

College News

Sussex County
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Fall 2024

What's Inside



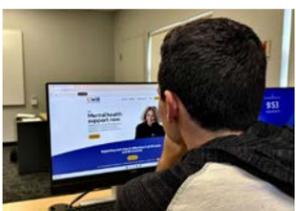
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12 Angry Jurors



Halloween Costume Party



Art is Blooming

SCCC Experiences Enrollment Boost

By Maydene Yamisha
College Hill Writer

Sussex County Community College in Newton experienced an influx of students this semester. Buzz has been going around the school about an increasing number of students attending. Many professors and students noticed parking spaces being more limited this year and a lot more friendly faces around campus.

Solweig Dimino, registrar, is local to the area and works at the Registrar Office. She has worked at SCCC for 39 years and mentioned how so much has changed from when she attended SCCC as a student.

“At that time, we were still located at the Sussex County Technical School campus,” she said. “There were only five us in the first graduating class and now we graduate approximately 500 students each year.”

Since she started there, it has grown from a few 100 students to more than 2,000. She believes that the reason for more traction at the school is because it’s an affordable option for many students, especially for those who wish to transfer once they have completed their two years. When asked if SCCC has made improvements she said, “We continuously strive to make improvements to our school by adding new programs, new sports, student involvement through Campus Life with our clubs and activities and many more things that would take too much time to list.”



Photo by J. Jeffreys

President Jon Connolly had shared that enrollment is up compared to last year by 1.5% to 2%. He had shared how staff members are very eager to help guide students to resources and how staff thrive on “more energy on campus.”

Connolly and staff are excited about higher enrollment and feel that it signals a move beyond the restrictions of COVID causing people to feel freer. When asked about any new plans of dorms or more classes being offered, he said, “The Board of Trustees has voted to explore constructing a residence hall here at the college. This possibility is not because we have more students but because we wish to provide a full college experience.” Student engagement, comfortability and experience is Connolly’s top priority and wants to give students the full college experience.

Linda Presto, an adjunct instructor, has noticed an increased number of students attending college. She is on campus at least twice a week and specializes in writing courses at SCCC. She even attended the school years ago. “I

think it’s a wonderful idea to have an area bustling with young people and to be around them when they are figuring out their lives and their future,” said Presto. With the news of more students on campus, Presto is thrilled with excitement of their being more life on campus. When asked if she noticed a higher enrollment she mentioned how there are more opportunities for athletes on campus and said, “Now that we have athletes who get to play here and more offerings, I see a rise in enrollment for the college.”

Presto had also mentioned that the staff are dedicated to all new and returning students and said, “From what I have witnessed, the staff at SCCC is very dedicated to the students. I know I talk to other teachers about challenges and most of us try to engage students and help them whenever possible.”

It appears that SCCC is showing a lot of prosperity for up and coming students and the staff are thriving off of this new energy!

Staff Acts Fast on Cafeteria Flooding

By Maydene Yamisha
College Hill Writer

After a water line burst flooded Sussex County Community College’s cafeteria, staff set up a tem-

porary food kiosk and students can expect a restored, upgraded cafeteria by semester’s end.

On Friday, Sept. 13, at approximately 1:30 a.m., a cold-water line burst and due to water damage to the floor, the cafeteria was closed for students’ safety. Staff

members reacted quickly by removing the couches, tables and chairs out of the main gallery to make a makeshift cafeteria in the old campus store so students could still grab food on the go. Staff were moving the furniture until well after 9 p.m.

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Alex Figueroa, 21, who worked at the cafeteria and is a full-time student, witnessed the action first-hand and said, "they've worked hard fixing and draining the water."

Thankfully the kitchen itself wasn't affected by the flood and staff were very quick to make an alternative kiosks stand near the cafeteria so students could still get hot food, drinks, and snacks at their convenience. It took about two days for the makeshift kiosk to be put into place. It's about the size of the old one, with a register and counter space. The new kiosk serves chips, candy, drinks and hot food. For breakfast students are given the choices of bacon, egg and cheese on a roll and croissant and pork roll. There is even an option of just having

egg and cheese on kaiser rolls for students that don't eat meat. For lunch students can find chicken fingers with fries, mozzarella sticks and some cold sandwiches.

Both Dr. Cory Homer and Rick McDermott said that the cafeteria should be up and running by the end of the fall semester. Homer, who is the vice president of Student Success and Institutional Effectiveness, is making sure that the cafeteria is being worked on every day.

"There is something being done every day to work towards getting the cafeteria floor project completed, whether that be physical work on the cafeteria, project calls with the vendors doing the work, financing meetings with the insurance company, or discussions with the cafeteria staff," Homer

said. This is to ensure that students and staff can get their cafeteria back and efforts are being made every day to work towards this goal. Homer is incredibly proud of the teamwork that was displayed by members from facilities, custodial staff, the campus store, cafeteria, IT and other members of the college community. This situation has been handled extremely well, he said.

Homer said, "I am extremely proud of the teamwork that was displayed in addressing this issue and ensuring that students had continuous access to food on campus. It was great to see many students approaching staff to say, "Thank you" because they understood that many of them went above and beyond in this situation." Campus Life has also sponsored events to Nutrition Center offerings. McDermott

works in the HVAC and electrical department at SCCC and reported that students should expect to see a new cafeteria floor of concrete and an epoxy coating. "It's going to be really nice," said McDermott.

Students and faculty can expect the cafeteria to be back by the end of this semester.

