Navigating the online classroom

Experts say it’s not the easy way out

By Robert Craig

Jessica Baschoff, like many college students, goes to school full time, works and has several off-campus responsibilities.

In addition to her full course load, Baschoff opted to enroll in a few online courses while acquiring her associate’s degree in psychology at DCCC.

“I decided to enroll in an online course at first because I didn’t want to overwhelm myself during the week going to classes, and thought that an online course might help lighten the load,” said Baschoff, now a psychology major at the University of Scranton.

“However, though I did spend significantly less time in class, I found myself spending twice as much time reading from the textbook and writing papers than I would have spent sitting in class.”

Baschoff is part of a larger community of online learners across the United States.

According to an Online Learning Consortium national survey, more than 7.1 million students were taking at least one online course in 2013 and the proportion of college students taking at least one online course is at an all-time high of 33.5 percent.

DCCC is one of many colleges that utilizes the distance learning approach.

According to their website, DCCC has been offering online and blended courses since 1998 and now offers more than 120 online and 30 blended learning courses throughout most of their majors.

DCCC uses WebStudy as its online learning platform. Other platforms include Blackboard, Articulate and Coursera.

According to many counselors and professors at DCCC, it takes a very self-motivated and disciplined student to be successful in an online classroom. However, there is a common misconception that taking online courses is easier than taking them in the classroom.

Chris Dungee, associate professor and counselor in the Career and Counseling Center, said that a good candidate for taking online courses is someone who can work well under their own self direction, follows course syllabus and course materials and feels comfortable directly asking professors for help when needed.

On the other hand, Dungee said that someone who needs a lot of direction is not a good candidate for taking online courses. He suggested that students who fare well from in-class discussions wouldn’t acclimate to an online learning environment so easily.

“Someone who is not self disciplined is not a good candidate for taking online courses,” Dungee said. “You have to be a self starter and know how to go at your own pace.”

Taking the same stand on online learning, Jennifer Kalligonis, associate professor and counselor in the Career and Counseling Center, said that a good candidate for online learning would be a student who is comfortable working independently and has great time management skills.

“I would have to say a student who has already taken a fair number of traditional classroom courses and has an established GPA of 3.0 [would be a good candidate],” Kalligonis said. “Someone who isn’t in their first year of college and especially not someone who has never taken a college course before.”

Kalligonis also suggested that students seeking a traditional college experience should avoid online courses.

“A student who is looking to experience campus life, make connections and meet other students shouldn’t take online courses,” she said. “It’s hard enough when commuting to meet other students. When you’re not coming to campus, it’ll be a little harder.”

DCCC alumna Dawn Glancy took about 10 credits online during her college career. While juggling a full-time job and a full-time course load, taking online courses allowed for flexibility in her schedule, she says.

However, she too agreed that gaining and maintaining connections takes a little more effort when taking classes online. “It is difficult to obtain a sense of community and establish relationships with peers other than through electronic communication,” she said.

Kalligonis urged students who are interested in taking online courses to access DCCC’s online learning website to review the all-in-one document about online learning as well as to take the online learning readiness quiz, which determines if online learning is a good approach for particular students.

According to DCCC’s website, students must possess the following technical skills to be successful in an online learning environment: the ability to access DCCC’s online learning website, the ability to access and maneuver the internet with confidence, the ability to download, save and open a variety of file types (documents, audio/video, etc.) and the ability to install plug-ins and related software upgrades, if applicable.

Susan Scalzi, assistant professor of Allied Health and program director of the Medical Coding and Billing, agreed with the notion that students must have strong computer skills in order to be a successful online learner.

“If a student is not fully confident in using a computer and computer applications, or may need face-to-face interaction to learn best, these students might not be good candidates for online courses,” Scalzi said in an email.

Scalzi, who has taught many online courses at DCCC, believes there are many benefits of online learning. Continued on page 2.
Human Services Club gives back on Thanksgiving

By Grace Tolvaisa-Weaver
Special to The Communitarian

City Team provides hot meals, safe shelter, showers, and clean clothing to our cities’ homeless populations throughout the Delaware Valley, as stated on their website.

They have a lot of volunteers, who make their programs successful volunteers like the Human Services club.

The Human Services Club helped City Team with their annual Thanksgiving food box delivery. Club members were among the kind and gracious people who gave up their Saturday morning to deliver Thanksgiving dinners, including turkeys, to families in need throughout the Chester community.

We had a good turnout of Human Service Club members who came to this off-campus volunteer opportunity. We were able to get two cars of people to City Team which allowed for us to take two routes rather than one, and actually we did two routes per car.

That means that we delivered Thanksgiving dinners to about 20 families in the Chester community. Those families were among the 950 families that were able to have a Thanksgiving dinner through City Team.

We are always looking for new members. All are welcome! If you are interested in learning more about the Human Services Club, please email either of our Co-Presidents, Danielle (dwiegand@mail.dccc.edu) or Sam (snewman6@mail.dccc.edu).

We would love to have you join us! We have a fun semester planned for the Spring of 2015!
NOPE presents drug awareness seminar to students

By James Pearson

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, there are approximately 30,000 annual unintentional drug overdose deaths in the United States. On Nov. 5, 2014, The NOPE (Narcotics Overdose Prevention & Education) Task Force presented a seminar at DCCC’s Marple campus titled “Sometimes You Never Sleep it Off,” which focused on student awareness when drug overdoses occur.

“The NOPE Task Force is a 501 non-profit organization that formed in Palm Beach County, Florida in 2004, to combat the illegal use of prescription drugs and narcotics, as well as other abused substances,” according to their website. “NOPE Task Force is comprised of community leaders and concerned families working to save lives.”

