stony Brook to abolish the fees. Steven Ketchum, the Research Assistant Union representative, said that graduate students should not have to pay to work.

"When that fee bill comes through, it ruins my whole month," Ketchum said. "I know the RA's [research assistants] here do the lion share of the research

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New president elected to USG MLK's personal attorney speaks at SBU

By Gabby Pardo
Assistant Opinions Editor

Junior political science major, Shaheer Khan, has been a leader since elementary school.

Growing up in Elmont, New York, he was class president in the 6th grade, senior class president in high school and now he's set to be the Undergraduate Student Government (USG) president for the 2019-2020 school year.

Running with the SB Unied Party, Khan's campaign consisted of 13 initiatives to better the university. Some of these include improving attendance at USG events, increasing transparency within USG and pushing the university to hire more multilingual employees within Counseling and Psychological Services.

"When you're president, you work closely with a faculty, staff and administration," Khan said. "You're talking to the higher-ups to make sure the quality of student life is better. That's an important aspect of USG. It would give me satisfaction to be the voice for those who don't have it."

Khan came into college as a biomedical engineering major,

but changed to political science in his sophomore year.

He realized that he enjoys interacting with people and learning about policy so he can improve people's quality of life.

Because of the role's time commitment, he must step back from his involvement with the Center of Civic Justice, where last summer he registered 2,500 students to vote.

Khan is also a Forever Fellow for Roosevelt Quad, where he lived for his first two years on campus.

The future president first got involved in USG in the Fall 2018 semester, as a College of Arts and Science senator. During his campaign for senator, he ran with no party.

"Being able to run with a party and full cabinet, they're realizing what issues are in each college," Khan said.

The incoming Executive Vice President, Mohamed Heiba, spoke highly of Khan.

"Shaheer is a man that never stops working; he always fights for what's right," he said.

The two have been friends since their freshman year, and

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By Maya Brown
Staff Writer

Dr. Clarence Jones, a scholar writer in residence at the Martin Luther King Jr. Research & Education Institute at Stanford University and adjunct professor at the University of San Francisco, spoke as part of the Presidential Lecture Series on Wednesday, May 1.

Jones — who worked as Martin Luther King, Jr.'s personal attorney and adviser during the height of the civil rights movement and helped write the famous "I Have A Dream" speech — shared his thoughts on the current challenges facing King's legacy. "What Dr. King sought to do was to reclaim the soul of America," he said.

Jones shared how Dr. King was deeply committed to nonviolence, having been a student of Gandhi. "I didn't agree with his way of nonviolence at first, but I went along with him. I told King that 'if a white man were to put his hands on me, he was going down for sure.'"

Jones said this remark made King laugh. He shared with the audience what King told him: that engaging in violence was the reaction the oppressors wanted and therefore, violent actions just obscure the message behind the protest.

"That was the reason that was our way of going about things," Jones said. "To really be non-violent, you have to start out with loving yourself. You have to love yourself enough to commit yourself to something deeply."

Much of Jones' lecture pondered what kind of nation the U.S. is becoming — both morally and ethically — in the 21st century. "I believe that today we face a crisis of morality and we've lost the way," he said. "This lecture requires us to look at the journey in short form of where we have come."

Jones spoke about the long-term impact that slavery had on America's history, adding that 2019 marks the 400th year anniversary of the initial arrival of slaves in the U.S. "You can't understand the proper soul of America and essence of what America is today unless you understand where we came from and the truth behind slavery," Jones said.

He also spoke about school segregation during the Jim Crow era. After discussing the movement to integrate public schools, Jones pivoted the discussion to a broader critique of inequality in the U.S. He noted how even as society has gradually become more equal, certain people have been left behind.

"How is it possible that in the richest country in the world we can spend trillion plus dollars for Afghanistan and farm boys, but we don't have enough money to feed and provide shelter to the homeless and poor?"

Later on, Jones spoke about the impact that technology has had on the quest for social justice. Jones argued that today, machines and property are valued over people. "If we wish to honor Dr. King, we must shake the social economical order," he said. "We must cool a world on fire and save our children from destruction."

Steven Adelson, co-director of the Center for Civic Justice at SBU, met Jones when he was a college student and got the opportunity to hear his story and passion. This encounter gave him the energy he needed. He shared how throughout the day, Jones spoke to students and he saw that "the excitement came out to the forefront for all of them," he said.

Cheryl Chambers, associate dean and director of multicultural affairs, said she appreciated the insight Jones was able to give on Dr. King as a personal friend of his. "My favorite part was being in the presence of someone who not only knew Dr. King but also knew his soul," Chambers said. "I loved that he could speak about him in a way that no one else can."



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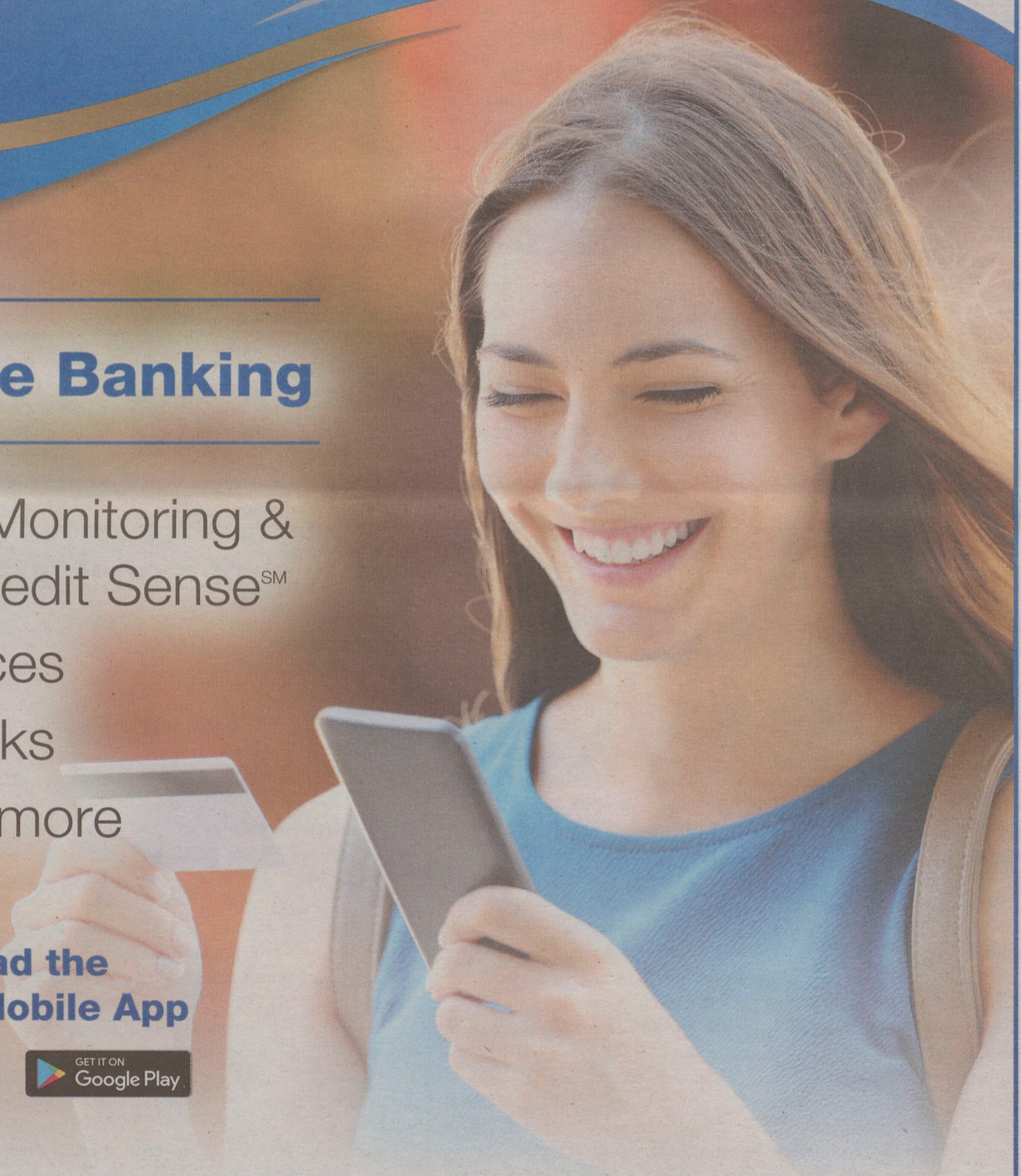
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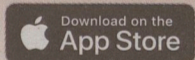


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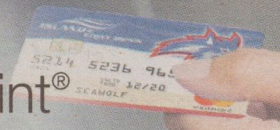
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Grad students want SBU to abolish fees

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here, and the TA's [teacher assistants] do 60% of the teaching here. We're essential employees, but we have to pay for things like the tech fees, which I need to do my job. President Stanley and his administration people aren't paying for the internet. We're the only full-time employees that pay to keep the lights on around here."

The graduate student's list, which was delivered to the Office of the President, included five demands. They read, "A freeze on all Graduate Employee fees, effective immediately. Eliminate all Graduate Employee fees within the next 12 months. Mandatory disclosure of fees on all offer letters for all admitted graduate students. A public hearing run by GSEU and GSO [Graduate Student Organization] on the fees, where you will face uncensored questions from graduate students and employees. You must request an audit of Stony Brook finances from State Comptroller DiNapoli."

Crawford said the high cost of fees and the low salary forces her to make sacrifices on her living situation. She lives with four other roommates in a shared house.

"It's crowded, and we're definitely not getting what we should be getting as grown adults who are working towards our careers," she said. "We should

be able to be choosy about our living situation."

Around 150 graduate students and sympathizers attended the march. They blew stadium horns, banged drums made of empty water jugs with yard sticks and yelled chants. They cried, "Stanley is a jerk, we won't pay to work!" "Deficit? Full of s---!" and "Waive the fees, f--- the fees!"

The protesters marched through the Strawberry Fest outside of the Student Activities Center. The group passed the Administration building and paused to make as much noise as possible in the echo between the two Staller buildings. They then stormed through the inside of the Frank Melville Jr. Memorial Library and finally ended inside the Administration building.

Within the Administration building, the marchers lined up around the balcony of the second floor. The upper level filled quickly. The remaining protesters had to disperse themselves underneath.

The leaders of the event — Andrew Dobbyn, the business chair agent for the GSEU, and Caroline Propersi-Grossman, the chief steward of the union — led a second rally after the march. Dobbyn motivated the crowd to chant as he and Propersi-Grossman delivered the letter of demands to the Office of the President.

The fire alarm sounded right as Dobbyn gave the command for the

protesters to leave the Administration building. They started a new chant as they slowly filed out. The graduate students yelled, "We'll be back."

The university released a statement via email to *The Statesman* following the protest that emphasized the importance of fee increases.

