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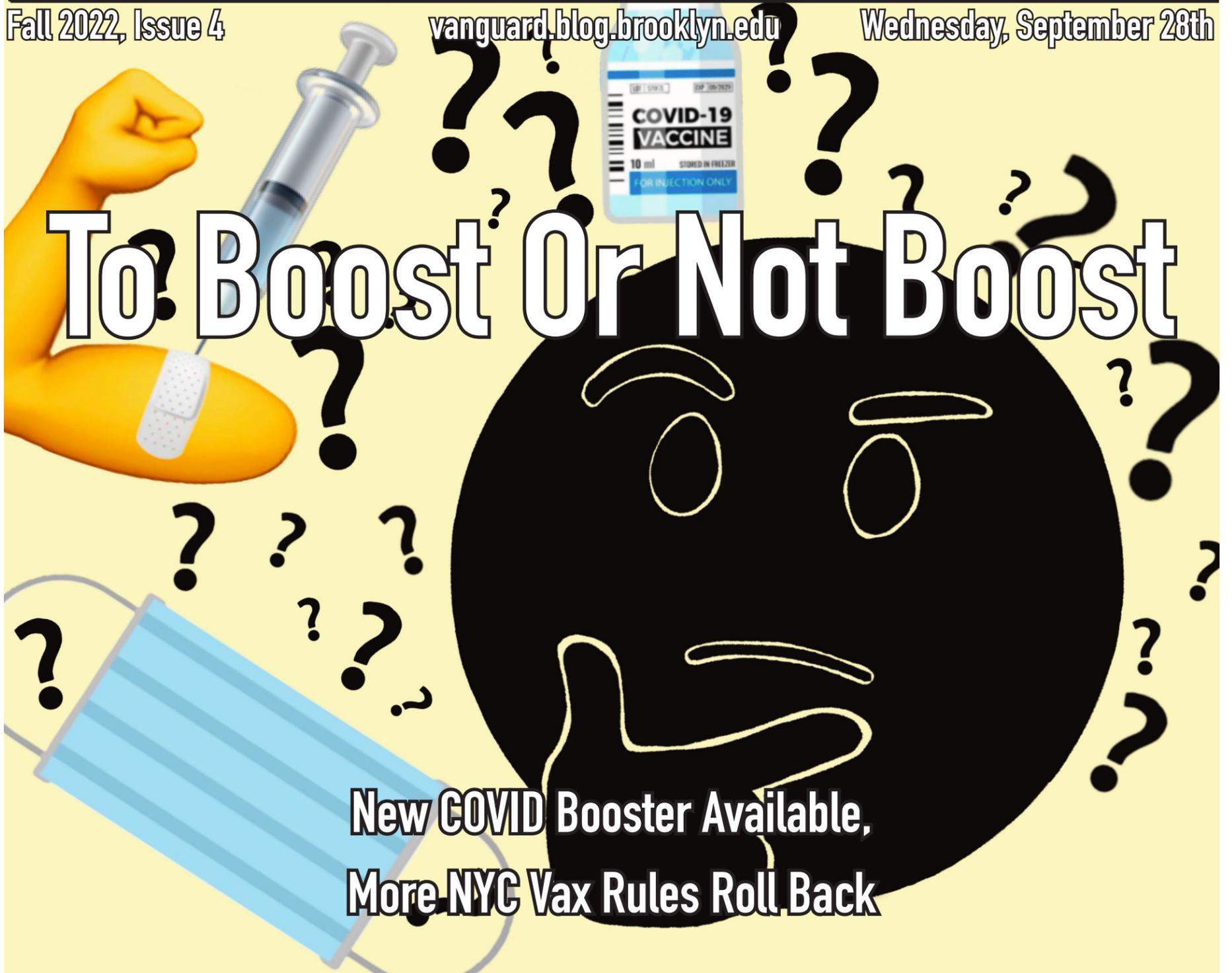
THE BROOKLYN COLLEGE

WANGUARD

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New COVID Booster Available, More Restrictions Lift In NYC

GENERAL INQUIRIES
THEBCVANGUARD@GMAIL.COM

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TUESDAY: 11 A.M. - 6 P.M.

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

GABRIELA FLORES
23FLORESG@GMAIL.COM

MANAGING EDITOR

MICHELA ARLIA
MICHELACA24@GMAIL.COM

BUSINESS MANAGER

HIFZA HAMEED
IHFZAHAMEEDII.COM

LAYOUT EDITOR

ANAKIN JACKSON
ANAKINJACKSONM@GMAIL.COM

DIGITAL EDITOR

EMMAD KASHMIRI
EMMADK01@GMAIL.COM

PHOTO EDITOR

KAYLIN GUZMAN
KAYLINGT01@GMAIL.COM

SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGER

BRIE UNDERWOOD
BRIECUNDERWOOD@GMAIL.COM

SECTION EDITORS

NEWS: RADWAN FARRAJ
RADWANFARRAJ47@GMAIL.COM

FEATURES: SERIN SARSOOR
SERIN.SARSOOR@BCMAIL.CUNY.EDU

ARTS: SAMIA AFSAR
SAMII.AFSAR@GMAIL.COM

OPINIONS: TBD

SPORTS: OWEN RUSSELL
OWENNRUSSELL@GMAIL.COM

STAFF WRITERS

ANNETH ARROLIGA
DIANA BAUTISTA
PATRICK BOYD RICHARDSON
GABRIELA CENTENO
HELEN DANG
DAVID GLANZMAN
CHAYA GURKOV
MARWA IKHMAYES
CYNTHIA LEUNG
PRISCILLA MENSAH
MELISSA MORALES
CAILAH PARKER
HADARA PEREZ-AROCHO
STEPHANIE JIMENEZ REYES
SYDNEY RODRIGUEZ
STAVROULA STATHOPOULOS
SHEA STEVENSON
DYLAN TYLER
ALEXANDRIA WOOLFE

CARTOONIST
NITU FARHIN

PHOTOGRAPHERS
SOPHIA KEBADZE

FACULTY ADVISOR
MJ ROBINSON

By Radwan Farraj
News Editor

A new bivalent COVID-19 booster targeting two coronavirus strains is available to eligible individuals. The new booster protects against the original strain of the coronavirus and against two Omicron subvariants that rapidly spread in the U.S. over the summer.

As vaccines and boosters have been made available to NYC residents over the course of the pandemic, nearly 80% of New Yorkers of all ages have also completed their primary series, meaning they have received two does of either the Moderna or Pfizer vaccine. 40.1% of city residents have received an additional booster after completing their primary series, according to a NYC Department of Mental Health and Hygiene report.

Nearly a month into the fall semester, CUNY has seen relatively low numbers of positive cases on its campuses. In CUNY's most recently recorded week, only 119 tests were recorded positive from a total of 7,981 tests across all campuses, according to CUNY's COVID-19 Safety Tracker. About 2,100 cases are recorded on average in New York City daily with hospitalizations declining,

the city's website reported as of press time.