Delaware County Executive Director Marianne Grace and Holcomb Behavioral Health Systems Prevention coordinator Chelsey Price started the seminar off by talking about the dangers of drug overdose. “Addiction can run in families,” said Price talking about the death of two brothers Jesse Leonard, 20, and Dustin Leonard, 23, from drug abuse. During their presentation the NOPE Task Force presented a short video titled “Experience the Reality” that illustrated the effects of combining drugs and alcohol.

According to Leonard J. Paulozzi, M.D., M.P.H., Medical Epidemiologist for the National Center for Prevention and Control Centers for Disease Control, the majority of overdose deaths involve more than one drug. “My brother had seizures when mixing prescription drugs,” said presenter Ashley Seneko on her brother Dennis. As a result, he went to jail for his drug use.”

According to Seneko, when her brother was released from jail he turned to heroin after being fired from his job. But the use of heroin caused Dennis to spend two weeks in the hospital before finding a new job in New Jersey. A few weeks later, Seneko received a Facebook message from Tricas Gooden, about Dennis not being at work so she contacted the police department. “It was discovered by police that Dennis died from heroin overdose in his apartment,” Seneko said.

During the seminar, Upper Chichester sergeant police officer James Reardon said that he recalled similar issues of drug abuse occurring. “One night a 19-year-old male named Jared Kirstein got together with a friend to go to a carnival but decided to go see another friend to drink alcohol,” Reardon said.

While drinking alcohol, Kirstein made a big mistake by popping two unknown pills and also taking a prescription drug.”

According to Reardon, Kirstein was “wasted” but his friends decided not to take him to the hospital but left him lying on the sleeping bag in their apartment. “When Kirstein did not awake his friends contacted his parents and called the ambulance,” Reardon said. “As the paramedics worked on Kirstein they were unable to save him and he died from combining drugs and alcohol.”

Reardon added he wants people to understand that it only takes one pill that leads to combining drugs. “Every time you decide to drink or do drugs you’re close to dying,” he said. “But our goal is for us to make the right decision.”

“Addiction can run in families,” said Satterly, adding that he thinks it is important to talk about sexual orientation, which directly relates to behavior and personal identity, he added. Next, Satterly had attendees perform an exercise. He had everyone close their eyes and imagine their first crush. Then he had everyone imagine the thoughts, feelings, and experiences that occurred as a result. He defined the results as sexual orientation.

Satterly believes this topic is “critical to discuss in this day and age,” adding that LGBTQ youths are far more likely to commit suicide than heterosexual youths. In fact, LGBTQ’s are three to four times more likely to attempt suicide than hetero people, Satterly explained. Satterly said homophobia, heterosexism, biphobia and transphobia are major sources of oppression. “[LGBTQ suicide] is something that means a lot to me,” said Stephanie George, a social work major. “I have people in my life who are struggling with suicidal thoughts. This problems are directly related to their [sexual] orientation.”

Before talking about suicide, Satterly discussed gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgenders in general. According to Satterly, sexuality and diversity is a sensitive issue that is both personal and complex.

Satterly explained that LGBTQ’s should be treated with respect and openness. He also explained that people should suspend their assumptions about LGBTQ’s because homophobia is pervasive and still a serious issue. He then began to talk about sexual orientation, which directly relates to behavior and personal identity, he added.

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Satterly discussed the difference between gender and orientation. He said gender refers to the personal identity of a person and his or her behaviors, and sexual orientation refers to the sex to which a person is naturally attracted.

Satterly explained that too many people assume that men with feminine behaviors are gay, or that women with masculine behaviors are lesbians. He said there are exceptions, and that stereotypes have to come from somewhere.

Satterly defined a gender as an identity that reflects non-traditional gender identity, status or experience. Transgenders are commonly and poorly treated, Satterly added, saying gender transgression is often met with violence.

Satterly went on to identify intersex people, those born with blended or ambiguous genitalia. He believes it is not appropriate to perform surgery on these individuals and to let them figure out who they are on their own.

Satterly mentioned the story of university student Tyler Clementi, who was secretly filmed kissing another male, after which Clementi hurled himself off the George Washington Bridge.

Satterly continued to show statistics among LGBTQ youths who were surveyed: 25 percent of these people were threatened with violence; 10 percent of them had been physically attacked; 30 percent of them fear verbal abuse; 21 percent of them fear attack, and more than 33 percent of them made a suicide attempt.

The good news, Satterly said, is that LGBTQ youths who are emotionally resilient are more academically and personally successful. To help kids, Satterly suggested that people need to increase social support and reduce isolation among LGBTQ’s. He also believes that people should instill hope and future optimism among these youths.

Finally, he said people should enhance resiliency among LGBTQ youths. Satterly advised parents to be aware of sudden isolating behaviors, angry outbursts, expressions of hopelessness, self-deprecating statements, and bullying. Furthermore, organizations should provide administrative support and stem hateful comments toward LGBTQ’s.

Finally, Satterly believes peers are the most important influence on LGBTQ youths. According to him, they should speak up and reach out to bullied peers.

At the end of the lecture, Kim Bach, a social work major, said she wanted to slap a gay tract to the audience. Another student said she also benefitted from the presentation. “I got a lot out of the class,” said Mercedes Powers, a DCCC sociology major. “I want to know how to implement advocacy within elementary and middle schools to prevent suicide.”

Gail Myrick, an educational adviser in the Career and Counseling center, told students, “Always be true to yourself.”

Contact James Pearson at communityrarian@mail.dccc.edu

Students learn about LGBTQ issues

By Matt Pellegrini

Special to The Communityarian

More than 30 students and staff attended a lecture on suicide among youths who are gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (LGBTQ), run by Brent Satterly, a program director and associate professor at Widener University. The event occurred Nov. 6 in the Academic Building.

