



New VCCS Chancellor Dr. David Doré visits PVCC

Explore California
with the Geology
Club, pages 10-11

Benjamin Marcus, staff writer

On April 6, the new chancellor of the Virginia Community College System (VCCS) Dr. David Doré visited PVCC and met with students in the Bolick Student Center between 10:30 a.m. and 11:30 a.m.

PVCC was the fourth school Chancellor Doré visited after taking up the position on April 3. Doré is scheduled to visit all 23 community colleges in the VCCS before the end of the spring semester.

Students, faculty, and staff gathered in rows of seats in the Student Center with Doré standing at the front with a microphone. “One of the things that are really important to me as the chancellor of the system is that the system elevates the voices of you, students,” Doré said as he opened the discussion.

The first question came from the Student Government Association Treasurer Malcolm

James, who asked about the neglected maintenance of college buildings. Doré explained that the issue James was discussing was deferred maintenance (maintenance that has to be postponed due to lack of resources) and talked more about his responsibilities as chancellor to explain how he might go about dealing with the problem. “One of my key roles is I am the advocate of this system with the general assembly, with the governor, with our partners,” he said. Doré expressed his intention to assess the maintenance of all buildings in the VCCS in the near future.

Other topics of discussion included pay for teachers, mental health services, veteran students, and the increasingly diverse student body of Virginia community colleges. Throughout the discussion, Doré emphasized the importance of creating a good structure for communication in the VCCS to make sure students’ voices are

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Chancellor David Doré talks with students gathered in the Bolick Student Center. Photo courtesy of Nathan DuPriest

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DATES TO REMEMBER

— **Science Symposium *** —

April 28, 12:15-1:15 p.m., North Mall Meeting Room

— **Sentence: Flying in Place III *** —

April 28 & 29, 7:30 p.m., April 30, 2:30 p.m.,
Dickinson Building Main Stage

— **Spring Fling *** —

May 1, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., East Lawn Patio

— **Early College Scholars Ceremony *** —

May 4, 6:30 p.m., William Monroe High School,
Greene County

— **PVCC Pottery Club: Bowls & Bunuelos** —

May 5, 4:30-6:30 p.m., Dickinson Building

— **Spring 2023 Exam Week** —

May 2-8

— **Radiography Pinning Ceremony *** —

May 9, 6 p.m., Dickinson Building Main Stage

— **Sonography Pinning Ceremony *** —

May 10, 6 p.m., Dickinson Building Main Stage

— **Nursing Pinning Ceremony *** —

May 12, 1 p.m., John Paul Jones Arena

— **50th Commencement Ceremony *** —

May 12, 6 p.m., John Paul Jones Arena

— **10-week Summer Classes Begin** —

May 22

— **Memorial Day: College Closed, No Classes** —

May 22

— **Juneteenth: College Closed, No Classes** —

June 23

— **Independence Day: College Closed, No Classes** —

July 4

— **Fall 2023 16-week Classes Begin** —

August 21

*Free Event ^Student Vouchers Available

Editor's Note

Makenzie McCoy, assistant editor

When I first began attending PVCC, I was 16, a dual-enrollment student, and didn't really know what I wanted out of a college experience. However, I was certain that I had a passion for writing and wanted to pursue it.

During my first semester, I earned my first three credits in ENG 111. The following semester in the Fall of 2022, I enrolled in ENG 112 but was eager to try a type of writing that I hadn't before. After meeting with an adviser, I decided that I wanted to give journalism a try and enrolled in ENG 121 as well.

Over the span of the 16-week course, I gained a substantial amount of knowledge and experience that has already taken me incredibly far in pursuing a career in journalism. Professor of English Dr. Tamara Whyte has taught and supported me since the day that I first stepped into her classroom for ENG 121, and I could not be more thankful. I am excited to see what is to come for me in my career and will always give attribution and gratitude to PVCC and *The Forum*.



Makenzie McCoy
Photography by Makenzie McCoy



Student Government Association News

Will you make a difference?



Student Government Association (SGA)
Recruiting 2023-2024 Executive Officers
Applications Accepted Until Filled
Priority Deadline May 8



PVCC Community Celebrates Student Success

Makenzie McCoy, assistant editor

On April 17, students, faculty, and proud families gathered in the V. Earl Dickinson Building to attend the nineteenth-annual academic and leadership award convocation. This event is held yearly to honor PVCC students and the achievements that they have made over the school year.

Attendees were warmly welcomed during the opening introduction speech, given by PVCC's President Dr. Jean Runyon. "Students often say that their accomplishments are due to those who supported them during their journey, and our faculty and staff are among the best," said Runyon during her introduction.

Over the span of the convocation, awards and recognition were given to students, starting with academic awards, followed by student leadership awards. These announcements were followed by the recognition of scholarship recipients before announcing the PVCC Distinguished Student Award.

