

CUNY Adds \$5M For Mental Health
Pg.2

Former Prof Sues College
Pg.3



THE BROOKLYN COLLEGE

WANGUARD

Fall 2020, Issue 9

thebcvanguard.com

Wednesday, November 11

IT'S OVER!



**BIDEN AND HARRIS WIN HISTORIC 2020 ELECTION,
BC REACTS**

Pg. 6

**BC Reacts To Biden
Victory
P.6**

**Conservatory Starts Again
P.10**

**Op-Ed: Keeping Our
Heads Down
P. 14**

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Fall '19 And Spring '20 Grads Still Await Diplomas

By Paola Sacerdote & Julie Saadia
Staff Writers

The Fall 2019 and Spring 2020 classes of Brooklyn College are still waiting on their diplomas. The administration recently sent out an email to update the confused graduate students on the status of the diplomas.

“In early October, we began working with a company that will print and mail diplomas remotely,” the administration’s email wrote. “We currently anticipate that your diploma will be mailed by the end of December, with electronic copies emailed to you around mid-December.”

Many graduates have

been wondering when and where their diplomas are for some time. Some students contacted advisors with the hopes of getting some more information.

“I reached out to an advisor and they said that they are still conferring with graduates and that we will be receiving an email when DegreeWorks finishes checking credits,” said Becca MarGee.

For some students, the diplomas will arrive a year after their graduation.

“I graduated in December, and I am yet to receive my diploma,” Aaron Tsang told the Vanguard.

Despite the administration’s optimistic update, some graduates have already been affected by the delays.



BC graduates await their diplomas./ Church Hill Classics

“My job wanted a hard copy of my diploma, and I did not have it,” said graduate Iliane Hamaoui Liliane. “I lost out on some benefits that I would have received with my diploma.”

The administration’s email update also gave instructions on what graduates should

do to make sure they receive their diplomas.

“We will contact you via email when we have further details, but in the meantime, we need you to take the following important steps to successfully receive your diploma,” the email read.

CUNY Adds \$5M For Mental Health Services

By Maya Schubert
News Editor

CUNY plans to spend an additional \$5 million on mental health services by January 2021, according to an announcement in mid-October. Per CUNY’s announcement, the expanded budget will allocate about \$278,000 towards mental health services to each of its senior and community colleges. The announcement came at a hearing on Oct.16 of the City Council’s Committee on Higher Education and Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities, and Addiction voiced dissatisfaction with the University’s resources.

“Many CUNY students face significant burdens that affect their mental health and, consequently, their academic success,” CUNY Chancellor Félix V. Matos Rodríguez said in the press statement. “The pandemic has only exacerbated these challenges.”

The budget will allow campuses to increase the staff for health and wellness centers and provide additional training for them. The money will also be used to train and

certify 120 new campus counselors, and provide funds for students to more easily access “teletherapy” services, including crisis text support.

Facing lengthy wait times and irregularly offered sessions, CUNY students have known mental health resources to be lacking, but systemic issues have been especially highlighted by the pandemic. At the City Council hearing, Hunter College student Anna Compton described waiting months after repeated attempts to contact referred campus therapists. By the time campuses closed in March, she was “at a point of desperation,” but, eight months later, she has yet to connect with a therapist.

“Our wellness centers are failing students,” Compton said at the hearing. “CUNY campuses need more mental health counselors. We needed this before the pandemic, and we certainly need it now.”

In the Healthy CUNY initiative’s student survey conducted in April, over 40 percent of respondents reported often feeling anxious, and around 30 percent reported often feeling depressed. This



CUNY plans to increase money spent on mental health services./ Photo edited by Humza Ahmad

represented an uptick over previous years. For comparison, fewer than half as many students experienced persistent feelings of anxiety and/or depression in a 2018 health survey.

COVID-19 has brought a plethora of physical, emotional, and economic challenges to students. For many, including some, like Compton, with learning disabilities, remote learning has produced a unique challenge by itself.

“As a Brooklyn College student, I’ve encountered numerous students who are struggling to keep up their grades while also managing their anxiety

and depression,” BC junior Neha Syeda told members at the hearing. “They would like to seek mental health resources - however, accessing these services has proven challenging.”

According to CUNY’s announcement, the University was planning an expansion of mental health resources before the pandemic, but the plan detailed in October also came as a forward response to testimonies at the City Council’s meeting.

The expansion of services will be in full effect for CUNY students by the beginning of the Spring 2021 semester, although some services will be available sooner.

Former Italian Dept Pros Sues College

By Michela Arlia
Staff Writer

Luigi Bonaffini, a former professor of Italian language at Brooklyn College has brought on a multi-million dollar discrimination lawsuit against Brooklyn College, the CUNY system, and provost Anne Lopes, the New York Post reports.

Following the department of Modern Languages and Literature's decision last fall to terminate the Italian major and minor programs on campus, Bonaffini was forced into retirement and other faculty members into teaching gen-ed courses. Bonaffini filed a claim in April of 2020 with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and was issued a right to sue notice on July 29.

Bonaffini, a well known professor, author and translator for the Italian Community, has been teaching Italian at Brooklyn college since 1977. Over the last several years, he has been instructing classes fully online due to a hearing disability, of which does not impede on his ability to teach, he states.

Part of Bonaffini's claim charges the college with eliminating Italian instruction so as to phase out the elderly staff of professors aged 65 and older.

As per the New York



Former Brooklyn College Italian Language Professor, Luigi Bonaffini./ CUNY

Post, in the lawsuit against the institution, Bonaffini "claims he was forced into retirement at the beginning of 2020 due to his age, nation of origin, and hearing disability, which the suit contends did not impact his ability to instruct his popular classes."

When reached out for comment, Bonaffini told the Vanguard, "I am in litigation with the college [and] I am not sure I can talk to anyone about it."

While the former

professor makes his claim in a lawsuit seeking \$12 million in damages, Media Relations Manager for BC Richard Pietras spoke on behalf of the Department of Modern Language and Literatures.

"The Department... decided that its Italian major and minor needed to be revitalized due to declining enrollment," Pietras said. "The department reorganized its programs and developed new courses and study abroad options

to attract students, while continuing to offer courses in Italian language, literature and culture."

Bonaffini's lawyer, Marshall Bellovin, told the New York Post, "For some reason, be it political or otherwise, they've targeted a significant substantial minority student population and according to the allegations in the complaint, my client had absolutely no alternative but to retire."

"As student interest in Italian increases, the department hopes to expand its offerings," Pietras said.

The Vanguard reached out to provost Anne Lopes and head of the Modern Languages and Literature department Vanessa Perez-Rosario for comment, but have received no response at this time.

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It's Joe!

Former VP Joe Biden Elected President, Harris First Female VP

By Ryan Schwach
Editor-in-Chief

After a chaotic bid, a projected 161 million plus votes, slow moving counts, and 90 hours between polls closing and the final election call, Former Vice President Joe Biden has been elected the 46th President of the United States.

On Nov. 7, late in the morning, the state of Pennsylvania and its 20 electoral votes put President-Elect Biden over the coveted 270 vote threshold, securing him the presidency, as well as giving his running mate, now Vice President-Elect Kamala Harris, the role of the nation's 49th Vice President. Harris will be the first woman to serve as VP, as well as the first African American, as well as the first Asian American to ever hold the office.

"But while I may be the first woman in this office, I won't be the last," Harris said in her acceptance speech Saturday night. "Because every little girl watching tonight sees that this is a country of possibilities."

President-Elect Biden jogged onstage in his hometown of Wilmington, Delaware just after Harris. "My fellow Americans, the people of this nation have spoken. They have delivered us a clear victory. A convincing victory. A victory for



President Elect Joe Biden./ Kevin Lamarque | Reuters

"We the People," he said. "I pledge to be a president who seeks not to divide, but to unify. Who doesn't see red and blue states, but a United States. And who will work with all my heart to win the confidence of the whole people."

In recent days, Biden has worked to push his transition into 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, which will be made official on Jan. 20 of next year. His campaign has also begun hinting at plans for the first 100 days in office, starting with reinstating the United States' stake in the World Health Organization, which Trump rolled back in the midst of the coronavirus

pandemic. Biden has further committed to beginning initiatives to combat climate change, as well as moving to cancel some student debt.

