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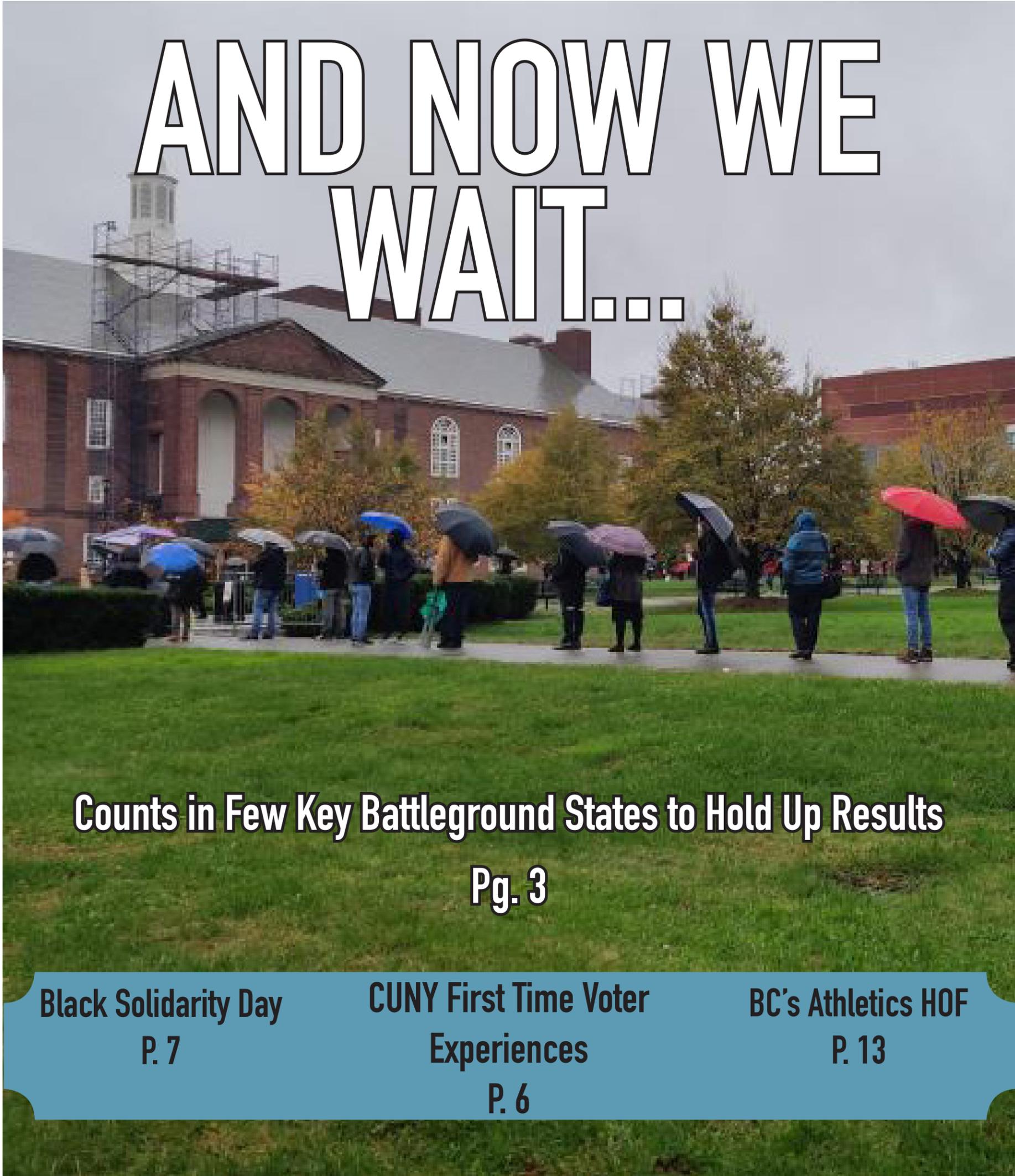
THE BROOKLYN COLLEGE

WANGUARD

Fall 2020, Issue 8

thebcvanguard.com

Wednesday, November 4



**AND NOW WE
WAIT...**

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USS Elects New Chair

By Ian Ezinga
Business Manager

The second week of October saw the confirmation of Juvanie Piquant as the new CUNY University Student Senate Chairperson, whose office is held in tandem with a seat on the CUNY Board of Trustees. Piquant, a junior student of law and paralegal studies at City Tech, has a long history of student activism and leadership and aims to make the voices of CUNY students heard.

Prior to winning this office, Piquant served on the USS Steering Committee as the Vice Chair of Legislative Affairs, acting as the second in command to the chairperson. As Vice Chair, Piquant focused on legislative advocacy and higher ed policy. Here she learned about some of the many contours of the discussion revolving around higher education not just for CUNY, but for SUNY, and institutions around the state.

In addition to her post at USS, Piquant also served as a board member for New York Public Interest Research Group (NYPIRG). Although her latest term recently ended, for the three years she was involved, Piquant was able to conduct research on environmental policies and higher education.

"It's given me the foundation as a student



Juvanie Piquant, the new CUNY University Student Senate Chairperson./ usscuny.org

leader to understand the importance of organizing and policy but also how to activate other students," Piquant told the Vanguard.

Piquant understands the importance of her new position, which also makes her the student representative on the CUNY Board of Trustees, with the power to vote on CUNY wide decisions like tuition hikes.

"You are more involved in conversations with members of the trustees and the administration," she said. Being that nothing is made official without some form of preceding discussion, this direct

line of communication is designed to have students' concerns platformed at the highest rung of the administrative ladder.

While this year harbors several extreme problems and tough discussions, CUNY students have always had a lot of valid gripes with the administration. Some of the key discussions that Piquant hopes to bring to the board is racial inequality throughout the university, sustainability, and pertinent to the circumstances at large, a credit/no credit policy.

Piquant wants to emphasize the role of student involvement

not just in student governments or various USS issues, but in CUNY as a whole.

"How do we work cohesively and collectively together to become champions of our own goals that we know we can achieve?" Piquant said. The answer, she believes, lies within students being able to recognize their role in the fight no matter how big or small. "The fight for a better CUNY is not just one person's fight, it is all of our fight. And our job is to understand what is our role in this fight."

Correction:

In last week's issue, we incorrectly referred to the film class "Location Sound" as a hybrid course, this is not the official class designation. Also, the 72-hour wait time to pick up equipment does not pertain to this course. We apologize for the errors.

2020 Election Goes Down to Wire As 5 States Count Outstanding Ballots

By Ryan Schwach & Maya Schubert
Editor-in-Chief & News Editor

With the vast majority of states called, and well over 100 million votes counted, America will have to wait patiently for the results of the 2020 election.

As of press time, the Vanguard's tabulation of voting has Former Vice President Joe Biden up 238 electoral votes to President Donald Trump's 232, with five key states Nevada, Wisconsin, Michigan, Georgia, and Pennsylvania still counting mail-in and early ballots, which are expected to be overwhelmingly Democratic. Early this morning, Joe Biden made a rousing come back in Wisconsin and Michigan, showing there

may be enough for him to outlast President Trump.

Three of those states, Wisconsin, Michigan, and Pennsylvania were once called "The Blue Wall," and were strongholds for Democrats until President Trump flipped them red in 2016. Arizona is currently leaning towards Biden, and Georgia is leaning towards Trump. If Arizona holds for Biden, and Georgia for Trump, then Former VP Biden has to win two out of the remaining three states in Michigan, Wisconsin, and Pennsylvania.

