

3.5.24 — Issue 3 — Volume CXXI



THE FREDONIA LEADER

SUNY Fredonia's Student-Run Newspaper

Protest in the Commons

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**Program Cut Updates
University Senate Holds Special Meeting
BSU Red & Black Affair
High Noon Friday Celebrates 40th birthday
Buffalo vs. Vegas Arena Comparison
[OPINION] The Queer Woman Experience**

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THE LEADER

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"Happiness is not by chance, but by choice." – Jim Rohn

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Photo by DREW PALUCH | Photo Editor

Students For Fredonia holds march for fair funding

ABIGAIL JACOBSON

Asst. News Editor

DAN QUAGLIANA

News Editor

Most students remember last semester ending with a bang — specifically, with a protest that aimed to raise awareness and concerns about the proposed program cuts that had just been announced by Fredonia President Stephen Kolison.

The group that organized that protest, which would become known as Students for Fredonia (SFF), held and organized another protest on March 1 of this semester; except this time, they expanded their scope in order to catch the attention of more people.

SFF took those who attended the protest around Reed Library, Maytum Hall and Fenton Hall, and then made their way to Barker Commons in the heart of the village.

Once the protest got to the village, five speeches were made by Sophie Myers, Jasmine Johnson, Henry Domst and Benjamin Evans, as well as Jon Espersen, the deputy mayor of Fredonia.

Everyone who attended the protest brought either artwork, instruments or signs to show their support.

“Fair Funding for Fredonia,” “SUNY is STARVING our SCHOOL” and “Kolison, learn the PROFESSORS’ NAMES” are just some examples of signs brought to the protest.

The protest was live-streamed on SFF’s Instagram, @students.for.fredonia.

“It was beautiful to see how music, art and the general student body came together to fight for our community,” said Myers, a co-president of SFF.

“Students seemed so genuinely happy; we created something special today,” Evans added.

Myers’ speech covered many aspects of the proposed program cuts, including students’ and faculty members’ mental health, worries for the future and a lack of administrative response.

“We’ve asked repeatedly for financial data to justify these decisions. We’ve asked what plans there are to retain faculty, and

we’ve been met with silence,” said Myers in her speech. “We are asking you to meet us with empathy, dignity, integrity and grace.”

She also went on to discuss how Fredonia “is defined by its commitment to the arts and to music.” Fredonia provides a wide variety of majors and minors which, according to Myers, “is one of our biggest strengths, one that attracts a diverse range of students.”

Espersen’s speech mentioned how he and the village board of trustees responded to the university’s decisions.

“The mayor and the ... trustees of the village stand shoulder-to-shoulder with you,” he said.

In Johnson’s speech, she says, “The administration thinks we are going to go down without a fight, but we know something that they don’t. We know that it takes all of us to build a community, and the foundation of a healthy community is based on trust, compassion and communication.”

Evans mentioned in his speech that he attended three University Senate meetings and asked at all of them: “Why have we not been provided with a financial argument for these cuts?” The third time, he blatantly asked, “Do you have this data?”

“Kolison’s response was that ‘This week, I’m going to Albany to discuss the financials,’” Evans reported.

Domst relayed in his speech how he first came to Fredonia for graphic design, but later added an art history major. He mentioned how important all of these programs are to Fredonia as a whole: “This school and these professors, not the administration, mold us into strong and knowledgeable individuals that become successful in programs that have aspects not found anywhere else.”

Later in his speech, Domst spoke on how Fredonia “[needs] actual answers from the administration, no more dodging the questions.”

According to Domst, Fredonia needs “a ladder to get out of this hole. As far as I know, the only room I can make a ladder in is the sculpture studio.”

Henry Domst, media coordinator of SFF who was interviewed for this article, is the Design Editor of The Leader.

College of Liberal Arts and Sciences holds open forum to bolster student engagement

EJ JACOBS
Life & Arts Editor

On Feb. 22, the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS) and its Student Advisory Council (SAC) sent out an email to all students on track to receive a degree from that college.

This email stated that, “The CLAS dean’s office and the CLAS Student Advisory Council are hosting an open forum to discuss matters related to CLAS.”

The goals set out for the discussion were to make it so students had a place to go to feel safe and supported enough to openly talk about the issues they have with the university and CLAS, both as a unit and separately.

The email made it clear to students that the dean’s office expected that a majority of the questions and concerns of the student body would be directed toward the programs that are up for potential discontinuation. In regards to that, the email stated that, “We are likely to have no more information than what can be found here [referring to the Roadmap to Financial Sustainability Q&A]. That said, we understand the need for more dialogue on the matter.”

The email also states what the proposed agenda for the meeting looked like: “Items already on the agenda include the proposed program discontinuances, new programs in development and student resources in development.”

On Feb. 28, from 5:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. in the Kelly Auditorium in the Science Center, Dr. Andy Karafa, the dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, and Todd Proffitt, CLAS’s senior assistant dean, hosted and moderated the open forum.

Before discussing the proposed program discontinuations with the students in attendance, Karafa and Proffitt detailed new programs that the dean’s office is considering implementing, as well as new student resources that can be taken advantage of.

The new programs that CLAS wishes to see implemented are an M.S. in data science, a B.A. in healthcare management, a B.A. in health sciences, a B.S. in medicinal chemistry, a B.S. in robotics, and a social media minor.

Some of these programs have been confirmed to be added and have been voted upon by University Senate, while others are still in the planning stage.

Karafa took care to stress that these programs can all be taught by professors who are currently employed at the university, and they won’t incur any new costs.

He also unveiled plans for increased funding for summer research programs, as well as an idea for a directory of faculty/staff expertise and scholarship interests. If a student is looking for someone who’s knowledgeable about a certain subject, this would allow them to see which faculty and staff members can let them know more about it.

Karafa and Proffitt did talk about the proposed program

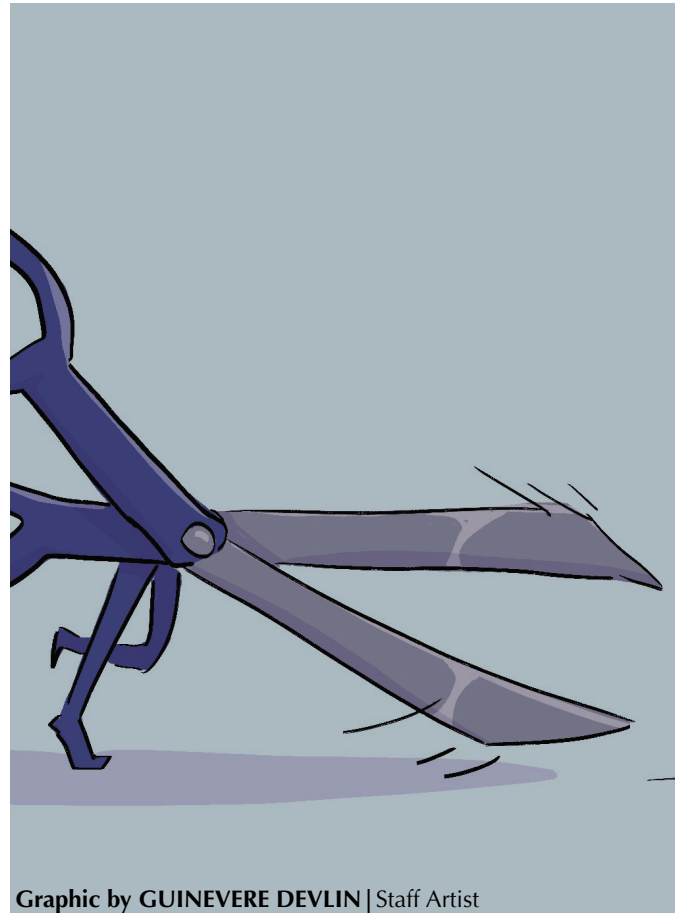
cuts, but there wasn’t much they could say that hasn’t already been released by the administration through Fredonia’s Roadmap to Financial Sustainability Q&A section on the website.

Sophie Myers, a co-president of the student advocacy group Students for Fredonia (SFF), said that the forum made students at least feel like they were being heard, something that the administration hasn’t been able to do.

Dan Quagliana, a member of the CLAS Student Advisory Council that planned the forum, thought that, “It went really well! We got to show off some new plans that are in the works that I think will draw some new students to Fredonia. I really think some good news was needed right about now, and it’s always nice to hold a forum like this where students feel like they’re being listened to.”

CLAS and the advisory council are making plans for another open forum at some point in the future.

Dan Quagliana, who was interviewed for this article, is the News Editor of The Leader.



Graphic by GUINEVERE DEVLIN | Staff Artist

Rumors swirl as proposed program cuts continue to threaten student livelihood

DAN QUAGLIANA

News Editor

Over the last few weeks, rumors have been swirling around Fredonia's campus regarding the proposed program cuts, leading to an atmosphere of suspicion and mistrust between students and the administration.

One such rumor is that the proposed programs have officially and irreversibly been cut by the administration — students have been sharing this information amongst themselves. But this isn't true: President Stephen Kolison and his cabinet say that feedback is being collected from the campus at large, which will influence their decisions in a few weeks.

According to the Program Deactivation Review Process (PDRP) timeline available on Fredonia's website, two different conversations are happening on campus right now.

From Feb. 27 to March 18, University Senators are discussing the revised discontinuation list with their constituents; almost every department on campus has a Senator representing them. Most of them are faculty members, but students' representatives are the Student Association president and vice president, as well as the four class presidents.