Biden's plans will surely be stymied by the Senate should it remain in Republican control. However, the fate of the legislative body is currently in flux, as two races in Georgia are headed towards January runoffs. If both races are won by Democrats, there may be an even 50-50 split, which would leave Vice President Kamala Harris to be the deciding vote.

As of presstime, President Trump has yet to concede the

election, and he as well as members of his administration instead have spent the last several days making baseless accusations of widespread election fraud, that in their estimation is enough to reverse the outcome of the election. "We will win!" President Trump tweeted on several occasions of late, hoping several lawsuits in swing states will end in his favor.

It has been reported that both First Lady Melania Trump and Jared Kushner, senior adviser to the president, have approached the President about conceding. Reportedly, Trump has asked

federal agencies to not recognize Biden's transition, and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said on Tuesday that "There will be a smooth transition to a second Trump administration," when asked about if the State Department will cooperate with Biden's incoming transition. As of right now, if results hold, Joe Biden will win the electoral college by 77 electoral votes.

On Tuesday, President-Elect Biden called Trump's refusal to concede "An embarrassment," and has said that nothing will stop the peaceful transition of power, as has happened in this country since 1797.

Brooklyn College Reacts to 2020 Election Results

By Kendra Martinez
Staff Writer

America has decided on Joe Biden as our president-elect, and the highly anticipated election demonstrated a tight race for the candidates. Three Brooklyn College students shared their reaction to the result of the election.

Adrienne Gonzalez, felt as though the media played a significant role in the election. "I think the campaign period is too long, for the sake of our political integrity and democratic integrity. I think it runs too much as a way for the media to get ratings in one thing, and spread misinformation. It kind of goes back to it threatening political and democratic integrity," said Gonzalez. She adds that Trump's claims about voting fraud is also affecting the democratic foundation.

"The narrative about illegal votes and it being rigged is so dangerous to our democracy because it creates this distrust - as if the Democrats cheat. And that's going to make the next four years more difficult," she said.

Senior students Oba Cantine and Alondra Jimenez expressed their anxiety during election week. Both students stayed away from the media during the election. "It was hard to stay away from the media because everyone's talking about it on Instagram and it's just everywhere," said Jimenez, who says this was the first presidential election she was able to vote in. For Cantine, it was his second time voting for president. "You never knew who was going to win at any point. It was just the uncertainty that made me really anxious not knowing what our future will hold in

this country," Jimenez said while awaiting the election results. Cantine also said that he received updates from his mom.

Jimenez said that when President Trump was elected, she was only a senior in high school, concerned about any policies that might affect her education at Brooklyn College. Now, in her last year of college, she is paying close attention to how Biden will play in the next four years as she starts her career. She hopes that Biden can keep his promises once he steps into office, which are one of the concerns she expressed. "I feel like just because he is president, doesn't mean that I'm relieved, because I feel like we still need to hold him accountable for everything he promised - he actually lives up to," she said. Cantine mentioned that he is not necessarily

content with our president-elect, but glad that Trump was voted out of office.

Gonzalez is apprehensive about the Biden-Harris administration, but she has more faith in the vice president-elect than the president-elect. She is mindful about Biden's concerning history in this country, and in Harris' career as a prosecutor, but is hopeful that this administration will be a better one than Trump's. "We know the shadiness that comes from Biden's history in terms of wars and racism. And Kamala Harris's career as a prosecutor. So it's like, 'Alright, I'm going to bear that in mind so I won't be disappointed by them.' But I do believe it'll be a better administration than the past four years," said Gonzalez. Policies that Gonzalez cares about include affordable healthcare, police reform,

and monetary stimulus during the pandemic. "I do believe in the competency within the new administration, and it has to do more with Kamala than it has to do with Biden," she said.

President-elect Joe Biden will take office on Jan. 20, 2021. As of now, President Donald Trump along with his administration and supporters have refused to concede, having filed lawsuits in several states in an attempt to challenge and discount the ballot counts.

These students have shown some type of hope for America in the upcoming years under a new administration. However, they are still weary of what that administration would look like, a concern that many people have shared across the nation.

BC Alum Saul Kassin And The Science Of False Confessions

By Qichelle Maitland
Staff Writer

In our criminal justice system, a confession is often considered to be the most substantial piece of evidence there is. However, in some cases, when faced with pressing claims, individuals can confess to a crime that they did not commit.

"First of all, people think confessions are perfect. Second of all, given the way they're taken, they can't be. Something's wrong," said Saul Kassin, a distinguished psychology professor at John Jay College and BC alum, who is well renowned in his field world wide.

Kassin has dedicated his career to studying this phenomenon.

After completing his undergraduate studies at Brooklyn College and shadowing a cognitive psychology professor, he gained a deeper understanding of how people responded to difficult situations. This piqued his interest in social psychology and led him to pursue a PhD at the University of Connecticut. "I just found that experience to be electrifying," Kassin said. "I was interested in the way people perceive themselves and others, and the kinds of influences that people exert over each other. Straight social psychology."

During his postdoctoral studies at the University of Kansas, Kassin learned of an interrogation manual,

which explicitly detailed how to get someone to confess to a crime and the ways in which you can coerce someone.

"Now this was 1978, the concept of a false confession wasn't really out there," Kassin said. "I read this manual on interrogation and thought... 'This is Milgram but worse.'" Stanley Milgram's experiment on obedience found that people will go to great lengths to obey instructions from a perceived authority, even if it involved harming another person.

Kassin pointed out that numerous professionals in law enforcement had read those same manuals and they didn't think there were any issues. "As a social psychologist trained

on the processes of social influence, compliance, conformity, obedience, and persuasion, there was no question in my mind that we had a problem. The problem then was trying to convince anybody else that we had a problem," said Kassin.

At the time of his studies, there was no hard literature on false confessions. That all changed after the Central Park Five.

He referenced the infamous case that indicted five teenagers on the assault and rape of a woman jogging through the NYC park. "Four of them had confessed on tape. Even I was stumped in my tracks. I thought, 'Wow, you can get one to confess but four of them? How?'" said Kassin.

Kassin found that it is not what people confess to but the things that lead them to confessing: interrogation strategies.

Interrogation officers are simply allowed to lie, and about anything. From fingerprints, DNA samples, and even results from a polygraph test. "Police are permitted to do that, present scientific evidence to tell you something about yourself that you didn't even know. That strikes me as insane, out of the gate," Kassin said.

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BC Alum Saul Kassin And The Science Of False Confessions

CONTINUED FROM
PAGE 5

He revealed that under certain circumstances you can change someone's entire emotional state, thus changing their beliefs, perceptions, and memories. "This is not a secret," said Kassin. "There isn't a psychologist in the world that would disagree, that when you misinform people about reality, you can change everything."

Kassin stressed that most people are still greatly misinformed about the way that false confessions happen. "People think that the way that police get innocent people to confess is to browbeat them, yell and threaten them. That's not how it happens," Kassin explained. "The way people confess to crimes is through trickery and deception."

He recalled a case about an 18-year-old named Peter Riley, who although innocent, confessed to killing his own mother. His confession resulted from hours of interrogation and a lie detector test which he eagerly believed would exonerate him. However, police lied and told Riley that he failed the lie detector test.

Initially, Kassin produced the concept of an internalized false confession based on Riley's case and then found more like them over decades.

He revealed that while minors are more vulnerable to interrogation strategies, anyone can be susceptible to a false confession. In



BC alum and John Jay College professor Saul Kassin./ *Science Magazine*

the Central Park Five case, interrogators held the teenagers for hours on end, intimidating and lying to them about the evidence and sequence of events. Eventually, this led the innocent suspects to not only admitting to the crime but describing the ways in which they did it.

"95 percent of proven false confessions contained within them facts about the crime that were absolutely spot-on accurate. Sometimes even exquisitely detailed," Kassin revealed. "I mean down to the minutiae of the crime scene. Yet, those were not facts that were out in the public domain. So now you ask yourself, well, how did the innocent person know this?"

They got it from the police during the "interrogation mischief," which the public does not get to see. When a young suspect gets on camera and gives a detailed confession, jurors assume they are the culprit, and therefore guilty.

