



THE LEADER

SUNY Fredonia's Student-Run Newspaper



Freshman LeFevre making strong first impression

See page 16

Third shelter-in-place of semester shuts down White Street
Cuthbert brings unique writing passions to Fredonia
Dr. Angela Pucciarelli Rice: Leading athletics, individuals
[OPINION] Fredonia still failing to provide menstrual products
[SATIRE] An exclusive (non-) interview with SUNY chancellor

THE LEADER

News

3 Third shelter-in-place of semester shuts down White Street

4 Sidewalks outside Science Center, Houghton Hall crumbling

5 Police Blotter

5 Ethnic & Gender Studies Symposium highlights student, faculty research

Life & Arts

6 Chicas brings award-winning news to Fredonia Radio Systems

8 Birger Vanwesenbeeck: Fredonia's well-traveled Belgian professor

10 Cuthbert brings unique writing style to Fredonia

12 Step into sustainability: SUNY Fredonia's Earth Day expo

Sports

14 Angela Pucciarelli Rice: Leading athletics, individuals Freshman

16 LeFevre making strong first impression

18 Fifth Quarter: Examining options for Bills' top draft pick

Opinion

20 Bring back equality: Fredonia still failing to provide menstrual products

22 What happened to Fredonia's sculpture program?

24 Who really controls what we can or can't read?

26 Lovercolumn: Red, Yellow and Green Flags

Scallion

28 An exclusive (non-) interview with the SUNY chancellor

29 Braces are torture. Like, actual torture.

30 Horoscopes

We are looking to fill these roles. Contact us if interested! Email leader@fredonia.edu:

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"I follow three rules: Do the right thing, do the best you can and always show people you care." - Lou Holtz

Proud member of The Associated Collegiate Press.

Third shelter-in-place of semester shuts down White Street

ALEX BUCKNAM
Managing Editor

In the past month, Fredonia and Dunkirk have experienced three shelter-in-place orders.

The most recent was on Wednesday, April 8, when Fredonia Police issued a shelter-in-place for residents of White Street due to police activity.

The shelter-in-place went into effect around 3 p.m., even though Fredonia Mayor Michael Ferguson stated that police activity started early Wednesday morning.

Residents of White Street have said that activity began even earlier than that. At least one resident recalled police activity beginning around 12:00 a.m., raising concerns about communication timelines.

During that time, residents, community members, students and staff were confused about what was going on.

Unlike the previous shelter-in-place orders by the Dunkirk Police Department, community Facebook groups had very little updates.

The only information they had was that a situation was going on, which added to public uncertainty.

White Street was filled with Fredonia, Dunkirk, state campus and SWAT police cars, with reports saying that police were carrying assault rifles.

Police cars were blocking all street entrances, but reports state that people could still walk on the sidewalk, creating a mixed sense of restriction and access.

Mitch Horucy, a resident of White Street, said that police with assault rifles knocked on his door and told him to stay inside and lock his doors two different times.

“They came knocking on my door and told me to stay inside and lock my door,” he said. “I thought this would be a multiple-day thing.”

The shelter-in-place was lifted early Wednesday evening, with a suspect in custody.

The suspect was later identified as Kyle L. Denhardt.

On Friday night, the Fredonia Police Department reported that Denhardt was unwanted and refused to leave the residence.

Denhardt was also believed to have a handgun at the time.

Fredonia police tried to communicate with Denhardt, who eventually barricaded himself in the residence.

The police department obtained a search warrant and entered the house.

They discovered a large number of guns including what is referred to as a “ghost-gun,” high-capacity magazines, ammunition and rifle parts.



Photo by MITCH HORUCY | Sports Editor

Denhardt is charged with second-degree menacing, second-degree criminal trespassing, second-degree criminal possession of a weapon, two counts of third-degree criminal possession of a weapon, fourth-degree criminal possession of a weapon for possessing a ghost gun and five counts of fourth-degree criminal possession of a weapon for unfinished frames.

Denhardt was taken to Chautauqua County jail for centralized arraignment, and his bail was set at \$400,000.

This comes after a March 24 incident in which Christopher Marcinkowski shot a police officer, who was wearing a bullet-proof vest, during a drug raid on Franklin Avenue in Dunkirk.

A shelter in place was issued for that area, and a standoff occurred.

It also comes after an incident in Fredonia on March 7, where a townwide shelter-in-place order was issued after Jahmaul Johnson led police on a high-speed chase, later ditching his car and going on foot.

After the incident on White Street last week, Fredonia police put out a statement thanking all agencies and departments involved.

They said they will put out a statement of what happened during the incident after investigations.

No further arrest details have been made public at this time.

Under New York State law, arrests are public information, but under the New York Freedom of Information Law (FOIL), police departments can temporarily withhold records if it could interfere with law enforcement investigations.

The Leader will provide updates as more information becomes available.

Mitch Horucy, mentioned in this story, is the Sports Editor of The Leader.

Sidewalks outside Science Center, Houghton Hall crumbling

JASPER BATEMAN

DEI Chair

The walkway between Houghton Hall, the Science Center and McEwen Hall is crumbling and splitting apart into jagged edges, causing students to trip over it.

“I personally have become victim of this multiple times,” said sophomore geology major Sam Post.

Dr. Thomas Hegna, chair of the geology and environmental science department, stated that the walkway is made of Pennsylvania Bluestone.

Pennsylvania Bluestone is a fine-grained sandstone, making it porous and less resistant to certain climate conditions.

Specifically, Pennsylvania Bluestone is vulnerable to wet-to-dry and freezing-to-thawing cycles, which Western New York is known for.

This causes the walkway and the stone to start breaking.

The bluestone first made a prominent appearance on campus when the Science Center was constructed, between the summer of 2011 and the fall of 2014.

This makes the walkway over a decade old.

According to WeConservePA, the problem will only get worse.

Pennsylvania Bluestone being this broken for its age and the climate conditions that Fredonia is under will cause the walkway to break away more.



Photo by IZZIE NOELLE | Photo Editor



Photo by IZZIE NOELLE | Photo Editor

Post worries that if the situation is not fixed, students, bike riders and skateboarders will be affected more than they already are.

Post and other students worry about their current to day-to-day lives on campus because they might trip on the broken sandstone, and they have to be more vigilant when walking to class.

They also worry about how much worse this situation could become.

With spring approaching and snow being gone, the damage that occurred during the winter is starting to be exposed.

“It will only keep wearing away and breaking,” Post said.

“In just a few more winters, it’s going to be way worse and will harm students more than it [does] now.”

Students walking isn’t just an issue. The campus has a portion of its student body that rides bikes, skateboards and scooters as their primary means of transportation.

“I’ve seen students on bikes and skateboards trip before,” said Post. “I worry that one day they will get seriously hurt.”

While Pennsylvania Bluestone is durable for high traffic areas, it can flake off in layers if it’s not properly maintained.

Combined with an ever-changing climate, it’s a recipe for exactly what we’re seeing now, according to Post.

If the Pennsylvania Bluestone is not sealed, water seeps into the pores of the rock and freezes.

This pops off pieces of the rock, causing it to flake.

Although Fredonia is no stranger to flakes of snow, flakes of sidewalk could create a much more dangerous issue.

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 in and around SUNY Fredonia. All information is provided on the University Police Department's website, <https://www.fredonia.edu/about/offices/university-police/blotter>. The Police Blotter will continue every issue, with new information regarding any new criminal acts that occur on the SUNY Fredonia campus.

Off-Campus:

Wednesday, April 8: Kyle L. Denhardt, 44, was arrested after barricading himself in a residence on White Street in Fredonia; an investigation is ongoing.

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.

Ethnic & Gender Studies Symposium highlights student, faculty research

Student and faculty research come together for the second annual Ethnic & Gender Studies Symposium on Wednesday, April 15, from 10 to 10:50 a.m.

The symposium will take place in the Williams Center, rooms S204-DE.

Intersectionality, gender, sexuality and transgender and non-binary experiences are among the topics featured in the event.

The symposium, open to all, highlights student and faculty research taking intersectional approaches in ethnic and gender studies.

This year's event will feature a faculty keynote by Dr. Heather McEntarfer, associate professor in English adolescence education and writing. The keynote is titled, "Working Toward Trans-Inclusive Educational Spaces."

McEntarfer teaches pedagogy-based courses for the English adolescence education major as well as creative non-fiction and media writing for the department's writing major.

She will discuss her recent qualitative research focusing on interviews with trans and nonbinary teachers.

Her essay, "It Has Made Me Stronger": The Strengths of Trans and Nonbinary Teachers," co-authored with Dr. Matthew Rice of Bard High School Early College, was published in the Oct. 16, 2025, issue of the "Journal of Queer and Trans Issues in Education."

In addition to McEntarfer's talk, three students completing their Social Change Capstone as part of their work in the Women's & Gender Studies minor will give short presentations highlighting their individual research projects.

Those students are:

Lain Pelonero (writing major): "Beyond the Binary: Exploring the Relationship Between Gender and Sexuality"

Damon Abbey (psychology major): "Advocacy Means Inclusivity!"

Brooke Waterman (psychology major): "Invisible Labor and Psychological Strain: An Intersectional Feminist Analysis of Emotional Labor."

For any questions, email Dr. Jeanette McVicker, EGS coordinator (mcvicker@fredonia.edu).

