

An Inspiring Ending to 2020: PVCC's Symposium on Race and Racism

William Waugh, staff writer

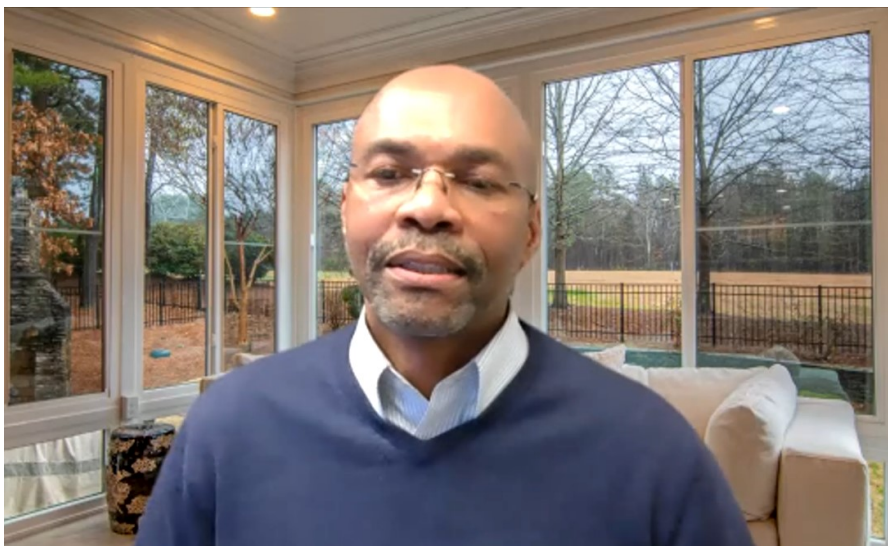
Held on Nov. 2 via Zoom, PVCC's Symposium on Race and Racism was a powerful and inspiring night to incite change within not only the PVCC community, but the Virginia community as a whole. The meeting was hosted for a little over two and a half hours, spanning through 13 speakers. Presenters from various facets of PVCC came together to discuss racial inequality and share stories of their experience of having received or witnessed discrimination. The event tackled issues on both the personal and societal ends of the spectrum, ensuring everyone left having learned something new.

"We truly cannot move forward as a nation, as a community, as a college, if we're not willing to discuss the issues surrounding racism, discrimination, and equity," PVCC President Dr.

Frank Friedman said in his opening speech for PVCC's Symposium on Race and Racism. As Dean of Business Olugbemiga Adekunle introduced the guest speakers, the symposium already felt like a natural presentation. One feature unique to Zoom webinars is the ability to raise questions at any point throughout the presentation to be asked during Q&A portions and the ability to do so anonymously. The few technical hiccups experienced in the beginning were quickly ironed out as the night progressed, proving Zoom to be a fluid means of conducting a symposium.

The President of the Black Student Alliance, Sheketa Payne, gave an excellent speech on what the definition of racism is in America, saying that "Racism is as American as apple pie." Her speech touched on microaggressions and

See Symposium on page 4



André Luck shares his story on practicing civic engagement.
Screenshot taken by William Waugh

In This Issue

- PVCC Events -pg. 2
- SGA Update -pg. 3
- Local News -pgs. 6-7
- Art Exhibit -pgs. 10-11
- Classes -pgs. 14-15
- Clubs -pgs. 20-21
- Reviews -pgs. 22-25
- Comics -pgs. 26-27

DATES TO REMEMBER

- **Final Exam Week**—
Dec. 16 to Dec. 22
- **Nursing Pinning Ceremony**—
Dec. 17, 4 p.m., virtual
- **Industrial Electronics Technology Showcase** —
Dec. 17, 5-8:30 p.m., virtual
- **Campus closed for Winter Break** —
Dec. 24 to Jan. 3
- **Gallery Exhibition: Ed Miller: Inventions for
Uncertain Times**—
Now through Jan. 20, virtual
- **Gallery Exhibition: Faculty Exhibition** —
Now through Jan. 20, virtual
- **Payment due for 16-week classes**—
Jan. 5
- **16-week classes begin**—
Jan. 11
- **12-week classes begin**—
Jan. 25
- **Martin Luther King Jr. Day: no classes** —
Jan. 18
- **Last say to drop with refund for 16-week class** —
Jan. 28
- **Gallery Exhibition: Barbara Shenefield** —
Feb. 5 to March 31
- **One Mic Stand** —
Feb. 11, 7 p.m., Dickinson Auditorium
- **Last say to drop with refund for 12-week class** —
Feb. 15
- **Spring Break: no classes** —
March 8 to March 13

Editor's Note

Jude Bolick, assistant editor

I have always loved storytelling. When I was younger, my way of telling stories was with my stuffed animals. Every day, my sibling and I spent hours constructing elaborate stories that took place in *The Buddy Kingdom*, telling oral stories and acting them out with stuffed animals.

As I got older, I began to write these stories down, filling notebooks with short stories, working my way up to a completed draft of my first novel. As I was homeschooled up to college, I am thankful for my mother nurturing this passion and supplying me with extra lessons on vocabulary and grammar to help me grow as an author.

When it came time to start college, I was extremely conscious about getting a job that was “financially reliable,” and I feared that a fiction novel writer was not that. I allowed my passion to go dormant while I sought out a career that could support me and my family. In a way, I felt like I had traded my writing notebooks for textbooks.

My passion for writing was reignited after taking two classes at PVCC. I knew I would adore Creative Writing, but I was not as keen about Intro to Journalism. I went into that first class expecting the worst and came out with an unlikely solution to my career dilemma. Suddenly, I knew what I wanted to be: an editor for a newspaper.

Not only have I found a new love for editing, I have also been reunited with my love for writing, and I have several full-length novels under my belt now. I also met my two closest friends in that class, and I have learned far more than I ever could have expected to. I encourage anyone who has an interest in writing to consider taking a semester or two of journalism. It changed my life, and I am proud to be a part of *The Forum*.



Student Government Association News

William Waugh, staff writer

For those who do not feel involved enough in their community, want to expand their connections, or just want to have their voices heard, the Student Government Association (SGA) provides a cordial atmosphere designed to change PVCC for the better.

Ashab Alamgir, vice president of the SGA, and Shawn Anderson, director of student engagement and student life, shed light not only on what the SGA does for PVCC, but what it does for the students themselves.

The SGA often meets directly with faculty, staff, and administrators to make connections. The SGA typically meets once every two weeks on Monday at noon for its general assembly members. The Executive Board meets every Thursday. Both meetings occur for an hour each. In these meetings, they discuss a variety of topics and issues to increase the quality of life for students at PVCC or facilitate the hosting of communal events, such as the Drive-In Movie Night or Casino Night.

“This year, what we’re trying to do is hopefully increase student engagement by maybe having more flexible hours,” said Alamgir. “A lot of students want to be more involved with the community, which is one of the things we’re working on right now.”

Another element of focus in the SGA this year is integrating the clubs into the SGA more than they have in the past to ensure all voices are heard. everyone’s voice is heard.

One of the many unique factors about the SGA is that club representatives attend the General Assembly meetings, along with the Executive Board, to share or receive feedback on how or what their club is doing.

“If you’re a student at Piedmont, and you wanna dip your toe in the water and get involved, the SGA is the perfect opportunity for that,” Anderson said. Students who want to engage with the SGA but do not want to be in a larger executive position can apply for the General Assembly and attend the biweekly meetings.

The SGA currently fosters a warm, welcoming atmosphere and a diverse roster of representatives in culture, age, and gender. “We want to make sure that we have representation for

everyone because that’s only going to make the SGA better in what it does for the college and for the students,” Anderson said.

The benefits of a smaller community college, such as PVCC, demonstrate themselves in ways that students might not even consider.

“SGAs at four year institutions do a lot of huge things for their colleges and universities, but they can’t always have access to their administrators in the way that the SGA at PVCC does. The president and vice president of the SGA get to meet with the president of the college once a month to discuss what they’ve been up to, and that’s really awesome and unique in the world of student organizations,” Anderson said.

One of the most essential parts of the SGA is the development of social skills and connections.

“The most rewarding experience for me is to really get to know other people or have my voice heard while establishing certain policies. Knowing that you can actually make a difference and actually see things from a different perspective is the most rewarding thing for me,” said Alamgir. The SGA relies on working with others and seeing different perspectives to get a better understanding of the student body as a whole.

As the SGA meets with different committees, such as the Student Service Committee, Administrative Services, Curriculum Instruction Committee, and College Senate, they all reference back to one group in particular: the student body. Joining the SGA not only gives students the opportunity to represent themselves and their diverse interests, but it allows them to represent others who are similar to them.

“I encourage students to use it to change the college and to change the experience for students in a positive way, but also use it as a way to advance where you want to end up in your careers. It’s a really good opportunity to network and meet some really good people,” Anderson said.

This month, they are running the 25 Days of Giving event to donate 1,000 pounds of food to the PVCC pantry.

If you’d like to sign up for the Student Government Association, visit their website: <https://www.pvcc.edu/student-government-association>.

Symposium, continued from page 1

nationwide racism and inequalities to prove that the textbook definition does not do it justice.

“It is something we absolutely must combat, but it’s also something we have to confront,” Payne said with a photo of Martin Luther King Jr.’s March on Washington, D.C., as her background.

