

THE
FREDONIA LEADER

SUNY Fredonia's Student-Run Newspaper

**Fredonia mayor
threatens to call
National Guard for
this year's FredFest**

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Attacks on diversity, equity and inclusion continue
C-store faces backlash for selling expired drink
Nine minors to be removed from Fredonia curriculum
Lacrosse sets sights on Puerto Rico, playoffs
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“I don't think your ability to fight has anything to do with how big you are. It's to do with how much anger is in you.” -Amy Winehouse

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Attacks on diversity, equity and inclusion continue

ALEX BUCKNAM

Asst. News Editor

Two prominent events have happened in Washington D.C. since Feb. 14: the Department of Education (DOE) sent out a letter telling schools that they need to get rid of diversity, equity and inclusion programs; and the House of Representatives passed a budget resolution bill.

On Feb. 14, the acting assistant secretary for civil rights for the DOE, Craig Trainor, sent out a letter titled “Dear Colleague.” In summary, it states that schools, colleges and universities had to get rid of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) programs by Feb. 28.

The letter opens by stating, “These institutions’ embrace of pervasive and repugnant race-based preferences and other forms of racial discrimination have emanated throughout every facet of academia.” It continues by saying, “Colleges, universities and K-12 schools have routinely used race as a factor in admissions, financial aid, hiring, training, and other institutional programming.”

The letter then goes on to blame racial discrimination on diversity, equity and inclusion programs stating that the DOE will not tolerate racial discrimination pushed by DEI.

“The Department [of Education] will no longer tolerate the overt and covert racial discrimination ... The law is clear: treating students differently on the basis of race to achieve nebulous goals such as diversity, racial balancing, social justice, or equity is illegal.”

The letter concludes with the DOE’s intention to take measures to assess compliance to end racial discrimination, which is a requirement that schools have to meet to receive federal funding.

The department gives schools 14 days after the letter was sent out to achieve this, threatening, “Institutions that fail to comply may, consistent with applicable law, face investigation and loss of federal funding.”

This letter has caused multiple groups and unions, like the American Federation of Teachers, to file lawsuits against the DOE, arguing that the letter was an overreach of the department’s powers and misrepresents what DEI programs do.

As of Feb. 28, there are multiple lawsuits over this letter that are making their way through the courts.

As of Feb. 28, SUNY Fredonia has not gotten rid of any diversity, equity and inclusion programs.

DEI does not only include race, according to Dr. Gregory King, the assistant provost for faculty development at The California Institute of the Arts (CalArts). DEI oversees things like “ramps and sidewalk curb cuts, family restrooms, breastfeeding/pumping stations, floating paid holidays, pay equity and transparency, parental leave (time & pay), not having to just accept workplace harassment, work accommodations for a variety of disabilities, flexible work arrangements and size-inclusive chairs and beds in medical facilities.” He further notes, “This is not a full list.”

The House of Representatives passed a budget resolution on Feb. 26 with a 217-215 vote, which is the exact number of votes the Grand Old Party (GOP) needed to pass the budget resolution. One Republican voted against the bill and one Democrat did not vote.

The GOP budget resolution (H. Con. Res. 14), includes \$4.5 trillion in tax cuts, \$1.5-2 trillion in spending cuts and a \$4 trillion increase to the debt ceiling.

This was the first step to achieving President Donald Trump’s budget agenda, according to CBS.

A budget resolution is defined by the Congressional Budget Office as “a blueprint to guide congressional action on budget-related legislation over the course of the year. It does not provide funding for federal programs or change tax law; rather, it sets overall spending and revenue targets, sometimes for as many as 10 years.”

This means that the rumors of any Medicaid or food stamps being cut through this budget resolution are false. Cuts to these programs could come, however, when Republicans figure out how they are going to achieve the \$1.5-2 trillion in spending cuts. As of Feb. 28, we do not officially know what is being cut.

This budget resolution still needs to pass the Senate and then needs to be signed by President Trump before it comes into effect.

After the budget resolution is signed, appropriate committees in the Senate and House will meet to create the 2024-2025 fiscal year (FY) spending bill, since this bill has yet to be passed and signed by the president.

Passing a budget resolution bill is also the first step to passing a reconciliation bill.

According to the House Committee on the Budget, a reconciliation bill is defined as, “a tool – a special process – that makes legislation easier to pass in the Senate.”

This will bump down how many votes are needed to pass a spending bill in the Senate to a simple majority — from 60 to 50 — according to the Economic Policy Institute. As of Feb. 28, the Senate contains 53 Republicans, 45 Democrats, and 2 Independents who caucus with the Democrats.

This means that if a reconciliation bill was not passed, the GOP would need seven Democrats to vote on their spending bill. But if a reconciliation bill was passed, the GOP would not need a single Democrat vote and could lose four Republican votes, since in a tie, the Vice President of the United States would cast his vote.

Now, this does not mean that Congress can just keep on passing a reconciliation bill to override the cases where 60 votes are needed in the Senate. According to the Economic Policy Institute, “A reconciliation bill can only focus on budget-related measures.”

The Leader will continue to monitor and provide updates on what is happening within the Trump administration and Congress in the upcoming months.

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C-store faces backlash from selling expired drink

ABBIE MILLER
Editor-in-Chief

There are a few things that are certain in life: death, taxes and complaints from the student body about SUNY Fredonia’s food.

Regardless of whether it’s Cranston Marché, Willy C’s, Starbucks or one of the on-campus cafés, finding someone who claims to have had a subpar experience with the food at Fredonia seems to be as easy as locating a piece of litter in New York City.

Up until recently, it appeared that the only on-campus food and beverage provider to dodge these complaints was the c-store.

Considering the types of products sold there, this makes

sense. The majority of food that fills the store are pre-packaged items that were created and delivered to Fredonia by nationwide food and beverage vendors. These products tend to be more standardized in quality due to the nature of the companies that produce and ship them as multi-million corporations with extensive quality assurance departments and staffing.

No human-made creation or process is entirely free from error, though.

On Feb. 4, The Leader received reports of a student having purchased a beverage from the c-store that had been marked as having expired on Jan. 27.

Coupled with the concern was photographic evidence of floating congealed specks within the Starbucks coffee beverage, which the student described as having an “off flavor.”

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, “With an exception of infant formula, if the date passes during home storage, a product should still be safe and wholesome if handled properly until the time spoilage is evident.”

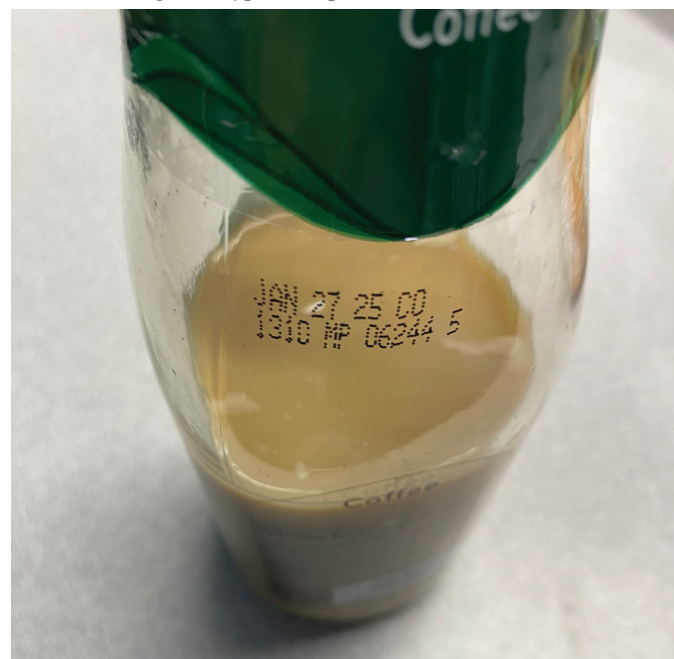
While most recently expired foods and beverages meet this threshold for safe consumption, the federal government warns that, “If a food has developed ... spoilage characteristics [an off odor, flavor or texture], it should not be eaten.”

Another picture supplied by the anonymous student revealed that the Jan. 27 date on the bottle is not specified as a “best if used by/before” date, a “sell-by” date, a “use-by” date or a “freeze-by” date. This specification would provide further information as to whether the product was indeed expired and spoiled, as it appeared to be, or whether it instead was made or processed incorrectly before or during shipment.

Dan Quagliana, the vice president of the Faculty Student Association (FSA) Board of Directors, indicates that an incident such as this has occurred at least twice this school year so far.

Quagliana, who is considered a chief student advocate to FSA, said, “I brought [the topic of expired foods being sold at the c-store] up once last semester and then again at the most recent meeting [on Feb. 7].”

The response that Quagliana received from FSA was “some-where along the lines of, ‘We’ll look into it.’” This was promised to Quagliana by FSA’s Director of Retail Operations Chris Zenns, whose responsibility is to oversee the bookstore, c-store



A Starbucks coffee beverage bought at the c-store on Feb. 4, eight days after the expiration date marked on the glass.

Photo anonymously provided.

and Starbucks.

When asked if he's received concerns like this in the past regarding expired items being sold at the c-store, Zenns replied, "Yeah. I mean, in retail [and] grocery in general, it happens a lot ... [But] generally, you don't have to worry about such things when they're rotated thoroughly."

Someone who has experience working at the c-store, but has chosen to remain anonymous, noted that there's a lot of circulation of products within the store. As such, this should theoretically be even less likely to occur than in an average grocery store.

With that being said, although the former c-store worker stated that they'd "never heard a complaint" in the semester they worked there, they also conceded that while working there, they'd "gone through certain sections of the store and [searched for] expired food ... [which they picked out] a time or two."

They also mentioned that, when it comes to the training of staff, they "think there definitely could be some work [done]."

"It's slightly relaxed in [the food service] aspect, where I feel like people who haven't worked before [should be told] 'this is exactly how you do this, this is exactly how you do that.'"

The anonymous former c-store employee stated that they were "kind of more just thrown into it," which wasn't necessarily an issue for them, because they had experience within the food service industry, but could be a problem for those lacking this exposure.

This viewpoint is directly at odds with that which was supplied by Zenns, who referred to the training that c-store employees receive as "pretty in-depth."

Upon hearing of the most recent report of an expired product being sold at the c-store, Zenns offered a more unexpected explanation for this specific incident.

According to Zenns, the expired product was unique in this case specifically because the c-store had an agreement with Starbucks whereby the only individuals in charge of handling these beverages were the company's vendors themselves, not c-store staff.

