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Total Solar Eclipse Captivates SCCC Community

By Shelby Stapel
College Hill Writer

On April 8, members of the Sussex County Community College community in Newton watched in awe as a 92% totality solar eclipse could be viewed from campus.



Photo by Allison Ognibene

To prepare for the eclipse, SCCC purchased 100 pairs of solar eclipse glasses to hand out to the community so that they could safely watch the eclipse from various locations on the campus. The eyewear was especially important for safe viewing as the intensity of the sun's light could easily cause damage to retinas, corneas and even the chips in digital cameras.

Due to such overwhelming interest, all 100 pairs were handed out, with the college surprised at the number of people asking for them. It was estimated by faculty that they could have given out at least 50 more pairs.

The viewing event was extremely well attended, with people

gathering in several locations such as outside of the D building, near the L building and on the Connor Green.

"I took a rough head count at one point during the eclipse," says Associate Professor of Physics Peter Schoch, who assisted with handing out glasses and took charge organizing the event. "The rough number I had was 85, so it would not be a stretch to say that we had close to 100 people all over campus viewing the event."

The event attracted a diverse crowd, being well attended by students, faculty, staff and other members of the local community. Many students chose to remain on campus that day solely to view the eclipse. One individual even brought a solar telescope for everyone to use.

The eclipse began around 2 p.m. and lasted until 4 p.m., with the best viewing occurring between 2:30 p.m. and 3:20 p.m. The visibility was phenomenal until about 3:20 p.m., when the sky became too cloudy to see the eclipse as clearly, with viewers only getting glimpses through the clouds.



Solar eclipse photo by Samantha Baisley

"The view was incredible from the campus for most of the time," says SCCC student Grace Loggie, who witnessed the eclipse from campus. "It became very cloudy near the peak of the eclipse, but

it was still visible and was amazing to see. It got very cold outside too!"

This solar eclipse was such a significant event because the United States will not experience another eclipse until 2044, and the eastern U.S. will not experience a visible one again until 2079. The last one, which occurred seven years ago in 2017, was annular rather than total, so this one was especially important.

Something else which made this



Photo by Allison Ognibene

eclipse so special was its ability to bring people together. It was an extraordinary event which got to be experienced by the entire SCCC community. While those on campus were visibly expressing their excitement at what they were seeing, many were just sitting quietly, collectively enjoying the experience as a group.

"Some people were very emotionally moved by the event," says Schoch.

A marvel of astronomy and astrophysics, this solar eclipse is an event which will be remembered by the staff, faculty and community of SCCC for years to come.

Night at Prudential Center Highlights Deaf Culture

By Bryce Escallier
College Hill Writer

The American Sign Language Club at Sussex County Community College in Newton ventured to the Prudential Center in Newark on Thursday, March 7 to see the NJ Devils play, engage in deaf culture, and shine a greater spotlight on the deaf community.

The ASL night was organized by multiple universities and community colleges in New Jersey. Seeing it as a great opportunity to get more involved in the deaf community, Kyla Stead, president of the ASL Club at SCCC, organized a trip out to the Prudential Center for everyone to experience their ASL Night. In addition, there was also a performance by Ocean County College's Sign Language Society of many different popular songs, while signing along to them.

"Every week, they do an ASL



Photo by Samantha Baisley

night," said Stead. "People in the deaf community are highlighted at this event." Stead's interest in ASL started after taking ASL with Adjunct Professor Allison Kocaj.

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She explains, "I started taking ASL I because I didn't want to take a history course, and Prof. Kocaj was super passionate and enthusiastic, and she inspired me to learn more."

Stead has been president of the ASL club since the fall 2023 semester, and since then, the club has become one of the biggest, and most popular clubs at the school, hosting a variety of events including monthly visits to Deaf Chat at the Rockaway Mall, rock climbing, and multiple bake sales through Campus Life. While all seemingly uncon-

nected to learning ASL, Stead's primary goal is to use the club as a means to shine a spotlight on deaf culture itself.

"I'm not teaching people how to be fluent, more so bringing awareness to deaf culture," said Stead. "I hope that when I'm gone, they keep learning." Every week, the club meets to practice basic grammar, and do activities such as hosting Family Feud style games to make the learning process more fun. Stead said she feels that doing it this way makes learning easier, as ASL itself does not follow typical rules of the English language.

"You're not just taking English words and putting them into signs. It has its own grammar, its own syntax," says Stead.

Kocaj has taken notice of how much of an impact the club has made on campus and is proud to see so many students going out of their way to learn about ASL and Deaf culture.

"You can sense a real community coming forth," says Kocaj. "Collectively, they are going to learn a language or culture. It will break down communication barriers."

After paying the \$26 entry fee, on the day of the event, members were provided transportation by the school using shuttle buses. The ASL club was also able to get a special message to display on the jumbotron reading, "Learning ASL is in your hands." The game consisted of the New Jersey Devils against the St. Louis Blues coming in from Missouri. The Devils won 4-1 against the Blues, with Timo Meier leading the charge with three goals.

New CARE Team at SCCC Helps Students in Need

By Bryce Escallier
College Hill Writer



Photo submitted by Jamie Borger

The newly established CARE program at Sussex County Community College in Newton is making significant progress in addressing student needs.

For more than a year, the newly appointed Crisis, Assessment, Response, and Education (CARE) team has been

serving the student body by providing assistance to those who need aid in an emergency situation. The team consists of multiple faculty members from varying different positions on campus.