Satterly presented information and statistics about LGBTQ youths and their tendencies towards suicidal behavior as a result of being mistreated.

Satterly believes this topic is “critical to discuss in this day and age,” adding that LGBTQ youths are far more likely to commit suicide than heterosexual youths. In fact, LGBTQ’s are three to four times more likely to attempt suicide than hetero people, Satterly explained. Satterly said homophobia, heterosexism, biphobia and transphobia are major sources of oppression. “[LGBTQ suicide] is something that means a lot to me,” said Stephanie George, a social work major. “I have people in my life who are struggling with suicidal thoughts. This problems are directly related to their [sexual] orientation.”

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Gail Myrick, an educational adviser in the Career and Counseling center, told students, “Always be true to yourself.”
Amy Williams Gaudioso, director of Campus Life, helped students plan the 20th annual Multicultural Festival in the STEM lobby Nov 13. A variety of countries were featured in the STEM lobby, including Mexico, Italy, Ireland and Haiti. The countries offered one food dish that students could try at their stations. People could go to Mexico for some churros, Chile for some Bruschetta, and Europe for some sweet potato pie.

When people stopped by each station, the students running the tables would usually tell a fun fact about the country. “My family grew up in the southern part of Chile, yet I was born here in the U.S.,” said attendee and psychology major Gina Diluzio.

According to Andrew Johnson, director of Wellness, Athletics and Recreation, all of the food for the event was made in the DCCC cafeteria, because of Pennsylvania regulations.

“I know I don’t have to go to the cafeteria to spend $5 on food when I can just try food here and get full off of it,” said business administration major Ryan Murphy.

Many students said that they had a blast trying all the different foods from around the world.

Contact Maryleigh Sharp at communitarian@mail.dccc.edu
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Stephanie Fazekas ’15, Psychology Major

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NBA Lottery needs change

By Chris Linvill

The Philadelphia 76ers are just plain awful and anyone who is a fan of basketball knows this. It is hard to watch when someone is trying to root for them but cannot stomach how bad they are. The 76ers are in a rebuilding phase where they are trying to get the best players possible in the next draft. Nobody knows if they are even going to get the best player, seeing as how the NBA lottery is going to be our obstacle even with the worst record.

Last year the worst record belonged to the Milwaukee Bucks even though the 76ers tied the record for most losses in a row in NBA history last season with 26. The 76ers finished with the second worst record.

The NBA Lottery was put into effect in 1985 and was supposed to help prevent tanking, but that obviously isn’t working out.

As a fan, it sucks to know that the team that I am rooting for is losing on purpose and I have to wait a whole year, or even two or three, to see them try to compete and win.

The NBA is planning to change the draft to make tanking go away altogether but the fact is it won’t because it will still have the worst teams with the highest chance of getting the number one pick in the draft.

Solutions are out there and I feel like the worst team should not get rewarded because they were the worst on purpose, but regardless of that, they have to get the best pick to keep the league balanced.

The teams in the NBA are either at the top or bottom of the pack and the teams in between that don’t get much recognition or have a good shot at getting a top pick.

The NBA Lottery, as it is now, consists of a lottery ball drawing of the first three picks with the worst record having a 25 percent chance of getting the first pick, the second worst record has a 19.9 percent chance and the third worst having a 15.6 percent chance of first pick. After that, it drastically decreases for each team in order from worst to best record for all non-playoff teams.

After the first three picks are selected via the lottery ball format, the rest of the picks are assigned from worst to best record automatically.

NBA Commissioner Adam Silver proposed a new lottery draft that was voted down by the NBA owners back in Oct. The new proposal would level out the chances of all 14 lottery teams to get a shot at the first pick and suggests that a higher amount of the picks will be drawn with the lottery ball format.

There are many different proposals out there from the one mentioned to every team getting an equal chance at number one. While I don’t agree with the proposal of all teams with an equal shot, there still has to be a change of the NBA Lottery to prevent tanking.

The proposal that was voted down made it clear that teams are continuing to tank and, in fact, the 76ers are one of the teams that were against the reform because it would hinder their shot at the number one pick.

Silver and the owners of the NBA can change this to reverse their image of a league where it is ok to lose on purpose. It may take time to come up with a proposal for the draft that everyone agrees on, but when one is found it needs to be implemented immediately.

When we as fans buy a ticket we want to get our money’s worth. We don’t pay to see mediocre professionals on a team who should be good to their fans because that is the only support they have.

Contact Chris Linvill at communitarian@mail.dccc.edu.
By Josh Moon

wearing body cameras for several years. Cops here. In Prattville, officers have been "It's likely we'll never know for sure. We had it heard by five other bullets, was falling to the ground. Witnesses offered conflicting testimonies, although most provided details that aligned with the latter theory. It's likely we'll never know for sure. But we should respect Wilson's decision to wear a body camera. There would likely be no riots. There would likely be far fewer problems in Ferguson between police and residents. If only the cops there had been like cops here. In Pravittille, officers have been wearing body camera recordings available to anyone at any time. Never hide anything.

By Brandt Ayers

The Anniston Star, Ala. (TNS)

Nov. 30—After decades of neglect, of black and white leaders walking and talking past each other, Ferguson finally had its climax of flames and riot. Now — if it is smart — it has a chance for a meaningful denouement.

That is the point in the narrative of a city where in Shakespeare, a shocking tragedy, the deaths of the young lovers and Juliet, awakens in the House of Montague and Capulet the terrible cost of enmity and separation.

If Shakespeare had written a sequel to his tragic story, the bonding of the two houses would have been awkward and testy at first. That will surely be the experience of Ferguson as the two communities come together as strangers. But if the leaders of Ferguson are patient and forgiving, the bonding, event friendships, will develop out of a sense of mutual interests. This is not said idly, for it is the story of Anniston in the 1960s and early '70s.