"I just feel like people are still getting COVID too much for my liking," wrote Amara Minott, a senior at BC, when asked if she was concerned about the current state of the pandemic. Minott added, "there is still widespread social trauma from [the] height of the pandemic, society gotta heal before we say the pandemic ends."

Mayor Eric Adams recently announced a COVID-19 booster campaign meant to encourage New Yorkers to get their booster shots in a press event on Sep. 20, where he received his own dose of the new bivalent COVID-19 booster.

"The new bivalent booster is here, providing better protection against variants we are seeing now and quite likely against variants in the future as well," said Adams. "We urge all New Yorkers to make a plan to get vaccinated if they are eligible, and we are grateful to the millions of New Yorkers who have already stepped up to keep themselves and their community safe," stated Adams.

During his announcement, Adams also rolled back vaccine mandates in the private sector, encouraging private businesses to implement their own vaccine protocols. For student



Mayor Eric Adams received the bivalent booster on Sept. 20./NYC.gov

athletes that participate in the Department of Education's PSAL, Adams made it optional for them to receive their primary COVID vaccine and eligible booster. CUNY has not announced changes to its vaccine mandate for students as of press time. All students enrolled in hybrid and in-person courses this fall are required to have their primary COVID shots unless they have an approved medical or religious exemption. Boosters are currently not required for registration. The university's mask mandate has been lifted since March 2022 following the removal of mask mandates for pre-K through 12th grade schools throughout the state and city. Some areas in the city require masking.

"I think the pandemic is taken more seriously in some areas than others. For example masks are no longer required on trains but my workplace requires them," Kamarayn Pecoraro, a senior at BC, wrote in a message to the Vanguard.

Though many COVID restrictions have lifted in New York City, some Brooklyn College students are worried about the lasting effects the pandemic will have on mental health. "But knowing how almost everyone was on edge last year and how we are currently dealing with a mental health crisis, the impacts of the last two years and how we recover collectively and individually will define if we are truly relaxed," opined Austin Dragos, a senior at BC.

When Is The Library's Lower Level Opening?

By Gabriela Flores
Editor-In-Chief

Reporting Assistance by
Travis Freeman

Brooklyn College's library basement is set to reopen at full capacity by spring 2023. The lower floor remains closed as the college

repairs damages caused by Hurricane Ida, prohibiting students and faculty access to its space.

The library's basement housed art installations from local artists, additional seating and study spaces for students, and current periodicals and newspapers, among other resources.

Hurricane Ida caused extensive flooding as it passed through the northeastern United States in September 2021. BC is currently working to replace damaged tiles, carpeting, furniture, data cables damaged by the flood, and elevators, according to the college's Media Relations Manager, Richard Pietras.

Hurricane Ida was a category 4 catastrophe with maximum sustained winds of 150 miles per hour. At Brooklyn College, no major losses besides the damages in the library's lower level were reported.

The Vanguard will report updates as they become available.

Emergency Medical Squad Returns, Looks For More Members

By Gabriela Flores
Editor-In-Chief

The Emergency Medical Squad is up and running again after its COVID hiatus, with members on call to provide ambulatory and patient care services. After a year of club issues and complaints of unresponsiveness, members aim to better engage with the Brooklyn College community and provide interested students with first-hand experience in emergency care.

“I hope EMS can rebuild its membership and expand its impact on campus back to its pre-pandemic levels,” student Patricia Dabrowski, EMS’s president, wrote in an email to the Vanguard.

Prior to the pandemic, students ran and operated a working ambulance for those on campus, Midwood High School, and P.S. 152. EMS offers different roles and training for all undergraduate students who apply. Regardless of their certification, all students start as dispatchers who take calls and relay them to those operating the ambulance. Members could eventually become a “Med-1,” or take the full role of being an emergency medical technician if they are licensed in New York State and have completed the necessary training. This fall, EMS began with four members after many graduated but have received applicants in recent weeks and are “actively recruiting.”

“As long as our office is open, we are ready and able to respond to calls,” wrote

Dabrowski, who was elected as president in May.

Last year, before Dabrowski became president, the Undergraduate Student Government received several complaints of unresponsiveness about EMS. Previous applicants, including Dave Dodson, a former student government member, were waiting months for a response on whether their application was rejected or not. This led to EMS’s budget of \$47,600 not passing in May and for USG members to demand that EMS make changes to its constitution. These reforms included clarifying why an undergraduate student is rejected, among other reforms. As of press time, no constitutional changes have been made as discussions between EMS and USG remain, but the club’s budget, backed by undergraduate student activity fees, has passed in the summer.

“I expect everyone at Brooklyn College to allow everyone to participate,” said Aharon Grama, the president of USG. “And if I as the president hear that people are gatekeeping [others] from using services they are paying for, I would fight for them.”

Grama noted that the government’s responsibilities include addressing student complaints and working with student groups like EMS. “I hope it will result in a more transparent process with EMS and possibly better communication between USG and EMS,” Grama said.

According to Dabrowski, EMS was gradually returning to campus last fall and spring, which may have led to longer turnarounds than usual.

“With many students having classes online, the office was often closed. Just like most campus clubs and services, we could not function normally under such unprecedented circumstances,” she said. “Now that we’re fully open, this problem should not occur anymore.”

Making its awaited and anticipated return, EMS is providing its resources for all students and enabling undergraduate students the opportunity of responding to calls and potentially serious emergencies on campus. For Dabrowski, her decision to join EMS was a natural one.

“I’ve always been interested in medicine, particularly emergency medicine, as it combines my love of science with a fast-paced and ever-changing environment,” she said. “I also enjoy doing something that has more of a real-world impact. I took an EMT course which confirmed my interest. And so, I joined BC EMS to further pursue my passions using this cool resource already present on campus.”

Many students previously reported being unsure of EMS’s application and interview process. Dabrowski explained that the organization requires applicants to fill out a form in-person, where students are asked to state their personal information and previous emergency-care



BC EMS logo./Facebook

experience. Undergraduate students who are interested in joining EMS can email Fred Kneitel (Fkneitel@brooklyn.cuny.edu), EMS’s administrator who oversees EMS’s ambulance, its registration and insurance, among other responsibilities. Kneitel would invite those interested to fill out the application in person at 021 Ingersoll Hall Extension with times for when the office is open, according to Dabrowski. Applications are accepted year-round and only reviewed by student members. Following the approval of their application, applicants will speak with student members about how EMS functions and ask them questions.

Before joining, students will receive training before they begin as dispatchers, which may result in long turn-arounds in application

responses.

“Sometimes, turn-around may take a while because training at BC EMS is highly individualized, making mass recruitment difficult. Because we provide a service, we must comply with state laws and guidelines, and respond to real calls and potentially real emergencies, we must ensure that each member is appropriately prepared to handle such a situation,” Dabrowski said. “This includes individual training sessions. Now that we are running, we will get back to people as soon as possible.”

The Vanguard will continue reporting updates regarding EMS as they become available.

CHECK US OUT ONLINE!

