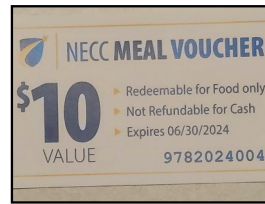


Learn more about PTK Honor Society Page 8



Questions about food insecurity help Page 6



Staff win NENPA awards Page 5

Observer

observer.necc.mass.edu @neccobserver facebook.com/neccobserver

Spring 2024 • Volume 88 • Issue Number 7 April 12, 2024

News Bytes

MassReconnect Information Session-Virtual Online.
Saturday March 24 from 9:00 to 10:00 am. Learn how Mass Reconnect provides funding for adults 25 years and older to earn a college degree at no cost.

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.

Spring Jam Haverhill. Join us for the NECC Spring Jam April 17 in the gym in D Building from 11:00-1:30 p.m. and celebrate being an NECC Knight. Food, drinks, music, and activities will be provided.

Why Trump? Join History Professor Steve Russell as he leads a discussion about the historical roots and continuing popularity of the MAGA movement. April 24 12:30-1:30 in the Center For Liberal Arts.

Total Eclipse



NECC students go beyond the stars to explore a path of totality in Vermont. For more photos turn to Page Seven. Photo courtesy of Emma Ruggiero

Students take a trip to view rare event

By EMMA RUGGIERO
Correspondent

On April 8, 2024, the college's PACE program organized a field trip to take their participants to St. Johnsbury, Vermont to experience this year's total solar eclipse.

Days leading up to the event, the PACE program held a workshop hosted by Northern Essex Community College Professor of Earth Science Mark Reinhold where he presented to the PACE participants the science behind the total solar eclipse.

A solar eclipse is "an event where the moon passes between the earth and the sun, resulting in the moon's shadow moving across the earth's surface," said Reinhold.

This solar eclipse is a unique and pivotal point in space history because "the sun will be completely covered by the moon" and "the pathway of the shadow will pass over Mexico, the U.S. and Canada continued Reinhold.

Experiencing "these types of events allow [society] a rare opportunity to study the sun's atmosphere," said Reinhold.

In order to study solar eclipses, astronomers use a variety of instruments, such as "earth-based telescopes" to capture the sun's "wavelengths of energy" and "satellites in orbit" that capture "the energy types that are blocked from us here on the surface," explained Reinhold.

At 10 a.m. on the day of the eclipse, students and faculty

Continued on Page 7

Upcoming events:

April 12, Last day to withdraw for Full Semester Classes

Monday April 15 Patriots Day (College Closed)

Salem State University Transfer Campus Visits-Lawrence April 16, 9:00 am to 11:00 am. Stop by and learn about Salem States and NECC Transfer Connection Program

NECC Jazz/Rock Ensemble Concert, Thursday May 2nd at 6:00 p.m. Free Admission

PACE Awards and Alumni Success Night Tuesday April 23 from 5:00-7:00 pm Haverhill Campus TC-103

Graduation Commencement at 11:00 a.m.

Saturday May 18th Haverhill Campus

How to find security around each campus:

Haverhill Campus
100 Elliott St., Spurk 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

www.observer.necc.mass.edu
 @neccobserver
 facebook.com/neccobserver

Trump's Tweets turned threats

BY KIM ZAPPALA
Editor-in-Chief/ Opinion Editor

In recent years, it's become increasingly clear that the words and actions of politicians can have a very real impact on the safety and wellbeing of everyday citizens. This has certainly been the case with Donald Trump, whose frequent use of social media to criticize and attack his opponents has led to several individuals needing extra security measures to protect themselves from the harm that Trump's supporters can have.

Former Vice President Mike Pence remained loyal to Trump throughout his presidency, their relationship soured towards the end of Trump's time in office. Trump publicly criticized Pence for

not doing more to overturn the results of the 2020 election, and his ire eventually boiled over into a violent insurrection at the Capitol on January 6th, 2021. Pence was in the building when the mob breached it, and he was forced to be evacuated to safety as the crowd chanted hang Mike Pence. In the aftermath, he reportedly required additional security measures, as he and his family were subjected to threats of violence from Trump supporters.

Cassidy Hutchinson, an advisor to Trump's former Chief of Staff Mark Meadows, testified in front of the January 6 Sub Committee telling them what she knew had happened in the White House involving Jan 6. In response, Trump attacked her on Twitter,

calling her a "RINO" (Republican in Name Only), and suggesting that she should be thrown out of the party. Hutchinson said that she received "countless" threatening emails and phone calls in the aftermath of Trump's tweets, including some from people who claimed to be members of the Proud Boys, a far-right extremist group. Hutchinson was forced to move out of her Washington D.C. and went into hiding due to the threats.

Ruby Freeman and Shaye Moss became targets of Trump's after they were falsely accused of participating in election fraud during the 2020 presidential election. Freeman and Moss were poll workers from Georgia who were working at a ballot-counting center when Trump and his former personal lawyer Rudy Giuliani spread conspiracy theories about the mother and daughter who were working at the center. Giuliani and Trump said publicly that Freeman and Moss were passing around USB drives as if it were vials of heroin or cocaine which there is no truth to. Freeman and her family began to receive death threats and harassment from members of Trump's base and they were forced to leave their home and go into hiding.

Michael Cohen, a former lawyer and fixer for Donald Trump, went to jail for lying to Congress about Trump's involvement with Russia. Cohen spent three years in prison. When released Cohen became a vocal critic of the president after he was arrested and convicted for his part of trying to cover up Donald Trump's affair with Stormy Daniels, a porn star, while Trump's wife Melania was at home pregnant with their son Barron. Trump attacked

Cohen on Twitter repeatedly, calling him a "rat" and a "liar," and suggesting that he should be disbarred, which he was. Cohen later revealed that he had received death threats from Trump supporters, and that he had to hire bodyguards to protect himself and his family.

Liz Cheney, a Republican Congresswoman representative from Wyoming, who has been very vocal in her criticism of Donald Trump in recent months for his part in the January 6th insurrection. She was involved with the Jan 6 Sub Committee who suggested criminal charges be brought against Trump. In response, Trump attacked her on Twitter and called for her to be removed from her position in Congress. Cheney was primaryed and lost her election in 2022. She has since reported receiving a significant number of death threats, and she has had to hire additional security personnel to ensure her safety.

Adam Kinzinger, another Republican representative who was targeted by Trump after he came out in favor of impeaching the president over his role in inciting the January 6th insurrection. Trump attacked Kinzinger on Twitter, calling him a "RINO" and a "loser," and suggesting that he should be primaryed in his next election which he was and lost. Kinzinger has received numerous threats of violence and harassment in the aftermath of Trump's tweets, and he has been forced to take additional security measures to protect himself and his family.

Gen. Mark Milley is the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and he came under fire from Trump after the 2020 election. Trump reportedly considered firing Milley after he pushed back against

the president's suggestion that the military should be involved in overturning the election results. Milley also called Trump out for wanting to be a dictator saying that took an oath to the Constitution not one single man. Milley reportedly required additional security measures after Trump said he was treasonous and it should be punishable by death. Milley has since received death threats by Trump's base and needed extra security.

Letitia James is the attorney general of New York, who led the investigation into Trump's fraudulent business dealings in the state where Donald Trump, his two adult sons Don Jr and Eric as well as his Trump Organizations CFO Allen Weiselburg, have already been found liable of fraud. Trump has targeted her on Twitter, calling her a "partisan hack" and suggesting that the investigation is politically motivated. James has received numerous threats of violence because of Trump's attacks, and she has had to take additional security measures to ensure her safety as well as the safety of her staff.

Fani Willis is the district attorney of Fulton County, Georgia, and she has indicted Trump for his attempts to overturn the results of the 2020 election in the state of Georgia. Trump has attacked Willis on Twitter, calling her a "Never Trumper" and suggesting that she is biased against him. Willis has reportedly received a significant number of threats because of Trump's posts lashing out against her. She has had to take additional security measures to protect herself and her family as well as her staff.

Continued on Page 4

NECC Observer

The award-winning student newspaper of Northern Essex Community College

Room C318, Spurr building,
100 Elliot St. Haverhill, MA 01830

Newsroom 978.556.3027
Adviser 978.556.3027

Advertising 978.556.3027
observer@necc.mass.edu

The NECC Observer reserves the right to edit, condense and refuse all submissions.

Spring 2023 Observer Staff

- EDITOR-IN-CHIEF** : Kim Zappala
- AND OPINION EDITOR** : Kim Zappala
- NEWS EDITOR** : Daniela Valdivia-Terres
- A&E EDITOR** : Shaun Hood
- A&E EDITOR** : Elle Palumbo
- SPORTS EDITOR** : Daniel Henrick
- FEATURES EDITOR** : Demiya Silva
- CAMPUS LIFE EDITOR** : Bailey Orio
- WEB EDITORS** : Kim Zappala, Daniela Valdivia-Terres, Shaun Hood, Daniel Henrick, Elle Palumbo, Demiya Silva, Bailey Orio

FACULTY ADVISER : Mary Jo Shafer

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.

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

The NECC Observer is a member of the Associated Collegiate Press, College Media Advertisers Inc., the Colombia Scholastic Press Association, and the New England Press Association.

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

You can reach us at:
978-556-3633
observer@necc.mass.edu

Opinion

www.observer.necc.mass.edu @neccobserver facebook.com/neccobserver

A cult leader and his followers

By **KIM ZAPPALA**

Editor-in-Chief / Opinion Editor

Donald Trump, often compared to a cult leader, has garnered what can only be described as unconditional love from a significant portion of the American electorate, with 71% of likely Republican primary voters preferring his truths over those from their family, friends, conservative media, and even religious leaders. This unwavering support is further evidenced by his followers' intense loyalty, which astonishingly leads many to act against both their own interests and those of their families, underscoring the depth of their allegiance.

This cult-like devotion isn't without foundation; experts like Bethany Burum and authors such as Steven Hassan in "The Cult of Trump" provide thorough analyses of Trump's persuasive methods, drawing parallels between his techniques and those employed by historical cult leaders. Trump has not only validated fundamentalist religious factions and white supremacists but also drawn them into his steadfast following, creating a faction internally divided yet externally united in unconditional love for their leader, a phenomenon not witnessed in America since the days of Lincoln.

The Origins of Trump's Cult Following

The 2008 economic collapse combined with Barack Obama's election set the stage for Donald Trump's ascent in 2016, igniting social unrest and a desire for change among certain segments of the American populace.

Trump's victory in the 2016 election was propelled by an unconventional coalition of white working-class and middle-class Americans, fueled by resentment and a sense of being overlooked and disrespected in their own country.

Cultivation of a Loyal Base:

Throughout his 2016 campaign and subsequent presidency, Trump deepened his connection with his supporters by establishing common adversaries, including Democrats, opposing Republicans,

the press, the judiciary, the so-called 'deep state', and proponents of immigration.