"On Tuesday [Feb. 27] afternoon, I went to the School of Music faculty meeting, and I asked them their thoughts on bringing TADA [the Department of Theatre and Dance] into the School of Music, because they really do a lot of the same things. They're performing arts, there's a lot of ... opportunities for collaboration there."

—DAVID STARRETT

Provost,

SUNY Fredonia

Another process that was supposed to occur at this point in the timeline concerns the feedback that the Provost's Council was slated to receive from the campus and community regarding the revised discontinuation list from Feb. 27 to March 8. However, as of March 2, this process has yet to happen because this revised list has not been publicly shared by Academic Affairs. According to Provost Dr. David Starrett, this lack of community accessibility to the campus's future is because the department chairs that oversee the programs that are being discussed have requested to keep those conversations private.

Another rumor that students have heard about is an apparent merging of the theatre and dance department with the School of Music. Most students have expressed displeasure with this news, believing that it will dilute the uniqueness of both departments.

"On Tuesday [Feb. 27] afternoon, I went to the School of Music faculty meeting, and I asked them their thoughts on bringing TADA [the Department of Theatre and Dance] into the School of Music, because they really do a lot of the same things," Starrett said. "They're performing arts, there's a lot of ... opportunities for collaboration there."

He further stated that, "I've talked with [members of TADA, and they] would be interested in it."

Starrett wished to make it known that the School of Music is not changing its name or losing its identity as something that Fredonia is known and respected for across the country.

In order to stop misinformation from spreading across campus, Student Association (SA) is partnering with Students for Fredonia (SFF). On March 6, in the Kelly Auditorium in the Science Center, the two groups are hosting a town hall meeting where students can direct any questions they have to student leaders on campus.

Following that, on a currently undetermined date, SA and SFF will host an administrative panel in the Williams Center Multi-Purpose Room, which President Kolison and members of his cabinet will attend. More information will be available within the upcoming weeks regarding the date of this administrative panel on SFF's Instagram page.



University Senate holds special meeting discussing potential program cuts

SIERRA MILLS
Chief Copy Editor

The proposed program cuts have been plaguing the minds of students, faculty and staff since their announcement, with questions having seemingly gone unanswered and many discussions and data being hidden from the public.

"It's been horrific. We knew it was coming. You know, we've seen it happening as President [Stephen] Kolison repeats and he's not wrong: It's happening all over the country. It's happening to flagships, it's happening in regional universities, [and] it's happening at private universities with smaller endowments," said Dr. Bruce Simon, the University Senate chairperson and a professor of English.

Following the approaching date of a finalized list of programs being discontinued at Fredonia, University Senate decided to hold a special meeting solely discussing the program cuts and how this would affect students and faculty.

This meeting took place on Monday, Feb. 26, from 4 to 6 p.m., in the Kelly Auditorium in the Science Center. It was open to all students.

This meeting was highly anticipated by students and faculty, as questions about the ongoing changes to campus have only been answered through the President's Office's Roadway to Financial Sustainability Q&A section on its website, where people can contribute questions to be answered by President Kolison and others involved in the decision-making process.

The questions that have been answered are limited, which led to hopes of more concrete answers during the meeting.

The meeting was open to anyone wanting or willing to voice their concerns or ask questions to either Simon or anyone in the administration.

During the meeting, the updated list of the programs being recommended for deactivation was not given to attendees, despite having been requested.

After the audience had a scheduled 30 minutes to air out their concerns and questions to Simon and the administration, Kolison made a report about the ongoing decision-making and possible communications with SUNY in Albany.

"But to me, the question is: why did it have to be something that was negotiated only between our administration and SUNY system administration between July 15 and Dec. 6? ... Why, between Dec. 6 [to] now, has it continued to be what I have to assume is ongoing conversations among administrators, when it's the faculty who are responsible for the curriculum? Even when there's financial considerations, their input should be, in my opinion, prioritized," Simon said regarding the timeline of the discussions on program discontinuation proposals.

After the president's report, Executive Vice President and Provost Dr. David Starrett also made a report, giving an update on the program cuts from his end of the decision-making.

"It feels like a slap in your face if you're a sculpture student, or a photography or philosophy student, and you care about the degree you value, and it seems like people in Albany don't

"It feels like a slap in your face if you're a sculpture student, or a photography or philosophy student, and you care about the degree you value, and it seems like people in Albany don't value it the same way you do."

—BRUCE SIMON

University Senate chairperson,
English professor,
SUNY Fredonia

value it the same way you do," Simon said.

Members of Students For Fredonia (SFF) also attended the meeting, advocating for evidence and data to be shared to allow students and professors alike to see what is happening behind the scenes.

"They are trying to cover their mistakes up but logistically, nothing can change at this point ... so by waiting until now for feedback, it voids anything we have concerns about, as it doesn't matter," Henry Domst, a senior graphic design and art history major and media coordinator of SFF, said after attending the meeting.

Another special University Senate meeting will occur on March 18, at 4 p.m., after the final list of programs being cut is sent to the Senate.

"The March 18 meeting, [is] going to be largely, I would say, taken up by what's on the final list ... and the rationale [behind it]," said Simon.

Recently, a Google Form that allows the campus community to input their thoughts on Fredonia as a whole has been released by the Senate Executive Committee.

"I think part of the core problem is, how do we get people ... like state legislators and the governor ... to control the strings? ... How do we get them to see our disciplines the way we see them? And that's a problem that's been going on for a long, long time," Simon said.

University Senate meetings are open for anyone to come and see some of the decision-making processes that involve everyone on campus, with a list of all the upcoming meetings listed in the University Senate section on Fredonia's website.

Simon explained that, "[The program discontinuances are] very complicated. It's [not really been] in the public eye, but it's a serious conversation, and we're gonna see the results of it fairly soon."

Henry Domst, the media coordinator of SFF who was interviewed for this article, is the Design Editor of The Leader.

Life & Arts

Students behind the art: Henry Domst

DAN QUAGLIANA
News Editor

Every student at Fredonia whose major has been proposed to be cut is upset about it. But very few of them, if any, are doing more about it than Henry Domst.

Domst is a senior double major in graphic design and art history with a minor in computer science. Out of those three areas of study, only the B.A. in art history is on the chopping block — but Domst is fighting tooth and nail to make sure that not even a single program is discontinued.

“I [originally] came here [just] for graphic design,” Domst said. “Then I later added art history because I became passionate about it after my arrival to Fredonia. I was drawn in because of my professors.”

It’s still unknown what’s going to happen to the professors who teach courses in the majors proposed to be discontinued if they’re cut. Will they get to stay here and just teach courses that count as credits for other majors? Or will they have to leave the university entirely?

“I’d taken so many art history classes beforehand that I was already interested in [the subject] and thought, ‘Why not add this to my resume?’” he said. “I love [my art history professors] so much. They give me so much information, confirmation on things that I’m doing. They just make me feel confident in making art and being able to talk about art in a different way.”

In an interview with the TV station WIVB, which is based out of Buffalo, Domst said that, “Our liberal arts are humanities. Our art programs are what make up Fredonia, and by taking them away, it’s kind of depleting the community, leaving an irreversible scar on our campus and just inevitably depleting the morale of our students in those majors and [those] that take classes within those departments.”

When Fredonia President Stephen Kolison originally announced the proposed program discontinuations on Dec. 6, 2023, everyone who heard about it was outraged. But Domst was one of the few students who decided to take action quickly that very same day. He’s one of the co-founders of the student advocacy group Students for Fredonia (SFF), who have been making their voices heard throughout campus and the local community.

“[The next day,] on Dec. 7, we held [a] protest and were successful in making some noise. They could even hear us from the top floor of Maytum Hall,” Domst remembers. “Our turnout was great and this gave us some momentum to be ready in the following semester as, coincidentally, the President held the address in the week prior to finals of the fall semester.”

And that’s who he blames for the current situation on cam-



Photo by **DREW PALUCH** | Photo Editor

pus — the administration.

“I think they want to look at this university as a business as much as they can,” he explained. “And so, by attaching students and these numbers to dollar amounts, it kind of tends to shift their biases and respect a little bit so that they don’t understand the full picture of [why] each major is important.”

Domst feels like he’s losing a community by having these programs potentially taken away from the university. “Seeing it be reduced to just numbers ... it hurts a lot,” he said. “I can see it in my teachers’ faces, I can see it in my fellow students’ faces — [in] everyone that has a major that’s being cut.”

Domst explained, “[We] know that [we’ll] be able to graduate. I’m worried that when I try and find a job somewhere and I give them a resume with a school that’s known for their arts; when they see that I graduated with a degree that was just cut, I don’t think they’ll see that as an equivalent as if I went to another school [and] got that degree [where] that degree program is flourishing.”

Henry Domst, the subject of this profile, is the Design Editor of The Leader.

Black Student Union concludes Black History Month with Red & Black Affair

SIERRA MILLS
Chief Copy Editor

Fredonia's Black Student Union (BSU) has taken the opportunity to celebrate Black culture and history as Black History Month draws to a close.

On Saturday, Feb. 24, BSU hosted an event called the Red & Black Affair, in which food and dancing filled the space of the Williams Center's Multi-Purpose Room (MPR).

Nyles Emile, a junior acting major and BSU's event chair, and Taj'Anay Quigley, a business administration major, hosted the event.