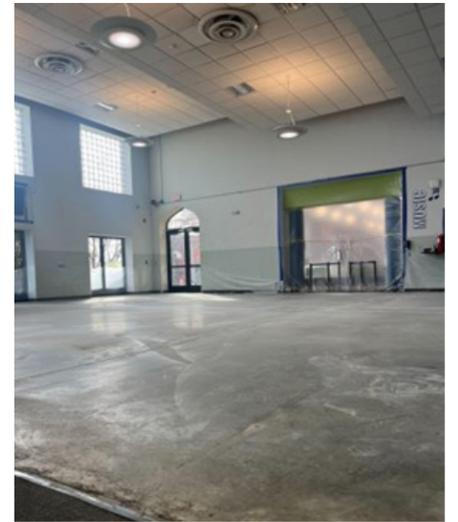


Photo by Maydene Yamisha

Empowered Funding Their Future Event

By Misha Andi
College Hill Writer

Imagine a future filled with limitless opportunities! Funding their Future has made that dream a reality for college students.

Funding their Future has been a cherished tradition at Sussex County Community College in Newton, rallying community support to fuel student spirits and celebrate the college's milestones.

Since 2017, this annual event raises funds for students' scholarships and bring Sussex's community together to celebrate the college's successes this year. On Wednesday, Oct. 16, Funding their Future was organized at Perona Farms in Andover. In total, 207 guests joined the evening to honor the Board of Trustee chairs, bring support to Foundation Scholarship students and staff members, and to recognize caring businesses and corporations who support SC-



Colleen Keever, Robin Tomlinson, Keith Niedergall, Dora Rodriguez, Mary Franchini, (They all are represent Provident Bank) and Stan Kula: Photo by Kathleen Peterson

CC's mission of education. The event featured a cocktail reception. Chef Martin Kester led the effort, uniting culinary partners and students for the occasion.

"The event grossed more than \$87,000," said Executive Director of the SCCC Foundation, Stan Kula. Thanks to this enthusiastic turnout, the event was able to excel last year's donation amount of \$72,000. Kula attributes the success of this year's event to the Foundation Board of

Directors being diligently involved in the event by inviting all of their friends, to planning the event, to arranging the entertainment—and getting all the items for the silent auction. The rest of the evening was lively with student ambassadors and student scholarship recipients engaging with guests, sharing personal stories and positive experiences at SCCC while enjoying two live band performances.

A student from SCCC had this to say

about the event: "I really enjoyed the event, the food from different vendors was phenomenal, and it was very impressive how many people came out to support," said Sean Margarum. "It was an honor to be asked to attend."

Added Kula, "Our evening concluded by recognizing our 10 honorees, the current and past Board of Trustee chairs. "A very special thanks for SCCC Foundation Chair Roger Thomas and Funding Their Future Planning Chair Alissa Isaacson for their wonderful remarks at the event, and for all of their hard work and support to make this the best event ever!" Kula said. Overall, students and organizers of Funding Their Future alike emphasize the importance of our community's support to make students' success possible.

The list of honorees that attended included: Jeffrey Quinn; Robert Vandenberg; Lorraine Parker; William Curcio; Tyler Morgus; Current Chair Kurt Gewecke; Ron Jackowitz; Charles Tice; and Kirk Perry.

SCCC Offers Free Teletherapy for Students

By Misha Andi
College Hill Writer

Sussex County Community College commitment to students' mental health has allowed a partnership with a new online mental health service.

Since April 1, SCCC has been offering a teletherapy program called Uwill for all students at no cost.

"SCCC is lucky to receive grant funding to provide Uwill to our students through April 2026," said Alyssa Hoekstra, a professional counselor and a board-certified art therapist. "Uwill has been wonderful to help students that may not be on campus or feel comfortable meeting with a therapist."

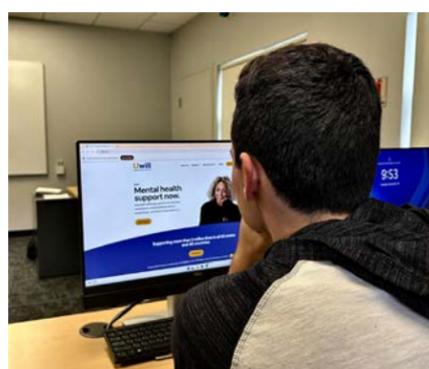


Photo by Misha Andi

Uwill has licensed mental health providers that supply various communication methods (video, phone, chat), and has tailored services to fit individual student needs.

How does a student get started on Uwill? Hoekstra explained, "The process is simple. Students register an account and answer some questions. Then they will get matched with the best possible counselor to meet their

(Continued from Page 2)

needs. Students can also switch providers at any time!”

Uwill provides a secure service under (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996) to keep students’ privacy safe and secure.

Aiden Asencio was one of many students who took advantage of the teletherapy program. Asencio was able to give much positive feedback and insight as to how his experience with Uwill was over the course of three weeks:

“You can pick the gender of your therapist to whatever you’re comfortable with and you’re given a variety of pronouns or labels to identify as so it’s inclusive to peo-

ple of all gender identities,” said Asencio, highlighting that therapist selection and inclusivity is a key feature. Asencio added that language barriers are addressed with a wide array of language choices available.

“If there’s a language barrier, there’s tons of languages you could pick from too,” said Asencio.

“Then you can choose the type of discussions you wanna have based on all those options, after which it will give you who they think is best for you to have a conversation with.”

For Asencio, therapy played a pivotal role in navigating decisions

regarding education paths as well.

“When I started talking to my therapist, I was so confused on if I should continue college or swap to a trade school,” said Asencio.

“They helped me break it down into little steps at a time so I can make my experience at college smoother. It’s been way easier this semester.”

He encourages others to try therapy, emphasizing the welcoming, non-judgmental environment therapists provide.

“Don’t be afraid to go out and try it,” he adds. “The therapists make it a safe place to talk about any-

thing. Uwill is for everyone, but I strongly recommend it to anyone who feels lost or doesn’t feel like they have the right person to talk to around them.”

