



Jamia Johnson/The Johnsonian

Some roles in certain departments have been fulfilled temporarily.

Winthrop's hiring freeze causes vacant positions

The Board of Trustees enacted a hiring freeze to temporarily hold off on hiring new employees in permanent positions due to budget constraints caused by the COVID-19 pandemic

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Several faculty and staff positions at Winthrop University have become vacant or temporarily filled as a result of the university enacting a hiring freeze in April 2020.

The hiring freeze was enacted by the Board of Trustees on April 3, 2020, as a result of impromptu budget deficits caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

"These are not easy decisions to make, but they warranted to ensure that we have the resources to continue to engage in exceptional teaching, learning, and service, be an employer of choice and support our faculty and staff as we move into the future," Interim President George Hynd said in a Winthrop news article.

"It's really an outcome of us trying to manage our budget... our budget requires us to make difficult decisions. We've had a 10% percent budget cut. We froze most positions when they're vacated, so when a faculty member or a staff member leaves, we're not immediately filling those positions," Hynd said in an interview on Jan 13.

Since then, many academic departments and divisions at Winthrop have been operating with certain faculty, staff, and coaching positions vacant. In many of these cases, the work that would have been normally covered by a single employee has been evenly distributed amongst the current workers within a department, according to News and Media Service Manager Judy Longshaw.

One of the many departments that have been affected by the hiring freeze is the Athletics department, which is currently operating with just over 20% of its full-time positions vacant this year, according to Vice President for Intercollegiate Athletics Ken Halpin.

"We have permanently eliminated two full-time positions at the beginning of

the fiscal year, and have an additional 12 positions that have been vacant this year so far," Halpin said. "These vacancies have included coaches as well as administrators. Many of these positions were left intentionally vacant because the only sports that have been competing have been men's and women's basketball."

"We plan to leave many of these positions vacant for the remainder of the fiscal year in order to be as fiscally conscientious as possible, but we are filling a couple of positions now as we anticipate all of our sports beginning competition this semester. This has obviously created many challenges but I am so proud of our staff for remaining committed to their unwavering support of our student-athletes. They have truly banded together to continue operating with a commitment to excellence," Halpin said.

Other departments with significant numbers of vacant staff include the Division of Academic Affairs with six vacancies, the Division of Student Affairs with five vacancies and facilities management with five vacant positions. Vice Presidents are continuing to operate in their respective departments at their fullest capabilities and are "closely monitoring the work within their divisions to ensure that areas continue to function effectively," according to Longshaw.

Some key roles within certain departments have been filled by qualified, temporary employees until these positions can be permanently filled. These interim-held positions include the current Dean of Students, Director of Residence Life, Director of Institutional Effectiveness, and the Head Women's Basketball Coach.

Hynd has said that though the pandemic has been the source of many abnormalities throughout the 2020-2021 academic year, administrative actions like the hiring freeze and furloughs will optimistically only be a one-time event.

Winthrop receives \$1 million in honor of alumna Ida Crawford Stewart

Leonard A. Lauder, chairman emeritus of the Estée Lauder companies, donated \$1 million to Winthrop's College of Visual and Performing Arts



Photo Courtesy to Winthrop University

Ida Crawford Stewart

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Winthrop University's College of Visual and Performing Arts received a donation of \$1 million from Leonard Lauder, chairman emeritus of the cosmetics company Estée Lauder in honor of retired Estée Lauder executive and Winthrop alumna Ida Crawford Stewart '43, art.

Lauder's donation will establish the Ida Crawford Stewart Endowment of the Arts which will provide "scholarships, faculty enrichment, program development and discretionary funds related to the mission of Winthrop's College of Visual and Performing Arts," according to Judy Longshaw, Winthrop's news and media services manager.

"This gift will provide our CVPA students and faculty with numerous learning opportunities, and I appreciate Leonard Lauder's generosity to honor one of our very own who certainly made a lasting impact on the Estée Lauder family and company," wrote President Hynd in an email sent to faculty and staff on Jan. 26.

"Leonard Lauder has provided us with a transformative donation," CVPA Dean Jeff Bellatoni said. "This gift will create tremendous opportunities to enhance the programming and support for the arts over the long-term. An endowment exists in perpetuity, providing support year after year, and over time will grow to provide increased funding."

"This comes at a time when support for the arts is as critical as ever. This endowment will benefit our students and faculty through scholarships and faculty enrichment and will allow us to fund creative initiatives on campus and in the broader community."

Ida Crawford Stewart graduated from Winthrop with a B.A. in art and even worked at the university before starting her career with Estée Lauder.

Stewart developed a personal relationship with Estée Lauder herself while working under her as her special assistant and personal representative. In turn, Stewart gained the admiration and respect of Leonard Lauder, Estée Lauder's son.

"My mother loved Ida, and I love Ida, and this endowment is a tribute to her and to her love of the arts, something we share. She truly reflects the ideals of lifelong learning in her deep commitment to the success of Winthrop and future generations of students," Leonard Lauder said.

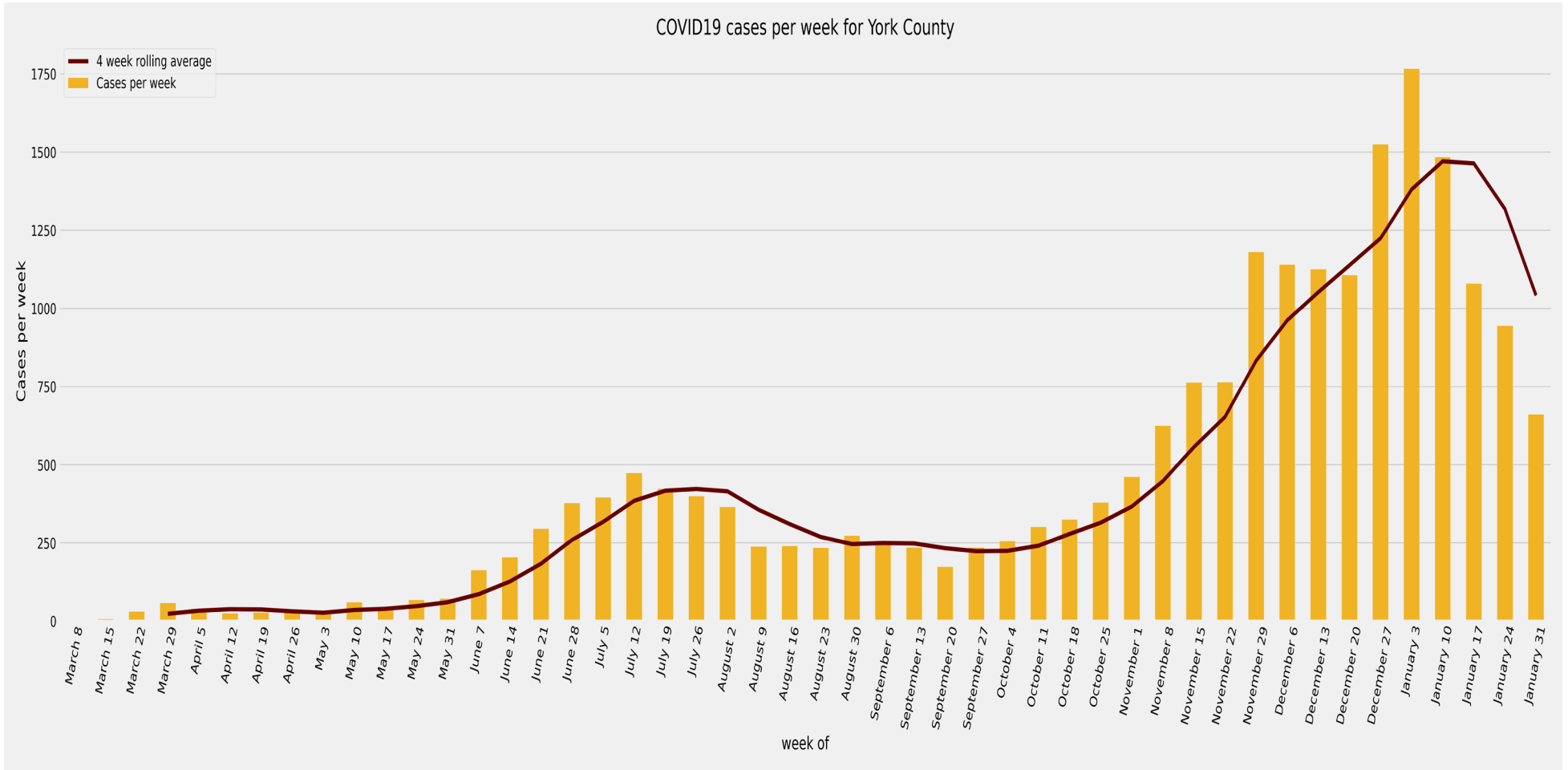
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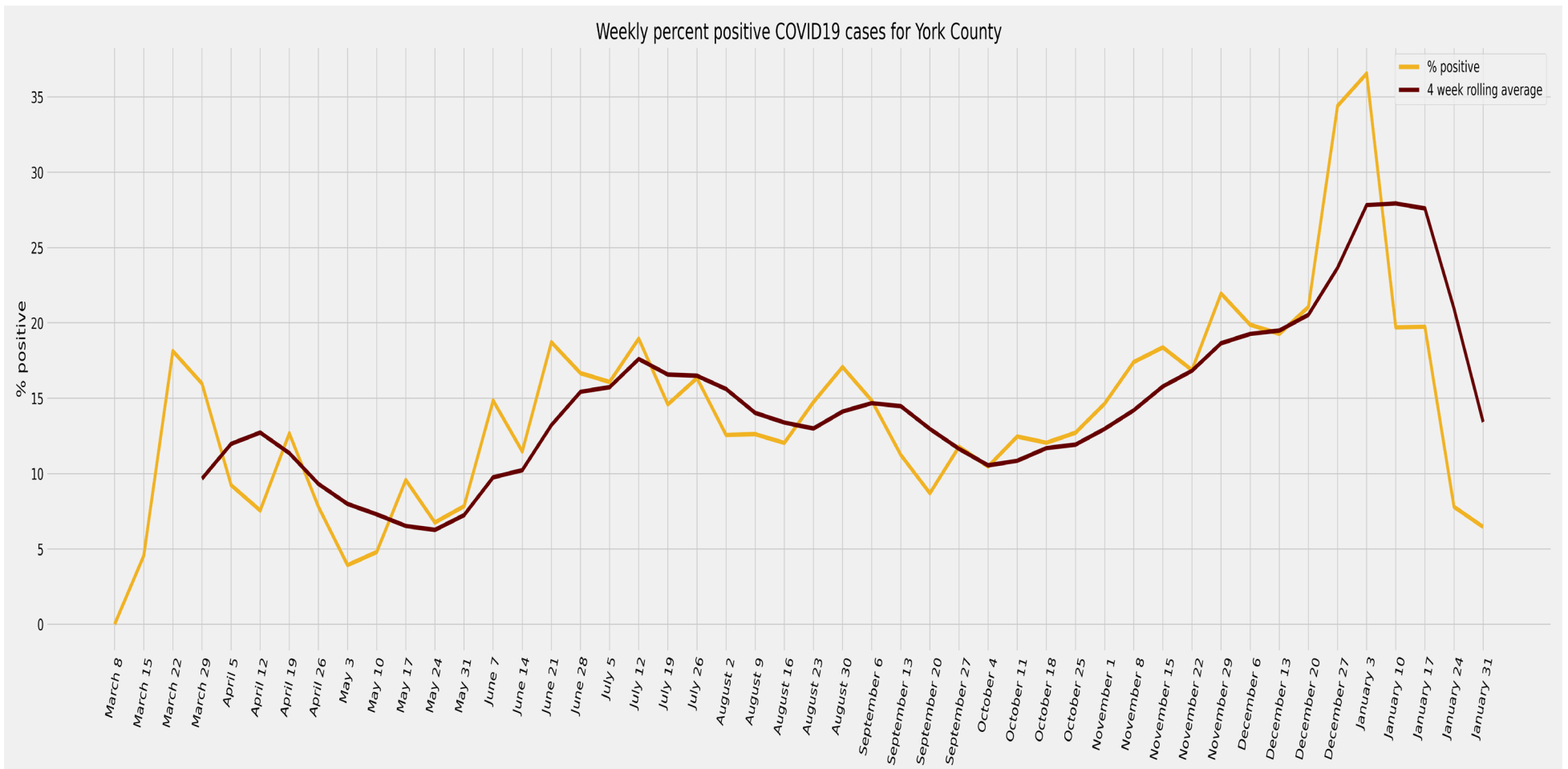