The distinguished student award was established in 1994 to recognize students who demonstrate leadership and engagement at the college and is the highest award that PVCC gives. The recipient of this award was the president of the Student Government Association, Hadrien Padilla, who gave a speech to show his gratitude. "As a final thank you, I'd like to shout out to my

delightful friends who have been there with me every step of the way," said Padilla after giving thanks to several students and faculty.

The academic and leadership awards convocation was closed by a short speech given by Runyon. "We wish you continued success in your educational journeys, and you'll always be a part of PVCC," said Runyon.



Hadrien Padilla
Screenshot of Awards Ceremony Recording

Chancellor, continued from page 1



Dr. Doré visits BIO 256 lab.
Photo courtesy of Nathan DuPriest

heard and of forming partnerships with local businesses to augment the student experience.

In an interview after the discussion, Doré also explained his plans to incorporate new technology into both better-serving students and the material being taught to students.

Doré finished the event by thanking students for their questions and re-expressing how important their voices are to him and the VCCS. He said, "You are the heart and soul of what we do. You are why we exist."

PVCC's Stormwater Program Plants a Forest

Shazila Nadia Muzafar Shah, assistant editor

If you have been to the PVCC main campus lately, you may have noticed the hundreds of white stick-like items jutting out from the ground in certain areas. If you look closer, these white sticks are being used to support the new trees that have been planted by PVCC's Facilities team. These trees are being planted for PVCC's Stormwater Program which started on March 15 this year and has been completed for this municipal separate storm sewer system (MS4) permit cycle which ends this October.

One of the goals of implementing the MS4 Stormwater Program is to improve the water quality of local waterways, which helps bigger water systems such as the Chesapeake Bay. As PVCC's MS4 discharges stormwater runoff to surface waters, this program ensures that PVCC's impact on the waterways are minimal, as regulated under the Clean Water Act, so that there is the least negative effect on waters possible.

According to PVCC's Multimedia Design Specialist Nathan DuPriest, the PVCC Facilities team, in consultation with H2R Engineering, have planted 836 native trees such as white oaks, silver maples and gray dogwoods. The trees, which come from a local Department of Forestry nursery, are dispersed randomly throughout the plots instead of by species. Planting these trees



helps reduce the amount of silt and illicit discharges that may get washed away by stormwater discharge.

PVCC Facilities Manager Kim McManus said, "There is a total of 2.01 acres in three parcels: between the new Woodrow Bolick Advanced Training Center and the property line along Interstate 64; in meadow behind the Keats Science Building; on the slope between parking lots 3 and 4." In the years to come, these plots of land will hopefully become flourishing forests.

Visit the PVCC website to learn more about PVCC's efforts and the Stormwater Program, or contact McManus at kmcmanus@pvcc.edu to learn more about or to give input on the MS4 Program Plan.



The Fairy Tales Behind the Stage

Azin Peymani, staff writer

The Drama Club of PVCC presented *The Brothers Grimm Spectaculathon* as the 2023 Spring show on April 7 and 8 in the evenings at V. Earl Dickinson Main Stage Theatre. The show was about fairy tales in modern life as a fun, exciting comedy. The cast and crew were PVCC student volunteers. The student leaders were able to find ways to use talented students efficiently. Backstage, everyone was occupied with something. There was a special bond, teamwork, and communication between everyone at tech nights when the technical team and cast partnered before the main show.

In a brief interview with Emily Thomas Clarke and Becelia Gabriela (Gaby), the first-time director duo, said their success for partnership was the result of communication, listening and creating a trustworthy space with their crew. Making decisions and ordering their crew seemed much easier and less stressful, but they chose the harder way: asking, listening and paying attention to everyone's opinion. They focused on finding each individual's talent.

The director team and stage manager were able to educate their team about each student's rights and the policies of the theater. They reminded their cast about each person's preferred name and pronunciation as a sign of respect. During challenges, their self-awareness by using breathing techniques behind the stage at tech nights to relax their minds and lead respectfully was impressive.

Sidney Lyons, one of the actors, shared their frustration at the beginning of the show when they didn't know others. But quickly they were able to create bonds with others and make friends. Sidney said, "I am mostly shy and quiet, and my first act onstage felt scary but made me gain passion to be louder and built more confidence."

Luis (Tony) Meras Lizardo, another actor, said, "I wish we had more than two nights to perform." He continued, "The quick bond between the crew was the result of mutual goal and care for show success, that led everyone to put their 100 percent." He shared that his ideas and comments were validated, respected, and taken seriously by the leaders.

Rory Adams enjoyed costuming the crew as well as acting. This was his first costuming experience. He had to use creativity in making decisions for everyone's costume, though his crew's confidence was very important. He said, "I needed to make sure the team can trust me over their bodies and insecurities. This opportunity helped me get out of my shell more." He continued, "I felt much better after the show." He spent time with the actors and the director team and created colorful, funny, and old-modern fashion mix costumes for the crew.

Head makeup artist Lou Marshall shared that trust and safety was important for them. Lou said, "Some of the actors never had the makeup experience before and building trust was important in order for the crew to accept the makeup offer."

Lou believed the cooperation between costuming and the listening ability from directors and stage manager was their key to success.