Adekunle then presented statistics about college graduation rates by race, healthcare inequalities in the wake of COVID-19, and U.S. incarceration rates by race and ethnicity. He then introduced the next guest speaker, James Bryant, who is a member of the Charlottesville City School Board.

Bryant gave a personal account of how he has experienced racism throughout his childhood up to his adult years as he grew up in Charlottesville. Experiencing discrimination from his guidance counselor in high school, he was told he would never make it to college and that he should pick up a trade.

“I was the first generation in my family to go [to college],” Bryant said.

Being able to work as an educator, he understood the value of education from his parents. Although Bryant was able to succeed despite his challenges, he ended his speech by making it clear that “It’s always been a town of the haves and the have-nots, and we continue to struggle with those issues in the city of Charlottesville.”

Keith Nabb, Gequetta Murray-Key, and Todd Platts shared their perspectives on how you react to racism or discrimination when directly faced with it. Keith Nabb, associate professor of mathematics, said, “There’s a tendency to just be complacent and ignore it, and then to let it fester and be upset about it, but when it’s . . . novel and it’s something you’ve never heard before, I think the gut reaction is to be just completely speechless. Unfortunately that’s the reality when you’re confronted with such blatant racism.”



Sheketa Payne gives her definition of racism. Screenshot taken by William Waugh

Nabb, who shared his story about being biracial in America, described his difficulties being an Asian-American. He described the false concept that Asian Americans have “made it,” explaining the discrimination he has been a victim of his whole life, with the exception being his college years.

Dr. Todd Platts, assistant professor of sociology, replied by suggesting a route not often taken when debating those with racist and inconsiderate views. Those within organized racism groups who break free from them “have usually encountered people who challenged their racist preconceptions of the world, who take the time to politely challenge them,” Platts said. He encouraged attendees to research people such as Daryl Davis, Christian Picciolini, and Kathleen M. Blee after the symposium had finished.

“We do need to step up and challenge racism when we see it,” Platts said.

Gequetta Murray-Key, adjunct instructor of police science, responded by saying, “There are times when you need to confront things head-on, . . . sometimes you have to bite your tongue, sometimes you have to hold your tears back. You do that because you want to feed your family.” Maintaining a job and securing a promotion is already difficult enough for people of color, and sometimes challenging racist superiors in the workspace can lead to being fired.

Adekunle added, “It depends on the context. If I’m representing the college, or I’m just out in the street, or if I’m playing basketball [prior to COVID], I could respond differently.” The context of what situation you are in plays a major role in what you do or say, which is why the one on one interaction is preferred to challenge certain viewpoints.

Michael Rahilly and Adam Johnson, associate professors of psychology at PVCC, gave a presentation on Racism, Stress, and Coping. Johnson displayed statistics of increasing national stress levels due to police discrimination of minorities being televised on media, primarily among African Americans. This process utilized sample surveys to determine the percentage of people within the United States who felt stress from seeing increasing reports of police brutality. As of September 2020, the percentage was up to 67% of African Americans.

Rahilly spoke about potential methods of reducing racism in ourselves, such as increased contact with and open mindedness about diverse groups of people. He discussed human social

identities versus personal identities, which allow us to increase our perception of our self worth by relating to our ingroups while denouncing outgroups. Many different social factors attribute themselves to our self-esteem, which is important to understand how we can break free from traditionally racist ideologies.

Career Services manager André Luck shared how he was able to challenge and change systems that did not necessarily understand their harmful effects when it comes to discrimination. As a member of a financial institution, he noticed the renomination of the same people to their board of directors. As new board members arrived, Luck realized that among the new members, there were never any people of color. To address this inequality, he scheduled a meeting with the board chair and the president.

“First, I established my own credibility,” Luck said. By sharing his experience, he was able to show them that he was qualified to be speaking about the topics he would later raise, which they were uncertain of. Luck was able to change the board of directors and institute diverse opinions amongst the board, who did so even without lip service. He shared the challenges of diplomacy when faced with issues that he is passionate about in a separate scenario.

“I learned to change the tone of my voice . . . If I was being verbally attacked, I learned to listen and make sure that the person got it out of their system before I responded. I wanted to make sure that--in my approach--there were benefits they were getting from the solutions or recommendations I was trying to give,” Luck said. He emphasized the difference between responding versus reacting, relating further to his diplomatic philosophy. Confrontation is almost always a daunting task, but Luck states that “Sometimes, you must do things afraid.”

As the Symposium came to an end, the guest speakers all gave their final thoughts and appreciations for the event. Platts presented an idea that the organizers of the Symposium had suggested, which involved the guest speakers to share their stories and put together a document to send to local and state governments and incite change within the community.

“I will continue to do what I do, what I’ve always done, until I can’t do it anymore, and yes: the struggle continues,” Bryant said as he concluded his speech.

The event recording is available online.

Police Chief Talks About Black Lives Matter

Zhaire Roberson, staff writer

On Monday, Oct. 19, Charlottesville Police Chief RaShall M. Brackney spoke about the Black Lives Matter movement, the connection between hate groups and law enforcement, and freedom of speech in Charlottesville. Brackney spoke as a guest for the One Book program at PVCC. Ibram X. Kendi's book, *How to be Anti-Racist*, was discussed in the webinar. Brackney is a retired veteran of the Pittsburgh Bureau of Police. Chief Brackney is also the first black woman to serve as the head of the police department in Charlottesville.

"Across the United States, hate groups are on the rise, and for me these manifestations are most evident in places like my hometown of Pittsburgh, Charlottesville, across the nation. We've seen the loss of life fueled by racism," Brackney said.

Brackney pointed out that often police behaviors and actions with minority-led protests differed from the white-led protests.

"Law enforcement response to protests matters," she said. "Here and across the nation, race matters."

Chief Brackney stated that law enforcement as a whole has been complacent in regards to the demonstrations and actions promoted by fear, uncertainty, and ignorance.

"Society can be comforted by the colorblind tagline, but we can not afford a color-blind approach to these issues," she said, "Colorblindness allows us to bury our head in the sand and not confront."

Brackney said that many anti-government and hate group

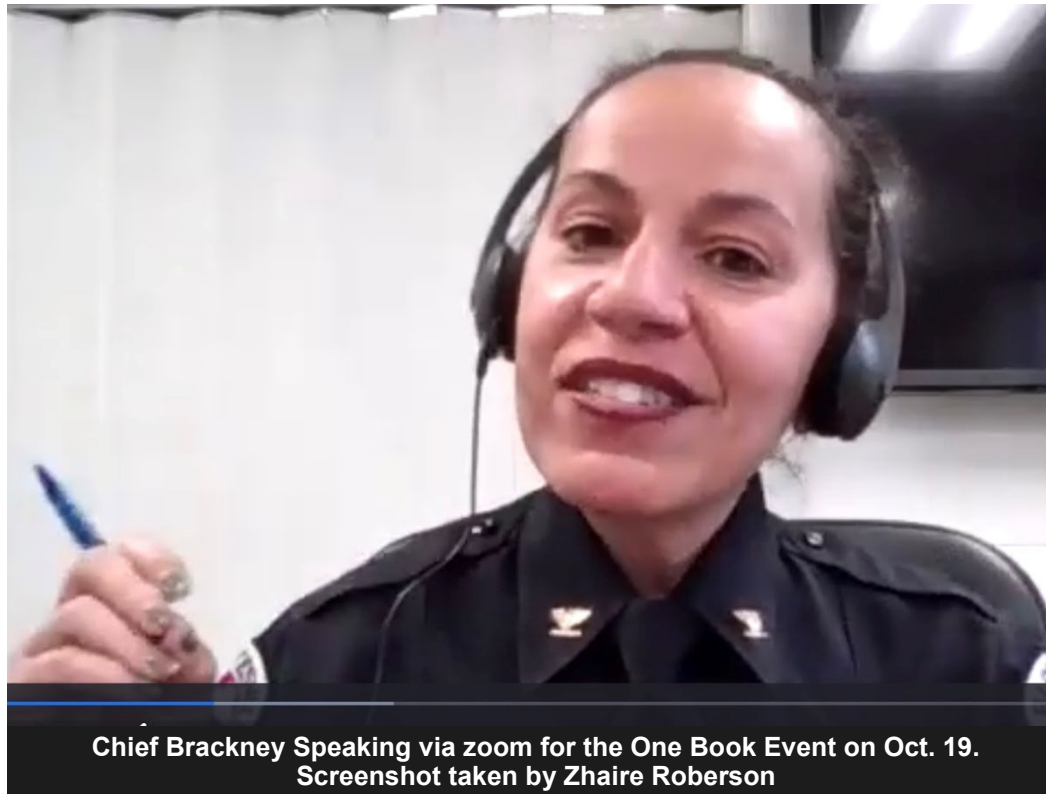
members often had active links to law enforcement personnel. She said that the political rhetoric of the hate groups regularly found a home in law enforcement unions.

"Law enforcement agencies are aligning themselves, unions are aligning themselves with white supremacists and neo-Nazi organizations. That is not comfortable for any person of color or any person who does not feel like they have power and access," Brackney said.

The Chief discussed her own personal experiences and the experiences of her husband regarding discrimination. Brackney said that to undo what has been done, regarding implicit bias, law enforcement must police through a more moral and ethical lens.