Life & Arts

Chicas brings award-winning news to Fredonia Radio Systems

AJ RUSSO

Special to The Leader

Fredonia Radio Systems, the university's student-run radio station, has seen continued success over the years, and it continues to grow as one of the best in the nation.

They have won multiple awards and have cemented themselves as one of the most successful college radio stations in the country.

Kevin Chicas, the station's news director, recently took home one of those awards.

Growing up in West Babylon, N.Y., Chicas wanted to be a music education major, and he would eventually be led on a tour of Fredonia Radio Systems.

"Jessica Tong, the professor of violin, took me on a special tour around the School of Music," Chicas said. "It led me to going to the radio station and wanting to check it out, and that's how I made it here today."

Chicas became the station's news director last May after he helped the station in various ways as a freshman.

"I was a WCVF assistant for my first semester here, and my second semester consisted of me helping out at the station," he said. "I was asked if I wanted to be the news director because many people were graduating, and I did not [want to] miss the opportunity being so interested in radio and communications."

Once Chicas became news director, he sought to build a team of news readers and writers.

"[During] my first semester as the news director we changed so much, we made a team and everything was running smoothly," he said.

In February, Chicas and Fredonia Radio Systems brought home four national awards at the Intercollegiate Broadcasting Systems conference in New York City.

"I ended up shooting for the stars, and it worked out very well," he said.

According to Chicas, one of the most important aspects of the station's success is the people who are a part of it.

"It is my favorite thing about being the news director here, everyone is passionate, the people who are a part of the station all work very hard at what they do."

Chicas added that the members of the station are willing to learn and teach each other.



Kevin Chicas poses with his 'Best Spot News' award.
Photo by MOLLY SUNICK | Special to The Leader

Many students in the radio station admire Chicas' personality.

Julia Klement, the station's chief archivist, said, "I love Kevin, I think he is very dedicated to his craft. He is very hands on with being the news director and [with] his music studies."

Danny Gazzilli, one of Chicas' news assistants, said, "He is always very organized, thoughtful [toward] the people he works with, and is also very focused as well as very reliable, helping me with my reading and writing for the radio station."

Chicas hopes to combine his love of music and communication in the future.

"I want to continue to pursue my career in music education and become a music teacher," Chicas said. He also wants to obtain an internship at a radio station somewhere near his hometown where he can learn more.

Chicas has been talking with iHeart Radio and Nassau Community College to see if he can continue to pursue his career in communications while becoming a music teacher.

To learn more about Fredonia Radio Systems, you can find them on Instagram @fredonia_radio.



News Editor

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Asst. Photo Editor



Ad Sales Manager



Asst. Art Director

Birger Vanwesenbeeck: Fredonia's well-traveled Belgian professor

EMILY SCHULTZ-CONE

Special to The Leader

Birger Vanwesenbeeck never thought he would be an academic, but life had other plans.

Vanwesenbeeck, now a professor at Fredonia, spoke with me over Microsoft Teams from Austria, where he is spending the remainder of his semester.

For Vanwesenbeeck, it was three in the afternoon.

He was dressed in a button-up shirt, as he is often seen wearing.

He is tall, possibly above six feet, but cannot be described as large.

His hair is short, brown and greying slightly. The same could be said for the man's full beard and mustache.

He greeted me from the archives of Stefan Zweig, an Austrian novelist and journalist.

The camera panned over to the book-lined shelves of the archive while he summarized his current research project.

The work is very slow. Archival research, he said, is perhaps comparable to the process of grief.

Zweig wrote in German, one of the six languages Vanwesenbeeck can read and speak to some degree.

Vanwesenbeeck grew up speaking Flemish, a dialect of Dutch. Around age 11, he began learning his second language, French.

"...I do have that privilege, starting at age 11, I had French and then throughout the rest of middle school and high school, Latin," he told me.

"Six years of five hours of Latin every week. German, unfortunately, not so much, which I'm kind of kicking myself for now," he says in reference to the Zweig archives.

"I was not a very good student of English, by the way, in high school ... That's only sort of kicked in later for me," he said.

Around age 14, he became interested in world literature.

To him, literature was, and still is, not about genre or national origins.

As a young teen, he began reading Russian storytellers, and eventually, American writers. Around this time, he also started exploring skills like guitar, skiing and cycling, which he continues into his adulthood.



Birger Vanwesenbeeck. Image courtesy of the SUNY Fredonia Department of Marketing and Communications.

“I did do the ride for Roswell a few years ago,” he shared. “I managed to collect \$750, and then I got to cycle over the Peace Bridge, which of course, is normally not open to cyclists, and the Rainbow Bridge in Niagara Falls. So, that was beautiful.”

Vanwesenbeeck is originally from Belgium, a country that he explained is big on cycling.

He still cycles, saying, “I do miss that here too. Now I live in Buffalo, so I can't help but miss the Hills of Tipa County.”

Cycling isn't the only thing Vanwesenbeeck noted about Belgium, adding that the nation's geography made it easy for travel.

“Well, I mean, of course, when you grow up in Europe, you know, family holidays are very often in another country, right? So, I grew up spending time in Austria, some time in France, Italy and Switzerland,” he said.

“When you grow up in Europe, you know, family holidays are very often in another country, right? So, I grew up spending time in Austria, some time in France, Italy and Switzerland.”

— **Birger Vanwesenbeeck**
Professor,
Department of English

He elaborated on his interest in traveling, saying it first became rewarding for him around age 16.

Traveling as a student in Europe can be very cheap, and he explained you can, “...actually get very far.”

The professor recounted his travel experience as a young adult who travelled on the EuroRail.

“For a month, you can go anywhere in Europe, you know, and if you're smart about it, I would, of course, I would sleep on this train. That way I could cut the cost of a hotel stay,” he said. “So, I would leave, let's say, I would leave Venice in the evening and wake up in Budapest in the morning.”

That travel experience, he explained, becomes even more meaningful if you can speak the language.

During Vanwesenbeeck's college years at Belgium's University of Antwerp, he studied dramatic languages with the goal of becoming a journalist.

He tells me becoming a teacher had never been a goal of his, saying, “I certainly also was not envisioning a career in academia, I don't.. my professors were... I don't know, I thought they weren't kind of connected to reality so much. And I thought that journalism was a way to still do the writing, but to sort of be more grounded in reality.”

For the duration of his senior year, he was an exchange student in the United States, more specifically, in Texas.

There, however, were some unexpected setbacks.

“... [Journalism] is not the kind of job where they simply hire new graduates,” he said. “I found myself, you know, turning to teaching in high school. That was sort of my daily job.”



Birger Vanwesenbeeck.

Photo via the State University of New York at Buffalo.

It was when Vanwesenbeeck officially moved to the United States that he landed the career he had envisioned for himself.

His freelance journalism began to take off, to the point where he had too many commissions to accomplish in a week.

Ultimately, he decided to continue his education at the University at Buffalo, where he received a Ph.D. in comparative literature.

In later years, he returned to UB as a professor before making his way to Fredonia.

While it may not have been what he had in mind, being an academic at Fredonia has opened up many possibilities for Vanwesenbeeck's research.

It has also provided him with ample opportunities to continue his work, and maybe even travel while he's at it.

“I would sleep on this train. That way I could cut the cost of a hotel stay. I would leave Venice in the evening and wake up in Budapest in the morning.”

— **Birger Vanwesenbeeck**
Professor,
Department of English

Cuthbert brings unique writing passions to Fredonia

SARA SUNICK

Special to The Leader

From Silver Creek to Georgia, from writing to gardening, Rebecca Cuthbert is a woman of many talents and hobbies.

She teaches a plethora of writing courses at SUNY Fredonia, one of her many jobs.

Cuthbert grew up about 10 minutes down the road from Fredonia, in the small town of Silver Creek.

She is the fifth of six children in her family.

She described herself as a “spacey person” as a child. She was very interested in the arts and English, more so art as a small child.

She’s always been interested in reading.

When she was younger, they didn’t have expensive entertainment, so she’d go to the library for story hour which encouraged her love for reading.

When she got a little older, she would check out a certain number of books at a time — she said her and her siblings would grab “all the books we could.”

Cuthbert still loves her hometown library and does free workshops for them.

Workshops are where people read each other’s prose or poetry and offer constructive feedback.

“The ones I take,” Cuthbert said, “are so fun and I’ve learned so much.”

One she describes as “rigorous” and “hardcore” is called Fright Club, run by Moaner T. Lawrence.

It is something you must apply to get into; there is lots of work every week and a strict schedule.

Another workshop Cuthbert regularly attends is called the Study Coven, run by author and scholar Lindsay Merbaum.

Cuthbert met her during the COVID-19 shutdown through an advertisement for an online workshop, run through a bookstore in Washington, D.C.

This workshop is about feminist horror, which happens to be one of Cuthbert’s specialties.

She loved the workshop so much that she continued to attend Merbaum’s workshops.

There was one about queer magical realism, but it was canceled by the bookstore.

Cuthbert encouraged Merbaum to continue the workshop without the bookstore, which they did.

Cuthbert is now a part of a Discord group for Merbaum’s workshops and classes, which are held “three or four times a year.”

She said, “I sign up for every single one.”



Rebecca Cuthbert. Image courtesy of the SUNY Fredonia Department of Marketing and Communications.

Cuthbert described her college life as “messy.” She had originally planned to move to Virginia, but “that didn’t work out,” she said.

