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Issue 7

Volume CXXIX

THE

LEADER

SUNY FREDONIA'S
STUDENT-RUN NEWSPAPER

Kershnar Controversy & More!

**Breaking
Updates**

**Professors'
Response**

**Students'
Response**

**1st Amendment
& Academic
Freedom**



THE LEADER

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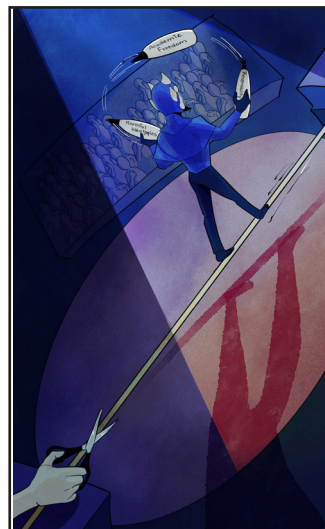
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If you dig down deep enough, you'll get to the surface (of the Earth).

Important updates: Kershnar situation

ALYSSA BUMP

Editor in Chief

The following story consists of updates regarding the Kershnar situation. This article was written Feb. 6, 2022.

HARASSMENT ON CAMPUS

There have been rumours swirling around campus that a threat may have been posted in one of the academic buildings. For confirmation on this matter, The Leader reached out to Brent Isaacson, Chief of University Police. Questions were asked about if a threat was indeed made, if said threat had a connection to the Kershnar situation and what the current status of the investigation was.

Isaacson replied with, “UPD did receive a complaint regarding a note on one of our academic buildings. We are investigating it as a harassment, not a threat. As it is under investigation, I will not be able to provide further information at this time.” The Leader will be looking into more updates on this matter.

LETTERS SENT TO SUNY FREDONIA

The Academic Freedom Alliance (AFA) and the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE) both sent letters to SUNY Fredonia, advocating for Kershnar’s rights of free speech and academic freedom.

The AFA letter was written by Keith Whittington, chairperson of the academic committee of AFA, and was sent to SUNY Fredonia on Feb. 3.

Whittington wrote in the two-page letter, “I write on behalf of the Academic Freedom Alliance to emphasize that Professor Kershnar’s scholarly research and teaching on these topics is fully protected by principles of academic freedom and his public discussion of his ideas on these issues is protected by principles of freedom of speech. There is, quite simply, nothing for the university to review under these circumstances.”

The letter also states, “The university’s obligation in the face of this controversy is to provide a forum in which ideas, however extreme or misguided they may be or seem to be, can be articulated, criticized and fairly debated.”

Whittington calls for SUNY Fredonia to release a public statement “clearly reaffirming Professor Kershnar’s academic freedom.” SUNY Fredonia has yet to release a public statement of this nature.

The FIRE letter, written by Adam Steinbaug, the director of the Individual Rights Defensive Program, spans seven pages. This letter was also sent to SUNY Fredonia on Feb. 3. Steinbaug’s letter goes in depth about the background behind the situation, the implications of the First Amendment and the issues of removing Kershnar from campus. Steinburg wrote, “By banning Kershnar from campus and initiating disciplinary procedures, including an ‘interrogation’ of Kershnar or ‘review’ of his extramural statements, SUNY Fredonia is in violation of the First Amendment.”

Steinbaug urges SUNY Fredonia to “avoid effectuating a heckler’s veto by returning Kershnar to the classroom and publicly committing to protect the First Amendment rights of



WKBW Channel 7 at the Kershnar protest in Barker Commons. Photograph by Tralee Cotter.

your faculty.” The letter also requests a “receipt of a response” from SUNY Fredonia “no later than the close of business on Monday, Feb. 6, 2022, confirming that SUNY Fredonia will not pursue an investigation or disciplinary sanction in this matter.” It is important to note that the Monday being referenced in the letter would be Feb. 7, not Feb. 6. It is unclear if SUNY Fredonia has responded or plans to respond to FIRE at the time of writing this article.

CHANGE.ORG PETITION UPDATE

The change.org petition titled, “Fire Professor Stephen Kershnar from SUNY Fredonia” has reached over 15,000 signatures. The petition was created on Feb. 3, meaning that it only took three days for 15,000 people to sign it. Before reaching this milestone, the petition read, “At 15,000 signatures, this petition becomes one of the top-signed on Change.org.”

PROTEST HELD IN BARKER COMMONS

On Sunday, Feb. 6, a protest was held in Barker Commons in Fredonia, N.Y. The event was not organized by one singular person, but rather was agreed upon by a group of students on Yik Yak.

The protest had a small turnout, and acted more as an open discussion about student issues such as campus safety and mental health.

WKBW Channel 7 attended the event, along with students and professors of SUNY Fredonia. To read more about the conversations, visit fredonialeader.org.

KERSHAR REMOVED FROM CLASSES

On Monday, Feb. 7, The Leader received a screenshot of an email from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. The email was sent to a student enrolled in Kershnar’s PHIL-258 class. The email explained that the course will be taught by “a new instructor effective Tuesday, Feb. 8, 2022.” The email also listed that the class will be held as scheduled.

Upon further investigation by our reporters, it was also found that Kershnar’s name has been removed from YourConnection when searching for courses to register for. It is unclear why this change has been made and what it represents.

Overview: Kershnar “under review” for defending pedophilia, sexism and slavery

ALYSSA BUMP

Editor in Chief

CHLOE KOWALYK

News Editor

This article was written on Feb. 3.

Professor-student sex, torture, pedophilia, slavery and sexism are among the views defended by SUNY Fredonia philosophy professor Dr. Stephen Kershnar.

While Kershnar claims to not directly support these views himself, he has published many articles, books and blog posts in which he argues for these controversial views.

Recently, videos of Kershnar discussing adult-child sex resurfaced on Twitter and have gone viral.

In the video reshared by @libsof-tiktok, originally from the YouTube channel Brain in a Vat, Kershnar discussed sex between an adult male and a 12 year-old girl. He told viewers to imagine she is a willing participant, rather than a person unable to consent. This goes against the many laws set in place across the U.S. limiting the age of consent to no lower than 16. Kershnar then said, “It’s not obvious to me [adult-child sex] is in fact wrong — I think this is a mistake.” The tweet now has over 10,000 likes.

SUNY Fredonia’s Twitter account, @FredoniaU, released a statement on Feb. 1 at 11:09 p.m. from the university’s president, Dr. Stephen Kolison. The statement reads, “SUNY Fredonia is aware of a video posted online involving one of its professors. The views expressed by the professor are reprehensible and do not represent the values of SUNY Fredonia in any way, shape or form. They are solely the professor’s views. The matter is being reviewed.” The comments on this post have been limited by the SUNY Fredonia Twitter account.

On Feb. 3, Dr. Kolison emailed students, faculty and staff saying Kershnar “is being assigned to duties that do not include his physical presence on campus and will not have contact with students while the investigation is ongoing” which would become “effective immediately

and until further notice.” Because of this restraint, Kershnar is unable to provide a comment to The Leader, SUNY Fredonia’s student-run newspaper, despite being reached out to via email.

With the power of social media, Kershnar’s video has blown up. Fox News was one of the first national news services to catch wind of the story. The New York Post, Newsweek, WKBW Channel 7, WGRZ Channel 2, WIVB Channel 4 and many other news sources have covered the story as well.

The story has even gone international, with coverage in Peru, Hungary and Turkey.

One question many people are asking is how Kershnar’s controversial arguments have been able to fly under the radar for over 20 years. But the truth is they haven’t. This exact situation has been a long time coming.

Kershnar was originally appointed to SUNY Fredonia in 1998 and became a full professor in 2005.

Back in 2006, Kershnar and then-president of SUNY Fredonia, Dennis Hefner, faced a disagreement over the student conduct policy. In particular, Kershnar had grievances with limited free speech and harassment policies in the code of conduct. Kershnar took to thefire.org, which stands for Foundation for Individual Rights in Education, to reveal this dispute, and how it was impacting his promotion to full professor. Nevertheless, the school granted Kershnar a promotion after initially turning him down.

Since then, Kershnar became a distinguished teaching professor in 2014. Being a distinguished teaching professor at SUNY Fredonia is no small feat. According to a prior article written about Kershnar’s appointment in 2014 on fredonia.edu, SUNY Board Chairman H. Carl McCall said, “The distinguished designation, SUNY’s highest academic honor, is reserved for the best of the best ... Each professor earning the distinction has advanced his/her field while teaching and mentoring students, often collaborating and innovating with colleagues and serving society at large.”

Diving deeper into Kershnar’s publi-

cations, this SUNY Fredonia professor has written works titled “For Discrimination Against Women,” “A Liberal Argument for Slavery” and even a blog post titled, “Professor-Student Sex: Permissible and Erotic.” Many more controversial publications of his can be found on philpeople.org. A book written by Kershnar in 2009 titled, “Sex, Discrimination, and Violence,” contains many controversial chapters discussing these themes.

In Dec. of 2020, Kershnar appeared on a podcast titled “Unregistered,” hosted by Thaddeus Russell, in which he discusses in detail whether the idea of adult males having sex with children is harmful in itself. In YouTube video “Sexual Taboos | Stephen Kershnar” by Brain in a Vat, Kershnar said “the notion [adult-child sex is] wrong even with a one-year-old is not quite obvious to me. There are reports in some cultures of grandmothers fellating their baby boys to calm them down when they’re colicky.” The YouTube video was taken down the night of Feb. 3.

The question now becomes how far can Kershnar’s right to freedom of speech protect him? Is there anything SUNY Fredonia can actually do?

On Feb. 3, the Academic Freedom Alliance (AFA), a non-profit organization that seeks to protect the first amendment rights of college and university faculty members, sent a letter to SUNY Fredonia in response to Kershnar being under review. Keith Whittington, chair of the AFA’s academic committee, wrote, “There is, quite simply, nothing for the university to review under these circumstances.” He continued, “A member of your faculty under such public scrutiny is likely to be targeted for abuse and threats, and the university’s responsibility is to shelter the faculty member from that harassment and not add to it.”

However, the public feels very differently about this situation. A change.org petition has been created in response to the ongoing situation, calling for Kershnar to be fired. As of the night of Feb. 3, the petition has reached over 11,000 signatures, nearly quadrupling the number of students enrolled at SUNY Fredonia.

