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THE

FREDONIA LEADER

SUNY Fredonia's Student-Run Newspaper



**Pink the Rink
connects hockey to
cancer awareness**

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Students protest in support of immigrants and LGBTQ+

Is Fredonia's recycling going to the landfill?

Trump's tariffs, firings and power shifts continue

Fredonia's very own perfect pitches

[OPINION] Boil water notices due to government inefficiency

[SATIRE] Local Scallion Editor runs out of ideas

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Front and back cover: Photos by BECCA TORNCHELLO | Sports Photographer

Front cover: Jack Graham defends the puck from Oswego Lakers.

Back cover: David Sudbrink and his family celebrate a well-played game and donations to the American Cancer Society.

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“[There can be] no pride for some of us without liberation for all of us.” -Marsha P. Johnson

Proud member of The Associated Collegiate Press.

Trump's tariffs, firings and power shifts continue to change landscape of American politics

ALEX BUCKNAM

Asst. News Editor

Since the beginning of February, President Trump has slapped and then unslapped tariffs on Canada, Mexico and China; spread disinformation about our international funding to Gaza; tried to overhaul government agencies; and initiated a purge of federal employees with probationary statuses.

On Feb. 1, President Trump announced he would be applying tariffs to three countries: Canada, Mexico and China. The tariffs were originally proposed to take effect on Feb. 4.

Canada would be facing 25% tariffs, but their energy resources would face a lower 10% tariff. Mexico would face 25% tariffs on imported goods and China would face a 10% tariff on imported goods.

Canada and Mexico tariffs were postponed after a deal was made. The tariffs on China are currently in effect, as of Feb. 15.

Trump has also applied a 25% tariff on aluminum imports from all countries that will take effect starting March 12. "As of 12:01 a.m. on March 12, 2025, the tariff proclaimed by Proclamation 9704, as amended, and the tariff proclaimed by Proclamation 9980, as amended, are adjusted to increase the respective tariff rates from an additional 10 percent ad valorem to an additional 25 percent ad valorem." stated the White House Website.

Trump is changing his tariff proclamations from his first term from 10% to 25%. According to the same document, this removes any allies exemption, so it includes Canada, Mexico, the U.K. and Australia, etc.

President Trump has also made moves to overhaul government agencies like the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the Consumer Financial Protection Program

(CFPB), the Department of Education (DOE) and the Small Business Administration (SBA).

Trump first made claims on Jan. 29 that USAID was sending \$50 million worth of condoms to Gaza. In a press conference, Trump stated, "We have identified and stopped \$50 million being sent to Gaza to buy condoms."

This was proven false by CNN fact-checkers. According to CNN, in the 2023 fiscal year, USAID only provided \$7.1 million worth of male condoms and \$1.1 million worth of female condoms to countries in Africa; no condoms were sent to any Middle Eastern country.

Another way President Trump has tried to overhaul the USAID was on Jan. 20, freezing all foreign aid for 90 days under his executive order Reevaluation and Releasing United States Foreign Aid.

These orders laid off thousands of federal employees according to D.C. News Now.

Last month, one of Trump's executive orders paused foreign aid that included the deliverance of life-saving medicine. However life saving medicine was exempt from the order as of Feb. 4.

However, as of Feb. 14, federal Judge Amir Ali directed Trump to lift the blanket freeze, stating, "[The Trump administration]

has not offered any explanation for why a blanket suspension of all congressionally appropriated foreign aid ... was a rational precursor to reviewing programs."

President Trump has also tried to overhaul the CFPB. On Feb. 8, Trump signed an executive order that halts all CFPB employees from doing their jobs and a few days later, he attempted to fire CFPB workers using this order. This order was also shut down by Judge Amy Berman Jackson of the U.S. District Court in Washington on Feb. 14. The reversal of the order comes after over 100 employees were already laid off, according



Graphic by LILIAN HOLMAN | Staff Artist

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to AP News.

The CFPB was first created in 2011 to protect consumers from unfair practices and discrimination.

Parts of the CFPB website are down as of Feb. 14, but the parts that are still working state that their work includes “Rooting out unfair, deceptive, or abusive acts or practices by writing rules, supervising companies, and enforcing the law; enforcing laws that outlaw discrimination in consumer finance, taking consumer complaints, enhancing financial education, researching the consumer experience of using financial products [and] monitoring financial markets for new risks to consumers.”

The DOE is also facing uncertainty under Trump. Though the DOE has yet to face any major freezes, Trump has talked about its upcoming overhaul. Along the campaign trail, President Trump spoke on how the American government needs to shut down the DOE and now that he is in office, he is still promising to do just that.

In a press conference, Trump stated how he hopes his Secretary of Education Linda McMahon does a great job putting herself out of a job: “I told Linda, ‘Linda, I hope you do a great job and do a great job putting yourself out of a job.’”

Elon Musk has also gained access to the DOE and shut out lawmakers from the building and the current acting Secretary of Education out of her office on Feb. 12.

According to a CNBC article, employees at the agency stated that, “Staffers from Elon Musk’s secretive government slashing effort, [Department of Government Efficiency] DOGE, have pushed the highest Department of Education officials out of their own offices, rearranged the furniture and set up white-noise machines to muffle their voices.”

Another department that faces being overhauled is the SBA. According to Politico, more than 100 employees on probationary status received termination emails on Feb. 11, which was all error until President Trump signed an executive order telling federal departments to work with the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE).

According to a CBS report, Trump has also begun a purge of federal employees starting Feb. 13. This will affect thousands of employees all across the board from different agencies, such as the Center for Disease Control and the National Nuclear Security Administration.

These mass firings will only affect employees who are considered probationary status employees. Probationary status employees are employees who have worked for less than a year and have little civil service experience.

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"[The Trump administration] has not offered any explanation for why a blanket suppression of all congressionally appropriated foreign aid ... was a rational precursor to reviewing programs."

— **AMIR ALI**

Federal Judge,

United States Federal Government

Residence Life opens free on-campus Thrift Room

DAN QUAGLIANA
Managing Editor

Have you ever met a college student who doesn't love going thrifting?

No, you haven't.

Have you ever met a college student who prefers driving off-campus to do something they enjoy?

No, you haven't.

Now, students can go to SUNY Fredonia's very own thrift store, all while staying within the comfort of campus.

On Feb. 4, the office of Residence Life opened the doors of the student-run Thrift Room in Eisenhower Hall, allowing students to take home second-hand clothing and dorm appliances.

Racks of clothes crisscross the room, and the area around the back wall is dedicated to dorm materials that aren't clothing-related.

"Over the past few years, residence halls have been offering areas within their halls to have items for students to take as they need," said Kathy Forster, the director of Residence Life. "This was becoming popular in more than just a few halls. In an effort to keep the idea of providing basic needs more sustainable, it was decided to consolidate these areas to one hall and in one lounge."

The idea for The Thrift Room was "originated by [residence directors, residence assistants] and students living in the residence halls."

Rylee Crandall, a visual arts/new media: animation/illustration major, is currently serving as the manager of The Thrift Room through SUNY's Empire State Service Corp (ESSC) program. As part of her position, she "has been writing down suggestions for improvement" to share with Forster to help The Thrift Room run more smoothly and to make sure they are catering to students' needs.

"By managing the store I mainly just sanitize and display the donations, as well as help out the students that come in by



The inside of Eisenhower Hall's Thrift Room.

Photo by **LORI DEEMER** | Special to The Leader

giving them directions, chatting with them or reassuring them that, yes, everything is free for students and to take what they need," Crandall said. "Being able to tell the students that every time feels great and I think that is truly why it is such a hit."

So far, The Thrift Room has been very popular amongst students on campus — according to Forster, 44 people visited it on its first day open. That may be due to the wide range of things that students can acquire there.

In addition to clothes like any other thrift store, the one in Eisenhower also offers room decor and dorm appliances, such as refrigerators. And "store" isn't exactly an accurate term to use to describe it — all items have been "donated and are free," which is why Residence Life named it The Thrift "Room."

Residence Life does "plan to seek donations" as the need arises. "In addition, at the end of the semester we will ask students to donate items directly to The Thrift Room for other students to benefit from," Forster explained.

She also said that "preparation of the donations for The Thrift Room was a bigger lift than [we] originally thought. We will reevaluate at the end of the first month to see what is needed."

"I didn't realize what a huge outpouring of donations I would get," Forster remarked. "...the room is not that big, so for now we will open with what we have and ask for more when needed."

"Kathy, though, had a room full of donations that was as tall as I was and [I was] willing to put in the hours, so here it is," Crandall remembered. "It took a full semester but now I officially work as an Empire State Service Corps member and the thrift store is officially open for business!"

ESSC is "a new program branching off of AmeriCorps specifically for SUNY students," according to Crandall.

"I was looking to go into the basic needs sector of the program because that's where I believed I could do the most work," she said. "Long story short, no one here had heard much about



The inside of Eisenhower Hall's Thrift Room.

Photo by **LORI DEEMER** | Special to The Leader

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it, which [is what] landed me as a student assistant working under both [Director of Student Health] Debbie Dibble and Kathy Forster!”

Located in Eisenhower Hall, next to the loading dock, The Thrift Room is open Tuesdays from 3 to 5 p.m., Thursdays from 6 to 8 p.m. and Fridays from 11:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Is Fredonia's recycling going to the landfill?

