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# Observer

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Spring 2024 • Volume 88 • Issue Number 8 April 26, 2024

## News Bytes

### Prep for Success Online Course.

This FREE one-week online course will prepare students with the tools needed for online learning.

The course will be offered within NECC's Blackboard platform. April 15, 8:00 am to August 21, 11:30 pm.

**2024 Graduation Fair.** May 1st 4:00-7:00 and May 2nd 11:00-2:00. Students purchase of graduation caps and gowns. Commencement information, and cords. Meet with Alumni, CARS, Care4er Services and more. Second floor of the Student Center.

**NECC Annual Awards Convocation.** May 14th 5:30-9:00. Please join President Lane Glenn and Provost Paul Beaudin for the 2024 Annual Awards Convocation. The ceremony will recognize students who have petitioned to graduate and have attained high honors status with a GPA of 3.5 or higher or students who have made exceptional contributions to NECC in the form of academics or cocurricular endeavors.

## Students honored



Photo by News Editor Daniela Valdivia-Terres  
PACE student of the year Emma Ruggiero, center, holds her award with PACE staff, left to right: Christine Carbone, Jessica Rocker, Esther Peralta, and PACE director Kristin Arnold. To read a story by Ruggiero about the PACE program see page 9.

### *PACE recognizes achievements*

By DANIELA VALDIVIA-TERRES  
News Editor

The PACE awards dinner was held on April 23. During this celebration, student members of PACE were recognized for their commitment and academic excellence.

PACE which stands for Pathways to Academic & Career Excellence, is a student support services program funded by a TRIO grant from the U.S. Department of Education. TRIO programs are open to students who are first generation college students, low-income or students with

disabilities.

If you are wondering what kind of support services PACE offers, "they can help you do well in your courses by referring you to tutors, providing you with a ThinkingStorm account, monitoring your progress, and providing academic skills workshops. PACE also provides intensive individualized academic advising one-on-one," according to the NECC website.

"The PACE program has had a significant impact on me since I immigrated and was unfamiliar with the col-

lege dynamic," said Rosa Garza, a business transfer student. "I feel like they guided me through the process and helped me choose a good college through their multiple college trips. The staff there felt like family; every time I had a question, I knew I could turn to Jessica or Christine. They made me feel comfortable throughout my college journey, and I'm grateful to my peer who told me about the PACE program in TRIO."

*Continued on  
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## Upcoming events:

Spring Childrens Book Drive. March 12-May 1. Please consider donating a book for children ages 3-15 to Benefit Ruths House Children Reading Program.

NECC Art Show. April 26, 29, 30 and May 1-2. 8:00 am to 4:00 pm. Haverhill Campus. Please join us to celebrate the work of our Art&Design students at the 2023-2024 Art Show.

NECC Jazz/Rock Ensemble Concert, Thursday May 2nd at 6:00 p.m. Free Admission. Please contact Alisa Bucchiere for requests @abucchiere@necc.mass.edu

Monday May 4. Last day of classes before final exams.

Monday May 6-May 11 Final Exam period.

Saturday May 18th, Graduation Commencement.

### How to find security around each campus:

**Haverhill Campus**  
100 Elliott St., Spurr Building, Room 110C

**Lawrence Campus**  
45 Franklin St. main lobby

Call 978.556.3333 from a cell phone. Extension 3333 from any campus phone on either campus.

# Editorial

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## Bittersweet good bye

**BY KIM ZAPPALA**  
*Editor-in-Chief/ Opinion Editor*

As I stand on the precipice of bidding adieu to Northern Essex Community College, my heart swells with a myriad of emotions, each one a testament to the depth and breadth of my collegiate journey.

It is a journey that has unfolded over the course of several years, marked by moments of triumph and adversity, growth and reflection, laughter, and tears. Now, as I prepare to embark on the next chapter of my life's narrative, I am compelled to pause and reflect on the profound impact that NECC has had on my academic, personal, and professional development.

At the heart of my collegiate experience stands Mary Jo Shafer, a guiding light whose unwavering dedication to her students has left an indelible mark on my academic trajectory.

Mary Jo's classroom was not merely a space for lectures and exams; it was a sanctuary for in-

tellectual exploration and growth.

Her passion for teaching was infectious, igniting within me a thirst for knowledge and a desire to delve deeper into the subjects that captivated my imagination.

Beyond her role as an educator, Mary Jo served as a trusted mentor and advisor, offering sage guidance and unwavering support as I navigated the twists and turns of my journalistic college journey. Her belief in my abilities empowered me to pursue my academic goals with confidence and determination, instilling in me a sense of purpose and direction that continues to guide me to this day.

But Mary Jo was not the sole architect of my collegiate experience. She was joined by a host of other educators, each bringing their own unique talents and perspectives to the table.

From Kim Lyng's dynamic class on Public Relations to Professor Meredith Gunning's thought-provoking discussions on Religion and Philosophy,

these mentors challenged me to think critically, to question assumptions, and to view the world through a broader lens.

I also want to thank Steve Russell, Stephen Slaner, Jennie Fitzgerald and Sheila Pierre.

Their dedication to academic excellence inspired me to push beyond my comfort zone, to explore new intellectual frontiers, and to embrace the unknown with courage and conviction.

Outside the classroom, the PACE program served as a beacon of support and guidance, providing me with the resources and assistance I needed to navigate the complexities of college life.

Jessica Rocker, Kristen Arnold, and Christine Carbone were more than just advisors — they were allies, advocates, and confidants, standing by my side

through the highs and lows of my collegiate journey. Whether it was offering guidance on course selection, providing support during times of personal struggle, or simply lending a sympathetic ear, the PACE team was always there for me, offering unwavering support and encouragement when I needed it most.

As I reflect on my time at Northern Essex Community College, I am struck by the profound impact that this institution has had on my life. It was here that I not only received an education but also forged lifelong friendships, discovered my passions, and laid the foundation for future success. From the bustling hallways to the quiet corners of the library, every inch of this campus holds a cherished memory, a reminder of the countless moments

of joy, discovery, and growth that I have experienced during my time here.

As I prepare to bid farewell to NECC and embark on the next chapter of my journey, I do so with a heart full of gratitude and a mind filled with cherished memories. Though my time here may be drawing to a close, the lessons I have learned and the connections I have forged will remain with me always, guiding me as I navigate the uncertain terrain of the future. And so, as I prepare to take my leave, I extend my deepest thanks to the entire NECC community — for your unwavering support, your tireless dedication, and your steadfast belief in the power of education to transform lives. Farewell, NECC.

Thank you for everything.

### NECC Observer

*The award-winning student newspaper of Northern Essex Community College*

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Have you taken Journalism I? Are you taking it now? Would you like to be on the Observer staff? Then submit your resume to [observer@necc.mass.edu](mailto:observer@necc.mass.edu).

#### Publication Schedule

Issue	Publication Date	Ad/Copy Deadline
#1	Feb. 16	Feb. 9
#2	March 22	March 15
#3	April 12	April 5
#4	April 26	April 19

We welcome letters and articles from our readers. You can submit via email, and must include your name and phone number for verification. Write "Letter" or "Article to Editor" in the subject line so we notice it right away.

Send your letters to [observer@necc.mass.edu](mailto:observer@necc.mass.edu)

We try to publish all letters we receive, but we reserve the right to edit or reject those we receive.

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- Let your voice be heard as you become part of the free press.
- Spend time with like-minded individuals as you let the student body know the latest news!!!
- If you have taken or will be taking Journalism I in the fall, we encourage you to join us. We will have staff openings in the fall as several of our current amazing staff are graduating. Join us and help continue the Observer's legacy at NECC!

**Interested? Contact us!!!**

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# Opinion

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## Abortion on the ballot

By **KIM ZAPPALA**

*Editor-in-Chief/Opinion Editor*

In a landmark ruling, Arizona's highest court recently upheld a long-standing law, dating back to 1864, that prohibits nearly all abortions. We have Donald Trump to thank for that. Trump brags about the fact that he had overturned Roe v. Wade and now women's health is seriously on the line. The ruling could have far-reaching implications, not only for women's healthcare but also for the political landscape in the key battleground state.

### The Decision

The state Supreme Court ruled that Arizona should adhere to the law, which bans abortion from the moment of conception, except when necessary to save the life of the mother. There are no exceptions for rape or incest. Under this law, doctors performing abortions may face fines and imprisonment of two to five years.

The court has, however, placed its ruling on hold, allowing for additional arguments about the law's constitutionality in a lower court. This means that abortions may continue to be performed during this period. Planned Parenthood Arizona, the state's largest abortion provider and the plaintiff in the

case, stated it plans to continue providing abortions for as long as it is allowed.

### A Pre-Statehood Law

The law, enacted before Arizona achieved statehood, was put on hold for decades due to the U.S. Supreme Court's 1973 Roe v. Wade decision, which guaranteed the constitutional right to an abortion nationwide. But with the overturning of Roe v. Wade in June 2022, the legal landscape changed dramatically, leading to renewed attention to the dormant law.

Arizona's Supreme Court ruled that the state should adhere to its 1864 law, arguing that subsequent state laws regulating and limiting abortion did not create a right to abortion. The court wrote, "Because the federal constitutional right to abortion that overrode § 13-3603 no longer exists, the statute is now enforceable."

### Political Implications

The court's decision has sent shockwaves through the political landscape. Democrats have decried the decision, calling it a "stain" on Arizona that could endanger women's lives. Some Republicans, wary of the political fallout, have also criticized the decision and called for a repeal of the 1864 law.

The ruling may also have significant implications for the upcoming elections. Demo-

crats are hopeful that the issue will galvanize their supporters, who have already launched a campaign to add a state constitutional right to abortion to the ballot in November.

### Reaction from the White House

President Joe Biden criticized the ban as "cruel" and called on Congress to pass federal abortion protections. In a statement, he said, "Millions of Arizonans will soon live under an even more extreme and dangerous abortion ban, which fails to protect women even when their health is at risk or in tragic cases of rape or incest."

Vice President Kamala Harris is also scheduled to visit Tucson for an event focusing on "reproductive freedom."

### National Abortion Landscape

Following the reversal of Roe v. Wade, abortion laws have varied widely across the U.S. Fourteen states currently ban abortion with very limited exceptions, according to the Guttmacher Institute, a group that supports abortion rights. Another 15 states protect abortion rights in various ways. This November, there are efforts in about a dozen states, including Arizona, to add a question to voters' ballots supporting abortion rights.

