DCCC renovates Marple Campus... again

By Maryleigh Sharp

DCCC is undergoing phase 3 of its campus wide renovations, some of which are scheduled to be finished by Spring 2015.

Phase 1 focused on improving the STEM Building and Advanced Technology Building. Phase 2 focused on converting the library to a Learning Commons and making better use of empty space on Marple Campus.

Phase 3 involves renovating parts of the Academic Building and Founders Hall, the latter of which will be started Oct. 20.

The renovations will consist of a new Enrollment Services Center, Institutional Advancement Area, Student Center and Dining/Lounge Expansion.

The staff in the Enrollment Service Center will also be fully upgraded, which means students will work with current and new staff to make registering for classes easier, as well as getting help with financial aid, DCCC President Jerry Parker said.

“I was thinking we would never be able to do this because it is so costly,” said Parker, adding, “[but] integrating all of these [services] will be better for all of the students.”

Admissions, Cashier, Customer Service, Financial Aid and Records will all be in one area instead of in different buildings. Students will receive an appointment ticket and if they can not meet at that time, they will have a smart phone app to tell them when to come back, Parker said.

“I wish they had this process when I was here,” said Sofia Deliopoulos, a psychology major at DCCC. “I hate the fact that after I am leaving this semester, everything is going on at DCCC.”

After completion, students using the Dining/Lounge area will be able to sit in front of the glass windows or in a separate room to do homework while eating.

With the new Student Center, students will have all their clubs and extra-curricular activities in one general area. Students who play sports can visit Andrew Johnson, director of Wellness/Athletics/Recreation, or learn about clubs on campus from Amy Williams Gaudioso, director of Campus Life.

“I am a full-time student and it’s easier to find Amy Williams Gaudioso now if I have any questions about the clubs because I didn’t even know she had an office before,” said Brandon Bronson, computer science major at DCCC.

According to a campus-wide letter released by Tony DeLuca, director of Plant Operations and Construction Services, the replacement of the six original elevators in both the Academic and Founders Hall Buildings will also begin on Oct. 1.

“There will be signs posted for safe travel around the areas as well as security present at times needed to help with directions,” DeLuca stated in a letter released Sept. 15.

Although the construction is scheduled to end Spring 2015, Parker said, “We are ahead of schedule.”

Contact Maryleigh Sharp at communitarian@dccc.edu

A different Eng. Comp. II in the works?

Check out clubs at different campuses

Volunteer and reduce student loan debt

Students weigh in on tobacco ban

The NFL under attack

Fear factors: Ebola, ISIS or the common flu?

Race at the box office

Audra McLaughlin rocks DCCC

Ciara Harrison, a psychology major at DCCC, gets an opportunity to meet with performer Audra McLaughlin at the Fall Festival on Sept. 23.

By Rob Buffum

“I have always loved the medical field as well as helping people,” said Audra McLaughlin, a recent contestant on “The Voice,” in a recent telephone interview. “In music you help people as well, but I was unsure if I could make it in the music industry so I picked the medical assistant program so I could help people.”

Like many DCCC students, McLaughlin changed her major more than once. Her journey to find herself took her from a psychology major to liberal arts and most recently back to the medical assistant program at DCCC.

McLaughlin said she never imagined she would be where she is today.
Audra McLaughlin sang “Breaking Through,” an anti-bullying song she wrote, at the DCCC Fall Festival on Sept. 23. The Fall Festival is an opportunity for students to get to know DCCC’s student organizations and clubs. (continued from page 1)

Most recently she has been in Nashville working on her first single, “Wish I Could,” with Sean Lacy which was released Sept. 22, the day before her performance at the Fall Festival.

Her career began in Delaware County, she said.

Before “The Voice” McLaughlin joined the Delaware County “Let There Be Rock” school, founded by John and Melissa Daley.

The school serves Delaware County as a combination community center and music school to empower kids to be the next generation of rock stars according to its website.

Shortly after McLaughlin joined the Dauleys, they asked her if they could send an audition video to producers at “The Voice.” “Two weeks later, McLaughlin found herself in New York City for a private audition for the show.”

The next thing she knew, she was in LA in front of the show’s producers. They called her shortly after and told her she had made the cut to the blind auditions. Photogenics, Photogenics is currently writing her first solo EP.

Audra McLaughlin sang her newest song “Wish I Could” at the Fall Festival. The song was released Sept 23. McLaughlin, a DCCC alumna, was a finalist on “The Voice” last season. She is currently writing her first solo EP.