It was the summer after her senior year, which meant it was too late to come up with a plan to go far away.

Cuthbert applied quickly to Jamestown Community College and ended up attending for a year as a communication major.

After that year, Cuthbert was still unsure of what she wanted to do.

Her sister lived in Georgia at the time, so she moved in with her.

She had to live there for a year to get residency because college was much cheaper that way.

For one year, Cuthbert went to Georgia State University as an English literature major.

Her route to the school was over an hour of driving, train riding and walking.

All her classes were on Tuesdays and Thursdays due to working full-time; she described this as “exhausting.”

After that year, Cuthbert transferred to the University of West Georgia for secondary education, which quickly changed back to English literature.

She went there for two and a half semesters.

It took Cuthbert five and a half years to get her bachelor's degree.

She returned home after her college endeavors in 2006, and soon after, she started dating her now husband.

Shortly after that, she went to graduate school at West Virginia University.

Cuthbert enrolled in a Master of Fine Arts program in fiction, graduating in 2011.

She came back home, and in 2012, she started teaching at SUNY Fredonia.

Eight years later, during the COVID-19 lockdown, she decided she'd go back and get a second bachelor's degree from SUNY Fredonia.

The experience was chaotic, to say the least.

The school's system had her in as both a teacher and a student.

"I was getting student parking stickers," she said. "It was a mess."

Cuthbert ended up getting a bachelor's degree in public relations.

She says she "always loved school," and that "learning is fun."

On the side of being a professor at SUNY Fredonia, she is the editor-in-chief at a small press called Undertaker Books.

The president of the press, D.L. Winchester, is a retired mortician — they publish "horror and dark fiction," which is right up Cuthbert's alley.

She also writes her own books, with her seventh one coming out this summer.

Her first book, "In Memories of Exoskeletons," "did fairly well for a tiny little chat book," she said.

It was, in her words, "validating," and she said it "gave me confidence to keep going."

It also won an Imadjinn Award for best poetry collection in 2024.

Her book "Self-Made Monsters" was an Imadjinn award finalist for best story collection in 2025.

Her books, in order, are:

"In Memory of Exoskeletons" (Alien Buddha Press, 2023)

"Creep This Way: How to Become a Horror Writer with 24 Tips to Get You Ghouling" (Seamus & Nunzio Productions, 2024)

"Self-Made Monsters" (Alien Buddha Press, 2024)

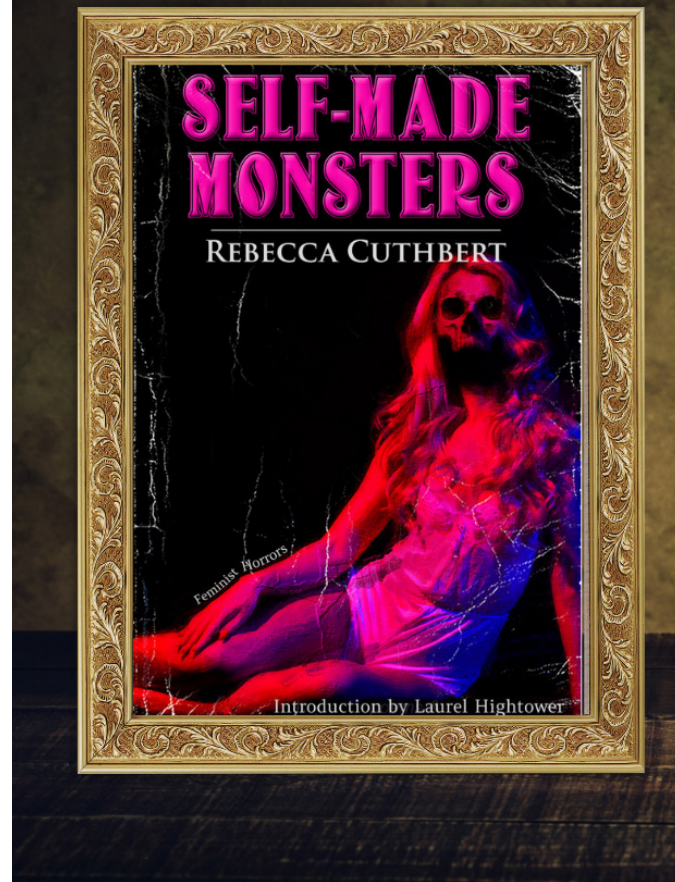
"Down in the Dark Deep Where the Puddlers Dwell" (AEA and Malediction Press, 2024)

"Six O'clock House & Other Strange Tales" (Watertower Hill Publishing, 2025)

"The Hauntings Back Home" (Undertaker Books, 2025)

Coming this summer, "A Cursed Thorn from the Hanging Tree" (Uncomfortably Dark Horror, 2026)

Not only does Cuthbert write, edit and teach; she's also been a volunteer at Lakeshore Humane Society since 2014.



'Self-Made Monsters,' written by Rebecca Cuthbert.

Image courtesy of rebeccacuthbert.com.

She said she "loves dogs," and she primarily helps with the dogs.

She also gardens, making homemade salsas, jams and pickles from what she harvests.

Cuthbert really loves teaching at Fredonia. "I love my students," she said.

"I also feel like it's good to do the thing you're teaching," she said. "It convinces the students that you know what you're talking about."

Cuthbert lives a "ridiculous" life as she puts it.

She really is full of talent and strives to make something out of it that's truly inspiring.

"I also feel like it's good to do the thing you're teaching. It convinces the students that you know what you're talking about."

— **Rebecca Cuthbert**
Adjunct Lecturer,
Department of English

Step into sustainability: SUNY Fredonia's Earth Day expo

MAISIE STRADER

Special to The Leader

On Wednesday, April 22, people across the world will pay tribute to our home planet on Earth Day.

But how many college students concern themselves with the day and what it stands for?

“I could say that because of the internet and social media, and everybody carrying phones and computers around, people are just more aware that it is an issue,” said Dr. Tracy Marafiotte, event coordinator for SUNY Fredonia’s Earth Day Expo and associate professor of communications. “But I don’t think that it has translated into meaningful increased actions.”

Earth Day began on April 22, 1970, to raise awareness on environmental issues and sustainability.

Since then, it has grown into an international movement encouraging individuals and communities to take action in protecting the planet.

Continuing that mission locally, Fredonia’s Department of Environmental Health, Safety and Sustainability will hold its annual Earth Day Expo & Farmers’ Market on Wednesday, April 22, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the Williams Center Multipurpose Room.

The event will feature 32 tables and is free and open to both the campus and community.

Leanne Sczepczenski, a senior and president of FredGrows, will be present at the event, standing at the FredGrows table.

Sczepczenski emphasized that Earth Day is about more than just awareness.

“[It’s about] connecting people with nature, teach[ing] sustainable practices, eliminating plastics and most importantly, hav[ing] fun,” says Sczepczenski.

As part of their outreach, FredGrows will be handing out “seed bombs,” small biodegradable paper balls filled with seeds that can be tossed into soil to promote plant growth.

“You can chuck it anywhere,” Sczepczenski added, highlighting the simplicity and accessibility of the initiative.

Last year, the expo arranged different activities such as upcycling t-shirts into no-sew reusable tote bags, and presented multiple projects brought together by Marafiotte’s Environmental Communications class.

Beyond the event itself, Marafiotte has also encouraged her students to engage more directly with sustainability efforts.

In past years, she challenged students to collect and keep all of their personal waste for an entire week as a way to look at the realities of overconsumption.



Dr. Tracy Marafiotte. **Image courtesy of the SUNY Fredonia Department of Marketing and Communications.**

This year, the global theme for Earth Day is “Our Planet, Our Power,” which focuses on increasing awareness and accountability for the damage we do to our home.

The goal Marafiotte has for Fredonia’s Earth Day Expo aligns with that message—for attendees to leave with at least one new idea or habit they can adopt to help the environment.

According to the Nature and Culture International Organization, Earth Day “serves as a reminder of our responsibility to safeguard our planet for future generations.”

That message resonates on a local level as well, where environmental challenges can feel more immediate and personal.

When asked about the biggest issue facing the Fredonia community, Sczepczenski pointed to concerns about access to clean water, following the multiple boil water orders.

During her time on campus, she noted that she has not observed many major environmental changes, but her club is working to promote smaller, everyday actions.

Earth Day

Expo & Farmer's Market



Image courtesy of fredonia.edu.

One such initiative is the “Turning Off the Lights” campaign.

This encourages students and staff to reduce energy consumption by shutting off lights when they are not in use.

Even with these changes, there are changes that you as a student can make to be more environmentally friendly, such as making changes in what you purchase.

Szczepczenski suggests getting glass packaging or even recommends changing your packaging options on platforms like Amazon.

In addition to the expo, FredGrows is hosting a weeklong series of events, including a Garden Gala on April 18, with all donations benefiting Freddy’s Locker.

Freddy’s Locker is a campus resource supporting students that need access to groceries and healthy foods.

Marafiote acknowledged that while awareness has grown, challenges remain. “There are a lot of people who are knowledgeable and educated, and who care,” she said. “They’re fighting for the environment against some scary s*** that’s happening.”

Ultimately, the Earth Day Expo aims to turn awareness into action.

“There are a lot of people who are knowledgeable and educated, and who care. They’re fighting for the environment against some scary s*** that’s happening.”

