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**THE BROOKLYN COLLEGE**

# **VANGUARD**

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Wednesday, March 29th

# GAME ON



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**CLUB HOURS**

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

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# Students 'Rage Against Midterms' On West Quad



The event's set-up table with plates, markers, and face covers./  
*Gabriela Flores*

By Michela Arlia  
*Managing Editor*

Reporting Assistance By  
Gabriela Flores  
*Editor-in-Chief*

The West Quad became a place to let off steam as the Undergraduate Student Government held a "Rage Against Midterms" event on Tuesday, Mar. 21. During common hours, students were encouraged to let out all midterm season frustrations in the best way possible – by breaking plates.

The event was originally scheduled for Mar. 14, but pushed back a week later due to weather. USG hired a

mobile rage room company called "Smash" to come to campus. After signing a waiver, students were able to pick up a ceramic plate, write a message, and smash it to the floor.

"The main point is to throw a plate so, take your anger out of throwing a plate," said USG Senator Fouad Altaffi.

Students passing by on the quad stopped in for a quick relief session, walking away both excited and relaxed. For a BC student named Kaitie, who did not want to share her last name, it was a relief to write things down and rage against all negativity around her including bad grades.

"I think it's amazing. I think

like its fun and people can really get their anger out," she said.

The idea for the event was first thought of by Graduate Student Organization President Louis Di Meglio, with USG organizers planning the final details in December 2022.

"I was like oh it's a different event, we haven't done an event like this on campus ever, so it was like, we always have you know the regular movie night or something like that," said Mariam Alex, USG's events director. "Also, although we're all burnt out and tired, and have a lot of rage against a lot of issues going on, whether it's in school or outside, so I just thought it would be a cool

event." Alex commented not having to be as stressed with event planning as she was last semester, noting she was pleased with the turnout and positive feedback from students on campus for this event.

"I'm excited for the end of the year, I'm excited for the rest of our events. I love seeing the campus come back to life, today is such a beautiful day," said Alex.

USG plans to host more events in the coming weeks and months leading up to the end of the semester, including the second annual Grand Iftar dinner, a carnival in May, movie nights, and even a puppy therapy event during finals week.



Students threw their plates into a tent./*Gabriela Flores*

## Upcoming Events On Campus (Mar. 29 to Apr. 18)

**Wednesday, March 29th**  
Bake Sale with Graduate Speech-Languard Hearing Organization  
Whitehead Breezeway, 11AM.

Cosplay and Korean Fashion Show with Anime and Manga Club  
Student Center – Occidental Lounge (5th Floor), 12 PM.

**Children Literature and Latinx Diaspora**  
Woody Tanger Auditorium, BC Library, 4:30 PM to 6 PM.

**CSU n Out Night with Caribbean Student Union**  
Student Center – Bedford Lounge (2nd Floor), 6 PM.

**Friday, March 31st**  
Next Year In Jerusalem, Shabbat Dinner with United For Israel  
Tanger Hillel, 7:15 PM.

**Tuesday, April 1st**  
Spring Fundraiser Bake Sale with Children First Club  
Whitehead Hall Breezeway, 12:30 PM.

**Exploring Philosophical Psychology with Philosophy Society**  
Philosophy Department Seminar Room (Boylan, 3rd Floor), 12:30 PM.

**Silent Fete with Caribbean Student Union**  
Student Center – Penthouse (7th Floor), 6 PM.

**Wednesday, April 5th - Thursday, April 13th**  
Spring Recess at Brooklyn College

**Thursday, April 18th**  
Publication Event with Stuck In The Library  
Student Center – Penthouse (7th Floor), 12:15 PM.

**Got an event?**  
Send calendar listings to [TheBCVanguard@gmail.com](mailto:TheBCVanguard@gmail.com).  
Events should be sent at least one week prior.

# NYPIRG Hosts Student Empowerment Conference, Invites AG Letitia James

By Gabriela Flores  
Editor-in-Chief

In its annual conference to encourage members and their respective causes, the New York Public Interest Research Group hosted virtual panels for CUNY and SUNY students last Friday, Mar. 24. Past and present NYPIRG leaders discussed their roles pertinent to bettering civic, social, and environmental issues. The state's Attorney General Letitia James kicked off the event, answering questions from Queens College and SUNY New Paltz student journalists.

"We're excited to continue the groundwork and continue working with you and others across the state to protect the public interest," said Sadiya Hoque, Brooklyn College student and chairperson of NYPIRG's student board of directors, during the event to James.

Coming days before Governor Kathy Hochul's executive state budget finalizes on Apr. 1, the annual event highlighted issues pertinent to student activists. The afternoon was divided into three sections, with Attorney General James first sharing how she addresses climate change, to the challenges she has undergone in holding exploitative corporations accountable. During her career in politics, James has become the first in several roles, including the first African-American and woman to hold the attorney general seat. Since 2018, James and her office removed



Panelists discussed their careers rooted in public interest. / @NYPIRGofficial via YouTube

more than 4,000 guns from NY communities, protected tenants from exploitative landlords, including through the state's lead-based paint laws, and defended the continuation of DACA in the Supreme Court, among other accomplishments, according to Hoque.

James discussed her latest efforts in canceling student loan debt. In helping thousands of New Yorkers whose student loan debts were mismanaged by the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency, James helped to implement an agreement that led the company to identify errors that cost borrowers loan forgiveness or lower monthly payments. In supporting President Joe Biden's push to cancel student debts in the wake of COVID-19, James has also pushed on the state level to end a law that charges a 22% fee on outstanding student debts owed to New York State.

"I hope to continue to work with all young people in this coalition, obviously to make that

vision a reality and to continue focusing on student debt, canceling student debt in this nation," James said, noting earlier that student loan cancellation could lead to "one of the most impactful economic justice initiative in history."

Following James' appearance, NYPIRG alums hailing from alma maters around New York discussed their work and commitment to public interest on a panel. For most panelists, becoming an attorney enabled them to implement fundamental changes to systemic issues they addressed prior to launching their careers.

