

Dogs prove to be man's best friend -- again



From left to right: Lauren Ranalli, Derrick Izumi, Michael Suriano, Jordan Smith, Caitlynn Everett, Roseanna Booth, and Amanda Bodner

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See page 3 for the full story

Students with mental health disorders confront unique and varied challenges

BY MORGAN ZUBASIC
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

You reluctantly walk into a fully occupied classroom, each seat taken by a student that is intensely judging you as you take your seat. Or at least you presume they are.

You also fail to hear the professor greet you, your focus preoccupied with the fact that you cannot stop shaking and your throat feels like it is closing up unbearably fast. Nothing bad is actually happening.

You just know this is the class where the professor makes students read things out loud. So you are having trouble functioning at the moment.

Because you have an anxiety disorder.

The term mental illness can be interpreted in different ways to different people. Its mere definition is defined as a type of distress and dysfunction, according to La Roche professor Lee Markowitz, who has a Ph.D. in psychology.

He said it is a type of matter difficult to define, with no definitive testing for it like a blood test.

"The general definition of a mental illness is a long-term pattern of

dysfunction that is distressing for the person in their every day life, it is unusual and deviates from the norm," he said.

Dave Allen, a La Roche student, is no stranger to the nature of mental illness. Allen said he is diagnosed with social phobia and depression.

He exerts a friendly and social aura when approached, a contrast to the characteristics that often come with anxiety and depression.

"Social phobia disorder is an extreme anxiety and fear of any social situation and an irrational fear of embarrassment in front of others," Markowitz said.

He added that the symptoms can be physical, such as sweating and shaking. "Sufferers can experience anticipatory anxiety about their anxiety," Markowitz said.

This can cause a student to exhibit avoidance behavior, like skipping a class so they can avoid the social situation that makes them anxious, he said.

SEE MENTAL HEALTH,
PAGE 9

How does the Internet impact interpersonal relationships?

BY HEATHER RADICK
MANAGING EDITOR

One in a series

Imagine this scenario: your friend is scrolling through her Instagram and sees that her significant other liked another girl's selfie, and she is not too happy about it.

She might then spend a few hours scouring his social media accounts looking for another similar encounter, or she might decide to deliberately ignore his texts.

Social media and the Internet have affected the way people interact with each other, though the nature of those consequences are widely debated. One begins to wonder how exactly this fixation on the Internet became such a huge part of human interpersonal relationships. Humans have experienced a rapid evolution in terms of technological advancement, and have been unable to escape the consequences of it for their interpersonal relationships.

The Internet is a double-edged sword. On one hand, it can be a potential link between those wishing to communicate in an easy, instantaneous manner. Jessica Lee, a La Roche student, remembers a friendship she had when she was 12 that

took place exclusively online. Though no pictures, locations, or even last names were given, she asserts that it was an honest and meaningful friendship.

Lee suggested that being able to hide behind the comfort of anonymity might lessen the pressure of meeting new people. Professor of communications Jeff Ritter said, "These technologies can be a great advancement in connection" to people who are shy or isolated.

In addition, the Internet can pave the way for relationships outside of one's immediate environment. Wright Library Circulation Supervisor Deborah Brown said she once wrote to an international pen-pal via traditional post, and often had to wait up to a month before receiving a letter. She said she would've welcomed social media applications like Skype that would've allowed her to talk to her pen-pal face to face without actually traveling the large distance to meet.

SEE INTERNET, PAGE 11

International



From left to right: Christian Mukungilwa of Congo, Tran Chi Duc Bui of Vietnam, Jaeyong Chang of South Korea, and Shengxian Huang of China

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International students prepare for a Pittsburgh winter

BY TIARA PHILLIP

CONTRIBUTING WRITER

People from all over the world experience seasons differently. This survey shows how people react to the winter season. For those that have not experienced winter in Pittsburgh, this survey shows their expectations.

Ariella Itangishaka
South Africa

Q: How was your first winter?
Annoying, cold, frustrating.
Q: Why?

I had no car at the time and I had to walk everywhere. By the time I got there I was wet and obviously cold.

Q: What is the best part of the winter?

I'm still trying to figure that out because I don't enjoy the winter at all.

Q: How many years now would you be experiencing snow?

Four years.

Q: What advice would you give someone from East Africa?

Stay warm and covered up during

the winter season. Don't eat as much as you want, you will get big pretty fast.

Jemoi Gibbs
Virgin Islands

Q: Have you ever seen snow before?

No.

Q: Are you excited about seeing and experiencing your first winter season with snow?

I am very excited, but I know it is going to be very cold.

Q: What activities do you plan on doing during the winter season?

Make snow angels and play snowball fight.

Q: Are you prepared for the snow season?

Yes, I bought my winter jacket already.

Q: Do you think you would grow a beard during the winter?

SEE WEATHER, PAGE 13

Christmas break presents challenges for some students

BY LAUREN VILLELLA

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Thousands of miles separate many international students from their families, but for some Christmas break fills the gap.

Christmas break presents unique challenges and opportunities for La Roche's international students. Some students travel to their home country for the break, while others choose to stay in the United States with family or friends.

Sijal Mokhtar, a native of Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, said she will spend Christmas break in her home country. Mokhtar said she will spend about 20 days in Saudi Arabia, then arrive in Pittsburgh in early January to begin the spring semester. Mokhtar is a ju-

nior majoring in psychology.

Traveling to Saudi Arabia is her regular Christmas break routine, Mokhtar noted, except for last Christmas, when she stayed in the United States.

"Last year I didn't go home," Mokhtar said. "I went to visit my aunt in Virginia Beach, and I also went to New York. Because it's cold here, it's nice to go to a warm place."

Deema Aljanady, a sophomore from Saudi Arabia, said she will spend Christmas break with cousins in New York. Aljanady, a management information systems major, said she has also spent Christmas breaks in Saudi Arabia.

"It was twice I went back home," Aljanady said, "and I spent it with my family. Last year and this year I will spend it with my cousin."

Aljanady added she has not set specific plans for the upcoming break, but she enjoys going to concerts, restaurants and museums.

Sani Shrestha, a junior from Nepal, said she will stay in the United States for Christmas break. Shrestha said she may stay in Pittsburgh, but would prefer to travel to a state she's never visited, like Illinois or Florida. Shrestha is an information technology major.

Seeing the way different cities in the United States celebrate Christmas and decorate for it is interesting,

Shrestha said.

"Especially in Christmas, I like how there's so many people coming to cities, main cities, to see lights and usually it's very crowded," Shrestha said.

Mokhtar said her specific plans influence whether she stays in the United States or goes home to Saudi Arabia during Christmas break.

"If I'm just staying here in Pittsburgh doing nothing, of course I prefer to go home," Mokhtar said. "But if there was a trip with my friends going to Orlando or Miami, or anywhere

SEE CHRISTMAS, PAGE 12

Dogs

Therapy dogs help students to reduce stress before an arduous finals week

By **MINA HOLLAND**
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

On November 22, the therapy dogs came to the La Roche College Center Square to visit students.

Every fourth Tuesday of each month, the therapy dogs visit students who like dogs or need a stress-free hour with a furry companion. The same dogs visit every month so that they do not lose touch with the people they get to know and love.