Attempted sexual assault allegation sent to President Kolison against Dr. Stephen Kershnar

ALYSSA BUMP
Editor in Chief
CHLOE KOWALYK
News Editor

Trigger warning: This article discusses potentially triggering themes of sexual assault. Please be advised before deciding to read this article.

On the morning of Feb. 4, an allegation of attempted sexual assault was sent to SUNY Fredonia President Stephen Kolison via email.

In the email, a SUNY Fredonia alum alleged an attempted sexual assault took place in the early 2000s by Dr. Stephen Kershnar, a professor of philosophy. At the time that the alleged attempted assault occurred, the individual was a

student of Kershnar. The former student, who has chosen to remain anonymous due to the nature of the allegations, informed The Leader of the email they sent to Kolison. The Leader cannot publish the details of the allegation at this time for legal reasons.

Kolison was informed that this information would be released in The Leader via email. He was also asked if he would like to comment on the matter. On Feb. 8, Kolison commented via email, "Please be assured that the current administration takes any and all allegations seriously and directs them to the appropriate department for review and, if necessary, investigation."

Kershnar was also contacted to see if he or his attorney had a comment on the allegation or the release of it in The Leader. Kershnar is still not allowed to have contact with SUNY Fredonia students during the "investigation," in reference to Kolison's email to students and staff. However, Kershnar's defense attorney, Barry Covert, replied, "[Kershnar] indicated that you reached out to him regarding a baseless accusation of attempted assault. No such charge has ever been made against him."

Covert works for the Lipsitz Green Scime Cambria firm. According to the firm's website, Covert "represents victims of sexual abuse, including adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse. He fights on behalf of his clients to hold abusers and those who allow abuse to occur accountable. [Covert] works to ensure his clients receive the validation they deserve for the trauma they have endured."

However, this past November, Covert received media attention for his work as a defense attorney for Christopher J. Belter Jr., who pled guilty to raping four teenage girls in his home. Although Belter faced eight years of jail time for his crimes and was ruled a Level 3 sex offender, Covert assisted his client into receiving no jail time. More information about this case can be found in multiple articles online.

The Leader will continue to seek out updates about this matter.



Faculty portrait of Dr. Stephen Kershnar.

Students respond to the Kershnar situation and share their experiences

ALYSSA BUMP

Editor in Chief

CHLOE KOWALYK

News Editor

After hearing of the controversial views discussed by Dr. Stephen Kershnar, a philosophy professor at SUNY Fredonia, many students were enraged. They took to Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat and even Yik Yak, an anonymous social media forum that shows posts by people within a small radius.

One student, Olivia Sylvester, a sophomore mathematics major, created a petition on Change.org after hearing about Kershnar's several works and podcast appearances surrounding topics such as pedophilia, sexism and racism.

The petition, titled "Fire Professor Stephen Kershnar from SUNY Fredonia," encourages students to sign in support of removing Kershnar from campus. As a result of his ideas, some students no longer feel safe on campus with Kershnar as a professor. As of Feb. 6, the petition had over 15,000 signatures.

Sylvester said she started the petition after seeing Kershnar's discussions on Twitter. "I was just in disbelief about what he said... you will [see] his other publications and you'll hear what students are saying you're like, 'Oh my god, someone has to do something about this,'" she said.

Students, parents, alumni, community members and social media users that are aware of the situation are among the thousands of people to sign Sylvester's petition.

Sylvester explained that she never expected the petition to blow up. "I was

getting ready for my 10 a.m. class and just made the petition and I'm like, 'Oh, I hope maybe like 50 people to sign it, 500 max,'" she said.

However, Sylvester expressed significant concerns with starting the petition. When creating the petition, she listed her name as only "Olivia S" and didn't include her last name to give herself some anonymity. Despite this, when she was interviewed by WGRZ Channel 2, her full name was listed with the television interview.

"I almost wish I wasn't the one to make the petition, but I know that there might have not been another person who would've made it and actually followed through this far." Sylvester continued, "So part of it's an honor, and part of it's a burden. But I'm glad to be making a difference at least."

SUNY Fredonia students have been extremely vocal about this situation, both on social media and on campus. Donnie Woodard, a technical theatre major, tweeted on his personal Twitter account "SUNY Fredonia saying that Stephen Kershnar's disgusting views on pedophilia do not reflect the views of the school in any way is a BOLD statement, given that the school BOASTED on every platform they had that he was a published author (for books on this exact disgusting material)." The post received over 100 likes.

Kendall Brooks, junior childhood inclusive education major, posted on Facebook: "Education is the gateway to a better future. No professor and/or educator should hold any position of power when they can't understand women's fundamental rights... [this] institution should understand that students

pay for an education, not to feel unsafe in the classroom... As a future educator and administrator, schools and institutions need to consider the student body's perspective more." In the post, Brooks also linked the Change.org petition created by Sylvester.

Students who have previously taken courses with Kershnar have also come forward to share their experiences. Some have chosen to remain anonymous to prevent potential conflict.

One student has taken three classes with Kershnar — one last semester and the other two were taken two semesters ago. They said, "He always struck me as someone who gets a kick out of pissing people off. In fact, in his classes it was almost impossible to tell what he actually believed and what he didn't."

"In my opinion, he is a disgrace to the other wonderful members of the philosophy department, and his heinous views should not be allowed to have a place on this campus," the student added.

Matthew Spencer, a senior theatre arts major with a minor in political science and philosophy, is currently enrolled in two of Kershnar's courses: PHIL-258: Life and Death and PHIL-313: Sex and Love. Spencer explained that in his Sex and Love course, Kershnar had a "very opinionated mindset on every topic." Spencer continued, "If [Kershnar] asked a specific student, for an example, and they gave an answer that conflicted with his view on the topic or debate, he would badger them until they basically caved under the pressure of the professor repeating the question over and over again."

Spencer also spoke about how his classmates were handling this situation.

He said, “Personally, I feel uncomfortable not for my safety and existence, but for a lot of my female and younger classmates. I sit next to somebody who is a freshman in one of the classes... I’ve spoken with her privately outside of class and she is very, like scared — I think that is the best word for it — for her safety as she just got onto campus in August, and one semester in and this happens.”

Olivia Beilein-Hunt, a senior double major in journalism and public relations, was enrolled in one of Kershnar’s courses in 2018 as a freshman. She was enrolled in the course to cover a Fredonia Foundations requirement. Beilein-Hunt said, “Looking back, it’s scary to think of how many other

on if I was being dramatic.” Beilein-Hunt ended up withdrawing from Kershnar’s course.

Another student who is currently enrolled in one of Kershnar’s classes said, “We were asked whether or not we thought that it was statutory rape for an older man to sleep with a woman who appeared older but had a mind of a minor... I said I believed it was wrong [and] he disagreed and called our age group ‘prudes.’”

This student would also like to remain anonymous. Although they would like to drop Kershnar’s class, they fear not having enough credits to remain a full-time student. “I feel trapped with a professor who I don’t feel comfortable with,” the student said.

especially if they are in the philosophy program.

A student that hasn’t taken any of Kershnar’s classes, who has chosen to remain anonymous to avoid repercussions, saw the circulation of the Kershnar situation on social media offered some peaceful ways students can protest. “The students are in control completely,” they said. “They can stop taking his classes and withdraw from them, stop going to his classes ... and peacefully protest around Fredonia, have conversations about it, etc.”

A protest was been planned by an anonymous group of students on Yik Yak, which took place in Barker Commons on Feb. 6 at 2:30 p.m. A main cause of this protest was the ongoing



Illustration by Lydia Turcios.

freshmen have been required to learn from him.”

She detailed that Kershnar would “[play] devil’s advocate and [twist] facts with fantasy. He would compare things with porn, orgies, etc.” She continued, “It was a very uncomfortable environment, but as a freshman, I had no idea of what I was supposed to expect out of college classes... I was very conflicted

However, there has been discussions about the possibility that students may be able to drop Kershnar’s courses with no penalty and re-register for a different course. It is important to note, however, that the philosophy department is quite small. Spencer explained that if students drop Kershnar’s courses, they may not have an appropriate class to substitute for the credits they need to graduate,

Kershnar situation, but in an Instagram post about the protest, students were urged to come out to support the campus community, no matter what cause they were supporting.

An article about this protest is available on fredonialeader.org.

First Amendment and academic freedom: How does this impact the Kershner situation?

ALYSSA BUMP

Editor in Chief

CHLOE KOWALYK

News Editor

The First Amendment states, “Congress shall make no law ... abridging freedom of speech, or of the press.” Even though the amendment reads that Congress cannot interfere with these freedoms, the Supreme Court has protected speakers against all government agencies, including federal, state and local jurisdictions. As SUNY Fredonia is a state school, not a private institution, these freedoms are protected by the state and the college.

According to Mike Igoe, an attorney and associate professor of journalism at SUNY Fredonia, “It used to be that the First Amendment was applied a little bit differently to kids and colleges and any educational setting. It was very pro-student, but now it [has] shifted the other way, in favor of pro-administration.” Pro-administration should not be confused with the undying support of professors at a university. Rather, it is the focus of the people that manage the university, such as the President’s Office.

When it comes to the First Amendment, many citizens are unsure of what limitations exist within our freedoms. Not all speech is indeed protected by the First Amendment. Some exceptions in extreme cases include: incitement, defamation, threats and obscenity. These restrictions have come to fruition through various Supreme Court cases.

Contrary to popular belief, no exceptions exist for hate speech in the First Amendment. According to an article titled “Permissible restrictions on expression” from *britannica.com*, “Racist threats are unprotected by the First Amendment alongside other threats ... such speech may not be specially punished because it is racist, sexist, antigay or hostile to some religion.”

However, free speech is limited on government property, as well as in government-run institutions, to a certain degree. Igoe explained that “if the government tries to restrict speech, they have to prove two things: you have to show a compelling government interest, meaning it's something important... and number two, if they restrict speech, they cannot do any more than is necessary.”

In fact, government employees, which includes SUNY Fredonia professors, could technically be fired for “saying things that interfere with the employer’s efficiency,” according to *britannica.com*. This means it could be argued that Dr. Stephen Kershner, the tenured SUNY Fredonia philosophy professor in question, could be fired under the grounds of disrupting the educational process at SUNY Fredonia.

Igoe explained that “not all types of speech are protected by the First Amendment, and the types of speech and the facts of the case are a very important aspect.”