— **Dr. Tracy Marafiote**
Associate Professor,
Department of Communication

By bringing together organizations, ideas, and community members in one space, the event encourages individuals to take small but meaningful steps toward protecting the world around them.



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SPORTS

Angela Pucciarelli Rice: Leading athletics, individuals

MITCH HORUCY

Sports Editor

Before becoming the Interim Co-Director of Athletics, Dr. Angela Pucciarelli Rice was a Blue Devil herself, scoring over 1,000 points in her career on the women's basketball team.

Now, she is the one helping student athletes in a multitude of ways.

In her current position, she works with fellow Interim Co-Director of Athletics P.J. Gondek, splitting the duties between the two.

"We're kind of like a tag-team," said Pucciarelli.

Some of the things Pucciarelli handles are renewing coaching contracts, or, in the case of soon-to-be retired coach Braun, looking for the next coach of the women's volleyball team.

She also handles most of the internal operations like human resources, making sure they have the correct personnel for games and events and, as she says, "making sure everybody's going to the right place."

This wasn't the plan all along for her, though.

When she got out of college, she became a marketing and sales intern for the company Refresco and quickly realized she was missing something.

"It was the first time in my life I wasn't playing basketball ... I thought to myself, something is missing," said Pucciarelli.

It was after she left her job at Refresco that she decided to get back into the world of sports, but not as a coach.

She didn't believe she had the patience to be a coach but knew she wanted to work and be involved in sports.

This started a long journey to where she is now, working jobs to make ends meet while volunteering to get her foot in the door anywhere she could.

She worked with the Women's Basketball Coaches Association in Atlanta for free.

She got to go to the 2011 Women's Final Four in Indianapolis, which was an experience she enjoyed, but it still wasn't what she wanted to do.

This led to a grad assistantship at Hilbert, then getting hired as the assistant Athletic Director at JCC, where she worked for five years.

It was 2018 when she was hired at her alma mater, Fredonia, where she's been ever since.



Dr. Angela Pucciarelli Rice. Image courtesy of SUNY Fredonia's Department of Marketing and Communications.

Staying in Fredonia wasn't always her plan.

"I think when you live here, the goal is to get out of your small town," said Pucciarelli.

Once she got older, her younger siblings, 10 and 13 years younger than her, changed her mind on wanting to leave, leading to the job at Fredonia working out perfectly.

Outside of her position in the athletic department, she is involved in numerous other things both on campus and in the community.

Starting with her on campus involvement, she is the SWA, or senior woman administrator, something the NCAA doesn't require, but 99% of colleges have.

This is the highest-ranking female in each NCAA department, ensuring a female voice in a usually male-dominated field.

Also at Fredonia, she's on the Council for Women's Concerns, D.E.I. Advisory Council and the Title IX Task Force.

Partaking in groups like this is something she feels strongly about, as a big advocate for representing women and under-represented communities.

She pointed to the way she was raised, which was a family that was big into activism and equality.

"I want to make sure the female student athletes here, or people who feel underrepresented, feel they have a space to explore things," said Pucciarelli.

In the community, she leads the annual National Girls and Women in Sports Day event at Fredonia, and she served on youth sports board around Chataqua County.

In 2022, she was one of 30 women nationwide to attend the SWA program in Indianapolis.

If you ask student athletes at Fredonia, most will talk highly about Pucciarelli and their relationships with her.

"I want to make sure the female student athletes here, or people who feel underrepresented, feel they have a space to explore things."

— **Dr. Angela Pucciarelli Rice**
Interim Co-Director of Athletics,
Senior Woman Administrator

Creating relationships with athletes is something she does without thinking.

"[It's important to] just to try and talk or help them get whatever resources or anything that they need." said Pucciarelli.

She hopes that every athlete at the school feels both seen and heard.

It doesn't matter to her if they're the MVP or someone who doesn't play that much; she cares about how they're doing off the field.

"I care if they're having a good experience on the softball team, if they feel supported by their team and their coach, if they feel like they belong within our department, if they belong within our college," said Pucciarelli.

With three young children, she'll likely be a member of the Fredonia community for years to come, which is a huge win for the school and community.

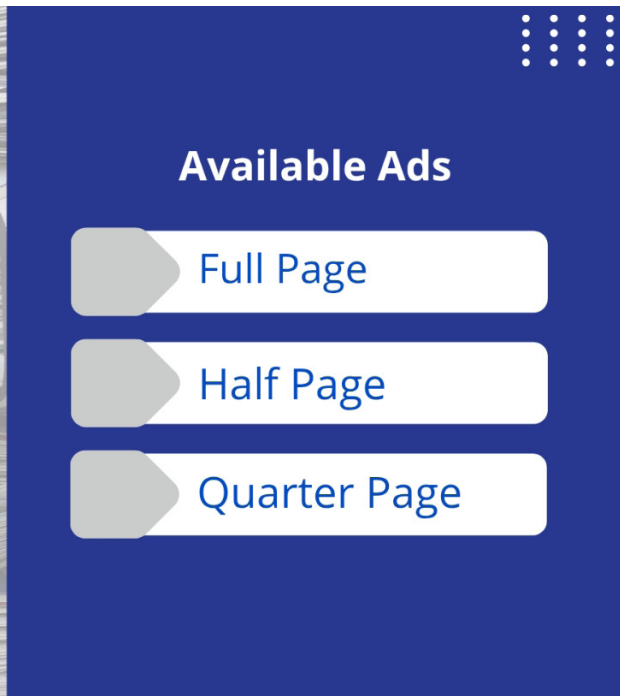
"I care if they're having a good experience on the softball team, if they feel like they belong within our department, if they belong within our college."

— **Dr. Angela Pucciarelli Rice**
Interim Co-Director of Athletics,
Senior Woman Administrator



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Freshman Amelia LeFevre making solid first impression

JACK HOADLEY
Assistant Sports Editor

Every sports team seeks out an instant impact from a new recruit in their first-year class, whether that is during or outside of the game itself.

Luckily for Fredonia, freshman attacker Amelia LeFevre has brought a tremendous presence on and off the field for the Blue Devils.

LeFevre is one of six first-year players for the women's lacrosse team this year, but you wouldn't be able to tell.

She has had a tremendously smooth transition from high school to college, much of which she attributes to her coaches.

"They do a lot for us... as much as they can to help us prepare before we come in," LeFevre said in regard to coach Tori Poffenberger's proactive approach to acclimating new recruits.

LeFevre had interest in Fredonia dating back to her sophomore year at Auburn High School, but her interest was never entirely academic.

"One of my main reasons was that they have a very good education program...I could tell it was going to be a really good fit for me," she said.

She again credited coach Poffenberger as a reason why she fell in love with everything Fredonia had to offer.

But the jump from high school to college athletics is never truly easy, and LeFevre attributed much of her early success to top-tier preparation.

She participated in as much of the off-season program she could before going to Fredonia and worked with private trainers and coaches to best prepare her for the jump.

One thing she never could've been ready for was the freedom that comes with being in college, citing that as the most surprising part of the adjustment.

"You don't have anyone to tell you what to do...you have to manage your school and everything to do with sports," she said.

This freedom would become overwhelming to anyone in a new place, but LeFevre seems to have embraced the new territory.

LeFevre has totaled eight points for the Blue Devils with four goals and four assists, making her young freshman campaign an impactful one.

However, a marquee moment for her season so far was when Fredonia beat Nazareth 7-4 earlier in the year.



Amelia LeFevre chases a Morrisville player, Wednesday, April 8, 2026. **Photo by TRAVIS BERNHARD** | Sports Photographer



Amelia LeFevre. **Photo by TRAVIS BERNHARD** | Sports Photographer

Beating the Golden Flyers was a major milestone for the team, as LeFevre called it, “very exciting to accomplish that.”

Obviously, a strong team bond was also an essential factor of what made Fredonia feel just like home.

LeFevre said that her new teammates are like sisters to her now, after being extremely welcoming from the jump of her recruitment.

The strong chemistry of the team has propelled them to a promising 7-7 record as they look to build off of two straight victories with the SUNYAC tournament approaching.

As the season continues to push forward, LeFevre says that as a whole, the team would like to win at least one SUNYAC game in this year’s tournament.

Individually, she reinforced that for her, lacrosse will always be about fun and enjoying the game she grew up on.

Whether it’s crucial scoring or supporting the team outside of the turf, LeFevre has certainly had a strong first-year.

As a clear current and future contributor for the team, LeFevre and the Blue Devils will look to finish the rest of the year strong and accomplish their goals.

The team’s final two home games will take place on Wednesday, April 15 at 4 p.m. against Cortland and on Saturday, April 18 at noon against Plattsburgh.



Gabby Lewinski (left), Amelia LeFevre (center) and Hannah Crowther (right) shake hands with Morrisville players, Wednesday, April 8, 2026. **Photo by TRAVIS BERNHARD** | Sports Photographer

Fifth Quarter: Examining options for Bills' pick at 26th overall

MITCH HORUCY

Sports Editor

For the first time since 2017, it won't be Sean McDermott's staff making the selections in the NFL draft.

Joe Brady and his newly constructed coaching staff face an important draft, their first one of this new era.

McDermott and company had a great first draft, taking franchise pillars such as: Tre'Davious White, Matt Milano and Dion Dawkins in 2017.

With only two picks in the top 100 of the draft, general manager Brandon Beane must make his top two picks count.