It takes unique training to be a therapy dog. According to his owner, a four-year-old French Mastiff named Buzzy had to go to classes at Misty Pines where one thing they did was desensitize him to loud noises.

“One of the things that freaked [Buzzy] out was one of the umbrellas,” the owner said.

Though desensitizing Buzzy and other dogs to loud noises was a repetitive process, it worked over a matter of weeks.

“They would take a series of stainless steel pots, sneak up behind [the dogs], and drop them,” the owner said.

He added that other methods of desensitizing Buzzy and other therapy dogs included gunshot noises, medicine smells, odors, and food.

Therapy dogs can have a story behind their namesakes. Ziggy, an English bulldog who is 6 years old, got his name when he was trained to be

housebroken.

“When we first got him and he was learning to be housebroken, he would go out in the yard and zig back and forth, so we just called him Ziggy,” Ziggy’s owner said. “He wasn’t really named after anyone, it was just how he’d walk in the yard.”

Therapy dogs provide companionship with the students and their owners. A golden retriever named Watson has been a therapy dog for two years and is close with his owner.

“[Watson] is my best friend,” his owner said. “I named him Watson because I’m a fan of Sherlock Holmes and you know Sherlock Holmes has a side detective named Watson. When I go into the old folks’ home, I tell them that I’m Sherlock Holmes and this is my dog, Watson, and we’re on the case of the missing medication. They kind of laugh.”

Therapy dogs help students unwind from stress from schoolwork and other things.

“They definitely do,” a freshman, Caitlyne Everett said. “I’m always stressed because of class and stuff and when I come see the therapy dogs I’m always so much happier afterwards. I can’t stop smiling.”

Caitlyne added that though she does not have any pets, the therapy dogs make her want one.



From left to right: Tori Albert and Kailey Fetzko

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Amanda Bodner takes a break from studying to relax with a therapy dog

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Jordan Smith with Wendell

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Roseanna Booth and Katie Ryan interacting with Watson

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“I’m always stressed because of class and stuff and when I come see the therapy dogs I’m always so much happier afterwards.”
- Caitlyne Everett

Accomplishments

Student captures first place in Study Abroad competition

BY SYDNEY HARSH
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



Angel Sanchez took this winning photo in Stege, Denmark during his Study Abroad trip

© ANGEL SANCHEZ

La Roche College announced the winner of the International Education Week travel photography contest on Friday, November 18, 2016.

Congratulations to Angel Sanchez, a senior sociology and psychology major, for winning the photography contest.

Sanchez said he could not pass up such a picture-perfect moment while biking through Stege, Denmark.

"I was traveling with the Denmark Study abroad group whenever I took this photo. Denmark was full of so many picture-perfect moments. It was hard for me to choose a photo to enter into the photo contest," he said.

Sanchez said he took the beautiful photo on his android phone.

"This picture means a lot to me. This photo is one small part of all

the great memories that I created in the study abroad program," he said. "Every picture has a story to tell, and is a memory that I will never forget."

Sanchez said, he will continue to studying abroad – whether it is going with the study abroad groups or on his own.

"Studying abroad gave me the perfect opportunity to open my eyes and mind to learn more about other places and cultures from around the world. Having the chance to go to new places and experience new things is really rewarding to me. I am going to Russia over spring break. I also plan to travel the world on my own."

The Study Abroad office hosted the travel photography contest during International Education Week.

Students could vote for their favorite travel photo during the week of November 14, 2016.

Psychology professor places third in Laurel Highlands photography contest

BY SYDNEY HARSH
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Laurel Highlands released the winners for their 13th annual photography contest.

Dr. Lee Markowitz – a psychology professor at La Roche College – placed third place in the 2016 Laurel Highlands photography contest.

"The Laurel Highlands Visitor Center inspired me to enter my photo into the photography contest. The Visitor Center was looking to promote the Laurel Highlands area to attract more visitors and tourists," Dr. Markowitz said.

He said that it was the perfect opportunity for him; he was not going to pass up entering one of the many beautiful photos he took of the Laurel Highlands into the photography contest.

"I've always loved photography. My interest started when I was young," the professor said. "I would go out to take pictures with my dad with film cameras. I can remember taking so many interesting and neat

pictures with those cameras."

Dr. Markowitz said photography is now a passion of his.

"My interest in photography kept growing," he said. "I bought my first DSLR camera three years ago. With this new and up to date camera, I can continue my passion with photography more and more each day."

The photo contest begins in early January each year.

The panel for the 2016 Laurel Highlands photo contest consisted of the Laurel Highlands Visitor Bureau staff and three professional photographers.

Photographers submitted over 1,300 photos to this year's contest.

Winning photos will be displayed in three exhibits. Those exhibits include Nemaquin, Woodlands Resort, and Seven Springs Mountain Resort throughout the winter months. The winning photos will also be featured in the 2017 Laurel Highlands Destination Guide.



Dr. Lee Markowitz captured the beauty of the Laurel Highlands with his award-winning photo

© DR. LEE MARKOWITZ

Interested in joining our staff?

The Courier is always looking for new writers and photographers.

Contact either Sydney Harsh or Lauren Villella for more information on writing for the Courier.

Sydney.Harsh@stu.laroche.edu
Lauren.Villella@stu.laroche.edu

Man on the Street

**Entertainment Editor Jess Lee asked students:
“What was the best gift you’ve ever received?”**



Name: Rachel Hibshman
Major: Interior Design
Year: Freshman
Quote: “My winter coat. I wear it everyday in the winter.”



Name: Mollie Farruggia
Year: Junior
Major: Marketing
Quote: “I would say the best gift was when my grandpa said he’d pay for my trip to New York City, but the second best gift was my Deadpool sweat-pants from my boyfriend.”



Name: Rishabh Patel
Year: Freshman
Major: Business Management
Quote: “My car! It’s a 2016 Acura ILX. My dad gave me a brand new car when I graduated!”



Name: Ariella Itangishaka
Year: Junior
Major: Math Finance and Management
Quote: “When I was a child I used to love reading comic books, so when my dad would travel he’d always buy one for my sister and I. Those were the best gifts to get.”



Name: Jessica Kefover
Year: Sophomore
Major: Criminal Justice-
Quote: “My dog Kia!”



Name: Name: Vanisha Purohit
Year: Senior
Major: Leadership and Accounting
Quote: “An annual pass for Disneyland.”



Name: Isabella Wallace
Year: Freshman
Major: Bio-Chemistry
Quote: “A necklace. It had a bunch of red jewels, that were meant to look like rubies but weren’t actually rubies. It was something a friend of mine gave me before I moved away and it means a lot since we don’t talk much anymore. I still have it, too.”



Name: Elna Nduema
Works for the ESL program
Quote: “When my brother told me he was going to be a father.”