COVID-19 data

During the pandemic, The Johnsonian wants to keep you up to date with the number of positive cases in the York County area.



Philip Nelson/The Johnsonian



Philip Nelson/The Johnsonian

◀ Stewart from front

Stewart recently moved back to South Carolina from New York City still with a fervent love for her alma mater and is grateful for Lauder’s generous donation in her honor.

“It took several seconds for it to sink in, so I guess you could say my first reaction was silence. But as soon as I processed it, I was overwhelmed and deeply grateful. I always believed my success in life — and my wonderful career with Estée Lauder — had much to do with my time at Winthrop,” Stewart said.

“To have an endowment in my honor from Leonard Lauder to the college I love is more than I ever imagined.”

Lauder’s donation will pave the way for future Winthrop students as well as faculty to flourish in the College of Visual and Performing arts just as Stewart did during her time as an undergraduate.

To view more of our weekly COVID-19 data visit our website by scanning the QR code



About The Johnsonian

The Johnsonian is the weekly student newspaper of Winthrop University.

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your name, major and year if you are a student; your name and title if you are a professor, or your name and profession if you are a member of the community. Letters, cartoons and columns reflect the opinion of the authors and are not necessarily the opinions of The Johnsonian Staff.

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Cooper Beck/The Johnsonian

The popular amusement park was forced to shut down due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Carowinds is set to reopen in May, with precautions set in place.

Carowinds now scheduled to reopen May 22

Carowinds amusement park in Charlotte, NC did not open for the 2020 season, but is making plans to open in May

Bryn Smyth

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Carowinds amusement park in Charlotte, North Carolina has made plans to reopen the park to the public on May 22.

The park, which is usually open for the spring, summer and autumn months, did not have its typical season in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

According to an article in the Charlotte Observer published on Jan. 28, "Carowinds, owned by Ohio-based Cedar Fair Entertainment Co., reopened for select dates in November and December for a holiday season outdoor event with some rides running."

"Outdoor amusement parks were allowed to reopen Oct. 2 at 30% capacity under North Carolina Gov. Roy Cooper's Phase 3 reopening plan. Indoor amusement park rides must remain closed."

Carowinds officials announced their plans to ensure a safe reopening amidst the pandemic on their website Carowinds.com.

"Carowinds will open with limited capacity in the park so you can maintain proper social distancing from other guests. To ensure that happens, you will need to plan for your visit in advance. You must also provide information about the current health of family and friends coming with you to the park."

The website then outlines the specifics of these protocols. All guests who are two years or older will be required to wear face coverings even when on rides, and each guest must also pass a thermal screening test where they will require a temperature reading less than 100.4 degrees to enter. Guests must also maintain social distancing from other parties throughout the duration of their visit.

There are additional

safety measures the park will also put in place but cannot enforce.

According to the website, guests will be encouraged to "Wash your hands every 20 minutes. We have many hand sanitizer stations all through the park. Avoid touching your face."

The park will also enforce contactless forms of payment as well as mobile passes to enter the park.

According to the Charlotte Observer article, "the park posted jobs like admissions, food service, performers and ride workers."

"For everyone's safety, all associates working in the park must complete a health assessment and temperature check each day before reporting to work as well. We're all in this together!" read Carowinds.com.

The park also announced that there will be new attractions open to the public come May. Such

attractions include the Boogie Board Racer and the Grand Carnivale.

The Boogie Board Racer is "billed as the longest mat racing slide in the Southeast," and the Grand Carnivale is a nightly "street party and parade," according to the Charlotte Observer.

"We recognize that people are concerned about keeping their families safe.... We're following all of the guidelines that are recommended by the experts and that includes staying with your group, staying safely distanced from others and staying outdoors," said Lisa Stryker, the communications director of Carowinds, in a 2020 WKYC article, in reference to the park's decision to reopen temporarily in December for a holiday event.

Stryker and other Carowinds officials are being diligent to uphold those same guidelines as the park opens up in May.



Police blotter

A roundup of crime on campus

Sarah Hassler
staff writer

On Jan 28. Communications received a call from an RHPD officer advising that while booking an inmate into the city jail, he discovered a small plastic bag that appeared to have heroin residue inside of it.

The reporting officer requested to meet the RHPD officer at the city jail to recover the found evidence. Once at the City Jail, the RHPD officer explained that he was in the process of booking an inmate when he discovered the small plastic bag on the floor of the booking room. While investigating where the bag came from, the officer checked the camera footage for the booking room. In doing so, it was discovered that the bag was seen falling out of a subject's pants leg during intake. The RHPD officer advised that the subject in question was identified as having no Winthrop affiliation. The subject was booked on Jan. 27. At that time, the subject was arrested on a warrant and charged with leaving the scene of an accident and operating an uninsured vehicle. After leaving the city jail, the R/O advised A/C Yearta of the recovered evidence. At that time, A/C Yearta contacted the law center and discovered that the subject had already bonded out on the charges listed above. Arrest warrants will be sought and the subject will be charged with possessing contraband in the city jail and also violation of drug laws (possession of heroin).

At 5:50 on Jan. 28 A/C Yearta received feedback from the Rock Hill City Jail on the video surveillance. The footage showed the subject dropping a small plastic bag containing heroin onto the floor of the booking room. While looking at the footage, it was determined that due to the lack of clarity on when the plastic bag was dropped, charges on the sub-

ject will no longer be prosecuted. The footage would show the subject being booked into the jail on Jan. 27 at approximately 12:45 p.m., but the plastic bag would not be discovered until Jan. 28 at approximately 1:00 p.m. The video would also show that other officers and inmates were also inside of the booking room in between those times. At this time, charges on the subject were dropped due to inconclusive evidence.