"For nearly a year, leadership in various graduate student fee-funded service units at Stony Brook University — Student Health Services/Counseling; Technology; Transportation Services as well as the introduction of Lifetime Career and Alumni Connections services — met with student advisory committees who consulted and advised on areas in which the University should continue, and increase, the quality and quantity of services that our students require and expect. In an environment of rising costs, a fee increase is essential to maintaining existing student services and expanding others," the email wrote.

Dobbyn and Propersi-Grossman said next semester's events would be decided by the members of their union, but they said the GSEU won't settle until Stony Brook waives the fees.

"This is just the appetizer. This isn't the main course," Dobbyn said. "This isn't anywhere close to the end. This is just the beginning. When next semester rolls around, the gloves come off."

Khan plans changes for USG

Continued from page 1

even live off campus together. Heiba said he is fully confident that Khan will achieve his goals over the next year.

"One thing I want to see him do is accomplish all 13 of his points," he said.

"I know he can do it and with the right help, I'll be there for him and the rest of the Executive Council and Senate."

To make his vision possible, Khan has a concrete plan of making office hours more useful.

"It's important to have set office hours so you can make it routine," Khan said.

"I plan on having my availability the Sunday before school starts every week, so students would have full access to my Google Calendar and whenever they need to come and speak they can just check that."

Khan plans to give full disclosure to students and media relations about what goes on within USG each week.

He said he also wants the process of picking artists for Brookfest and Back to the Brook to be more transparent.

"Our main method of getting students engaged is through polls and emails," Khan said. "We need to take that one step forward and introduce a form where

people can meet one on one to run down the process of bringing artists to campus."

Current USG President, Justas Klimavicius, said one of the most challenging parts of being president is continuing with the work that USG has already started and preserving university traditions.

He is also vouching for Khan to increase participation in events and USG elections.

"I hope to see a change in how the USG team approaches our own elections," Klimavicius said. "Getting more student participation and buy-in is important in becoming a better and more effective organization."

Despite the challenges that come with the role, Klimavicius expressed confidence in Khan's ability to lead.

"Shaheer is a really good people person and I think he knows how to motivate a room of fellow students," he said. "I am excited to see how things go for Shaheer and the rest of the team."

When asked what challenges he may face in the future, Khan said he'd rather not speak for what will happen in the future.

"I'm not in the role yet and I don't want to have the preconceived notion," he said. "I rather speak into existence that it'll go well and I have the support that I need."

Researchers make new revelation about mental health for 9/11 responders

By Cindy Mizaku
Contributing Writer

A team of researchers at Stony Brook University conducted a pilot study that suggests there may be a link between chronic post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in 9/11 responders and cognitive degeneration, leading to diseases like Alzheimer's.

Thousands of first responders and survivors from Ground Zero are still coping with 9/11-related illnesses such as PTSD. Organizations like the World Trade Center (WTC) Health Program and the Stony Brook WTC Wellness Program that conducted the study provides health support and medical treatment for first responders who are in need of care.

The study's sample included 34 first responders, half of whom identified as having symptoms of PTSD such as re-experiencing stressful memories that induce physiological distress. Blood samples from the responders were collected to analyze the concentrations of three biomarkers that are measures of neurodegeneration: beta-amyloid, tau and neurofilament light.

"What makes [this study] unique is that responders are followed for every year to every 18 months since 2002, so we know a lot about their PTSD," Sean Clouston, an assistant professor in the department of family, population and preventive medicine and the study's lead researcher, said.

Before conducting the study, Clouston theorized that people with PTSD are at a greater risk of experiencing early aging. After monitoring patients at the WTC Wellness Program, Clouston and his team of researchers found that PTSD was associated with cognitive impairment affecting memory functions, physical functioning and the brain's ability to process information.

The study found that higher levels of the beta-amyloid marker — a type of protein that builds up in the brains of Alzheimer's patients — was highly correlated with PTSD.

Benjamin Luft, director of the WTC Wellness Program, said that his organization was initially established as a voluntary clinic to serve Long Island's first responders who did not have health insurance after 9/11.

"We began the program in what we call a 'collaborative way' between doctors, nurses, social workers and other psychologists where they're very sensitive to not only a variety of medical conditions but also the psychological and social problems that people may have," Luft said.

Referring to the study, he said that "it is part of a puzzle that we've been working on for many years."

"[The program's] collaboration and integration between specialties show that even though things may predominantly manifest themselves psychologically, they have a tremendous amount of physical effects," Luft said.

Luft emphasized that the responders' physical, psychological and psychiatric health are intertwined and need to be treated equally. The program and the study sheds light on how traumatic exposures like 9/11 impact long-term human suffering.

By identifying a biomarker for PTSD and the patients' cognitive problems, the responders get a sense of their own risks of experiencing neurodegenerative diseases. This is important, according to Clouston, because one of the problems with neurodegenerative conditions is that there is not a way to regrow brain material after neuron cells die; any medical intervention has to be done early in the process when patients start to experience aging.

Determining these risks allows medical experts to check what might be worth measuring and double-checking for patients who are suffering from chronic PTSD for more than a decade after their traumatic exposures.

"One of the reasons why I actually do this work is that I'm interested in understanding this foundational problem in the social sphere, which is this long-standing problem — exposures in midlife appear to affect your lifelong trajectories," Clouston said.

John Feal, a 9/11 first responder, is the founder of the FealGood Foundation, an organization that works to inform elected officials and private entities of the concerns and illnesses faced by first responders. During the recovery

mission, his left foot was mangled under steel wreckage. After several surgeries and a PTSD diagnosis, Feal steered his suffering and vulnerability toward a larger goal that speaks to his foundation's motto: "No Responders Left Behind."

"I didn't have the FealGood organization to advocate for me," Feal said. "I had to fight for myself." Feal's organization depends on grassroots activism to advocate for the care of first responders who have been denied compensation for their sacrifices.

"When people act heroically we are thankful, but we don't realize that when people are doing those things, they are losing something."

-Benjamin Luft
Director of WTC Wellness Program

The foundation's small beginnings, collecting donations and selling t-shirts, led up to one of Feal's greatest accomplishments: the passing of James Zadroga 9/11

Health and Compensation Act in 2010. When the law passed, it provided health monitoring for first responders and survivors as well as funding for the WTC Program.

Institutions like the Stony Brook WTC Wellness Program "have the responsibility to not only treat us but use us as data," Feal said. "9/11 will be used as a model. It's vital that they continue to research the after-effects of those affected by 9/11 and their post-traumatic."

Clouston and his team plan on expanding their research by enlarging the sample size and factoring in more biomarkers that can potentially further support the study's findings. Two influential additions to their research include looking into neuroimaging studies and changes in the immune system.

By looking at magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scans, researchers will be able to detect neurodegeneration in the brain. Also, Clouston said that when "experiencing chronic stress, [the brain] dysregulates the immune system," so the new study will explore changes in the neuroimmune system and broaden the blood marker spectrum to strengthen the link between PTSD in first responders and cognitive diseases.

"Working with first responders gives you a sense of the tremendous amount of sacrifice that patients or people do," Luft said. "When people act heroically we are thankful, but we don't realize that when people are doing those things, they are losing something."

ARTS & CULTURE

Hillel Director is retiring after 37 years at the university

By Anna Correa
Arts & Culture Editor

At the end of a long work day running the Jewish campus organization Hillel, fundraising, supervising faculty, working with a Board of Directors and interacting with alumni, Rabbi Joseph Topek walks out of his office and goes straight to the coat hanger to put on his Texas Longhorn cap on top of his bright red Stony Brook yarmulke.

Outside the office, Topek can be found around campus, attending sports games and live performances from student groups and supporting the Seawolves.

Although he has been at Stony Brook University for over three decades and it's his 37th year living in Stony Brook, he still has a bit of a southern drawl. His accent might reveal that he's actually a native from Houston, Texas. Otherwise, you couldn't tell since he can list the best bagel shops and kosher restaurants from New Jersey to New York.

Jerrold Stein, former associate vice president of Student Affairs and Dean of Students, has known Topek for more than 35 years out of his 38-year career at Stony Brook and considers Topek a stabilizing force.

As the Chair of the Interfaith Center, Topek "not only supports the Jewish community, he supports and enhances student life and helps us build a sense of community and belonging on the campus," Stein said.

Topek has seen students and staff come and go. This summer will mark 40 years of service as the Hillel Foundation Director and three years at Virginia Commonwealth University. Topek has served as the campus director for 37 out of the



Rabbi Joseph Topek is the Director of the Stony Brook Hillel Foundation. He will be retiring this year after working for the Hillel Foundation for 37 years.

52 years that the campus Hillel has existed. The university itself is only 62 years old.

His kids grew up in the Hillel and used to spend every weekend on the campus, observing Shabbat, the Jewish Sabbath.

"My kids did grow up here and came to many Hillel programs when they were young. Students were our babysitters," Topek said. "I suppose you could say that our kids were 'Hillel brats' much like kids in military families are called 'Army brats.'"

Topek's three daughters are now married and he has five grandchildren. Susan Remick Topek, his wife, is a retired Early Childhood Education specialist at the Jewish Education Project. She has published seven Jewish children's books and has been supportive of his career.

"He's not flying solo. She's his anchor." Dr. Evelyn Bromet, board member of Hillel and dis-

tinguished professor in the psychiatry department, said.

Bromet has known Topek since the late 80s and says that on a personal level, he is incredibly kind and thoughtful. When her mother passed away one summer, she didn't want to talk to anyone and stayed home, not wanting people to visit her. When others couldn't get close to her, Topek stepped forward and didn't take no for an answer.

"He broke down the barrier," said Bromet. "Only Rabbi Topek would have done that."

Besides being director of the Hillel Foundation at Stony Brook, Topek serves as a chaplain and chairs the Interfaith Center, serves on committees at the university, directs Jewish religious life, works on large scale programs, teaches courses in Judaic Studies and history and is the Jewish Chaplain

in the Long Island State Veterans Home at Stony Brook Medicine.

He also has lectured for the American Jewish Historical Society in New York, the U.S. Department of the Interior, the National Park Service and the Jewish Museum in New York City, among others.

One of Topek's most cherished and unforgettable memories is when he helped a religious patient — who had passed away in the Long Island State Veterans Home — with a small family perform a minyan. A minyan is a public prayer that requires 10 men, but only three of the patient's family members were male. Topek and a few students went to his funeral and completed the assembly of 10 men.

"I asked eight students to come to the funeral of a man they never met early on a Sunday morning. They all got up and came to the cemetery and very lovingly carried this man's coffin

from the hearse to the grave, helped to bury him and then said the Kaddish along with the family," Topek said. "It was one of the most moving things I have ever witnessed and a completely selfless act by these students. Afterward, they even thanked me for giving them the opportunity to do this."

As the times changed, so did the scope of Hillel. Hillel was initially geared towards undergraduates but now caters just as much to graduate students.