The program is headed by David Poltersdorf, who serves as chair for the program, followed by Keith Festa, head of Security and Transportation. Others also offer their services to the team including Jamie Borger, director of Student Success and Advising, Jason Fruge, and Pam Cavanagh.

Borger had initially started an alert system for professors to notify other faculty members if students were showing any signs of unusual behavior; this acted as the precursor to what would eventually become a fully established team of faculty members specializing in providing students with crisis intervention support. Being an established team now, there is a unanimous sense that communication is key. Each member is dedicated to ensuring that their actions are having a positive effect on those they help, which is why regular

check-ins with students are heavily pushed.

"We meet monthly as a team to check back with students," says Borger. "We then follow up with students after we convene with each other about them." While the team encourages students to report any changes in behavior that they feel are worth looking into, they are not using surveillance methods to keep tabs on anybody.

"When you introduce something as heavy as a support system like this, you want it to come off in a positive light," said Borger. "We don't want people to think we have a bird's eye view over the school."

A form is available on the school's website that anyone can fill out to notify the CARE team about other students' behavior; however, it is not actively watching over the student body. Intervention only occurs after an anonymous report has been made with a clear description of what kind of behavior a student is exhibiting. The team has a rigid pro-

cess that they adhere to when working with students. After receiving an anonymous report, the team will meet with the student. If they are perceived to be an immediate threat, or are eventually planning on harming themselves or others, security is contacted immediately. If they are only at risk, or are not an immediate threat, they will then proceed to collect any and all information they can about the student to not only gain a better understanding of the student's situation, but also use that information to move into the next phase of the process, creating an intervention plan using various campus resources, as well as outside help from other organizations such as Family Promise, and Bridgeway Behavioral Health Services.

After the student has received help, and they have progressed far enough into their intervention plan, this is when the team will then check in with the student to ensure that they are not still a risk to others or themselves.

Cosmetology Facility Provides Salon-like Experience

By Shelby Stapel
College Hill Writer

The fall semester at Sussex County Community College brought about a brand new facility for the exponentially growing cosmetology program.

Housed in its own new building at Vernon Township High School, the program now has a significantly larger space to accommodate its increased enrollment. Previously housed within the high school itself, the eight-year-old program has seen an exponential growth in interest and enrollment during the past few years.

The SCCC cosmetology program is supervised by Susan Discorfano-Catania, who has held the position for five years. Since she inherited the program, classes have steadily outgrown their existing space. With more and more students gaining interest in the profession, the move was absolutely necessary to meet

the needs of the individuals working to hone their craft.

"We are now able to experience more individual activities, accommodate more students for enrollment," Discorfano-Catania states.



SCCC Stock Photo

The move and expansion were a collaborative effort between the college and the high school, with former SCCC Chief Operating and Human Resources Officer James Gaddy working closely with

VTHS Superintendent Russ Rogers to set it into motion.

The building now housing the program facilities had been sitting vacant on the school property for a significant period. With some remodeling and renovations, it turned out to be the perfect space for the program.

The move and remodel required a significant amount of teamwork. A team of individuals from the college, gathered and rallied by Gaddy, worked together to make the necessary changes and installations to get the program up and running in its new space.

"We used operational funds to do the work, but it was an amazing team effort and collaboration to get the project done in about six weeks," states Gaddy in a press release.

They designed the layout and started with utilities work such as plumbing, electrical and lighting, before moving on to install several shampoo bowls, mirrors, work counters, manicure and pedicure tables, facial and waxing areas as well as a separate barbering area.

With two full classrooms built to replicate a real salon setting, the program can now compete with cosmetology schools in the private sector. The area is also completely ADA accessible with a ramp and stairs, according to a press release.

The final step, which was the flooring, was done completely by the facilities team, without a professional company. With people from both schools coming together to do it completely by themselves, the experience was rewarding, and a culmination of the teamwork required to make this expansion happen. "We are so thrilled that we increased the number of students in the program and gave Susan the space she deserves!" Gaddy says.

When asked about the new facilities and the growth of the program, Discorfano-Catania emphasizes the role her students have played in making it what it has become.

"The students are truly the reason for the program's success," she says. "There is a need for our industry. Cosmetology is an ever-changing career because

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there are currently 22 students enrolled in the cosmetology program – it is anticipated that there

will soon be many more. These new facilities will allow every one of them to gain even more knowledge and grow their skills in a

state-of-the-art, real salon setting. For further information regarding the SCCC cosmetology program, contact Discorfan-Catania

at sdiscorfan-catania@sussex.edu.

Center For Lifelong Learning Rocks Through Time

By Valentina T. Lopez Gimenez
College Hill Writer

Led by Adjunct Professor Wendy Fullem, the Center for Lifelong Learning at Sussex County Community College in Newton, offers a condensed journey through the evolution of rock music, enriching the lives of senior citizens and the broader community through a symphony of diverse educational experiences.

She teaches a comprehensive course on the subject every semester. The course is typically conducted online and covers the evolution of rock and roll from its roots to the modern era.

The first lecture on March 22 from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. at the Student Center Theater explored the origins of rock and roll, tracing its development from pre-rock music traditions to the early 1970s. The second lecture on April 12, focused on the period from the 1970s to the 1980s, capturing the essence of this dynamic era in rock history.

For the Center for Lifelong Learning, Fullem presented a brief version of the course in two lectures. The course is open to everyone but it's specifically for senior citizens in the county.

While the full course delves into the rock music landscape up to the present day, Fullem has chosen to conclude this abbreviated version from the 1980s. This period represents a significant milestone in rock history, particularly for those who lived through the advent of MTV and the cultural shifts of the era. Participants who wish to explore further can opt to enroll in the complete course, which extends into the 2000s and even the 2020s.