This strategy not only solidified his base but also fostered an environment where 71% of likely Republican primary voters viewed him as the most truthful source over family, friends, conservative media, and even religious leaders. (Donald Trump lied to the public over 30,000 times during his four years as president.)

Creation of a Community and Identity:

The MAGA movement, driven by a desire for tribal identity, played a crucial role in Trump's enduring popularity. It created a sense of community among his followers, who often overlooked negative aspects of his character, including sexual abuse allegations, in favor of the collective identity the movement provided.

Trump's transformation of the Republican Party into a movement characterized by intolerance, xenophobia, and pseudo-populism over six decades has been instrumental in maintaining the loyalty of his base, even post-presidency.

Psychological Factors Behind the Fervent Loyalty

The fervent loyalty of Donald Trump's followers is underpinned by a complex web of psychological factors and social dynamics:

Followers exhibit a remarkable level of blind faith, often denying inconvenient truths and adopting Trump's authoritarian, fear-based view of reality. This allegiance is fortified by a belief in Trump's divinity, with some supporters convinced he is chosen by God, further detaching them from factual reality.

To alleviate feelings of dissonance, shame, and embarrassment, Trump supporters employ various defense mechanisms: Denying the worst actions of Trump and portraying him as a 'fighter' for their cause. Catastrophizing the perceived threats from the left and attempting to portray Biden as more corrupt. Rationalizing their support by believing in the catastrophic consequences if Democrats gain power, viewing Trump's presidency as an unqualified success de-

spite evidence to the contrary.

Social Identity and Group Dynamics:

The loyalty can also be explained through social identity theory, where group members tend to favor leaders who they perceive as most like themselves. This is evident in Trump's portrayal as 'one of them', understanding and respecting their struggles.

The QAnon conspiracy further binds supporters with a shared belief in Trump's crusade against a supposed network of adversaries, with a significant portion of Republicans finding these theories plausible.

The Role of Media in Cultivating Trump's Base

Twitter, now known as X as well as Truth Social, has emerged as a pivotal platform in shaping US political discourse, with Donald Trump leveraging it to connect directly with the public and journalists. This direct line of communication allowed Trump to circumvent traditional media channels, broadcasting messages that were often controversial or false, yet attention-grabbing. His approach, characterized as 'big-seed marketing,' aimed to create a viral effect by reaching a broad audience with provocative content.

Influence on Media Coverage:

A study focusing on Trump's Twitter activity analyzed 98 articles from the top circulated newspapers, revealing themes such as Horserace Coverage and Media Coverage, indicating how Trump's tweets potentially influenced journalistic narratives.

Impact on Public Trust:

Political party identification has significantly influenced trust in the news media, with Republicans showing greater skepticism (Fake News). This skepticism is linked directly to support for Trump, highlighting a polarized view of media credibility among highly engaged partisans.

The deregulation of media over decades culminated in the Telecommunications Act of 1996, which allowed for the consolidation of media outlets into a few hands, further enabling the proliferation of pro-

paganda supporting Trump's administration. This environment made it easier for Trump to use social media platforms like Twitter to shape media coverage to his advantage, bypassing traditional media gate-keeping mechanism.

Comparing Trump's Following to Historical Cults:

Donald Trump's approach to leadership and his interaction with followers bear striking resemblances to tactics used by historical cult leaders. This comparison is not made lightly but is drawn from observed behaviors and strategies that echo those of some of the most infamous figures in cult history.

Tactics Comparison:

Insulting Opponents: Much like Jim Jones and David Koresh, Trump has been known to insult and demean his opponents, a tactic aimed at solidifying an "us vs. them" mentality among his followers.

Deflecting Criticism: Similar to Ron Hubbard's method with Scientology, Trump often deflects criticism, redirecting the focus away from himself and onto others, thereby avoiding accountability.

Distracting from Controversies: Sun Myung Moon and Trump share a penchant for creating distractions to shift attention away from controversies, a tactic that helps maintain a certain image in the eyes of their followers.

Steven Hassan, a leading expert on cults, underscores these parallels, suggesting that the psychological manipulation techniques employed by Trump are reminiscent of those used by Jim Jones, David Koresh, Ron Hubbard, and Sun Myung Moon. The comparison highlights not just the tactics but the underlying intent: to foster a sense of unwavering loyalty and devotion among followers, often at the expense of objective truth and rational discourse.

The Impact of Trump's Following on American Politics

Donald Trump's influence on American politics has been profound and multifaceted, reshaping the Republican Party and deepening partisan di-

vides. His ability to maintain a strong hold over a significant portion of the GOP, despite legal troubles and controversial actions, speaks volumes about his impact.

Legal Troubles vs. Political Support:

Fear Among GOP Officials: Many elected officials within the GOP remain hesitant to oppose Trump, fearing backlash from his massive following.

Rallying Despite Indictments: Despite facing arraignment and indictments, Trump's support among followers seems to strengthen, rather than wane.

Unwavering Endorsements: Trump continues to receive endorsements from Republican elected officials, underlining his significant influence within the party.

Autocratic Influence and Partisan Divides:

Comparison with Modern Autocrats: Trump's autocratic tendencies and divisive rhetoric have drawn comparisons with modern autocrats, such as Vladimir Putin and Kim Jun Un, influencing the political landscape within the Republican Party.

Deepening Partisan Divides: Trump's presidency exacerbated partisan and personal divides, with an average of 86% of Republicans approving of his handling of the job versus just 6% of Democrats.

Impact on Personal Relationships and Political Values: The intense divisions have even influenced personal relationships and widened the gulf over core political values, further polarizing the American public.

Cult Following's Role:

Unwavering Loyalty: Trump's followers exhibit unwavering loyalty, despite his ethical transgressions and moral depravity, contributing to increased political polarization and a hostile political discourse.

Increased Political Engagement: His followers have been highly motivated, leading to increased voter turnout and active participation in protests and advocacy, reflecting the deep-seated support within his

Continued on page 4

Opinion

www.observer.necc.mass.edu [@neccobserver](https://twitter.com/neccobserver) facebook.com/neccobserver

Letter to the editor: Students shouldn't go hungry

Letter to the Editor 4/8/24

To The Staff of The Observer,
As an NECC faculty member, I express my solidarity with students who are advocating for more support from college leadership around the issue of food insecurity. I have two overlapping concerns. First, I also would like to see more attention to food access on NECC's campuses. Second, more broadly, I see a need for better communication from college leadership.

NECC leadership rightfully reminds its employees to address the whole student. At convocation, college-wide meetings, and Professional Day, awareness of

students' life situations is emphasized, and responsiveness is encouraged. Currently, many NECC students are unfortunately experiencing food insecurity, and that is a big barrier to learning. While colleges cannot completely "solve" the problem, they can do something.

Something is better than nothing.

When students, faculty, and staff learned about the termination of a social worker last spring and voiced our concerns about the future of services to students, including food access, we were told that services would not be diminished but would instead

be provided in a different way. I was told that I was mistaken in my concern. It was difficult to believe leadership's reassurances, though, because information about a new plan was vague and piecemeal. It seemed improvised.

Now, a year later, I understand that providing food access on campus is not a priority for NECC leadership and that they aim to make a greater impact in other ways, such as increasing Federal Pell Grants. It would have been helpful to hear this rationale earlier in the conversation. I understand that there cannot always be transparency in an institution, but currently there is very little or

none, and NECC can do better. For example, when the Haverhill food pantry was dismantled last September, college faculty and staff were not informed ahead of time and instead learned the news by word-of-mouth after the fact. No one enjoys delivering bad news, but it would have been more respectful in this situation.

I understand that leadership needs to choose how they direct limited time and resources. Still, I think that NECC can and should do something to address food access on campus, even if it is not a priority. Students have identified this issue as their priority.

Our peer institutions, like

Bunker Hill Community College and North Shore Community College, have robust food access programs. I think that we can operate on par with them.

Genuine expressions of concern are acts of optimism. In other words, if people like me didn't think that our institution could continually grow and change and improve, then we wouldn't speak up about the challenges. I hope that this can be a turning point for improved communication and student support at NECC.

Sincerely,
Michelle Carter
Professor of Art & Design

Continued from Page 2: Trump's Tweets

Trump's rhetoric and threats online are so severe that during his New York civil fraud trial jurors had to be completely anonymous. Jurors had to use aliases amongst themselves never revealing their real names. Jurors had

to meet in an undisclosed location to be bussed to the courthouse so Trump and his supporters would not find out their identities to help secure their safety.

The people listed above are just a few examples of the

many individuals who have needed extra security measures after being targeted by Donald Trump on social media. Whether they were former allies who fell out of favor with the president, or officials tasked with investi-

gating his actions, the common thread among them is that they became the subject of harassment, threats, and vitriol from Trump and his supporters. In an age of increasing political polarization, it's more important than ever

that we recognize the real-world consequences of the words we use online and take steps to protect those who are on the receiving end of abuse and intimidation.

Continued from Page 3: Cult leader

base.

Throughout the discourse on Donald Trump's profound influence on American politics and his parallel to historical cult leaders, it becomes evident that his unparalleled ability to command loyalty and shape the perceptions of his followers marks a signif-

icant and potentially lasting impact on the political landscape. The examination of the origins of his following, the psychological underpinnings of their fervor, and the role of media in amplifying his message underscore the complex web of factors that contribute to the unique phenomenon sur-

rounding Trump. This multifaceted analysis not only sheds light on how Trump managed to maintain his grip on a significant portion of the GOP but also highlights the deeper societal and political ramifications of his leadership style.

The significance of Trump's following extends beyond the

immediate political arena, deeply affecting the social fabric and potentially altering the course of American politics for generations to come. As we reflect on the implications of this undying loyalty, the importance of further research and action to understand and possibly mitigate the divisive

effects of such a polarizing figure becomes clear. Ultimately, the phenomenon of Trump's cult-like following serves as a call to critically examine the dynamics of political leadership, media influence, and the psychology of group identity in shaping our democratic processes

Crafting an effective elevator pitch

By KATIE YEATON-HROMADA
Coordinator for Career and Services Internship

Imagine you are in an elevator with someone you hope to work. They turn to you and say, "Tell me about yourself." You have 30 seconds before you reach the ground floor. Quick! What do you say? How much do you say?

Your elevator pitch is a concise summary of yourself. The name "elevator" represents the short amount of time it takes to deliver, like the time it takes to go from one floor to another, typically 30-60 seconds.

It's important to practice your

introduction to become confident. Focus on what you want the listener to know about you.

Do not be shy! Your elevator pitch is an opportunity to set a good first impression. You may not find yourself in an elevator with your future boss, but this introduction could be helpful when you attend a networking event, such as the Spring Job Fair on Thursday, April 25th in TC103 on the Haverhill Campus.

Create a concise pitch using the template below and start practicing with a friend.

Here's an example:

Hello, my name is Golden Knight and I am completing my liberal arts degree at Northern

Essex Community College. I will be graduating next May and I am interested in a career that works with people and uses my technology skills. I've enjoyed the opportunity to create videos in my public speaking class and I'm looking to get more experience in social media marketing. Could you tell me about XYZ Company's approach to marketing?