On Mother's Day in 1961, a Freedom Rider bus was assaulted and burned. In response, a white leader ran for City Council promising a biracial committee. He was elected and the committee eliminated racial signage and separate waiting rooms.

But the struggle against resistance to racial comity required dogged effort. In 1965, the same year as "Bloody Sunday" in Selma, there was a Mother's Day Ku Klux Klan march down the main downtown street, which was followed in July by "White Man's Rallies" on the courthouse steps.

The violence of the rallies' rhetoric inflamed a group of white thugs, who fired deer slugs into an automobile filled with black workers ending their shift at a pipe plant, wounding the driver, Willie Brewster.

As Brewster lay dying at a local hospital, a leading physician called me at the paper with an urgent message, "We've got to do something." That evening at his house, we raised a $20,000 reward, an enormous sum for the time.

Importantly, each donor agreed to sign his or her name to a full-page advertisement in the Sunday paper. Approximately 300 well-known donorsdeclared in the reward announcement, "We are determined that those who commit secret acts of violence will not control this community."

A skilled state investigator, Lt. Harry Sums, who identified and arrested the shooter, said it was the reward — not a stricken conscience — that persuaded one of the thugs to turn state's evidence that resulted in a conviction.

As rare as it was for an all-white jury to convict a white man for the murder of a black man, the struggle to create a united community was not over.

Simmersing beneath the surface was — and is today — a layer of distrust put there by the drastically different histories of blacks and whites. A spark can flare into a major incident.

A minor incident at an unusually close-knit high school, which in 1971 was integrated by 225 "new" students, provided the spark. Shots were fired into the home of a civil rights leader and armed black men patrolled the neighborhood.

In the midst of what could have been a Ferguson-level riot, or worse, an undisciplined police force staged a sit-down strike against a city manager who denied officers' demands for shotguns and riot gear as inciting violence.

State police came in, led by a seasoned officer, Maj. Bill Jones, and restored order. Jones was persuaded to stay on as "police administrator" his reforms created a trained and professional force.

With calm restored, the community went about the business of building a structure, which reached deep in the leadership of both communities. The Committee of Unified Leadership met every Tuesday morning with the first order of business, "Are there any crisis problems?"

This history is recited not in a boastful way but to indicate that a more unified community does not come quickly or easily, that it will not be aided by a national commission on police-community relations or on the demilitarization of police forces. It certainly will not come from street protests in Ferguson or other major American cities.

It will come from the good will and talents of local people in Ferguson.

Ferguson's fruits of neglect

A person poses for a photo for his friend in front of a burning Title Max Loans business along West Florissant Avenue on Monday, Nov. 24, 2014. Protesters took to the streets, erupting in mass looting and confrontation with riot police throughout the night, after a grand jury did not indict Ferguson Police Officer Darren Wilson in the shooting death of unarmed teenager Michael Brown.

By By Josh Moon

Montgomery Advertiser, Ala. (TNS)

Dec. 03—One of the most disputed and discussed parts of the killing of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Mo., has been over the final, fatal gunshot from police officer Darren Wilson. That shot was fired at Brown, already hit by five other bullets, was falling to the ground.

Brown Family supporters claim the shot was fired as Brown, already hit by five other bullets, was falling to the ground.

The witnesses offered conflicting testimonies, although most provided details that aligned with the latter theory. It's likely we'll never know for sure. But we should respect Wilson's decision to wear a body camera. There would likely be no riots. There would likely be far fewer problems in Ferguson between police and residents.

If only the cops there had been like cops here. In Pravittille, officers have been wearing body camera recordings available to anyone at any time. Never hide anything.

I've heard board chairmen tell board members to stop discussing matters in private. I've watched boards that don't have prior committee meetings cast votes to spend hundreds of thousands of tax dollars without a word of discussion. I've watched attorneys for some boards approve a private, "executive session" for reasons that fail to meet Alabama's Open Meetings Act standards. And it happens all the time.

The same goes for limiting access to public documents — there should be none. But there is. Try to get information out of the University of Alabama or Auburn University sometime. A few years ago, I filed an Alabama Open Records Act request with all public universities in the state requesting the amount of painkillers — specifically the non-narcotic drug Toradol — they gave to student-athletes. Troy University responded almost immediately with the information requested. The Alabama system declined it, citing student privacy laws, despite the fact that the request — and a subsequent phone conversation — explained clearly that specific student info wasn't requested. That request is still pending. It was filed in 2012.

Reporters who cover Auburn athletics say there are well over 100 requests for public information that have been outstanding for more than two years.

The Advertiser's James Crepea filed a few years ago requesting the costs AU paid to hire a security firm to watch over football players. It was eventually filled -- five months later.

Auburn billed the Advertiser for gathering that info. It charged us for two hours of work. Two hours, five months. This is an issue you have to care about. These people -- the cops, the lawmakers, the university employees, the board members -- they all work for you.

There is no reason cops shouldn't wear body cameras, that public meetings shouldn't actually be held in public or that public documents shouldn't be readily accessible to anyone in a timely matter. Ever. This is the public's business. This is your business.

You better start caring.

Commentary

Public's right to know should be valued

By By Josh Moon

Montgomery Advertiser, Ala. (TNS)

Sheriff's deputies will begin wearing cameras next year. And the Montgomery Police Department will start equipping its officers with cameras as soon as it raises the funds. Good for all of you. This is a win all the way around.

These tiny cameras don't restrain officers in any way, but they do restrain a multitude of problems. Like frivolous lawsuits. Like bogus claims against cops. Like the questions of police misconduct.

Most importantly, these cameras can be instrumental in achieving a public's trust in the officers who are risking their lives to protect it.

With that in mind, here's a suggestion for local PDs and sheriff's offices: Make those body camera recordings available to anyone at any time. Never hide anything.