### The Road Ahead

While the court's ruling is a significant setback for abortion-rights supporters, the fight is far from over. The court's decision to put its ruling on hold provides some breathing room for legal challenges. Meanwhile, Democratic lawmakers and abortion-rights activists are exploring new legal strategies and tactics to delay the implementation of the law.

The fight over abortion rights in Arizona is emblematic of the broader national struggle over reproductive rights. As states continue to pass restrictive abortion laws, the issue is likely to remain a key political flashpoint in the months and years to come.

### Key Players

Key players in this ongoing battle include the Arizona Supreme Court, the state's attorney general, Kris Mayes, Gov. Katie Hobbs, Planned Parenthood Arizona, and several state lawmakers. All will play crucial roles in the next phase of this contentious issue.

### Impact on Women's Healthcare

The reinstatement of the 1864 law could drastically reduce the number of abortions performed in Arizona, forcing women to travel to neighboring states such as California, New Mexico, or Colorado to terminate their pregnancies if

they are fortunate enough to have the means to travel.

### Legal Challenges

The fight over the 1864 law has been a long and complicated one, involving various legal challenges and interpretations. The coming months will likely see even more legal wrangling as opponents of the law seek to challenge its constitutionality.

### Public Opinion

Polls suggest that the court's ruling is at odds with public opinion in Arizona. Only 7 percent of Arizona voters support an outright abortion ban with no exceptions, according to a recent poll conducted by YouGov.

The Arizona Supreme Court's decision to uphold the 1864 law marks a significant moment in the ongoing battle over abortion rights in the U.S. The ruling could have far-reaching implications, not only for women's healthcare but also for the political landscape in a key battleground state. As the nation continues to grapple with the issue of abortion, the outcome in Arizona could set a precedent for other states considering similar laws.

It is time that we stop letting middle age white men decide what is right for women's bodies.

You can not be pro-choice and vote for republicans.

## Trump's hush money trial

By **KIM ZAPPALA**

*Editor-in-Chief/Opinion Editor*

The commencement of Donald Trump's trial for alleged hush money payments unfolded with compelling revelations, key testimonies, and legal maneuvers, shaping the pivotal first week of this historic criminal case.

The trial's initiation marked a significant milestone in the legal scrutiny surrounding Donald Trump's alleged involvement in hush money payments. As the proceedings commenced, jurors were presented with extensive testimonies from key witnesses, shedding light on the intricate web of alleged financial transactions and efforts to conceal

damaging information during the 2016 presidential election.

David Pecker's Testimony: The former CEO of American Media, David Pecker, took the stand to provide insights into the editorial structure of the National Enquirer and detailed the level of oversight he had on the stories. His testimony included confirmation of phone numbers that the prosecution suggested could be relevant to the case. Pecker's role in the alleged "catch-and-kill" scheme to suppress negative stories about Trump was a focal point in the early stages of the trial.

The prosecution, led by Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg, outlined the crux of the case, emphasizing the

allegations of a coordinated effort to conceal information that could have affected the 2016 election outcome. The prosecution's case revolved around the assertion that Donald Trump falsified business records to obscure payments made to individuals involved in the alleged hush money agreements.

The prosecution detailed the case as a criminal conspiracy and cover-up, alleging that Trump orchestrated a scheme to withhold damaging information about his personal life, particularly an alleged affair with adult film star Stormy Daniels. The prosecution highlighted 34 "falsified" business records that were purportedly intended to conceal the true

nature of the payments made to individuals involved in the alleged hush money agreements.

The trial's early stages were marked by legal maneuvers, controversies, and challenges, underscoring the intense legal and procedural dynamics at play. Notably, the contentious issue of a gag order and the prosecution's allegations of Trump's violations added further complexity to the unfolding legal proceedings.

Violations and Prosecution's Request: The prosecution accused Trump of "willfully and flagrantly" violating the gag order by making public

statements about potential witnesses in the case, prospective jurors, and court staff. This led to a request by the prosecution for Trump to be held in contempt of court and fined for the alleged violations. The judge's decision on this matter added a layer of legal scrutiny and procedural intricacies to the trial's early phase.

The conclusion of the first week of the trial set the stage for ongoing legal proceedings, witness testimonies, and potential developments that would continue to shape the trajectory of this landmark case. Additionally, the trial's political implications and

*Continued on Page 4*

# Opinion

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## Haiti: Who is in charge?

By JULES PLAISIME

Correspondent

Today is Sunday April 7, 2024. Tell me who is in charge in Haiti now?

“You want me tell you?”

“Barbecue and his group,” said a source who is being kept anonymous for safety reasons, during a phone conversation.

Why did you say that?

“I am telling you the truth. He’s the only one who says something and executes it with power.”

Where are the authorities in the country?

“I am telling you there is no authority beside the gangs. They are the authorities. They do whatever they want and no one can stop them.

“People are being killed and politicians are fighting for power whereas the one that (is) called government in place now is in-

capable of doing anything. They are powerless. They cannot agree on anything.”

What exactly do the gangs want?

“I don’t know sometimes they say they want to put Guy Phillippe in power. The other time they want to be on the negotiation table. Nobody knows for sure what they really want. They are talking about corrupted oligarchy to get rid off but they only abusing the poor people. Now no one is exempted from their violence but the oligarchs so nobody knows what is going to be next. Every evening they are trying to take over the police barrack in “Clercine.” Right now as I am talking to you, they fighting. They want Guy Phillippe to be President so he will give amnesty to them after all the crimes they have been committed against the people.”

“The international communi-

“

I am telling you there is no authority beside the gangs. They are the authorities. They do whatever they want and no one can stop them.

People are being killed and politicians are fighting for power, whereas the one that (is) called government in place now is incapable of doing anything. They are powerless. They cannot agree on anything.”

- An anonymous source in Haiti

ties have removed their nationals via helicopter for 15-20 thousand dollars head to the Dominican Republic because no fly in Port-AU-Prince. For us who don’t have a second country, we are in the

mercy of God and as you might hear it before, I don’t see any sign that the day light is near.”

As I was talking with this man, a round of automatic weapon started firing and he had to stop

the conversation to hide his telephone in order to avoid being accused as police’s spy.

This is the way life is in Haiti. No one is safe!

## Interviewing tips

FORWORD BY KATIE

YEATON-HROMADA

Coordinator for Career and Services Internship

ARTICLE BY KRISTAL

RODRIGUEZ ALMONTE

Correspondent

Greetings, reader! Going into a job interview can be stressful and exciting. You spend a lot of time preparing and you’ve practiced interviewing, but have you considered the questions that can or cannot be asked during your interview?

The article provides valuable insights into the legal do’s and don’ts of job interviews, covering the types of questions that are off-limits and how to rephrase them appropriately. Students considering a career in Human Resources will find this information essential for conducting fair and compliant interviews.

Career Services offers interview practice meetings for current students and NECC graduates. We would be happy to work with you! Schedule a meeting

thru Navigate or email careerservices@necc.mass.edu.

**What can or cannot be asked in a job interview?**

My name is Tatiana Rodriguez Almonte. I am about to graduate in May and I am so excited to write this paper. I believe a lot of students would find it beneficial. Currently, I am completing an internship with Northern Essex Community College Career Services to learn more about talent acquisition. Career Services at NECC is a good resource for students with questions about employment and interviewing because they are always willing to help students to succeed with their educational goals.

Students who are considering a career in Human Resources should read this article because I will be talking about the tough questions that are illegal to ask in a job interview.

Job interviews are very important for both people who are searching for jobs and for companies who are seeking people to hire. While reading about the questions we should avoid asking when interviewing, I learned that asking people personal questions

is illegal because it could be discrimination. The U.S Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and Yale University Office of Career Strategy both mention interviewers should not ask their candidate personal questions protected by laws such as race, color, religion, sex, national origins, age, or pregnancy. I learned that the only way an interviewer can ask an individual about their age is if the question is relevant to the job position. For instance, if the position needs to hire someone older than 20 years old.

When interviewing a candidate, the interviewer should always ask questions relevant to the position. It is illegal to ask applicants about their citizenship status, disability, or their national origin because that will make applicants feel uncomfortable and discriminated against. Yale University Office of Career Strategy provides a few examples of the questions interviewers should not ask in a job interview and what are the right questions to ask. To illustrate, an illegal question is to ask an applicant is “are you a citizen of the United States?” Instead, interviewers should

ask, are you authorized to work in the United States? It is illegal to say, “Oh, you sound like you have an accent.” Instead, interviewers should ask, how many languages do you speak? in case the question is related to the job position. When interviewing an applicant, the interviewer should keep in mind it is illegal to ask about an arrest record, such as saying, “Have you been arrested before?” Instead, they should ask them, “Have you ever been convicted of any crime other than a traffic violation?” That way applicants will not feel discriminated against.

I must admit that each of these articles helped me a lot and now I have a better understanding of what the questions are that are illegal to ask and how to ask them in a correct and legal manner. While interviewing them, I noticed that each of them asked similar questions as to what the right and wrong questions to ask are when interviewing applicants. Through experience, knowing the legal guidelines and similarly following them, applicants can be assured of a fair interview. I now feel more confident as to what I

should ask when I start working in the Human Resources Department as a recruiter.

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## Trump trial continued from page 3

and Trump’s bid for a potential return to the White House added further layers of significance to the unfolding legal drama.

Court personnel and law-

yers from both sides anticipated that the trial would last between six and eight weeks, with proceedings generally scheduled for four days a week. As the prosecution con-

tinued to present its case and the defense prepared its strategies, the trial’s expected duration and the evolving legal strategies set the stage for a protracted and complex legal

battle.

The first week of Donald Trump’s trial for hush money payments was characterized by compelling witness testimonies, the prosecution’s allegations of criminal con-

spiracy, legal controversies surrounding a gag order, and the anticipated duration of the trial. These developments set the stage for a prolonged legal battle with significant political and legal implications.

# News

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## Jammin' at Spring Jam

By MATTHEW SCHARN  
Correspondent

On Wednesday April 17th, Northern Essex held its annual Spring Jam for students and faculty, with many activities and different events taking place on campus.

There was food, free giveaways, games, but most important for a lot of people, music.

If you were anywhere on the Haverhill Campus April 17th from 11 through 1, you were most definitely graced with the great tunes and spectacular voices that took over the quad.

Most of those that performed the live music are music students of Alisa Bucchiere, the head of the music department here at Northern Essex.

From original music to covers of songs, this event gave these students a chance to perform in front of people that they wouldn't normally get the chance to do so for, giving them more of an experience with a live audience.