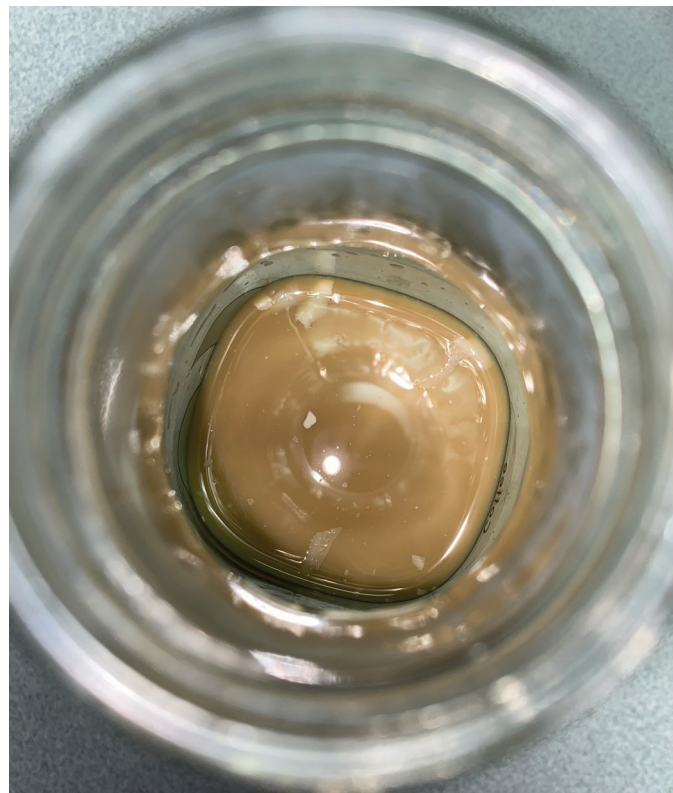
"Until recently, [we] relied on the vendor to supply [these Starbucks drinks] ... So, not that we're completely hands-off of that, but that was probably handled by a third-party [vendor]," Zenns stated.

Now that the c-store is doing its own ordering, including where it regards Starbucks products, Zenns assures that incidents like these are less likely to occur. "There's some extenuating circumstances that could have added to [the selling of the expired beverage] but an expired product is an expired product and I just encourage people to please bring it to our attention immediately so we can pull it [from the shelves] and we can make it right with you."

This is part of the standard operating procedure when an expired product is found by c-store staff, according to Zenns. After expired foods are sold, they "refund the item ... and then check the remaining items" to make sure that they are within the expiration date on their packaging.

The process regarding food disposal of expired products is not made known to students on the FSA Board of Directors such as Quagliana. According to him, "I would assume someone is checking the expiration dates in the c-store." Amidst this most recent student report, however, Quagliana states that "either [this is] not being done or it's being done horribly."

One solution to prevent incidents such as these from happen-



A Starbucks coffee beverage bought at the c-store on Feb. 4, eight days after the expiration date marked on the glass.

Photo anonymously provided.

ing is to introduce a more extensive training process for c-store employees. Quagliana said that he believes that this is a process that will eventually occur, stating, "I don't think it would take a long time to implement either, because there's always at least one person working at the c-store. A lot of the time, I see two [employees working there]."

However, one barrier to this is the significance to which student concerns such as these are given by FSA. Despite pleas from Zenns to "Keep [FSA] informed and let us know when you have a problem and we'll be happy to make it right," Quagliana is steady in his belief that "I don't think [FSA doesn't] take it seriously, but they could be doing a lot more."

Even after additional training, Zenns is cognizant that situations like this are not impossible. "You want to make sure that you bring your products forward so that the [older] dated products are front and center," Zenn said. "But things get through."

It remains to be seen whether improvements will be made to the current system of food processing within the c-store, and whether these changes are what students and faculty deem necessary to begin with.

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

Nine minors to be removed from Fredonia curriculum

ABIGAIL JACOBSON

News Editor

After last spring's removal of 13 majors, some students had remained hopeful that SUNY Fredonia administrators would choose to keep the remaining programs.

As of Feb. 25, this notion has proven to be just that: false hope.

In the fall semester of 2023, it was announced that 13 majors were proposed to be cut.

These majors were:

Bachelor of Arts (BA) Visual Arts New Media: Art History
BA French
BA French Adolescence Education
Bachelor of Science (BS) Industrial Management
BS Mathematics: Middle Childhood Specialist (grades five through nine)
BA Philosophy
BA Sociology
BA Spanish
BA Spanish: Adolescence Education
Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) Visual Arts and New Media:
Ceramics
BFA Visual Arts and New Media: Photography
BFA Visual Arts and New Media: Sculpture
Bachelor of Science in Education (BSED) Early Childhood Education (birth through second grade)

The reasoning behind these proposed cuts was due to the announcement of a new budget for the SUNY system by the SUNY Board of Trustees. Out of the \$163 million in additional funding received by SUNY, Fredonia was given \$2.8 million.

An email was sent out by the Provost's Office on March 18, 2024, titled "[Students] Program Deactivation Review Process, an Update." In this email, David Starrett, the executive vice president and provost, said, "We will keep associated minors [to these deactivated majors]."

This was a lie, according to the information in the email students received on Feb. 25 from the Provost Office titled "[Students] Minors," which detailed what minors were being removed.

The list of the potential minors that were being considered to cut last fall were:

African American Studies
Art History
Arts Administration
Athletic Coaching
Film Studies
French
Latinx Studies

MultiEthnic Studies
Museum Studies
Native American Studies
Philosophy
Public Health
School & Counseling Psychology
Spanish

The minors being removed, according to the most recent email, are:

Computer Information Systems
Earth Science
Economics
French
Industrial Organizational Psychology
International Studies
Mathematics
Philosophy
Web Programming

Now, in the spring semester, it has been announced that nine minors have been cut. This list includes minors whose majors were already cut, such as the French and Philosophy minors.

The decision was based on responses given by 30 programs that were "identified as having a three-year average enrollment of less than 12 students." A deadline was set for Feb. 4 for responses from these programs on how to respond to low student enrollment numbers.

It was proposed that some of the minors in this list be merged with another minor. Additionally, some responses had approaches aimed at increasing the enrollment in these minors.

The Feb. 25 email states that these discontinuations are "not a reflection on the quality of the minor, but our decision is driven by the demand and interest in these minors."

This email also states that, "This change allows us to focus our resources on expanding programs in higher demand or developing new programs that align better with our student demands."

Forty-one students are enrolled in these nine minors. According to the email, 19 of those students are seniors and "will graduate this spring."

The remaining 22 students will be able to complete their minors. According to the most recent email, "students in these minors have been contacted by phone and updated on this development." This claim was unable to be substantiated through an investigation done by The Leader.

Additionally, Fredonia administrators claim to have "removed the ability for any other students to declare these nine minors."

In the email, Starrett wrote that, "At SUNY Fredonia, we

are committed to student success, and we will ensure that students have the necessary coursework to complete their program, just as we do for every student on our campus.”

The provost’s office ended the email by thanking students, faculty and staff for their understanding “as we move to update our academic portfolio in order to serve the wants and needs of our students most effectively.”

With the announcement of these nine minors being removed, students and campus groups have already begun to express their concerns.

Nat Todero, a freshman medical laboratory science major, mentioned that some of their roommates are art majors and are very vocal about these cuts.

“They’re thinking that it’s ... really inconsiderate,” Todero said.

When the email was sent out, Todero took a look at what minors were being cut and they thought, “Those are so important to have.”

Todero has seen a lot of anger being expressed, some at the SUNY system and some at President Kolison.

A student advocacy group, Students For Fredonia (SFF), has also expressed concerns.

Mason Fuller, the president of SFF, claimed, “We weren’t told what the 30 proposed minors [to be cut] were.”

“It is [frustrating] that the promises that were made to us by [the] administration are just being broken without ... regard for what we’re feeling,” Fuller said.

Fuller and the rest of SFF had meetings last spring with President Kolison and the rest of the administration.

“The thing that we were pushing for was student inclusion in these decisions,” Fuller said. According to Fuller, “Not all input can be taken into account.” However, “...what [they’re] doing [in comparison with] what they said that they were going to do is really frustrating.”

When the email was sent out, the SFF E-board chat lit up. According to Fuller, they were asking questions such as “What do we do about this?” and “What statements should we make?”

SFF’s plan of action is to inform the students about these latest cuts immediately. “Letting students know what actually is happening and what they are doing ... [and the] way that they’re announcing it is something that we also want to call attention to,” Fuller said.

“‘Sunsetting’ minors is nothing ... what they’re doing is discontinuing them and removing those avenues for education,”

"You cannot cut minority grounds in a minority area when you have minority students on a campus."

— DAKOTA RICHTER
President,
Student Association
SUNY Fredonia

Fuller said.

Fuller wants students and faculty to be aware of these removals, “even if it doesn’t directly affect them.”

Since the announcement of these nine minor cuts, SFF’s first course of action is looking to host a forum meeting. This meeting would allow students to express what they are looking for and what these minor cuts mean to them. Their next course of action is going to the administration.

“It doesn’t feel like they are advocating for us ... we understand that [some decisions are inevitable] but it is the fact that they just aren’t consulting us or talking to us [that makes their outcomes worse],” Fuller said.

SFF wants to talk to the student body as a whole and ask questions such as “What are people looking at for the future?” and “What do we as students think that this is going [to] do to our education instead of for our education?”

Fuller mentioned that “[For] a lot of these minors that are being cut ... [we] were promised that [they] weren’t going to be touched.” This leaves students in a weird place because, according to Fuller, “If you don’t have the minor and don’t have the major, but those classes are still required, what are we going to do?”

“We are losing classes and we are losing professors, even though ... [the administration] said that wasn’t going to happen,” Fuller said.

According to Fuller, “[SFF] have concrete instances of this happening in things that they promised, or at least stated factually, [were] not going to happen.”

Fuller mentions that the only way that they can see the administration being held accountable is if the student body and surrounding community, “Don’t look away from what they’re doing. Don’t let them just get away with taking these avenues of education away from people.”

In Fuller’s words, the administration is “trying to make us complacent ... [by saying that they are cutting] only nine [minors] out of 30, [and that] we get to keep the other 21.”

According to Fuller, “[The] administration doesn’t take the students seriously and they might not always take the faculty seriously. But if we’re both saying the same thing, maybe we can get them on the same page.”

Fuller’s biggest concern is whether the administration “actually” spoke to students and saw how this affects them.

“You can think about how it affects the budget all you want and that’s great but education isn’t a business. Education affects students and it should be for the students and about your students — not about your wallet and not about your budget,” Fuller said.

Fuller believes that even if these decisions aren’t affecting you or your major, students need to think about the students who are coming in next year and the year after that.

Dakota Richter, a senior biology major and the president of the Student Association (SA), expressed his thoughts on these minor cuts. When program cuts were first announced, they cut majors. According to Richter, “There was [such a lack] of communication on their end ... We were in the dark.”

At the start of the fall semester of 2024, there were rumors being spread on YikYak and through word of mouth of possible minor cuts. Richter expressed being extremely frustrated with the administration “because ... we had this issue last year. [They] should have been better prepared.”

Continued onto next page

After hearing these rumors, Richter called an emergency town hall meeting and expressed his frustrations.