Starting with pick 26, I can't see them trading up, unless someone like Jordan Tyson or Carnell Tate falls deep into the late teens or early 20s.

This leaves the team with two options: staying put at 26 or trading back.

If they stay at 26, there's a handful of players I really like who could come in and be instant contributors.

Starting with my top option, it's unlikely he'll make it to the Bills' selection, but crazier things have happened.

That player is Dillon Thieneman, a safety out of the University of Oregon.

He offers a ton of versatility at the position, being able to line up at a multitude of spots.

The Ducks had him play deep safety, slot corner and in the box as a linebacker.

He may not start day one after the team added C.J. Gardner-Johnson in free agency, but he allows you to run three safety defensive formations, such as dime.

Gardner-Johnson is also only on a one-year deal, meaning he isn't the long-term answer for the position.

Thieneman could be that answer and pair a fun safety pairing with Cole Bishop for years to come.

A second option at 26 is Auburn edge Keldric Faulk.

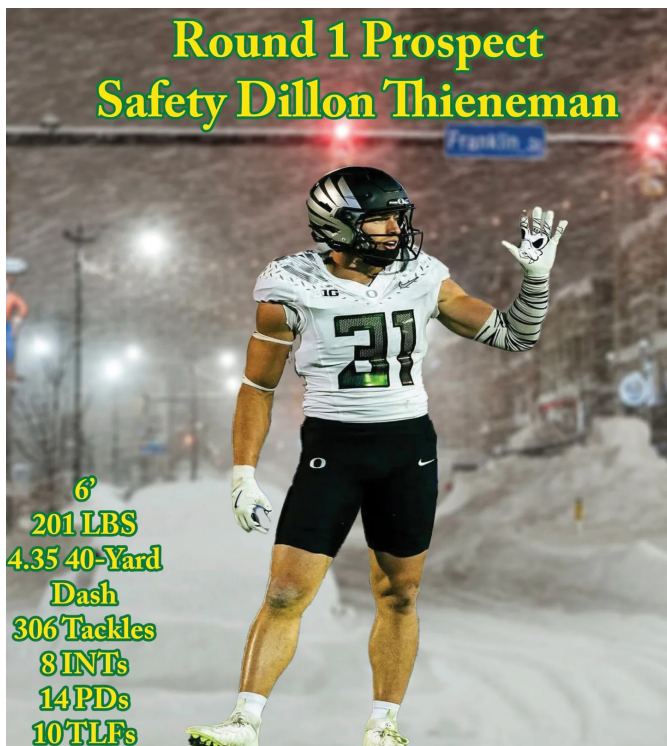
At 6'6", 276 lbs. with a 4.67-second 40-yard dash, the athleticism speaks for itself.

With Faulk, you're taking the bet that his technique will catch up to him, and athleticism will lead to production.

At Auburn, he only had 13 sacks in three seasons, which isn't exactly round one edge rusher production.

In his 2024 campaign, he showed flashes of what he can be as a pass rusher, posting career highs in just about every stat, including nine sacks.

He's already showcased he can be a good-to-great run defender, using his size and length to shut down run gaps, but taking an edge that can't be on the field on third down situations in the first round raises questions.



Graphic by MITCH HORUCY | Sports Editor

He'd fit the defense if drafted, being able to be an outside linebacker and rush from the edge of a 3-4 or slide inside as a defensive end.

At just 20-years old, he still has a ton of room to improve his game, but he'll be a development player if taken.

A final guy that could be the choice at 26 is Ohio State defensive tackle Kayden McDonald.

McDonald is someone who didn't fill up the stat sheet as a Buckeye, and won't do it in Buffalo either, but could be extremely valuable to the defense.

He's a massive human that's nearly impossible to move in the run game.

He'd play nose tackle in Buffalo, lining up head-up on the center, clogging the interior of the offensive line.

Having a guy like McDonald creates plays even when he isn't the one who makes them.

When having to double team McDonald, it creates one-on-one matchups with guys like Ed Oliver, Greg Rousseau and Deone Walker if they're out together.

Those players all thrive in one-on-one situations in space, but the team hasn't had a player to help create those opportunities.

McDonald could be that guy.

Moving onto the scenario where they trade back, using PFF's mock draft simulator, the Bills traded pick 26 and 165 to Tennessee for picks 35 and 66.

Starting with pick 35, Jacob Rodriguez and Chris Bell are two players I could see the Bills taking.

Starting with Rodriguez, he was tremendous at Texas Tech, winning a plethora of awards, including best linebacker in the country.

There are questions about his ability to be an every-down off-ball linebacker in the NFL, but I think he can.

Adding him would spark discussions on the linebacker room in Buffalo, adding him to a room of Terrel Bernard, Dorian Williams and Joe Andreessen, with only two of them being able to get real snaps.

Bell is an interesting prospect who could go anywhere from the mid-20s to the back half of the second round.

He was trending toward being a mid-first round selection before tearing his ACL in November, which has heavily affected his stock, as expected.

At 6'2", 220 lbs., he fits the mold of a boundary receiver, pairing his size with 4.4 speed.

He's a problem when matched up with smaller cornerbacks, and uses his size to excel after the catch, running with purpose.

He visited Buffalo, so the interest is there, but it'll be a question of if he can recover from his ACL injury and return to his old self.

At pick 66, possibly my favorite prospect in the entire draft should be the pick if he's on the board.

That player is Skyler Bell, a wide receiver out of UConn.

With a smaller frame, I'm unsure if he will be able to continue to be an impactful boundary receiver at the next level, but that doesn't turn me away from him.

From weeks eight through 10, he had a three-game stretch where he totaled 26 receptions for 432 yards and five touchdowns.

His hands have been questionable in his career, but he seemed to make improvements this past season.

His contested catch ability also isn't great due to his smaller frame, but he won't need to do much of that in the league if he's playing primarily inside.

If you want to watch a game of his to understand who he is as a player, his game against Boston College was filled with flashes of his ability to get open, along with his great ability after the catch.

A second guy at pick 66 is Josiah Trotter, a linebacker from Missouri.

He's a physical, downhill linebacker who is great in the run game.

He needs to improve if he wants to be an every-down backer in the future, but he could be a great depth and a plug-and-play player if anyone in front of him suffers an injury.

As I've mentioned in all three of the draft columns I've done while at school here in Fredonia, this is one of my favorite days of the year.

With almost every pick outside of the Raiders at first overall completely up in the air, it should be yet another fun and entertaining draft weekend.

If you want an in-depth look at some of the players I mentioned or are interested in a mock draft done by yours truly, check out my website, fifthquarterfootball.wnywebsource.com.

The screenshot displays the Fifth Quarter Football website interface. At the top, there is a blue navigation bar with the site name "Fifth Quarter Football" on the left and search, menu, and social media icons on the right. Below the navigation bar is a large hero section featuring a video player for "5th Quarter Mock Draft: Volume I" with a "DRAFT 2026" graphic. To the right of the video is a smaller thumbnail for "5th Quarter Mock Draft: Volume I" and another for "Buffalo Bills Skyler Bell Draft Preview" showing a player in a blue jersey. Below the hero section is a "Latest" section with four draft preview thumbnails: "5th Quarter Mock Draft: Volume I" (dated April 3, 2026), "Buffalo Bills Skyler Bell Draft Preview" (dated April 1, 2026), "Buffalo Bills Dani Dennis-Sutton Draft Preview" (dated March 31, 2026), and "Buffalo Bills Dillon Thieneman Draft Preview" (dated March 26, 2026). A "View More" link is located to the right of the thumbnails.

Fifth Quarter Football's official website.

Bring back equality: Fredonia still failing to provide menstrual products

GIULIANNA LALOMIO

Chief Copy Editor

The distinction between the words “equality” and “equity” has been a crucial focus in DEI (diversity, equity, and inclusion) since the term emerged in the 1960s.

The only instance that I can think of where this question is needlessly posed, however, is in the provision of free menstrual products in bathrooms.

In this particular situation, equality truly may be the better answer.

For anyone who routinely purchases menstrual products, it is no secret that prices have continued to follow the trend of inflation.

As of July 2024, the average price of a package of tampons was up 36%, and pads rose to 41%, with both percentages surpassing food price inflation, according to the Wall Street Journal.

This dramatic increase was enough of a concern to draw the attention of our public officials, specifically New York State Senator Michelle Hinchey, who represents the 41st district as a Democratic Party member.

In August 2024, “her bill (S5910B) requiring public colleges and universities to provide free menstrual products in campus restrooms was signed into law... by Governor Hochul in celebration of Women’s Equality Day.”

Since then, thanks to Senator Hinchey, State University of New York (SUNY) and City University of New York (CUNY) students can rest easy knowing that they can simply pop into any campus bathroom and find the solution to a visit from “Aunt Flo.”

Yet, as you might have guessed, I wouldn’t be writing this article if there weren’t an error in that statement.

In September 2024, The Leader published an article titled “New York State passes a bill requiring universities to provide free menstrual products.”

At the time, before the bill had passed, Darin Schulz, head of Fredonia’s Faculty Student Association (FSA), was trying to find a way to get menstrual product vending machines on campus.

“As of July 2024, the average price of a package of tampons was up 36%, and pads rose to 41%, with both percentages surpassing food price inflation, according to the Wall Street Journal.”

— **Giuliana Lalomio**

However, with the new law, the implementation of products in all bathrooms would have to take effect immediately, and compliance would be mandatory.