They said, "At the start of the process, everything was a mess and with mutual respect and communication, the show ended up more professional and satisfying." Lou continued, "I miss everyone already. I made new friends, and this experience made me love theater and created more passion towards theater makeup."



The cast of *The Brothers Grimm Spectaculathon*
Photo courtesy of Azin Peymani

Voices from Within: *Sentence: Flying in Place III*

Brian Zhang, staff writer

America has the most imprisoned people in the world, followed by China, Brazil, and India. Within the United States, Virginia has the highest incarceration rate. Inmates are paid less than a dollar an hour and pay up to a dollar to spend 5 minutes on the phone with their families. *Sentence: Flying in Place III* is a performance based on the creative writings of inmates in the PVCC Higher Education in Prison Program. It is the third installment in a series first conceived last spring under the leadership of Dean of Humanities, Fine Arts, and Social Sciences Leonda Keniston and English Professor Ben Sloan, who will be performing in the ensemble.

The show will consist of multiple episodes or “frames,” curated by Associate Professor of Theater Arts and Director Brad Stoller, Co-director LaTasha Strother, or one of the cast members. Together, the frames seek to share the experience of being incarcerated through a multi-disciplinary presentation.

I was invited to watch a rehearsal of an untitled frame curated and coordinated by PVCC student Azin Peymani, which is focused on the theme of self forgiveness. An essay written by an anonymous inmate was narrated by student Ava Peymani while Azin produced a stunning, if somber, vocal accompaniment. Other members of the cast complemented the essay’s inner conflict with freeform choreography, creating another layer of emotion.

Through this original presentation of essays and poems written by incarcerated students, Azin hopes the audience can take away an “empathy for individuals we can’t relate to, and use that ability in everyday life.” She described the artistic process as therapeutic, providing both a medium of empathy and an outlet for her negative emotions. The cast has spent many months planning and

rehearsing the various episodes, but Azin’s frame in particular will be a live performance wherein movements and vocals are freestyled.

The ensemble was clearly very talented. With the frames presented in sequence, they hope to capture experiences from dining to mail, transportation to visitation. As Stoller put it, “We’re following a progression of the experiences a prisoner goes through from being booked to the time they’re released.” By definition, the lives of inmates are hidden from those on the outside. The performers here hope to expand awareness and compassion for those incarcerated, many of whom are PVCC students like those going to campus or taking online classes.

Sentence: Flying in Place III will take place on the Dickinson Main Stage free to all on April 28 and 29 at 7:30 p.m., and April 30 at 2:30 p.m.



Photography by Brian Zhang

Deliberative Dialogue Fosters Democracy

Emily Moss, staff writer

On March 21, students, professors, and administrative staff gathered to participate in a Deliberative Dialogue together. Part of this experience involved learning effective communication with emphasis upon seeking common ground. While previous dialogues have involved topics like gun control in the United States, healthcare, and an abundance of other pressing current topics, the recent dialogue focused on freedom of speech on college campuses and, innately, addressed mitigating harm on campuses. This topic emphasized that some forms of free speech may involve hate speech, which participants learned is a protected form of free speech in the United States, despite the damage it can cause to culture and society in a broader sense.

The opening of the dialogue, led by PVCC Professor of English Jennifer Koster and Director of Library Services Crystal Newell, addressed the format of the event and how participants were expected to proceed in their deliberation of the issue. Next, participants split into small groups to dive into a discussion that incorporated their own experiences and knowledge, delving deeper thanks to descriptions of solutions and their effects.

Among the three solutions there was a common theme: balancing the protection of students and constitutionally-assured access to freedom of speech and expression. The proposed solutions were nuanced in nature.

As the discussions continued, it became evident that the goal of deliberation is not to come up with a definitive answer to a difficult issue. Rather, deliberation is used to better define a previously overgrown path of understanding, shaping newfound understandings of needs, personal stakes, and unifying themes among participants whose experiences may otherwise differ greatly. Koster and Newell urged participants to identify the solution that best

encompassed the results of the deliberation among each group. Next, the groups reunited to discuss the outcomes of their discussions.

During this experience, I had the honor of leading one of these deliberation groups. My group spent time discussing ourselves. In our group, PVCC President Dr. Jean Runyon aided in our decision making, joining us as a peer and sharing her perspective, describing the ways in which protecting and fostering diversity within the campus community sits at the core of her role as president.

We pondered the three outcomes while incorporating our own identities into our conversation. Why did this issue matter to us? Why did some hypothetical solutions or outcomes matter to us more than others? What did this indicate about our individual identities? We contemplated our stake and found common ground to unify us further as we moved through our reflection of the difficult issue at hand. At the start we

split into homogenous groups made up of many identities that were acknowledged and valued. Once we reunited as one large group, we discovered that other groups had shared both our paths in our discussions and our feelings on the issues at hand.

It is evident that students want to occupy educational spaces wherein their thinking, exploration of new ideas, and discovery of self is uninhibited but simultaneously protected from harm. The deliberation groups collectively agreed that any enabled manifestations of hatred or violence on college campuses are inherently oppositional to the fundamental purpose of an educational institution.