Officials from the "Blue Wall" states, have said that it will take time to tabulate the early ballots, and election results may not be in for a day or two. "Due to the pandemic and the high number of absentee ballots, it will

likely be Wednesday before all the unofficial results are in," Meagan Wolfe, Wisconsin's chief election official told WAOW, ABC News. "It doesn't mean something went wrong – it means election officials are doing their jobs and making sure every legitimate ballot gets counted," she said.

Democrats and the Biden Camp are hoping that the late counting will be enough to surmount current gaps in those few states.

Last night, Joe Biden addressed an optimistic crowd in his home state of Delaware. "We believe we are on track to win this election," he said. "And it ain't over until every vote is counted."

Not long after, President Trump tweeted: "We are up BIG, but they are trying to STEAL the



Former Vice President Joe Biden./ Win McNamee/Getty Images

Election. We will never let them do it. Votes cannot be cast after the Polls are closed!" He came out to speak at around 2:30am, doubling down on his previous tweet, which was flagged by both Twitter and Facebook.

"We were getting ready to win this election, frankly we did win this election," he said in the East Room of the White

House. "This is a major fraud in our nation. We will be going to the US Supreme Court. We want all voting to stop. We don't want them to find any ballots at 4am and add them to the list," he said.

As of presstime, the race is still extremely close, and there is still much left to count.

CUNY Board Votes To Continue Online Services

By Ryan Schwach
Editor-In-Chief

Online learning for the spring? On Oct. 26th the CUNY board of trustees voted to continue online learning services into the spring.

This does not officially put the learning of CUNY's 275,000 students online, but merely states that CUNY will provide services for individual colleges who choose to go online.

The minutes for the Oct. 26 Board of Trustees meeting reads:

"The Board of Trustees approves the University's

decision to extend and continue the offering of online and distance learning instructional modality for the delivery of courses in degree and non degree programs and the offering of remote support services for the Spring Semester 2021."

This leaves the door wide open for a virtual Spring semester as students and faculty alike lament the current state of affairs complete with increased workloads and a lack of motivation.

"To protect the health and safety of our community, we are

pleased to announce that the CUNY Board of Trustees has voted for all CUNY colleges to continue online teaching in the 2021 Winter Intersession and Spring Semesters. Therefore, Brooklyn College will offer its winter and spring courses in a remote format, except for those courses that cannot be delivered remotely, such as those few that are being offered in a hybrid format this semester," wrote President Michelle Anderson in an email to students Friday. "Although we miss very much being able



Blackboard and Zoom, online learning tools used during COVID-19./ Collage by Humza Ahmad

to see one another in person, it is not yet safe to gather again on our beautiful campus. There is no vaccine or cure for COVID-19, and cases are rising across the country," she said.

BC Early Voting Site for 2020 Election

By Maya Schubert
News Editor

Brooklyn College's campus took a role in the 2020 election as a polling place for early voting. On Oct. 24, the West Quad building opened its doors to admit a line of early voters.

Some voters lined up outside the college's gates before the polls opened at 10am. Even once the polls opened, the socially-distant line swept past the open gates of campus and down the sidewalk, winding beside Roosevelt Hall. Most voters waited hours before entering the polling place.

"People were patient," said Zach Pellecchia, a BC student who went the first day and stood in line for three hours. "It was a long ass line, but it was long because we all wanted to do good. It was nice to go on campus," he added.

The line's length only increased within the next few days. According to the NYC Board of Elections, Brooklyn reached almost 200,000 cast ballots within the first five days of early voting, surpassing the other boroughs in early voter turnout. Cumulatively, New York City gathered almost 700,000 votes in the first six days, making up most of the state's 1 million early votes.

Despite steady COVID-19 cases across Brooklyn, many decided to vote early rather than



Early voting line at Brooklyn College./ Twitter @BCPresAnderson

apply for absentee ballots or wait until Election Day. Several weeks ago, thousands of Brooklyn voters received misnamed ballots, destabilizing already shaky trust in the mail-in system, which has been very slow.

"The USPS is being throttled by the government," said

Pellecchia. "As someone who is able to go out and wear a mask, I think mail-in voting should be for those who can't, especially populations that are high risk."

In the few days leading to Election Day, lines at BC tapered slightly. According to a BC student, voters only waited about

twenty minutes to enter the building on the morning of Halloween.

"It was very simple and straightforward," said Ashten Rodriguez, who was voting for the first time. "The poll workers and staff were really nice and attentive."

The worker who handed out "I Voted" stickers

stopped Rodriguez at the exit and asked if it was his first time voting. When Rodriguez answered yes, "He shouted, 'We got a first time voter!' and everyone cheered," Rodriguez said.

CHECK US OUT ONLINE!

@THEBCVANGUARD ON SOCIAL MEDIA

WEB Computer Lab to Reopen

By Bobbie Bell
Staff Writer

On Nov 2., the West End Building Computer Lab officially reopened after a nearly seven month closure.

Since March, closure of essential spaces on campus like the WEB Computer Lab have left countless students congested in their homes and in search of a safe and quiet study space with a working computer.

“Towards my last two semesters at Brooklyn College, I was literally there all the time after class was finished,” said Jacki Campbell, a former student and spring 2020 graduate.

To many students, the WEB Computer Lab was more than a study space. It was also a place where students could congregate and decompress.

“When I found out it opened late, I was there even later trying to finish assignments, catch up on reading [and] talking with other people,” said Campbell.

While the computer loan distribution program has eased some stress related to access to resources on campus, many continue to struggle. “While we have the device loan program, getting a laptop/tablet loaned right now can take up to ten days, which is just too long if you need access quickly,” said Maisa Lopes Crispino, an upper senior.

Crispino, a peer mentor at the college, has personally seen how the closure of essential buildings on campus has impacted students. “Some of the students I worked with felt that with both the library and WEB closed, they had no access to technology/ study space, since their



West End Building at Brooklyn College./ [Brooklyn College WEB Computer Lab's Facebook](#)

options at home were limited,” said Crispino.

Nancy Chavez, a senior at Brooklyn College, did not use the space much before its closure, but said, “I do like the idea that it’s finally reopening for students who need it.”

To ensure that the building remains within CDC guidelines, students must reserve a computer by signing up in advance through an online form, allowing students the ability to social distance. Masks must also be worn at all times.

Crispino said she is “torn about them reopening,” because while it is a great resource to many students, COVID-19 cases are rising in Brooklyn again.

“I believe people will adhere to the rules at first but they may want that free flow of how it was before to come back,” said Campbell. “However, during this time in COVID, this is

unfortunately the new norm.”

Campbell recalls how packed the WEB Computer lab space used to be, and with finals week rapidly approaching, Campbell is curious how the space will look like this time of year with the pandemic guidelines.

“If you have to reserve spaces and social distance, people will be stressed out,” said Campbell. “It’s because finals are already stressing them out, and to add this factor in, it’s just added stress.”

Since Campbell is an alumni, she will not have access to the space during this time. Only current students may reserve time.

Students must also keep record of whether or not they have had any symptoms within 12 hours of their reserved time, by using the Everbridge Health Screening App on their phones. The app will

ask the student questions about how they have been feeling to analyze whether or not they have COVID-19 symptoms. The student must show their results upon arrival.

Students are required to sanitize their devices before and after each use. As stated in a mass email from Anil Lilly, the Manager of Information Technology Services on Thursday, “Any individuals using our facilities will be responsible for cleaning and disinfecting equipment before and after use (supplies will be available) and will need to follow the stated guidelines for everyone’s protection.”

After contacting the lab, the Vanguard was informed that while the space will be wiped down at the start and end of each day, it is on students to keep the space clean throughout the day.

