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VANGUARD

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Random COVID-19 Testing For CUNY's Vaxxed Raise Student Concerns

By Gabriela Flores
Editor-In-Chief

CUNY announced a random testing program for vaccinated people across the university starting the week of Nov. 15, near the fall semester's end. Students and faculty who submitted proof of vaccination to CUNY will be randomly selected and required to get tested at a CUNY testing site within seven days after being contacted, leaving many students at Brooklyn College upset with the new policy.

"I think they're losing the trust of BC students by changing their minds so often. Their policies already in the fall semester changed multiple times," said student Chaya Fieldman, who finds the new program contradictory to CUNY's vaccine mandate that initially limited COVID-testing to unvaccinated people, not those who are vaccinated.

If a selected individual tests positive for COVID, their access to campus and Cleared4 Access Pass will be blocked, per CUNY's email announcement on Nov. 17. University administrators, however, did not give details about repercussions for non-compliance. For many students, CUNY's lack of clarity on the consequences for not testing if selected was troublesome.

"I don't even know what mandatory means. Are we going to get kicked off the campus if we don't get the test in time," questioned student Allan Randall, who explained he does not have time for testing given his busy schedule, but thought the random testing program made sense given the Omicron variant, a highly mutated form of COVID that has spread to dozens of countries so far. "They were not clear on what would happen if you don't get



CUNY is now implementing random testing for vaccinated students./ Photo edited by Dylan Kaufman

tested. They were clear on days, but they were not clear upon consequences."

Richard Pietras, Brooklyn College's Media Relations Manager, wrote in a statement to The Vanguard that those who do not get tested if selected "will not be able to access campus." This information, however, is not yet known to many Brooklyn College students. "Those who test positive at Brooklyn College will be contacted by a staff member per the standard protocol. In addition, access to campus will be blocked until they have a negative test," he continued.

Other students found issues with which vaccinated individuals would be eligible for random testing. After being contacted by a vaccinated student selected for testing despite taking only online courses, David Dweck, Treasurer of the Undergraduate Student Government (USG), noticed that the policy seemingly included those who reported their vaccination status to CUNY and are not accessing its campuses. Dweck consulted with his USG colleagues and BC President Michelle Anderson about the potential issues that can

arise for those who may not even have immediate access to one of CUNY's 20 testing sites.

"Take someone who went to let's say Europe - would they have to fly back in, take a test and fly back out in order to finish their classes? Or would they be withdrawn? I don't know. Cause we don't know what the punishment is for not complying," Dweck said. "The second thing is that by putting this in place for vaccinated students who are off-campus, we would be discriminating against vaccinated students, thereby causing less students to get vaccinated," he explained, noting that students who are unvaccinated without medical or religious reasoning may be discouraged from getting the COVID-shot.

As USG awaits word from BC and CUNY administrators after raising their concerns, some students like Dweck also find that vaccinated people are protected enough against COVID-related hospitalizations and deaths, therefore they should not be mandated to get tested. With the high efficacy rates of vaccines approved in America and

the slim possibility of false negatives and positives in COVID testing, Randall thinks that, though CUNY's implementation of a random testing program makes sense in the wake of Omicron, the measure is unfair.

"Science hasn't figured out how to do 100 percent accurate tests yet. And that's okay, but when you start implementing towards taking away people's education, well that's a different ball game and that's where I would say maybe it's not the best idea," he opined.

As of press time, CUNY's testing sites have reported a cumulative 181 COVID-positive results out of 79,075 tests university-wide since Aug. 25, according to CUNY's official website. To date, 19 confirmed total cases of COVID were reported from Brooklyn College's testing site. Since CUNY has announced its testing program, Brooklyn College's vaccinated students and staff have been randomly selected for testing.

For more information on the testing program, visit: <https://www.cuny.edu/coronavirus/covid-19-testing-program-facultyandstaff-faq/#radom>.

CUNY Colleges Raise Big Money In #CUNYTuesday

By Matt Hirsch
News Editor

On Tuesday, Nov. 30, the CUNY community came together for a donation drive called #CUNYTuesday to support students in need. Over \$2 million has been raised between the 23 CUNY colleges and five CUNY-related organizations, as of publication. So far, Hunter College has raised the most money, donating over \$427,000 from nearly 800 different donors. Brooklyn College sits at number seven on the list, raising over \$85,000.

“It’s great that people are coming together to help students. As a student, you deal with a lot. Especially with financial issues, some of us,” Television, Radio, and Emerging Media student Luis Flecha told The Vanguard. “With the holiday season supposed to be a happy time, it’s good to see that CUNY is giving its students that happy and stress-free time.”

It’s no secret that the last year and a half has put CUNY students through undue stress. With the hardships everyone has had to endure through the pandemic, Flecha



Photo from @BklynCollege411 Twitter.

appreciates the assistance to the CUNY student body. “Especially with COVID, having people with families who couldn’t work,” said Flecha. “It’s the right thing to do because without the students there is no CUNY, no SUNY, no college, period. Great on the CUNY schools’ part to do something like this.”

Much of the \$85,000 raised by Brooklyn College so far has come from professors. Giving back to the students is something that is near and dear to the hearts of many faculty and staff at BC, especially Journalism and Media Studies Professor Ron Howell, who donated \$100 of his own money to the cause.

“Because of who I am, as a guy who grew up right here in Brooklyn, and have a love for Brooklyn, and whose mother and father were born in Brooklyn,” Howell said. “My grandmother was born in Brooklyn in 1901. So it’s so meaningful to me.” As a person of color, Howell especially had the tribulations of minorities in mind when he made the donation. “And also the challenges of people of color. I would say that’s been meaningful. And so as it turns out, yes, I did contribute myself, a hundred dollars in the name of black faculty and staff association,” said Howell. “There was

kind of an obligation...I think it’s meaningful.” As a CUNY-wide effort, students from all CUNY colleges will benefit from #CUNYTuesday. Kingsborough Community College has raised over \$60,000 so far. With the holiday season upon us, KCC professor, CUNY Journalism Discipline Council Chairman, and Brooklyn College alum, Patrick Hickey Jr. shared his thoughts about the donation drive with The Vanguard. “I think it’s great that, especially during this time of the year, that the CUNY community offers help to those who deserve it the most, our students,” said Hickey.

The challenges presented by the pandemic are universal. And as such, the community that CUNY fosters is vital to the success of students. In times of difficulty, events like #CUNYTuesday are a much-needed boost to the morale of students.

“I think it’s great that CUNY is hosting this and trying to help students out like myself,” Brooklyn College student Rayna Pajares-Held told The Vanguard. “I’ve had my fair share of struggles this past year and it’s nice to see togetherness and people around us wanting to see us succeed.”

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CUNY Extends Withdrawal Policy For Unvaxxed Students To Spring

By Radwan Farraj
Staff Writer

C U N Y ’ s withdrawal policy continues as classes shift modalities from being mostly online to mostly in-person for the spring, with 70 percent of courses scheduled on campus as of press time.

Unvaccinated students taking in-person or hybrid classes in the spring are expected to be fully vaccinated and upload their vaccination card by Jan. 18, ten days before the semester’s start.

The fall’s withdrawal policy went into effect in early October, as access to CUNY campuses was limited to those who had been fully vaccinated and uploaded their proof of vaccination to CUNYFirst. CUNY Chancellor Félix Matos Rodríguez announced in a university-wide email on Nov. 22 that the policy will extend to the spring 2022 semester.

“I think it was fair, but it also wasn’t fair,” said Nayab Raza, a senior at Brooklyn College. “I think it is fair because it ensures the safety of all students since a lot of us are going to be back in the spring, and it ensures the safety of professors.” However, Raza said that they feel the policy does



CUNY students face the decision to withdraw if they remain unvaccinated heading into the upcoming spring semester. / Photo by John Schilling and edited by Dylan Kaufman

not consider students enough, especially since withdrawals due to non-vaccination without medical or religious exemptions occurred after the semester’s start. Troyansky of a potentially more transmissible Omicron variant that broke headlines recently, the busy holiday season, and return to in-person classes in consideration, she explained, “It is a university would disservice to everyone at least offer more online classes for as long as the pandemic remains, citing both his own experiences with online courses and of fellow students. “I really liked the distance learning... It’s so much more convenient. I don’t need to go back and forth...And honestly, it goes a lot better for me,” he said.

Professor David Troyansky of Brooklyn College’s History Department explained that if we’ve been teaching hybrid but we’ll go completely online, then students won’t get caught in this and could stick with this course,” he said. The student also hoped that the university would offer more online classes for as long as the pandemic remains, citing both his own experiences with online courses and of fellow students. “I really liked the distance learning... It’s so much more convenient. I don’t need to go back and forth...And honestly, it goes a lot better for me,” he said.

One BC student, who wanted to be referred to as Jackie, said that she was originally against the suddenness of the vaccine mandate and withdrawal policy. With the presence of a potentially more transmissible Omicron variant that broke headlines recently, the busy holiday season, and return to in-person classes in consideration, she explained, “It is a university would disservice to everyone at least offer more online classes for as long as the pandemic remains, citing both his own experiences with online courses and of fellow students. “I really liked the distance learning... It’s so much more convenient. I don’t need to go back and forth...And honestly, it goes a lot better for me,” he said.

BC Reacts: Kyle Rittenhouse's Acquittal

By Serin Sarsour
Features Editor

During a police brutality protest last summer in Kenosha, Wisconsin, Kyle Rittenhouse shot three men, killing two and injuring another. He was recently declared not guilty on Nov. 19. As the news traveled to Brooklyn College, many students did not believe justice was served within the court's verdict.

"I do not think he should have been acquitted on all charges," said BC sophomore Sharmin Akter. "He definitely had a vendetta against Black Lives Matter and the protests and caused him to take such harmful actions."

On Aug. 23, 2020, a 29-year old black man named Jacob Blake was left paralyzed from the waist down after getting shot seven times in the back by a white police officer in Kenosha, igniting several protests, riots, and Black Lives Matter efforts against police brutality throughout the city. Blake's encounter with the police came three months after George Floyd's murder by an officer in Minnesota. At one of the protests in response to the shooting, then 17-year-old Rittenhouse shot Joseph Rosenbaum, Anthony Huber, and

Gaige Grosskreutz with a rifle, later claiming in court he acted in self-defense after the men approached him.

BC sophomore Amber Prophete also disagrees with the verdict and believes Rittenhouse should be held accountable for carrying and using a firearm while being underage.