This experience shed new light on the importance of students' input on the function of their college. It also illuminated the power students hold in decision making. Being able to deliberate a complex issue alongside faculty and administrators allowed both sides to discover how issues uniquely impact us all, based upon our interconnected roles within a system.



Photography by Emily Moss

Surprise Party Celebrates Surprise Friendships

Seb Harper, Student Writer

A gym is not a typical place for a party. But wherever there is good company and good food, a good party can be held. This idea was proven by the birthday party for Lucinda Riley on Thursday, April 13. Lucinda, who turned 75, is a student at both PVCC and UVA and a wonderful friend. During the P.E. class last fall semester, she was one of the students that pumped everyone up and made the class one of the best I have taken.

With such a close friendship between classmates, it was no wonder that we were delighted to throw her a birthday party. Our beloved P.E. teacher, Christie Graf, adjunct instructor of physical education, and Lucinda's daughter, Lisa, helped spearhead the surprise party.

Upon my arrival at the gym, Graf rushed me into the office to make a card for Lucinda. The eleven of us all waited for Lisa to bring her mother in for the surprise, creating an air of excitement and anticipation.

Graf set up a table, topped with her own homemade chocolate cake, many fruit plates, and a selection of cookies. Before the party began, we were milling around the gym, hoping that if Lucinda happened to see us, she would think we were just exercising.

Finally, Lucinda appeared, fantastically dressed as always, and we sang "Happy Birthday." Lucinda teared up but maintained

composure and blew out her candles.

The birthday was a two-fold surprise. Not only did we surprise Lucinda with the birthday party, but Lisa surprised Graf with a gift. The work she did to make our P.E. class inviting and wonderful was not overlooked. While we ate cake, someone turned on some music. Holding our plates in our hands, we all started dancing.

Graf's closing words were "Aging is when you limit yourself."



Lucinda blowing out her candles
Photo courtesy of Nathan DuPriest



From right to left: Nicholas LaCasse, Jay Rinaldi, Lewis Tate, Max Goetting, Sage Ebelherr, Joseph Wells, Tony Lizaro, Lisa Gladwell, Lucinda Riley, Christie Graf, Seb Harper, Keabetswe Leshoe
Photo courtesy of Nathan DuPriest



PVCC Students and SJ State students at Pushawalla Canyon Oasis. Photo courtesy of Callan Bentley



Faculty at the Fish Creek Sturtzstrom Photo courtesy of Raymond Hess



PVCC Students and Faculty at Fish Creek Sturtzstrom. Photo courtesy of Kimberly Blisniuk



Students making field observations a



Professor Kim Blisniuk gives a short lecture at Burns-Pinon Research Station. Photo courtesy of Callan Bentley

PVCC Geology Meets Southern California

Caroline Kenney and Rebekah Carroll, staff writers

On the afternoon of March 4, 12 PVCC students boarded a plane bound for Los Angeles. Accompanied by a team of faculty from various schools, they set out to spend Spring Break studying the rich geologic history of Southern California.

The field course was led by PVCC's Associate Professor of Geology Callan Bentley. In past years, Bentley has run field courses in various parts of the country through Northern Virginia Community College and last year took PVCC students to Death Valley. The PVCC team was joined by Professor Kim Blisniuk of San Jose State University, along with six of her graduate students. They were also joined by Professor Edith Rojas of the College of the Desert, Alan Pitts of the U.S. Geological Survey, and Tom Biggs, who is a retired geology professor from UVA.

Through their exploration of Southern California, students learned not only how to piece together the deeply fascinating geologic history of the region but also how geologists conduct field research. Students developed field journals with detailed sketches and extensive notes, asked questions and developed hypotheses, and collaborated with faculty and their peers to come to conclusions.

Although the purpose of this trip was to delve into Southern California's rich geological history, the attending students brought with them a variety of interests including ecology, archaeology, and paleontology. Thus, each student brought a unique perspective to the table. Prior to the trip, students completed a pre-trip research presentation which they used to study a topic of their choice and examine the ways it contributed to Southern California's natural history. Topics included the native cultures of Coachella Valley, the paleontological history of Southern California, and many different aspects of the geologic history of the area. Students were also expected to complete a post-trip research project to demonstrate their understanding of the region's geology and to discuss the aspects of the trip that fascinated them the most.

Aside from their studies, the students were able to spend the week experiencing the unique natural beauty of Southern California by exploring areas such as Joshua Tree National Park, Anza-Borrego Desert State Park, La Brea tar pits, the Salton Sea, the San Andreas Fault, and much more.

Taking this course and experiencing the world being used as a classroom has been an important part of the educational journey of many students. Mara Cox, president of the PVCC Geology Club, said, "Trips like these expand students' horizons in many ways. Whether a student is aiming to study geology or not, they are able to leave these trips with a better respect for the Earth and our place in it."

