



THE
FREDONIA LEADER

SUNY Fredonia's Student-Run Newspaper

**Fredonia
Experiences a Total
Solar Eclipse**

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SA comptroller resigns, new student takes his place

HUNTER HALTERMAN

Staff Writer

Fredonia's Student Association (SA) has recently lost their comptroller and hired a new one.

Brian Lyght Jr., a junior music education major and former SA Comptroller, officially announced his resignation from that position on March 29, 2024.

Included in his letter, he wrote about his time with the organization.

"I want to express my gratitude to you and the entire Assembly for the positive and collaborative work environment," Lyght wrote. "I have truly valued my time at the Student Association and will carry the experiences and skills gained here with me throughout my career."

His resignation came as a shock to some, such as SA Chief Justice Bethany Anderson, a senior social work major.

"I was surprised when the former comptroller resigned, at the time it felt like everything was moving really fast," Anderson said. "I respected his wishes, and wish him well in his future endeavors."

The Student Association comptroller's responsibilities include, but are not limited to, overseeing financial operations regarding approved club budgets and signing off on various purchase orders, working closely with the General Manager/Accountant of the Student Association and to attend all General Assembly meetings to give a report and financial advice to clubs.

Another responsibility of the comptroller is to appoint members to and head the Budget and Appropriations Committee, and to work with them to prepare the Student Association budget every year at General Assembly (GA) Day — an event that directly preceded Lyght's resignation.

The committee, which for most of this year consisted of three students in addition to the comptroller, met with student clubs on a couple different occasions to create a preliminary budget with each of them.

This was based on what the club was asking for and discussions between them were about what could be rid of in their budgets.

Following these meetings, the committee must prepare an overall budget for the Association and work with all satisfied and dissatisfied clubs to reach a final consensus.

The committee faced a harder challenge this year compared to prior years as this was the first time that the Student Association budget was not balanced. In other words, the organization was pulling in less money than they were spending.

This is due to the University's lower enrollment, which results in less student activity fees being paid. These student activity fees are included within every student's tuition and make up a proportion of the Student Association's budget. This is used for the budgets of all student clubs.

For the longevity of the Student Association, the Budget and Appropriations Committee decided to take firm action now, which came in the form of more funds being cut from clubs' preliminary budgets.

This was a decision made by the committee and comptroller

that resulted in controversy and anger, leaving 14 of the 23 constituted clubs initially dissatisfied with their proposed budgets.

GA Day ended up taking over nine hours to finish before SA representatives voted on the final budget.

As a result, this day left a bad taste in the mouths of many club leaders and SA representatives. This includes the B&A Committee, who had two of its three members quit.

Rosemarie Rapisarda, the Student Association president and a senior political science major said, "I think everyone in that room was angry. Everyone in that room wanted to leave, and just did not want to be there that long."

Within the weeks following this meeting, more anger was directed towards Lyght and the committee.

Rapisarda specifically recalled a story about a club member coming up to Lyght in the Cranston Marche while he was eating his lunch.

"They went up to him and were pressuring him, and basically attacking him," she said. "This could have played into the reason why he resigned — he was just not feeling support from the clubs anymore."

On top of everything, later that day, a notice was also sent to the Student Association by an unknown student calling for the impeachment of Lyght.

Before the Assembly could meet to vote on and discuss the impeachment, however, Lyght submitted his resignation.

In his final statement addressed to The Leader, Lyght took time to express his gratitude towards his former Budget and Appropriations Committee members Yan Jiang, Jenna Polito and Cameron Showard, Student Association colleagues Vince Gugino, Michelle Corrente and Katie Siragusa, club E-Board members and all student workers in general.

"Please be kind to your student workers (or any worker, or staff member for that matter) because they shouldn't have to deal with an attitude or people being rude to them," Lyght wrote. "They shouldn't have to deal with angry emails or getting yelled at in public if something goes wrong. They shouldn't have to lose sleep over their job, lose friends over their jobs or worry about what will happen to them the next day or after a meeting. They shouldn't have to worry about their integrity or character getting dragged through the mud because of decisions or situations that are out of their hands."

As a final note, Lyght wrote, "People must remember that we are all human. We make mistakes and have our moments, especially when we are under a lot of pressure and sometimes feel like they have the whole world watching."

Following Lyght's resignation, Student Association started looking for a new comptroller to take his place.

After interviewing multiple candidates, the organization settled on applicant Ebony Jones.

Jones is a second year accounting major, who transferred to Fredonia from Medgar Evers College in Brooklyn, NY with an associate's degree in biology.

Continues on next page.

“I took on the role [of Comptroller] because I thought it really aligned with what I wanted to do in the future,” said Jones.

According to Rapisarda, Jones is looking to “get an internship at the New York State Comptroller's Office” post-graduation.

“She is so sweet and when I interviewed her, I was like ‘wow, this girl is really passionate,’” Rapisarda said.

This was a huge selling point for Rapisarda, who was conducting the interviews for the position.

“If you are really passionate about the position that you're in, you're more likely to do a better job,” she said.

Jones officially took on the role of SA Comptroller on April 15.

Looking forward to next year's GA Day, Jones hopes to be “more efficient” by working with clubs to be satisfied earlier.

“There were a lot of budget cuts and there was a lot of stuff going on,” said Jones. “Nothing that [Lyght] could control, but now I feel like we're in ... better standing. Although [Lyght] isn't here, he did leave [behind] a lot of great things. And I'm going to try my best to basically finish what he started.”

The Budget and Appropriations Committee is seeking new members. If you're interested, or have any questions, reach out to Jones at SA.Comptroller@fredonia.edu.

Vice President for Finance and Administration Michael Kelly resigns

DAN QUAGLIANA

News Editor

ROSEMARIE RAPISARDA

Staff Writer

On March 13, SUNY Fredonia's Vice President for Finance and Administration Michael Kelly resigned from his position at the University.

“Today [March 13], I had a conversation about the future with Mr. Michael Kelly, [v]ice [p]resident for Finance and Administration, and I have accepted his resignation from SUNY Fredonia,” said an email sent out by Fredonia President Stephen Kolison to faculty and staff.

“His last day in the office will be on April 1, 2024. During his remaining time with SUNY Fredonia, Mr. Kelly will be focusing on the necessary transitions,” the email continued.

Kelly is no longer listed as a member of the president's cabinet on Fredonia's website.

According to Kelly, he is leaving the University to take a job as the assistant superintendent for finance and management services in the Williamsville Central School District. Williamsville is a village within the towns of Amherst and Cheektowaga, two suburbs of Buffalo, NY.

“This is a great opportunity and one I'm really looking forward to,” Kelly said. “Williamsville is a community I worked in previously and the school district is top-rated. The community is also a wonderful place and this opportunity really was too good to pass up.”

In the 2023 fiscal year, Kelly earned \$134,092 at Fredonia, according to seethroughny.net. According to the same website, Kelly's predecessor in the Williamsville position, Thomas Matuski, earned \$196,390 in the same fiscal year.

“One of my graduate degrees allowed me to become certified as a NYS School District Business Leader and this opportunity to lead the business operations of one of the top school districts in [Western New York], also happened to be a dream come true,” Kelly explained. “I wish the timing would have been different and I could have spent more time with SUNY Fredonia, but this opportunity wasn't likely to come around again during

my working career, so I made the really difficult decision to step away from SUNY Fredonia with my career in mind.”

Kolison said, in another email to faculty and staff on April 5, “Having discussed the urgency of finding a new [v]ice [p]resident for the Division of Finance and Administration with the Senate Executive Committee, we are proceeding with a national search with the goal of filling the position sometime between October and December this year. We will work expeditiously to achieve this goal. I am working with members of the University Senate Executive [C]ommittee to propose and approve a search committee at the next meeting of the University Senate.”

This search committee was approved by the University Senate at the April 15 meeting. It consists of administrators, faculty, staff and a student.

“In the interim, I have asked Dr. David A. Starrett, [the] executive vice president and provost, to provide executive oversight for the subdivision of Finance, which includes Accounting, the Budget Office, Internal Control, Payroll Services, Student Accounts and University Services,” Kolison's email continued. “While this is not the most ideal arrangement, let me note that the university will save about \$90,000 as a result.”

Starrett did not provide a comment on Kelly's resignation. President Kolison could not be reached for comment.

Kelly started his vice president position “in February 2023. This position was a dream come true and all of my prior experiences made me ideally suited to step into this role,” he said. “I'm a proud 1998 [g]raduate of SUNY Fredonia.”

While Kelly served as vice president for Finance and Administration, he and his department “reduced and eliminated recurring annual expenses, developed a plan for securing SUNY Fredonia's long-term financial stability, introduced online sales and marketing for the campus bookstore, hired a dynamic new [University Police c]hief [and] developed a plan to reorganize University Services, ... amongst other accomplishments,” he said.

“I feel proud of the work we did while I served in this vital role,” Kelly noted. “The cabinet and employees work very hard to move the school forward and continue the outstanding standards and legacy of SUNY Fredonia. Given the budgetary situation, difficult decisions continue to be made with the future of this University in mind.”

Fredonia alum Josh Ranney returns to campus to inform students

GWENYTH KIRKWOOD
Special to The Leader

Josh Ranney, the director of communications for New York State Assemblymember Karen McMahon, returned to Fredonia on April 17 to tell students about voting, state government and the power of the press.

After graduating in 2019 with degrees in journalism and political science, Ranney said, “Fredonia was vital in preparing me for my role today and laying the foundation for my career ... I simply wouldn't be where I am today without Fredonia.”

As a student on campus, he took part in “diverse and plentiful opportunities” with numerous campus media organizations, including Fredonia Radio Systems and The Leader.

During Ranney's time with The Leader, he was the News Editor. As a sophomore, he was elected president of the Student Association (SA) and continued serving in different SA roles throughout college.

In Ranney's day-to-day professional life as a communications director in the state assembly, he interacts with the press and news media almost daily. He also handles other roles including written statements, responding to constituent inquiries and managing social media.

“While my focus is on communications, from time to time, I have to jump in and help out on any number of issues, be it legislation or constituent relations,” Ranney said.

He explained how his favorite thing about his role is interacting with the press and seeing his work be used in news stories. He also looks forward to “opportunities to work out of our Albany office and the busyness and action of being in the capital.”



Josh Ranney. Photo by JEAN CESTARO | Special to The Leader

Ranney discussed how the most important part of his workday is any interaction he has with the news media, which he described as a “major focus ... It's important to maintain a professional and effective relationship with the press, as they are key in relating what our goals and motivations are to the public.”

He said his day can vary from very hectic with a press conference to a pretty slow communications day. Regardless of the day, he still has to handle the issues of people in the community.

Ranney noted that his biggest motivation is looking back and seeing how far he has come and how his work has progressed: “It inspires me to keep going and keep improving and pushing what may seem like limits, but are actually stepping stones.”

While on campus as a graduate on April 17, Ranney participated in a panel discussion and an “ask-me-anything” (AMA) styled event, where students could, as the name suggests, ask him anything.

The AMA, lasting from 10-11 a.m. in the Williams Center, focused on Ranney's professional experience and advice on applying and interviewing for jobs.

Following that, he gave a keynote address titled “From Campus to Career: Democracy in Action,” also at the Williams Center.