A few of the students who performed at the event, Alex Ravi and Kadie Albrecht, were excited with the opportunity to showcase their talents and Jam out on campus.

When asked what his favorite part of performing in Spring Jam was, Ravi said "Just helping set up and being able to be in such a nice school and give the people a show."

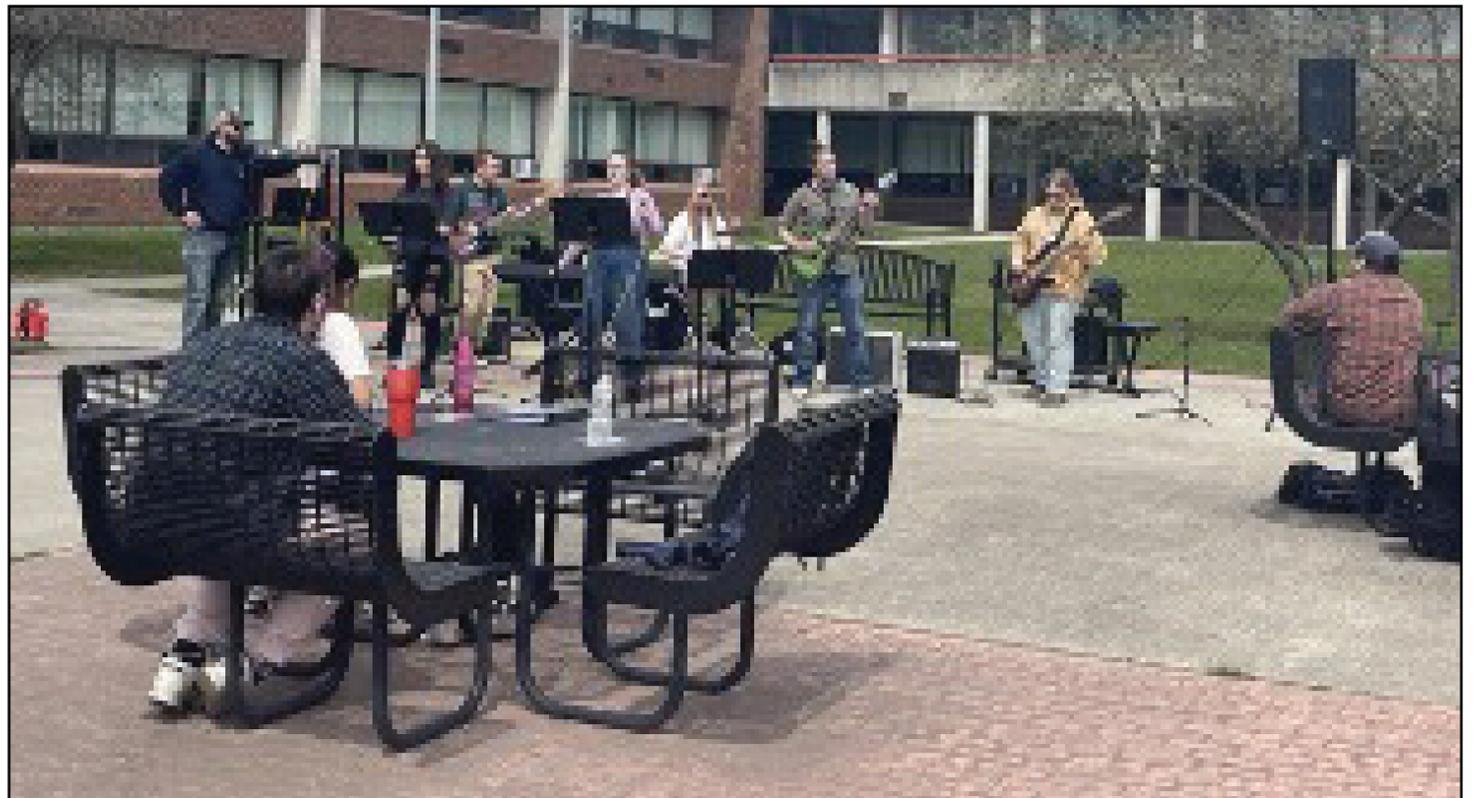


Photo by Matthew Scharn

Students play music as part of Spring Jam on the Haverhill campus April 17.

Ravi performed the song Me, Myself & I by G-Eazy & Bebe Rexha alongside fellow music student Cierra Townshend as well as performing an original rap song entitled Clock In.

When asked the same question, Albrecht responded "These songs are songs we work in in PW class

(Performance Workshop) and it's great because we kind of get to fine tune in class as a workshop and then we get to perform it live. We perform in front of each other every week but now we get to perform in front of people we're not comfortable with, so it's challenging but really fun!"

Albrecht performed the song

"I'm A Believer" with a group of people including Jackson Bonfiglioli, Cheryl Lopez, Sara Curtin, Jay Silva and Jacob McLean as well as singing multiple duets with people such as "Smoking Out The Window" and "Take Me or Leave Me" (both with Angely Gabriel), All I Wanted (With Jacob McLean) & Seventeen (With

Sara Curtin).

With events like these on campus, we truly let music live on and impact so many people's lives on a day to day basis. Anything music related linked with NECC can be found under the #NECCMusicThives on social media,

## Professor to release his fourth book

Rich Padova, history and government professor at Northern Essex will be releasing his fourth book next month which will be complimentary for anyone who would like a copy. Titled The First 100 Days: FDR to Biden, the book examines the first 100 days of presidential administrations beginning with Franklin Delano Roosevelt and ending with incumbent President Joe Biden.

Since the days of FDR and ever since, scholars and journalists have examined the first 100 days of presidential administrations to see if campaign promises were fulfilled during this time period and if anything else of significance was accomplished. Professor Padova, with the research assistance of some of his GOV 101 students from the Fall Semester of 2023, takes a look at the first

100 days.

Students, faculty and staff who would like a complimentary copy are invited to contact Rich at rpadova@necc.mass.edu to reserve a copy and make arrangements for pick-up. Copies will also be available from Rich this summer at Lawrence Heritage State Park, 1 Jackson Street at Canal.

## Candidate visits NECC



Photo courtesy Rich Padova

Dr. Jill Stein, 2024 Green Party presidential candidate, visited Northern Essex in Haverhill on April 4 to discuss her campaign and answer questions from students. Pictured from left to right are the following: Elijah Antunes, Student Government Association president; Amy Callahan, Liberal Arts dean; Rich Padova, history and government professor; and Dr. Jill Stein.

This paper is your voice, too!  
We want to see what you have to say.

\*\*\* 000 \*\*\*

You can reach us at:

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# Food resources on campus

BY EMMA RUGGIERO

Correspondents

Northern Essex Community College students can find a quick pick-me-up just around any corner on campus.

“The number of food pantries on U.S. college campuses has ballooned from 80 to around 800 in the past decade” says Stateline newspaper journalist Robbie Sequeira, and NECC is one of them -- with a food pantry available on the Lawrence campus.

Having food resources on campus, whether it’s as sim-

ple as a snack or a filling meal is important according to the Dean of Students Jason Arey because “if students are hungry they cannot focus on their academics.”

“Food insecurity is a huge barrier to student success” and “by providing food resources on campus” this barrier will be reduced in addition to allowing students to save and “use their money to cover other necessities,” continued Arey.

NECC offers a variety of

food resources on both the Haverhill and Lawrence campus. Students can inquire about \$50 Market Basket Gift Cards, \$10 food vouchers, Madd Love food boxes delivered once a month – 50 boxes are delivered each month, the Food Pantry on the Lawrence campus, Weekend Snacks for Students, the Haverhill campus Perfect Blend Cafe and the Bookstore.

Students can also find food in Student Success Services like Academic Coaching in

room 211 in the Haverhill campus’ Spurk building. They provide a variety of snacks such as granola bars, crackers, apples, bananas and oranges. In addition, from time to time they provide sweet treats like homemade cookies and brownies.

Supplying food on campus will benefit students in the long run “on a few different levels,” explained Academic Coach Gretchyn Gallagher.

Food resources not only “provide [nutritious] calories

to students,” but it also “creates a sense of community” on the NECC campuses, said Gallagher.

Gallagher explained that it is “important for students to not be embarrassed and to come forward with any obstacle they have” because she wants to “help [students] navigate through these barriers.”

In the future Gallagher hopes that NECC graduates can give back to their community in relation to food insecurity.

# Eclipse party at NECC

BY TATIANA RODRIGUEZ

ALMONTE

Correspondent

On April 8, Northern Essex Community College hosted an Eclipse Party for those who wanted to view the eclipse and spend time with friends and loved ones. The Career Services Staff at Northern Essex Community College also joined the Eclipse party, along with NECC staff and students. While I was fortunate enough to join the party as well, I also had the chance to interview a few people who also attended.

Talking to Olivia Ramirez, a Liberal Arts student, helped me understand more fully why people were so excited and anxious about the Eclipse. Ramirez stated, “This is my first time coming to NECC to join an Eclipse party and I must admit that I am excited about the experience. There are more people here than I ever expected. We are all gathered for a common reason and

we’re extremely excited to see what an authentic eclipse looks like in real life.”

Gregory Mendoza, another student from Northern Essex Community College, also mentioned his excitement regarding this event. Mendoza stated, “I was reading an article on my phone and the article mentioned that in the United States, the eclipse is expected to cause a huge impact. One result mentioned was the possibility of an electricity shutdown, birds and wildlife were expected to escalate in behavior, and for a period almost complete darkness may occur. I was curious to see if any of these projections could be true. This is why I am so anxious to be here firsthand. I want to see what will occur before, during, and after this amazing celestial event.”

Sandra Smith, another student from NECC, mentioned her excitement about the

event. Smith mentioned, “I received an email to Northern Essex Community College students and staff inviting us to this party. At first, I thought my chance of attending such an event was very small. After reading the email and listening to all the excitement in the hallways, classrooms, and library, I must admit I was growing in curiosity to see what was going to happen. I decided to attend as my excitement grew. This is why I am here.”

While interviewing these three people for the college paper, I was able to learn more about how curiosity can catch people’s attention. All three people interviewed came to join the party looking for answers to different questions. Their common interest in the universe and humankind prompted them to ask what the results would be following this shared phenomenon.



Photo by Sports Editor Daniel Henrick

The eclipse is seen from NECC’s Haverhill campus on April 8.

They wanted to see the results following something of such magnitude. They knew it would be an experience greater than themselves and many people were heard whispering about it being an “Aura from God,” but certainly from the heavens. Such an event occurs so seldom that to miss it would have been a tragic loss. For such an act of nature and the universe to engage the attention of so many people around the world, clearly grabbed the attention of millions. It was an awe-inspiring and spiritual event not to be missed.