Since 2007, a program called Keshet Refuah, known as "The Medical Connection," brings a group of about 10 medical students — regardless of faith — to Israel every summer so they can gain experience and develop as future physicians. It's a program geared towards humanizing medicine and helps connect young American medical professionals to the State of Israel.

Joanne Buonocore, the Catholic campus minister, has worked with Topek for six years and said she admires his dedication. "Regardless of which specific faith tradition a student belonged to, Topek felt a student should feel supported and comfortable expressing that faith," she said.

After his retirement as director, Topek is still going to work part-time as a chaplain in Stony Brook Medicine at the Long Island State Veterans Home.

"I may continue to teach a course, and I will be working on one or two long term book projects that I began several years ago," Topek said.

The Hillel is hosting a retirement party for Rabbi Topek on Sunday, May 19 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. in Student Activity Center Ballroom A.

LACS holds forum on immigration border sanctuary

By Cindy Mizaku
Contributing Writer

The Latin American and Caribbean Studies Center (LACS) at Stony Brook University held a panel forum on immigrant sanctuary activism featuring legal, activist and academic perspectives.

In light of today's polarizing rhetoric about illegal immigration and restrictive policies set to strengthen border security as well as the powers of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), Eric Zolov — director of LACS — set up a platform for voices of different backgrounds to talk about their experiences in the movement to protect immigration rights.

"The thing I didn't expect to happen was having to write parent contact information on six-week-old infant backs," Lisa Vontino-Tarrant, a human rights activist, said about her experience as a community organizer in PedWest, Tijuana's new border town built by the U.S. government.

Michelle Caldera-Kopf, who is the senior attorney in the Immigration Practice Group and the program manager for the Liberty Defense Project, represents low-income immigrants who are at risk of deportation in Long Island. As an immigration rights advocate, she is well versed in

immigration law and has worked on applications for asylum, lawful permanent residence, protection for immigrant juveniles and the green light coalition.

"Hateful rhetoric was often used with the judges, by the prosecutors and jury to sort of paint folks as dangerous and poisonous and really push the narrative that starts from the very top to our president and goes all the way down to our local district attorney's office and our local sheriff," Caldera-Kopf said.

She spoke about ICE's vast influence in getting local counties and sheriffs to work with them in restraining undocumented immigrants in county jails. Homeland Security's 287(g) program legalized partnerships between state/local law enforcement and ICE. Consequently, the program allowed for the transferring of hundreds of immigrant detainees to Albany County Correctional Facility.

Although Caldera-Kopf highlighted the negative impacts of having local officials criminalize undocumented immigrants based on ICE's protocol, she said that by providing legal representation, immigrant detainees receive consultation to best frame their stories for seeking asylum.

"Folks who have contact with a lawyer, 80% of the time are able to prove that they had a credible fear of some sort of persecution in their home country," Caldera-Kopf said. Sheriff Craig Apple of Albany County did not hinder the mobilization of volunteer lawyers so that detainees can be justly represented without fearing the language barrier and uncertainty with the law.

Vontino-Tarrant volunteered to work in El Chaparral for the Sanctuary Caravan, a 40-day effort of assisting asylum seekers at the border by providing supplies and shelter. After meeting hundreds of migrants traveling for over two months to Tijuana from Honduras, she became increasingly aware of the lack of respect and care they received at the hands of border control.

Despite their draining and dangerous traveling, Vontino-Tarrant said that the migrants were told to come back to El Chaparral in two months to be processed, being left without food, shelter and — most importantly — an organization that prioritized their basic human rights.

"You really get to know people when you're in the community because they see you day after day and they start to tell you their stories," she said.

Vontino-Tarrant shut down myths that aim to invalidate the needs of asylum seekers such as the notion that they are taking advantage of the U.S. immigration system.

"Everybody was facing imminent threats either from gangs, government, military and police because in a lot of those countries, those four things are so commingled you can't tell who is who," Vontino-Tarrant said.

Nancy Hiemstra, an assistant professor in the Department of Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies, discussed her research in working with immigrants who were detained and deported to Ecuador in addition to the economics behind how U.S. immigration institutions operate.

"From working with people in Ecuador, I think it is important to get out there that a lot of the premises underlying all this rationale of protecting security and deterring future immigration was very easy to see that doesn't work," Hiemstra said.

Hiemstra shed light on how there are economic interests that push for immigration policies, considering the U.S. government spends \$2.6 billion for the country's detention system and an average of \$23,000 to deport one person.

She explored the many ways companies and counties play a big role in shaping immigrant policy; private companies operate 60% of detention facilities that impair living conditions for detained immigrants so as to profit from them. In doing so, facilities — like Essex County that works with GD Dining — partner up with companies to sell soiled food and other necessities at a high cost, she said.

"These companies are essentially making money off of the misery that they create for these people in these facilities," Hiemstra said. "They have voluntary work programs where they are allowed to hire detainees to work eight-hour shifts doing cleaning or food prep and get only one dollar a day."

Sophomore political science major and president of Long Island Immigrant Activists, Evelyn Lopez, said it's important to have these type of panels to show the different perspectives about immigration, especially since immigration is a hot topic in the mainstream.

Together, Vontino-Tarrant, Caldera-Kopf and Hiemstra reminded the student and faculty audience that the protection of immigration rights depends on persistent activist work and dialogues that dismantle divisive narratives.

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The Tribeca Film Festival went from April 24 to May 5. It showcased independent films and shorts, TV shows, VR stories, online content, panels on gaming, Q & A's with cast and directors, panels with celebrities and experts, and immersive exhibitions. This year was also the first year that they had "Tribeca Pride" – a day dedicated to LGBTQ+ content in memorium of the Stonewall Riots in New York City.

The festival was founded in 2001, shortly after 9/11, by Robert De Niro, Jane Rosenthal and Craig Hatkoff, to bring back cultural and economic life to lower Manhattan. This year marks the 18th year, and since then has been the start for new directors and the spot for breakthrough roles for actors in the film industry. Some of these films will go on to be nominated and even win awards at the Academy Awards and the Emmy Awards.

The Statesman was part of the first year of an initiative by Tribeca for colleges to participate in press coverage. We were grateful to be part of the few students to be involved in red carpet appearances and exclusive interviews and screenings.

"We needed to do something to help our city fight fear and hatred. We needed to bring people back downtown. We're movie people, and so we did what we do best: we put on a show ... Stories are the most effective tools we have to entertain, to educate, to inspire, to heal, and to bring us together."

Awards

U.S. Narrative Competition

Founders Award for Best Narrative Feature – Burning Cane
 Best Actress in a U.S. Narrative Feature Film – Haley Bennett in Swallow
 Best Actor in a U.S. Narrative Feature Film – Wendell Pierce in Burning Cane
 Best Cinematography in a U.S. Narrative Feature Film – Phillip Youmans for Burning Cane
 Best Screenplay in a U.S. Narrative Feature Film – Bridget Savage Cole and Danielle Krudy for Blow the Man Down

International Narrative Competition

Best International Narrative Feature – House of Hummingbird (Beol-sae)
 Best Actress in an International Narrative Feature Film – Ji-hu Park in House of Hummingbird (Beol-sae)
 Best Actor in an International Narrative Feature Film – Ali Atay in Noah Land (Nuh Tepesi)
 Best Cinematography in an International Narrative Feature Film – Cinematography by Kang Gook-hyun for House of Hummingbird (Beol-sae)
 Best Screenplay in an International Narrative Feature Film – Noah Land (Nuh Tepesi)
 Best Editing in a Documentary Film – Editing by Jennifer Tiexiera for 17 Blocks

Best New Narrative Director Competition

Best New Narrative Director – The Gasoline Thieves (Huachicolero)

Best New Documentary Director Competition

Albert Maysles New Documentary Director Award – Scheme Birds

Documentary Competition

Best Documentary Feature – Scheme Birds
 Best Cinematography in a Documentary Film – Cinematography by Yang Sun, Shuang Liang for Our Time Machine
 Best Documentary Short – Learning To Skateboard In a Warzone (If You're A Girl)

Short Film Competition

Best Narrative Short – Maja
 Shorts Animation Award – My Mother's Eyes
 Best Documentary Short – Learning To Skateboard In a Warzone (If You're A Girl)
 Student Visionary Award – Jebel Banat (Egypt) directed and written by Sharine Atif

Storyscapes Award

Storyscapes Award – The Key

Tribeca X Awards

Best Feature Film – Almost Human
 Best Short Film – The Face of Distracted Driving
 Best Episodic Film – History of Memory
 Best VR Film – The 100%

Audience Awards

Narrative Documentary Award – Gay Chorus Deep South
 Narrative Audience Award – Plus One

Nora Ephron Award

Nora Ephron Award – Rania Attieh for Initials S.G. (Iniciales S.G.)

Virtual Reality

By Melissa Azofeifa
 Assistant Arts & Culture Editor

Cinema 360: Her Truth, Her Power

The first 10-minute documentary is called "Mercy." It follows Edith Molo in Cameroon, who developed a tumor in her jaw at the age of 7, which grew until it deformed the right side of her face. Molo mentions how difficult it was for people of Cameroon to be able to get adequate medical care, let alone a surgeon.

She heard about Mercy Ships, which that brings surgeons and

specialists to African shores so people can receive quality medical care. Virtual reality helps us experience all of Cameroon's beautiful landscape as we make the journey with a hopeful Molo to the Mercy Ships for treatment.

The second eight-minute documentary, "Girl Icon," follows Rhani on her exodus of being the only girl in her family to get an education. She shows us the classrooms in VR and parts of India. This story promotes Malala Yousafzai and her fund to provide education for women.

"Children Do Not Play War" is the last eight-minute documentary in this experience. It highlights the effects of the war in Uganda in children through the lens of Aloyo Margrate and her experience. We follow her through Uganda as Margrate tells us why children do not play war and never should.

GAMING: DEATH STRANDING

By Emily Clute
 Contributing Writer

On Thursday, April 25, video game director Hideo Kojima took to the Tribeca stage to discuss his newest game, "Death Stranding," with the game's star, Norman Reedus, and gaming journalist Geoff Keighley. Kojima is well known in the video game world as the "father of the stealth game genre" for his work in creating the "Metal Gear" series. The game "Death Stranding" has long been a source of mystery, since little has been revealed about it since it was announced in 2016. While it currently has no release date, Kojima shared new details on the plot of the game during the talk.

"There are so many things happening in the real world — in America, in Europe — everything is actually connected by the internet. But in a way, we're not connected in the real world these days. I'm putting that as a metaphor in the game. The player will have to reconnect the world in the game," Kojima explained.

The game will feature Sam Bridges, a playable character played by Reedus via 3D mapping animation. From his movements to his tattoos, it was important to Kojima that all aspects of Reedus are reflected within his character. While it took him some time to get used to the gear involved with the technology,

Reedus was blown away by the final product.