It is important to note, however, that the First Amendment may protect speakers from being censored, but it

does not protect them from facing the consequences of what they say from the public. Freedom of speech goes both ways — observers can choose to respond to what is being said through shunning, expressing disapproval and peacefully protesting.

In Kershner’s case, the speech in question revolves around adult-child sex and other seemingly controversial topics. However, being a professor at SUNY Fredonia gives Kershner academic freedom. As a philosophy professor, Kershner has used the argument that part of being a philosopher and professor is to debate ideas, even those that the public may find to be extremely objectionable or offensive.

According to the Organization of American Historians, academic freedom is “the principle of freedom of expression for scholars engaged in discipline-related teaching, learning, research, publication and service.” Simply put, academic freedom protects educators’ rights to perform research and debate various topics without fear of sanction. This freedom is important for students, educators and the public as a whole because it allows the cultivation of new ideas and research.

Just like free speech, academic freedom also has limitations. According to “Defining Academic Freedom” by Cary Nelson, academic freedom does not protect an educator from investigations into allegations, misconduct or violations. It also does not protect faculty members from sanctions for “poor performance.”

On top of having academic freedom, Kershnar is also tenured. Tenure is a long-term contract with a professor that guarantees employment that can only be terminated under extraordinary circumstances. However, there are criticisms concerning tenure. Ernst Benjamin of the American Association of University Professors, argued that “tenure creates excessive social, as well as individual, costs because unproductive tenured faculty limit opportunities for new faculty and programmatic innovation.”

Tenured professors are protected from unfair layoffs, but they are not protected from being fired completely. They do have a right to a hearing before being fired, and the process to fire someone that is tenured isn't impossible. It is just much harder to do so.

The process of being tenured standardly consists of being reviewed six years after starting the position. According to academicpositions.com, the review looks into a professor's contribution in three areas — research, teaching and service to the university. The professor also must put together a dossier, which normally consists of a CV, publications, a teaching portfolio and a few other things that summarize why the professor is fit for tenure. Simply put, the tenure process is normally complex and hard to do. It reviews everything a professor has done that makes them deserving of the tenure title.

Some have been critical of the fact that Kershnar was ever tenured in the first place. According to a post on Twitter from @kirbwyrd, “The fact that Stephen Kershnar has tenure makes me respect the concept of tenure even less.”

Igoe described the Kershnar situation as being a three-pronged event. “You've got the First Amendment. You've got academic freedom. And then, you've got what will the school do?” As of Feb. 5, neither the college nor the union have taken action against Kershnar, and the union likely won't take action until the university does so first.

On Feb. 3, SUNY Fredonia's president Stephen Kolison wrote this in a statement to all students, faculty and

staff via email: “Please allow me to reiterate my earlier statement that I view the content of the video as absolutely abhorrent. I cannot stress strongly enough that the independent viewpoints of this individual professor are in no way representative of the values of the SUNY Fredonia campus.”

Igoe believes that “Kolison is absolutely within his rights to speak out against the fallout from this.” Kolison too is protected by the First Amendment, which allows him to separate the values of the college and those of

Kershnar. Kolison is “within his rights,” according to Igoe, by creating a division between the university's views and Kershnar's views — since Kershnar's comments on podcasts and in his blogs may have created an environment that makes students and colleagues feel uncomfortable.

While many people want Kershnar to be fired, this situation is more convoluted than it appears upon first glance. There are several factors at play, and this process will most likely take some time before it is fully resolved.



"Bald Eagle - Illustration" by DonkeyHotey is licensed under CC BY-SA. 2.0.

Professors' varying views on Kershnar uproar

ALYSSA BUMP

Editor in Chief

CHLOE KOWALYK

News Editor

Several SUNY Fredonia professors have voiced their opinions about the recent news regarding their colleague Dr. Stephen Kershnar. This past week, a video on Twitter from @libsoftiktok showed Kershnar appearing on a podcast where he discussed topics such as adult-child sex. Along with the resurfacing of this podcast on Twitter, several of Kershnar's books, blog posts and other works have entered the public eye once again.

With differing views circling on academic freedom and the First Amendment, numerous SUNY Fredonia professors have not shied away from expressing their opinions.

Dr. Neil Feit, a distinguished teaching professor at SUNY Fredonia, has taught in the philosophy department for over 20 years. Feit was emailed a request for an interview with *The Leader* on the Kershnar situation, which he politely declined. However, he did provide us with a message he sent to President Kolison.

In the message, Feit was responding to Kolison's message to the campus from Feb. 3 where he announced Kershnar has been assigned duties off campus and that the situation would continue to be investigated. Feit wrote to Kolison, "Everything that has recently provoked outrage on this matter is very clearly constitutionally protected speech, and SUNY Fredonia is a public university. There is no basis for this matter being reviewed or investigated, and there is no basis for sanctioning Dr. Kershnar in any way."

Feit also included a link to a Daily Nous post titled, "Kershnar Cycle Reactivated (several updates)." According to their "About" page, "Daily Nous provides news for and about the philosophy profession, useful information for

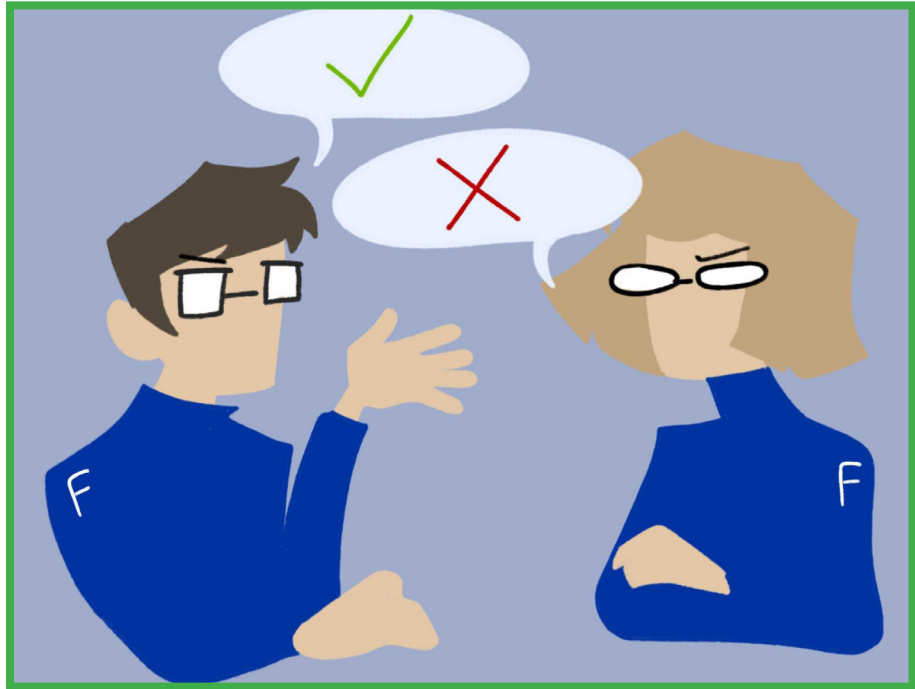


Illustration by Lydia Turcios.

academic philosophers, links to items of interest elsewhere and an online space for philosophers to publicly discuss it all."

The post started out by explaining what they say the "Kershnar Cycle" is. Simply put, the post explains that every few years, people discover the work Kershnar has done as a philosopher. People are shocked by it. They tend to feel outraged and share their disapproval. That is, until there's something else to discuss and Kershnar is forgotten about once again.

The author of this post, Justin Weinberg, wrote, "Kershnar Cycles, like hurricanes, come in varying strengths. Typically they're... mild. This time, however, it's more severe, as the cycle appears to have been initiated by a very popular social media account, @LibsofTikTok, which shared a selectively edited video of an interview with Kershnar, titles of some of his articles and called for him to be fired."

The post continued by pointing out how Kershnar shapes his philosophical arguments around adult-child sex. It also shows written instances where Kershnar himself has said he does not support adult-child sex.

Weinburg finished the original post with, "Raising questions about sacred beliefs is one of the ways philosophy is especially valuable. That Kershnar has dedicated his career to this value (in ways that may have been personally or professionally costly to him) gives his fellow philosophers a further reason, apart from academic freedom, to defend him, even if they disagree with his conclusions." The post has since been updated several times.

Another SUNY Fredonia professor, Dr. Darrin Rogers, has also voiced his opinion.

Rogers is an associate professor in psychology and earned his Ph.D. in child and adolescent clinical psychology from Ohio State, where he did research

in direct child victim focused sexual aggression and sexual abuse research as well as clinical work. He has been trained as someone who studies offenders and offending.

"I'm fully in favor of academic freedom," Rogers said, "and I think even difficult and uncomfortable topics should be explored."

However, Rogers' main concern with Kershnar's discussion was Kershnar's lack of judgement about how to discuss topics of this manner. Rogers said, "I do not believe that he showed good judgment or responsibility [regarding] when and how he made these comments and what audience he made them to."

Rogers also pointed out that many of Kershnar's arguments are factually incorrect: specifically Kershnar's reference to adult-child sex as being "unharmful."

"If you do good research, you find that yeah, this causes harm," Rogers explained. "But it gets messy because [the research is] realistic... not everybody experiences terrible consequences for the rest of their lives, [but] some people do."

"It was frustrating to me to see him make these comments, especially the comments that this doesn't cause harm... his comments were [in direct] contradiction to a large amount of research on this," Rogers said. "I think he's wrong about harm. I think he's irresponsible to wander off on these interesting philosophical musings and his philosophical musings always end in a place, I think, at least from what I've seen, that is shocking and horrifying."

Rogers further explained, "You'd make the world a better place by using science and sound judgment to figure out why [pedophiles] have these thoughts and feelings, [and] how to manage them, so they don't turn into behaviors."

Dr. Bruce Simon, an associate professor in English, voiced his criticisms of those who've criticized Kershnar on Facebook. In his post, Simon also linked a review of the situation posted by Rogers on Facebook to provide more information on the topic.

In his post, Simon wrote: "So, yes, of course his positions and arguments

First, Simon explained that Kershnar's critics have "cast a contrarian libertarian conservative as a liberal or progressive." This point reflected the labeling of Kershnar as a liberal by some news outlets' viewers due to his employment at a liberal arts college.

Simon also criticized those who demanded SUNY Fredonia ignore the First Amendment and campus policies and "fire [Kershnar] for his extramural speech without proof of adequate cause or any due process."