At this meeting, Richter gave three reasons as to how this discrepancy between what was promised and administrators' actual actions could have occurred. "One, they lied to me. Two, they miscalculated or three, they lied to me," Richter said. According to Richter, they didn't answer him until the end of the meeting and said they "miscalculated or misspoke."

With the recent announcements of nine minors being cut, Richter again heard through social media. Because of this, he became even more frustrated. Richter believes that students have the right to open information, so why didn't he hear about any of these cuts?

"As the president, I should have been aware to tell the students what is going on and as a student, I should have been able to know about this information as soon as it happened," Richter said.

Richter called an emergency town hall meeting and a few minutes later, received an email about the meeting on that Friday, Feb. 21. In that meeting, Richter became aware of the minors being cut and wanted to wait to be able to discuss with students at General Assembly (GA).

"I wanted to have some time with Students for Fredonia, to talk with them, to tell [them] what is going on [and] to keep them in the loop before it got pushed out," Richter said. He was unaware that they were pushing the email out so early.

Richter discussed the original minors that they proposed in the fall and mentioned that many minors involving minority groups were proposed. This made him extremely frustrated.

"You cannot cut minority grounds in a minority area when you have minority students on a campus," Richter said. Richter has been told by word of mouth that these minors involving minority groups will not be cut due to the current political climate, and he is thankful to that degree.

According to Richter, with the current list, three or four of those minors were self-deactivated by their departments.

Richter discussed that the administration doesn't see student initiatives in those minors.

In Richter's own experience, he didn't find out about the deactivation until they were already voting on deactivating one of his majors. Now, Richter has about 40 credits that he can't use for anything.

"It hits a little more when this type of stuff occurs because I was directly affected and I have friends that are directly affected so that [is] frustrating to see," Richter said.

Richter mentioned his Chief of Staff, Isabelle Price, who "is all for protest."

Richter, however, is more of a facts type of person. "Give me the facts, let's see the facts and then I'm going to try and help out ... policy-wise."

According to Richter, he takes off his student hat and puts on his SUNY representative hat in situations like these. Once doing that, he's not just looking at SUNY Fredonia. He's looking at all 64 campuses to advocate at the statewide level.

"I think it's incredibly important that our student groups [have] protests ... I am doing a lot behind the scenes that I'd be more than open to tell people about," Richter said.

In the future, he would like to see more of the data aspect and promises being kept. "So if you're cutting and doing this,

show us promise. Show us [the] future. What are you planning? What are your initiatives? Because right now, I don't see those initiatives," Richter said. "You're giving me good ideas on how to get out of the deficit, but where is the future hope [for] after the deficit? I'm not seeing that."

Richter mentioned that SA is looking to do a mass protest in April "whether it's minor cuts, women's rights, equal rights, trans rights, Black rights, affirmative action, all those things." Richter is currently collaborating with some student groups about a time and place where they can protest and walk through Fredonia and the town.

The Leader reached out to David Starrett for clarification on the proposed 15 minor cut list and the current nine minor cut list and was told: "There was no list of 15 minors being proposed."

These 15 minors that were proposed in the fall came from the charge for the Joint Task Force on Academic Minors that was approved by University Senate on Sept. 30. After this was iterated to Starrett in a follow-up email, no response was received.

The Leader also reached out to President Kolison for a time to meet to discuss these minors and was told there was nothing available for this week.

"We came here as ... students to pursue an education that fulfills us and people are getting that taken away from them," Fuller said. "It's important for us as students to be able to advocate for why we came here and why we like Fredonia and why we choose this school out of 1,000 other schools in the country ... Use that to advocate for students in the future because they might not have that same [opportunities]."

"You can think about how it affects the budget all you want and that's great but education isn't a business. Education affects students and it should be for the students and about your students — not about your wallet and not about your budget."

— **MASON FULLER**
President,
Students for Fredonia
SUNY Fredonia

Fredonia mayor threatens to call National Guard for this year's FredFest

ABBIE MILLER
Editor-in-Chief

ABIGAIL JACOBSON
News Editor

Warning: This article contains mentions of violence.

SUNY Fredonia has become synonymous with several things: its concentration in music, the history of its teaching programs and FredFest.

First debuting 45 years ago, FredFest is an annual event held the weekend before “dead week,” or two weekends before finals week.

Up until 2015, the celebration of the school year was hosted by SUNY Fredonia itself as a school-sanctioned event.

National musical acts were brought in to perform, beer stations were set up to provide alcohol to those 21 years and older and students were contained in the grassy area between the Williams Center and the quads.

Since the weekend stopped being associated with the school, however, the event has changed dramatically.

FredFest now serves as a source of pandemonium for the local Fredonia, Dunkirk and University Police Departments, with an ever-growing spike in incidents ranging from sexual assault to shootings and stabbings to public intoxication.

In the past 10 years since FredFest stopped being school-sanctioned, a rising tension has also grown between community members wanting to protect their property and Fredonia students wanting to celebrate the end of their school year.

A poll aimed at detailing the general student body’s opinions was shared through YikYak and Instagram on Feb. 24. It received 110 responses, which will be summarized as follows.

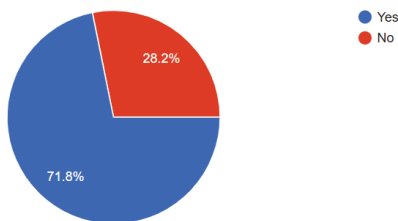
Of the poll’s respondents, 71.8% of students had attended FredFest in the past and 28.2% of students had not.

When asked if respondents would attend a SUNY Fredonia school-sanctioned event to occur the weekend of FredFest, only 17.3% responded “Yes.” Approximately 54% of respondents replied with “Maybe” and 28.2% answered “No.”

Those who responded with either “Maybe” or “No” to this

Have you ever attended FredFest?

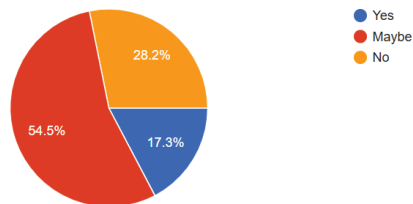
110 responses



Graph taken from the poll conducted on Feb. 24.

If SUNY Fredonia were to create a school-sanctioned type of substitute event to occur the weekend of FredFest, would you attend?

110 responses



Graph taken from the poll conducted on Feb. 24.

question were then prompted with a follow-up inquiry about which events would have to be offered at the school-sanctioned alternative to guarantee those students’ attendance.

The most popular suggestions to be included at a school-sanctioned FredFest were food trucks and musical performances from national artists (such as Flo Milli, Noah Kahan and other B-list musicians), each of which had 78.5% of votes.

Another idea to increase interest in a prospective on-campus FredFest was for the school to provide alcohol to students aged 21 and older upon review of ID, which 65.4% of respondents chose.

Considering the fact that FredFest is known to be an event that is heavily influenced by alcohol consumption, it is somewhat surprising that such few respondents chose this option as attracting students to a school-sanctioned version of the weekend. This suggestion may have received relatively few votes under this consideration because this would prevent individuals without an ID stating them to be 21+ from receiving alcohol, and thus somewhat deter underage drinking.

Other additions that would make students more likely to attend an on-campus FredFest include local act musical performances (50.5%), yard games (43%), crafts (34.6%), and athletic games (24.3%).

Just over 9% of respondents chose the option “Nothing could make me attend.”

When asked to supply their general feelings upon hearing that administrators and the local government are planning on cancelling the off-campus FredFest for a school-sanctioned rendition of the event, only 8.2% of respondents claimed to be “excited” and “interested in attending the new event that will be hosted by the school.”

In comparison, 58.2% chose the option “Upset, I am angry that this is considered a priority above other issues such as the boil water orders and budgetary deficit.”

As the second-most chosen response, 48.2% stated that they were “Sad, I think this prevents students from being able to celebrate the end of the school year.”

About 12% of respondents answered that they were “happy” with the proposed cancellation because they “believe it may

Continued onto next page

Continued from previous page

make the area safer” and almost 40% claimed to be “neutral” about the topic, being able to “understand the viewpoints of being both happy or upset about the current state of FredFest.”

The penultimate survey prompt asked respondents what they felt was the most problematic and significant issue that currently occurs at FredFest since it has stopped being school-sanctioned.

The highest-voted answer was “Violence (shootings, stabblings, macings, etc.),” which received 88.8% of votes. Other popular concerns were “Disorder (people shouting, fighting, etc.)” (44.9%), “Littering” (37.4%), “General unsafety (people on roofs and/or doing illicit substances, etc.)” (34.6%), and “Vandalism” (31.8%).

Trailing with the least amount of respondent concern was “Underage drinking” (22.4%), “Public urination” (16.8%), “Loitering on/around businesses or others’ properties” (15.9%), and “Violation of open container laws” (12.1%).

To end the poll, respondents were asked to supply any questions or comments for the SUNY Fredonia administration or for the town of Fredonia.

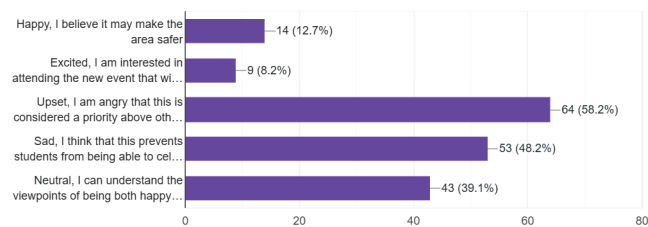
One user discussed how FredFest is a way for their peers to celebrate the end of the semester before leaving to go home for a few months. They also mentioned how they heard that the majority of violence that occurs at the event is not done by Fredonia students.

“FredFest has been something I have very much enjoyed in the past and is something that I am so excited for after this very long semester ... It’s a way for my peers and I to celebrate the semester before we go away for a few months or longer depending on the circumstances. It would be incredibly disappointing to have this celebration and bonding experience taken away from us. I have also heard that the major violence that has occurred was not from SUNY Fredonia students (I’m not sure how accurate that is though), so why should we get punished for something that our students didn’t do. There are bigger things for the school and town of Fredonia to be worried about (like the budgetary deficit, cutting of programs and organization of certain programs as well, and the boil water orders that happen AT LEAST once a semester, if not more, which impacts the whole town on a much larger scale). While I can acknowledge that there are some safety concerns, it is very disappointing to hear that an event that a lot of students look forward to for a long time is being considered to shut down.”

Some respondents mentioned that there are other priorities that are more important. One user stated, “the town has its priorities so wrong,” while another responded with, “Why are

What is your general feeling upon hearing about the school’s and mayor’s efforts to prevent FredFest, as it has been in the recent past, from occurring?

110 responses



Graph taken from the poll conducted on Feb. 24.

you so intent on fixing this when you can’t even make our water safe to drink? Where are your priorities?”

For some students, FredFest may be the highlight of their year, their last taste of freedom before the adulthood that follows graduation.