On Jan. 28, the Reporting Officer (R/O) was conducting normal patrol at the intersection of Eden Terrace and Evergreen Circle in the city limits of Rock Hill. The R/O observed a Nissan Altima with only one illuminated headlight. The R/O then initiated a traffic stop. The R/O made contact with the suspect who was a Winthrop student. As the officer was talking with the suspect, he detected the odor of marijuana. The officer then asked the suspect if he had any marijuana in the vehicle. The suspect initially stated that he did not, but once the officer advised him that he was going to search his vehicle, the suspect stated that he had marijuana in his pocket as well as a handgun. The R/O then detained the suspect and recovered the firearm from the suspect's front right jacket pocket. The R/O recovered a Smith and Wesson M&P Shield. The R/O had dispatch run the firearm through NCIC and it came back clear.

The R/O then recovered a baggie of marijuana from the suspect's front left jacket pocket. Rock Hill Police Department arrived on the scene and searched the passenger. The R/O then searched the suspect's vehicle and recovered a baggie of marijuana from the center console of the vehicle. The R/O then arrested the suspect for unlawful carry of a handgun and possession of marijuana first offense. The suspect's vehicle was released to the passenger.

Rep. Greene removed from House committee assignments

Chase Duncan

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The Democrat-led House of Representatives voted last Thursday to remove Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene from her committee roles after a string of past controversial statements and

posts were rediscovered revealing support for fringe conspiracy theories and support for political violence against Democrats and federal agents.

Greene's list of beliefs and endorsements relating to controversial conspiracies stretch back to 2017, when after "seeing

things in the news that didn't make sense to me," she "stumbled across" and became an advocate for QAnon, a fringe right-wing conspiracy theory that alleges the existence of a shadow cabal of Satan-worshipping elitist pedophiles composed primarily by Democrats, liberal

Hollywood elites and personalities typically opposed to conservative thought, according to CNN.

The Georgian representative also engaged with the discredited Pizzagate and Frazzledrip conspiracies in 2018, both of which

▶ see [Greene](#) pg. 4



Rep. Greene

accuse influential Democrats of participating in secretive human trafficking and pedophile rings to aid in Satanic cannibalistic rituals, according to an article published by Media Matters for America.

In 2018, Greene agreed with a Facebook comment alleging that the deadly mass shooting that occurred at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School that took 17 lives was a staged event. Greene posted separately that she had private information that “Nancy Pelosi tells Hillary Clinton several times a month that ‘we need another school shooting’ in order to persuade the public to want strict gun control, according to an article published by Media Matters for America.

Greene’s fringe beliefs took action in March 2019 when she confronted Parkland shooting survivor and political activist David Hogg in the streets of Washington, D.C., in a video published by NowThis News. The then-political commentator followed Hogg around, questioning how the boy was able to meet with U.S. senators and accusing the shooting survivor of having “Soros and his major liberal funding.”

Greene went on to lambast the activist as an “idiot” and “completely trained” in a 2019 interview with firearm activist group Georgia Gun Owners Inc. on Facebook.

“I confronted David Hogg twice, and he ran away from me,” Greene said. “No one’s covering my story. I want my second amendment, but none of you are covering my voice. You’re only covering their voice because they’re paid for it.”

Prior to the motion to remove Greene from her committee roles, the Representative defended her previous actions and beliefs as that of someone who was “allowed to believe in things that weren’t true.”

“If it weren’t for the Facebook posts and comments that I liked in 2018, I wouldn’t be standing here today and you couldn’t point a finger at me and accuse me of anything wrong,” Greene said.

The motion was

passed by 230-199. 11 House Republicans crossed party lines to strip Greene of her seats on the Budget Committee and House Education and Labor Committee.

“As I have repeatedly criticized Ilhan Omar for her anti-Semitic comments, I had to hold Marjorie Taylor Greene accountable for her denial of the Parkland Massacre, the Flight 77 crash, and accusing a Jewish family of starting wildfires,” said Rep. Maria Salazar, a Florida Republican who voted in favor of removing Greene from her committee seats.

House Republican Leader Kevin McCarthy disavowed the past comments made by Greene, but voted against removing her from her committee positions and called the motion to remove her a “partisan power grab.”

“Past comments from and endorsed by Marjorie Taylor Greene on school shootings, political violence, and anti-Semitic conspiracy theories do not represent the values or beliefs of the House Republican Conference. I condemn those comments unequivocally. I condemned them in the past. I continue to condemn them today. This House condemned QAnon last Congress and continues to do so today,” McCarthy said.

“I understand that Marjorie’s comments have caused deep wounds to many and as a result, I offered Majority Leader Hoyer a path to lower the temperature and address these concerns. Instead of coming together to do that, the Democrats are choosing to raise the temperature by taking the unprecedented step to further their partisan power grab regarding the committee assignments of the other party.”

“In the end, this resolution continues to distract Congress, especially given the limited time that Speaker Pelosi and the Democrat leadership want the House to debate and work on what it needs to focus on: getting Americans back to work, getting kids back to school, and providing vaccines to all Americans who need it.”

Robinhood faces immense scrutiny from SEC and investors

Robinhood halted trading on buy orders for GME & AMC as investors surged, investors in GME and financial analysts believe there should be a class action lawsuit; SEC investigates

Sean Miller
staff writer

Every amateur investor dreams of hitting it big on the stock market. Like winning the lottery, many believe that if they make one good investment, they will never have to work again. This was the case for many of the armchair investors of GME stock last week.

While overall stock market growth was sluggish, GameStop shares soared over an astounding 1000% during the initial trading frenzy, egged on by the Reddit forum r/wallstreetbets. This captivated the attention of investors, the media and even the White House as they had never seen such a massive effort from individual investors to increase a single company’s market value.

Suddenly, a \$5 investment into GameStop became worth over \$350 at its peak. Individual investors were delighted to see such a quick turnaround and now found that their investment portfolios were suddenly flush with thousands of dollars. Wall Street, however, was not happy.

As GME shares kept skyrocketing, Robinhood announced that they were halting trades in GME and AMC stock, citing “recent volatility.” Users of Robinhood suddenly found that they were no longer permitted to buy shares in GME and AMC and that they were only allowed to sell. Overnight, the value of GME shares plummeted and investors were outraged.

Some investors, like 10-year-old Jaydyn

Carr, managed to pull out their investments early and make a nifty profit off of the whole ordeal. Others, however, were sticking by the rallying cry, “Hold the line” on r/wallstreetbets and lost thousands.

Brandon Parker, a junior computer science major at UNC Charlotte, was invested in GME on Robinhood and pulled out at the last minute before the freeze came into effect. He says that Robinhood’s actions have shaken his faith in the platform and believes they colluded with hedge funds who were being short squeezed.

“The initial response from Robinhood seemed to be that they were concerned about people putting their money into a volatile stock—and then they limited stock buying and said people don’t know how to use their money. Even though there was valid financial reporting on wallstreetbets that was well informed. I don’t think their intentions were actually because they were worried about people losing money. This leads me to believe it’s more of an issue of Robinhood and maybe the hedge funds [colluding],” Parker said.

“I’d like to see a lawsuit from people on wallstreetbets or anyone who invested in GME on Robinhood. An investigation by the SEC won’t result in any real action being taken.”

Dr. Yuanshan Cheng, an assistant professor of finance and expert in investments at Winthrop, says that hedge funds engage in market manipulation but they are seldom successful.

“Hedge funds are



Emma Crouch/The Johnsonian

Robinhood is an investment app that allows you to invest and trade stocks right from your phone.

not that regulated. All kinds of open-ended funds or foundations will raise money from the public are regulated; they have to tell you what they are doing. Hedge funds act on behalf of some people with more than \$1 million... They don’t have to tell you what they are doing. They try to manipulate it [the stock market] but it’s very hard to define manipulation... I think they would try to manipulate the market to some extent, then not get caught. But they don’t really have a lot of success.”

Prominent GOP and Democrat leaders such as Ted Cruz and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez have denounced Robinhood’s actions, calling the company’s decision to not allow for investors to buy shares market manipulation and have called for an SEC investigation. However, the legality of Robinhood’s actions are uncertain and the company fervently denies any collusion occurred.

Some observers like Dr. Cheng believe that the company should not be allowed to tell investors what to do with their money and a class action lawsuit should be filed.

“I think personally that’s a legal issue. We

should have a class suit against them—I put money over there and we had a contract. We can go back to the contract and it seems I could have made more money out of this. I think it’s illegal. I believe in free speech and freedom that’s why I come from China to the US,” Cheng said.

Robinhood has since lifted the trade restrictions and the SEC has released a statement saying, “The Commission will closely review actions taken by regulated entities that may disadvantage investors or otherwise unduly inhibit their ability to trade certain securities.”

The SEC fell short of naming Robinhood specifically but it is clear that Robinhood will be investigated.