"You can't computer generate honesty," he told the audience. "It's like a film. A really good film."

Kojima had no new visual content to share during the talk but hinted that new material from the PlayStation 4 exclusive game will be released within the next month. With no release date in sight and very little information regarding plot, "Death Stranding" still remains a mystery to fans — but, with Kojima at the wheel, we can expect a game that tests the boundaries of game genres and pushes the limits of what we know about video games.

Shorts: Down To Earth

By Alexander Bakirdan
 Contributing Writer

Zero

"Zero" is a piece that deals with the monotonous reality of surviving the end of the world while simultaneously telling a story of growing up and teenage rebellion. Bella Ramsey plays a young girl who must follow her father's three rules to survive, the most important of which is to

"never leave the house." As the short goes on, Ramsey's character grows increasingly frustrated with her father's rules until she eventually breaks them all, leaving the house and stepping out into a beautifully empty world. The short's directors, The Brothers Lynch, announced a feature film version of the short will be forthcoming and I am eagerly anticipating its release.

The Shipment

"The Shipment," a story about a father's love for his daughter, seems very Whovian right from the beginning. "I wanted it to really capture that classic sci-fi 2001: A Space Odyssey feel," Director Bobby Bala said. A sci-fi piece set on a distant planet, its subtle bits of world-building allow a simple and sweet story to shine while dealing with complex issues of morality. The core of this piece boils down to "what would a father sacri-

fice to give his daughter a better life?" and "The Shipment" answers this question in beautiful fashion.

Bunker Burger

"Bunker Burger" is an excellent exercise in dark humor and a stunningly realistic take on the apocalypse. In a post-apocalyptic world, resources are scarce and residents of a multibillion-dollar bunker have to maintain the status quo to preserve their re-

sources, so when they bring in an outsider, it's only logical that they have to kill one of the residents. The blunt delivery and candid comments of characters as they try to justify their own presence in the bunker leads to some particularly funny moments that are perfectly undercut by the dark reality of what they are discussing. This short walks the tightrope of dark humor well and delivers a very fun viewing experience.



Actor Zac Efron
(ANNA CORREA/THE STATESMAN)



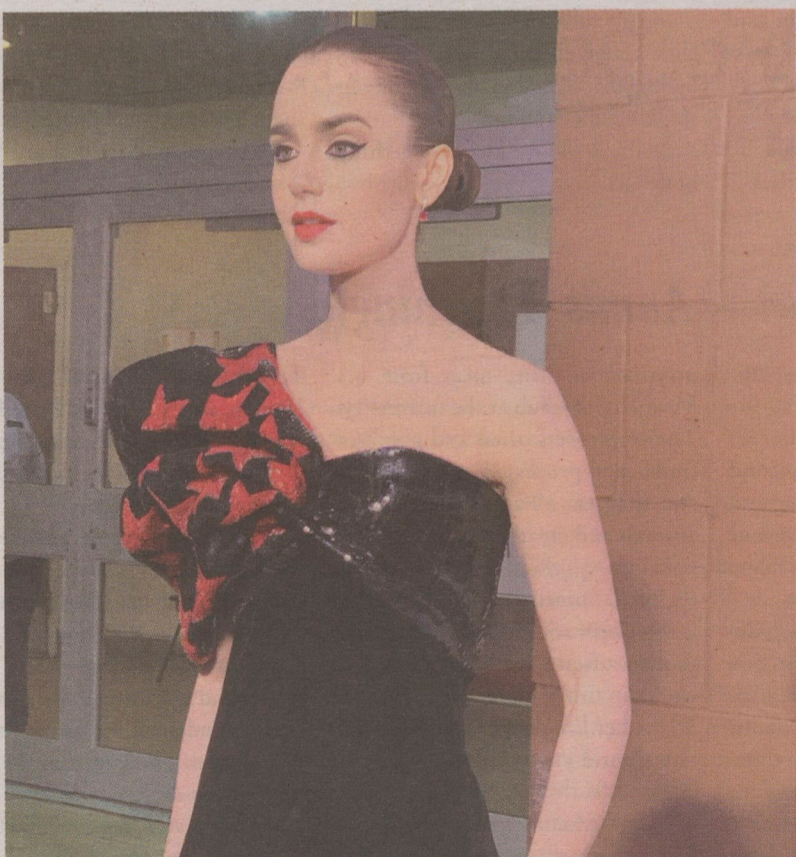
Director Michaela Occhipinti
(ANNA CORREA/THE STATESMAN)



Actor Nat Wolff holding his brother Alex Wolff
(ANNA CORREA/THE STATESMAN)



(ANNA CORREA/THE STATESMAN)



Actress Lily Collins
(MELISSA AZOFEIFA/THE STATESMAN)



From left to right: producer Poonam Deol, actress Lima Das, director Bhaskar Hazarika, musician Tammy Nguyen, musician Aniruddha Borah
(ANNA CORREA/THE STATESMAN)



Actor Alexander Skarsgård
(ANNA CORREA/THE STATESMAN)

Tribeca featured films from 44 countries. They tried to incorporate more LGBTQIA+ content and female directors to make the festival diverse.

Editor's Picks:

37 Seconds

Award-winning writer and director Hikari tells a unique story in her debut feature film, "37 Seconds," which won the Panorama Audience Award and CICA Art Cinema Award at the 69th Berlinale.

Yuma Takada (Mei Kayama) is a Japanese 23-year-old with cerebral palsy who is a great manga artist and storyteller, but often gets taken advantage of by others because of her kindness and disability. She really wants her independence from her protective mother Kyoko Takada (Misuzu Kanno) and her YouTube star cousin and "manga star" (Minori Hagiwara) as she realizes her family obligations are hindering her growth as an aspiring manga artist.

When she tries to start her career as an independent artist, she's faced with the challenge that her work looks similar to her cousin's, who she actually ghostwrites and draws for. She decides to go the alternative route and explore a pornographic manga outlet — who actually praises her work as being creative and beautifully drawn.

However, Yuma doesn't draw from experience and the sex scenes seem unauthentic. The woman who interviews her from the manga outlet sends her out into the world to have new and genuine experiences, which in turn, leads to Yuma experiencing her life for what it could have been if she didn't allow her mother's fear to get in the way. It's a story of sexual experimentation, finding new sterling relationships and self-sufficiency.

It's a coming of age film that Kayama plays exquisitely well in. She shows people that her character is a talented individual who is frustrated not by her circumstances, but by the people who limit her. It is a criticism and a lesson for society to not doubt or treat people with disabilities as incapable.

It's a beautifully bittersweet tale that makes you frustrated for Yuma, but also glad that Hikari decided to make a film about the intimate subjects of what happens in a disabled person's home life and their sex life.

Flesh Out

Food is such a staple in our lives, but in this film, it becomes a way of torture and control over young women who want to respect tradition and their parents.

Award-winning Italian documentarist and director Michela Occhipinti's first feature film "Flesh Out" is based on real experiences with women across Mauritania. Not only is it well-researched, but it's heart-wrenching to know that our protagonist, Verida (Verida Beitta Ahmed Deiche) went through this ritual in her own life. It's not just good acting.

"I wanted to do it with one girl and her life. She [Verida] was promised to marriage when she was 16 and she was not happy about it," Occhipinti said. "She went through gavage. She married, then she divorced and she remarried to a Turkish man."

Although our main character is a Mauritanian woman, gavage — a ritual of overeating to get a fuller figure because it's a status of wealth and beauty — is also ever-present and haunting our protagonist as Verida has to eat up to six meals a day to please her future husband. She is weighed several times a week but ends up falling in love with the man who is supposed to bring "balance" to her life.

This is a narrative set in a place far away from us, but this is a

lifestyle that is real for women in Mauritania and other locations in northern Africa. They have to wake up in the middle of the night and be force-fed, even when they can't eat anymore.

The setting of the film is strategically placed in the capital city of Mauritania, Nouakchott, where Verida has two friends that face different lifestyles, but they are all modern women who worry about dating, social media, education and work.

The film was at first supposed to be documentary, but the stories needed to be told in a way that's personal. It's not just girls in villages who conform to gavage, it's city girls who are constantly on social media and worrying about the latest fashion trends.

"Mauritania in my film works as an 'elsewhere,' opposed to the world from which I come from and where I live, and yet, in its paradoxical inversion of a series of relations, it transforms into a mirror showing the distorted way in which the female body is perceived in nearly all societies," according to Occhipinti's director notes.

This movie is about bringing the past and present together in a way that at first feels distant but then becomes relatable.

Extremely Wicked, Shocking Evil and Vile

with assistance of Melissa Azofeifa

The year is 1978. Young girls are in love with him. They absolutely can't believe he's a criminal — especially with cheeky commentary and humor, the side swept hair and charming smirk. He shoots flirty looks to women in the courtroom and they all melt.

He's not your typical celebrity. He was created by the media and his own manipulation. He's the infamous Ted Bundy — played by Zac Efron as we have never seen him before — in his most mature role to date, in the film "Extremely Wicked, Shockingly Evil and Vile," directed by Joe Berlinger.

"That was my number one goal, to not celebrate Ted Bundy or his horrific acts," Efron said on the red carpet.

The audience is brought back to 1969 to live the tale through his girlfriend and later fiancée Eliza-

beth (Liz) Kloepfer, played by Lily Collins. During the whole trial, Bundy adamantly denies the murder accusations to his lover and the people around him and even becomes his own spokesperson and counsel.

Efron's performance is more than convincing and you can see why young girls fell for Bundy. As the audience member, you become like Liz, finding it hard to believe what happened.

Berlinger, who created "Conversations with a Killer: The Ted Bundy Tapes" — a four-part series for Netflix which premiered in Jan. 24 of this year — used his knowledge of true crime to bring the tale of Bundy to a convincing narrative piece. This film explores the paradoxical feelings of people who believed Bundy was innocent and even goes as far as poking fun at the cute serial killer trope, which has become a sort of trend

as people obsessed over crime stories and "celebrity-like" status that criminals have acquired through the media.

"Liz was not stupid. It's not that she missed the obvious clues," Berlinger said. "She had a whole life with this guy, which is why it was so hard for her to see the other side."

When you see those 30 names on the screen and hear the evidence, there's no doubt he did it, but even as you get to the last moments of his life, there's still this sense of doubt.

In today's world, these type of people still exist and to not judge a book by its cover, Efron said in a Q&A after the film.

"How was Ted able to completely mislead a justice system through the highest level?" Efron said. "He was savant."

This film is now available on Netflix.

The Kill Team

"It's about speaking truth in the face of bullying," Krauss said at the World Premiere.

When Sergeant Deeks (Alexander Skarsgård) comes in as the new officer in charge, the boys try to impress him to become second-in-command. Brigmann ends up being the leader, even though he's seen as the weak, so-called goody two shoes of the troop, but he soon comes to realize this the problems are beyond petty intimidation by his brothers — it's inhumane treatment and murdering of innocent Afghan civilians that are at stake.