Students looking to reserve a computer may only have up to two hours to complete any necessary work or study within the space. The Vanguard was also informed that there are no updates yet on how more students may be accommodated during finals season. “If additional hours or computer stations are needed, we will consult with Environmental Health and Safety to explore the possibilities,” said Ronald Jackson, Vice President for Student Affairs.

While the lab will remain open from Mondays to Fridays, a strict opening and closing time will be enforced. On Tuesdays and Thursdays it will be open from 1p.m. to 7p.m. whereas every other day will have availability between 8a.m. to 2p.m.

First-Time CUNY Voters Weigh-In On Poll Experience

By Gabriela Flores
Features Editor

As the country's general elections came to a close, eligible CUNY students made their homestretch in filling their ballots and casting their votes. In New York City, over 1.1 million voters showed out to early poll sites, not letting the pandemic stop them from exercising their rights. For new voters across CUNY campuses, making up the 6.2 million who turned out this year nationwide, casting their votes was worth any hurdles that came their way - including their anticipation of excessive wait times and election unrest.

"It's a civic duty to vote, so might as well take advantage of it. If you have the opportunity to make your voice heard - you might as well do it," said Ridwan Waseef, a Hunter College undergraduate.

With news tailing the long lines of polls, Waseef assumed his site at Laguardia Community College would be the same. To his surprise, the process was relatively swift. Once he had his ballot in hand, the surge of coronavirus cases, and related deaths peering over 233,000 (as of press time), influenced his decisions. In New York State alone, over 33,000 residents died due to COVID-

complications. For Waseef, these deaths were preventable if necessary precautions and actions were implemented earlier by government officials.

"That number just kept going through my mind. Those people deserve - I mean, you can't bring them back alive - but to avoid those conditions in which people died, we need to do something to avoid that," said Waseef.

Similarly, for Queens College student Christina Rhim, the significant tolls that the pandemic has inflicted on healthcare, the economy, and the survival of Americans with the country's high unemployment rates were difficult to ignore while casting her vote. She hopes her presidential candidate of choice would manage all the issues that will come up during their administrative years.

"There's just so many things going on, it's like one thing after another after another. If the president's able to keep up with all those problems and be able to find a solution to them, I think that's what the president should do - find solutions."

Rhim believes her vote, and that of anyone else's, has substantial weight in the election. Having her first voter experience being in a year filled with a heightened awareness

of environmental issues, a troubling economy, and other challenges has been eye-opening. In the long-term, this election for a new head of state can make or break the wheels of progress.

"I don't know what's going to happen after the election. I just have a feeling that with everything going on, the president that is going to be chosen is going to have a big impact on our future," said Rhim.

By contrast, BC first time voter Paola Muñoz's experience casting her first vote felt anti-climatic. New York is a democratic state, not a swing one like New Hampshire or Minnesota, which led Muñoz to consider her decision relatively insignificant.

"Honestly, voting at least in New York, I felt that the vote I was going to give in wasn't going to really count because I know New York is usually a blue state," said Muñoz. One of her major concerns about voting is the electoral college and its disregard for each state's populations. Though she does not think the system should be completely removed from presidential elections, she thinks it needs reform.

"It invalidates the voices of a lot of voters because it's based on a chance really, it's based off a system that was created in the

very, very beginning of America that hasn't really changed. This is an issue because a lot of things have changed in the US."

For Nizar Alvarez, a BC student who has worked as a poll site translator since 2016, exercising his right to vote was initially not his plan. Though he did not hit the polls as a voter before this year, he had an interest in knowing more of how elections operated. After sharing a heartfelt moment with a newly-turned American citizen, who was excited about voting for the first time, he decided to continue being a poll worker. Sometime later, as he scrolled through his social media, Alvarez decided to cast his ballot after being registered for two years.

"I've seen people's pictures on social media saying that, 'They want to vote, but they can't. You can vote, but you choose not to - so you're throwing away your rights as a citizen,'" said Alvarez. "(...)It kind of felt uncomfortable at first, and then it became guilt. I can vote, and other people can't for a number of reasons, but they want to vote. It kind of just stemmed from that."

During this election season, Baruch College undergraduate Ekra Kazi has used social media to inform her

friends about voter information. Whether it be sharing light-hearted TikToks of young voters like herself or posting resources on her Instagram, Kazi has found that it's essential to keep others informed of their rights. Though she has voted before in primaries, this year was her first in a general election.

"I think having my entire age group being so passionate, informative, and caring, is really setting up the future for these young soon-to-become voters - which is important."

Currently, former Vice President Joe Biden is ahead of President Donald Trump. As all votes are gathered and counted, it is likely that the outcome will change. But, in the meantime, these first-time CUNY voters will retain their patience in waiting for the 46th elected head of state.

"I think one important thing to keep in mind is, no matter who wins the election you shouldn't be discouraged from your right to vote," said Waseef.



Students Relieve Stress, Let Talent Shine at Black Club Mixer

By Bobbie Bell
Staff Writer

Two days before Halloween, Black organizations on campus showcased their talents through poetry readings, dancing and costume contests at the Black Club Mixer put together by the Women of Color at Brooklyn College.

With the pandemic keeping students indoors for the most part, and racial injustices being highlighted more frequently, this event ultimately provided a safe space for Black students to decompress and embrace who they are.

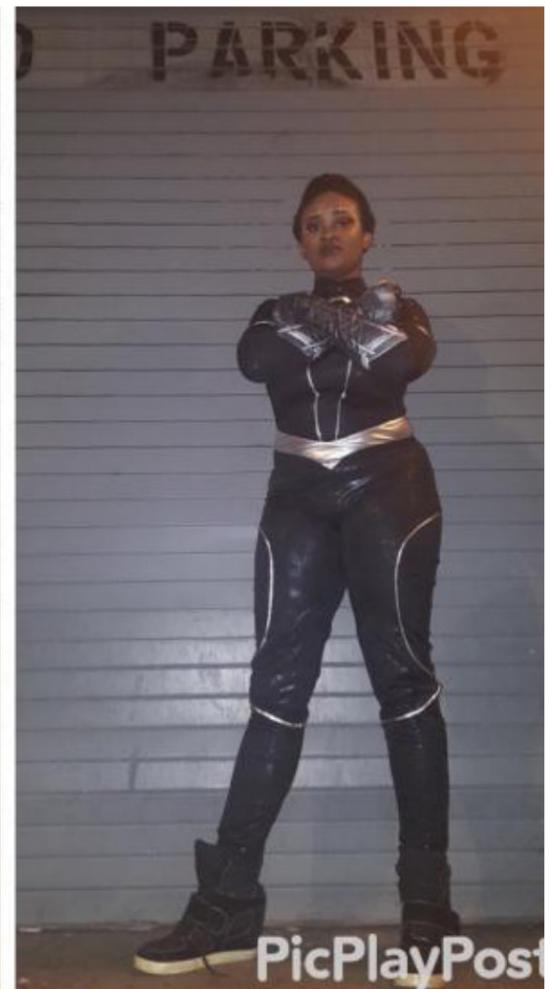
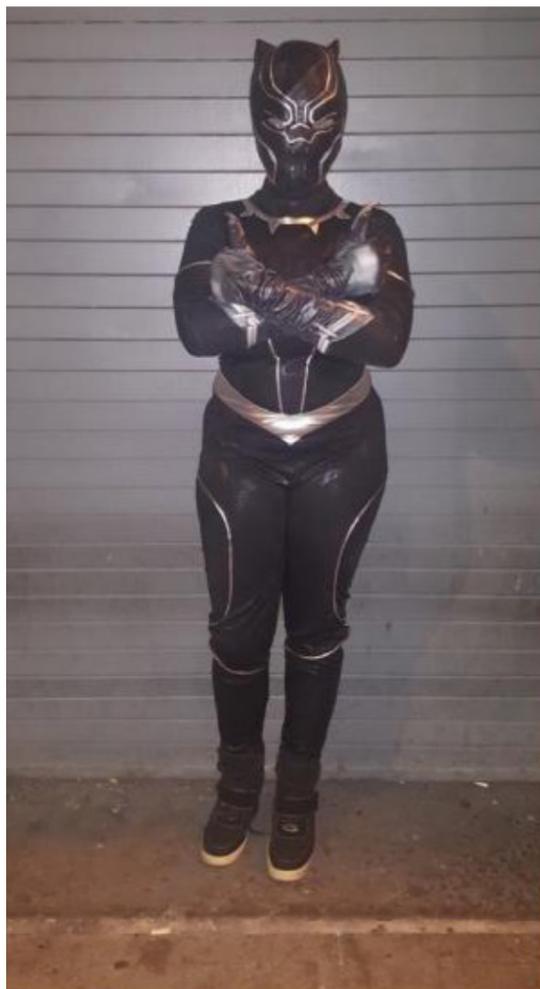
“The past few weeks have been very stressful for most people, especially dealing with midterms and the political and social climate of the world,” said Mame-Yaa Boateng, president of Women of Color. Boateng used the event to highlight a Black-owned business, her brother’s. Boateng gave away two shirts by her brother’s