As we are now four months into 2026, it has only recently become common to see free menstrual products in bathrooms, and so far, they have only been found in ones labeled for women and some in gender-neutral ones.

The campus’s responsibility to provide this free service, through their own means of funding, is further supported by the Public Health Law § 267, signed into effect in July of 2018, which “increases the amount of purchasing of these products by the state, including SUNY and CUNY schools.”

Although it is public knowledge that Fredonia is dealing with a structural deficit, that shouldn’t be an excuse to disregard state-wide law.

Beyond compliance, it is also a great disservice to students who rely on the ability to comfortably deal with a natural phenomenon that is often very uncomfortable.

“Although it is public knowledge that Fredonia is dealing with a structural deficit, that shouldn't be an excuse to disregard state-wide law.”

— **Giuliana Lalomio**

Senator Hinchey further supports this sentiment on her website, saying, “Menstrual products are a fundamental health necessity, and no one should be held back in school, work or life because they can’t afford or access them.”

Sydney Smith, a freshman psychology major and current chair of the Student Association’s Community Relations Committee, recently began researching Bill S5910B after wondering how the campus was implementing it.

As someone who utilizes the women’s bathrooms, she was shocked to find that, beyond the concern that pads were the only available option, many bathrooms had nearly empty dispensers, with some not receiving a dispenser or, even worse, still having the old 25-cent dispensers.

“College is expensive enough, and the fact that we are making our students go out of their way to get hygienic products — it’s a major problem,” Smith passionately stated. “We are letting our students down, and action needs to happen so all of our students have access to reliable and comfortable products that were promised under the Aunt Flo bill.”

“Menstrual products are a fundamental health necessity, and no one should be held back in school, work or life because they can't afford or access them.”

— Michelle Hinchey
New York State Senator,
41st District

As the bill was specifically worded to require providing free products for “all” bathrooms, it seems, in addition to poor implementation in the women’s bathrooms, the men’s bathrooms haven’t received the products at all.

“College is expensive enough, and the fact that we are making our students go out of their way to get hygienic products — it's a major problem.”

— Sydney Smith

Jordan Stephens, a senior business administration major and the president of the Student Association (SGA), said, “SGA is in full support of ensuring that this law is being adhered to and is looking to follow up with administration on this issue.”

Stephens also said that he feels guilty that the issue wasn’t brought to his attention sooner, so that SGA could have been looking into solutions all along.

Finally, he confirmed that he has not seen any version of menstrual products in the men’s bathrooms on campus.

Equality shouldn’t be accomplished only through laws.

Fredonia had every opportunity to resolve this issue before the state issued its mandate but instead waited until the last possible second to take action and was, inevitably, unprepared.

Time and again, Fredonia has failed to be proactive or meaningfully respond to laws and mandates passed through SUNY or the state — whether concerning menstrual products, the sustainability action plan or program cuts.

A question echoed by nearly every student remains: “How many voices will it take for the campus to take responsibility?”

And even more so, when will equality be equal?

“We are letting our students down, and action needs to happen so all of our students have access to reliable and comfortable products that were promised under the Aunt Flo bill.”

— Sydney Smith



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Out of sight, out of mind: What happened to the sculpture program?

LANDON LYONS

Special to The Leader

In Spring 2025, when the Sustainability Committee moved to remove “Suitcase” (2015), the worst of a neglected set of sculptures on SUNY Fredonia’s campus, we were thrilled to see it go.

The apparent degradation of the form’s structure and the environmental impact it was beginning to have on its surroundings was noticeable.

Students were using it as a garbage can for Starbucks cups. Pieces of limp rubber hose languished on the ground all around it.

It was grotesque.

It had to go.

“Suitcase” is just one symptom of a sculpture program falling apart.

Look closely at the art around you on campus.

Red sculptures, like John Clement’s “Popeye” and Robert Murray’s “Megan’s Red,” are turning pink.

More regrettably, Bill Stewart’s terracotta piece, “Lunar Time,” which was erroneously placed outdoors and exposed to the elements, is in a state beyond repair.

We acquired this art but are not taking proper care of it.

Most sculptures on campus were first acquired under the In Sight / On Sight (ISOS) program.

ISOS began in 1998, founded by professors emeritus Bob Booth of sculpture and Marvin Bjurlin of ceramics.

The original idea was to install sculptures on a rotating basis of one to three years, with the strategies of minimal need for maintenance and ease of access for students seeking to work professionally with art installation.

At its height, ISOS works garnered popular attention with students, several of whom aided in the acquisition of sculptures as permanent works.

Permanent, here, being a relative term — a sculpture is only as permanent as its material; red is red until the sun fades it.

Owning a piece of art means that Fredonia is endowed with the responsibility of upkeep.

This responsibility is being shirked, and art is being lost, damaged and unreplaced in the process.

There are many reasons why In Sight / On Site failed as a program, meaning there are many lessons we can learn in the process of restoring our sculptures.

One issue is that of support. In 2014, at its peak, ARTFORUM secured around \$4500 from the Student Government Association (SGA), more than enough to sustain ISOS.



'Suitcase' by Steven Siegel. **Image courtesy of fredonia.edu.**

Fracturing of student interest into major-specific clubs and low General Assembly attendance caused ARTFORUM to lose its ability to support ISOS — that, and a veto from the then-SGA President Connor Aitcheson on a motion to keep ISOS independent of a student organization ultimately sealed the fate of the program.

The attempt to couch ISOS under the job description of the Gallery Director was doomed as well.

When In Sight / On Site is the responsibility of just one person or organization, it becomes easier to forget about and absolve yourself of responsibility.

Not only does a program like In Sight / On Site need to return to Fredonia, but we also need to treat it like something worthwhile.

It’s less of a chore to maintain art if we agree as a campus that the art we have is valuable and will appreciate if we take care of it.

To be frank, In Sight / On Site operated under a lax structure that mainly got by through the connections Bob Booth had with artists that needed to fulfill a service component to secure grant funding.

If ISOS were to come back today, we would need to devote time to figuring out how to properly contract artists and how to secure funding.

It is a task that is larger than you and I — it extends to the entire realm of students, faculty and administration, and requires at least a few from each category to act in support of visual culture on campus.

It is not just In Sight / On Site that is the problem; it’s a general lack of attention paid, and responsibility shirked at SUNY Fredonia.

Without intervention, carelessness for our sculptures will start to look just like carelessness elsewhere on campus, enveloping and stifling educational pursuits for students.

Who wants to go to a school for art if they can’t even bother to order another coat of paint for a sculpture made by a professional?



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Who really controls what we can or can't read?

NICHOLE IACUZZO
Special to The Leader

22,810 books have been banned from U.S. public schools from 2021 to 2025.

“Access to literature prepares our youth to confront the real world, offering a window into experiences otherwise unknown to them. However, diverse ideas and stories featuring protagonists from historically marginalized identities are often the first topics targeted by censors,” (PEN America, October 2025).

PEN America is a nonprofit organization with the goal of protecting free written expression in the U.S.

This quote focuses on how all types of books prepare us for living our lives and the texts that we need the most are the ones that are being censored to the public.

People in power like pressure groups, PTA, parents, elected officials, board members and administrators, shelter these books that need to be read to the students.

“Access to literature prepares our youth to confront the real world, offering a window into experiences otherwise unknown to them. However, diverse ideas and stories featuring protagonists from historically marginalized identities are often the first topics targeted by censors.”

— **PEN America**
October 2025

As a result, the kids don't get the proper education they deserve.

I had the opportunity to speak to Zach Farren, a junior English and history education major.

Farren is also a writing tutor on campus with an astonishing 4.0 GPA in English education.

During his high school experience, Farren read “The Hate You Give,” “The Giver,” “Animal Farm” and “Invisible Man,” all books that have been banned in other public schools across the country.

Farren has a more culturally respectful response to the world, and he's able to empathize with people that have a different background from him because of the way the books teach lessons and morals.

Farren found a love for “Animal Farm.” The story connects with historical topics including fascism, and he thinks about the current political state in the world when reading this.

This book covers an abundance of what's going on in today's day and age in a very educational and professional setting.

In addition, Farren would love to teach “The Giver.” It's an introduction to distortion novels for students.

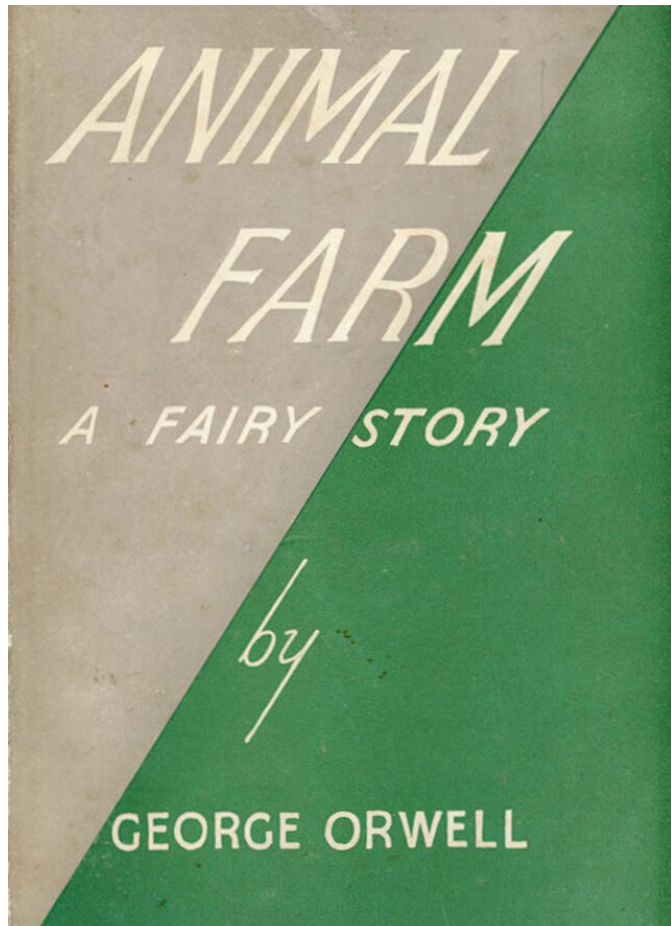
“The Giver” is a great example of “why on earth are these books actually getting banned?”