Hoekstra added, “SCCC is hoping to help bridge the gap in services.” Many students struggle in silence with anxiety, stress, depression, and many other mental health concerns but it is never too late to receive help. Some common concerns that therapists on Uwill can also help with include: Trauma, self-esteem, loneliness, sleep, body image— and relationship difficulties.

Students can start their first session at Uwill that fits their schedule at: app.uwill.com

New Clubs Involve Students at SCCC

By Christine Ahmad
College Hill Writer

Sussex County Community College in Newton has recently added new additions to its long list of clubs: Investment Club, Tabletop Role Play Games Club, Broadcasting Club and Rock Band Club.

The Faculty Advisor of the Investment Club is Jason Petecca. The club holds in-person meetings on campus on Wednesday evenings and virtual meetings on Sunday evenings.

Club meetings consist of market discussions, analyzing businesses, educational presentations, and mock investing activities. Guest speakers are always welcome to voice their knowledge of investing at club meetings.

“The primary goal of the Investing Club is to equip members with the knowledge and tools necessary to make informed financial decisions,” states Petecca, adjunct professor of accounting. The purpose of the



Students meet for the Tabletop Role Play Games club outside the cafeteria this fall semester. Photo by Morgan Eakin.

Investment Club is to introduce students to investment forms and strategies that apply to their life. For the students that do not get the opportunity to take an investment class, the investment club has that covered.

Students can share their knowledge, ask peers and advisors questions and develop an understanding of how the financial markets work.

The club was founded by Dylan Olsen, a student at SCCC, who is also the current president. Olsen founded this club to create awareness of the importance of investing. Forming this club allows college students of any age to learn necessary skills to invest.

There were many other individuals involved in making the Investment club possible. Other key leaders of the Investment group include: Vice President Alex Corujo; Treasurer Robert Flemming; and Secretary Nick Krison. Many students wanted to join a club that would strengthen their skills and strategies in financial literacy skills and investing strategies in order to prepare for their future careers and that is just what the investment club does. Students serious about their financial education as well as investing should contact InvestingClub@sussex.edu or speak to an advisor to join.

Tabletop Role Play Games is new this semester as well. It is run by student President Morgan Eakin.

Eakin also goes by “Crimson” during their time at meetings.

With many individuals interested in the club, the club consists of around 10 active members and are looking for more!

“Our purpose is just to create community and for people to have fun,” states Eakin. “We want people to just come and play Dungeons and Dragons.”

The Tabletop Role Play Games club meets on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 3 p.m. to 8 p.m. outside of the cafeteria. Once the cafeteria is fixed they will meet inside the cafeteria.

Media Services Specialist Tim O’Connor and Melissa Marshall are the co-advisors of the Broadcasting Club. This club is working on figuring out more details. They have had a few members attend meetings and are looking forward to more. There is no set location or days for the Broadcasting Club, but they are hopeful of having the club be more developed by spring 2025. Rock Band Club, advised by Adjunct Math Professor John Elmuccio is also new this semester.

Elijah Simmons Helps Many in Writing Center

By Christine Ahmad
College Hill Writer

With more than 10 years of pursuing his passion for writing he

is finally able to help others find and improve their skills.

As of July 16, Elijah Simmons has been a part of the Writing Center at Sussex County Community College in Newton. Along with being a Writing Center coordinator, he teaches English 1 and Effective Speaking at SCCC.

Simmons started his writing career when he was 18. Starting off as a criminal justice major he shortly realized that it was not his calling. He noticed his high grades within his writing classes and decided to pursue a degree in it.

Graduating from Binghamton

University, located in Binghamton, N.Y. Simmons received his undergraduate degree in writing and rhetoric. Continuing his education, he received his master’s in writing in rhetoric and is now working on finishing his PhD from Michigan State.

“I feel like I was having writer’s

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block after finishing my PhD and I talked to my committee about going back to the east coast and getting a real job in my 30s," he said. "Technically I've never had a real job. I have always been a student."

Simmons explained how education presents many opportunities and the endless opportunities that come with a writing degree. The options, freedom and various jobs sold Simmons on his career. He noted that every college or university requires at least one writing class which is why the job opportunities are so vast.

"Everything just aligned and when I first started, I wanted to be some type of writing administrator, so everything worked out well," he said.

Although this is Simmons first job not as a student, he has spent years as a writing center consultant at his past schools. This is the first year that

Simmons has worked at a community college and expresses that the students and demographics are much different than a four-year school.



Photo submitted by Elijah Simmons

"The teachers are a lot more empathetic and affectionate towards students," he said.

Everyone in the community is welcome at the Writing Center, one does not have to be a student at Sussex for writing assistance. Assistance with oral presentations, brainstorming, communication or an extra eye are some of the many different things that can be assisted with at the writing center.

The writing center is catered around the individual's needs. Writing consultants are open to whatever the student needs assistance with.

The area is typically quiet, creating a productive writing environment. Many students there are very serious about their work and enjoy being there. There are no limitations on what can be done at the writing center so "all are welcome," Simmons says.

Sean Margarum, a student at SCCC, visited the writing center last year for a history assignment. He explained that the writing center helped clean up his paper and caught more than the online tools he used.

"I think it's a great tool for anyone struggling with finals or the other large papers they are assigned," says Margarum. "The center knows what they are doing when it comes to that sort of thing".

Besides writing, students benefit from the social aspect. There are many different types of people and majors to socialize with. There are also many different sources of information within the writing center to look at while you visit. Another SCCC student Maydene Yamisha also went to the writing center for help with an essay required for her English class.

"It was beneficial for me because it created a comfortable and peaceful space to work on the essay," Yamisha says. "Students work there too and help students with their essays. So instead of a professor helping you it's another peer helping which takes the pressure off."