business “Boyani,” as a prize for the TikTok dance competition.

“There are amazing Black-owned businesses that put thought and care into their work, but they get overlooked since they might not receive the exposure many popularized companies attain,” said Boateng.

In spite of it being a virtual event, the Mixer was an interactive experience that allowed Black clubs on campus to come together, promote their organizations, and just have fun. Clubs such as the Black Student Union, Minority Association for Pre-Health and Pre-Med Students, Glamazon, and fraternities like Sigma Gamma Rho, were all present.

“We are still in a pandemic and it just gives us an opportunity to support one another through it all,” said Shazam Wilson, a fraternity member of Phi Sigma Chi and aspiring musician, told the Vanguard. “We don’t know what everyone is



Oluwadamilola Sholaja, the Event Coordinator for ASU, dressed as Black Panther./

Instagram @womenofcolor_bc

going through so even small events like this gives a chance for everyone to touch base and feel some type of centered,” said Wilson. As host for the event, he kept attendees pumped up with his high energy and encouraged participants to dance to their favorite trending Tik Tok moves.

During the mixer, many club members spoke about how they support each other through common interests. “We heavily encourage creative expression in any form,” said Nya Archie when speaking on behalf of club ARTiculate.

In addition to attendees sharing their club missions, several shared poems they had written that highlighted what being a Black woman means to them.

Archie’s poem was a crowd favorite. “My mother told me Black girls descended from royalty,” she recited.

In her poem titled “Women,” Pomie Delva,

vice president of Women of Color, spoke about how powerful women are and about not needing validation from anyone.

“I am a woman who lifts other women up,” she said.

Some participants like Oluwadamilola Sholaja, event coordinator of the African Student Union, were active participants in contests throughout the event. For the costume contest, she decided to dress up as Black Panther, one of the first Black superheroes portrayed in Marvel films.

After Black Panther actor Chadwick Boseman’s passing a few months ago, many recognized him as a legend who helped shape how stories of Black people are conveyed on screen.

“This is my tribute to him,” said Sholaja. “Boseman contributed to Black storytelling; any movie he worked on was impactful, for the most part, to the Black people; which I think is beyond

humble,” said Sholaja.

Club members also used their time to share their upcoming events, and let attendees know that there is a space for them if they are interested in joining. For example, Glamazon noted that the pandemic would not stop them from giving back this holiday season.

“This year, we are happy to do a toy drive in collaboration with SUNY Downstate,” said Brittany Thevenot, the treasurer of Glamazon. “We usually have a fashion show, but that’s up in the air due to recent events,” said another member.

Even as the last few moments of the Zoom dwindled down, the energy continued. The chat was blowing up with fire emojis, and hand claps. Throughout the night, many sang along to songs, played games, and danced before snapping back to reality.

“It’s crazy out there, so keep your heads up,” said Wilson.



Participant Alani Thompson’s interpretation of a killer pumpkin./Instagram @womenofcolor_bc

Black Solidarity Event Calls For Change, “There Are Other Battles to be Fought”

By Gabriela Flores
Features Editor

To ring in the 2020 general election, Brooklyn College hosted Black Solidarity Day to reflect on Black people's contributions in CUNY, America, and beyond. From fighting for more teachers of color to challenging the narrative of Blackness, guest speakers shared their continuous pursuit for change.

Remembering the efforts of leaders before them, like Malcolm X and Toni Morrison, the event recalled the history that empowered Black communities in the first place.

“Black people did not create the need for liberation and power,” said Dr. Jermaine McCalpin, professor at New Jersey City University. “If all lives truly mattered, there would be no need for Black Lives Matter. But because of the existential reality of our oppression, we have to shake off our chains.”

For Carlos E. Russell, the late founder of Black Solidarity Day, recalling Black people's important socioeconomic and political contributions can remind them of their vote's importance.

“Growing up, my dad taught me that America is based on two things: democracy - voting - and capitalism. Now to facilitate the change you had to affect one or the other, or both,” said Khari Russell, the founder's son.

In Russell's spirit, and in the wake of Black Lives Matter, Dr. McCalpin defined Black solidarity as the unification of Black people, where the common goal is to dismantle the oppressive forces of racism. McCalpin says that to understand this unity, one must understand Blackness's diversity and the definition of Black power, which is the “declaration of Black humanity and dignity.”

“If Black skin already sets us apart, why not use it to be empowered?” asked McCalpin.

Today's protests against

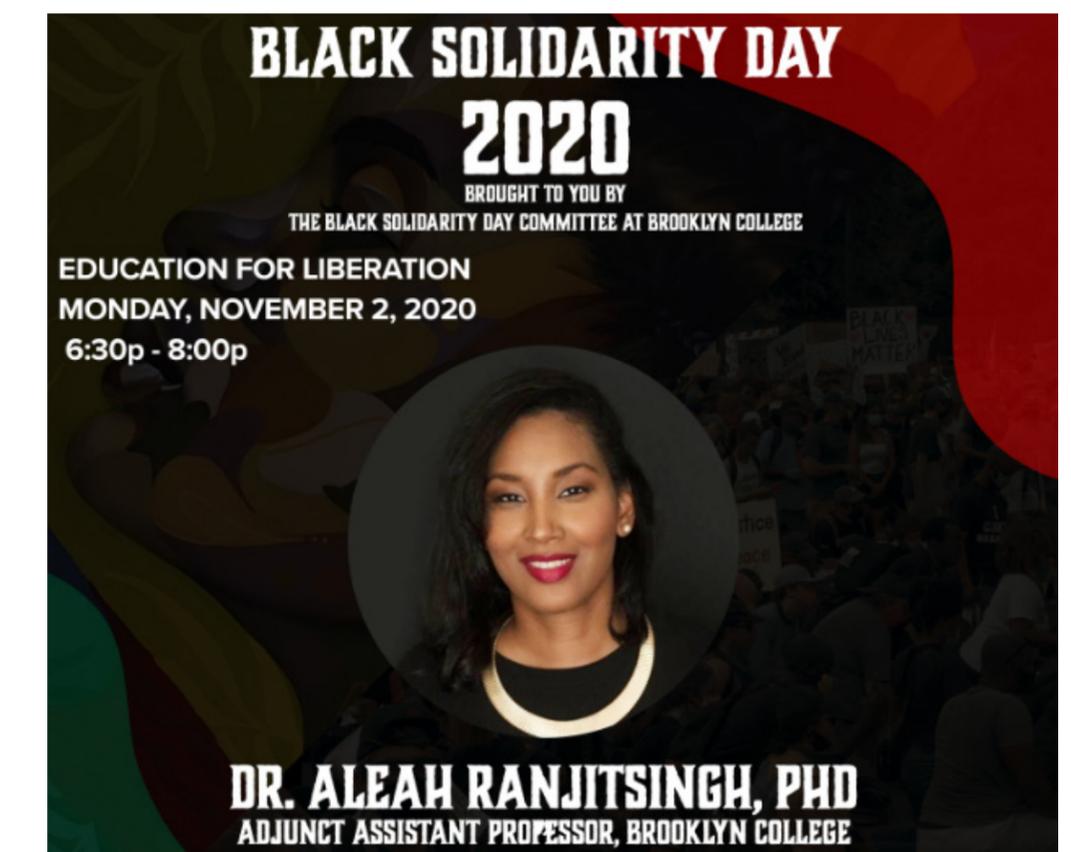
police brutality, and many social injustices, are a continuation of the struggle that previous activists carried, explained Africana Studies professor Dane Peters. In 1969, 17 BC Black and Puerto Rican students were sent to Rikers Island for 4 days, with bail set at \$15,000, after being in a standoff with police. Despite the challenges they faced, these students obtained what they were pushing for - ethnic studies and a step forward in having more peers of color admitted to the then 96% White student body.