Welcome Back Social gives new opportunities for DCCC students

By James Pearson

DCCC’s Campus Life Office offered its Welcome Back Social to students at the Upper Darby Center Sept. 18.

The event encouraged students interested in creating, joining a club or student government branch. Tables were set up in the Upper Darby Center, while the presenters waited for students to finish classes. Once students began congregating to the tables, Assistant Director of Campus Life Allyson Yacovett and Student Activities Coordinator Richard Smith began answering questions.

During the process students decorated sugar cookies and enjoyed iced tea and water as Yacovett discussed the services and programs offered.

“Clubs are open to anyone as long as you’re a student,” Yacovett said. “But the clubs are in the recruiting process so we’ll need to see if they will become active for students to join.”

According to Yacovett, the process for starting a club involves three factors. At least eight clubs need to be active on campus for it to be considered for membership. The club listing for the next semester included 40 clubs that were active on each of the campuses. Film club is the only active club so far that is accessible on DCCC’s Upper Darby campus, added Yacovett.

“McLaughlin’s blind audition was recorded on the first day of filming. Her rendition of John Prine’s ‘Angel from Montgomery’ quickly won her favor from all four judges. “I was so overwhelmed when I saw all the chairs turn around for me,” McLaughlin said of her experience on The Voice. “I was so nervous but definitely excited at the same time. It was a crazy experience. I was standing in front of four [music] idols. I remember laughing the whole time because I didn’t know what to say. At the time it felt like a dream.”

Back home, she had to keep quiet about how she did until the show had aired. On May 6 the episode during which McLaughlin was sent home aired. She said it saddened her to leave the show, yet she was grateful for the opportunity it gave her to work with such talented musicians.

Since then McLaughlin has been working on writing songs for her debut EP album. "I felt proud to see that someone from my school was on ‘The Voice.’ She brought positive attention to our awesome school.”

Audra McLaughlin sang “Breaking Through,” an anti-bullying song she wrote, at the DCCC Fall Festival on Sept. 23. The Fall Festival is an opportunity for students to get to know DCCC’s student organizations and clubs.
Students respond to the question, "How do you feel about the tobacco-free campus here at DCCC?"

By Nicole Ryder

Special to The Communitarian

“I like it because it keeps the campus cleaner, but I’m a smoker and it’s annoying to have to go off campus during my breaks to smoke.”

Kaitlyn Meckley, 19, West Chester, Business Major

“I think it’s nice. I don’t smoke [but] it doesn’t bother me when others do.”

Brianna McCanley, 20, Bryn Mawr, Liberal Arts Major

“There should be an area that’s…equipped with a place to dispose your butts.”

Rachel Juliano, 28, Havertown, Business Major

“Their location is a little harder to find in certain cases, but they’re generally well placed throughout campus.”

Tom DeFalvio, 18, Drexel Hill, Liberal Arts Major

“I enjoy it very much because I can just go throughout the business of my day without having to choke on cigarette smoke.”

By Robert Craig

After Beckie Northwood graduated high school, she was excited to begin college. But despite an earnest desire to study public health, her current major, Northwood said she did not anticipate the rigorous study of literature in her English Composition II class.

At DCCC, most students must take English Composition II. Writing about literature, otherwise known as ENG 112, transfer or earn an associate’s degree.

“Having such a strong focus on literature made writing the papers a lot less interesting for me…,” Northwood said. “My papers lacked any true depth due to the fact that I was simply uninterested in the topic.”

For more than 20 years the best way to teach college freshman composition has been a debate among scholars and professors of English. In a scholarly article titled “Freshmen Composition: No Place For Literature,” written in 1993, author Erika Lindemann writes that freshman English students should provide opportunities for students to master the genres, styles, audiences and purposes of college writing.

However, Lindemann maintains that studying a work of literature and focusing on writing an essay about it can amount to collapsing the discourses of the academy into one genre (literature). This can limit the students’ abilities to practice other forms of writing and experience other perspectives because of too strong an emphasis on analyzing the literature, rather than solid writing training, she believes.

Some English faculty at DCCC agree, saying that students would be better served by offering them a choice. Consequently, these faculty are attempting to implement a new, non-literature based writing course, ENG 113: Persuasive Writing, which is the college’s writing title.