"He willingly went to the BLM protest. If anything, he put himself in the danger he claims he was in," said Prophete.

Rittenhouse traveled from his hometown Antioch, Illinois to be at the Kenosha protest. He claimed he was there with a rifle to protect property from being demolished by rioters, according to AP News.

Now 18, Rittenhouse faced a total of six felony charges in court, with five counts charging use of a dangerous weapon: first-degree reckless homicide, two charges of first-degree recklessly endangering safety, first-degree intentional homicide, attempted first-degree intentional homicide, and possession of a dangerous weapon by a person under 18. Rittenhouse was acquitted of all charges by Judge Bruce Schroeder, Wisconsin's longest-serving state trial



Kyle Rittenhouse was found not guilty on all five charges in the Kenosha killings./
Sean Krajacic-Pool via Getty Images

court judge who conducted the trial.

"The judge was obviously pro-guns and anti-Black Lives Matter. He made that clear on multiple statuses," Prophete opined. "The judge was absolutely rude and biased."

BC sophomore Luis Saldana-Luna also believes the trial was unfair because Rittenhouse was granted a break by the judge to compose

himself after he cried during court. "If it was a person of color, I doubt they'd let them do that, and even rapidly accuse them as guilty," said Saldana-Luna.

According to Forbes, Judge Schroeder allowed prosecutors to refer to the two men Rittenhouse killed as "arsonists" and "looters," but would not allow them to call the men "victims."

"I think this verdict can definitely set a precedent for future trials that involve protests and young white men," said Akter, concerned about how the decision will affect the future of society. "When white men continue to commit these crimes, it's safe to say this will be used as an example and this could be scary for everyone's safety."

BC Coaching Sessions Hosted By Author Joseph Fraia

By Mary Zakharova
Staff Writer

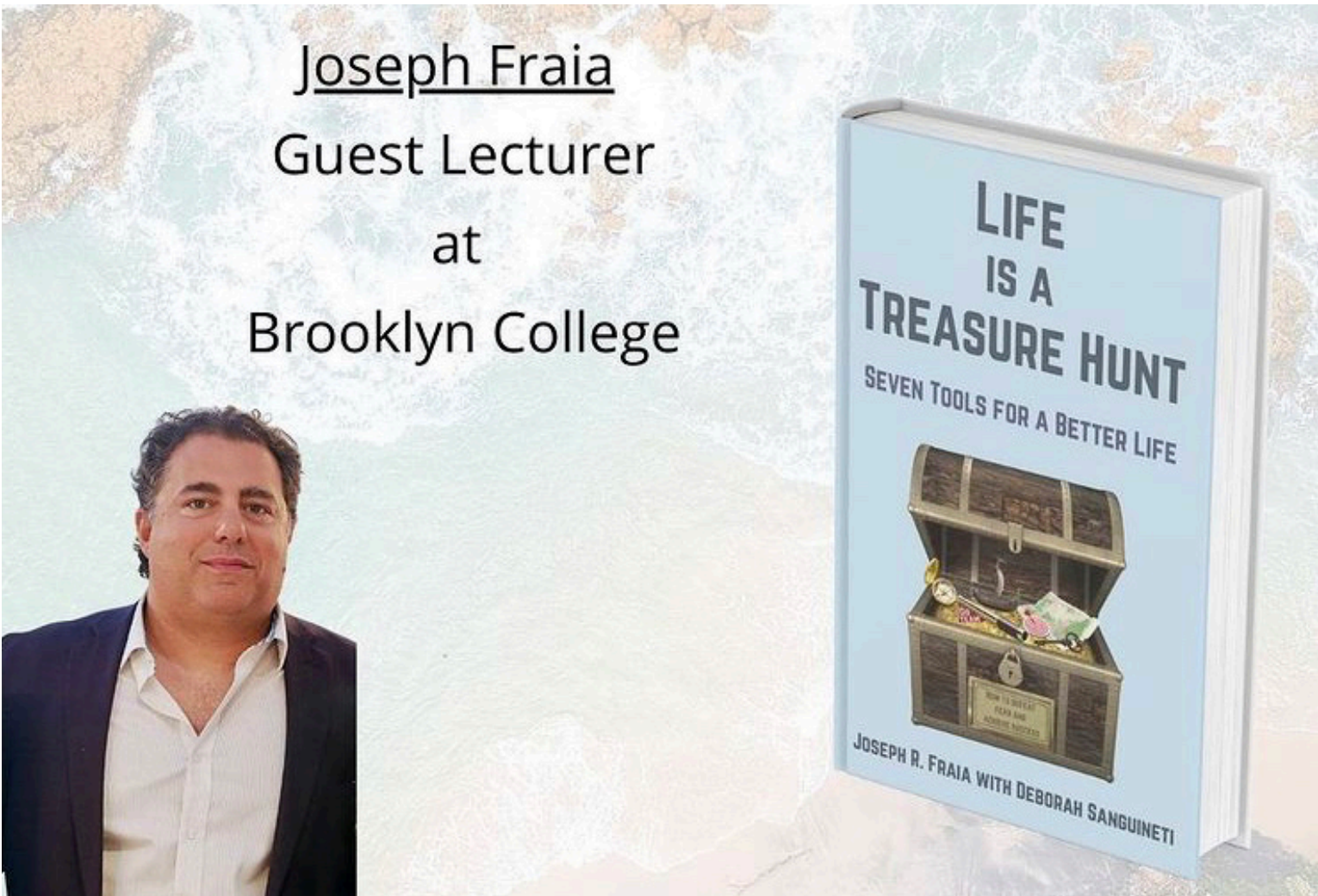
Since October, Brooklyn College students have been able to attend coaching sessions on “Campus Anxiety and Stress” with Joseph Fraia, the author of “Life is a Treasure Hunt,” a book that discusses practical tools for anybody who wants to achieve self-awareness, self-realization, and a healthier life.

During the 15-minute sessions, Fraia discusses the most common problems students face during their life in college. There are four types of problems, Fraia told The Vanguard: being far from home, strict deadlines, social life and facing a new environment, and financial issues.

For each problem, Fraia uses the two-part method he created and discussed in his book.

“[...] Everything starts with introspection, so everything starts from getting to know yourself... and then, after that, you need to assess your goals and your purposes,” said Fraia. For each trouble, there is one way of dealing with it, but the key is to know the specifics of your character and your goals.

Fraia’s idea was not only to create a system that would help people come to a better life, but also to create a community where “treasure hunters” can communicate with each other and Fraia himself any time they need



Courtesy of the BC International Business Club

assistance. “I don’t want to be any filter, any barrier between myself and a reader,” he said.

Fraia said that many Brooklyn College students who visit the sessions reach out to him during the week.

“It’s all about taking that first step,” said Fraia. “Unfortunately, in our society, the pressure is a lot of times about ‘you have to figure things out by yourself’ - it’s part of the challenge, a part of growing up.”

What Fraia wants to show is that this “do it yourself” thinking is very far from human nature, while having elders teach the youth is

normal and natural. With his sessions, he is trying to teach young people the fundamental rules of life, without pressuring them to figure everything out by themselves.

“We are not supposed to figure things out by ourselves, we are supposed to be structured, we need help,” added Fraia.

This idea became the main purpose of his book: to create a society where previous generations can help new ones, and that is also what Fraia does during his meetings.

The Campus Anxiety and Stress events

have proved to be very popular among Brooklyn College students. Every week, there are around 30 students contacting Fraia, and during the 15-minute session, he usually has two or three students with whom he discusses their issues and progress, advising them on the next steps.

Apart from his work at BC, Fraia is planning to host events on Taoism, a belief system from ancient China that revolves around humans and animals living “in balance” with the “Tao,” or the universe. Fraia wishes to explain how some things you would never think

are connected to Taoism actually are.

“If you have a hero or a superhero you like, it’s very likely that that superhero is a Taoist,” said Fraia.

Through all of his events, Fraia is trying to build a connection between him and students, encourage them to think about their life and future, and teach them methods he uses himself.

“I don’t want the conversation to stop with the book,” said Fraia. “I want the conversation to start with the book.”

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ISSO Continues Celebrating International Students' Day Virtually

By Gabriela Flores
Editor-in-Chief

Whether it be sharing traditional recipes like shemai, or anecdotes from Caribbean carnivals, attendees of the annual International Students' Day celebration showed their cultural pride and identity on Nov. 17. No matter if one recipe was from Morocco, or poems described the Nuyorican experience, every participant tuned in to hear student and faculty voices rooted from all corners of the world.

"Part of the mission tonight is to remember who we are and what we're proud of," said Jesus Pérez, the director of Brooklyn College's Immigrant Student Success Office (ISSO), who organized the event with other administrators and co-sponsors.

Before kicking off, the night started with a land acknowledgment, a custom recognizing indigenous peoples as the original inhibitors of New York's land, which contextualized the significance of celebrating one's heritage in the first place.

"As we share and talk about our own cultures and traditions, I think we should be conscious and thankful that we are able to pass down these traditions or reconnect with our cultures despite a long and continuous history of colonization and cultural genocide done onto our own respective communities," said Valeria Pinet, Puerto Rican Alliance's (PRA) Secretary and Club Connector, while giving the acknowledgment.

Soon after, participants delved into their own "recipe paired with a story," carrying on ISSO's cookbook motto and tradition that took off last year. Woven into the idea that hearty, decadent food connects all people to their culture, ISSO and

BC's Black and Latino Male Initiative thought compiling recipes for a potential cookbook could help raise emergency relief funds for international and immigrant students. As its efforts echoed in the night's celebration, participants spoke of the dishes that hit their nostalgia. One student described his multicultural meal with ingredients from Asia, Europe, Africa, the Caribbean, the Middle East, and the Americas.

"I thought of my many friends, which they are a diverse group of people from almost every corner of our beautiful world," said a student named Tino, president of BC Dream Team, admitting he struggled to submit a meaningful dish for ISSO's cookbook. "Then I thought, 'I need to come up with a diverse dish inspired by my friends, only utilizing ingredients found in my neighborhood.' As time went by, I was getting more ideas."

Transporting attendees to the island of Barbados with her description of conkies, a banana leaf-wrapped pastry with a melody of sweet potato, pumpkin, fruit, and other ingredients, Renée Straker, BC's Assistant Director For Student Diversity Initiatives, emphasized the dish's decadence.

"Conkies make for a great, hardy breakfast or sweet-flavored snacks. But you know, it's something near and close to my heart because in every family there's that one person who can make that amazing conkie. Not everyone can't make it. It's a special skill," Straker said, noting that she doesn't have that special something to make the delectable treats, but her aunt does, making her the designated conkie-maker.