Simon also added that many of Kershnar's critics have demanded that "politicians punish SUNY for hiring, reappointing and promoting him," and have cited Kershnar has a poster child for the misuse of taxpayer dollars, which could delegitimize and defund public higher education institutions like SUNY Fredonia.

Also, some of Kershnar's critics have described those defending Kershnar's free speech as either "secretly agreeing with him, being complicit in his thoughts and crimes or protecting a pedophile," according to Simon.

Finally, Simon explained that because Kershnar is Jewish, several posts depicting anti-semiticism have shown up as a result of the situation.

Mike Igoe, an associate professor of journalism at SUNY Fredonia and an attorney, was reached out to by WDOE radio and WKBW TV for an interview. During a separate Zoom interview with The Leader, Igoe referenced what he told those two news organizations. "I said, 'I don't really want to get into his case at all, because there's too many things [at play] right now...' So, I will talk strictly about the First Amendment."

Igoe made the point that not all types of speech are protected under the First Amendment. He also explained that there are a lot of separate issues simultaneously working together in Kershnar's case. "There's employment contracts, union contracts, academic freedom... it's a very involved story in many respects." Igoe also points out that The U.S. Supreme Court has allowed speech to be restricted by school administrators if they feel it disrupts the learning environment and conflicts with the school's values.

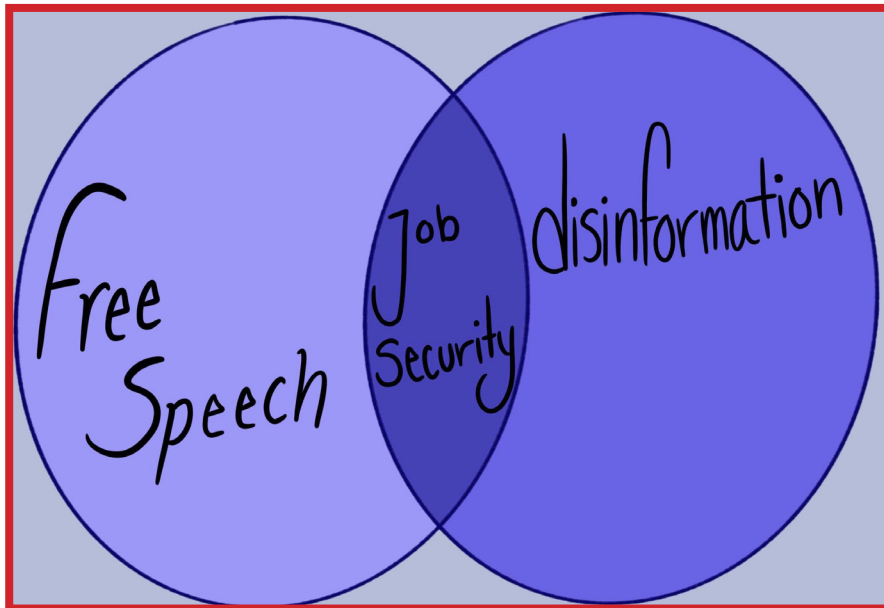


Illustration by Lydia Turcios.

Rogers also cited that many organizations across Europe and the United States that advocate for adult-child sex may latch onto information such as the discussions put out by Kershnar that are not entirely factual, and use them as a sort of justification.

deserve severe criticism. And what I find truly terrifying about the online ire aimed at him right now... is how eager his most vehement critics are to..." followed by a list of criticisms about how Kershnar's critics have handled the situation.

Life & Arts

Students **showcase** unique personalities at **Activities Night**

CHLOE KOWALYK

News Editor

Bright yellow pants, colorful signs and microphones were among many eye-catching attractions SUNY Fredonia's students used to draw attention to their clubs at Activities Night this past weekend. Hundreds of students gathered in the Steele Hall Fieldhouse to showcase their favorite clubs and encourage their peers to sign up and get involved. But, with dozens of different clubs all fighting for their peers' attention all at once, the club members had to get creative with their persuasion techniques.

Abby Goetz, a member of the campus club Enactus, donned bright yellow pants with a blue top to show off her club's colors and attract nearby students.

SUNY Fredonia's D&D Fellowship had a different approach, and paraded around their table with a tall sign that listed the club's name. When interested students walked over, the club members told the students all about what D&D is and how they can get involved. "We have a good time," said Matt Antalek, the club's president. However, the D&D Fellowship wasn't the only club to march with a sign.

WNYF-TV's members took shifts walking around the fieldhouse with a large sign advertising the campus television station and the club's social media. Members of the television station wore matching lanyards that described their names and position titles at WNYF.

The Fredonia Nerf Club stole the attention of passing students with their intricate nerf gun display. "We have a bunch of different games that we play," said Mark Hoffman, a member of the

club. Hoffman detailed a large list of nerf gun game modes that students can participate in. Abbie Horn, another club member, explained how the Fredonia Nerf Club has several different events surrounding the nerf games. This includes a "costume nerf for Halloween," and "build nights" where members work together to recreate the abilities on their nerf guns.

For more musically-inclined students, the American String Teachers Association (ASTA) found their recruitment technique to be a live performance during Activities Night. Helen Smit, ASTA's president said that their club is "for anyone and everyone who is interested in anything to do with string instruments." The club has events with guest artists and speakers, they go to concerts and even have a mini orchestra to practice new string instruments. Photos of these events were depicted on a tri-fold board to show students what ASTA is all about. ASTA's four e-board members took the stage in front of the Steele Hall gymnasium where they played an arrangement on their string instruments. While the sounds of ASTA's live performance filled the student's ears, so too did the members of Sound Services, a club on campus that teaches students about doing the audio and lighting at live shows.

The Sound Services team came to Activities Night fully equipped with a sound board and a microphone, which they used to advertise their club. In addition to their sound equipment, Sound Services even had a spotlight, which lit up the bleachers and ceiling above them, attracting even more students towards their table.

Not only does SUNY Fredonia offer clubs for students interested in music, audio, nerf guns, D&D, television and business, they also offer more major-specific clubs and activities. For instance, the National Student Speech and Language Hearing Association (NSSLHA) advertised opportunities for students in the Communication Disorders Sciences major. "We do a lot of work within the department and getting to know the professors, [as well as] a lot of study sessions and resume building within the major," said Abby Newman, the social chair of NSSLHA.

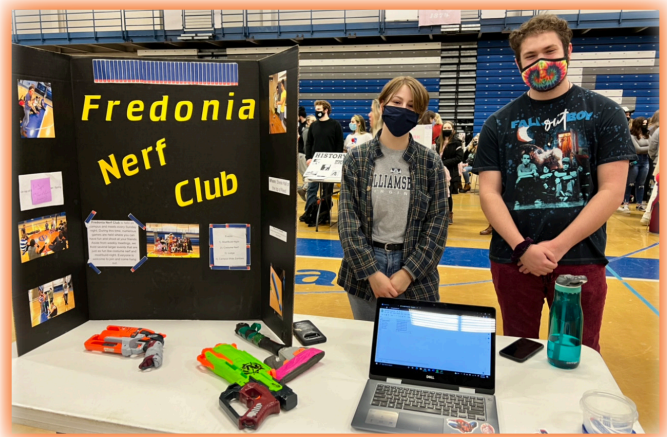
Similarly, Social Work Club, geared towards students interested in the social work major, has started up again after COVID-19 severely impacted the club's recruitment last semester. Several students interested in the major found themselves revisiting a club they had seen once before in a rejuvenated state. The club's president, Abby Tartaro, said that Social Work Club will be doing "a lot of volunteer events trying to raise money for Make-a-Wish."

In all, many students felt that Activities Night was a great success. One student, Cass Dolaway, said "[There were] a lot more people than I expected to be here ... I think it has a really good turnout."

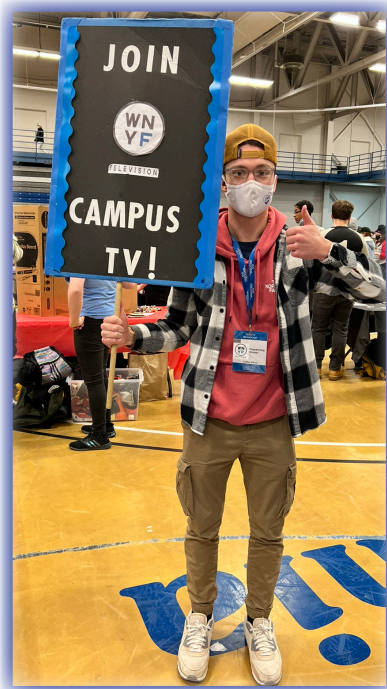
With the over 170 clubs and activities the college offers (according to the college's website), students are sure to find a club that's just right for them. Whether it's battling their friends with nerf guns or volunteering with Social Work Club, there's a place for all students to let their unique personalities shine.



D&D Fellowship.



Fredonia Nerf Club.



WNYF-TV.



Enactus.



Sound Services.



American String Teachers Association.

McEwen Café reopens after one year of closure

ERIN MOSHER

Special to The Leader

Last year, McEwen Café was closed after being open for the fall 2020 semester only. This spring 2022 semester, FSA reopened the café, providing students and faculty a new option to quench their thirst and satisfy their hunger.

“We wanted to get at least that cafe open because it is in the thoroughfare of college. It is the busiest, most traveled intersection especially when it is cold out,” said Darin Schulz, executive director of FSA.

McEwen Cafés hours are different from Mason Café, as Mason Café is open earlier and later.

Students are saying they would like to see more nutritional options offered at McEwen Café. Vossler says, “I wish they offered more things like breakfast sausage and egg sandwiches so I could have protein for the day.”

The café does offer healthier and more inclusive options like fresh fruits and vegetables, blueberry muffins, peanut butter and grape/strawberry jelly sandwiches on wheat berry bread, vegan sandwiches, vegan chocolate chip cookies and plenty more.

McEwen Café is now serving hot foods like spaghetti and meatballs as well which can be heated up at the café per request. You can even purchase a sandwich and ask for it to be heated up on the spot.

If you were on campus at all last semester and travelled your way into either McEwen Hall or the Science Center, you would have noticed a sign on the gates saying they were closed. The main reasons were labor shortages, lower student enrollment and COVID-19.

“The full reason was when COVID-19 happened, we had to close all of the cafes as classes went remote.