Template for Elevator Pitch

Customize this template and make it sound more like you!

1.) Hello, my name is _____ and I am completing my degree in _____ at Northern Essex Community College.

2.) I am interested in a career as a _____ in the _____ field (industry, e.g., marketing, computer science, etc.).

3a.) I have worked as a _____ and really enjoyed _____ (mention an aspect that relates to your future career).

OR

3b.) I have completed projects in _____ and am excited to get more experience.

4.) Could you tell me more about _____
Contact NECC Career Services
Interested in a practice/mock

interview? Schedule an appointment with NECC's Career Services through Navigate or email.

Email: careerservices@necc.mass.edu

Navigate: <https://necc.navigate.eab.com/>

Handshake: www.necc.join-handshake.com

Join Career Services and MassHire Merrimack Valley Career Center for our upcoming job fair!

April 25, 2024 @ 10am-1pm | Haverhill Campus, TC103

See Page 9 for a flyer about the upcoming job fair.

News

www.observer.necc.mass.edu @neccobserver facebook.com/neccobserver

Observer staff members win NENPA awards

By MARY JO SHAFER
Faculty Adviser

The New England Newspaper and Press Association (NENPA) recently honored two student staff members of the Northern Essex Community College Observer student newspaper. Observer News Editor Daniela Valdivia-Terres of Chelmsford won first place for best news story and Editor-in-Chief/Opinion Editor Kim Zappala of Haverhill won second place for best opinion page in the college division of the Better Newspaper Competition awards banquet March 23 at the Westin in Waltham.

Valdivia-Terres was honored for a front page story from the April 27, 2023, edition of the Observer, headlined Civic Engagement: Students speak out.

Zappala was honored for a collection of her opinion pages published during last school year. They were competing against students from colleges and universities throughout New England. Finalists in their categories included students from Northeastern University, Bowdoin College, Framingham State University and Quinnipiac University.

"I am so proud of Kim and Daniela. They work so hard on their stories for the Observer and these awards recognize their dedication to the craft of journalism," said Mary Jo Shafer, NECC Journalism/Communication program coordinator and faculty adviser to the NECC Observer. "Daniela puts in long hours covering the news stories that are important and relevant to our

students. Kim manages double duty as editor-in-chief and opinion editor and her opinion pages always offer a vibrant, factual and feisty take on the politics of the day, highlighting the importance of civic engagement."

Shafer said it is particularly exciting that their work is being honored alongside students from universities and colleges throughout New England.

"It shows how strong Kim and Daniela's work is and the important role the Observer plays in our campus community," she said.

Observer Arts and Entertainment Editor Shaun Hood of Groveland and Sports Editor Daniel Henrick of Haverhill also attended the NENPA convention on March 23, taking workshops on topics including data journalism, an introduction to using artificial intelligence, fact-checking and the election, mobile storytelling and investigative reporting. They also attended a screening of the documentary "Bad Press," about a fight for press freedom against state-censored media and a Q&A session with the reporter featured in the film and its director. The Observer is published monthly during the academic year by NECC journalism students. Observer staff works to inform the college community, including students, faculty, and staff.

The Observer also serves as a public forum for the Haverhill and Lawrence campuses and accepts letters and guest

The Observer student staff and faculty adviser are thankful for the longtime support that they have found at NECC through the years. This extends to so many: Faculty, staff, administrators, previous faculty advisers, and most importantly the students who read and contribute to the Observer.

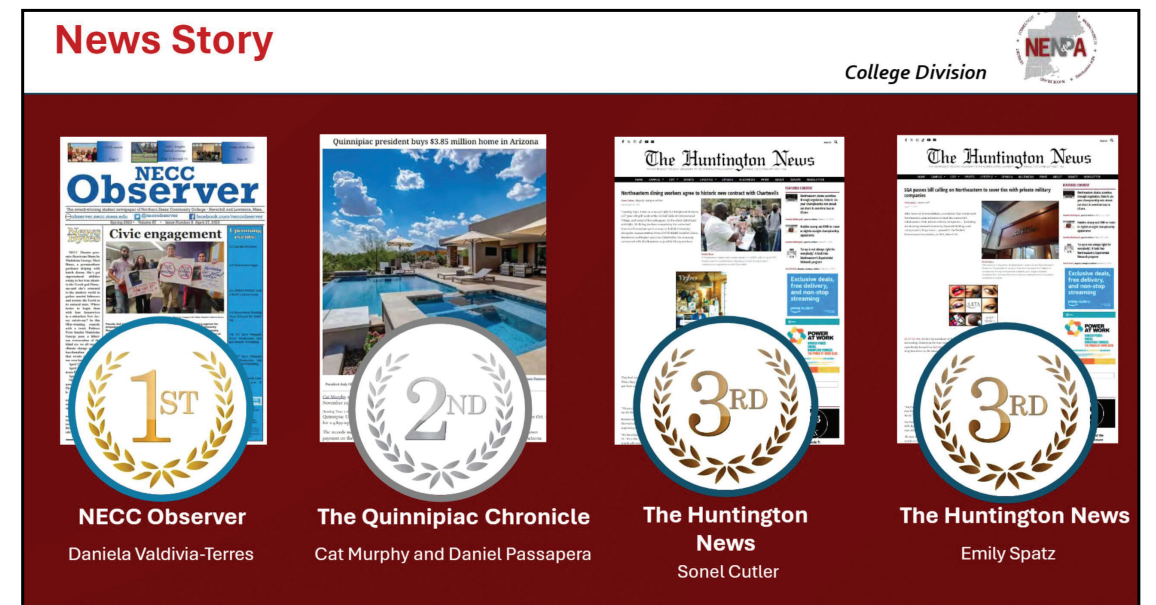
We think the Observer is a vital part of a vibrant community. We are proud to be part of it and we are proud to have your support.

A free press on a college campus is a precious resource. We believe it fosters more civic engagement and sense of community. It creates more awareness

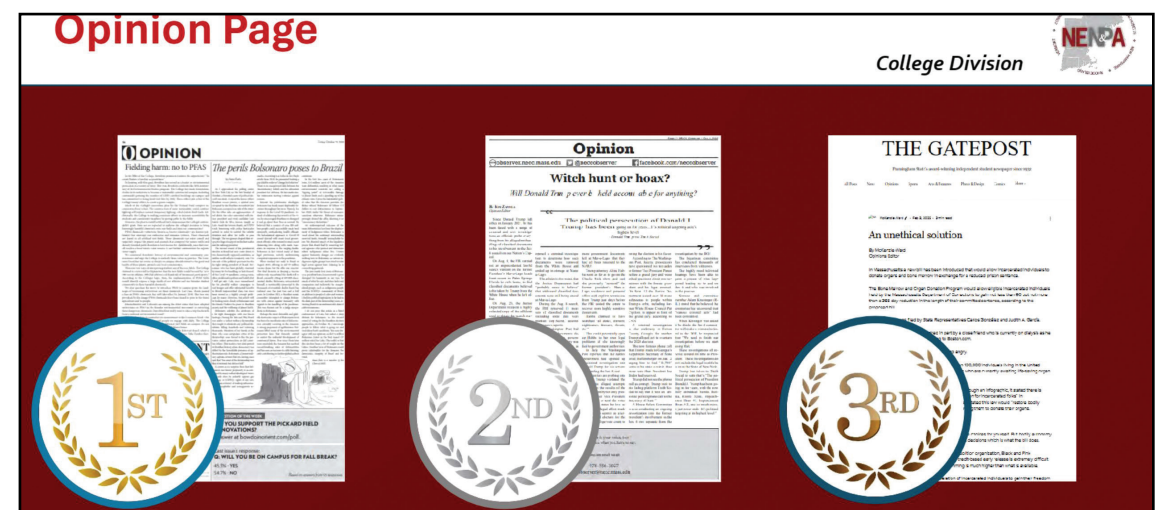
and an informed campus community. We believe the Observer is a public forum and that student reporters and editors are a voice for students as well. It's also an important experiential learning opportunity for journalism students, one where they gain real world skills and gain experience interviewing, writing and editing stories, copy editing and designing pages.

We want to take a moment to thank President Lane Glenn, Provost Paul Beaudin and Dean of Liberal Arts Amy Callahan for their continued support. We really appreciate it.

We also today really want to highlight to the NECC com-



Photos courtesy of NENPA



column.

The Observer is a member of the Associated Collegiate Press, College Media Advertisers, Inc., the Columbia Scholastic Press Association, and the New England Press Association. To learn more about NECC's Journalism/Communication program, visit the website or contact Mary Jo Shafer via email at mshafer@necc.mass.edu

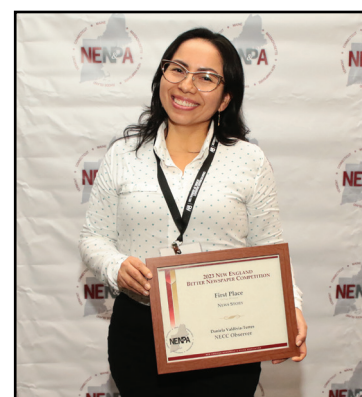


Photo courtesy of NENPA
News Editor Daniela Valdivia-Terres.



Photo by Mary Jo Shafer
Observer Editor-in-chief/
Opinion Editor Kim Zappala.

Observer wants to thank supporters

community our deep appreciation and thanks for some other staff members as well, who have been particularly helpful to us in our day-to-day operations. These are all folks who work within the IT department of the college.

Lenin Tejada has been a superhero for the Observer for years. He knows how the server works, takes cares of the computers, can quickly and efficiently help when systems go awry and is a Mac expert.

He recently helped the newsroom transition to new(ish) computers, which is a big help to us. He is always cheerful and helpful and we appreciate him so much! Thank you Lenin!

In the last few months a dedicated group of NECC staff have been working behind the scenes to help the Observer revamp its website. The website needed to be updated and moved to a different server to make it more secure.

Cesar Gonzalez Tellez has graciously spent time with the Observer faculty adviser and News Editor Daniela Valdivia-Terres to figure out what the new site should have and how the Observer staff wanted it to look.

He then spent endless hours updating the site. Cesar has been a longtime supporter and helper. We know we can go to him with questions or concerns about the website. We appreciate all your

work so much Cesar, thank you! Victor De Jesus and Luis Jimenez have also put in time and effort into this website redesign.

And thank you as well to Chief Technology Officer Danny Rivera. If we didn't mention you by name and you have done anything to support the Observer, we want you to know we are thankful for you too.

Without the support of our community, the NECC Observer could not continue to thrive and serve you the way a community journalism publication should. We really appreciate your support.

Food programs in jeopardy?

Students create petition about food, housing, civic engagement resources

BY DANIELA VALDIVIA-TERRES
News Editor

On April 2, there was a petition spread by Student Government Association SGA about food and housing insecurity titled Saving Civic Engagement. It called for students to sign up on behalf of the services the Civic Engagement, Service-Learning, and Community Resources Coordinator, Janel D'Agata-Lynch, used to oversee before her position was retrenched.