If interested in using the writing center, students can either book an appointment online or walk in. Monday and Thursday the hours are 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.; Tuesdays and Wednesdays are 2 p.m. to 7 p.m.; Friday meetings are online.

Arts & Entertainment

"12 Angry Jurors" Play Overcomes Major Setback

By Christine Ahmad
College Hill Writer

Despite the opening night cancellation, the fall show still went on at Sussex County Community College in Newton.

On Thursday, Nov. 14, the Health Science and Performing Arts building also known as A Building was supposed to host the opening night presenting the "12 Angry Jurors." Late afternoon the school had announced a gas leak preventing the show to go on later that night.

"This was only the second time in the college's history that they had to cancel a show," states Allison Ognibene, the coordinator of theater and adjunct professor.

Turning a bad situation into a learning experience, Ognibene helped guide her Performance and Production class in creating a backup plan. The students took matters into their own hands and were on the phone with scheduling, marketing, academic affairs, security, maintenance, and operations to put their new plan into action.

"It was truly the perfect opportunity for my Performance and Production class to literally learn first-



Photo by Jodi Halteman

hand what is entailed in a crisis situation," said Ognibene. "Went to work to create and implement an action plan in case the show got canceled, which it ultimately did."

The class was able to get into contact with actors as well as the production to find availability. The class had got in touch with the licensing company and were able to reschedule.

All members of the production began spreading the word of the last-minute cancellation by social media, posters and emails. "12 Angry Jurors" ended up being performed a day later on Friday, Nov. 15.

"12 Angry Jurors" was about 12 jurors deciding the fate of a man who allegedly killed his father. Eleven of the Jurors vote that the man on trial is guilty while one is holding out and has reasonable doubt that the man is not guilty.

In a criminal trial they must have a unanimous vote to decide the fate

of an individual. Temperatures rise as they discuss the case trying to come to a conclusion. This year the theater department has partnered with the Criminal Justice department to capture the authenticity of a trial.

"We talked about how important it is to listen to all evidence and not make decisions prior to completion of evidence," stated Rachelle Jones, head of the Criminal Justice Department.

"We talked about voicing your opinion in the jury deliberation room and not being swayed by emotion if other jurors are trying to convince you otherwise. We talked about the fact that the criminal justice system would not work if the jurors don't take the role seriously."

Theater is filled with many majors, some behind education, science, English and anthropology majors. Students do not need to be a theater major to participate.

"What is wonderful about theater is that it is all inclusive," Ognibene said.

The cast and crew consist of 17 students, six alumni and nine people from the community.

The Senior Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs, Kathleen Okay, attended opening night and commented, "The students, alumni, and community members who performed in this play were riveting. The staging and set design, enhanced by graphic design elements, were excellently curated."

Ognibene has a theater degree from Desales University and a master's degree from Brooklyn College in performing arts management.

Auditions were held early September and rehearsals had taken place since the third week. The cast previously practiced three days a week and increased it to four as the production got closer. Wednesdays were often dedicated to building sets, costumes and figuring out sound.

The play was held on Nov. 15, 21, 22 and 23 at 7:30 p.m. and on the 16 and 23 at 2 p.m.

"Everyone is invited and accepted to come in," Ognibene said. "We will find a spot for you. That is what I think is so important."

Art is Blooming at SCCC

By Maydene Yamisha
College Hill Writer

Art is blooming at Sussex County Community College in Newton with more work readying displays for all art lovers to endure!

During the semester there were many opportunities for artists to display their works on campus. In fact, on Tuesday, Oct. 8, John Park exhibited his oil paintings of outdoor scenery and group portraits in the C Building.



Photo by Maydene Yamisha: Artwork by John Park

Park is a self-taught artist and has been painting since he was young. When asked if anyone inspired him to paint, he said “A teacher selected me, taught me, thought I was prodigy.” He was able to flourish in his skill through watching videos, reaching out to other artists and his teacher, J.S. Nah.

A great inspiration to kick off other art exhibitions on campus this semester. SCCC Curator Gallery Coordinator, Anna Carina Sinocchi shared that another art exhibition that she is curating called, “So What’s the Alternative” and the opening date and artists reception was set for Tuesday, Nov. 19. The exhibition was set to be held through Friday Dec. 20 in the C Building at SCCC. The medium of the exhibition is focused on alternative processes to the art of photography.



“SO, WHAT’S THE ALTERNATIVE?”

A group exhibition incorporating alternative approaches and creative methods in photography, on display from November 19 through December 20, 2024.

ART EXHIBIT OPENING RECEPTION
11/19 | 4:30-7:00 PM | ART GALLERY

Photo submitted by Anna Carina Sinocchi

Sinocchi says that “Four New York metropolitan area-based artists utilize various approaches and alternative processes to the art of photographic image making.”

The four artists included: Michael Paris Mazzeo, Andreas Rentsch, Lois White and Tom White. The event is free and open to the public. Sinocchi also practices in arts

specifically in mixed media, alternative photography and abstract oil paintings. She plans to have a show in January displaying her own work. Her exhibition is set to be held next year during the spring 2025 semester from January into March.

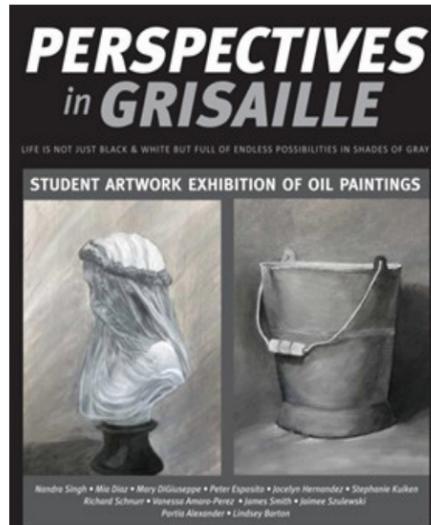


Photo submitted by Janet Cunniffe-Chieffo

Another art exhibition being held at SCCC is called “Perspectives in Grisaille” which is being held in the Atrium which is just outside the theater. Janet Cunniffe-Chieffo is in charge of this exhibition and is very excited about it.