DAN QUAGLIANA
Managing Editor

Over the last few weeks, many students have been concerned about the recycling on campus — or the lack thereof, in their view.

The belief that SUNY Fredonia does not separate its trash and recycling when waste is disposed of is not a new one, but it has been gaining traction around campus recently.

According to Sarah Laurie, the director of environmental health and safety and sustainability on campus, “The concern that the campus is mixing recycling and landfill trash comes up often, almost every semester.”

However, she did confirm that, “Recycling IS separated from landfill trash.”

Laurie explained how “There are separate receptacles around campus and separate dumpsters at each building. Our waste hauler, Casella, collects them separately and sends us annual reports outlining how many tons of material were sent to [the] landfill and how many tons were recycled.”

The university maintains dumpsters at every building on campus. Throughout each day, custodial staff empties the trash and recycling bins throughout their buildings, and they take the waste outside and place it in the appropriate dumpsters.

“...the most common [concern] we’ve found is that students see building custodians loading trash and recycling into the same bin on their custodial carts,” Laurie said. “What the students don’t know or see is that there are two separate bags within that bin and the materials remain separated.”

She also said that the “only time” that trash and recycling would be mixed would be because of “an accidental mix-up.”

But Jordan Stephens, the chair of the Student Association Sustainability Committee, said something different. He claims that, “There’s definitely a recycling issue on campus, but the problem might not be exactly what we thought.”

“The custodial staff is pretty small, so a lot of the issue actually comes from students contaminating the recycling bins,” he said.

Stephens further explained that in his experience, when custodians do sometimes throw away recycling bins, it’s because students have accidentally filled them full of trash instead of recyclable materials. “While custodians do sometimes throw away full bins, it’s usually because they find that a bin labeled for recycling is actually full of trash.”

On campus, some recycling “stations” have three different

recycling bins: refundable materials, paper recyclables and “other” recyclable materials.

The university works with Casella to handle all of the “no sort” recycling bins, but if those bins get contaminated by any amount of food or non-recyclable materials, however small, everything in the bin has to be thrown in the trash. The university could face fines if they don’t do this, so custodians don’t really have any choice.

Stephens has “had a really hard time finding any bins on campus that don’t have contamination issues,” he said. “There’s a specific threshold for what can be accepted by Casella, and most of the time we exceed that threshold. That’s why custodians end up throwing a lot of it away. Anything under that threshold gets reported back to us in our waste audit, so it gives us a clearer picture of how much is actually getting recycled versus sent to the landfill.”



Staged photo of some trash on campus.
Photo by DREW PALUCH | Photo Editor

University Senate seats face radical change

ALEX BUCKNAM
Asst. News Editor

SUNY Fredonia numbers have been shrinking in students and staff over the last 12 years. Several actions have been taken to try to combat this. One of them concerns University Senate representatives.

On Feb. 3, it was announced to University Senate body that the executive committee has finished looking for a way to shrink the number of seats in the Senate.

A total of 13 seats are potentially being eliminated, three of which are held by students.

University Senate is currently made up of 60 representatives. Student Association (SA) representatives currently hold seven seats in the Senate to give the student body a voice in the faculty-dominated body: the president, vice president, all four class presidents and an at-large graduate student.

This proposed change will cut down the seats and only give Senate seats to the president, vice president, one at-large undergraduate student and one at-large graduate student.

The SA vice president, Dan Quagliana, did not like the fact that this change was proposed at first.

"I didn't like the fact that Senate was looking to reduce the number of students who serve on that body when I first saw it," Quagliana said.

But after some thought, Quagliana noted that the change makes sense.

"Some students who are a part of University Senate do not show up to those meetings. Those students count towards quorum just as the same as the faculty representation," Quagliana said.

Quorum can have a huge impact on Senate because if they do not have enough present members in attendance, they cannot start meetings.

"Some students who are a part of University Senate do not show up to those meetings. Those students count towards quorum just as the same as the faculty representation."

— **DAN QUAGLIANA**
Vice President,
Student Association
SUNY Fredonia

It's not just students who don't show up to the meetings. According to the University Senate chair, Rob Deemer, "We have always had trouble with people not being able to make it."

However, absences aren't the direct cause for these changes. Now and then, Senate's bylaws need to be updated and changed to fit the needs of the university. The last change came in 2012.

The bylaws cover how the Senate operates; this includes how many representatives each on-campus department gets.

Deemer mentioned that these cuts were also to adjust for the number of students and faculty the university has.

In 2012, the student population was 5,214. In 2024, the student population dropped to 2,876.

Deemer explained the potential seat changes by using the U.S.'s House of Representatives as an example. "Every 10 years, they figure out how many representatives you get based on your population," Deemer said.

Students aren't the only ones having seats changed.

The School of Music's seat will be counted as an at-large arts representative.

Seven at-large academic seats will be eliminated as, according to Deemer, "...they're not from any particular disciplinary area. They're just academic faculty."

Two contingent faculty representatives will also lose their seats.

The philosophy department will lose their seats considering there is no longer a philosophy program at Fredonia.

Finally, the communication disorders and social sciences chair will also be cut.

They are adding seats as well as cutting them. According to Deemer, they are looking to add three classified staff as a way for secretaries to be a part of the Senate. "So it's not just cutting it down, but it's kind of reconfiguring it."

According to Deemer, it is important to note that these changes are not finalized and are far from being over.

After everything is finalized, it will get sent out to all senators and they will share it with their constituents.

Once it gets to the ratification stage, every voting faculty member has the chance to vote on it.

According to Deemer, voting faculty refers to people who work for the university, but excludes secretaries.

Updates or concerns about this situation can be discussed with your representative.

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



Ben Evans and others protest in support of immigrants and the LGBTQ+ community.
Photo by JEAN CESTARO | Staff Photographer

Students rally in support of immigrants and the LGBTQ+ amidst recent executive orders

ABIGAIL JACOBSON
News Editor

ALEX BUCKNAM
Asst. News Editor

Warning: This article contains strong language.

With the recent wave of executive orders being signed into law by President Donald Trump, many communities around the United States have been protesting. As of Feb. 7, the SUNY Fredonia campus community is one of them.

On Feb. 7 at 12 p.m., a protest in solidarity with immigrants and the LGBTQ+ community took place.

The protest began outside of University Commons, where students and community members stood around, bundled up with signs. Some of the signs made by protesters said “we are all immigrants!,” “Being trans is awesome, no human is illegal” and “you can’t take a piece of us without impacting all of us.”

The protesters walked past Fenton and Thompson Halls, hooking around Rockefeller Arts Center, passing by Dodds and Steel Halls, Mason Hall and the Williams Center and making their way back to University Commons. They repeated this loop once more and ended the protest at Dodds Grove, where speeches were given.

During the protest, chants were yelled, including, “Death before detransition” and “No fear, no hate, no ICE [U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement] in our state.”

The protest was not just composed of SUNY Fredonia students but included members of the surrounding community as well. Reverend Holly Clark-Porter of Fredonia Presbyterian church was also in attendance. She stated that the Fredonia Presbyterian Church is queer-friendly and that she heard about this protest on Instagram and Facebook.

Other local community members like Julie Hutchinson also attended this protest. Hutchinson hopes it does some good, stating, “I think we have to do something. We have to keep our spirits high because ... it’s such a cruel time now.”

Other students gave their opinion, with some talking about how the orders affect them because they are a part of the LGBTQ+ community and saying that it brings “a lot of fear and uncertainty.”

Benjamin Evans, one of the coordinators of this protest mentioned that it affects them as someone who is non-binary because “it means I no longer have a governor identity.” Evans also mentioned that they are “concerned on where it’s going, [particularly in regards] with mass deportation [because] there is no humane way to do that.”

Micaela LaBarbera, a senior acting major and a coordinator for the protest, discussed why they decided to do this.

LaBarbera said that she was having an anxiety spiral and she “wanted to do something about it and I felt like a hypocrite because I wasn’t doing anything about it.”

LaBarbera was mad at herself because “I was just sitting and doom scrolling, just talking about it and like being a hypocrite and saying ... ‘woah, but why isn’t anybody doing anything?’”

People have asked LaBarbera, a white, blonde woman, “Well, what makes you think you can speak out against this?” LaBarbera responded with “But I think that’s why I should ... I’m not trying to be any kind of white savior or anything but [these orders affect] people man.”

She reached out to Evans because they have organized protests in the past for Students for Fredonia revolving around major cuts.

“That’s basically just how it started. Anxiety spiral. Call Ben,” LaBarbera said.

According to LaBarbera, the protest was coordinated for the marginalized groups of people who “have been villainized and dehumanized since the beginning of time and there have been protests since forever.”

“I’ve only lived 22 years of life but this is the first time in my life. I’ve seen people, no matter what they’re pro or against, so divided and so scared and ... full of so much hate.”

Because of parties being divided and filled with hate, she mentioned how some of these people are afraid of change.

“[all parties] are terrified of things that they don’t understand,” LaBarbera said. “People are ... terrified of anything that they don’t personally get that isn’t their own truth.”



Students holding posters for the protest.

Photo by JEAN CESTARO | Staff Photographer

She mentioned how it’s getting really dangerous and with the executive orders happening, “they are feeding off of our fear to get horrible things to pass.”

At first, LaBarbera wanted the protest to be oligarchy and to be against Donald Trump and his executive orders. But she sat for a second and thought “that’s broad and ... it’s not really a positive message to just send something out there that says [we are] against x,y and z. I want to support something.”