Photo submitted by Wendy Fullem

As part of their commitment to lifelong learning, senior citizens have the opportunity to take the course free of charge, ensuring accessibility for all interested learners. They simply need to register and ensure that space is available before joining the class.

Through collaborative efforts with the Senior Services Division and support from various community organiza-

tions, the center harmonizes with its mission to promote happiness and well-being through the timeless pursuit of knowledge.

The Center for Lifelong Learning, as outlined on the website at www.sussex.edu, is dedicated to serving the needs of the 50+ community while also welcoming family and friends of all ages. This initiative, which was founded and directed by Nancy Gallo, is a collaborative effort with the Senior Services Division of the county, led by Lorraine Henc.

Each semester, the center offers diverse cultural and educational lectures, courses and events, attracting thousands of participants to the campus. The Center for Lifelong Learning believes in offering a diverse array of educational experiences, including art, history, music, political science and financial planning.

Salvatore Paolucci specializes in financial planning and has provided valuable insights into financial management for the participants.

Fullem is a multiple-time presenter who has shared her expertise in music, enriching the community with engaging discussions and performances. Michael Hughes is known for his captivating lectures on art history, offering fascinating insights into visual arts. Robyn Izquierdo, who was set to pres-

ent on ancient Egyptian practices in April, promises an insightful exploration of this intriguing topic.

One highlight is the annual welcome and celebration lunch in December, generously sponsored by Senior Services, which provides an opportunity for the community to come together and enjoy supplementary entertainment, including performances by students in the music program or local community groups like the APAC band. "Their mission is to promote happiness through lifelong learning, fostering connections between individuals with similar interests and promoting the idea that learning is beneficial at any age," Gallo said. "Research supports the notion that keeping the brain active through learning contributes to overall health and well-being, a principle we wholeheartedly endorse."

SCCC has been fortunate to receive support from various community organizations, including the Karen & Quinlan Center, Bristol Glen Community, the sheriff's department, the prosecutor's office, local attorneys, legal services for seniors, and even a local pet funeral home. Topics covered in the programs range from Medicare and Medicaid, education to travel expos and cultural events like music and art workshops.

SCCC Hosts 5K Race Boots On The Ground

By Valentina T. Lopez Gimenez
College Hill Writer

Sussex County Community College in Newton hosts for the first time a 5K race to support veterans and make them feel at home.

More than 70 people were expected to participate on April 13, at 10 a.m. at the SCCC campus for the 5K race Boots On The Ground to support veterans and their families.

SCCC cares and values veterans, and this race is a shout-out for them and their families. This is a fun family-oriented event where the entire community is welcome, children, pets, elderly and volunteers. It's going to be engaging and there's going to be prizes for participants.

Richard Escobar, one of the organizers, is part of the American Legion, and one of its missions is to help and be there for the vets, their families, their children and everybody.

He, along with veteran David Haislip, had a goal to provide support. They both understand coming back home is rough and it is nice to find someone who is welcoming.

"Anything that I, as a veteran and an American Legion member, could do to help alleviate and reduce that challenge so the guys can come home and live their life, I want to do it," Escobar added.

Escobar does a lot of 5Ks and course races. "There's always young people there all the time," he said. "So, it hit me like, well, maybe we could do a 5K or something like that."

"The campus is sitting in front of me," he realized. "I'm at a light here. I'm saying, 'Wait, this is a school right there. Why don't we try the school?'"

SCCC facilities are a special space because they eliminate inconveniences that using public roads brings such as parking on the streets or stopping the traffic.

"It's a great place right in the middle of the county of Sussex," Escobar said. "It's just perfect."

After studying in the perimeter for a little bit, Haislip noticed the perfect route for the event and it's just under one kilometer.



Photo submitted by Richard Escobar

"It's nice, easy up and down hills," Haislip said. "There's rockiness and then grass and a little bit of everything. But it's not too overwhelming. Anyone can really do it."

And then he set up an advanced route, which is two and a half K on the dot, and that's at the heels.

"You're going to work up a sweat," Haislip said. "You're going to get a workout doing that one. But it is very doable, and it's for more advanced runners and it works per-

fectly." People were getting 3D dog tags printed by the campus technology team.

The campus is getting together and connecting as a team to provide all of these services which is very important so that the message to the incoming veterans is that this campus is alive and has things that will help them.

"3D printing, high tech, communications," Escobar said. "It brings to the surface what the school can provide to a new veteran coming out of whatever service he's in."

"By capitalizing on the resources and support offered by the college, such as carts, tables and tents, many of these challenges have been effectively mitigated," he added. "Allowing for a more focused and efficient planning process without the complexities of dealing with public roadways."

However, even with these advantages, there remain smaller challenges to address, such as signage placement and volunteer coordination. Nonetheless, with a capable team and willing volunteers, these obsta-

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cles can be managed effectively. Things could've been purchased, but the school is providing them. "It brings much more emphasis to this campus being one of

the places that a veteran will transition and come from what he did to what he will do," Escobar said. Logistical challenges can be one of the most daunting aspects of organizing an event like a

race, especially when it involves coordinating with local authorities and managing resources effectively. The decision to utilize the facilities provided by SCCC has indeed helped to streamline many

of these logistical nightmares, making the planning process smoother and more manageable.

Café Partners with Student Farm

By Valentina T. Lopez Gimenez
College Hill Writer

Sussex County Community College in Newton offers various fresh products that can be found anytime at the Skylanders Café.