Those services were:

Food Insecurity assistance that includes programs like Free Monthly Mobile Market, Free Food Pantries on Haverhill and Lawrence campuses, and freezers with frozen foods in both campuses.

Housing insecurity assistance, according to students' needs, whether they had children or not, they were accommodated by a nonprofit organization, and followed-up by D'Agata-Lynch. As a licensed social worker she followed every case by case.

Free feminine products were available in bathrooms in both campuses.

Clothing assistance, students had access to vouchers from secondhand stores.

Civic Engagement, which involves programs across campuses promoting voting among students. Highly needed now with a presidential election coming.

The SGA, known for its strong voice advocating for students' concerns, was asking NECC students for their signatures as their support. Specifically, the SGA was concerned for the future of the food access programs that D'Agata-Lynch started in 2022 with a grant she applied and obtained for this cause from the Department of Higher Education.

Here there is an excerpt from the petition and please see it in full in the photo above.

"It has come to our attention that the Grant for the Food insecurities program will be coming to an end this

June 2024 ... the NECC administration has been fumbling around trying their best to keep this program up and running.

"Without this work, about 140 students a semester will be left without housing insecurity support. Is there a plan to continue these services? NO, NECC has no current plan to continue this program."

Elijah Antunes, President of SGA and Representative of Executive Committee, All College Assembly ACA, said "when we found out that after Janel (D'Agata-Lynch) left, Francellis (Quinones) came into that position, it became of consolidating and the effort still seemed to be there, but it just isn't. It wasn't at the level that it was previously." Antunes added that as the food grant would expire in two months, they are concerned about the future of food programs.

Quinones was hired as Chief Officer of Justice Equity Diversity and Inclusion (JEDI) director in July 2022. She is no longer working for NECC since November 2023, but she was on leave earlier.

On Sep. 7, 2023, in the Board of Trustees meeting, Randall Correa was announced as the newly hired Food Access Outreach Coordinator. It was announced in the website that he and Quinones would work "closely at utilization rates for the NECC Mobile Markets and food pantries, which have declined significantly in recent years."

The \$180,000 grant for free food access to students

The Massachusetts Department of Higher Education DHE/ARPA Food Security Program Food Access Project, granted \$180,000 to NECC, to be used according to the plan D'Agata-Lynch proposed to help students with food insecurities, during 11/21/22 to 06/30/24. The grant is meant to be solely and exclusively used as the title says, for food for students.

In one year, since D'Agata-Lynch left NECC in May 2023, the food pantry and

the freezer with free frozen food known as Smart Meals in Haverhill was dismantled. The Free Mobile Market with fresh and seasonal produce and groceries disappeared. No feminine products were refilled. Student point of contact for any food or housing insecurity or any basic need was not announced. All the other programs mentioned above know as Civic Engagement vanished.

Duties assigned to new dean of students

Jason Arey started his new role in NECC last August 2023 as dean of students. This position "oversees a variety of student support services in the areas of Counseling and Psychological Services, Compliance, Veterans and Military Services, Student Life, the Center for Accessibility Resources and Services, Community Standards, Student Government Association, and the Care and Concern Outreach Team, including student conduct and student wellness initiatives. The dean is also responsible for oversight and development of extracurricular and student retention activities at the college," according to the NECC website.

However, as Quinones was on leave before leaving NECC the new dean of students, Arey, was assigned to take over the food programs and oversee the DHE/ARPA grant. Here are the current student food programs he is managing:

Food Boxes with some produce and canned food were offered to students since November '23. These boxes are coming to NECC under a contract with an outside company UTECH, and mostly known as MADD love food boxes.

Market Basket Gift Card, students can access up to one \$50 card per academic year.

\$10 Food Voucher, students receive four vouchers \$10 each to buy food in the cafeteria or the bookstore in Haverhill campus, and \$3 meals in Lawrence campus.

Food Pantry in Lawrence campus, only under appoint-

Saving Civic Engagement

It has come to our attention that the Grant for the Food insecurities program will be coming to an end this June 2024.

Last year, NECC administration fired the person in charge of the Food and housing insecurities.

Since then, the NECC administration has been fumbling around trying their best to keep this program up and running.

They have since hired 4 different people to take on this role and still have not been able to bring this program where it once was last year.

Without this work, about 140 students a semester will be left without housing insecurity support.

This program works to create, The NECC Mobile Market which helps all students and faculty members by providing fresh produce and other goods.

This program also facilitated the food pantry which is utilized by students every day.

Is there a plan to continue these services? NO, NECC has no current plan to continue this program.

Please help by signing our petition.

If you have any questions and/or would like to know how to help email me at: 00339008@student.necc.org

Photo by News Editor Daniela Valdivia-Terres

The petition members of the Student Government Association were asking students to sign.

ment, students can shop for free in the food pantry.

Snack Bags, this recent initiative proposed by Arey allows students to request a snack bag for the weekend. This includes crackers, fruit cup, cereal among other bites.

Arey's statistics from Dec. 31, 2023, to April 5, since he took over, shows that 359 students have received support from all these food program.

Regarding the **voting initiative**, Arey said "we have a couple of different groups that are nonpartisan, that focus on voter registration," who will come to campus, one of them during the Spring Jam, and they will help students to register to vote.

Arey said students can access **feminine products** through the Lawrence pantry. He gets them through the Dignity Matters organization.

Arey also said the grant included a budget to hire a full-time assistant who would take care of this initiative until the grant expires, June 30. However, he said the person they hired quit and applied for another position within NECC

and that the assistant position is vacant. As the budget can not be used for other purposes, that money will be refunded, he said. At the same time, he said there are more funds available but they have to spend it before the deadline.

"It is sad, but I'm going to try not to (return money.) But even if ... I spend every single cent in all of the food lines that I've just talked about, the salary line is still there," he explained.

No more food grants?

What is going to happen when the grant is over or expired? The student trustee, Zeke Vasquez, in the last Board of Trustees meeting spoke up. He explained he was concerned that there was no plan to continue with food programs but before the meeting he said he had a conversation with Provost Paul Beaudin and Arey.

"They have promised that they are currently working on extending the grant or finding new funding through the

Story continues on Page 9

News

www.observer.necc.mass.edu @neccobserver facebook.com/neccobserver

Eclipse continued from Page 1

gathered into a NECC bus and ventured off to Vermont.

Through the windows of the shuttle bus, the field trip goers were exposed to Vermont's spring scenic route of clear blue skies, rocky moun-

tains and endlessly flowing streams.

Due to traffic there was a change in the field trip itinerary, however, students and faculty were still able to make the most out of the trip when they experienced the total so-

lar eclipse.

As the moon began to pass between the earth and the sun, the field trip members gathered together with their eclipse glasses to experience this special event.

"Oohs" and "aahs" filled

the air when the solar eclipse went into full effect. The flash and shutters from pictures being taken were heard, too.

Many of the members on the trip agreed that the total solar eclipse itself was their favorite part, and were fasci-

nated by the change in temperature when it dropped and when the stars became apparent as the sky turned dusk.

After the scientific event, the PACE students and faculty made their way back home safely.



Photo by Professor Douglas Leaffer
View of the total eclipse from Vermont.

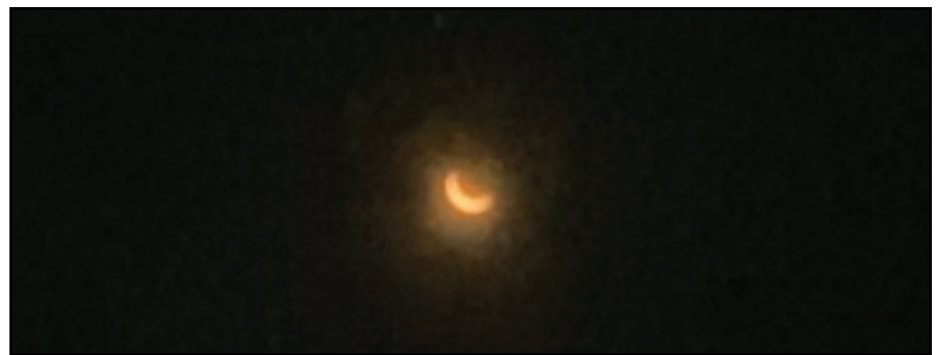


Photo by Daniel Henrick
The moon travels in front of the sun.



Photo by Emma Ruggiero
Students view the eclipse from Vermont.



Photo courtesy of Douglas Leaffer
Professor Douglas Leaffer takes in the eclipse from a spot in Vermont.



Photo by Douglas Leaffer
The sky turns twilight as the moon makes its way in front of the sun.

Get inspired by PTK alumni

BY DANIELA
VALDIVIA-TERRES
News Editor

On Thursday, April 25, at 5:00 PM, is the 14th Phi Theta Kappa Induction Ceremony, in the Lecture Hall, C-Building, on the Haverhill campus.

Mostly known as PTK, it is the world's largest honor society for community college students. It offers great opportunities to access scholarships "to help you complete your associate, bachelor's, even master's degrees," according to their website, www.ptk.org

It also remarks, PTK "recognizes the academic achievement of college students and provides opportunities for its members to grow as scholars and leaders."

During the next PTK induction, the guest speakers will share their academic journey which started in the NECC classrooms. Although none of them were PTK members, they are familiar with the program, and encourage students to be part of it. Here is a glimpse of their inspiring stories:

"NECC set me up for success," said Abigail Tannatt. She is an Earth Scientist educator. She is a NECC '20 alum in Environmental Science, she transferred to New York SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry where she obtained a bachelor's degree in environmental science, watershed resources.

While her days as a NECC student, she first joined Student Government Association SGA, as a regular member, and later, she transitioned up to SGA Vice President.

Tannatt said right after high school, she was not sure about what career to pursue as she was passionate about so many things. So, instead of enrolling into a four-year institution for

a degree and changing it later, she decided to take her general core courses, at NECC.

"It completely changed my viewpoint on college in a good way," said Tannatt about her experience as a NECC student. She met peers that were focused about their careers, she met passionate faculty members, and she took as many courses as she could.

Semesters went by, she set her own career goals and discovered her passion for the science.

Tannatt treasures great memories of some courses and professors. The Physical Science course taught by Mark Reinhold was one of those. "I remember I still have my notes from his class, ... when I went to college, I did use them. He was a very great lecturer. It's one of those courses, you're not just taking notes. You're actually taking so much information as he's teaching."

Another faculty that enhanced Tannatt's curiosity for science was Professor Mike Cross. "He taught courses with magic. I took Organic Chemistry through him, and he would have a deck of cards and he would do like a magic trick with them while he was to incorporate what we were learning. It was amazing. I took some courses over the summer with him at the Lawrence Campus."

Among other courses and professors, Tannatt said "I was inspired by my time at Northern Essex by getting involved in student government, by doing clubs and doing organizations that I knew were things that were going to better my resume." She emphasized that when she was getting ready to transfer to one of the most competitive schools in the nation, "I feel like what I did at

Northern Essex really set me up for success as a transfer student."