“Fredfest is a quintessential part of the year[-]end Fredonia experience. Whether there is an official FredFest or not, students will still celebrate it as they see fit. Therefore, instead of cancelling it entirely[,] there should be efforts by the university and town to encourage and reinforce responsible celebration while providing education on the consequences of poor and[/]or illegal behaviors.”

Michael Ferguson remembers when it was the college who hosted FredFest.

Although Ferguson has only been mayor of Fredonia for one year, he has seen the impact the infamous event has had on the community.

“I always thought it was a nice event for Fredonia college students ... to socialize, to celebrate the end of the year and get ready for the last week [of school],” Ferguson said.

However, last year’s FredFest broke that straw.

According to Ferguson, “[it was] the shooting a year before ... one stabbing led to three stabbings [and] fights where we found a couple of Fredonia State students basically with their heads cracked open on the sidewalk. That’s not FredFest.”

Ferguson says that business and small shops in Fredonia are scared and FredFest “is a nightmare [for them].” He adds that business owners are “constantly upset” that their properties are getting damaged and feel the need to close their businesses for that weekend.

“It’s not what any community expects ... [that’s] not what normally happens in our community the other 362 days of the year,” Ferguson said. “We’re just trying to find a happy medium.”

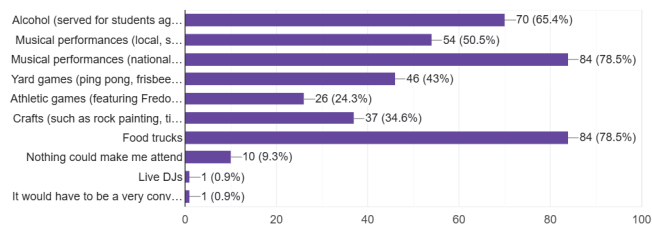
Ferguson believes that, “you’re never going to stop it off[-] campus but it doesn’t have to [escalate].”

He wants to protect students, Fredonia police officers, residents and the businesses in Fredonia. He mentioned that after past FredFests, directional signs have been yanked out of the ground, post office boxes have been tipped over and local businesses have had windows broken. Some residents of Fredonia even go on vacation and get out of town so they don’t have to deal with FredFest.

“This is a college event for Fredonia State current students and hopefully future graduates,” Ferguson said. “We embrace that, but we need to get back to that for the safety of every-

If you responded “Maybe” or “No” to the last question, which of the following would make you most likely to attend:

107 responses



Graph taken from the poll conducted on Feb. 24.

body.”

“We’re willing to work with everybody. We don’t want to enforce something that doesn’t necessarily have to be enforced, but if the people are going to continue to invite these people into the community, then we are not going to have any other choice,” he argues.

Ferguson believes that some of the community will be ecstatic that FredFest is being curbed. However, that’s not the mayor’s main goal. “We’re not here to destroy it and end it. We’re willing to work with the college to control it.”

In his opinion, the college has to take some responsibility because a majority of those who attend FredFest are Fredonia State students. He acknowledges that FredFest used to be an on-campus event but things have changed due to not having the population and money Fredonia had before.

According to Ferguson, they have caught certain sororities and fraternities inviting people through social media and “we’ve asked them not to do that.” The Fredonia police have gone door to door every year because there are certain fraternities and sororities that contribute to bringing in people from other colleges and areas.

“All I’m asking is that we find a way to make it safe, that we talk to our fraternities, our sororities and our students and say ‘Please ... don’t advertise on social media,’” Ferguson said.

The Fredonia mayor has made it clear that he wants the college to take repercussions. Ferguson described an incident that occurred many years ago whereby a woman was at a house party and they were doing flaming shots. When she threw the shot back, her hair, face and the house were set on fire. According to Ferguson, the woman suffered third degree burns and was hospitalized for months.

“What were those repercussions? Those students never set foot in Fredonia State again and never graduated,” Ferguson said. “That’s not what we’re looking for.”

Ferguson would like to come up with a solution by discussing with the college, students and student body. “We either come to a solution where we [work together] with the college and the students and the student body [to figure out] how we can put on two days worth of activities on and off the campus,” Ferguson said. “Or, unfortunately, I put an eight o’clock curfew on the village and bring in the National Guard ... Hopefully we don’t ever have to get to that point.”

Ferguson does not want to end FredFest. However, “if [these crimes continue], we’re not going to have any other choice.”

If FredFest was to be stopped, Ferguson is fearful of a negative response from students.

In fact, one of the poll’s respondents wrote, “Cancelling FredFest will make students more likely to hold some other event in spite.”

Another student added, “Best case scenario[:] they turn it back into a music festival. Worst case scenario[:] you make the students angry and you get a bunch of drunk students purposefully messing up the town in protest.”

According to Ferguson, the next few weeks will be important in deciding what to do about FredFest. “We [either] can work together and make this a safe place for everybody, or the village does its best to make sure it doesn’t exist and we don’t want to do that.”

Ferguson has been told by some people that “you can’t touch [FredFest]. That’s important to the college.”

“We’re going to have to find some way to say, let’s do this.

Let’s work together,” Ferguson said.

Ferguson would like to see FredFest back on campus with food trucks, local or regional music and activities for students. He mentioned the thought of a beer truck for those who are of legal drinking age. He would limit it to two tickets per student, with one ticket per drink. He also thought about the idea of checking on students on their way in and out to ensure that they are okay.

Some respondents seconded this alternative to make FredFest a ticketed event again:

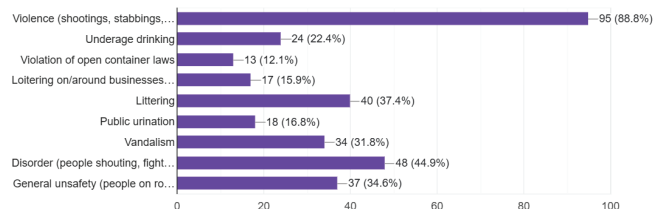
“The University stopped being involved in the celebration, and since then, the University and the Village have no control over FredFest weekend. The weekend was once filled with beer, hot dogs, and national headlining artists on campus. Now, students have free rein and we’ve seen what they’ve done with it ... My suggestion: make FredFest a ticketed event again. Fredonia students get one free ticket and can pay \$10 or \$15 for a guest ticket. Block off the Water Street Municipal Lot and have Fredonia Police monitor the event throughout the day. One of the bars downtown could potentially be part of the event and have an outdoor beer tent or a similar setup. Shut everything down around 8 or 9 o’clock at night, and students will either go home, gather with a small group of friends, or go to the local bars.”

Another respondent gave a similar alternative in an attempt to reduce the violence at FredFest. “[W]hen the sun goes down and everyone goes to the bars is the time most incidents happen. So don’t shut down [F]red[F]est ... police the bars.”

With consideration to the potential changes that may be inflicted by the mayor and/or administration, The Leader will continue to monitor and provide updates regarding FredFest.

What do you believe is the most problematic and significant issue that currently occurs at FredFest as it has been in the recent past?

107 responses



Graph taken from the poll conducted on Feb. 24.

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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

February 14: A report was made for aggravated harassment, where the victim was receiving multiple calls/texts. A warrant has been issued.

February 14: A report for criminal mischief was made due to the finding of a bathroom in the University Commons lobby being damaged. The report has been closed by investigation.

February 15: A report for larceny was made for a bicycle being stolen from a Nixon Hall bike rack. The status of this report is "prosecution declined."

February 19: A report for harassment was made for a neighbor dispute in Nixon Hall. The status of this is that it has been "turned over to Student Conduct."

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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MARCH SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

- WEDNESDAYS MARCH 5, 12, 19, 26 - 8PM TO 10PM: TRIVIA NIGHT
- THURSDAY MARCH 6 - 8PM TO 11PM: SCAREOKE - BELT YOUR FAVORITE TUNES
- MONDAYS MARCH 10, 17, 24, 31 - 5PM TO 10PM: 10% OFF FOR SERVICE INDUSTRY PROFESSIONALS
- THURSDAY MARCH 20 - 6PM TO 10PM: OPEN MIC NIGHT - ALL ACTS WELCOME
- THURSDAY MARCH 27 - 7PM TO 11PM: LIVE MUSIC PERFORMANCE
- FRIDAY MARCH 28 - 7PM TO 1AM: KIKI AT THE TIKI - LGBTQ+ CLUB NIGHT

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Life & Arts

Roommates release song on Valentine's Day in support of domestic violence survivors

MIA CIECHALSKI
Life & Arts Editor

Warning: This article contains mentions of domestic violence.

Music is one of the best ways to let out emotions that are otherwise difficult to express.

To that effect, two best friends and roommates, now creative partners, released their very first single “you should leave him.” on Valentine’s Day.

Emma Porter, a junior music industry and public relations major, and Bella Albino, a junior sound recording technology (SRT) and vocal jazz major, have been best friends and roommates since their freshman year. Recently, they became creative partners.

The two decided to make music together in August. At the time, Porter was journaling about unresolved issues from her past.

“I was just at that point when I came home from work, producing beats, singing out a bunch of nonsense. I really wanted to write this and make it into a physical thing,” said Porter.

Their song “you should leave him.” reflects both Porter’s and Albino’s experiences with domestic violence from past relationships.

They wanted to create something that lets them take back their power and for other people who may have gone through this or who are currently going through something like this to relate to as well.

“The song ... kind of just channeled [the] anger that I feel,” Porter said. “This song is from a woman’s side of a relationship where there’s emotional abuse, manipulations and physical abuse.”

Both Albino and Porter created the song because they felt that society allows men in relationships to be as angry as they want, and there’s no backlash for it.

“This song is about the events and thoughts I had during that time, the anger I had towards [my ex-boyfriend] and being able to verbalize it ... and say, ‘It’s okay for me to be ... angry about this,’” said Porter.

When the song was released, Emma decided to change her stage name from Otto to Porter.

“It came from my mom’s middle name and my grandmother’s maiden name. I wanted to honor the women who came before me,” said Porter.

Albino agreed to help Porter create the single not only because she understood Porter’s perspective, but also because she felt that the SRT department can sometimes get stale while she’s recording her own rendition of other people’s work.

“The objective is just to meet the deadline and get the grade,” Albino said. “So, listening to Emma’s demo, I was like, ‘Okay, finally, something I’m

really excited about.”

This was Albino’s first opportunity to use everything that she’s learned at Fredonia for a project that’s her own, not just for school.

For Albino, creating this song was a powerful and healing



Single cover art for "you should leave him." by Emma Porter and Bella Albino.
Photo via Spotify.

experience.

“I was also in unsafe situations, and when you are in something like that, you feel completely powerless,” she said.

To Albino, their song represents reclaiming the power that was taken from them.

“All of the power you took from me, I am taking it back, and I’m going to speak on this because it takes so much strength to finally say, ‘I’m done,’” said Albino.