McEwen Café. Photographs by Erin Mosher.



Kaitlyn Marquez, a sophomore music therapy major, said “I am happy to see it open, even though I don’t go there a lot, I had a class in fall 2020 in McEwen and every morning I would get breakfast there at the café.”

Now with this cafe opened, students like Maura Vossler, a sophomore childhood education major, are finding it easier to grab a bite to eat in between classes. “It will be super easy to grab something in between classes because my classes are pretty close together and a cafe is the perfect thing to get me through,” said Vossler. Joey Fuimano, a sophomore music education major, added “It is helpful that [the café] is also in McEwen because I have to go to the library a lot to print.”

When the lunch rush happens, or when classes get out, getting to one of the café’s in time can be difficult. Once you get to Starbucks or Tim Horton’s, the lines are already out of the door. Willy C’s seems to battle with long lines as well, especially during the lunch rush.

Joey Fiumano, a sophomore music education major, commented on the wait, “If you are comparing it [McEwen Café] to Willy C’s, I would say it is pretty fast.”

“When Sprout Café closed, we incorporated all of the vegan options into the other cafes,” said Schulz. “We rolled out a couple new vegan options this semester, the most popular one is the Southwest Chickpea salad sandwich on wheat berry bread,” Schulz added. The chickpea sandwich can be found at Willy C’s under the deli category.

When we opened back up, enrollment took a significant hit — our numbers were down much more than what we were expecting to be and planning for,” said Schulz.

If you are a student, or part of the non-student union, FSA has many job openings. You can find applications on the FSA website under the “Other” tab and “Employment Opportunities.”

For an update on Tea Rex Café, Schulz said, “We are going to see what enrollment numbers look like, and then hopefully, we are in a little bit of a better situation with labor.”

Make sure to make your way to McEwen cafe before the semester ends to treat yourself with hot chocolate, Peet’s Coffee or peanut butter and jelly sandwiches.

Local "CREATE Project" non-profit serves those dealing with childhood sexual abuse and its aftermath

CHLOE KOWALYK

News Editor

Since second grade, Valerie Walawender has held a vision: one day, she would help others. She drove through less-fortunate neighborhoods with her parents and went to school where she and her siblings were practically the only white students in the school. She was constantly surrounded by various cultures, traditions and art.

A few years ago, Walawender's dream became a reality when she founded a non-profit organization called the "CREATE project." CREATE stands for Child-Responsive Empowering Art Through Everyone, and seeks to support children dealing with sexual abuse and trauma.

"The dream of dreams is to help communities become free of child trauma, abuse and neglect.. the ultimate goal, locally, is to become the world's first community that's free of those problems," said Walawender. The CREATE program combines art, tradition and culture to help inspire and educate communities about childhood trauma, and ways they can make a positive impact.

According to their website, "the CREATE Project is based on the idea that child trauma, abuse and neglect are family and culture-based problems, and require family and culture based solutions." Walawender asserts that these issues can impact everyone.

"The arts and tradition of practice in a loving, caring, nurturing environment can really help sustain a family and a community, and be very healing for individuals and children," she explained.

Walawender herself is an artist and a folklorist. She's also a senior recreation therapist for the state of New York for developmentally disabled adults. Her studies in graduate school were "focusing on developing art-based tools for people who have experienced trauma."

Prior to the pandemic, the CREATE Project held many events and activities within the community. Some of these events included creative sewing, tai chi, wood craft, African American gospel singing, Puerto Rican folk song and even African drumming. They also offered youth after-school and summer programs.

However, the pandemic didn't slow Walawender down. At the very start of the pandemic, in Jan. 2020, the CREATE Project started a new library program in the Dunkirk Public Library. "Each month, we were set up to have a local bunch of local tradition bearers from different cultures talk about their culture... and demonstrate their different cultural traditions in music, the arts, [and] storytelling..." she said.

Walawender explained that while healing is different for every individual, it is important to heal because someone dealing with childhood abuse "may not even recognize how it's affecting them... [their] decisions and parts of their life."

Currently, the CREATE Project has several initiatives happening, includ-

ing a public sculpture and a public art program. In addition, a new "tell your story" program has been created with the CREATE Project online. Through the program, people can submit their own stories and photos dealing with topics such as child abuse.

On top of this, the CREATE Project has just launched their "Traveling Trunk Program," which will feature trunks filled with cultural-specific items, art, music, writings, toys and artifacts, to name a few.

According to Walawender, "Individuals, community groups, institutions, businesses, and organizations that serve local families and children, are invited to help design, donate and suggest items and ideas for each trunk." These trunks will allow people to educate themselves as well as share their cultural traditions with one another.

Recently, the CREATE Project found out that they have received a small grant from Art Services, which will enable them to produce a documentary titled "Tradition, Trauma and Tenderness." The documentary will feature a diverse group of people including psychologists, neurologists and people from varying backgrounds.

"Tradition, Trauma and Tenderness" will explore trauma from multiple perspectives such as cultural, historical, psychological, neurological and personal.

To learn more about the CREATE Project, you can visit their website at: <https://create-project.com/> and their Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/CREATEProjectNY/>.



CREATE Project

Child-Responsive Empowering Art Through Everyone

Show review: Last Call Entertainment returns to BJ's

JORDAN BUDD
Staff Writer

On Wednesday, Feb. 2, Last Call Entertainment, a local concert promotion company, created and run by SUNY Fredonia students and alumni teamed up with one of the town's bars, BJ's.

The flyer featured a stacked lineup. The indie cowboys of Buffalo, Johnny & the Man Kids, the yellow rock and roll of the Burkharths, and the Fredonia-based hometown heroes Beach Tower were all scheduled to play at the first Last Call Entertainment BJ's collaboration since March of 2020. Prior to the pandemic, these shows ran on a bi-weekly basis, employing a large cast of the local and broader Western, New York scene.

Everything was going according to plan until the unfortunate news that headlining act, Johnny & The Man Kids had to cancel their performance due to some immediate medical issues. Their lead singer, Johnny Marciniak, needed an unprecedented visit to the emergency room prior to their scheduled musical contributions. The band took to Twitter within the following days to announce that the vocalist's surgery was a success, and he is now resting.

Last Call Entertainment head, Dan Doyle, a senior music industry major, booked an impromptu performance from the ever-present force within the local music scene, Jacob King, a junior English major. King, always-ready guitarist and member of many bands, put together yet another stirring acoustic mix of covers and originals.

King's opener "Mother Mouse," which he recently wrote over winter break, appropriately kicked off the tunes in BJ's.

An unreleased love song about organic tea has become a staple of King's repeated acoustic setlists within Fredonia. His diction was as articulate as ever while his lyrics never fail to bewilder in the most gratifying ways.

King's Pink Floyd cover of "Jugband Blues" was a tastefully selected choice from the band's early catalog. This strained led to King getting lost in the moment

amidst a dynamic and extensive guitar solo. Following an uptick of applause from the BJ's goers, the ever-so-humble musician let out a quiet "shhh" while smiling, which was met with chuckles from the audience. His eclectic, hoe-down-ish version of the psychedelic folk song was nothing short of entertaining despite King's lack of a full band; he proves time and time again the power of one man and a guitar.

King followed this up with yet another unreleased song that focuses on the name of a tea, specifically "Lady Grey." It features a must-have chorus that is

certainly one of his best.

King's final song was a live premier of a brand-new unreleased gem that he's titled "The Hider (Hi Ho)."

King hopes to record and release many of these songs soon. His hopeful fanbase awaits as these tunes have quickly become Fredonia favorites for more than a few melophiles.

As the following act, Beach Tower, took the stage the excitement was clearly building for an electric performance. The band consists of Cascio Fonseca (vocals), Johnny Zareski (rhythm guitar), Evan Donnelly (bass guitar), Ryan Terry



The Burkharths. Photograph by Karalyn Hope.



The Burkharths. Photograph by Karalyn Hope.

(lead guitar) and Joey Porth (drums). Friends of the band rallied behind their fellow students.

Lucas Cottet, close companion of the band and lead singer for The Science Behind It, took the stage with trumpet in hand alongside the indie rockers. His appearance works in tandem with the group's recent release of their debut album, *If We Make It to May*, as he has several trumpet performances on the project.

Their show started with a tasteful callback to an important thematic moment, "Last Rose of Summer," from their debut. Porth's dramatic drum rolls paired with Terry's melodic playing worked as the perfect soundtrack to the opening scenes of their performance.

This musical title screen blended into "December" the introductory track from their latest work which showcases vocalist, Fonseca.

Their follow-up, "Down by the Ocean," was a guitar cooldown

from the more dramatic moments on "December." The sunglasses wearing Cottet's added trumpet parts complimented the track as he remained on stage.

Fonseca announced that the audience might know this one, before the band launched into their most recognizable song, "In My Bed." Their performance featured newfound guitar pedal antics, gang vocals and a breakdown while still maintaining its dreamy indie pop rock atmosphere. Terry's guitar rang out the iconic melody one last time as the song came to a vivid slow motion conclusion.

As the band's intensity was beginning to turn up a notch, they fittingly followed up their most popular song with the riffastic, "Burning Bridges," their heaviest bit yet. Cottet's trumpet growls and flourishes sprang up throughout the sprawling six-minute ripper, while guitarist Terry's use of a violin bow created a grating and raspy soundscape.

Rhythm guitarist and backing vocal-

ist, Zareski, joined Fonseca on the final chorus before Cottet exited stage right and the band descended into the galvanic mayhem of their first title track, "If We Make It to May." Porth's cannon of a kick drum and Donnelly's blustering bass lines pushed the nightmarish number along.

The following two songs, their cover of "Burning Down the House" by the Talking Heads and their original "Summer Nights" got the fun-loving BJ's crowd moving. "Summer Nights" included an amusing reference to the iconic chord mess-up of Green Day's "Good Riddance (Time of your life)." The band made the smooth transition to their closely related song "Love Poem" which directly follows "Summer Nights" on their latest track list.

Their simply chill-inducing closer, "I'll Stay," featured a huge trumpet solo from the returning Cottet, a poignant performance from the band, a powerful display of emotion from Fonseca and a

Continued on page 18.

Continued from page 17.

display of emotion from Fonseca and a shimmering ending. The band poured everything into this moment and left the audience star-struck.