Cunniffe-Chieffo is a senior adjunct professor in fine art and has worked at the college for five years. Twelve students are going to be displaying their oil paintings along with Cunniffe-Chieffo who will also be displaying her own art. She said, “I was inspired to create a painting for the show too which

is on display! I figured we are all students for life, so why not? Including me, there are 13 artists.”

Students that are in Cunniffe-Chieffo’s Painting I, ARTA 180-01 have been working on these paintings as part of the curriculum, started them in class and then continued to finish them at home. Some students even felt inspired to create another grisaille on their own to exhibit.

The theme of this art exhibition is attributed to the art of grisaille which is a French term that translates to “grayness.” The paintings are an inspiration to the play, “12 Angry Jurors.”

Cunniffe-Chieffo implores students to check out the exhibition because she says she feels it’s important to look at art since it offers perspective on themes that are explored in the play but through a visual aspect.

She said, “I love how art and theater are combined in this artistic collaboration. I also think viewers may not be aware of “grisaille” and what this process means. By looking at the art, viewers can learn about the process of grisaille and how powerful it can be as a form of visual expression.”

The exhibition is until Dec. 17 and anytime the Atrium is open, anyone can come and enjoy the show.

Halloween Costume Party Hosted by SCCC

By Misha Andi
College Hill Writer

Halloween came back in full swing at Sussex County Community College in Newton with the return of a beloved tradition.

On Tuesday Oct. 29, Adjunct Professor James Jeffreys and Professor Sherry Fitzgerald put together a Halloween costume party. The event took place in the student center theater from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m., offering students the opportunity to showcase their cosplaying skills and costumes to compete for a prize.

“This is the first time we held this event since COVID, we’re expecting around 100 students!” said Jeffreys. “It’s gonna be a lot of fun.” Although the department has held other Halloween type events, it is great that SCCC was able to bring

it back. Upon entering, all guests received a treat bag filled with an assortment of candy. Extra treats were available throughout the evening for students with an extra sweet tooth!

The party’s setup created the perfect atmosphere, with a projector screening a mashup of classic Halloween horror movies, including favorites like “The Addams Family.” Many students praised the music selection, the playlist was a mix of well-known Halloween songs like “Monster Mash” alongside popular modern hits from artists like “Gorillaz” which kept energy high and encouraged dancing and socializing amongst peers.

“I loved the whole theme of the party,” said student Aiden Ascencio, who was dressed as a skeleton. “Everyone did an amazing job with their costumes!”

The costume contest included categories judged on scariness, creativity, uniqueness and cuteness. The judges were Professor of Fine



Mary Givseppe as a fallen angel; Gianna Rimli as a cow scarecrow; Michael Z. as the green knight; Nasir Taylor as creepy clown; Ashley P. as plague doctor; Jackie Patereck as Cleopatra; Amelie Bruhns as Emily from “Corpse Bride”; Kianna Nievevteck as Lyney from Genshin Impact; and Braden Rosario as Caesar.
Photo by J. Jeffreys

Arts Michael Hughes, Professor of Visual Arts Sherry Fitzgerald, Adjunct English Professor Veronica Coyne and Adjunct Professor of Graphic Design James Jeffreys.

Nine students received awards for their outstanding costume designs. Everyone who participated and won were able to take home custom designed trophies.

“Everything went as planned. It looked like everyone had fun and students said they also had a blast!” commented Fitzgerald. Overall, 75 students showed up to the party.

What is SCCC Excited For in 2025?

By Sean Margarum
College Hill Writer

Recently, the students and staff of Sussex County Community College in Newton were able to give a closer look as to what they are excited for in the new year, with the hopes of showing people the things they might look forward to in 2025!

After talking to more than 50 members of SCCC's student body and staff there is an anticipation towards 2025 in the air. With 2024 almost behind them many students commented on their hopes, plans, and items of excitement for the new year.

The most common answer was for the incoming spring semester, and what the future may bring them afterwards. Almost every second-year student mentioned their excitement for the incoming freedom they would get after the spring semester. Students talked about the colleges they

plan to attend afterwards for their bachelor's degree. There are students who plan to attend Ramapo, Rutgers, and William Paterson University.



Photo by Sean Margarum

While speaking to Catarina Cruz in the student lounge, she mentioned how she looks forward to figuring out where to go next after feeling like her "hard work here was completed." There are students looking to progress in the medical field or form American Sign Language 4 to pursue their love for the class.

Other students mentioned their plans to visit different areas of the world. Odin from Campus Life mentioned how in January

he plans to visit his family in Serbia for Christmas. California was another popular destination for 2025 trips, while some students plan to visit Greece or Colombia.

On the more pop culture spectrum, there is a lot to look forward to. Video games like "Clair Obscur: Expedition 33" or "Grand Theft Auto VI" are highly anticipated among the student body, with both launching hopefully in the new year. Films like "F1" or the sequel to "Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse" will likely deliver on student excitement. Other students look forward to conventions like the New York City Comic-Con, or anime expos in the area.

Not everyone enjoyed their 2024, with some students commenting on its difficulty, due to the stress of election season, or financial struggles, but there was still a lot of hope for the future. Christine Gaydos, Campus Life coordinator of Student Engagement & Inclusion, commented on her idea to reach new personal goals with the new year, which

was a common theme among many students.

Some of the players for the SCCC football team mentioned they wanted offers to come in 2025 and had optimism towards it. Other students looked forward to job promotions or their yearly bonus outside of school.