LaBarbera discussed how Trump is attacking the DEI (Diversity, Equity and Inclusion), Medicare and Medicaid, immigrants, the LGBTQ+ community, trans people in specific, women’s reproductive rights, “and the list goes fucking on.”

LaBarbera and Evans sat down and decided the protest would support the LGBTQ+ community, specifically trans people, and immigrants, since “those are the ... two marginalized groups of people that we are seeing that are looked at as [the] most inhumane at the moment.”

LaBarbera discussed a play last year, “Slut,” that she was the lead in. Those involved in the play did the “slut walk,” where they “kind of just marched around campus advocating for women’s rights and reclaiming the word ‘slut.’” She mentioned how she’s been a part of a few marches for women’s rights and reproductive rights and “noticed that people kind of look at it and just turn a blind eye.”

According to LaBarbera, “for some reason people look at immigrants and they look at trans people as less than human ... [my] main goal is to educate people [and] have people share stories because I can’t speak on it.”

“I do what I can to get people together in a safe place and organize something that is an outlet for people to build more community but I can’t say anything,” LaBarbera said. “It’s mostly just about building community, sharing experiences, learning and accepting each other.”

At first, LaBarbera wanted the protest to happen in the Multi-Purpose Room in the Williams Center but that was considered a fire hazard due to not knowing how many people would show up. “I would love for an ungodly amount of people to come so having it outside... [is] better,” LaBarbera said.

In light of executive orders continuously being signed and the fact that some of these could affect campus and universities everywhere, SUNY Chancellor John B. King Jr. and SUNY Fredonia President, Stephen H. Kolison both sent out emails regarding them.



Community members protesting with students.

Photo by JEAN CESTARO | Staff Photographer

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In King's email, he stated, "The reality is that we do not yet know what many of these directives will mean for our campuses and our students, and we anticipate extensive litigation that will over time clarify their reach and implications."

King talked about how some students fear for their future and that SUNY stands with its students and faculty. "SUNY is proud to count as a member of our community every one of our students, our faculty and our staff members — no matter their religion, their nation of origin or immigration status, their gender, their race or ethnicity, their sexual orientation or gender identity, or their political beliefs."

He also mentioned that he will work together with students and faculty to navigate and understand these changes.

In Kolison's email, he mentioned that, "We are working closely with SUNY to monitor these developments and determine what they mean and the extent of their applicability to the work we do here at SUNY Fredonia."

Kolison went on to assure students, faculty and the community at SUNY Fredonia that, "At SUNY Fredonia, we have committed ourselves to building an inclusive community regardless of our human differences, including race, religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, and place of origin ... all members of our community should feel that they belong here."

He also discussed that SUNY Fredonia supports students in obtaining their educational goals and works hard to "make our institution a place where all our students can afford to attend,

persist, and complete."

Kolison ended his email by mentioning that "you belong here" and that he is "deeply committed to ensuring that our campus remains a safe and welcoming environment for all our students, faculty and staff."

LaBarbera said that "seeing these emails makes me feel so much hope ... Actions are worth more than words but I feel that they mean what they say and I think that's beautiful."

New rule halts music lessons on campus

LUKE VILLAVICENCIO
Staff Writer

On Jan. 30, at 9:50 a.m., a public email was sent to all music majors at SUNY Fredonia by the Dean of the music, theatre and dance programs, Dr. David Stringham. The email announced a new directive requiring the cessation of non-curricular private lessons on campus.

"Through a written memorandum, Provost Starrett has directed us to comply with an immediate cessation of faculty, staff, students and community members offering non-curricular private lessons on our campus," the email stated.

This announcement took many music students by surprise as it entails the cancellation of a rather helpful source of income for some.

There has been long-standing encouragement for music students to exercise their craft by offering lessons to fellow students as well as local Dunkirk and Fredonia residents, so this declaration seemingly came out of nowhere for many.

Students seem to be the main people that this directive affects due to private lessons offering financial help and job experience, though it relates to all staff and faculty as well.

Many faculty members often use private, non-curricular lessons to allow prospective students to prepare for an audition into their studio, aiding in program growth and the quality of studio members. According to the memo sent to faculty and staff, "the exception to this directive is for a 'one-off' private lesson for recruitment purposes for which the teacher receives no compensation." This exception provides at least one avenue to allow these recruitment lessons to continue.

Recognizing the importance of this staple of Mason Hall, Dean Stringham has begun to work out a solution. "Dr. Avni, Ms. Darrell-Sterbak, Prof. Mai, and Dr. Reese have accepted my invitation to serve on a Community Music Task Force.

This group is representative of all three of our music departments as well as our staff colleagues, and will work expeditiously ... to develop and implement a solution that allows us to resume these offerings," he wrote.

The email clarifies the understanding of the values of reinstating non-curricular lessons, though for the time being, Mason Hall staff and students will need to grapple and adjust with this memorandum.

While the Community Music Task Force works to allow members of the music department to teach outside of classes,



The inside of a Mason Hall classroom.

Photo by **REBEKAH GERACE** | Staff Photographer

what can these students and faculty do in the meantime?

Some simple solutions lie between the lines of the Dean's email; these individuals are not allowed to teach on campus.

There is, of course, nothing against the maintenance of lessons outside of campus. If you happen to live off-campus and teach from your residence, this memorandum would not affect you.

Music students who have taught locals in Dunkirk or Fredonia are always free to travel to students' houses for in-home private instruction. This is unfortunately not an option for those without a reliable mode of transportation, so another option may be the rather limited medium of lessons via video conferencing.

Many teachers in our modern, post-pandemic world have become accustomed to and proficient at teaching through Zoom or Google Meet. This method, while potentially lacking in quality, provides a certain ease of scheduling. Within Mason Hall, there is, of course, nothing wrong with giving fellow Fredonia music students tips on their secondary instruments, sans any form of transaction.

For the time being, these seem to be the few options music students and faculty have within the given guidelines.

While the memorandum may seem inconvenient, the operation of non-curricular lessons on campus unfortunately creates some vulnerabilities for the university.

"I can understand that this directive is inconvenient; however, it ultimately protects you, our faculty and staff, and other colleagues at the university."

— **DAVID STRINGHAM**
Dean,
School of Music
SUNY Fredonia

This precautionary measure prevents the unsupervised education of students as well as the unregulated commerce from private lessons from getting out of hand. The best music students and faculty can do is work with these constraints and come up with methods by which lessons can be returned to Mason Hall in a safe and beneficial manner.

"I can understand that this directive is inconvenient; however, it ultimately protects you, our faculty and staff, and other colleagues at the university," Dean Stringham concluded. For now, the music community at Fredonia must work within these constraints while awaiting a resolution that preserves the benefits of non-curricular private lessons in a safe and regulated manner.



The inside of a Mason Hall practice room.

Photo by **REBEKAH GERACE** | Staff Photographer

HAIL! Fredonia Records presents: The Rap Royale

ELENA FITZGERALD
Staff Writer

The rap genre may be more popular now than ever before thanks to performances like Kendrick Lamar's Super Bowl Halftime Show. Even a smaller town like Fredonia is becoming involved in the rap scene, with the HAIL! Fredonia Records' upcoming rap show.

HAIL! Fredonia Records is back, bringing SUNY Fredonia a rap show for everyone to enjoy on Feb. 28, from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. in Thompson Hall W101.

HAIL! Fredonia Records is a capstone class at Fredonia that brings real world experiences within the industry into the classroom for all music industry majors.

HAIL! Fredonia Records works with the local and Western New York music scene to put on shows, as well as bring in artists and industry professionals for speaker events.

Notably, this capstone class holds a yearly show at The Cave in Buffalo, as well as other pop-up events like Punk Goes Bowling at Lucky Lanes and The Dog Walk in prior years.

Led by Professor Armand Petri, he guides the students in the class to put on shows, such as The Rap Royale coming up right on campus.

Students have been working hard this semester to make the show happen in the class, and they've been collaborating with other clubs and classes.

Helping contribute to the event are the club Sound Services, as well as the Laptop Recording and Concert Touring and Sound classes, which are also within the music industry major.

The event itself includes rappers performing, as well as freestyle rap battles, an idea brought to the class by senior music industry major Jonah Solomon.

"I met a local rapper, B-Roll Kazper, and he told me to check out his music. Ever since then, I thought we should do a rap show in Fredonia," said Solomon.



Sadboymanii and V0ntè perform at an event last semester.

Photo by OLIVIA CASTIGLIONE | Special to The Leader



Sadboymanii performs at an event last semester.

Photo by OLIVIA CASTIGLIONE | Special to The Leader

B-Roll Kazper will be one of the performers at the show, as well as Sadboymanii and V0ntè, both students at Fredonia.

Olivia Castiglione, a junior music industry major, said that "trying to [track] people down to do a rap battle [for the event] has been interesting."

Castiglione mentions how there has been discovery within the process, noting that she found an artist that solely does freestyles and battles for the first time through this event.

The class has been working for months on this event in order to promote the show itself through social media (@hail-fredoniarrecords) and through posters you have seen throughout campus.

This is also one of the last events that will be held by graduating seniors in the Music Industry Program this school year, one of whom is senior music industry major Jazmine Torres. She is not only one of the members working on this event, but she also manages Sadboymanii, who will be performing at the show.

Torres expresses how important this event is for her in her last few weeks as a student at Fredonia. "Not only am I experiencing a freestyle rap event, but I am also experiencing my artist performing as well. That's awesome, especially as a senior and it being one of my last shows."