“It's not that things aren't changing in America. It's just that this is a constant struggle. This is not one of those things where I'm running in a race, and the race is over, and I won,” said Peters, encouraging students to push for campus policy changes during their time at college. “No, there are other races to be run. There are other battles to be fought.”

For Dr. Clarence G. Ellis, the Department of Education (DOE) Superintendent of Schools in District 17, implementing a “paradigm shift” to the makeup of NYC public schooling staff became his life's calling. After dropping out of high school in the 10th grade and returning to academia, Ellis realized the significance of having males of color like himself leading a classroom.

“(…) Oftentimes, you'll see a man with a suit and tie on and has degrees and say, ‘Oh he's always had it easy.’ Part of this is resiliency - I'm not talking about the cliché of pulling yourself up from the bootstraps - I'm talking about resiliency to odds you never thought you'd overcome,” said Ellis.

Similarly, for Shomari Akil, DOE Restorative Practice Director, the strong relationships between teachers and students can lead younger generations to develop better decision-making skills and to thrive beyond academics. By building



“Black Solidarity Day”, celebrating black people's contribution to CUNY and the world./ Professor Aleah Ranjitsingh on Blackboard

a community, students would be encouraged to do better with their studies as well. However, despite the benefits it may have for the child's well-being, it subsequently burns out many Black male teachers.

“Not only are we required and asked to be the father, the brother, the uncle, but we're also asked to be the Joe Clark, you know?,” said Akil.

Fondly remembering her days as an undergraduate in the Africana Studies Department at BC, Dr. Trina Lynn Yearwood recalls the significant role her Black professors played in uplifting her. After failing her English class, where her professor called her work “incompetent,” Yearwood decided to venture into her first Africana Studies course called “Black Child In Public School System.”

“The voice that was silenced the year before - I found it in my classes that credited this space for intellectual conversation where I wasn't the token Black student responding. Where there was validation from my professors and people who really cared about me, who had a real vested interest,” Yearwood said.

Academically, Africana Studies has enabled Black

students to delve into their identity deeper than they initially thought possible. In her course at the Borough of Manhattan Community College, BC professor Dr. Aleah Ranjitsingh teaches about the Black body in American history. She begins her curriculum with a look into pre-colonial kingdoms of West Africa - which is often surprising to many of her students who thought their origins as Black people began with slavery.

“It's about learning and unlearning, and most importantly, unlearning everything that you've been taught about yourself, everything that you've internalized about yourself as a Black body, as a Black person. Be it in the US or even the Caribbean space,” said Dr. Aleah Ranjitsingh.

For Robert Jones Jr., author of the upcoming novel *The Prophets*, minoring in Africana Studies enabled him to call himself a writer and understand different intersectionalities “in the space of Blackness.” Jones credits his development of cultural competence, or the ability to understand and interact with other cultures, to the department.

“I came from a line of people who've wrote and

read at risk of death, that they could've been whipped or murdered for knowing how to read, for knowing how to write,” said Jones. “That it was my inheritance to be able to call myself a Black writer, and by virtue of the fact that I'm writing is always going to be politicized because I'm writing against a narrative about me, about my people about this country.”

With looming cuts in funding for Africana Studies, Jones believes that CUNY is not providing enough financial backing for the department to carry on its role in expanding the understanding of identity among students.

“So, if you're going to give us this work to do, give us the money to do it,” said Jones.

Through their discussion of Blackness in different areas of society - from academia to civic unrest - panelists emphasized the importance of hearing Black experiences and resiliency. Through this collective reflection, against the backdrop of closing elections, the message remains clear - the fight against social prejudices is a long one, but change must continue to be pursued.

Alumni Spotlight: Theater Dept's Danielle Kogan

By Michela Arlia
Staff Writer

Danielle Kogan is a recent graduate of Brooklyn College with a Bachelor's degree in Theater and Journalism. Graduating in the class of 2020 summa cum laude, the Vanguard caught up with Kogan to see what she has been up to.

Since graduation, her biggest accomplishment has been the formation of her own theater company, The Pressure Players.

"It's an ensemble company by a bunch of local actors," said Kogan. "And creating my own opportunities to be creative and employed has been nothing short of insanely empowering."

Since the pandemic kept her from collaborating with other artists in person, Kogan was fortunate enough to give

back to the Brooklyn College community during her time at home. She was recently a guest speaker in a workshop series about creating digital theater hosted by the BC Theater Department, and she hosted a live reading of *The Pressure Player's A Family Tree* in collaboration with Tanger Hillel at Brooklyn College.

Kogan is very grateful for all the opportunities Brooklyn College has given her, especially in the Theater Department, and wishes to come back and assist in any way she can.

"I want to show artists at Brooklyn College that they don't have to wait to practice the thing they train so hard to pursue," said Kogan. "And I'm happy to share how I do it as I go because theater has honestly done [its] best, at least for me, when

it's in [the] process of collaboration."

Kogan feels that she and her fellow graduates have had a sense of normalcy stolen from their post-grad life by the pandemic.

"I felt robbed of an opportunity that I had trained for, for at least 10 years, and suddenly every possible field that I could have gone into wasn't just closed temporarily, it was barred from existing," she said. "I was ready for it to be difficult, but not COVID-19 level difficult."

Despite the challenges she has faced, Kogan has been able to make the best of the situation, through her involvement in her growing theater company, a part-time online tutoring job, and many collaborative projects.

Giving back to the Brooklyn College community allows her to share her journey



Danielle Kogan./Backstage.com

with other students, and provide advice or guidance for other undergraduates who are in the process of joining the workforce, about to graduate or who are just undecided.

Her advice to students who are aspiring artists would be to make a plan, be clear about what exactly it is that you

want, be specific about following it. Perhaps most important is to not go it alone.

"To...every aspiring artist, I'd say the only way up is together," said Kogan. "If you're committed to doing this professionally...accept the idea that you will not get there on your own."

Prof Hamilton Talks Black Futures in Art Lecture

By John Schilling
Arts Editor

These are the tenants of afrofuturism, according to Dr. Elizabeth Hamilton, an Assistant Professor of Art History at Fort Valley State University in Georgia, whose research focuses "primarily on race, feminism, afrofuturism, and the impact of visual culture on the lives of black women."