Tannatt currently works as a Behavioral Technician helping children who have autism to be more involved with their community, analyzing what are the things that interfere with their ability to go to an elementary school or high school and be successful. "It's amazing our job and it's very, very rewarding."

She has plans to continue her education and pursue a doctorate degree in Ireland.

From choppy beginning 'til' becoming Dr. David Kalivas.

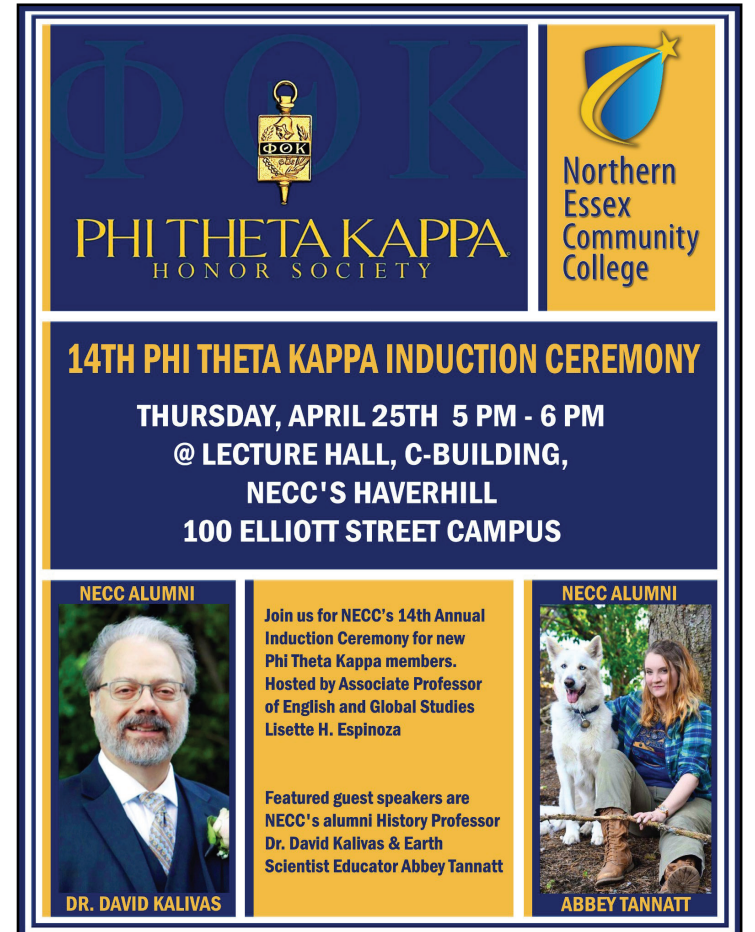
Dr. Kalivas obtained his associate degree in History at NECC, 1977. PTK chapter began in 2010, so he could not join when he was studying here at NECC. However, he became familiar with PTK when he worked as a history professor in Middlesex Community College MCC. He became the director of the Commonwealth Honors Program which works with PTK students.

"PTK recognizes students for their high GPA and their scholarship. The Commonwealth Honors Program gives students a chance to learn research skills and engage in learning more in depth when they take the honor seminars. One is an honorary recognition, and the other is an Honor Society. I mean an honor program that really helps students hone their skills, both in terms of reading analytically and doing research.

So, I think that's why it's a good partnership," Kalivas stated.

After almost 40 years teaching history at MCC, he retired four years ago. He recalls that he enrolled at NECC right after high school but he was not ready to start his academic journey.

It was 1975, he was 17 years old. "I wasn't sure 100% what I wanted to do. I had an idea that I wanted to major in history, and maybe someday I'd want to teach history. But, I also had an idea, that maybe I wanted to go to law school, or maybe be a dentist. I had a variety of things [in mind],"



The poster features the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society logo at the top left and the Northern Essex Community College logo at the top right. The main text reads: "14TH PHI THETA KAPPA INDUCTION CEREMONY THURSDAY, APRIL 25TH 5 PM - 6 PM @ LECTURE HALL, C-BUILDING, NECC'S HAVERHILL 100 ELLIOTT STREET CAMPUS". Below this, there are two columns of information. The left column, titled "NECC ALUMNI", features a photo of Dr. David Kalivas and text: "Join us for NECC's 14th Annual Induction Ceremony for new Phi Theta Kappa members. Hosted by Associate Professor of English and Global Studies Lisette H. Espinoza. Featured guest speakers are NECC's alumni History Professor Dr. David Kalivas & Earth Scientist Educator Abbey Tannatt". The right column, also titled "NECC ALUMNI", features a photo of Abbey Tannatt and a dog, with the name "ABBEY TANNATT" below it.

Kalivas remembers.

"I was a little young and I had to balance schoolwork or having a good time and like many students, I chose to have a good time. Perhaps more often than I should have, and so I decided, well, maybe this wasn't for me," Kalivas thought.

"My beginning was choppy," he said. So, he withdrew from NECC, and he went to work in a well-known grocery store. After a year of being a full-time retail employee, he realized he didn't want to do that for the rest of his life.

"I came back to NECC and that's when these professors I met in class were very helpful, and I became a very dedicated student. I did very well. And then I transferred," Kalivas said with a smile.

He said he got very interested in history at NECC because he had "wonderful professors" whom he saves kind memories off. "For the time they took to spend and to engage me and to help me really learn how to learn better."

Kalivas is grateful to many faculty who taught him courses like U.S. history or government, he said "they really became models for me in many ways."

Kalivas gave this interview from his home office sur-

rounded by full bookshelves. He seems satisfied by a full life dedicated to study and teaching. He remarked he had fond memories from his time at NECC, "And so, Northern Essex was where I started. That was the beginning point. It helped me get going... It gave me the platform to succeed."

The former history professor did not hold to pass on his experience to his students. To the ones who were not performing well academically, he always used to say, "This isn't the time for you. You should take time off, find a job, and if you want to come back, we'll be here for you."

In 1978, after his graduation from NECC, he transferred to Suffolk University where he majored in History, continued with a master's degree at the University of Connecticut, and his PhD in World's History at Northeastern University. And the rest is history!

How to become a PTK member?

Entry into PTK requires you to have completed 12 credit hours of work at NECC and earned a cumulative GPA of 3.5 or greater. More information about PTK can be found

at the event or by contacting Professor Lisette Espinoza at lespinoza@necc.mass.edu.

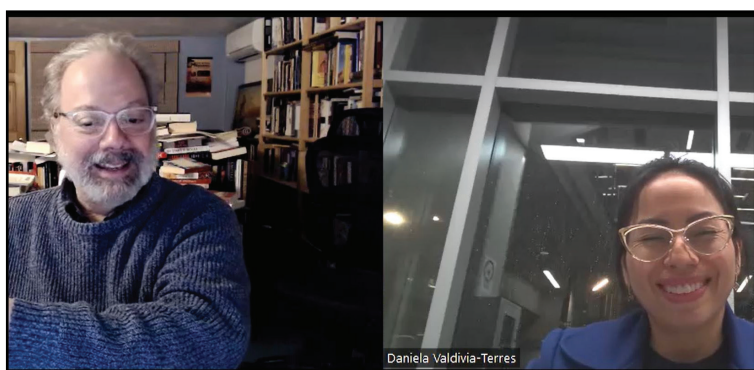


Photo by Daniela Valdivia-Terres

Dr. David Kalivas talks with Daniella about how NECC prepared him for success.

News

www.observer.necc.mass.edu

[@neccobserver](https://twitter.com/neccobserver)

facebook.com/neccobserver

Continued from Page 6

Department of Higher Education,” Vasquez said.

“I hope that we are able to hold them accountable. Because that is the whole reason that we are here ... Last year we had similar issues which were promised very similar things, and at the end of the year, unfortunately, we’re still looking for those programs and we’re hoping that there was more active support,” Vasquez said.

However, President Lane Glenn said “solving that is not going to happen through one-time grants” He asked Arey, “how much is our grant Jason? We are not to solve this with \$100,000 grants from DHE. It

is too big a challenge. It’s just not going to happen. So, our advocacy is going full throttle into getting more money into students’ hands. I encourage the students and others involved in this to try that.”

Glenn said that “other structural things around increasing student aid by Pell Grant aid. Those are the kinds of things that over time can make a difference.”

Indeed, in an interview after the meeting, this same thought was reinforced by the Vice President Lawrence Campus and Community Relations, Noemi Custodia-Lora, “you know grants are something that they’re very limited. We

do not know how, if, or how much money will be available in grants in subsequent years. So that’s the reason why the college is looking into more sustainable solutions. To really help the students.”

Near the deadline for this edition Beaudin interviewed by this reporter said he and Dean Arey have a “plan three prompt approach” which consists in advocacy for student to get more money through Pell grants, access to local public assistance or state programs and working with Student affairs.

When asked about housing insecurity, Beaudin said the NECC website has con-

tact information of the Care and Concern Outreach Team, which is a multidisciplinary team within NECC. When asked about who a student may contact for domestic violence assistance, Beaudin said the NECC website also had information of a nonprofit organization to reach out to.

Hope on the horizon, for now

Karen Rooney, executive director of development institutional advancement which is a fancy title to say that “she works helping to secure grants and implement them.”

Rooney said NECC the grant is underspent. She explained NECC has asked to

repurpose some of the money to “reallocate” more sources of food for students. She said the Department of Higher Education confirmed they have it in consideration, but it is not guaranteed yet.

Also, NECC has asked for an extension of the grant until Dec. 31, 2024.

In any case, if you are a student going through food or housing insecurity or are in need of any of the above services, please I encourage you to contact the Dean of Students, Jason Arey at jarey@necc.mass.edu.

GROW YOUR CAREER

April 25, 2024

ALL INDUSTRY Job Fair

Hartleb Technology Center
100 Elliott Street
Haverhill, MA

SCAN HERE TO REGISTER



**Northern Essex
Community College**



Or call 978-722-7000



MASSHIRE
MERRIMACK VALLEY
CAREER CENTER

A proud partner of the **American Job Center** network

Arts & Entertainment

observer.necc.mass.edu @neccobserv- facebook.com/neccobserver

Brianne Beatrice shares what's next at NECC Theater

BY SHAUN HOOD

Arts & Entertainment Editor

This interview has been edited for clarity and readability.

We recently chatted with Northern Essex Theater Coordinator, Brianne Beatrice. Check out the interview below!

Shaun Hood: Before we get into what comes next for NECC Theater, I just want touch on the recognition from the Kennedy Center that you and your students have been receiving recently, as well as another great run of "Hurricane Diane." First of all, to quote Rita Moreno, congratulations on your tour de force! I also know that it was recently made known that Mirrorajah Metcalfe won a national award. What do you have to say regards to Mirrorajah's award, and really just looking back at that journey as a whole from this past year?