For the dress code, wearing black and vibrant red was recommended to stick with the event's theme.

Food was catered by Buffalo's Classic Soul, with highlights including fried chicken, macaroni and cheese, and ribs.

On every table, an influential Black figure was featured to celebrate their importance in history, including Malcolm X and Martin Luther King Jr.

During opening remarks, the e-board of BSU was awarded Intercultural Center letterman jackets by David White as a memento of their hard work in celebrating inclusivity and diversity.

President Stephen Kolison and his cabinet also attended and supported the event, with Kolison himself giving a speech.

Prizes were also given out during the Red and Black Affair, with a raffle ticket being given to every attendee.

During the celebration, people were selected at random to play two rounds of trivia games. The main theme of the trivia was Black history, with categories such as television shows, athletes, singers and fill-in-the-blank phrases that are commonly said in Black households.

EnFusion, one of Fredonia's dance teams, performed during the event, among other performances.

A photo booth in the MPR allowed those who attended to keep a memento of the celebration of Black culture and history.

To see a recap of the Red & Black Affair through the eyes of the photo booth, look on Black Student Union's Instagram at @bsufredonia.



Photo by GIULIANNA LALOMIO | Special to The Leader



Photo by JEAN CESTARO | Special to The Leader



Photo by GIULIANNA LALOMIO | Asst. Copy Editor



Photo by GIULIANNA LALOMIO | Asst. Copy Editor



Photo by JEAN CESTARO | Special to The Leader

Queer Literature Brought To Campus: "Rainbow Rainbow" author Lydia Conklin visits Fredonia

MARISSA BURR
Opinion Editor

Every four years, there's an extra day in the calendar year; on Leap Day 2024, the campus welcomed writer and graphic artist Lydia Conklin.

As part of the English Department's Mary Louise Wright Visiting Writers series, Conklin came to discuss their collection of short stories, "Rainbow Rainbow," as well as their work as a graphic artist, assistant professor and writer.

To prepare for the event, multiple professors on campus, such as Michael Sheehan and Rebecca Cuthbert, included "Rainbow Rainbow" as part of their required readings. Students then discussed the assigned pieces and delved deeper into Conklin's messages and writing style.

On Feb. 29, Conklin visited classes to allow for an open forum of conversation about things they've learned as a writer, as well as specific questions about the short stories.

They revealed that their favorite piece was the first in the collection, "Laramie Time," because of how it helped them write characters that made decisions that they never would. At a craft talk held in Fenton Hall at 4:00 p.m. that day, Conklin broke down different aspects of their process when creating the piece.

For example, the title itself was chosen for a few reasons: its "poetic" sound, its ability to represent this in-between place where the characters were living, and the history of Laramie, Wyoming surrounding the murder of Matthew Shepard.

But this wasn't their original title — they wanted it to be a quote from the story: "I don't care if my baby makes chairs." Conklin believed the quote spoke to the character Lee's inability to connect with her future child as anything more than an abstract thought. In the end, the title was obviously rejected — by many people, Conklin said — and one of their alternatives, "Laramie Time," was chosen instead.



Conklin also reminded the writers in the room that often, they are asked to show, not tell, what characters are feeling. This was something they focused on heavily in their early years of writing, believing that they couldn't break this rule at all. "Finding that balance was really hard to strike," they recalled.

Those attending the craft talk were eager to learn the inspiration behind Conklin's characters, and how they developed them into people that were both likable yet flawed.

Conklin revealed that in "Laramie Time": The character Arun, who played the role of the friend, confidant and sperm donor to the lesbian couple, was originally based on their female friend who lives in Laramie, WY.

By changing the inspiration for Arun's character from a woman to a man, a door was opened to an entirely different character. Whether intentional or not, this could be seen as a beautiful way to validate those in the transgender community; by removing the gender identity they'd been in conflict with since birth, their entire way of going about life is open to change.

The collection as a whole was intended to be an accurate representation of queer relationships. When asked about their inspiration for the plots of their stories, Conklin revealed that "a lot of my stories come from my own experiences, that's how I connect to them."

While Conklin only felt comfortable discussing the issues that they themselves had faced or felt close to, they took care when writing to make sure that the readers would "see that queer characters are complicated and real people."

One of the ways they accomplished this was by not over-explaining concepts that those in the queer community would already understand. They kept in enough information that the story could still be understood without that explanation but also



made sure it didn't exhaust queer readers.

Another way they accurately represented queer experiences is that they made their characters make poor decisions. For one, they said, "It's more exciting to read about characters that are doing things that you wouldn't do." They discussed how, in standard fiction, the cisgender protagonist is the only one allowed to make mistakes. Yet, that's not accurate to real life. So, they decided to re-establish this trope to the queer identity.

"All people are messed up, especially if society hates them," Conklin explained. They wanted to ensure their characters weren't perfect and without flaws.

At the end of their visit, they hosted an event at the Marion Art Gallery. After a musical performance by Bridget Brown, Sheehan opened the night by reading Conklin's biography, including their achievements such as The Stegner Fellowship in Fiction at Stanford University, a grant from the Elizabeth George Foundation and many more. He then discussed "Rainbow Rainbow," and stated how "they go to dark and real places but also striate light." Sheehan also commented on the fact that "characters hurt each other, but are written with grace and dignity."

Conklin read excerpts from "Rainbow Rainbow," as well as a short story that wasn't finished at the time of their collection's publication, but will be released this coming summer. Conklin also gave attendees a glimpse into the first chapter of their next novel, set to be released in June 2025. All three pieces seemed to captivate the audience.



Photos by HENRY DOMST | Design Editor

FRS rocks the 40th anniversary of High Noon Fridays

ISABELLA INZINNA

Staff Writer

Steele Hall Ice Rink must've been a time machine when Fredonia Radio Systems (FRS) took over for their annual event, Rock 'N' Skate.

Program Directors Heather Leonardi and Elena Fitzgerald with Music Director Brian Shin transformed the ice rink with help from Sound Services, taking us back in time to the '80s. Back then, neons were in, the hair was big and High Noon Friday was created!

The event was held on Friday, Feb. 23, in Steele Hall Ice Rink, but there was more than just ice skating. Off the ice, there was a photo booth with handmade props and an '80s-themed costume contest that anyone could enter. Among the offered refreshments were popcorn, pizza, soda and juice. There were also a few tables selling raffle tickets, candy grams and CDs/Vinyls.

Matt Volz, a sophomore journalism major said, "I didn't skate but I loved seeing everyone's costumes, and some people really got into the '80s spirit." As a volunteer working the event, Volz said, "It was fun to see some of the people who never skated before go out on the ice for the first time."

Overall, Volz noted that he had a fun time attending the event.

Another aspect of Rock 'N' Skate was the celebration of High Noon Friday's 40th anniversary. The '80s theme stemmed from this celebration since High Noon Friday was created in that decade. Fredonia Radio Systems itself was created a few years before High Noon Friday aired its first episode.

Since then, High Noon Friday has aired every Friday on WCVF during the fall and spring semesters, giving the campus and community a place to have their voices heard.

In essence, High Noon Friday is a variety radio show which currently airs news, student segments and trivia. For news, they cover campus, local, national/international and sports news.

The student segments typically come from Professor Chris Dahlie's Audio Production II Class. On occasion, FRS' show The Local Lo Down will submit mini field interviews titled A Little Lo Down.

A more recent addition to High Noon Friday that has become a staple for listeners and FRS members alike is the "classically chaotic segment, trivia slightly after 12." Many FRS members go on-air for the first time through the trivia segment.

Chief Engineer Brian Valencia's first time on-air was a High Noon Friday trivia segment.

Valencia said, "I remember being nervous and also excited." Speaking in front of a microphone can be extremely nerve-wracking, especially for the first time. Valencia continued, "Once I was actually on-air and trivia started, everything felt natural and my nerves went away."

Overall, Valencia said being on High Noon Friday was a blast.

Throughout the year, FRS plans on doing everything it can to celebrate the milestone, and Rock 'N' Skate was just the beginning. There's some promotional content that plays on-air throughout the day on WCVF, promoting the anniversary. There's also a special interview with Dan Bergren, the original advisor of WCVF, which will be available on the FRS YouTube channel soon.

Happy 40th Birthday High Noon Friday, here's to 40 years and many more to come.

Matt Volz, who was interviewed for this article, is the Sports Editor of The Leader.



ROCK 'N' SKATE event | Photo by ISABELLA INZINNA | Staff Writer

Rock 'N' Skate: Gallery by Justin Hooch



SPORTS

5th Quarter Column: Even with Snow, the Drought Continues

MITCHELL HORUCY

Assistant Sports Editor

It's April 2011. President Obama is in his first term, E.T. by Katy Perry is the number one song in America and Zach Benson is six years old.

That is the last time the Buffalo Sabres played in a playoff game.

This drought of 12 seasons, soon to be 13, is good for the second-longest active drought in the four major North American professional sports.

With that being said, it's obviously fair for fans to be upset with the franchise.

I think fans have even more of a right to be annoyed when we look at what owner Terry Pegula said 13 years ago when he purchased the team.

"Starting today, the Buffalo Sabres' reason for existence will be to win the Stanley Cup," said Pegula in his introductory press conference.

Since he said that, the Sabres have not made the playoffs with him as the owner for a full season.