The following and final act, The Burkharts, opened their performance with a cover of the surf rock classic, “Miserlou” by Dick Dale and his Del-Tones. It acts as the perfect cinematic opener to the ‘60s recollection and comical she-nanigans that define this six-piece act. The group consists of Trevor Hodge (vocals/guitar), Gavon Hodge (drums/vocals), Austin Knorr (bass guitar), James Wrobel (keyboard/vocals), Luke Sampson (guitar) and SUNY Fredonia student Cameron Bunch (guitar).

Burkharts second song was their well-known affectionate tune, “To Be Your Lover.” The mid-tempo love devotional has racked up almost half a million streams on Spotify alone. Hodge’s enamored spirit was further character-

ized with each chorus as he sang with an expressive fervor. His animated yells act as transitional moments within the song’s compositions and have become representative of their performances.

Their follow-up original “In My Worried Mind” brought on a rush of dancing in the audience as the sticky chorus warmed up their listeners. Hodge muses on living in a “never ending summer” while the band’s harmonics built up to a climax and then broke down into one last chorus.

The group mixed in a cover of the Beach Boys, “I’m Waiting for the Day,” effortlessly.

Another song from their 2021 EP, Who are the Burkharts, “Our Rockaway” continues to build on their modern jangle pop and ‘60s nostalgia fusion. The sunbathed track’s evocative riff and reminiscent vocal melodies are a dead ringer for their Beach Boys’ influences

while Hodge’s punkish screamed yelps contrast this idea, making a blend that is all their own.

Following this song, the well-dressed band premiered a brand-new song that they had yet to play in the familiar BJ’s venue. Their recent creation got the floors and wooden structure shaking in the nearly 100-year-old bar.

The group returned to a well-known favorite which has been performed many times in Fredonia, “Lazy Dazing,” from their 2019 EP of the same name. Back-in-style flair pants swished amongst the crowd while the present day band, The Burkharts, continued to build on what once was while emitting a lustrous indie vibe that sparkled within the audience.

Another unreleased track was played before they rolled into a dream pop-esque song from the Lazy Dazing EP, appropriately titled “Oh Dreamer.”



Beach Tower. Photograph by Karalyn Hope.



Jacob King. Photograph by Karalyn Hope.

The show featured the typical antics of The Burkarts, who've become known for being archetypal jokesters. This horseplay was present throughout the night and led to bassist Knorr mounting guitarist Sampson, and several impressive gymnastics from guitarist Bunch.

The Surf Curse cover, "Disco," preceded their penultimate song, "Flower City Nights." This indie original became

a kooky mashup that randomly thrust into "Before I Knew It" by yodeling kid himself, Mason Ramsey and "Party in the USA" by Miley Cyrus. It was, indeed, a stimulating mix.

Their final song was a cover of The Beatles opener to their White Album, "Back in the U.S.S.R." It was a high energy screamer that was well received by their audience. The strategic cover song played on the group's matching outfits,

which could be compared to the many times The Beatles chose a uniform look.

Afterwards, the bar inhabitants and concert lovers alike cleared out into the quiet Fredonia streets, and crisp night air as the snowstorm began to brew. The lot went home to get some rest for the following weekday in a celebratory mood due to the return of live music and drinks on a Wednesday night.

SPORTS

For the love of hockey: Canadian goaltender drove 30 plus hours in winter conditions to get to Fredonia

JULES HOEPTING
Managing Editor

Moving across the continent to play hockey is just what hockey players do, according to Zach Willms, sophomore sports management major and a goaltender of the Blue Devils Men's Ice Hockey team, jersey number 33.

Inspired by his dad who was also a goaltender, Willms has been playing hockey since he was four years old. He grew up in Camrose, Alberta, Canada, where playing hockey is so embedded into culture that it is "tough to avoid, almost," according to Willms.

Unlike other sports, after graduating high school hockey players often play in junior hockey leagues for a few years before playing at a university level. This is why the majority of university hockey players are between the ages of 21–24. Likewise, Willms moved from Camrose to Armstrong, British Columbia, Canada to play for the North Okanagan Knights in the Kootenay International Junior Hockey League when he was 17 to continue his hockey career. Afterwards, he moved to Red Lake, Ontario to play on the Red Lake Miners, a part of Hockey Canada's Superior International Junior Hockey League. According to Willms, Red Lake is the "northernmost point a paved road takes you in Ontario" and describes it as "the boonies," adding that when it was cold enough, he drove "across a frozen lake to get to the rink every day."

When relocating to other provinces, Willms stayed with a billet family, which is similar to a host family. "A family just

takes you in and it's super cool. They just volunteered to do it. I mean, they get paid enough to feed you but like they don't make money," he explained. This allowed Willms to experience living in different places, which is something he values. "I want to see every corner of the world if I can, so I just love any kind of new experience no matter what it is."

As for Fredonia? Willms was spotted by hockey coach, Jeff Meredith, while Willms was playing in Wisconsin; the junior hockey league Willms was in had two teams in the United States.

Willms didn't know much about Fredonia, but had heard Division III of SUNYAC was a "good league to play hockey" through a friend playing hockey at Geneseo. Willms was willing to go just about anywhere to further his career and was excited to move to Fredonia.

For his first semester in fall 2020, Willms flew to Fredonia from Alberta. After a semester, he decided he wanted to have his car with him. Thus, after winter break, Willms had to drive over 30 hours to bring his car to Fredonia. Not long after he had started his journey, a cold snap hit bringing -20°F (-30°C) temperatures. Willms' car heater



Zach Willms. Retrieved from FredoniaBlueDevils.com.

— which he had just fixed prior to departure — stopped working; the air that was coming through was cold.

"So, I bundle up. I got these boots on. I got pants, jackets, toe warmers — everything. I got eight hours to Weyburn, Saskatchewan — my first leg of the trip. Most miserable day of my life."

Willms spent the night in a hotel and called all of the car repair shops around trying to get the car heater fixed with no luck. Eventually, he went to Canadian Tire and purchased "a full sized

propane take you'd have on your grill, and a little heater that screws on top of it and I put it on my passenger seat. And I had to spark it with a match like every five minutes."

The trip still had adventures to come. Willms got caught with a dead battery during a snowstorm in Chicago, Illinois, and had to flag down a restaurant employee to give him a boost. But he was also able to make a stop in Saint Paul, Minn. to catch up with hockey friends.

Within the world of hockey, players make a lot of connections with other hockey players from all around. "My best friend from my team in [British Columbia] and my best friend from my team in Ontario are now teammates and also best friends in Jamestown, N.D.," said Willms. He also said he had a friend who plays in Rochester, N.Y., who watched him play his very first game as a Blue Devil in Rochester. Within Fredonia's hockey team roster, there are players from the states of Alaska, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Illinois, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, Tennessee, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina,

Pennsylvania, South Carolina and Utah, and the Canadian provinces of Alberta, British Columbia and Ontario, and even from the country of Sweden.

"I went to Canadian Tire and purchased a full-sized propane tank you'd have on your grill, and a little heater that screws on top of it and I put it on my passenger seat. And I had to spark it with a match like every five minutes."

Blue Devils Men's Ice Hockey team coach, Jeff Meredith, is excited to work with Willms: "I was so impressed during the recruiting process that the fact he plays the position of goaltender at such a high level only made me want to work with him here at Fredonia more. He is such a positive, upbeat person and teammate and gives off a genuine vibe and attitude, I knew that he would be a

great person on our campus and in our program."

As for Willms' experience at Fredonia thus far? "Being here is great. I'm just so lucky to have a team. I automatically get 30 best friends, you know?" Willms later added, "I got full classes and great professors and just feel like I'm getting my first classroom college experience." His favorite moment as a Blue Devil so far was watching Logan Dyck, a goaltender, score a goal. A goaltender scoring a goal is "literally a once in a lifetime opportunity" to witness in hockey, according to Willms.

Despite not having a lot of playing time due to COVID-19 restrictions and a wrist injury, Willms is confident the best for him and the team is yet to come: "I think we're the kind of team that can be sneaky and could surprise the conference."

For the latest updates on all things Blue Devils Men's Ice Hockey, visit fredoniabluedevils.com/sports/mens-ice-hockey.



Zach Willms guarding the goal. Photograph by Kaitlyn Melendez.

Fredonia Sports Update

ANTHONY GETTINO

Sports Editor

Men's hockey team lost to Potsdam Friday 2-6

- Kieran Furlonger and Johan Zoller each scored a goal

- The team lost to Plattsburgh 1-13 Saturday on the road

- Parker Brakebill scored Fredonia's only goal of the game

The Blue Devils travel to Geneseo Friday before a home game against Brockport Saturday this week.

Men's and women's track and field teams traveled to Brockport Saturday

- Jared Hecht placed second in the Mile (4:37.15)

- Nick Abdo ran 50.96 to earn second overall in the 400m

- Josh Walters placed second in the 800m (1:59.33)

- Haley Lerner placed third in the pole vault (10 feet 6 inches)

- Toby Onuoha placed second overall in the triple jump (13.91m)

The team will travel to Boston this weekend.

Both the men's and women's swimming and diving teams

traveled to Cortland

- Noah Wisniewski placed second in the 100 backstroke (1:00.76) and third in the 200 backstroke (2:22.72)

- Ian Hildale placed third in both the 50 free (23.61) and the 200 free (1:53.55)

- Riker Smith, Samuel Cottrell and Tyler Conti each placed third in their respective events

- McKayla Polowy won the 500 free (5:29.57) and 1,000 free (11:16.42), while also taking second in the 200 free (2:02.24)

- Kayla Hagen won the 50 free (26.07) and placed second in the 100 free (56.74)

- Mindy Doktor won the 200 IM (2:07.05) and placed third in the 200 butterfly (2:30.63)

The Blue Devils travel to Buffalo next weekend for the SUNYAC Championships.

Men's basketball lost to Cortland at home Tuesday 66-89

- Aaron Collins scored 15 points and added 5 rebounds

- Matt Abersold added 11 points

- The team's weekend games were postponed due to weather conditions.

Fredonia will travel to Buffalo State Saturday.

Women's basketball team lost to Cortland 48-76

- Katie Pitcher had 10 points and 3 steals

- Lauren Mickley had 10 points

- The team's weekend games were postponed due to weather conditions.

Fredonia will travel to Buffalo State Saturday.



Photograph by Owen McGuire.

ATTENTION JUNIORS!