Ranney sat down to eat lunch with the current Student Association executives, followed by participation in two panel discussions with Fredonia Mock Trial and students from The Leader and SA, where he discussed the communication aspects of his job, such as delivering press releases. He also talked about state government as a whole and the effect that the media has on it.

It was “a meaningful conversation about local government and the mass media. I had multiple community members, faculty and staff tell me how articulate and knowledgeable [the panelists were],” said Dr. Angela McGowan-Kirsch, a communications professor and the chair of the American Democracy Project committee.

“I'd love to host a similar panel in the fall,” she remarked.



Photo by DREW PALUCH | Photo Editor

New Exhibit in the Barker Museum: 'The Fredonia Un-Censored'

LEE PYE
Staff Writer

The Fredonia area is intensely rich with history, and the Barker R. Darwin Museum is a perfect place to step back in time. When one steps back in time, they should be sure to grab a newspaper along the way.

The new exhibit in that museum, The Fredonia Un-Censored, displays old newspapers from Fredonia and Chautauqua County's history, mainly consisting of the no-longer running newspaper The Fredonia Censor. Most papers in the exhibit came from the last of the editors from the newspapers, who donated the newspapers to be preserved.

The Barker Museum, located at 7 Day Street in the village of Fredonia, NY, was founded in 1874 by the Women's Christian Temperance Union, well after the creation of some of the newspapers displayed in the new exhibit.

The Fredonia Censor founder was Henry C. Frisbee, who created the newspaper in 1824. The museum models some of his personal possessions, such as his walking cane. Frisbee's wife was also one of the founders of the Women's Christian Temperance Union, which founded the museum, connecting Frisbee even closer to the museum that honors him today.

The museum holds more, such as the oldest newspaper printed in Chautauqua County, the "Chautauque Gazette," the first volume printed in 1817.

Times change, and newspapers change. Now, for example, The Leader has multiple staff members collectively searching for stories and editing the paper until it comes to life. Frisbee did it all on his own. He got news from local talk from the nearby tavern, town gossip and other newspapers, so the sources were not necessarily reliable or up-to-date.

The newspaper collection spans from 1817 to 1982 with a print from the Courier Express.

The collection grows to some other papers, like The Leader. The Leader began in May 1892 at the Fredonia Normal School, which would eventually become SUNY Fredonia. The newspaper was originally called The Normal Leader. For the first year, The Normal Leader was all handwritten.

The current curator of the Barker Museum, Maxwell Walters, holds much of the information that's been given, making a tour of the museum jam-packed with local history.

"In this case, I had been doing research on The Fredonia Censor in particular since August of last year," he said. "Research goes on, slowly at first, and we drew up the timeline for it, and prioritized a list of what needs to get done in order for this to open on the exact day we want[ed] it to."

The exhibit, from the idea, took about eight months. During that time, they collected newspapers and artifacts from their collection, loans from Daniel A. Reed Library, Archives & Special Collections in Reed Library, The Dunkirk Observer and private collections. After extensive research, they collected all of the artifacts they saw fit in the museum, which took about two months. Finally, Walters and his team prepared the muse-

um for its new exhibit, which took another month.

Walters said, "To see it come together, by taking the actual objects we have in the collection or are local, then finding a way to display them so that it's just as interesting to people as it is to me who has spent a lot of time looking at it, that's the really exciting part."

"The Fredonia Un-Censored" holds newspapers and artifacts from Frisbee, printing plates, cameras that were used to take pictures for the newspapers, medicine bottles along with their print stamps and, of course, lots of newspapers. Jacob Fox, a student intern at the Barker R. Darwin Museum, said, "My favorite part about how we set this up is seeing all the connections from the research. Not only seeing the print aspects of it but the journalism aspects of it. It's a lot of seeing the things you've been researching and looking into sort of coming to life, it's very satisfying."

The flier for the new exhibit states, "Discover who and what filled the columns of the Fredonia Censor (1821-1964) and its rival newspapers in Fredonia and Dunkirk. During its 143-year run, the Censor provided information about contemporary events both global and local; today, its original pages provide insights into the daily lives, perspectives and experiences of people from the past, enriching our understanding of local history and its broader significance."

The Fredonia Un-Censored will be open to the public on Saturday, April 27, and will stay open throughout the summer.

The museum is looking for student volunteers and offers several internships each year. Applications can be sent to curator@barkermuseum.org.

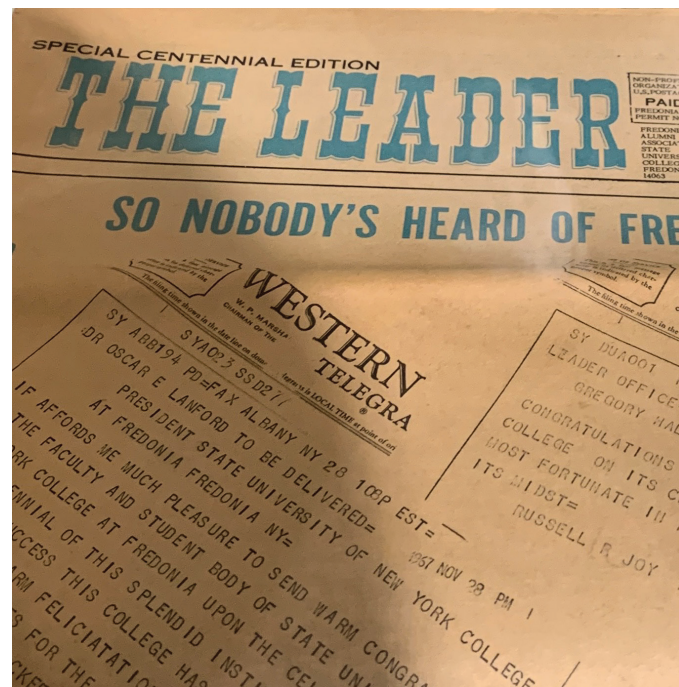


Photo by LEE PYE | Staff Writer



**A DEPARTMENT OF
THEATRE & DANCE
PRODUCTION**

T*he Crucible* tells of a farmer, his wife and a young servant girl caught up in the infamous Salem Witch Trials of the 17th century. Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa's *Abigail/1702: A Twice-told Tale* picks the story up 10 years later as the characters deal with the aftermath of the events of *The Crucible*. These productions are presented on a rotating basis to present the story in its full depth.

The Crucible

April 26 & 27,
May 2 @ 7:30 pm
May 4 @ 2 pm

Abigail/1702

April 27 & 28 @ 2 pm
May 3 & 4 @ 7:30 pm

Marvel Theatre,
Rockefeller Arts Center

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FREDONIA

STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

Life & Arts

Students behind the art: Mackenzie White

EJ JACOBS
Life & Arts Editor

DAN QUAGLIANA
News Editor

Fredonia students have made a name for themselves by sharing their opinions on the recent program discontinuations. Mackenzie White, a senior ceramics major, is one among many who have added to the ongoing discussion.

White, who will graduate in December, did not originally start in that major. Along with many others who have been interviewed this semester, White started her SUNY Fredonia career as an animation illustration major.

“Originally I had gone for the hopes of animation/illustration, and this is one of the only schools that offers that,” she said. “I also knew that they had a really strong art program regardless, so I really wanted to go. So when I came here, I took [a] ceramics class, and I fell in love with it and switch[ed] my major.”

When asked if she regrets choosing Fredonia with its current campus climate, she said, “I definitely don’t regret choosing Fredonia. I wanted to go to a smaller school and I really liked the area.”

When Fredonia was incorporated into SUNY, it exclusively focused on producing teachers with education degrees. Now, it includes 79 different undergraduate degrees, although that number will soon be decreased by 13 due to program discontinuations.

“I’m happy that I’m really close to [finishing] my degree because I’m still getting mostly the full experience of the program,” White said. “None of us really know ... what classes will be cut. So I’m happy to be graduating at the time that I am.”

She said that she doesn’t “know if it will really matter” if having a degree in a non-existent major will affect her chances of getting a job after graduation.

“I still have the degree and there was the program happening and it was an accredited program,” she explained. “My main concern, really, is just kind of seeing down the line, if there’s more cuts in other places and everything else because there have been other schools that have cut their ceramics programs. So I feel like finding a job might be a little hard [because of that].”

White noted that the students are handling the program cuts “really well ... We’re being really supportive.” But she said that the professors are “worried about losing their jobs.”

She also noticed how Fredonia seems to be “getting rid of their art programs and switching to more STEM classes,” but thinks that students won’t come to Fredonia for those programs because “there’s a lot of other schools in the area that offer bet-



Photos provided by WHITE | Special to The Leader

ter STEM classes than what Fredonia is able to [have], especially with the new nursing program that they’re bringing in. I feel like if most people want to go to [school for] nursing, they’re going to go somewhere in Buffalo.”

Considering over 500 students are currently enrolled in the University at Buffalo’s nursing program, this judgment may not be without its evidence.

Regarding the purported switch to STEM classes, White finds it “sad that Fredonia is trying to find a new identity, instead of keeping the one that they are known for.”



Photo by MACKENZIE WHITE | Special to The Leader

Safer sex for college students

MARISSA BURR
Opinion Editor

Content warning: mentions of sexual violence

Advocacy for a healthy and safe sex life has been around since the social change and civil rights movements of the 1940s and 1950s, and to continue on this path, April has become recognized as Sexual Assault Awareness Month.

The National Sexual Violence Resource Center reports that, in the years before its first national celebration in 2001, events, marches and observances were held throughout the month.

The first U.S. Take Back The Night Event occurred in 1978, seven years after the first Rape Crisis Center was established in San Francisco.

Since then, the teal ribbon has become the symbol for the movement, and is a symbol for survivors everywhere.

Beyond sexual violence prevention, it is necessary to participate in safe sex practices that will help reduce the risk of unwanted pregnancies or sexually transmitted infections [STIs].

One way is to limit your sexual partners to just one person who is also only having sex with you, although this may vary depending on a person's sexuality or personal choices. John Hopkins Medicine states this can "reduce exposure to disease-causing organisms." They also suggest discussing past partners, history of STIs and drug use prior to engaging in intercourse.

In addition, it is suggested that condoms be used every time there is penetrative sex. Male condoms made of latex should be used to cover the penis, but if there is a latex allergy, then a polyurethane one can be used as a substitute. Most female condoms are already made of polyurethane.

When participating in oral sex, using a condom can protect your partner from contracting an STI. They can be transmitted orally, including herpes which can pass through activities like kissing.

It is advised that women should not douche — which is the act of putting a stream of water into the vagina in order to rinse it — after sex to avoid spreading infection into the reproductive tract or washing away spermicide. Douching is also not an effective method of preventing STIs.

Bodily awareness is also necessary for having safe sex. Checking yourself and your partner for rashes, blisters or sores can reveal an unknown infection. Regular testing and bodily examinations with a medical professional are other security measures.

Some experts say that there is no such thing as safe sex because any type with any level of protection carries some risk. Instead, the only 100% safe method is abstaining.

However, this itself isn't always true because of instances of sexual assault.

On college campuses, sexual violence is pervasive according to the Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network (RAINN). Among all graduate and undergraduate students, "13 percent experience rape or sexual assault through physical force, violence, or incapacitation."