Though conkies and other dishes like Mexico's mole poblano are national meals, there's one edible

MULTICULTURAL FEAST & CULTURE FAIR
Celebrating International Students Day
Nov. 17th 6:30-8pm
[Tinyurl.com/internationalfeast](https://tinyurl.com/internationalfeast)
PREPARE YOUR FOOD, POETRY, DANCE, MUSIC, & ART TO SHOWCASE
JOIN US FOR A NIGHT OF FUN & CULTURE!
Event Co-sponsored by I am BC Initiative, S.A.I.L., Office of Diversity and Equity Programs, Children & Youth Studies Program, Office of International Student and Scholar Services, International Programs and Study Abroad, BLMI, BC DREAM TEAM, MEDO, CSU, USG, and the Immigrant Student Success Office.

Courtesy of ISSO.

commonality that all countries share, explained Professor Jessica Siegel, who organizes the recipes on ISSO's cookbook. And that one similarity is bread.

"All you need is grain and some water and heat; that's what makes bread," she said, detailing how her curiosity of the staple first began when she thought of challah, a Jewish bread that reminded her of her grandparents who came from Poland. During her presentation, Siegel read aloud Pablo Neruda's poem titled "Ode to Bread."

"Many things that we share is bread, as many people say, it's the staff of life," Siegel said.

The evening's dabbling in poetry continued with Shadae Brown, a BC alumna who returned to ISSO's celebration to read her poem encompassing her Jamaican pride. Another poem titled "Viejo San Juan," written by a BC student in 1993, was excerpted by PRA President Christopher Arias. The work, written

with "Spanglish twang" and paired with drawings on white poster paper, showcased the former student's Nuyocrican experience, or their Puerto Rican diaspora in New York City.

"In a five-room apartment where my neighbors were Puerto Rican like me/Dressed in tropical garments/I know, I know, I know/ I'll miss Puerto Rico," Arias read. "And so, and so, and so/I'll live in El Barrio/And when I hit the numbers, I'll return to San Juan/And for the price of pan/Until my life is done/Island blessed by the sun/Here I come, here I come/Donde my roots are from."

Beyond food and literary works, participants described the significant celebrations of their respective culture: from Dominican Republic's carnival to the broader festivities the Caribbean hosts.

"I think that one thing people tend to forget is

that we're a very passionate people, not just about each other, but just life in general," said Caribbean Student Union Treasurer Walter O'Meally when describing the importance of carnivals across the islands. "Carnival, in a sense, isn't just about partying. It's a celebration of being here, of being able to live, laugh, and enjoy. And that's why our dance and style of music is so expressive."

O'Meally noted, after a game of Caribbean trivia with participants, that though outsiders may see certain Caribbean dances as "provocative or inappropriate," it's ultimately a misunderstanding of the people's nature. "As passionate people, we like to have passionate dances," he said.

As more students and faculty described segments of their respective roots, they danced out to "Tu Con El," a salsa beat by Frankie Ruiz, ending the night's celebration of Brooklyn College's diversity.

Theater World Mourns Death Of Composer Stephen Sondheim

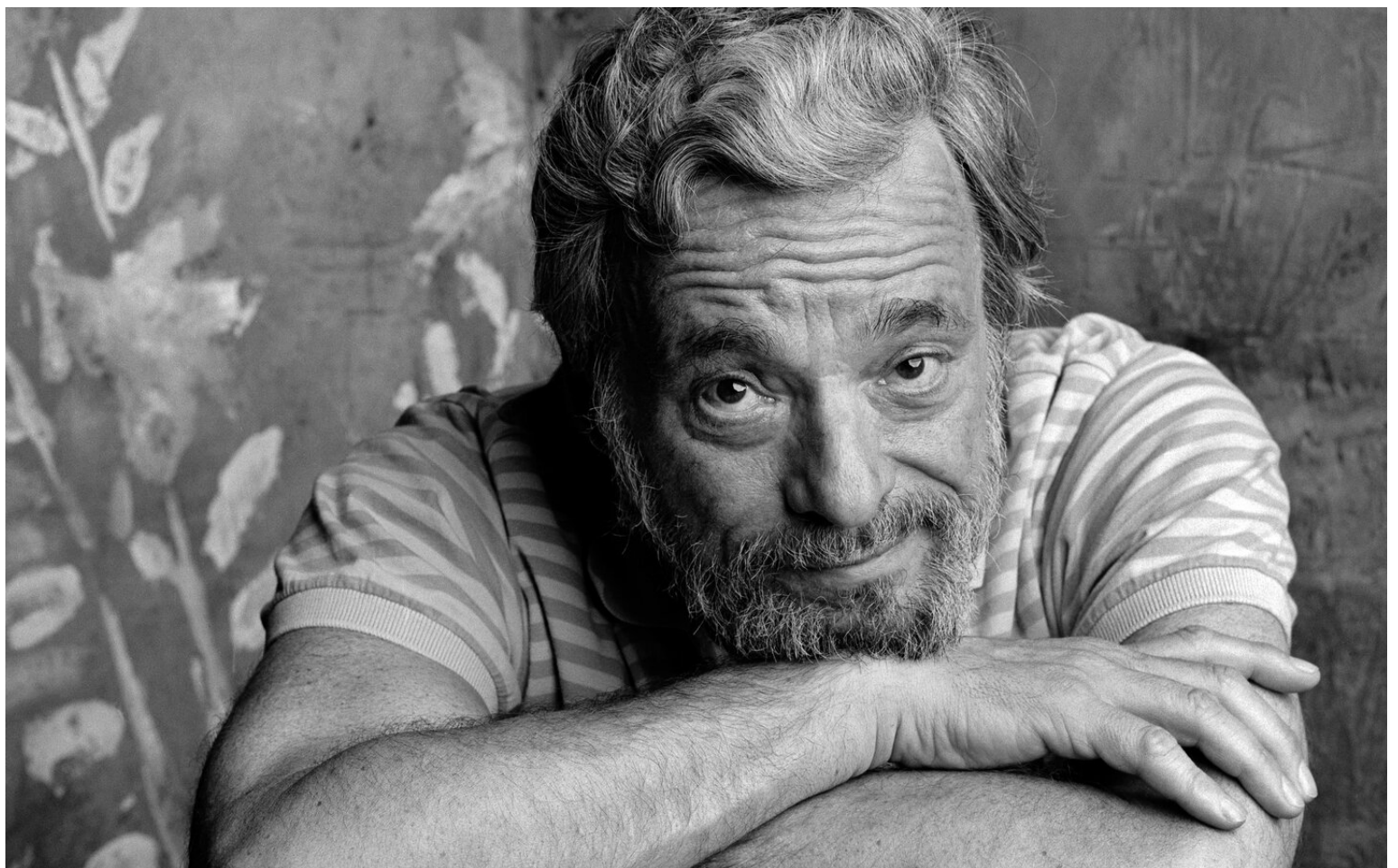
By Michela Arlia
Arts Editor

The world was shocked on Friday, Nov. 26, with the news that Stephen Sondheim, musical theater legend, had passed away. Sondheim died at 91 in his home in Roxbury, Connecticut. His cause of death is still unknown.

One of the most influential composers and lyricists of the 20th century, Sondheim wrote scores to classics such as “Into the Woods” (1987), “West Side Story” (1957), “Company” (1970), “Gypsy” (1959), and many more. From the 1950s to 1990s, Sondheim produced hit after hit that debuted onto the great white way.

The first Broadway show featuring Sondheim’s music and lyrics was the 1962 farce, “A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum,” which won a Tony award for best musical that year. From there, during what is known as his most productive period in the 1970s and 1980s, Sondheim created eight original and varied works, including “Company” (1970), “Follies” (1971), “A Little Night Music” (1973), “Pacific Overtures” (1976), “Sweeney Todd” (1979), “Merrily We Roll Along” (1981), “Sunday in the Park With George” (1984) and “Into the Woods.”

Following the news of his passing, a quick scroll through Twitter would have you understanding just how



Stephen Sondheim wrote the music for 12 Broadway musicals./Fred R. Conrad via The New York Times

influential Sondheim was to the six decades worth of generations who followed and were influenced by his work.

“I am so so sad to lose my friend Steve Sondheim,” said Bernadette Peters, Broadway legend and close friend to Sondheim, on her Twitter account. “He gave me so much to sing about.”

For the BC community, the death of the musical theater icon holds great importance, including for the Department of Puerto Rican and Latino Studies (PRLS). Throughout the semester, PRLS has been hosting a lecture series based on the anticipated release of Steven Spielberg’s “West Side Story” film, which will feature Sondheim’s music.

The series, which studies the musical’s social impact and controversies, has invited special guests who

worked on the upcoming film version. Despite Sondheim’s passing, PRLS is committed to speaking on his works and the barriers they broke.

“‘West Side Story’ is among Sondheim’s top works, which includes lyrics that the Puerto Rican community found offensive, such as in the song ‘America,’ and, on the flip side, there is little doubt that lyrics in ‘Officer Krupke’ were offensive to the white community as well,” said PRLS Associate Professor & Deputy Chairperson Dr. María E. Pérez y González. “He also wrote some of the most beautiful words with profound meaning during a time when interracial relations were problematic and intermarriage was illegal in so many states, such as in ‘Somewhere.’”

Reflecting on Sondheim’s music and accomplishment of the

musical’s “Maria” being the first English song with a Spanish title, Pérez y González described how it resonated with her as a teenager when she first heard her name in a song. Many in the Latinx community also felt heard and represented on a big stage for the first time through Sondheim’s music.

“I was astonished that my name was the centerpiece of such a beautiful love song,” Pérez y González said. “I had never heard my name in a song before or anywhere else on television except Sesame Street.”

This past Sunday, the Broadway community gathered together for what they called “Sunday for Sondheim,” where the Broadway League, the Times Square Alliance, and actor/producer Erich Bergen organized a performance of “Sunday” from Sondheim’s famous

musical “Sunday in the Park with George.”

The event occurred in Duffy Square, the heart of Times Square, on the steps of the TKTS booth. Conducted by Grammy nominee Michael J. Moritz and led by Lin-Manuel Miranda, artists shared their love for the composer the best way they knew how: through song.

Cast members of current Broadway shows “Ain’t Too Proud,” “Wicked,” and others showed up to sing and pay their respects.