"I still fight for the things that I believe in, I just have more tools at my disposal than I did before," said Melanie Prasad, legal director of Jobs To Move America, while explaining what led her to become an attorney. With their days in canvassing or protests against tuition hikes and other concerns, panelists shared their upbringings as student activists with NYPIRG. In continuing to make strides in

NYPIRG, Statewide Outreach Manager Gabrielle Alper shared that her daily motivation is rooted in her work connecting, discussing, and effectively persuading constituents for a common cause.

"The thing that motivates me more day-to-day is thinking about essentially the exponential impact of talking with people one on one, and knowing that me and all my colleagues talk to a bunch of people," Alper said.

For other panelists, bringing concerns and stories of constituents to elected officials, while actively working to address them through the legislature, has been a fulfilling component of their career. Each emphasized the importance of appreciating big and small wins despite any significant losses to campaigns or other plans.

"When you get to pass legislation that is then signed into law, there's really nothing like it. It is so satisfying when you do that," said Liz Moran, NY public advocate for

Earth Justice, who noted the importance of having "an entire life" outside of one's passion for legal public work.

In growing as communicators through NYPIRG, the panelists learned to execute their message for addressing public issues effectively and pivot topics to better connect with communities, elected officials, and colleagues. Despite the challenges they encounter daily in their respective roles, the panelists encouraged student activists to remain persistent through their campaign work and beyond.

"I would say that setbacks really are growth, and it's like strength training - so to speak. You use your setbacks as a tool for learning," said Michael Hernandez, NY policy director for Rewiring America.

The conference concluded with breakout rooms that focused on NYPIRG's ongoing efforts pertinent to higher education, the environment, and healthcare.

# SJP, PRA Recognize Interconnected Struggles Between Palestine And Puerto Rico



SJP and PRA organizers with Professor Conor Tomás Reed./Jason Lin

By Jason Lin  
Staff Writer

Reporting Assistance By  
Serin Sarsour  
Features Editor

Brooklyn College's Students for Justice in Palestine and the Puerto Rican Alliance hosted a panel last Tuesday about the interconnected struggles shared with Palestine and Puerto Rico. Together, they invited Professor Conor Tomás Reed, a scholar-organizer of radical cultural movements at CUNY, the 2022-2023 Postdoctoral Fellow in Social Justice in Higher Education at the CUNY Graduate Center, and a Puerto Rican professor at BC, to support and talk more to the audience about situations happening with both groups.

"The motivation behind hosting this event was to express solidarity with our brothers and sisters in other struggles," said Jihad Hasan, a senior at BC who is the secretary for SJP. "Internationalism is a key component of

Palestinian liberation, so the liberation of Puerto Rico against American imperialism is essential to us."

SJP and PRA acknowledged similar obstacles their communities face, with both hoping to raise awareness to students of similar or different backgrounds to take action on the oppression of the past and present.

SJP, a community club on campus, is built on democratic principles to raise awareness about the human rights violations committed by Israel against the Palestinian people and build solidarity with the Palestinian struggle for human rights, justice, liberation, and self-determination.

PRA is an alliance devoted to advancing Puerto Ricans and other Latinos through educational, cultural, and political awareness. They dedicate concrete services for students that will embrace their personal and academic experiences at Brooklyn College. Together, the clubs

brought to life their long-awaited collaboration.

"SJP's former president told us that Professor Conor Tomás Reed was willing to be a guest speaker for any events we'd have in the future. Right away, we reached out to PRA and Professor Conor and started planning," said Laila Mazhar, the president of SJP. "Each club prepared their own slides with background information on the struggle against colonialism, and then Professor Conor presented his slides."

The presentation captured and informed the audience about the solidarity and anti-colonialism struggles within Palestinian and Puerto Rican communities. Both share goals in the fight against oppressive forces, and have similar experiences with losing countless lands, resources, and autonomy. Palestinians' efforts for independence have been met with human rights violations and restricted access to necessities. Puerto Rico has faced

discrimination, economic exploitation, and limited political power by being claimed as a colony by the US for a century. As a result, the fight against the oppression of colonialism remains a massive topic today, with activists pursuing justice and liberation.

**“It is important that we engage and connect because it helps raise awareness...”**

"The event started with the SJP explaining colonialism in Palestine, followed by the PRA explaining internationalism and colonialism in Puerto Rico," said Hasan. "Professor Conor Tomás Reed then took the stage and explained how organized both movements in NY and

how both movements resisted colonialism in their home country against the colonial powers."

Professor Reed also helped students gain recognition for the progress and desired goal of the countless protests that have gone through in CUNY and the US. For many of the organizers and attendees, the event enabled them to contextualize the thread that connects Palestine and Puerto Rico.

"It allowed us to see from a different perspective how interconnected our struggles are. Anti-colonialism, anti-imperialism, and anti-capitalism were the unifying themes that I thought helped us guide our collective struggles," said Abdullah Saleh, a senior at BC.

Through discussions over lunch provided by the hosts, students were able to further delve into conversations that impact their communities on campus and beyond.

"It shows us as college students that it is important to be engaged and we interact with various communities from doesn't matter where you come from [...]," said BC senior Fehim Hoti. "It is important that we engage and connect because it helps raise awareness and it helps spread the word to implement justice."

After the presentation, Reed, SJP, and PRA allotted the remaining time for audience members to promote events, comment on the overall presentation, or ask questions. Towards the end, participants discussed and shared their ideas pertinent to the Palestinian and Puerto Rican communities within BC.

# Phi Sigma Chi Hosts Dinner Honoring Women Student Leaders

By Gabriela Flores  
Editor-in-Chief

Reporting Assistance By  
Michela Arlia  
Managing Editor

Women leaders and their efforts can oftentimes be overlooked. But for the brothers of Phi Sigma Chi fraternity, recognizing women leaders through their annual Women's Appreciation Dinner is one of the many ways that they aim to continue supporting campus diversity and inclusion among their peers. This year's event also marked the tradition's return to campus after the pandemic shutdown.