According to Shannon Bullock, the College Advisory System (CAS) faculty delegate, ENG 113 focuses on rhetoric and argumentation, not literature, as the central focus for teaching students how to write. “It is intended to be a continuation of critical thinking and writing skills that would serve as an alternative to ENG 112, Bullock said.

This course is currently under review by the CAS, but the college is drawing closer to a decision. It has not yet been submitted for the final formal evaluation, but Bullock said that if and when it is approved, the course could be available for students as early as Spring 2005.

Meanwhile, ENG 113 has been approved for transfer to area universities as a second-level composition course. “West Chester University, Shippensburg University, Neumann University, and Harcum University have deemed ENG 113 worthy of transfer credit,” said Dr. David Freeman, assistant professor of English, in an email.

But according to Bullock, ENG 113 will not meet the prerequisite requirements for DCCC’s higher level literature courses such as Children’s Literature, Contemporary Literature and World Literature.

Although ENG 112 will not be removed from the college’s course catalogue, ENG 113 will be a second option for students who would rather not focus on literature in a writing course, Bullock said.

Some English faculty believe that there is always a place for literature in the study of English composition. But, according to Matthew Wilsey-Cleveland, assistant professor of English, there is also room for a second choice.

“The curriculum for ENG 113 would include more rigorous and complex research-based assignments that focus on more sophisticated registers of critical analyses,” said Wilsey-Cleveland in an email. “Rather than literary analysis and fictional texts covered in ENG 112, the new ENG 113 would be driven by composition and rhetorical theory and purpose real world and professional contexts.”

According to Wilsey-Cleveland, to further the intense study of rhetorical analysis, ENG 113 can offer students the study of document design, visual rhetoric, technical communication conventions in business and scientific fields, and body language.

“My perspective is that students would greatly benefit from engaging in such study precisely because the knowledge and skills they acquire can be directly applied to the world they live in and the careers they are striving to realize,” Wilsey-Cleveland added. “Good writing varies from genre to genre. A compelling business proposal or scientific report won’t have all the same qualities as a moving novel. There are certainly crossover skills but by and large different types of writing require different focuses and mastery of different skills.”

Wilsey-Cleveland believes that literature offers many things technical writing does not, but the reverse is also true.

While many professors of English at the college are interested in being a part of this shift from literature to rhetoric, some professors believe that literature still has a place in college composition courses.

“One of the reasons we study literature is to understand the human condition,” said Elizabeth Gray, assistant professor of English, who received a Masters of Fine Arts degree in poetry. “I think studying literature gives students problem-solving skills… as well as an in-depth look at the things that connect us, that make us human.”

Although Gray does understand the relevance of literature in composition courses, she also believes that the potential implementation of ENG 113 isn’t such a bad idea because it would allow for more flexibility for the faculty who create program curriculums.

“I think that anyone could benefit from studying literature and the beautiful works,” said Gray. “We have denied students who are seeking to improve their writing the benefits of reading an entire body of excellent writing.”

Gray also suggested that studying literature gives students an opportunity to examine great models of writing.

In a second scholarly article published in 1993 titled “A Place For Literature in Freshman Composition,” Gary Tate promotes the same idea when explaining what happens when literature is taken out of English composition courses.

“We have denied students who are interested in,” Northwood said. “If I had the opportunity to take a different writing class I would have in a heartbeat.”

Contact Robert Craig at communitarian@mail.dccc.edu

These classic novels are sometimes taught in literature-based English composition courses.

(From left to right: images courtesy of propwize.com, dogecentre.de/illustration.com and whineyforever.com)

“Early peer feedback is crucial for new authors,” wrote Elizabeth Gray, assistant professor of English. "I think writing criticism is inherently positive, and the process of writing for a critique can help you find your voice as a writer.”

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“We have denied students who are seeking to improve their writing the benefits of reading an entire body of excellent writing,” Tate writes. “It is not unlike telling music students that they should not listen to Bach or Mahler.”

Northwood, like other students, she did not get what she hoped for in ENG 112 and wishes ENG 113 had been an option when she was taking English Composition II.

"Most of my assignments were to read, analyze and write a paper on a short story that seemed irrelevant and did not do much in assisting me to improve myself as a writer which I ultimately was more interested in,” Northwood said. “If I had the opportunity to take a different writing class I would have in a heartbeat.”

Contact Robert Craig at communitarian@mail.dccc.edu

These classic novels are sometimes taught in literature-based English composition courses.