This spring semester, about 25 students from the agricultural program led by Program Supervisor Erin Shroll, provided fresh hydroponic herbs and vegetables to the Skylanders Café and Arbor Restaurant located at McGuire Technical Education Center at 47 Main Street.

There are a diversity of plants such as mustard green, kale and bok choy, lettuces, pea shoots, and microgreens like radishes which are planted incredibly close together so they harvest at an early stage, and then, it becomes a garnish which an interesting spicy flavor where they can be eaten in salads.

There are also herbs such as dill, parsley, rosemary, thyme and even basil. Skylanders Café is mostly interested in lettuce greens for salads, wraps and sandwiches.

"The idea with the microgreens is that you're basically harvesting them within 10 to 14 days," Shroll said. "We

have what we're calling the market garden."

"Hydroponics are planted in inert growing media and supplied with nutrient-rich solutions, oxygen and water using the nutrient film technique," Shroll explained. "There's a film of water, essentially, that runs across the bottom of the channel and keeps the plants providing nutrients from the water."

Previously, sales were primarily limited to employees, with pop-up events attracting staff members to purchase goods. Shroll said these occasions were enjoyable, offering a glimpse into the greenhouse environment.



Photo by Valentina T. Lopez Gimenez

Currently, agriculture students are looking for a "farm-to-fork" approach, emphasizing the direct connection between them and the food grown or consumed.

This initiative tries to educate students about the journey of their food, fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation for the process.

The student farm, specifically the market garden, follows the principles of intensive cultivation and profitability. Market gardening, as exemplified by experts like Elliot Coleman - an American farmer, author, agricultural researcher and educator who advocated organic farming - focuses on maximizing production and profitability within a limited space.

Shroll explains that by carefully planning and growing crops, farmers can use their space well and make more money. This helps them earn a good income even from small areas of land. Students are still working on getting the right balance for how much food the student farm produces. This means they're figuring out how much to grow based on how much people want to buy.

Currently, they're using a smart plan to rotate their crops, ensuring that they grow enough produce to meet immediate needs while also planning for future demands. Any extra food they have is given to students, so it doesn't go to waste and helps the community.

Even though students are still perfecting the process, this flexible approach helps them meet demand without wasting food. They are finding the best way to use the farm's produce efficiently by keeping an eye on things and making changes as needed.

"We all have a relationship with food,

so it's fun to ask if somebody's interested in agriculture, and they say no, but yet they had," Shroll said.

"How many meals have you eaten today?" she added. "We all have a relationship with food, and I feel like the closer we get to it, the more we want to have clean, nutrient-dense food, and that's what we're trying to achieve."

Shroll emphasizes experiencing the act of growing is so much different than just learning about it in theory.

Agriculture classes are open to everyone who wants to learn how to grow plants regarding the major chosen.

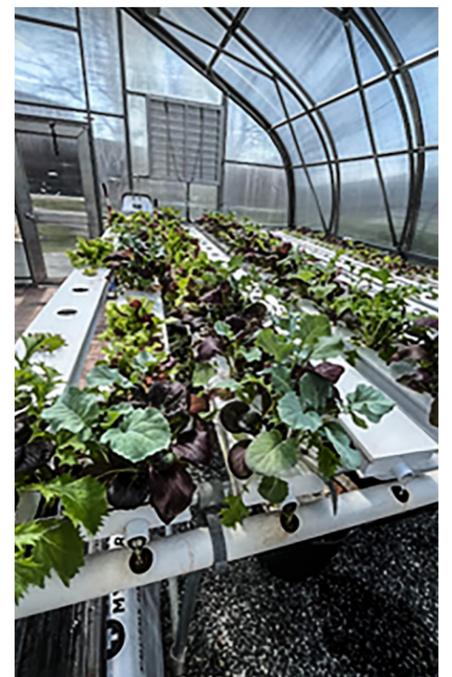


Photo by Valentina T. Lopez Gimenez

Arts & Entertainment

Artistic Endeavors of The Idiom & Image Magazine

By Melanie Schouppe
College Hill Writer

The Idiom & Image Magazine continues to embrace the creativity of the Sussex County Community College community through its yearly publications.

The Idiom & Image Magazine keeps to the tradition of giving a platform for students to display their art, writing, photos and many other creative ventures for others to see and enjoy.

The magazine was started in 1992. "It started as a literary magazine but has evolved into a literary and art magazine, and so it features poetry, prose, visual art, photography," states Adjunct Professor Anita Collins.

Collins is the Idiom & Image Maga-

zine faculty advisor and Teen Arts coordinator. She started working for SCCC in 2017. This group mentored many students in the publishing of this college magazine. She and a few selected student interns are the people behind putting the magazine together and completing it for publication in September.

The history of the Idiom and Image Magazine started with English Professor James Rawlings as editor, Professor Jean LeBlanc, who assumed the title after James stepped down, and Professor Sherry Fitzgerald who designed the magazine in the beginning and later accepted the role as art director for many years.

The types of work that can be featured within an issue have unlimited bounds. It's encouraged for students to submit any form of creative work and endeavors. From writing to sculptures the magazine will display whatever the artist thinks up.

"Poetry, fiction, non-fiction, visual art, graphic design, photography" are welcome, said Collins. "If there is a fashion designer they could submit



Artwork by Anthony Klein "Self Portrait" Legos

photographs of their fashion work, if there is a culinary artist they can submit photos of their culinary artwork such as cookie or cake decorating any artwork is welcome from the Sussex County Community College student body". There are a few ways a student

can submit their work to be a part of an issue of the magazine. One way is to email Collins with the inclusion of the work name of the piece and student's name and major. Keep in mind to keep the work to either a 300 dpi digital file or a PDF file. Another way work has been selected is through the Teen Arts Festival and it could be chosen from more than 500 pieces of creative works.