The PVCC students returned home from a week full of adventures, fond memories, and new friends. Thanks to the faculty who made this trip possible, students can expect to see more field courses like this happening in the future. Moving forward, plans have been set in place for a field course to run in El Paso Texas Spring 2024.



at Rattlesnake Canyon. Photo courtesy of Mara Cox

Warrior Scholar Project in North Carolina

Johnson Li, staff writer

In summer 2022, veterans and current military students participated in the Warrior Scholar Project at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC-Chapel Hill). Warrior-Scholar Project (WSP) is a nonprofit organization that equips service members and veterans for success in higher education.

According to the Warrior-Scholar Project website, they “host intensive, one- and two-week college-preparatory academic boot camps in three disciplines: Humanities, STEM, and Business & Entrepreneurship.” WSP has partnered with 20 different four-year institutions to host their academic boot camps. The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill exclusively taught humanity courses to participants for one week.

The UNC-Chapel Hill campus was a beautiful place to live and learn. Participants were allowed to dorm with other WSP students, providing an opportunity to make friends, and food was provided for free at the Chase Dining Hall

Monday was the initial start of unit one, where WSP students were assigned readings to complete by the end of Sunday. WSP students were also given an essay about democracy that they needed to complete by Friday. Each day, there was a new instructor to lecture students on different topics that were related to history and American government. During the day, WSP students were given designated hours to work with writing instructors and tutors to receive help for their essays.

Dr. Hilary Edwards Lithgow was the writing instructor at WSP University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and has taught WSP for several years. Dr. Lithgow enjoys helping out military and veteran students through the WSP program. She recalled a WSP student that wrote an essay draft that reflected most of the WSP students' work ethic towards education. Dr. Lithgow said, “As he [the student] explained when he handed in the paper, he sought the strongest and most thorough possible criticism of his work in order to be able to learn and improve as much as he possibly could during the time we had. He wanted to make the most of every minute and sentence.” In Dr. Lithgow’s mind, military and veteran students that participated in her WSP boot camp are hard working and make all of their time in the classroom productive

Working side by side with Dr. Lithgow was a University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Ph.D. candidate named Erik Maloney. On his experience working with WSP students, Dr. Maloney said, “A WSP classroom is not just teachers and students, but a team working together, dedicating their highest and most earnest efforts to understanding ideas that matter, listening attentively and reading well, carving out their places in debates of the deepest significance to humans and to the history of democracy.”

The boot camp ended with a course reception. Participants who had successfully passed the academic boot camp were awarded a WSP pin by their fellows. Instructors were present to celebrate the accomplishment of their participants.



WSP UNC classroom lecture. Photography by Renata Schmidt

Navigating the Challenges of Math

Luca Gett, staff writer

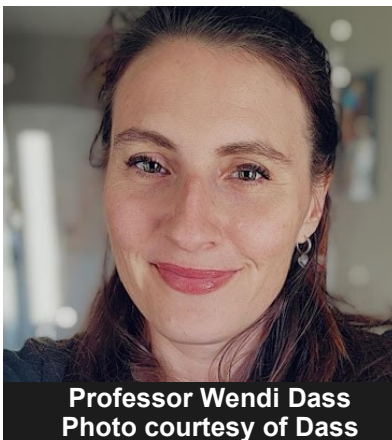
Dr. Wendi Dass, professor of mathematics, began teaching at PVCC in 2010. Originally from Northern Virginia, Dass said she was drawn to mathematics because she felt comfortable with it. Her interest was solidified by what she described as some great experiences with her math professors. She received her Bachelor of Science in mathematics and Bachelor of Arts in music from the University of Mary Washington, her Master of Science in mathematics from the University of Virginia, and her Doctorate of Education in mathematics education from the University of Virginia.

Dass described her teaching style as stressing conceptual understanding and active learning. These fundamentals are tied together in what she considers to be the most important aspect of her teaching style: collaborative work. She said, “I like to be creative with my assignments and make them fun.” Her students are familiar with moving chairs and pushing tables together to work on group assignments. Some students benefit from active explanation of certain concepts, and others from having concepts repeated to them from a student’s perspective.

Just as important as her teaching style is how she develops relationships with her students. MTH 154: Quantitative Reasoning, a course commonly used to fulfill one of the mathematics requirements for humanities majors, presents her with the challenge of connecting with less math-oriented students.

“It’s interesting. I guess it’s like teaching any other course in some respects; there are a lot of people in that class who don’t like math or who you have to work with more to improve their confidence with it. It’s a matter of confidence in that class, more so than with other classes,” Dass said.

The same can be said for students that struggle in her courses. “I try to work with them one-to-one, more personally. I think I give them more attention to be honest,” Dass said when asked about her approach to challenging students.



Serving as the chair, Dass has also been faced with challenges unique to the math department. “I think we’re trying to work more on entry-level courses, particularly entry-level courses like precalc, both at the system level as well as with things like placement,” she said.

The recent removal of the Virginia Placement Test (VPT) from PVCC admissions has changed the way students are

placed in mathematics courses. “We’re definitely seeing more issues with underprepared students,” Dass said when asked about any issues that arose with this change.