Robinhood’s reputation as an online investing platform has taken a major beating in the week following their decision to freeze GME and AMC trades. Over one hundred thousand negative reviews of Robinhood on Google have been removed and the FTC announced that they had received over 100 complaints about Robinhood.

The company will be facing immense public backlash in the weeks to come.

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February 10, 2021

Women's Basketball collects fourth win in five games

Eagles split double-header with Radford

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The Winthrop women's basketball team hosted Radford for a two-game series this past weekend, losing on Friday but winning Saturday night's contest in overtime.

The Eagles were originally supposed to travel to Gardner-Webb for two games this past weekend, but that series was postponed due to COVID-19.

Friday's match did not end well for Winthrop. Despite being down just 26-23 at halftime, the Eagles were defeated 72-46 as Radford went 18-of-24 from the field in the second half.

To Winthrop's pleasure, Radford did not carry that same efficiency into Saturday. After two minutes of scoreless play, Winthrop's Madison Ervin put the first two points on the board, followed by two more from Winthrop senior Anika Riley.

The Highlanders started 0-for-7 on their shot attempts, finally scoring with 5:14 left in the first quarter. While the teams exchanged leads during the final few minutes of the first period, Winthrop took a 13-12 advantage into the second quarter after a layup by freshman J'Mani Ingram put the Eagles up by one.

The Highlanders opened the second quarter on a 9-0 run,

pulling ahead 21-13 with seven and a half minutes remaining in the first half. Winthrop's opponent went on another 9-0 run later in the quarter that put the Eagles down 32-19.

Seconds before the halftime buzzer sounded, Winthrop's Riley hit a mid-range jumper to cap off a 7-0 run for the Eagles and to cut the team's deficit to six points. Winthrop was still outscored 20-13 in the second quarter and subsequently trailed 32-26 at the break.

Despite shooting just 3-11 during the third quarter, the Eagles were able to keep the score reasonably close by earning nine shots at the free throw line, of which they made six. Winthrop also didn't send Radford to the charity stripe at all during the third quarter.

The Eagles trailed by eight points entering the final period of regulation. They opened the quarter on a 10-2 run, tying the game at 48 with five minutes to go.

Down 50-49, Winthrop's Myra Strickland gave the Eagles their first lead since the end of the first quarter when she sank two free throw attempts. She made two more to re-tie the game at 53.

Radford persisted,



pulling ahead by three with 37 seconds left in the fourth quarter, but a jumper from Winthrop's Riley brought the score to within one point.

The Eagles chose to foul Radford's Makaila Wilson right away, which worked in Winthrop's favor as the junior went 0-for-2 at the line. On the other end of the court, Winthrop sophomore Sydney Hunter was fouled on a basket attempt with 19 seconds remaining.

Hunter went 1-for-2 at the line to tie the game at 56, which left the Eagles needing a strong defensive stand. Radford was left to toss up a layup at the buzzer, which rolled across the rim and fell outside of the hoop, forcing overtime.

Both teams exchanged two-point baskets during the first minute of the five-minute fifth period. Those would be the only buckets made from the field for the rest of the game, as free throws would ultimately tell

the tale. Winthrop

shot the last eight free throws of the game, sinking five to give the Eagles a 63-59 win. The home team earned a whopping 35 free throw attempts (making 22) compared to Radford's 12 attempts (8 makes).

Winthrop's Anika Riley was the star of the game, shooting 6-of-10 from the field and recording a double-double with 15 points and ten rebounds. Riley was one of four Eagles to post double-digit scoring figures, accompanying graduate transfer Madison Ervin (13), sophomore Myra Strickland (11) and junior Maleeah Langstaff (10).

The Eagles look to take on Gardner-Webb next in Boiling Springs on Feb. 12 and 13. Winthrop will then travel to UNC Asheville before returning to Rock Hill to close out the regular season against Presbyterian.

Softball schedule announced

Eagles set to compete in four tournaments

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Winthrop Softball is preparing to travel roughly 700 miles for the first event of their 2021 season, Feldberg's Invitational in Miami, Florida. There, the Eagles will compete against Florida Atlantic and Florida International in a total of five games starting on Feb. 12.

There will be four other tournaments before Big South Conference games begin — two in Rock Hill and two in Georgia. Among those tournaments, the Eagles will play teams from all across the country including the University of Illinois Chicago, Syracuse University and Mercer University.

"It's going to be a crazy year with all of the tournaments we have at home, but with COVID, I would rather play tournaments at home than at other schools," said fifth-year pitcher, Madyson Watson.

Although Watson typically enjoys traveling to the other cities for games, COVID-19 policies prevent the team from sightseeing while away and her family cannot watch her since most schools are not allowing fans in the stands.

Big South Conference games begin with a two-day, three-game series at Campbell on March 19 and 20. There are 55 games scheduled throughout the 2021 season, but the team remains flexible as various obstacles are known to pop up unexpectedly.

Watson was originally looking forward to playing against Texas A&M, but COVID-19 policies prohibit the Eagles from flying to a game. Watson is now eager to play Clemson, Syracuse and Marshall the most.

"All of the schools I have mentioned

have great talent and will put up a fight," Watson said.

This will be the first time the Eagles will face Clemson, playing a double-header on April 13 at Clemson. Winthrop was scheduled to take on the Tigers last year during their inaugural softball season, but the season ended prior to the game being played.

Like many other teams, the Eagles' 2020 season was cut short, but they still competed in 23 games earning a 12-11 record.

"Everyone on our team gets along and plays well on the field together. Our freshmen this year have the kind of attitude that they take the bull by the horns which is nice to see, especially with the goals that we would like to attain as a team," Watson said.

Even though Watson is not concerned with having minimal to no fans in the stadium, she recognizes that it may affect every player differently.

"Some athletes feed off of crowds while others could care less if they are there or not. I think we as a team will do fine though considering we have scrimmaged all fall and spring with no one in the stands or anything," Watson said.

With an entire returning pitching staff and seven starters, the whole team is determined to dominate this season.

"Our focus is to make it into the conference and bring a championship home. Some other goals we have are to stay relaxed and play loose. When we start to put pressure on ourselves and play tight we do not play up to our potential," Watson said.

The Big South Championship is currently scheduled for May 13-15 in Boiling Springs, NC.

SCORES

Women's Basketball

Loss on Feb. 5 vs. Radford, 72-46
Win on Feb. 6 vs. Radford, 63-59 OT

Rocket League

(Esports)

Win on Feb. 2 vs. Campbell, 2-0
Win on Feb. 2 vs. High Point, 3-0
Win on Feb. 3 vs. UNC Asheville, 3-0
Win on Feb. 6 vs. UC San Diego, 3-0
Win on Feb. 7 vs. Marist, 3-0
Win on Feb. 7 vs. Loyola Marymount, 4-0
Loss on Feb. 7 vs. UT Arlington, 4-1

Women's Volleyball

Loss on Feb. 6 at Charleston Southern, 3-0
Loss on Feb. 7 at Charleston Southern, 3-1

League of Legends

(Esports)

Win on Feb. 6 vs. Alabama, 2-0



Olivia Esselman/The Johnsonian

EAGLE OF THE WEEK

William “Mordio” Yang



Alex Romano
staff writer

other programs throughout his college career.

“Winthrop’s actually my fourth college. I went to Robert Morris in Chicago my first year, I went to Maryville University in St. Louis, and then before I came here I went to Culver-Stockton in Missouri,” Yang said.

During his first year playing at the collegiate level, Yang made a very fond memory as his team made the collegiate finals.

“The game company, Riot Games, flew us out to L.A. and got us this five star hotel and these nice restaurants and we got to play on the stage where professionals play and stuff. It was pretty cool,” he said.

Despite COVID-19 causing some of his teammates to play from off campus, Yang said it has not been an issue.

“We’re pretty fortunate because eSports is all online,” he said.

Yang became a member of the Winthrop eSports team during its inaugural season in 2019-2020.

“Winthrop was building a new eSports



Photo Courtesy to Winthrop Athletics

Yang program and the director told me he would build a team around me and let me know of some of the roster decisions he was making, and the roster looked competitive enough for me so I decided to give it a shot,” he said.

Although Yang enjoys playing at the collegiate level, his future plans involve playing professionally.

“When you’re at the highest level in collegiate eSports, the plan is not to graduate, the plan is to try and go pro,” he said.

Yang said that there is a large skill gap

between collegiate and professional play, but he plans to make the leap.

“Comparing the highest level of collegiate to the lowest level of professional play – it might be like comparing middle schoolers to high schoolers, but there’s obviously outliers like new, young talent,” Yang said.

Yang and Winthrop’s League of Legends team are off to a 2-0 start this season, with their most recent win against Newberry on Jan. 30.

Swinging into golf season

Winthrop’s men shake the rust off at first spring event

Matthew Shealy
shealym@mytjnow.com

The Winthrop men’s golf team tied for seventh out of ten teams last week at the Any Given Tuesday Intercollegiate. The team traveled to Kiawah Island, SC for the three day event that began on Jan. 24 and ended on Jan. 26.