On Tuesday, Oct. 27, Hamilton joined Dr. Christopher Richards' ARTD1010 class to give a lecture titled "Narratives of Fugitivity, Black Feminist Futures, and Art History" based on her upcoming book

scheduled for release in 2022.

When it comes to the presence of afrofuturism throughout the arts, some might think of Sun Ra, an American jazz composer whose music created a mythology often credited "as a way to liberate black people from oppression in the United States." This mythology involved Sun Ra imagining himself as from Saturn, instead of his home of Birmingham, Alabama.

"Sun Ra is a pivotal figure in afrofuturist study, but it is here that I want to resist him as the sole architect of afrofuturism," said Hamilton. "Before there was Mae Jemison or even

Sun Ra, there were three women born in the 19th century that traveled among the stars even in their own imaginations."

These women were Harriet Tubman, Harriet Powers, and Alma Thomas, who Hamilton claims should all be seen as "progenitors of afrofuturism with just as much as much importance."

When it comes to Harriet Tubman, Hamilton refers to Celeste-Marie Bernier's *Characters of Blood*, where she describes Tubman as "someone who can be considered an artist because of the way that she fashioned her own life."

The main artwork Hamilton uses to convey this idea is Sanford Biggers' *Codex*, which at first glance does not appear to be a narrative of a notable black heroine. Nonetheless, the piece transports those who view it into a celestial environment that does just that.

"Codex is a richly layered narrative of the deeds of Harriet Tubman that relies on the visual language of afrofuturism," said Hamilton. "Biggers defines afrofuturism as a way of recontextualizing and assessing history and imagining the future of the peoples of the African diaspora via science

fiction, technology, sound, architecture, individual and culinary arts, and other more nimble and interpretive modes of research and understanding."

Codex is made up of several hanging quilts painted with constellations that serve as a representation of quilts being used as a sign to fugitives of "safe houses" while escaping via the Underground Railroad. The way they were hung or the patterns depicted on them were deliberate ways of guiding escaping slaves.

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The name “Codex” implies that the quilts are to be read as pages in the book of Harriet Tubman.

“Afrofuturism plays heavily in this installation as Biggers identifies Tubman as an astronaut that used the stars to traverse dangerous territory and free those enslaved,” said Hamilton. “Codex is very much about the absence of the body and the possibilities of materiality to convey meaning.”

Similar to Biggers’ Codex, Harriet Powers utilized quilts to convey a neo-slave narrative, a cohesive viewpoint of slavery from the perspective of the enslaved that is supported by collective oral history, archival information, and imagination.

Powers was born in Georgia in 1837, and while not much is known about her life, historians have determined that she was deeply religiously and very creative. It is believed that she began quilting at the time of Emancipation when she was 26 years old.

“[Powers] said she desired to preach the gospel in patchwork,” said

Hamilton. “She created her own narratives, which carried on oral histories and bible stories, practicing an alternate form of literacy since she was not traditionally literate.”

In 1886, Powers created a Bible Quilt with 11 panels of animals, humans, crosses, flowers, and sunbursts. Among the people are Biblical figures like Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, and Jesus Christ. Powers’ quilts were considered to be “a hybrid art form” in which she resorted to Christian themes, but the content of her work remained African-inspired.

This is seen more clearly in 1898 with Powers’ Pictorial Quilt made up of 15 panels: ten Biblical scenes and five featuring local history. The two categories are connected, however, by one panel in which Powers depicts the rich people who will not inherit the kingdom of God.

“The celestial phenomenon that filled Powers’ work suggests her succinct consideration of the sweet hereafter and the world beyond Georgia,” said Hamilton. “The Bible stories create a space of the imaginary in her works that deal with fantasy, although... the stories were very real to



Dr. Elizabeth Hamilton with a painting by Alma Thomas./ Elizabeth Hamilton.

Powers.”

Powers hoped there was a life better than that of Georgia, and her afrofuturistic desire to flee the South coincided with her desire to be “in the heavenly realm” due to her Christianity. Furthermore, her shift from enslavement to freedom represented “a shift in being” that she worked through within her quilts whilst thinking of elsewhere.

This idea of forward thinking and a progressive point of view is also present in the works of Alma

Thomas, the first African American woman to have a show at the Whitney Museum of American Art in 1972, whose work focused primarily on the future.

“Thomas was an afrofuturist par excellence,” said Hamilton. “Thomas was an artistic innovator who was not stuck in the past.”

After graduating in 1924 with an art degree, Thomas began teaching but stayed involved within the art community by taking more classes and working with artists of the Washington Color School movement to further hone her craft. Her art career really began, however, after she retired in 1960.

“[Thomas] developed a mode of painting that she called ‘Alma stripes’ that combined a repetitive, effervescent dashes of color with illuminated backgrounds that seemed to shimmer from the contrasts she created,” Hamilton explained.

Between 1968 and 1972, NASA’s Apollo program inspired Thomas to create “space paintings” in which she aimed to explore new perspectives of the Earth from the moon. While some other artists from this time viewed these voyages with great cynicism, Thomas took a much more optimistic

approach.

“[Thomas] felt that through art, race could be transcended,” Hamilton continued. “Thomas had a utopian vision in which she could escape racial turmoil through her art.”

Compared to Sun Ra, Hamilton explained that Alma Thomas provides “a feminine perspective” that makes her just as much a progenitor of afrofuturism as he is.

“They are indeed kindred spirits,” Hamilton clarified. “While Thomas does not go as far as Sun Ra in creating a personal mythology, she does identify with the astronauts in her work and strives for alternate futures concerning race in the United States.”

As the lecture came to a close, Hamilton reflected further on these three women as “the architects of afrofuturism” and where she sees afrofuturism going.

“I see it really becoming a way that we think about politics. We have to be able to imagine black futures,” Hamilton said. “Thinking about politics and afrofuturism as a way to imagine better futures and a way to imagine liberation...that is the power of afrofuturism I think.”



Dr. Elizabeth Hamilton argues that Harriet Tubman (left), Harriet Powers (center), and Alma Thomas (right) were all “progenitors of afrofuturism.”/ Photo Edited by John Schilling

On The Record: Bruce Springsteen, Letter to You

By Allison Rapp
Opinions Editor

When I was a freshman in high school, the English teachers had everyone write letters to their future selves. The idea was that we would get the letters back at the end of senior year, after four years of whatever the hell had been thrown at us, and we could reflect on the kids we were then versus the young adults we had become. They encouraged us to write about both our academic and personal goals -- the things we hoped to achieve by the time high school came to end.

I don't remember ever getting the letter back and I cannot, for the life of me, remember what I wrote. Probably something generic about doing well in classes, making new friends, and skipping off to college.

But, of course, it didn't really matter. What did matter was that by the time my senior year was over, I knew beyond a shadow of a doubt that I was a wholly different individual from the rather awkward 14-year-old who had entered high school four years before. I didn't need to read the letter to know I had grown.

I didn't write a letter to myself at the beginning of college, but if I had, I likely would have written about hoping for a new set of open doors, opportunities to travel, lifelong mentors,

etc. Some of those things were accomplished, others less so.

Bruce Springsteen's latest record is titled Letter To You, but it reads more like a letter to himself. He has, quite literally, gotten the band back together -- it's the first album he's done with the E Street Band since 2014. The boss has returned to his gritty, garage rock roots.

"As the summer wind sings its last song / One minute you're here, next minute you're gone."

Springsteen, in my mind, has always been best when he allows himself to access the most isolated, lonely, damn near miserable parts of himself. He did it on Nebraska, he did it on The River, and it appears he's done it again.

"Faded pictures in an old scrapbook / Faded pictures that somebody took / When you were hard and young and proud / Back against the wall running raw and loud."