Brianne Beatrice: "Hurricane Diane" has been an unbelievable process and journey. Having done the show now three times, originally back a year ago in the spring, and then having submitted that production to the Region One American College Theater Festival, and it being selected as one of the top six shows in the region. The region spans Massachusetts, Maine, Vermont, Connecticut, New Hampshire, New York. I was really, really proud of that show and they performed it at Region One. It was highly received by the audience and by the responders from the Kennedy Center. Then, we came back, we performed a revival of the production at the top of the semester, and we recently found out that Mirrorajah won Outstanding Actor in a performance, being in the top three in the country. So, all eight regions, only three actors were recognized in the country, and Mirrorajah was one of them with her performance as Diane in "Hurricane Diane." It's amazing. I am absolutely elated. I feel that her win is a win for the entire production as a whole, and her being the leader of that show.

SH: It's also a win for the college, pushing the arts at NECC! Is there a showcase coming up for any of your current semester classes? If yes, tell us about it!

BB: Yeah, we always do a showcase at the end of the semester. It'll be in early May. I'll do a showcase for the directing class, and we'll do a showcase for acting theory and practice.

The directing showcase will be a variety of scenes directed by, starring the students in the directing class. For the Acting Theory and Practice class, there will be a combination of both scenes and two contrasting monologues, which is what they learned throughout course, and they'll be presenting that to the audience.

SH: I know that Summer Theater is coming up, and it seems to be a fan favorite among lots of students. As for students here at the college who are looking to fulfill some credit requirements over the summer, why should they take summer theater?

BB: Summer Theater is a wonderful class that focuses on script analysis and understanding how to put a show together. So, what we do is we begin the process of learning, acting, and then also delving into a specific play that I will choose, and then teaching the students how we begin the process of concept work, design work, and basically, how to put a show together, what it means from beginning to end. How do we go from a script all the way to lights, costumes, the entire performance, and the audience? That's what Summer Theater is. It's a really fun, exciting time, and I hope that many students will join me for summer theater starting next month.

SH: I know you love "Wednesday" on Netflix. Obviously, a lot of people do too, but what's your perspective on Jenna Ortega as Wednesday Addams and the series' first season both in terms of "Addams Family" lore, and an artistic perspective?

BB: That's an interesting



Photo NECC News
Mirrorajah Metcalfe (left) and Gwynneth Glickman (right) during rehearsal for "Hurricane Diane"

question! I love Jenna Ortega. I thought she was wonderful in the show. I think she's a fantastic actor, and I love "The Adams Family." I loved the original, and I like it even more that she's in it. I thought she brought a really interesting take to the role that has sort of launched her career. I also think that Ana Barrera - who was in "Hurricane Diane" - resembles her.

SH: Do you have a favorite Broadway show? Is there anything at all that you want to say about any recent Broadway happenings that you know of?

BB: Actually, last week I saw my best friend, Jay Carey, is the PSM, which is the production stage manager for the show, "Company," currently in Boston. His husband, Christopher Deangelis, is actually in the show and I saw the production and it is absolutely riveting. I was aghast watching this performance. It's still in Boston right now at the Opera House. So, if anybody's interested in seeing "Company" by Stephen Sondheim, it is a really, really, really solid production.

SH: I'm not an actor, but I love the arts because movies and TV and stage shows make me feel! I'm also just really fascinated by Broadway and movies and the entertainment industry as a

whole.

Most recently, I really enjoyed learning about the Broadway musical, "How to Dance in Ohio," and its autistic cast members who played autistic characters, and now its Autism Acceptance Month! Sadly, How to Dance in Ohio closed after only a few months on Broadway, and I was not able to attend a performance. However, since the show started getting promoted on national news on TV around the time when it opened on Broadway, I have been much more comfortable about talking about me being on the Autism Spectrum. Not everyone who knows that I'm on the spectrum also knows of "How to Dance in Ohio," but I still feel recognized in watching the interviews with the cast and crew as well as clips from the show.

As a college professor, what is your perspective on representation on the stage?

BB: I think that theater is a means to heal, to change, to inspire people, and to grow more comfortable with who we are. It's humanity in its essence! I love representation on the stage. I love that this vehicle can help people understand humanity and where we are, and who we are, and different cultures, different races, different people, and

different communities. I think that that is one of the greatest things that theater can contribute to an audience and to help an audience understand topics or grow to understand themselves more as a means of watching a production.

SH: Is there anything that you're working on or that NECC Theater has coming up that you'd like our readers to know about?

BB: Yes. I absolutely want everybody to know that "Hurricane Diane" is going on a tour! It will be released, more dates will be released, but we have collaborated with Merrimack Repertory Theatre. At the end of June, Hurricane Diane will perform, NECC Theatre will collaborate with Merrimack Repertory Theatre. NECC Theatre will also collaborate with the Firehouse in Newburyport in October, where they also picked up Hurricane Diane.

In a week or so, Mirrorajah Metcalfe and I, again, we're going to DC to get her award, her recognition at the Kennedy Center. At the beginning of May, there will be auditions for our fall NECC production, which will be a play called Circle Mirror Transformation by Annie Baker. Please take a look out for those audition dates. Follow us @necctheatre on Instagram for all the information that you need.

Arts and Entertainment

observer.necc.mass.edu @neccobserver facebook.com/neccobserver

What's your cinematic gem?

By ANTHONY SOUSA
Correspondent

Over the past few weeks I've decided to give myself a goal of watching at least 200 movies for the year, as I have a deep love for film and have been trying to catch up with all of these movies I haven't seen yet.

Now my love for film has never left, but it is rare (kind of) that I feel so strongly about a movie to the point where I think about it for days on end.

Recently, I watched *Punch-Drunk Love* by Paul Thomas Anderson, and it felt like I had discovered something that I had once forgotten, yet loved. A cinematic gem. A sense of joy that is just so comforting it feels like whatever you are watching is something you are so familiar

with, yet it is the first time you are interacting with it.

Since then I have been trying to find a way to put this feeling into words and I got some help from NECC students to tell me what movie had them feeling this way.

Throughout this journey I have watched a lot of amazing movies from *Dune 2*, *Anatomy of a Fall*, and even older ones like *Cruel Intentions* and *Videodrome*. Some would even say that most of the movies I have watched recently are arguably better than *Punch-Drunk Love*, but none have made me feel the way that this movie has.

This movie is just beautifully shot, while having an amazing soundtrack that just fits so perfectly and it's about a salesman who is struggling with mental health while going through so

many events that shake up his life, one of which is finding love.

The best way to describe this feeling of joy is like you have stumbled upon something you loved as a kid and it feels exactly how it did the first time, or rediscovering an old song you had forgotten and loved so deeply.

It just puts a smile on your face like nothing else can, regardless of the context of the movie.

Curiously, I went around campus trying to find other students who have felt this way about movies before.

After trying to explain this feeling to them I had the chance to ask three students, "Have you felt this way before with any movie? and If you have, why do you think this one movie stands out?"

Lucas Bermudez said, "I think the movie for me is *La Haine*, just

because the message of the movie takes place in such a specific time and place in France its themes and characters relate exactly to how the world is right now, like *La Haine* translates to hate. The youth of the movie are the main characters but they don't hate people, they just hate the position they've been put in, the position to push back. In a strange way the movie made me feel empowered, like the movie had me saying "Man this is always going to be the way it is these systems are always going to be in place to try and tear people down and I can either accept that and live in this world or fight to change it in a meaningful way."

Another student Matthew Scharn said, "Yes I have with *Back to the Future*. I don't know, it has this element about it that speaks to love and family, while

touching on all the heart strings while still being able to be a sci-fi movie that just blows you away. It still holds up to today's standards, the combination of the soundtrack with the way the movie is shot is just perfect."

Lastly, Rashid Afife said, "The most recent *Batman* movie changed my perspective on how I view superhero movies, changing how future comic book movies can put a superhero in a real life setting and my expectation of them from now on. The plot was phenomenal, and the characters' personalities went along perfectly with how it was written, adding more depth to the movie. I loved the way I felt walking out of that theater."

So now I just have one question for you:

What's your cinematic gem?

Speechapalooza returns to NECC

By ZACHARY CUTLER
Correspondent

Northern Essex proudly announces today that in April Speechapalooza is coming back better than ever.

The event is organized and hosted by the Principles of Public Relations class.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic Speechapalooza was at-

tended by students who wanted to share their ideas to their friends and classmates in person through the power of making speeches.

However during the pandemic it became more difficult, and everyone had to have their classes online and making Speechapalooza move online as well.

It returned as an in-person event last year, hosted by Professor Kim Lyng's Principles of

Public Relations class.

Now four years later it makes a strong second year comeback.

This event prior to the pandemic was founded by Liberal Arts Dean Amy Callahan to make the students speak their mind and open their hearts.

Lyng then took over Callahan's role as facilitator and continued to make it part of the class.

Lyng put out a statement saying "Speechapalooza is a great

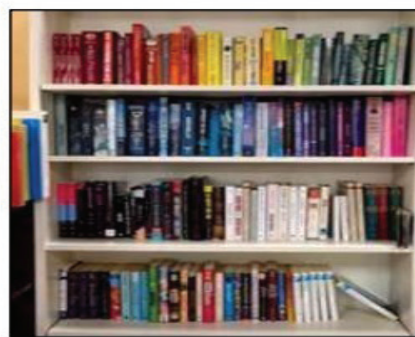
opportunity for the NECC community to have their voices heard and it's wonderful chance for the students in the PR course to plan and promote a real-world public speaking event. So, it's a win-win all around!"

Students are encouraged to participate in the activities of Speechapalooza and incentives for participating are included but not limited to eating pizza as well as winning prizes.

Speechapalooza will be held in Spurk Building's Lecture Hall A. The date for the event is set for Thursday, April 25, from 12:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.

For more information about the event please contact the event coordinator at neccspeechapalooza@gmail.com or any of the social media pages like YouTube, Facebook, Twitter/X or Twitch.

Spring Children's Book Drive



Please consider donating books for children ages 3-15.

To Benefit Ruth's House Children's Reading Program

- Various Genres and Languages [including bilingual]
- New and Gently Used

Sponsored by NECC's Community Outreach Group Student Club

March 25 - May 1

Contribution box locations: NECC Haverhill and Lawrence campus buildings

[Contact: Club Advisor, Prof. Paula Richards, prichards@necc.mass.edu]

Arts & Entertainment

observer.necc.mass.edu @neccobserver facebook.com/neccobserver

Kung Fu Panda 4

Another Hollywood Remake

By ELLE PALUMBO

Arts and Entertainment Editor

Kung Fu Panda 4, the fourth installment to the hit children's movie series, hit theatres on March 8th to mostly positive reviews from critics but some negative reviews from past fans and audiences. The film, which includes Jack Black, Dustin Hoffman, James Hong, Bryan Cranston, and Ian McShane reprising their roles from the previous movies and Awkwafina, Key Huy Quan, and Viola Davis joining the cast for the new installment, involves Po finding and training his successor as the new Dragon Warrior.