When they first started to create the song, it was very collaborative and the song metamorphosed throughout the process.

When they were finalizing the demo and getting it into the studio, both Albino and Porter were building ideas off of each other.

“Throughout the whole process, it just kind of changed and grew and became so much bigger than I think we thought it could,” said Albino.

Porter said, “It was a strong start for a single, because I feel like right off the bat we knew exactly what needed to be said in the first song.”

Porter hopes their song will encourage other people to talk about their experiences, to feel emotions they should have towards it and encourage them to be angry at the person who created their domestic violence experience.

“The song is a reminder that it’s not your fault, and you have every right to call this person out and tell them that they’re in

the wrong,” said Porter.

When Albino was in a domestic violence situation, she didn’t have anything she felt she could turn or relate to.

“I hope this is something that people [who] are recovering or out of this situation can connect with, and for the people that are currently in it, [they] can use this song to find the strength to leave,” said Albino.

Both Porter and Albino hope their song can help people feel a sense of community.

“Love is not supposed to hurt. Love is not supposed to be upsetting. Love is real and it is found all around you. It is found within yourself, in communities of people who have the same experiences as you, and it is out there. You can find the strength in yourself to leave,” said Albino.

Porter and Albino have a message for everyone out there: you are loved.

The QR code to the right is being used to collect donations for the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence.



Pick a card, any card: Students premiere tarot art depictions

MAISIE STRADER
Special to The Leader

Warning: Depictions of violence.

All people believe different things; some believe in magic, and others do not. However, just because you can’t see it doesn’t mean it isn’t real.

Tarot readings are a controversial topic to many, but to some, they’re a fascinating look into the world of spirituality.

These readings are influenced by the shuffling of cards to predict your thoughts, feelings and future.

Students Andrea Conner, Ben Evans, Brianna Gasper, Evelyn Osborne, Em McKeivitt, Isabella Weber, Jocelyn Seib, Julian Santos, Kadence Osborne, Ariel Wiechmann, Maya Kulick, Nia Anand, Natalie Weber and Ryan Turtel recently opened an artwork exhibition called ‘Myths & Magics Tarot.’

The exhibit was located in the Emmitt Christian Gallery, which was available to view from Feb. 10-26.

The students state, in the write-up titled “The Mission,” “With only the 22 Major Arcana, the 14 of us each took on one or two artworks that represented the meaning of each card and fit into the theme chosen for this project: Myths and Magics. Instead of sifting creativity, artists were encouraged to research as much as they could about their chosen cards and look at other decks. Then, when it came down to illustrating that work, each

artist could take their own creative liberty with their newfound knowledge — many of which choose to take myths surrounding their tarot and breathe it new life.”

The first card in the arcana is called “The World,” which was designed by Andrea Conner. Her work is a digital illustration of a woman with brown wavy hair, wearing a flower crown, reaching into the world from the sky and pointing with her finger to create a hurricane. Conner states, “Mother Earth continues to create new stories on Earth. In her hair, you can see a wreath which represents the cycle from beginning to end to new beginnings.”

The second card represented is titled, “Judgement,” a digital media piece by Evie Osborne. Judgement is pictured as a bird-being standing on top of a pedestal ablaze, as a man begs before them. The viewer may also see smaller details such as the shadow of a hand in the dress of the bird. The artist took creative inspiration from the Egyptian God Osiris or the Phoenix from various mythologies.

The next card is labeled “The Sun,” a digital illustration by Isabella Weber. The illustration is pictured as a knight or hero, in bronze armor drawn with a red cape. The Sun is depicted as the head of the knight as he points his sword to the viewer with his other hand clenched. Weber says, “The Sun card, when pulled upward, is meant to represent vitality, self-confidence and success.”

“The Moon,” the fourth arcana card, is a digital media piece

Continued onto next page

Continued from previous page

by Evie Osborne. Osborne shares, “I grew up with tales of the Puca, an Irish Shapeshifter known for its trickery, and felt it would work perfectly with The Moon’s Tarot themes of deception.” The work is shown as an image of a younger-looking boy, drawing a curtain back to find the moon, along with three wolf-like animals. Osborne uses colors such as purple and black to embrace the glow of the white moon in the middle.

The next card is “The Star,” a digital illustration by Ryan Turtel. Turtel puts a pop art theme to his, using all sorts of colors, to capture the Sun as a rockstar. He says, “The Star tarot card represents bringing hope, renewed power and strength to carry on with life. The card itself is a message to its reader to have faith, and trust in your own self-fulfillment, which I related to a lot.” The artist mentions that he took inspiration from the mythological figure, Astraeus, the titan god of the stars.

Following the order, there is “The Tower,” a digital illustration by Benjamin Evans. Evans shows a windmill that has captured a bird on the rotator blade. The bird sits there as he draws himself sitting on the tower. “The crow will come down one

Nia Anand says, “In the artwork I depicted Kali, who is the goddess of destruction in Indian Mythology, as a symbol of death.” Kali is shown in the middle of fire, dancing around three people with horns growing from their heads and bleeding on their faces.

The “Hanged Man” is a digital illustration by Brianna Gasper. She focused her image on a naked woman tied to a rock with rope, as a snake slithers around her. Gasper says the piece is, “An illustrated telling of the Binding of Loki from Norse mythology. The Binding of Loki is the tale of how the trickster god ran from Asgard to hide away in Midgard — the mortal realm — after he murdered the god of light, beauty and purity, Balder.”

The next card in the gallery was titled “Justice,” also by Brianna Gasper. This illustration depicts Egyptian gods at a table. Gasper writes in the caption, “An illustrated telling of the Weighing of the Heart, a ritual performed by the gods Anubis, Ma’at, and Ammit. A mortal’s heart would be weighed by Anubis, the Guardian of the Scales and god of funerary rites, upon a set of scales in the Duat or the Underworld — against



“The Magician” and “The Chariot” by Julian Santos.
“The Hierophant” by Natalie Weber.
Photos by MAISIE STRADER | Special to The Leader

day, when all his sketches are swept away, and his grievances fade into sacred, bittersweet memories.”

One of the most popular cards is labeled “The Devil.” Student Em McKevitt says, “For my card, I wanted to focus around ... this idea of overindulgence and how innocent it may seem at first.” The Devil is depicted as a red coat dressed in a black cape, spilling a red liquid from his hands, with the moon behind him.

The next card is called “Temperance,” a digital illustration by Kadence Osborne. The card is depicted as a blinded sorcerer who wears a long dress with an attached cape, levitating a clock in her hands. Osborne says, “When I took on this card alongside Strength, I could see how much they both played into each other. However, there was one aspect I found in Temperance that Strength didn’t quite focus on [—] time. In order to achieve peace of mind, one must be patient in the pursuit of greatness.”

Another popular card in a tarot deck is called “Death.” This card represents transformation and new beginnings. The artist

a feather which represented Ma’at, the goddess of truth and justice who was responsible for maintaining order in

the universe.”

The “Wheel of Fortune” card was a digital illustration given to student artist Ariel Wiechmann. The audience may see a red woman with long orange hair floating in the sky holding an astrological wheel. The signs on the wheel represent the four signs, Aquarius, Scorpio, Leo and Taurus; which represent the four elements: water, fire, air and water.

The next card is called, “The Hermit.” The artist Maya Kullick says, “The Hermit, while also finding comfort in its home, finds comfort in its own thoughts and company.” The Hermit is shown to be snuggled into bed with a long beard dipping into his mug.

Ultimately, Myths and Magics has shown this timeless vision with a new bold digital theme, offering a personable selection of artistic concepts with each person structuring their card the way they see it.

ACADMIC ADVISING SERVICES
PRESENTS...



PREPARE FOR ADVISING

FALL 2025 REGISTRATION DATES

OFFICIAL ADVISING PERIOD BEGINS
MARCH 24TH

MARCH 24TH - GRADUATE REGISTRATION
MARCH 28TH - HONORS REGISTRATION
MARCH 31ST - SENIOR REGISTRATION
APRIL 1ST - JUNIOR REGISTRATION
APRIL 2ND - SOPHOMORE REGISTRATION
APRIL 3RD - FRESHMAN REGISTRATION

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SPORTS

5th Quarter Column: Why Has it Become Harder to Watch Sports?

MITCH HORUCY

Asst. Sports Editor

Gotham Sports, Hulu, ESPN+ and Max subscriptions cost a grand total of roughly \$670 per year.

That's the amount someone living in Buffalo would have to pay in order to be able to watch every Buffalo Sabres game this season.

This may sound ridiculous, because it is. However, it has become the new norm in this age of streaming.

An example of another sport with this issue is baseball, specifically the MLB.

They have MLB.TV, a website where you can watch every MLB game being played.

However, fans may be upset when they see some of the games may be "blacked out," which is a term sports fans have become familiar with. This is when the broadcast of a game isn't shown due to a multitude of reasons. These could be protecting the team's home territory, encouraging fans to attend games or just fulfilling a television contract.

In Buffalo, the following teams have games blacked out and can only be watched on the teams' local streams: the New York Yankees, New York Mets, Cleveland Guardians and the Pittsburgh Pirates.

This means that if you lived in Buffalo and wanted to watch, for example, the Mets play the Philadelphia Phillies, you'd have to pay for the local broadcast plan.

Keep in mind, the Mets play six hours from Buffalo, and the Phillies are eight hours away.

Another great display of craziness is the MLB and the state of Iowa.

Six teams claim Iowa as "home territory." Those teams are: the Chicago Cubs, Chicago White Sox, St. Louis Cardinals, Kansas City Royals, Minnesota Twins and the Milwaukee Brewers.

So someone living in the state with MLB.TV would have games for all six of those teams blacked out.

A last example from a different league is the NBA, which is really struggling with viewership.

Some of the talk about declining viewership has been overdone, but the league has seen a 5% decrease in viewership compared to last year.

Similarly to the MLB, the NBA has NBA League Pass, a paid service that gives you access to every NBA game.

However, blackout rules are once again applied.

Relating it back to Buffalo again, even with League Pass,

you'd still need to pay for the local broadcast to watch New York Knicks and Brooklyn Nets games.

While people will point to the decrease in things such as too many 3-pointers, load management and too long of a season, I think the answer is much more simple.

It's too hard to watch games.

Going hand-in-hand with games being more difficult to watch is the decline of cable television.

In 2019, 84 million households had cable.

In 2024, that number is down to 40.8 million.

On the other hand, the number of households with digital pay TV was at 10.4 million in 2019.

That number is now at 22 million as of last year.

Before the rise of streaming, games on cable were much easier to access. Also, streaming-only games were unheard of.

The NBA does have nationally televised games almost daily, but that isn't enough.

A good example is the Knicks. They have 34 nationally televised games, good for third-most in the league.

However, that's still less than half their games, about 41% to be exact.

An easy fix would be to buy NBA League Pass and be able to watch the other 48 games, but unfortunately this isn't the case.