The Eclipse Party had more than about 100 people watching. The students and staff joined the world with a human interest. They were happy and enjoying their time together and possibly even made some new friends. It was not the largest group convening to appreciate the eclipse around the country, But I can tell you it was one of the most excited and engaged groups I have seen. The spirit of the heavens tied a knot for humanity that day, and we all joined together in a common sense of awe and joy.

# Course highlights presidential campaigns

BY EMMA RUGGIERO

Correspondent

A unique opportunity strikes Northern Essex Community College once every four years. With the 2024 presidential election on the rise, this semester students were given the opportunity to embark on a quest for the presidency; a course that explores the process of running for president.

This course was created by Northern Essex Community

College Professor Richard Padova in “2007 as an upper-level, special topic history elective” he said. Padova said he decided to create the Quest for the Presidency course to share his “interest in presidential history, campaigns and elections.”

In 2008 the course came into full effect and Padova began “teaching it every four years during a presidential election year” he said.

NECC student Giovanni Cruz said he enrolled in this

course not only because a flier on a bulletin board caught his eye, but because he was “curious [to learn how a president] is chosen by the people.”

Students who enroll in this course can expect to engage in class discussions that analyze the candidates and issues occurring in a specific election year. In addition, students are given an opportunity to “complete three independent projects throughout the semester” that allows them to explore the world of politics beyond the

classroom, said Padova. Padova said his “objectives are to help students understand the history of [politics in the U.S.] and how they have changed and evolved over time.”

His teachings about the quest for the presidency are making an impact on his students.

Emme Shaw said that she “loves politics” and enrolling in this course has provided her a “better understanding” of the political parties and their views in the United States.

The class discussions consist of “formal and mature debates” that offer her a sense of perspective to learn from her classmates, she said.

Padova said his goal with this course is to reflect his passion for politics on to others and share the “very unique presidential election system in our country” as well as prepare students who chose to vote to do so “by way of an informed decision” in any election.

# News

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## PACE awards continued from Page 1

For Maria “Ampa” Cubias PACE is more than a program, she said.

“For myself I have always described PACE as unconditional family, unconditional love, unconditional respect, and effort toward the students to achieve our goals and be better every single day,” she said. “I thank PACE staff for all the support, love. For (guiding) me throughout my darkest moments when I feel that I cannot (do) more they are always being there for me to cheer me up and tell me that I can do this and more. This program has helped me tremendously with the support that we got from our mentors Kristen, Jessica, Christine and Esther. Thank you so much for always being there for us!”

PACE recognized students in 10 categories such as Citizenship Award, which congratulates students for their leadership and promoting success of other students, or Academic Achievement Award, which applauds students’ effort in maintaining a 4.0 GPA. The Futuristic Award goes to students who have worked hard during their time in NECC and will continue to grow as an individual either in their academic and/or professional careers.

The Learning Scholar is an award that recognizes a student who demonstrates growth and change in enhancing their learning strategies during this semester.

There is an award for staff or faculty who have served as an integral component to the success of the TRIO program, the Partnership for Equity Award.

The list of the awardees:

**Citizenship Award:** Rosa Conn, Akira Matos, Andrew Parente

**Learning Scholar Award:** Rafie Ceballo-Peralta, Luis Hernandez, Halie Nault, Daniela Valdivia-Terres, Ethan You

**Outstanding New Participant Award:** Enrique Almanzar, Nayeli Almanzar Lizardo, Lirianni German, Joshua Hernandez, Shannon Rice, Izeah Rivera

**Perseverance Award:** Divine Biose, Kisbel Filpo Fernandez, Izieah IgartuaRivera, Miguelangel Perez, Lourdes Polanco, Abigail Preston,



Photo by Christine Carbone

**From left to right: PACE Academic Adviser Esther Peralta, Daniela Valdivia-Terres, and PACE Transfer Adviser Jessica Rocker.**



**From left to right: Rocker, Collin Endsley, Anh Nguyen.**



**From left to right: Akira Matos and Rosa Conn.**

Jorge Torres-Guzman, Dafreisy Veras

**Futuristic Award:** Scott Bixby, Joshua Buffum, Le Xuyen Bui, Alliyah Cuevas, Rebecca Charabaty, Kyara Cruz Santos, Cassandra Kusad, Megan Lesiczka, Anthony Severino

**Most Inspirational Student Award:** Maria Cubias-Realegeno, Ashley Jimenez Rodriguez, Erin Magner, Kimberly Zappala

**Most Involved Participant Award:** Denisha Adorno  
**Academic Achievement Award:** Sonia Baez, Alliyah Cuevas, Collin Endsley, Christopher Guzman, Anh Nguyen, Jordi Ortiz

**Partnership for Equity Award:** Martha Bixby, Jeff Flaherty

**Student of the Year:** Emma Ruggiero

The PACE Alumni Panelists were Shania Berard, Parisa Hatami, Giselle Peguero Grullon, Kelly Perez.

They shared their insights and experiences about their

time at NECC throughout their further education.

They discovered the biggest take aways when they transferred to a four-year institutions:

**Time management and organization.** This will make a big difference from day one. “Have your syllabus handy,” said Giselle Peguero Grullon.

**Networking,** not only with your peers but with professors and staff.

**Ask for help** to professors and staff. Don’t be shy!” said Shania Berard. Look for academic adviser and support services. “Send those emails to professors asking for help, they want to see you thrive,” said Kelly Perez.

**“Don’t be afraid of failure,”** said Parisa Hatami. Even the pathway seems too hard, “being resilient will help you to achieve your dreams.” In the same line, Shania Berard said “even when you find bumps or mountains on the road, challenge yourself!”

**Take care of your mental and physical wellbeing.** “Be healthy and do workouts,” Hatami emphasized.

Also, Hatami added that as an immigrant PACE was pivotal in her first steps in her academic career.

She appreciated the support she received from the director, “Kristen is more than a counselor; she is a good listener,” she said.

The celebration called it a night after some questions from students to the panelists. Family members and close friends of the awardees who joined the celebration left after showing their support in this ceremony. If you need more information contact the PACE staff at pace@necc.mass.edu or visit their offices on both campuses.



**From left to right: Rocker, Martha Bixby, PACE Director Kristin Arnold, Jeff Flahery, Peralta and Data Specialist Christine Carbone.**



**From left to right: Nayeli Almanzar Lizardo, Peralta, Josh Hernandez, Carbone, Enrique Almanzar, Lirianni German, Shannon Rice and Izeah Rivera.**



**From left to right: Lourdes Polanco, Kisbel Filpo Fernandez, Miguelangel Perez, Divine Biose, Izaiah IgartuRivera, Dafreisy Veras, Abigail Preston and Peralta.**



**Alumni panelists from left to right: Parisa Hatami, Kelly Perez, Shania Berard and Giselle Peguero Grullon.**



**From left to right: Anthony Severino, Le Xuyen Bui, Rebecca Charabaty, Kyara Cruz Santos, Joshua Buffum and Megan Lesiczka.**

Photos by News Editor Daniela Valdivia-Terres

# Immigrant teens brave solo journeys

BY MILAGRO HENRIQUEZ  
Correspondent

During the ongoing global migration crisis, a unique narrative unfolds as immigrant teenagers venture on solitary paths to the United States. Their journeys, often fraught with peril, offer glimpses into the struggles and aspirations of those seeking refuge in a new land.

A 16-year-old from Honduras, shares her harrowing journey across borders and through unforgiving terrain. “I had no choice but to leave,” she recounts, her voice trembling with emotion.

“The violence back home made it impossible to stay.”

Her journey, like that of many others, is marked by uncertainty and danger. Yet, her determination to find safety and opportunity propels her forward. “I had to be brave,” she says, her eyes reflecting the resilience of youth in the face of adversity. “For my family, for myself.”

As she recounts her story, she is joined by a 17-year-old from El Salvador who shares similar sentiments. “Leaving everything behind was the hardest part,” he admits, his voice tinged with sorrow. “But I knew I had to do it to

survive.”

For these immigrant teenagers, the journey to the United States is a solitary one, marked by hardship and sacrifice. Yet, amidst the challenges there is hope - hope for a better future, free from the violence and poverty that once defined their lives.

“I dream of a better life,” a 16-year-old from Honduras declares, her voice filled with conviction. “A life where I can go to school, find work, and build a future for myself.”

As the teenagers share their stories, they are joined by a volunteer at a local

migrant shelter who came to United States at the age of 15 by herself. “Their courage is truly inspiring,” she says, her eyes shining with admiration. “Despite facing unimaginable challenges, these teenagers refuse to give up hope.”

Having worked closely with migrant teenagers, she adds, “Their resilience is a testament to the strength of the human spirit. We must do everything in our power to support and uplift them on their journey.”

As the interview ends, the three reflect on the resilience of the human spirit and the power of compassion.

“We may come from different backgrounds,” says the 16-year-old, her voice steady, “but we are united by our dreams and our determination to build a better world.”

As immigrant teenagers continue to brave solitary journeys to the United States, their stories serve as a poignant reminder of the universal desire for safety, opportunity, and freedom.

In their courage and resilience, we find hope for a brighter tomorrow where borders are no barrier to compassion and humanity.

# Mental health issues in education

BY YAMILY BAEZ  
Correspondent

Mental health is a fundamental aspect of overall well-being, but it is often overlooked, especially in educational settings, specifically in adolescents. For students, the pressures of academic performance, social dynamics, and personal challenges can significantly impact their mental health. A vivid example of this is in my community, the students at Lawrence High School.

Mental health problems among students are a growing concern, and research indicates alarming rates of anxiety, depression, and other disorders. Addressing these challenges is necessary to ensure student success and well-being. In this research, my objective was to delve deeper into the complexities of mental health

problems among students.

As a student at Lawrence High School, I know the adversities we experience every day. Apart from my own opinion, I wanted to hear the opinions of my classmates Emily and Osmairy.

After a conversation we talked about the pressure that college can exert on us and school at the same time. We came to the conclusion that there’s this constant pressure to excel academically whether it’s to get into a good college or meet the expectations of parents and teachers. It can be overwhelming and lead to stress and anxiety.

Also, we have friends who have struggled with anxiety and depression, especially during exam seasons or when dealing with personal problems. It is challenging to see them go through that.