“Maestro Stephen Sondheim is indeed among the most prolific composers/lyricists of our time with influences not only on Broadway and film, but also in arts programs throughout the U.S. and abroad,” added Pérez y González. “Undoubtedly, Sondheim’s music will continue to live on for generations.”

BC Symphonic Choir Performs Final Semester Recital

By Aliyah Jacobson
Staff Writer

On Nov. 17, the Brooklyn College Symphonic Choir performed their final concert of the semester with an in-person audience. The Conservatory of Music started allowing Brooklyn College members with proof of vaccination to be part of an audience for conservatory shows after they cancelled their live stream option.

Upon entering the Claire Tow Theater, the choir performed movements of “Handel’s Messiah” and Margaret Bonds’ “Simon Bore the Cross.” Even though they were restricted by masks and social distancing, it was a thrilling sight to see the choir on the stage again, a reminder that in the post-COVID world, artists can have a role or voice.

The women singers performed in their matching concert gowns and the men wore tuxedos with their singer’s masks, hair pulled back, and no jewelry present, per the rules. They were led by the Conservatory Director Malcolm J. Merriweather, who gave introductions to the various pieces. Their next and final



Courtesy of Malcolm J. Merriweather

piece was sobering and moving, focusing on the life and lynching of Matthew Shepard, a gay college student in Wyoming, titled “Considering Matthew Shepard.” The work was originally written by Craig Hella Johnson inspired by Shepard, who was murdered as part of a hate crime in Wisconsin in 1998.

Merriweather reminded those in the audience of the violence that so many in the LGBT community face, and how though we may have come a long way in the passing of equal rights in this country and around the world, there is still a long way to go. The narrator,

a member of the conservatory singers, shared towards the end of the piece how this incident, along with others, prompted former President Barack Obama to sign “The Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crime Prevention Act” eleven years after Shepard’s death. The act expanded existing federal hate crime law to include crimes motivated by the victim’s sexual orientation, gender, identity or disability.

Of the various movements in the piece, one was the voice of Shepard’s mother calling to her son; one was of Shepard himself with

excerpts from his journal; and one was a haunting jazz melody titled “Get Away from Me” sung by Chen Philips, an Israeli vocal singer. One of the lyrics repeated many times was “Stay out of my heart, stay out of my hope,” and Chen reflected on these words saying that she channeled her Holocaust survivor grandparents who prayed that those who hated them and were conspiring to wipe out their race would be kept away from them.

The movement ended when Merriweather shared that Matthew Shepard’s parents, in fear of his grave being desecrated,

held on to his ashes for twenty years. In 2018, through a moving tribute, Shepard was finally laid to rest at the National Cathedral in Washington D.C. At this time, those on the stage and in the audience had tears in their eyes and a sense of the gravity of the words and performance that then erupted in a standing ovation.

“This is important to me that college students understand about this, so that it never happens again,” said Merriweather in regards to performing the sobering piece on Matthew Shepard. “Performing this piece is an emotional roller coaster.”

BC Theater Continues Season With “Water By The Spoonful”

By Gabriela Flores
Editor-In-Chief

As the Department of Theater comes to the end of its 2021 winter season, production continued last week with “Water By The Spoonful,” a show that interchangeably moves from a struggling Puerto Rican-rooted family dealing with death and other tensions to an online support group for recovering addicts. Written by Pulitzer Prize-winning dramatist Quiara Alegria Hudes, and directed by Francisco Solorzano, the play goes knee-deep into the importance of human connection. In doing so, it illustrates the emotional tolls of PTSD, overdose, and other internal struggles.

The play first opened up with cousins Elliot (Michael Adrian Burgos) and Yaz (Monica Ugarte), who are seemingly polar opposites. Elliot wears a Subway shirt as his work uniform and speaks Spanglish, while the latter sports a suit and is later revealed to be a professor who struggles to speak Spanish. As Elliot and Yaz talk, one quickly realizes how close yet so unaware of each other’s problems they are - with one cousin hesitant to share why he needs something translated and the other going through a complicated divorce. At the backdrop of it all, Elliot talks about his concerns over his adopted mother Ginny, who’s his biological aunt and is undergoing chemo.

As the opening scene unravels at a steady pace that carries on throughout the show and lets out the many layers of each character, the audience finds out Elliot is an Iraq War veteran with some secrets. Going into scene 2, the audience finds themselves in the digital world of a recovering addicts support group with Chutes&Ladders (Ebenezer Adjei), Orangutan (Estelle Lee), and HaikuMom (Camila Pérez Santiago), who’s later revealed to be Elliot’s biological mother.

There was incredible chemistry between the three, who were first introduced in a triangle formation with each in their respective spaces: Odessa in her living room at a desktop; Chutes&Ladders in his IRS workplace; Orangutan in Japan pursuing a job. Noticeably, you see that the actors are feeding off each other’s energy, making for a tight-knit and playful bond connected through the struggle of maintaining sobriety. The comedic relief of such heavy topics like drug addiction is added by the one-liner of HaikuMom, or Odessa, who flatly says “censored” for every curse word used between Orangutan and Chutes&Ladders.

Once introductions are made, the audience looks into the nitty-gritty of Elliot’s post-traumatic disorder from the war: a ghost who repeats an Arabic phrase Elliot wanted to be translated earlier in the show. The ghost (Brendan Ahmed) comes out with exposed flesh across half of his face. The lighting, paired with the ghost’s eerie calls towards Elliot, speaks volumes of war trauma. Sure, not everyone may have been on the battlefield, but you gain a sense of the emotional scarring prevalent years after discharge through Burgos and Ahmed’s exchange. For as long as Ahmed stays in the scene, Burgos doesn’t make any eye contact - but the ghost’s presence ultimately torments him.

The complexity of “Water by the Spoonful” doesn’t lag whatsoever afterward. There are moments where subtleties of each actor’s performances carry the show’s immersion for viewers. Whether it be through an intimate fight between Elliot and his ghost when they finally meet eye-to-eye, or the introduction of new user Fountainhead (Harrison Hernandez) on the recovering addicts’ site, each actor undoubtedly gave their all on closing night.

Not to mention,

many scenes beautifully depict the humanity of each character and their gradual understanding of self and others. There’s no dull moment, all serving a purpose to the larger scheme of the show. One of the most noteworthy is when Odessa relapses after a tense conversation with her son Elliot and niece Yaz, where they talk about her late daughter who died from dehydration. It’s this shoveled-up past that explains the family’s strains and inevitably forces the audience to reckon with the high emotions exuding from the stage.

Pérez Santiago’s portrayal of Odessa encompasses the high stakes of her character’s return to drugs - not only for herself but for those closest to her. When Elliot and Yaz arrive at Odessa’s home, they find her lying on the ground, and they soon begin to panic and worry they have pushed her over the edge. On cue, the light follows Pérez Santiago’s spirit as she sheds tears, and Yaz looks up to the same light and calls on her aunt to be free. This scene translated so powerfully to the audience despite it being the most difficult to tap into for actress Ugarte as Yaz.

“I don’t know what happened, but that is the first time that I’ve ever really been connected to that scene. I remember crying, looking at Camila [Pérez Santiago], and just like taking in the whole scene. And it was so different,” Ugarte told The Vanguard when describing the weight of the scene during the production’s opening day.

Besides these challenges, Ugarte found comfort and friendship with her colleagues, making her first in-person BC production memorable.

“It was such a great environment that you never dreaded coming to rehearsal and working with each other, especially because everyone was also so professional



Water by the Spoonful

by Quiara Alegría Hudes
Directed by Francisco Solorzano

The Department of Theater at Brooklyn College

Show Dates:
November 19th at 7:30 pm
November 20th at 2:00 pm and 7:30 pm
November 22nd - November 23th at 7:30 pm
New Workshop Theater

Visit Department’s main website for tickets:
<https://depthome.brooklyn.cuny.edu/theater/>

Promotional image./The Dept. of Theater at Brooklyn College

and funny. So out of those, like really heart-wrenching moments, we could just try to pull ourselves out together and have a laugh,” she said.

This closeness carried on from behind the scenes to center stage and into pairings like Orangutan and Chutes&Ladders. Though they mostly communicated over their screens, the audience saw them experience a full-circle moment where they met face-to-face in Japan. Lee and Adjei’s performance was awe-inspiring, with the audience feeling the relief and joy of their respective characters in finally meeting a longtime friend.

The cast’s chemistry doesn’t end there. Once Odessa heads into her recovery after relapsing, she quickly becomes dependent on Fountainhead, who is ultimately pushed by circumstances to be there for his one friend that made him realize his drug problems.

It’s this selflessness that actor Hernandez perfectly portrayed through his individual performance and care for Pérez Santiago’s character that shows a side far less self-absorbed than what was initially introduced of Fountainhead.

With the play’s departure set on a beach in the family’s native Puerto Rico, and Odessa’s home in the background, the audience sees the show in its totality. As Burgos steps into a prop that emanates a waterfall, and Pérez Santiago rises from her tub with Fountainhead’s aid, one sees the production’s key: as cliché as it may sound, life is worth living in spite of the hurdles.

“Whatever anybody believes in religiously or if they’re not religious, it just makes you think about the afterlife and just making sure that you make your time on this earth worth it. I would say that’s really what I’ve gained from this show,” said Ugarte.