"We in law enforcement and you in academe can no longer be complicit," she said, "We can no longer embrace the status quo, conscious moral leadership recognizes injustices, it recognizes its failures."

To contend with racism, prejudice, and bias, Brackney said that she sent all members of the police department personnel on a week-long training through the Anti-Defamation League.



Chief Brackney Speaking via zoom for the One Book Event on Oct. 19.
Screenshot taken by Zhaire Roberson

An Interview with a Postal Worker

Maxwell Walpole, staff writer

The United States Post Office was first created in 1775 by the Second Continental Congress, with Benjamin Franklin serving as the first Postmaster General. This early incarnation of the post office deliberately prioritized the mailing of newspapers over personal correspondence in an attempt to help strengthen the bond of the colonies through the sharing of civic news. Franklin and his eventual successors helped to streamline the mailing process by investing in new transportation technologies, from the horse and carriage to the national roadway system to the intercontinental railway service.

In 1970, postal workers organized a massive strike in protest of poor working conditions and low wages. In the face of the collapse of the U.S. mail system and falling stock prices from a spooked market, President Richard Nixon acquiesced to the strikers demands and agreed to give the major postal unions the right to negotiate on wages and working conditions. In the aftermath of the strike, Nixon passed the Postal Reorganization Act of 1970, which transformed the United States Post Office Department into the modern Postal Service. The Post Office now is a semi-independent branch of the U.S. government, required to operate like a business and run its operations solely through the sale of its products, mostly postage, while receiving no tax revenue.

While voting by mail has been a regular practice for over a hundred years, in 2020, mail-in ballots have been the source of enormous controversy. Amid accusations of voter fraud, disturbing accounts of mail-in ballots being discarded, and widespread reports of mail delays, the integrity of the United States Postal Service is perhaps now more important than ever.

My father, Peter Walpole, is a 33 year veteran of the post office, and in some ways it shows. He is a middle aged man, nearing 60, sporting a salt and pepper beard and a boyish smile. For 20 years, he worked as a letter carrier, but in the last 13 years he has worked in customer support and is now a senior sales executive.

“I work with large businesses on their shipping and mailing needs. When you get a box in the mail, that’s the kind of thing I help set up,” he said.

“I was there at the post office when we hit our peak letter mail volume, and it was extraordinary how much mail was being processed by the postal service,” he said. “When there was the initial great recession back in the late ‘90s, I saw that letter volume just fall off the cliff. I think everyone knew that the internet would take some of that first class letter volume away, but I’m not sure anyone anticipated it to drop so dramatically and so fast. We’ve seen some of that volume come back, especially in marketing mail. But people don’t send handwritten letters and cards as much as they used to, the internet has taken a lot of that business,” said Walpole.

He paused, then continued, “On the other hand, the rise of the internet has seen us grow dramatically in package volume. Small boxes are being shipped out by e-commerce businesses. That growth in package volume has not offset the revenue loss from letters, but it helps.”

As soon as I asked him what he thought people should know about voting by mail, Walpole’s demeanor seemed to change. Suddenly he seemed more confident, more determined.

“The thing about voting by mail (is that) there’s definitely concerns with our network and there’s stuff that’s been in the news, and I understand that,” he said.

“But we handle that kind of volume as a regular thing. And so if everybody in the nation voted by mail, they still would be a relatively small percentage of our overall volume. There are issues about network delays, and so there’s been a strong effort to get out the word that if you’re going to vote by mail, vote early. I think the post office will do better than people expect, given all the stuff that’s been in the news. There’s virtually zero evidence of widespread voter fraud. There’s always an issue with voter fraud in every election, but it’s miniscule statistically. I think that’s going to be true this year, and I think that we’re going to get the ballots done. There’s good, dedicated professionals in the postal service that are committed to getting this job done, we take it very seriously.”

“I’m glad we’ve been in the news so much because there are some structural changes that need to happen in the postal service,” he said. “But by the same token, we’ll handle the election mail just fine. I’m very comfortable saying that.”

PVCC's Library Adapts to COVID-19

Maxwell Walpole, staff writer

As schools transitioned to online classes in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, PVCC's Betty Sue Jessup Library was presented with a seemingly insurmountable problem: how could a service that depends so heavily on in-person interaction survive a world of social distancing? The library faculty, led by Director of Library Services Crystal Newell, knew there could only be one answer: adapt to these new challenges and overcome them.

"We want everyone--students, faculty, and staff--to feel safe at the library. We also want students to know that we are here, whether virtually or in-person," Newell said. "I think the most important thing to note is that almost all of our services are still available, regardless of the pandemic."

Indeed, the library on campus continues to provide all the services it normally does, albeit with extensive safety precautions in place. For online students, however, the place to go is the PVCC website.

"The library's homepage is the portal to all of our services and collections," said Newell. "You

will be able to chat with us, find out COVID-19 specific services, and search the library's collection."

Newell went on to explain that through the library website students can access some of the library's new features, like rooms set aside for students to attend Zoom classes and even a method to mail books to students. By searching for a book in the QuickSearch library catalogue, clicking on the title, and clicking sign in under Request Item, any student can have books mailed to their address.

If a student needs help from a librarian, they can contact them via the chat on the library homepage, email, phone and even in-person.

While the rigid protocols of social distancing have thrown a wrench into the works of PVCC, above all Newell wants students to know that students should still take advantage of every service provided by the library.

"Don't let the semester pass without visiting the library," urged Newell.

The PVCC Betty Sue Jessup Library is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Their staff members are available during these same hours.



Veteran Services at PVCC

Zhaire Roberson, staff writer

The Veteran Services department at PVCC offers an array of resources and comprehensive services to students who are veterans or dependents of veterans. The Veteran Services department at PVCC is notorious for ranking



**Cecelia Lightfoot, Retired Army Veteran.
Photography by Zhaire Roberson**

highly amongst other schools in the Military Friendliness® and Acceptance categories.

The Veteran Education and Transition Service (VETS) offers free information sessions via Zoom for new military students who are interested in using their VA Educational Benefits at PVCC. In the online session, advisors will lead the attendee through the application process for admissions.

If you have questions about Military exceptions for residency requirements, placement assessments, financial aid advising, career services, disability services, or credit for prior learning, the information session is a great place

to start.

For specific instructions on how to set up a web conference, contact Jackie Fisher at jfisher@pvcc.edu.

I recently sat down with Cecelia Lightfoot, a retired US ARMY veteran with over 20 years of service. Lightfoot attended PVCC for one year in 2012, before transferring to a 4 year college where she received her Bachelors of Science degree in Interdisciplinary Studies. I'd like to disclose that Cecelia Lightfoot is my mother, however, she agreed to answer all my questions honestly and professionally.

I asked Lightfoot about her experience working with the Veterans Services office.

"The Veterans services staff was very supportive and knowledgeable. They had experience dealing with prior military personnel [...] they were so welcoming," she said.

Lightfoot went on to emphasize the importance of the Veteran Service staff understanding how military people thought.

"They understood that I wanted to attend school while also working a full-time job and raising a family," she said. Lightfoot continued, "As a military vet, they offered me the option to apply my military education benefits package to pay for my schooling."

I then asked her what her overall thoughts about PVCC were, and she said the following, "You have great instructors and professors, who may have taught at Universities before. I liked that PVCC was geared more towards the independent individual, the go-getter type who's looking to make a career. That was really refreshing as an older student"

As the interview came to a close I asked Lightfoot one final question. I asked her how she would rate the Veterans Services department at PVCC on a scale of one to ten.

"I'd give them a 10 out of 10. There's structure at PVCC, yet it's informal which is something that I really liked. They helped me build my own study plan too."

After talking with Lightfoot and reviewing the Veterans Services page online, it is safe to say that the Veterans Services staff is dedicated to helping Veterans and their families when it comes to pursuing a higher education.

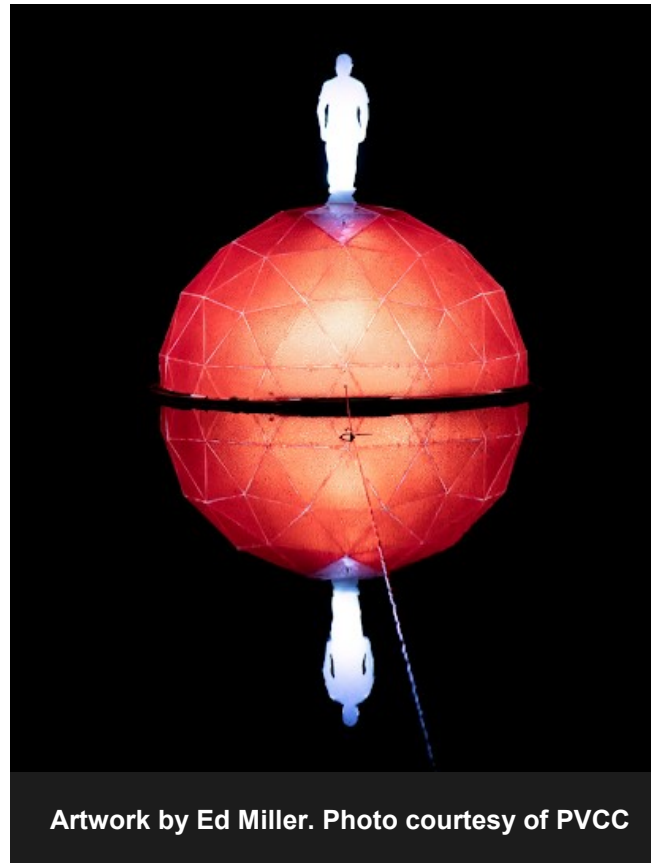
Ed Miller's Sculptures on Virtual Display

Zhaire Roberson and William Waugh, staff writers

In the age of COVID-19, many are turning towards the arts to express their thoughts. Through online exhibitions and social media, quarantine artists can share their craft instantly to the entire world. PVCC is harnessing local talent to create some exhibits of their own, as seen by Ed Miller's newest collection, *Inventions for Uncertain Times*.