At first in denial, Brigmann has to choose between being loyal to his troop by keeping silent and participating in the slaughter or reporting them to the authorities, while putting his own life in danger.

"This is a film about soldiers who have made mistakes. This is not an indictment of the U.S. military. I hope that the film and the themes and the characters transcend the idea that this is a U.S. military problem," Krauss said. "This is a human being problem. We didn't invent war crimes. This is a part of the human psyche."

Skarsgård's portrayal of Deeks makes it difficult to dislike his character, as he's both tender and cheeky, but also conniving and sly. He won the award for IMDb StarMeter Award at the Tribeca Film Festival.

"This is what happens when you surrender your morality for authority," Skarsgård said at the premiere.

"It's about toxic masculinity," Wolff added.

Aamis (Ravering)

Aamis is the first Assamese language film that premiered at the Tribeca Film Festival by director Bhaskar Hazarika. It's his second feature film but it has a lasting and biting impact since it's not your typical light-hearted Indian drama — it's actually a thriller.

Like a Shakespearean play, the film is set up into two acts: one about love and intimacy in a relationship and the other about sin and tragedy. Although there isn't exactly a break in the film that separates these parts, there's a definitely a turning point in which you would never expect, especially in a love story.

Private-practice physician Niri (Lima Das) befriends a Ph.D. student in the local university, Sumon (Arghadeep Barua), after his friend becomes ill.

To make up for the unscheduled check-up on her day off, Sumon

promises to bring meat from his Meat Eater's Club at the university. The club meets often and prepares fresh, not processed, meat to eat and they eat all types of different animals and creatures. To make the situation quirkier, Sumon studies regional meat-eating traditions across India. Sumon and Niri start to meet often but Niri is a married woman with a child. She starts to doubt her life since her husband is not around enough and she lives a boring life.

Mina (Momme Borah) is Niri's friend who is also having an affair, but in a different way. She questions: "is this is an affair or a food show?"

The film breaks expectations because of the lack of intimate actions as the relationship is built on consuming strange meats. The reason I describe the meat as "strange" is not because I see it as different — because each culture has

its own views on what is normal. However, the bat meat Niri thinks is unusual to eat will seem pleasant compared to the sinful meat that is consumed later on.

I have to say I've never had these flavors mixed in a film. It draws a very thin line between feeling for Niri's character as a woman who is oppressed living within social constructs and empathizes with sinners. It also condemns the characters for their actions, showing that there are consequences.

In an interview, the director Hazarika describes this film as Kafkaesque. It is about food, love and ingesting somebody in the literal sense. The quasi-illegality of the actions of the film and the spotlight on immoral crimes of humanity and the hunger in the sense of affection and control is what makes the ending ever so sad.

"Anybody can sin at any moment," producer Poonam Deol said.



PHOTO COURTESY OF VIVO FILM

Trixie Mattel: Moving Parts

By Rachel Parker
Contributing Writer

“Delusional confidence” is what drag queen Trixie Mattel — the winner of RuPaul’s Drag Race All Stars Season 3 — tells us is at the heart of all drag performances within the first five minutes of her documentary.

This documentary forces us to not just ogle at the exceedingly popular world of drag but to bear witness to drag queens’ unique struggles and experiences. Witnessing Trixie’s co-star and close friend, Katya Zamolodchikova, have a breakdown on camera is viscerally disturbing, as is the look in Trixie’s eyes as she helplessly watches her friend leave the set. However, the resulting conversation about mental health between Trixie and two equally dazzling queens, BenDeLaCreme and Kennedy Davenport, illustrates the uphill battle of trying to navigate private life in a very public industry.

Perhaps a delusion is exactly what it is, for Trixie is biting hilarious and unforgiving. On the other hand, when the make-up comes off and the wigs come down, Brian Firkus takes over and doesn’t share these traits with his drag persona, nor does he pretend to. Firkus is best defined by a scene where, in the middle of applying his makeup, the room service knocks and he proceeds to hide in the bathroom. Once they leave, Firkus tiptoes back into view in his wig cap, disclosing, “I don’t want to make anyone uncomfortable.”

Equal parts thought-provoking and entertaining, Trixie’s film is a triumphant glimpse into the many moving parts of the drag world. Watching Trixie speak directly to the camera, her deadpan delivery and candidness are as natural as her performance, while still exuding authenticity. That’s why Trixie Mattel stands out. It’s why we love her, and it’s why this film works.

At the Heart of Gold

I remember the day the story broke about, former USA Gymnastics National Team doctor, Larry Nassar and his crimes against his patients, the bulk of whom were young female gymnasts. I remember during his trial when I and hundreds of thousands of others took to Twitter, where live updates and videos of the victims’ testimonies flooded our timelines. The anger, disgust and heartbreak we all felt hearing these women’s stories are given an additional target in this poignant documentary: the adults in charge.

Through the sometimes somber, sometimes torn, but always captivating voices of these women, this film exposes and dissects a long-standing tradition of training gymnasts to unquestioningly accept pain. Nassar was a warm, friendly face to these women in their childhoods, and furthermore, a welcome break from the constant anger and taunting from their coaches.

Nassar’s sexual abuse was openly known among the gymnasts, as described tearily by one former gymnast who recalls comforting younger girls by earnestly telling them “it’s okay” because he “does it to me too.” Heartbreakingly, she looks at the camera person and asks if it was her fault that he didn’t get caught earlier and if she made these girls think the abuse was normal.

This film allows these women’s voices to triumph and shine, and also makes for an intimate movie-goer experience. I and the women around me in the theater openly groaned in reaction to Nassar’s lawyer’s attempts to discredit the women, and we openly wept at the various testimonies the women gave during the trial. At one point, a woman sitting in the row in front of me offered a tissue to a stranger a couple of seats over from her. That’s what “At the Heart of Gold” reminds us: we can triumph and we are not alone.

A Regular Woman

“A Regular Woman” may be based on true and tragic events, but director Sherry Horman made a superhero movie.

The film reveals our protagonist’s end in the very beginning: that young mother Hatun “Aynur” Sürücü (Almila Bagriacik) will be murdered by her brother in the name of an honor killing. This having been divulged at the start of the film lays a foreboding, grim tone over the rest of the film. The juxtaposition of this against the film’s vivid colors, freeze-frame character introductions and vivacious soundtrack with everything from punk to EDM creates a stunning, engrossing effect.

Aynur also serves as the film’s narrator, giving a funny, compassionate voice to a woman who was pressured and threatened for so long to be silent. By narrating the story of her own life and death, Aynur takes her cir-

cumstances into her own hands, solidifying her ownership of this story, and does not leave it to be misconstrued or misinterpreted by others.

Actual footage of Aynur, from home videos to the news coverage of her death, are interspersed throughout the film, which Bagriacik beautifully brings to life in her performance. Aynur’s narration continues after her death in the film, adding a revelatory layer to the events that follow. She does not pretend to be omniscient, but entertains the theories, states what she believes truly happened and reminds us that we’ll never know.

A truly unique experience, equal parts entertaining and grievous, “A Regular Woman” breaks the constraints of the “based on a true story” genre, and gives us all something to hope for in terms of cinema and in terms of the treatment of women.

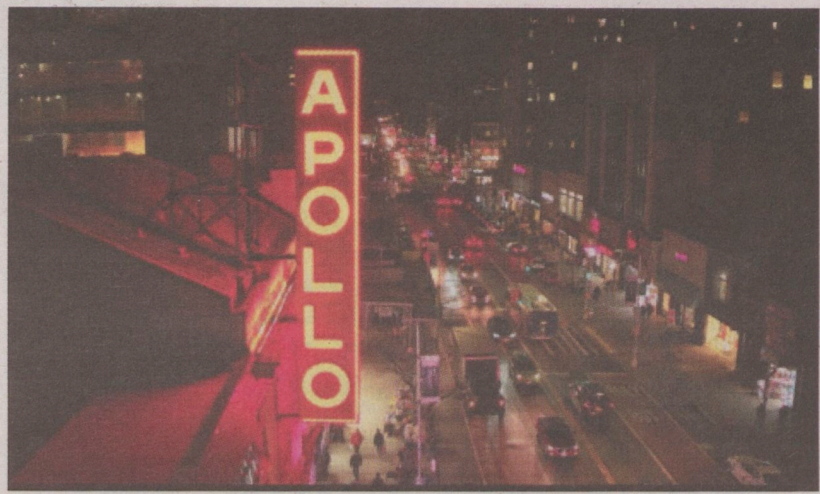


PHOTO COURTESY OF HBO

The Apollo

By Melissa Azofeifa
Assistant Arts & Culture Editor

“The Apollo,” which premiered at the 2019 Tribeca Film Festival at the Apollo Theatre on Wednesday, April 24, was a beautiful and enlightening documentary done by HBO. It portrayed the Apollo’s importance to the African American community and its artists.

The documentary highlighted how the theater was and continues to be a beacon and gathering place for the community, despite everything that Harlem has been through in the past and present.

The documentary centered around Ta-Nehisi Coates and a show he had at The Apollo in November 2018. During the show,

Coates and other local artists read excerpts and selected essays from his book, “We Were Eight Years in Power: An American Tragedy.”

Watching what the Apollo meant to the people interviewed was heartwarming. Some would say “The Apollo is synonymous with being your highest self;” others, like Harlem native, Leslie Uggams, said, “It was like a school.”

According to Blackpast.org, on January 26, 1934, the Apollo was reopened as a Black-oriented theatre, nearly twenty years after it originally opened. The first performance by African American Artists was an “all-colored review” called “Jazz a la Carte.”

The Apollo later featured an “amateur night” where new performers appeared. In 1934, 17-year-old Ella Fitzgerald made her singing debut at the Apollo. Over the years other famous performers who debuted at the Apollo included Billie Holiday and Lauryn Hill.

After decades of success, the Apollo Theatre went bankrupt and closed in 1976, as reported by the New York Times. The theatre later received holding landmark status from the U.S. government, the State of New York and New York City in 1983. Today, it draws an estimated 1.3 million visitors and continues to promote new talent by giving them the spotlight at their shows, as it has done since 1934.

Scheme Birds

Gemma, who lives in a small Scottish town that few end up leaving — or even want to, “Scheme Birds” effectively captures the isolation and community of growing up in a small town. Though brash, funny and undoubtedly sincere, Gemma’s eyes were so expressive at times that when she wasn’t speaking, I felt as if I were watching a moving performance.

For better or for worse, we the audience remain at Gemma’s side,

even when her friends and family don’t. The film is an example of sublime storytelling, without having to exaggerate or fabricate anything to amp up the stakes. The stakes are the same we all face: our happiness, our careers, our families and friends, our romantic relationships, and they are more than enough to get us rooting for Gemma’s happiness, praying for her epiphanies and not wanting to say goodbye.