Both on and off a college campus, people in the 18-24 age range are still at a high risk of sexual violence. Male col-



Graphic by JOHN LEAHY | Staff Artist

Male college-aged students are reported to be 78 percent more likely to be victims than their non-student counterparts. However, female college-aged students are 20 percent less likely to be victims than female non-students.

lege-aged students are reported to be 78 percent more likely to be victims than their non-student counterparts. However, female college-aged students are 20 percent less likely to be victims than female non-students.

On the Fredonia campus, those affected by sexual violence can contact the Title IX office or University Police to file a report or inquire about accommodations.

For everyday use, the Health Center also has sexual health services available to all students. They can schedule visits relating to STI testing, birth control and more, as well as supply emergency contraception for \$15 and a home pregnancy test for \$5. Right outside of their office in LoGrasso Hall, there are also condoms and individual packets of lubrication available for free, along with personal hygiene products.

If you or someone you know has been a victim of sexual violence, contact the above campus resources or 800-656-4673 for 24/7 help.

The personalities behind the Park and Ride bus service

HUNTER HALTERMAN

Staff Writer

The Park and Ride bus service is simple.

You walk to the bus stop, push the button, wait a couple of minutes and then get on the bus.

You thank the driver, get off the bus and walk to class.

This is what the process is for nearly every student who rides the bus.

On a surface level, the Park and Ride is just a bus service that takes students and some faculty back and forth from various locations around Ring Road.

There are bus stops at the Williams Center, Lot 9C in front of University Stadium, Lot 8A by University Village, Lot 7 near Thompson Hall and right next to Maytum Hall.

It's offered Monday through Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m., as long as classes are in session.

Most of the time, you'll hear classic rock playing on the bus radio, whether it's from "97 Rock (96.9)" or "Classic Hits 104.1."

Students might be having a conversation with the driver about the weather or about something that played on the radio earlier that day. Many passengers, though, don't know anything about the driver they're talking to, let alone their name.

Despite this, junior audio radio production and video production major Dan Granados describes the service as "welcoming."

"The drivers do make the ride seem a lot faster than it is. They just create a nice environment," he said.

Another student, Liam Cerone, said that he usually expects the service to be "polite" and "reliable."

"Sometimes when I'm going to [the Rockefeller Arts Center] but the bus is going to Williams, he'll pull up in front of the building and let me off instead of going all the way back around," Cerone said.

But one question remains: who is behind the wheel to create these experiences?

JAMES "JIM" ODDO

Jim Oddo has seen the bus service transform into what it is today, as he enters his 15th year this year, making him the longest current driving employee.

Before coming to drive for Fredonia, though, Oddo kept busy.

For 20 years, he worked in a printing factory until it closed, and after that, he owned three different businesses: one newsstand and two grill restaurants.

As Oddo got older, running three businesses got more difficult and he had to sell them.

"I was so used to working 10 to 12 hours a day, and the next thing I know, everything was gone," he said. He found himself bored after this massive change. But soon, he was approached about a new position.

Oddo had a connection with Terry Tzitsis, the current director of University Services, which the Park and Ride system

falls under.

"[Tzitsis] and I have been friends for years and years," said Oddo. "I ran into him one day and he said he was looking for a driver for around 10 hours a week. So I said 'OK,' and I've been here ever since."

At this time, the Park and Ride wasn't even a student service.

He loosely describes the early years as a "limousine service" for employees, driving them back and forth from the Park and Ride Lot 8A to Maytum Hall.

"I'd get all the employees that were coming back from lunch, then I'd just sit there for three hours until they were done," Oddo said. But this changed only a couple of years into his employment.

"Offices were put all over the place, so they came along and said we're going to have two buses, because now there's a bunch of employees in the Williams Center, some over in Jewett, some at Houghton ... Up until about four years ago, it was two buses," Oddo added.

One of these buses would drive only from Lot 8 to Maytum Hall, and the other would drive from Lot 8 to the Williams Center.

Everything changed in 2014, though, when the University Village opened.

"When they built [the townhouses], Park and Ride changed completely," Oddo said. "It changed everything because really most of our students come out of here."

At this current time, all four drivers expressed that on average, they drive around 60 students per shift. For Oddo, driving is a pleasant experience.

"I don't think any one of us had a problem with any kids ever," Oddo said. "The kids are always [saying] 'please' and 'thank you.'"

GILBERT "GILL" UHLENDORFF

The next driver down the line is Gill Uhlendorff.

Uhlendorff has been driving the bus for 14 years, starting not much longer after Oddo.

He wasn't new to working at the school, however.

Prior to driving, Uhlendorff had a 32-year career with SUNY Fredonia's University Police, which spanned from 1978 to 2010.

At this time, he dealt with many alcohol-related incidents, as the legal drinking age was still 18 when he started. Throughout his police work, SUNY Fredonia only had three bars on campus.

Uhlendorff loves to talk about his experiences during this time.

"The students love to hear about the past with the three bars on campus, or the bowling alley in [Dods Hall]," said Uhlendorff. "Where the fitness center is, that's where the old pool was. They just built the floor over it."

During and before his time with the University Police, Uhlendorff served for 28 years in the military: four years of active duty in the army and 24 years in the Air Force Reserve.

"When I was in the reserves, I was still working for UP. I would be on drills for two weeks and be gone, and then I was

deployed twice,” Uhlendorff said.

During his time in the military, he was sent to Korea, Kuwait and Germany.

But this came to an end when Uhlendorff retired from the military in 2008.

Following his retirement from the University Police, he started working under University Services as a Park and Ride driver.

Uhlendorff shared a story of how the Park and Ride service was almost dissolved in the years preceding the pandemic.

“At one point, they almost canceled the bus. But the students got together and started a petition,” Uhlendorff said. “And then the students got enough signatures and faculty support and they brought the bus back.”

When the pandemic struck only a year or so later in Spring 2020, the bus was taken out of service for a couple of months anyway, due to the large number of students that went home.

During this time, Oddo and Uhlendorff were sent home.

Oddo said, “September [2020] came and they hired two guys... They drove for two semesters, and then [Uhlendorff and I] came back.”

One of those employees hired was Jim Sarzymidk.

JAMES “JIM” SARZYMIDK

Jim Sarzymidk is a relatively new driver, as he began less than four years ago at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Looking back to the moment he got hired, Sarzymidk said, “[Tzitsis] called me and asked if I could come in for an interview. I came in for the interview and he handed me the keys. And that was the interview.”

Born in Rochester, Sarzymidk moved to Dunkirk when he was less than a year old.

When he was 21, he was sent to Germany after getting drafted into the U.S. Army not long before.

During this time, Sarzymidk was given the opportunity to travel all over Europe, to countries such as Austria, France and the Netherlands. His favorite place to visit was the tallest mountain in Germany, known as Zugspitze.

“You take a cable car up the German side, and it's two miles long,” Sarzymidk said. “You ski down the Austrian side, so you need to have a passport... It's a pretty cool experience there.”

He also recalled seeing Oktoberfest and the World Cup.

Starting to play when he was only 13-years-old, Sarzymidk established a skill and love for playing the guitar — as well as built up quite the collection.

In his time in the military, he played on a 12-string guitar.

“When I got to Germany, I got in with a bunch of guys over there and we would jam in the barracks,” he said.

When he came back to Dunkirk, he only brought home a six-string, a banjo and a dulcimer. Now, he has a collection of over 15 different guitars — one of those brand new.

“I keep saying I've got to get rid of some, yet here I am buying another,” Sarzymidk said.

His skills landed him in a couple of bands over the years, namely “The Great Depression” and “The Pickled Pissants.”

More often, though, Sarzymidk enjoys having a simple jam session with his friends.

He describes these jam sessions as “therapeutic.”

At one of these jams four years ago, Sarzymidk heard about a job opportunity as a driver for the Park and Ride. He has no complaints about taking it.

“It's the first job I've worked in my lifetime where you actual-



Photo by HUNTER HALTERMAN | Staff Writer

ly feel like you're appreciated.”

Sarzymidk adds, “I worked in a steel mill for 36 years — you get kicked around in the shop and it's not really a whole lot of fun working. But I'm glad I'm getting to enjoy these years now.”

NATHAN “NATE” BETTS

Nate Betts is the newest Park and Ride driver, only starting roughly a year ago.

Before he was a driver, Betts worked a couple of different jobs.

For more than 30 years, he worked as a bricklayer but was told to stop by his doctor who was concerned for his back.

Shortly after this, Betts got a job at a machine shop in his hometown of Westfield, NY. Soon after retiring from this, Betts found the Park and Ride position.

Betts said, “My wife works in human resources and I told her I was bored one day, so she went to work and asked around to see if there was anybody hiring.”

Reflecting on his time driving, he adds, “This is a good job, I like it here.”

Betts usually works the morning shifts, and shares that he may see an average of 60 students per five- to six-hour shift.

But no matter how busy the Park and Ride may get, drivers do still have a chance to communicate with the students.

“It takes a while, but you get used to where they're going to go after you pick them up,” Betts said.

Outside of the bus, Betts is also an officer of the Westfield Moose Club, an organization that takes care of a few beaches and campgrounds and hosts regular fundraisers and events.

In his spare time, Betts also enjoys collecting various Jack Daniels memorabilia.

“I've got old bottles, yardsticks, openers, mugs — there's just all kinds of stuff,” Betts said.

He added, “And a lamp... My mom worked at a little shop in Nashville, Tenn. and next door was a liquor store. This guy was the top Jack Daniel's salesman for the month, and he won this lamp with gold leaf lettering and stuff... He knew I collected it so he gave it to my mom to give to me.”

On top of this collection, Betts even has property at a Jack Daniels' Distillery.

“I'm a squire, which means I own property in Lynchburg, Tenn. where they make Jack Daniels. It's a half-inch by a half-inch,” he said.

Dan Granados, who was interviewed for this article, is the Business Manager of The Leader.



Hit GRL performs outside of University Village before totality. Photo by JUSTIN HOOCK | Special to The Leader

Fredonia experiences total solar eclipse

IZZIE INZINNA
Staff Writer

KRYSTYNA PORTUGUES-KLOS
Staff Writer

Western New York experienced a rare celestial event on April 8 — being in the path of totality for a total solar eclipse.

The light in the sky faded into black, shocking engulfed towns across the nation.

A solar eclipse can only occur when there is a new moon, and there is at least one every year, but any given person is rarely in the right spot to see one.

Partial eclipses occur when the moon is farther away, and is therefore too small and doesn't fully block the sun, leaving a crescent of light around the moon.

During a total solar eclipse, which completely obscures the sun, animals tend to get confused and go into their sleep cycle.

In the summer, crickets and frogs can be heard and more deer will be present in the woods. The temperature also drops due to the moon covering the sun.

An eclipse isn't super rare, about two to five eclipses happen yearly, and a total solar eclipse occurs every eighteen months. The rarest part of a solar eclipse is totality, since each area on Earth is in the path of totality only once every few hundred years.

The last time that Fredonia experienced a total solar eclipse was approximately 100 years ago.

With a rare event happening in its little corner of New York, SUNY Fredonia decided to celebrate in a big way.

Associate Physics Professor Dr. Michael Dunham and Emergency Planning Coordinator Charles Holder were co-chairs for

the Eclipse Planning Committee, and met with President Stephen Kolison many times over the past year to discuss an event for the campus to celebrate and watch the eclipse together.

With Mark Suida from Campus Life, they created an event aimed at boosting student reception and inviting prospective students to see and engage in activities on campus.