After this conversation

with my friends, I was still very interested in the topic that is why I took the initiative to see some news about it. The Boston World has a very interesting article titled Lawrence High School Looks Like a Battlefield” referring to the large numbers of fights that occur daily in said institution carried out by the same students. This is a clear sign of the mental health problems that students present today, letting us know that mental health problems are not only due to depression and anxiety but also that the mismanagement of emotions and anger is present in the daily lives of students.

Thanks to my arduous research I realized that this is not an individual concern but rather it is a topic of interest that worries the adults of my city. The article published in Rumbo News, titled “Lawrence needs an effective school com-

mittee, marks the concern.” Regarding the wave of violence and depression among students, the author Dalia Diaz highlights the lack of attention on the part of parents regarding this problem and the mediocre way in which our authorities work.

Several factors contribute to the high prevalence of mental health issues among students. Academic pressure, including the pursuit of high grades and standardized test scores, can lead to stress and anxiety. The competitive nature of academic environments further exacerbates these pressures.

Additionally, social challenges such as peer relationships, bullying, and feelings of isolation can significantly impact students’ mental well-being. Moreover, personal factors such as family problems, trauma, and substance abuse can further compound these

issues.

The consequences of untreated mental health issues among students can be severe. Poor mental health negatively affects academic performance, leading to decreased productivity, concentration difficulties, and absenteeism. Moreover, it can hinder students’ ability to engage in extracurricular activities and social interactions limiting their overall development and well-being. Left unaddressed, mental health issues can persist into adulthood, affecting various aspects of individuals’ lives, including relationships, employment, and overall quality of life. As a final message, it would be good for parents and schools to be more interested in these issues and to be able to work together to solve these problems.

# Students share thoughts on artificial intelligence

BY JANELLE SERVERIUS  
Correspondent

With AI being installed into many websites, it can be accessed by many users. However, students in the age of advancing AI have discussed their opinions on what they think about it.

When discussing Artificial Intelligence, such as OpenAI, with Abigail Lopez, a student from Early College, she said AI can have “its ups and downs”. One of the downs of AI, she explains, is using it to cheat on tests, which could backfire. She has also used AI, but mentions not much, as she

uses it as a method to understand rather than to replace work entirely.

However, AI also is seen as possibly negative by other students. When discussing with Dangerlin Henriquez, another Early College student, she says “It’s bad because people can take advantage of

it”. Although, she also reflects on how “Sometimes it can be useful, but it depends on the situation”. This, she explains, is because “It’s not you, it’s not yourself.”, where AI is a separate entity from the one writing. This, she considers, makes it “dangerous at the same time”.

Xzavier Nunez, a third Early College student, expresses a more neutral tone with AI, leaning more towards being positive. When discussing using AI with schoolwork, he has stated it can be “pretty helpful if it’s used correctly”, such as using it for references.

*Editor’s Note: The stories on this page were reported and written by Lawrence High School Early College students who are currently taking a Journalism I course. We wanted to include some of the stories from the high school students to highlight what they are thinking about and reporting on and to showcase some of the work they have done this semester as they have learned about journalism.*

## News

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# TikTok faces ban in the U.S.

By **KATRINA MANON**  
Correspondent

On Tuesday April 23 the U.S. Senate is set to vote on a bill that would ban TikTok. The United States House of Representatives already passed a bill April 20, that would give “TikTok’s Chinese owner ByteDance about six months to divest the U.S. assets of the short video-app, or face a ban”.

The popular social media app with 150 million monthly U.S. active users is known

for its short videos that can consist of anything from funny skits to education content, dance and lip sync videos and more.

TikTok has been a successful platform for American business owners and entrepreneurs to promote their brand and build a platform. As news of the bill surfaced all over the internet TikTok users had a few thoughts to share.

TikTok influencer and NECC student Pedro Rentas who has gained a following of 122,000 followers with his

videos getting thousands of views stated, “I think it would be unfortunate if they banned TikTok because it is a great platform for content creators like me to have a voice and relate to other people”.

Influencers like Pedro Rentas have mentioned how TikTok has helped them gain a community that feels like family where they can showcase their creativity and build a virtual connection.

TikTok has been a platform that during the pandemic helped thousands of active

users keep a sane mind when lockdown measurements had taken place.

NECC alumni student Diana Martinez stated, “I remember during lockdown I downloaded the app just to see what everyone was talking about, and I actually ended up really enjoying watching all the short videos and still till this day I enjoy it, it’s a different vibe on TikTok”.

The United States main concern with TikTok is that it opposes a national security threat because the Chinese

government could use TikTok to spy on Americans and could possibly influence Americans by amplifying or suppressing certain content.

“I mean I get it when it comes to security reasons, but I feel like this can happen with any other social media platform as well not just TikTok,” said Diana Martinez.

The Senate is set to vote on the bill later today. Now Americans wait as the future of Americans having access to the social media app is uncertain.

# How professors ended up at NECC

By **MARTHY MARTINEZ**  
Correspondent

At any institution around the world, whether it is a four-year university, community-college, high school, middle school, or elementary school, the bread-and-butter of these places are centered around the students, whose job is to learn, and the faculty, whose job is to instill knowledge that help their students succeed in their future careers.

This message is equally shared by the faculty and staff present in the boisterous community of Northern Essex Community College, who reflect on their determination to learn from their time as college students to evoke a positive environment in their classrooms.

A shared reality between many of the professors here at Northern Essex is the uncertainty

of what career to focus on after college. For many of them, they chose different programs to major in when compared to the programs that they teach now at the community college.

Professor Mary Jo Shafer, coordinator of the Journalism and Communications program in the department of Performing Arts and Communication, attributes her Bachelor’s degree in American Studies and Creative Writing and past work at newspapers in shaping her career as a professor at Northern Essex. “It’s funny, I never really thought much about teaching,” stated Shafer. “People would always say, ‘Oh, maybe you should go into teaching.’ and I would be like, ‘No.’”

Shafer, who would later receive her Master’s degree in Journalism from the University of Alabama, said she eventually realized that her

career as a newspaper editor involved teaching as well, as her qualities of leadership in a newsroom helped cement her role as a teacher to the young reporters under her wing.

The mutual relationship between students and faculty can also be attributed to the attitudes of professors, who try to make their classes worthwhile and entertaining.

However, for some professors, such as Professor Lori Heymans of the Math department, some subjects are difficult to extract enjoyment from them. “I try to be as interactive and kind of fun in class, but when you teach Math, fun and math don’t really go together,” stated Heymans. “But, I try to have an environment where the students can kind of trust me, so they can be able to ask questions.”

Heymans, who has her Bachelor’s in Electrical Engineering and her Master’s in

Math, furthermore remarked on how she aims to help her students through multiple resources, including office hours and the MathCenter.

In the world of professors, one factor solely stands out that strictly focuses on challenging their teaching: student feedback.

Although some professors would vehemently cringe at the attempts of their students trying to criticize their work, other professors, such as Adjunct Professor David Rattigan, who teaches Public Speaking classes, encourage student feedback, but with certain limitations. “There are times that whenever I look at the criticism from students, it’s the student who doesn’t show up for the first class, and then says, ‘Well, I don’t know what the class was about.’ ‘Well, you didn’t understand what the class was about because you didn’t show up (to class)

enough.” stated Rattigan. “Sometimes, I think that student feedback could be better informed. I think when a good student gives me feedback, I value it more.” Rattigan, who simultaneously teaches classes at University of Massachusetts, Lowell, additionally reflected on the relationship between the student and their professor, stating that the relationship peaks when the student and professor are working towards a common goal in the classroom.

The faculty within a school system are either cherished or despised by their student body. Nevertheless, in any school environment, whether it be a four-year university, community college, or high school, the incessant message that faculty and staff aim to plant in the minds of their society is fairly simple: to support the people that help shape their budding community.

# PACE program changes students’ lives

By **EMMA RUGGIERO**  
Correspondent

A Northern Essex Community College student success service has been changing students’ lives for decades and does not plan to change that tradition any time soon. This impactful student success service is the TRIO Program, or to the dedicated members, they know it as the PACE Program. The program stands for more than a Pathway to Academic & Career Success, they are “a family on campus” says the director of the program Kristen Arnold. As the director for the past seven

years, Arnold’s mission is to help participants “persist, get their degree, transfer, reach milestones [and gain skills] to be successful wherever they go,” she said.

To help with the transfer process Jessica Rocker, the program’s transfer adviser for the past six and a half years, says transferring “is a big part of PACE” so she makes it her goal to provide “one-on-one” assistance for students. Rocker helps students be aware “of their options” such as “private and public schools, the FAFSA packages, scholarships and the location and

[possible] commuting distances.”

She also “plans field trips to colleges” that provide students with “the full experience” of a four-year school said Rocker. Student involvement and dedication to the program does not go unnoticed. As the program’s Data Specialist Christine Carbone tracks students’ engagement in the program, recruits students to join the program and provides one-on-one support that meets participants’ needs. For example, she helps search for “special scholarships” that PACE students are eligible for said Carbone.

Carbone took on the job three years ago because not only did the position pique her interest, but because she “loves [interacting] with students [the most]” said source. Moreover, she believes the PACE program helps students navigate and enjoy their college experience because they are a tight-knit “group [that provides] a gentle guide for [participants] to be successful” said Carbone. The PACE program’s newest academic adviser, Esther Peralta who became a part of the program in August of 2023, helps students create “academic plans”

that “work best for them” in order to stay motivated and “on track.”

Her main goal when working with students “is to make a schedule that is realistic,” said Peralta. This involves getting to know the students’ lifestyles and preferences, which Peralta says she enjoys.

With the program’s open-door policy PACE students can come together to participate in weekly workshops, transfer field trips, culture field trips to museums, the yearly PACE awards and alumni panel, school wide events and their first-generation party that takes place in November.

# Campus Lie

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## Enhancing accessibility at NECC

By BAILEY ORIO  
Campus Life Editor

Northern Essex Community College's Haverhill Campus is a hub of academic and social activity, but for students with disabilities, navigating its spaces can sometimes present unexpected challenges.

While efforts are made to ensure accessibility, some students and faculty say recent incidents have highlighted the need for better communication and proactive measures.

DJ Rosado, a student who uses a wheelchair to get around at NECC, shared his experiences with accessibility on the campus, emphasizing both positives and areas for improvement.

"My experience with accessibility on the campus is OK, but there are times when I feel like they should've done stuff sooner," Rosado remarked.

Rosado went on to say, he recounted an incident where he was stuck in an elevator, the elevator just stopped working. This underscores the need of

how important it is for the elevators to work properly and when concerns are reported, that timely assistance and support from campus facilities are addressed.