This book shows topics of individualism, world building, human experience, emotional development and the necessity of pain.

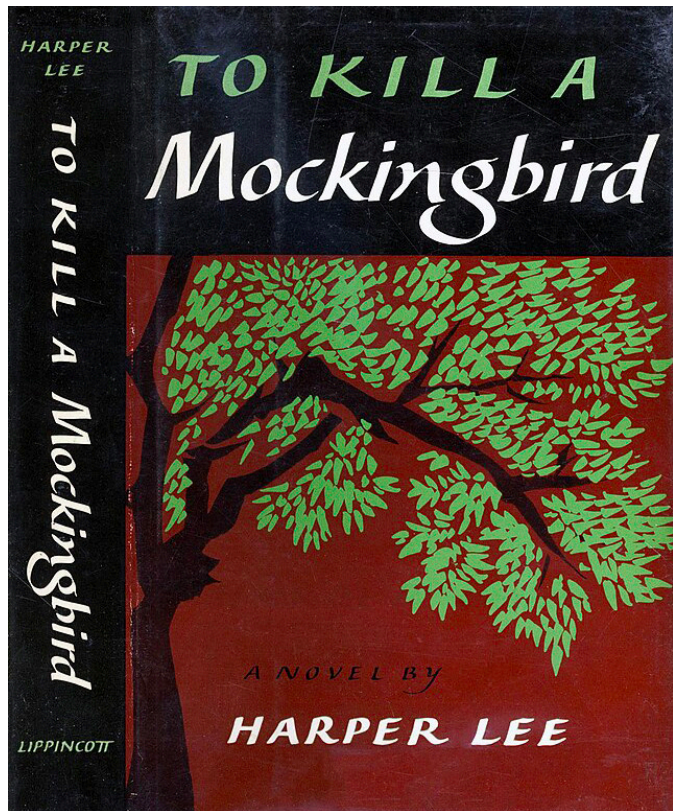
These are topics children need to learn to better understand themselves and be ready for challenges that will come along the way.

Banning books is an attempt of indoctrination. Parents sheltering their children are hearing rumors and theories about the books that are simply being made out to be much worse than it actually is.

Parents should just read the books themselves, do research and really sit with the criteria before causing such an uproar.



'Animal Farm' by George Orwell.
This image is free to use under public domain.



'To Kill a Mockingbird' by Harper Lee.
This image is free to use under public domain.

Powerful people are pulling works out of school and not allowing the children to learn texts that can help them build empathy and an understanding of other cultures and ideas.

My father, Jack Iacuzzo, is also an English teacher at Washington Middle School in Jamestown.

I decided to speak to one of his colleagues, Eric Anderson.

I chose to speak with him because he has been an English teacher for about 28 years now.

Anderson was also a member of the military before becoming a teacher.

He has taught multiple banned books in his career including, "To Kill a Mockingbird," "Lord of the Flies," "The Giver," "In Cold Blood," "The Outsiders" and "The Diary of Anne Frank."

His all-time favorite book to teach is "The Outsiders" because it is still relevant to his students' lives.

One of his favorite things to see as a teacher is the students being engaged and overly interested in the topics of the novel.

They can relate to the characters because every single character reminds them of a friend or family member they have; it's a text to self-connections.

He also favors teaching "To Kill a Mockingbird" because it helps the students learn about empathy and segregation.

It promotes discussion and debate among the seventh and eighth graders.

The topic of good vs. evil is also shown through the fight for justice.

Anderson believes that children should be surrounded by readings like this that challenge critical thinking skills and understanding morals.

Anderson's opinion on banned books is that nobody should tell someone else what they can and can't do.

Everyone needs to be tolerant that people have opinions, and they need to have an open mind.

Every book should be available to the public, and it is their own decision to pick it up and read it themselves or share it with others.

Lastly, I asked Anderson, "How do you feel with certain school districts demanding teachers use a purchased curriculum instead of choosing what they desire to teach?"

He expressed that every one of his students has different learning needs and most of the purchased curriculums do not provide enough differentiation activities for students to grow academically.

Furthermore, there are visual learners, verbal learners and auditory learners who need different techniques to excel.

Many teachers are frightened and exhausted of what might come when they choose a particular piece of text because there are eyes watching them all the time.

It's growing more and more frustrating, especially to an English teacher.

American teachers are struggling to deal with this issue, and it's getting more difficult to bring engaging books to the students.

I would highly encourage more people to show up to board meetings and speak up about what they truly feel because books are not going to stop being banned unless we voice our opinions.

Our words are the most powerful way to get things done, and it shows how much we care about the power of free speech; we will not be silenced.

I strongly believe that buying banned books is another way of showing support because it proves that we actually want to read the stories.

I have recently started buying the books that I wasn't taught because I want to see what I was missing out on.

I am starting my own collection and writing reviews after I finish each book, and each one so far has been positive opinions on why they most definitely should be taught in a public school.

Why should we silence authors who work so hard to publish a book?

It's extremely unfair to just pluck their work off the shelves and make them feel invalidated with their talented writing.

For one, I would've loved to read every single book I mentioned in this paper, and I wasn't introduced to any of them in my academic years.

I am just one student who failed by the rules.

Imagine how many more kids there are that had it much worse than me.

I will keep reading what I want to, and nobody can stop me.

Lovecolumn: Red, Yellow and Green Flags

THE QUARTERBACK

Executive Producer of Lovercall

THE MUSICIAN

Lovercall Producer

BUMBLEBEE

Lovercall Producer

Hello!

We are The Quarterback, The Musician and Bumblebee: producers and hosts of the radio show Lovercall, right here in Fredonia.

Lovercall is an anonymous late-night talk show about love, relationships and more.

Students who are guests on the show use codenames to protect their identities when discussing potentially personal topics, hence the codenames of the writers of this column.

This is your reminder that none of the hosts or guests are professionals, and everything stated is based on personal experiences.

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

“The Musician” is a 23-year-old gender-fluid person who uses they/she pronouns and is a senior at Fredonia.

“Bumblebee” is a 19-year-old questioning person who uses he/she/they pronouns and is a sophomore at Fredonia.

On each episode, the hosts and guests of Lovercall participate in a variety of segments.

The cast discusses a relevant news story, a date idea, a wacky game and a main topic for the episode.

Listeners can submit their questions or seek advice 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 is broadcast weekly throughout the semester on Wednesday nights from 10 p.m. to 12 a.m. on WDVL 89.5 on fredoniaradio.com.

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



This week's date idea is:

Seeing a psychic!

Date idea of the week

We hope to provide fellow students with fun and unique date ideas in every episode.

These date ideas aren’t just for romantic partners — you could go with your friends, classmates or even go solo for a fun activity in Fredonia.

This week, you’re going to embrace your spiritualist side and go see a psychic!

As “out there” as it sounds, this could actually be a lot of fun.

While many people believe psychics to be little more than experts of pseudo psychology, others fully believe that there are people who can see into the future.

Whether you believe it or not, going to see a psychic can be something to spice things up.

It’s important to take whatever you hear from your reading with a grain of salt.

Don’t get too worked up if what you hear isn’t a favorable outlook for the future.

On the flip side, if you hear something positive about the future, why not believe it and think of it as something to look forward to?

There's no harm in believing in something positive even if it doesn't come to fruition.

All in all, the idea of seeing a psychic is meant as more of a fun outing than a legitimate look into your future.

You don't have to go far to find them, either!

Just off Route 60 near Cassadaga, the Lily Dale Assembly is home to several psychics, mediums and more spiritual experts.

In its early days, Lily Dale was a key location in the women's rights movement in New York State, and Susan B. Anthony spoke at the Assembly several times.

Lily Dale is only a 15-minute drive from Fredonia, so it provides a short getaway for all your spiritual desires!

No matter who you go with or where you go, we at Lovercall hope you have fun and find out something wonderful that may await you in the future!

Red, Yellow and Green Flags

This week we talked about red, yellow and green flags.

In the world of modern dating, people often talk about "red flags," "yellow flags" and "green flags" when evaluating potential partners, but at their core, these flags are really about one thing: safety.

Red flags point to behaviors or attitudes that may indicate emotional, psychological or even physical unsafety in a relationship, while green flags suggest a person is capable of contributing to a healthy, secure partnership.

Yellow flags fall somewhere in the middle, signaling areas that may warrant more observation or discussion.

Ultimately, paying attention to these signs can help people better protect their emotional well-being and make more informed choices about who they let into their lives.