The Adjunct Instructor of Art/Art Appreciation at PVCC, Ed Miller, released his new solo exhibition on September 25. Miller graduated from the Art Department at PVCC and earned his M.F.A. at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville. Miller has had many pieces shown throughout Central Virginia and is notorious for being active in the local art community.

This exhibit in particular displays a vast range of works away from the canvas and into sculpture-based art. Currently, his exhibition titled *Inventions for Uncertain Times* has opened up online and is running from Sept. 25, 2020 to Jan. 20, 2021. His works diversify themselves from beautiful, abstract, large scale sculptures to smaller, more intimate self portraits inspired by the COVID-19 pandemic.



Artwork by Ed Miller. Photo courtesy of PVCC



Artwork by Ed Miller. Photo courtesy of PVCC

Miller's pieces are incredibly versatile. The first sculptures presented in the gallery are two clay busts from the *Art in Odd Places: Matter* collection. Random people walking through the Charlottesville Historic Downtown Mall were used as models for collection and their busts were made on the spot. These busts are unlike any of Miller's other pieces shown in the gallery because they use a significant amount of color.

The second collection shown includes the pieces "Elevated Figure," "Deconstructed Minotaur," and "Goddess Wings." This series is more abstract and focuses more on detail and texture. Like the other collection, the series incorporates clay but it also includes paper, tape, and wood.

Ed Miller's piece "Body of Light" uses a beautiful geodesic dome structure along with silhouettes of himself cast over a lake to mirror the image. The pitch black background makes this piece immediately

stand out against the contrast of the red dome and white silhouette. The photography included on the website was clear and the exposure of each picture was well balanced.

Usually, when a person is viewing a sculpture they would walk around it. To truly experience any piece of art, it is recommended to view it from different angles. If there were more images of each piece, zoomed in or from other angles, then the online gallery would be even better for the viewer.

Miller's newest pieces in the collection display a unique blend of creativity and relevance. These sculptures seem to be heavily inspired by the COVID-19 pandemic, hence its name



Artwork by Ed Miller. Photo courtesy of PVCC

Inventions for Uncertain Times. All of these tackle the concept of social distancing and safety measures with a slight science-fiction twist.

Ed Miller's "Self-Portrait with Powered Air Mask #2" displays an air filter running through a tube directly to a shielded frontal mask with spectacular attention to detail. From the ridges in the air filter to the deformation in the hair from the mask's strap, this is the level of quality that is simply the norm in Miller's work.

Other works, such as the "Isolation Suit Model," demonstrate unique concepts that are



Artwork by Ed Miller. Photo courtesy of PVCC

almost retrofuturistic in style, while works like "Face Mask with Two HEPA Filters and Fan" stretch to absurdity in their design.

Within these debilitating times of the global pandemic, art is often something to look to and pursue. Ed Miller's *Inventions for Uncertain Times* blends uniqueness, creativity, and relevance to create art within protective social distancing equipment. Emitting hope within experimental creativity, Ed Miller delivers soon-to-be artifacts from a time so revolutionary in our present.

If you would like to learn more about Ed Miller, visit his website at edmillersculpture.com.

If you would like to view the entirety of this collection, you can visit the collection at sites.google.com/view/edmiller/home.



Artwork by Ed Miller. Photo courtesy of PVCC

First Semester According to Freshmen

Zhaire Roberson, staff writer

This year's freshmen knew going in that their first semester would be unlike any other they had gone through. Millions of students across the country have had to readjust their styles of learning as they shift their focus from classrooms to computer screens. According to all four students (Sydney Lopez, Jumana Al Mulhim, Temnesera Mekonnen, and Olivia Thomas), getting acclimated to this year's learning style has been an adjustment.

Although almost all courses have been moved online, Biology 101 is one of the few on-campus lab classes offered at PVCC now.

“My favorite class would probably be the in-person lab portion of biology. It’s the only in-person class I have where I can meet new people and do fun experiments,” said Sydney Lopez, a recent Albemarle High School graduate and first-year at PVCC.

To reach graduation requirements and obtain the necessary credit hours, some students are still taking as many classes as they can this semester. Lopez is enrolled in four classes this semester.

“I feel like high school prepared me for attending a community college in terms of the



Sydney Lopez, a first-year student

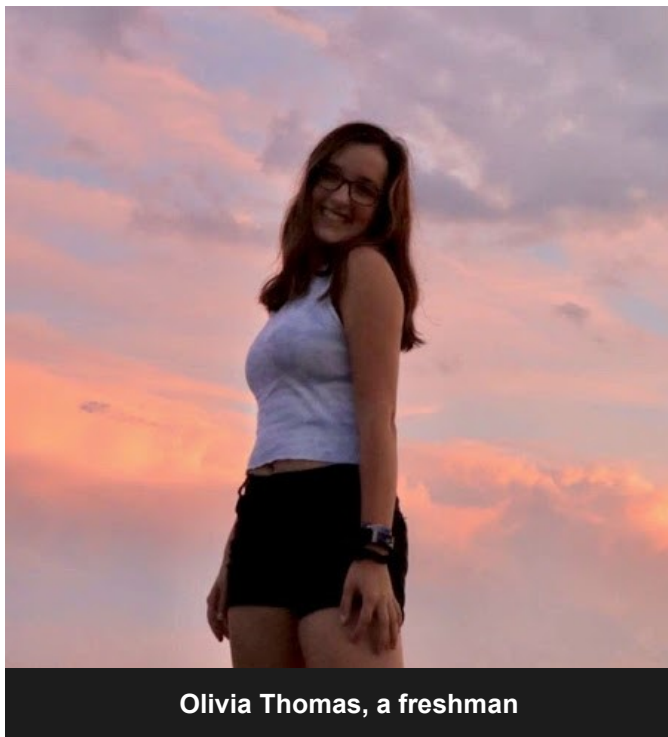
workload. I took both AP and dual enrollment classes. I’d say I spend an average of 14 hours per week doing homework,” she said.

All four students mentioned the difficulty of making friends and establishing relationships with their peers and professors this semester.

“It’s easier to make friends with someone in person, for me, because I get to learn who they are before I meet the online version of themselves. That can be completely different than who they actually are,” Lopez said.

Lopez sympathized with professors saying, “This year is a big adjustment for many professors who are not used to teaching online, so I assume it’s more stressful than usual and harder to connect with students due to this.”

In recent months, many students have had a hard time making the adjustment from high school to college. College-goers are finding it hard to gauge the expectations of their professors and are not used to having all of their classes online. One of these students is Olivia Thomas. Thomas is a recent graduate of Albemarle High School and a first-year student at PVCC.



Olivia Thomas, a freshman

“The transition for me, personally, from high school to college has been very hard, not only because all the classes are online but also because [I have] to navigate new teaching styles and learn what teachers expect of their students,” Thomas said, “High school did prepare me for community college, in the sense that there was going to be a lot of work, but the time management piece was not really trained.”

When asked how she would describe this new way of learning, Thomas said, “If I had to choose one word to describe online classes this year it would be complex. Each teacher has the information for their students to access in different spots. Everything they assign comes with its own challenges.”

Despite the challenges, students like Thomas consider their freshman year to be unique and continue to preserve.

Though many students have had a difficult time transitioning from an in-class learning environment to online learning, there are still students who thrive under pressure and embrace the changing and unpredictable atmosphere. Jumana Al Mulhim is one of these students. Al Mulhim is a first-year Liberal Arts major who graduated from Albemarle High School this summer. Al Mulhim has stepped out of her comfort zone to find ways to be social with others. “I’ve been building relationships through club activities,” she said. “Not seeing people in



Jumana Al Mulhim, a Liberal Arts Major

person is a strange experience for me, but I feel like I am strangely comfortable with everything at the moment.”

Like her peers, Al Mulhim took rigorous classes in high school which prepared her for community college.

“I definitely think high school prepared me well. I took a total of 11 AP classes, and I think that helped me a lot in terms of knowing how to analyze well and write critically.” said Al Mulhim.

Like Lopez, Thomas, and Al Mulhim, Temensera Mekonnen is not afraid to go against the tide when it comes to embracing unpredictability. Mekonnen is a first-year Business major and a graduate of William Monroe High School. Mekonnen has set her sights on staying optimistic this semester. “The upside is definitely getting to work from any location. If anything, I prefer college.” Mekonnen said. “This is a new environment for all of us, including the professors. We are all learning to work together.”



Temnasera Mekonnen, a business major

A Newsworthy Class: Intro to Journalism

Chelsei Moore, staff writer

Looking for a class that teaches everything from newsworthiness to redundancy to clichés and no-no words? Articles are the cornerstone of modern journalism, which is why PVCC offers a journalism course both in the fall and spring semester. Taught by Professor of English Dr. Tamara Whyte, Introduction to Journalism (ENG 121), teaches even the most challenged writer how to formulate well-crafted articles.