(From left to right: images courtesy of propwize.com, dogecentre.de/illustration.com and whineyforever.com)
Encouraging the progress of environmental protection at Delaware County Community College is one of several important initiatives facing the college’s student body.

In Fall 2013 this issue was brought forth to the student community. The Modern Environmental Sustainability Association (MESA), founded by Nick Jackson, was established as the first real student effort towards environmental awareness with the intention of allowing current students a voice in environmental efforts both on and off campus.

In its first academic year, the club started work on an organic garden, adopted a highway for Earth Day, and established a hiking trail for student leisure, enjoyment, and exercise. These projects featured partnerships with the Human Services Club, the Military Club, and the Art Club.

This year, MESA will operate on the basis of two primary concentrations: (1) the continued establishment of an organic community garden to be completed for the spring semester, and (2) the garnering of educative resources to bring to campus on how food production and different health practices correlate with DCCC student-life and the environment. As a club that believes in improving the trajectory of environmental sensitivity at DCCC, MESA provides students with the opportunity to collaborate with others on how to give back to the environment.

Students create MESA to help the earth

Surgical tech students celebrate their profession

Surgical Technology program students concluded National Surgical Technology Week after enjoying a celebratory breakfast Sept 26.
Keep eyes on the road, not your screen

By Delia Franchi
Special to The Communitarian

The dangers and risks of being on the phone while driving, yet some drivers continue to do so because although they recognize that accidents may have happened to other people, they are convinced the accidents won’t happen to them. But the statistics tell another story. The National Safety Council estimates that at least 28 percent of all traffic crashes — or at least 1.6 million crashes each year — involve drivers using cell phones and texting.

We have been warned several times of the dangers and risks of being on the phone while driving, yet some drivers continue to do so because although they recognize that accidents may have happened to other people, they are convinced the accidents won’t happen to them. But the statistics tell another story. The National Safety Council estimates that at least 28 percent of all traffic crashes — or at least 1.6 million crashes each year — involve drivers using cell phones and texting.

Drivers who text should also reflect on the risk, so it just isn’t worth it.

For example, studies have found that texting while driving causes a 400% increase in time spent with eyes off the road. Therefore, even if drivers do check their phones for only five seconds, it’s five seconds of attention lost and possibly five seconds of somebody else’s life or theirs at risk, so it just isn’t worth it.

Some people may say it’s not dangerous to text because they only take their eyes off the road for a few seconds. But consider this report from the Edgar Snyder and Associates Law firm, which stated, “Studies have found that texting while driving causes a 400% increase in time spent with eyes off the road.”

Therefore, even if drivers do check their phones for only five seconds, it’s five seconds of attention lost and possibly five seconds of somebody else’s life or theirs at risk, so it just isn’t worth it.

Drivers who text should also reflect upon the young people who are getting in accidents and aren’t living to graduate, or the regrets you may experience could be so deep, you may not even be able to discuss them in therapy or in your deepest conversations with those who love you.

The Baltimore Ravens, and suspended indefinitely by the NFL while Peterson has been put on the exempt list, barring him from participating in any activities with his current team the Minnesota Vikings, as his case is still being reviewed.

Although I do agree that punishment was needed in the Rice case I do feel, however, that the name bashing of Rice and his wife along with Peterson is excessive and unnecessary.

To be clear: I am not stating that texting while driving is excessive and unnecessary.

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Roger Goodell’s credibility is shot

By Chris Linvill

Ray Rice, former Baltimore Ravens running back, received a two-game suspension after a video was released of him dragging his then fiancée, Janay Palmer, out of an elevator in the Revel Casino and Hotel in February. The video was released right before the NFL preseason started.

While NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell was being scrutinized for administering such a light sentence, a second video from inside the elevator was released, which showed Rice punching and knocking Palmer out. Goodell then placed Rice on indefinite suspension and the Baltimore Ravens released Rice from the team.

Goodell claimed he had no knowledge of the video from inside the elevator, but multiple sources insist that Goodell did have knowledge of the full situation and that there were many other instances for which he should have taken bigger actions against Rice.

One anonymous source from the Associated Press said that Goodell received more information from a voice mail that was left for him and multiple sources from ESPN said that Goodell was told the truth by Rice himself.

What is more disturbing is that TMZ got the video before the NFL. If the NFL actually had access to the video first then it seems like a cover up to everyone else.