Looking towards the future, Kassin recognizes that there is still endless work to be done to stop false confessions, acknowledging that solutions aren't always as simple as knowing your rights. "The solution was supposed to be Miranda rights... that didn't work out so well," Kassin said. Miranda, given to us by the courts in 1966, states that suspects have the right to remain silent and have an attorney. "50 plus years later, we now know that 80 to 90 percent of people routinely waive those rights. And we know that innocent people, in particular, waive those rights," Kassin explained.

Kassin shared that, in almost all of these cases he would ask these individuals why they didn't just stop talking and ask for a lawyer?

"They look at me like I've got two heads on my shoulder and they say, 'Well, I didn't need a lawyer. I didn't do anything wrong.' Innocent people don't use their Miranda rights."

Kassin believes the single most important reform that will eliminate false confessions and prevent the abuse of interrogation strategies is for the state to require a mandate of the full recording of interrogations from start to finish. "Bring them into the room, light gets turned on and so does the camera. Then all interactions between police and suspects should be reported," said Kassin. "The reason for that is, how can a judge, jury, and a prosecutor determine how voluntary the statement was if they didn't see the process?" he questioned.

The notion of recording interrogations has been talked about now for many years. According to Kassin, many police departments continue to skirt the rules, though they exist. Manipulating and omitting footage of the final interrogation tape is common practice. NYS now has a law that requires the recording of interrogations for all major felonies, but even then, there are loopholes

to that rule. "I think the most important way the system can react is to require it and to require it without exception. No disclaimers, no disqualifications," said Kassin.

For Kassin, the ultimate goal is to reform as other countries have in the past. He compared our justice system to that of 1980's England when there was a wave of false confessions as a result of interrogation strategies. The British courts immediately reacted, revising interrogation rules and made it impossible to lie to suspects about evidence. "New York State legislature has a bill that will eventually come to. It's actually already in the works. It's gotten sidetracked by the pandemic but the bill calls for a ban on police lying to suspects about evidence," said Kassin. "I think that's an important step, it's a start."

#Boxedout Campaign Looks To Save Indie Bookstores in BK

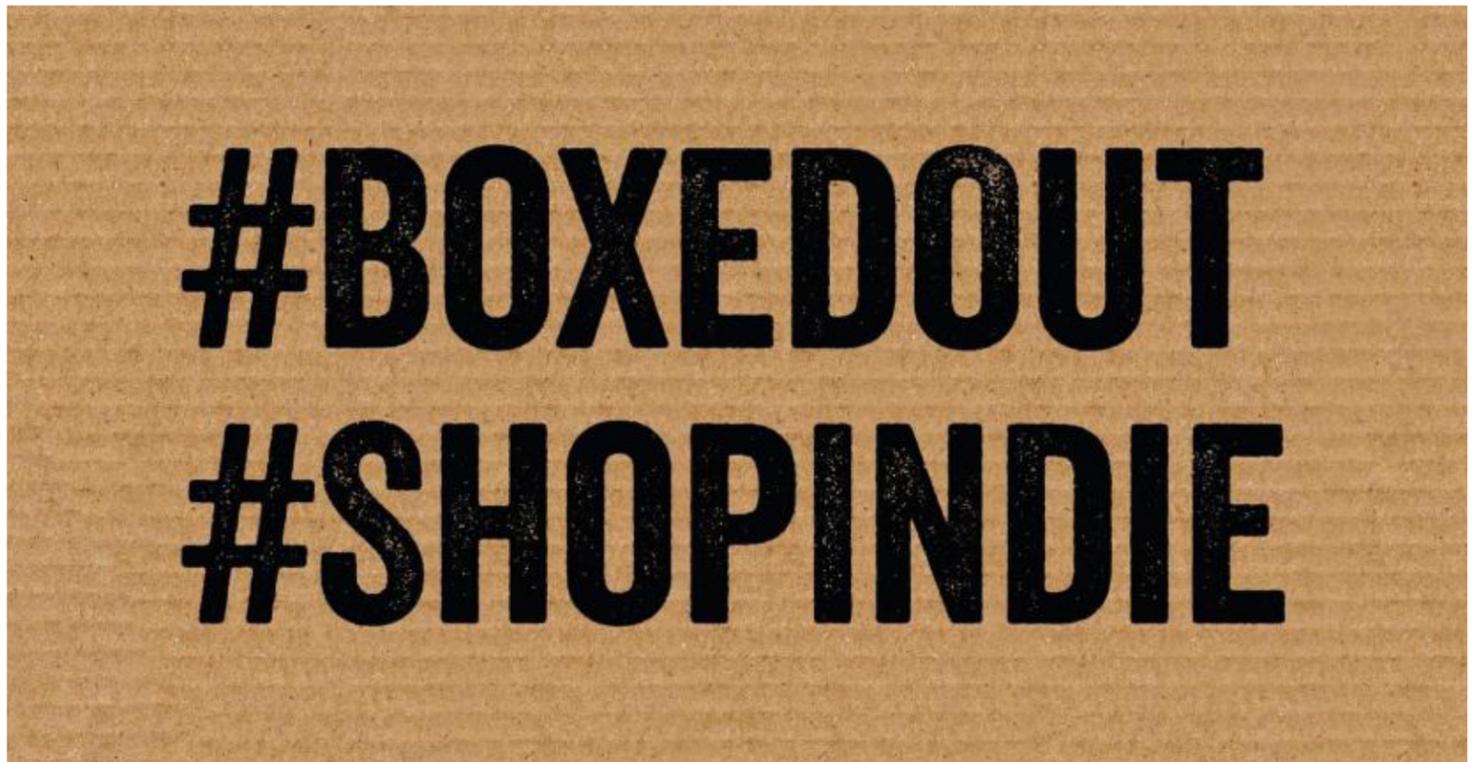
By Olivia McCaa
Staff Writer

In the past few months since the United States has started to reopen, indie bookstores are urgently pushing for the ability to reopen their doors to the community. However, since the coronavirus pandemic, these bookstores are facing a difficult time trying to compete against online sellers such as Amazon both in in-person and online sales.

“If the struggling indie bookstores close, the cause of death may be listed as COVID-19, but the preexisting condition will be Amazon,” said Dan Cullen, the senior strategy officer for the American Booksellers Association (ABA).

According to a survey in July conducted by the American Booksellers Association (ABA), 400 of their member stores saw a sharp decline in sales compared to 2019, and that some 20 percent of stores surveyed said they may not survive into 2021. Since the initial start of the pandemic and the slow reopening of our country, bookstores must ensure safe social distancing by limiting their store hours as well as maintaining a certain shopper capacity. As a result, these measures have significantly impacted bookstores customer foot traffic and their sales.

To spread consumer awareness on the challenges their local bookstores are facing, the American Booksellers Association, in partnership with DCX NYC, has launched #BoxedOut. The campaign was both a marketing



#BoxedOut Campaign supports Indie bookstores./ American Booksellers Association on Facebook

and online social media initiative that launched on Amazon’s Prime Day and has been continuous with their presence since.

Six indie bookstores throughout Los Angeles, Washington DC, and Brooklyn’s own Cafe con Libros, Community Bookstore, and Greenlight Bookstore took part in a staging of brown cardboard facades that covered the entirety of the bookstores. The cardboard was used to demonstrate how the world, especially in the United States, has been overflowed with consumerist ideas and behaviors from Amazon and other competing online sellers.

Accompanying the cardboard boxes were messages from the campaign such as, “If you want Amazon to be the world’s only retailer, keep shopping there,” and “Buy books from people who want to sell books not colonize the moon.” Amazon’s “boxing out” of local stores has a direct impact on our communities and can lead to a form of isolation such as the loss of local

jobs, sales tax revenue, the idea of neighborhood personality, community, and tradition. “People may not realize the cost and consequences of Amazon’s convenience until it’s too late,” Cullen told the Vanguard. He also says that part of the campaign is to show that change is possible with the customer’s financial backing. “We vote with our dollars for the world we want to live in, and this holiday season we have an opportunity to support with our dollars and our purchases from our local small businesses, our neighbors, and our communities,” said Cullen.

Very quickly after the launch of #BoxedOut, independent bookstores across the nation made their mark by posting support for the campaign on social media and creating their own signs downloaded from the ABA’s website. As of Oct. 30, the projected media statistics include 413 million views and 11.6 million engagements on social media. Media coverage has been

extensive with outlets such as The New York Times, Washington Post, Boston Globe, and CNN all highlighting the campaign. Participating book shops in Brooklyn have also gained the support of Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez.