From all of the responses, there is certainly a feeling of optimism, mixed with uncertainty. Yet isn't that what everyone sees when they look towards the new year? One of the benefits of conducting this survey was meeting new people, and the favorite answer came from more of a mindset than a literal answer.

When asked what he looked forward to most in 2025 a student named Nathan responded, "Seeing where life takes me honestly." He then talked about how there is an excitement to where those new directions may take him. Even when one doesn't know their future, there is always something to look forward to on the horizon. Here's to 2025!



SPORTS



Women's Wrestling Hits the Mat at SCCC

By Sean Margarum
College Hill Writer



Sophia Lombardo and Grace Pauls at Skylanders Gym gearing up for a match: Photo by Rebecca Mattes

From being in development for a little more than a year, the Women's

Wrestling Team at Sussex County Community College in Newton started its first season this fall under new coach, Rebecca Mattes. The team consists of two women, Grace Pauls wrestling at the 131 weight class, and Sophia Lombardo wrestling at the 160 weight class. They began their season with The Inaugural Millersville Women's Wrestling Open on Sunday, Nov. 17, with Pauls taking third place and Lombardo taking second.

The wrestlers are both experienced in wrestling at different levels, and more wrestlers and prospects may be on the way in future seasons. With the successful launch of the program, there are two prospects in the works for next year's season.

The men's wrestling team was already established at SCCC, but the women's team is brand new. "We felt that this would be the best time to start one," commented Todd Poltersdorf, athletic director at SCCC in a press release. "We will be the first community

college in New Jersey to have one."

The launch of the program had been in development for close to two years, with Mattes being part of the process for more than a year. Mattes has a history in women's wrestling from her own experiences on the mat, as well as an assistant and corner for women's club wrestling. Mattes opened up about the goals of the team, hoping to improve the team's technique, mat awareness and conditioning. She also hopes for the team to grow together as the season progresses.

When asked about the differences between women and men's wrestling, Mattes mentioned it comes down to style. Freestyle wrestling features a difference in starting position, a different scoring system because of back exposure, the ability to lock hands, and push out points and passivity. These changes from men's folkstyle wrestling make the sport entirely fresh, and the women's side of wrestling con-

tinues to grow. Mattes spoke about how she hopes to improve the difference between freestyle and folkstyle.

"They work together, practice tough, and wrestle tough," she said. "So far they've done an absolutely phenomenal job at adapting and overcoming."

The season will last for around five months without including the pre and post season. Upcoming events include a match at Centenary on Sunday, Dec. 8, The Will Abele Women's Open on Jan. 18, 2025 (an event held at Ursinus College in Collegeville, Pa.), The Bob Cat Open at Frostburg State University in Frostburg, Md., and the National Collegiate Women's Wrestling Championship on March 7, 2025.

Mattes hopes to see more students and others support the team by attending matches and events. The team looks forward to support, and fans wish them the best of luck!

Fundraisers & Sports go Hand in Hand

By Sean Margarum
College Hill Writer

Two fundraising events were held this fall for students and alumni with great successes. The Sussex County Community College football team held a Breast Cancer Awareness game, and Great Gorge Golf club held a golf fundraiser for athletic fundraising on campus.

At the Great Gorge Golf Club, the SCCC Alumni held a golf fundraiser. The event was held on Thursday, Oct. 3, and worked to raise money for the student athletes. The event was organized by Skylands Athletics, under the associate dean of Athletics/Student Discipline/ and Alumni Todd Poltersdorf. This is the 24th time the event was held, but the first-time post pandemic.

“We plan to make it an annual

event moving forward,” Poltersdorf commented on the event’s success. It was able to attract more than 90 golfers for the event, help raise money towards all of the athletic programs SCCC has to offer and supply more equipment for them in the future. The event managed to raise more than \$7,000 towards SCCC.



Photo by Christine Sakelakos

The day started with breakfast at 7:30 a.m. with tee times beginning at 9 a.m. The format was a scramble, with teams of four. The

winning team’s members included Howie Lazier, Derrick Lazier, Frank DeGroot and Tony Alexander with a very impressive score of -12. Other events of the day included a silent auction, raffling of Skylander merchandise, and prizes for other contests as well. That included both the men and women’s closest to the pin competitions and a longest drive competition.

On Saturday, Oct. 26, there was a football game with the Skylanders in support of breast cancer awareness run by Head Athletic Trainer Christine Sakelakos. The event helped raise funds for The Susan G. Komen Foundation. She commented on the importance of the event and how her mother was personally battling stage 3 breast cancer.

“Honor those who are currently fighting, those who have fought, and those who we may have lost,” Sakelakos said.

Many attendees and players at

the event had personal connections to the fight with breast cancer. Sakelakos’ mother even flew in from Colorado to flip the kick-off coin, and during half-time those who had been affected by breast cancer were asked to stand. Even the opposing team, the College of DuPage, wore pink socks in support.

The Culinary Institute collaborated by donating baked goods to sell at the event, as they were able to raise more than \$550 dollars in total. This was the first year the event was held, and there are already plans in the works to create a bigger campaign fundraiser next year. Events like these are important to support.

“I was glad to see that while I rally behind my student-athletes to keep them safe and healthy, they were able to show me their support for my own family,” Sakelakos concluded.

Broadway Star Sets Spirit For Holidays

SCCC Staff Writer



Photo by Allison Ognibene

The community packed the Performing Arts Center at Sussex County Community College in Newton Thursday, Dec. 5, at 7 p.m., at the Craig Schulman on Broadway holiday concert.

The international Broadway star performed 14 of his signature songs during the 90-minute holiday concert. One holiday song, “I’ll Be Home for Christmas,” set the mood for the upcoming holiday break. His singing was accompanied by Sue Anderson on piano.