@THEBCVANGUARD ON SOCIAL MEDIA

'All In For Brooklyn' Fair Celebrates Diversity At BC

By Michela Arlia
Managing Editor

Reporting Assistance by
Gabriela Flores
Editor-in-Chief

The West Quad was buzzing again on Tuesday, Sept. 20, as the Diversity Awareness Fair took over. In an effort to celebrate the many cultures and traditions on campus, the event hosted by the S.A.I.L. Center and Student Affairs featured food, music, and giveaways.

Clubs, organizations like Hillel and the LGBTQ Resource Center, and many others joined to show students new and old that their voices are represented within the student body.

"I said it a few times in terms of the DNA of Brooklyn College consistent of diversity and having that door for people to get the opportunity to get an education. So I think we are represented across campus and the important thing is that we respect and give dignity to the people we have here," said Jesús Pérez, the director of the Immigrant Student Success Office that co-sponsored the fair. Pérez has been at BC since 1989, when he started as a student, and can attest to the college's diversity he's observed over the years.

BC was recently recognized by the U.S. News and World Report as the most ethnically diverse college among campuses in the North Region for the fifth consecutive year.

"I know Brooklyn College likes to promote the fact that we are one of the most ethnically diverse campuses in the country, so for the students to come and actually see it, I think it's good for them to actually get that experience," said Shadiq Williams, alum and program coordinator

of Black and Latino Male Initiative on campus. Williams' chapter aims to promote the inclusion of underrepresented groups in academia by supporting their educational success.

Among the other organizations and clubs present was NYC Men Teach, a partnership between the Office of the Mayor, the New York City Department of Education, and CUNY that intends to improve the teaching workforce's diversity within the city. Their original goal was to add 1,000 male teachers of color into the teacher pipeline by 2018.

"It's very inclusive so they encourage all who have that passion for pedagogy to come and join city Men Teach," said Andre Clark, an NYC Men Teach mentee under Program Manager Shemeka Brathwaite. Clark noted the program is highly beneficial for men who have a passion for teaching but did not major in it in time. He also explained that the group provides services for their participants in the form of vouchers and compensation for MetroCards and study materials in order to pass teacher certification exams.

Also representing at the fair was Lamec Fabian, president of the Dominican Student Movement (MEDo), who was grateful for the diversity fair in order to spread word of representation to students.

"It's nice to show the campus who we are, to let them know that we exist because I feel like a lot of students don't know so it's good to show them and it's good to know that there's people to represent them here in campus and there's a group that they can just come to," said Fabian.

InterVarsity, a Christian club that exists on campus with the belief that everyone



Student organizations stationed across the West Quad for the fair./Gabriela Flores

is loved by God, also represented on campus.

"Brooklyn College is a very diverse campus so for people to be here, to come and share about their culture, about their religion, about their ethnic backgrounds, I think it's a really special thing," staff member Peter Cho said. Cho credits InterVarsity for allowing him to feel included when he first entered campus, and hopes to emit the same energy to new students this year.

"As a freshman, because I felt so cared for, I wanted to participate in InterVarsity and share that love with other people who are in need of a space like this," he said.

From the point of view of faculty on campus, Perez told the Vanguard that the role they play is vital to making sure diversity awareness continues on

campus and that students embrace their diversity.

"I think that people who work for the college, our role is to be there for the students and to be there for the diversity to support them and to make sure that everybody you know works together and reaches the goal [...] to get an education," he said

While offering everything from traditional ethnic foods to the opportunity to play board games with students across many clubs, diversity in its true form sprung up last Tuesday on the quad. Several leaders who represented at the fair stressed the importance of clubs becoming families, welcoming anyone regardless of their background and representing the groups they advocate for.

"I think it's important for students to be able to

walk out and see themselves reflected in the campus that they attend, especially if

there's somebody maybe that primarily goes to class and goes home, they may not get to see the full breadth and depth as to just how much diversity is on the campus," Williams from BLMI said.

The event's large turnout enabled students on campus to see the resources and spaces available to them. From the West End Building and its numerous student-run clubs to Roosevelt's ISSO, organizations across Brooklyn College are on standby to help and represent.

"There's clubs all throughout campus hidden in Boylan, in James, in Ingersoll, Roosevelt and it's just like we're here and if you just step out and try to find us, you'll definitely find someone that's part of clubs that you can definitely come by," said Fabian.

Prof. Theodore Muth And The Microbial Communities Living In Green-Wood Cemetery's Soil

By Serin Sarsour
Features Editor

The Green-Wood Cemetery is a 478-acre national landmark located in Brooklyn that holds rich art and history deep in its core, but there is more to the cemetery than meets the eye.

Theodore Muth is currently an associate professor in the Biology Department at Brooklyn College, working in the school since 2000. He is also a part of two different projects at the Green-Wood Cemetery, where he collects samples of the soil, studying if there is any correlation between the diversity of microorganisms depending on the type of landscape management that is being done on the site.

“One of the bigger questions that my lab is interested in is how does

human activity affect soil microbial communities? We have some hypotheses about certain types of activities that are going to either increase or decrease the diversity of the soil microbial communities,” said Muth.

When a colleague notified Muth of the work being done at Green-Wood, he submitted a proposal. As a microbiologist, Muth was eager to partake in the research being done at the cemetery after he was awarded Green-Wood's inaugural environment research grant earlier this year. Moving from an apple farm in the middle of nowhere in upstate New York to New York City constantly made Muth consider how all of this newfound human activity inevitably impacts the natural environment, specifically microbial

communities.

Muth explained that there are essentially three different types of management of the grounds at the cemetery.

“One is like mowing and very highly managed, kind of like the quad out here [at BC]. Then, they have less managed, which is called perpetual meadow, which they kind of just let grow. And they do some maintenance, but not a whole lot. And then there's some wooded areas, which are completely unmanaged,” Muth said. “So we have this kind of a spectrum from highly managed, medium managed, and completely unmanaged.”

Muth, along with other researchers who were awarded the same grant, collect soil samples from each of those three different regions to try to see if there are differences that can be tied back to how the level of management of the ground can shift the microbial communities. For instance, how the communities are shifted when the area is mowed and fertilized would be compared to how they would move when nothing is being done to a section of soil at all. Muth credits the cemetery's excellent records of the management of the ground as a helping hand with this research. One of those record keepers who makes these studies more feasible is Sara Evans, a Brooklyn College alumna and manager of the Horticulture Operations and Projects at Green-Wood Cemetery.

“Green-Wood, spanning 478 acres and situated amongst a diversity of urban communities, serves as a perfect field laboratory for conducting research into urban ecology,” Evans said.

Evans has worked full-time at the cemetery since



Researchers analyzing the soil in Green-Wood Cemetery./Jeff Simmons

2017 where she manages all of the records for their living collection, or tree collection of the arboretum. She also oversees several horticulture operations and planting projects, along with supervising any contractors on the site who are doing tree work and a lot of the environmental research that is being done at Green-Wood.

The method most used to analyze the soil is a metagenomics strategy where Muth and the rest of his team use DNA from the environment as a proxy for the microorganisms that are in that environment, which could be soil or water, among others. After collecting the sample, all of the DNA is extracted. Then, the group sequences one gene that is found in all bacteria. By sequencing that gene and comparing the sequences to the database, the researchers can see all the different bacteria that were in that sample. These studies have led Muth and his colleagues to find a difference in diversity between managed and unmanaged spaces.