Living in Buffalo, or really anywhere in New York, you'd have to specifically buy the Knicks local TV package, which is MSG.

The fix isn't simple at all which makes things harder, but if every major sports league besides the NFL wants to find out how to fix viewership, making the games more accessible is a great start.

Lacrosse sets sights on Puerto Rico, playoffs

MATT VOLZ
Sports Editor

As spring sports begin, teams often deal with postponements or cancellations due to bad weather.

Fredonia's women's lacrosse team is no different, as they've already seen two of their first three games go unplayed.

However, in a few weeks, they'll ditch the cold and clouds for warmth and sunshine with a trip to Puerto Rico.

The trip is similar to the Florida trips that baseball and softball teams attend each year.

In fact, the lacrosse team was on their own trip to Florida two years ago when they were first contacted by the company that hosts the games, according to head coach Tori Poffenberger.

Poffenberger has been to the tournament before as a player, during her senior season at St. Mary's College.

"The competition is great down there all the time, and it's cool to just experience a different culture and a different spot," she said.

The company, Puerto Rico College Sports Tours, has brought college teams to the commonwealth every year since 2006, according to its website.

In addition to lacrosse, the website says they also host basketball and volleyball tournaments.

The team plans to arrive in San Juan early on Saturday, March 15.

In their first game, they'll face Worcester State at 9:30 a.m.

on Monday, March 17.

The other matchup will pit the Blue Devils against Springfield College at 11:30 a.m. on Tuesday, March 18.

But outside of the games, the team will get a chance to explore Puerto Rican culture, according to Poffenberger.

She said the team will also get a chance to explore Old San Juan, a part of the capital city that captures its history but also features shops and restaurants.

Exploring a different culture gives the team the opportunity to bond and deepen their own team culture, something Poffenberger credits as already being strong.

"I just feel like our culture is where we want it to be," she said. "I truly feel that every single player is invested in our vision, in our values and in our goals that we want to achieve."

That's a sentiment shared by Sydney Buchko, a graduate student in her fifth year on the team.

"I think everyone's bought into what we've been trying to build," Buchko said. "We have a lot of goals with each other that are bigger than just ourselves."

Buchko started at Fredonia in the fall of 2020, and she played for multiple head coaches in her first couple of seasons before Poffenberger arrived in 2022.

Buchko is pursuing her master's degree in inclusive childhood education, and she said that much of the reason she decided to stay another year was because of her coach.

"I always say that once [Coach Poffenberger] came in, my

Continued onto next page



Photo by BECCA TORNCHELLO | Sports Photographer

Continued from previous page

lacrosse experience actually began,” she said.

Buchko is the oldest player on a team with several freshmen, and both she and her coach said the freshmen have already made a positive impact on the new season.

“I love [our freshmen] all across the board,” said Poffenberger.

According to Poffenberger, the team has five core values they adhere to, referring to them as “TJUDD”: trust, joy, unity, dedication and discipline.

“[Those] are the five that we sat together and came up with as a team,” she said, adding that the values represent not only what they strive to be as a team on the field but as people off of it.

Unity is one of the values that has led the players to success, according to both Buchko and Poffenberger.

Poffenberger said that when she first arrived, there wasn’t much cohesion between the attackers and defenders on the team.

However, she said that she is thrilled to now have “midfield feet” on both attack and defense, highlighting the speed and agility of her players.

“We’re fast enough to put pressure on teams ... Our players can get up and down the field,” she said. “I think that helps to build that cohesiveness across the field and across positions.”

These values were put to the test in the team’s opening game of the season, a road matchup against Nazareth.

It was early in the third quarter when Nazareth scored its third consecutive goal to open up a 5-1 lead over the Blue Devils.

Poffenberger said she asked her team how they could play with their values in an effort to refocus them.

Although the Blue Devils fell 11-9, it was a much closer final score than their 2024 loss to Nazareth, which came by a final score of 13-6.

Buchko was limited offensively, as the opposing Golden Flyers honed in on the fifth-year midfielder.

However, other players stepped up.

Senior Emma Cockerel was the team’s leading scorer, with three goals and two assists.

One of the aforementioned freshmen, Miele Baran, added a goal and an assist.

“People are understanding and really owning the fact that their role might change game to game,” Poffenberger said. “We’re owning those roles and really accepting the fact that when one person isn’t able to do something, someone else is going to fill in like a puzzle piece.”

She said that the team’s goal this season is to make it to the conference playoffs, a height the program hasn’t reached in a decade.

The last time the Blue Devils reached the SUNYAC playoffs was 2015, a season in which the team made it all the way to the quarterfinals of the NCAA tournament.

Poffenberger commended the improvement she has seen in her three years as head coach, and she said that getting back to the conference playoffs would be “a really exciting thing” for the team.

Their chance to make some noise in the conference begins as soon as they return from Puerto Rico, as their first conference game is slated for 11:00 a.m. on Saturday, March 22 at Plattsburgh.



Photo by BECCA TORNCHELLO | Sports Photographer

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Overcolumn: Questioning?

THE QUARTERBACK

Executive Producer of Overcall

THE MUSICIAN

Overcall Producer

RADIO REBEL

Overcall Producer

Hello!

We are The Quarterback, The Musician and Radio Rebel: producers and hosts of the radio show Overcall, right here at Fredonia. Overcall 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 he/him pronouns and is a senior at Fredonia.

On each episode, the hosts and guests of Overcall 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 WDVL 89.5 on www.fredoniaradio.com.

This column runs in conjunction with Overcall 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 put your knowledge of each other to the test with some trivia!

This is different from general trivia — you're not answering Jeopardy-style questions about ancient history or science.

Instead, these trivia questions are a way for you to get to know each other better!

Trivia can be played with as many people as you'd like. It can be done as a couple, with friends or maybe with family, although they might know you fairly well already.

There's an episode of "Friends," season 4 episode 12, to be exact, where the group plays a trivia game with questions about each other that only they would know the answers to.

That's an example of a way it can be played with friends, but you can also play it with your romantic partner(s) as well.

You can make the questions as easy or as difficult as you'd like, depending on how long you've been together and how well you know each other.

We talked about the idea of this being a first date, and we decided it could be a good way to get to know each other.

The Musician brought up a similar idea called "The 36 Questions that Lead to Love," a series of questions they ask on every first date.

The questions are split up into three different sets, with each containing 12 questions.

Some of the questions include:

If you could have dinner with anyone in the world, who would it be and why?

How is your relationship with your mother?

What is your greatest accomplishment?

What does friendship mean to you?

This is a bit different from trivia, but it could be a good way to get to know someone and deepen your relationship with them.

Either way, the goal of this date idea is to learn more about each other and have some fun while doing it!

Questioning?

What is questioning?

Questioning is when you start to question your sexuality and/or gender.

A lot of times, queer and questioning are interchangeable with the Q in LGBTQIA+.

However, that doesn't necessarily mean you are a part of the community.

It's all about preference if you feel comfortable identifying with the LGBTQ+ community.

If you want to stick with the cisgender and straight label while you figure it out, that's fine too!

Remember that you can change your name, pronouns, gender and sexuality at any point, and can change it as many times as you need.

Questioning is about discovering who you are (and who you aren't) and who you like (and who you don't).

Many people have an instance or a memory of their "gay

awakening,” which is something that makes you think, “Huh... maybe I am not straight/cisgender?”

Having that feeling that you might not be straight or cisgender can be terrifying for a lot of people, especially when they have grown up in a closed-minded area or household.

Discovering yourself can be hard to do with societal pressures, physical limitations and internalized homophobia.

It can also be a beautiful learning experience to figure yourself out!

On the show, we discussed that those who are questioning have the opportunity to express themselves in a variety of ways without necessarily permanently deciding on a label.

For example, if you think you might be bisexual, try using that label of “bisexual,” test it out and see if you like it.

If you decide that it’s not for you, move on to whatever you think might be more fitting for you, and continue that process until you feel comfortable!

It’s not necessary, but many people change their hair, clothes, style, attitude, friends and anything else that would make them feel more connected with their unique identity.

However you express yourself, questioning is a part of life, and it can also be a beautiful journey of self-discovery.

Remember, you do not need to come out and be openly queer to anyone you don’t feel comfortable coming out to. Come out when you’re ready, and come out in any way you feel fits you.

If you are someone who is questioning, best of luck to you, and remember, the Lovercall crew always has your back!

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.



Ice, ice, maybe? The problem with Fredonia's lack of salt and plows

JENNA DRAKE
Special to The Leader

Over the past few months, SUNY Fredonia and its surrounding communities have received debilitating amounts of snow and ice storms.

Feet of cold, wet gunk accumulate in only a few hours while chilling temperatures aid Jack Frost’s weekly chicanery.

From the first of December up until Feb. 14, the Fredonia/Dunkirk area has had 30 accounts of snow, ice and/or rainfall reports, keeping in mind that many of these accounts can last for a period of several days at a time. Although not all of the reports were severe accounts, they still had a considerable effect

on all of the students and members of the Fredonia community.

There have been daily complaints from students and staff surrounding the maintenance of campus sidewalks and walkways during these winter months.

Many students, including myself, have fallen on sheets of ice simply walking to class or to the parking lot. One of my closest friends, although clumsy, slipped and fell down a flight of stairs outside Fenton Hall just last week, which happened to be a relatively calm day for snow and wind. Just today, I heard a classmate saying how bad their leg hurt due to slipping and falling on ice.

There are two separate issues here: plowing and salting. First and foremost, plowing is not only needed on main ac-

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cessways to academic buildings but on the entire campus. Many students have jobs off-campus, as well as student teaching obligations where they need to access their car, and should not be at risk of hurting themselves on the walk there.

It is simply discriminatory to NOT acknowledge the students who have mobility-based disabilities in this discussion. Not providing access to cleared sidewalks is purposefully creating an environment that is more challenging for students with disabilities and the campus as a whole. If SUNY Fredonia wants to take action in protecting its students and accommodating those with disabilities, they could at least shovel a path.

I understand the fact that many members of the groundskeeping staff are underappreciated and possibly underpaid (that information is publicly available), but it does not diminish the need for comfortability and safety on our campus.

It seems as though our safety is only a concern for three feet of snow or more, but can be ignored with anything less than this, including sheets of ice and slippery slush.

Salt seems to come and go as it feels as though the minute the ice begins to melt, the sidewalks suddenly become salted, but when the ice is actually a problem, nothing.

I have discussed my concerns with one of my professors from last semester, Dr. Brian Boisvert, and he proposed the idea that since SUNY Fredonia is only about four miles away from its main water source (Fredonia Reservoir), there may be a runoff pollution effect from using rock salt. As Fredonia is less than 15 minutes away from this source, it may actually be contaminating our water with a highly increased chloride level.

Although this is concerning and needs to be addressed with efficiency, I honestly cannot believe that SUNY Fredonia has a genuine concern for the environmental impact of rock salt, as other environmental issues such as effective recycling or reduction of waste haven't been on their radar.