"We try to make sure we're encompassing every community within our campus body, and making sure that they're honored and respected," said Mohammad Tusar, the fraternity's vice president. "It's a necessity for us to do this because we see this as a way to honor the women that help us out the most on campus."

During the dinner last Wednesday, Mar. 22, guests celebrated 20 recipients who were awarded for their commitment to diversity and inclusion, as well as their leadership in civic engagement. The night saw students enjoy poetry, beats from Brooklyn College alum DJ Beko, and performances from Phinasty, the fraternity's national stroll team that performs to a mix of musical genres. Among those honored were administrators from the Student Activities, Involvement, and Leadership Center, including Renée Straker and Da'Nashja Davis, who helped organize the evening. Women leaders from the Caribbean Student Union, Black History Month



Some participants posing after the dinner./Siegfried

Committee, Desi Club, and other organizations, were also applauded for their contributions. For several honorees, getting the chance to be visibly appreciated for their efforts became one of their most meaningful accomplishments as student leaders.

"I think it's beautiful to see fraternities and male groups acknowledge and respect women for who they are and what they do, especially the women who surround them on campus," said Women of Color President Ariscelys Turay, who was awarded at the event. "I have a good relationship with the brothers of Phi Sigma Chi, so this felt extra special."

On the note of women empowerment, the fraternity's president, Zyeem Nazir, gave a keynote address recognizing historic women freedom fighters. Nazir commended women's immense contributions throughout his speech while discussing the inequities they face. He highlighted the importance of giving women the seats they deserve at every table.

For Tusar, not only were Nazir's words impactful, but so too was his ability to stand before an audience to deliver his thoughts as a graduating senior, who initially was an introverted freshman.

"Four years later now, at our senior event, he's the one giving the keynote and having the courage to deliver such a profound message about women's empowerment and the inequities that women have faced. Him being my brother, that was one of my favorite moments of the night," said Tusar.

One of the night's most memorable components was undoubtedly the food, according to many who attended. From chicken parmesan to salmon teriyaki, students feasted and heard poems about women empowerment by Myraklez Foster, a poet and member of the fraternity's sister sorority Delta Sigma Chi. For the awardees, appreciating women is especially important given the odds they defy.

"It makes me happy that women who are working hard are finally getting

recognized," said Ziria Gaither, vice president of BC's Alpha Epsilon Phi sorority. "We're a CUNY campus, we're small, but we still have some type of support and recognition."

Being the leaders they are, those awarded will continue their work for the community. For Gaither's sorority specifically, members aim to keep expanding diversity and inclusion on campus. Being founded by seven Jewish women who were excluded from other sororities due to their religion, the chapter's sisters today hope to continue growing a rich cohort of members that hail from different backgrounds. To Belia Rodriguez, AEPHI's president, leading such a mission as a Queer, immigrant, Latina student has taught her valuable insights.

"Like I said, I'm an immigrant, so I was born and raised in a place where everyone pretty much believed in the same thing and they acted the same way, so coming to New York City and being able to lead an organization

like that has really made a difference on me because I've learned from them as well," said Rodriguez, who was awarded at the dinner.

As for Women of Color, keeping the momentum built from their graduating president, who'll be passing the torch this May, will remain one of their active responsibilities moving forward as women student leaders.

"I think my biggest accomplishment this year was being on the e-board for WOC, and I'm so glad I did it," said Rhema Mills, the club's treasurer and secretary. "[...] Just being able to help plan these events and see the turnout has not only helped my own organization but it's really improved my teamwork. At the end of the day, Ari and I are a team and I'm honored to work with her."

Before closing out this spring, Phi Sigma Chi is set to carry on its traditional collaboration with WOC in Battle of the Sexes, where students can have discourse on relationships and other buzzing topics.

# BC Spotlight: NABA's Jessica Vaivao, A Budding Business Leader



*Courtesy of Jessica Vaivao*

By Serin Sarsour  
Features Editor

As an up-and-coming leader in the business world, Brooklyn College student Jessica Vaivao is starting the foundation of her career on campus. In doing so, she uplifts her peers and communities as president of the National Association of Black Accountants, carrying on the independence and leadership skills she first gained at a young age.

"I had a lot of curiosity," Vaivao told *The Vanguard*. "I was told 'to not try, but instead do,' and that rings in my head whenever I want to make an impact for my community."

As president of NABA, Vaivao aims to help underrepresented and marginalized communities at BC make names for themselves in the business

field. This passion blossomed throughout the COVID-19 pandemic after Vaivao witnessed first-hand the significant difference between the financial status of Black, indigenous, and people of color communities and that of their white counterparts. This surreal awakening for Vaivao inspired her to get involved in her community and help those in need, starting with a non-profit her friends founded called Bushwick's Art.

"[...] We essentially donated food to people, had leisure and creativity events to help BIPOC individuals' mental health needs, and supported BIPOC artists in low-income neighborhoods and assisted in helping them earn something to get by, just to make it easier on them," said Vaivao, noting that NABA

is an extension of the work she participated in during the pandemic.

Many NABA members have gone on to get

**“I was told ‘to not try, but instead do,’ and that rings in my head...**

accepted into internships and jobs working for successful companies and accounting firms, including “the big four”: Deloitte, PwC, EY, and KPMG. However, without Vaivao having the initiative to become club president after COVID-19 had shut the club and everything else down, NABA may not exist today.

“NABA has taught me the

importance of not letting the fear of failure control you, and that it's okay to branch out and break a bubble that had been set from systemic oppression,” Vaivao said. “We're taught that failure should be avoided. However, failure is a natural thing in life and a learning lesson to be had so it won't happen again.”

Besides being at the forefront of NABA's operations, Vaivao is majoring in business administration under management. Vaivao realized early on that she was good at managing and assisting others. In further developing her skills and knowledge of the industry, she actively picks up tips she could apply to her own business and network. Vaivao's knack and passion for business are rooted in her upbringing with several relatives working in the field, from her grandmother who has been an accountant since 1979 and is now an associate director at UBS, to her uncle being one of the senior managers for BlackRock.