“Potentially, kind of counterintuitively, the bacterial diversity in the soils of the managed environment is more

diverse than the unmanaged soils,” Muth explained. “[...] You kind of think degraded environments or a lot of human influence can have a negative impact on biodiversity. That's probably true for like animals, birds, insects, and plants, but actually having stresses on the community creates more little micro-environments for microorganisms to grow in.” After analyzing multiple soil samples in different sections of the cemetery, Muth shared that various studies, including one of Green-Wood's and other parts of NYC, have indicated that worn out soils that have been more heavily impacted by human activity have greater bacterial or microbial diversity as a result.

Though Muth noted that he is still in the middle of this work, he and the other researchers still have not had the chance to look at the metabolic potential of the microbial communities. Once they do, further analysis of the soil at Green-Wood will determine the environmental changes and nutrients found in the soil's cellular machinery.



A tool used to study soil./Jeff Simmons

Prime Video's 'The Rings Of Power' Gives Tepid Delivery

By Patrick Boyd Richardson
Staff Writer

One of the best high fantasy authors to ever live, J.R.R. Tolkien, has his beloved mythology "Lord of the Rings" honored again. Tolkien's work, or legendarium to Tolkien fanatics, is spectacular in description and euphonic in its linguistic detail. And the newest "The Rings of Power" series on Amazon Prime shows a brilliant homage to Tolkien's vision, or at least would have, had the plot been more intensified with the appropriate gore and violence familiar to Tolkien fans worldwide.

I truly think the level of sophistication that Tolkien – the inventor of fantasy as a popular literary genre – aspired to in his world-building is not satisfactorily reflected in this series.

Set in Numenor, "The Rings of Power" ambitiously prequels the 20-year-old "Lord of the Rings" trilogy, but it's decidedly tepid in its delivery. Not reaching the heights of the original Peter Jackson films, the series steals the set design and wardrobe queues from the original films with peculiar candor yet falter in every other aspect. They are monotone and do not take necessary risks. Now to be fair, any Amazon Prime series isn't going to hold a candle to a major motion picture from a Hollywood production company, even if it was released roughly 20 years ago in theaters everywhere.

The casting is clever but challenging to say the least. Like the original film trilogy, the characters are not portrayed by extremely well-known actors, at least starting out in the show. The inability to introduce a character's persona swells up into a serious problem because of this

anonymity. Fortunately, as the show goes on, you can weave together the



'The Lord of the Rings' returns in prequel series 'The Rings of Power.'/Ben Rothstein for Prime Video

personalities a bit better – it just takes too much time. The exposition in the show is so paltry it often does not plug these gaps in the narrative.

Throughout the series, elves superabound. The young Elrond character is particularly good, and Celebrimbor is not bad either. However, these elves talk in circles about elven family and elven politics. You are expected to Google to find out what they are referring to, which, to be fair, is often interesting.

Take the case of Earendil, Elrond's half-elf father who is never but is established from the beginning to have disappeared. They don't really explain that he was turned into a giant star in the sky by the Valar (gods), they just let you feel sorry for his son because his dad is either dead or missing. Google shouldn't be an active part of any viewing, but in this series the fandom is so massive and the lore so deep, it can only be necessary. This isn't a bad thing, it is quite good since it really is a loving compliment to the immense imagination and perfectionism of Tolkien's world-building.

There are some issues

the show's, which is hilarious considering the astronomical budget. I cannot decry the poor quality of the cinematography. While the lighting is appropriately fabulous, the angles and framing lend to an abysmally irresponsible shot selection. This, mind you, is throughout the five episodes that were altogether boring in their frequency of action and impossible in any ability to be clever for the many dialogue-heavy moments.

The problem is officially the lack of death or even thematic focus on it. The five episodes so far in the introductory season seem to hover around the idea of doom and devastation, but the destruction is never felt-imminent or actualized – it's merely a mirage the entire time.

Like a *deus ex machina*, the hero-of-the-moment is always saved by some side character or paternal figure or, nay I say, a divinely-inspired Eldar. This happens within the Southlander territory a lot. These people die more often than the Numenoreans because they were cursed for siding with Melkor, the never-been-filmed supervillain and evil

god from the First Age.

The death of the Numenoreans isn't a flavor we can fully taste, but only wonder upon from afar either. This is ironic considering that the island of Numenor (spoiler) is later utterly torn apart with genocidal consequences.

Repeat characters like Galadriel, Sauron, and Isildur are welcome. But, they are surprisingly sidelined in the wake of a self-important, machinating, small village that desires a kind of cheap, video game survival. Its characters aren't fundamentally interesting, yet we are exposed to their travails as though they were the continuation of the Hobbit's Bilbo, just in a different cloth of race on an entirely different continent yet still in the Tolkien world.

I had a hard time understanding how the characters became so racialized after many films have established the world as being predominantly white. The show doesn't miss any punches because more characters are racially ambiguous than in other Tolkien-inspired works. One tends to think the likelihood of diverse skin color is questionable in a world where the races aren't

ethnic but based rather on how powerful a sentient species is: elf, human, dwarf, hobbit. Yet, the very idea that skin color could vary between typically monocolored groups like the elves or the dwarves is quaint and somehow realistic. The notion that skin color changes like hair color is a powerful one in this series.

Without any illuminating qualities, the fails to pack the same wizardry punch the original trilogy knew so well. Maybe the showrunners and script writers should read less Tolkien's fairytales, and more John Milton's religious epics since he was someone who established the particular moral style Tolkien employs. Milton is essential to Tolkien, at least if "The Rings of Power" want to show naturalistic, pompous, and quasi-religious veins famous in Middle-Earth speech.



Excavating An Excavation, The Van Cortlandt's Legacy Collection

By Samia Afsar
Arts Editor

There's nothing quite like holding a piece of history in your hand. Researching and eternalizing material that once belonged to individuals who otherwise tend to be forgotten is less of a science, and perhaps truly an undervalued art. As part of an archaeological field school this summer, I, and a team of six other CUNY students investigated and immortalized remains uncovered by BC students at Van Cortlandt Park.

What I had failed to understand at the time was that this research, during a four-week course known as ANTH 3470, would quite literally change the trajectory of my life.

Brooklyn College Professor Arthur Bankoff and Frederick Winter conducted three separate excavations at Van Cortlandt Park during the early 1990s as part of their own summer archaeological field schools. During these field schools, Brooklyn College students were given the opportunity to learn archaeological methods and explore the Van Cortlandt property.

Located in the Bronx, Van Cortlandt Park was once Indigenous land which was later turned into farmland

by early Dutch colonial settlers until ultimately being passed down to the Van Cortlandt family. The archaeology of Van Cortlandt Park is especially rich when considering the property spans centuries of history, the majority of it pertaining to post-colonial settlements.

Initially, hoping to find evidence of some of the first indigenous inhabitants before the property became the Van Cortlandt's, Bankoff, Winter, and their students were able to uncover countless artifacts ranging from the 18th to 19th century. These included ceramics, glass, organic materials such as faunal remains and bones from a variety of different animals, leather shoes, and metal.