One approach the work gets selected is through a theme that the magazine may have that year. Another way in which works have previously been selected is more of an open-call approach where they see if any written works can be matched up and be paired with a piece of artwork or photograph or be paired in other ways.

Through the magazine's lens for expressing the talents of the student body, it has also been recognized with a few awards. Two awards included the Graphic Design USA (GDUSA).

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The 2023 issue of the magazine was given a rank of excellence in the 2023 National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE). "Each issue gets better and better and each year we win awards," she said. "We've won a national award from

the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE). We are a literary and arts magazine of excellence. We've won that award, then Graphic Design U.S.A. the 60-anniversary competition for literary publications. It's a professional contest, we're a student-run publication; I sub-

mitted it, and we won three times." It is hoped that more students will decide to submit their works and pieces in the coming years. There are no limitations based on a student's major or career goals; they push for students to submit works they enjoy doing and making by

putting no limits on their creativity. For those interested in looking through a copy of the magazine there are digital copies on the SCCC website.

Two Shows Light Up Stage This Semester

By Melanie Schouppe
College Hill Writer

This April and May Sussex County Community College in Newton shined a light on two performances to reach a wide range of audiences.

"Arsenic and Old Lace" depicts a classic comedy that an older audience can recognize, while "Once a Pond a Time, The Tales of Thumbelina and Ugly Duckling" retells three famous Hans Christian Anderson stories for children to enjoy.



Photo by Allison Ognibene: "Arsenic & Old Lace" rehearsal

Beginning with "Arsenic and Old Lace," this performance tells the comedic story of an engaged Mortimer Brewster's family on the night of his wedding. In this story, his two elderly aunts Abby and Martha choose to kill a person with poison; his brother thinks he is Teddy Roosevelt; and another brother is actively hiding from the police using plastic surgery. After discovering a dead body and facing worry about his upcoming marriage, Mortimer may not even get to the wedding.

The essence of this semester's play lies in its comedic elements, set against the backdrop of 1941. It also shows the craziness and complexities of family, which is a change of pace from the play featured last semester "She Kills Monsters."

Allison Ognibene, director of the pro-

duction and SCCC Theater liaison and adjunct, discussed how it was a main goal to differentiate from the last few productions.

"We did a drama in the fall so I thought a comedy would be fun for the spring semester," Ognibene said. "The other thing too is that we have been doing a lot of contemporary works, and "Arsenic and Old Lace" is a tried-and-true classic comedy that I thought college would really enjoy." The production brings a lighthearted tone. It has been attracting a large audience already with pre-sales selling fast. As of March 27, there had been 41 presales purchased before the official press release was sent out.

Along with the production, the Center of Lifelong Learning at SCCC planned on hosting a lunch at the Arbor Restaurant for the senior citizens. The lunch is not open to the public and can only hold 36 people. The goal was to host a reserved lunch for the seniors with them then going to see a show.

The menu was arranged by Chef Martin Kester who is the supervisor of the Culinary and Hospitality program at SCCC. That menu includes appetizers of sunchoke velouté and carrot & baby green salad; entrees such as gemelli pasta and chicken supreme; ending with a dessert of strawberry & basil shortcake rhubarb-almond cake with strawberry cream. "Arsenic and Old Lace" was set to take the stage on Thursday, April 25, Friday, April 26, and Saturday, April 27 and Friday, May 3 at 7:30 p.m.; as well as Saturday, May 4 at 2 p.m. Tickets were \$10 for the public and \$5 for students, seniors, and U.S. military.

Moving onto the children's play "Once a Pond a Time, The Tales of Thumbelina and Ugly Duckling." This play was written, produced, and is being performed by students who are involved in a workshop run by Ognibene to show students the process of making

a theater workshop and show. This is the third show this workshop has produced with plans to continue for years to come.

The stories that will be featured in this performance include three Hans Christian Anderson stories which are "The Ugly Duckling," "Thumbelina," and "The Emperor's New Clothes." The show conveys important messages such as acceptance, kindness, asserting oneself, and resisting conformity, as depicted in the stories it presents.

This show hopes to give kids a chance to learn how to sit in a chair for the duration of the performance, as well as learn how to react to an audience through the event of watching something live.

This performance is being made in tandem with many different departments including: The childhood development department involving Adjunct Professor Vicki Vigorito and Adjunct Professor Elizabeth-Delfino; Adjunct Professor Anthony Ur's class making projections for the show; Adjunct Professor James Jeffreys comic book illustration class; Martin Kester's culinary class; and Dr. Leonard Sheehy with the Makerspace were also involved.

Though the show is the main event, there was a chance for the kids to do meet and greets with the characters and cast, as well as do arts and crafts at the creation station which is being led by the students involved with the childhood development department. Delfino, an adjunct professor in the Elementary/Secondary Education and Child Development Department, brings 25 years of teaching experience in both private and public school systems. Delfino's students, along with Vigorito's students, are responsible for managing the creation station. This station held an arts and crafts opportunity for the kids in which students created headbands, frog paper bag puppets and a cut-

paper duck. "After careful consideration, the students in my Music & Art in Early Childhood Education choose the activities they would like to do with the children who attend the play," said Delfino. "They read over the fairytales of "The Ugly Duckling" and "Thumbelina" and watched videos of both stories. Then they came up with several craft ideas that related to the story. They continued to discuss the choices they made and then narrowed it down to three craft activities."