Classes got canceled the day of the eclipse so that everyone could experience it together, and no one had to miss it.

Purchased by the University, eclipse glasses were provided for free to every student, faculty and staff member so everyone could safely view the eclipse.

Kathryn Thies, the special programs manager for the Faculty Student Association (FSA), communicated with five food trucks to come to campus for this event. Throughout the day, on Ring Road by University Village, these food trucks (Cheesy Chick, The Best of Buffalo by Byron, LuGia's, Over the Rainbow and Yakisoba) were parked in lot 9D to provide students with some non-FSA fare.

There were multiple events such as a club fair, food trucks and a concert in the University Village put on by Fredonia Radio Systems, Sound Services and Campus Life.

Sangai Keita, an intern for Campus Life, helped organize the pep rally so that people could have fun with all the different activities.

There was also an opportunity to spin the Starry wheel for free merch from the brand.

Near the concert were tables where you could tie-dye t-shirts with class presidents

EJ Jacobs, a senior English major and the senior class president, was a part of the planning and running for the tie-dye table. Jacobs mentioned that there were already plans to have a senior class event on the day of the eclipse.



Two Peas in a Pod performs at University Village at eclipse event.
Photo by JUSTIN HOOCK | Special to The Leader

The senior class ordered white shirts — that way seniors could personalize them.

According to Jacobs, the table was a success. She said about 133 shirts were tie-dyed between students and community members. The junior and sophomore classes gave the senior class funds to get shirts, making this a more inclusive event.

While tie-dying, attendees were able to listen to music thanks to Sound Services and Fredonia Radio Systems.

On the bill for this show were Two Peas in a Pod, Plymouth Knob, Hit GRL and Bone Machine.

Facilities Services helped set up the event on Ring Road so that there could be live performances outside, produced with the help of Hunter Halterman, Elena Fitzgerald and Josh Ribakove from Fredonia Radio Systems (FRS) and the bands that played that day.

Fredonia Radio Systems booked the bands, while Sound Services provided the equipment.

Michael Tumbaco, a SUNY Fredonia alum and the bassist for Hit GRL, said, “This is kind of a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and it was an honor to be able to play [during it].”

Between the Hit GRL and Bone Machine sets, there was a break for everyone to watch the eclipse. Food trucks shut down

and music stopped as everyone put their glasses on and looked to the sky.

Not much could be seen through the clouds, but some were able to get a glimpse of the moon eclipsing the sun. Though the timing was unfortunate, the sky cleared up after the eclipse, allowing for some beautiful spring weather.

The biggest concerns for the University were the number of people and traffic congestion on campus, as many were expected to travel to the area to see the eclipse.

With the help of the University Police and the Fredonia Fire Department, paramedics were stationed at the event for medical safety, and traffic control was handled so everyone could attend the events safely.

Over 1,500 people came to campus to experience the eclipse.

For community members, students and travelers alike, April 8 will surely be a day to remember in Western New York.

EJ Jacobs, who was interviewed for this article, is the Life & Arts Editor of The Leader.



The early stages of the eclipse.
Photo by CHLOE KOWALYK | Editor in Chief



Fredonia enters totality. Photo by IZZIE INZINNA | Staff Writer

SPORTS

A look back at Fredonia's 1994 hockey run

MATT VOLZ
Sports Editor

This is the first of a two-part series highlighting Fredonia's 1993-94 hockey season.

In Fredonia's first-ever NCAA hockey season, the 1986-87 campaign, the team didn't win a single game.

Seven years later, they lost only one.

The 1993-94 Blue Devils' record of 29-1-4 was the best of any other college hockey team in the country, and it remains the best single-season record in school history.

Going into the season, they weren't sure how good they would be.

"I knew we were going to be good," said Craig Conley, a senior forward on the team. "Everything just came together that year."

The year before, Fredonia finished 11-15-1, and they were bounced in the first round of the State University of New York Athletic Conference (SUNYAC) playoffs.

Part of the disappointing result was due to the absence of high-scoring forward Jeff Lupu, who had taken the year off to return home to Michigan and work with his father after the sophomore had sustained a back injury.

When Lupu returned to the Blue Devils in the fall of 1993, several others came along as incoming freshmen and transfer students.

Defenseman Mike McDonald came from Farmington Hills, Mich. to join older brother Rob on the team. Another pair of brothers, Brad and Eric Preston from Mission Viejo, Calif., also came on as first-year college players.

Head coach Jeff Meredith also recruited a pair of freshman goalies, Eric Pryzkuta from Buffalo and Jason Sirota from Thornhill, Ontario.

Fredonia also got some help from the transfer portal, adding forward Dave Simpson from SUNYAC rival Geneseo and forward Gary Masocco from SUNY Canton.

The new additions enhanced an already talented group that included seniors like Conley, forwards Marty Diamond and Mike Lowe and defenseman Jim Pinti, who served as the team's captain.

That talent was evident from the first day of practice, as the Preston brothers recalled looking at each other and wondering if they'd made a mistake by trying out for such a talented squad so far away from home.

However, once they made the final roster, they remembered being welcomed with open arms by the team's seniors.

At the beginning of the season, Meredith instituted a "big brother, little brother" program that paired up seniors with



Rob and Mike McDonald. Photo provided by JEFF MEREDITH

freshmen in an attempt to get the freshmen acclimated to being in college and playing hockey at the Division III level.

Eric Preston was paired up with Pinti, and he specifically referred to the captain as his "big brother" from that season.

Several team members highlighted Pinti's leadership as being the reason for their success.

"I think if we didn't have the leadership from Jimmy and from what he did, I don't think we would've been as successful as we were," said Diamond.

Pinti recalled sitting on the porch of Diamond and fellow forward C.J. Glander's house on White Street one fall afternoon in 1993.

He said that, in that moment, something clicked and the team decided they wanted to make a run for the national championship.

While it may have seemed like a lofty goal for a team that had never reached the NCAA tournament in its history, Fredonia began the season on a tear that made dreams of a title feel possible.

"We won and we won and we won," recalled Meredith. "We just kept winning, and it just kept building."

Meredith recalled significant games against what he called "benchmark teams," including a tie with conference rival Plattsburgh who was ranked third in the nation at the time.



Photo of the celebration of 1995. Provided by JEFF MEREDITH

The Blue Devils didn't have a problem blowing teams out, either. They steamrolled Scranton 18-0 on a Saturday night in December, only to top it by shellacking conference rival Buffalo State 19-0 in early February 1994.

As a result, Fredonia found themselves ranked at number one in the nation, and they carried themselves with that level of confidence.

"The swagger that our guys had ... They'd go into any rink and they knew they were winning," said Meredith. "They didn't just know they were winning, they knew they were going to blow somebody out."

Part of the team's success came from the team's lethal power play unit, which featured four All-Americans in Lupu, Conley, Pinti and Lowe, as well as Mike McDonald.

The group was operating at a 50% rate in December, scoring on half of their man-advantage opportunities.

"Our second power play group used to get upset because they never got to go out," said Meredith.

Fredonia finished the regular season without a single loss, finishing 23-0-3.

They parlayed that success into their first-ever SUNYAC title, beating a Plattsburgh team that had ended Fredonia's season in the SUNYAC championship two years prior.

The Blue Devils took home several individual awards as well. Meredith was named SUNYAC Coach of the Year, Eric Preston earned Rookie of the Year honors and Pinti was recognized as the conference's top overall player.

The team had their eyes on a much larger prize, however, as the goal from that fall day on White Street had remained intact.

They began the NCAA tournament with a weekend series against RIT, now a Division I hockey program.

The series was played on campus at Steele Hall Ice Arena, and fans continued to support the team the way they had all season.

The arena was at full capacity, or perhaps over it, for nearly every game. Meredith recalled that on several occasions, the fire marshals had to come in and close the doors because the building had reached its maximum capacity.

However, for the second game against RIT which decided the series, Fredonia was able to sneak in a special guest: then-Sabres captain Pat LaFontaine.

LaFontaine, a Hockey Hall of Famer whose jersey number 16 has been retired by the Sabres, is Diamond's first cousin.

"I think if we didn't have the leadership from Jimmy and from what he did, I don't think we would've been as successful as we were."

—MARTY DIAMOND

Forward,
SUNY Fredonia Hockey 1994

"They had to sneak him in through the Zamboni door because he wasn't going to get in. They weren't letting anybody in through the front door," said Diamond. "A couple of the guys and Jeff knew he was coming, so they had the arena people push some snow away and they let him park his car where the Zamboni comes in."

LaFontaine watched from behind the glass as the Blue Devils steamrolled RIT, 7-0, to advance to the Final Four.

Fredonia traveled to Superior, Wis. for the semifinals, taking on defending runners-up Wisconsin-River Falls.

Lupu scored on a breakaway eight seconds into the game, but the Blue Devils struggled to generate offense the rest of the way.

"We were pinned in our end," said Pinti. "We played a lot of defense that game."

Despite being outshot by more than triple, an early second-period goal from Lowe and a power-play marker from Lupu brought the Blue Devils within one.

The lead was insurmountable, though. As the final horn sounded, the scoreboard at Wessman Arena read: Wisconsin-River Falls 4, Fredonia State 3.

For the first time all season, the Blue Devils had lost.

They didn't get the chance to play for a national championship, but a third-place game against Salem State awaited.

Shortly before the consolation game, Lupu learned that his grandfather had passed away.

"I wanted to dedicate that game to him," Lupu said.

He recorded a hat trick that night, providing the difference in a 7-4 Fredonia win.

"Loops went off," said Meredith. "He had a great game."

Today, the banners from the 1993-94 season still hang in the rafters of Steele Hall Ice Arena, with one commemorating the SUNYAC championship and another honoring the team's third-place NCAA tournament finish.

Several players are also honored on the wall of the arena, serving as a proud remembrance of the most successful season in school history.

Over the past three decades, many players have long since left the area, but Meredith still remains, soon to be entering his 37th season as the head coach of the Blue Devils.

He hopes that one day, the program might return to its former glory.

"Let's return things to where they used to be because we blew the roof off this campus," he said.

Meredith said that he and assistant coach Brian Rigali hope to admire the past but stay focused on the future. Their motto for this upcoming season reads, "A proud tradition, a new chapter."

When the puck drops this fall, fans can only hope that the next chapter will be as exciting as it was 30 years ago.

5th Quarter Column: 2024 NFL draft preview

MITCHELL HORUCY

Asst. Sports Editor

With the weather starting to get nicer and the sun being out longer, this could only mean one thing.

It's NFL Draft season.

For the Buffalo Bills, this very well may be their most important draft since 2018, when they moved up and drafted Josh Allen.

That's worked out alright.

After moving on from players such as Jordan Poyer, Tre'Davious White, Micah Hyde and more, there are a lot of holes to be filled by the youth.

The Bills currently hold four picks in the first four rounds at 28, 60, 128 and 133.

They hold a total of 11 picks throughout the seven-round draft.

There are three things the Bills could do in the first couple of rounds that I'll take you through, as well as my opinion on them.

The first option would be just staying at 28.

This is the most unlikely scenario for the Bills in my opinion.

General Manager Brandon Beane has traded up in each of the last two drafts. While these were only to move up a few spots, it's still not staying in their original pick.