"There are probably some earlier pieces in the collection," Professor Kelly Britt, who led this summer's study of the excavation, told the Vanguard. "We haven't explored the whole collection yet, so I'm not quite sure what else is there."

Instead of working on a separate site to uncover our own artifacts, my field school, which consisted of Britt, six other students, and myself, worked on excavating the Van Cortlandt excavation. During the four-week-long program, we each selected



The 1990s excavation./East Lawn-Van Cortlandt Park Slides

an artifact and worked to investigate its history, essentially conducting research for the city.

"There are so many advantages to working with students, first and foremost, it's fun," said Britt. "[...] They [students] see things from different perspectives because history is really seen through the present, so when you're studying the past, you're really studying the present in many ways, and the students are able to bring so much different pieces of information to the table."

During our field school, we worked on researching three ceramic animal figurines; a silver spoon with the Van Cortlandt initials and its maker's mark engraved into

it; two glass bottles, one medicinal and the other used to store condiments; a butchered bovine rib; and oyster middens.

From the collection, Britt had two favorites she enjoyed studying. The first is a ceramic dalmatian figurine that was discovered to be a Staffordshire Dog, which usually came in a pair of two. These ceramic dogs were used as gifts and as decorative interior pieces that could often be seen on top of shelves, fireplaces, and on window sills. Some theories suggest that Staffordshire Dogs were used as a secret 'lover's language,' where women would display the figurines to communicate a message to their lover. If the dogs were displayed facing each other, it meant the woman's husband was out of town and that her lover could visit. If the dogs faced away from each, that signaled her husband was home.

The second and perhaps Britt's most favorite artifact was the engraved silver spoon since it provided a direct link to the Van Cortlandt's themselves.

"If you're thinking of a murder mystery board and you're connecting objects to people, with the spoon, you can actually put a string to a potential person," said Britt.

Considering that the Van Cortlandt artifacts are in

fact a legacy collection, Britt emphasized wanting to showcase how one does not need to perform an excavation in order to gain grand results.

"Legacy collections are awesome in the sense that you don't have to excavate in order to do really amazing research and find out really amazing things. You can do what we basically did and excavate an excavation. I think that's undervalued," said Britt. "I really like working with this collection, because we get to work directly with the city, with the archaeological repository, and the Van Cortlandt Museum itself. In many senses, we are helping them and they are helping us, and we get to work together on this much larger project."

Piecing together fragments of Van Cortlandt's history has become a passion for Britt that extends beyond processing and cataloging found artifacts. Though she offered the work done this summer for a separate class this fall semester, it was ultimately canceled due to low enrollment. However, Britt will be performing a mock dig on Thursday, Sept. 29, and will be offering similar courses alongside some new exciting additions in the near future.



Bottles excavated from the field school 1990-1992./Van Cortlandt Park Slides Box

'Riki-Oh': Righteous Violence And Action Cinema

By Shea Stevenson
Staff Writer

"Riki-Oh: Story of Riki," a 1991 Hong Kong film adaptation of a Japanese manga of the same name, boldly asks in an opening title crawl for the audience to imagine a capitalist hellscape in which prisons have become privatized. From an American perspective, this is almost a punchline in and of itself; state-level private prisons have been opening since 1986 and can be dated in the U.S.A. as far back as 1852. But this movie cares little about the history and politics of incarceration – it seems to think two things about private prisons:

1) Action scenes in prisons are badass.

2) People who run private prisons are evil (and may be the subject of righteous violence).

Because when it comes down to it, "Riki-Oh: The Story of Riki" is only interested in one thing: righteous violence, or violence towards someone deemed deserving of it thus removed from the ugly connotations of common brutality. It believes in righteous violence with such pure-hearted devotion that it almost amounts to thematic depth in a sagely blank clarity. Let me backtrack with some context.

My first encounter with "Riki-Oh" was on YouTube and surely too young. It was one of the hundreds of movies that swirled in the miasmatic canon of the late 1990s to early 2000s underground shock-cinema that became the backbone of many early internet subcultures, continuing the legacy of



'Riki-Oh: The Story of Ricky' shows righteous violence without guise like most action movies, Shea Stevenson opines./Tilt Magazine

the VHS-ripping scene. The movies that were passed around remained largely the same but now had a mythic quality to them; because the movies were so inaccessible, but their names were well known, reputations tended towards exaggerating what people had already heard and continued repeating.

I heard that "Riki-Oh" was the most excessively violent movie of all time. I still don't know if that's true – but if there was ever a test of those things, I'd be rooting for it. In mentions, it seemed to me to come with a "only watch if insane" caveat. Certainly a part of this was the then in vogue notion that Japanese media was particularly strange and perverted (a take that still haunts us) even though, as stated previously, the movie is from Hong Kong.

I come to you to say that if you can stand the sight of blood, you should

watch "Riki-Oh" even if you're not insane. Because the virtues of "Riki-Oh" are the virtues of all action cinema, and the vices of "Riki-Oh" are only in spurning disguises we've become too used to.

Action cinema has one unifying ingredient: righteous violence. Without violence, there is no action. If the violence is not righteous, we call it horror. But filmmakers, especially in Hollywood, seem embarrassed of this. They want us to indulge in righteous violence, otherwise why make an action movie? But they understand that to endorse it in narrative is uncouth to a modern audience. We're to understand that revenge is bad, that pacifism is good, and that we don't like murderers. So filmmakers introduce moral ambiguity, remove the blood, and punish characters for over-indulgence in violence.

I'm not about to tell you those things are bad. In fact, I happen to agree with most of it. The problem lies not in its morality, but in its philosophical clarity. Again: why make an action movie if you're not interested in righteous violence? If you're going to commit, commit!

"Riki-Oh: The Story of Riki" is not the best action movie, but it has a magnetic clarity of purpose. Instead of half-hearted mollifications that suggest "we're not hurting anyone that bad, it's ok," it focuses all of its power into invoking ultimate righteousness and unimaginable violence – becoming the final form of modern action cinema.

The titular Riki is as pure hearted as they come, and his adversaries are literally the overseers of a for-profit people-dungeon. When Riki punches something, his fist either goes through it or detonates it.

And when he does evict a guard's brain from their skull, he looks back into the past at all action cinema and asks, "Am I not your son? Is this not what you feigned but never had the courage to grasp?" Do what you will, we come to the action movie to see heads roll. And I think that's cool.

Its complete commitment to its own bit makes "Riki-Oh" worth your time in 2022. There has never been a movie like it, and no imitators reach its heights. For those among you attuned to internet scavenging, "Riki-Oh" is available online if you know how to seek it. Without an in-print physical release in America at time of publishing, it goes against its legacy for me to recommend you rent it for streaming. Find it or don't. As Riki teaches us, the only sin is lack of commitment.

Opinion: The GRE Is A Game. Are We Surprised?