The closest they've gotten to making the dance was last year when they finished with 91 points, one point out of a playoff spot.

After having legitimate and reasonable expectations to qualify this year, the Sabres currently have a 2.7% chance to make the playoffs according to moneypuck.com.

This has led to fans, rightfully so, showing frustration at games with boos and chants of "fire Donnie."

The chants were aimed at Sabres head coach Don Granato, who lots of people are unhappy with.

After an article from the Buffalo News' Mike Harrington, fans found out that the players really did not like these chants.

They stopped saluting fans after home wins, which a lot of people have noticed.

This has led to a bit of a discussion on whether the fans are in the wrong for booing, or the players are wrong for being mad.

On one hand, a fair amount of the players have only been here for a handful of years, and shouldn't be at blame for 13 years of misery.

But from a fan's perspective, there has been little to no improvement over the last 13 years to give them any hope.

A term I see get used a lot that I agree with is that the Sabres as a franchise have "settled with mediocrity."

This isn't just the players, but the front office, all the way up to Pegula and the ownership group.

There's way too many games where the players come out flat, or don't show any heart, which you hate to see as a fan.

If the players aren't going to care about the team or game, why should the fans watching it?

The decrease in fan engagement has shown when you look at the arena during games.

In 2011, the Sabres ranked ninth in attendance with an average of 18,500 people, or 98.7% of the capacity.

Fast-forward to this season, their average attendance is only 15,970, while only filling up 83% of the arena.

This is good for second last in the league, slightly in front of the San Jose Sharks.

On top of losing a lot of fans they once had, there's an entire generation of people that have never seen the Sabres win.

Being born in 2004, I fall in this generation.

As I mentioned before, the Sabres haven't been in the playoffs since the 2010-2011 season, making me six years old.

Since then, the team hasn't even been competitive for most of those years.

I'll see pictures and videos from the days when Lindy Ruff was the coach, and the team was led by Chris Drury, Danny Briere and Ryan Miller.

The arena packed to the brim, "party in the plaza" happening outside of it, all showing the passion Buffalo sports fans are known for.

I've never gotten to experience this in my 19 years of life.

In fact, I watched my first meaningful Sabres game in April this past season.

By "meaningful," I mean that it was a critical game for the Sabres playoff chances, not their chance at the number one pick in the draft, which we've had many of.

Perhaps the most frustrating thing I see is on social media – which if you're a fan of the Sabres, you know Sabres social media is a great place.

The thing I see so consistently and something so many Sabres fans feel, including myself, is how they want to love this team.

This past week, the team had their first three-game win streak of the season.

However, after they beat the Hurricanes to win their third straight, you would've thought the Sabres won the cup.

When the team gives the fans something to cheer about, something to be happy about, they support them.

It just happens to be so rare that the team does indeed give fans something to cheer about.

You don't have to look far to see what happens when a team cares as much as the fans do.

We all know about the Bills Mafia and how rowdy and passionate they are, but the Buffalo Bandits have shown what happens when a team cares.

With both teams playing in the same arena, I think it's fair to compare the two.

In the 2023 season, the Bandits had an average attendance of 14,700.

In the 2024 season, which is still ongoing, they have an average attendance of 16,130: more than the Sabres.

It's worth noting that the Bandits are reigning NLL champions and not fighting for a playoff spot.

I think the players can be slightly annoyed at the constant booing, but the fans have every right to boo, and should continue to boo until this franchise turns it around.

Spotlight on Courtney Woodring, co-captain of Fredonia's cheer team

CHLOE KOWALYK

Editor in Chief

When Courtney Woodring isn't on the mat with a bow in her hair and white sneakers on her feet, she's focusing on her academics and extracurriculars.

Woodring is a senior public relations major with a minor in leadership studies. She graduated from Eden High School, located in the town she grew up in, Eden, N.Y.

Eden itself is a small town located about 40 minutes away from Fredonia with Woodring's graduating class only consisting of about 100 students.

However, Woodring's love for sports was much bigger.

During her childhood, she played many different sports, including gymnastics, bowling and eventually, cheerleading.

After seeing many of her friends pick up cheerleading in school, Woodring decided she wanted to try it too.

"I was like, 'that seems fun, yeah, I want to try that,'" she said.

Although she tried many sports, cheerleading seemed to be a good fit for Woodring, as 2024 marks her 14th year in the sport.

High school cheer was especially memorable for Woodring.

"My birthday always fell on our homecoming game. I have two videos of me bawling my eyes out because they got the announcer to sing 'Happy Birthday' over the loudspeaker and surprise me," she said. "I had a good core group of friends that I grew up cheering with."

Following her cheerleading experiences throughout her childhood and in high school, Woodring decided to cheer again in college. After taking a brief hiatus throughout her freshman year at Fredonia during the COVID-19 pandemic, Woodring decided to jump back into cheerleading.

She tried out for Fredonia's cheerleading team, and has been a Blue Devil cheerleader since.

She also cheers on her peers as the team's co-captain.

The cheerleading team cheers for both men's and women's basketball, as well as other events on campus such as the annual Pep Rally and community service events. "Sometimes, we support the hockey team," Woodring said.

In addition, Woodring said that the team competes in a major cheer competition in Daytona Beach, Fla.

This competition is extremely well-known to those involved in the cheerleading community. Hundreds of college cheerleading teams across the United States meet in Daytona Beach to compete.

This year, the competition is scheduled to take place in April.

The Fredonia cheerleading team has been to this competition several years before, and Woodring has been twice already herself. The team is planning to compete again this year.

"For the first time my first year, it was just crazy because a lot of the teams that we saw and the athletes that were there, I had grown up watching," Woodring said. "It was surreal. Going back over the years was really fun."

When stunting, Woodring is primarily a back spot, which means she stands behind the flyer to help ensure the stunt is stable. While stunts are her main strength, Woodring also en-



Photo courtesy of Courtney Woodring

joys the dancing aspect of the routines.

Woodring's coach at Fredonia, Julie Troche, has coached her since she started at Fredonia.

"Since coaching Courtney, I can say that she is an individual that silently processes what is being taught and responds with thoughtful solutions. She will take on a task and follow it through until the end," Troche said.

Troche also commended Woodring's organization and focus on details. "Courtney models a can-do attitude and approaches teaching teammates in a calm manner," she said.

As a senior, Woodring has been a leader to the younger cheerleaders on the team.

"Courtney, as a cheerleader, is a lead[er] by example, not necessarily in-your-face, but in a quite calm demeanor," Troche said. "She will carry through on her word and demonstrate by being that silent leader."

In addition to being an active Blue Devil cheerleader, Woodring is also active on campus as the promotion chair of Spectrum.

"I'm always at a bunch of events on campus," she said.

Through her work with Spectrum, she is able to combine her passions, and gets the cheer team to perform at several different events that Spectrum puts on.

"She has always taken on many projects at once for the team. She provided opportunities for community service [and] got the team engaging with clubs on campus," Troche said.

Woodring also works as an intern for Marketing and Communications on campus. She helps run the campus's social media, and contributes to blog content.

In addition, she works as a barista at the Starbucks on campus.

Woodring admits that her schedule is often very busy and hectic, but that doesn't stop her from being active in both campus activities and for her cheer team.