SCCC President Jon Connolly; Sherry Fitzgerald, professor of Visual Arts and chair of Visual and Performing Arts Department; and Adjunct Graphics Arts Professor Jimmy Jeffreys, organizer of the event, joined the 212 attendees for a wonderful eve-

ning of song. “It was a beautiful, beautiful event,” says Jeffreys. “When he sang the song from Les Misérables “Bring Him Home,” it just brought you to tears. It was so emotional.”

With ticket prices at \$20 for the general public, and \$10 for students, employees and veterans, SCCC raised \$2,730 from the show. Proceeds will benefit Campus Life and the Visual and Performing Arts Department, says Jeffreys.

He was grateful that Adjunct Theater Professor Allison Ognibene’s students helped with ushering guests and helping out in the box office.

Schulman is widely recognized for the PBS broadcast of Les

Misérables 10th Anniversary Concert, according to a SCCC press release.

“He holds a unique place in theater history as the only actor to have played the iconic roles of Jean Valjean in Les Misérables, the Phantom in The Phantom of the Opera, and the title role in Jekyll & Hyde,” as stated in the press release. With more than 2,500 performances of Les Misérables across three countries, Schulman’s portrayal of Valjean remains legendary.

His extensive resume includes roles like Tevye in Fiddler on the Roof, Archibald in The Secret Garden, and Crazy Old Maurice in Disney’s Beauty and the Beast. Schulman’s versatility spans Broadway, opera, and symphon-

ic pops, where he has sung lead tenor roles in The Tales of Hoffmann, Tosca, Madame Butterfly, and many more. He also created and produced the internationally acclaimed BROADWAY NIGHTS™ concert series, including Three Phantoms in Concert.



Craig Schulman, Sue Anderson and Adjunct Professor Jimmy Jeffreys: Photo by Allison Ognibene



Craig Schulman, Sue Anderson, Jimmy Jeffreys, Allison Ognibene and theater students, Fenrir Lewin, Alyssa Zemietra, Chris Flatt, Nina Bennett, Sky Sobieski, Danielle DiBattista: Photo submitted by Allison Ognibene

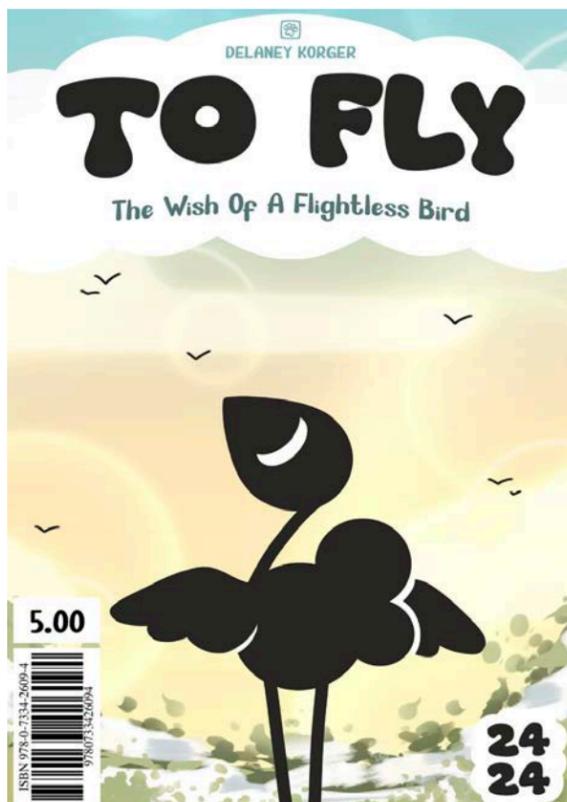
As an educator, Schulman has taught at Sacred Heart University in Fairfield, Conn., offers private vocal coaching, and leads master classes in voice and musical theatre, sharing his passion with aspiring artists.