People

LRC Literary Society presents accomplished local poet Samuel Hazo

BY LAINEY STANDIFORD
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

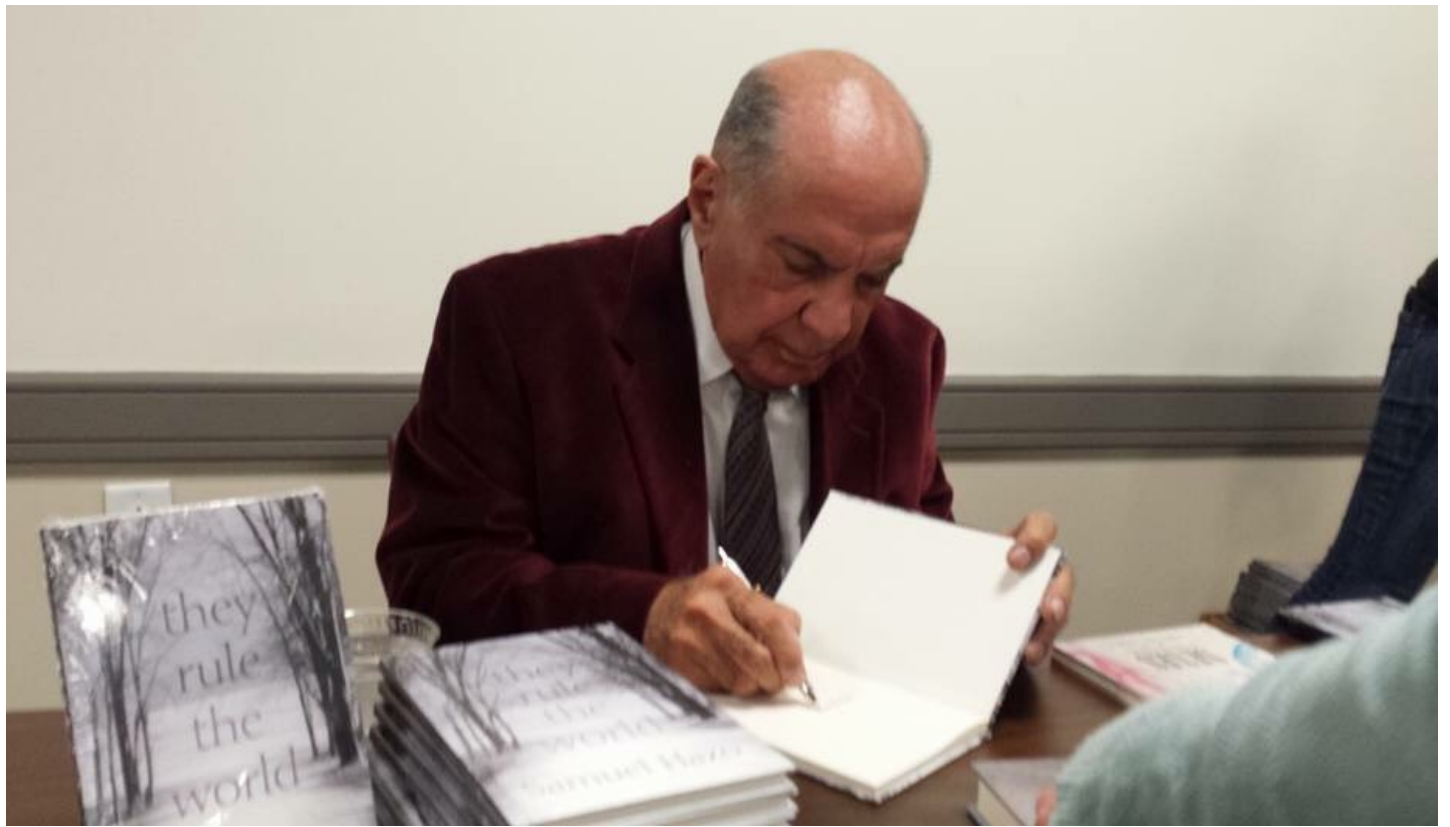
In CC Square on a Friday night, one might have seen Dr. Samuel Hazo chatting to the few students that lingered outside of the Ryan Room.

A relatively quiet man with a sharp mind, Dr. Hazo caught and kept the attention of the few he spoke to before the event. La Roche College's Literary Society presented Dr. Hazo for an evening of poetry reciting on November 4, 2016.

Dr. Hazo is the author of multiple genres of books including poetry, fictions, essays and plays. He established the International Poetry Forum in 1966. His work through the Poetry Forum has brought hundreds of distinguished poets to Pittsburgh.

According to his website, Dr. Hazo is a McAnulty Distinguished Professor of English Emeritus at Duquesne University, where he previously served as a professor for 43 years. He has received 12 honorary doctorates from colleges and universities across the state. Governor Robert Casey named Dr. Hazo the First State Poet of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in 1993, and he served in the position for 10 years.

Dr. Hazo's poetry reciting be-



Samuel Hazo signing copies of his book "They Rule the World," which is a collection of poetry

© LAINEY STANDIFORD

gan with the poem "Silence Spoken Here." His voice grew louder with his passion as he recited more of his poems to the audience. After finishing his first poem, Dr. Hazo paused and said, "That's one of the tributes

I often pay to language. The ultimate language is silence. It's the silence you experience after you have heard a poem, or read a poem." As he continued, his conversation between each poem incited laughter from the room,

keeping the event lighthearted.

People might consider it astounding that a man of Dr. Hazo's age can

SEE HAZO, PAGE 13

Sister Michele is leaving the classroom for new role with Congregation of Divine Providence

BY LAUREN VILLELLA
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

With new responsibilities, Sister Michele Bisbey, CDP, Ph.D., will no longer be teaching at La Roche College or directing the La Roche Experience.

The provincial chapter of the Marie de la Roche Province elected Sr. Michele as provincial director in August 2016.

"I knew my name was being considered," Sr. Michele said. "I didn't think that I would be elected. Pretty much until the election itself I wasn't sure what was going to happen. I knew it was a possibility."

Although the sisters elected her in

August, Sr. Michele said, she did not take office until Oct. 28, Marie de la Roche's birthday. Under the Sisters of Divine Providence, Sr. Michele belongs to the Marie de la Roche Province.

In September 2017, Sr. Michele said, she will be a member of the Marie de la Roche Province for 50 years. Sr. Michele said she started at La Roche College in 1967 as a student and a sister.

The role of provincial director is a five-year term, Sr. Michele said, and re-election is a possibility. The appointment process is long, Sr. Mi-

chele added, and includes invitations to consider positions and a discernment process.

Her new role, Sr. Michele said, entails being the leader of the Sisters of Divine Providence in the United States and the Caribbean.

"We have our headquarters here in Pittsburgh, but we also have big groups of sisters in St. Louis, in Kingston, Massachusetts, in Puerto Rico and in Santo Domingo," Sr. Michele said. "And we have sponsored ministries in those areas as well."

Some local sponsored ministries, Sr. Michele noted, include La Roche College, the Providence Heights Alpha School, the Kearns Spirituality Center and Providence Connections.

"In the Kingston area we have a whole school system; it's called Sacred Heart School and it's pre-k through 12th grade," Sr. Michele said. "And in St. Louis we have a place that's called Room at the Inn and it's a day shelter for the homeless. And then in San Benito, Texas, right on the Mexican

border, we have a center for refugees."