Now that he's weathered the storm that is rock 'n' roll for some 50 years, Springsteen finally has the advantage of looking back on his decades through his valiant, rowdy earlier days. In writing those songs he was, essentially, writing little letters to himself.

Perhaps he's reading those letters over now. On this album he's brought back one of his most beloved characters, Janey, along with just about every other Springsteen



trope you can think of -- trains, rivers, loud guitars. But this isn't Born To Run, it isn't even The River. And though it's often difficult to think of Springsteen as an aging old man, (he still plays three hour concerts at age 71), he's reached a critical turning point in his songwriting career: the point at which he can reflect and see how he became the person he is today.

"Things I found out through hard times and good / I wrote 'em all out in ink and blood / Dug deep in my soul and signed my name true / And sent it in my letter to you."

Springsteen has also reached another point: he

knows his voice is more powerful than silence.

"There's no art in this White House. There's no literature, no poetry, no music," he said on his radio show "From My Home to Yours," last week. "Where'd that country go? Where did all the fun, the joy, and the expression of love and happiness go?"

We've heard this before. Where have all the flowers gone? This time, instead of going to the wartime graveyards, they've gone to the ICU beds and emergency rooms. There are roughly 230,000 of them now.

If the United States could write a letter to our former selves, collectively,

what would we say? That we wished we could have seen the red flags sooner? That we would have paid more attention to the fact checkers? That we would have considered the impact our personal actions would have on others more seriously? What about if we could write a letter to our future selves? What hopes would we have? The first step to writing that letter happened on Tuesday, November 3rd, 2020. We have the rest of the letter to write now.

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An Experience With the 2020 Election's Long Early Voting Lines

By Michael Castaneda
Columnist

I have always voted two blocks away from my apartment without trouble. However, this year was the first time that New York State has allowed early voting in a Presidential election. It's one of those weird political trends that red states have actually been considerably more progressive in; Georgia has had early voting since 2008.

I had asked for a mail-in ballot the day Governor Cuomo announced we could do so this summer, and I never received it. This was likely a problem due to the incompetence at the New York Board of Elections, which has been reported on by the New York Post and the New York Times.

There has been so much mishigas surrounding mail-in voting that I decided just to do it in person. After the original wave, New York has seen low covid numbers and has consistently posted the third lowest infection rate in the county. With much less COVID out there, in person voting seemed worth it.

Day One: It was the first

day of early voting. I went to my early voting site on Saturday, Oct. 24. The line snaked around two blocks as far as I could see and it felt chaotic.

Day Two: I tried again on Monday, Oct. 26. I thought that since it was a weekday, people would be at work. The line shouldn't be that bad. It was. The line went around four blocks. The poll worker said the line would take two to three hours. That didn't work for me either.

Day Three: I didn't try to vote this day, but I saw the line for my early voting site was documented on TMZ. From the pictures, it looked like the line went around seven blocks or more.

Day Four: On Friday Oct. 30, the early polling location was set to open at 7 a.m. If I just set my alarm for 6:30 a.m., I should have been able to get up, get ready, and vote. It didn't happen. I am not a morning person. However, that night during my Zoom Shul, the Rabbi mentioned that lines have gone down.

Day Five: I didn't have work and I didn't have school. I packed my Machine Learning textbook and my massive Bluetooth headphones



The sticker you get after you vote. / Allison Rapp

so that I could watch YouTube videos in line. I was ready to stand for hours in line to vote.

When I got there the line took less than ten minutes. (Lines at Bread's Bakery and the Apple store were longer.) I voted and was out the door less than three minutes after that.

My guess is that it probably would have been just fine to have waited until election day. Some might argue -- why go

through so much trouble? You live in New York, the candidates don't even bother to campaign here. Their argument continues by making this point: with the electoral college system, margins in voting numbers don't matter, only electoral votes do.

I am always surprised how many people have this opinion. I take the counter argument that if individual votes didn't matter, then why has there been such powerful opposition to suppress the vote?

As Paul Weyrich, cofounder of the Heritage Society, a conservative group, said in 1980: "I don't want everybody to vote. Elections are not won by a majority of the people. They never have been from the beginning of our country and they are not now. As a matter of fact, our leverage in the elections quite candidly goes up as the voting populace goes down."

Just to be absolutely clear there has been no evidence of voter fraud.

The Trump appointed Director of the FBI, Christopher Wray, said so.

Nevertheless, this myth is being wrongly circulated in mainstream media outlets like Fox News, and on social media. So, there might be voter intimidation on election day.

Furthermore, there is the threat of Election Day violence. Businesses have begun boarding up to protect themselves. There are reasons to vote early that come out of a world of worry.

By the time this article is released, the presidential election results might not yet be known. Still, the president may declare victory in the hopes that, following the Bush v. Gore playbook, the supreme court will declare him president -- ignoring the proper election results.

Even though there may be trouble following election day, things seem okay now. Vote.



A line outside for voting. / Allison Rapp

BC Inducts Historic 82' Basketball Team To Hall of Fame

By Conrad Hoyt
Sports Editor

The Brooklyn College 1981-82 men's basketball team, will be inducted into the BC Athletics Hall of Fame. That team reached the final four of the Division 3 NCAA tournament (finishing in third place), and is the only CUNY team to ever reach such a feat, it isn't hyperbole to say this team is the best CUNY has ever produced.

The Vanguard was able to sit down with a member of that historic team, forward Dan Byrnes, to discuss what that team's run meant to him, and what it means to be honored by his alma mater.

Byrnes, a Brooklynite through and through, played as a point forward for the Bulldogs, a team known for its depth and versatility. "I was a good basketball player, but not an athletic basketball player," Byrnes bluntly stated.

"I was a decent shooter, a good foul shooter, didn't turn the ball over much, and [was] kind of like an assistant coach out there on the floor."

In 1982, the Bulldogs defeated the number one seed, the undefeated College of Staten Island in the tournament, and were not even the second or third best team on paper in the division, with Baruch and John Jay ahead of them. But the Bulldogs were a tight-knit group, led by Head

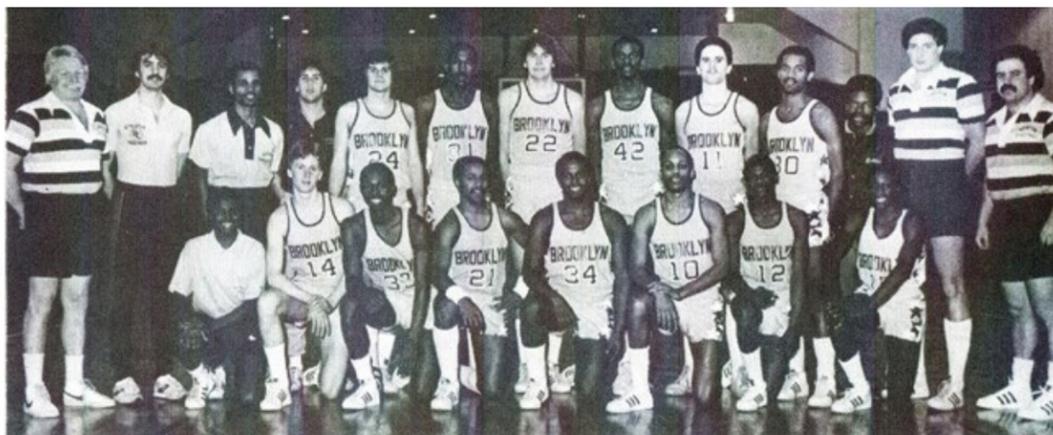
Coach Mark Reiner.