Correction

DCCC students explore a hiking trail during an event sponsored by the Modern Environmental and Sustainability Association April 22.

In the May 6, 2014 edition, The Communitarian incorrectly reported that a newly created hiking trail on Marple campus was a collaborative effort of Campus Life and the DCCC Veterans Club. According to Matthew Wilsey-Cleveland, assistant professor of English, and a recent news release the trail was created by the college’s Modern Environmental and Sustainability Association (MESA) in partnership with the Human Services Club, the Military Club, and the Art Club. The college community was invited to walk the trail for the first time April 22. Wilsey-Cleveland and Tanya Gardner, assistant professor of communications studies, were co-faculty advisors at the time. Today the club continues to operate under the advisement of Wilsey-Cleveland and Erica Danowitz, assistant professor and reference librarian.

The Communitarian

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The Communitarian Opinion Policy

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A homeless Chester man, sometimes referred to as the "Music Man," expresses his feelings about hip-hop music. Music man walks around the city of Chester everyday, listening to music, and has been doing that for years, residents say. Most of the music he listens to is from the 80s, and current day music. He says his ultimate goal is for music to be how it was when he was growing up, hence the sign.

Photo by Theodore Miller

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Local News

Chester County ‘Music Man’ protests hip-hop

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- DUAL ADMISSIONS INFO SESSION –

BECOME TEMPLE MADE.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 16, 2014, 6:00 P.M.

Delaware County Community College
Marple Campus, STEM Auditorium

Find out how to complete your bachelor’s degree at Temple’s Philadelphia or Montgomery County campuses.

To register, call 267-468-8111 or visit ambler.temple.edu/TUatDCCC.

TEMPLE UNIVERSITY

Don’t forget: November 1 is the deadline to apply for Spring 2015.
In a continuing pursuit to bring an end to gun violence, the Chester/Delaware County chapter of Heeding God’s Call has organized a “Memorial to Lives Lost to Gun Violence” at Swarthmore Presbyterian Church. It was set up on Sept. 20th by volunteers, dedicated on the morning of the 21st, and is actively located at 727 Harvard Ave. in the town of Swarthmore, Pa. All shirts honor the memories of victims of gun violence, including their names and dates of passing.
Philadelphia Eagles defeated the Washington Redskins by one field goal (37-34) Sept. 21, leaving the Eagles headed into the fourth week undefeated and in first place within the NFC East division. This was the last game of their three-game win streak. The San Francisco 49ers defeated the Eagles (26-21) on Sept. 28, thus ending their win streak.

The NFL doesn’t really care about domestic violence

By Brett Quinn
Special to The Communitarian

In the fall out of the Ray Rice Saga and the handful of other domestic abuse cases involving NFL players that have arisen in the past few months, we have been fed the same statements countless times. We’ve been told this is something that the NFL refuses to tolerate, yet the actions by the league say otherwise.

Commissioner Roger Goodell’s original ruling of suspending Ray Rice for two games was recently upgraded to an indefinite suspension, but the motive behind his decision is questionable. Goodell only decided to increase the suspension when TMZ Sports released a video to the public showing Ray Rice hitting his wife in the face and knocking her unconscious. Public outrage forced Roger Goodell’s hand.

Contrary to what he would like us to think, it was not a decision founded on morals and his desire to “make things right.” Additionally, Goodell needed massive public outcry criticizing his insubstantial two game ban of Rice to even make an official protocol for NFL domestic abuse cases.

Goodell is not alone in his phony actions and statements. The Carolina Panthers allowed Greg Hardy, who was convicted of domestic abuse in the summer, to play for them in week one and only deactivated him after public backlash created a public relations nightmare for them.

The San Francisco 49ers are currently allowing defensive lineman Ray Macdonald to start on their team despite having charges of domestic violence levied against him. Commissioner Goodell also allows this.

The Arizona Cardinals displayed good judgment by immediately deactivating running back Jonathan Dwyer last week as soon as charges surface. It is hard to take that move seriously, however, as a week prior to Dwyer’s arrest, the team signed running back Chris Rainey who has been convicted of both domestic abuse and stalking charges in the past.

Despite all the posturing done by the NFL to appear like they truly care about eradicating domestic violence, there is hardly a single piece of evidence available to show so. Actions speak louder than words, and the NFL’s actions indicate that they do not care about domestic violence; they care only about public perception.
Apathy, not Ebola, is the deadliest disease

By Kyrie O’Connor
Houston Chronicle (MCT)

This week, we’re all really worried about invasions.