Vaivao even kick-started her own small business in 2020 called Mushi Mu's Artiso, named after her nickname Mushi, where she mainly sold handmade paintings, pins, bookmarks, and stickers. She created this business as a way to deal with trauma and grow as an individual after escaping from a toxic relationship. As a physical vendor, she traveled around NYC to attend gallery showcases and vendor markets. Since she was able to meet so many different people and make new connections while doing this, she was given the opportunity to become a modeling agency manager and a manager for

a non-profit organization. Although her business has been on hiatus since 2022, Vaivao hopes to eventually reestablish it after she graduates with newfound knowledge of the business world.

For 12 years of her life, she attended Catholic school, where she played badminton and did debate for eight years, among other endeavors. Vaivao described her childhood as “fulfilling” despite the bad as she was always doing something.

Now at 20 years old, Vaivao's main career goal is to become a chief operating officer since assisting a body or company in their operations is her strong suit. Though, she wouldn't be opposed to pursuing a career in human resources, public affairs, insurance, or consulting.

“I'll have a good career and I'll be okay with not living an extravagant lifestyle, I just want a fulfilling life,” she said, noting that she also wants to be a mother and a wife one day, as well as continue to support her community in whatever way she can.

Painting and drawing are some of Vaivao's favorite hobbies, especially when she is stressed out. She's the type of person whose mind is always on “go mode” even during calm, quiet moments after painting or drawing something.

“It's just a nice feeling to organize an excel sheet, or plan my future into steps to create a better financial future for myself,” said Vaivao. “It helps me feel productive and makes me feel like my daydreams are more attainable. If they feel more attainable, I won't let anything stop me from getting what I want.”

# 'The Whale' Delivers Self-Destruction And Redemption

By Samia Afsar  
Arts Editor

Trapped in the four walls of Darren Aronofsky's "The Whale" (2022) are shame, guilt, loss, and two meatball subs with extra cheese.

Based on the award-winning play written by Samuel D. Hunter under the same name, Aronofsky's drama follows, or rather sits at home with, college writing instructor Charlie (Brendan Fraser) as he suffers from an eating disorder that has left him at 600 pounds. With his health deteriorating, Charlie makes one final attempt to reconcile his relationship with his brusque 17-year-old daughter Ellie (Sadie Sink), as he confronts buried trauma and reignites lost love.

In his film, Aronofsky, alongside his director of photography Matthew Libatique, confines audience members to the four walls of Charlie's apartment where the entirety of the almost two-hour film is shot.

Sure, there are one

or two exceptions with somber exterior shots of his Idaho apartment as a much-needed breath of fresh air. Still, "The Whale" serves as an ode to claustrophobia as Charlie's apartment is often crowded with either his friend and caretaker Liz (Hong Chau) or the Evangelical Christian missionary Thomas (Ty Simpkins). The film's intense dialogue over sexuality, suicide, addiction, and religion even imprisons viewers to the mortification that has led to Charlie's isolation.

As captivating and impacting as its story is, Fraser truly stole the show with a hauntingly stellar performance that ultimately nabbed him the Academy Award for Best Actor in a Leading Role at this year's Oscars.

Through each wheeze, each painfully fulfilling bite of food, to every plea for forgiveness – and all while wearing a 300 lbs fat suit – Fraser undoubtedly proved himself worthy of the Academy Award, and social media users were quick to applaud his



Brendan Fraser delivers a stellar performance in "The Whale." / Good Morning America

performance.

Twitter user @sofiaRoldann tweeted, "[...] the most profound performance I've ever seen. It's easily the best performance of the year. When I stood to leave the entire theatre was crying at the end. Every. Single. Person. I've never seen anything like it [...]."

Other audience members viewed the acting as the film's only saving grace. "The whale was not a good movie... good acting but that's about it," said Twitter user @IAMWESLEYCURTIS.

Although Fraser has starred in numerous blockbusters, his performance in "The Whale" was his first Oscar

win, and arguably the only role he has played worth awarding.

Perhaps it was the industry overlooking Fraser's capabilities by primarily casting him in physical comedies such as "Encino Man" (1992) and "George of the Jungle" (1997), before finally being cast in the original "The Mummy" franchise. Or maybe it was simply his role as Charlie in Aronofsky's film that enabled him to deliver such an incredible performance. Either way, Fraser's win is one that is not only well-deserved, but one that rightfully diverges him from his portfolio of comedies.