ALMA MATER SOCIETY FREDONIA'S HIGHEST NON-ACADEMIC HONOR SOCIETY IS NOW ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS

If you are a Junior (by credits), or first semester Senior (by academic acceleration) and you have made outstanding non-academic contributions to SUNY Fredonia, you are eligible to apply for induction into the Society.

PLEASE PICK UP AN APPLICATION
(see dates available below)
AT THE STUDENT ASSOCIATION OFFICE
G-107 WILLIAMS CENTER

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION
PLEASE CONTACT MICHELLE CORRENTE
(S.A. OFFICE) AT michelle.corrente@fredonia.edu
or call 716-673-3381

APPLICATIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED FROM
February 21, 2022 TO March 11, 2022
IN THE STUDENT ASSOCIATION OFFICE
(located in the Williams Center)

OPINION

Pesky politics: How the Kershnar situation became an online political battleground

CASEY HUBER

Special to The Leader

Philosophy professor Stephen Kershnar has been lambasted by many, but for varying reasons.

His views on pedophilia are being lumped together with his political ideology, but you will get different perspectives on what exactly Kershnar believes depending on where you go.

Twitter is a toxic cesspool and I hate it, but it is the place to go to find different points of view on the Kershnar scandal.

Unfortunately, it is not hard to find defenders for Kershnar.

“He’s a professional philosopher playing Devil’s Advocate — that’s what philosophers do,” verified Twitter user @clairlemon posted (Clair Lehmann was suspended from Twitter). Important to note, Lehmann is apparently part of the intellectual darkweb, a group who reject the alleged leftist agenda.

From what I have found, Kershnar is being defended on the grounds of free speech, not for what he actually said (or for that matter, believes).

In some cases, there is an odd focus on Kershnar being Jewish.

“Stephen Kershnar, a Jewish professor who has written books in support of pedophilia, abortion, slavery and much more on purely ethical grounds,” Twitter user @PunishedMaajid posted.

Posts like these are concerning, as the anti-semitic undertones are bad in their

own right but also tend to shift responsibility of the content that Kershnar says toward that group.

However, Twitter is not the only place to find opinions on the Kershnar scandal.

Mainstream media across the globe have also jumped on the Kershnar scandal. What is particularly interesting is how Fox News has handled the situation.

A comment on one of the Fox articles published on the Kershnar scandal reads: “Don’t be fooled. THIS is where unchallenged progressive views have led, and conservatives can no longer ignore these perverse opinions. Get in touch with your local and state representatives now.” This perception that Kershnar is another ‘left-leaning wacko’ is being cultivated by outlets like Fox, and this idea is dangerous but not new.

While Fox may not have explicitly called Kershnar and his reprehensible ideas leftist, they have not dissuaded the commenters from thinking this way.

If you’ve taken a class where there was a discussion of the impact of fake news in the media, you probably already know where I’m going with this. In the event that Fox News is your only source of news, you may not like what is about to be discussed.

Before we talk about Fox, we should talk about misinformation in general. Misinformation is important to understand because of how pervasive it is in our society. It’s hardly a new concept, with yellow journalism being prevalent

in the 19th century. The Spanish-American War is argued by historians to have been spurred on by sensationalist headlines and disinformation campaigns.

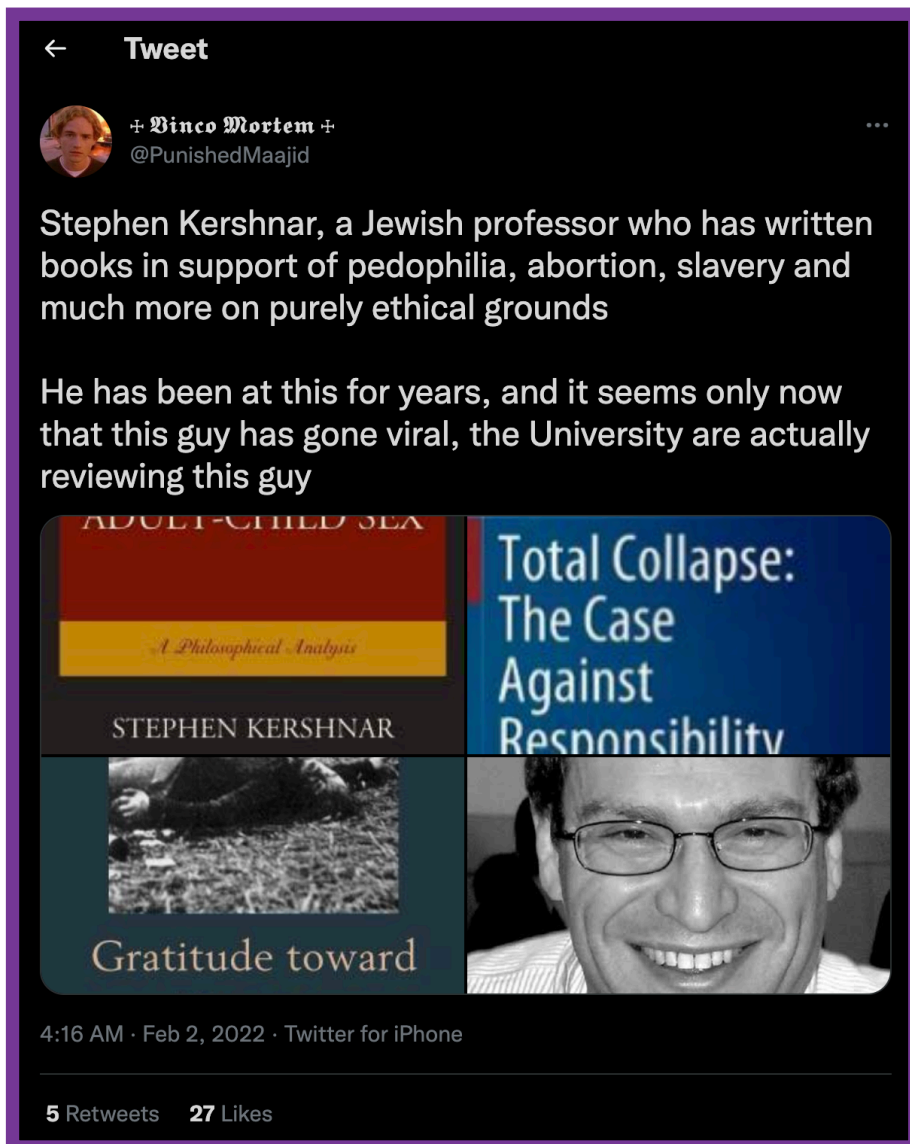
Misinformation is different from disinformation in terms of context. Misinformation is information that is inaccurate on its own, often due to being taken out of context. Disinformation is intentionally wrong and often is used to further a political agenda. Both forms are designed to mislead the reader.

During the 2016 election, much of the disinformation that spread through the U.S. was born in Russia in order to “sow distrust in American democracy overall,” according to TIME magazine.

So, if Fox is to be accused of spreading misinformation, or even disinformation, do they have a motive? Short answer: yes. Long answer: Fox is a business-first entity, and thus prioritizes making money over all else. Fox makes money by selling eyeballs, specifically the eyeballs of conservatives.

Fox being a business must cultivate its viewership to maintain it. Conservative eyeballs are best cultivated by content that is both familiar to them and perpetuates beliefs they have already accepted.

It is easier for people to believe information that aligns with pre-existing beliefs in a phenomenon called confirmation bias. Everyone is prone to this effect, but how heavily you rely on your daily dose of confirmation bias correlates to how hard it is to see new points of view objectively.



@PunishedMaajid tweet.

There is a capital “T” Truth to information — what happened is what happened, nothing more or less. That being said, the way we communicate information is inherently flawed by means of internal bias. Everyone has a bias, but how (or if) we control it says a lot about how we value information.

Fox has a bias and the way the news outlet controls it tells me that it values information like a commodity: something that is a means to an end, the end being money.

Bringing it back to the Kershnar scandal, we can analyze the perception that Kershnar is a ‘left-leaning wacko’ who is symptomatic of the liberal agenda through a liberal arts college.

Is he? No.

Kershnar, with all the evidence I’ve gathered, seems to align with libertarian ideology. Contrary to popular belief, libertarians are not necessarily left-leaning, according to SUNY Fredonia political science professor Raymond Rushboldt.

Rushboldt defined the general libertarian belief as the idea that “the government shouldn’t interfere with your expression of individual rights, however most people would agree that the government has a role for protecting individuals from the consequences of dangerous behaviors,” Rushboldt said.