Rosado's concerns extend beyond isolated incidents. "Last year, when I was taking two theater classes, they wanted to fix the elevator and without prior warning, they disrupted me in class to inform me that they would be shutting the elevator down and I had to leave the class. It upsets me because I wasn't given advanced warn-

ing, and I lost valuable class time," Rosado said. The lack of communication left him and his peers feeling frustrated and inconvenienced. I myself rely on the use of elevators for accessibility. The elevators in the C building and the Student Center are unreliable and at times hinder my ability to get to class.

My class had to be moved in the fall of 2023, because of the elevator not working, and I didn't get notified until the last minute. So you can see that these issues have been going on for a

while. Rosado and my experience further emphasizes the critical need for improved facilities, communication, and proactive measures to address accessibility concerns on campus. Northern Essex Community College is a great school with many great faculty members that want to see all students succeed. By fostering collaboration between students, faculty, and administration, we can continue to make NECC a campus environment that prioritizes accessibility and inclusivity.

**NECC THEATER**  
**FALL SEMESTER 2024**

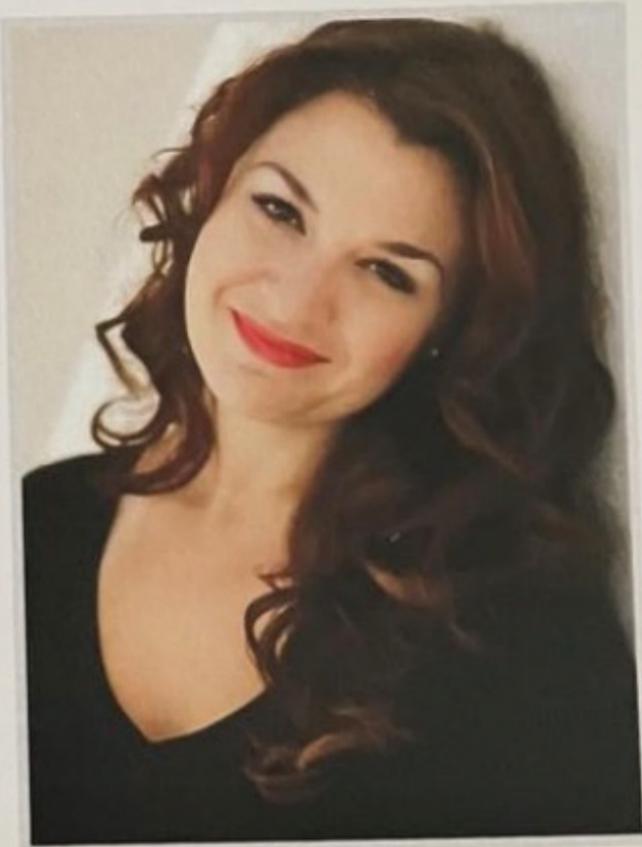
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with Professor Brianne Beatrice

THE101  
Intro to Theater  
Online

THE112  
Acting Scene Study  
M/W 11 - 12:15pm

THE110  
Improv Voice and  
Movement  
M/W 2 - 3:15pm



Northern Essex Community College | @necctheater | bbeatrice@necc.mass.edu

## Arts and Entertainment

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# A24 continues to have success in the independent film industry

By **SHAUN HOOD**

*Arts and Entertainment Editor*

Over the course of the past few months, three of the new movies I saw in theaters that stood out to me were *Love Lies Bleeding*, *Problemista*, and *Civil War*. Those three movies are each quite different in terms of genre, plot, themes, and other aspects, but they are all A24 titles that I love. A24 is a production company, but A24 is also its own distributor. That means that they're an independent entity in the sense that they're not owned by a larger company such as Disney or Warner Brothers. A24 is no stranger to Hollywood success after winning the Oscar for Best Picture in the years when movies like *Moonlight* and *Everything Everywhere all at Once* were released, and I honestly feel as though some A24 titles are at times having success in putting their movies with original stories with social relevance in front of the same audience as some of the more mainstream blockbuster franchises that get talked about a lot.

*Love Lies Bleeding* is about Lou (Kristen Stewart) and Jackie (Katy O'Brian), as they fall in love in the midst of lots of turmoil related to Lou's dysfunctional

family and Jackie's journey as a bodybuilder. With that turmoil comes lots of graphic violence. Something that makes *Love Lies Bleeding* stand out to me in a different way than most A24 titles is its lack of obvious social relevance. That is not a criticism, but I think most A24 movies are very creative while still thematically having a lot to say about whatever timely social topics are present in the given movie. Nonetheless, *Love Lies Bleeding* is intense to watch. I was worried for Lou and Jackie in what they were going through, and I felt an adrenaline-rush that I haven't felt while watching a movie in a years. *Love Lies Bleeding* is worth a watch; whether you're a fan of the cast or A24 itself, this movie excels at its extraordinary suspense!

*Problemista* follows young man from El Salvador living in New York City named Alejandro (Julio Torres). Alejandro aspires to design toys, but he's having visa trouble as an immigrant in New York. Throughout the movie, he goes on what I would call a journey of self-discovery as he works very hard to find a job that will allow him to stay in the United States. *Problemista* is a comedy. Throughout the movie, it proves to be a well-done immigrant story directed by Ju-

lio Torres (Alejandro himself), while also demonstrating some eccentric story-telling with certain scenes illustrating how the present plot is figuratively playing out in Alejandro's imagination. I love *Problemista*, and all I will say about the ending, is that I love how things turn out for Alejandro.

*Civil War* is directed by Alex Garland. He directed *Ex Machina* (2015). *Civil War* follows Lee Smith (Kirsten Dunst), a troubled journalist making her way to Washington D.C. alongside some colleagues. It takes place in the midst of a dystopian modern civil war in the United States when several alliances such as the Western Forces (California and Texas) have risen up with their own army in an effort to overtake the federal government in D.C. where the President (Nick Offerman) has assumed the power of a dictatorship in his third term. I would imagine that lots of viewers would find *Civil War* to be difficult to watch as it may be disturbing for people who work in a job where they worry about politics in the age of today's divisiveness. I still think *Civil War* is a good movie all things considered, and it has an ending that is likely to really leave audiences wowed.



Photo courtesy A24

The poster for the movie *Problemista*.

A24 is breaking barriers in the independent film industry. If you haven't seen any of the A24 titles (new or old) mentioned here, then they're definitely worth checking out!

## A breakdown of 2024 iHeartRadio Music Awards

By **JANIE DUNN**

*Correspondent*

April is starting off on a high note thanks to the iHeartRadio music awards which premiered live April 1st on FOX. The iHeartRadio music awards celebrate the most-played songs and artists that were played on iHeartRadio stations and the app from 2023. This year, the event took place at the Dolby Theatre in Los Angeles, California and was hosted by hip-hop icon Ludacris. Since this is an award show that celebrates music, there were live performances from some of today's biggest artists throughout the night.

Justin Timberlake opened up the show by singing and dancing to his songs "Selfish" and "No Angels" off of his new album *Everything I Thought It Was*. Timberlake had a band and background singers that danced along with him, creating a fun and upbeat environment for the audience!

Rising star Tate McRae danced

and sang her record-breaking hits "Greedy" and "Exes" off of her new album *Think Later*. Host Ludacris performed a mash-up of some of his greatest hits with special guest T-Pain.

iHeartRadio honored three legendary figures in the music world with special awards. The three awards were The Icon Award, The Innovator Award, and The Landmark Award.

Beyoncé received the Innovator Award, to which Northern Essex Community College student Elle Palumbo said that she "is so deserving of because her album [Cowboy Carter] was so personal and beautiful and she is 110% an innovator". Stevie Wonder presented Beyoncé with the award. When accepting the award, Beyoncé thanked Wonder for "making a way for all [artists]" and smiled big when saying she is "honored to receive this recognition from [him]".

Cher received the Icon Award after delivering a beautiful performance with artist Jennifer

Hudson. As a musical tribute performance, Hudson performed "If I Could Turn Back Time" by Cher before changing songs to "Believe", in which Cher came out and sang alongside Hudson. Afterwards, Meryl Streep came on stage and presented Cher with the award, which excited fans of *Mamma Mia!* and *Silkwood* to see them reunite.

Green Day received the Landmark Award and was handed the trophy by Avril Lavigne after their performance of "Bobby Sox" and "Basket Case".

Many artists, ones who have been nominated before and never-before were able to bring home some iHeartRadio awards!

It is not a surprise that Taylor Swift won the most awards of the night after the incredible past year she's had. Swift extended her lead as the artist with the most iHeartRadio awards as she won 6 awards at this year's show, including both Artist of the Year and Pop Artist of the Year (which was a new category at this year's

show), and brought her total amount of iHeartRadio awards to 25. Surprisingly, Swift and her loyal, die-hard "Swifties" did not receive the award for Best Fan Army. The award instead went to K-Pop group BTS and their fans, "The BTS Army".

In second place, with 4 awards won, was Regional Mexican artist Peso Pluma and R&B artist SZA. Thanks to her smash-hit "Kill Bill", SZA was able to bring home the award from the biggest category, Song of the Year. Pluma received the award for both Regional Mexican Artist of the Year and Regional Mexican Album of the Year, along with two other iHeartRadio awards.

2023 introduced us to many new and talented artists who were nominated at this year's iHeartRadio Music Awards. Breakout artist Jelly Roll won Best New Artist in both the Pop and Country category. "Dial Drunk" singer Noah Kahan received the award for Best New Artist in the Alternative and Rock category. New

hip-hop icon Ice Spice took home the award for Best New Artist in the Hip-Hop category. "On My Mama" singer Victoria Monét won the award for Best New Artist in the R&B category.

In summary, the 2024 iHeartRadio Music Awards reminded us why music is so important and vital to us. Music helps us connect, learn, and love one another, and most importantly, helps us sing our hearts out!

The iHeartRadio Awards was full of fun musical performances that got everyone up on their feet dancing and singing.

The Awards was also full of new, first-time winners who can add an iHeartRadio trophy to their trophy cases at home! If you are interested in seeing the full list of nominees and winners, check out the official iHeartRadio website (<https://news.heart.com/featured/iheartradio-music-awards/content/2024-03-31-2024-iheartradio-music-awards-see-the-full-list-of-winners/>).