Cullen wants consumers to understand that Amazon purposefully and very strategically works to sell the idea that they provide the most affordable price with both ease and convenience. The ultimate cost of choosing to buy from Amazon, rather than our local stores, like Community or Cafe Con Libros, is a direct loss for our community. According to the 2019 Civic Economics “Prime Numbers” study, approximately 28 percent of all revenue of indie bookstores immediately recirculates back into the local economy where the business is located. This in turn translates to a massive local impact advantage of 610 percent over Amazon where as Amazon only recirculates

4 percent locally

Aside from their impact on the local economy, indie bookstores offer an incomparable advantage over Amazon which is the opportunity to discover new titles and authors for readers. Cullen says that local bookstores “have the ability to put the right book into the hands of a reader that can’t in any way be replicated by access to an online algorithm.”

In an effort to support our local bookstores this upcoming holiday season, Cullen asks customers to get a head start on their wishlist shopping. “By shopping early, shoppers and gift-givers can be sure to find the titles they want and ensure that recipients will receive their gifts by the holidays,” he said. Cullen also says that many of the new upcoming titles already have seen a high request for pre-orders and demand. Because of COVID-19, Cullen warns that last-minute shopping will be more difficult due to safety restrictions. So plan as if November is the new December and support your community.

The Sound Of Music: BC's Sonic Arts Student Union

By Chaya Gurkov
Staff Writer

What is music? Does the ticking of a clock or the revving of an engine warrant a musical acknowledgement of sorts, or are they just byproducts of man-made machines? Andres Leon, a student in the Sonic Arts program, has found a rather unusual instrument to use as a channel for making music: a modular synthesizer. Sonic art is the creation of art using sound waves and vibrations.

"I like allowing the machine to make things that I don't have control over. It's a conversation between the machine and what I do," Leon said. The sounds that he creates through the synthesizer are unconventional and yet unquestionably musical, a composition of melodies arising from the symbiotic relationship he has acquired from years of working with it.

Coming to the states as a young boy from Ecuador, Leon's love for sound carried him through the Berkeley College of Music to where he currently studies at Brooklyn College's Sonic Arts MFA program, a place that holds students who create music in a variety of genres.

As the brainchild of Music Professor Douglas



The Sonic Arts Program incorporates technology in its teaching./ CUNY

Geers, the Sonic Arts Program was intended to be a place for students to not only explore their creative voices, but to develop their historical and theoretical knowledge of sound, a fundamental part of the program that Leon takes particular enjoyment from.

"We really try to question and conceptualize and have conversations that push the boundaries of what is music from a more conceptual and artistic perspective than just making music to fill the music industries desires," he commented.

Leon is also the co-president, along with Zach Weinstein, of the Sonic Arts Student Union. The two guys, along with Treasurer Melissa Carter and Secretary Francois

Deville, dedicate their time to bridging the gap between the Sonic Arts students and the greater artistic community, acting as a liaison to the schools faculties.

They have facilitated events that have brought people like Taja Cheek, an Assistant Curator at MoMA PS, as a guest in a series of discussions about careers in the arts. The next event they have planned features a demo and lecture from NYU Professor of Physical Computing at Interactive Telecommunications, Tom Igoe, this coming Thursday.

This year, Zach expounded on plans the Union has for expanding its reach to include more of what the students want. "We want everyone's

opinions on the decisions that we're making to make sure that it's within the interest of the whole student body of the program," he said.

That isn't the only thing the Union plans to focus on. While the program grows every year, Leon explained that the club has been using their voices and position to change the status quo at the Sonic Arts Program- and it began with asking the question of how to become more inclusive.

"How do we put an emphasis on getting to understand art studies and Sonic studies and music studies from a more diverse world perspective?" Leon asked.

For the members of the Sonic Arts Union, that means helping to secure

teaching positions for people of different ethnic origins and reaching out to various undergraduate programs with minority populations to get the word out about the Sonic Arts Program. Leon explained that the effort's made with the hope that they are able to acquire more scholarships for those students who are intrigued by this master's degree program.

While COVID-19 festers and continues to impede on our lives, Leon remained optimistic for what the Union has in store.

"At least we feel that these conversations are happening now, more than ever," he said.

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Phi Sigma Chi, A Brotherhood For Good

By Gabriela Flores
Features Editor

Whether it be cracking inside jokes or cheering each other on through it all, members of the Phi Sigma Chi Multicultural Fraternity at Brooklyn College have grown an inseparable bond that they call a “life-long brotherhood.” Together they have become an inclusive environment for men looking to better society through communal engagement. From cleaning up local parks to chatting with the homeless during COVID-19, members have shown their dedication to tackling the issues that affect each other and their communities.

“Honestly, we all do this because we want to help the human race,” said BC student Hassane Soumahoro, otherwise known as Reign of Phi Sigma Chi.

Back in 1996, at the CUNY New York City College of Technology, Phi Sigma Chi’s six founders decided to create a diverse organization that cultivated leadership development and recognition of self-worth. No matter what race, religion, or culture a student came from, they were more than welcome to join the “true brotherhood.” Today, the spirit of those founders has continued. Before entering the fraternity, members - or “brothers” - are accompanied by five others who will be their life companions. Since joining the fraternity nearly a year ago, Soumahoro and his fellow brother Mohammad Tusar, or Tonic, have vowed to be there for each other through thick and thin.

“Brotherhood in this fraternity is always being there for each other, having each other’s back, knowing your brother the best. There’d be days where I wouldn’t feel my best, and Hassane would just send me a meme. Then, I’m like, ‘Ah man, can’t stay angry the rest of the day at these people,’” said Tusar.

Contrary to the questionable Greek life culture on some college campuses, where hazing is a common practice, and frat parties have spiked COVID-contractions, brothers from Phi Sigma Chi have remained focused on their mission - to help communities. From the get-go, the fraternity pledges their support for the betterment of one another. When recruiting and initiating prospective members, they solely ask for students to bring their individualities to the table.

“It’s a relief because I’m part of a fraternity that doesn’t have any scandals like other fraternities. You hear about other fraternities, where hazing is happening to extreme degrees where kids are being overdosed,” said Tusar. “We actually take care of the people that come into our process. Hazing of course is a crime, and what do you gain out of it? What are you teaching the people?”

For Tusar, joining Phi Sigma Chi has become an opportunity for him to become part of a community filled with students that “come from different walks of life.” Being raised in Pennsylvania and coming to NYC in middle school, Tusar has always lived in diversity. Interacting with people who do not look



Phi Sigma Chi members at a Black Lives Matter protest./ Instagram @phisigmachi_bc

like him and who do not share similar upbringings has contributed to his growth as an aspiring doctor looking to build cultural competence in the medical field.

“We all have different experiences, and because of those different experiences, I can grab onto a lesson or something like that. The way you deal with something is different from that way I deal with something, but the way you deal with it may be more effective than me,” said Tusar.

Soumahoro’s arrival to Phi Sigma Chi came after his search for an opportunity to socialize led him to find organizations which aimed to tokenize his Blackness. Through his brotherhood at the fraternity, he’s been able to showcase who he authentically is and proposed several initiatives for Phi Sigma Chi to take on - including leading their own local Black Lives Matter protest.

“I met somebody in the fraternity, and he gave me

a whole speech like, ‘Never change for other people. Stay true to yourself.’ He was speaking to me in a way that shows that they valued me for me, and not just as a symbol. Some other organization, they need a Black guy, but this organization wanted me for me,” said Soumahoro. “They wanted me for Hassane, not just because I’m African or Indian.”

In valuing the individuality of each member, the fraternity has worked towards showing their inclusivity of everyone. Recently, they have become a certified safe zone for the LGBTQ community in BC. This accolade, rooted in their founding gay brother’s legacy, has been a step for them in their plan to ensure all on campus have the support they need.

Through their philanthropic pillar, 363 Campaign, the fraternity has worked on serving their communities day after day - not only on Thanksgiving and Christmas, when most decide to volunteer.

“It’s actually our duty to help out on those days that people neglect,” said Tusar. Currently, the brothers are actively fundraising and running a toy drive for NYC children’s hospitals. They have also led park clean-ups and food distributions in numerous communities, including Harlem, where Soumahoro is from.