One of the clearest indicators of someone's character we discussed was how they treat people in underprivileged or service positions.

Someone who is rude to food servers, dismissive toward retail workers or openly disrespectful to those they perceive as "beneath" them is displaying a major red flag.

These behaviors can reveal entitlement, lack of empathy and poor emotional regulation.

Similarly, small acts of inconsideration — such as refusing to return a shopping cart or yelling unnecessarily in public — may seem minor on the surface, but they often reflect broader attitudes about respect, responsibility and consideration for others.

We also talked about how there is often a green flag opposite every red flag.

Where rudeness and selfishness signal concern, empathy and intentionality show promise.

A person who takes an active interest in other people's passions, asks thoughtful questions and genuinely engages with what matters to others demonstrates care and emotional investment.

Strong communication, one of the foundations of Lovercall, is another major green flag.

Healthy partners can express themselves clearly, listen attentively and put in effort to maintain the relationship rather than expecting it to thrive on autopilot.

Perhaps most importantly, emotionally mature individuals can sit down and have serious conversations without becoming defensive, hostile or angry.

The ability to navigate conflict calmly is often what separates healthy relationships from harmful ones.

At the end of the day, recognizing red, yellow and green flags is not about judging people for every flaw or imperfection — it's about identifying patterns that affect emotional safety and relationship health.

No one is perfect, but the way someone treats others, communicates during conflict and manages their emotions can reveal whether they are likely to be a source of security or stress.

In dating and relationships, paying attention to those signs can make the difference between building something healthy and overlooking behaviors that may become harmful.

Reach out! Do you want to ask the creators of Lovercolumn a question? Do you want advice? Fill out our form using this QR code.

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

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

Lovercallers Submission Form 2025-26!!



THE SCALLION



Satire and parody for Fredonia

An exclusive (non-) interview with the SUNY chancellor

MEGAN KIDBY
Scallion Editor

By all accounts, State University of New York (SUNY) Chancellor John B. King Jr. is an incredibly busy man.

As the leader of the SUNY system, King oversees 64 campuses, hundreds of thousands of students and countless initiatives aimed at improving higher education across the state.

He is a former U.S. Secretary of Education, a respected policymaker and a nationally recognized advocate for educational equity.

He is also, apparently, very committed to not answering my email.

Despite my best efforts to secure an interview for this profile—an endeavor that began so long ago, the email was sent in the Jewett Hall parking lot—King has remained steadfast in his dedication to mystery.

My email, once full of hope and journalistic ambition, now drifts somewhere in the digital void, perhaps buried beneath unread newsletters, meeting reminders and other emails from Leader E-board members long past.

I have received what experts in communication refer to as “absolutely nothing.”

No reply. No acknowledgement. Not even the courtesy of a vague AI generated “Thank you for reaching out.”

Still, I need an article for the paper because I’ve been traumatized by past editors who would cut my section, so below is a complete transcript of my interview that DEFINITELY happened with Chancellor King:

Q: What inspired you to pursue a career in education?

A: No response

Q: What are your goals for the future of SUNY?

A: No response

Q: What message would you like to share with SUNY students?

A: No response



Chancellor John B. King. Image via the State University of New York.

Q: How do you balance the responsibilities of leading such a large university system?

A: No response

Q: Did you see my email?

A: No response

Q: Be honest—was it sent directly to spam?

A: No response

In fairness, leadership at this level likely requires managing countless responsibilities, and perhaps my humble request for comment simply could not compete with the demands of overseeing one of the nation’s largest public university systems.

Or perhaps he read my email, whispered “not today,” and moved on.

Either way, Chancellor King remains an influential force in higher education, a transformative administrator and living proof that even the most persistent student journalists cannot win them all.

Though I may never know his favorite part of working for SUNY or his preferred coffee order, I can confidently say this: John B. King has left an impression on me—primarily in the form of waiting for a response.

Hopefully, my next profile idea of the Fredonia police chief will go better.

It’s been three months, but I’m sure he’s just busy with...stuff.

Braces are torture. Like, actual torture.

AVA-CLAIRE BORING

Special to The Leader

I would not wish braces on my worst enemy, especially when you go to the cheapest orthodontist in town.

My orthodontist (named Dr. Floor for privacy reasons), was cheap for the soul reason that he was caught soliciting a prostitute while running for mayor, and now nobody wants braces from a perv.

The orthodontist was my worst nightmare, which was strange coming from someone who was never afraid of the dentist as a kid—not because of the braces he was putting on me, but because of his uncomfortably wide smile accompanied by Extreme Mouth Breathing Tendencies (EMBT).

This orthodontist would hover three inches over my teeth, breathing coffee-scented breath directly into my mouth, completely unmasked.

I wasn't prepared for what braces would do to my life.

My least favorite part was that after I smiled, my top lip would get stuck to my top row of braces, and I had to consciously move my lip back down.

I wasn't prepared for the random pieces of food that would launch out of my mouth at any given time or the sudden awareness of how slimy my teeth felt as soon as my braces came off.

These are just the little things you take for granted when you don't have braces.

My braces process was very rough and very long.

The day I got my top braces, Dr. Floor put brackets on all my teeth except for one of my front teeth, which was the end of the world for a 14-year-old.

I think the words I used were "social suicide."

After the next couple of visits, I got my front tooth bracket and my bottom braces put on, but I was not in the clear.

Dr. Floor determined that my bottom teeth were far too crowded for each tooth to have a bracket, so he excluded one of my front bottom teeth when gluing the brackets on.

When I finally thought my face was fixed, I now had a relatively straight bottom row, except for one bottom tooth sticking straight up and pushed back while all of my other teeth were pulled forward.

My teeth stayed like this for a solid couple of months, and it was all I could think about when smiling, eating, or even talking.

When Dr. Floor finally put that last bracket on my bottom tooth, I felt my confidence significantly increase.

After a couple more visits, Dr. Floor determined my teeth were still too crowded.

Upon making this observation, he decided to squeeze a thin file between my crowded teeth and saw back and forth to create space between them.



Graphic by AVA-CLAIRE BORING | Special to The Leader

It was the most painful experience I've ever had at any doctor.

I want to finish off my horror story by saying that not every application process is as horrific as mine.

In fact, most aren't horror stories at all.

If I had any advice to give to my braces baddies, it would be that you are still beautiful with braces!

Make sure you brush twice a day so you don't get those little yellow squares on your teeth after getting them off, and always keep those little brushes so you can get the gunk out after every meal.

The most important piece of advice would be to WEAR YOUR RETAINER!

Also, do your research before trusting someone to be all up in your mouth.

Orthodontists, if you're reading this, pop a Tic-Tac before you go to see a patient.

HOROS

IZZIE NOELLE

Photo Editor

Hello everyone! I feel like things in Fredonia have felt so crazy this past semester alone. Like, we truly have experiences that shape college life at Fredonia. So, for this issue, I'm gonna tell you what Fredonia experience you are based on your zodiac sign!



Aries

Going to bed after a beautiful day, only to wake up to snow:

The weather here is soooo temperamental. Like, why did I fall asleep after a nice 50-something degree day only to wake up to a 20-something degree day with SNOW. WHAT???



Taurus

Going to the creek and having a fire:

The creek is probably one of the best things about Fredonia. It's right off campus, it's beautiful and it has fire pits along the trails. I mean, there's nothing to hate here.



Gemini

Getting D.P. Dough at 2 a.m. because that's all that's open:

We've all had late nights where we stayed up, never had dinner and didn't realize it 'till it was too late. That's where D.P. Dough comes in. It's decently priced and open late — in fact, it's probably one of the only things open past midnight.



Cancer

Hammock City:

When the weather gets nice, Hammock City comes back. The trees between Nixon and Alumni become littered with hammocks and blankets as people enjoy the nice weather.



Leo

All of Fred Yak uniting for random reasons:

There are about three reasons that Fred Yak unites on the regular. Thunderstorms, boil water orders and when something crazy happens like the recent shelter-in-place orders.

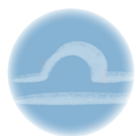


Virgo

Wondering if your major will be cut:

It's no secret that we're currently expecting a second round of budget cuts after the initial set of cuts in 2023. I think a lot of students have started to wonder if their major is on the chopping block.

COOPES



Libra

Boil water orders:

You can't go one semester without one — you just can't. There's nothing like waking up and brushing your teeth, only to find out that you weren't supposed to use the water. We've had what, three this academic year? Four?



Scorpio

The campus ghost stories:

There are legends of all the haunted buildings on campus. I mean, just start asking around. I've heard ghost stories from Igoe, McEwen and McGinnies.



Sagittarius

Getting a tummy ache from dining hall food:

As much as dining hall food can push the limits of your tastebuds and have you trying new food, it can sometimes test the limits of your stomach too. Stay safe out there.



Capricorn

The dog food smell:

We all know what it's like to walk outside and be hit with the overwhelming smell of dog food. Thank you Dunkirk Purina factory!



Aquarius

Leaving your dorm to find horses and a bouncy house on campus:

World Mental Health Day, my beloved. It's always such a treat to see these random fun events on a random weekday in October. I absolutely love stopping by for photo booth pics and therapy horses.



Pisces

A shelter-in-place order:

Yeah, I know this one is a little crazy. We've had about three different shelter in place orders within the past few months. Kind of insane.