“Especially in school, it’s always encouraged to write longer rather than shorter, but in journalism (and much of the real world) it’s better to get your point across in as few words as possible. This makes it so the writing is more direct, eliminating the unnecessary fluff that students stuff into essays to try and reach that length requirement, and it allows the writer to highlight what’s really important,” said Jude Bolick, former ENG 121 student, assistant editor for *The Forum*, and current intern for Dr. Whyte.

When asked about her experience as a journalism professor, Dr. Whyte responded, “This is my seventh year teaching journalism at PVCC. My first major was journalism, and I enjoy taking what I have learned in many classes and experiences and using it to create a practical journalism class for PVCC students.”

Journalism is considered a transfer elective for most majors at PVCC, for any students looking to enhance their writing skills for an English major or just to tweak their knowledge.

“At the time, my favorite aspect was just learning about journalism and the media in general, and I still do love learning more about the world of journalism,” said Ginger Hood, former ENG 121 student, assistant editor for *The Forum* and current intern for Dr. Whyte.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Journalism was found in the main building, room M617D (inside the Writing Center). During this unprecedented time of transitioning from in-person to online classes, Dr. Whyte did her best to provide a fun loving learning environment via Zoom.

“It was a really positive experience, and though I still love taking journalism online, I do miss in-person class and Forum meetings. Going

online has definitely made some parts of the class more efficient, but I miss sitting next to the friends I made in Journalism 1 and doing projects together, or even just getting to talk to people more before and after class,” said Hood.

In the upcoming semester, Journalism will be offered again via Zoom Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11 a.m to 12:15 p.m. The prerequisite for this course is the completion of English 111 (College Composition I).

While most classes have pricey textbooks that will likely never be used again once the class is over, Journalism has a different approach to having literature that can be used for all forms of writing. The two required textbooks are *The Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law* (\$17) and *Journalistic Writing: Building the Skills, Honing the Craft* (\$20).

“Any student who wants to improve their writing or build their resume could get a lot out of the class,” said Dr. Whyte.

Journalism may be an intimidating choice for some students, but it is a gateway to learning all forms of writing.

“I was actually dreading the class at first, because I’m rather introverted by nature and not a big reader of the news. Looking back on it now, I’m so glad that I took it, because it helped me find my calling in life, and I’ve met so many wonderful people. It’s an experience I will never forget,” said Bolick.

Dr. Whyte added to this point by saying, “I think it is a special class because we get to have a workshop environment and students get to produce the school newspaper, which gives them great skills and experience. Students get to develop as writers and editors, skills that transfer to other types of writing as well.”

It can be argued that journalistic writing is an acquired skill, but any student who puts their mind to it can excel in this course.

Students who are interested in taking the ENG 121 course that have questions for Dr. Whyte could best contact her via email (twhyte@pvcc.edu). Dr. Whyte typically responds within 24 hours during the week and 48 hours during the weekend.

Read the full article online at piedmontforum.com

The Perks of Taking Biology 107

Zhaire Roberson, staff writer

Not everyone enjoys learning and studying science. To some students, the idea of being in a science class with no hands-on learning can seem grueling and uninteresting. The lab in Biology 107, Environmental Science, is not like that at all.

“Bio107 presents the basic concepts of Environmental Biology in order to gain a better understanding of how the human population interacts and impacts the natural world,” said instructor of the course, Jennifer Scott, via the syllabus.

When students take Bio 107 online, they will get to perform labs at their homes, by performing them at home, students make the most of hands-on learning. At the beginning of the semester, students enrolled in the class visit the Keats Science Building on PVCC’s campus to pick up their lab kits. The lab kits include a variety of instruments students must use to perform experiments and tests. The lab kits also include safety and instruction manuals.

Bio 107 is online anytime, which means

students are allowed to work at their own pace. Usually, assignments should be completed within a week. The class week runs from Monday through Sunday.

Although there is no required textbook for the course, students will need to purchase their professor's choice of semester reading. The semester reading will be a roadmap to help the student answer the weekly discussion board questions. This semester, students read *The Forest Unseen* by David G. Haskell.

Regular course work per week includes two discussion board posts on the semester reading, one lecture quiz, one lab assignment, and a lab quiz. There are a total of three exams in Bio 107. Throughout the semester, students will watch a variety of documentaries that pertain to weekly lesson plans and exams.

Biology 107 Lab is for students who enjoy hands-on learning, like working from home, and want to obtain a better understanding of the human impact on the environment. Biology 107 will also fill the requirement for a transferable science credit for a four year college.

A Class Out of This World

Evan Green, staff writer

Class sign ups have started at PVCC and many students are looking for an elective or an extra science class with a lab. Astronomy II is one of these options for the upcoming Spring 2021 Semester, plus students don’t need a prerequisite to take Astronomy II.

Astronomy II is a natural sciences class at PVCC, which students can also search for under NAS 132. This class is about studying what is going on in space and in the Milky Way Galaxy.

During the Astronomy I course Dr. Edmund Walendowski, professor of astronomy and former ARMY specialist said, “In Astronomy II we will learn more of the Milky Way galaxy’s different stars”.

Astronomy II students will also need the Ninth Edition of the *Cosmic Perspective* as

their textbook. A part of the class will involve looking through an observatory.

Dr. Walendowski said, “I’m really excited to share my love of astronomy to students and sharing my observatory online with the class.”



Keith Nabb: Professor and Published Author

Jude Bolick, assistant editor

PVCC has welcomed many new faculty members to the community this fall semester, all of whom are adapting not only to their new positions, but also to a heavily online environment.

One of these new faces, Assistant Professor of Mathematics Dr. Keith Nabb, is more than ready to take on this challenge.

Nabb went to Ponganset High School in North Scituate, Rhode Island, which is part of the Foaster-Glocester School District. From there, he went to Rhode Island College for an engineering program, but shortly after starting he decided to take a semester off when he realized he did not want to pursue a career in engineering.

“My heart didn’t really feel it,” Nabb said in a recent Zoom interview.

After returning to college, he went into a math program instead and graduated with a B.S. in Secondary Education (Mathematics) from Rhode Island College, then went on to receive a M.S. in Mathematics from Texas Tech University followed by a Ph.D. in Mathematics Education from Illinois Institute of Technology.

His interest in education arose when he went with his mother to teach art, discovering his love for teaching.

Nabb worked at Moraine Valley Community College in Illinois for fifteen years, then went on to work at University of Wisconsin-River Falls for four years before getting a job at PVCC.

Overall, he preferred his experience with community colleges over universities.

“I like the environment quite a bit better,” Nabb said. “The students are very similar. They just work very hard, they ask when they need something, and I just like the nation of the whole two year.”

COVID-19 posed new challenges for Nabb with a heavily online environment, but he adapted quickly to this new normal, helping his students strive.

“I finally feel like I’m in a groove,” Nabb

said. “I do think they’re learning, and that’s the most important thing.”

Nabb has a wide variety of personal interests, such as playing board games with his family, painting, and finally solving a complex math puzzle called Martin’s Menace.

On top of this, he is a researcher and published author with a wide collection of podcasts, presentations, and research papers.



Photo courtesy of Keith Nabb

“My research interests are in the teaching and learning of mathematics,” Nabb wrote on his website. “Currently, I am working on some projects related to equity in mathematics curricula, active learning, and mathematics teaching at the developmental level.”

For more information, check out Nabb’s Website keithnabb.com or email him at knabb@pvcc.edu.

Engineering Expert Kirk Gomes

Jude Bolick, assistant editor

Life poses many challenges, one of the biggest being how to decipher what career to pursue. With endless possibilities, it can be hard to sift through it all and find a calling in life by college. For Dr. Kirk Gomes, a new assistant professor of engineering at PVCC, it was never a question in his mind.

Gomes grew up in Mumbai, India, where most of his family still resides. His interest in engineering started at a young age, which he attributes to his father taking him to work with him at Otis Elevators manufacturing plant in Mumbai.

“It was fascinating to see all the machines in action and all the mechanical and electrical equipment lying around the factory,” Gomes said in a recent interview. “I have also always liked tinkering around with toys and things at home and even ended up shocking myself as a kid with 220 volts of electricity.”

Gomes graduated from the University of Mumbai with a Bachelor of Engineering before coming to the U.S. for graduate school with his wife, Katie. From there, he received a masters and a Ph.D. in mechanical engineering from the University of Toledo. During grad school, he discovered his interest in teaching when he became a teaching assistant for several semesters.

“I had never, ever planned on joining the teaching profession, and in fact, I was terrified on my first day of being a teaching assistant,” Gomes said. “That was mainly because I was from another country and all I knew about how American students behaved was from what I had seen in movies and television. What I didn’t know was that everything that I had seen on television depicted high school students, and that college students, especially those in engineering, were completely different. On that first day, they were respectful, friendly, and they followed

instructions. I really enjoyed the interaction and all of that is still unchanged to this day.”

Gomes moved from teaching assistant to part-time adjunct while he finished grad school, then took on a full-time teaching job after graduation. He worked at Central Virginia Community College (CVCC) while his wife pursued her own education, then began looking for a different college that was closer to the university she intended on attending.