I'd also like to address the rock salt shortage occurring throughout the country as a possible point to why less salt is being used on campus.



Photo by GIULIANNA LALOMIO | Chief Copy Editor

According to local and national news sources, including WGRZ, a Buffalo news source, there has been a struggle to maintain regular quantities of rock salt.

“We were able to get some rock salt last Thursday and Friday, maybe seven pallets, and we were selling it as fast as we could put it out,” said the manager at Ace Hardware in Lancaster, NY.

Although this amount of salt may sustain the needs of a few hundred driveways, it doesn't compare to the salting needs of the many surrounding college campuses, not to mention other public spaces.

I'm sure that other SUNY schools throughout New York are experiencing salt shortages, but if there really is a scarcity problem, why would Fredonia not inform their students about the issue? Also, what plans are being put in place to tackle the issue of our collective safety?

Our administration must understand that the needs of every student should be met, not only during several feet of snow but also during regular snow and ice. No student or faculty member should be injuring themselves or worrying about that.

When one of the larger storms took place in the first two weeks of December, classes were canceled and plans were made to promote the safety of the students.

An email was sent to students and staff on Dec. 12 to inform them about the cancellation of classes, which included this statement: “The safety of our students, faculty, staff, and visitors is always our top priority.”

According to Fredonia's Head of Groundskeeping Richard Newton, “We started planning for it when I was getting the forecast about a week in advance, to get as much equipment ready as possible.”

It seems unfortunate that only extreme storms take serious planning, and I wonder if, with the same time and care, our community could feel a bit more confident in their own safety on school grounds.



Photo by GIULIANNA LALOMIO | Chief Copy Editor

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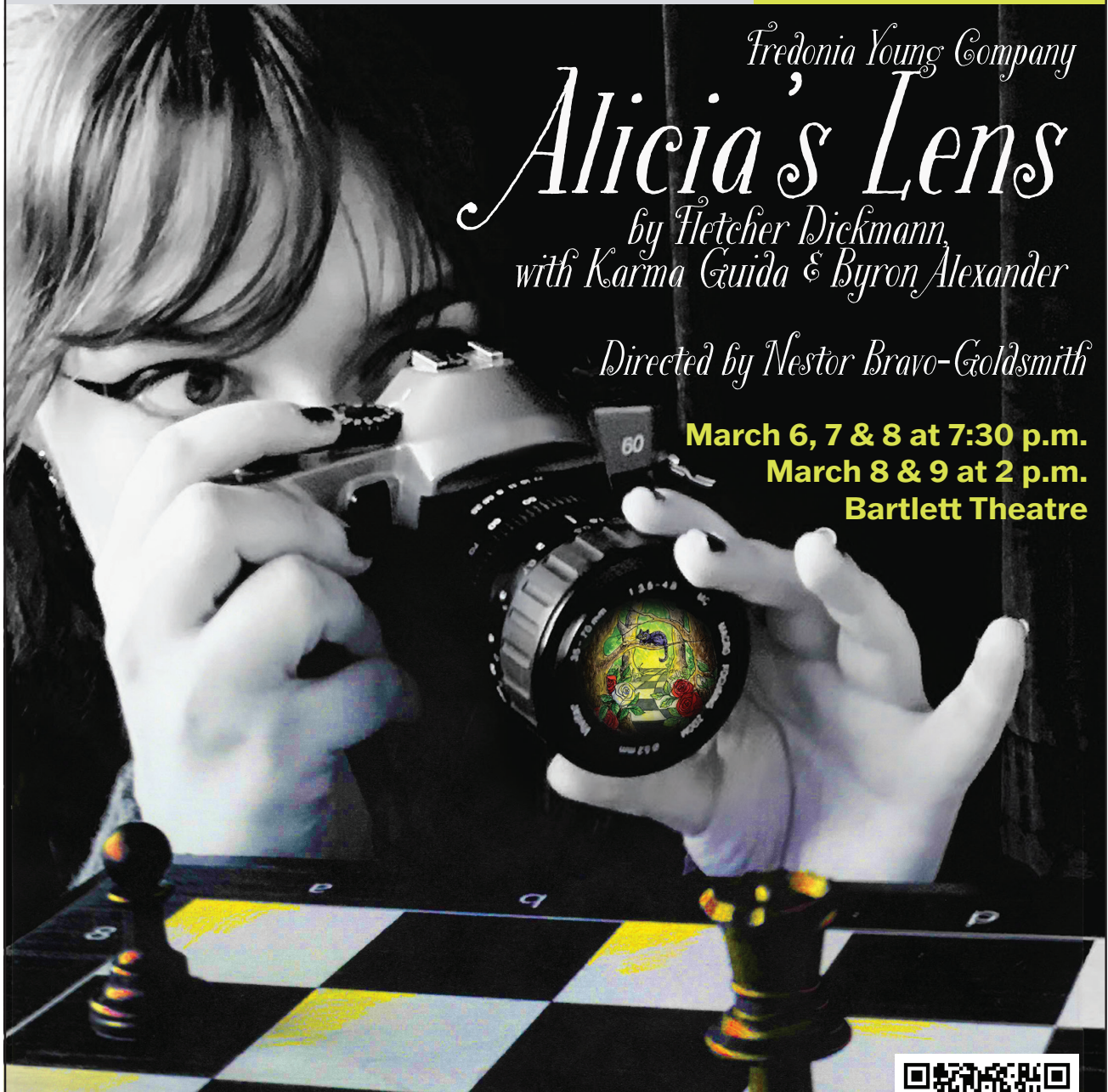
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Search for Meaning

Anonymous

Warning: This poem is messy, like life. Thank you for reading if you do.

I am a writer. And I have lost all meaning.
I am a poet. I have lost all meaning.
I am lost in what the meaning is.
What is my meaning? Do I mean anything?
What is the meaning of this?

We are alive.
We have the opportunity
To create a better world.
We can watch from a distance.
And put our heads in the sand.
I'd rather be compressed into a sand and mud mixture.
Never move again and watch the waves roll onto me.
The danger of that, though,
is that if we don't get our heads out of the sand,
the tide will rise,
and we will drown.

I am a transgender man. And I am scared.
It feels like, maybe, we could be wrong.
Maybe, it feels like,
America is not Free.
Maybe I am wrong.
Please, oh please, prove me wrong.

I am a transgender man. And I am scared.
I am scared for people like me.
I am scared for you.
I am scared of who is in charge of the American
government.
I am scared of being silenced.

I am scared of dying from those hands.
Those old, rich, Nazi-coded hands.
So why are we being quiet?
Are we not talking about this?
Did they already silence us?

I am a transgender man.
The world is exploding in front of us.
And I am the only one crying on the floor of this
gender-neutral bathroom.
The world is exploding.
Assignment number three is due on Wednesday.
The world is exploding.
It's all around us. It affects you, your parents, your friends.
The world is exploding.
And it will all crumble onto me in the gender-neutral
bathroom.

TikTok doom scrolling, I roll my strained eyes.
Your feed is sparkly foods, book reviews.

Mine is executive orders ridding my existence.
The world is exploding.

"In my life I have not scratched my ear without war in the
background." ~ Brian Turner

Kendrick Lamar stands before the President.
Standing between the two halves of the American flag.
He displayed a televised revolution.
The media complained about Black rap.
"The revolution is about to be televised." ~ Kendrick
Lamar

"The revolution will not be televised." ~ Gil Scott-Heron
It's a shame nobody has a camera.

The news outlets no longer give facts, but opinions.
No truth is spread but lies are heard.
The world is exploding.
Lies are fed to us like babies.
The spoon airplane has fallen out of the sky.
We pretend our FYP is catered to us on factual information
instead of polarized opinions of famous news anchors.
The world is exploding.
People are fleeing. People are taken, deported.
People are killed.
The revolution is already in the streets.
Police sirens have never filled Fredonia as much as they do
now — have you noticed?

I noticed the rise in sirens during FredFest weekend.
I thought that was months away.

If you are still scared,
Put your head back in the sand.
It is safer, it is calmer.
I want to go back, too.
Get back in touch with reality.
The world is exploding.

The revolution is already in the streets.
Not at the beach.
Not in the sand.
Not in the gender-neutral bathroom.
The world is exploding.

Scrolling on your feed won't save me.
Or you.
I am finding the meaning of my life again.
This is my plea for you to find yours.
The world is exploding.

This poem is my way of doing something about it.
This is a way I am finding a meaning.
A reason to search for meaning.
What will you do?
The world is exploding.



Satire and parody for Fredonia

SUNY Fredonia's "Minors" email sparks panic

MEGAN KIDBY
Scallion Editor

The entire student body of SUNY Fredonia was thrown into turmoil this week after the administration sent out an email with the subject line “[Students] Minors,” leaving many to assume the university had made the bold decision to ban anyone under the age of 18 from campus.

The email, as it turned out, was merely an announcement regarding minor program cuts — a clarification that arrived far too late to stop the hysteria. By the time students actually opened the message, rumors had already spread faster than the frat flu.

“I thought, ‘Oh my God, they’re kicking out all the freshmen!’” said one on-edge sophomore. “I mean, I know some of them can’t even figure out how to use the dining hall, but this felt extreme.”

Resident assistants (RAs) reported widespread confusion in the dorms, with first-year students frantically packing their belongings, unsure if they were being expelled or if this was just another obscure SUNY budget cut.

“One kid tried to argue that since his birthday was in a week, maybe he could just hide in a Mason Hall practice room until

then,” said one Alumni Hall RA. “I wasn’t even sure what to tell him.”

Meanwhile, local bars and liquor stores allegedly rejoiced at the prospect of an all-18+ campus.

“Honestly, we didn’t hate the idea,” admitted a bartender at BJ’s, who wished to remain anonymous. “[It] would’ve cut down on all the fake IDs.”

Eventually, a follow-up email titled “Wait, No, Not That Kind of Minors” was sent, clarifying that the message referred only to academic minors, not the complete erasure of youth from campus. By that point, however, the damage had been done.

“That was the most terrified I’ve been since the Tickler,” admitted one senior who was seen holding on to her laptop for dear life. “I still don’t trust any email with a vague subject line. What’s next? One titled ‘Majors’ that just says ‘We’re canceling all of them?’”

SUNY Fredonia has promised to be more careful with its subject lines in the future. However, sources say students remain on edge, bracing themselves for the next cryptic email titled “Faculty” or “Tuition,” which they fear may bring even worse news.

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"A Sitdown With Brock" season premiere gets leaked

BROCK PAPKE

Special to The Leader

Trigger warning: This article contains strong language and depictions of cartoon violence and injury.

In a turn of events that surprised absolutely no one, the final season premiere of "A Sitdown With Brock Papke" has been unceremoniously leaked onto the internet, setting off a chain reaction of chaos, confusion and reluctant viewership.