Winthrop’s best performer was Ryan Tattan, who finished with an even par after three rounds. Head Coach Kevin Pendley said it wasn’t a surprise to see Tattan lead the team.

“He’s been our best guy for pretty much the last two years,” Pendley said. “He’s been rock solid. He was good in the fall; he played well in the amateur events he got to play in. He had a pretty good summer when he did get to play back home in England. [He] made match play at the English Amateur, which is a very prestigious event.”

While the golf team usually doesn’t compete until later in the spring, Pendley said this event and one more were added to the spring schedule to make up for time lost last semester.

“When the fall season was canceled, a lot of teams were scrambling to pick up some extra events which I felt was important for the student-athletes,” he said. “[I] did not want them to feel the impact of basically having two seasons essentially be half-killed.”

Winthrop took six golfers to last week’s match, which Pendley said is one more than the team usually competes with. This gave an extra golfer the chance to get some meaningful reps in, while the team’s total was still calculated using only the best four scores from each

round.

While Pendley said he thought the team “did some good things” given that there had only been about two weeks to prepare since students arrived back on campus, he cited “competitive rust” as a cause for mental mistakes and players not responding as well to adversity as he would have liked.

After the final round, Winthrop’s team score was 12 over par.

“We didn’t score well on the par-5s which was the big key to that golf course,” Pendley said. “Any week you look at par-5 scoring – the teams that are at the top of the leaderboard in par-5 scoring, I can almost guarantee you they’re at the top of the leaderboard for the tournament as well.”

While the team’s top goal is to play in the postseason, Pendley said he doesn’t want his guys to focus on that very much.

“There’s a lot of factors that go into postseason play that are out of our control, so I want to just see us focus on us and grow, and not worry about the exterior stuff,” he said.

“There’s been times in the last couple of years [where] we’ve gotten a little off track and focused too much on rankings and all the other stuff. The only bearing we can have on that is handling our day-to-day business and making sure we’re improving every day.”

The team has almost an entire month off before its next event, the Wexford Intercollegiate. Winthrop will travel to Hilton Head Island to compete on Feb. 22 and 23.

Editor’s note: This story was originally published on The Johnsonian’s website on Feb. 3.

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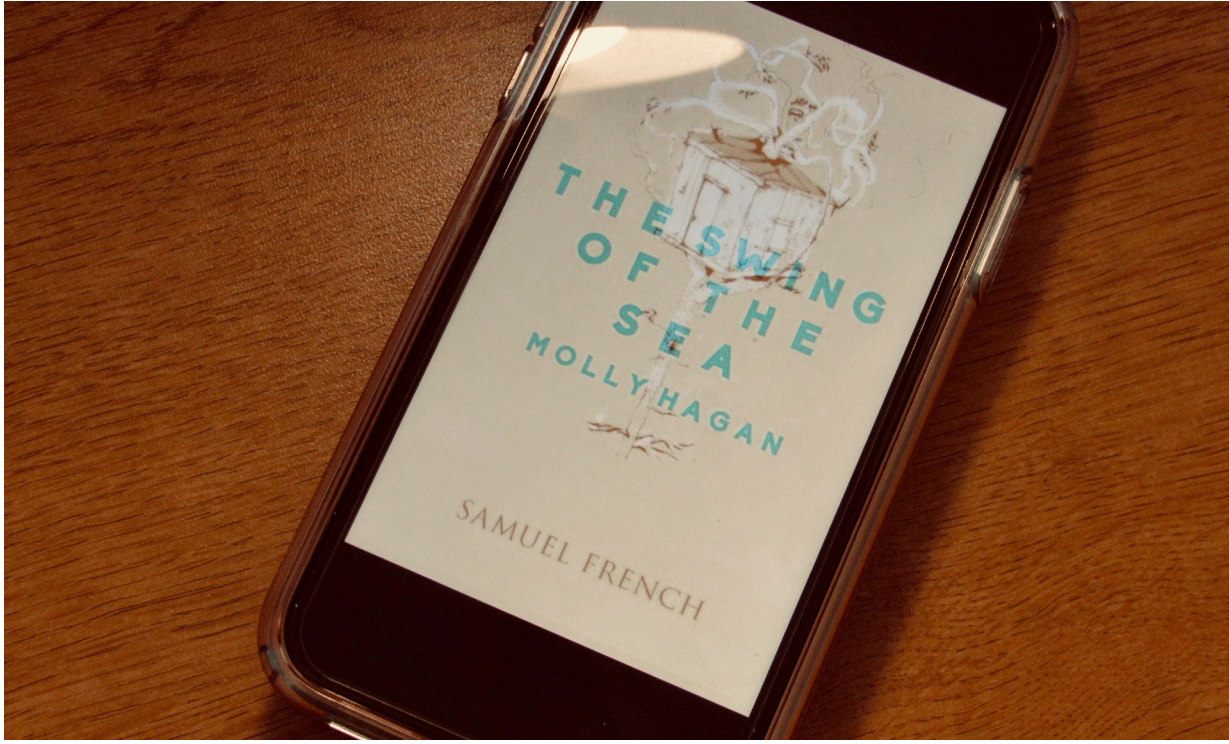
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February 10, 2021



Emma Crouch/The Johnsonian

Swing of the Sea is a book by Molly Hagan about dealing with the death of a friend.

The Swing of the Sea, coming soon

Some of the cast of the upcoming play provide insight into what the audience can expect

David Botzer
botzerd@mytjnow.com

With the new semester chugging along at full speed, Winthrop University's theatre department looks to dive deep into their Spring 2021 production season by starting off with Molly Hagan's "The Swing of the Sea."

According to the Department of Theatre and Dance's website, the play is two children's "journey through memory and imagination following the sudden death of their friend." The plot centers around Boots, a yellow-rain-boots-clad girl, and her friend Eggs, a boy dreaming of asking her to an upcoming dance, as the two come to terms with the death of their friend, Peter.

Sophomore technical theatre major Connor Marsh, who stars as Eggs in the play, said that the show "centers on a lot of dark subject matter that you have to deal with very

young." He went on to say that the play is "a retrospection on what's it like to go through [the loss of a friend] at that age."

Marsh said that the character of Eggs is meant to be 12 years old, almost 13, during the events of the play.

"Eggs deals with things like loneliness and isolation," Marsh said, "even when he is friends with Boots. So, it is him going through the grieving process while trying to maintain a positive attitude, which doesn't always work."

Marsh is joined onstage by senior psychology major Taji Mayberry, who plays the role of Peter. Mayberry said the "The Swing of the Sea" explores how loss can affect a friendship and what happens to the people left behind after a death.

Mayberry's character, Peter, is "there to help his friends accept his death," according to the actor. Peter "wants them to get better individually and as friends

together."

Throughout the production process, Mayberry has been worried about representing the role well.

"He goes through a lot of complex feelings for anyone, especially for his age, and ends up taking his life," Mayberry said. "So, it is important to understand his actions before the play to understand his actions during the show. I would say accurately portraying a character going through such pain and having to see what he left over was the biggest obstacle."

According to Marsh, the hardest part about the show for him has been trying to navigate the situation with COVID-19. Throughout the rehearsals, the cast and crew have experimented to see what they can and cannot amidst safety precautions while maintaining the safety of everyone involved.

One major change that has resulted from these precautions is the pro-

ductions' move to a digital streaming performance.

"We rely a lot on camera work now," Marsh said. "It's more of a Saturday Night Live style than anything. But I find it interesting how we can make that live performance still feel live with it all just being camera work."

Once the play has ended, Marsh hopes that the audience will walk away with "a new perspective on mental health. I hope that it comforts them in a way, especially with the grieving process and moving on."

Mayberry shared Marsh's hope that the audience will be more aware of mental health and that they will "Learn the signs of people going through silent pain."

He went on to say that he also hopes "that adults, young and old, will listen and watch for elementary and middle schoolers as well. Their experiences and feelings are just as worthy of validation, don't disregard them."

Are we all artists in our own way?

The term artist is not an exclusive term, but one that includes all that create

Mari Pressley
staff writer

The word "artist" is commonly used to describe someone who is well known for a work of art they have completed. But is that the only way to be an artist?

According to Dictionary.com, an artist is "a person who produces works in any of the arts that are primarily subject to aesthetic criteria."

While people create art every day without recognition, many create for their own pleasure and interests. However, this does not make them any less of an artist. Being an artist is not defined by if one can advertise, sell or share their work. Instead, the only thing an artist has to do is create.

Art can be expressed through various outlets such as dance, painting, singing, filmmaking, collaging and writing. Although, these genres of art are not the only way people can be artists.

"I think that anyone can be an artist," sophomore chemistry major Mason Mattison said. "If you write poetry, play covers, or doodle in your notebook during class, you are an artist."

It can be disheartening for someone to create a piece of art and not be recognized, fail to win the competitions they enter or have their process of creating art disrespected because of how others view it.

Junior dance education major Jala Smith shared how she is an artist as a dancer.

"An artist is someone who has something to display or show and express to the world," Smith said. "You can be an artist [by] accepting your flaws, insecurities, and finding a way to express and overcome them."