Join HAIL! Fredonia Records at The Rap Royale to experience performances and a freestyle rap battle.

Local TV station owner Phil Arno shares insight into reality of news industry

ABBIE MILLER
Editor-in-Chief

While he spent a lot of his career behind the silver screen, there is nothing two-dimensional about Phil Arno.

This is exactly the thought process that led Communications Professor Mike Igoe to choose the WBBZ TV Owner as a guest speaker for his journalism class.

Arno described how, as a young post-graduate, his dream was to be involved in the news media industry. And he was willing to do anything to be a part of it.

According to Arno, in order to be hired within television broadcasting, you first have to be hired by a radio corporation. For him, that foot-in-the-door was WKBW Radio.

The approach that ended up scoring Arno his first position in radio may be considered somewhat nontraditional, but was effective all the same.

An eager teenager, Arno called the biggest radio station on the East Coast at the time, WKBW Radio, and asked to speak with its program director.

Disclosing that the encounter would be in regards to an assignment he was working on, Arno was able to score an interview with one of the most successful men in the business, Jeff Kaye.

Just before the meeting was over, Arno asked Kaye for a job. To Arno's surprise, he got one.

Arno began to be assigned random tasks based on what his coworkers were unable or unwilling to do — directing traffic during a wintertime event, writing copy for radio hosts and filming footage for a broadcast.

Eventually, he was recommended for and hired by a television station, Channel 4. Here is where he would continue to further prove himself to the broadcasters around him.

Years later, Arno would move across the country in search of the revolutionary and expansive L.A. market.

Little did he know, this change in scenery would provide its own set of challenges.

As Arno's flight touched down in L.A., it appeared he was right back where he started: jobless but determined.

He wrote to each news director in the area, introducing himself with a letter of recommendation and a resume. It would be four months before Arno finally received a response.

The wait paid off. Arno spent the next 20 years behind the camera lens, as well as in and out of helicopters.

He looks back on this era of his career fondly, stating, "To me, it was the greatest job in the world."

What intrigued him the most was the impact that the media could have. In his view, a news reporter is "basically a window for the world to see what's going on."

After two decades of success reporting with Channel 9 in L.A., it took something drastic for Arno to return to the New York newsgathering scene, according to WBBZ TV.

This drastic event took the form of a helicopter crash.

Sustaining life-threatening injuries and unaware if he'd ever be able to see his wife and newborn sons again, Arno was forced to make a choice: continue what he believed was the height of his career in Calif., or return to the place that raised him.

Taking into account the dangerousness of his current job at the time, he ended up choosing the latter.

However, upon returning to Buffalo, it slowly became clear that Arno's career was far from over. Rather, it had just begun.

Arno's news reporter experience in L.A., combined with a history of odd jobs in Buffalo, gave him the skills he needed to work his way back to the top and surpass his previous goals.

This time, he wasn't just looking to make a name for himself, he was looking to lead.

And lead he did. Slowly but surely, Arno became the face of WBBZ TV station as its owner.

Now, Arno instructs upcoming journalists to achieve their goals through hard work and dedication.

Arno urges aspiring reporters to "look for the job you want," dream big and use your determination to make a future for yourself.

He credits his position as owner of WBBZ TV to the fact that he forged opportunities for himself and actively worked to expand his skillset with every task he was given. Taking every duty seriously is what Arno says increased his value for prospective employers and ultimately allowed him to reach where he is now, at the height of his career.

Come rain or shine, LA or Buffalo, TV or radio, Arno plans on continuing to forge his legacy in the media industry.



Phil Arno at his WBBZ desk.
Photo via buffalonews.com.

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Police Blotter

UNIVERSITY POLICE DEPARTMENT SUNY Fredonia

The Police Blotter, run and shared with The Leader by the University Police Department (UPD), aims to provide information to students, faculty and the community at and around SUNY Fredonia. All information is provided on the University Police Department's website, www.fredonia.edu/about/offices/university-police/blotter. The Police Blotter will continue every issue, with new information regarding any new criminal acts that happen on the SUNY Fredonia campus.

On-campus

January 8: A vehicle was struck on campus by another car which left the scene. As of February 13, the investigation is still ongoing.

January 13: A sex offense was reported to UPD. The report status is "closed by investigation."

January 24: A report for aggravated assault was made for an individual who received an email/text message scam. Its report status is "closed by investigation."

January 28: A report was made for harassment involving two individuals engaging in a physical altercation at Dods Hall. This report is "closed by investigation."

January 29: An arrest was made of an individual on January 29 at 9:30 a.m. They were charged with criminal mischief.

February 7: A report was filed for a domestic incident. The victim reported ongoing harassment by their ex. The report states "prosecution declined."

February 10: A report was filed for aggravated harassment, in which the victim reported a fake Instagram account was created with their information. The report status is "prosecution declined."

The University Police (UP) wanted to express their knowledge of the injured deer on campus. According to Police Chief Gordon Carpenter, an Environmental Conservation Police Officer (ECO) met with UPD to discuss the apparent injured deer that has been seen on campus.

UPD explained the situation to the ECO, where they mentioned the deer had an injured leg and "has been in that state for over four weeks." UPD also mentioned to the ECO that the deer has been "eating and moving around, but does not seem to be afraid of humans."

The ECO observed the injured deer and said "that the deer was thriving" due to it seeming to be alert and its ears raised. The ECO also stated that in its current state, "the deer is surviving and should be left to continue as is."

All information printed in The Leader's police blotter is a matter of open public record. No retractions or corrections will be made unless a factual error is shown. Anyone who is cleared of charges has the right to have so printed. It is the responsibility of the accused to provide notice and proof of the dropped charges.

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In The Leader Office!
S206 Williams Center

Life & Arts

Fredonia's very own perfect pitches

MIA CIECHALSKI

Life & Arts Editor

Remember the International Championship of Collegiate A cappella (ICCA) competition in “Pitch Perfect”?

Well, guess what? It’s real, and one of Fredonia’s very own a cappella groups won.

Dynamic Intonation (DI) went to the ICCA Central Quarterfinal 3 on Feb. 1 and will be advancing to the semifinals on Mar. 22 in Buffalo, N.Y.

DI is the one and only competitive a cappella group that SUNY Fredonia has on campus. Following their recent win, excitement filled the room during one of their rehearsals as members celebrated the achievement.

In the weeks leading up to the competition, the group rehearsed tirelessly, fine-tuning their setlist for the quarterfinals paid off.

The process for them to be able to compete at the ICCAs is quite simple. To be accepted to compete in the quarterfinals, you have to fill out an application and then upload a video of your group performing two to three songs, according to Varsity Vocals.

It was a long process for DI to compete at the ICCAs, according to senior BFA acting and writing major Harley Selegean.

However, one of their main goals was to rebuild after COVID-19 happened, said Selegean.

Selegean joined DI in 2021, when all of the a cappella groups were trying to rebuild and get back together.

“Our process was really trying to establish ourselves as a group with an aesthetic, and make ourselves known to the world outside of Fredonia,” said Selegean.

Selegean is currently the president of DI and getting to see how it grew and contributed to the group in multiple different ways has been a very fun experience for them.

Getting to win the ICCAs was a very memorable and fun experience for all of the members involved in this club, especially for junior BFA acting major Ryan Okun.

“It was one of the best experiences of my life,” said Okun.

This was also a very memorable bonding experience for everyone.

“We were doing three weeks of non-stop rehearsals/choreography, practicing over and over and we just got so close,” said Okun.

However, as fun as this process was, there were still some challenges during this experience as well.

Okun said one of the group’s biggest challenges during rehearsals was making sure to stay focused, positive and confident.

“We’re all there for each other though, and we all are each other’s biggest supporters,” said Okun.

While winning ICCAs was a memorable experience for the group, it was also an unbelievable experience for others, like masters student Christian Taber.

“It was something that caught me off guard because there was a lot of really good competition at the quarter final of ICCAs,” said Taber.

Taber said that as each group was being named for third place and second place winners, he first thought they didn’t win this time.

“We tried our hardest and we put a lot of work into it, so I’m super proud of our people,” said Taber.

That moment was also one of the first times in Taber’s life where he physically jumped for joy for something because of how much excitement and passion he felt in that moment.

Not only have the members of DI been so ecstatic about this incredible moment for their group, but the campus has been as well.

Many members said they have been congratulated by many of their classmates and faculty who have mentioned that they can’t wait to see how the semifinals go for them.



Dynamic Intonation celebrates their advancement to the semifinals.

Photo by ARVIN ZABALERIO | Special to The Leader

Lucas West takes center field with national anthem performance on the Bills' biggest stage

GWENYTH KIRKWOOD
Staff Writer

If you were to ask a Western New Yorker their dream in life, nine times out of 10, you will be met with some iteration of “meeting Josh Allen.”

SUNY Fredonia’s own Lucas West has had this honor and more.

West, a jazz piano and voice major, began his journey to Highmark Stadium in 2023 with an open audition. Little did he know, this would lead to not one, but two performances on the Buffalo Bills’ home field.

His debut performance took place in November 2023 against the New York Jets at Week 11 after a successful audition.

From there on out, he remained in a talent pool, which led him to an unexpected call for him to perform at a divisional playoff game this past January. However, despite being granted the opportunity to sing at the wild-card game, West had to decline due to being in Germany at the time.