For They Know Not What They Do

By Emily Clute
Contributing Writer

The battle between religious freedom and LGBTQ rights has been long fought in the United States. Though marriage equality was guaranteed in 2015, the fight is far from over; extremist groups push for anti-LGBTQ bills daily, and religious dialogue has caused lasting, harmful effects such as enduring hate crimes on those in the LGBTQ commu-

nity and their families. Directed by Daniel Karslake, “For They Know Not What They Do” is a documentary that covers the experiences of four LGBTQ people — Ryan Robertson, Sarah McBride, Vico Baez Febo and Elliot Porcher — and their experiences with religion, family and community. Using a combination of personal testimonies, family photos and videos, national news clips

and footage of religious services, Karslake provides an emotionally vulnerable yet insightful look into the intersection between religion, gender and sexuality. The documentary covers extremely intricate topics such as faith, freedom, acceptance and forgiveness in a very profound way that helps the viewers understand what this community goes through while sharing these four unique experiences.

Circus of Books

In this unique documentary, “Circus of Books” director Rachel Mason tells the story of her family’s business; an iconic, gay pornography shop in Los Angeles. On the outside, Karen and Barry Mason seemed like regular parents; they took the kids to school, sports practice and church. In reality, they were the head of an adult empire in LA. Starting with selling Hustler magazine from the trunk of Barry’s car, the couple would

go on to run an iconic shop on Santa Monica Boulevard for 30 years, and would even eventually branch out into a hardcore film production company. “Circus of Books” stood as an icon for the Los Angeles LGBTQ community, providing a safe gathering place during the dangerous eras of legal and social persecution. With personal testimonies from her parents, siblings and “Circus

of Books” staff, Mason allows viewers an intimate look into the rise and fall of an empire. Through losing friends and staff to the AIDS crisis, facing felony charges of obscenity during the Reagan era, personal conflicts of morality and a failing financial market, “Circus of Books” leads you through the unlikely story of a family just trying to make a living.

Come to Daddy

“Come to Daddy” is a surprising, genre-bending film with twists and turns at every corner. This thrilling but comedic film stars Elijah Wood as Norval, a young man struggling to cope with a suicide attempt and old demons. When he hears from his father for the first time since childhood, he

puts his life on pause to visit him in his father’s secluded home. Yet the reunion he has dreamed of is quickly ruined, as he becomes suspicious of his father and his reasons for requesting his visit. In his directorial debut, Ant Timpson provides a refreshing take on a thriller with “Come to Daddy,”

leaving audiences laughing and gasping in surprise through all 93 minutes. Wood’s performance is unlike any other he’s produced before, allowing fans to see a new side of a familiar face. For a film that leaves you with just as many laughs as it does surprises, check out “Come to Daddy.”



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OPINIONS

THE STATESMAN

INFORMING STONY BROOK UNIVERSITY FOR MORE THAN 50 YEARS

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The Statesman and its editors have won several awards for student journalism and several past editors have gone on to enjoy distinguished careers in the field of journalism.

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PICTURES OF MONEY/Flickr VIA CC BY 2.0

A picture of a pile of money. The Excelsior Scholarship is a form of need-based financial aid for students of State Universities of New York and City Universities of New York.

When financial aid gets in the way of education

By Cindy Mizaku
Contributing Writer

The words, “Total Amount Due” appeared in front of me in jumbled up letters. I darted out of my room across campus to the Bursar’s Office, desperately hoping it was some kind of mix-up that could quickly be fixed.

“I’m sorry, but you have been decertified for the Excelsior Scholarship,” a Bursar manager told me. “You should have known.”

Confused and at a loss for words, I couldn’t help but remember my father’s relief after hearing the news of Gov. Andrew Cuomo’s tuition-free degree program. I could hear him saying in his thick, Albanian accent, “How lucky! Excelsior will administer on your first year of college.”

In Fall 2017, I started my first semester at Stony Brook University on the pre-med track. Like many undergraduate students on similar paths, I rely on financial aid to pay for college. It is difficult to ensure that degree-applicable credits are going toward programs like TAP, which requires a minimum of 12 credits per semester. This especially applies to students with interests in studies they cannot pursue because of financial aid programs’ eligibility requirements.

I graduated from an early college high school and came to Stony Brook with junior standing — something I easily looked over while slowly getting accustomed to college life as an antsy freshman. My semester was made up of frequent trips to the financial aid office and undergraduate advising to explain my case: “I depend on the Excelsior Scholarship, and I am on the pre-med track. I know I need to take 30 degree-applicable credits by the end of the year. I do not want to major in biology to cover my pre-med requirements. What can I do to guarantee my eligibility for the scholarship?”

After what felt like countless talks, I was left dissatisfied when I was told by a handful of advisors that because the Excelsior Scholarship was “new,” they didn’t have the slightest idea about how to approach my situation.

The growing consensus made me believe that I had to trial-and-error my way through navigating financial aid during my time at SBU.

I decided to follow the advice I was given by leaving my major undeclared, only to find out that I owed full tuition for not satisfying the scholarship’s eligibility requirements.

For months, I blamed my lack of responsibility and certainty for losing a much-needed opportunity to ease the financial burdens that come with being a college student. It wasn’t until I sat down in Liz Montegary’s “Feminist Theory in Context” class that I learned many other students had also felt misled and rejected by promising financial aid programs.

Montegary, an assistant professor in the department of women’s, gender and sexuality studies, spoke about how financial aid can often restrict a student’s ability to fully grow.

“College is a chance to explore new ideas — to figure out who you are as a person, how to ask questions, and how to be creative,” she said. “These are the skills we need if we’re going to build a more just society. I already worry that critical thinking and writing skills are devalued on our campus. The fact that financial aid packages set further limits on what students can study is all the more concerning.”

Academic institutions that prioritize students’ financial needs also need to take into account that fulfilling the 12 credit requirement per semester, in the case of TAP, depends on the courses being offered and student responsibilities that get forgotten. Many students accept financial aid programs out of necessity and end up feeling trapped when they begin to question whether or not they’ll meet eligibility requirements semesters ahead.

TAP recipient and sophomore psychology major, Jonathan Baez, frequently worries about securing the aid he receives. Baez planned on declaring a second major before having to accept that he wouldn’t be able to do so because TAP only factors degree-applicable credits going toward first majors.

“Every semester there’s a scheduling conflict or an issue where I basically have to work my schedule in a way that I’ll be eligible for TAP and other scholarships,” Baez said. “When making my schedule, I can’t really do so by what classes I’m interested in. My priority is to pick ones that will make it so I’m eligible for TAP.”

Baez, who came to Stony Brook with almost all of his Stony Brook Curriculum (SBC) requirements fulfilled, had to take classes in sequences that were not beneficial for him in the long run because of their demanding expectations.

Joly Zakaria, a junior computer engineering major, was decertified for TAP after changing her major, talking to an advisor about the classes she needed to enroll in and not being told that one of them did not count toward her degree.

“I was informed way too late in the semester where I was no longer able to add or drop the class,” she said. “As a result, I was decertified out of the blue. I think by having requirements for eligibility, it makes it harder for students to actually try and branch out to take classes that they might actually be passionate about. They are sort of forced to stick to the major they chose and not explore anything else.”

Financial aid institutions need to consider that students are open to changing their career paths and fields of study. Restricting students to one choice of study and, therefore, the major’s corresponding classes, leaves them with no room to prospect their interests and explore other opportunities.

Financial aid is essential, but we need to be thinking about how it covertly limits students because of its obstructive guidelines. Stony Brook needs to do a better job of acknowledging these consequences and helping students deal with them. As it stands, we’re on our own.

The Onion Bagel: Congratulations graduates, get ready for the real world

By Aaron San Jose
Contributing Writer

The Onion Bagel is a satirical column for The Statesman.

Congrats Class of 2019, you're done. The nightmares have stopped, you can sleep again. You've stopped suffering from prophetic dreams about President Stanley burning your degree at the graduation ceremony. Adulthood awaits!

I get that it all feels a bit overwhelming. You're a 20-something-year-old in six figures worth of debt. You have a job that pays \$12 a fortnight, your parents think you're a failure and they kicked you out of the house. Then moving day for dormers came and went, and now you're homeless, with your only refuge being the communal shelter built by Eastern European survivalists near West Apartments. All you see is an endless void where your future should be. Pure, black abyss.

But don't worry guys — it'll all be OK.

You're out in the real world without a paddle, but at least you're free. You're going to have to live in a two-bedroom loft with eight of your closest friends (although you hate half of them now) like some kind of tenement in a Brazilian Favela, but your best bud brought his 40-inch TV and his Roku, so you can binge watch all eight seasons of "Burn Notice" just like you always wanted.

Of course, you'll be nostalgic for all your old friends. They're all spread out across the country, never to be seen again, because they're gainfully employed through their connections with the royal family of Surakarta. You're not talking to your best friend anymore because he hooked up with your ex on your favorite couch, even though you told him six times not to do that.

And since you criticized your favorite professor for coming to class naked and your second-favorite professor died from a heart attack because he was literally too old to teach, you're officially stuck working your way up the corporate ladder at Arby's.

But it's fine! You can finally start paying off that debt, unlike the freshmen who are as screwed as you are by the time 2024 comes around — unless Elizabeth Warren is elected president — then they'll be fine and have every opportunity you never had!

It's understandable though, you're filled with this existential dread about your future and you don't know what path to take. Your degree gives you options and ironically it makes you more unsure of what to do. Here's some encouragement for you, from everyone in the same situation.

"I tried going to grad school in California at Stanford, which is my dream school, but because of the Excelsior Scholarship the school talked me into taking, now I literally can't leave this university," engineer



PUBLIC DOMAIN

Students throwing their graduation caps. After earning their degrees, graduates must face the harsh reality of figuring out the next chapter of their lives.

and Stony Brook alumnus Michael McDonough said. "It's not a big deal, my mentor was going to teach all of my classes at Stanford, and he's connected to the smartest men and women in our field, but why would I need to talk to them? WHAT IS A SEAWOLF EVERYBODY?! I AM!"

"They're gone, they're all dead, they're just ashes now," history major Elena St. Vale said. "They were sacri-

ficed like animals to fuel some kind of eldritch horror. I just switched my major from bio because I wasn't enjoying it, and I walked in mid-way through the semester to find ... a HARVEST! IT WAS OBSCENE, IT WAS AN ABOMINATION, THEY DIDN'T DESERVE THAT!"

There you have it! So just keep on swimming, keep your chin up and keep that stiff upper lip. And if

you're wondering how you're supposed to do all of that at the same time, well guess what — you're a college grad. You can do anything! We believe in you. Now take on the world with all the might you've got, and you should do just fine. Besides, this is the world you were born into, you really can't do anything else other than try, right?