Delfino discussed why it's a good thing to take children out to see live theater. Some of the benefits included supporting the growth of knowledge



Photo by Allison Ognibene: Children's Play "Once a Pond a Time" rehearsal

of different types of people, an increase in empathy and stronger reading comprehension skills.

"Watching live theater can affect a child's development by helping to create a greater tolerance of different people and ideas, as well as increased empathy for others," Delfino said. "They show a better understanding of reading materials. Research shows that watching live theater impact is much more substantial when you watch live theater as opposed to watching a movie, video or television show."

The dates and times of the performances were Thursday, May 2 at noon, Saturday, May 4 at 11 a.m., and Thursday, May 9 at noon.



SPORTS



Men's Basketball Shoots a Winning Season

By Melanie Schouppe
College Hill Writer

Sussex County Community College's Men's Basketball team played a

strong season with its final game held on Feb. 27. The team had an awarding season with a well-earned number of wins.

Finishing with 19 wins out of 29 games, the team had a well-played season. The men's basketball team aims to get better and improve next season.



SCCC Stock Photo

This team is led by Coach John O'Hara who has been coaching basketball for 30 years. After being offered the job of coaching the women's basketball team and completing his first year at SCCC, this year marks his second year at SCCC, alongside assistant coach Jay Hill.

This season had a team of nine play-

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ers. Most of the team members are planning to continue to play basketball at different institutions in the following season. The team has held a couple of important wins this past season, one of the biggest being against North Hampton Community College in Pennsylvania.

“We had a regular season record of 19-9,” O’Hara stated. “We had a few big wins, but the biggest win was against North Hampton.”

Although a great season, there are still goals to improve and grow from the previous seasons. Through recruiting new players for the next

season, through updates made to the recruiting process and the continued practice of the current players, the coaches aim to secure a national championship victory.

“We continued to grow the program as they were doing last season,” O’Hara said. “We are recruiting for

all positions in preparation for next season.”

Any students interested in trying out for the basketball team, can email coach O’Hara.

Football Scores # of Scholarship Offers

By Shelby Stapel
College Hill Writer

This past fall, the Sussex County Community College Football Team continued to grow and improve, finishing with what coaches are saying is its best season so far.

With a record of 8 wins and 2 losses, the team was just one vote short of qualifying for a bowl game. One of its most notable victories of the season was against Army Prep – it had lost to the team in its previous season, and many of Army Prep’s players will advance to play Division 1 football. Another significant victory was in the final game of the season, in which SCCC football defeated local rivals Monroe College.

The team boasted a roster full of talented players this season.

“While all of our players contributed to our success, some key individuals stood out,” says Head Coach James Robertson.



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Quarterback James Laubstein is currently being recruited by New Mexico State. Defensive End Breon Askins is being scouted by Long Island University. Joenez Coleman, defensive tackle,

has caught the attention of several Division 1 colleges including Syracuse. Ahmad Peoples, middle linebacker, has received several Division 2 offers for football and even an offer to play Division 1 rugby.

“This program focuses on bringing in athletes, helping them grow and develop, and assisting them in being recruited by four-year colleges, ideally with a scholarship,” says Robertson. “This season, we exceeded expectations with an impressive record, which is certainly worth noting. However, I believe the most significant highlight is the success of our players and the opportunities they’ve earned to continue their athletic and academic careers at four-year universities with scholarships.”

This season, the team has seen more offers than ever before. It will be losing 17 starters to graduation this spring, and of those graduating 90% have been

offered scholarships to play football at a four-year college. Considering the program is only three years old, this is a remarkable achievement, according to Robertson.

He also encourages the students and staff to continue supporting the football team and all the other athletic programs SCCC has to offer.

“The achievements across our athletic programs are truly remarkable,” he says. “Let’s keep the momentum going!”



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Men’s Soccer Excited For Next Season

By Valentina T. Lopez Gimenez
College Hill Writer

Anticipation fills the air as the 2024-2025 season is approaching, announcing the growth of Sussex County Community College Men’s Soccer to a team of 35 players. Its recruitment stretched across Sussex and Morris counties, seeking out the best local and international talent, with players from nine different countries.

As Coach Christian Castro geared up for his third season at SCCC, he reflected on the journey that led

him there. With three seasons behind him, the upcoming one would mark his fourth in collegiate soccer, demonstrating his steady commitment and passion for the sport.

Many students reached out to Castro when they heard about the team’s tryouts. Even though the team usually doesn’t accept walk-ons, Castro is happy to give a chance to players who want to show their skills and love for soccer.

Looking back at the last season, Castro is proud of how much the team had improved.

“From having to recruit the entire team from scratch within ten weeks back in 2022,” Castro said, “to be

able to compete for a Regional Title in 2023, we’ve shown our resilience and ability to grow in a very difficult circumstance.”

Starting from nothing in 2022 to almost winning a Regional Title in 2023 is proof of how strong and determined the team is even when things get tough.

Looking forward to the next season, Castro understands that winning isn’t everything. It is also about creating a close-knit team and a positive attitude and forming connections that go beyond just playing soccer. With this strong base, Castro believes that everything else will come together at the right moment. As the new season begins, Castro

stands ready on the sidelines preparing to guide his team once more. With its sights on victory and its spirits united, the team is confident to create the next memorable chapter in SCCC’s Men’s Soccer.

Interested students in joining the team can contact him at ccastro@sussex.edu.