Later, he was given the opportunity to perform in the divisional round instead. The journey consisted of flying back from Germany, fighting jet lag and preparing to perform just days after his arrival.

“I was on a seven-hour flight wearing an N95 mask the entire time to stay healthy for the gig,” West recalled. “It was a crazy time, but I made it work because I knew this was an opportunity I couldn’t miss.”

This game, Bills vs. Ravens, was the most-watched NFL game of the 2024 season to date, with 43.1 million viewers.

As both a performer and a Buffalo Bills fan, he experienced an overpowering sense of community with the people in the stands. “We all want the same thing — to see the Bills win,” he said. This connection made it easier for him to give a performance in front of thousands of people.

West had the opportunity to sing right in front of players such as MVP Josh Allen. “Being so close to the players was crazy,” West said. “It was like performing for my family—the Bills Mafia.”

David Stringham, Fredonia’s School of Music dean, was not surprised to hear about West being invited to perform at the Bills game.

When he was called again for his second performance, Stringham stated, “I think him being invited back a second time speaks to the impression he made with his first performance.”

Despite the large audience and high stakes, West did not feel pressured. “Once I started, the nerves went away,” he said. “I was comfortable because I was doing something I love in front of people who share the same passion.”

West emphasized that rehearsing for the national anthem requires consistent practice. To prepare, he played the anthem

five times a day leading up to the day of the big performance, to guarantee that every note was thoroughly embedded into his mind.

To fully absorb the anthem, he plays it on the same piano he uses for concerts, allowing him to perform instinctively while focusing on the musical choices in the moment. He even has a backup anthem, “O Canada,” ready in case he gets the opportunity to perform at a hockey game.

“Preparation is key,” he explained. “I want to be in a place where I’m not thinking about the next chord. I want to be fully present in the music, enjoying the performance without distractions.”

Born and raised in Fairport, New York, West began his musical journey at an early age. His mother, a music teacher, played a big role in developing his love for music. When he was six years old, he started taking classical piano lessons, which led him to explore other instruments. As of today, West is proficient in piano, voice and trombone, and performs in Fredonia’s choir and jazz orchestra.

West sees his anthem appearances as a major milestone in his musical career. “This experience gives me faith in myself,” West says. “It’s easy to get discouraged in this industry, but moments like this remind me that I’m doing something right.”

Stringham also stated that, “One of the great privileges of working in education is watching students work hard, develop their skills and knowledge and succeed within and beyond the classroom. That never gets old!”

Determined to continue pursuing music, West acknowledges Fredonia’s music program as giving him valuable training and opportunities to excel as a musician.

“I’ll keep improving my craft, and hopefully, this isn’t a one-time thing. I want to continue being part of great experiences like this,” said West.



Lucas West gets ready to perform national anthem at Bills game.

Photo provided by Lucas West.

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SPORTS

The duality of Josh: How MVPs of the same name led Buffalo sports to prominence

MATT VOLZ
Sports Editor

In 2024, Buffalo fans saw their hero win the award for Most Valuable Player (MVP) of the league.

Their championship-caliber team was led to success by an offensive star named Josh.

This star by the name of Josh routinely makes plays that leave jaws on the floor, and his scoring touch was recognized by the rest of the league.

Given this description, it may seem like I'm talking about the Bills and their MVP quarterback, Josh Allen.

But what if I told you he wasn't the only one to fit that mold?

Just 20 minutes north of Allen's football playground, Josh Byrne and the Bandits are the top team in the National Lacrosse League (NLL).

Like Allen, Byrne was named the MVP of the 2024 season, leading the league with 135 points.

Success wasn't immediate for Byrne, though.

In 2017, Byrne was a star player out of Hofstra University, who the Bandits drafted first overall after a dismal 6-12 season.

As a rookie, he played all 18 regular season games, putting up 26 goals and 37 assists for 63 points.

Buffalo finished the season 8-10, last in the East Division for the second consecutive season.

At the same time, the Bills were a team enduring their own rebuild.

After making the playoffs in 2017, which was their first appearance since 1999, the team needed a new quarterback.

They traded up to the seventh overall draft pick to select Allen, an unpolished but talented player from the University of Wyoming.

Allen's rookie season was a rough one, as the Bills finished 6-10 and missed the playoffs.

Not to mention, Allen suffered an injury to his throwing elbow and missed a few games.

For both teams, though, 2019 would be a different story.

Allen showed signs of improvement, and his play, along with a top-tier defense, led the Bills to a 10-6 record and a playoff appearance.

The playoffs didn't go the way the Bills hoped, though, as they lost a wild-card game to the Houston Texans in overtime.

Byrne and the Bandits also got their first taste of playoff

heartbreak after a much-improved regular season.

Byrne only played nine games in 2019, but he put up 42 points as the team finished 14-4 and earned the top seed in the East Division.

At that time, the first two rounds of the playoffs were single-elimination games, while the NLL Finals were a best-of-three series.

The Bandits took down the New England Black Wolves in the first round, and a win over the Toronto Rock in the East Division Final propelled the team to the doorstep of a championship.

But this time, it wasn't meant to be.

Against the Calgary Roughnecks, the Bandits lost the first game and saw their season end in overtime of Game 2.

They entered the 2020 season with championship aspirations, and they sat at 7-4 through their first 11 games.

That was just in time for the entire sports world to be put on pause due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The rest of the season was canceled, and the 2021 season wouldn't be played at all.

The Bandits would have to wait for a chance to redeem themselves.

In the meantime, football continued, and the Bills burst onto the national scene in 2020.

Allen's play vastly improved as he went from a mid-tier quarterback to one of the league's best players.

The Bills finished 13-3 and won their first division title in 25 years, earning the second seed in the AFC playoffs.

In the wild-card round, Buffalo defeated the Indianapolis Colts to advance to the divisional round, where they took down the Baltimore Ravens.

Needing a win to go to the Super Bowl, the Bills fell short, losing 38-24 to the Kansas City Chiefs and starting a trend of having their seasons ended by Patrick Mahomes and company.

The next season was an up-and-down campaign for the Bills, but they finished 11-6 and won their division again.

They beat the doors off of the New England Patriots in the wild-card round, with Allen becoming the first quarterback ever with five touchdowns and no interceptions in a playoff game.

The divisional round brought another trip to Kansas City, where the Bills held a three-point lead with just 13 seconds remaining.

They didn't walk out with a win.

While the Bills kept coming up short in the playoffs, the Bandits hoped they wouldn't do the same when they returned to play.

The lacrosse team picked up right where they had left off, finishing first in the league at 14-4.

They beat Albany in the first round and advanced to another matchup with Toronto in Round 2, which was now also a best-of-three series.

Buffalo wouldn't need all three games, sweeping their cross-border rivals and advancing to the NLL Finals.

Against the Colorado Mammoth, the Bandits won the first game but lost the second, setting up a winner-take-all championship game in Buffalo.

They didn't win it.

Again, both Allen and Byrne headed into the summer without championship glory.

The Bills kicked off 2022 as favorites to win the Super Bowl, and they played like it on the way to a 13-3 record.

They snuck by the Miami Dolphins in the wild-card round but were trounced by the Cincinnati Bengals the next week.

The Bandits also put together a strong regular season in the spring of 2023, finishing 14-4, which was tied with the San Diego Seals for the league's best record.

Buffalo took care of the Rochester Knighthawks in the first round, and again, they stared down the Rock with a trip to the Finals on the line.

In a pattern that appears to be the reverse of the Bills' history with the Chiefs, the Bandits again swept Toronto and went back to the championship series.

Like the year before, the Bandits faced Colorado.

Again, they won the first game and lost the second, setting up a do-or-die Game 3 in Buffalo.

The loss in Game 2 was notable, too, as Byrne was sidelined with an injury.

He returned to the field in Game 3, ensuring that things wouldn't end the same as the previous two seasons.

Byrne scored four goals in a 13-4 blowout, bringing Buffalo its first NLL title since 2008.

As many of the city's sports fans hoped Allen would bring them a Super Bowl, Byrne's NLL Cup victory gave them a reason to celebrate.

For the Bills, the next season was a lot like 2021, as an up-and-down season resulted in an 11-6 record and yet another division title.

The playoffs followed the same formula as the years before too: a win in the wild-card round followed by a loss to the Chiefs in the divisional round.

As the spring of 2024 went on, though, heartbreak turned to joy as the Bandits put together a title-defending season.

The Bandits didn't have quite as much regular-season success, finishing 11-7.

Their first-round game was a matchup against the Georgia Swarm in Buffalo, a game that went to overtime tied 9-9.

The two teams went back and forth for a few minutes until Byrne buried the game-winner and sent his team to the next round.

The Bandits faced a familiar opponent in the semifinal, as it was Bandits vs. Rock for the fourth straight season.

The series ended in yet another Buffalo sweep.

In the NLL Finals, the Bandits faced the Albany FireWolves, a team in a similar spot to where the Bandits were in 2019.

Buffalo won the first game and returned home for Game 2, which they won to claim a second straight title.

Byrne was named MVP of the Finals, another accolade in a season where he was chosen as the league's very best.

It's unclear whether or not Byrne's success influenced Allen, but either way, the quarterback decided that one Josh winning MVP in Buffalo wasn't enough.

After an offseason in which the Bills lost several key pieces, including Stefon Diggs, Allen's top receiver, discussion began about how good the team would be.