The variety of art forms in the world are necessary if we want to live somewhere that is full of diversity and new things. New clothes and clothing trends would not be possible if creative minds never shared their ideas.

Although the people



Artists use a variety of supplies to master their art abilities.

who create in the fashion industry are called designers rather than artists, they are still artists, in a way, because they are creating. It may not seem like art or fit the description of "art" as it is commonly known, but it is still art because it is a visual expression of that designer's own-making.

While those who are creating in their own way should embrace the work they construct and their ability to generate new ideas and creations, art is also an approach for people to express themselves and contribute to society.

Junior sports management major Patrick Williams said that artists should "just continue to be themselves and leave their footprint in the genre of art they are interested in, and by doing this, people can embrace their artistic abilities."

As you continue to brainstorm your next project, it is important to remember that anyone can be an artist or creator, even if their ideas do not fit a certain definition. That means thinking outside of the box and stepping out of your comfort zone.

"Cherish everything that you make and never give up on your medium," Mattison said. "it's okay if it takes you ten seconds or ten years to create something, you are still an artist."

Jamita Johnson/The Johnsonian

COVID-19 Valentine's Day

Valentine's Day may look a little different as it is celebrated during a pandemic

Sam Hyatt
staff writer

As Valentine's Day approaches, people may have to begin thinking about how they will celebrate this holiday during the pandemic.

Valentine's Day, a day where people express their love to their friends and significant others through gifts such as: flowers, chocolate hearts, teddy bears and jewelry. Sales

for these items all skyrocket during this time of the year.

This year, dinner dates and gatherings may have to be modified and postponed amidst the growing number of COVID-19 cases and the fear of the new strains entering the United States.

Senior exercise science major Cameron Adams said, "COVID, in particular, is not affecting me this year for Valentine's Day,

although it may affect other couples because they may not be able to do some of the things that they have planned."

Valentine's Day 2021 will be the first year that people will not experience a traditional Valentine's Day due to social distancing guidelines. However, much like those in school and working remotely, those celebrating this holiday can use tech-

nology to spend time with their friends and significant others in order to follow social distancing recommendations.

Corinne Whipple, a senior computer science major, shared a little about her relationship as it is one that is long distance. As a result of their long-distance relationship, they do a lot of dates through Zoom and FaceTime.

▶ see COVID pg. 9

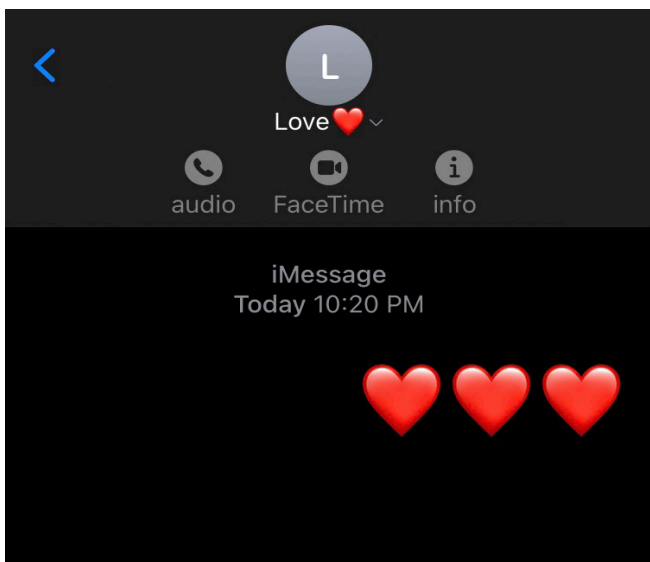
◀ COVID from pg. 8

“My boyfriend and I are long-distance as it is, so we do a lot of things virtual,” Whipple said. “Fortunately, he will be visiting me for the holiday, but if he were not visiting me, we would FaceTime or watch a movie and celebrate that way.”

Fortunately, there are various ways to use technology to celebrate with those you love. Many couples or friends can use FaceTime and Zoom to have dinner and conversations, while some may use Hulu Party or Netflix Party to watch movies with their family and friends.

Despite the options technology offers, it still doesn't change that Valentine's Day will unfortunately not be the same as it usually is for many people because of the pandemic. But some are not letting that stop them from spending time with those they love.

Senior English major



Emma Crouch/The Johnsonian

Emojis are a common way of expressing what you are feeling without using words.

Beth Warnken said, “My mom’s birthday is around Valentine’s Day, so we’ve had to be extra safe in how we plan to celebrate her, so we are opting for more close family time instead of going out or having a big group together.”

For those who choose to gather in big groups and spend time in person with their significant others to celebrate the holiday of love, it is important to remember to social

distance as much as possible and to continue to wear masks, properly, around others.

“I hope people will take the time to think of fun and unique ways to celebrate loved ones with the pandemic happening,” Warnken said. “Taking the extra time to plan around gatherings and going out could be super meaningful to your loved ones and others.”

Your wish, their command

In recent years, movie-goers seem to have gained influence over movie studios’ final releases

Emily Curry
staff writer

Fans usually don’t get much say in the content that studios produce. For better or for worse, it’s usually a “take what you can get” situation.

Even when studios make horrible decisions about story arcs or the portrayal of some characters, at the end of the day, fans usually have to accept the movie as it is — because the other option would be not having any content at all. However, every once in a while, studios do take fan opinions into account.

Take, for example, Warner Brothers’ decision regarding what has come to be known as “The Snyder Cut.” During the production of the “Justice League” movie, based on the DC Comics, the original director Zack Snyder stepped away from the production process, and Joss Whedon was brought in.

According to an article written for The Verge, “fans criticized Whedon’s contributions to the film, which included a lighter tone.” After the film’s release in 2017, many fans wanted to see Snyder’s original cut of the film, prompting the fan campaign to “release the Snyder cut.”

Finally, three years after the original film was released, in May of 2020, Warner Bros. announced that “Zack Snyder’s Justice League” would be getting an official release on the streaming platform HBO Max. The release date is March 18.

Another studio swayed by fans is Disney, on the matter of the hit book series “Percy Jackson and the

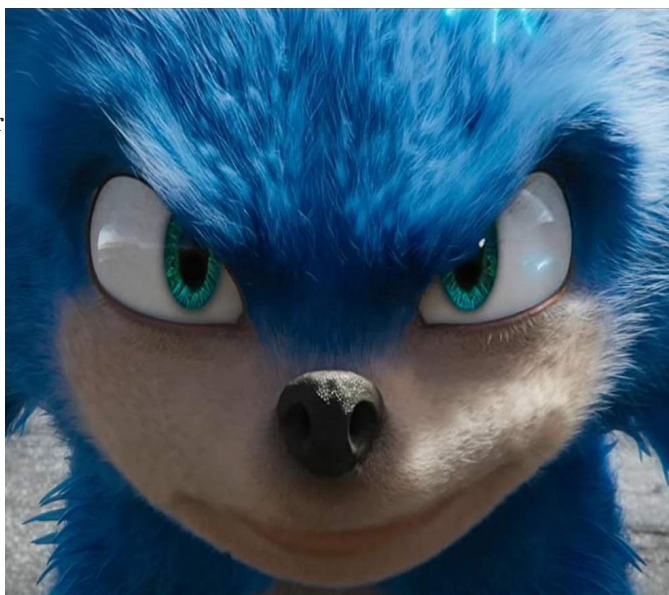


Photo Courtesy to The Guardian

Fan feedback led to the production team delaying the Sonic the Hedgehog movie.

Olympians.” This series, written by Rick Riordan, drew praise from many, including The New York Times, where critic Polly Shulman called the first book, “The Lightning Thief,” “worthy of Ovid.”

The movie adaptations, however, fell flat. Riordan himself said, “Once I saw the final script and saw what they were doing on the set, I realized I had to step away for my own peace of mind.”

The faithless adaptations left many fans unsatisfied, and petitions were created for Netflix or Disney to adapt the series. In 2019, a new opportunity arose, as Disney acquired 21st Century Fox, which had produced the movies.

It seemed like a perfect time for Disney to turn the books into a television miniseries for its now-launched streaming platform, Disney+, and fans started #DisneyAdaptPercyJackson. And just a little more than a year later, Riordan announced on Twitter

that a series was in the works with Disney.

Perhaps the biggest fan-induced concession from a studio was “Sonic the Hedgehog.” In 2019, Paramount Pictures released the first trailer for their upcoming picture, giving fans their first look at the digitally rendered video game character. However, some found the design, in the words of an article written for Vulture, “creepy” and “upsetting.”

In response, the director himself, Jeff Fowler, announced that “The message is loud and clear... you aren’t happy with the design & you want changes. It’s going to happen.”

The movie’s release was delayed three months in order to complete the redesign.

While movie studios certainly cannot bend to the whim of every fan, it is certainly good to know that they are listening. After all, who knows better what the fans want than the fans themselves?

Artist Spotlight: Creating Opportunity

Emily Curry
staff writer

Starting just around the age of 2, sophomore art education major Autumn Jackson has been involved in art for as long as she could hold a pencil. However, the artist from Columbia, South Carolina said it was a piece she created in middle school that marked a turning point in how she viewed herself as an artist.