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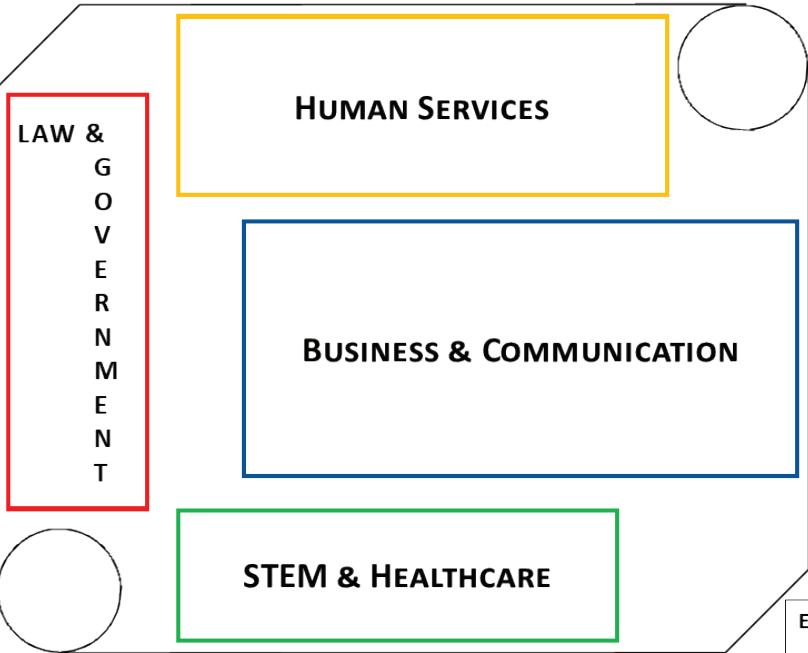
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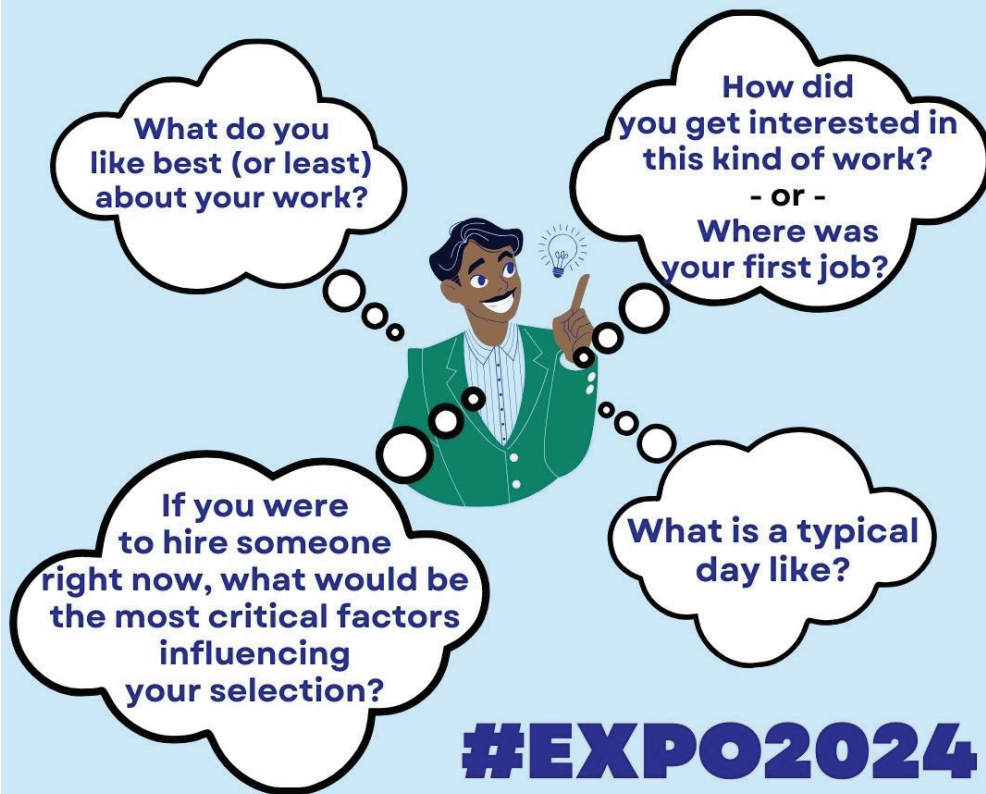
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Outside of her campus events and extracurricular activities, Woodring has worked to make the most of her college experience by making new friends.

One of Woodring's closest friends is Katie Lee, a senior video production major.

Woodring and Lee met their sophomore year in 2021, as they lived in the same suite on campus.

"I had just gotten to campus after being home all of freshman year due to COVID and I was moving into a suite where basically everybody knew each other already," Lee said. "But early on Courtney, Sophia (another new suite mate) and I really clicked."

After their experiences living together during their sopho-

more year, Woodring and Lee decided they wanted to live together, and looked for apartments.

Now, the duo have been roommates for two years.

"Courtney is just someone who is so nice and instantly easy to talk to. She's a great listener and always knows the right thing to say," Lee said. "She's one of the smartest and [most] hard-working people I know; she always wants to achieve better, whether that's in school, spectrum or the cheer team."

Woodring has been able to build bonds with several other students on campus.

In fact, Woodring's advice to younger students and prospective students is to get involved on campus. "Don't be afraid of getting out and don't be afraid of meeting new people," she said.

"If I weren't doing cheer, what would I do?" Woodring said.



T-Mobile Arena | Photo by MATT VOLZ | Sports Editor

As Vegas strikes gold, Buffalo has the blues

MATT VOLZ
Sports Editor

During our Super Bowl trip to Las Vegas, I had the opportunity to attend my first NHL game outside of Buffalo.

We went to the Vegas Golden Knights game against the Minnesota Wild on Monday, Feb. 12.

Predictably, the Vegas hockey experience is quite a bit different than Buffalo.

Before each game, a knight skates out onto the ice to engage in "battle" with an unknown foe.

Sometimes, celebrities will make appearances at the games, similar to the New York Knicks or Los Angeles Lakers of the NBA.

For example, Grammy award-winning rapper Lil Jon was at

our game.

But beyond all the pomp and circumstance that is to be expected with a Vegas attraction, I couldn't help but notice how, compared to the KeyBank Center in Buffalo, the T-Mobile Arena in Vegas was just... better.

Now, there's several reasons as to why that may be. A big part of it is age.

The KeyBank Center is nearly 28-years-old, having opened in September 1996 when the Sabres left their former home, the Buffalo Memorial Auditorium.

The most recent major update to the arena took place in 2016, when KeyBank secured the naming rights and the arena was renamed from First Niagara Center to what it is today.

But the only things added in the 2016 update were the Key-

Bank Center signage and a new LED lighting system.

The T-Mobile Arena also opened in 2016, one year before the Golden Knights began play as an expansion team in the NHL.

It should also come as no surprise that Las Vegas as a city is a bigger draw than Buffalo, especially in the winter months of the NHL season.

Maybe the biggest factor that affects the mood of the arena is on-ice performance, however.

The Golden Knights have been one of the most successful expansion teams to date, having only missed the playoffs once in their team's existence.

They have also been to the Stanley Cup Finals twice in that span, and they won it all last year.

This season, Vegas is once again a dominant force in the league, sitting in second place in the Pacific Division at the time of this article.

Buffalo, on the other hand, hasn't made the playoffs at all since 2011, the longest postseason drought in NHL history and the second-longest drought in all of North American professional sports, trailing only the New York Jets.

The Sabres also haven't won a playoff series since 2007, they haven't reached the Stanley Cup Finals since 1999 and they've never won the Stanley Cup.

Not to mention, between 2013 and 2021, the Sabres finished in last place in the entire NHL four times.

After a 2022-2023 campaign in which they missed the playoffs by a single point, the Sabres currently sit at 23-26-4, 10 points out of a playoff spot and seventh-to-last in the whole league.

They are also on pace to have a losing record at home for the fourth consecutive season.

As the team continues to struggle and the playoff drought grows longer, fan support is not what it used to be.

In fact, fans have loudly expressed their discontent with the way the organization has been run in recent years.

Four years ago, Buffalo native Duane Steinel called into the sports talk show "Schopp and the Bulldog" on WGR 550, Buffalo's flagship sports radio station, following a loss to the Ottawa Senators.

Steinel proceeded to go on a nearly four-minute rant about how the organization's many missteps have brought him, a dedicated fan and season ticket holder, to the brink of giving up hope.

"I've dedicated my life to hockey because of this team," he said in the call. "I can't do it anymore, man."

A few weeks later, some Sabres fans staged a protest outside the

KeyBank Center to voice their displeasure with the organization.

Fans have also stopped showing up to games in Buffalo.

An article published by The Athletic in December 2023 showed the attendance figures for each team in the league to that point in the season.

The Sabres ranked 31st out of 32 teams, ahead of only the San Jose Sharks who had one of the worst starts to a season in recent memory.

Vegas, on the other hand, had the league's very best attendance record, with their arena bringing in nearly 700 more people than its listed capacity on a given night.

Monday's game was no different, with a crowd of 18,207.

As I sat and watched the game, I thought to myself, how can the Sabres be more like the Golden Knights?

How can the KeyBank Center be a rocking atmosphere like T-Mobile Arena is on any given night?

I do have to give the Sabres credit for trying to make their pregame introductions more entertaining.

When Buffalo skates onto the ice to begin the game, they skate underneath a massive pair of sabre swords as longtime broadcaster Rick Jeanneret's famous call of "here come the Buffalo Sabres" blasts through the loudspeakers.

However, I think more can be done with this.

In decades past, the team used to have its mascot, Sabretooth, tightrope down from the ceiling of the arena onto the ice.

I also think the arena needs some major upgrades. Some fans have noted issues such as arm rests being replaced by 2x4's, outdated seats and signage that remains from the team's navy blue color scheme, which they left for royal blue in 2020.

Arena upgrades in the near future seem unlikely at this point, however. The KeyBank Center is owned by Erie County, so any plans to upgrade the facility would need to go through the county first.

According to an article published by Sports Business Journal in 2022, the county doesn't seem all that interested in putting government funding towards the arena for upgrades.

A spokesperson for Erie County Executive Mark Poloncarz stated that under the arena's current lease, it is up to the owner to foot the bill.

So, will the Sabres gameday experience ever be comparable to that of the Golden Knights?

Only time will tell.

But, as the arena continues to decay much like the play on the ice, fan support isn't getting any stronger and Buffalo is becoming less and less of a premier hockey destination.



MATT VOLZ

Sports Editor

Be sure to tune in to "Big Blue Sports Podcast" every Wednesday afternoon from 3 p.m. to 4 p.m.!

Each week, I talk about Fredonia sports, provide sports news updates, recap Bills games and more!

I'll also make my picks for the upcoming NFL games and recap the games of the week before.

You can tune in on WCVF 88.9 FM in Dunkirk and Fredonia or stream live on fredoniaradio.com.

Alone Among Thousands

ALEXANDER FISHER

Special to The Leader

Colleges are communities. Or at least, they used to be.

Standing on the seventh floor of Maytum Hall, I have a bird's eye view of Fredonia's campus, from the music complex to the arts building, the dining hall and the dorms.

It's midday, and despite the bright sun and vibrant autumn leaves dotting the landscape, the campus is strikingly empty. Those few people that I do see below me look down on their phones, headphones or earbuds, all walking...

Alone.