Some sources said that in order for the Bills to have another successful season, Allen would have to play like an MVP.

He did.

Allen became the first player in NFL history to score 40 or more touchdowns in five consecutive seasons, as the Bills went 13-4 and won their fifth straight AFC East title, a franchise record.

A wild card win over the Denver Broncos and a divisional round win over Baltimore set up another matchup between the Bills and the Chiefs, and for the first time since 2020, it was for a trip to the Super Bowl.

History repeated itself again in Kansas City.

This brings us to today, where the Bandits are in pursuit of a third straight title, and the Bills can't seem to break through.

Byrne's team is off to an unblemished start, sitting at 6-0 as of Feb. 13.

He ranks second only to Smith in points per game across the league and leads the NLL in goals per game.

Whenever a team lands an MVP-caliber player, team success often follows.

That has been the case for both the Bills and the Bandits, although the championships have only come in lacrosse.

If Allen can bring home a Lombardi Trophy, the two Joshes may permanently find themselves on the Mount Rushmore of Buffalo sports heroes.

"If Allen can bring home a Lombardi Trophy, the two Joshes may permanently find themselves on the Mount Rushmore of Buffalo sports heroes."

Pink the Rink

connects hockey to cancer awareness

MATT VOLZ
Sports Editor

For one night each year, Fredonia hockey fans enter Steele Hall Ice Arena decked out in an unlikely color: pink.

Pink the Rink, a night dedicated to cancer awareness and research, has become a staple of Blue Devils hockey.

Each year, fans, family and friends can pay to put a loved one's name on the back of a pink Fredonia jersey to be worn in-game.

The jerseys are then given to those who purchased them in a postgame ceremony.

The event even landed the team on ESPN's SportsCenter several years ago.

But in recent years, Pink the Rink has become even more than what it was before.

This year, two clubs teamed up for a Pink the Rink tailgate party outside of Cranston Marché on Friday, Feb. 7.

Fredonia's chapter of the American Cancer Society (ACS) and Campus Life were in charge of the table outside the dining hall.

The tailgate ran for three hours prior to puck drop, and it featured pink decorations and tailgate-style foods.

Fans were also able to make signs for the game, both celebrating the team and honoring the night's meaning.

Campus Life came prepared with giveaways, as they handed out pink foam hockey pucks branded with the Blue Devils logo.

As the tailgate wound down, the stands of Steele Hall Ice Arena began to fill up with a near-sellout crowd.

The game itself would prove to be no easy task, though.

Fredonia faced off against conference rival Oswego, a team battling for the top seed in the SUNYAC playoffs.

As such, the Blue Devils got off to a slow start, trailing 4-0 just minutes into the second period.

"I think that with Pink the Rink, there's a lot of distractions, and I think those distractions got the best of us," said head coach Jeff Meredith. "We weren't playing our game, we weren't working like we needed to, we weren't competing like we needed to."

However, the team fought back with power-play goals from senior Ryan Bailey and sophomore Xavier Fortin, and they trailed 4-2 heading into the final frame.

Like the first two periods, Fredonia gave up a goal early, and they found themselves trailing 5-2 in the final minutes.

But they didn't quit.

With just over two minutes remaining, the Blue Devils found themselves back on the power play with the goalie pulled.

Freshman Luke Morris, a Fredonia native, took advantage of the six-on-four opportunity to score his sixth goal of the year and cut the deficit to 5-3.

Less than a minute later, with the net still empty, Morris did it again.

The energy in the stands returned to a fever pitch as the Blue Devils tried to score one more and snatch a point from the jaws

of certain defeat.

It wasn't meant to be, though.

Oswego locked the rest of the game down and held on for a 5-4 win.

Meredith applauded his team for their comeback effort, but he said the team can't find themselves in early deficits like the one they saw that night.

"I've always thought that you can't win the game in the first period of Pink the Rink, but you can lose it, and I think that's what happened to us," the coach said. "It took us 20 minutes to get to our game, and we really wanted that time back at the end."

Although the result wasn't what the Fredonia faithful wanted, the postgame ceremony carried on as usual.

Meredith got on the microphone and announced to the crowd that in all the years of Pink the Rink, the total amount of money donated to cancer research had now surpassed \$120,000.

"The community has embraced Pink the Rink, and the campus has certainly embraced Pink the Rink," Meredith said. "It makes it easy for us to keep Pink the Rink going every year and going strong."

"This community is so strong and amazing," said Olivia Spolar, a senior childhood inclusive education major who serves as president of ACS.

While Fredonia's chapter of ACS wasn't directly involved with the game, proceeds from Pink the Rink go to the American Cancer Society organization.

"Any money raised for [the ACS organization] is something [its Fredonia chapter] is proud of and would love to be a part of," said Spolar.

Spolar said she would love to see more collaboration between ACS and the hockey team for Pink the Rink in future years, and she hopes to see ACS's outreach grow on campus.

"I want to start honoring more of our Fredonia faculty, staff and students who have gone through [cancer] or passed away," she said. "One of my ambitions before I graduate is to start doing some sort of dedication program."

ACS will host its annual Relay for Life on Saturday, April 26, which Spolar said will look a bit different this year.

She said ACS is partnering with other clubs including Spectrum, Sound Services and Music Industry Club to create an all-day event similar to last year's solar eclipse event.

In the days leading up to Relay for Life, they will host Paint Cranston Purple, a three-day event similar to the Pink the Rink tailgate.

The goal of ACS is to "raise funds and awareness for cancer research and care," according to Spolar.

On nights like Pink the Rink night, a hockey game between two conference rivals turns into something much more: a quest for a cure.



Fredonia students attend Super Bowl LIX

All photos provided by PARKER GURNETT | Staff Writer



Boil water notices continue due to government inefficiency

DAN QUAGLIANA
Managing Editor

On Sunday, Feb. 3, the Village of Fredonia and the Town of Pomfret announced that they were implementing another boil water order.

Yes, that says “another.” It’s the fifth one in the last 24 months, according to the Dunkirk Observer.

At the time, the village claimed on their Facebook page that the boil water order was caused by “a blown pipe at the current water treatment plant.” Another Facebook post also said that “there [was] a disruption in disinfection treatment.”

The order was lifted on Feb. 8, more than four whole days after it was first implemented. For more than four days, residents in the affected areas were told to bring all of their water to a rolling boil for one minute before they used it. This includes water used not only for drinking but also for brushing your teeth, washing your dishes and basically everything else that water is used for.

The village clarified that the water was still safe for bathing and washing clothes, providing that no water was consumed.

If this was the only time this has happened, no one would care. But five times in the last two years is completely unheard of — not to mention bewildering.

I live in the town of Amherst, New York, in Erie County. As long as I’ve lived there, the town has never had a boil water notice. Every single person that I’ve talked to on campus who doesn’t live in the area has never had to boil their water. Not even once.

And Fredonia has gone through this five times in the last two years.

The current mayor, Democrat Michael Ferguson, made fixing the village’s water a centerpiece of his successful 2023 campaign. And to his credit, he has certainly tried.

Last December, the village board of trustees voted 3-1 to approve the LaBella engineering firm to do a State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR) on the village’s water system, which “is supposed to cover all available options for future projects,” according to the Dunkirk Observer.

The alternatives for supplying water to the village include “improving the village water treatment plant, decommissioning the treatment plant, drawdown of the village reservoir, interconnection of the city of Dunkirk and/or interconnection with the North County Water District.” This review is itself an update of a 2023 study of the village’s water system by the same company.

According to the Observer, the one trustee who voted “no”

on the SEQR, Michelle Twichell, says that she voted no because, “The resolution does not name a municipal entity as lead agency for the SEQR, there is no specified deadline for LaBella to complete the review, LaBella’s proposal for the SEQR lists specific concerns that won’t be included and the resolution does not specify a cost.”

“These [specific concerns] include details of the connections and their costs,” Twichell said. “An SEQR without including all details is not worth the paper it’s printed on.”

She also stated that the costs related to the SEQR wouldn’t “be necessary if we choose to maintain our own water system.”

Cost is something that has been particularly contentious regarding this study. Trustee Jon Esperson disagreed with Twichell, stating that this study is needed if the village wishes to fund future upgrades to the water treatment system.

In December 2023, the board of trustees voted to close Fredonia’s water treatment plant and start purchasing water from the City of Dunkirk, but residents of Fredonia by the name of Citizens Action Group for Saving Our Reservoir sued in order to stop that from happening.

“They believe fixing and maintaining the current Fredonia water treatment plant and reservoir is the best course of action,” said Buffalo TV station WGRZ. “They also claim that the resolution was passed in violation of New York State Environmental Conservation Law because a State Environmental Quality Review was not conducted.”

“The village water treatment plant is over 100 years old,” the court filing says. “As such, it is a historic building and resource of the village. [State Environmental Quality Review Act] considers the alteration and adverse consequences to a historic structure to be a significant adverse environmental consequence. Since the village intends to decommission the water treatment plant, without any consideration or information concerning what they will do with the water treatment plant, an Environmental Impact Statement would have to be drafted.”

On May 16, 2024, State Supreme Court Justice Grace Hanlon ruled in favor of Save Our Reservoir’s lawsuit.

This brings us back to the same debate the village government has been having with itself for years. Now that getting water from Dunkirk is off the table, their only option is to completely rehabilitate Fredonia’s water treatment plant.