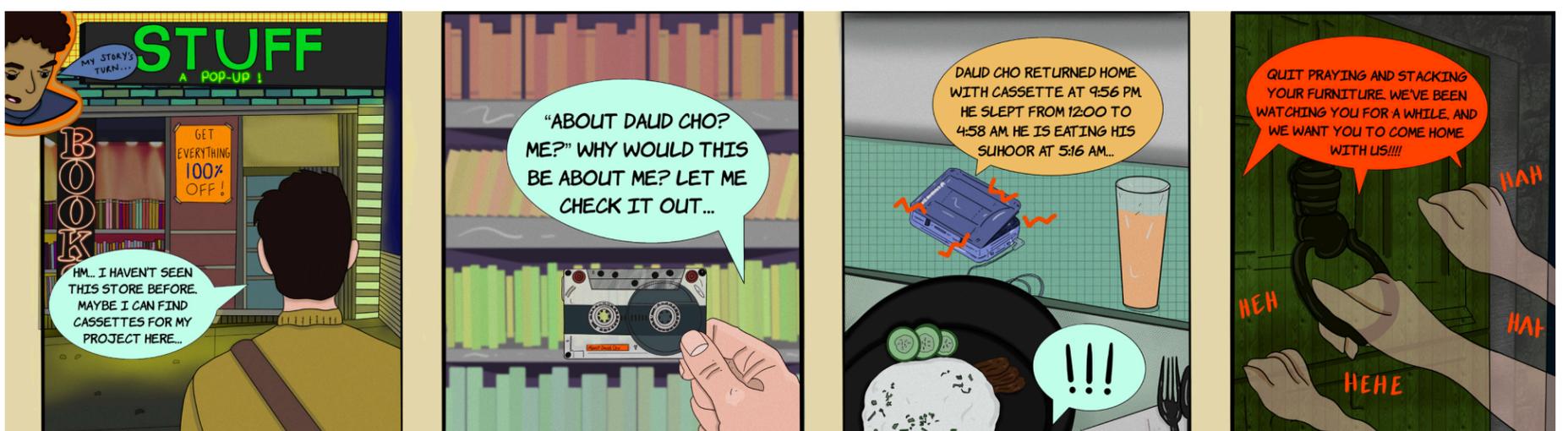
Through its

audaciousness and phenomenal performances, Aronofsky's drama perfectly captures the poetic intricacy of self-destruction and the desire for redemption. Whether you decide to watch it for its plot or for Fraser's incredible performance, "The Whale" is a beautifully gut-wrenching film dissecting the complexities between relationships with one another and oneself.

"The Whale" is currently available to stream on Amazon Prime Video, Apple TV, Vudu, Redbox, and YouTube.

## Big Apple City

by Nitu Farhin



Big Apple City: The Name Cassette (Episode 6)

Nitu Farhin

# Age-Old Tale Of Love And Fate: BC Opera's 'Dido And Aeneas'



A scene from BC's "Dido And Aeneas."/Paulina Gajewski

By Paulina Gajewski  
*Staff Writer*

Conservatory opera students captivated the audience by returning to the classics with a fully staged production of "Dido and Aeneas" in the Don Buchwald Theater on Friday, Mar. 24. The three-act opera was overseen by Artistic Director Isabel Milenski, who holds numerous national directing credits at Carnegie Hall and universities across the globe. Alongside Milenski was Music Director Violetta Zabbi, who has been involved in over a hundred different opera projects across New York City.

The opera singers were accompanied by the symphonic Brooklyn College Choir, directed by Tami Petty, winner of the Joy in Singing International Competition and professor at musical faculties in New York and New Jersey. The choir's voices guaranteed that the songs always felt full and complete.

Among the choir were sopranos and altos, along with tenors and basses, which enriched the performance. No musical performance is complete without the collateral orchestra that included accompaniments in violin,

viola, violoncello, double bass, as well as keyboard, which provided acoustic support whether the melody was light and quick, or deep and slow.

Henry Purcell, composer of the opera's "Dido and Aeneas," embarked on a variation of the original myth regarding the two titular characters. The myth is derived from the "Aeneid," a work of the great Roman poet Virgil. The noble hero Aeneas journeys to Italy, where he is fated to be the original ancestor of Rome.

Due to the self-fulfilling machinations of the Greek gods, Aeneas lands on the coast of Africa and meets Dido, the ruler of Carthage, whose husband had recently departed. Dido's heart is set aflame with passionate love for Aeneas through the will of Cupid.

The events that occur on the earthly realm are direct consequences of the quarrels that occur on the celestial realm. The queen and king of the gods, Hera and Zeus respectively, are torn in their decisions regarding Aeneas' fate. Hera devises for Aeneas to remain in Carthage as Dido's lover, and in response, Zeus reminds Aeneas his destiny lies in Italy.

Destiny in myth is inevitable, and so Aeneas tells Dido of his departure.

The queen of Carthage, heartbroken and abandoned now twice, prepares for her own death.

Purcell's opera revolves around the arrival and departure of Aeneas, whose actions are manipulated by a sorcerer and his witches instead of divine intervention. The show proved to be a spectacle for the full house of guests, executing musical and visual facets with operatic theatrics.

As the audience members were seated, eyes were drawn to the simple yet effective stage settings, consisting of a mountainous landscape for the background and a stone pedestal. The choir marched in one by one, taking their place to the right of the stage.

Act One began with a dim stage. Dido, played by Tomoko Nago Kern, was surrounded by her attendants as she commenced her tune of mourning. Still awash with grief, Dido was conflicted regarding her feelings towards her new guest, Aeneas, played by Mark Berkowitz. Dido's handmaidens, consisting of performers Jessica Bobadilla, Xiaoyu Gao, Qingran Yang, Alyssa Clayton, and Zhao Li, were dressed in all white to provide a stark contrast to

her black mourning robes.

As a representation of Dido's doubt, the handmaidens undulated across the stage while handmaiden Belinda (Reina Muñiz) attempted to raise Dido's spirits with the promise that love will cure her grief. Her black robes were switched out for robes of striking purple. As Aeneas entered the court, the handmaidens took the form of Cupid's arrow to exemplify the divine course of their love.

The orchestra ushered in a giddy and amorous tune as the two lovers embraced, finalizing the first act.

Beginning with intense, thunderous instrumentals, the second act mimicked a dreary storm. The stage lighting switched to deep blues and purples as the silhouettes of three menacing figures sauntered to the forefront. The sorcerer (Joe Damon Chappel) was escorted with the two witches played by Patricia Posluszna and Chen Philips. They struck fear in the audience with frightening, unintelligible gasps and yelps, accompanied by the high-pitched laughter of the choir.

The witches meandered across the stage to deep and drawn-out instrumentals as the sorcerer sang about his forlorn plan to separate Aeneas from Dido. One of the sorcerer's spirits would disguise themselves as a god and inform Aeneas of his destiny, forcing him to leave Dido.

The lighting drastically shifted as the storm cleared. As Dido, Aeneas, and their hunting party gallivanted onto the stage, the sorcerer and his witches deserted it. The bright white robes of the hunting party were now decorated by extravagant red ribbons. This scene of entertainment and pleasure, however, was

soon punctuated by the hints of an oncoming storm that separated the two lovers, leaving Aeneas vulnerable to the sorcerer's plan.

As Aeneas was told the news from the faux god, he launched into a powerful lament damning his own destiny. This was the first scene where a character existed completely alone on the stage, embedding the idea that his fate is his alone.