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Women’s B-ball Boasts Several Standout Athletes

By Shelby Stapel
College Hill Writer

This past season, Sussex County Community College’s Women’s Basketball Team made a big impression within the region and nation.

Finishing the season with a record of 12-17, the team achieved several significant victories both on its home court and on the road. At



Photo by Shelby Stapel

home, the team defeated Passaic County Community College, and on the road came back with a win in overtime against Bergen County Community College. There were also many personal victories on the team this season, with several key

players breaking records and ranking high among their fellow athletes at the collegiate level.

In her second year at SCCC, player Riley Feichtl scored 1,000 points in her career. She also came out on top within the region in both scoring and rebounding.

The college’s three-point record was broken this season by Mackenzie Meyers, who achieved 190 career three pointers. Along with holding the school record, she also leads the entire nation in three pointers for the season.

Point Guard Anna Torpey was a standout player as well ranking fifth



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in the region in steals. Head Coach Rafael Matos is optimistic about the future of the program, hoping to continue its growth within the com-

munity and region.

“Next season we are looking to build a sturdy foundation for the program by making Region 19 playoffs and winning more games,” he says.

The team is also planning to increase its outreach and become more involved in the community. This summer, the women’s team will be holding a basketball camp for youth

within the entire county.

Women’s Softball Team Homers with Strong Start

By Bryce Escallier
College Hill Writer

The Sussex County Community College Women’s Softball team made excellent progress at the start of the season and was proving itself as a team to look out for.

Coach Jamie Borger leads the Women’s Softball team, pushing the many returning players to perform better than they ever have.

The team has faced some fairly steep competition. It headed to Myrtle Beach for both practices, and to play against other teams in the state, going against nationally ranked teams from different states.

“We played 3rd, 4th, and 9th ranked teams nationally from Illinois, Wisconsin, and Upstate New York,” said Borger. It left Myrtle Beach with a 1-6 record playing against teams

from Prairie State, Madison College, and Joliet Junior College among others.

After returning from Myrtle Beach,



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the team came back to face some more local schools such as Orange County, and Salem, with a particularly noteworthy upset against County College of Morris on March 26 with a win of 10-2. The season started on March 12, and will conclude on May 2.

Borger has previous experience managing the team, with seven years of experience working as the assistant softball coach. She was promoted to head coach around the time of COVID, and did not get

to participate in that year’s season; however, she came back strong for the following season, and has been a driving force for the team’s success for three years now. This marks the softball team’s 32nd season overall at SCCC, with the team initially being established by Athletic Director John Kuntz, who eventually retired in the spring of 2023.

This season, the team saw a lot of returning players. Borger also highlights the performance from certain players on the team. Gianni Carreiro, a pitcher, and outfielder has been particularly successful.

“She’s been a brick wall on third base,” said Borger. As well as Sydney Griffone, who just last year exceeded more than 100 strikeouts; and Natalie Armstrong, starting pitcher.

Borger hopes to take the strengths that these players are already exhibiting and expand upon them. They also have new commitments for future seasons, one being Julia Parise, a varsity catcher, and captain from Lenape Valley Regional High School; as well as Megan Jennings, a pitch-

er from High Point Regional High School who has experience playing with, and against some members of the current softball team.

In addition, the team is also using its platform to do some good for the community. The softball team



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was planning to host an awareness game on May 2 in support of Father John’s Animal Rescue, a no-kill shelter in Sparta aimed at finding homes for homeless cats and dogs.

Lacrosse Team Aims High Through the Season

By Melanie Schouppé
College Hill Writer

As the 2024 season continues, the Sussex County Community College Lacrosse Team keeps working to improve and aiming high.

With 14 active players on the current team with hopes of ending the season strong Skylanders lacrosse continues to put its best foot forward.

The team is led by Coach Steve Manitta who has been coaching lacrosse for 30 years at the recreation, high school and college levels and has been a coach at SCCC for

five years. The assistant coach is Jeff Taylor.

The team’s captains are Liam MacClugage and Jeremiah Carfello. Of the 14 players, several will be moving on to continue playing at different institutions in the following season.



Photo by Traci Smith

With the team working through the season, it had one win on March 28 which was the seventh game of

the season. That win was against Tompkins Cortland Community College located in upstate New York, a school part of the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA). NJCAA is an organization dedicated to sports programs within two-year colleges.

“Our first win of the season was against Cortland-Tompkins, a NJCAA team from the upstate New York area,” Manitta said. “It’s the first time we’ve ever beaten them.” Though there have been some rough patches this season, hopes to end the season with a bang are still high, with the goal to win Region 19 this season.

With all the positive energy being put into the ongoing season some changes will be established for the

next season. One of the biggest ones is upgrades being made to the athletics facilities.

“The facilities are being updated on campus this upcoming summer,” said Manitta. “That will surely improve our ability to recruit student-athletes here at Sussex. Most, if not all, colleges nationwide pump funds into their athletic departments in order to entice athletes to compete on top-notch athletic fields, weight rooms and training facilities.”

If any students are interested and have experience in lacrosse and want to join the Skylanders Lacrosse team they should contact Manitta or Taylor through their emails which can be found on the SCCC website.

Wrestling Team Pins Several Firsts This Past Season

By Melanie Schouppé
College Hill Writer

Nicholas Barzano, coach of Sussex County Community College’s Men’s Wrestling team pushed the team to its limits and secured many historic victories for the school.

After the team’s performance at the



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Garden State Atlantic Conference Team Championship, Barzano is currently on the ballot for National

Coach of the Year with seven other coaches in the running for the title.