“7th-grade year, I think, I created a pop art collage of a pair of Converse, and that was one of the first pieces that was going to get sold, but I wanted to keep it for some odd reason. But that just allowed me to see that somebody could actually want my art,” Jackson said.

Jackson, a teaching fellow at Winthrop University, is studying to become an art teacher and has taken almost any and every opportunity that she is offered.

“I have worked with the NAACP on several occasions; I used to be a part of a[n] organization called ‘BLAC’. It was the Black Artists Coalition, and they allowed me to get involved with a local paint and sip studio,” Jackson said. “So, any opportunity I can get, I am on it.”

On Jackson’s Instagram account for her artwork, @fall.jackson-creations, you can catch a glimpse of her hectic artist lifestyle through candid photos of her working on pieces, photos of paintings, and featured photographs.

She explains that although a significant amount of the pieces she has in art shows are photography, she has diversified herself through

exploring many different art mediums.

Last semester, Jackson was asked by Emerald Cooper, president of the Winthrop University NAACP Chapter, to create a mural for the March for Black Lives. The piece displayed two blue hands covering the mouths of two people with brown skin.

“For the Black Lives Matter mural...they wanted for me to create a piece that brought the community together while also talking about the issues that have been going on with police brutality especially after the death of Breonna Taylor and Eric Garner. They wanted to have a piece that talked about those issues but also creating a sense of community and awareness on our campus,” Jackson said.

The artist is most inspired by divine femininity. Furthermore, from the experience of being a black woman in the U.S.

“It’s more connected to me and exploring sexuality, health, just all the things that come into my mind and give me peace at times,” Jackson said. “I’m following two current artists right now.

“It’s Lady Aiko Nakagawa; she is from Japan, but she’s a New York-based street artist, and the other one is So-maya Critchlow. She’s a London-based artist, and she works with earthy tones, race, sex, and culture. So, they’re both women artists, and they focus on the same things like women and empowerment.”

When asked to describe the process she goes through for her creations, Jackson said, “If I don’t have an idea of what I’m going to do, I will just stare at a wall

for a really long time. And then, like magic, it’s like boom, ‘You need to do this,’ and then I’m running around my room trying to get my sketchbook and pencil and I’m jotting it down, and my roommate will look at me crazy like ‘what are you doing?’ I’m like, ‘I just got an idea, I need to put it down.’

“So my process is either hectic or I’ll do intense research on what I want to do. Different colors, meanings, feelings so it really just depends on my mood for the day.”

The artist, who gives art lessons at Chelsea and Savannah Art Studio and also tutors students in art history at the Academic Success Center, revealed how Winthrop has helped her further her pursuits in art.

“Winthrop has helped me so much. Coming from Columbia, the art programs are not as good as they could be, so my art was lacking in the sense of technical appeal and just true artistry.

“So, coming to Winthrop and having numerous professors that are experts in their field and have the best interest of me at heart, I’ve been able to further develop, learn new techniques, get my hands on new materials that I have never touched or even seen in my life,” Jackson said. “Winthrop has just really given me new opportunities and new experiences.”

Jackson has been accepted into the 33rd Undergraduate Juried Exhibition. She will display six images titled “Her Inner Beauty” showing at Rutledge Gallery from Feb. 15 through Mar. 5.



Autumn Jackson

Photo Courtesy to Autumn Jackson

Mari Pressley | Assistant A&C Editor
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February 10, 2021

Joe Biden's first accomplishments in office

President Joe Biden has introduced change in his first two weeks in office

Sam Hyatt
staff writer

On January 20, 2021, Joe Biden was inaugurated as the 46th President of the United States of America and has hit the ground running, making changes ever since.

The Biden administration has set forth more executive orders in his first two weeks as president compared to many previous presidents. So far President Biden has signed twenty-five executive orders.

A few of these executive orders include rejoining the Paris Climate Accord, preventing discrimination in the workplace based on gender identity or sexual orientation, and expanding COVID-19 testing.

Senior English Education major Ashley Moore said, "I am

most excited about Biden rejoining the Paris Climate agreement because global warming is something that I worry about a lot and I want the United States to be more environmentally friendly."

During the two weeks that Biden has been in the role of president of the United States, there have been various decisions made that have brought both excitement and anger to the American people.

Biden's decision to discontinue the permit of the Keystone XL oil pipeline is one of the few decisions that has stoked division between the Democratic and Republican parties. The Democratic party seems to be content with this decision as it will be saving wildlife and important land, while the Republican party is angry because many people will be losing a

job as the construction has been halted.

The pause on student loan payments is one action done by Biden that has made numerous current college students and college graduates very happy and feeling hopeful.

"Hopefully the promise of student loan forgiveness will come about soon," Junior Elementary Education major Taylor McNair said.

From the beginning of Biden's campaign, President Joe Biden has continued to call for unity among the people in the United States. The division in the country is not something that can be ignored, and he recognizes that.

However, there is still a great deal to look forward to while Biden is in office even though there is a lot of disagreement occurring among citizens. "In the future, I am



Wren Brooke/The Johnsonian

President Biden holds a signing ceremony in the Capitol accompanied by Vice President Harris and leaders from Congress.

looking forward to seeing what he does in education. I will soon be an educator myself and I am excited that his wife is an educator and will most likely be influencing what he does in education," Moore said.

It is evident that the education system in the United States is not the best. With the Biden administration having influence from an educator, Dr. Jill Biden, it is exciting and heartwarming to know that change will be coming soon. As this change begins to occur, there is hope for younger generations to be a part of an education system that

is centered around their wellbeing, and not focused on standardized testing and test scores.

Ellery McNeil, a junior double majoring in conservation biology and educational studies, said, "I like his executive order to reverse the transgender military ban because I believe that gender identity should not bar someone from any job or service." McNeil adds that "I want to see a lot of social reform especially in regard to the LGBTQ+ community, immigration reform, women's rights, and issues surrounding the justice system."

The possibility of the minimum wage being raised to \$15 is something that many people are hoping for and looking forward to. "I think that the movement toward \$15 as the minimum wage is good," McNair said, "the cost of living has made \$15 the living wage."

As Joe Biden continues to make changes during his first term as president, we can expect to see more of a push for people to wear masks and social distance as he fights to get the COVID-19 spread in the United States under control.

Valentines and the other 364 days

Valentine's Day is traditionally a time to declare love, but is it actually worth it?

Autumn Hawkins
staff writer

Valentine's Day is a commercialized way to celebrate being in a relationship, but whether or not the tradition is worth participating in, is the question.

While Valentine's Day is the perfect opportunity to confess romantic feelings, it is also ridiculously overpriced. According to the National Retail Federation (NRF), the United States has spent an average of \$18.9 billion on Valentine's Day gifts and celebrations since 2009. To put this in perspective, the amount of money the United States has spent on Valentine's Day could pay off the cost of attendance for over 580,000 in-state Winthrop students.

Although Valentine's Day is expensive, it promises an entire day spent with significant others, family, and friends. It falls on a workday 71 percent of

the time, however, so it can only be celebrated after business hours. For couples with young children, those who rely on public transportation, and those who work the opposite shift as their significant other, it can really put a damper on the festivities.

Why is Valentine's Day worth celebrating? It may give couples an opportunity to shower each other with affection, but what about every other day of the year? Instead of having a tumultuous relationship and a perfect Valentine's Day, significant others should aim to romance their partners every day — even if it seems insignificant.

Next Avenue, a subdivision of the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) has spoken out about how to keep the romance alive outside of February 14.

► see

Valentines pg. 11

The bare minimum (wage)

Minimum wage is not a living wage, and should be raised

Autumn Hawkins
staff writer

The current minimum wage of \$7.25 is not enough to live comfortably and should be raised.

In 2019, Congress passed the Raise the Wage Act, which would raise the federal minimum wage to at least \$12, as well as eliminate the tipped minimum wage that restaurant workers experience. When the act was proposed, Congress cited the financial reports of families living off of minimum wage. On average, a parent of two children who is making the current minimum wage is thousands of dollars below the poverty line.

By raising the federal minimum wage to the \$12 to \$15 range, the National Education and Labor Committee estimated that at least 4.5 million Americans would be given the chance to escape poverty. This would mean that children could have access to better educational opportunities, neighborhood food stability would rise, and traditionally impoverished areas would be able to

repair buildings and roads more often.

Raising the minimum wage would also allow businesses to flourish. If workers are making more money, this would facilitate the purchase of goods and services. More demand would lead to businesses needing more workers, which would begin a positive cycle in the economy.

Surveys conducted by both the Democratic and Republican parties indicate that approximately 75 percent of businesses support increasing the minimum wage due to worker productivity. It has been found that employees with a higher starting wage feel more motivated to succeed during the workday. Over half of the nation's small businesses firmly believe that the federal minimum wage should be raised to at least \$12.

The Economic Policy Institute (EPI), a nonprofit dedicated to raising awareness of the financial needs of lower/middle-class workers, raises the question of how an increased minimum wage would impact the hospitality and



Olivia Esselman/The Johnsonian

The minimum wage could rise to \$15/hour under the Biden administration.

service industries.