Resembling the vastness of the sky at sea, the background morphed into a dazzling blue at the beginning of Act Three. The bleak tone left over from Aeneas' song deviated to a ditzy and light one with the arrival of sailors as the performers were led by David Thomas Cronin. Preparing for their departure, they danced with the ladies on the shore, embodying naïve and hopeful flings.

Dido and Aeneas did not share the same privilege. As Aeneas announced his departure, Dido rebuked him. His guilt compelled him to declare that he will defy fate for her, but Dido had already set her mind on her abandonment and forced him to leave.

Overwhelmed by her own grief, Dido sang a heart-wrenching song, pleading for her fate to be forgotten. Tomoko Nago-Kern proved that opera is a physical art rather than a stationary one, with her enchanting movements expressing her pain along with her voice. The stage transformed into a burning red as Dido and her handmaidens prepared the mode of her own death: a pyre. The opera began with a love that set her heart aflame, though in the end it was that same passionate love that led to her demise.

Returning to the classics proves to be a reminder that the themes of humanity will run their course for eternity, with "Dido and Aeneas" telling the age-old tale of tragic love and destiny.

# Opinion: Let's Save The Internet Archive



Internet Archive loses copyright lawsuit, Shea Stevenson opines it should be saved./*Gabriela Flores*

By Shea Stevenson  
*Opinions Editor*

The Internet Archive is an online non-profit library that houses all kinds of media, from 1920s pulp magazines to defunct 90s websites. Its older-internet surfing function, perhaps its most well known function, is called the Wayback Machine. Most recently, the Internet Archive lost a lawsuit against four major publishers: Hachette, HarperCollins, Wiley, and Penguin Random House who claim that the Internet Archive has lost them millions in revenue. Not only is that thoroughly unconvincing on the face of it, (millions?) but also, that's what a library does. It's an online library.

If the Internet Archive goes down, which it seems like at least some swath of it will, then we've lost a load-bearing column of our modern history. There are innumerable webpages, books, videos,

all kinds of things that never got a physical copy, that would be lost if even just the Wayback Machine went down. Anyone who's ever tried to find something old or obscure on the internet has eventually come to the Internet Archive, and often, it's the final stop on those searches. So if it's definitely not losing these companies millions, why would they want to nuke it?

Companies try their best to stop you from owning anything at all. Back in the day, this was the mining town, where you worked for the company that owned the mine, your house, the places you ate at, and everything else. Nowadays, the most common version is that everything is online and you're only renting it. That's why subscription services are useful to them; you no longer own your stuff, you don't have agency over it, you can only interact with it in ways that the company allows you to. If they

don't want you to have it anymore, they can take it away. In that way, this is an obvious choice by the publishers. It's not about profit loss, but rather consolidating control over their copyrighted works. If you can't get it through the library, you have to get it through them, and that gives them all the power to draw up the terms of engagement.

If it were legal, companies would be doing this to all libraries everywhere. It's only working here because the government doesn't seem to know what the internet is, nor how to handle it in terms of legality. Lots of people are unsure if the internet is even real life.

In a system with both copyright and major corporations, situations like this are always crawling from the woodwork. It doesn't matter what the common good is, it doesn't matter if everyone on Earth were to agree that the archive is incredibly useful, it doesn't matter that the

defining forum for our era's lived reality – the internet – is inevitably going to be lost to time because we have chosen shareholders as its caretakers. They have the money, they have the paper that says the idea is theirs, they don't want to spend money keeping it archived, it's gone. And should anyone try to save it, they've become a criminal.

On a smaller scale, we see stuff like this often these days. There was a stink raised about HBO Max removing some cartoons (like "OK.KO." and "Infinity Train") a couple months ago, because it turns out that HBO was the only one who had the license to stream those shows and they were electing not to. The shows still have limited legal ways to view them, but the message comes across. Art on these platforms are disposable if any degree of profit is in the balance. Everything

made in the age of streaming, everything that never had a DVD, Blu Ray, CD, vinyl release, is always on the edge of being lost. As soon as it's not profitable to keep a server running with that data on it, it's gone.

Our only hope is piracy then, obviously. As long as one person has it on a flashdrive, we can all have it (illegally). It's like the Irish hermit-monks copying the ancient texts during the European dark ages and hiding the books. To future historians, or simply future scavengers who hope to understand what on Earth was happening to us, these pirating sites are the actual Rosetta Stones and secret treasuries of our times. Somewhere, someone has a room full of terabyte harddrives and CDs and DVDs filled with all the inane nonsense no one ever thought to keep, and that person is the most important recordkeeper of the modern age.

# Before The Presses: BK Streets Are Changing Fast



Michela Arlia delves into gentrification's effects on BK streets./Edited by Gabriela Flores

By Michela Arlia  
Managing Editor

It is no shock that this city loves to pack its people in like sardines, and when we can no longer build horizontally, we build up. This often ruins the once beautified views of the city and beyond, making it sometimes feel as if we're in a slowly closing trash compactor.

Neighborhoods we once were told as kids to never touch with a 10 foot pole, are now up and coming with apartment complexes selling at five to six figures and above.

Nonetheless, Brooklyn is a walk in the park in comparison to Queens with its intricate street naming system.

However, there is something to be said about how these streets reflect the growing changes that have arguably led to BK's diminishing visual charm. Brooklyn, like

Manhattan, is dependent on thoroughfares, or streets that span the grid as a main road. I find it ironic that the longest street in the borough is the very one this campus

**“When we can no longer build horizontally, we build up.**

sits on: Bedford Avenue. The avenue starts where Greenpoint ends, and stretches through to Sheepshead Bay. With just a quick Google search, it is clear that Bedford holds a very different definition depending on who you ask. This is gentrification at its clearest, as Bedford Avenue on the World Wide Web shows to be synonymous with Williamsburg, a section of the borough that once held strong as an industrialized

neighborhood. Since 2005, it has been flipped on its head, with once low-run industrial plants transformed into expensive high-rises.

I believe a bit of gentrification here was much needed as living spaces expand. But how much reinventing is too much?