By Michela Arlia
Managing Editor

130-170. Those are the magic numbers to score on the graduate record examination, also known as the bane of my existence for the last two months of my life. It occurred to me that most people have never heard of the GRE, yet simultaneously, I have never not heard of it. The GRE is another standardized test to measure basic skills on a difficult level, only adding to the stressors that the application season naturally brings.

While applying to graduate schools, I crossed my fingers, toes, and eyes that the exemption of the GRE scores due to the pandemic would extend one more year, but I was one unlucky camper. I knew I had to crack down leading up to the exam, and bought a test prep book thicker than a Miriam Webster. I worked on it daily, completing problem after problem, being as confused with words I have never heard in my life. My intention was to take this exam once and only once.

Growing up, I highly disagreed with standardized tests and all they stand for. A product of the public school

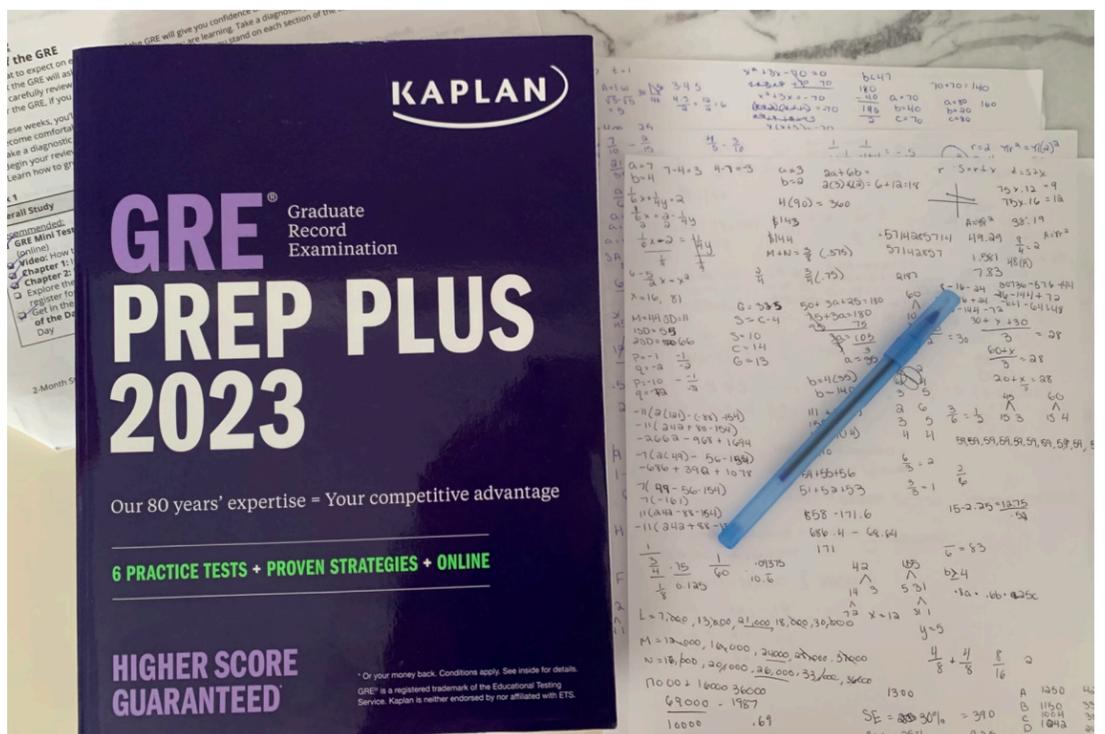
system, from elementary through high school, I took state tests, regents, and even the SAT, but still to this day never felt it helped me in any way.

Throughout my process of attending open houses for programs over the past year, I had a program director say to me, "tell me your annual income and I'll tell you your GRE score." And that has been the best summarization of standardized tests if I've ever heard one.

Now let's talk about how much these tests measure. The answer - nada.

These examinations have never seemed fair, as we begin in the younger grades with school becoming a job of teaching to align with a test instead of a solid knowledge base. It creates pressures and anxieties in young children that can then manifest into bigger problems as we grow up. The funniest part about these tests is that New York is one of two states that still administers state exams and regents, so the scores will never translate to anything in other states as there is no equivalent. As students, we have learned to obsess over these scores, allowing them to define us.

Applying to undergrad was a hassle in itself with the



Test prep from months of GRE studying /Michela Arlia

SAT, as my classmates would take the exam multiple times and pour themselves over test prep, but there's a secret to all of this.

Something that people don't realize, especially with the GRE, is that the test is designed as a game. An impossible game at that, where one of the hardest things to do is to take it twice and get a higher score the second time.

If anything, these exams for college admission exist for the sole purpose of test prep moguls like Kaplan and Princeton Review to gain a few extra bucks, and testing agencies such as Collegeboard and ETS

to collect from desperate students wishing to put their best foot forward to land their dream schools.

If it's one thing I've learned from going through my second round of major applications to higher education, it's that no one cares as much as you think they do. The process itself is synonymous with chance and gambling, for no set of personal standards can guarantee admission.

By all means, this is not an argument for purposely flunking these exams, but at the same time, hopefully it is serving as a reminder that the test isn't everything. Let your true self shine in

application aspects like your personal statements and letters of recommendations (pick people you trust)!

There will be people who will read this and will think I'm hypocritical or say "I told you so." I apologize to those people now. I am still learning, and my realization is better late than never.

Am I happy with my scores? No, not really. But will I be taking this again, putting myself through the agony? Also no. I've accepted that it is what it is, and I hope that the admissions gods are on my side this winter. seasons passed, they missed the mark.

Vanguard Gazette

by Nitu Farhin



VANGUARD GAZETTE

Nitu Farhin

BC Sports Recap (Sept. 20 – Sept. 25)

Men's Soccer Still Searches For First Season One

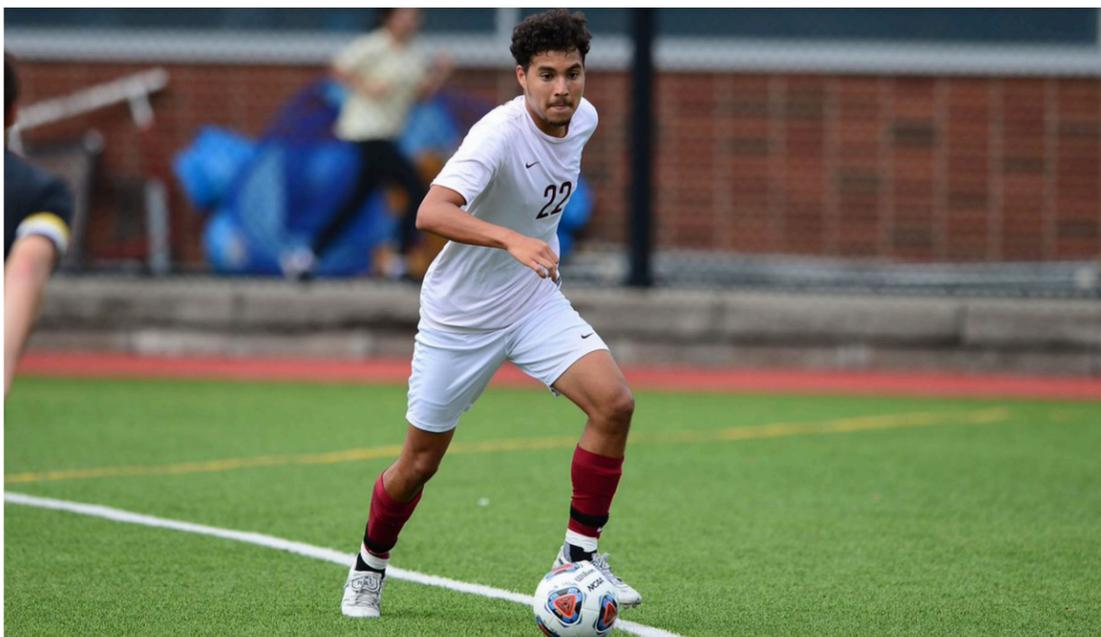
By Owen Russell
Sports Editor

The Brooklyn College men's soccer team still searches for its first win of the season after coming up short against St. Elizabeth's College on Sept. 21.