Stony Brook is alright, keep fighting to make it a better place

By Mike Adams
Opinion Editor

I had a weird time getting to Stony Brook.

I grew up in Kings Park, about 20 minutes from Stony Brook University. I had good enough grades and test scores through high school to senioritis my way into a spot in New York University's (NYU) journalism school, one of the highest ranked and most expensive in the country. That whole time I was getting ready to pursue a degree my family could only afford through the life insurance payments we got after my father passed, I had a lot of sensible people telling me that maybe I should give the much cheaper SBU a try.

But I wanted nothing to do with it. Growing up so close to Stony Brook, my joke was always that this school was "the ceiling of low expectations" — something other people could be proud of, but I would never accept as a viable option.

One dropout and a stint in community college later, I came to SBU in Spring 2017, humiliated into attending what I thought was the safety school to end all safety schools.

I could not have been more wrong.

My two years at Stony Brook have been the best of my entire life. The students, professors and friends I've met here changed me in ways I could never have antic-



EMMA HARRIS/THE STATESMAN

Demonstrators during the Disability March Protest on April 10, 2019. There are nearly 25,000 students on Stony Brook's campus who have the power to make a difference.

ipated. I found a second family at *The Statesman* that trusted me enough to let me write important stories, and eventually lead an entire section of the paper.

When I took over as Opinions Editor for *The Statesman*, I was worried that I wouldn't be able to find enough things I felt

strongly about to fill our pages week after week.

Turns out, there's a lot to complain about here.

But the single greatest problem this university has is apathy — the apathy of the student body towards the university's systemic efforts to dismantle itself.

It's not that difficult to see why nobody cares about the issues that don't immediately concern them. Half of the students here are commuters, many of whom aren't around long enough to care. Then, there are the STEM majors who are so swamped with work that they can't pick their

head up long enough to find out what's going on around campus. Once you filter out the people who are too busy or too removed to stay engaged, you're left with about five political science majors and the staff of the Undergraduate Student Government (USG) to do right by nearly 25,000 Stony Brook students.

When I cover a protest at this school and more than 100 people show up, I'm pleasantly surprised. That's less than one half of one percent of the student body, and it's nowhere near the numbers that might make the university take notice that its community gives a damn about, say, Stony Brook's systematic dismantling of its SUNY-mandated Writing and Rhetoric program.

The only activist movement I've ever seen bear fruit on this campus is the recent campaign to bring awareness to the university's accessibility issues. After an awful lot of complaining from an awful lot of people about Stony Brook's busted accessibility buttons, I actually saw mechanics going around and fixing them last week. That took protests, persistence and a whole lot of bad press — the only things Stony Brook ever really responds to.

So my advice to everybody who still has time to spend at this remarkably OK school is simple: get angry, get loud and get together. One shouting student might get drowned out by the stress of academic life, but I'd like to see this administration try and ignore 1,000 more.



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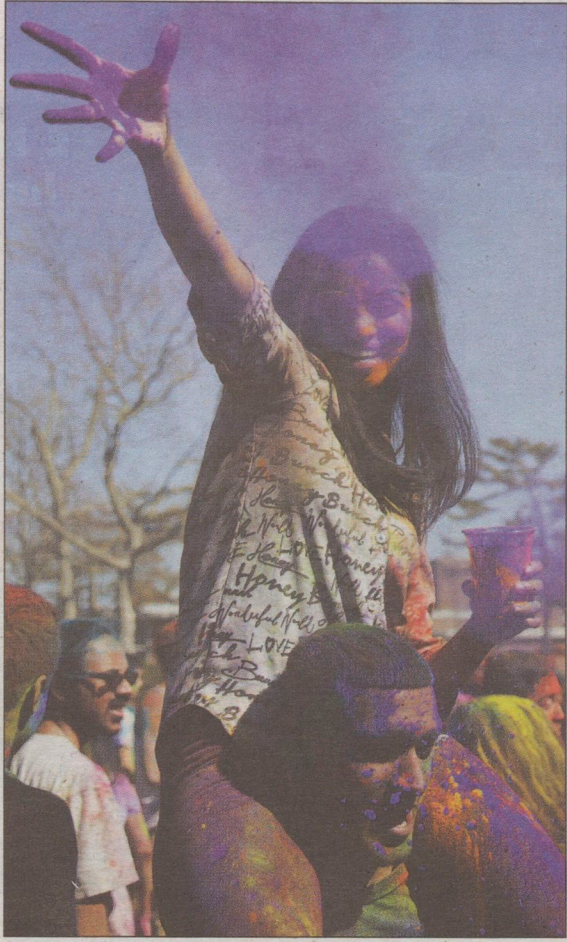
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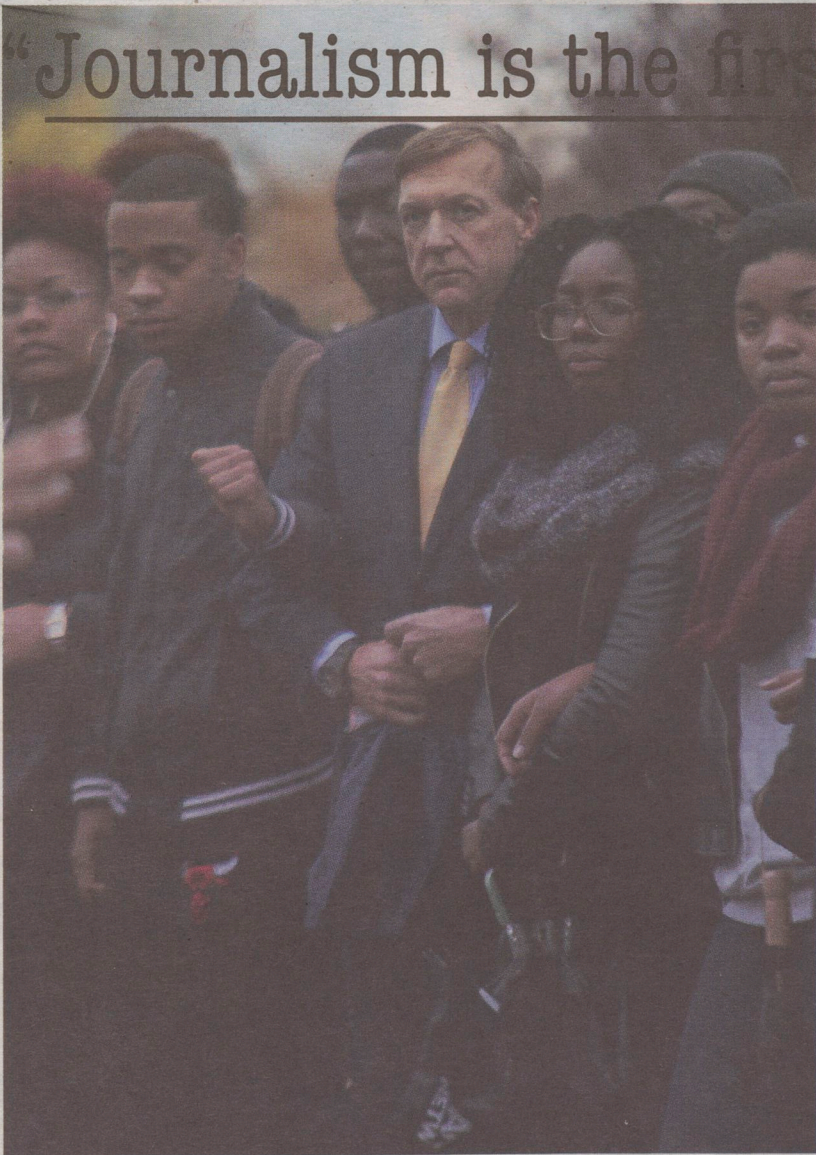
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President Stanley at a student demonstration, Nov. 12, 2015.
Christopher Cameron/The Statesman

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MULTIMEDIA

Stony Brook Year in Review



The Diamond Wolfettes performing during the 2018 Homecoming Seawolf Showcase. *SARA RUBERG/THE STATESMAN*



Gov. Andrew Cuomo during his visit to Stony Brook in the spring of 2019. *GARY GHAYRAT/THE STATESMAN*



Students wait on line for a ride at the third annual Wolfeland in September 2018. *GARY GHAYRAT/THE STATESMAN*



A\$AP Ferg performing at the 2019 Brookfest concert. *SARA RUBERG/THE STATESMAN*



Students protest ADA violations on campus in April 2019. *EMMA HARRIS/THE STATESMAN*



Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor visits Stony Brook in October 2018. *SARA RUBERG/THE STATESMAN*

No. 1 Men's Lacrosse falls to UMBC in A.E. Semifinals

By Ryan Magill
Staff Writer

The Stony Brook men's lacrosse team was defeated by the UMBC Retrievers on Thursday, May 2 by a final score of 14-8. The loss came at home at Kenneth P. LaValle Stadium and in the first round of the America East Playoffs, ending the Seawolves' season and killing their playoff hopes early.

The Seawolves entered the matchup as the top-ranked team in the playoffs and as the America East regular season champions, boasting a conference-best 9-5 overall record with a 5-1 conference record. The team also had eight players named to All-Conference teams as well as having the Defensive Player of the Year in senior LSM Ryland Rees and Coach of the Year in head coach Jim Nagle. UMBC entered with a 4-8 record and held the fourth seed in the playoffs.

Despite the rankings, UMBC dominated from the beginning. The Retrievers started off hot by outscoring the Seawolves 3-1 in the first quarter and followed it up with five straight, unanswered goals to close out the half. Led by junior attacker Brett McIntyre's first-half hat trick and four total goals, two-goal games from



SARA RUBERG / THE STATESMAN

Junior attacker Tom Haun in a game against Marist on Feb. 3, 2019. Haun finished the playoff matchup against UMBC with a hat trick.

senior midfielder Josh Jordan and sophomore attackers Trevor Patschorke and Steven Zichelli, as well as one goal game from junior attacker Ryan Frawley, freshman attacker Jack Thomas and freshman midfielders Keith Dukes and Taylor Bohanan, the Retrievers outplayed

the Seawolves. Offensively, the Seawolves were stagnant in the first half outside of a lone goal from junior attacker Tom Haun, who finished the game with a hat trick himself.

The second half saw more scoring from freshman midfielder Layton Harrell — who scored

two goals — and senior LSM Ryland Rees and junior attackers Jack Hannigan and Connor Grippe all scoring one goal each.

Despite the tough loss, head coach Jim Nagle preferred to look at the accomplishments and positive moments of the team's 2019 season.

"It was a great season for our guys," he said in a postgame press conference. "I really love our team and the commitment and effort that they gave. They were just a great team and they were a real pleasure to coach. I told them that as they walked off the field or in the locker room. We are obviously disappointed, but there were some good accomplishments as well on the year. I'm proud of the team even though tonight was a tough pill to swallow."