I'm here for an interview — to meet face-to-face, with Dr. Tracy Stenger, interim director of Student Affairs at Fredonia. She began her work at Fredonia in 1998, working in the Lograsso Hall Counseling Center, and later served as executive director of wellness and support before taking her current position as head of Student Affairs.

When I first came to Fredonia, the university was in the midst of dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic. Masks were required, and desks were socially distanced. I had occasional Zoom classes, but as a spring 2021 high school graduate, I missed out on much of the university's initial shutdown response. Dr. Stenger filled me in.

After the campus adopted hybrid in-person learning in the fall of 2020, the lasting emotional effects of COVID-19 lockdowns started to show up in the campus community. "We had just hoped people would pick up where they left off," said Dr. Stenger. "We're not seeing that."

According to Stenger, the university conducted qualitative studies among select groups of students when the campus returned to in-person learning. She said the research showed students were struggling with how to engage when they went to on-campus events. "There's a desire for connection, but [they're] struggling with the skills of how to build that," said Stenger.

Why aren't social skills something that comes naturally to us anymore?

In a spring 2021 Harvard poll, we found part of the answer. It revealed that 61% of young adults experienced 'serious loneliness.' Two years later, a global Meta-Gallup poll conducted in fall 2023 found that nearly a quarter of young adults worldwide — 27% — felt 'very lonely' or 'fairly lonely.'

While the pandemic and its lockdowns and social distancing procedures may be a thing of the past, a quarter of young people still feel this way today. The psychological effects are

ever-present.

I spoke to my friend and former research partner Anne Smith, who was a freshman at Fredonia in

the fall of 2020. Now in her senior year, Smith recounts her earliest experiences as an undergraduate student.

"For me, I feel like socialization was such a low priority that it just didn't happen at all," Smith said. "The expectation was, sort of by society—and I think the school followed it—was no hanging out. No talking to each other, don't gather."

But were the COVID-19 limitations really the start of our loneliness epidemic? Or were the masks, the lockdowns, the social distancing only an accelerant?

A 2021 'Journal of Adolescence' article by a multidisciplinary group of professors found that young people were already getting lonelier before the world shut down. "Nearly twice as many adolescents in 2018 scored high in loneliness than in 2000, with much of the increase occurring after 2012," states the article. Although these figures significantly increased, the authors note that, "A majority of students did not report high levels of loneliness."

From the 2010's onward, socialization was irreversibly changed, thanks to social media. Interaction between people is no longer mandatory to survive. We're living in the era of technology, texting and interconnectedness. While the internet has generated a platform for new, productive, fruitful connections to be made between two equally interested parties, sometimes that isn't always the case. The internet facilitates friendships, job opportunities and global experiences, but it also facilitates something else: isolation.

The remaining portion of this article can be found on our website or at the QR code below:



America is Everything We Saw In "The Barbie Movie"

AMARAH GHORI

Staff Writer

America is a Patriarchy

My earliest memories as a child include me playing with baby dolls. Pushing them around in their strollers, putting them to bed and “feeding” them.

Playing with toys that represented housework was normal. I loved my kid-sized toy iron, kitchen play set and vacuum cleaner. Doing motherly tasks was already subconsciously rooted in my upbringing.

Little did I know that these games and toys that I had were also normal for a lot of other girls, and we would continue to be conditioned to be “traditional women” throughout our young lives.

The “Barbie” movie is a powerful story about womanhood and the patriarchy that we experience. Barbie is portrayed as who you think she is, the embodiment of the “perfect” woman. She lives in Barbie Land – a world where women run everything. Among many other careers that the Barbie’s have, there is Doctor Barbie, President Barbie and even Nobel Prize Barbie. Barbie is this woman that can do it all and she does it flawlessly.

Throughout the movie, you come to realize that being “perfect” isn’t something as attainable as society makes it seem.

After Barbie takes a trip into the real world, she comes to realize how much American culture is different from Barbie Land. She finds the girl that “plays with her,” and starts to experience the same feelings. Depression and sadness are the main feelings her human has, as she is a mother who is tired of feeling like she needs to be perfect all of the time. This begins to reflect onto Barbie in the movie and she starts to become un-doll-like.

There was a beautiful monologue delivered in this movie by America Ferrera’s character on how, as women, we are expected to do a multitude of different things but it’s impossible to be everything at once, even though that’s what society demands of us. This is so beautiful and it truly depicts the country and how it is always expecting women to know and do it all.

It’s the hard truth for our world that, as women, we have no control over these things that happen to us.

I feel that it’s important that a movie like “Barbie” was able to address and shine light on different social situations in this society. It feels like a breath of fresh air to have this in the media because women have been fighting for their rights for years.

The most recent compromise of our rights has been the overturning of Roe v. Wade, which led to a loss of healthcare, as well as freedom, over women’s bodies. The case of Roe v. Wade protected the right to have an abortion. Abortion is necessary in so many regards. It’s sick that people were able to change the accessibility of it, all in what seemed like the blink of an eye. America is a patriarchy and it thrives on the downfall and control of women.

Why is it that women can’t make decisions for themselves?

In regards to the Supreme Court, making this decision is reversing years and years of progress for feminism in this country. Women have lived in a society, especially in America, where

we are expected to do things with a smile, even if what we’re expected to do is a double standard.

MARISSA BURR

Opinion Editor

America Is Demanding Unattainable Perfection

If the initial hype and massive press for Greta Gerwig’s 2023 “Barbie” movie weren’t enough to convince you to go see the film in theaters, the records it set in the box office should have been. All of the pink, fashion, star-studded cast and feminism compiled together in a little less than two hours were reasons that people both loved and hated the film. And for those who haven’t seen it or read much into the plot, you’re probably asking the question, “Why is a movie about a doll so controversial?”

Simple answer is that it isn’t; it’s just that the very people the movie calls on their faults are the ones making the most noise.

In the film, Margot Robbie stars as “Stereotypical Barbie” in Barbie Land, a world separate from the reality that we live in. The dolls live somewhat naively in the sense that they believe that when the first Barbie doll was created in 1959, she gave young girls in our world the confidence and inspiration to become anything they wanted and live their best lives. Yet, when Robbie’s character starts to malfunction in her universe, she must travel to the real world and find the girl she belongs to that doesn’t feel as perfect as her Barbie is.

After making it to the real world, Barbie and her stowaway Ken, played by Ryan Gosling, quickly realize that this place is nothing like the world they’re from. Within five minutes of roller skating down the streets of California, Barbie is cat-called and has her butt smacked by a complete stranger.

Ken notices that here, men are in positions of power and treated as higher beings just because of their gender. He takes this “novel idea” of patriarchy back to Barbie Land and implements it.

Suddenly, President Barbie is opening beers for volleyball players and Doctor Barbie is in a lingerie-like maid’s costume serving the other Kens. Now, Ken has taken over Barbie’s dreamhouse and discarded her and everything she built for herself, just because he was upset that she didn’t love him.

In crisis about not feeling worth anything because of the way the men have treated her, Barbie gives up and doesn’t want to live anymore. Her human Gloria, played by America Ferrera, with her tween daughter Sasha, is distraught that their society has broken someone whose life was perfect.

Barbie’s life was perfect because everyone loved her, and now she knows that in the real world she’s hated because people think she’s too sexual for young girls, or that she represents unrealistic standards of beauty. She, just like every other woman, is hated just for being one, while the men get to be respected and venerated only because of their gender. Their personalities, goals, accomplishments, or kindness have nothing to do with the way they are treated.

Continues on next page.

At the lowest moment, Gloria gives the movie's most notable monologue that has resonated with women everywhere:

"It is literally impossible to be a woman. You are so beautiful, and so smart, and it kills me that you don't think you're good enough. Like, we have to always be extraordinary, but somehow we're always doing it wrong. You have to be thin, but not too thin. And you can never say you want to be thin. You have to say you want to be healthy, but also you have to be thin. You have to have money, but you can't ask for money because that's crass. You have to be a boss, but you can't be mean. You have to lead, but you can't squash other people's ideas.

You're supposed to love being a mother, but don't talk about your kids all the damn time. You have to be a career woman but also always be looking out for other people. You have to answer for men's bad behavior, which is insane, but if you point that out, you're accused of complaining. You're supposed to stay pretty for men, but not so pretty that you tempt them too much or that you threaten other women because you're supposed to be a part of the sisterhood. But always stand out and always be grateful. But never forget that the system is rigged. So find a way to acknowledge that but also always be grateful. You have to never get old, never be rude, never show off, never be selfish, never fall down, never fail, never show fear, never get out of line. It's too hard! It's too contradictory and nobody gives you a medal or says thank you! And it turns out, in fact, that not only are you doing everything wrong, but also everything is your fault. I'm just so tired of watching myself and every single other woman tie herself into knots so that people will like us. And if all of that is also true for a doll just representing women, then I don't

even know."

This speech near the end of the movie silenced theaters. It brought me to tears because every word she said was true, and no one can deny it.

Look at the female celebrities Americans fawn over: Jennifer Aniston, Angelina Jolie, the Kardashian family and so many more. They are held to sky-high standards of beauty and excellence but the second they step out of line, the world will tear them down. If they get plastic surgery, people will call them fake, but if they let themselves age naturally, then they won't be pretty enough. If they don't have kids then they're not going to have a fulfilled life but if they do, we are never going to stop critiquing them as a parent. If these are the standards we have for women that as a society we claim to "love," then imagine how hard it is to be an ordinary one. In this seemingly cookie-cutter movie about a hero's journey, viewers are met with complex emotions and reactions to situations new to Barbie but completely common for today's woman.