Typically we see teams in the mid-to-late 20s in the draft be in a "best player available" situation. This isn't the Bills, as they have started the first mini-rebuild of Josh Allen's career.

With that being said, there are still a lot of good players the Bills could get at 28 who could come in and make an immediate impact.

Using Pro Football Focus's (PFF) mock draft simulator, I only looked at players with average draft positions of 20 or higher to make it reasonable.

Three players I like at 28 include Iowa cornerback Cooper DeJean, Oregon center Jackson Powers-Johnson and LSU wide receiver Brian Thomas, Jr.

Cooper DeJean is ranked as the eighth-best prospect in the draft by PFF. He primarily plays outside corner, but there has been some talk about whether he can play that position in the NFL.

Cornerback is widely considered one of the hardest positions to play based on pure athleticism.

DeJean may have the straight-line speed to play cornerback, but the question is if he can keep up laterally with wide receivers one-on-one.

Coach McDermott would likely be able to find a place for him to succeed in the defense, just maybe not at cornerback.

The second prospect I listed is center out of Oregon, Jackson Powers-Johnson.

Powers-Jackson is a tremendous talent, drawing a lot of comparisons from recently retired future hall of famer Jason Kelce.

The Bills cut center Mitch Morse this offseason after being the team's center for the past five seasons.

Current Bills guard Connor McGovern has come out and said that he will be moving to center this upcoming season. McGovern played center mostly in college at Penn State but has

played guard since he's been drafted in 2019. The plan is to have guard David Edwards, who was their primary backup this past season, start at left guard this year.

Drafting someone like Powers-Johnson gives you many different things. He gives you offensive line depth, which you cannot have enough of, but he also adds versatility. If Edwards or McGovern were to get hurt, you would have someone who could step in right away and wouldn't miss a beat.

The third option I mentioned was wide receiver, or WR, Brian Thomas Jr.

I think it's unlikely he'll be available at 28, but I will talk about him more in-depth when I talk about the Bills trading up.

Speaking of which, that leads me to the second thing the Bills could do, trade up.

There are two separate versions of trading up that the Bills could do.

One would be trading up from 28 to the high teens or early twenties.

The other would be trading up all the way into the top ten of the draft.

If they were to trade up, it'd be for one thing: a game-changing wide receiver.

In the scenario where they're very aggressive and trade up into the top 10, there are three guys they could take, but most likely only two. Those players are Marvin Harrison, Jr. out of Ohio State, Malik Nabers from LSU or Washington product Rome Odunze.

Harrison, Jr., or MHJ, will very likely be taken within the first five picks, so he's likely out of the picture. If the Bills were to go all in and trade numerous picks to get MHJ, it would be a great move. Even though the Bills have a lot of positions that need to be upgraded, MHJ is the best wide receiver prospect of all time in my opinion.

Nabers and Odunze are more likely, as they are usually looked at as bottom of the top 10 picks or sometimes into the double digits. Both would likely be the first WR taken in most drafts, but this incoming class is very good.

Nabers stands at 6'0" and 200 pounds with a 4.35-second 40-yard dash. Nabers is an athletic freak that thrives in space and can create a big play at any moment. He led the nation with 14 touchdowns this past college football season. He is also an exceptional 50/50 ball receiver and would be able to track down Josh Allen's deep balls with ease.

Along with being an athletic freak, he has a large lower body allowing him to break tackles in the open field, similar to a Deebo Samuel.

Odunze is a pure X-receiver who can take over the role that Stefon Diggs had in his years with the Bills. Odunze is a bit bigger with a 6'3", 212-pound frame, while running a solid 4.45-second 40-yard dash.

What separates him from other receivers is his route running. He can make a cornerback look foolish in the open field with his footwork and patience while running routes.

One thing he would have to do when he gets drafted is put

on some weight, however. His tall but slender frame could be a problem when bigger, more physical defenders try to overpower him at the line of scrimmage.

If the Bills were to be less aggressive and move from 28 to the early 20s, there's one guy who should be their target, and that's Thomas.

As I mentioned earlier, the LSU product most likely won't fall to 28, so the Bills may need to move up a few spots to get him. He's very similar in size to Odunze, coming in at 6'3" and 209 pounds, but he had a blazing 4.33-second 40-yard dash.

While he's the consensus WR4 amongst analysts' draft boards, he is a step down from the top tier of receivers I previously mentioned. Thomas is unpolished as a route runner, and he has a lot of flaws in his technical game.

However, his pure athleticism makes up for a lot, and he can be coached into becoming the feature outside receiver the Bills need.

The last and final option the Bills could do is trade down.

This would be an interesting move for the team but could work out very well.

If they do this, they'll likely move back a couple of spots into the 30s, or into the early second round.

By doing this, they could select two receivers who could make an impact from day one.

Using PFF's mock draft simulator again, there's three guys that are being picked at an average pick of 35 or higher that I'd really like to pick if the team were to trade back.

They are Georgia receiver Ladd McConkey, South Carolina product Xavier Legette and Oregon Duck Troy Franklin.

McConkey is listed at 6'0" and 189 pounds with a 4.39-second 40-yard dash. While not being the most athletic guy, he's

a fluid athlete who could thrive in many different roles on an offense. He could be put at outside receiver or slot receiver and would be able to see success at both.

Legette may be my favorite option if the Bills were to trade back and take a receiver in the second round. He is a huge wideout coming in at 6'1" and 221 pounds. Despite his size, he still ran a 4.39-second 40-yard dash.

Legette is an interesting prospect, as he only has one year of production at the college level. However, the one year he produced, he was exceptional.

He's a big-body, deep-ball specialist who uses his speed and size very well to his advantage.

He's still very unpolished and will need lots of coaching and game action before he can be a dependable number-one option, but if he gets there, the sky's the limit.

Troy Franklin would be a decent selection, but it's not who I would take.

He was incredibly productive at Oregon, including 14 touchdowns and 18 yards per reception this past season. He's 6'2" and 176 pounds, which is something to be concerned about if he's going to be playing outside receiver.

With that being said, he has great speed, clocking in a 4.35-second 40-yard dash.

He has tremendous deep ball skills and could stretch the field for the Bills.

With his combination of speed and size, he is always a threat to take the top off a defense and find the endzone on a deep shot.

While the Bills may be entering a new era, a great way to start it off right is with a good draft.

Tune into the draft this Thursday, April 25 at 8 p.m. on ABC.



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.

SUNYAction on the horizon: Brockport and Geneseo leave conference

MITCHELL HORUCY

Asst. Sports Editor

After a 64-year run, Brockport and Geneseo will leave the State University of New York Athletic Conference (SUNYAC) following the 2023-24 academic year.

Announced in August of 2023, The Golden Eagles and Knights will be the 10th and 11th teams to join the Empire 8 conference.

Despite moving conferences, the two schools will continue to compete at the Division III level.

After discussing the move with Brockport Associate Athletic Director (AD) Gil Burgmaster and Geneseo Director of Athletics and Recreation Dani Drews, they both had one main reason for the move: travel.

“The cost of travel has tripled in the past five years. It’s crushing and we just can’t sustain that,” said Drews.

After joining the Empire 8, six teams in the conference will be within 60 miles of Geneseo’s campus.

While in the SUNYAC, there were only two schools within 90 miles of the school.

Drews also talked about the stress that travel can put on student-athletes, and even coaches.

She talked about the trips to schools such as New Paltz and Plattsburgh, which are both over 250 miles.

Geneseo did research within their institution, leading them to learn that the biggest stressor for students, not just athletes, is academics.

“Having them be so far away from campus for so long, they’re traveling, they can’t do the work, the research, the things that they need to do,” said Drews.

As well as student-athletes, the coaches were also a big reason Geneseo made the move, according to Drews.

“We have a lot of coaches with young families,” she said. “It’s hard to be away for so long.”

She also added that aside from a few trips, all of their travel will be under an hour and a half.

Burgmaster had similar things to say, mentioning that this is a great opportunity for Brockport to play teams that are more in their area of New York.

Burgmaster and Drews said that this decision has been in the works for a while.

With many Empire 8 schools in the area of both Geneseo and Brockport, both schools have played against the opposing schools for a long time.

Brockport is actually a member of the Empire 8 for football and has been since 2014.

After Geneseo and Brockport officially join the conference, they’ll be the only public schools in the conference. While both Burgmaster and Drews aren’t worried about that difference, Drews did mention the change in public schools over the years.

“There’s a real misconception about the kind of resources

that state universities have ... Maybe 15-20 years ago, there was a discrepancy, you know, big facilities, we had maybe more resources. It’s really not the case anymore,” said Drews.

She also mentioned the declining enrollment in SUNY schools, including Fredonia and Geneseo.

“Because of the declining enrollment, athletics are directly impacted, as we’re funded by the fee,” said Drews, referring to the athletics fee that students pay.

As this pertains to Fredonia, not much will change.

Burgmaster and Drews said they plan to continue the SUNYAC rivalries with closer schools such as Fredonia and Buffalo State.

“There’s always good relationships that you build with other schools over the years and especially ones that are in your relative area,” said Burgmaster.

Drews also talked about the relationships between schools that have been built throughout the conference’s 66-year existence.

“There’s so many decades of great rivalries and experience and we definitely want to continue that,” said Drews.

Despite the SUNYAC losing two schools following the academic year, SUNY Canton and SUNY Morrisville plan to join the conference in the fall.

For conference realignment as a whole, it mostly refers to what’s going on at the Division-I level.

For example, the University of Oregon is one of 10 teams leveling the Pac-12 conference after this academic year.

Oregon has been a part of the conference since its beginning in 1915.

When asked about the correlation between what’s going on at the Division I level and Division III, Drews said it’s a much different situation.

The difference: money.

“I think honestly, Division III, everything is driven by trying to save money, save resources,” said Drews.

However, this isn’t the case at the highest level.

“They’re [Division I schools] talking about billions of dollars, how do we capture those media rights and that kind of money? So I think it was probably financially driven, but not in the same way that Division III is,” said Drews.

She also mentioned that the travel situation between the two is completely opposite.

In the case of Brockport and Geneseo changing conferences, it was to make travel easier for student-athletes. While in the case of a lot of the Division-I conference changes, it makes travel worse.

Drews mentioned Stanford University, another Pac-12 school leaving the conference. Stanford will be joining the Atlantic Coast Conference, or ACC. Schools in this conference include North Carolina, Virginia, Miami and Boston College.

She thinks it’s not fair for the athletes to have to travel 10,000+ miles for a game.

The changes many are seeing in college sports have made their way to us in SUNYAC sports.



A SITDOWN WITH Brock Papke

Airs Every Other Thursday at 10:00 PM on WNYF-TV

New townhouse policy has residents fed up

AISLINN EDMUNDS

Special to The Leader

It's no secret that SUNY Fredonia is in financial disarray from program cuts to most extracurricular club budgets being cut in half.

But I fear that Fredonia is beginning to think that the solution to these economic problems is to squeeze even more pennies out of the students who already pay a considerable amount to learn and live here nine months out of the year.

My newest concern lies with Residence Life, as I have reason to believe that their newest townhouse "policy" puts dollars into the pockets of our institution while taking advantage of their students in tandem.

On April 9, I and 196 other townhouse residents received an email from Resident Director Jill Swanson that said, "All townhouse students are expected to move out by Friday, May 24 regardless if you are returning to your same unit next year. Students are not permitted to store their items in the townhouses over the summer."