The Bulldogs marched into Wednesday's matchup carrying a four game losing streak. Despite every intention of righting the ship, Brooklyn got off to an unfortunate start. St. Elizabeth scored within the first two minutes. Brooklyn

allowed two more goals, before finally putting in one of their own. Freshman Danny Torrentes scored in the 53rd minute. A fourth and final goal from St. Elizabeth served as the nail in Brooklyn's coffin. The Bulldogs were unable to keep pace, and suffered their seventh loss of the season.

While the season has not been ideal so far, Brooklyn has a second chance to catch momentum on Sept. 28 against Lehman College; Brooklyn's first CUNYAC action of the season.



Courtesy of BC Athletics

Women's Soccer Continues Winless

By Owen Russell
Sports Editor

The women's soccer team remains winless after falling at home against the Pratt Institute on Sept. 21.

Brooklyn started strong against the Cannoneers. After allowing Pratt the first goal during the 11th minute, Brooklyn responded with one of their own in the 15th minute. Senior Rachel Gomez capitalized on a penalty kick for the Bulldogs. The two teams remained tied for 15 minutes until Pratt

notched a second goal in the 30th minute. The visitors followed that up with a third goal seven minutes later, and a final goal during the second half. Brooklyn never caught back up. The Bulldogs surrendered three unanswered scores on the way to their sixth straight defeat.

The Bulldogs still have more than half a season to make up for their shaky start. Their next opportunity comes Sept. 28 against Old Westbury.



Women's soccer fell to Pratt on Sept. 21./BC Athletics

Men's Cross Country Slimly Escapes Last Place

By Owen Russell
Sports Editor

The men's cross country team experienced its first taste of team competition on Sept. 25 at the Mount St. Mary Invitational.

Brooklyn fielded a full five person team after failing to do so in their previous meet. Brooklyn placed 13th overall in a field of 14 teams. Freshman Kevin McCarthy led the charge for the Bulldogs, finishing

first for the team and 90th overall. Freshman Wali Mohammad placed second for the team, and 93rd overall. The team narrowly escaped last place, finishing one point above Vaughn College, with a final score of 359. CUNYAC rivals CCNY, Queensborough, and Baruch all ranked higher than the Bulldogs. US Maritime won the meet with a score of 32 (low score wins).



The Bulldogs competed at Mount St. Mary Invitational./BC Athletics

BC Sports Recap (Sept. 20 – Sept. 25)

Women's Volleyball Ends Winning Streak In Hoboken

By Gabriela Flores
Editor-In-Chief

Women's volleyball was on a winning streak after beating Pratt Institute on Saturday, Sept. 17. But that changed once Brooklyn began their Stevens tri-match against Manhattanville and Stevens a week later.

The team racked up wins in their St. Joseph's Long Island tri-match, making splashes across the games. Against Rutgers-Newark, Brooklyn started on the right foot, leading the first set 25-18 on Tuesday, Sept. 20. Outside hitter Tessa Winkleman led the Bulldogs with 11 kills and nine digs. The matchup ended with Brooklyn winning 3-1 against the Scarlet Raiders, who were only able to secure 30 kills against the Bulldog's 41.

Brooklyn continued the momentum against Farmingdale on Thursday, Sept. 22. Kicking off the first set, the Bulldogs led 10-5, closing with 25-18 at the Rams' disadvantage. The third set, however, belonged to the Rams, who won 25-17. The two teams were cutting it close in the fourth and final match, but Aleah Rafat, a BC outside hitter, had other plans. Landing back-to-back kills, Rafat closed the eventful matchup 25-22, with Brooklyn claiming their third win in a row.

Things looked bright for the CUNYAC champions, but that changed when they headed to Hoboken. In their first matchup of the Stevens tri-match, the Bulldogs lost to Manhattanville's Valiants on Saturday, Sept. 24. Off the jump, the Valiants won

the first match 25-14, with the Bulldogs responding back with a 4-0 in the second set. Manhattanville didn't let the Bulldogs shine for long, though. The game ended 3-0 in Manhattanville's favor, ending Brooklyn's winning streak.

Later in the day, the Bulldogs fell 3-0 to their host, Stevens Institute of Technology. The Ducks led command throughout the three sets, letting the Bulldogs land their fifth non-conference loss for the season so far.

Brooklyn looks to regain its footing in their next match against Maritime College on Monday, Sept. 26.



Win streak ends with Manhattanville for women's volleyball./BC Athletics

Women's Tennis Looks High And Low For First Win

By Gabriela Flores
Editor-In-Chief

The women's tennis team is still searching for their first win of the season.

The Bulldogs opened their CUNYAC conference play against Baruch on Thursday, Sept. 22. Brooklyn's performance didn't see the light of a winning day, losing 0-9 against Baruch. BC's Marah Mustafa and Rebecca Finney scored the team's highest in doubles.

Their four points, however, were no match against their Baruch opponents who landed eight. Finney also led in Brooklyn's singles play with two points, but her competitor, Keila Pagan from Baruch, responded with a total of 12.

The losses continued at St. Joseph's Long Island on Sunday, Sept. 25, where Bulldogs dropped their fourth non-conference game. Players Veronika Tsiko and Monica Prado Capon led the team in

doubles with four, but their scores did not suffice against their Golden Eagles opponents who scored eight. Tsiko was the only Bulldog to put up a three-set fight in singles against her opponent. Though some played close on occasion, their efforts weren't enough for a win.

Women's tennis matchup will be at home against visitors Farmingdale State on Thursday, Sept. 29.



Women's tennis losses fourth non-conference match on Sept. 25./BC Athletics

Women's Cross Country Finishes Last

By Owen Russell
Sports Editor

The women's cross country team participated in its first team competition of the season on Sept. 25 as

part of the Mount St. Mary Invitational.

The Bulldogs finished 12th overall, failing to escape last place. Junior Lori Tsang crossed the line first for Brooklyn. She finished

with a time of 42:57 for six kilometers, placing 68th out of 90 competitors. The rest of the Bulldogs came in 83rd, 87th, 88th, and 89th respectively, rounding out Brooklyn's score to 322.