Rolling Rock Ramblings: Attempt In UnderstandingTheAmericanPsyche

By Ian Enziga
Opinions Editor

This opinion doesn't serve to address any one particular item of news or current event, which, admittedly, may detract from its immediate value to the reader. This piece's purpose is to embark on a long-standing project of mine to build a framework to better understand the course of events that those alive in the present must witness. Understanding the course of events is different than creating an action plan, but is critical for building a sustainable plan for future generations to buy into. Understanding news and culture from a vantage point located somewhere in America can only be fruitful if one sits on a bulwark comprised of an understanding of the American psyche's relationship to narrative and myth. When stripped of statistics about GDP, theories on voting preferences, or headlines of our most recent overseas conflict, the United States remains a deeply complex web of ambitions, ideologies, and most importantly, narratives. All of these separate entities have their own lineage

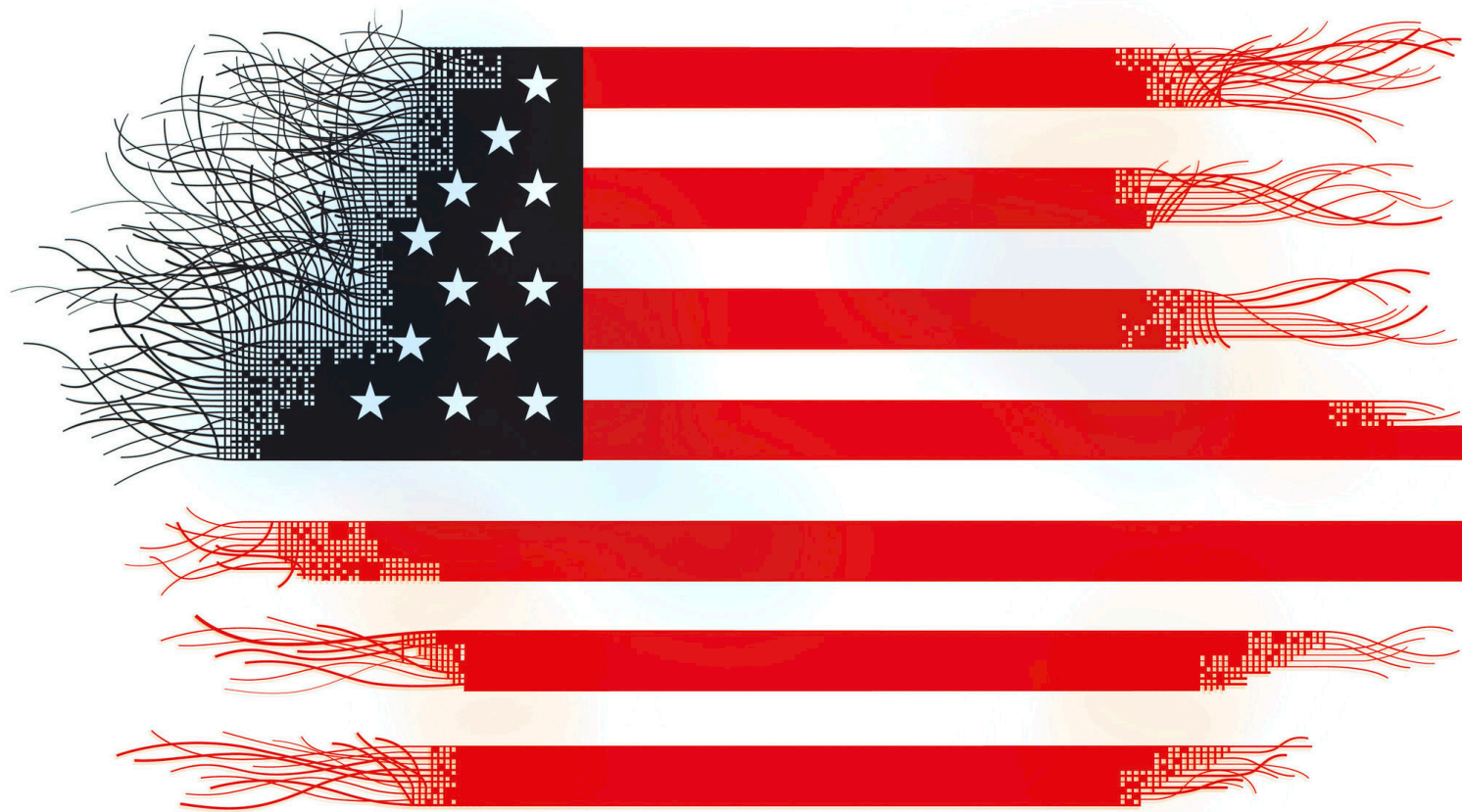
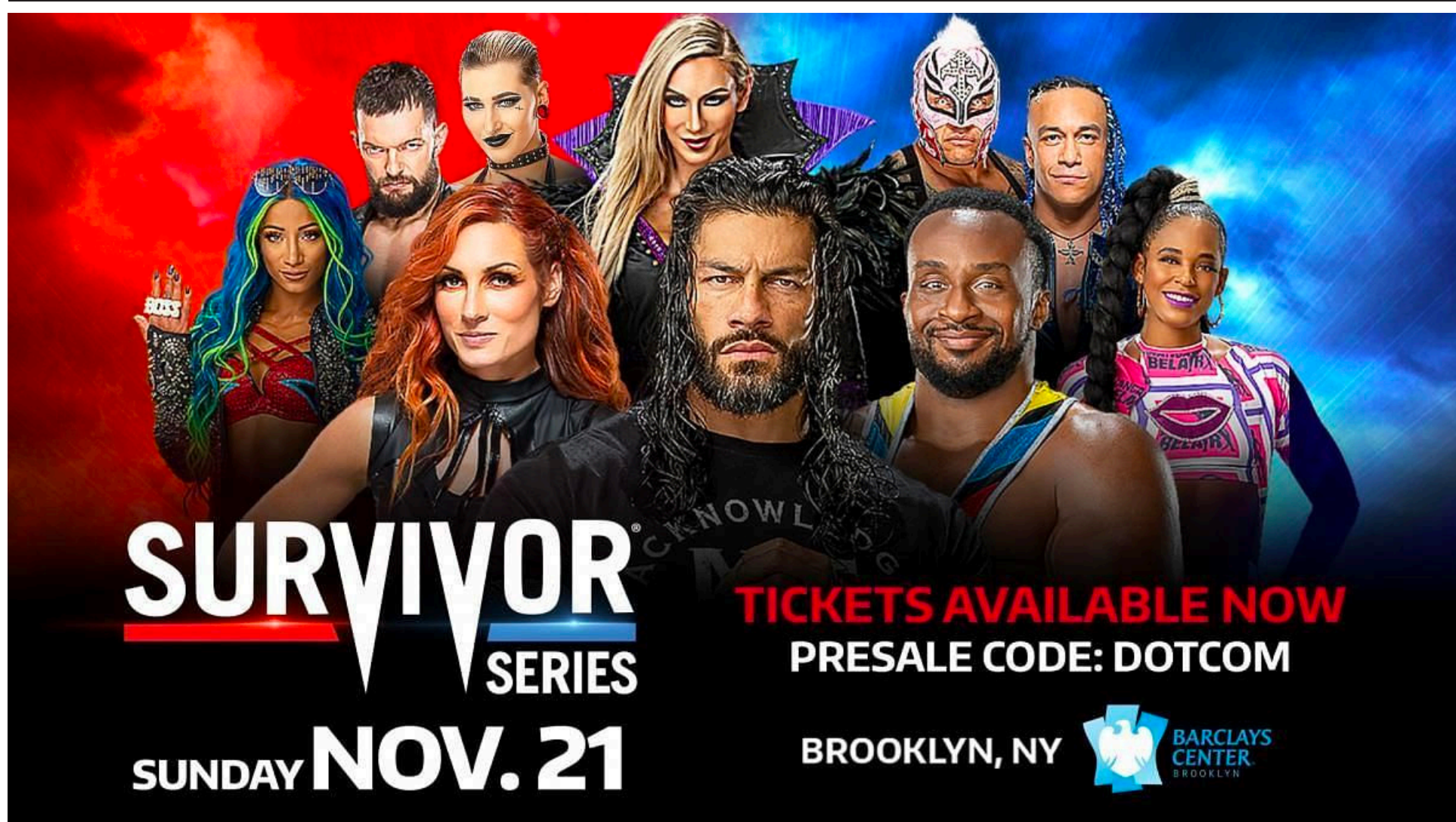


Photo by Harry Campbell via The New York Times

which, while traceable, are impossible to string together in a meaningful way to actually make sense of the past or the present. One of the oldest metaphors to describe America is that of the melting pot. It remains accurate and is critical to our understanding of our past and present. But escaping the more common usage of the metaphor, which speaks to the mixing of cultures and ideas, lies the key to my use case which is the blending of narratives. Breathing today, we all have stories that, if one had unlimited access to non-existent resources and time, could be traced back to the first record of human consciousness. These stories are the foundation of all that is around us. The stories we tell ourselves create the reality around us. The issue, then, is to untangle the countless different narratives which all have independent, and often competing, aims in explaining the world around us. These narratives often overlap and interact with one another in significant ways, but are also commonly studied and viewed on their own. There are, of course, the stories of the bourgeois and the workers, but there are also the stories from people of color, indigenous groups, immigrants, the young and old, LGBTQ individuals, and countless more. Each of these stories has a nearly untraceable beginning but also contain an ending, or some vision of the future. The endings or visions which these stories inevitably contain may be explicitly mapped out, more ambiguous, or not altogether realized. Any attempt at understanding the United States cannot begin without recognizing the power of narrative and the nation's countless, and often competing, stories and myths. This project's aim is to find a commonality among them. A commonality that isn't designed to unify these narratives, as that is impossible, but merely to comprehend this dizzying present. Looking at the stories of workers and the bourgeois is, in my opinion, the most useful starting point. But it is tremendously incomplete on its own. The first iteration of this project, which I guess will occupy the rest of my life, doesn't conclude with an answer as to what that commonality is. But my quest to find and promote practical solutions to our earthly struggles lends itself to trying to uncover the mystery of this commonality. My hypothesis, at this point in time, is that it revolves around the ways in which these narratives confront the idea of America, not the material reality itself. Yes, the stories we tell ourselves create the reality around us, but understanding the reality around us can only be done by analyzing the stories we tell ourselves.

WWE Survivor Series 2021: Season's Beatings At Barclays



WWE Survivor Series poster./Barclays Center

By Matt Hirsch
News Editor

World Wrestling Entertainment (WWE) brought their Thanksgiving week tradition, Survivor Series, to the Barclays Center in Brooklyn on Nov. 21.

Since 1987, WWE has kicked off the holiday season with the pay-per-view event. As part of the “big four” (WWE’s four biggest pay-per-views of the year, alongside Wrestlemania, the Royal Rumble, and Summer Slam), some of the most memorable moments in professional wrestling history happened at Survivor Series.

Traditionally, Survivor Series pits WWE’s two brands, Raw and Smackdown, against each other in a battle for bragging rights. About 15,000 fans packed into Barclays this

year to witness long-time rivals Becky Lynch and Charlotte Flair, the Raw and Smackdown Women’s Champions, go head to head.

Three years ago, at Summer Slam 2018, Flair won the Smackdown Women’s title in a triple-threat match against Lynch and Carmella in the very same building. Lynch jumped Flair after the match and sent her career to the stratosphere with that beat down. Three years later, they’re two of the most important women in the company’s history. In what can only be called poetic justice, Lynch pinned Flair this time, staking her claim as the top woman in the company.