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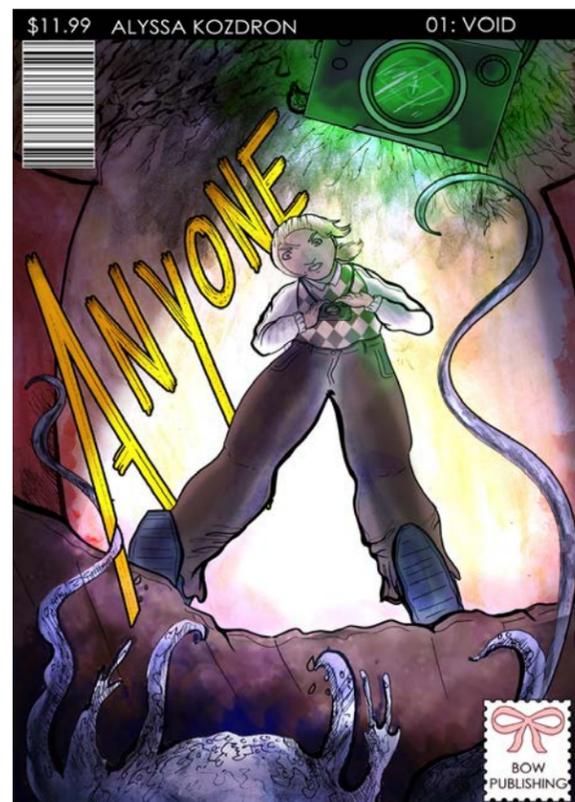
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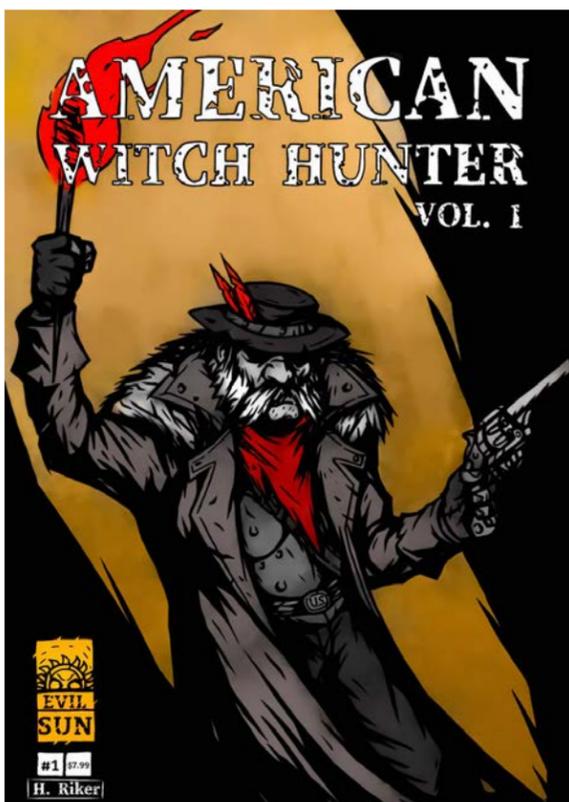
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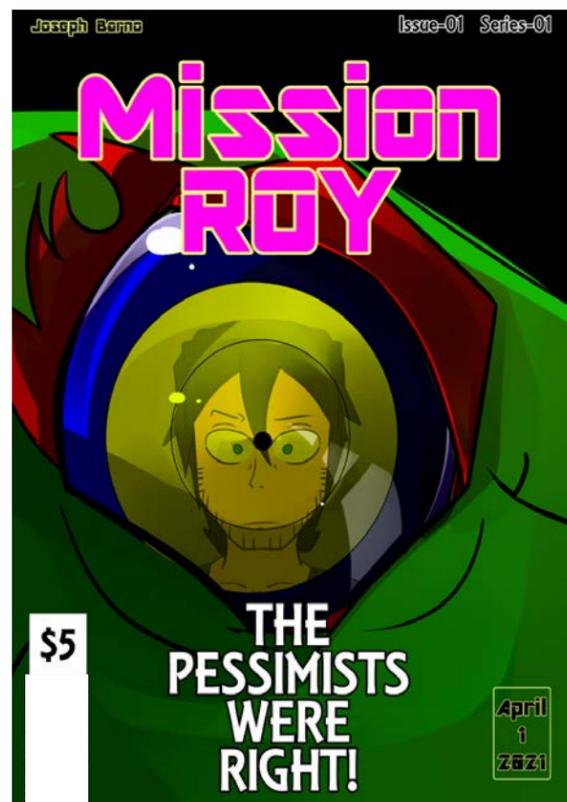
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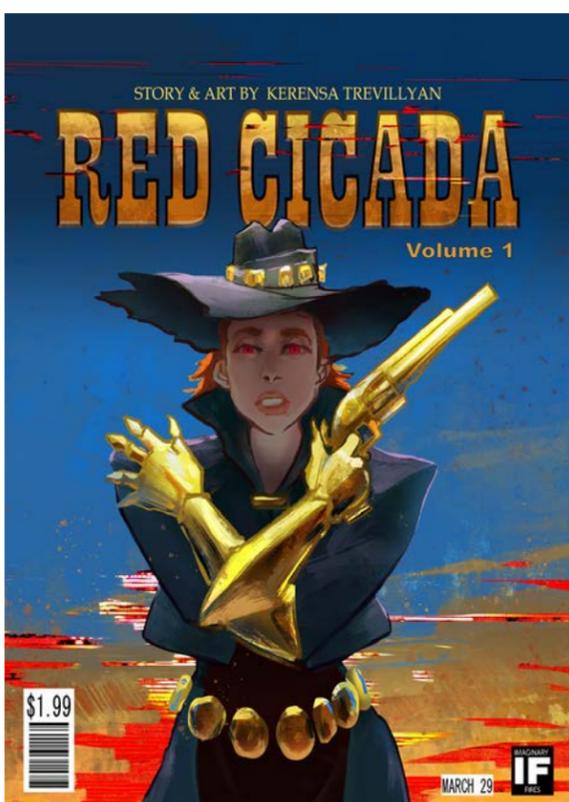
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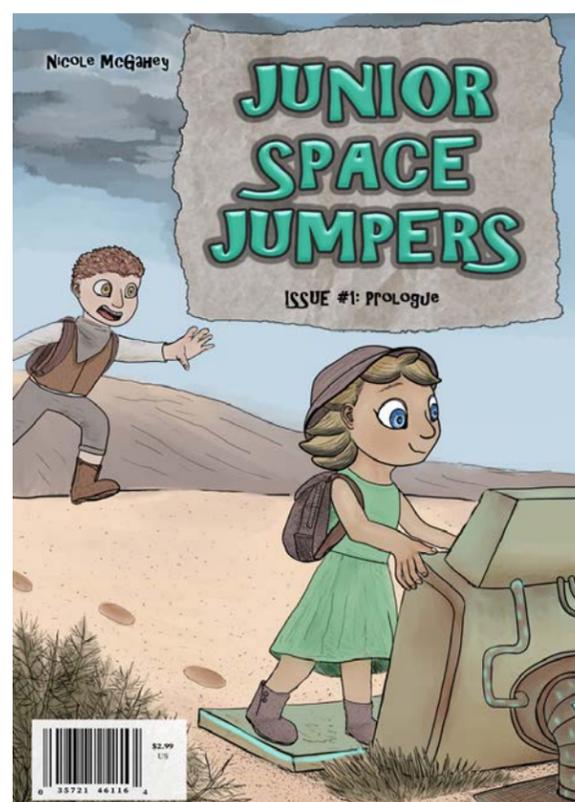
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