Collectively, connected through the thread of their Brotherhood that spans over 20 years, the fraternity has cultivated a tight-knit community. No matter the circumstances presented by COVID-19, and any Greek life myths they must debunk, these men are determined to be there for one another today and beyond their time at BC.

“We want your ideas. We want your mentality. We want a whole different spectrum of people. Whatever unique style you can bring, bring it in,” said Soumahoro. “If you love the human race, and you want to be yourself, we’d love to have you.”

Music Conservatory Returns With Virtual String Concert

By John Schilling
Arts Editor

Performances resumed at the Conservatory of Music at Brooklyn College on Wednesday, Nov. 4 with “Music for Strings,” an online concert presentation featuring classical works performed by students on string instruments which is free to be streamed anytime at the Conservatory’s homepage on the Brooklyn College website.

Jesse Mills, a violin professor and the head of the Strings Department at Brooklyn College, served as the concert’s coordinator and expressed excitement over music’s return to the community.

“Our strings students are doing a wonderful job making great progress this semester,” Mills said. “You will hear that in all of these performances.”

The concert began with William Swinnick Jr.’s violin performance of Johannes Brahms’ scherzo from the “F-A-E” Sonata, a four movement piece with a piano accompaniment provided by Eri Kang, the Conservatory’s staff accompanist.

Throughout the piece, Swinnick utilized constant shifts in dynamics to create an emphasis on specific moments. This often involved the repetition of notes at different paces and volumes that established a triumphant theme and took on an echo-like approach within the piece.

Similarly, the piano served as the backbone to Swinnick’s shifts, providing a steadiness which helped maintain the upbeat sound when played at a faster pace and conjured a melancholic aura when slowed.

As the piece continued, both Swinnick and Kang achieved a moderate tone and pace that allowed for a satisfying conclusion.

This shifted into the concert’s next performer,

Corinne Bennett, a violinist who took a different approach with Krzysztof Penderecki’s Cadenza for solo violin.

Before playing, Bennett directly addressed the viewers at home to share some insight about the piece.

“This piece...is split into three sections following a slow-fast-slow pattern,” Bennett said. “One thing I love about this piece is how the sections flow into one another seamlessly and without pause.”

The aforementioned transition, however, was an early struggle for Bennett, who grew frustrated and did not understand how the sections of the piece related to one another, but she soon had an epiphany.

“As I continued working on the piece, I found the experience of playing Cadenza to be similar to that of an inner monologue,” Bennett said. “I encourage you... to consider what inner landscape Penderecki may have had in mind when he composed Cadenza.”

With a straight face throughout, Bennett embraced Penderecki’s pattern and created a sense of tension as the piece sped up. When it finally slowed back down, Bennett let out a series of exhales that helped encapsulate the diffusion of this tension.

This did not stop Bennett’s careful finger technique, which along with her constant bodily movements throughout the piece, contributed to an abrupt ending: the piece’s softest note yet, which contrasted heavily from the screech-like sounds utilized in the piece’s loudest moments.

Following Bennett, Isabel Bruschi entered the spotlight with a violin performance of Frédéric Chopin’s Nocturne, Op. 62, no. 2.

Playing in E major, Bruschi started the piece

off with a sweet melody of moderate speed and dynamics. This, however, shifted into spaces which allowed Kang’s piano accompaniment to shine and become the driving force of the piece.

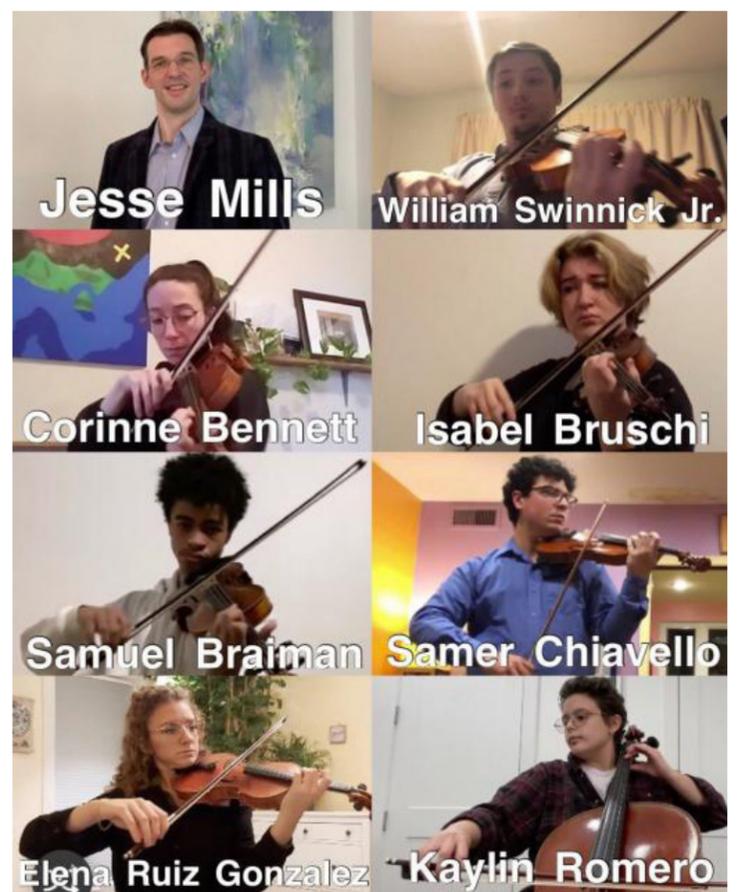
As the piano both sped up and slowed down, Bruschi’s violin melody followed, allowing for frequent tone changes. The most notable of these arrived towards the end, as the piece came to a crawl and took on a gloomier sound. Just when you think the piece is about to enter another movement, the gloom persists and the violin reaches a soft yet steady conclusion.

This allowed for Samuel Braiman, the next performer, to pick up the pace with Johann Sebastian Bach’s Partita No. 3, which includes Preludio and Gavotte en Rondeau.

Braiman began Preludio with a speedy, consistent technique in E major that created a choppy yet upbeat tone, providing a tension similar to that of Bennett’s performance. With seamless finger movement and an unbothered countenance, Braiman maintained this theme for the piece’s length before quickly transitioning to Gavotte en Rondeau.

Unlike any of the other pieces, Gavotte en Rondeau embraced what sounded like a consecutive counting of notes which allowed Braiman to utilize repetition to create a theme with a moderately high pitch throughout.

Samer Chiavello, the concert’s next violinist, took a similar approach with Eugène Ysaÿe’s Sonata No. 2, Op. 27, no. 2. In the middle of his living room, Chiavello utilized a variety of tempos throughout the piece, which came off as experimental. This included chromatic structures that use semitones either above or below the pitches close to them.



The Performers of Music for Strings.../ Photo edited by John Schilling

This becomes clear with Chiavello’s shifting dynamics that progressively get louder or gradually go lower, and this inconsistency was ironically consistent throughout the piece.

The real irony came, however, when Elena Ruiz Gonzalez performed Maurice Ravel’s Allegretto from Violin Sonata No. 2 in which the violin and the piano are seemingly juxtaposed.

As Kang starts on the piano, Ruiz Gonzalez plays the violin so faintly that the sound is almost drowned out entirely. The violin soon takes off, however, with forte dynamics to avoid remaining subtle. With careful precision, the violin takes over the piece as the piano goes softer, and this allows Ruiz Gonzalez to shine.

Unlike the beginning, Ruiz Gonzalez and Kang work together by the piece’s end with piano dynamics that bring the piece to a resolution and allow it to end on a high note but with a low note.

Perhaps, the most unique performance, however,

came from Kaylin Romero, a cellist who ended the concert with Joseph Haydn’s Allegro moderato from Cello Concerto No. 2, op. 101.

Accompanied by Kang, Romero makes a strong entrance on the cello with a sound that transcends the screen, and these sudden notes can be felt in your stomach as if the concert was held in person.

Despite this effort, Romero plays the piece in an effortless, soothing fashion. This does not stop Romero, however, from establishing a musical development in the midst of the piece, shaping a theme born from the opening notes. This is recapitulated soon after, however, as the piece returns to its original theme: a sonata form that brings the section to a steady conclusion.

With that, the concert came to a close, and although there was no audience to applaud, the implication was still obvious: Music had returned to BC.