Survivor Series is known for its five-on-five elimination matches, pitting teams from the two brands against each other. This year, Raw

cleaned house, winning both the men’s and women’s matches. Former champion Bianca Belair distinguished herself as Raw’s MVP, knocking off three of Smackdown’s competitors in the women’s match.

The main event saw Universal Champion Roman Reigns defeat WWE Champion Big E in arguably the best match of the evening. The two have been chomping at the bit, building up to this collision for months. And though Reigns came out on top, E gave him the hardest fight he’s had to endure during his reign as champion so far.

Survivor Series has produced iconic moments in pro wrestling. The most infamous of which happened in Montreal, Canada at Survivor Series 1997, known as the “Montreal Screwjob.” That night’s main event

was a title match between then-champion, Bret “The Hitman” Hart, and challenger, “The Heartbreak Kid” Shawn Michaels - two all-time greats in the business. The pair notoriously hated each other. Hart was set to leave WWE, then known as the World Wrestling Federation (WWF), for World Championship Wrestling (WCW), the biggest competition the company had ever seen.

When deciding the match’s outcome, Hart refused to lose the title to Michaels, but owner Vince McMahon had other plans. He infamously ordered the match’s referee to say Hart tapped out after Michaels put him in his own finishing hold, the Sharpshooter, even though he never submitted. Beating a wrestler with their own signature move is one of

the most disrespectful things you can do in pro-wrestling, regardless of the circumstances. If you go back and watch the match, you can see Hart spit on McMahon after the bell rings. The Montreal Screwjob might be the only time in WWE’s history where real-life dirty laundry was aired out in front of a live audience, and certainly, the most significant.

Survivor Series 2021 was the fourth time the pay-per-view was held in New York City, but the first time in Brooklyn. Survivor Series ‘96, ‘02, and ‘11 all happened at Madison Square Garden. Though the Barclays Center might not be as significant to the industry as MSG, it played the perfect home for the memorable moments that only the squared circle can provide.

Red Bulls Eliminated From Playoffs

By Billy Wood
Staff Writer

The New York Red Bulls journey to win the Major League Soccer (MLS) Cup for the first time came to an end on Nov. 20. They suffered a 1-0 loss to Philadelphia Union at Subaru Park.

The goal came in stoppage time during extra time. Jakob Glesnes scored in the 123rd minute to send Union to the next round of the MLS Playoffs. It was also the latest goal scored in MLS history.

Both teams were on the brink of going to penalties right before Glesnes was able to

score a volley late in stoppage time. The Red Bulls were able to dominate possession 55 percent to 45 percent, but Union had 3 shots on target compared to 1 from the Red Bulls.

This was the third consecutive season that the Red Bulls have been eliminated in the first round of the playoffs. In the Red Bulls history, they only made it to the finals once in 2008 when they lost to Columbus Crew 3-1.

Despite the loss, Red Bulls Coach Gerhard Stuber remained upbeat. “I look excited in the future with this team, I think we have made a

big step in the season and then right now we are on the level to manage games against the teams like Philadelphia,” he said.

Sean Davis, Red Bulls’ midfielder and captain, believes that even though there is room for improvement, he sees something special being built. “I think the foundation is really strong now,” he said.

The team is already looking ahead to next season when they open the season away to San Jose Quakes on Feb. 26, 2022. They will have their home season opener on Mar. 13 against Minnesota United.



The Red Bulls championship hopes will have to wait another season. /USA Today Sports

Yankees Quiet As Free Agents Begin To Sign

By John Schilling
Managing Editor

Since the Major League Baseball offseason began four weeks ago, the New York Yankees have been relatively quiet as big-name free agents have flown off the board.

Aside from extending manager Aaron Boone with a three-year deal, and picking up recently fired Mets manager Luis Rojas for third base coach, the Yankees have not done much to add to next year’s team. Unfortunately for the Yankees, many of the players the team previously showed interest in or were linked to ended up signing elsewhere, especially since the baseball world prepares for the expiration of Major League Baseball’s Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA).

Among these players was free agent shortstop Corey Seager, who signed a 10-year, \$325 million dollar deal with the Texas Rangers, as well as right-handed starting pitcher Justin Verlander, who re-signed with the Houston Astros on a one-year, \$25 million deal

despite receiving an offer from the Yankees of the same value.

The losses for the Yankees have continued to pile on with starting pitcher Corey Kluber, who played for the Yankees this past season, heading to the Tampa Bay Rays, a division rival, on a one-year deal with \$8 million guaranteed. Kluber missed a big chunk of last season due to an injury, finishing the year with a 3.83 ERA in 80 innings pitched. Kluber did, however, pitch a no-hitter against the Texas Rangers on May 19, sealing his Yankees legacy despite it being short lived.

To make matters slightly worse for the Yankees, right-handed starting pitcher Kevin Gausman is headed to the Toronto Blue Jays, another division rival, on a five-year, \$110 million deal. Gausman pitched the best season of his career for the San Francisco Giants in 2021 with a 2.83 ERA and a 14-6 record.

In addition, the Yankees lost some roster depth when the team parted ways with infielder Rougned Odor, utility player Tyler Wade, outfielder Clint Frazier, first

baseman Chris Gittens, and infielder Andrew Velazquez.

Hope is not completely lost for the Yankees, however, as a few of the free agents the team has shown interest in remain available. On the top of the Yankees list currently are first baseman Freddie Freeman and shortstop Carlos Correa, both of whom are coming off all-star seasons.

The two free agents, however, will not come cheaply and require the Yankees to break the bank, especially as other players continue to fly off the market with the lockout looming and the Yankees’ options becoming limited. Freeman, who has played his entire 11-year career with the Atlanta Braves, is seeking a six-year, \$180 million dollar deal, according to MLB Network Insider Jon Heyman. Correa, who has played his entire six-year career with the Houston Astros, is expected to demand a deal similar to that of Seager’s \$325 million deal with the Rangers, according to MLB.com.

Signing Freeman and/or



The Yankees remain interested in Freddie Freeman and Carlos Correa as free agents begin to sign. /Photo edited by John Schilling

Correa would certainly put the Yankees in a better spot, but over the last few days, the team’s acquisitions have been limited to the signing of infielder Jose Peraza to a minor league deal.

While Peraza is by no means the Yankees’ answer to the roster gaps they hope to fill, the team is seemingly running out of time and could have a hard time signing any big-name free agents after the lockdown. But the team is not giving up yet.

Late Tuesday night, the Yankees avoided arbitration with a few of their players, signing starting pitcher Domingo Germán, relief

pitcher Lucas Luetge, and third baseman Gio Urshela to one-year contracts. With this, the Yankees also opted to tender contracts to catcher Gary Sanchez, third baseman Miguel Andujar, and first baseman Luke Voit, despite speculation the team was considering non-tendering the trio and sending them to free agency.

These decisions could be an indicator of what is to come for the Yankees: a major comeback offseason or a quiet winter with the roster shaping out to be most of what it was this past season. Only time will tell.

My 2022 National Baseball Hall Of Fame Ballot

By John Schilling
Managing Editor

Every year, the Baseball Writers’ Association of America (BBWAA) is tasked with the responsibility of voting on which retired Major League Baseball players should be elected to the National Baseball Hall Of Fame in Cooperstown, New York. Members of the BBWAA can earn a chance to vote for the Hall of Fame if he or she remains on a baseball beat for 10 consecutive years among other things.

Until then, my ballot does not count, but this has not stopped me from filling out the official ballot each year and acting as if I had the honor to cast it. As per the rules, I can only vote for up to 10 players, and for a player to be elected, he must receive 75 percent of the votes from all the ballots cast, a very hard feat to accomplish. Last year, none of the players on the ballot were elected, but each player is permitted to stay on the ballot for 10 years unless he falls below five percent of the votes. Without further ado, here is who I would vote for if I were able to vote:

Barry Bonds, Final year on the ballot (2021: 61.8%).

If you are a baseball fan, then you know very well just how great of a player Barry Bonds was. The left fielder’s talent was so immense that over his 22-year career, he earned seven National League MVP Awards, eight Gold Glove Awards, won two batting titles, and was selected to 14 All-Star Games. He is currently the all-time MLB home run king with 762. Based on these numbers alone, you could argue that Bonds is the greatest player of all time, but all of these accomplishments have been watered down by Bonds’ alleged steroid use even though he never tested

positive for anything.

My issue with this, however, is that even if Bonds did use steroids, they were not officially banned until 2005, and he was clearly already a Hall of Fame-caliber player before he touched the stuff. I also take issue with the notion that the Hall of Fame is heaven or the Hall of Morally Good People. It’s a museum - a museum that should reflect Baseball’s history. As you will see, I take issue with steroids much more when they clearly made the player as good as they were, which is why I would not vote for Sammy Sosa. I also take issue with repeat offenders and positive tests, which eliminates Alex Rodriguez and Manny Ramirez from earning my vote...for now, at least.

Roger Clemens, Final year on the ballot (2021: 61.6%).

Over his 24-year career, the right-handed pitcher won 354 games, played in 11 All-Star games, earned an MVP award, won two World Series, and won seven Cy Young Awards, the most of any other pitcher. Clemens is arguably one of the best pitchers to ever play, but like Bonds, his rumored steroid use has kept him out of Cooperstown. Nonetheless, he earns my vote because he never tested positive and was already a Hall of Famer before he would have touched the stuff.

Todd Helton, Fourth year on the ballot (2021: 44.9%).

Helton is not nearly as slam-dunk as Bonds or Clemens, but there is something to be said about his 17-year career. With the Colorado Rockies, the first baseman earned four Silver Slugger Awards, won a batting title, led the league in seven offensive stats in 2000, played in five All-Star games, earned three Gold Glove awards, and led two playoff teams. Helton never won an MVP

Award and only recorded 2519 hits and 369 home runs, but he finished his career with a .316 batting average and .539 slugging percentage, and only two of the 21 first baseman in the Hall of Fame have over 3000 hits. It wouldn’t be a travesty if he was denied entry into Cooperstown, but I think his offensive efforts and contributions to Colorado earn him a spot even if his stats may have benefitted from Colorado’s high altitude.

Jeff Kent, Ninth year on the ballot (2021: 32.4%).

Based on statistics alone, Kent is the best offensive second baseman of all-time, and his career is one I believe the BBWAA has completely misunderstood year after year when considering his candidacy. In his 17-year career, Kent recorded 2461 hits and 377 home runs, won an MVP and four Silver Slugger Awards, and played in five All-Star games. We can get into the nitty gritty of Kent’s defense, as he finished his career with 236 errors, but many of his offensive numbers topple that of Hall of Famers Ryne Sandberg and Craig Biggio, which is good enough for me.