Part of her job, Sr. Michele said, is to ensure the sisters carry out their mission in the different areas of ministries. Another responsibility is to care for the sisters who are doing the work.

"Because of the vowed life that we live, none of us have money individually," Sr. Michele said. "It's all in common. So part of the new role is to say, how are those common funds best distributed so that people have what they need to do the ministry?"

Sr. Michele received her Ph.D. in theology from Duquesne University. She noted, however, that having a Ph.D. is not a requirement for the role of provincial director.

"It doesn't necessarily help or hinder," Sr. Michele said. "Those of us who have Ph.D.s have it really because of the College, because what we were trained for was to come to

SEE BISBEY, PAGE 11

"One of the things that I think I'm called to do is to articulate our vision, our mission of what it means to make God's providence visible."

- Sister Michele Bisbey

Humans of La Roche

Similar to Brandon Stanton's Humans of New York, Editor-in-Chief Sydney Harsh set out to ask students inspiring and motivating questions, eliciting insightful responses



Question:
What makes you stand out from other people?

Answer:
I think that the thing that makes me stand out from other people is my eagerness to always keep learning. I received an internship this summer where I learned so much about design and how beautiful it could be. I also took a study abroad trip to China, where I learned so much about a foreign culture, and now I strive to travel everywhere I can. I love to learn about people, and I try to meet everyone that comes my way. Through my involvement in cross country, ASID, Eco club, and working in student development, I've gotten to meet so many people here at La Roche. I love to help new people in any way that I can, because through helping others, you not only learn about them, but discover new things about yourself.

Andrea Luciano, junior interior design major

Question:
Where are you from, and what do you miss most about your hometown or country?

Answer:
I'm from Vega Alta, Puerto Rico. What I miss most from Puerto Rico is my family, friends, and the food. Family is family, you know? And I miss my friends because I grew up in a small town. We were always together, went to the same schools, and played on the same sports teams, etc. I am also a very traditional Puerto Rican. I love all my traditions, and the food is very delicious!

Luis Navedo, senior information and technology major



Question:
What is something that has meant a lot to you over the past three years?

Answer:
The friends that I made since freshman year and the sports I played have meant the most to me over the past couple of years. I started cross country my freshman year, and since then I have made most of friends through the sport. Then, I played basketball during my sophomore year and I made even more memories that way with being a part of a championship team and making more friendships! My friends in college have helped me with the struggles that come with college, and I'm so grateful for them being a part of my college experience.

Morgan Churilla, senior child and family studies major



Question:
What is one piece of advice that you will keep with you forever?

Answer:
If there was one piece of advice that I had to keep with me forever it would be a lesson I learned in elementary school. In elementary school, I was a huge cry baby. My teacher told me that when I cry the other person wins. This stuck with me because I was a very competitive person. So, after that conversation with my teacher, I always told myself that I will not let other people win by bringing me down. I learned to calm down and stick up for what I believe in.

Rachel Baacke, senior graphic design major



Writing

Speedwriting 101

NaNoWriMo challenges participants to write a novel in the 30 days of November

BY JESS LEE

ENTERTAINMENT EDITOR



Andre Parker (above) and Isabella Wallace are the members of NaNoWriMo

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Dr. Joshua Bellin brought together aspiring novelists from La Roche College during the month of November to participate in National Novel Writing Month.

National Novel Writing Month (NaNoWriMo) takes place during the month of November and challenges people to write a novel with 50,000 words in one month. "It's a ri-

diculous proposition when you think about it, write a novel in a month," Bellin said. "[But] it's an opportunity to take some of the pressure off in a weird way because people say they want to write novels and what happens is that I think they find that other things get in the way, they're anxious about writing it and it's a huge challenge."

Bellin said there are obvious disadvantages to participating in NaNoWriMo, like the pressure and focus put on reaching the goal. He said the advantages are more than enough to promote someone to take on the challenge. "The advantage is you can get a published novel or at least the beginnings. There is the community here as well as the online community to connect with other writers and share stories and write together with them. Writing can be so isolating and NaNo opens it up and creates a community."

Not everyone who participates in NaNoWriMo is an English major, Bellin said. He said that each year kids from his classes join as well as kids from other majors.

Bellin said, "Creativity is such an important thing because everything we do, especially on college campuses, is kind of functional and dedicated to a particular end. So much what we do here and in our lives is required of us. Nano isn't required and creativity is a good thing for its own sake."

At the end of the month, Bellin said he hopes to get everyone together so they can each read an excerpt from what they have been working on.

Bellin brought NaNoWriMo to La Roche in 2014, he said. He opened it to students, faculty, and staff. "Each time it has been primarily students

[participating] but there has been faculty in a couple cases. So, every time I do it I get seven to eight people who are interested. There are enough people per year who want to give it a try, which is encouraging."

Since the beginning of the group at La Roche, Bellin said no one, besides himself, has come out with a published novel but many have gotten good progress.

The group communicates and plans campus meetings mainly through a Facebook group and email. Bellin said the on campus meetings are for him and the students to sit and write together. He said, "...with writing, you can feel so alone and can lead to a lot of frustration and anxiety, but also uncertainty. Just knowing there is a community of people doing the same thing, feeling the same way, is very supportive."

Every October, Bellin sends out an email to students, faculty, and staff to let them know about National Novel Writing Month. "If you want to participate, it's a good idea to do some planning beforehand. I would also say to not worry if it stinks. That mess is something you can work on to produce something better. If you never make the mess, you never get beyond the mess."

English professor pens sequel to debut novel

BY MINA HOLLAND

CONTRIBUTING WRITER

La Roche College English professor Dr. Joshua Bellin recently released a successor to his first novel, "Survival Colony 9."

The second book in the series, "Scavenger of Souls," was released in August of 2016, and it is a continuation of "Survival Colony 9," Dr. Bellin's first novel in the series.

"I was inspired to write ["Survival Colony 9"] by a number of different things, partly, my own children were reading young adult literature and I thought it would be fun to try my hand at it myself," Dr. Bellin said. "I was inspired, I think in a larger sense, by a lifetime love of fantasy and science fiction literature."

The immediate inspiration for "Survival Colony 9," Dr. Bellin said, was from a vivid dream involving people in a desert landscape, a boy, and a shadowy threat confronting them.

"I didn't know what the threat was, but it seemed like something that could be interesting, and so that

became the Survival Colonies, Query Genn, who's the protagonist, and the Skaldi, who are these monsters. They were the threat," Dr. Bellin said.

Dr. Bellin planned to have "Survival Colony 9" be a standalone book, but continued the series since people showed enough interest in it. "I wanted to wrap up the story and take it to its logical conclusion," he said. "I think in book one there's sort of a series of victories both for the narrator individually and for his colony, but it's not a complete victory in the sense of the narrator discovering everything he needs to know about himself and the colony getting to a safe place. That happens in book two."

"Scavenger of Souls" provides questions and answers regarding "Survival Colony 9." Questions from the first book will be answered but new questions will arise in this novel as well.

"Scavenger of Souls," Dr. Bellin

SEE BELLIN PAGE 14



Dr. Joshua Bellin (above) is the author of "Scavenger of Souls"

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Holiday

How science is changing the way we eat

BY SYDNEY HARSH
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Will you be dining with GMOs this holiday season?