First, fueled by our lieutenant governor, we were told to worry about Islamist militants entering the country from our southern border.

That the ‘prayer rug’ found at the border turned out to be an Adidas jersey probably hasn’t slowed anybody down.

Tim told the students at one of our tonier suburban high schools are in a tizzy, worried about the ISIS threat at their doors.

Then Omar Gonzalez, a troubled veteran, breached multiple layers of Keystone Kops to run pell-mell through the White House.

He had 800 rounds of ammo in his car, we were told. That he got into the White House armed with only a pocket knife and his car was blocks away, and that his motives are still unclear, does nothing to calm the roiling public.

Oh, and the Ebola virus came to our shores in the body of Thomas Eric Duncan, who at least went to Dallas, secretly pleasing all of Houston.

Now we’re really going to die.

That we have a fully modern (if somewhat clueless) health system and decent knowledge of epidemiology, yet again, has stopped no one from flipping out.

I don’t know enough about psychology to know why at this particular moment the notion of penetration of our national body is so specifically frightening.

But it’s there.

Ah, but here’s the thing. We have actual, real, serious stuff to worry about and fear, stuff we even have a measure of control over.

The mostly imaginary threats have a gauzy simplicity about them, unlike the real problems. You must know that plain old flu kills on average some 36,000 Americans a year.

A few things are at work here. First, we love going nuts with fear, that frisson of dread that wakes up our hectic but, let’s face it, kind of dull lives.

A small epidemic, a light dusting of terrorists, now that would be something to talk about.

Remember after 9/11 when every one-horse town in America decided it was the next target?

If you get flu shots for yourself and your family and give them a healthy diet to build their immune systems, you’re lessening the real chances of a real epidemic.

You can’t do much about White House security. But would you like to preserve our democracy?

Here’s an easy fix: Vote.

The Omar Gonzalezes are far less of a threat than your chronic civic indifference, which really could bring down the nation we say we love.

As for terror, you may have been complicit in the deaths of 3,328 Americans in 2012, which is more than died in 9/11.

That number represents the people killed by distracted (not drunk) driving in that year.

Put down your stupid cellphone when you’re driving. If you don’t, as of now you’re a greater threat to your neighbors than ISIS.

These are apolitical fixes, applicable to red and blue alike, easy ways to do good.

Are you on board? Good.

So let’s review: Got a flu shot. Vote. Put down your phone. Oh, and calm the heck down.

Apathy, not Ebola, is the deadliest disease

National News

Penn State Brandywine

Find your place at Penn State Brandywine

- Baccalaureate degrees in Business, Biology, Communications, Engineering, Human Development, Information Sciences, Psychology, and more...
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- One-year accelerated RN to BS program offered by Penn State’s College of Nursing
- Convenient class times, free parking, small vibrant campus community
- A world of networking opportunities with more than 600,000 Penn State alumni
- Individualized counseling for transfer students
- Scholarships available

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Kurdish troops, backed by US, British aircraft, recapture key town on Syrian border

By Mitchell Prothero
McClatchy Foreign Staff (MCT)

IRBIL, Iraq _ Kurdish militia have captured a strategic border town on the route between the Islamic State-held cities of Raqqa in Syria and Mosul in Iraq as part of a three-front offensive launched to retake territory lost to the group over the summer, Kurdish officials said Tuesday.

The offensive, which was described as “limited” by a Kurdish security official, was supported by the heaviest anti-Islamic State coalition airstrikes in a week, with warplanes flown by the United States and its allies striking at least 20 targets _ including the first strikes by British planes since Parliament approved military action in Iraq.

Kurdish forces, known as the peshmerga in Iraq, began attacks early Tuesday morning on three fronts _ at the border with Syria at the town of Rabia; at Zummar, a city outside of Mosul; and outside Kirkuk, a city that the peshmerga occupied in June when Iraqi army troops withdrew in the face of the Islamic State’s advance.

Kurdish officials and media reports said that the offensive at Rabia and Zummar, both of which fell to the Islamic State in early August, were going well. There were fewer clear reports about the fighting outside Kirkuk.

The Kurdish offensive marks a resurgence of the peshmerga militia after its lightly armed forces proved no match in August for the heavy weapons employed by the Islamic State, which the insurgent group had captured when it overran Iraqi military positions in June. In the months since, the peshmerga, which is made up of two separate groups each loyal to one of the two main Kurdish political parties, has been reorganized to improve coordination and training and has begun to receive heavier and more advanced weaponry from Western countries.