St. Joseph's – Long Island won the meet with 54 points. Brooklyn finished below Baruch, CCNY, and Queens College in their first encounter of the season.

Both the men's and women's

cross country teams will race again on Sunday, Oct. 2 at the Queensborough CC invitational.

Mets And Yankees March Towards Playoffs. Where Do They Stand?

By Owen Russell
Sports Editor

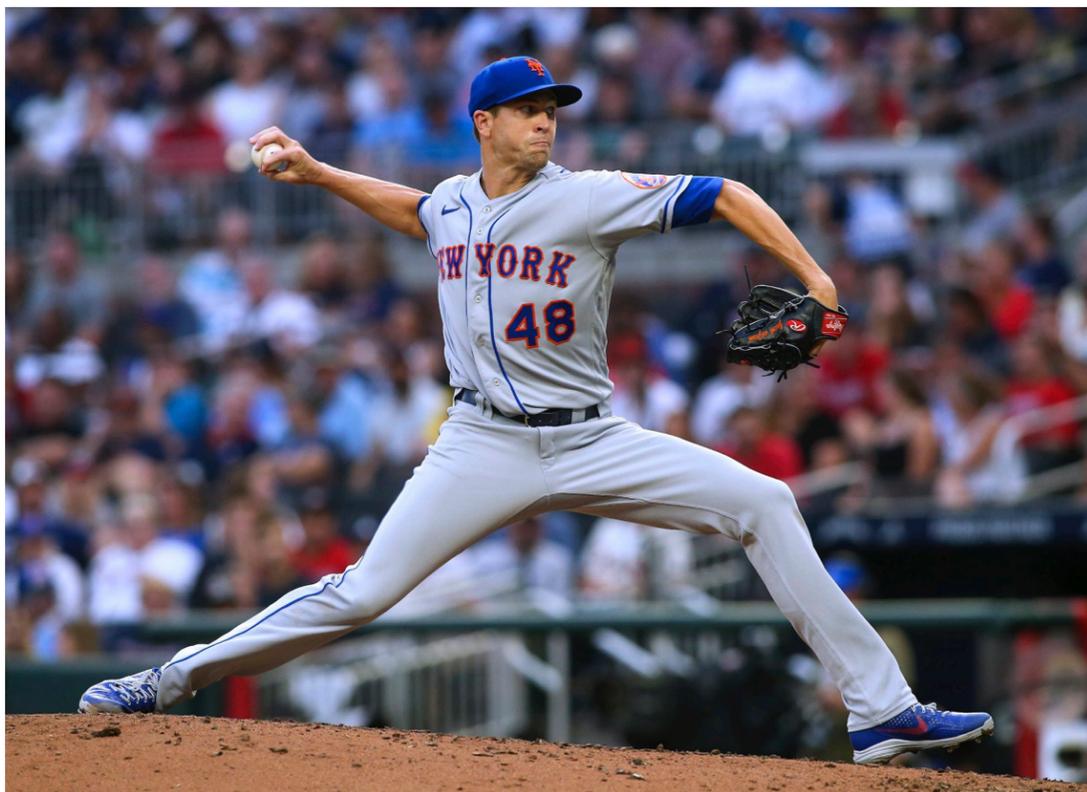
New York is a baseball city. Dating back to the early days of the sport, New York is steeped in Baseball history. With Babe Ruth breaking home run records, or Jackie Robinson breaking the sport's color barrier, baseball has thrived in the Big Apple. Even after the Giants and Dodgers' exodus in the mid 1950s, New York baseball continued to grow on the backs of the Yankees and Mets. Now for the first time since 2015, both New York baseball teams will play postseason ball.

That was a heartbreaking year for New York baseball fans, regardless of affiliation. The Bronx Bombers suffered a sweep in the AL Wild Card to the burgeoning Houston Astros. In Queens, the Mets came so close to their first World Series trophy since 1986 they could damn near taste it. However, highlighted by a late collapse from former ace Matt Harvey, the Mets came up just short to the

improbable Kansas City Royals. Seven years later, the two New York titans both hope to avoid a repeat of 2015.

The Yankees head into October as perhaps the most perplexing story in baseball. Die-hard and casual fans alike are following Aaron Judge on his quest to break the American League home run record that was originally set by Yankee legend Roger Maris in 1961. As of writing this, Judge sits one home run shy of tying Maris with 60 home runs. However, Judge is not just a boom or bust hitter. The Yankees' outfielder currently leads the American League in Batting Average, RBIs, as well as Home Runs. If Judge were to close out the year still in the lead, he would be only the second player since 1967 to do so.

But while Judge swats his way into the history books with each at-bat, the Yankees continue to cause fans chest pain and headaches. The team's second half of the season has given many fans whiplash, as the team yo-yos between dominance



Mets' Jacob deGrom./Associated Press

and the dumpster. Over the past 10 games, New York has gone 8-2, but you couldn't tell from the turmoil surrounding baseball's most storied franchise. The Yankees' pitching staff has cooled down at the worst possible time. Gerrit Cole has given up the second most home runs in baseball. Midseason addition, Frankie Montas, went from uninspiring to unavailable with a right shoulder injury. And now, according to the New York Post, the team is considering parting ways with the once spectacular closer, Aroldis Chapman. It'll take more than home runs for the Yankees to survive October, so the pitching needs to step up.

Now the Mets may be a different story. Queens' favorite team came into the season with lofty expectations after acquiring multiple key players during free agency, none more noteworthy than three time CY Young award winner Max Scherzer. Prodigal owner Steve Cohen has built the Mets roster by spending the second most money in

baseball, and so far it seems to be working. The Mets boast the third best record in baseball, and march into October as a viable contender for the first time in nearly a decade.

If there is anything standing in the way of the New York Mets it may be the stiff competition heading their way come playoff time. As of now, the Mets would earn a first round bye, and play either the Atlanta Braves or the San Diego Padres in the NLDS. But nothing is guaranteed. The Mets have yet to clinch the NL East, as they cling on to a 1.5 game lead over the Braves. Atlanta has proven to be a thorn in the Mets' side this season. The Mets have beaten the defending World Series champions nine times and lost seven. In their last series against each other, the Mets won only once and lost three times. Now with the season winding down, the Braves just won't go away. The two teams have one final three game series left starting Sept. 30. Those three games just might decide which

team earns the first round bye, and which team must survive the Wild Card.

The Mets' pitching staff has been solid this season, earning the third best ERA in baseball, but the team still needs to be careful. Their two aces, Scherzer and Jacob Degrom, have missed significant time this season. If either of those two were to go down in the playoffs, it could prove the lowly Mets flew too close to the sun yet again.

If the planets align, and the baseball gods cave to the prayers of New Yorkers past or present, then New York City may be headed to a Mets-Yankees World Series. Last time that happened, Derek Jeter led the Yankees to their third straight World Series victory. Both teams have shown this season that they can dominate lesser competition, be it through the long ball, or the fastball. Neither team is guaranteed a spot in the Fall Classic, but it could be an exciting postseason for either team.



Yankees' Aaron Judge./Getty Images