With the holiday season approaching, most of us will see the same food items on the menu as we did all our lives: turkey, ham, stuffing, mashed potatoes, corn, green beans, beats, etc. However, at the genetic level that menu looks very different.

“These genetically modified organisms (GMOs) have been around for almost 20 years,” Dr. Fredrick Sproull, a biology professor, said. “Yet, there is a low percentage of people who believe that it is safe to eat genetically engineered foods.”

He continued to explain how people think GMOs are created.

“Some people like to say GMOs are an accelerated domesticated change,” the professor said. “However, we do not create GMOs through domestication. In domestication, they are using the genes that are already present. Scientists enhance certain genes and select against others.”

Dr. Sproull said, scientists are introducing genes that would never be in an organism. This can cause problems relating to our health and the environment.

“There are plenty of reasons why

people think GMOs are problematic. A few reasons why they are problematic us because they alter the ecosystem and do harm to our bodies,” he said.

The professor said, if we do not contain the environment in which genetically engineered crops grow, they can severely alter the ecosystem. Also, crops and foods can be changed in ways that they are not doing our body any good.

Dr. Gail Rowe – biology professor – agreed with Dr. Sproull.

“Concerns about genetically engi-

neered crops go beyond food safety, including a general unease about possible long-term health or ecological impacts,” she said. “There are also environmental issues such as gene drift and the expansion of monoculture cropping systems, the corporate ownership of seeds, and the expansion and consolidation of farms.”

“However, in other ways, they improve the ability of crops to withstand certain diseases and can prolong the life of fruits and vegetables to allow them to get to the market in better shape,” Dr. Sproull said.

He used rice as an example to explain the hidden benefits of genetically modified crops and foods.

“Scientists genetically altered rice that has a much higher protein content than farm grown rice,” the professor said. “This is important for people in third world countries because they do not have access to foods rich in protein. Protein is a very scarce commodity in those countries.”

Dr. Rowe said President Barack Obama signed a bill into law creating a federal labeling standard for foods containing genetically engineered ingredients.

“These specific labeling rules,” she said, “will govern how these ingredients are identified on food products. The idea is to make it easier for consumers to know what they’re buying.”

The professor explained how there is a ton of scientific evidence proving that genetically engineered foods are safe to eat, but many people fear eating them.

“Genetically engineered foods have been part of the American diet for 20 years now, and there is strong scientific consensus that they are safe

“It is very difficult to avoid eating genetically engineered foods, unless you are extremely careful with ingredients.”

- Dr. Gail Rowe

SEE GMO, PAGE 14

Mental health, continued from page 1

Skipping a class because of his anxiety is something Allen can relate to, he said. “If I know I have an oral presentation one day, or I have to read something out loud, no matter how big or small, I get very anxious about it,” he said.

Allen described the latest incident of his anxiety interfering with school, when he avoided reading a personal poem for one of his classes. It resulted in him skipping the class altogether that day.

According to Allen, he felt so uncomfortable about reading his poem aloud that the night before class, he practiced reading it over and over again to the point of complete memorization.

He said the fear of reading material out loud in front of people extends further than personal written pieces about himself. Whenever he is called on in class to read something he becomes shaky and obsesses over reading everything right, he said.

“Whenever I have to read out loud, I will read the text at least five times and keep going over it so I know it before I have to read,” he added.

Professor Markowitz said these behaviors are common with anxiety disorders, and can present themselves frequently.

“Worry can be a component to any anxiety disorder. So with social

phobia, it’s quite restricting in social situations. During class, the student can experience difficulty with paying attention to the lecture and listening, because they’re too busy worrying and thinking about their worry,” he said.

Residing on the complete opposite end of the spectrum lies Allen’s experience with depression.

Markowitz said, “A depression disorder is a prolonged period of low mood, inability to feel pleasure from ordinary activities they once enjoyed, sleeping too much or not sleeping at all, over eating or lack of eating, lack of motivation, low self-esteem and feeling exhausted for no reason.”

A school day can be demanding for someone who has depression, according to both Allen and Markowitz. Sometimes Allen finds it hard to get out of bed in the morning and bring himself to go to school, he said.

Not because he is feeling lazy, he just doesn’t have any energy to, he added.

The consequences of depression are not limited to everyday school work on a daily basis, according to Markowitz. He explained how loss of interest can occur in more serious ordeals than just homework.

“Sometimes, with a student who has depression, it isn’t uncommon for them to lack enjoyment and pleasure in things they used to be interested

in, like their major in school. It is bigger than just changing their mind or deciding their major is just not what they want to do anymore,” Markowitz said.

He added, “The student can fully recognize that they know they used to enjoy their major, but just can’t remember why they loved it so much, or don’t know how to start enjoying it again.”

On especially hard days, during a depressive episode, trying to find interest in what he is learning can be difficult, according to Allen. “I can struggle in class with staying focused,” he said, “I just don’t care about what I’m learning that day.”

The symptoms of depression can restrict a student in accessing their full ability to perform as best as they can in school. That can then lead to other people noticing this behavior, like the student’s peers and professors, Markowitz said.

“During a school week, or even a school day, a depressed student can be tired all day because of their depression. They can be too exhausted to do well in school, like finishing homework. This can lead to the teachers noticing and misinterpreting it as laziness. Then the student can feel even worse about themselves if they start falling behind in school because of this,” he added.

Hope can be found in the fact that nothing is permanent, and that doesn’t exclude mental illness, according to Professor Markowitz.

“People who suffer from a mental disorder can experience a day, or a week, without any symptoms of their mental illness. Symptoms can remit and not be present 24/7,” he said.

Allen was able to verify this from his personal experiences. He said he does go through a day, or longer, of being capable of productivity without feeling the presence of his illnesses close by.

There is a certain unparalleled depth that stems from all the varying thoughts and emotions that can come with a mental illness. With a heightened sense of creativity being one of them, according to Allen.

“I can experience some weird thoughts and emotions from my anxiety and depression,” he said, “and it’s allowed me to be pretty creative in self-expression.”

He added that he loves to write, and enjoys the artistic catharsis that flows through him each time he taps into the things that burden him.

“Writing is a release for me, I’m able to articulate my thoughts in an artistic way,” he said, “and that helps me.”

Literature

Bob Dylan's Nobel Peace Prize sparks debate about the meaning of literature

BY HEATHER RADICK
MANAGING EDITOR

Bob Dylan, like a rolling stone, has always bounced from one passion to the next.

For his most recent accomplishment, he went knockin' on Heaven's door, and won the Nobel Peace Prize for Literature. Yet, there is a heated debate about if Dylan's win is merely idiot wind blowing or if those who disapprove are criticizing what they don't understand.

The Nobel Peace Prize for Literature is the literary world's highest honor. By choosing a popular musician as the recipient of this award, the Swedish Academy has potentially redefined the boundaries of literature, igniting a strong debate about whether song lyrics possess the same artistic value as poetry or novels.