We have a bad problem in this state with public officials conducting public business in private. If you doubt that, go to a board meeting sometime -- any board meeting. Listen to the discussion, or lack thereof, over important votes. It's nonexistent.

I've heard board members tell board members to stop discussing matters in private. If you doubt that, go to a board meeting sometime -- any board meeting. Listen to the discussion, or lack thereof, over important votes. It's nonexistent.

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Don’t rave to the grave

Raves and electronic dance music are not only about using drugs, proponents say

By Robert Craig

Although rave culture promotes well-being, the heavy drug use at such events is becoming more well-known than the events themselves. According to “Money, Music, and Molly,” an article by India Thompson in the Music Business Journal published at Berklee College of Music, MDMA has been named the cause of death in numerous cases this year in New York, Boston and Washington D.C., as well as 36 MDMA-related hospitalizations after an Avicii concert in Boston on June 25.

Consequently, many people think that raves are only about drug use, that the heavy bass and bright lights only attract the type of people who wish to dance the night away in a clouded haze of sweat and distorted visuals.

But proponents of the electronic dance music community say that rave culture employs a whole different state of being: to come as you are, no questions asked, and just be yourself and have fun.

Throughout the rave community is a well-known acronym, which is ultimately the raver’s mantra: PLUR. This stands for peace, love, unity and respect among all ravers and is meant to be carried into the outside world.

Closely associated with the term PLUR is another item specific to the rave community. Many rave-goers make bracelets out of pony beads and similar lettered beads meant for spreading the PLUR message. These bracelets are called kandi (candy) and have become a large part of rave culture.

Kandi bracelets are usually made by ravers before large events and are intended for trading. Ravers created a special handshake used for trading kandi in which they make peace signs and heart shapes with their fingers before grabbing each other’s hands and locking them into a fist shape to pull the bracelet from one person’s arm to the other.

While kandi is meant to spread peace, love, unity and respect, these bracelets are now banned at some rave events and labeled as drug paraphernalia.

In February 2014, Diplo, a popular Miami-based DJ and producer, personally banned kandi at his own events.

In a tweet, Diplo explained why he started to ban kandi at his events. “I never wear Kandi and I understand it’s not drug related culture inherently. We just had serious issues with kids hiding it,” he tweeted.

“There was a definite relationship between safety and security [with kandi] and made it so we had to ban certain items.”

It has been rumored that many people wearing kandi were sneaking drugs such as LSD and Molly into events by hiding the drugs in their bracelets.

But proponents of rave culture say that rave culture promotes well-being, the heavy drug use at such events is becoming more well-known than the events themselves. According to “Money, Music, and Molly,” an article by India Thompson in the Music Business Journal published at Berklee College of Music, MDMA has been named the cause of death in numerous cases this year in New York, Boston and Washington D.C., as well as 36 MDMA-related hospitalizations after an Avicii concert in Boston on June 25.

Consequently, many people think that raves are only about drug use, that the heavy bass and bright lights only attract the type of people who wish to dance the night away in a clouded haze of sweat and distorted visuals.

But proponents of the electronic dance music community say that rave culture employs a whole different state of being: to come as you are, no questions asked, and just be yourself and have fun.

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Diplo tweeted: “All I care about is people coming to enjoy music and having a safe and good time. Everything else is secondary. I would trade 100,000 angry ravers to have 100 percent safe and happy street parties like when we started it in Philly six years ago.”

Diplo, like other DJs and festival coordinators, such as TomorrowWorld and Electric Daisy Carnival, has teamed up with organizations like DanceSafe, an organization that promotes health, well-being and drug education at raves and other EDM events.

DanceSafe is a San Diego-based non-profit organization started by Emanuel Sferios in 1998. According to DanceSafe’s website, the public health organization has two fundamental operation principles: harm reduction and popular education.

“The idea that any and all risks from any activity could be eliminated is not one that I personally subscribe to,” said Mitchell Gomez, National Outreach Director for DanceSafe. “Even when individuals are shown the inherent risks in certain behavior, many will continue this behavior. Once this is accepted, society is presented with two choices: to pretend that this risky behavior isn’t happening, or to accept that it is happening and do what we can to help mitigate it. I prefer the latter.”

“The purpose of DanceSafe is not to condone or promote drug use, but rather provide a non-judgmental perspective to help support people who use drugs in making informed decisions about their health and safety, according to their website.

“I think by far the two biggest issues with raves and festivals are over-crowding and lack of access to water,” Gomez said.

“From small warehouse parties to massive festivals, we constantly see that most health issues are directly related to these two problems.”

As the popularity of EDM rises, experts say it is a good idea to be aware of what raves and other EDM events have in store for both rave veterans and newcomers. Illegal substances do, indeed, make their way into the hands of many ravers, they say, although rave enthusiasts insist EDM always has been, and always will be, about the positive energy, the mutual camaraderie among ravers, and the music.

Some, like Diplo, may not be convinced.

“I have thick skin, so you guys that consider yourselves PLUR can attack me all you want,” Diplo continued in his tweet on the banning of kandi. “It doesn’t bother me. I’m just here for the music.”

Contact Robert Craig at communitarian@mail.dccc.edu
Arts and Entertainment

By Mack Fox
Special to The Communitarian

The sun shone bright through the glass walls of Longwood Gardens’ four-acre conservatory Nov. 10, bringing emphasis to the vibrant colors of its Chrysanthemum Festival and its 80,000 plus blooms.

“They’re all [grown] with lights in the greenhouse across the street because chrysanthemums like no light,” said employee Suzanne Breiseth. “They bloom when the days are shorter. We bring them out when they are in buds, so that they won’t bloom until we get them out here for the exhibit.”