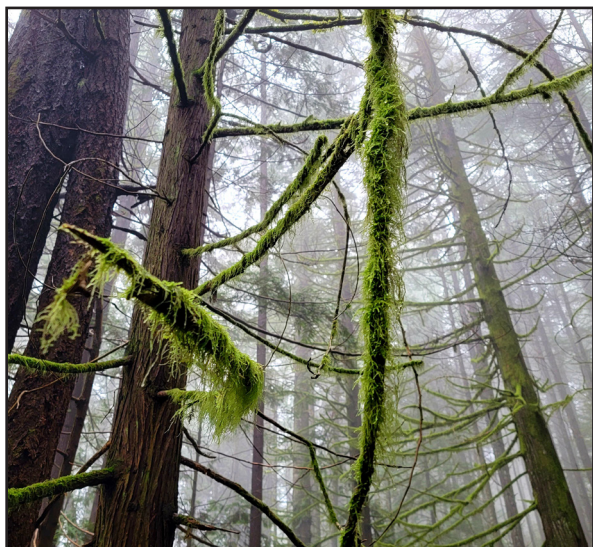
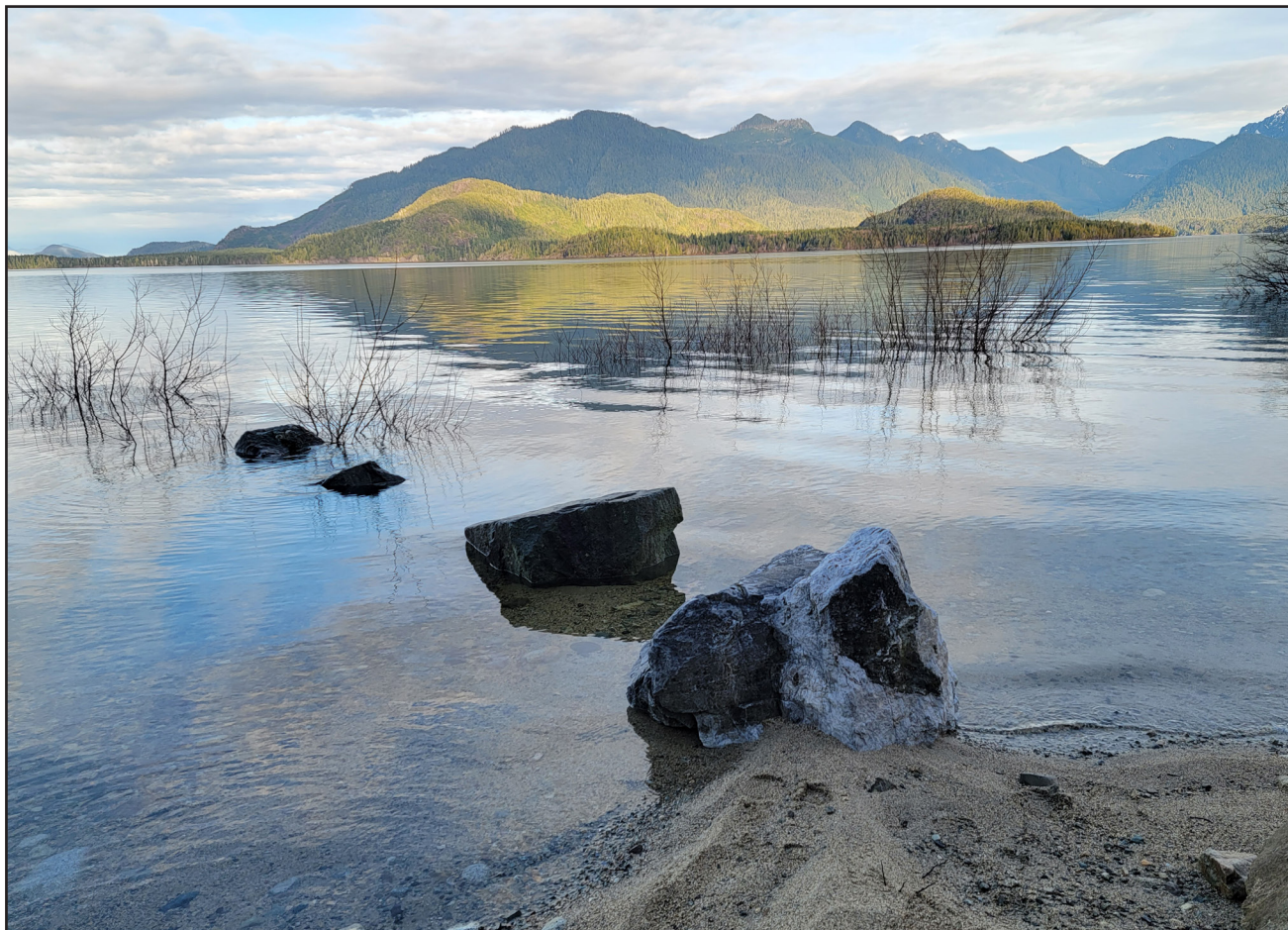
On Kershnar’s blog titled Objectivist v. Constructivist v. Theist, he published articles in favor of student-professor sexual relationships from 2010 to 2016 as well as articles like “Against Diversity,” where he argues that racial diversity “does not correlate with wealth, happiness, peace or other indicators of human flourishing.”

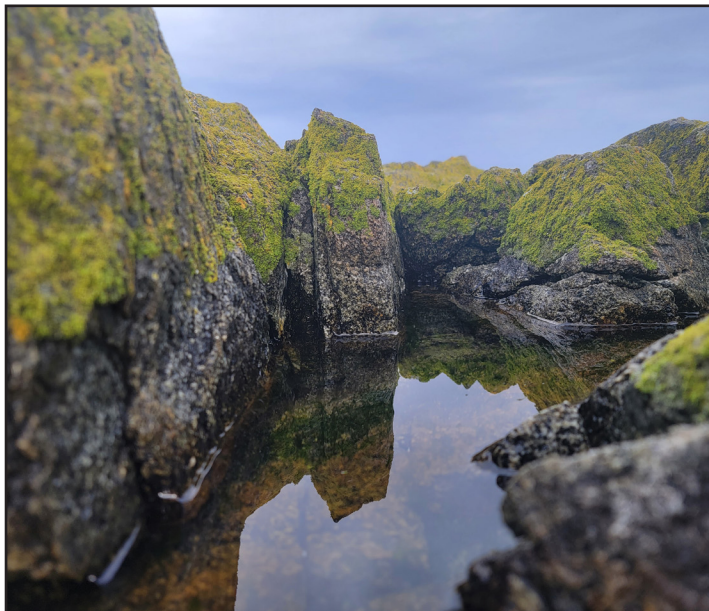
More evidence that Kershnar is a libertarian lies in another blog post titled “National Disgrace #1: Massive Incarceration,” where he argues against government drug prohibition and suggests that drugs such as crack cocaine should be legal.

So when conservatives claim that Kershnar is a leftist, look at the evidence for yourself. From what I have found, Kershnar seems to be a libertarian, likely right-wing given his view on race (see “Against Diversity” above).

“Look at the evidence yourself” being said, Kershnar’s blog is horrific to me. Prepare yourself for an experience if you plan on reading his work.

Jules Hoepting: Vancouver Island in January





THE SCALLION

Satire for Fredonia



A 'BEACON OF HOPE': **METaverse** SHOWS SIGNS OF BENEFITING SOCIETY AT LARGE



"Woman using a virtual reality headset" by marccoverch, from Creative Commons.

MATTHEW BAUM

Scallion Editor

Recent discussions regarding the upcoming VR-accessible Metaverse are making it clear that this project will provide much-needed relief to countless American lives.

When Ronnie Caschernian, also known on Twitter as @Big_Eth_Daddy808, invested in Bitcoin with money granted to him in his grandmother's will, he had no idea how quickly his life would change. At the time, Ronnie lived in Break Bluff, California, with his stock-broker parents, and now he owns a digital picture of a lion wearing a shirt that says the word 'boobies' while still living with his stock-broker parents.

Caschernian, with no prompting at all, took time to explain the value of his virtual picture.

"You see, it's all about redistribution of assets. I spent Mammy's 3,000 dollars to invest in Bitcoin, which I then converted to Ethereum, which I used to get ol' Marley here," he said, pulling up a weblink to the ridiculous-looking .jpg he claims ownership over, "And the best part is, this piece is a great addition to my Meta-mansion living room, where I could host other investors for digi-drinks!"

The "investors" Caschernian mentioned are other youthful entrepreneurs with not enough going on in their real lives

that have willingly sold their soul for internet clout. Their investment in all things cryptocurrency, NFTs, and Metaverse has made it a veritable hotspot for other like-minded dingbats. They spend their time creating more and more harmful ways to feign superiority and destroy natural resources. At the same time, having all of the obnoxious Meta-heads indoors and away from the general population is a huge plus for anyone who doesn't want to bother with them anymore.

Clara Studebaker, a junior geology major who used to go to school with Caschernian, said it was a "real breath of fresh air" to know he would be spending all of his time online instead of bothering her about his delusions of grandeur.

"When I saw Zuckerberg's Metaverse announcement, I knew I'd be seeing way less of Ronnie around the grocery store where I work," she said. "I'd had a rough couple months before then, so I really saw the announcement as a beacon of hope."

Critics of the digital program have said that it may lead to a downward spiral in terms of proper eye health and socialization skills for everyone involved, but an overwhelming majority of concerned citizens have come forward to say that they are perfectly happy with the idea of not seeing privileged nerds with Napoleon complexes in their suitable non-digitized shared spaces.

COMICS: NICOLE THORSON



HAIL FREDONIA RECORDS 5K

FEBRUARY 26, 2022 • 10AM

DODS GROVE @ SUNY FREDONIA

Proceeds from this event will be donated to The Institute for Autism Research (IAR) at Canisius College in Buffalo, NY.

SCAN TO REGISTER!



Contact August Bates with any questions
bate7836@fredonia.edu



HOROSCOPES

JAY BYRON - Staff Scallywag

An instructional guide about how to finally make friends.

ARIES

Get into NFTs, but in an ironic way. Fake it on Twitter so you can gather a bunch of NFT bro followers, then right-click-save their profile pictures and threaten them with being a normal person. I know this doesn't sound very friendly, but afterwards, the rest of Twitter will flock to you in amazement. You're the prank god! Everyone wants to be your friend, you hooligan!



TAURUS

You don't have to impress anyone. In fact, if you embarrass yourself, the chances of you making friends increases. Slip on some black ice at one of the bus stops to really seal the deal.



GEMINI

Show everyone your wicked cool coin collection that appeared under your bed one day. "Hey guys, look at this wicked cool coin collection," says you. Then everyone says, "What a wicked cool coin collection!"



CANCER

Go to the pier in Dunkirk and summon mermaids, since you probably struggle with the humans. They'll each kiss you on the cheek and then leave without a trace.



LEO

Wear your mask right. Over the nose. If you are wearing it right, wear it wrong outdoors in public, and adjust it as if you feel really bad about it being below the nose. Like, "omg sorry guys I care!!!" Not only is it true, but you obviously care about the well being of others. People like you after that. Wear your mask right.



VIRGO

Adopt a cat with big feet. +1 friend. Then, people will flock to you to touch the cat's little feetsies. +infinite friends.



LIBRA

Join Nerf Club! Your real friends are the people you nerf. (heart emoji)



SCORPIO

Do your homework. Like, for real this time. Working hard will make everyone flabbergasted that you aren't active on Twitter/Instagram. They like how quiet you are. It's... mysterious. ;)



SAGITTARIUS

Get famous on YouTube. Okay, that kinda sucks. You might not actually end up having any friends, sorry. I don't make the rules.



CAPRICORN

Buy glue-on nails and make everyone around you comment on them. I don't know the logic behind it, but it SERIOUSLY works.



AQUARIUS

You're gonna have to befriend the black squirrels on campus. I know you stop to look at them every time, and I get it, and I see you. They appreciate you.



PISCES

Explain to everyone how deep Mitski's music is. They'll find you artistically depressed. It's somehow beautiful. They're crying already and they don't even know yet!