Bob Dylan is known for writing songs for the counterculture, and for creating anthems for grassroots political and social movements. In 1962, his song "Blowin' in the Wind" became an influential protest song in a chaotic time when the United States was at war with Vietnam. In 2004, it was ranked number 14 on Rolling Stone magazine's list of the "500 Greatest Songs of All Time."

The news of Dylan's win has received mixed results. Novelist Irvine Welsh said he was a fan of Bob Dylan, but scathingly told the Telegraph that the decision was an "ill-

conceived nostalgia award [by] senile, gibbering hippies." This opinion is particularly harsh, as Welsh's occult novel "Trainspotting" echoed the theme of grown-up punk radicalism that Dylan frequently sang about.

Author of "Chocolat" Joanne Harris gave a biting remark to the Telegraph on the continuous lack of diversity in the choices, asking "is it just that the Nobel has run out of old white men to award their literature prizes to?" British Indian author of "The Impressionist" Hari Kunzru affirmed this belief by lamenting the missed opportunity to showcase works by lesser-known international writers who do not enjoy Dylan's large amount of commercial success.

Dr. Janine Bayer, chair of the La Roche College English department, also said she disagreed with the Academy's decision. Like many, she genuinely enjoys his music, especially because he often conveys powerful messages about politics and social issues that fit with La Roche's own goals and beliefs of peace and justice. However, she said she did not view his song lyrics as poetry.

Dr. Bayer is writing a book about famous Pittsburgh poet Sam Hazo, and said he too disapproved of the decision because his standards for what constituted as poetry were much higher.

On the other hand, Bob Dylan has drawn many supporters eager to share their enthusiasm. President Barack

Obama, who controversially accepted the Nobel Peace Prize in 2009, had nothing but praise for his fellow winner, tweeting, "congratulations to one of my favorite poets, Bob Dylan, on a well-deserved Nobel."

Obama's comment, in addition to many others, brings to the forefront the question of whether or not Bob Dylan should be classified as a poet. He is mostly known for his folk music and wide usage of acoustic instruments, but many don't know that he has published a number of experimental prose poetry, including his 1971 collection "Tarantula." The first poem in the collection, "Guns, the Falcon's Mouthbook & the Gashcat Unpunished," begins with a tribute to Aretha Franklin:

aretha
crystal jukebox queen of hymn and
him diffused in drunk transfusion

aretha with no goals, eternally single
and one step soft of heaven

let it be understood that she owns
this melody along with her emotional
diplomats & her earth & and her musical secrets

Dr. Michelle Maher, an English professor at La Roche and an accomplished poet, said Dylan's Nobel Prize was well deserved. She said "poetry and song lyrics are two different art forms in different media, but they come from the same root."

Dylan is not the first individual to challenge the definition of literature. In 1953, Winston Churchill received

the Nobel Peace Prize for Literature in recognition of his exalted political speeches.

In addition, just last year the prize went to the Belarussian journalist Svetlana Alexievich, who exclusively wrote documentary novels – reported narratives drawing on factual interviews with real people – rather than traditional fiction.

The pressing question is whether this decision will affect the way society views literature as a whole, or if it will be viewed simply as a trendy phase and fade away. Dr. Bayer said she took the latter position, reminding us that Winston Churchill won the award over 60 years ago, and did not appear to set any sort of precedent, and neither will Dylan.

The Swedish Academy justified their choice by stating Bob Dylan "created new poetic expressions within the great American song tradition," and that his artistic reach "could not be put in a single box." Despite the amount of disapproval, the Academy stood by their decision.

However, Bob Dylan himself has been mysteriously silent on his victory. Historically, recipients of the Nobel Prize appeared at a news conference arranged by a publisher. Rather, Dylan was performing a concert in Las Vegas when the news was announced, and did not comment on the honor. So when loyal fans may ask him, 'how does it feel?' his reply very well may be blowin' in the wind.

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Bisbey, continued from page 6

the College, teach at the College or administer at the College.”

Sr. Michele said she is the third provincial director in the new province. Her immediate predecessor, Sr. Michele noted, was Sr. Mary Francis Fletcher, who hailed from Kingston.

The first provincial director, Sr. Michele said, was Sr. Mary Joan Coultas, who also served as the fourth president of La Roche College. Sr. Michele said she believes she has been well-mentored and hopes to continue the tradition of mentoring.

“I would hope that we would provide avenues for younger members to assume leadership, to follow their dreams, to carry forth the mission and the way they see, which might be different from the way we’ve seen it in the past,” Sr. Michele said.

In her new role, Sr. Michele said, she is continuing the work of the previous provincial directors rather than beginning new work.

“It would be continuing to make sure that our sponsored ministries have the resources that they need to continue,” Sr. Michele said. “So La Roche would certainly be one of those.”

Sr. Michele said she believes she is called to effectively express the sisters’ mission and vision statements.

“One of the things that I think I’m called to do and that the sisters have told me that they want me to do, is to articulate our vision, our mission of

what it means to make God’s providence visible,” Sr. Michele said.

Sr. Michele noted she tries to accomplish this through the talks she gives, the papers she writes and by utilizing the Scriptures.

“Part of what I do at times is to use the Scriptures and talk about ways that you might not think about how they really are a reflection of that mission,” Sr. Michele said.

A topic of concern for her, Sr. Michele said, is ensuring that people know they have a valuable contribution to make to the world.

“I have a concern for people to be free, to know that they’re good, to know that they’re heard, to know that they have a contribution to make, and that that’s valued,” Sr. Michele said.

This past summer, Sr. Michele said, the provincial chapter met to set the goals for the next five years. These goals come from the sisters’ vision statement.

“The things that the sisters talked about this time was working on right relationships with all of creation, all of the world,” Sr. Michele said. “So making sure that we are people who are in right relationship. They talked about transparency. They talked about delegation and they talked about giving voice to people being able to express and do the kinds of things that they feel called to do.”

According to Sr. Michele, the vision statement may not necessarily

be the same for the next provincial director. The vision statement is for the present, Sr. Michele added, and the sisters may need to revise it in five years.

“As you start living into it, you start realizing the implications of it and then you say, maybe we didn’t go far enough on this, maybe we want to go farther,” Sr. Michele said.

The sisters strive to make some response to the many issues present in the world today, Sr. Michele said.

“I think some of the challenges are obviously diminishing resources, an aging population,” Sr. Michele said. “The burgeoning needs of the world are more and more evident. So we live within the same milieu as everybody else. We’ve got climate change to deal with and now racism and prejudice and discrimination and bullying.”

Sr. Michele noted there are not as many young people entering the province as in previous years.

“We don’t have as many young people coming because people aren’t making lifetime commitments now at a young age like they used to,” Sr. Michele said. “I think we need to look at alternative forms of membership.”

These alternatives, Sr. Michele said, could be allowing people to enter the province for a short period of time. Another alternative is to allow people to commit differently.

Maintaining a steady ethic of life is important to the sisters, Sr. Michele



Sr. Michele Bisbey (above) is the new provincial director of CDP. COURTESY OF SR. MICHELE

said. They also, Sr. Michele noted, strive to focus on the whole spectrum of issues, not just one.