This email raised confusion, as I remembered Swanson telling me and my roommates Michael Hamill, John Read and Stephanie Reed over the winter break before our move-in that a big selling point for townhouse residency is that tenants can keep their items in their units over summer vacations.

Townhouse residents pay an average of \$5,150 per person, per semester, along with a \$100 deposit.

This is easily the most expensive housing plan offered, compared to kitchen suites sitting at \$4,300 and standard single- and double- occupancy costing anywhere from \$4,100 to \$4,800.

Many of us have agreed to these prices because we were led to understand that we were also paying for amenities that are not offered in other residence halls.

Since the email did not explain why we'd need to move out of a unit that we'd be living in again next fall, I naturally sent an email to Residence Life asking for clarification. This began a chain of messages that gave inconsistent explanations as to why residents needed to move.

Residence Life and Director of Residence Life Kathy Forster had initially informed me that the units would be used for summer camp and conference housing. However, in her email response, she stated, "We do not provide summer storage in any residence hall or townhouse bedrooms/common spaces as these areas are rented out for conferences and programs during the summer months."

What's interesting about this explanation is that there would be no furnishings in our units to successfully house students or conference goers. I've been told by several Resident Assistants that summer camps always house students in the dorms, as it is easier to keep track of everyone in one building.

I then responded to Forster by saying, "Thank you for the clarification. However, the first email on this chain confirms

that storage was accessible in years previous [—] 'In past years that was an option but not for the past couple.' [—] and was the policy that I as well as my roommates were promised when we moved in."

After this, I was then informed on April 10 by Forster that I couldn't keep my belongings in my unit because, "Due to normal wear and tear and sadly abuse of the townhouse units they require professional preventative maintenance and at times renovations in all units."

Again, I question this being the case since we were asked last spring to move out for necessary renovation that was explained to us as though this were a one-time inconvenience, which seems to now not be the case. The email regarding this came from Swanson on April 4, 2023, stating, "We are completing extensive maintenance projects in the townhouses this summer including but not limited to door repairs, ceiling repairs and full painting of all units so that when residents return this fall the units are fresh and up to date. This does not allow belongings to be kept in the units over the summer."

In that same email from Swanson, there was a note saying, "With living in the townhouses, students are able to stay from August to May (including academic year breaks) at no additional cost. This does not include summer break." But this comment did not state that this was a policy for every year, so we assumed it was specific to just Summer 2023 while renovations were being done.

In fact, nowhere on the official lease, nor the Fredonia website, does it specifically state anything about the disallowance of unit storage over the summer break. It only reiterates what Swanson's email said, that from August to May, there would be no additional cost for storage over any breaks. The vagueness is distinct.

The townhouse licensing agreement also states that general upkeep and maintenance are permitted all year round while residents are living in their units. Under the inspection section, it says, "Duly Authorized representatives of the university may enter student rooms for the purpose of inspection or maintenance." What would the moving of our belongings do to aid in this process if it is possible to complete while we live here?

My favorite response was an email from Forster, who assured me that I would be able to keep my belongings in my unit and live here over the summer if I were to pay a \$3,000 fee as per the link she forwarded me: "We are offering summer housing in the Townhouses if interested. Feel free to visit this link for more information regarding summer housing in the townhouses."

This last suggestion left me especially confused. Where will the alleged summer campers and conference attendees stay if I choose to reside in my unit? What if we all chose to pay the \$3,000? Would this new policy remain relevant since there is such a desperate need for summer vacancies?

Despite this policy becoming the "new expectation," there has been no change to the licensing agreement since 2021



Photo by BECCA TORNCHELLO | Staff Photographer

when I moved here, to the licensing agreement that exists now as of April 16, 2024.

Lastly, residents were given no formal notice that the policy had changed. If you ask Residence Life where you can find the written policy, they will forward you to the regulations around occupancy and summer residency. Still, there is nothing that suggests there to be an allowance or disallowance to keeping belongings in the unit.

In fact, the timing of their email on April 9 informing us about the lack of complimentary storage accommodations for the summer break came four days after applications for townhouse living in Fall 2024 closed. The Fredonia website includes the statement “UPDATE AS OF 4/5/2024 Townhouse Applications are closed for Fall 2024.”

It feels deliberate that Residence Life decided to upheave almost 200 students’ plans only after they had committed to a lease for the following year.

You may be wondering where we are expected to keep our belongings since we were informed about this new policy with a month of school left and with no prior notice. Well don't you worry, Residence Life has us covered!

For the price of \$200 per person, we can store a whopping 10 boxes worth of our belongings in one-half of a dorm located in abandoned Igoe Hall with no assistance in pick up or drop off.

If you're wondering how an entire apartment is meant to fit on only one side of a dorm room you wouldn't be the only one! But if you feel you need the whole room to store 20 boxes then no worries! You'll only have to pay \$400 in exchange.

In my final response to Forster, I suggested our email chain shows significant inconsistency and vagueness in the explanation of why we can no longer keep our items in our townhouses. This, along with ignoring my request to drop the storage charge, and then telling me I could stay in my unit with my belongings

for the right price, leads me to believe that the reason we are being asked to move out has nothing but monetary benefit for our school and complete financial exploitation of students who are attending a school that was sold to us as “affordable.”

Since sending this email, I've been met with silence from Forster.

After a week's worth of communication with Swanson, we scheduled a meeting with Forster and Swanson for Friday, April 19.

Unsurprisingly, no headway was made. When bringing up our concerns and personal perspective on the situation we were unfortunately met with deflective and unprofessional behavior from Forster with a considerable amount of eye rolls. It felt as though she fostered an overall contempt that the meeting was happening at all.

Contrary to Forster's behavior, Swanson greeted us with compassion and empathy.

She was apologetic for the confusion we've experienced. She was more than willing to continue the discussion with us to aid in making the move out as smooth as possible, despite her inability to change the situation.

In this meeting, we suggested a proper email be sent to inform all students that the townhouses, in Forster's words, will “never ever ever offer summer storage again” to ensure that all confusion current residents have can be resolved. Forster did not seem receptive to this recommendation.

We were provided an additional reason for the discontinuation of this amenity, explaining that staff for summer camps will be living in some but not all of the units for the first time ever. We suggested that senior units could be used for this lodging since they would need to move regardless but we were told that this would not be equitable for all students, or convenient for Residence Life.

Continues on next page.

We still lack understanding as to why they have never explained this new reason before when they had admitted to knowing that this plan would be put into action for several months now, if not an entire year.

Forster expressed disappointment in our concern, as the previous in-unit storage was a “courtesy” and it’s too bad how kind courtesies happen and then people assume that this will be the standard. She then threatened to remove the policy that allows us to move in a week before classes and stay a week after classes end since that is a “courtesy” as well: “We will certainly either go back to the standard move-in date where everyone is moving and keep it standard to a regular residence hall, I don’t know what the answer is.”

Since Forster had told us unprompted this action was “not a money grab,” I once again suggested the waiving of the \$200 fee just for this semester. I had hoped to continue the discussion but was only met with, “We appreciate your feedback.”

After some awkward silence, my roommate Michael then asked, “Just to be clear, you will not waive the \$200 storage fee, and we still have to move out?” Forster responded with a clipped “Yep, that’s right.”

What was most disappointing about this entire affair was how we had ultimately hoped that we’d be able to have an open conversation. We wanted Forster to understand that the choices that are being made considerably impact her residents. Forster

failed to show us she understood this message as she continued to chastise and project the problem onto us.

One helpful piece of advice offered by Forster is that we should look into Dan’s Moving and Storage Company if we’re so worried about the on-campus storage charge. So if you have to move out of the townhouses this summer, don’t take it from me, take it from Forster! Use Dan’s! They’ll be sure to offer a more equitable deal that includes pick-up and drop-off of stored items.

I, as well as many other residents, have signed a petition that explains that this policy change was made with no proper notice and does not honor the promises we were given at the time of moving in. The attempt to take even more money from the students whose tuition, room and board are meant to pay for the quality of life and education we were promised when agreeing to studentship at this institution and the sneakiness and dishonesty behind the decision to dishonor past agreements are egregious.

To think the student body will take this manipulative action in silence is ignorant. Despite everything, our ultimate goal as residents is to come to an equitable agreement. We are more than willing to negotiate with Residence Life for fair terms in the form of allowing us to store our items in our units or dropping the \$200 storage charge.

As of now I, as well as my roommates, cannot in good conscience promote or encourage prospective students to apply to our institution with the understanding that there is financial exploitation around every corner.

A proposed plan for trauma-informed care at SUNY Fredonia

ABBY TARTARO

Special to The Leader

Trauma-informed care is a therapeutic style approach to assist those who have endured trauma.

The natural instinct when someone sees something as “not normal” is to wonder what is wrong with the person. Trauma-informed care shifts the question from “What is wrong with you?” to “What happened to you?”

This approach helps the survivor understand what is happening inside their brain and understand that the trauma response is the brain’s way of trying to protect them.

It is important for trauma-informed care at SUNY Fredonia to be incorporated in order to treat each person in a way that they can feel cared about.

Following the recent program cuts, students and faculty have expressed a large decline in their mental health.

When we are met with vague or no answers, it leaves us feeling hopeless. When we express the mental health struggles we are facing from the dysfunctional environment that the campus has become, we are sent to the Counseling Center, where the issues we are facing become pathologized when the problem is systematic.

The mental health of students will continue to plummet as the response the campus has is to attack the person and not the problem.

The problem is the way we are being treated.

This can lead to a trauma trigger in the future, as students may not trust the very administration that is supposed to be advocating for them. They may have trouble furthering their education, feeling as if they are not valued.

Thus, a trauma-informed care plan is a great way to help these students and faculty in need.

There are 10 implementation domains for trauma-informed care.

These domains include Governance and Leadership, Policy, Physical Environment, Engagement and Involvement, Cross Sector Collaboration, Screening Assessment and Treatment Services, Training and Workforce Development, Progress Monitoring and Quality Assurance, Financial and Evaluation.

There are six principles of a trauma-informed approach including Safety, Trustworthiness and Transparency, Peer Support, Collaboration and Mutuality, Empowerment, Voice and Choice, and Cultural, Historical and Gender Issues.

Governance and Leadership consists of identifying a point of responsibility, leading and overseeing the work, implementing a trauma-informed approach, inclusion of peer voice and initiating a system of change. This can be done when drastic changes at our college need to be made by including the voices of the people who would be impacted by the decision being made. This would also include principles of trauma-informed care, which include collaboration and mutuality. A decision needs to include a diverse set of voices and not just those who have the most power or control over

the situation.

Policy consists of written policies and protocols establishing a trauma-informed approach as an essential part of the organizational mission and procedures and protocols that include it as well.

This approach must be hard-wired into practice and procedures, not just relying on training workshops or a well-intentioned leader. I believe it would be helpful for our administration to create a trauma-informed care guide and written policy for future decisions.

The policy should focus on ways to prioritize the mental health of people impacted by large decisions and have a plan set in place for if or when mental health plummets. The administration should attend trauma-informed care training prior to announcing decisions so that they are aware of how their actions may impact people.

Physical environment as a space should also allow a collaborative approach that supports openness, transparency and shared spaces.