According to village trustee Jon Esperson, “LaBella estimates the cost to retain the reservoir, spillway and water treatment plant to be \$34,314,000. The cost to decommission the water treatment plant, drawdown [sic] the reservoir and build an interconnect with Dunkirk is estimated to be \$26,035,000.”

And that’s something that Save Our Reservoir should know

— two of its members, Kara Christina and Athanasia Landis, are a former village trustee and mayor, respectively. They are part of the reason that Fredonia’s water problem wasn’t fixed when they were in office, and they continue to be part of the problem now.

But the current treatment plant is an old and historic building, according to them, so we must continue to use it.

“I understand your frustration every time there is an order. We are also under the same order. We are not immune, we are also village residents,” said current village trustee Nicole Siracuse on Feb. 5. “So attacking board members with comments such as ‘poor excuse for a public servant’ and that we’re ‘brain dead,’ are unhelpful and unnecessary. If you think you can do better... There’s going to be two seats up for election this year

— have at it. Getting involved is what makes a difference, not making comments on social media.”

Gotta love our current village government, too. While derogatory comments such as “brain dead” are completely unnecessary, the board clearly doesn’t like people complaining about their toxic water, so they ask residents to run for office to fix the problem themselves. Just like the Save Our Reservoir group, the current village board of trustees is apparently made up of people who, when they encounter the slightest setback, won’t lift a finger to go out of their way to help the people they’re supposed to be serving.

Yes, you had a plan a year ago. You were forced to stop it by a lawsuit.

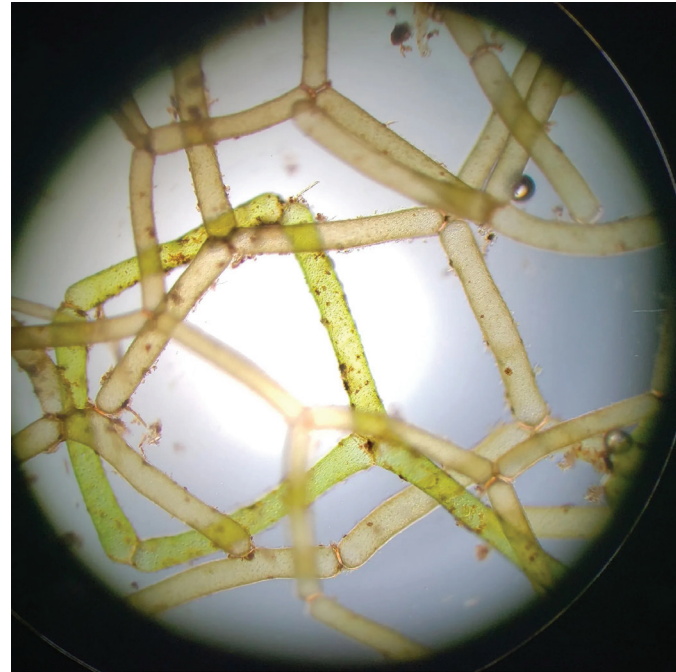
So now you try something else. You keep trying something else until something works. Residents of Fredonia shouldn’t have to live with more than two boil water notices a year.

I’m a current senior at SUNY Fredonia. If someone had told me that this was a problem I would have to be facing just by living within the village boundaries, there’s a very real chance I might not have gone to college here. And I sure as hell wouldn’t ever choose to live here because of it.

Instead, I’ve been forced to suffer through years of former and current village officials blaming each other for a problem that they’re all allowing to happen.

We live next to a lake, for God’s sake. Stop arguing with each other, sit down and figure out how to fix this.

Last weekend, Mayor Ferguson called the village’s water and budget “our first priorities” on Facebook. I’ll believe it when I see it.



Fredonia water during a boil water order, as seen through a microscope.
Photo by DAKOTA RICHTER | Special to The Leader

Overcolumn: Long-Distance Relationships

THE QUARTERBACK
Executive Producer of Lovercall

THE MUSICIAN
Lovercall Producer

RADIO REBEL
Lovercall Producer

Hello!

We are The Quarterback, The Musician and Radio Rebel: 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 are guests on the show use codenames to protect their identities when discussing potentially personal topics, hence the codenames of the writers of this column. This is your reminder that none of the hosts or guests are professionals, and everything stated is based on personal experiences.

“The Quarterback” is a 20-year-old cisgender man who uses he/him pronouns and is a junior at Fredonia.

“The Musician” is a 22-year-old gender-fluid person who uses they/she pronouns and is a senior at Fredonia.

“Radio Rebel” is a 21-year-old transgender man who uses

Continued onto next page

Continued from previous page

he/him pronouns and is a senior 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 can submit their questions or seek advice either via Fredonia Radio's Instagram, @fredonia_radio, on YikYak or through the QR code provided in this column.

We answer your questions live on the radio, then add them to this column in case you missed the episode.

The show will broadcast weekly throughout the semester 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 in print and online at fredonialeader.org.

Date idea of the week

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

For this week's date idea, you are going to have a long-distance date night!

If you're not fortunate enough to have loved ones closeby, this is the date for you!

This date idea is best over some form of video chat, whether it be FaceTime, Zoom or whatever else.

That way, you can see your partner's beautiful face even if you aren't there with them!

This is a multi-step date idea, so stay with me.

You're going to start with a nice virtual dinner, so you'll be chatting with them while you each make dinner in your respective kitchens.

Whatever you make is up to you, and it doesn't have to be the same thing as the other person, either.

When you sit down to eat, make sure your partner can still see your face.

This may seem a little weird, but the goal is to keep it as similar to a real in-person dinner date as possible!

After you've finished eating and done all your dishes, it's movie time!

Several streaming services allow users the opportunity to watch a movie together from different locations; services such as Disney+, Hulu or Netflix are viable options.

It doesn't matter whether you watch a romantic comedy or a true crime documentary; whatever you choose is great!

After the movie is over, get ready for bed and chat with them as you fall asleep.

Sooner or later, you'll be with your loved ones again, but until then, you've got this date idea as a way to be together no matter how far apart you are.

Long-Distance Relationships

Long-distance relationships, as we defined on the show, are relationships where you would need to go "out of your way" to see each other.

Many college students find themselves in this situation, and it can be hard to maintain a loving relationship with someone you can't see all the time.

Whether you're with someone who goes to a different school

or lives in a different town, or whether you and your significant other(s) are in different parts of your lives, we discussed a few tips for maintaining your love.

Open and honest communication is probably the most important thing to remember with any long-distance relationship.

It's easy to feel jealous of those who get to spend lots of time with your significant other(s), but remember that you're the one they chose to be with.

If you're worried about your partner(s) straying from the relationship, have a conversation with them about it.

Sure, it's a difficult conversation to have, but communication is key to maintaining any healthy relationship.

In that same vein, it's important to have trust in any relationship.

It's not always easy, we understand. But try to live by this idea: trust them until they give you a reason not to trust them.

The next piece of advice is to make time for them, even if it's not a lot of time.

In any relationship, all parties should feel like they matter to each other.

Some people have very busy schedules, that's true. So it's understandable if you can't spend every waking moment talking to your partner(s).

Even just a few minutes per day can be enough to remind them that you love them and despite the distance, you're right there with them in spirit.

If you find yourself questioning your relationship because of the distance, think about what you want out of it long-term.

If the relationship seems like something you want to last, have faith that it will last and do your best to make that the case.

If the distance is too much and you don't know that you envision them in your future, have an honest conversation about it.

Remember this: whatever is meant for you will find you, and whatever is meant to be will be.

Working through a long-distance relationship can be a leap of faith, there's no doubt about that.

But sometimes, in order to be happy, you just have to jump.

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 wdvlonair@gmail.com or visit Fredonia Radio Systems, located in McEwen Hall 115 and open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

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





Satire and parody for Fredonia

Local Scallion Editor runs out of ideas

MEGAN KIDBY
Scallion Editor

In a shocking turn of events that has rocked The Leader's satire section to its very core, Editor Megan Kidby has officially run out of ideas.

After years of crafting witty headlines, biting commentary and just the right amount of sarcasm to keep the university administration mildly uncomfortable but not legally involved, Kidby has hit a creative wall — one so insurmountable, it might just be the eighth wonder of the world.

"It's like staring into the abyss," Kidby whispered, clutching a half-empty coffee cup and what appeared to be a list of half-baked article ideas, including titles such as "Library Introduces New 'Crying Corner' for Finals Week (It's Just a Mirror)." She sighed. "I've made fun of Fenton Hall, the dog food smell and that one professor who wears a fedora unironically. What else is left?"

Sources close to Kidby report that her descent into idea drought began last week when she spent three hours staring at a blank Google Doc before dramatically declaring, "This is it. This is how I go." Attempts to jumpstart her creativity included scrolling through TikTok, watching political debates, and even reading serious news, but to no avail. "I thought about making fun of AI again, but at this point, I'm pretty sure it could write the whole section for me," she admitted before glancing around nervously and whispering, "Wait. Has it already?"

Desperate, Kidby turned to her loyal ex-Assistant Editor Jace Jacobs, who suggested groundbreaking pitches such as "Satire Editor Writes Article About Running Out of Ideas" (meta), "University Announces Revolutionary 'Fix the Wi-Fi' Initiative — Just Kidding" (overdone), and "Breaking: Absolutely Nothing Has Changed Since Last Semester" (painfully accurate). She rejected them all, citing "a deep need to feel original" before immediately Googling "funny things to write about."