“For our sisters, we have a commitment to a consistent ethic of life, which means that we’re concerned about the dignity of life from the moment of conception until the moment of death,” Sr. Michele said. “And that if you support the birth of a child, how do you support that child through everything else that happens to them.”

Internet, continued from page 1



Jason Page (above), an IT student

© HEATHER RADICK

despite being separated.

Writing letters, or even emails, poses the risk of sacrificing the meaningful face-to-face contact that most people crave when communicating. Brown argued that to see a person’s facial expression and to interpret their hand gestures give meaning to a conversation that cannot be textually translated. Programs like Skype, or FaceTime, return to this traditional method of physical communication, while offering ease and efficiency.

Of course, with any technological advancement, there are hidden threats. Contrasting with Lee’s opinion, professor of psychology Janet Gates said that one might say something on social media that is misinterpreted by the reader and perceived as hurtful. She said, “The constant availability of social media seems to be increasing anxiety” because social media doesn’t allow for in depth discussion and communication.

Joelle Mellon, who works at Wright Library, said she personally knows people whose lives have been de-

stroyed by the Internet. She said she is worried about the looming threat of complacency that comes with the transformation of everyday activities and events into being exclusively digital.

Indeed, it is easier than ever to conduct one’s daily activities on the Internet. The obvious lure of massive multiplayer games like World of Warcraft and League of Legends is the easy way one can create a community of likeminded people without ever having to walk outside. An individual may socialize with others with similar interests, find entertainment in playing games, and soothe anxiety or insecurity related to face-to-face communication.

As Lee stated before, this type of unconditional anonymity may be a boon to some, but Mellon said it might encourage an entire generation of people who no longer have motivation to leave their computer. A large genre of science fiction exists focusing on a grim future where all humankind lives in virtual realities after their own reality became bland and uninteresting.

An IT student, Jason Page, said he has used social media to communicate with international friends while

stationed in the military, primarily through online games like World of Warcraft, which he said is a relaxing way to stay connected with friends. However, Page, like Mellon, also warned it could encourage people to transfer their lives entirely online and reject traditional human interaction. He said he believes that human beings are social creatures, and require physical touch and speech in order to survive.

Albertson’s, a large grocery store chain located primarily in the Southwestern United States, also agreed with Page’s opinion. The store eliminated all of its self-checkout lanes in 2011, stating a desire “to talk to customers more.” The decision resulted in mixed reviews; people over the age of 50 expressed approval, while people ages 21-35 were disappointed in the elimination of a process that lessened both the length and stress of grocery shopping.

Although he said he could see the benefits of the Internet, Jeff Ritter said people “should try to limit their dependence on [it] and take more time to meet with people face-to-face.” Ritter’s opinion suggests that there is both good and bad things about communicating via the Internet.

People “should try to limit their dependence on [the Internet] and take more time to meet with people face-to-face.”

- Dr. Jeff Ritter

Christmas, continued from page 2

fun, I'd prefer to stay here."

Mokhtar noted she can choose between taking a plane to Washington DC or having someone drive her there. The flight from Washington DC to Saudi Arabia, Mokhtar said, is about 14 hours.

"Before the plane flies, I go to sleep," Mokhtar said. "I just wake up when I want to eat something."

Shrestha said she never goes home to Nepal for Christmas break. Summer vacation, Shrestha said, is when she travels to Nepal because she has more time.

"Summer is a long-time vacation, and the rates are expensive," Shrestha said of traveling to Nepal. "So if you go there, you just want to stay there for a long time."

Depending on the route she takes, Shrestha added, a flight to Nepal can total 28 hours. Nepal, Shrestha noted, is about 11 to 13 hours ahead of the United States.

"There are no direct flights, so you have to go to two, three transits and then stay there and wait for that flight," Shrestha said.

Adjusting to the time zone difference between Saudi Arabia and the United States is difficult, Mokhtar said. Mokhtar added she experiences jetlag, a sentiment Aljanady echoed.

Saudi Arabia, Mokhtar said, is seven to eight hours ahead of the United States. Mokhtar added she initially doesn't sleep regularly at home in Saudi Arabia because of the time zone difference. When she comes back to the United States, Mokhtar said, her school routine prompts her to return to normalcy.

"I try to set up the alarm, but nothing actually helps me a lot," Mokhtar said. "I just wake up because I know I have to do something, I know I have to go to class, so I just wake up and I go back to normal."

Although she does not celebrate Christmas, Mokhtar said, she does celebrate two Muslim holidays with similar customs to Christmas. One holiday, Mokhtar said, is Eid al-Fitr, which Muslims celebrate after Ramadan.

"Ramadan is when we fast for a

whole month from the sun rise 'til the sunset for 30 days," Mokhtar said. "After Ramadan ends, there's the first holiday, Eid al-Fitr. It's a big celebration, big family gathering, almost everyone gathers in my grandparents' house, almost 100 or 200 family members in one house."

During Eid al-Fitr, which Muslims celebrate for three days, everyone exchanges gifts, including candy and new clothes, Mokhtar said.

A similar holiday, Mokhtar added, is Eid al-Adha, which is also a three-day celebration. The only difference between Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha, Mokhtar said, is that during the latter celebrants sacrifice a goat or cow.

Shrestha also noted a holiday and festival with customs similar to Christmas, Dashain and Tihar. Nepalis celebrate Dashain, Shrestha said, for 20 days and Tihar for five. According to Shrestha, both are characterized by gift-giving, including clothes, money, jewelry or gold coins.

The Tihar festival, Shrestha said, involves many lights and vibrant colors, similar to Christmas decorations.

Mokhtar said when she arrives in Saudi Arabia, she will spend time visiting her family.

"I see a lot of my family," Mokhtar said. "My grandparents live in another city, which is about four hours drive, like from here to Washington DC. So we go and spend the weekend over there. They live in Medina."

During Christmas break, Mokhtar added, she also spends time volunteering at a day care, attending seminars or going to the beach.

"There's a beach in Jeddah," Mokhtar said. "A lot of my friends have beach houses, so sometimes we go and spend the weekend over there. It's too hot over there, so we don't do a lot of outdoor activities."

Mokhtar said the drastically different climates of the United States and Saudi Arabia is a difficult adjustment.

"I have eczema in my skin, and I have very sensitive skin, so when I go home, because it's very humid, my skin gets very good and clear and nice," Mokhtar said. "But when I come here my skin becomes very dry.



Sijal Mokhtar (above) is a junior from Saudi Arabia © LAUREN VILLELLA

I have to go to the dermatologist and use a lot of lotions, and I don't like the weather much right here because I'm not used to the cold weather."

Aljanady described Saudi Arabia's climate as persistently hot. When she went home for Christmas break, Aljanady said, she spent time on the beach because of the hot weather.

"It's like summer all year," Aljanady said. "It never gets to snow, just rain a little bit and that's it."

Aljanady noted she has been in the United States for three years, and first saw snow when she came to Pittsburgh.

"I like it, but I don't like the feeling," Aljanady said. "But I like how it looks."

The first time she encountered snow, Shrestha said, was when she moved to Pittsburgh.

"I just like to watch it from the inside, from the window," Shrestha said.