# Arts & Entertainment

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## A deep dive into “Cowboy Carter”

### *Beyoncé’s new album on the history of country music*

By ELLE PALUMBO

Arts and Entertainment Editor

“This ain’t a Country album. This is a ‘Beyoncé album.’” is what Beyoncé posted on Instagram before the release of her much-anticipated 8th studio album “Cowboy Carter”, a country inspired 27-track record. The record, which includes two hit singles “Texas Hold ‘Em” and “16 Carriages”, is the second installment of a trilogy of albums, following her 7th studio album “Renaissance”. Renaissance celebrated the influence of Black queer culture and house music, while Cowboy Carter celebrates the Black influence in southern American culture and history. Inspired by Beyoncé’s performance of her song “Daddy’s Lessons” at the 2016 Country Music Awards, in which she states, “I did not feel welcomed...and it was very clear that I wasn’t,” Beyoncé allowed herself to investigate the history behind American Country music, ultimately coming up with Cowboy Carter.

Like many albums Beyoncé has released previously, love, heartbreak, and self-identity are common themes on this record. In “16 Carriages”, one of the lead singles on the album, Beyoncé opens up about her personal life and how working as a child affected her as an adult. She mentions her launch to fame at 15 in the girl group Destiny’s Child, and then alludes to struggles in her present life, creating a heartbreaking and beautiful glimpse into one of America’s most hardworking performers. The 4th track on the album “Protector”, delves even further into Beyoncé’s life, as she reveals her life as a mother, showing her conflicting feelings between wanting to protect her children, but knowing she must allow them to go

out on their own.

Beyoncé’s journey of self-love and relationships continues in a more fiery and spiteful tone with “Jolene”, a cover of the famous Dolly Parton track, in which Parton features. “Dolly P” introduces Beyoncé’s cover of her song, with a new twist to it, as Beyoncé changes the lyrics to the original hit, issuing a warning to Jolene to stay away from her man. This track adds a fierce tone to the album, showing people that Beyoncé is not messing around about her love life and self-identity. This fiery streak is continued in the next two tracks on the album “Daughter”, which dives into Beyoncé’s struggles of identity and self-doubt, and “Spaghettii” which explains the struggles Black artists have faced in the country music industry and how Beyoncé expects to change them. Both songs play into the nature of anger and destruction, with Beyoncé being fed up with issues of identity as a black country woman. “Alligator Tears” is a sweet and simple love song, referring to the phrase “crocodile tears” meaning tears that are shed by a hypocrite or someone who doesn’t feel bad about the choices they’ve made. Beyoncé explains loving someone so much, it doesn’t matter what they do, with many fans believing she is referring to Jay-Z’s past infidelity. The topic of infidelity is continued towards the end of the record in “Tyrant” with Beyoncé demanding answers from the “Hangman”, most likely a symbol of infidelity referencing Jay Z’s infidelity.

With love and heartbreak as a common theme in “Cowboy Carter”, Beyoncé incorporates that in her research of the history of country music, including

“

“Used to say I spoke, ‘too country’/ and the rejection came, said ‘I wasn’t country ‘nough’/ Said I wouldn’t saddle up, but if that ain’t country, tell me what is?”

- Beyoncé on “Cowboy Carter”

”

the influence of Black artists in American country music. “American Requiem” showcases Beyoncé’s experience at the Country Music Awards, with the lyrics “Used to say I spoke, ‘too country’/ and the rejection came, said ‘I wasn’t country ‘nough’/ Said I wouldn’t saddle up, but if that ain’t country, tell me what is?”. She addresses the racism she experienced after dipping into the country scene in 2016, segwaying into the next track on the album “Blackbird”. The cover of the famous Beatles’ tune features up incoming Black country singers, Brittney Spencer, Reyna Roberts, Tanner Adell, and Tiera Kennedy, creating a modern twist on the over 50-years old song. The original Blackbird was inspired by the experiences of Black girls attending an all-white school, hammering home the cultural significance of Country music in this album, and on the track itself. The number-one hit from the album “Texas Hold ‘Em”, while a classic fun country track, addresses the issue of racism black country artists have faced, as Beyoncé is the first Black woman with a number-one country song, once again showcasing the importance of black people in American Country culture.

“Ya Ya”, an upbeat anthem, references the Chitlin Circuit, a collection of performance venues that sustained many Black musicians and dancers during the era of racial segregation

in the US. Beyoncé references this historical fact, by also touching on the struggles of living in America as a black person, with lyrics like “Whole lotta red in that white and blue / History can’t be erased”. This journey is concluded in the closing track “Amen”, solidifying the history that inspired the album and the importance of the Black country artists that came before her.

The collaborations on “Cowboy Carter” continue the legacy and message Beyoncé is trying to put out. Famous country artists Dolly Parton and Willie Nelson make appearances on the album, encouraging listeners to acknowledge the Black history behind country music and welcome Beyoncé and fellow Black artists into the country scene. Adding incoming Black country singers Brittney Spencer, Reyna Roberts, Tanner Adell, and Tiera Kennedy with incoming artist Shaboozey, who mixes country with hip hop, rock, and Americana, allows for listeners to encourage new artists, and solidifies the history behind Country music. Linda Martell, the first commercially successful black female artist in country music, is also featured on this album, with Beyoncé playing tribute to the success of black country artists before her. Martell eventually left country music after disputes with her manager Shelby Singleton Jr, allowing Beyoncé to give her a resurgence. Famous pop

artists Post Malone and Miley Cyrus are also included on “Cowboy Carter”, adding to another important part of the record, genre bending.

While some may believe that “Cowboy Carter” is a country album, many listeners would agree that it is more of a country themed album, due to the different genres and styles that are incorporated. “Bodyguard,” a swinging, classic rock anthem, strays away from the classic country sound. However, in typical Beyoncé fashion, the track still includes lyrics that represent a country theme, and an instrumental that reminds listeners of the country. “Daughter” gives listeners a taste of opera, with a segment of the Italian opera song Caro Mio Ben, which segways into “Spaghettii” a rap song, featuring Shaboozey. Listeners also get many R&B tracks, including “Tyrant”, “Desert Eagle” and “II Hands II Heaven”, which while taking part in a genre different to country, include country terms, such as “do-si-do” and “giddy-up”, to remind you of its origins in country. “Ya, Ya” is an upbeat rock song that incorporates samples from “These Boots Were Made for Walkn” by Lee Hazelwood and “Good Vibrations” by The Beach Boys.

“Cowboy Carter” delves into the route of country music, inspiring myself and other listeners to learn and embrace the origins of American country music. By bringing up the issues with Black people in country music, such as the racism she faced at the 2016 Country Music Awards, Beyoncé claps back at haters through 27 tracks of pure culture and beauty, creating a splendid Act II to her trilogy of albums.

## Arts & Entertainment

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# Beyoncé's "BLACKBIIRD"

*The Beatles cover reaffirming Paul McCartney's 1960s message*

BY DEMIYA SILVA  
Features Editor

March 29, 2024 was a huge day for the "Beyhive," also known as the nickname for fans of popular artist Beyoncé.

On this day, the thirty-two-time Grammy award winner released her eighth studio album, titled *COWBOY CARTER*.

The record found Beyoncé shifting her sound in a different direction, more inspired by country music.

The album's tracks had many features, notably from artists like Miley Cyrus, Post Malone, and Dolly Parton. *COWBOY CARTER* received immediate critical acclaim, including a perfect score from both NME and Rolling Stone.

The second track on *COWBOY CARTER* is ti-

tled "BLACKBIIRD," and is a cover of the Beatles tune, originally released in 1968. "BLACKBIIRD" is the only cover included on the record.

The cover not only uses original tracks from the 1968 rendition, but also features four Black country singers, Tanner Adell, Brittney Spencer, Tiera Kennedy, and Reyna Roberts.

These artists provide both lead vocals and harmonies on the track, breathing more life into the already impactful tune.

In addition to Paul McCartney's original acoustic guitar track, Beyoncé's rendition of the song contains orchestration and bass that the original "Blackbird" didn't possess.

The original origins of the Beatles song exist within the political climate of the 1960s in the United States.

In a 2018 interview that

McCartney did with GQ, in which he breaks down some of his most well known songs, he speaks on "Blackbird". "I'd heard about the Civil Rights troubles that were happening in the 60s," McCartney tells GQ. "in England, a bird is a girl, so I was thinking of a Black girl going through this; now is your time to arise; set yourself free; take these broken wings."

On April 4, McCartney took to Instagram to post in appreciation of Beyoncé's rendition of "Blackbird."

"I think she does a magnificent version of it and it reinforces the civil rights message that inspired me to write the song in the first place," McCartney writes on Instagram.

In his post, McCartney writes on how he received the information on Beyoncé's cover.

"I spoke to her on Face-

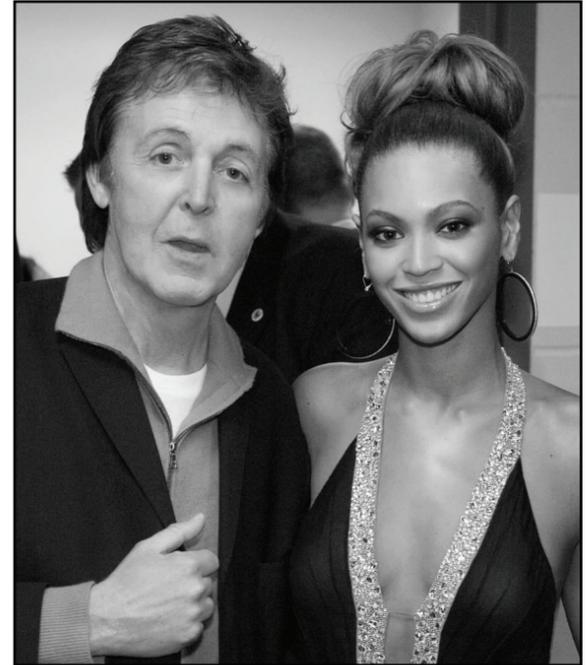


Photo courtesy of @paulmccartney on Instagram  
Paul McCartney and Beyoncé photographed together

Time and she thanked me for writing it and letting her do it." After stating how much he enjoys the *COWBOY CARTER* cover of the song, he

continues, "Anything my song and Beyoncé's fabulous version can do to ease racial tension would be a great thing and makes me very proud."

# Taylor Swift's new album breaks records

*Swift once again proves she is a force to be reckoned with*

BY ELLE PALUMBO  
Arts & Entertainment Editor

American pop star and billionaire Taylor Swift released her newest album this past weekend, *The Tortured Poet's Department*, and it is already breaking records left right and center.

The album was announced at the 66th Annual Grammy Awards on February 4th after Swift won Best Pop Vocal Album for her previous studio album *Midnights*, and it has already surpassed *Midnights* in first day streaming numbers, proving that fans cannot get enough of Swift's music.