But whether the quick results at Rabia were a sign of an improved peshmerga was uncertain. Reports indicate that the Islamic State had moved a large number of fighters out of the area to reinforce its units fighting in Syria, according to a Kurdish military official who did not have permission to speak to the news media.

“Not a major offensive to retake Mosul,” said the official, who reports to Kurdish President Massoud Barzani in Irbil. He said Rabia was a target “to cut the flow of weapons and men between Mosul and Raqqa” and to put pressure on Islamic State forces holding another northern Iraqi city, Sinjar.

The fighting near Kirkuk was undertaken by peshmerga troops loyal to former Iraqi President Jalal Talabani’s party, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, which is based in Sulaimaniya. It was a sign of continuing coordination issues that the official said he was not well informed on the progress there.

“We have improved our communication with Talabani’s men through a central operations center, and this attack was done in coordination with them, but I don’t have immediate progress reports as that information is processed through their commanders,” the official said. He described efforts to build one centralized peshmerga command as “in progress.”

Kurdish refugees arrive in Yumurtalik, Turkey, fleeing the advances of Islamic State extremists on the north Syrian city of Kobani, on Tuesday, Sept. 30, 2014. (Roy Gutman/MCT)

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By Saba Hamedy

LOS ANGELES — A prequel to “The Conjuring” about a haunted doll and a David Fincher thriller will fight for the No. 1 spot at the box office this weekend.

David Fincher’s “Gone Girl” is expected to gross as much as $25 million, according to people who have seen pre-release audience surveys. This would put it in a tight competition for No. 1 with horror film “Annabelle,” which could gross as much as $27 million.

Meanwhile, tracking services show a wide range of expectations for “Left Behind,” the third wide release to hit the theaters this weekend. The film, distributed by Freestyle Releasing, could pull in between $5 million to $15 million.

Based on the popular novel by Gillian Flynn, Fincher’s film follows Nick Dunne (Ben Affleck) after his wife Amy (Rosamund Pike) goes missing on their fifth anniversary. As secrets of their marriage unfold, police, media and community members try to unearth whether Nick killed his wife.

The R-rated film, co-produced by Twentieth Century Fox and New Regency, cost about $61 million to make. The studios anticipate a more modest opening of about $20 million.

Fandango, a Los Angeles-based ticketing website, said on Wednesday that the thriller is poised to become one of the highest-selling October movies since the company launched 14 years ago.

It earned a score of 89 on the site’s “Fanticipation” indicator, just behind the stranded-in-space film “Gravity” at the same point in its sales cycle last year.

The film has a number of advantages. For one, it has the star power behind Oscar-winning Affleck. In 2012, “Argo” grossed about $19.5 million in its opening weekend and went on to earn $136 million and an Oscar. In 2010, “The Town” grossed $23.8 million in its opening weekend and went on to gross $92.2 million.

Fincher has also developed a cult following for films such as “The Social Network” and “The Girl with a Dragon Tattoo.” This, added to the reader fan base for Flynn’s book, will likely lure in core fans.

However, many of the director’s films usually see big numbers over time rather than just in their opening weekends. For comparison, “The Social Network” opened to about $22.5 million in its opening weekend in 2010. It went on to gross about $97 million. Likewise, “The Girl With a Dragon Tattoo” pulled in $12.8 million in its opening weekend in 2011. The film, based on the popular novel by Stieg Larsson, went on to gross $102.5 million. Likewise, “The Good Lie” will open in 461 theaters. The Reese Witherspoon drama could make about $2.5 million this weekend.

On Wednesday, Paramount Pictures released Jason Reitman’s “Men, Women & Children” in New York and Los Angeles markets. The film will expand to the top 12 markets on Friday.

The R-rated horror film follows the haunted doll from “The Conjuring” named Annabelle. In July 2013, “The Conjuring” cast a spell over audiences and opened to about $41.5 million. It ended up grossing $318 million worldwide.

“Left Behind” will likely draw in the same faith-based crowds that popularized “God’s Not Dead.” Based on books by Tim LaHaye and Jerry B. Jenkins, the apocalyptic thriller, which cost about $15 million to make, stars Nicolas Cage. Freestyle Releasing expects the film to gross as much as $10 million.