“Katie was planning on starting grad school at Mary Baldwin, which would have been a 90-minute commute one way,” Gomes said. “So I

checked to see if there were any VCCS schools that were closer to Mary Baldwin, and I found PVCC. What was even more awesome was that they were looking to hire an engineering professor. Fortunately, everything worked out, what with COVID-19 and all, and here I am.”

During his time at PVCC, Gomes has found both positives and negatives about online classes compared to in-person.

Although he prefers teaching in person, he has found that there are advantages that are exclusive to an online structure of teaching.

“I miss the face-to-face interaction,” Gomes said. “I have a very sarcastic sense of humor, so it takes a lot longer for my students to get that when we’re meeting online only. I’m also not teaching any classes that have a mandatory physical laboratory component. Other than that, I have my Surface and screen-sharing and with the ability to record lectures and post a PDF of whatever I have written on the screen, I think online classes have an advantage.”

Gomes currently resides in Lake Monticello with his wife, Katie, and their three pets: a Maltese dog named Eleanor Mae “Ellie” and two cats named Joseph Lawrence “Joey” and Charles Xavier “Charlie.”

For more information, contact Gomes at kgomes@pvcc.edu.



**Dr. Kirk Gomes and his wife, Katie.
Photo courtesy of Kirk Gomes**

A Club Focused on a Common Cause

Chelsei Moore, staff writer

With a title like Black Student Alliance (BSA), a White American, Hispanic, Asian, or European student may be hesitant to join or ask questions to gain knowledge of the mission of the club. In a recent interview with BSA President, Sheketa Payne, it was made clear that any student can join the organization as long as a simple criterion is met, “be a decent human being with an open mind. That’s about all you need.”

It is easy to think that being experienced in fighting the isms of the world and being organized are requirements to join BSA, but rest assured those are not prerequisites for membership. Not only do these criteria hold no weight, neither does ethnic background. According to Payne, “We live lives filled with intersectionality and it would be a huge disservice to the club if we didn’t have those same intersects represented within our membership.”

“The most fundamental principle of BSA is to provide a safe and welcoming space for minority students and their allies. Racism has been a rampant issue in this country for centuries and those affected by it have always needed a place to gather, release some of those burdens, and formulate how to use those experiences to advocate for change,” said Payne. BSA at PVCC is a safe place for students “to be seen and heard,” according to Payne.

This is a place that stands on the foundation of allowing members to turn any challenges into strength to combat the oppression and evils of the world that may weigh them down.

Just by existing, BSA gives individuals a chance to feel safe in a time of such uncertainty, especially those of minority communities throughout Charlottesville and PVCC.

“I believe we are helping by challenging both communities to be better. We use a variety of mediums to educate and amplify the lesser known experience in an effort to initiate community members to be more mindful of the ways in which they live. Most aren’t actively perpetuating the ism’s that plague this world but many do participate unconsciously. We strive to spark conversations that stimulate growth on an individual level. It’s impossible to change the

systems if the mindsets of the individuals engaging in said systems don’t change also,” said Payne.

BSA works to provide whatever tools are necessary to help individuals succeed, whether it is hot chocolate during finals week, raising money for the less fortunate, or creating events to bring focus to underrepresented issues.

“We like to look for and provide solutions no matter how large or small the problem may be,” said Payne.

Much like other clubs on campus, joining BSA can be simple. Payne said, “All students have to do is reach out and express interest. This can be done one of several ways.

Interested students may reach out to PVCC’s Coordinator of Student Engagement & Student Life – Shawn Anderson, or an existing club member. Any of those roads will lead to membership. There’s no application or background check required. We promise.”

Due to COVID-19, the structure of club meetings has changed from every Wednesday at noon in the Financial Resource Center to every other Wednesday at noon via Zoom. In order to gain access to meetings, “Our secretary, Kerri Gentius, sends meeting links and reminders to each member. If any non-members would like to attend a meeting, we ask that they reach out via email to either myself or Kerri to receive an invitation link,” said Payne.

“BSA is an excellent place to cultivate leadership skills. We afford all of our members the opportunity to organize and lead events with the safety net of having the entire club supporting them as a team. We actively encourage it. This allows those who aren’t accustomed to leading to grow comfortable within the role without fear of failure. The support and safety of the space also allows them the chance to grow their confidence about their leadership style and skill set,” said Payne.

BSA also prides itself on providing the same support for academic and cultural awareness. Prior to COVID-19, BSA held study sessions to support members and encouraged them to come for help regardless of what subject area they struggled with. During study sessions, conversations would often lead to eye-opening

discussions on different cultures, heritage, and other aspects of members' lives.

"Since COVID-19, we haven't been able to gather for those study sessions but we're still available to members as a virtual collective and yes, those expanding conversations are still occurring," said Payne, providing an alternative to in-person groupings.

With mental health being in the forefront of the challenges in the lives of college students, BSA acts as a support group for members to an extent.

"While we aren't experts in the mental health field, we all understand the value of a safe and supportive space. If more support is needed, while we don't have a therapy fund, we do have the incomparable Amanda Key on our team. Ms. Key is fundamental to us all keeping our sanity. She provides crisis counseling, a shoulder to cry on (or vent to), and most importantly, she's willing to 'pull our card' as my grandmother would say. She's an honest and loving voice of reason – a 'Big Momma' of sorts. She makes sure we don't neglect ourselves while advocating for others. She also helps to connect us with mental health resources beyond the halls of PVCC if more support is needed," said Payne.

"BSA has several events in the works. We will be releasing a calendar of events on our club page (<https://www.pvcc.edu/black-student-alliance>) within the coming weeks. We also announce events on our Facebook page (<https://m.facebook.com/pvccbsa/>). We've spent most of this semester formulating, organizing, and restructuring the club itself but we have many awesome things on the horizon. There is one initiative that I am incredibly excited about. Unfortunately, I can't provide the 'big scoop' as it's just reaching the final stages of planning before implementation," said Payne. Members and those who are interested in joining the Black Student Alliance are encouraged to attend meetings to get involved and be in the know of the most up-to-date information on BSA events.

As parting words, Payne said, "I want to stress that while BSA is Black centered, we are not a



A photo from the Black History Month event, Spring '19. Photo courtesy of Payne.

Black only club. We try to model the welcoming openness we wish to see in the world."

BSA is here at PVCC to provide students with an opportunity to join an organization that focuses on civic leadership, supporting the PVCC and Charlottesville communities, encouraging individuals to push forward with education, and "eradicating the ism's of the world," quoted from Payne. Students can help by supporting local organizations like BSA and being a resource for change.

"Like most advocacy organizations, our needs are quite simple, yet difficult to obtain. We need bodies. We need active members. We need people who are willing to commit to participating in events and we need people to carry the conversations sparked out into the larger world. We need amplification via people engaging," said Payne.

Anyone interested in joining BSA should contact the club officers whose contact information is listed below:

Sheketa Payne, president:
bsapresident010@gmail.com
Amelia Davis, vice president:
basvicepresident010@gmail.com
Kerri Gentius, secretary:
bsasecretary010@gmail.com

PVCC's LGBT+ Club Champions Diversity

Maxwell Walpole, staff writer

As a public community college, PVCC is naturally a diverse place, home to students from all walks of life. However, when surrounded by so many different people, the unique struggles facing some of the most vulnerable members of our community are often overlooked.

This is the reason why PVCC's LGBT+ club exists, to spread awareness of the everyday challenges faced by the students in this club, and to strengthen their bond with the wider community.

According to club Faculty Adviser Professor of English Dr. Jessica Kingsley, "The club also seeks to support the college in various ways, such as volunteering during voter registration day, and participating in Club Day and Spring Fling. Finally, the club hopes to help its members meet new friends."

At 20 members, each club meeting is filled with activity and conversation. At the beginning of every meeting, the club president first checks

in with the members to see how they are doing,

then the president moves on to discussing any upcoming events.

"In the past, club members have participated in PVCC's voter registration drive, hosted a Halloween 'Trunk or Treat' event, hosted a booth at Spring Fling, had a coming-out day event, among other events," said Kingsley.

After the planning sessions for future activities conclude, the club meeting transitions to an open discussion period. Here, club members can discuss any number of topics, from the problems that they face like discrimination from family and peers, to current events, to what classes they are taking this semester. For students not interested in discussion, they can opt to play games instead.

While the club is currently on hiatus due to the COVID-19 pandemic, they plan to resume meetings via Zoom during the spring semester. Students interested in joining the LGBT+ club can contact Kingsley for more information at jkingsley@pvcc.edu.

Creative Writing Brings Writers Together

Chris Kreitzman, staff writer

Led by Professor of English Jennifer Koster, the Creative Writing club began in 2006.

"It started as the Poetry Club and has been called Writers Unite! The Creative Writing Club at PVCC. We often just call it the Creative Writing Club. It's easier," said PVCC student and club member Yanir Haim.

The goal of the Creative Writing Club, in the words of Haim, "is to provide [a] community for people interested in creative writing. We write each time we meet, and we run a couple of contests at the college—the 600-Word Short Story Contest, Peep-o-Rama [dioramas made out of Peeps that illustrate a favorite scene from a book], and we publish the college's literary magazine [The Fall Line]."