Spotify announced a day before the album released that *The Tortured Poet's Department* broke the record for the most pre-saved album in

Spotify history. When the album was released, Spotify announced that not only had the album become the most streamed album in a single day in 2024, but of all time, breaking the record previously held by Swift's previous album *Midnights*, according to Variety.

The album was also the most streamed album in a single day on Amazon Music and Apple Music, making it Swift's most popular album to date, according to Today and Apple Music via Instagram. *The Tortured Poet's Department* was also the largest music pre-order of all time, according to Today.

The US Billboard charts also released that the album sold 1.4 million copies in traditional album sales, according to initial reports from

Luminate, with 243.4 million on-demand audio streams on opening day.

"The song Down Bad is so catchy," said NECC student Matt Scharn.

*The Tortured Poet's Department* originally had 16 tracks, coming in at just over an hour. However, Swift announced via Instagram only 2 hours after the release that she released *The Tortured Poet's Department: The Anthology* the secret second half of the album. The second half includes 15 new songs, making the entire album come in at 2 hours and 2 minutes.

"I love how she released a regular album and then not even 24 hours later she released the deluxe version," said NECC student Janie Dunn. "It's so fun."

The album received "generally favorable reviews" from critics, coming in at a 77 out of 100 from Metacritic.

Critics praised the album for its songwriting, musical composition, and emotion, with many critics saying that it is her strongest album to date. However, despite record breaking numbers, many critics felt *The Tortured Poets Department* was one of Swift's weaker entries, finding the lyrics to be weak and the allusions in the album to pretend to have emotional depth.

In true Taylor Swift fashion, many fans have already begun decoding the new tracks. Many fans and critics have noticed the songs revolve around her relationships, especially her ex, English actor Joe Alwyn and most recent ex, Mat-

ty Healy, lead vocalist for the band the 1975.

Songs such as "So Long, London", "loml", and the title track "The Tortured Poets Department", are all rumored to be written about Joe Alwyn, according to Cosmopolitan.

Fans also took notice of the song "thanK you alMee", which many believe references the famous feud between Swift and celebrity Kim Kardashian.

"The song supposedly being about Kim Kardashian annoys be," Dunn added. "I feel like she's just dragging out this feud from years ago."

Despite many negative reviews, the positive reviews have outweighed the negative ones, allowing for Swift to dominate the pop scene once again. "The Tortured Poets Department" is now streaming.

# Sports

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## Knights topple Quincy 11-1

By DANIEL HENRICK-  
Sports editor

A solid night at the plate from Chris Bear of Boston, MA helped lead The Knights past Quincy community college 11-1 on April 16. The run-rule victory improves NECC to (13-11) this season and (7-2) in regional play.

Brown, Max Lalime of Portsmouth, NH and Griffin Ruffner of Exeter, NH did the most damage at the plate. The trio combined for 6 RBIs (runs batted in) on six hits. Laime and Bear each swiped a bag on the base paths in the game.

“We’ve seen similar pitching, so I just stuck with the approach that coach has been talking to us all year about.” Laime said.

Lalime’s offensive performance earned praise from assistant coach Jeff Mejia Jr.

“Max is an amazing ath-

lete; he is an explosive player. When he plays. To his capabilities he will look like the best player on the field,” said Mejia.

Brayan Garre of Monte Cristi, DR got the start. The freshman collected two strikeouts and yielded one run on three hits over four innings of work.

“My curveball was on early. I avoided contact so they weren’t really touching me” said Garre “(Eric) Wainwright behind the plate helped establish the zone with me and stay locked in”

A single to center field from Bear and a pair of walks by Thomas Fratto of Reading, MA and Eric Wainwright of Falmouth, MA loaded the bases for The Knights, threatening early. However, NECC squandered the early oppor-

tunity with a fly out to right field from Michael Fabiano of Reading, MA to end the threat.

In the second inning The Knights once again threatened to score but didn’t waste this opportunity. The knights grabbed complete control of the game, scoring seven runs on six hits. The run was capped off by a two RBI double ripped down the left field line by Ruffner.

The Knights added to their lead in the third inning with a pair of runs from Lalime and Manuel Castro of Manchester, NH, 9-0 Knights.

In the fifth inning head coach Jeff Mejia elected to use his bullpen going with Francis Comeau of Plymouth, MA. Comeau tossed a clean inning by striking out the side.

The bottom fifth inning



Photo by Daniel Henrick

### Starting pitcher Brayan Garr fires a pitch

once again featured traffic on the base paths. Fratto crushed a single into right field. Then Followed back-to-back hits batsman to load the bases. Fa-

biano grounded into a fielder’s choice at first to score Castro to lead 10-1. A sacrifice fly from Ruffner scored Fratto and ended the game with a

## CCRI falls to Northern Essex in blowout

By DANIEL HENRICK  
Sports Editor

The community college of Rhode Island fell to Northern Essex 9-1 on April 20th. The victory improves the Knights record to (14-11) and extended The Knights winning streak to three games.

Reflin Jimenez of Lawrence, MA got the start. Jimenez tossed seven innings, allowing one run on four walks and four hits. The right hander picked up the win. On the opposing side, CCRI’s Alex Iannuccilli took the mound. Iannuccilli went four innings. He allowed five runs, three earned on four hits and four walks. Iannuccilli collected four strikeouts in his outing.

In the first inning CCRI struggled defensively. The Knights took full advantage as Maniel Castro of Manchester, NH and Max Lalime of Portsmouth, NH both scored on throwing errors from CCRI.

NECC tacked on three more runs in the second inning from doubles by Max Lalime and Chris Bear of Boston, MA 5-0

after two frames. CCRI responded with a run of their of the top of the third. Jimenez struggled with his command, allowing two walks and a hit to load the bases with one out. Jimenez walked the next CCRI batter to force in a run, 5-1. The damage was limited as a ground ball to second induced a double play to end the inning.

The Knights had opportunities to score but couldn’t come through as they were held scores in the third and fourth innings. NECC broke through with a bases loaded double from Armani Paulino of Lawrence, MA in the fifth inning to lead 6-1.

Over the final two innings NECC pushed three more runs across home plate to lead by eight, initiating a mercy rule for the 9-1 victory.

Mark McKay of Plymouth, MA, Paulino, Bear and Lalime each tallied two hits. Lalime and Eric Wainwright of Falmouth, MA Both recorded ta pair RBIs.



Photo courtesy of the NECC website

### Knights outfielder Michael Fabiano taking an at bat

# Sports

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## Reynoso named to All-American all first team

By DANIEL HENRICK  
Sports Editor

On April 11th The Knights' Luis Reynoso of Lawrence was included in the NJCAA (National junior college athletics association) All-American first team for the second straight season. The selection was announced by the NJCAA voting committee. Reynoso is the first Knight in program history to be named to two All-American selections.

Reynoso helped lead The Knights to their second

consecutive NJCAA East District /Region 21 final appearance. They returned to the NJCAA national tournament where NECC finished fifth in the tournament.

In the 6'6 forward's 2023-2024 campaign he appeared in 31 of NECC's 34 games. He averaged 20 points and 13 rebounds per game. Throughout the season Reynoso's presence was felt on both ends of the court as he was first in points (19.8), assists (13.2)

and blocks (1.6).

Nationally, he was third in the league in defensive rebounds (278), sixth in offensive rebounds (130) and fifth in rebounds per game margin (13.2). His 614 points ranked seventh in the league.

In his second season with Northern Essex, he reached the 1,000-point milestone on Feb 18th. He was the first Knight since Joe Marshall in 2001 to accomplish that feat. Reynoso recorded



1,264 points, 831 rebounds and 249 assists overall in his two-year Knights career.

Photo courtesy of NECC Knights

## Voelker named NJCAA pitcher of week

By DANIEL HENRICK  
Sports editor

After a 2-0 week from The Knights ace, Jayden Voelker of Coventry, RI he received the NJCAA pitcher of the week honor for the April 18th week. The right-handed pitcher struck out 24 batters across 10 innings and lowered his season ERA (earned run average) to 2.95 that week.

Voelker threw a five-inning gem on March 30th against Roxbury that saw all 15 outs come from strikeouts. This was something head coach Jeff Mejia "had never seen anything like it." The sophomore dazzled again in his next start on April 13th vs Bunker hill. He struck out 13 batters and allowed one hit over five innings of work.

For the season the sophomore is (4-0) in five starts with a 2.95 ERA and 51 strikeouts in 23.2 innings.



Photo courtesy of the NECC athletics website

Pitcher Jayden Voelker winding up to throw a pitcher

## Pitcher Jayden Voelker of NECC draws attention

By ELIJAH THIBODEAUX  
CORRESPONDENT

Northern Essex Community College's baseball team was in the limelight due to one of its standout pitchers, Jayden Voelker's, outstanding performance.

Voelker, from the close-knit village of Coventry, Rhode Island, has piqued the interest of scouts with his exceptional pitching abilities and steadfast passion for the game.

Voelker's baseball career began in his birthplace of Coventry, where he refined his abilities on local Little League grounds before breaking into the high school ranks.

As a strong player for Northern Essex Community College, Voelker has developed as a force to be reckoned with on the mound, with a devastating fastball and pre-

cise precision that have made opposing batters struggle to connect. What distinguishes Voelker, however, is not only his athletic ability, but also his relentless work ethic and will for success. Despite overcoming hurdles along the road, Voelker has stayed committed to his quest for perfection, putting in many hours of practice and training to hone his

craft and take his game to new heights.

Voelker hails from an athletic family, and his younger brother, Logan Voelker, is also creating a name for himself in athletics. Logan has followed in Jayden's footsteps as a great pitcher, demonstrating his own athletic ability on the basketball court and football field.

As scouts continue to notice

Voelker's remarkable performance on the mound, the future appears promising for the brilliant young pitcher from Coventry. Voelker is focused, driven, and ready to take whatever opportunities arise as he pursues his baseball aspirations. *Editors' note, Elijah is a member of the baseball team*

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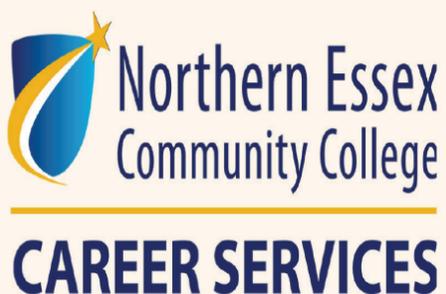
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