As for next season, however, Nagle isn't quite ready to think about that yet.

"We'll kinda take some days away from it," Nagle said. "Like I said, it's just a tough pill to swallow and you hope that when you look back on the season, you reflect on the bigger picture and the full journey and some of the accomplishments that the guys made and more importantly, just what kind of team they were because they were a really special group. Hopefully we keep that going. We got a lot of guys coming back that played a lot of minutes."

The Seawolves look to prepare for next season following the upset. The team will be graduating nine seniors.

WLax wins A.E. honors

By Sasha Podorov
Staff Writer

On Wednesday, the America East conference hosted its annual women's lacrosse awards banquet honoring the best players of the 2019 season. The league's coaches, who were not allowed to vote for their own players, honored eight Stony Brook players with all-conference selections.

Seniors Keri McCarthy and Carlee Janelli and sophomore Haley Dillon were named to the All-Conference Second Team.

Janelli and Dillon were key pieces of Stony Brook's fourth ranked scoring defense. Janelli secured 35 ground balls and caused 18 turnovers while serving as one of two defensive captains.

Dillon gathered 27 ground balls and forced 32 turnovers, leading the conference in caused turnovers per game.

McCarthy, who was named to the initial Tewaaraton Award watch list, took the majority of Stony Brook's draws, ending the season with 75 draw controls alongside 17 goals and 10 assists. She ranked fourth in the conference with 3.95 draw controls a game.

Five Seawolves — sophomore midfielder Siobhan Rafferty, junior attacker Taryn Ohlmiller, junior midfielder Ally Kennedy, senior defender Mackenzie Burns and senior goalkeeper Anna Tesoriero — were also named to the All-Conference First Team.

Rafferty scored 47 goals on the season, tied for second most in the conference, and was named to the All-Academic Team for carrying a 3.90 GPA.

Ohlmiller scored 65 points on 35 goals and 30 assists in limited game action. Also named to the Tewaaraton Award watch list in February, Ohlmiller notched a season-high eight points in

Stony Brook's opening game at Colorado.

Despite missing five straight games due to a leg injury, Ohlmiller's 65 points would be good for a top-75 ranking nationally as of May 3.

Kennedy, a scoring machine for the Seawolves this year, was named America East Midfielder of the Year. A member of Team USA, she heads into NCAA Tournament play with 80 goals, one of the best scoring outputs in the nation.

She was one of 25 final nominees for the 2019 Tewaaraton Award. The finalists will be announced on Thursday, May 9.

Burns was a catalyst defensively, securing 28 ground balls and causing 24 turnovers while also picking up 32 draw controls. Her pace and control of the game earned her Defensive Player of the Year honors.

Tesoriero, the lone goalie on the All-Conference First Team, was fittingly awarded Goalkeeper of the Year. She allowed less than eight goals per 60 minutes played, leading the America East with a Goals Against Average of 7.59. Tesoriero also finished third with a save percentage of .462.

Head Coach Joe Spallina was surprisingly not awarded with Coach of the Year honors after leading his team to wins over three ranked teams and a perfect 9-0 conference record en route to a seventh straight America East title.

His team will now take part in their seventh straight NCAA tournament. The farthest the team has made it to the finals was in 2017 when the team was defeated by then-No. 1 seeded Maryland 13-12 in the semifinals.

Akwasi Yeboah transfers to Rutgers



EMMA HARRIS / THE STATESMAN

Redshirt-junior forward Akwasi Yeboah in a game against Binghamton on March 9, 2019. He recently announced his transfer to Rutgers University.

By Andrew Zucker
Staff Writer

Highly sought-after Stony Brook Men's Basketball graduate transfer, Akwasi Yeboah, announced his commitment this morning to Rutgers University on his social media accounts, ending speculation as to where he might go.

The list of schools attempting to gain the services of the English forward included Texas Christian University, Southern Methodist University, Clemson University, Marquette University and Rutgers.

Once Yeboah announced his intent to transfer it was widely thought he would choose Rutgers, due to their head coach Steve Pikiell, who originally recruited Yeboah to Stony Brook.

"Coach Pikiell made a deal with me and said if my team made it

to the finals (in high school), he would come and watch," Yeboah told Newsday last season. "He came and watched the final game. I did really well, and he offered me [a scholarship] right after the game."

Leading the Seawolves to a 24-7 record and an appearance in the College Basketball Invitational, Yeboah had the best season of his college career, averaging 16.7 points, 7.7 rebounds and 1.4 assists in 32 minutes per game while earning a spot on the first team All-America East.

This season, aside from earning first-team All-America East honors, Yeboah was voted onto the second team All-Metropolitan along with now Rutgers teammate, junior forward Eugene Omoruyi.

Yeboah played a vital role in the Seawolves' offense, accumulating

1,317 points in his three-year career with a career average of 13.9 points per game.

He leaves Stony Brook sixth all-time in points in program history.

Yeboah's decision to leave marks the fifth time this offseason the Seawolves have seen someone from last season's roster leave: Head coach Jeff Boals stepped down and took the same position at Ohio University, the transfer of freshman guard Jules Moor and sophomore guard Corry Long and the graduation of senior guard Jaron Cornish.

The Seawolves look to fill the void of their recent departures. Newly appointed head coach Geno Ford already has two new signees in Mouhamadou Gueye and Tyler Stephenson-Moore, as the new additions to the team's roster for the upcoming 2019-20 season thus far.

Softball wins four out of five against Manhattan and Maine

By Andrew Zucker and
Sasha Podozorov
Staff Writers

With the crack of her bat in the fifth inning, junior pitcher/first baseman Melissa Rahrich cemented her name among Seawolf greats. The junior's double in the second game of Stony Brook's doubleheader against the Manhattan Jaspers tied the record for the most RBIs in a single season at 52.

Her record-setting hit capped off a terrific performance on the diamond. Rahrich went 4-6 on the day with two home runs and four RBIs while pitching a complete seven innings with five strikeouts in the second game as Stony Brook defeated Manhattan 8-3 and 6-0, respectively.

Head coach Megan Bryant complimented her team's execution in both games.

"These were two good team wins today and we were solid in all three facets of our game," Bryant said in a press release.

In the first game, Rahrich hit the first of her two home runs to put the Seawolves up 2-0 in the bottom of the first.

The Jaspers answered back just half an inning later when sophomore left fielder Emma Kindblom hit her own two-run home

run off freshman pitcher Shelbi Denman to tie the score at 2-2. But these were the only earned runs she allowed, as after junior infielder Riley Craig drove in a run in the bottom of the third, Denman pitched a complete game with a lead at her back.

Junior catcher Jordyn Nowakowski's double scored two more in the third to put the Seawolves up 5-2.

The Seawolves dominated the second game from start to finish. They scored three runs in the first inning courtesy of singles from senior catcher Irene Rivera and freshman catcher Chloe Vangorder. Rahrich drove in the next two runs with a home run in the third and a double in the fifth, while junior pitcher/first baseman Taylor Pechin capped off the scoring with a home run.

Rahrich allowed five hits but no runs in seven innings pitched to pick up her 14th win of the year, good for third in the America East. This was her fourth complete game shutout on the season.

Stony Brook then kept their momentum rolling in a doubleheader against the University of Maine on Friday, May 3 and Saturday, May 4. The Seawolves won the first matchup, 7-3. The second game was moved to Sat-



SARA RUBERG/THE STATESMAN

Junior pitcher Melissa Rahrich against UMass Lowell. She tied the single-season record for RBIs with 52.

urday at 11 p.m., while game three was played at 1 p.m. The Seawolves took a split on the day, losing game two of the series 7-3 but winning the series and season closer, 5-0.

For the first five innings of game one, the Seawolves coasted, due in large part to Rahrich's play on the mound and in the batter's box. A third inning two-run home run, her 16th on the season, followed by a fourth-inning RBI single raised the score to 6-0 Stony Brook. The home run by Rahrich in the third drove in senior outfielder Katelyn Corr, for her second run scored on the day. Corr took over sole posses-

sion of #1 in program history in runs scored in a single season with 48, ahead of outfielder Stephanie DiBiase with 47 in 2003. With two more games in the series, Corr looked to add on even more.

Rahrich increased her record to 15-11 on the season after pitching seven innings while giving up eight hits, three runs and no walks while striking out five.

Game two of the series did go as well as the first game head for the Seawolves. Heading into the bottom of the fourth, tied at three, Denman gave up a lead-off solo home run to the Bearcats. Following the home run,

Coach Bryant replaced Denman with Pechin. Rivera hit her ninth home run of the season in the loss and Corr scored two more runs.

Stony Brook closed out the series and season in a dominant fashion, winning 5-0. Rahrich got the starting nod once again — pitching her second straight complete game — and finished the season with a 16-11 record. Rahrich picked up her 17th home run of the season in Saturday's game, while Corr scored another two runs, bringing her season total and the new school record of runs scored in a season to 52.

"We didn't do enough in the first game today to help ourselves win, but we did respond well to play our game in game two and win the series," Bryant said in a press release. "Mel threw a great game; our offense was productive and our defense was excellent. It's a good way to finish the regular season and we look forward to the America East Tournament next week."

With the win, the Seawolves finished the regular season 11-7 in conference play and 29-17 overall. The #3 seeded Seawolves look forward to an America East Championship Tournament game versus #6 seeded Binghamton in Hartford, Connecticut at 1:30 p.m. on Wednesday, May 8.

SEAWOLVES SCOREBOARD

 SOFTBALL TUESDAY, APRIL 30 (DOUBLEHEADER) 3 - 8 / 0 - 6  STONY BROOK	 SOFTBALL FRIDAY, MAY 3 7 - 3  MAINE
 BASEBALL TUESDAY, APRIL 30 6 - 7  LIU BROOKLYN	 WOMEN'S LACROSSE SATURDAY, MAY 4 7 - 21  STONY BROOK
 BASEBALL WEDNESDAY, MAY 1 1 - 2  MANHATTAN	 SOFTBALL SATURDAY, MAY 4 (DOUBLEHEADER) 3 - 7 / 5 - 0  MAINE
 WOMEN'S LACROSSE THURSDAY, MAY 2 5 - 17  STONY BROOK	 BASEBALL SATURDAY, MAY 4 (DOUBLEHEADER) 3 - 4 / 5 - 3  MAINE
 MEN'S LACROSSE THURSDAY, MAY 2 14 - 8  STONY BROOK	 BASEBALL SUNDAY, MAY 5 8 - 9  MAINE

you could pick it up on the way to class...
...but sometimes that's just too much effort

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They will tell you it's
just a blob of tissue

But at 28 days her eyes and ears have
already begun to show.

Education doesn't have to end
because a new life begins.

Need help? Call 631-243-0066 24 hours, 7 days
www.aaapregnancyoptions.com