Haim shared what he found to be the most interesting part of the club. "Our literary magazine has become increasingly professional and collaborative. The Advanced Computer

Graphics class designs several versions, we choose our favorite, and then incorporate student art into it. It is also professionally published. We have readings, too. One year, we had Rita Dove, UVA Professor of Poetry and former U.S. Poet Laureate, read."

Those in the Creative Writing Club urge others to join because it is a great place where students can practice creative writing, get to share and expose one another to different types of writing, and encourage each other to practice writing in their small friendly group.

With all the different kinds of stories that club members write, if it is short stories, poems, creative nonfiction, or if one just likes to read, PVCC's Creative Writing Club is the place to be.

For those who want to share their creative thoughts, make friends, and bring stories to life on paper, this is the go-to place. For questions, meeting times, or how to join, email them at literarymagazine@pvcc.edu, or club adviser Jennifer Koster at jkoster@pvcc.edu

Pickup Ultimate Frisbee Returns to PVCC

Zhaire Roberson, staff writer

John Gulley, associate professor of philosophy and staff adviser to the Ultimate Frisbee team, discussed the next steps for PVCC's Ultimate Frisbee team.

"PVCC Ultimate has been around for over ten years now, and prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, we consistently held games of casual pick-up ultimate," said Gulley.

Each year, new students join the team with a different level of skill and athleticism.

"The degree of student participation and competitiveness of our teams has varied over the years, but the goal has stayed the same," said Gulley, "Creating the opportunity for new and experienced players of all abilities to get together for pickup Ultimate."

The team works collectively to achieve their shared purpose of having fun, while also letting everyone play who wants to. The team Facebook page has further information.

In the past, the Ultimate Frisbee club traveled to other schools and tournaments to play.

"We traveled to a few tournaments years ago, and coordinated scrimmages with some university teams, but in the last few years we have just enjoyed weekly practices," said Gulley.

It is difficult for teams to practice together currently, due to the COVID-19 regulations put on sports. "We do not currently have practices and that will continue through the spring semester most likely," said Gulley, "Play will most likely return in the fall 2021 semester but sadly probably not return before then due to the COVID-19 pandemic."

Some sports teams can hold socially distanced practices while other teams, like Ultimate Frisbee, depend heavily on teammates remaining in close contact with one another and their opponents. "Socially distanced play will not work as we almost always play tight one-on-one defense," said Gulley.

In regards to trying out for the team, Gulley said, "Try-outs are not required and PVCC Ultimate is open to all. New players are especially encouraged to come out. We will teach you the basics."

Friendship and Fellowship with CRU

Evan Green, staff writer

One of the many clubs at PVCC is a Faith-based group called CRU.

CRU is a non-denominational Christian-based group. They have organized some events that happened in the past like Fall hangout/cookout on campus, movie nights, corn mazes, bowling, and Fall Retreat.

CRU member Asley McCready said, "Fall Retreat is an annual event where we all go on a retreat and stay at a camp with UVA Cru. We are gone for a weekend and students get to participate in a program and various activities."

CRU does not have any major events coming up, but they do meet every Friday at noon at Barracks Road Shopping Center in front of Five Guys to hangout and have lunch.

Plus, on Wednesdays, they have a virtual bible study.

McCready also said, "My absolute favorite thing to do is go to Panama City during spring

break, we will go and share the gospel and meet students from other schools as well."

As a group, CRU said, "Some favorite things we do as Cru are our community events and opportunities to go on Summer missions and conferences. All through the semester, we visit conferences that teach students leadership and how to share the gospel in a workplace setting, and during the summer, our students have the opportunity to live on a mission, either in the states or overseas."

CRU wanted everyone to know that "One major thing about Cru is we want to serve. We want to have served hearts and for everyone to walk away from Cru feeling like they have the tools and training to share the gospel in whatever environment they end up in."

For more information, please contact:
Student President Ashley Hovey:
ajh2598@email.vccs.edu, ashley.hovey@cru.org;
or Club Adviser: André Luck, aluck@pvcc.edu.

The Queen's Gambit Miniseries Review

Chris Kreitzman, staff writer

The plot of mini-series *The Queen's Gambit*, based on the 1983 novel by Walter Tevis, says in a Netflix description, "Abandoned and entrusted to a Kentucky orphanage in the late 1950s, a young Beth Harmon (Anya Taylor-Joy) discovers an astonishing talent for chess while developing an addiction to tranquilizers provided by the state as a sedative for the children. Haunted by her personal demons and fueled by a cocktail of narcotics and obsession, Beth transforms into an impressively skilled and glamorous outcast while determined to conquer the traditional boundaries established in the male-dominated world of competitive chess."

I needed to take a little while to fully process my feelings and know my thoughts on *The Queen's Gambit*, and without a single shred of doubt, it is one of the best things Netflix has put out this entire year.

The sole reason I was excited for this at first was because of Anya Taylor-Joy. And while she did magnificent (as she usually does), I loved everything about this show. I was surprised at how completely invested I was, and how quickly, for that matter. The plot was intriguing and the characters were likable, given their unique personalities and great chemistry between the stars. And boy was this show emotionally satisfying.

Despite playing chess, I did not think I would be interested in a show focused on the game. But every second the clock was ticking had me on edge, and that suspense is yet another thing that's nailed to absolute perfection. Even with the seemingly mundane subject, the show is engaging. Both the game itself and the events revolving around the lead character keep you wondering how each scene will play out and what will happen to the protagonist.

Speaking of that main character, I couldn't just talk about this wonderful show without mentioning the astounding Anya Taylor-Joy. As I

said previously, she's done magnificent in any film she's been a part of because of how much she dedicates to her roles, from *Split* to *Glass* to *Thoroughbreds* to *The New Mutants* to *The VVitch*, but I honestly think her role as Beth Harmon in *The Queen's Gambit* is her best performance yet. Her flaws, her struggles, her humor, her heart, and the downright incredible character development from episodes 1 to 7,

Taylor-Joy gives a great performance portraying all these traits in Beth Harmon and gives her so much life as the character is taken on a rollercoaster ride of ups and downs through each riveting episode.

This is by no means a fast paced show; It is a very slow burn, yet I still couldn't take my eyes off the screen with every episode I put on. And I wasn't the only one who adored this show. It's been getting endless praise since first premiering, such as the rare 100% score on the Rotten Tomatoes website and glowing reviews like one by The Harvard Crimon's Emi P. Cummings, saying, "Adapted from Walter Tevis' 1983



bildungsroman of the same name, the show is not a treacly melodrama; instead, it is a reinvigorated variation of a sports narrative, the sport being chess and the athlete being fictional chess prodigy Beth Harmon (embodied by the exceptional Anya Taylor-Joy). Taylor-Joy is supported by a stellar cast whose refined performances and superb chemistry present a convincing look into the 1960s chess scene. Despite being centered around an occasionally dull game, *The Queen's Gambit* is unfailingly thrilling, endearing, smart, and — somehow — a bit sexy."

The Queen's Gambit is such a fantastic, emotional, exciting, intense, cheer-worthy mini-series drama — one of the best you'll find in anything new TV-related. For those who have Netflix, it was released on Oct. 23 and is currently streaming, so I urge any subscribers to check out this show. It is definitely one not to be missed.

The Mandalorian Returns to Disney+

Ginger Hood, assistant editor

After a year of waiting, the much anticipated second season of *The Mandalorian* began its release on Disney+ on Oct. 30. With a release schedule of one episode every Friday, the eight episode season is already quickly nearing its end. Many fans had high expectations for the second season after its award winning predecessor - expectations that, so far, it has had no trouble living up to.

With all the familiar stylings of a space western, *The Mandalorian* stays thematically in line with its first season without rehashing the same plot points over again. The show balances its existing characters with new characters nicely and even introduces some familiar faces for fans of other installments in the greater Star Wars canon. The second season is generally much more involved in the existing Star Wars universe, establishing a clearer timeline for the show and losing some of the standalone feel of its previous episodes.



Photos courtesy of Disney+

However, the plot is not the only noteworthy difference. Where the first season's soundtrack was good, the second season's soundtrack is great - the original Mandalorian theme still heavily



Photos courtesy of Disney+

influences the sound, but there are plenty of other notable motifs throughout each episode. Ludwig Göransson does each scene justice with his compositions, from the soft twinkling of The Child's curiosity to the stabbing synthesizers, frantic strings, and threatening percussion of the Mandalorian's multiple fight scenes.

The new season is also visually stunning, showcasing the beautiful landscapes characteristic of Star Wars and the meticulously crafted character designs of friend and foe alike. The setting of each episode is gorgeous to look at, even on planets covered in oppressive fog or devoid of most scenery besides sand.

Additionally, the designs of the aliens populating the world of *The Mandalorian* have stepped up a notch, especially the designs of the various sentient humanoids of the galaxy's outer rim. Even the concept art shown during the credits of each episode is worth sticking around for.

Overall, *The Mandalorian's* second season lives up to the expectation set by its previous episodes, and is even higher quality in some areas. The whole show is definitely worth a watch, whether you are a fan of Star Wars or completely new to the franchise. *The Mandalorian* is available for streaming on Disney+, where the season two finale is set to be released on Dec. 18.

North Street Press Club Doesn't Disappoint

Chelsei Moore, staff writer

Imagine having a meal that is so delicious that it becomes natural to completely ignore all the empty calories being consumed. I am here to talk about the best hidden restaurant in Farmville, Virginia. This mystical place with decadent menu options, great hours, exceptional staff, and the quickest service around is called North Street Press Club. Located at 127 North Street, the building may go unnoticed (since it still proudly shows the Farmville Printing signage).