The wrestling team pulled a massive victory, ending with a score of 33-21, thus securing a conference win for the first time in the school’s history. This included two teams that they had previously lost to during the season.

Spirits are at an all-time high amongst the team, including Danny Park, who says he believes the team made a strong impact this season.

“We really made an impression on the whole tristate,” said Park. “Everyone pulled their weight.”

Barzano is also proud of everyone’s performance this season.

“We had a record season, we had the best season we ever had, we won our conference district and region, all for the first time in “school history,” he said.

The Skylanders had a bit of a rough start, taking a few losses in the be-

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ginning hours of the conference match. However, they came back strong with Roman Citro pinning his opponent, and Seth Hagensen following up with a bonus point victory, sweeping during the second round, and securing SCCC's first ever GSAC Championship victory.

This hard-fought victory comes only four years into the men's wrestling team's time being at SCCC, and even more impressively only two years into Barzano's career as coach.

In addition to a conference victory, the team also managed to score the school's first ever district win at the Gulf Atlantic District Tournament in Council Bluffs, Iowa. The tournament consisted of Region 10,19, and 20 schools, all nationally ranked, from across the country, including Virginia, Maryland, New Jersey and Pennsylvania. By the end of the season, the team officially had three district champions: Roman Citro, Seth Hagensen and Taylor Sibbles. In addition, its performance at the district tournament made seven team

members national qualifiers, including Shane Saulnier, who became a two-time national qualifier, the first in school history.

The team is immensely proud of its accomplishments. John McCarthy, another member of the wrestling team is extremely proud of his teammates' accomplishments, and the camaraderie that they all share. "It's a very tight knit bond," said McCarthy. The wrestling team made quite an impact during the season, ending with a record of 6-3, as well

as a 6-7 record amongst Division 1 competition.

The wrestling team's size has doubled since last season. The wrestling team is also receiving two new commitments for next season: Mike Vandermuelen and James Dacunto, both having a history of incredible performance. Dacunto secured victory for his team at the Hunterdon/Warren/Sussex Tri-County Tournament, and Vandermuelen is a four-time region and state qualifier for Jefferson High School.

Men's Baseball Team Stays Optimistic

By Valentina T. Lopez Gimenez
College Hill Writer



Photo by Traci Smith

Coach Ramadan Mehmedi has led the Sussex County Community College Baseball Team for an awesome 13

years, bringing loads of energy and skill to the game.

With a big squad of 27 players, Mehmedi picks those who are both good students and great athletes. He's pumped for the fall tryouts when new players can join the team for the spring season. Fall is when the team practices and tries out new players. Mehmedi is watching closely to see who's got what it takes for the spring lineup. It's a time of buzz and excitement as the team starts shaping up and everyone aims to show his best game.

Right now, the team's record is 14 wins and 13 losses. It's been a rollercoaster ride, but everyone's still fired up. With 10 games left, they're aiming for the playoffs and they're feeling positive

about their chances. Mehmedi knows it's not just about winning.



Photo by Traci Smith

"Attitude, effort and a desire to be truly part of the program is evaluated each year and we look to always be better than the last," he said.

These are things he teaches his players, creating a vibe of teamwork and never giving up, no matter the score.

Looking forward, Mehmedi sees big things ahead for the SCCC Baseball Team. Each season brings new chances to get better, both as players and as a team.



Photo by Traci Smith

Melajero Ajero Final Radio Segment

By Melanie Schouppe
College Hill Writer

Sussex County Community College sadly had to say goodbye to its evening school radio broadcaster, Melajero Padua Ajero, earlier this year.



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Ajero, 57, of Vernon died Wednesday, March 28. The exact cause of death was still currently unknown as of April 23.

All that is currently known is that he was found dead in his home.

Born on August 4, 1966, in Philadelphia, Pa., Ajero worked at a few different radio stations before coming to SCCC, most notably WSUS which is owned by iHeartMedia. He started his career at SCCC in 2020 as an evening broadcaster for the school radio station WRSK Cruizin Oldies 97.5.

Going by the air name Mel Andrews, people were able to catch A Hero's segments on the station Monday through Friday from 6 p.m. to 11 p.m. He put a lot of care and effort into his segments and it showed through to the listeners.

As well as being one of the station's radio hosts he also had a job at Heller Industries located in Florham Park as a customer service representative.

The people who had known and worked with Ajero have all been sad-

dened by his death. They will continue to remember him by all of the wonderful material he produced for the school station.

"Mel enjoyed what he did and you were able to tell when he turned on the microphone," says Tony DeNicola another host for the station and adjunct professor at SCCC. "He was having fun and enjoying what he did best and as a person he was a very kind guy and a great friend, and he will be sorely missed by me, colleagues, friends, campus security, and listeners."

Son of Melecio and Obdulia Ajero Melajero Padua. Ajero had left an impact on his friends and family and will most definitely be missed.

"He was the cherished son of the late Melecio and the late Obdulia (nee Padua) Ajero," stated his obituary. "Mel was a dear brother to Mark Ajero, Michael Ajero, and Mario (Gina) Ajero. He was a

loving uncle to Ariel, Riley, Antonio, and Olivia."

Though the microphone was sadly turned off too soon for Melajero Padua Ajero the impacts and relationships he had made and had with his family, friends, other hosts, and the listeners of



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the SCCC station will be remembered and missed.

Grad 122 Typography and Layout Student Design the College Hill News Masthead



Led by Sherry Fitzgerald and Jimmy Jeffreys, student: Peter Nagy designed above masthead for spring 2024.

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