Currently, the wage of servers is significantly lower than the minimum wage. In the 1990s, Congress froze the subminimum wage for tipped workers at \$2.13. This is because the wage takes into account the tips that restaurant workers receive.

The EPI found that in states where servers are paid the full minimum wage amount before receiving their tips, state poverty rates were significantly lower. Financial stability in workers' households leads to better attendance and productivity. Increased demand once again begets increased hiring rates.

The EPI argues that an increase in the minimum wage would be a step toward ending negative racial stereotypes. Impoverished neighborhoods

have historically been a way to keep Americans of color at a disadvantage. Because of this, the stereotype of people of color being portrayed as dirty, poor, or "beggars" has been "proven" in the eyes of those who do not rely on \$7.25 to feed an entire family. By raising the wages, lower-income Americans would be able to afford better housing, more food, and access to reliable healthcare. This would allow Americans of color to be seen as equals, rather than someone beneath others based on income alone.

The federal minimum wage is outdated and does not reflect the complexity of today's economy. By raising the minimum wage, the United States would be giving Americans the ability to prosper.

Is Britney Spears in a toxic situation?

Students speak on if they believe in the Britney Spears conspiracy



Micheal Yelton/The Johnsonian

People believe Britney is being held captive.

ing to the petition, “her father doesn’t allow her to drive, all of her calls and messages are monitored, she’s not allowed to vote, hang out with anyone, or spend money without permission.”

Spears has been making strange videos on Instagram and TikTok since summer 2020 of her doing weird dances and acting almost as if she’s in a type of trance. Fans have been commenting on her videos to ‘wear yellow in your next video’ or ‘mention the word fruit in your next video.’ All of these things that her fans have been telling her to do, she’s been doing. Fans have also created a conspiracy theory that she is being held captive and is being forced to do things.

“I don’t know if the whole thing is true,” said freshmen psychology major Andy Jones. “I believe that some parts have been exaggerated, but no one should ever assume that someone is lying about being in a dangerous situation like that.”

The Star Newspaper claimed, “to thousands of fans, Britney is no longer a pop star - she’s a prisoner.”

“I think there is a high possibility of this being true,” said sophomore social work major Franchesca Ross. “Especially if her decisions are affecting money because people love money.”

Crowd Surf - the company behind Spears’ marketing team - cofounder Cassie Petrey stated in a social media post, “Britney has stated many times that she creates the posts, but people continue to believe conspiracy theories over what she says over and over again. Britney is not ‘asking for help’ or ‘leaving secret messages’ in social media. She is literally just living her life and trying to have fun on Instagram.”

Whether Britney Spears is in a dangerous situation or not is something that is not known to the public right now. Her fans hope that she is safe and not in any danger. While it might be a coincidence that after her fans have asked her to wear yellow in her next video, she wears yellow, it might also be a cry for help. If Spears is in any danger, we hope that she’ll get help soon.

Allison Reynolds
staff writer

Britney Spears was one of the most popular singers of the 2000s. With hits such as ‘Toxic’ and ‘Baby One More Time,’ Spears quickly climbed the charts and became an unforgettable singer with a unique sound. However, in 2021, many of her fans are worried about Spears’ well-being and safety.

The hashtag “#FreeBritney” has been all over social media, with fans concerned that Spears is being held against her will and that she has been hiding S.O.S. hints in her videos on Instagram and TikTok.

Spears had a public mental breakdown in 2008 in which the singer shaved her head and smashed a car window with an umbrella. Ever since then, Spears has been living under a legal conservatorship. Her affairs are handled by a trust, led by her father, Jaime Spears. There’s a #FreeBritney petition on change.org with over 100,000 signatures to possibly get the singer the help that she needs. Accord-



Jamia Johnson/The Johnsonian

Parking permits cost up to 100 dollars for the year.

Parking permits: For our safety, or for lining pockets? Why parking permits should not be so costly in the era of COVID when many students are primarily online

Wren Brooke
staff writer

Parking is already a nightmare for anyone when it’s free, so is it fair for Winthrop Police to charge such high rates for it during this financially crushing COVID-19 era?

Aside from the standard links, the Campus Police website has three subpages: Clery Act (government-enforced information transparency), General Safety Tips, and Parking Enforcement. Registering your vehicle costs \$100 whether you are a resident or commuter, so if you have a car for all four years that is \$400 — not including parking fines, but let’s get to that a little later.

As of the past few years, Winthrop’s combined undergraduate and graduate student body has totaled around 6,000. Making a conservative estimate let’s suppose 1 out of 4 students pay to register their vehicles. That is about 1,500 registered vehicles, meaning by those numbers Campus Police collects around \$150,000 in registration fees.

With just about everyone learning remotely last semester and many classes still being online this semester, one might think that the registration fees would be slightly less. Students living off-campus have to drive into campus and get ticketed face a \$110 fine, with one alternative: register their vehicle for \$100.

Each subsequent time accrues an additional \$110 fine, and registered vehicles parked in spots not allotted to them will get a \$40 fine.

Resident student parking spots are mainly located near Richardson and Wofford, with the Cherry Road parking lot an additional block away down the main road. Besides these, only a scanty few spaces are placed near any of the other dorm halls.

Commuter students, despite paying the same fee as residents, have even fewer spaces to choose from: either across Oakland Avenue near Dinkins and the Ida Jane Dacus library, or on the Cherry Road lot. Without a disability parking permit, this means that those commuting by car to most classrooms have a solid ten to fifteen-minute walk, including crossing a usually busy road at least once.

So, where does all the money from registration and fines go? The Campus Police website is not so clear on that topic. Officer salaries come straight from the university, and most statements have indicated that the money goes towards maintenance and upkeep.

If we take our estimated vehicle registration income from earlier (and not including parking citations), some things the money could be used for are repairing about 750 potholes, repainting 350 parking lots (or 15,000 parking

spaces), or paving a brand new 25,000 square foot parking lot — every year.

Alternatively, Winthrop’s Campus Police could give each of their 16 employees a bonus of about \$9,375. For perspective, full-time officers get a salary of approximately \$35,000 a year, just barely hovering over minimum wage. On the other hand, a government listing for the university Chief of Police’s salary sits between \$60,344 and \$111,646 annually.

According to their website, on average there are 1.5 officers on duty during any given shift, with a total of six patrol officers on the payroll. Compare this to two full time parking enforcement officers, so on any given day there is at best one more officer working to keep students safe than there are officers working to issue them fines.

This issue of safety shows. In a survey by College Factual of about 4,000 colleges and universities, 3,000 of them reported fewer incidents. Another evaluation website, American School Search gave the university’s campus police a D- rating based on government data, concluding “Winthrop University is a very dangerous place to study.”

This leaves us asking, which is a higher priority to campus police and the university: our safety, or our money? And where is it all going?

◀ Valentines from pg. 10

Dr. Terri Orbuch, a marriage counselor, has shared the same tips with all of her clients. Putting effort into an extravagant holiday is impressive, Orbuch has stated, but making a relationship work full time is even more so.

Communication is key for any relationship. Orbuch has stated that communication impacts every aspect of a relationship, whether it’s planning a Valentine’s date or paying the bills. Couples should be open and honest with each other as much as they can to avoid misunderstandings. By not communicating, couples run the risk of having a disastrous Valentine’s Day...or worse yet, a disastrous marriage.

Small acts of love are ultimately more meaningful than the grandeur of Valentine’s Day. “Jewelry is wonderful, but a gift from the heart is so much better,” Orbuch said in her advice blog. Material gifts are



Olivia Esselman/The Johnsonian

Valentine’s Day, a holiday known for love, chocolate and roses, is just around the corner.

nice, but they do not fully shape true love. Small things, like doing the dishes or hand making a gift, show one’s significant other that they are in it for the long run.

With the pandemic, Valentine’s Day is more difficult to celebrate than it has been in the past. Restaurants and event halls are limiting capacity — if they’re even open! Social distancing makes even outdoor events difficult, as the constant threat of being infected with COVID-19 looms over the celebration. It

isn’t about the quantity of celebration this Valentine’s Day, but rather the quality. A date consisting of watching Netflix is still as romantic as a night on the town if spent with the right person.

Whether or not Valentine’s Day is worth celebrating is up to each couple to figure out for themselves. As long as it is spent with consensual partnership in mind, then what does it matter?

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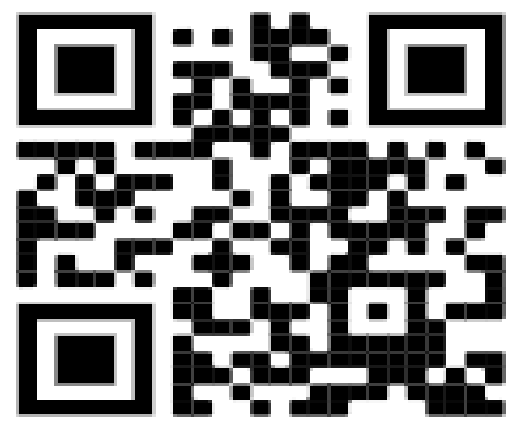
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