Another challenge has been advertising the difficulty of MTH 167: Precalculus with Trigonometry, a five-credit course with a high fail rate. As it is a critical component for many STEM major requirements, ensuring the success of the many students that take the course has been difficult. Dass said, “Right now, we’re advising more students to take it in two semesters as MTH 161 and MTH 162.”

As for the courses she enjoys teaching the most, Dass loves any components of the calculus series. “I think I like the content; for many students, it’s completely new, and it’s fun to introduce something to them the first time. Whereas in the precalc I know many have seen the course content before. It’s nice to get them interested in something,” she said.

In her free time, Dass, a published author, enjoys writing. She said, “I mostly write women’s fiction and general fiction. I also like to write short stories. Those are more literary short stories.” Dass also stays connected with her interest in music, as she recently returned to singing in The Oratorio Society of Virginia choir. She has a daughter, Sabine, from whom her students occasionally receive constructive feedback in crayon and colored pencil.

Those interested in taking a course with Dass in the future can contact her at wdass@pvcc.edu for more information. Currently, she is set to teach MTH 154: Quantitative Reasoning and MTH 267: Differential Equations in the upcoming fall semester of 2023.

A Book to Turn Anyone off Reading

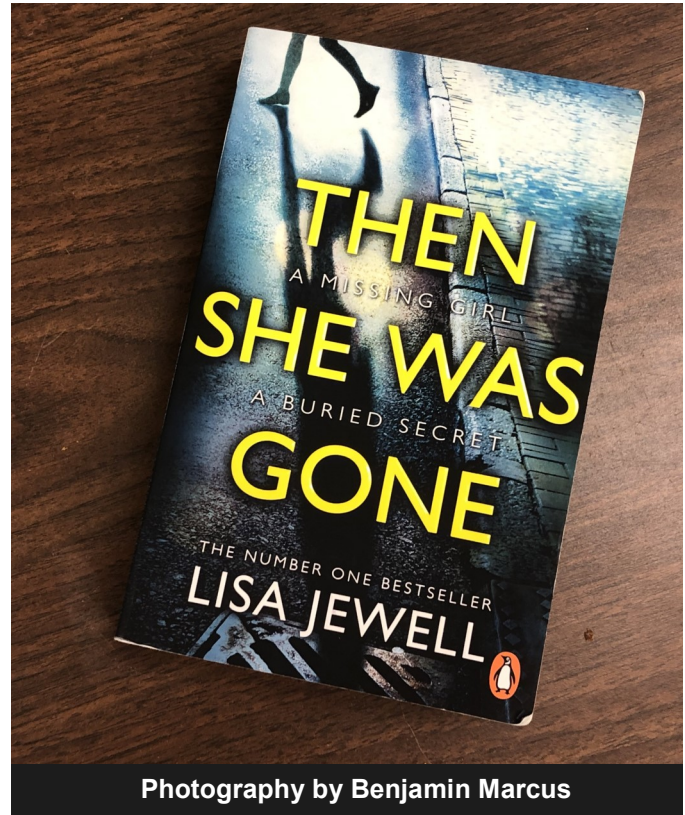
Phoebe Hayashi, staff writer

While not all bestsellers are horribly written books, *Then She Was Gone*, by Lisa Jewell, (originally published 2017, republished 2022) is one of those books that gives modern bestsellers a bad reputation. Unfortunately, like most bestsellers, the blurb was written to make the book sound interesting – and, due to the nature of the book, sound like a completely different book. In short, the PVCC Book Club was completely conned.

Centered around the mysterious disappearance of 15-year-old Ellie, the focus of the book is on Ellie’s bitter mother, Laurel. At the beginning of the novel, distraught at the disappearance of her favorite and youngest child of three, Laurel is living alone ten years after Ellie’s disappearance, having distanced herself from her remaining family. And then, of course, she meets a handsome man who has a young daughter who is the splitting image of Laurel’s missing Ellie.

From there the mystery attempts to take off: what happened to Ellie? Will this book have any character development? Did Ellie really run away like the police thought? Why is Laurel such an unlikeable character? What does Laurel’s handsome suitor have to do with Ellie? Did the person who wrote the blurb read the book beforehand?

The blurb made it sound like the book was centered on the mystery of Ellie’s disappearance, but not too long in, it seemed pretty clear what had happened to Ellie. There was no mystery to keep me reading, and I certainly was not going to stay for the two-dimensional characters. The premise turned my stomach, and everything in the book seemed a little stereotypical for my taste. Ellie was pretty with a popular boyfriend, so she is the one who disappears. Laurel is so traumatized by Ellie’s disappearance that she no longer appears to care for her remaining kids. However, she still panics when she goes to her other daughter’s house and finds it empty. So, logically enough, she proceeds to call all the phone numbers she has for that daughter. But when her daughter answers, Laurel hangs up without saying anything. Essentially, Laurel plays the part of a traumatized but loving mother who fails to express her feelings and then does not



Photography by Benjamin Marcus

understand why her kids do not like her. If I wanted to read stereotypes like this, I would read *Le Morte D’Arthur*, which at least has literary merit.