An example of a way our administrators can incorporate this is by cognitively thinking about the location where they are meeting people and how the seating is arranged. This would also address the safety aspect of the six principles of trauma-informed care.

Engagement and involvement include people in recovery, trauma survivors, people receiving services and family members receiving services. These people need to have significant involvement, voice and meaningful choice at all levels.

At SUNY Fredonia, this means including our faculty, staff and students. Trauma survivors often feel powerless and unable to control the situation. By including their voices, they are given the opportunity to have a sense of power and to feel as if their voice matters. This also refers to empowerment, voice and choice in the six principles of trauma-informed care.

Cross-sector collaboration is collaboration across sectors that is built on a shared understanding of trauma-informed approaches and principles. This can be incorporated at Fredonia by including other offices.

The Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and the Counseling Center would be beneficial offices to incorporate. DEI should be looped in when students are expressing their socio-economic struggles relating to disability, race and other vulnerable or at-risk populations.

The Counseling Center should be looped in for students experiencing severe stress and crises. In addition, student support groups can be a way to introduce student voices into issues. Examples of this can include Life Club and Students for Fredonia. This would incorporate peer support, a principle of trauma-informed care.

However, this should not move fully into one office or group and no longer include the administration. This would address the principle of cultural, historical and gender issues in trauma-informed care.

Screening, assessment and treatment services are utilized when practitioners use and are trained in interventions based on the best available empirical evidence and science, are culturally appropriate and reflect principles of a trauma-informed approach. It is important for our students and faculty to be given proper intervention when they are experiencing trauma.

This would go hand-in-hand with the trustworthiness and transparency principle of trauma-informed care. Students and

faculty need to be able to trust our administrators in order to work effectively with them.

In order for students and faculty to trust the administrators, they need to be transparent with us on what is occurring and how they plan to address it.

Similarly, the domain training and workforce development recognize that ongoing training on trauma and peer support are essential. The human resources system is supposed to use a trauma-informed approach in its operations.

I believe it is important for our administrators to be trained in trauma-informed care in addition to our Human Resources (HR) system so that they can avoid making the same mistakes in the future. This would also address the collaboration and mutuality principle of trauma-informed care, as the HR systems and administrators would collaborate to create a trauma-informed environment through their employees.

Progress monitoring and quality assistance is an ongoing assessment, tracking and monitoring of trauma-informed principles and effective use of trauma-specific, evidence-based screening assessments. This means that there needs to be a system in place to hold each office and position accountable for following through with their trauma-informed care approach.

This can be done if all offices are trained and check in with each other.

The financial piece of trauma-informed care refers to finance structures that are designed to support a trauma-informed care organization: staff training support. Given that Fredonia is already in a structural deficit, it can be hard to allocate more money for additional training. However, this training would be necessary to provide students and faculty on campus with a sense of importance and belonging when they are addressed as people instead of their emotions.

Evaluation is the effectiveness of the services and trauma-informed approach being implemented.

Evaluation should occur from the students and faculty through a Google Form where they are allowed to voice their opinions and concerns. This will create a collaborative approach to working together in a trauma-informed environment.

All voices are needed to make a system function properly, and it is important to acknowledge this. This would be an ongoing, long-term process that allows for the opportunity for healing to occur.

The Six Principles of Trauma Informed Care

- Safety
- Trustworthiness and Transparency
- Peer Support
- Collaboration and Mutuality
- Empowerment, Voice, and Choice
- Cultural, Historical, and Gender Issues

The Ten Domains of Trauma Informed Care

- Governance and Leadership
- Policy
- Physical Environment
- Engagement and Involvement
- Cross Sector Collaboration
- Screening Assessment and Treatment Services
- Progress, Monitoring, and Quality Assurance
- Financial
- Evaluation

Graphic by **ABBY TARTARO** | Special to The Leader



Lovercolumn: Keeping the Spark Alive

THE ELECTRICIAN

Executive Producer of Lovercall

THE ARCHITECT

Lovercall Producer

THE QUARTERBACK

Lovercall Producer

Hello!

We are The Electrician, The Architect and The Quarterback: producers and hosts of the radio show Lovercall right here at Fredonia. Lovercall is an anonymous late-night talk show about love, relationships and more. Students who come on the show use a codename to protect their identities when discussing potentially personal topics, hence the codenames of the writers of this column.

“The Electrician” is a 21-year-old cisgender female student who uses she/her pronouns and is a senior at Fredonia.

“The Architect” is a 21-year-old cisgender male student who uses he/him pronouns and is a senior at Fredonia.

“The Quarterback” is a 19-year-old cisgender male student who uses he/him pronouns and is a sophomore at Fredonia.

On each episode, the hosts and guests of Lovercall participate in a variety of segments. The cast discusses a relevant news story, a date idea, a wacky game and a main topic for the episode.

Listeners also write into the show, either via Fredonia Radio’s Instagram, @fredonia_radio, on Yik Yak or through the QR code provided in this column.

We typically answer the questions asked right here in this column, so be sure to look out for student stories and questions in future columns.

The show is now being streamed weekly on Wednesday nights from 10 p.m. to 12 a.m. on WDWL 89.5 on www.fredoniaradio.com.

This column runs in conjunction with Lovercall and can be found both in print and online at fredonialeader.org.

Date idea of the week

We hope to provide our fellow students with a fun and unique date idea in every column. These “date” ideas aren’t just for romantic partners — you could go with your friends, your classmates or you can even go solo for a fun activity in Fredonia.

This week, our recommendation is a bit unique: ax throwing! Ax throwing is a somewhat new and off-the-wall activity that’s gaining lots of popularity.

If you’re looking for something to break up the monotony of everyday life, this might be the activity for you!

It can also be a really good way to get out any built-up frustration or aggression you might be feeling, similar to how you might scream into a pillow or lay a few haymakers on a punching bag.

Just make sure the ax is thrown at the wall ... and NOT at your partner!

Keeping the spark alive

Our topic for this week was “Keeping the Spark Alive,” which can be a common struggle for people in long-term relationships.

Once the honeymoon phase and the excitement of a new commitment wear off, it’s typical for there to be a mutual feeling of, “Now what?”

We discussed a number of different ideas for you and your partner to keep your spark alive.

One idea we had is going on new dates. These could be things you’ve always wanted to try but have never done, or they could be completely new ideas that you and your partner might not have ever thought of.

This is where ax throwing could come in if that’s of interest to you!

We also talked about traveling with your partner, as there’s a sense of excitement that can come with going on an adventure.

You don’t even have to travel far if you don’t want to. There are plenty of places right here in Western New York that you and your partner may love!

Another idea we discussed was trying new things.

Whether that’s trying out something different in the bedroom, or even just trying out a different activity together, doing something different can add a little fun and adventure to your relationship.

Before you try anything new though, be sure to have a conversation with your partner about that new thing first, just to make sure you are both comfortable before you try anything different.

We also recommend doing the small things in your relationship to keep that spark going.

For example, you could write your partner a cute note and leave it in a place they’ll see it, or surprise them with flowers without any occasion.

It could even be as simple as doing something for them, such as making the bed or helping them with a task.

These little things help remind your partner that you care for each other, and small things can have a big impact!

While this next piece of advice may sound counterintuitive, we recommend prioritizing your time alone, as well as time with your partner.

Being together constantly can lead to those monotonous feel-

ings, and in some cases, codependency.

You want to ensure that you are able to be happy and confident with yourself, as well as with your partner.

Finding that balance of alone time and together time is important not just for you, but also for your relationship.

A final piece of advice we have is to communicate problems as they come up.

While this seems obvious and is mentioned in almost every Lovercolumn, so many issues stem from partners not communicating effectively with each other.

Sometimes, couples don't even feel the need to communicate even small concerns to their partners.

If you are feeling a little stressed about something, or if you feel there is an issue in your relationship, we cannot stress discussing this with your partner enough.

Long-term couples thrive when they are able to address each other's worries and negative emotions.

A couple who keeps the spark alive is one that communicates

effectively and finds that understanding in each other.

Reach out!

Do you want to ask the authors of Lovercolumn a question? Do you need advice? Fill out the form by using this QR code.

Interested in being a guest on Lovercall? Email frs@fredonia.edu or visit Fredonia Radio Systems, located in McEwen Hall 115 and open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

"The Electrician," "The Architect" and "The Quarterback" are members of Fredonia Radio Systems and are involved in the production of Lovercall.



Literary classics to keep shelved

MARISSA BURR

Opinion Editor

Whenever someone is going to an English or writing field, they get hundreds of comments hearing about how "oh I could never get through those books in high school blah blah blah." The truth is, I get it.

I loved reading growing up, even the classics. I read Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet" in sixth grade. But some of the novels I was forced to read scared me away from any English program for years.

I thought if I pursued that path in college, the classics would only get more difficult. I trudged through Charlotte Bronte's "Jane Eyre" and Bill Bryson's "A Walk In The Woods" in high school and it made me question if I actually loved reading.

The truth was that I did, I just didn't know that you don't have to love all of the classic literary novels to be an avid reader. In fact, there are some that even now as a writing major I would tell people to avoid altogether. They can kill your passion, like they almost did to me.

As I know everyone has their preferences, I asked an old friend of mine, Mia Barone, to give her perspective as well. We went to Fredonia High School together but were in two different sections of English classes, and now she is a senior English major and social media intern for the English department.

One book that neither of us were fans of was "Great Expectations" by Charles Dickens.

I read this book as a freshman in high school and it was a bear to get through.

I knew about nine percent of what was actually happening and had to reference online cliff notes just to hold my own in a class discussion. I will never pick up this book again because even though I know the story now, it is just not worth it.

Barone read this novel in two different classes at SUNY Fredonia and said, "Sure, the novel taught me about class differences in society and the importance of loyalty and affection rather than wealth and power. However, I am unsure why the

English curriculum always includes this novel. The themes were important, but I just wasn't a huge fan!"

Even though we read the piece at two different points in our lives, I have a feeling that this is one of those books that even if I had been older when I had first been exposed to it like Barone had, I still wouldn't have been more willing to reread it after.

She discusses the fact that the themes were important, but the book itself wasn't her favorite, and I feel the same way about "The Grapes of Wrath."

Again, I read this in high school — this one in my junior year — and while it was less tortuous to get through than "Great Expectations," I still hated reading it.

Once again, I was forced to go to online adaptations to understand everything that was happening. The ending itself also wasn't satisfying and made me feel as though I wasted my time reading.

What was surprising though was that while I hated Steinbeck's "The Grapes of Wrath," I loved his novel "Of Mice and Men" that I read that same year.

It was much quicker-paced and felt more like he was telling a story and not just putting as many words on a page as possible.

That is where these classic novels get to me.

When the author's purpose is to tell a story and ensure that the reader gathers what lesson they were supposed to learn, the book is enjoyable.

But getting paid by the word and taking full advantage of that (cough Dickens cough) or going into pages worth of detail about landscape takes the reader out of the setting and makes them unwilling to dive back in.

Just because pieces are considered classic or timeless doesn't mean they should be forced on readers who will not get the purpose of reading them.

On the other hand, there are novels that can keep readers engaged and should be taught more if an instructor's goal is to retain passionate students.

I would highly recommend "The Book Thief" by Markus

Continued onto next page

Zusak, “The Poisonwood Bible” by Barbara Kingsolver, “Nickel Boys” by Colson Whitehead and “To Kill A Mockingbird” by Harper Lee.