Piano Prof Pays Tribute To RBG

By John Schilling
Arts Editor

Since Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg passed on Sep. 18, Americans are still grieving the loss of the esteemed public servant and reflecting on the legacy she left behind.

For Brooklyn College Piano Adjunct Professor Jeffrey Biegel, this commemoration has taken on a musical form.

“Ruth’s passing and legacy had indeed stirred up many to preserve her values and her lifelong dedication to our Constitution and humanity,” Biegel released in a statement. “She should be remembered.”

Recently, Biegel, a longtime pianist, performed as a soloist in Kenneth Fuchs’s “Spiritualist,” a piano concerto which won a Grammy for the Best Classical Compendium. Biegel also performed a series of #StayAtHome Saturday Concerts this past spring during the



Prof. Jeffrey Biegel performing “Reflection of Justice: An Ode to Ruth Bader Ginsburg.” / @JeffreyBiegelMusic on Instagram

COVID-19 quarantine.

This time around, however, Biegel announced he would write “Reflection of Justice: An Ode to Ruth Bader Ginsburg,” a piano piece set to honor the late justice. Soon after, Biegel began sharing updates via his page on how the piece was coming along. This included a couple

of revisions to ensure its perfection.

“I’m certainly not on any level to the great composers, but what I have learned...is that the great composers would have revised their music if they had more opportunities to revisit them,” Biegel wrote in one of his updates. “Many have, but many composed their music on instruments quite different in sound, key size and depth to our modern instruments.”

On Oct. 30, Biegel shared the “first public performance” of “Reflection of Justice: An Ode to Ruth Bader Ginsburg” on his Instagram page (@JeffreyBiegelMusic), which shows Biegel seated at his piano at home paying tribute to Ginsburg.

The musical elements translate this idea even further with “each letter of her names set to musical alphabet tones.” This includes RBG and

Ruth Bader Ginsburg, which actively spell out her names within the piece.

“In the beginning, it is RBG for several measures, and then R-U-T-H and B-A-D-E-R and G-I-N-S-B-U-R-G,” Biegel explained in one of his updates. “The ‘right hand’ rapid notes form an obligato repeated section of ‘Ginsburg’ with ‘Ruth’ and ‘Bader’ played by the ‘left hand.’”

Aside from these alphabet tones, however, the piece also references America and gives a nod to other parts of Ginsburg’s life, such as “Kiki,” one of the late justice’s early nicknames.

“Listen for a brief quote of ‘The Star Spangled Banner’ as the climax builds toward two big chords played with the entire arm length of the right arm, symbolizing the ‘long arm of the law,’” Biegel wrote. “The nickname, Kiki, appears just before the end in

four high register tones before the final measure.”

The most recent performance of the piece, which can be found on Biegel’s Instagram page, shows him playing on the piano alone, but it is possible that this piece could soon become something bigger.

Two weeks prior, Biegel announced that he teamed up with Ellen Taaffe Zwilich, a Pulitzer Prize-winning composer, and Denyce Graves, an American operatic mezzo-soprano, to honor Ruth Bader Ginsburg further in his new musical work.

“Added to voice and piano will be [a] small orchestral ensemble,” Biegel announced. “Vocals and narration will include biographical text and powerful quotations from Justice Ginsburg’s lifetime dedication to equality and human rights. Stay tuned!”

On The Record: Déjà Vu – Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young

By Allison Rapp
Opinions Editor

The day before the election results were announced, I took a solo walk in Green-Wood Cemetery. Bright, sunny, and nearly 70 degrees in November seemed like as good a sign as any to get out and about. Two years ago during this exact time of year, my dad and sister came to visit me for a weekend and I took them to Green-Wood. My dad, not normally a big city kind of guy, enjoyed the little oasis away from the concrete.

Last Friday, I practically retraced our steps. Walking without my headphones in, I was content to absorb the quiet -- something the last tumultuous week had provided little of.

But a few steps through the cemetery gates, it becomes easy to forget you're still in the heart of America's largest city. I sat on the same stone bench I had taken a photo of my dad sitting on two years prior and suddenly felt... emotional.

Four years ago, when Donald Trump was elected, I remember my dad apologizing to my sister and I. "I'm sorry this is happening," he said. Of course, it wasn't directly his fault, but his apology stemmed from his shock. He, like thousands of other Americans, had placed an enormous amount of faith in this country and its people. He trusted it to live up to its moral creed and do what was best for the next generation, which included his kids. Though undeniably flawed in more ways than one, America needed to live up to that expectation and, instead, it failed.



I grew up on a lot of protest music. When I was quite young, my dad wasted no time in explaining the historical significance behind songs like "Ohio," which at the time of its release had struck a particular chord in him -- he had college-aged siblings in 1970.

"What if you knew her and found her dead on the ground? How can you run when you know?"

For much of the last four years, each of us have had to wrestle with not only each other and our steep ideological differences, but with our own sense of accountability. The system does not run on its own and the choices that get made every day affect

millions at the drop of a hat. We've been forced, rightfully, to continually ask ourselves the same set of questions: What am I doing right now to help? How does my position of privilege affect the way I think about this issue? What sources can I utilize to better educate myself on a topic I don't know much about? How can you run when you know injustice thrives?

To all the people who dedicated their time in some fashion to ensuring this election ran smoothly and appropriately -- poll workers, ballot counters, door knockers, phone bankers -- it paid off and it was worth every last second of it. It goes

without saying that there's an immense amount of work ahead of us to be done, but doesn't it feel like a weight has been lifted? Like you can inhale a full, deep breath for the first time in ages?

"The sky is clearing and the night has cried enough. / The sun, he comes, the world so often up. / Rejoice, rejoice, we have no choice but to carry on."

When I spoke with my dad over the weekend after hearing the big news, this time he thanked me and told me how happy he was for my sister and I, noting that "the resistance has triumphed." Indeed, millions of young people stepped up to the plate, looked bigotry straight

in the eye and said it can't happen here. Not anymore. Biden was right -- character was on the ballot this year and this time, character prevailed. Parents, including my own, will finally wake up in the mornings and worry just one bit less about their children. The future suddenly doesn't look quite as dim.

"Teach your parents well / Their children's hell will slowly go by. / And feed them on your dreams / The one they picks, the one you'll know by. / Don't you ever ask them why, if they told you, you will cry. / So just look at them and sigh and know they love you."

Book Review: “We Were Liars” by E. Lockhart

By Michael Castaneda
Columnist

“Shut up...I’ll give you more chocolate if you shut up.” The reader is explicitly told to not ask questions. If you can just go with it, then maybe they’ll let you in. No promises. *We Were Liars* by E. Lockhart asks the question: if you really hated your family -- extended family too -- would you burn them all down?

Cady is our narrator, but maybe not a protagonist. She spends her summers on her family’s private island off of Martha’s Vineyard. Alongside two cousins and one family friend, they call themselves “the liars.” They live in their own world separated from the adults and younger cousins -- like how it is to be a teenager in every multigenerational setting all over the world, except each of these families has their own beach house on their private island.