Take, for example, Remsen Street, the entranceway to the Brooklyn Heights Promenade. It sits just over the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway and offers what I believe are some of the best views of the city. When nearing the end of the path on Orange Street however, where you once were able to get the closest photo angle on the strip of the Brooklyn Bridge, you are hit with an enlarged advertisement for the latest Apple product in true capitalist fashion. Sitting on the side of a high-class residential

building nonetheless, it obstructs 100% of the view and makes it unworthy of even traveling all that way by foot.

Two arguments can be made here with both the obtrusive (yet clever) marketing and the view obstruction. To highlight the latter, the streets of Brooklyn offer much history and many hidden gems through its views. The constant hunger to fit more and more people in small spaces only diminishes much of the beauty built into the streets over time.

22nd Street in Park Slope between 5th and 6th Avenues sits ever so perfectly atop a hill, that when on its peak, you are offered a clear shot of Lady Liberty. If developers ever find an unnecessary need for a 22-story condominium complex just a few blocks up – of which they will – then bye-bye, Liberty.

It seems as though the

real estate term “location, location, location” has held too much weight over time, making it hard for us Brooklynites as we feel like tourists in our own borough. Prices of pretty much everything will continuously go up, which will force people out, leading to even more gentrification. From there, it is just a snowball effect.

In times of ever-evolving gentrification and developer monopolizing times, I thank my lucky stars for the Brooklyn Historical Society for overseeing the 40-plus historical districts Brooklyn calls home to. Because of them, there are still some places in Brooklyn that won't have a finger laid on them. In the midst of building up, I know these streets are the few places left where I can revisit to remember what Brooklyn once was yet will never be again.

# BC Esports Cruises To National Wins, Requests Funds



Members of the Esports Club during a tournament in February. /@cunybcesports via Instagram

By Gabriela Flores  
Editor-in-Chief

The Esports Club is picking up wins left and right in national competitions, putting Brooklyn College on the map within the sport's realm. Esports, or competitive video gaming, has been a relatively new phenomenon at BC, seeing over 400 members and counting since it informally began in April 2022 on Discord. Now, with four teams playing in League of Legends, Valorant, Rocket League, and Super Smash Bros Ultimate singles, they're pushing for the college to back their momentum.

"We have a really strong natural talent pool," said Xander Raff, who wears multiple hats as the club's president, coach, director, and player. With all the

competing members hailing from the college's student population, esports has aided in retaining students at the college.

In the wake of the ongoing student government elections, the club is spreading the word about the included referendum that undergraduates can vote on until Friday, Mar. 31. Currently, the referendum seeks to increase fall and spring student activity fees for undergraduates from \$114.85 to \$120, with \$5 allocated to esports to form a department. If 10% of the student body votes in favor of the referendum by the deadline, and it makes way for the CUNY Board of Trustees' approval, the Esports Club can gain referendum status that would ensure their future fund allocation. For Raff and other members, these

overdue funds could give their teams the support they need to continue beating the competition in most matches, all while providing the esports athletes the coaching they need to better their craft in their respective games.

Soaring at the top ranks are the League of Legends and Valorant teams. The League team has managed to become part of the upper bracket in esports' consideration of Division 1, with an undefeated 7-0 record as of press time in the Champions Division of the NECC, a collegiate gaming competition. Raff, who coaches all teams while also playing for League of Legends, consistently ranks 1500 out of 2.7 million ranked players in the game. With two weeks left until playoffs, the League team has already managed to secure their seat. In a similar fashion, the Valorant team has earned a 7-1 record, clinging onto its stake in the NECC's Challengers Division – the equivalent of lower Division 1 – and a spot in playoffs. Coming into this spring semester, two more teams were added to the roster: Rocket League and Smash Ultimate, landing significant wins and scarce losses. Competing at a level

resembling lower Division 2 and higher Division 3, the Rocket League team carries a 5-3 tally with one more match needed to make it to playoffs. In Smash Ultimate singles, a BC player by the alias of "Reeduck" landed his part in playoffs on Friday, Mar. 24, by beating Arcadia University in a close 3-2 final score. As three of four teams warm their controllers for NECC playoffs, the Esports Club is looking to continue building what they've already sowed over countless hours.

"We have an opportunity to be a national caliber program, to be ahead of the curve when it comes to CUNY, ahead of the curve when it comes to New York City, and ahead of the curve when it comes to the entire Northeast region," said Raff, explaining that a stable financial backing could cost the college less than a traditional athletics program.

In collaboration with other student organizations, including Kappa Sigma as well as the Anime and Manga Club, the Esports Club has managed to put together on-campus watch parties for BC members to see their gaming chops. Besides competition, the club enables its community

to connect on and off campus. Whether it be by playing casually, creating posts for the club's social media, or chatting through their Discord group, members have shown their commitment to e-sports.

As a collective that's been fully student-led, and has no direct line of funding from the college yet, the BC Esports Club hopes to work with the Undergraduate Student Government to secure a physical space on campus, hire coaches, purchase PCs for any student to compete or use for fun, along with other resources.

"It's one of those things where we have a really golden opportunity here. We're trying to get the students to show the administration that they're willing to put their money into it," said Raff.

In preparing to best their competitors hailing from universities like Cornell and Ithaca, the Esports Club is also slated to host two events in April, including a casual gaming hangout and Smash Ultimate tournament. For more information, visit the club's Discord chat: <https://bit.ly/BCEsportsClub>.

## BC Sports Recap (Mar. 18 – Mar. 25)

### MEN'S TENNIS GIVES SPLIT PERFORMANCE

By Owen Russell  
Sports Editor

The men's tennis team split its two matches this week. Their record stands at 2-2.

Brooklyn's first match on Mar. 22 was a win against St. Joseph's (Long Island). The Bulldogs dismantled the Eagles, winning eight of the nine matches. Brooklyn's

doubles teams swept the competition going 3-0. Doubles #1 team, Ryan Sham and Aymen Kuc, beat their opponent in quick succession, winning 8-2. Freshman Allen Mardakhayev scored a win in #6 singles, his third of the season.