David Ortiz, First year on the ballot.

Over his 20-year career, Ortiz was beloved by baseball fans on and off the field. The designated hitter/first baseman, often referred to as “Big Papi,” played in 10 All-Star games, won three World Series, and earned seven Silver Slugger Awards while recording 2472 hits and 541 home runs. Though Big Papi never won an MVP, he finished within the top 10 of the voting six times and even led the league twice in runs batted in and once in home runs. Ortiz is a no-doubt Hall of Famer, but he was accused of testing positive for performance-enhancing drugs in 2003 by a New York Times report

2022 BASEBALL HALL OF FAME BALLOT

<input type="checkbox"/> Bobby Abreu	<input type="checkbox"/> Andruw Jones	<input type="checkbox"/> Manny Ramírez
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <u>Barry Bonds</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jeff Kent	<input type="checkbox"/> <u>Álex Rodríguez</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Mark Buehrle	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Tim Lincecum</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Scott Rolen
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <u>Roger Clemens</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> Justin Morneau	<input type="checkbox"/> Jimmy Rollins
<input type="checkbox"/> Carl Crawford	<input type="checkbox"/> Joe Nathan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <u>Curt Schilling</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Prince Fielder	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <u>David Ortiz</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gary Sheffield
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Todd Helton	<input type="checkbox"/> <u>Jonathan Papelbon</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> <u>Sammy Sosa</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Ryan Howard	<input type="checkbox"/> Jake Peavy	<input type="checkbox"/> Mark Teixeira
<input type="checkbox"/> Tim Hudson	<input type="checkbox"/> Andy Pettitte	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Omar Vizquel
<input type="checkbox"/> Torii Hunter	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>A.J. Pierzynski</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Billy Wagner

The BBHOF Tracker Team:
@NotMrTibbs | @ShutTheDore
@tonycal93 | @jmdewivo

Ballot #

Players Voted For:

Gained Vote

Lost Vote

First Year Candidate

Final Year Candidate

Photo edited by John Schilling

in 2009. This test was never made public nor was it ever determined to be legitimate, but Ortiz gets my vote anyway without question.

Scott Rolen, Fifth year on the ballot (2021: 52.9%).

Similar to Helton, Rolen is far from a slam-dunk Hall of Famer, but the third baseman’s 17-year career was far from mediocre. Rolen recorded only 2077 hits and 316 home runs but earned eight Gold Gloves, played in seven All-Star games, and was an above average player for most of his career. Among third basemen, Rolen ranks ninth all-time in Wins Above Replacement (WAR) with 70.1. I do not love WAR nor do I think it’s a great statistic to use when evaluating how good a player was, but it makes clear that Rolen was among the best at his position, a position that is heavily underrepresented in the Hall of Fame. Rolen’s numbers are very similar to Hall of Fame third baseman Ron Santo, and he even tops Santo with his career triple slash and Gold Glove wins. Also, as Chris “Mad Dog” Russo, radio sports personality, likes to say, there is an “eye-test” when it comes to certain players, meaning that fans can tell

that a player is Hall of Fame-caliber simply by watching the games and seeing him play. For me, Rolen passes this eye-test even if the stats are not enough.

Curt Schilling, Final year on the ballot (2021: 71.1%).

As of now, I have no knowledge of being related to Curt Schilling, but either way, the guy is one of the best postseason pitchers in the game’s history, and his regular season stats are nothing to sneeze at either. In his 20-year career, Schilling won 216 and lost 146 games, finishing with a 3.46 earned run average (ERA). This is not bad, but it is less than ideal for a pitcher looking to be enshrined in Cooperstown. Schilling, however, had two 20-win seasons and led the league twice in strikeouts. As for the postseason, Schilling was dominant with an 11-2 win-loss record and a 2.23 ERA across 12 series, five years, and 133.1 innings pitched. This success would earn him three World Series championships, one of which he was named World Series MVP. Schilling’s legacy is further helped by his iconic “bloody sock” moment in Game 6 of the 2004 American League Championship Series.

My 2022 National Baseball Hall Of Fame Ballot



Photo edited by John Schilling

The issue with Schilling, however, is that he is an outspoken conservative who has been criticized multiple times for things he has said about LGBTQ issues, Islam, journalists, the U.S. Capitol insurrection in 2021, and many other things. After falling short last year, Schilling publicly requested to be removed from the ballot, citing that his support of former President Donald Trump was being used against him. Many writers have opted not to vote for Schilling because of his outspoken conservatism, claiming some of the things he has said have violated the Hall of Fame's character clause.

As far as I am concerned, the character clause means next to nothing as it only began to be brought up by writers when the steroid guys started appearing on the ballot. It's also rumored to have been written by a segregationist in the first place. Not to mention, the Hall of Fame has already honored colluding owners and known cheaters, making Curt Schilling the least of the Hall of Fame's problems. From a pure on-field performance standpoint alone, Schilling gets my vote.

Gary Sheffield,

Eighth year on the ballot (2021: 40.6%).

In his 22-year career, Sheffield was an excellent hitter with 2689 career hits, 509 home runs, a batting title, and five Silver Slugger Awards, as well as nine All-Star appearances and a World Series championship. Sheffield never won an MVP, but finished in the top 10 of the voting six times. The issue with Sheffield is that he played three different positions for eight separate teams, none of which he particularly identifies with legacy-wise, and is also linked to steroid-use. Sheffield never tested positive but was named in the Mitchell Report, an investigation into doping in MLB, and claimed to have unknowingly received steroids in 2001 from his personal trainer, who was also associated with Barry Bonds. In any case, Sheffield's numbers did not significantly improve in the aftermath of when this would have happened, and he had already enjoyed a bulk of his career success.

Omar Vizquel, Fifth year on the ballot (2021: 49.1%).

Vizquel's 24-year career spans four decades, and many have discredited the shortstop as being an

accumulator with his 2877 hits. Had Vizquel hit just 123 more hits, however, there would not be a single question about his candidacy. While Vizquel is generally considered to be a below average hitter, he makes up for any offensive shortcomings immensely with his defense. As a shortstop, Vizquel played more games than anyone at the position and won 11 Gold Gloves, the second most behind Hall of Famer Ozzie Smith, whose offensive numbers are worse than that of Vizquel.

The same is true for the shortstop with the third most Gold Gloves, Luis Aparicio, who also happens to be a Hall of Famer. To be fair, Omar's longevity certainly plays a factor in all of this, but I believe his success as a shortstop is significant enough to earn him a spot in the Hall, especially since I think Keith Hernandez and Gil Hodges are just as deserving of enshrinement in Cooperstown for their defense as first basemen, but that is a whole other conversation for another day.

Billy Wagner, Seventh year on the ballot (2021: 46.4%).

As of right now, I am not

entirely sure if Wagner is deserving of the Hall of Fame, but I do think his 16-year career is worth a closer look for further consideration. The problem is that relief pitchers, especially when it comes to Hall of Fame consideration, are generally limited to ERA and saves. There are other stats to consider, but none nearly as prominent as these two.

Wagner's ERA is a respectable 2.31, and he earned 422 saves, which is sixth on the all-time saves leaderboard. There is much to be said, however, about the seven-time All-Star, who I think has suffered from being in the shadow of Mariano Rivera, the all-time saves leader and best closer to ever pitch, and Trevor Hoffman, the second all-time saves leader. Why punish a guy for not being Mariano Rivera? There has to be a better way to evaluate relievers, and when you compare Wagner to Hoffman in other stats, he really holds his own. The two are almost identical in WAR, but Wagner beats Hoffman in ERA, walks and hits per innings pitched (WHIP), and strikeouts per nine innings pitched (K/9). And Wagner was much more dominant against opposing

hitters with a career slash of .187/.262/.296 compared to Hoffman's .211/.267/.342.

Wagner also happens to be a lefty, which is something to consider as well. At this moment, I cannot definitively say that Wagner should be a Hall of Famer, but I think he is the best reliever to be considered since Hoffman and Rivera, and I am curious to see how evaluating relievers will evolve as the years go on, and my vote for Wagner would at least support the effort to keep him on the ballot should something be decided about that.

Aside from the 10 I voted for, I also considered outfielder Andruw Jones and pitcher Andy Pettitte when filling out my ballot. The rest of the ballot, in my eyes, is made up of very good players but none that I think are deserving of being inducted.

Nonetheless, out of all these names, I think only Ortiz will get the call when the results are announced on Jan. 25. I could also see Bonds, Clemens, and Schilling making it, but I think their controversies will ultimately keep them out.