The "Barbie" movie showed the world what people expect from women: pink, shoes, smiles and perfection. It also dug deeper and portrayed what men really want: someone subservient and doting that they can use as they please.

But what do women want?

The film answered that as well. Women want to feel seen and heard but not as an object of desire or something to critique and make better. Women want everyone to see them for who they are inside and on the outside, and appreciate that they are here and trying. In America today, perfection is unattainable, even from Barbie. No matter what Barbie, Margot Robbie, or even I do, it will never be enough to satisfy.

Women aren't perfect, and continuing to demand that will always keep us from truly advancing as a society.

Oh How I Love Being A Woman!

MARISSA BURR
Opinion Editor

"Of, relating to, or being the sex that typically has the capacity to bear young or produce eggs," says Merriam-Webster Dictionary. "All of the females of the human species. All such females who have arrived at the age of puberty," lists The Law Dictionary. Advancing legislation in Alabama states that barring an accident or anomaly someone who has a "reproductive system that at some point produces ova" and male as someone who, barring accident or anomaly, has a "reproductive system that at some point produces sperm."

This is womanhood. Broken down into scientific jargon and detached terminology, but women can be classified as such.

Yet, they are so much more than that.

Women are powerful. Women are strong. Women are intelligent. Women are empathetic. Women are more than the patriarchal society tries to reduce them to.

They are sexualized for the bodies they were given, chastised for not doing what they're told and ridiculed for standing up for themselves.

Don't believe me? I sent out a survey on my social media for students who identified as women to fill out, responding to various questions aimed towards learning about things they've

experienced that their masculine counterparts may not have.

The results were, unfortunately, exactly what I expected.

Almost every woman said that they felt unsafe on the daily because of their gender identity. This wasn't surprising to me, seeing as I used to run with keys between my fingers and still have pepper spray. I won't go anywhere alone at night, and even during the daytime, I've avoided certain situations out of fear.

Over half of the respondents reported that they'd faced discrimination or harassment based on their gender both at school and in the workplace. Their stories range from sexualizing comments to demeaning attitudes to full-blown harassment.

Being a woman means toeing this line between being pretty enough that you aren't made fun of but not too pretty because you'll attract attention and distract men. It means having to dumb yourself down so you aren't ridiculed for talking too much or being a know-it-all. This gender identity comes with the stereotype that if you don't lie down and take it, you're a (*insert any feminine degrading term here).

One response stated, "I often feel that I am not being taken seriously. I've taken a few classes on campus in which I am not acknowledged as much as my male classmates. I feel like my male counterparts would never truly understand how it feels to walk into a room and have all eyes fall on you. It's hard to present ideas and be taken seriously without coming across as a bitch. But, if

you don't act seriously, you won't be taken seriously."

No matter how successful a woman is, the patriarchy is actively working against her. For a 2019 Politico Magazine article, president of the African American Intellectual History Society, Keisha N. Blain, writes that, "Regardless of a woman's experience, education or abilities, the patriarchal nature of U.S. society fosters the perception that women are less qualified and less competent than men. What patriarchy has done is convince people that a strong and intelligent woman represents a problem; a disruption to the social order rather than an integral part of it."

Humans would not be able to exist without women — whether you like it or not. They are essential to life, and should not be treated as a lesser being because of it. Again, if you don't believe me, I present the topic of menstruation and hormones.

According to the government resource MedlinePlus, "Every month, your body prepares for pregnancy. If no pregnancy occurs, the uterus sheds its lining. The menstrual blood is partly blood and partly tissue from inside the uterus."

This is a natural bodily function that a large majority of those with a uterus experience. "Experience" being a polite term of course. In my own words, I would characterize my monthly cycle as something you suffer from or are forced to endure. This process starts around age 11 and goes until your early 50s. That's over 40 years of having to deal with uncontrollable bleeding, headaches, mood swings, cravings, cramps, fatigue, bloating, sore breasts, irritability and lower back pain.

Yet women, from the time they are preteens, are viewed as disgusting and unsanitary for having periods.

One survey respondent said, "Having a period in high school was awful because during gym class, you would tell your gym teachers and they would think you were lying. Or they'd be so grossed out by you that you'd fail gym class."

Having periods is not seen as a valid excuse by most to miss work, even by other women. People base this level of validity on their own experiences, but every body is different, even if among the same gender. Some women don't get periods, while some have light and manageable ones. Others, however, got the worst end of the deal and have heavy, excruciatingly painful ones.

As my cards usually play out, I was a part of the latter. Mine were so heavy that I developed an iron deficiency and was getting dizzy from both pain and blood loss. The result: Going on birth control at 13. In an attempt to make my cycle more manageable, the pill adjusted all of my hormones and caused my body to change in other ways.

The worst part was that it eventually just stopped working, so I had to go on a different one with new side effects, and the cycle repeated about five more times until I finally gave up altogether. I tried to get an IUD and because of the way my uterus was shaped, it didn't go in properly and caused horrible cramping — though not as bad as the pain of the insertion process, which almost made me pass out. I had to get it removed only three months later and am now using an arm implant.

I don't have the worst experience though. A respondent revealed that, "Since the 7th grade, my period pain has been so bad that I pass out all the time during that 'time of [the] month.' Doctors ran so many tests and they never truly found a connection so I pass out all the time still to this day."

These are the kinds of things that so many women have to go through, and they're still expected to function as normal people in society. If not, they're seen as weak. But, if they do push through and go on with their day, they risk leaking, passing out,

immense pain, stomach aches and so much more. Women are told to not even talk about these things when there are other men around, but that's how we've created one unaccepting generation after another. Silent acceptance of inequality has been forced upon an entire gender.

Haven't women suffered enough?

Nope, not according to the government. Every day legislation is being pushed forward to not allow women full control over their bodies. The overturn of *Roe v. Wade* in 2022 left girls and women everywhere without the ability to access safe birth control methods, including abortion. The New York Times reported that many bans that came about following the decision did not make exceptions for rape, incest or abuse victims, despite over 1,000 girls under 15 having been reported seeking abortions each year.

The system makes decisions for women that they are not going to follow up and protect. 27 states proposed anti-abortion bills, but "none guarantee paid family and medical leave," "18 have gender wage gaps above the national average," and "22 have poverty rates for women above the national average," reports an article from American Progress.

But bringing these things up might be seen as "complaining" by some, so I'll return to discussing the power that women have. Because we have a lot.

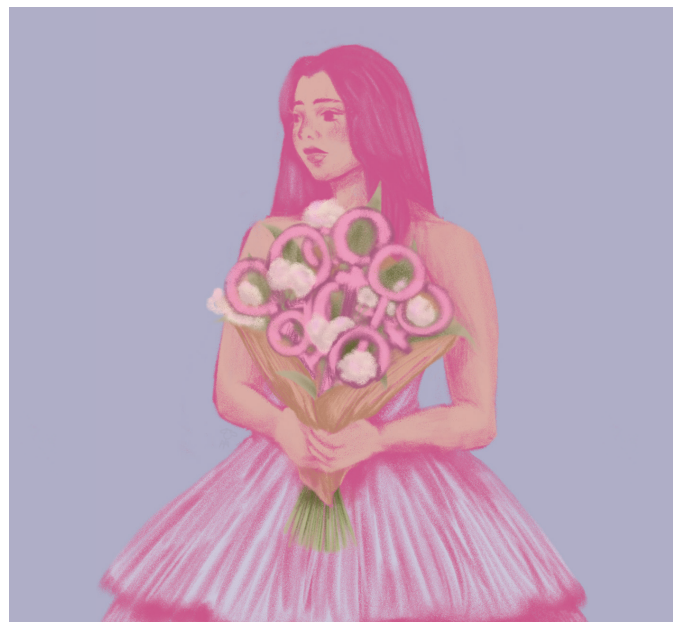
We have the power to encourage everyone around us to be better and to not accept any bullshit. The survey respondents, for example, had this to say:

"You can't please everyone so start living for YOU and YOU only."

"Support each other. Be there for each other. Protect each other."

"Keep your head up! Even if it feels like this world isn't made for you, you have everything you need to succeed already within you."

Overall, do not be afraid to stand up for yourself. Whether it's at work, in classes, at the doctor or even at home, remember that you are so much more than anything the patriarchy tries to reduce you to.



Graphic by KELLY NGUYEN | Asst. Art Director

The Queer Woman Experience

GABRIELLA GARDNER

Special to The Leader

It is no secret that the LGBTQ+ community has faced lifetimes of oppression.

While things have become more accepting and tolerant, there is still a long way to go. Homophobia has not gone away fully, but rather turned more towards subtlety and microaggressions.

In addition to this, a lot of people don't address the different forms of homophobia, and how each identity within the queer community experiences their own unique type of discrimination and stereotypes.

There is specific harassment that many queer women or feminine-identifying people experience, specifically from heterosexual cisgender men. These men are frequently homophobic towards homosexual men, deeming their relationships disgusting, while fetishizing and sexualizing lesbian relationships. They tend not to view these relationships as real, and instead as something existing exclusively for the male gaze or fantasy.

Many of these men hold the belief that they can "turn" a lesbian straight, therefore seeing them as a challenge. They will ask them if they need a third in their relationship, or say how they just haven't met the right man yet.