Brooklyn's second match failed to be as fortuitous. The Bulldogs lost 7-2 to

Farmingdale State College on Mar. 24. Farmingdale swept Brooklyn in doubles competition. The Bulldogs were able to steal two wins in the singles portion. Sophomore Mujibur Shaad won #5 singles, while junior Mordecai Lev won #6 singles.



Courtesy of Lamar Carter for BC Athletics

# BC Sports Recap (Mar. 18 – Mar. 25) Cont'd

## MEN'S VOLLEYBALL LANDS TWO WINS, ONE LOSS

By Owen Russell  
Sports Editor

The men's volleyball team won two of three games this week. Their season record sits at 7-12.

Brooklyn's first match of the week came on Mar. 18 against Medgar Evers. The Bulldogs went down to the wire with the Cougars to eke out a close victory. Brooklyn and Medgar Evers traded sets from the jump. Medgar Evers won the first and third, while Brooklyn won the second and fourth. For the first time this season, the match would be decided by a crucial fifth set. First team to have scored 15 points won. The beginning of the set mimicked the flow of the entire match, as the Bulldogs and Cougars traded blows, but ended

with a tie at 5-5. The set seemed destined to be a slugfest, however, Brooklyn had other plans at the final point. The Bulldogs went on a run, scoring seven straight points. Medgar Evers was hopeless to catch up. Brooklyn won the final set 15-10 as sophomore David Lema led the team with 37 assists. Junior Tommy Min scored 18 kills and two aces to help the Bulldogs win a nail-biter.

The Bulldogs' second match of the week was not as thrilling. Brooklyn suffered a three-set sweep at the hands of Baruch College on Mar. 21. The Bearcats simply overpowered the Bulldogs, pummeling them in three straight sets (25-7, 25-15, 25-16). At the mercy of Baruch's serve, the Bulldogs faced a weak



Courtesy of Joseph Gomez for BC Athletics

spot. Brooklyn allowed 19 aces, while only scoring one of their own. Senior Fidel Maldonado Jr. led the team in kills, scoring five.

On Friday, Mar. 24, the Bulldogs defeated Lehman College, scoring their third CUNYAC win of the season. Brooklyn battled in the

first two sets, earning close victories (25-18, 29-27). However, the Bulldogs could not secure the sweep in the third set. Lehman won 25-22 in the third set. Brooklyn remained unphased, not balking at Lehman's challenge. The Bulldogs stifled the Lightning,

winning the fourth set 25-16. Brooklyn formed a wall defensively, recording nine blocks compared to Lehman's one. David Lema recorded 44 assists. Tommy Min recorded 18 kills and 18 digs.

## WOMEN'S SOFTBALL DROPS MOST MATCHES



Courtesy of BC Athletics

By Owen Russell  
Sports Editor

The women's softball team played six games this week, including three double-headers, losing all but one of the contests.

Brooklyn's first double-header came on Mar. 18 against the University of Valley Forge in Phoenixville, Pennsylvania. Brooklyn got shelled out the gate by the Patriots from Valley Forge in game one. In the first two innings, Brooklyn allowed six runs without scoring any of their own. By the end of the fifth inning, Brooklyn

still trailed 6-1 with just two innings left to play.

All seemed lost for the Bulldogs, but anything can happen on the softball field. Brooklyn caught fire in the sixth inning, scoring six runs to take the lead. How'd they do it? A mixture of luck and skill. The Bulldogs compiled hits and scored on two errors by the Patriots. So while only four of the runs were considered "earned" in the stat sheet, Brooklyn still took control of the game. In the final inning, Brooklyn scored one more run. They then allowed one run to the Patriots, but managed to get three outs to end the game.

Brooklyn won a glorious comeback 8-7 thanks to an offensive onslaught in the sixth. Freshman catcher Kaitlyn Belfield scored three RBIs for the Bulldogs while earning two hits and one walk.

The Bulldogs could not replicate game one's magic in game two against Valley Forge. Brooklyn lost 10-1 in five innings. The Bulldogs just could not contain the Patriots' offense from the first pitch, allowing two runs in the first inning and three runs in the fifth. Unlike earlier in the day, Brooklyn could muster a comeback. They managed just one run

in the fourth inning. Junior infielder Yesileidy Paulino tripled to score catcher Kaitlyn Belfield.

Brooklyn's second double-header of the week proved even more challenging as the Bulldogs lost two blowouts to New Jersey City University on Mar. 21. Game one saw the Bulldogs score zero runs in five innings. NJCU scored eight runs: six runs in the second inning and two in the third. Despite the high score, Brooklyn pitcher Danielle Guzzardi allowed just one earned run. Seven of NJCU's eight runs came on fielding errors by the Bulldogs. Bad fundamentals can lose a team the game, as evidenced by the blowout loss in game one.

Game two failed to fare much better for the Bulldogs. Brooklyn lost 7-1 in another crushing blowout. This time around all seven of NJCU's runs were earned, so at least the fielding errors were fixed. The Bulldogs held NJCU scoreless for the first two innings, and were only down 1-0 after three innings. A three run rally in

third put the Bulldogs down four, and then another three run rally in the sixth closed the door on Brooklyn. The Bulldogs' sole run came on a throwing error, allowing sophomore infielder Zoey Van Vleet to score in the sixth inning.

Brooklyn's third and final double-header of the week featured the "Battle for Brooklyn" against St. Joseph's. Game one was an ugly affair. Brooklyn allowed six runs in the first inning, then five in the third. When it was all said and done, Brooklyn lost 12-1 after five innings of challenging play. Brooklyn's lone run came when Zoey Van Vleet scored on a wild pitch.

Game two proved to be equally as frustrating for the Bulldogs. Brooklyn failed to score in seven innings, while allowing six runs to the visiting Bears. The majority of the damage was dealt in the fourth inning when St. Joseph's scored five runs. Four of those runs were scored as unearned. The loss brings Brooklyn's record to 3-5.