In limited release, Warner Bros. “The Good Lie” will open in 461 theaters. The Reese Witherspoon drama could make about $2.5 million this weekend.

The major retrospective of Paul Strand: Master of Modern Photography will run October 21, 2014—January 4, 2015
Press Preview, October 16, 2014
Peace Corps & AmeriCorps
Pledge to Expand Outreach Efforts on Ways to Reduce Student Loan Debt through Public Service

WASHINGTON, D.C., Sept. 23, 2014 – Peace Corps Director Carrie Hessler-Radelet and Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) CEO Wendy Spencer today joined U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan and Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) Director Richard Cordray in pledging to help public servants and national service participants, including Peace Corps volunteers and AmeriCorps members, reduce their student loan debt. The agencies are among the first federal agencies to take CFPB’s public service pledge on student debt.

“Given that more than 60 percent of AmeriCorps alums go into public service careers, it’s important they know about options that can help them reduce their student debt,” said Spencer. “Our nation needs more public servants, and the effort we are kicking off today will help more AmeriCorps alums translate their service commitment into careers in the public interest.”

Through this pledge, the Peace Corps and CNCS commit to share information about options for managing student loan debt with applicants, volunteers, and employees. In partnership with the U.S. Department of Education and the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, the Peace Corps launched a new web portal and public education campaign to help current, future and returned volunteers understand the benefits that may be available to them to help manage their student loans if they choose public service.

“Student loan forgiveness has become a key tool to enhance the affordability of public service careers,” said CFPB Director Richard Cordray. “We are working to raise awareness of this program by getting more employers involved and are so pleased that leading public service agencies like the Corporation for National and Community Service, AmeriCorps, and the Peace Corps are joining our efforts.”

“I am delighted to sign this pledge to actively inform the employees at the U.S. Department of Education about Public Service Loan Forgiveness as a way to reduce their student loan debt,” said U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan. “This program can save thousands of dollars for government workers and non-profit employees who dedicate their lives to public service. It’s also a great recruiting tool for government agencies and tax exempt non-profits that want people able to follow their heart and passion—not just chase a big paycheck because they have to pay back loans. We can’t afford to lose that talent because of student debt.”

There are a number of benefit options to help reduce student loans for Peace Corps volunteers and returned Peace Corps volunteers, including the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program (PSLF). Peace Corps volunteers may qualify for forgiveness of remaining federal student loan debt after they have made 120 qualifying payments (10 years, or consecutive payments) on those loans while employed full-time by certain public service employers. If enrolled in PSLF under an income-driven repayment plan, volunteers may have qualifying payments as low as $60 throughout their service.

AmeriCorps engages more than 75,000 Americans in intensive service each year at non-profits, schools, public agencies, and community and faith-based groups across the country. After successful completion of their term of service, AmeriCorps members are eligible to receive a Segal AmeriCorps Education Award to help pay college tuition or pay back student loans. Since 1994, AmeriCorps members have earned more than $2.7 billion in Segal AmeriCorps Education Awards. AmeriCorps members can take advantage of a number of student loan benefits, including the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program.

Find tools and resources on student loan relief for Peace Corps volunteers at peacecorps.gov/loans. For more information on the CFPB’s public service pledge, please visit www.consumerfinance.gov/pledge.

About the Peace Corps: As the preeminent international service organization of the United States, the Peace Corps sends Americans abroad to tackle the most pressing needs of people around the world. Peace Corps volunteers work at the grassroots level with local governments, schools, communities, small businesses and entrepreneurs to develop sustainable solutions that address challenges in education, health, economic development, agriculture, environment and youth development. When they return home, volunteers bring their knowledge and experiences—and a global outlook—back to the United States that enriches the lives of those around them. President John F. Kennedy established the Peace Corps in 1961 to foster a better understanding among Americans and people of other countries. Since then, more than 215,000 Americans of all ages have served in 139 countries worldwide. Visit www.peacecorps.gov to learn more.

About the Corporation for National and Community Service: The Corporation for National and Community Service is a federal agency that engages more than five million Americans in service through its AmeriCorps, including VISTA and NCCC, Senior Corps, Social Innovation Fund, and Volunteer Generation Fund programs, and leads the President’s national call to service initiative, United We Serve. For more information, visit NationalService.gov.
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**Open House on Oct. 14 from 5-7:30 p.m.**
Visit sju.edu/transferinfo to get more information or register.