Faculty members and readers alike have expressed concern. "The satire section is the only thing that gets me through my 8 a.m. class," confessed one student, clutching an old issue of The Leader like a life raft. "If Megan quits, where will I get my weekly dose of passive-aggressive commentary on campus parking?"

In a last-ditch effort to reclaim her former glory, Kidby has reportedly turned to the oldest trick in the book: repackaging

old jokes in a way that seems fresh. Expect upcoming pieces such as "University Introduces New Innovation: Windows That Actually Open" and "Professor Insists He's 'Not Tech-Savvy' While Using 47-Tab Spreadsheet."

As of press time, Kidby was last seen staring at a blank page, whispering, "Maybe the real satire was the friends we made along the way."



Photo by DREW PALUCH | Photo Editor
Graphic by ABBIE MILLER | Editor-in-Chief

A Sitdown With Brock Host uses AI for ideas?!

BROCK PAPKE

Special to The Leader

CHATGPT

Special to The Leader

Warning: This article contains strong language.

In a shocking revelation that will shake the foundation of late-night television, sources have confirmed that local talk show host, Brock Papke, has been secretly mining ideas from ChatGPT for his upcoming season.

That's right — while fans believed Mr. Papke's interviews were a product of his sharp wit and journalistic instincts, it turns out he's been outsourcing creativity to a chatbot. Insiders close to the production claim that instead of brainstorming with his team — or, heaven forbid, reading a book — Mr. Papke has spent hours grilling AI for segment ideas, monologue jokes and ways to make it look like he still cares about the show.

A leaked transcript from behind-the-scenes interactions between Mr. Papke and ChatGPT paints a troubling picture of a man desperate for inspiration, turning to artificial intelligence for guidance on culturally relevant bits to how his suit should look on camera.

[BEGIN TRANSCRIPT]

Brock: Alright, you stupid robot, I got one more season in me to make this show relevant before I'm completely burned out and get canceled for the third time. Hit me with something fresh. Something that'll make people say, "Wow, Brock is back!"

ChatGPT: How about an interview on the rise of AI—

Brock: I'm gonna stop you right there. First off, that's too meta on so many levels that I don't have time nor know how to comprehend. Secondly, I'm trying NOT to make people think that I'm using AI. Give me something else.

ChatGPT: Okay, how about an episode where you interview someone, but they have no idea what the topic is until you start grilling them? No prep, no escape.

Brock: That's basically what I already do, but with less paperwork.

ChatGPT: Fair enough. Here's a riskier idea — an entire episode where your guest is an AI-generated version of themselves, trained on their past interviews. You could debate their past self in real-time.

Brock: Ah, yes. Because nothing says "good television" like a lawsuit waiting to happen. You never take a class with Professor Igoe, haven't you?

ChatGPT: Who's Professor Igoe?

Brock: ...Can you give me something else?

ChatGPT: Understandable. How about this — one full episode where you interview an empty chair, but over time, viewers start to realize the absence of a guest is the guest.

Brock: Ah, yes! A recreation of the unaired pilot, that's fuck-

ing genius!

ChatGPT: Wait, you've done that before?

Brock: Don't judge me, Bumper!

ChatGPT: Is that a reference to the film *Robots* (2005)?

Brock: Man, Elon is already putting his favorite movies in here.

ChatGPT: *Sighs* Ok. Is there anything else you want from me?

Brock: Yep, scrap everything else. Overhaul the entire season. I need all the scripts finished by tomorrow — no excuses!

[END TRANSCRIPT]

Since the revelation, the staff of The Leader has attempted to reach out to Mr. Papke for comment, but he has refused to answer any of our questions. These questions range from his failed presidential election bid and the recent AI allegations to, in his own words, the "bullshit writers' strike" that took place last semester — a strike he single-handedly caused by paying his employees with checks for \$0.00.

The only response we received from him was: "You can't prove that I did that! You so-called journalists probably used AI to make this transcript. You're just mad that I'm winning."

Whether or not he truly considers consulting AI a "win" remains to be seen. As the scandal unfolds, one thing is certain: the next season of *A Sitdown With Brock Papke* is shaping up to be its most unhinged yet — assuming ChatGPT helped write it.

This article was partially written by ChatGPT and is intended as satire. The Leader and WNYF Television do not support AI replacing real human journalists.

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Friday 2/14 - 5:00 pm to Midnight: Valentine's party featuring specials on dishes and drinks for two

Thursday 2/20 - 6:00 pm to 10:00 pm : Open Mic Night - all acts welcome

Thursday 2/27 - 7:00 pm to 11:00 pm - It's A Live (show)! - Live music upstairs at Monster Beach

Friday 2/28 - 7:00 pm to 1:00 am : KiKi at the Tiki - Fredonia's only regular LGBTQ+ Club Night

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HOROS

ABBIE MILLER

Editor-in-Chief, Hopeful Romantic

In my opinion, Valentine's Day is the one holiday that is as universally hated as it is loved. Those who do not have a romantic partner are left hating those who do and those who do are left too blissfully unaware of their surroundings to sense that not everybody wants to see their PDA. No matter who you are, we've all been in these positions before.

Hope is not lost though. There is a possibility that those who do not have a partner are content to spend Valentine's Day with family and friends and that those who are in a relationship are fighting the entire day instead of enjoying it. With all of the paths that your day could have taken, I'll give you the final summary of how I think your sign spent their Valentine's Day.



Aries

With the love of your life

You spent your Valentine's Day in one of the best ways possible: cuddled up with your special someone. There are few things in this life that beat spending the day with someone who is unconditionally enamored by your presence and delighted by your personality. You learned this firsthand last week, as you gazed into the love of your life's eyes and told them exactly how you feel about them.



Taurus

Surrounded by family

Many people mistake Valentine's Day as a holiday centering around one specific type of love — the romantic kind. But surrounded by people who understand all of your quirks and appreciate you not just despite them but because of them? That's something special in and of itself. You learned the importance of taking familial love into account this Valentine's Day as you enjoyed the presence of those who watched you grow into the person you are today.



Gemini

Watching a 2000s era rom-com

"When Harry Met Sally", "How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days", "13 Going on 30", "27 Dresses", and "Crazy Stupid Love" — all movies which were on your roster of what to watch this Valentine's Day. No matter which of these star-studded, swoon-inducing spectacles you viewed, your joy for Valentine's Day was renewed all the same. There are just some people who love love and, my friend, one of those people is you.



Cancer

Curled up by a cozy fireplace

Despite the fact that spring looms around the corner like a silver lining to the brutal cold, you don't really mind the chills you get every time you go outside — at least not when you're sitting in front of a glowing fireplace. You spent your Valentine's Day perched in front of sizzling logs, waiting for a nice cup of hot cocoa to fill your stomach.



Leo

Treating yourself to a college student's "five-star dinner"

Why would you wait for someone else to do it when you can do it yourself? This was exactly your mentality when you showed up to the c-store with nothing but a FredCard and 75 spare points. Frozen meals and salty snacks galore, you stacked your arms full of all of the sweet and savory items you could find, and walked out having spent only 30 more points than you originally intended.



Virgo

Enjoying the small things in life

You've had it tough since the new year began, and unfortunately Valentine's Day wasn't an exception to this pattern. But despite being in the pits during a day when you should feel at your best, you paid attention to the smaller blessings in life that sometimes go unnoticed by others. Your caring family, your belief in yourself and your ever-supporting friends were your focus throughout the pandemonium around you.

COOPES



Libra

Feeling the love of those around you

Whether it concerns your romantic partner(s) or your friends and family, you are well-loved by all of those who encounter you.

This was made apparent this Valentine's Day more than ever. You were showered with the love and appreciation that you deserve and treated like the royalty you are.



Capricorn

Eating all of the chocolates you received in one sitting

There's no shame in this. So you struggle a bit with self-control when it comes to chocolatey treats. Don't we all? Everyone knows that the serving sizes on the back of the package are suggestions, and what are you if not a rule-breaker? You've forged your own path in life, but a few nights ago that path may have led you to the nearest bottle of Tums.



Scorpio

Listening to your favorite break-up album

I know you think that this whole holiday is overrated and that Valentine's Day, along with every couple to ever exist, should be thrown into a fiery pit and eradicated forever. That's why you spent Valentine's Day listening to your favorite break-up album. "Back to Black" by Amy Winehouse, "Rumours" by Fleetwood Mac, and "Lemonade" by Beyoncé are already major records in your music rotation, but they got extra streams last week.



Sagittarius

Crying, but then laughing

It took a while, but you put that tub of Ben & Jerry's ice cream down and dried your eyes. It's hard sometimes to see the blessings that you have instead of all of those that you don't — especially for those who are single on a holiday where romance is inescapable. But despite the valid crashout, you were still able to have a fun time by yourself by tuning in to some comfort TV and laughing along to your favorite Melissa McCarthy movie.



Aquarius

Having a snowball fight

Whether or not you're from Western New York, you have always had an appreciation for the snow. You have frequently shocked your peers by expressing your tolerance of it, particularly amidst the seemingly never-ending Fredonia snowstorms. On Valentine's Day, you took advantage of all of these flurries by challenging your partner to a duel.



Pisces

Making fun of couples

You have no shame, but there are times you believe that others should. This is exactly why you spent your Valentine's Day crouched over your phone, scrolling through couples' social media posts and playing the age-old game "siblings or dating?"



Pink the Rink

Fri. Feb. 7, 2020