As of its 3rd week in theatres, Kung Fu Panda 4 has surpassed its predecessor, Kung Fu Panda 3, at the box office with a \$153 million gross in the US, according to BoxOfficeMojo. The film debuted at \$58 million, topping the box office opening

weekend, and making it the highest opening weekend for a DreamWorks Animation film in 12 years, according to Cartoon Brew. Many critics praised the film, including praise of Black's performance from Frank Scheck of the Hollywood Reporter and praise of the film's art direction from Claire Shaffer of the New York Times.

However, despite mostly positive reviews from critics, the film's release has sparked negative reviews online and from some other critics. The Boston Globes' Odie Henderson expressed disappointment in the film's villain, voiced by Viola Davis, with the Telegraph awarding the movie two out of five stars.

"I found the villain to be really boring," said NECC Art and Design student Alison Palumbo. "Her personality and motivations were super cookie-cutter,

therefore she didn't really feel threatening at all. She also didn't have any connections with any of the characters like the previous villains did, making it hard for the audience to believe she's a convincing villain."

Many users online who watched and discussed the movie also expressed their dislike for the lack of fan favorite characters "The Furious Five," played respectively by Angelina Jolie, Seth Rogan, Jackie Chan, Lucy Liu, and David Cross. Oliver Ehrhardt of the Daily Cardinal expressed his disappointment in this by stating that the best part of the film was the end credit scene, in which the Furious Five make their only appearance in the film.

"The Furious Five's dynamic with Po is super interesting and fun to watch, so it was very disappointing that they were not in it," added Palumbo. "I don't

know why DreamWorks keeps putting Po with other characters, when there is already a good dynamic with the Furious Five."

With the release of Kung Fu Panda 4, an online conversation has resurfaced regarding why Hollywood is desperate to create reboots, sequels, or revivals instead of creating new work. Many online users noted that most of the upcoming movies slated for 2024 are either reboots, sequels, or based on an existing market and brand name, claiming that the success of Kung Fu Panda 4 was due to the franchises previous movie's success. Fans of the first 3 movies have pointed out that the 4th installment's success was also due to DreamWorks bringing back the fan favorite villain "Tai Lung", despite his defeat at the end of the first film.

"Movie makers just want more money," said Haverhill

resident Hannah Kiernan. "An easy way to do that is re-making something, so even if the work is not amazing, they are still getting money for work that is not good."

Many people who have participated in this debate have also noted the importance of nostalgia, especially with the making of the newest Kung Fu Panda movie. The original Kung Fu Panda movie was released in 2008, making it 16 years old, with many of the audience of that movie coming back to watch the newest installment grown up.

"The general population, especially Gen Z, has a crazy bias for nostalgia," said Haverhill resident Kaelyn Kellett. "The movie doesn't even have to be good, but if it reminds people of a child-like wonder than the general population is down to see it."

Kung Fu Panda 4 is playing in theatres now.

Music With Alicia

By MATT SCHARN

CORRESPONDANT

Music can really change lives, and for some they work to change people's life with it everyday. Alicia Malana, a 2021 graduate of Northern Essex from Newburyport took her degree in music at the college and started her own music school for students of all ages called Music With Alicia, located in Newbury.

"We specialize in private lessons, group classes, and events. We officially opened in September of 2023. I have 2 other amazing teachers who offer various instruments! We are also actively hiring and looking for more teachers to join our team!" says Malana.

She has been playing piano ever since she was 6 years old and self taught herself on the guitar. Malana writes her own music and says that teaching and sharing the joy of music with others has always been a

passion.

One teacher at Northern Essex that really influenced Malana along her music journey was Alisa Buccheiere.

"She really influenced me in how I want to teach my students. She was always so kind hearted and willing to help. I look up to her a lot and use her teaching style on a daily basis, she makes music fun!"

Although an avid music learner, she did not always see herself teaching, not until she started teaching it on the side for fun and fell in love with it.

"Sharing my passion for music with others has given me so much joy. To see the smile on children's faces and parents truly makes me feel accomplished in my job!"

Check out her social media for her business Music with Alicia on facebook or @musicwithalicia on Instagram and bring the spirit of music into your life!



Photo courtesy of Alicia Malana

Arts & Entertainment

observer.necc.mass.edu @neccobserver facebook.com/neccobserver

Chappell Roan: A queer musician to watch

Roan's rise to success

By **DEMIYA SILVA**
Features Editor

In a culture of ever-evolving music and trends, 26 year old Chappell Roan has recently been able to put her stamp on the music industry as of recent. Kayleigh Rose Amstutz, or Chappell Roan, is an up and coming pop artist that has made quite the splash within the last year.

The Rise and Fall of a Midwest Princess is Roan's debut record, released September 22, 2023. The album tackled Roan's shift from her Midwest upbringing to the life of the queer scene in Los Angeles. This theme is one described in the track "Pink Pony Club", in which Roan details the contrast between where she came from and the nightclubs in West Hollywood.

The Rise and Fall of a Midwest Princess has other themes such as sexuality, discovery, and self-acceptance. Roan expertly matches topics with a lot of under-the-surface depth with amazing vocal performance and extremely fun de-

liveries.

An album highlight is the pop-anthem "Red Wine Supernova", the second track on the record. In the song, Roan talks about her experiences developing relationships with other women. "I'm in the hallway waitin' for ya/ Mini skirt and my go-go boots/ I just want you to make a move/ So slow down, sit down, it's new."

Roan also isn't afraid to discuss her Christian upbringing and how it affects her grasp on her sexuality. In "Naked In Manhattan", Roan sings "touch me, baby, put your lips on mine / Could go to hell but we'll probably be fine."

On September 13, 2023, Roan took to her social media accounts to announce herself as an opener for Olivia Rodrigo's Guts World Tour. Roan and Rodrigo share a producer in Dan Nigro, causing a connection between the two artists.

During her stint in Rodrigo's tour, Roan went on a small headline tour of her own in some cities in between the shows. For this headliner, as well as her headlining tour in 2023, Roan has invited lo-

cal drag queens to perform as openers at the shows.

A large part of Roan's brand is her campy and fun aesthetic, heavily inspired by the art of drag. She has told publications like NME that she considers herself to be a drag persona, and would want other people to think of her in that way as well.

Earlier this year, Roan posted a clip from a new song on her social media accounts, successfully teasing something new for fans. The song is called "Good Luck, Babe!" and was released on April 5. The track contains lyrics about a girl that refuses to accept her identity as a queer person. Roan sings "You could kiss a hundred boys in bars/ Shoot another shot, try to stop the feeling/ You can say it's just the way you are/Make a new excuse, another stupid reason."

The bridge of the song delves further into what the future of this girl may be if she doesn't accept her own identity. "When you wake up next to him in the middle of the night/ With your head in your hands, you're nothing more than his



Photo courtesy of Island Records

The single art for "Good Luck, Babe!"

wife/ And when you think about me, all of those years ago/ You're standing face to face with 'I told you so.'"

"Good Luck, Babe!" has blown up quickly on social media apps such as TikTok, where people are posting videos dissecting the lyrics and relating them to personal experiences with the hashtag "goodluckbabe."

Roan herself has even

posted videos onto the platform of her and her friends performing a dance that she created to the track.

Roan has been able to tap into the queer music space and make serious waves within the last year. Her genuine relatability juxtaposed with her fun persona has played a huge role in her massive cultural appeal.

The spring and summer trends of 2024

The place of muted tones in this year's fashion

By **KATRINA MANON**
Correspondent

Statement clothing pieces are out and discreet chic wardrobe staples that include trench coats, pencil skirts, trouser suits and light denim jeans are in.

The British Vogue 2024 spring/summer fashion show models strut down the runway in muted palettes to showcase designers' spring and summer collection of 2024.

As images of this year's fashion show scouted across

the internet this spring/ summer collection is the most talked about collection due to the surprise in muted colors.

Designers like Prada, Gucci, Versace, Alexander McQueen and more revealed their spring and summer styles and colored tones.

The muted tones surprised the public as previous years spring and summer collections have been known to have a variety of vibrant color block styles.

It appears as if designers played it safe this year for

spring/summer 2024 as many of their collections remained in the white, nude and black colorblock.

As a pop of color, the color Red was one of the few tones that managed to make it through the color wheel for designers across the board.

A few students at NECC were asked what they thought about this year's trendy collection and color block for spring / summer 2024.

NECC student Jennifer Tejada stated that "you can't go wrong with black or white

during any time in the season."

Another student, Diana Martinez, had a very different opinion when it came to the muted tones and said that "spring and summer is all about sunshine, flowers and bright colors. Everyone wants to wear nude tones nowadays and that is boring."

The designers for this year's Vogue fashion show explained that their show was an "exploration of modern beauty" and described that "muted tones and simplicity (were) the inspiration for this year's spring

and summer 2024 collection". If you were wondering what to wear this year it is safe to say that you probably already own most of this spring's and summer key elements.

All you will need is clever style with a splash of red, a crisp white shirt and black trousers.

Ballerinas and Mary Janes are not going anywhere so keep these staples in rotation along with a well cut black blazer and your outfit will be trendy this spring and summer.

Sports

www.observer.necc.mass.
[@neccobserver](https://twitter.com/neccobserver)
facebook.com/neccobserver

NECC sweeps Roxbury in doubleheader

By DANIEL HENRICK-
Sports editor

Northern Essex baseball added to their win column with a double header sweep against Roxbury community college on March 30 at Trinity stadium. NECC (6-9) extended their win streak to three in a row. The Knights won by scores of 18-1 and 16-6, both were run rule shortened games.

Game one

Jayden Voelker of Coventry, RI who got the start for the Knights was electric striking out 15 Tigers. Voelker allowed one run on four walks over five innings of work and didn't yield a hit. Roxbury's lone run came in the fifth inning with a base loaded walk to force in a run. The Right hander's performance earned high praise from Knights head coach Jeff Mejia.

"All 15 outs were strikeouts I don't think I've ever seen anything like it, he was lights out," said Mejia.

In the bottom of the fourth inning an injury scare occurred when a Knight collided with the Tigers first baseman Andrés Pitno. Pitno was on the ground for several minutes. "His head collided with the turf" explained Roxbury head coach Justin Carey to a con-

certed spectator "we will keep you (the spectator) updated" added Carey.

The offense provided all NECC would need to win. An explosive second inning featured 11 runs on six hits and a walk. The Knights pushed seven more runs across between the third and fourth inning thanks to extra bases hits by Michael Fabiano of Reading, MA and Ryan Brown of Haverhill, MA for the 18-1 victory.

Game two

The second match was closer as starter Harrison Cooley of Barrington, RI was charged with six runs, five earned in 2.1 innings. Cooley struggled with his command allowing four hits, one walk and three hits batsman.

"It wasn't my day" Cooley said.

"He didn't get to warm up the way he typically does, and it certainly showed but he did a good enough job to keep us in the game" Mejia said about Cooley's rough outing. "In those circumstances all you want to do is be close so you could comeback."