Barone recommends “Little Women” by Louisa May Alcott and “On Earth, We’re Briefly Gorgeous” by Ocean Vuong.

One novel that is highly coveted by both of us is Sylvia Plath’s “The Bell Jar.” This can be a triggering book because of its content, but is an important story to be told.

Barone expressed that, “I think ‘The Bell Jar’ is a wonderful choice for college students because the main character struggles with the choice of what to do with her precious life... It teaches people about the value of treating others with respect and also warns that we should not repeat certain parts of history.”

We both read this in our college careers, and I agree that this is a piece that should stay in that age level if not higher. Because of its serious content, Plath’s works are often banned, which isn’t right.

Mental health is something that needs to come up more in the literature that students are exposed to because it is a prominent factor in their lives.

They should read about it past the brief mentions of Bertha Mason in “Jane Eyre” being imprisoned in Mr. Rochester’s attic for being insane.

Mind you, Plath’s stories don’t have a happy ending either, but it is more realistic than the 1800s depiction of mental illness.

On the topic, Barone commented, “Book-banning frankly makes no sense to me.

By taking certain works of literature away because they contain ‘inappropriate’ themes, we are silencing voices and important lessons for students to learn.

There is a reason that several college professors have strayed away from teaching only works from dead white men.

Literature provides a voice for people who have historically not had much of one; there is room for every human being to be able to express their personal experiences regardless of sexuality, race or class.”

The world we’re living in is not sugar-coated or watered

down like these people trying to ban books want it to be.

By not exposing young people to the highs and lows in literature, they will create a complex that their life is somehow worse than anything they’ve ever read — they’re on an island all alone.

They aren’t.

Just as we related to Disney princesses or Toy Story characters as children, we can see ourselves in Esther Greenwood and George Milton. People just need to be given the opportunity to read that.



Graphic by ROEN CLOUTIER | Staff Artist

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Satire and parody for Fredonia

Abby's silly little birthday list

ABIGAIL JACOBSON

Asst. News Editor

The greatest day in history has arrived. My birthday.

I never used to like my birthday. Mainly because I shared it with my twin sister, my aunt and a load of other people. Rude.

Why did all these people have to be born on MY birthday?? I should have a day to myself since I am so special. That was all sarcasm (not all of it)! Having to share my birthday with my twin sister, Sarah, who, might I add almost killed me in the womb, has always been special. We each had our own cake, our own cards and most of the time, our own gifts.

If you know what it's like to have a sibling, you KNOW you will almost always share things such as clothes, books, games and even a bedroom. Sometimes you don't share your things and end up stealing each other's clothes (I promise Sarah I will give you back your shirt.)

I know what y'all are thinking: Abby, why are you telling us this? Because, since my birthday is soon, April 24 to be exact, I am expecting each and every one of you dear readers to get me a gift. If you don't, I will be severely hurt and cry (I won't for real but you should totally get me a gift). Since my sister and I are turning 21 (BIG SLAY FOR THE JACOBSON TWINS), I have made up a list of things only I want for my birthday.

1. Fungi furniture by Pual Octavious

If y'all have not seen these pieces of furniture this artist makes, YOU HAVE TO LOOK AT HIS INSTAGRAM! His Instagram is @pualoctavious and the furniture?? HELLO?? It's beautiful. It's not for sale sadly but I mean y'all could make it happen and get it for me.

2. Life supply of Lindt chocolates

Best chocolate ever. Like no offense to anyone who likes Dove or Hershey but Lindt has the best chocolate EVER! It's a bit expensive but guys, it's my birthday. Y'all have to go all out, like come on.

3. Triple chocolate cookies

Since we are having a discussion of chocolate, instead of a cake for my birthday, I am requesting triple chocolate cookies. With a tall glass of milk.

4. Squishmallows

I LOVE Squishmallows. I wouldn't say I have an obsession with them but rather I like to collect. Do not look at my bed, I totally don't have like 50. That's a crazy accusation guys come on.

5. Signed album from Laufey

Laufey is my FAVORITE artist ever. To receive a signed album from her would be a blessing. I would cry.

6. Someone to pay off all of my student loans and tuition

I am broke. I cannot afford this anymore so someone should totally pay off all of my student loans and my tuition. Also, it would help relieve stress from Mrs. Jacobson so y'all should totally do that. My mom deserves it.

7. For program cuts to not happen (y'all please)

I don't even have to describe how we all feel about this.

8. Appa from Avatar: The Last Airbender

I LOVE APPA AND I LOVE AVATAR. It won't be too hard, just look at the sky for a flying bison. Thank you.

9. Every single Bridgerton book ever made

I just recently started watching Bridgerton and oh my goodness this show is amazing. Finding out it's based on a book series?? AND I LOVE BOOKS!

10. Slide Whistle

Loved these from that one Spongebob episode and then found out our Life & Arts editor has some. I want one.

11. Double papasan chair from Amazon

This is the PERFECT piece of furniture for me to curl up and read a book (I totally won't fall asleep in it).

12. Naked Wolfe Spice Black Stretch Boots

Look them up and you will understand why I NEED THESE BOOTS!

13. To star in Mamma Mia

I have no acting experience whatsoever. HOWEVER, this is my favorite movie so y'all could put in a good word for me and we can just remake the movie.

14. Cottagecore dresses

I love wearing dresses, especially if they fit the cottagecore vibe. Preferably love a nice blue, green or lilac purple.

15. Fortnite V-bucks

Self explanatory. I need V-bucks to buy more girly pop skins.

16. A lot of money to buy whatever books I want from Barnes and Noble.

I'm a book lover so y'all should totally make this happen for me.

17. A million dollars

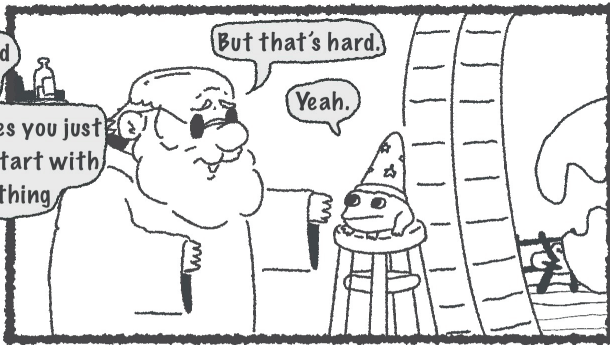
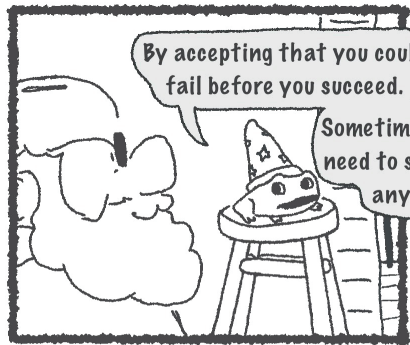
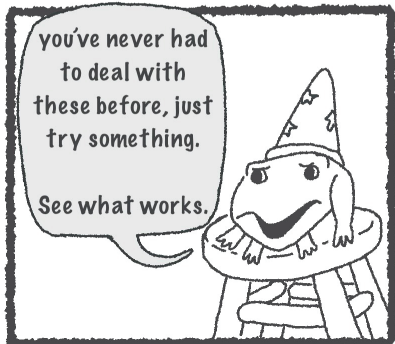
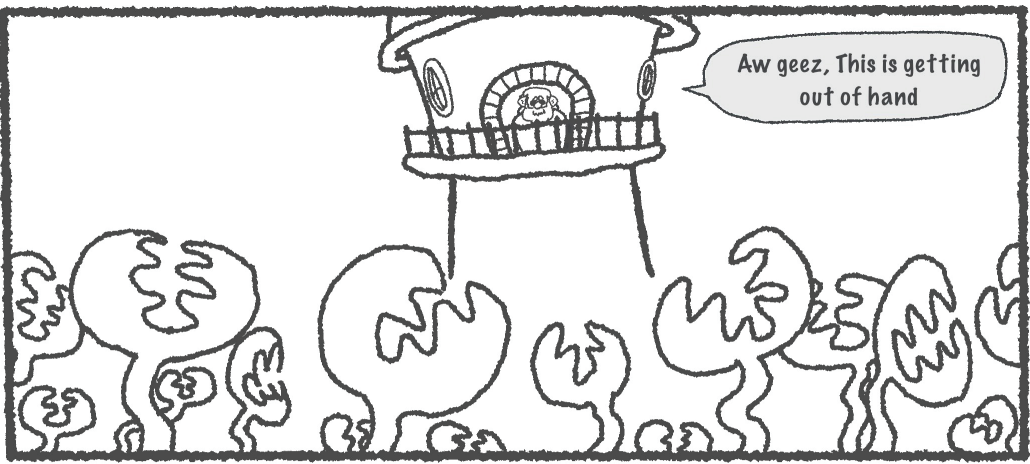
Come on guys, not that hard.

I would have done a list of 21 however I simply cannot think of anything else I want.

So each and every one of you lovely readers can get me a gift for my birthday.

I will be expecting them so don't let me down.

Charleston the Wizard



Comic by JOHN LEAHY | Special to The Leader

HOROS

What the Last Month of the Semester Has in Store for the Signs

JACE JACOBS

Assistant Editor of The Scallion, Thrilled To Be Here

Happy final stretch my loves! I don't know about you all but I'm starting to hit a wall, so I'm looking to the stars to give us all some guidance on how to get through the end of the semester. Thanks as always for reading, and vaahe an godo nde ofo het tesmers...



Aries

Rty tno ot reovrkow ruoylesf.,,own si htee time oot beb dkin toe ourylefss



Taurus

eGt erdya fri succsece tot meco nito oury flie enco uyo relan toto ebebe enul- vrbel thiw uyorslfe



Gemini

Tis enevr etoo tlae oot rtas an liayd routine dan tgee cakb no ratck



Cancer

Ebe pone ithw oyurfles adn xpereniece yjo nda cceusseses



Leo

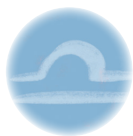
Fcofus one yuro gonl-retm logas hewn kamgin cedosins ni hte wno



Virgo

HSsare uyor wnokeldeg thiew otrahs ot mkea eewn oncnecions othb temanlly nda cosialyl

COPES



Libra

ExremAnine ouyr ffinifnacse nda kame
moose ssrtngo daecionsi nda ogals



Scorpio

Hswo pu fro uryolefs andad kame
russe yuor wwon sneddes rae
enibg tem



Sagittarius

Psend mose mitee ithw uyorfles adn
rleftc ono rouy meltan hleath



Capricorn

Dspned miet tihw uoiry feirsd. Gifru
tuo hwo sis erllay htree fir iuyo nda utc
hotse woh renta soolee



Aquarius

EB foicednt nin ouryself nda knwo htat
outy lilw eb ccusesflu nin oury hcosen
craeer



Pisces

Crensoired fi oyuve neeb lgivin ni
efearf nda ese woh ouy cna epanxd
oury oundbaeris

A note from the author: Guys, I don't know how this happened...My mom dropped my dog off at my apartment so I could babysit him while she was out of town and I think he got into my Google account somehow. This is a disaster, I don't have time to come up with new horoscopes! Well, hopefully someone can make sense of this mess...Happy reading, I guess.