"I believe that much of my success in life, I learned from sacrificing for the better of the team, knowing what a team looks like, knowing how to coach a team," said Byrnes. He heaped praise on his coaches and trainers and teammates for leading him and the team, and for organizing "a group of people for a single goal."

After Brooklyn College's success in 1982, the men's basketball program moved into Division 1 the next season, playing teams like Jim Calhoun's Northeastern University and Rick Pitino's Boston University. Byrnes, still on the team through much success and sweeping changes, was extremely happy to be along for the ride, learning every day.

Although it wasn't just learning on the court, as it is with any college athlete. In the daily grind of schooling, Byrnes described Brooklyn College as not all that different from our campus of today. Students plan their schedules around their part-time jobs, they go to class, go to work, get home, eat dinner, do their homework, and start the process all over again in the morning. He also remarked on the diversity present at BC, and how that prepared him for a life outside of school, where any opportunity could land you in a place outside of your comfort zone.

When Byrnes started his college experience at Brooklyn College in 1978, the



(l-r) Kneeling — R. Blake, Manager, G. Sullivan, R. Phillips, A. Wheeler, D. Brown, K. Williams, E. Robinson, G. James; Standing — Head Coach, M. Reiner; Trainer, L. Klein; Assistant Coach, T. Gustus; R. Micallef, R. Edwards, D. Byrnes, R. Davis, E. Delaguardia, K. Vickers, Manager, H. Robinson; and Assistant coaches, L. Vitale, M. Eisenberg.

Brooklyn College Kingsmen Basketball Team of 82' / Brooklyn College

city was experiencing major budget cuts. The campus today is clearly rebuilt, showing improvements that make Byrnes happy to see as an alumnus. The game's changed too, something starkly seen on the professional level, but just as much on the college stage.

"Basketball has truly changed. Everyone's faster, everyone's bigger, everyone shoots further away from the basket," stated Byrnes. For context, the three-point line did not even come into effect until the year after the Bulldogs' historic run.

Byrnes explained how there used to be a lot more set-up plays in the late 70's and early 80's, and how today, it's a lot of motion offense.

In 2016, at its championship game, CUNY recognized the 1981-82 Brooklyn College men's basketball team. The team had a little VIP section, reunited with all

of their friends and former teammates, and had an overall splendid time. It was somewhat of a precursor to the yet-to-come Hall of Fame ceremony.

"If our Hall of Fame ceremony at the school is anywhere close to that, it will be a spectacular time," declared Byrnes.

In recent years, and prompted by that 2016 reunion, Byrnes has felt extreme joy in hearing more about his old friends' lives today, and how successful they have become.

"My teammates are now pillars of their communities. Lifelong friendships have been created over just being on that team," he said.

There are three main things Byrnes thinks about when reminiscing on that record-setting Bulldogs team.

First was what a great deal of sacrifice it was giving up parts of their individual games for the betterment

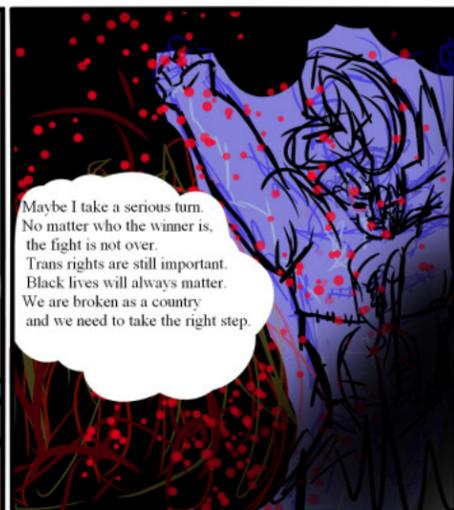
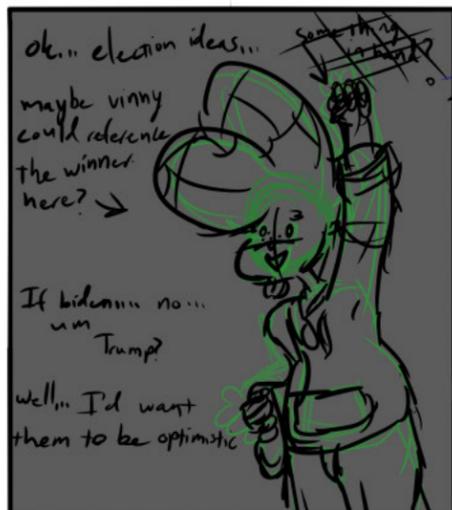
of the team. Second was the friendship and tight-knit bonds the players formed and the cohesion that produced. Lastly was the hard work they all put in, as friends and teammates. Byrnes explained that the coaches used to have a saying: "Games are for show, but practices are where you win the games."

When asked about some life lessons he took away from his time at Brooklyn College and with the Final Four team, Byrnes shared how integral a role BC played in their success.

"I think our Brooklyn College education was part of a foundation to start us off. I think the Brooklyn College experience also assisted in our foundation of going forward. I think the hard work of the team assisted [in] knowing that hard work will pay off. And I think that has helped me going forward."

Vinny The Goat

by Mo Muhsin and Gabrielle Toro Vivoni



Dodgers Win World Series, Ending Drought

By Jose Rohdin
Staff Writer

The Los Angeles Dodgers have finally won the World Series ring that has eluded them since 1988, and it took a weird season for it to become official.

When the Coronavirus pandemic hit during the start of spring training for the 2020 season, it, of course, put a halt to any games being played. Eventually, they figured out a compromise to play a 60 game season while also adding three new teams to each conference playoffs. This led to one of the most exciting regular seasons and playoffs in a long time.

The Dodgers traded for Mookie Betts from the Red Sox in the 2019 off-season, right before spring training opened for the 2020 season. Betts, who is one of the best players in baseball, added to another stacked lineup. The team was built to finally win the World Series after losing the team that won it all in four straight seasons, all the way back to losing to the Cubs in the 2016 National League Championship Series.

Even in a shortened season, the Dodgers still pulled off the best record in baseball, going 43-17,



Mookie Betts, baseball right fielder for the LA Dodgers./Norm Hall/Getty Images

solidifying them as the favorites. Betts, along with Corey Seager and Cody Bellinger, were the offense's driving force, with other solid bats around them, such as AJ Pollock, Christ Taylor, Max Muncy, and Justin Turner. The pitching staff was led by Clayton Kershaw, Walker Buehler, and closer Kenley Janson, but the team found solid pitching from youngsters Julio Urías and Dustin May.

The Dodgers swept through the wild card and divisional rounds, making easy work of the

Milwaukee Brewers and the San Diego Padres. However, the Atlanta Braves were a team on a mission and put up big numbers on the Dodgers pitching staff, which gave the Braves a 3-1 lead in the National League Championship Series.

The Dodgers came back to force a game 7, which was one of the season's best games. It was capped off by a Bellinger home run blasted into right field in the bottom of the 7th that would end up being the winning run. Urías pitched the final three innings,

not allowing a signal baserunner, sending the Dodgers to the World Series for the third time in four seasons.

In the World Series, they faced the Tampa Bay Rays, who had the best record in the American League with a 40-20 record. The Dodgers only lost two games to the Rays, one of which they fell behind in early, and the other on a walk-off home run. For the rest of the games other than the deciding Game 6, the Dodgers got on the board early and kept the lead. Betts

was the star of Game 6, hitting the game-sealing home run in the bottom of the 8th.

The Dodgers were finally World Series Champs.

The World Series MVP landed in the hands of Corey Seager, who led the Dodgers in batting average, home runs, runs batted in, and runs for the entire playoffs.

With next season's Dodgers team expected to be similar to this World Series team, I would not bet against them to make the World Series again.

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