According to the garden’s guidebook, the methods behind cultivating chrysanthemums into such unique formations originate from Asian traditions. To emphasize this, Longwood Gardens offered Asian inspired celebrations on the nights of Nov. 7 and 8, such as lantern making, a festival parade, performances by dragon dancers, and hundreds of floating lanterns in their exhibition hall.

Volunteers assisted with the striking amount of work. One such individual, who preferred to be known only as “Chris,” said she volunteers several days every month. “We have 700 volunteers, but they’re not all in the Conservatory,” Chris said. “We have greenhouses, we have outside workers, and we have a potting shed, and we have people who weed. That’s where the 700 volunteers come in. We have many jobs. A lot of them work in the office or the library.”

When the festival opened, visitors were able to stroll through the exhibits, stopping to admire plants, take photos, or have a seat by one of the various fountains throughout the building. When the festival opened, visitors were able to stroll through the exhibits, stopping to admire plants, take photos, or have a seat by one of the various fountains throughout the building.

Having opened on Oct. 25 and remaining so until Nov. 23, the festival greeted visitors right through the front door with its Thousand Bloom Mum, which boasted more than 1515 white and yellow flower blossoms on a single plant. “It’s the biggest that’s ever been done here,” Breiseth said. “In this hemisphere it’s the biggest to be grown. Last year our bloom was 1365. Each year we get more on one plant. It’s the most labor intensive [display]. That’s why it’s 17 months in the works.”

In addition to the white and yellow petals of the Thousand Bloom, the room was aglow with oranges, pinks, scarlets, purples, and reds that showed off the great diversity of the chrysanthemum. Across the room a different display showed 114 different varieties of the flower grafted onto the same plant. From the ceiling hung chandeliers compiled of many potted-plants to form colossal cascading shapes.

Further down the Conservatory halls, another display served to distinguish the 13 different classifications of chrysanthemums: Irregular Incurve, Reflex, Regular Incurve, Decorative, Intermediate Incurve, Single and Semi-Double, Pompon, Anemone, Spoon, Quill, Spider, Brush and Thistle, and Exotic or Unclassified.

Throughout the hall’s conservancy were numerous additional displays, showcasing the diversity of the chrysanthemum from both the ground level floor to the bloom covered pillars and the displays suspended overhead.

The main building, Breiseth said, has been in place since it was commissioned by Pierre duPont in 1921, and some of the flowers and other plants have been there just as long, though their exact identifications are kept secretive to protect them. One might think that a great deal of work had concluded for Longwood Gardens, but the staff is already preparing for the next exhibit.

“It’s the same with the Christmas design,” Breiseth said. “Next year’s Christmas design is already in the works.”

The Thousand Bloom Mum, which Longwood Gardens proclaims to be Chrysanthemum Festival’s “crown jewel,” stood just beyond the entrance of the Conservatory. Boasting 1,515 flowers arranged upon a single plant, it stood as the largest of its kind to ever exist outside of Asia.

Photo by Mack Fox

Chrysanthemums of various colors adorned Longwood Gardens’ conservancy’s main building and many of its halls. Even pillars were wrapped in flowers while large bloom chandeliers hang from above.

Photo by Mack Fox

Mums exhibit delights visitors at Longwood Gardens

By Mack Fox
Special to The Communitarian

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The diversity of Chrysanthemums was highlighted by a Longwood Gardens display that showcased 114 different varieties grafted onto the same plant.

Photo by Mack Fox

Photo by Mack Fox
Review: ‘Buried Child’ found on Marple Campus

By Rob Buffum

In 1978 Sam Shepard wrote “Buried Child,” a play about the American dream gone wrong. Thirty-six years later, DCCC students and faculty bring this timeless classic back to life for DCCC students. It is truly something to be seen, as its theme is just as relevant today as it was when it was written.

In Act I, Dodge’s character, brought to life by Rahjul Young, spends the majority of the time being pestered and bothered by his family while sneaking drinks from a bottle hidden in the couch. His wife Halie, played by both Madalyn DeFelice and Samantha Angeline, is introduced off stage as she hampers Dodge while preparing to go out with Father Dewis, her reviver and lover. Tilden, played by Joseph Acquaye and Alex Novak, staggered onto stage with an armful of corn that he claims to have picked out back in the rain, although Dodge claims to have not planted corn in more than 30 years.

We finally see Halie as she enters the room and goes hysterical at the mess Tilden has made shucking the corn all over the floor. She leaves, instructing Dodge to tell Tilden to stay inside and watch his father. Dodge falls asleep listening to Tilden tell what he’s done while he was missing the last 20 years. Tilden then covers his father in the husks of corn, steals his whiskey and goes back into the fields. Bradley, portrayed by Terence Stroman and Andrew Haase, is the final character we meet in Act I. Bradley had an unfortunate accident with a chainsaw and now wears a prosthetic leg that he has great difficulty using.

Bradley staggered up to the sleeping Dodge and takes a set of hair clippers to his head as the lights drop on Act I, leaving us to believe he has given his father a butchered haircut. Act II begins with Vince, played by Erick Rathman and Sean Campbell, and his girlfriend Shelly, played by Amanda Lewis and Kweinyon Kannah, on a cross country trip to visit Tilden who they believe is in New Mexico. They have stopped on the way to visit Vince’s grandparents, whom he has not seen in several years.

Tilden then returns from the fields with an armful of carrots he has pulled behind the house. Again Dodge claims nothing has grown out back since the dustbowl.

Neither Dodge nor Tilden seem to recognize Vince, and Shelly is convinced that they have entered the wrong house. Eventually, Dodge sends Vince out to get him another bottle, and the men of the family begin to interrogate and inform Shelly about their family and their macabre secret, a child born of Halie and Tilden that Dodge had killed and buried in the fields years before.