The leak of this final season premiere has sent shockwaves through the media landscape — or, in other words, every Fredonia media club.

In what was originally construed as an ordinary security breach or a corrupted hard drive hack, the incident quickly exploded into a full-blown scandal which we, as staff of The Leader, reluctantly had to report — mainly because we were bored. Someone, somewhere, wanted this episode to see the light of day, and all signs point to an inside job.

According to an anonymous tip, this is going to be the "Watergate of TV broadcasting as we know it right now." From what we gather, it's going to be the most unhinged, batshit-crazy episode of all time. Sources remain unidentified, but we have suspicions.

With the leaked episode on our hands, the staff of The Leader had a private screening of the season premiere in their office, and the reactions to the leak ranged from general confusion and somewhat positive reviews to downright refusing to acknowledge the existence of the show.

Some of the so-called "highlights" (better described as moments that left the staff permanently scarred) include:

- Brock Papke dedicated two agonizing minutes of his monologue to saying "We are so fucking back."
- The host physically fought two of the three working cameras that belong to WNYF Television and Stu-



Photos of the leaked season premiere of "A Sitdown With Brock".

Photos provided anonymously.

dent Association. Miraculously, neither camera broke, which is arguably the most surprising aspect of the episode.

- Only positive review was that the audio quality massively improved from previous seasons. It doesn't sound like a kindergartener slapped every different effect from Adobe Audition onto the audio file. Is this Papke actually improving or did he pull a Steve Jobs and outsource editors from different countries?
- After a bumper ripped straight from "Adult Swim," Papke brought out 1997 NBA Rookie of the Year Allen Iverson for an interview, making it a spectacle with 50 confetti rockets exploding at once. The noise was so loud that the audio was peaking for a solid 30 seconds. Was Papke bringing out Hall of Famer AI as a response to the claims of using ChatGPT?
- The host asked him about "up dog" and tips for getting into crypto. Iverson, ever the professional, insisted on real questions. Papke agreed, then immediately followed up with, "Why did my wife leave me?" — derailing the interview into an impromptu therapy session.
- One of the cameramen interrupted the Iverson interview in the middle of the episode to ask to take a selfie with the guy. The episode's least shocking moment was the cameraman's lack of professionalism and control over his employees.
- Phill Will, his sidekick (or maybe not?, we don't even know at this point), tries to get his contractual minute of the spotlight, only to receive a flying dropkick by Papke. The reasoning for the kick was that Papke's chimichangas weren't cooked correctly so he had to suffer. Will was left sweating on the floor, barely able to catch his breath, as Papke stood over him, grinning like he'd just won a prize. Will got carried away on a stretcher as Papke tried to diffuse the situation by quipping, "I'm not paying for your medical bills."
- A few potshots were directed towards The Leader, describing them once again as "so-called journalists," an insult so grand and profound that he said it twice more after that.

At this point, Head Scallion Editor Megan Kidby was found on the floor underneath her office rocking back and forth in horror, finding out that they were not even halfway through the leaked episode.

As she gazed at the screen, her expression was a mix of disbelief and exhaustion. The only response she could muster was a low, exhausted murmur: "I can't... I can't do this."

At that moment, it became painfully clear that no one, not even the most seasoned among us, was prepared for the mad-

ness that was unfolding.

The remainder of the episode follows Papke as he attempts to carry out another interview with his usual antics, only to be repeatedly distracted by a fly buzzing around the studio.

The guest appeared confused but powered on. As Papke asked questions, the guest tried to answer, but Papke was constantly sidetracked, swatting at the fly or losing his train of thought entirely.

Despite the fly's constant interruptions, Papke pushed on, his professional demeanor slipping as the situation grew more chaotic. The constant one-liners were hit-or-miss as the fly kept buzzing around his head.

The episode wrapped up with Papke hilariously chasing the fly around the studio wielding a chainsaw, something straight out of a "Looney Tunes" rip-off. As the fly zipped around, Papke stumbled over equipment, knocking over microphones and knocking into his guest, who could only watch in disbelief.

The scene reached a crescendo as Papke cornered the fly, only for the fly to make a last-minute escape, leaving Papke panting and frustrated.

In the final moments, Papke delivered his tired sign-off, but before he could even take two steps, he slipped on Will's sweat from earlier, the chainsaw still running, flying up and landing on him. All that's left is Papke's blood-curdling screams as the chainsaw unexpectedly engulfs him off-screen, and the screen fades to black as the guest watches in horror, unable to look away.

The episode concluded and The Leader office was thick with disbelief as the credits rolled.

All anyone could do was stare at the screen with that shocking ending. Some exchanged nervous glances, others shook their heads in disbelief, but no one was willing to be the first to speak.

Despite the leaks, we were left with more questions than answers: Is this real? Did we accidentally discover the series finale? More importantly, is Papke dead?!

We, the staff of The Leader, have no clue about the status of Papke and his apparent death or Will after that brutal drop-kicking from earlier in the episode. Reports are saying that there has been an apparent falling out between the two but at this point, we are too shocked to even know if any of



Photos of the leaked season premiere of "A Sitdown With Brock".
Photos provided anonymously.

this is real or not. It's all up to speculation.

Will has been unusually quiet since the leak, which is odd given his typical role of enduring Papke's verbal tirades and occasional physical outbursts.

Do we take this silence as him mourning Papke's death? Or could it be that Will, long relegated to the shadows, finally saw his moment for vengeance? I mean, he did get drop-kicked by the psychotic host after trying to get his moment to shine.

Was this his Deep Throat moment? If anyone had the motive to expose this debacle to the public, it's him. But hey, we're just so-called "journalists," so what do we know? Too soon?

With the official release of this final season premiere looming, one thing is certain: we are not ready. We may never be ready. But rest assured, we will be here, watching, whether out of journalistic duty or sheer masochism.

And should another leak emerge, The Leader will be ready to investigate, no matter where the breadcrumbs lead. We just need at least a week to recover.

Join The Leader for General Body meetings!



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



In The Leader Office!
S206 Williams Center

HOROS

ABBIE MILLER

Editor-in-Chief, Boasting a 5-hour-a-day Average Screen Time

With the Oscars right around the corner and the Grammys, Critics Choice Awards and BAFTAs taking place last month, there is seldom a time period as rich in notable celebrity moments as now. Many say that the rise of the Internet and this age of celebrity stardom are eroding away at the very fabric of American society and the notion that we are civilized creatures who can resist a fascination with shiny things.

But I'm not so sure.

I mean, I know that our attention spans have lessened and that we are currently facing a variety of issues, from the rise of artificial intelligence to the spread of fake news.

But at the same time, the Internet is more than this ever-growing inevitability. It can be an escape, a place where people come together over the fact that Demi Lovato has an alter ego named Poot and Chris Rock was slapped because of a G.I. Jane 2 joke (can't wait to see it). Out of all of these distinct references that cross language barriers but which we would be hard-pressed to explain to a Victorian child, which pop culture moment are you?



Aries

Nicole Kidman's AMC commercial

Hosting get-togethers and festivities with friends is a skill that you have perfected while in college, and it's also one that's brought you great joy. Your loved ones come to your place for magic — to laugh, to cry, to care. Remember to also care for yourself from time to time too, and do what needs to be done to protect your own peace as well as everyone else's.



Cancer

Keke Palmer saying "Sorry to this man" while hooked up to a lie detector

You are universally loved by quite literally everyone who comes into contact with you, and for good reason. But when it comes to your thoughts and feelings about yourself, you have the habit of drawing a blank. You hope you don't sound ridiculous, but there are times when you just don't know who this man is — the man (or person) in the mirror.



Taurus

Rihanna's Super Bowl LVII Halftime Show pregnancy reveal

The caregiving aspect of your personality can sometimes be at odds with the fierceness that you present to the rest of the world, not unlike Geminis. When push comes to shove, you know how to be both the caretaker that your family needs and the self-made mega-star that better have her money.



Leo

Pedro Pascal dancing to Devo on SNL's 50th Anniversary Show

Is it a rendition of the running man? Is he doing calf raises for exercise? You let your freak flag fly much like Pedro Pascal lets his arms cut through the air — without embarrassment. This confidence is a quality that few possess but many aspire to, so remember this any time that you feel down about yourself.



Gemini

Eric Mays and his behavior in the courtroom

You have a natural talent for making others laugh, but you also know when to stick up for yourself. Going to a public school growing up taught you all you needed to know about how to go low-ER when others go low. And you'll make sure that your voice is heard, even if it's when you're telling others they have the floor.



Virgo

TikTok edits of Luigi Mangione

So you enjoy kicking back to "He Could Be The One" by Hannah Montana or "Daddy's Home" by Usher. Who could blame you? You understand what it's like to be as hated as you are loved. The feeling of being scrutinized for what you believed was the only solution to an institutionalized problem is something you know well.

COPES



Libra

The voice reveal of Pinocchio in the 2022 cartoon remake

You are anxious to leave Fredonia. Your countdown until graduation started the moment you saw that clock tower, turning to your dad and pleading to be on your own. "I've got the whole world to see," you said. But however difficult living in the moment can be sometimes, it will prove worthwhile when you look back and are able to cherish the memories that you made while you were here.



Capricorn

The Kendrick vs. Drake beef

Sometimes, you feel as though you are on top of the world. You feel like you have just performed a hit song at the Super Bowl Halftime Show, the same song that got you several Grammys and earned you critical praise from fans and enemies alike. Other times, you may as well just cancel the rest of your tour. It's up to you to decipher just how "Not Like Us" you are from those around you.



Scorpio

That photo of Daisy Edgar-Jones with Paul Mescal and Phoebe Bridgers in the background

I'll be blunt. You have deep-seated romantic issues that sometimes prevent you from seeing what is right in front of you. Your tendency to self-sabotage may not lead you to remove your hand from your partner's back instead of your friend's, but it doesn't take a picture or video to see that there are some issues you need to work through before you can effectively be a page in someone else's love story.



Sagittarius

Fleetwood Mac's 1997 "Silver Springs" performance

Now I'm not a Sagittarius, personally. But time must have cast a spell on me because I won't forget this performance. And you're just like me in that respect. I won't tell you whether you're Stevie Nicks or Lindsey Buckingham, but let's just say you know what it's like to face the anger of a woman whose voice will haunt you.



Aquarius

The entire "After" movie franchise

Based off of a Wattpad fanfiction, the Harry Styles look-alike used for this film is ... well, they tried. Let this be a lesson to other filmmakers and to Aquarians like yourself: You can't outdo the do-er. So why try? Instead, embrace your own personality and admire the quirks that make you you.



Pisces

The video Howie Mandel shared when he had COVID

Is this COVID-related, Howie? Is it? You try to make connections between unrelated incidents sometimes, to the point that it may disturb those around you who are attempting to decipher these supposed links. At the end of the day, maybe that thing that you swore was meant to be is just a coincidence.