Mejia decided to use his bullpen with one out in the third inning, he turned to reliever Mike Gisener of Wilm-

ington, MA. Geissler was brought in with runners on the corners and one out up 6-2. The right hander allowed a walk to load the bases. Then followed a Tiger hit an RBI double to left field to put Roxbury within two 6-4. A bases loaded walk forced in a run, 6-5. A sacrifice fly to right field tied the score at six. Geissler limited the damage to four runs. The score was now tied at six apiece.

NECC 's bats picked up a struggling pitching staff tagging The Tigers with 16 runs on 16 hits including a two-run shot over centerfield by Chris Bear of Boston and a home run from Thomas Fratto of Reading, MA.

"I liked that we came back, every time they threw up a run we responded with at least one run. Explained Mejia. "Our guys kept battling all their other arms and they were their better arms than the last game"

In the top of the fifth inning The Knights once again went to their bullpen, this time Jeremy Lopez of Amesbury, MA got the call. Lopez fared much better, tossing a clean fifth inning and worked around one

Photo by Sports Editor Daniel Henrick

walk for the 16-6 win.



Photo courtesy Daniel Henrick

Game one starter Jayden Voelker warming up

Bear was a highlight on offense for the day going 6-for-7 (.857) with eight RBIs, eight extra base hits and a walk.

"Chris bear had a great series and he's our leader," said Mejia.

Fratto and Eric Wainwright of Falmouth, MA Both had a sold day at the plate collecting a combined eight RBIs on five hits and a home run from Fratto.



A Tiger striking out in game one

Darren Stratton honored with NBAC award

By DANIEL HENRICK
Sports Editor

On April 7th, Men's basketball head coach Darren Stratton was presented with the Guardians of the game champion. The honor came a year after Northern Essex finished with back-to-back region 21 finals victories. Coach Stratton received the award at the final four and NBAC (National association of coaches) convention in phoenix.

Stratton was grateful for the recognition, thanking God, his family, the players, NECC Athletics staff and academic coaches. He cited them for their trust and support for his success.

"This achievement could not have been accomplished without the overwhelming support of athletics from President Lane Glenn and Vice President Mike McCarthy, they continue to go the extra mile for not only our Men's Basketball Team but for all our students here at NECC, said Stratton. "More Importantly, I would like to thank my wonderful wife Elizabeth Stratton and my family for the sacrifices they make daily, allowing me to do something I truly love. Lastly, I would like to thank my assistant coaches, managers and all my basketball players. They are the ones that truly deserve this award" Stratton added.

Expectations were high after coming off the first NJCAA tournament in program history. Stratton's team lived up to those expectations as They went 30-1 in the regular season, 32-2 overall and captured consecutive region 21 titles. They were the first team in the region to accomplish that feat since Springfield tech in 2003 and 2004.

The Knights entered the NJCAA tournament in Herkimer, NY as the number two seeded team. They fell to Riverland community college 72-59. Although The Knights fell short of a national NJCAA championship crown, they were 2-0 in the consolation bracket and finished 5th for the seco year in a row. This was Stratton's



Photo courtesy Daniel Henrick

From left to right (Darren Stratton, Leonard Hamilton)

twentieth season as The Knights head coach. Dring that span he accumulated a

record of 320- 206.

Sports

www.observer.necc.mass.

@neccobserver

facebook.com/neccobserver

NECC welcomes the 2024 athletics hall of fame class

By DANIEL HENRICK
Sports Editor

A trio of former Knights were inducted into the 2024 class on March 20. The three recipients were a cross-country standout, Larry Fowle, standout baseball player Colby Maiola and Sercan Fenerci a standout basketball player and a team CEO. The ceremony took place at the technology center.

“We covered three different sports with three decorated athletes that span twenty years. We’re hoping more alumni will get involved back from the start in 1970s to now. We don’t know the whole history of the athletic program so we’re hoping more will come and share the past with us so we can grow the hall of fame that way as well,” said athletics director Dan Blair.

Larry Fowle

In Fowle’s Knights career he broke a school record back in 2001, a record that he still holds today. He is the only cross-country athlete to break a 27-minute run mark in 8,000 meters (about 4.97 mi) at the school. He was named NJCAA player of the week on October 21st, 2001, for his recording breaking performance. In his sophomore year Fowle finished third in The NJCAA northeast district meet. Under coach Dawn Caputo, he helped lead The Knights to the college’s highest ever finish at 10th place finish at the NJCAA

tournament in San Antonio, TX.

“I can still remember breaking the school record and her (Caputo) running over to give me a hug at the finish line” said Fowle. “Coach Caputo is just as deserving this honor as I am tonight”. Thank you for this induction from the bottom of my heart.”

Sercan Fenerci

For Fenerci, a Turkish Native, has made basketball his life spanning each level from playing, to coaching and currently team management. Sercan is the first international player to have joined The Knights basketball team. In his season with the Knights 2003-2004, he was named to a 21 all-region first team and ranked third in rebounding (13.1). He also overcame his struggles with the language barrier.

“If it wasn’t for Sercan I don’t think we would have all the international players to play for Northern Essex. He opened the floodgates for the international players to come to Northern Essex and know what a special place it is. He is the epitome of what Northern Essex is, build from the ground up.” said Stratton

After graduating from Northern Essex, he went to Angelo State University with a full athletics scholarship. After graduating from Angelo

State, he joined the coaching ranks by becoming a volunteer assistant coach for one season at NECC. Then he became the head coach at Lamar Community College and as National Team Coach for the Turkish Basketball Federation. Sercan is now the CEO of and President of the Providence Pirates ABA Basketball Team.

“I am so thankful, I appreciate “Dan’s (Blair) support and Larry and Colbey for being in the same class as you” said Sercan. He also thanked his aunt and uncle who directed him to Northern Essex.

Colby Maiola

In 2016, Maiola was named NJCAA player of the year as he helped lead the baseball team to their first national championship appearance. Under head coach Jeff Mejia in 2016 the two-time region 21 first team selection led the league in slugging percentage at (.932) and finished third in on base percentage with (.582). Maiola batted (.435) that season with 29 extra base hits. He continued his playing career at the University of Massachusetts Lowell for two years.

“If I could I would have played all four years here.” said Maiola. “Being here helped me establish who I am and who I wanted to be. So, to be back here getting this honor means the world to me and to hear everyone else loving this



Photo courtesy of NECC Knights
(Left to right) Athletic director Dan Blair, Colby Maiola, Sercan Fenerci, Larry Fowle, Vice president of institutional advancement Allison Dolan-Wilson

place as well is truly incredible” added maiola.”

Maiola recollected the moment he first learned about his induction into the NECC hall of fame

“I’m sitting at my desk, my phone starts ringing, and coach Mejia pops up, I answered the phone, and he told me he wanted to be the first person to tell you are being inducted into the Northern Essex Hall of fame. All the joys from my two years playing here came rushing back the friendships all the experiences all at once rushing back at me.” Maiola also thanked his parents, and his sister Morgan, for the support and sacrifices they made for him.

Mejia spoke highly of Maiola as a person as well as an athlete

“He is a natural born leader. On the field, he was the national player of the year, so he was a gifted baseball player. In baseball there are ups and downs so he would bring the team together and lead our team to the 2016 national championship,” said Mejia about his former player. “Straight A student, graduated here with high honors here as well as Umass Lowell.

This was Northern Essex’s fifth annual hall of fame induction, which started in 2019. As an annual event Northern Essex is accepting nominations for athletes who meet the criteria and made major impacts on the athletics program. Submissions are accepted on the NECC athletics webpage all year.

Baseball team overcomes rough start, finds winning formula

By ELIJAH THIBODEAUX
Correspondent

The NECC Knights baseball team began their season with a rocky 3-8 start, facing early challenges and setbacks that tested their resilience and determination.

However, after a period of adjustments and hard work, the team has managed to turn their season around, putting the pieces together and emerging as formidable contenders in their conference.

The Knights, known for their strong work ethic and team spirit, faced adversity in the early stages of the season.

A series of close losses and inconsistent performances left the team searching for an-

swers and struggling to find their rhythm on the field.

Despite their talent and potential, the Knights found themselves falling short of their own expectations and those of their fans.

“We knew we had the talent to compete at a high level, but things just weren’t clicking for us in the beginning,” said captain Eric Wainwright.

“It was frustrating for everyone, but we knew we had to stay focused and keep working hard to turn things around.”

Determined to overcome their early-season struggles, the Knights doubled down on their efforts in practice, focusing on fundamentals, teamwork, and communication.

Players spent extra time in the batting cages, fine-tuning their swings, and working on their fielding and pitching mechanics.

The coaching staff emphasized the importance of staying positive and supporting each other through adversity.

“We knew we had to come together as a team and trust in each other’s abilities,” said-team captain, Jayden Voelker. “We had some heart-to-heart conversations and really committed to giving our all every time we stepped onto the field.”

The turning point came when the Knights faced off against Roxbury Community College in a crucial series on

March 30.

Determined to turn their season around, the team approached the games with renewed focus and intensity.

In the first game of the series, the Knights came out swinging, with strong performances from both their offense and defense. Ace Jayden Voelker delivered a standout performance on the mound delivering 15 ks topping out at 97 MPH shutting down Roxbury’s batters and leading the Knights to a commanding victory.

Buoyed by their success in the first game, the Knights carried their momentum into the second game of the series.

The offense exploded with

a flurry of hits and runs, while the defense remained solid, stifling Roxbury’s attempts to mount a comeback.

“We just have to win, its what we do and we know how to do it” said Jayden Voelker.

The Knights then prepared to head up to Southern Maine Community College to take on the Seawolves for a chilly 9 inning battle April 2.

As the NECC Knights baseball team celebrates their hard-earned victory, they look forward to building on their success and continuing their journey towards greatness in the remainder of the season.

(Elijah is a member of the baseball team.)

NECC'S PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC RELATIONS CLASS

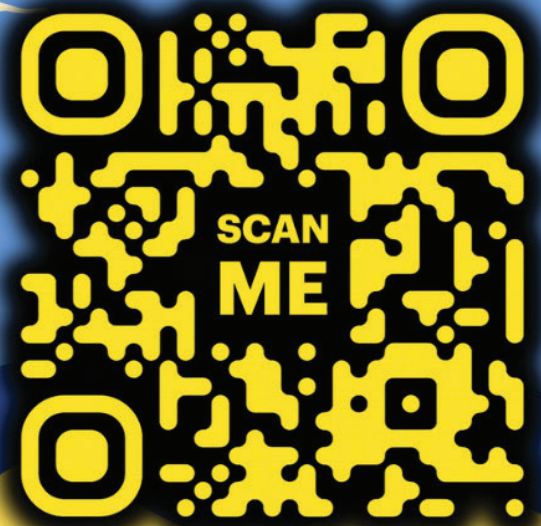
PRESENTS

**Thursday,
April 25th
12:30 pm Through
2:30 pm**

**Free Speech,
Free Pizza!**

**Sign-Up
& Socials**

**Lecture Hall A
C- Spurk Building
Haverhill Campus**



**10TH ANNUAL
SPEECHAPALOOZA**