At the end of Act II Shelly has had her fur coat taken by Tilden, who wanders about the stage with it, holding it like a baby. Bradley questions her and even goes as far as to stick his fingers in her mouth. All of them eventually fall asleep and the lights go down.

Act III begins with Dodge presuming that Vince has run away and left Shelly. He tells her not to fear Bradley as he only has one leg. He informs her that the best way to deal with him is to take his leg and throw it out in the back yard.

Shortly after, Halie and father Dewis, played by Steven Travers and Bryan Tate, arrive at the house to find Shelly drinking a cup of bullion that she made for Dodge.

Halie begins a screaming match with Dodge and Bradley, who claims that Shelly is a prostitute. Shelly attempts to tell Halie that she is Vince’s girlfriend and they have come to visit them, yet Halie continues to believe she is a trespasser.

Frustrated, Shelly grabs Bradley’s wooden leg and brandishes it like a sword to fend off the family, finally throwing it across the room to the family’s astonishment.

Finally, Vince returns, drunk and throwing bottles at the house. He then cuts a hole in the screen door and enters the house that way. Halie and Dodge finally recognize Vince, and Dodge decides to give him the house and land. Shelly and Vince argue over whether they will stay or not. After finally convincing Vince to keep the house, Shelly decides to leave and go back home. Vince grabs Bradley’s wooden leg and throws it out the back door.

As Bradley is crawling across the floor to get his leg, Father Dewis leaves and Halie goes up to her room. Vince seems to be the only one who realizes Dodge has died, and places a blanket over him and a flower on top.

As the lights go down Halie is telling Dodge about all the crops that she sees outside in the fields, not realizing he is dead.

“You can’t force a thing to grow,” Halie says. “You can’t interfere with it. It’s all hidden. It’s all unseen. You just gotta wait til it pops up out of the ground. Tiny little shoot. Tiny little white shoot. All hairy and fragile. Strong enough to break the earth even. It’s a miracle.”

Finally, we see Tilden, returned from the fields once again, this time holding the skeleton to the buried child.

“Buried Child” ran from Nov 12-22. This spring, the department will be performing a musical. In the opinion of this critic, it is surely one to watch out for.

For more information, contact Rob Buffum at Communitarian@mail.dccc.edu
Ferguson police to recruit more blacks; Darren Wilson gets no severance

By Kurtis Lee
Los Angeles Times
(TNS)

Nov. 30—The mayor of Ferguson, Mo., announced Sunday that the city would establish a civilian review board to monitor police conduct and would actively recruit more African American officers.

But Mayor James Knowles III said there would be no imminent changes in the leadership of the Police Department.

Knowles' remarks at a news conference came a day after Officer Darren Wilson resigned from the police force in the wake of violence and international criticism over Wilson's killing of Michael Brown, an unarmed 18-year-old black man.

The mayor said the proposed changes would help improve the predominantly white police department's relationship with Ferguson's predominantly African American residents.

"We are committed to rebuilding our city," Knowles said. "And a part of that is having officers invested in the community."

Over the next several months, Knowles said, the city will unveil a program in local public schools that will seek to forge a bond between police officers and young people. That is in addition to the planned civilian review board and the recruitment of more African Americans.

"We are here for you and will not leave you," Knowles told residents.

For much of the last week, sometimes-violent protests have roiled the St. Louis suburb of about 21,000 after a grand jury declined to indict Wilson, who shot and killed Brown on Aug. 9.

When Wilson resigned Saturday, he said in a letter that he was told his "continued employment may put the residents and police officers of the city of Ferguson at risk."

"It is my hope that my resignation will allow the community to heal," Wilson wrote. "I would like to thank all of my supporters and fellow officers throughout this process."

Wilson's lawyer, Neil Bruntrager, said the officer had resigned after learning of threats of violence against other officers and the department.

Knowles said Sunday he was unaware of any specific threats to Wilson and did not give him a deadline for a resignation. He also said that Wilson did not receive severance pay.

Ferguson Police Chief Tom Jackson said Sunday he would not resign, despite widespread criticism from protesters and calls for him to step down.

"My focus has been on safety and security of citizens," Jackson said. "I report to the leadership of Ferguson. I'm concerned about the city. I will not resign."

Jackson said he spoke with Wilson last week and was unaware of any specific threats to him. But Jackson added, "It's been a threatening environment all along. Everybody knows that."

Knowles said that the city will do everything in its power to help the businesses that burned in the riots rebuild as soon as possible. As of now, he said, there is no cost estimate for the damaged property in Ferguson.

Missouri Gov. Jay Nixon has called a special legislative session so lawmakers can allocate state funds for rebuilding efforts in Ferguson.

The U.S. Department of Justice is conducting a civil investigation into the Ferguson Police Department to see if it has a pattern of using excessive force or racial profiling. The Justice Department is also conducting a criminal investigation of Wilson, but experts say that a federal indictment is unlikely because the government would have to prove that Wilson purposely violated Brown's civil rights.

Curtis Minter, right, of Akron, Ohio, at the memorial to Michael Brown in the Canfield Apartment complex in Ferguson, Mo., on Saturday, Nov. 29, 2014. "This case has too many unanswered questions not to deserve a trial," Minter said.

(Christian Gooden/St. Louis Post-Dispatch/TNS)
FSU shooting: Students tell of chaotic moments in library

By Anne Geggis and Marisa Gottesman
Sun Sentinel
(TNS)

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla._Kevin Kaminski's head had just hit the pillow early Thursday morning when he was jolted awake by his cellphone lighting up with a call from his daughter.

Before he even answered the call just before 1 a.m., he said he was fearing the worst — and his worst fears were soon realized when his daughter, Jackie, 18, of Lake Worth, told him that she was on the second floor of the Florida State University's Strozier Library, a floor above a gunman on the loose.