I was assured by my Book Club compatriots who did manage to make it to the end that the ending was very predictable and that the book read like a Colleen Hoover book (and not in a good way). Some thought that it had tipped over the edge from terrible to “it’s so bad that it’s really entertaining.” I would argue, however, that it fell straight into the pit of “it’s so bad that I don’t know how it got published.”

Probably the only saving grace of this book is that it is really easy to read, not that it saved the book for me. I blew through the first 54 pages in less than 30 minutes, partly because of the writing, but mostly because the font was big and the chapters were arranged to take up a lot of space.

If you are debating between removing your wisdom teeth and reading this book, I would suggest removing your wisdom teeth. At least at the end of the procedure, something productive will have occurred to offset all that pain.

I Can't Believe Sonic Freaking Died

Seb Harper, staff writer

Sega's Sonic the Hedgehog franchise has been floundering for a while. What was once a new and fresh mascot to rival Nintendo's Mario has languished in the post 3D platform era. While Sega tries again and again to capture the old magic that once won the hearts and minds of kids in the 90s, they have never been able to quite get their games to feel right. Many of their 3D games languish with mixed reviews on Metacritic.

That is until now.

Released on March 31 in what could have been the most disappointing April Fools prank, *The Murder of Sonic the Hedgehog* turned into one of the best reviewed Sonic games on Steam and has generally favorable reviews on Metacritic.

The gameplay is not what you expect for a Sonic game. There is very little “going fast,” and it is not an action-packed game. Instead, it is a visual novel with light runner-game elements. The charm of the game is immediately captured by the art style and the writing. Even the sound design helps push the tone of fun and absurdity. The game is humorous while being just the right amount of cheesy; you can tell that the creators of the game love Sonic.

According to Katie Chrzanowski, the social media manager for Sonic the Hedgehog, this game was a passion project by a small group of

friends within Sega.

From the *Family Guy* pose that Sonic takes as he lays on the ground to the blank look

your character has despite what is going on, the physical humor shines through. The characters also stand out, with their own quirks and eccentricities taking center stage. While many 3D Sonic games languish in clunky gameplay, by removing that gameplay, the artists allowed the characters and humor to speak for themselves.

Dispersed throughout the game are minigames where you are Sonic constantly running down a path with randomly generated obstacles. This is the main character's game that they turn to when they are out of ideas. It helps them “Think like Sonic.” It gets harder as the game progresses but stays relatively in the background and is not the best part of the experience. This minigame can be gimmicky and can interrupt the flow of the gameplay but not enough to take away from the experience of the whole.

While we might not get another gem like this, I do hope Sega pays attention to the love with which the game was made with and received. Hopefully, Sega will allow more of these passion projects in the future.

The game can be downloaded for free on Steam. As of writing, it has overwhelmingly positive reviews with over thirteen thousand Steam reviews. On Metacritic, it has a eighty-four critic score and 8.7 user score.



AMY

Someone murdered my darling Sonic!

The iconic *Family Guy* pose. Photo courtesy of Sega

Fast Fashion is out, Sustainability is in

Adina Wall, staff writer

Darling x Dashing Boutique on Charlottesville's downtown mall is a hub for quality pre-loved clothes, some still with original tags. Dashing is the year-old, masculine counterpart to already-established Darling Boutique. Patrons are supporting over 100 local artisans of self-care products, giftable tchotchkes, and fashionable accessories in addition to shopping for clothes more intentionally.

The entire inventory is available online. Opportunity for store credit is made available through their clothing drop-off program where people can channel an "old to me, new to you" mentality and feel good about where their clothes are ending up (not in a landfill). People's size and style variations are taken into consideration, making Darling x Dashing a safe space for anyone to explore self-expression through fashion.

Owner Linnea White has a message to share. White said, "I grew up in a family that was very thrifty anyways. I was the youngest of four. We always went to yard sales. Second-hand was a way of life, so it was very natural." She said that being homeschooled in her childhood allowed her to enjoy a fun, slower, and more intentional education, which was enriched by going with her mother to local, artisanal craft shows.



Darling x Dashing Photography by Adina Wall

Today, she pays homage to hard-working local artisans through an ever-evolving selection of mindfully made and sourced cosmetics, incense and candles, jewelry, moisturizers, bath bombs, hair accessories, and more.

Some of these local artisans include Fredrickburg's hand-dipped incense cones by Commonwealth Provisions, Harrisonburg's Seed and Soil handmade botanical jewelry, and withSimplicity clean and organic beauty products like face serums and vegan nail polish. Also

available are shampoo bars and CBD bath bombs by Rappidian's Little Flower Field. For every purchase of 920 jewelry, based out of Richmond, \$1 gets donated to suicide prevention, and this list is barely skimming the surface. The whimsical and aesthetically pleasing stickers, mugs, and disco balls spark joy to those passing in and out of Darling x Dashing.