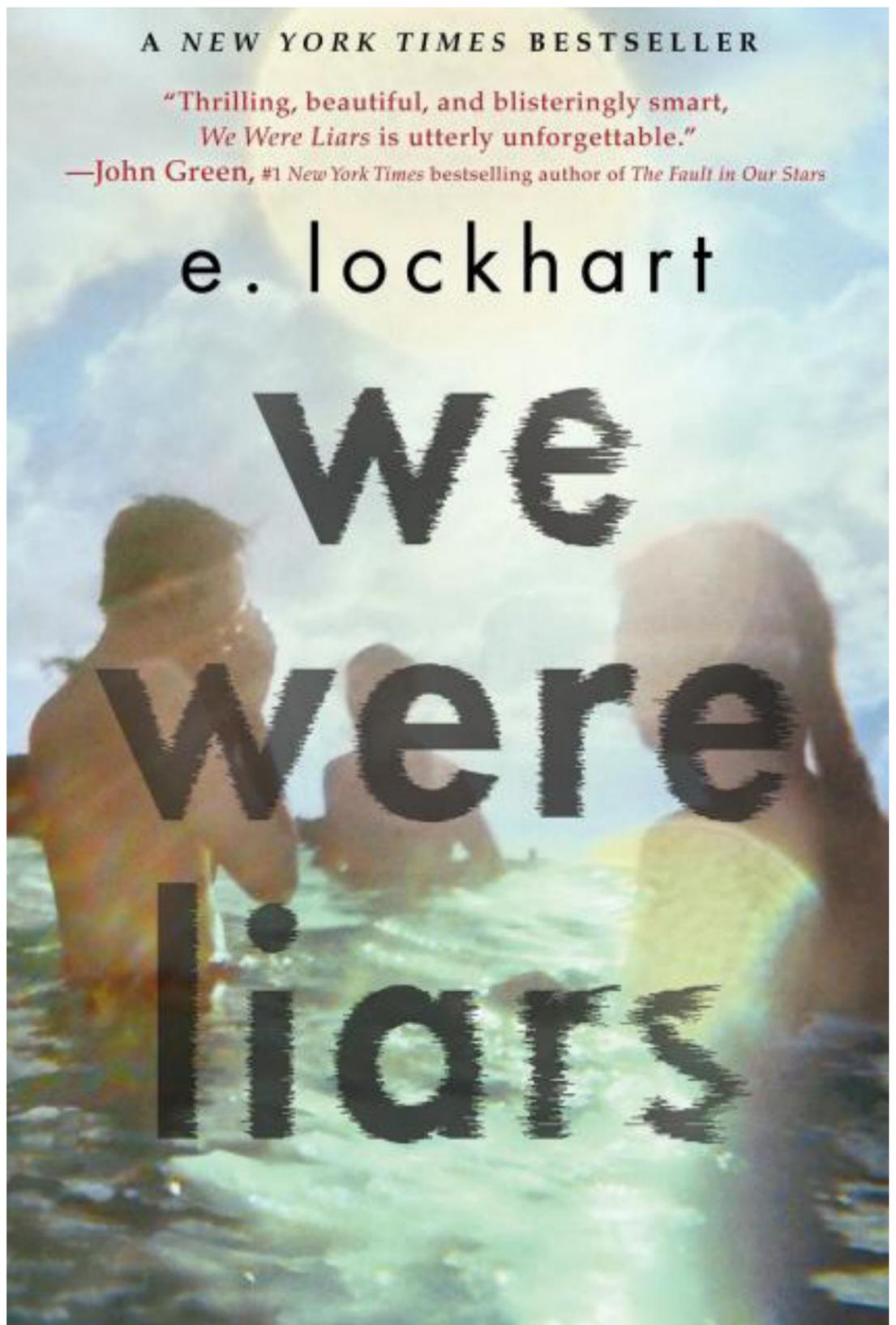
As pretentious as this set up may sound, it feels authentic. An old friend of mine who went to Greenwich Country Day School before he prep’d in Virginia, used to tell me when we walked about the city: “They’re doing it wrong.” He was referring to when, say, a guy would wear Nantucket red shorts, a golf shirt, and boat shoes without socks. They were trying to dress the part of a culture they knew nothing about, but so desperately wanted the world to see them as being a part of.

Instead, *We Were Liars* seems to almost be a case study of a rich family

where the children are dependent on “the family money.” The author makes a convincing argument that when your family pays your rent, your family is your job. When you have no real accomplishments of your own, at least none that justify your level of comfort, your sense of self-worth is predicated on your family myth. It is this house of cards that Cady wants to set a blaze.

There are a few things that really don’t work. First, this book came out in 2014. It’s set in the present day. The main characters are all teenagers born of the generation where every child leaving the hospital came with a free iPod. Nowhere in this book does technology punctuate the lives of the characters as it would even in 2014. Another misstep is that one of the characters is supposed to be of Indian heritage. This character reads so inauthentic, it makes one wonder if the author has ever met an Indian before. This is a pity, because there is an astute lamentation about racism, which could have been more impactful had the author ascribed more features to this character besides having black skin and eating curry. Lastly, it relies on the plot device of someone slowly recovering from amnesia, which feels like a Hulu original movie or a story that opens unironically with: “It was a dark and stormy night.”

All things being equal, the book is still a fun read. This is a plot-driven book and not a character-driven one.



“We Were Liars”, novel by E. Lockhart./Delacorte Press

The slow unraveling of the mystery keeps the reader going, and witty pithy dialogue keeps it fun. Each character is an archetype of New England’s old money culture, so there isn’t much character development to speak of. You automatically know who everyone is and that doesn’t change much. The focus is to figure out what happened.

Towards the end of the book the reader is given an “F-you” -- what the reader thinks has

happened in the story hasn’t happened at all. This makes for a very satisfying ending.

I never understood what was meant by a summer beach read before I read this. It is gripping and not vapid, but not too enriching either. For those who have read *A Separate Peace* by John Knowles, you might recognize the structure but you will not get the insights into the human condition. This book straddles the genres of realistic YA fiction and

psychological thriller. There seems to be an endless song of praise for this book. It was named best book of the year by NPR, Time, The Wall Street Journal, and The Boston Globe, and stellar reviews litter the internet. I am not sure I’d go that far but as is written in *We Were Liars*, it is nothing “that a Percocet and a couple of slugs of vodka doesn’t cure.”

Op-ed: Keeping Our Heads Down

By Ian Ezinga
Business Manager

The news of Joe Biden's victory in this year's presidential contest was met with celebrations across the city and the nation. The celebrations seemed duly warranted when taking into account the last four years and a few long days of uncertainty while waiting for the outcome. These celebrations, particularly jubilant in New York, don't require too much thought beyond one critical question: what are we celebrating?

During a soccer game when one team is leading another by three goals to zero, if the team that is down manages to get one back, the players do not celebrate. The goalscorer grabs the ball from its place in the net and runs back to the halfway line in order to resume the play as quickly as possible. The crowd is right to celebrate, but they do so with a humility that understands that the game is far from won. Perhaps the losing team keeps scoring and the prospect of winning seems to be more likely, but not until the teams are on similar footing does the real celebration

begin.

If you were able to forgive me for the sports analogy, you might see what I am getting at. The progressive movement, which Joe Biden presumes leadership of, is far from being on equal footing with the conservative establishment. Over the course of Donald Trump's term in office, he has to appoint three conservative justices to the Supreme Court, the mobilization of a conservative base almost entirely unseen before in American history, and an unmasking of Democrats' inability to shore up a meaningful resistance that amounts to much more than ineffectual virtue signaling.

Remember in the wake of George Floyd's murder and the subsequent protests how Nancy Pelosi, Chuck Schumer, and co. donned Kente cloth and knelt in the capital building for nine minutes? Remember when they tried to impeach Trump, swiftly lost, and quickly returned to nothing more than a conspiracy theory involving the Russians? It is quite the spectacle surveying the sheer ineffectiveness

of the democratic machine's ability to take down the antagonistic powers that be, let alone even resist them.

This ineffectiveness can be largely chalked up to who Democrat's are answering to. Big tech in Silicon Valley and folks in Wall St. make up an impressive block of funding for democratic candidates. Not to mention oil ("I will not ban fracking!"), private health insurance ("I beat Bernie Sanders"), and a host of other interests whose goals are ominously distant from those of regular Americans ("Nothing will fundamentally change.")

Although it doesn't look like we are celebrating the next progressive dynasty, perhaps we can at least celebrate the coronation of Ol' Joe and Kamala Harris. The only problem with that is Joe Biden has a truly astounding record of being on the wrong side of segregation and criminal justice, to name just two issues he's failed to deliver on. Giving the eulogy at Strom Thurmond's funeral, Biden called the segregationist a "brave man" and one who he became "good friends" with. Apart from his

suspect relationships with segregationists, let us not forget Kamala Harris' own railing against him in regard to his stance on bussing. During the debate, Harris addressed Joe's record on bussing by telling all that she was one of the little girls that was bussed to an integrated school in California. I'm sure glad they were able to put that difference aside.

There isn't a single doubt about Harris having all the necessary credentials as far bringing more representation of women of color to the forefront of our national discourse. Her points for representation are unfortunately stacked up, however, against her record as a prosecutor. On the debate stage, Tulsi Gabbard clearly articulated why we should all be deeply concerned about Harris' record of locking away people for non-violent marijuana offenses, holding prisoners for longer than their sentences in order to use them for labor, and fighting to maintain our nation's pride and joy: the Cash Bail system.