"The first word she spoke, I could tell that something was really wrong," said her father, an editor at Boca Magazine. "She said, 'Dad, I'm in the library on campus. We're hiding. There's a gunman on the floor below me.'"

Kaminski's father said he just about dropped the phone when she told him why she was calling. "It's the most shocking news you could possibly hear," he said.

Jackie Kaminski, a 2014 graduate of Suncoast High School, said she had been working on a chemistry lab report with friends and just returned to the library from getting Dunkin' Donuts coffee when things went haywire.

"I hadn't been back five minutes when I hear the shots go off," she said. "At first I didn't realize what it was. But then everyone was freaking out. People were coming up from the first floor trying to get away from it."

She was part of a stampede of 80 people toward the back of the library, behind the bookshelves. She first called 911, where she was told to stay put and that help was on the way. And then she called her dad.

Afraid that being on the phone would attract the gunman's notice, Kevin Kaminski said he told his daughter to get off the phone. And they communicated by text after that.

The danger was over within 15 minutes, heralded by an announcement from the library's intercom. She called her dad back. "A rush of relief flooded over him at the sound of his daughter's voice 450 miles away, telling him the gunman was stopped."

But there was no going to sleep for either of them. Concerned about those who had been hurt, he went on social media sites such as Twitter and Facebook to see what information was coming out. Meanwhile, Jackie Kaminski was stuck at the library until 4:30 a.m. as police went floor by floor, making sure everything was clear, she said.

FSU student Tiffany Knight, 19, of Palm Beach Gardens, an FSU sophomore who is an aspiring communications major, was working on a paper on the third floor of the Strozier library when she heard two noises that sounded like very faint shots that reminded her of fireworks, she said.

"The whole room chuckled and exchanged words like that wouldn't happen to us," Knight said. "We would hear screaming or an alarm."

Seconds later, the sound of an alarm did go off, confirming the students' fear that they really did hear gunshots, not celebratory fireworks, she said.

"My stomach dropped," she said. "We all just gave a blank stare to each other."

She said a woman announced there was a man with a gun in the building. Before the announcer could finish telling the students to stay put, the group began rushing to the back of the building toward a fire exit, Knight said.

Knight followed two men down the stairs, she said. "I heard screams and people yelling at me to go," she said.

She came out on the side of the building, where she saw police.

"I was shaken up," she said. "But I thought we would be OK because cops were there."

She said she called her mom to say she was fine when she heard "rapid gunfire" behind her. "I didn't even look behind me to see who was shooting," she said. "I just ran the opposite way."

She said it was difficult to be on campus Thursday. "I am thankful I wasn't on the first floor to see anything," she said. "I feel like I would be more traumatized."

Students comfort each other the morning of Thursday, Nov. 20, 2014 after the previous night's shooting at Florida State University's Strozier Library in Tallahassee, Fla. (Kathleen McGrory/Miami Herald/TNS)
By Pete Grathoff
The Kansas City Star
(TNS)

Five St. Louis Rams players took the field for Sunday’s game against the Raiders in St. Louis with their hands raised. It was to show their support for protesters in Ferguson, Mo., and around the country who are angered that former police officer Darren Wilson was not indicted by a grand jury for the killing of Michael Brown. “I just think there has to be a change,” tight end Jared Cook told the Associated Press. “There has to be a change that starts with the people that are most influential around the world. “No matter what happened on that day, no matter how the whole situation went down, there has to be a change.” The other players were Tavon Austin, Kenny Britt, Stedman Bailey and Chris Givens. The players’ action angered the St. Louis Police Officers Association. In a news release, the Association’s business manager, Jeff Roorda, called for “the players involved to be disciplined and for the Rams and the NFL to deliver a very public apology.” The NFL said the players would not be punished for their actions, according to USA Today.
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Mexico thieves stealing billions in oil, gasoline from country's pipelines

By Tim Johnson McClatchy Foreign Staff (TNS)

HUIMANGUILLO, Mexico _ The big-time gasoline thieves had already come and gone during the wee hours, filling their tanker trucks with stolen fuel and then fleeing. Then dawn broke, and word spread that a crime gang had again tapped into a gasoline pipeline, and it was spewing fuel into a ditch. At first, only a few farmers showed up, carrying plastic jerry cans. Then dozens. Then even more. All were eager to collect what spilled fuel they could. Gasoline fumes filled the air, and puddles of rainwater and gasoline spread amid a drizzle. “This is a gift from God,” said one of the farmers, who gave only his first name, Frank, as he partially filled a 5-gallon white plastic container with gasoline. Mexico is plagued by rampant energy theft. In the first eight months of this year, 7.5 million barrels went missing, a rate of about 30,000 52-gallon barrels a day, enough to fill a fleet of more than 100 tanker trucks. Organized crime groups are behind much of the theft, which occurs along a network of pipelines that carry gasoline, diesel, crude oil, natural gas and petrochemicals around the nation. The problem just keeps getting worse. In 2000, Mexico tallied 155 cases of fuel theft from pipelines. Since then, it’s been a steady climb. In 2012, thieves drilled 1,635 illegal taps. That number grew to 2,614 in 2013. This year, the number of illegal taps is expected to top 3,000. Constant spills caused by the theft spoil the environment and rob Mexicans of a valuable resource. But the piracy also may crimp Mexico’s success in opening its energy sector to international investment. In early 2015, for the first time in eight decades, Mexico will allow foreign companies to bid for concessions and explore for energy on its soil or in its offshore waters. To deal with the piracy, and a web of corruption surrounding stolen fuel, foreign companies operating in Mexico will have to budget for high security costs. Weak penalties for stealing oil and gasoline have exacerbated the problem.
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