For people starting or already on a sustainability journey, White says her biggest advice is a reflection of Anne-Marie Bonneau's quote, "We don't need a handful of people doing zero waste perfectly. We need millions of people doing it imperfectly." White adds, "Anything you do to make progress is good."

The store is located at 115 1st St S, Charlottesville, VA 22902. They are closed on Mondays, and their number is 434-202-0664.



Darling x Dashing consignment and local artisans. Photography by Adina Wall

Delicious Ramen Inside a Sake Brewery

Shazila Nadia Muzafar Shah, assistant editor, and Brian Zhang, staff writer

A staple in many college student's lives, ramen can range from instant ramen to upscale, slow-cooked ones. According to their website, Bad Luck Ramen Bar simmers pork bones for 18 hours to create their signature Japanese tonkotsu broth (bone broth) for their ramen.

First of all, Nadia had the Nas Original Ramen (\$16). The ramen had noodles, chashu pork, corn, mushrooms, a boiled egg with a jammy yolk, nori (seaweed) and garlic oil in a tonkotsu broth. The flavor of the broth was savory and rich, and it combined well with the garlic oil. The noodles absorbed the broth to give each bite of noodles a burst of flavor. The chashu pork was smoky with a great ratio of fat to meat. However, Nadia wished the ramen came with more broth as there wasn't enough to finish it with each included topping.

Brian tried the Smokey and The Veg (\$15), a ramen concoction of smoked tofu, mushrooms, carrots, and other standard ramen vegetables. To his disliking, the texture of the noodles did not taste very different from those of instant noodles, and neither did the broth. The smoked tofu did not carry any distinct flavor. Despite these shortcomings, Brian ate from the bowl heartily, slurping up the last piece of noodle and sipping



Nas Original Ramen
Photography by Shazila Nadia Muzafar Shah

the last drop of broth. He also sampled an inari (\$8), charming tofu wrapped pouches of rice with sweet soy sauce. Biting into these golden packets produced savory-sweet hits of flavor and the crispy texture of the tofu was delightful to chew on. Although Brian thought the ramen did not stand out, it was just the thing to help absorb the fine selection of drinks at the only sake brewery in Virginia.

For those over 21 years old, we would recommend the sake slushy. Sake is a Japanese alcohol made by fermenting rice, and the drink is made into a slushy by partially freezing it. The slushy flavors available for this day were mango and triple berry. After asking for a recommendation from our waitress, she told us that we could get the flavors mixed which allowed us to have the best of both worlds. The taste of the sake was strong, but the mango and triple berry complements the alcohol well, and it is not too sweet. Who knew rice and ice could make such an exquisite combination?

Bad Luck Ramen is located inside North American Sake Brewery at the IX ART Park. They are open from 11:30 a.m. to 9 p.m. on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Sundays. And from 11:30 a.m. to 10 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays. Do note that there is a pause in food service from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. Check out their website for more information on their hours and menus!



Mango and triple berry sake slushy
Photography by Shazila Nadia Muzafar Shah

Local Poets Share Their Stories

Makenzie McCoy, Assistant Editor

During this year's annual Virginia Festival of the Book Festival, three local poets, Janine Joseph, Gregory Orr, and Kiki Petrosino shared their stories during an event titled "The Turning Point: Shaping a Poetic Life."

The Virginia Festival of the Book has defined its purpose as "bringing together writers and readers to promote and celebrate books, reading, literacy, and literary culture." This year's event was opened and moderated by the Chief Operating Officer of the Virginia Humanities Kevin McFadden.

The first poet to be introduced by McFadden and share their story was Janine Joseph. Joseph is a poetry professor at Virginia Tech and an organizer for UndocuPoets, an organization that promotes the work of current and previously undocumented poets in the United States. Joseph read pieces from her recent collection, *Decade of the Brain*. This work reflects Joseph's experiences during a ten-year recovery process after suffering brain damage and memory loss in a car accident that took place in 2008.

Next introduced was poet and Professor Emeritus of English at UVA, Gregory Orr. He

presented excerpts from his recent work *Selected Books of the Beloved*. This book has been described as a "celebration of the transformative power of poetry and our extraordinary capacity to feel and to love." During this presentation, he shared that he had been accumulating the pieces of poetry in this book for more than twenty years before the book was published in 2022.

The last to share her work during this event was the Professor of Poetry at UVA, Kiki Petrosino. She presented a memoir published in August 2022 titled *Bright*. This book is a collection of full-length essays that describes Petrosino's experience growing up in an interracial family. During the reading, she shared that the idea for the memoir only arose after writing her last book, *White Blood: A Lyric of Virginia*. *White Blood* explores Petrosino's genealogical and intellectual roots while acknowledging the racial history in the upper South. She explained that writing *Bright* allowed her to explore the connection between these concepts further.

McFadden closed this event by introducing additional questions for each of the poets, giving them time to demonstrate their passion for reading and writing further.



Kiki Petrosino, Gregory Orr, and Janine Joseph
Screenshot of the live stream taken by Makenzie McCoy

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