It is so damaging to the experience of being a queer woman.

While it is not directly a hate crime, it is still harmful and pushes a dangerous narrative that women exist for male pleasure, a concept deeply rooted in sexism and misogyny.

These men only have these thoughts and opinions about women who fit their standards of what a woman should act or look like. They will sexualize relationships between two feminine women, but if it is a relationship between a feminine and masculine woman, or two masculine women, they will project similar hate that is present in gay men's relationships.

They will say things like, "Why not just date a man then?" or "Who is the man in the relationship?" just because a woman presents herself as masculine. They believe that masculinity is owned by men rather than it being a style or quality. It is important to remember that there is no "man" in a lesbian relationship, because the relationship is, by definition, between two women. This is just further pushing gender roles and heteronormativity onto queerness when the essence of being queer is to break those binaries and boundaries.

People should also acknowledge that most erotic content of women loving women is quite literally produced for the pleasure of straight men, therefore making it inaccurate and unrealistic. It makes it unenjoyable for the actual queer women who it should be created for in the first place, as Ash Marquis talks about in an article from Youth Outright.

Not only this, but in general, queer women's representation in media is highly disappointing. Almost all of the content produced of romances between two women ends tragically. One of the women ends up leaving the other for a man, or discovering it was a phase. While it is important to recognize the concept of internalized homophobia and compulsory heterosexuality

because they are very real things that lesbians experience, it doesn't hurt to have a happy ending sometimes too.

Love stories between gay men are often happier overall, meanwhile, lesbian relationships are portrayed as more miserable and overall emotional, which just reinforces that misogyny. It basically implies that women cannot truly be content with each other and need a man for that job.

Pieces in media that follow gay male relationships such as "Heartstopper" and "Red, White, and Royal Blue" are receiving lots of recognition while even the rare realistic lesbian media that we get for our representation often gets canceled after just a couple seasons. This has been a pattern with numerous television shows with lesbian storylines, especially on Netflix ("Everything Sucks!", "I Am Not Okay With This", "Atypical", "First Kill").

"It is a purge of queer TV," comments queer news platform Them. Another trend that supports the idea that queer TV is being purged by networks is the killing off of queer characters.

It is similar to the same concept of people of color in movies or television shows. The gay characters are usually the first ones to go, because they are viewed as more disposable or "expendable" as television tropes often describe. This is also known as "burying your gays."

It is interesting, however, that the roles are reversed when it comes to stereotypes about lesbians from heterosexual cisgender women. They will often label queer women as "gross" and "predatory." These women will make assumptions that lesbians must be interested or sexually attracted to them just because of their sexual orientation. A straight woman may find out another woman is a lesbian and ask, "You don't have a crush on me, do you?" but when the lesbian says no, she is somehow offended that she is not her type.

Meanwhile, these same women will idolize white gay men, and form strange obsessions with having a gay best friend.

When it comes to queer women, what makes the experience different from queer men, especially within the realm of internalized homophobia, is compulsory heterosexuality, or "comphet" for short. Tilly Brogan from Our Streets Now defines this as, "how our heteronormative society conditions women to view their interactions, connections and relationships with men as romantic or sexual."

While some LGBTQ+ individuals know they are queer from a very young age, there are also many people who don't realize, or come to accept themselves until much later in life. Because of this, a lot of people, specifically heterosexual individuals, will make assumptions or form opinions that being gay is a choice, and it is not something that you are born with. In reality, though, many queer individuals, especially lesbians, are not coming to terms with their sexuality sooner due to the pressures of heteronormativity, and the patriarchal society we live in.

The world is so centered around men that women don't take into consideration that they can be attracted to women. As little girls, we are already indoctrinated by all the movies and books we read that we need a handsome prince to come to our rescue

to live happily ever after. Besides the point that women can be independent and do not need a partner in the first place, we also were never given the opportunity to consider if we wanted to fall in love with a woman instead.

A lot of ignorance comes from being uneducated. While valid questions may arise from pure curiosity, asking someone who

has come out as a lesbian, “What about (insert old boyfriend or male crush)?” is unfair. These questions further reveal a double standard because many times when men come out, people do not question their relationship history. Men will say that they were just in the closet and that the signs were always there.

Why is it different for women?



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Every Tuesday at **7 p.m.**



In The Leader Office!
S206 Williams Center

THE SCALLION



Satire and parody for Fredonia

THE SCALLION TEAM
Princess Diana Enthusiasts

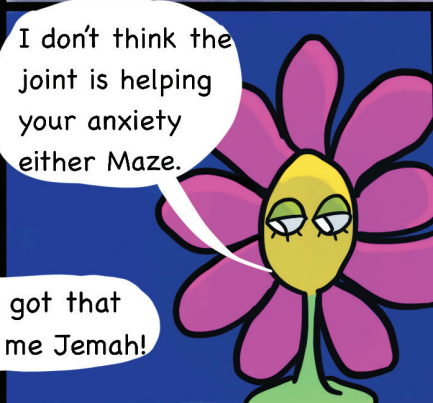
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Graphic by ROEN CLOUTIER | Staff Artist

THE PARTY B4 GRADUATION

Page 1 of 5
updates bi-weekly



Comic by NICOLE THORSON | Art Director



Bachelor Interview Part 2



MEGAN KIDBY
Scallion Editor

Ladies, gentlemen and non-binary friends, we're back!

If you didn't read the last issue, I'll catch you up. I, Megan Kidby, sat down with our wonderful bachelor Jace Jacobs and asked him a couple questions about love, family, challenges and other things that made him the man he is today. Unfortunately, we had to stop the interview a little early, but I just got the chance to ask Jace the rest of my hard-hitting questions.

If you read this interview and want to know more about our bachelor, feel free to scan the QR code below and sign up for our Bachelor contest!

In what ways do you actively work on self-improvement and personal growth?

Jace: I am a big fan of journaling! I used to journal every night and I'm trying to get back into it. I'm also just trying to practice kindness and patience with myself. I'm just trying to be nice to myself because I have a long track record of not being nice to myself.

How important is a sense of humor to you in a potential partner?

Jace: Incredibly important. If you can't commit to the bit you can't hang.

Can you share a funny or lighthearted experience that reflects your personality?

Jace: When I went to *fake british accent* London, we went clubbing on New Year's Eve. This was part of a study abroad program for context, and we had hit up two clubs and then we went to a gay club afterwards. My friends and I were waiting at the bar to get a drink and...I'm a big Troye Sivan fan. I love his new album. The song Rush starts playing (which is my favorite) and I turn to my friend, drunk, and I say, "LET ME GET MY DRINK FIRST. I NEED TO GO DANCE."

If you were a pizza topping what topping would you be and why?

Jace: Honestly...pineapple because nobody wants me here and I'm a little fruity.

If your love life was a movie what would its title be and who would you want to play you in the lead role?

Jace: If my love life were a movie, it would be titled "Not This Again." I would want Zach Galifianakis to play me.

In the spirit of full disclosure, how many socks have you lost in the laundry over the past year? Do you have a secret stash of mismatched socks?

Jace: I have probably lost — honestly this is pretty depressing — at least 10, if not more. I do keep all of my mismatched socks. I shouldn't but I do.

In the event of the zombie apocalypse, how would you ensure the safety and happiness of your future partner while fighting off the undead with style?

Jace: I wouldn't. I would sit them down and say 'we're fucked.'

So, we know you have a dog named Bowie. If Bowie could talk, what embarrassing secrets do you think he would reveal about you?

Jace: He would probably reveal that anytime I'm home alone, I double check that my parents are actually gone and then I turn on my music full blast and sing and dance around my house. He does not like that I do this.

What is the weirdest or funniest pick-up line you have ever used or heard?

Jace: I used this one on News Editor Dan Quagliana on Valentine's Day: Damn girl, are you Princess Diana? Because I love and respect you.

The Leader Presents...

The Bachelor




Use QR code to sign up!



Winner gets a one-on-one date with THE Jace Jacobs of The Scallion



Comic by JAMES GRAY | Special to the Leader

HOROS

JACE JACOBS

Assistant Editor of The Scallion, Chloe Kowalyk's Least Favorite Staff Member (Apparently)

Hi guys, welcome back to another edition of Jace's super great and awesome horoscopes. At our last e-board meeting for The Leader, our editor-in-chief told me I needed to "make the horoscopes shorter" and "edit myself." I think this means I'm about to lose my job, so if this is the last time you hear from me, don't be surprised. In the spirit of keeping things brief, I don't have a specific theme this week, so I'm giving the signs some insight into how the month of March will shake out for them. Good luck y'all.



Aries

It's your
season,
congrats.



Taurus

Change is
upon us
/pos.



Gemini

Find a new
job, rebrand
yourself, fall
in love, etc.



Cancer

Time to
make a five-
year plan!



Leo

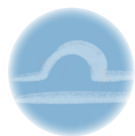
Use your
communica-
tion skills for
good,
not evil.



Virgo

It's all
about the
Benjamins,
baby!

COPIES



Libra

Learn from
your past
mistakes and
ditch the
dead weight.



Scorpio

Your life is
about to
be like a
movie.



Sagittarius

Please stop
trying to
multitask.



Capricorn

Pick up a
new hobby
and ditch
the old
drama.



Aquarius

Get ready to
step out of
your com-
fort zone, the
time is now.



Pisces

Ask them
out around
the 11th.