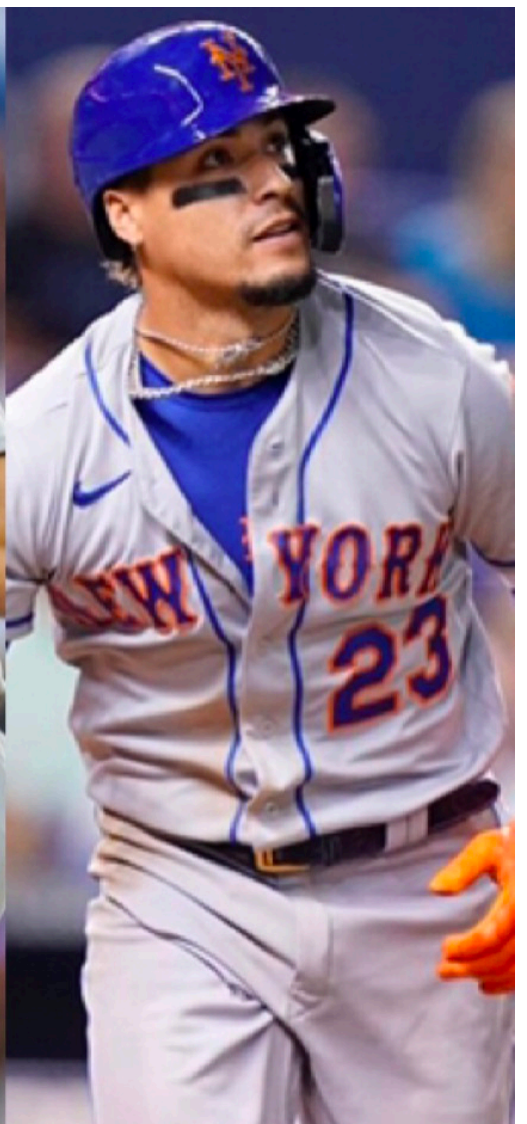
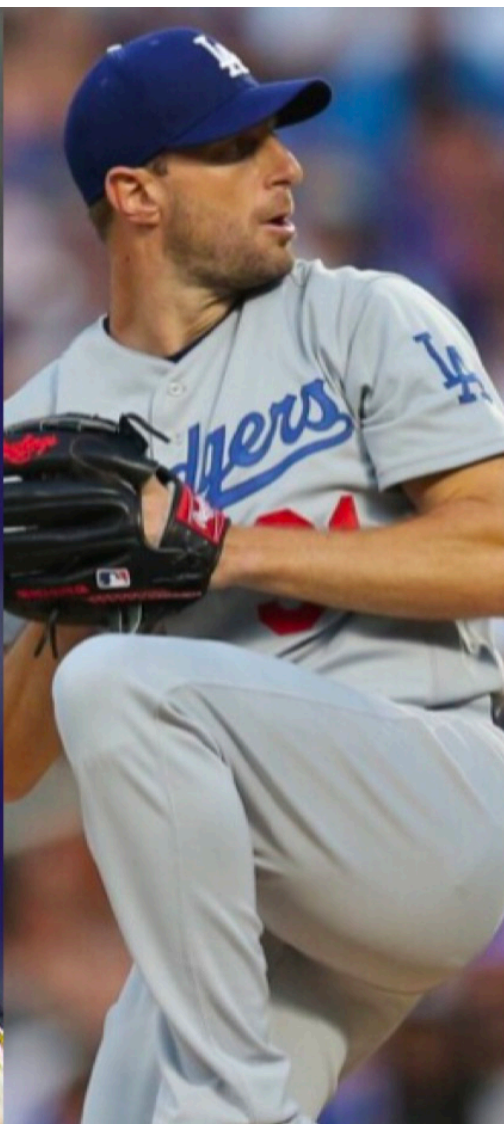
Mets Sign Scherzer And Marte, Lose Báez

By Owen Russell
Sports Editor

On Oct. 3, the New York Mets played their last game of the season against the Atlanta Braves, the would-be World Series Champions. Losing that game, the Mets fell to 77-85, concluding another dismal season. While fans wondered whether or not the misery would continue into the offseason, the Mets' front office had something brewing.

This past week the Mets have spent top dollar to retool their roster, spending hundreds of millions signing some of the biggest free agents in baseball. Among them was none larger than pitching ace Max Scherzer, who agreed to a three-year, 130 million dollar deal. Scherzer, 37, is arguably the sport's most dominant pitcher, winning three Cy Young Awards since 2013. Most recently, Scherzer spent the last season pitching for the Washington Nationals, before being traded to the Los Angeles Dodgers.

While Scherzer would go on to lose the World Series with LA, he continued his dominance leading



Marte and Scherzer will play in Queens in 2022, but Báez will head to Detroit./Photo edited by John Schilling

the league in WHIP, and finishing third in the Cy Young voting. The addition of Scherzer is an exciting prospect for fans. With the hope that Mets star Jacob deGrom will stay healthy, the Mets could have the best one-two pitching punch in all of baseball.

Scherzer isn't the only big name who will call New York his home this spring. Earlier in the week, outfielder Starling Marte agreed to a four-year, 78 million dollar contract. Marte is an electric player, having stolen 47 bases this past season while batting .310. Along

with Marte, the Mets also signed infielders Mark Canha and Eduardo Escobar.

With these recent three additions, it seems New York is going all in on restructuring their offense. Last season, the Mets were one of the worst hitting teams in baseball, ranking 27th in total runs out of 30 teams.

It should be noted, however, that there are still a few loose ends for Steve Cohen and the Mets. Infielder Javier Báez, who was brought to Queens at the trade deadline to help spark some life into the lineup, has agreed to

terms with the Detroit Tigers. Meanwhile, fan favorite Michael Conforto has not yet agreed to a contract, but it seems he has played his last game as a New York Met. Along with Báez and Conforto, pitcher Marcus Stroman is also looking for a new contract. While some argue that Stroman was the Mets most consistent pitcher in the rotation, he seems to be the odd man out.

In a now deleted tweet, Stroman claimed that the Mets didn't have any interest in bringing him back. "I know a source who says the front office

would rather go for the other pitchers on the market," tweeted Stroman, who later confirmed that the source was himself.

Barring an impending lockout, December could be a very interesting month for the Mets. Having already snagged some of the best free agents out there, owner Steve Cohen could still have a few tricks up his sleeve. While money talks, and the Mets have certainly made some money moves, fans will have to wait until Opening Day to see how well these signings pan out.

What’s Happening With MLB’s Collective Bargaining Agreement?

By Johan Abdu
Staff Writer

This Wednesday, Dec. 1, Major League Baseball’s Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) will expire, leaving many players, organizations, agents and more waiting in the wings for the future of their contracts, expenses and other conditions when the league begins pre-season baseball in February 2022.

The MLB’s CBA has a notorious history of renegotiation and tension between the league itself and its players, with everything from player strikes to labor stoppages. Most notably in 1994, the league had a lockout, leaving players to strike after the owners of multiple organizations tried to impose salary caps.

Major League Baseball Commissioner Rob Manfred spoke last Thursday in a meeting of

MLB organizations and their owners in Chicago, stating that their goal of reaching an agreement by the deadline is their top priority.

“I can tell you from the clubs’ perspective, we’re committed to continuing to offer proposals and suggestions in an effort to get to an agreement before December 1st,” Manfred told reporters.

With so much talk of a potential lockout, spurring memories of 1994, it’s important to understand what MLB’s CBA is exactly and how it works.

The MLB’s CBA is essentially a giant contract that sets the base terms and conditions between the players and team owners. The 373-page agreement, signed back in 2017, covered everything from salaries and team rosters to even travel regulations.

With both the players and



MLB Commissioner Rob Manfred (left) and MLB Players Association executive director Tony Clark (right)./News-Herald.com

organizations involved, coupled with the rise of revenues from broadcasting rights and million-dollar sponsors, the CBA leaves many players demanding higher compensation as the years go on and as player salaries get higher. They can demand to sit out in protest and some owners will just refuse to budge, leaving the MLB with the ability to halt baseball for the time being.

With the start of the 2020 season

being postponed due to COVID-19, much has been speculated over the CBA this time around. The lockout of 1994 led to unprecedented labor stoppages, shortages, players walking out, and even having the whole postseason cancelled.

Commissioner Manfred, who has been in charge since 2015, is confident in reaching a new agreement with organizations and is steadfast that baseball, its players, and the teams will come to a decision

soon for the fans.

“Every single time, I have found a way, we have found a way, to make an agreement and keep the game on the field...I just don’t put that much weight on it,” Manfred told The Athletic. “We’ve had very, very difficult situations in the past, and we found our way through them. We’ve got great people and I think we’re going to find our way through this one, too.”

Vinny The Goat by Mo Muhsin and Gabrielle Toro Vivoni



BC Sports Recap (Nov. 18-30)

Men’s Basketball Wins First Game

By Owen Russell
Sports Editor

Despite having a tough past two weeks, losing three games, the Brooklyn College Bulldogs secured their first win. Their first game over the stretch saw them lose to William Paterson University 81-50, on Nov. 17. Brooklyn was outmatched out of the gate, getting outscored 43-22 in the first half. Things didn’t get much better for Brooklyn in the second half, ultimately losing the whole game. Shooting has been a bit of a struggle for the Bulldogs so far. It was much of the same this

time around, as the Bulldogs shot 3-25 from behind the arc. Guard Noah Shy was the team’s top scorer, putting up 14 including eight free throws. Nov. 19 saw a bounce back performance by the Bulldogs, as they snatched their first win, beating Manhattanville College in the AJ Buchanan Tournament. The game would be described best as hard fought. The two teams battled out in the first half, Manhattanville outsourcing Brooklyn 26-20. The Bulldogs came back at halftime though, and ended up beating the Valiants 55-54. Noah Shy was

yet again the team’s top scorer. This time dropping 19 points and swiping 5 steals. The very next day, Brooklyn played again in the AJ Buchanan Tournament, this time against Kean University. It was another hard fought contest for the Bulldogs, except this one didn’t go their way. The Bulldogs and the Cougars traded blows back and forth till the buzzer sounded. Guards Zuric Harvey and Serge Thraysbule did all they could to keep the Bulldogs alive, scoring 16 and 14 respectively, but in the end, Kean won 61-58. Free throw shooting may have been the difference as Kean



Sophomore forward Elisha Park sealed the game with free throws for the team’s first win this season. /Damion Reid

got to the line 18 times and sank 14 of their chances. While Brooklyn was, to put it kindly, porous, the Brockport Golden Eagles held strong. As the game clock ticked down, the Bulldogs were handed their sixth loss, losing 84-58. Coming off the holiday break, the Bulldogs will play again on Dec. 3 against Lehman College, their first conference matchup of the season. After two close contests, the Bulldogs were exposed once again. On Nov. 23, the team was handed a heavy loss from SUNY Brockport. It was a rough contest for the Bulldogs. The team shot 2-14 from three point land. They recorded zero blocks and allowed 84 points.

Women’s Basketball Wins One, Loses One

By Owen Russell
Sports Editor

The Bulldogs only had two games in these past two weeks. After winning their first three of the season, Brooklyn split these last two contests. The first game was on Nov. 19 against Kean University. Brooklyn kept it close all game, although they found themselves outscored for the first three quarters. Despite a stronger fourth quarter, the Bulldogs dropped

their first game of the season, losing 64-58. Brooklyn didn’t shoot particularly well from the field, but their 30 free throw attempts kept them in the game. Forward Chanel Jemmott was the team’s brightest star by far scoring 27 of the team’s 58 points. She shot 9-17 from the field and 8-11 from the stripe. Having lost their first game of the season, Brooklyn looked to bounce back against the St. Joseph’s Bears on Nov. 23. It was a much different story against

the Bears as Brooklyn came blazing out of the gates. They outscored St. Joseph’s 20-12 in the first quarter and 19-9 in the second. The second half was a little closer, but Brooklyn held off any resurgence and won the contest 78-53. Two Bulldogs, guards Gianna Gotti and Ericka James, found themselves with 20 or more points. The Bulldogs play again next on Dec. 3, squaring off with conference rival Lehman College.



Junior guard Gianna Gotti has been a big factor in the team’s strong start this season. /Damion Reid