North Street Press Club, locally known as Press, has boosted its standards for cleanliness and safety with new VDH Guidelines to combat COVID-19. These measures include marking off certain tables and seating areas to maintain social distancing, requiring all guests to enter wearing masks, and setting up sanitizing stations for patrons. The hostess even displayed a lovely example of how to dress when coming in to dine. The staff has even implemented a checkpoint out front to ensure the rules are being met.

With multicultural menu options that range



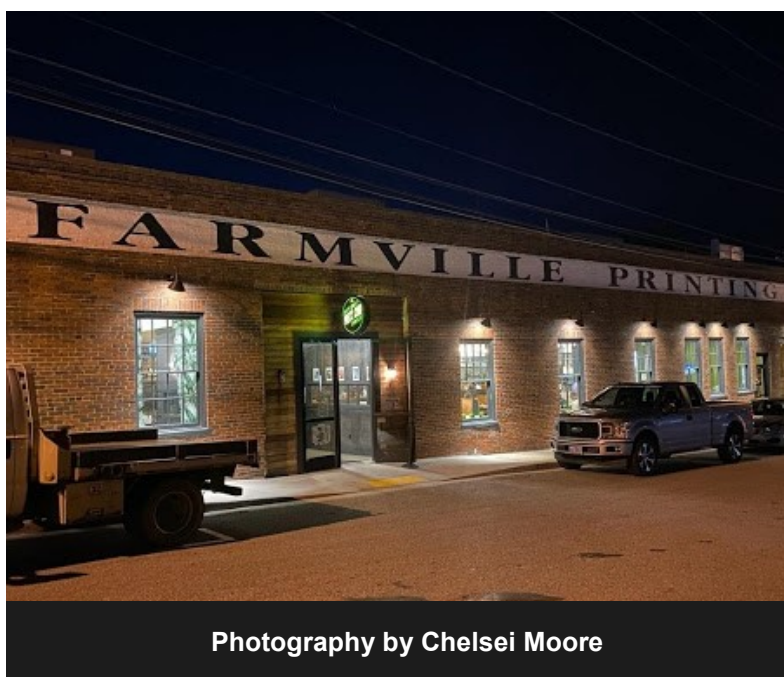
Photography by Chelsei Moore

from juicy, flavorful cheeseburgers to honey sriracha infused salmon, the menu will not disappoint even the pickiest of eaters. For those who have a favorable pallet for kimchi, I would recommend the Big Bang Chicken Sandwich (\$12). It is a beautifully golden fried chicken breast with a drizzle of honey sriracha, topped with a kimchi slaw to die for, on a brioche bun with sriracha mayo and candied peppers, served up with your choice of waffle or crinkle cut fries.

For those who have visited, it would be an injustice not to mention how beautiful the kitchen is set up. The display of tropical plants and sleek chrome appliances is truly a sight to acknowledge.

The next time you're in the Farmville area, I guarantee if you stop by you will not be disappointed. As I mentioned before, North Street Press Club has the best hours, service, staff, and food around. Do not hesitate to stop by.

Their hours are Monday-Saturday 11 a.m. to 10:30 p.m.; Sunday 9:30 a.m. to



Photography by Chelsei Moore

Lime Leaf: Thai Food Worth Talking About

Zhaire Roberson, staff writer

As COVID-19 continues to disrupt the country and people yearn for normalcy, it is no surprise that eating establishments have opened up. Many restaurant owners hope to gain back lost business to stay afloat. Most restaurants have taken a big hit since the start of the pandemic and as a result have either cut back on portion sizes or increased the prices of their food. Lime Leaf Thai Restaurant is not one of those restaurants.



Photography by Zhaire Roberson

I ordered some carry out from Lime Leaf Thai Restaurant this week and was more than happy with the quality of the food, the pricing, and the portion size. I ordered my carry out over the phone, which was very easy and efficient. You can place your order by calling 434-245-8884, or by visiting their website: limeleafsiam.com. My food was ready within 15 minutes of calling in my order, and all I had to do was go into the restaurant and pay. Lime Leaf Thai is not like most Thai restaurants in Charlottesville; it has a variety of authentic Thai dishes at an affordable price. Entrees range from \$11 to \$29, while small plates and appetizers range from \$4 to \$10.

The restaurant is nestled between Tropical Smoothie and Skrimp Shack in the Rio Hill Shopping Center off Route 29. The address is 1958 Rio Hill Center, Charlottesville, Va. 22901. From the outside, the restaurant looks ordinary,

however, upon entering the friendly staff greet the customer. The staff is accommodating, and they will ensure that each person walks out of their establishment with everything they want.

Lime Leaf Thai Restaurant offers lunch 11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Tuesdays through Saturdays. Lunch is offered from noon to 2:30 p.m. on Sundays. Dinner hours are 5 p.m.- 9:00 p.m. Tuesday - Sunday. On Mondays, Lime Leaf is closed.

Although indoor seating is closed and tables are pushed back, there is no doubt that customers' eyes will still be drawn to the huge airbrushed paintings which make up most of the wall decor in the restaurant. The aroma of bay leaves and other herbs fill the space. The ambient music that plays throughout the entire eatery is soothing and creates an incredibly relaxing atmosphere for all who enter the restaurant. The restaurant is clean and has an open floor plan.

This week, I got the Stir-Fried Noodles with beef. It cost \$12 and it was prepared and executed beautifully. Stir-Fried Noodles is a noodle dish that is made with wide rice noodles that are stir-fried in a light brown sauce with broccoli and egg. It sounds very simple, but when all the ingredients come together they are perfectly balanced. The sweetness of the brown sauce combined with the savory egg and seasoned broccoli creates a very light flavor. The grilled smokiness of the beef combined with the sweetness of the noodles creates an explosion of goodness in the mouth. The dish does not contain any peanuts and is not spicy at all. Spice can be added, upon request. The portion of the dish is quite large, and I actually could not eat it all in one sitting. I saved half of it for the next day. I reheated it in my nonstick pan, and it was just as good.

Overall, I give Lime Leaf four stars. The restaurant is excellent not only by food quality standards but also by cleanliness standards. The food is consistently good and affordable. The atmosphere is extremely positive; the staff is not only helpful but also kind, and the service is brilliant. The only thing that would make Lime Leaf better is if they had curbside pick up or were on a food delivery app like GrubHub or UberEats.

COMIC!

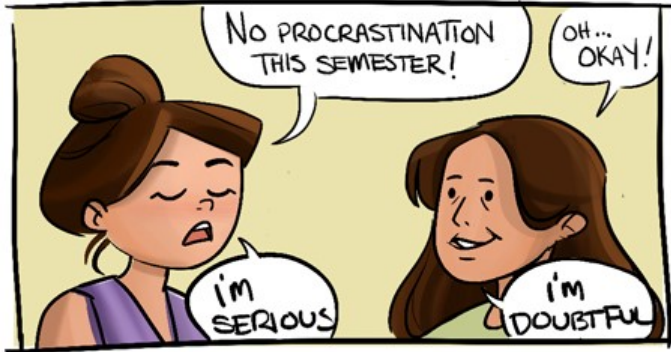
the Forum



COMIC!

the Forum

AUGUST 2020



NOVEMBER 2020

HEY, DON'T YOU HAVE HOMEWORK DUE TONIGHT?



OHHHHH.....



LZ20

Classifieds



The PVCC Literary Magazine, *The Fall Line*, is accepting submissions!

Sponsored by Writers Unite, the PVCC Creative Writing Club

The PVCC Literary Magazine, *The Fall Line*, is now accepting submissions for our Spring 2021 edition. We are accepting original poetry, fiction, and creative nonfiction, including graphic narratives. **Submissions MUST follow the guidelines below to be considered. The last day to submit work is Monday, January 18, 2021, at 11:59pm.** Here are the guidelines:

- We will accept a MAXIMUM of 10, double-spaced pages of prose [creative fiction, creative nonfiction, and/or comics] and/or three poems per person. All prose should be written in 12-pt font, double-spaced, with one-inch margins.
- Submissions should have a title page with the name of the work, its genre [short story, creative nonfiction, poem, graphic narrative], writer's name, email, and phone number. *Please give all work titles. The writer's name should appear on the title page only; the title of the work MUST appear on the work.*
- Work must be submitted electronically via your VCCS email through [the link](#) sent to students' VCCS email address and posted on the "Writers Unite PVCC" Facebook page. **THIS FORM CAN ONLY BE ACCESSED THROUGH A VCCS EMAIL ADDRESS.**
- Submit files as .doc, .docx, or .rtf, and .bmp, .tiff, or .png if an image. Work will be accepted from *current* PVCC students only.
- Submissions must be wholly the individual's work. Submitting work to this contest gives PVCC Writers Unite non-exclusive rights to publish the work, royalty free, on its webpages and in the literary magazine, *The Fall Line*. Writers retain the rights to their work and are free to seek publication elsewhere.

Questions? Contact us at literarymagazine@pvcc.edu.



Check us out on social media

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The Forum offers classified space to the PVCC community free of charge. Please send announcements along with full name, email, and phone number to: twhyte@pvcc.edu.

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