The President-Elect and our next Vice President are not the

shining nobility of the progressive tradition. They are symptoms of a political system that rewards politicians for representing the interests of corporations rather than those of their constituents. I am all for the idea of pushing Biden left, but this man has been in politics since 1973, has shown very little progress and no remorse for his past positions.

Trump being out of office will definitely allow for a safer climate for undocumented immigrants and members of the LGBTQ+ community. But Trump makes a good point when he asks "who built the cages?" Just because a politician isn't outwardly decaying from the effects of sheer loathing for regular people, doesn't mean that they are our champions. Getting comfortable with Obama's legacy being handed over to Hillary is exactly what gave us Trump. It's okay to dislike these people and I don't see a ton of value in celebrating them. Instead of celebrating I think we should put our heads down and keep fighting.

CHECK US OUT ONLINE!

@THEBCVANGUARD ON SOCIAL MEDIA

The Brooklyn Nets Sky High Expectations

By Jose Rohdin
Staff Writer

In the 2019 offseason, the Brooklyn Nets signed both Kevin Durant and Kyrie Irving, two of the most creative and efficient scorers in the NBA. It put them at the top of the pack to make it out of the Eastern Conference with the Giannis Antetokounmpo-led Milwaukee Bucks.

However, the Nets signed Durant knowing full well that he had just torn his Achilles in the 2019 NBA Finals, weeks before free agency. Durant sat out the entire 2019-2020 season to recover and get back to 100 percent before the upcoming 2020-2021 season. Irving picked up a shoulder injury that ended up needing surgery during the season, and he sat out the rest of the year, only playing 20 total games.

After Irving's injury, the Nets threw in the towel on the 2019-2020 season with their two all-stars out for the season. The Nets still made the playoffs with the seventh seed, but got swept by the Toronto Raptors. As their season ended, they looked to the next season where a healthy Durant and Irving could take them to the Finals.

The first thing the Nets needed to do in the offseason was to find a head coach for the team. Kenny Atkinson was fired midseason for unclear reasons. With Irving putting up career numbers, the team was still not winning, and that seemed to be blamed on Atkinson, and it was also rumored that Durant and Irving did not like Atkinson as a coach and wanted someone they liked to take over.



The Brooklyn Nets signed Kevin Durant despite him tearing his Achilles in 2019./Nicole Sweet/USA Today

The Nets promoted Jacques Vaughn to head coach, who coached the Nets' bubble team, leading them to a 7-3 record before facing the Raptors in the playoffs. Vaughn was interviewed to become the permanent head coach, but the Nets instead chose former two-time league MVP, Steve Nash.

Nash was a player development consultant for the Golden State Warriors while Durant was on the team, and is known as one of the best point guards ever to play the game, meaning Irving could learn a lot from him. This was almost a perfect match, and with Vaughn staying on as the highest-paid assistant coach in the league, it was perfect. Nash also hired some old friends from his MVP years with the Phoenix Suns, Amar'e Stoudemire, Ime Udoka, and Mike D'Antoni to be his assistants. D'Antoni is perhaps the most

important because he has been a head coach for a long time and has led the Houston Rockets as one of the best teams in the league and will be a great mentor with a lot of experience for Nash.

The next thing that the Nets need to figure out this offseason is their available cap space and then build a championship roster around Irving and Durant. The issue with this is that with the current roster from last season, they are over the cap, meaning if they want to spend more money, they will have to pay a lot of luxury taxes.

The issue is that the roster could use some sprucing up. The team is built around its offense and ability to put up points, but they have no solid outside defenders outside of Taurean Prince. On top of that, with all their scoring, and with no definity that they will be able to re-sign sharpshooter Joe Harris, the team lacks three-point

shooting.

What the Nets should do first is pick up Garrett Temple's \$5 million team option because they really won't be able to sign anyone else, and he is a decent shooter and defender. Next, the Nets should try their hardest to keep Joe Harris, as he is one of the best three-point shooters in the league, but beyond that, he is an excellent cutter and finisher at the rim. His contract has been around \$8 million in the last two seasons, and he is definitely worth a lot more. The Nets will need to pay up, but it will be worth it.

Finally, the Nets should explore some trades. It would be nice to sell out and trade a bunch of draft picks and a player for a star like Jrue Holiday or Bradley Beal, and while those are not wrong moves, they could make the team way too top-heavy. The Nets have three centers, all the same

thing in DeAndre Jordan, Jarrett Allen, and Nicolas Claxton.

They can't trade Jordan because he was a big reason for bringing Durant and Irving to the Nets. So, you are left with Allen and Claxton, both solid young bigs who could bring in some decent role players. The Nets also have the 29th pick in the draft; even though it is nice to have young players for the future, the Nets need to win now, and trading that pick for another role player might be more than worth it.

Even though the Nets are one of the teams favored to come out of the East and be in the NBA finals next season, fans need to worry about what happened with the Los Angeles Clippers. The Nets are a good team, but we need to see them play well together and hope they make the necessary moves this offseason.

Is Danny Dimes Worth A Nickel?

By Conrad Hoyt
Sports Editor

Through more than simply donning the red, white, and blue uniform, Daniel Jones best captures the spirit of the New York Giants in that he shows flashes of brilliance, but ultimately squanders wonderful opportunities.

No one will mistake Jones for an elite quarterback in this, his second year. And most, beyond possibly Giants GM Dave Gettleman and the Giants faithful, won't mistake him for ever being one. But he does show potential to be a great player and leader, which must hurt most for Giants fans when they see the team then fail.

Jones was drafted sixth overall by the New York Giants in 2019. Since then, in games Jones has started, the Giants are standing at an appalling 5-16.

When Jones was announced as the Giants first pick of the draft, most were flummoxed. Even if Jones was the Giants' guy (which it seemed clear he was given his connections to the Manning family), it seemed pretty clear that he would still be on the board at number 17 or 30, the Giants' next two picks.

But draft choices are not an exact science, and players are meant to prove the naysayers wrong. Jones had an opportunity to learn under Giants legend Eli Manning, and then get the keys handed to him



Daniel Jones, football quarterback for the New York Giants./ **Robert Sabo**

when he was ready.

Jones can look extremely adept at maneuvering within the pocket, using his legs to gain yardage, firing to open receivers and moving the ball upfield. He can also look like a deer in headlights who gives the Giants little chance to put points on the board. This enigma is frustrating for Giants faithful, and casts aspersions on Gettleman's decision-making, which many people have been complaining about for years, dating back to his time with the Carolina Panthers.

Look no further for the highs and lows of Jones than two weeks ago when the Giants lost a nail-biter to the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, 23-25. The Giants led at the half, 14-6, but were down eight as the clock

dwindled at the end of the fourth quarter. Jones then led the Giants down the field with enough powerful momentum to manifest a touchdown against a formidable Buccaneers defense. All that was left was a two-point conversion to tie and extend the game.

Jones caught the snap, shifted his feet and hips to the side, and fired to his receiver in the endzone. However, the ball was broken up by a Bucs defender's hand, and pass interference wasn't called on the play. Upon replay, it was clear Jones should have thrown the ball earlier and further to the right so that it wasn't slightly behind his receiver, and with more velocity. The Giants' hopes were raised by Jones getting them down the field and within one conversion

of tying the game, just to be crushed by a minor mistake.

In 13 games (12 starting) last year in his rookie season, Jones averaged a 61.9 completion percentage, 24 total touchdowns and 12 total interceptions. Comparatively, this year, across 9 games, he is averaging a completion percentage of 62.4%, has 8 total touchdowns and 9 total interceptions. The Giants are 2-7, with their only two wins coming against the similarly-putrid Washington Football Team.

Jones feels like he can be a starting quarterback for a playoff team. We watched Nick Foles defeat Tom Brady in the Super Bowl a few years back, so really anything is possible. But is Jones the type of player that can actually lead a team

to success? Can he be the best player on the offensive side of the ball and make the big plays when it counts? That remains to be seen, but most of the numbers point to a disappointing answer.

Daniel Jones could become the savior of the Giants next year with more experience under his belt. With talent around him, he blooms into the player the most optimistic Giants fans believe he can be. But he could be just another castoff, adrift in the wind, forgotten in the history books except when general managers study when not to reach for a player in the draft.