Before she travels to Saudi Arabia for Christmas break, Mokhtar said, she usually receives gift requests from her younger siblings. They frequently request a game or toy from Toys R Us, Mokhtar said. She also shops at Ross Park Mall or the Grove City Premium Outlets to find gifts for her parents, Mokhtar added.

"I bring a lot of gifts for my mom and dad," Mokhtar said. "Fragrances, accessories, because Coach, Louis Vuitton, Michael Kors is cheaper here than in Saudi Arabia."

When she traveled to Saudi Arabia for Christmas break, Aljanady said, she also brought gifts for her family. Sometimes family members will request an item, Aljanady said, or sometimes she will surprise them.

"I get a lot of stuff, like clothes, bags, gifts and everything," Aljanady said. "Makeup sometimes, toys, all kinds of stuff. We have stuff there, but sometimes they'll want a different brand of something we don't have

there."

Shrestha said when she travels to Nepal in the summer, she brings items like perfume, watches or wallets for her family. When she comes back to the United States, Shrestha added, she likes to bring souvenirs like key chains or T-shirts.

Mokhtar said she will bring snacks and spices like cumin and cardamom with her when she arrives in the United States. The food serves as a reminder of her home, Mokhtar noted, as do the many Saudi Arabians in Pittsburgh.

"There are a lot of Saudis here in Pittsburgh, so they really remind me of being back home," Mokhtar said. "We're like a family, we're all sisters and brothers, we help each other whenever we need, so it's nice. Food and the Saudi friends remind me of home."

Aljanady said when she travels to the United States she brings her favorite Saudi Arabian chocolate with her.

"We have a different kind of chocolate," Aljanady said. "It's not like here, even the Kit Kat you have here, it's not the same at all. That one back home, I love it."

According to Mokhtar, traveling from one country to another makes her aware of certain cultural differences.

"Culture is very different in Saudi," Mokhtar said. "One example, women do not drive in Saudi Arabia, so we have drivers. There are not a lot of outdoor activities, the weather is too hot. People in Saudi are mostly very hospitable. Food is a big thing in Saudi."

Like most students at La Roche, Aljanady said, she is excited for Christmas break and eagerly anticipates it.

"After the exams and the finals I feel like I deserve it," Aljanady said.



Sani Shrestha (above) is a junior from Nepal

© LAUREN VILLELLA

"I like it [snow], but I don't like the feeling. But I like how it looks."

- Deema Aljanady

Hazo continued from page 6

remember the poems that he has written throughout his life. The collection of his poetry remains in his head, a feat that seems practically impossible. He continued through, musing on the idea of poetry. He said, "One of the reasons that poetry survives is because it is brief. The intensity of a short poem brands you. You don't so much as memorize it, but remember it without even trying. You can't forget it."

Dr. Hazo continued through the event with the poems: "Ballad of the Jolly Broker," "Merchandise's Song," and "Overnight," which presented the theme of materialistic happiness in a way that the audience couldn't help but smile.

To the students in the room, Dr. Hazo might have unknowingly offered the best advice to them. "You are here for four brief years for one reason; and that is to discover what you don't want to do," he said, "And then when you've done that, then you decide what you really love to do. If you choose something you don't love, and many do, you can fail. You might survive, but you can't excel."

Moving into a more buoyant topic, a topic that resonates with all married couples, Hazo recited three poems from his book "Sexes: The Marriage Dialogues." Before he started, he said, "Some of them were imagined, and some I actually heard." The audience erupted with laughter, and Dr. Hazo

delivered what were the audience's favorite poems of the night.

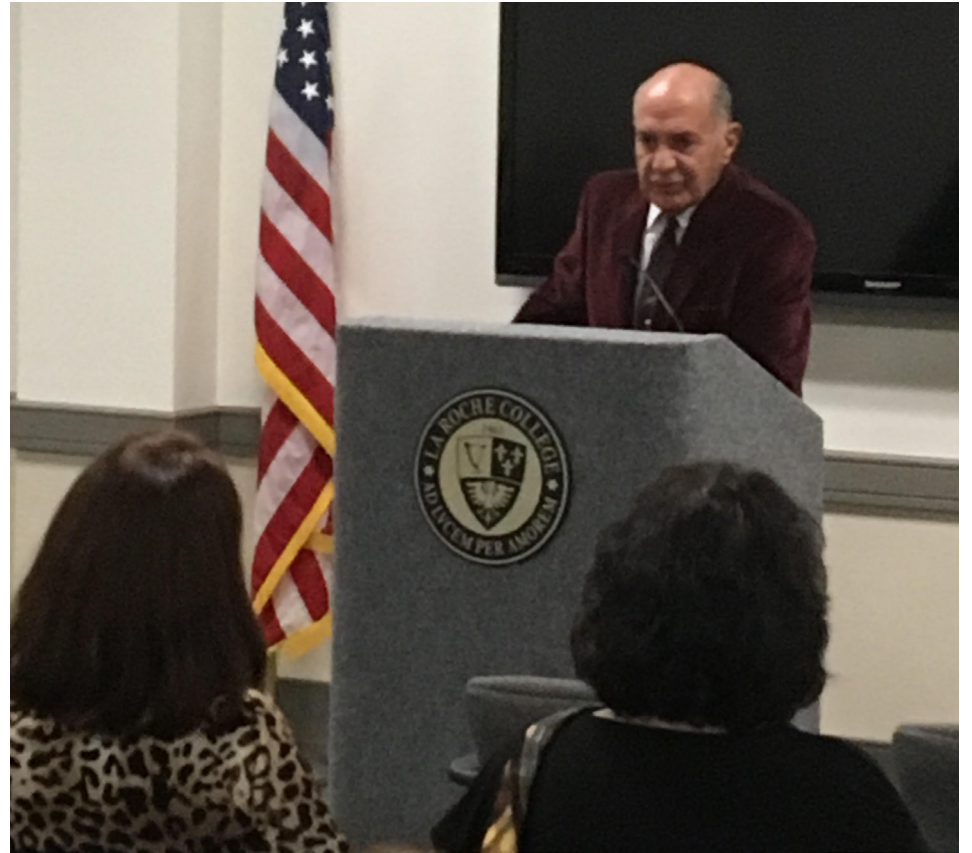
To end the marriage dialogues, the poem finished with, "You always say something that makes me cry," he said, "When all I wanted was a good ole' fashioned fight."

Continuing along, Dr. Hazo said, "These next few poems are reluctantly current. Wish I never wrote them. I'm not a pessimist by nature, but the first 16 years of this century have been awful." He introduced the next two poems, "In the Time of the Tumult of Nations," and "No Words for This," with a statistic. "People don't realize it, but 66,000 American men and women have been killed in war," Dr. Hazo said, "from 1968, until now."

The silence in the room was so profound that one could hear the sound of a pin drop while waiting for Dr. Hazo to begin his next recitation. He concluded the poems with a simple statement. "If a true poem is one you wish you never had to write, then this is it," he said.

"Beginning With Azaleas," "Footnote," and "And the Time Is" were the final poems Dr. Hazo delivered. Dr. Hazo so confidently spoke the words, the audience could feel the passion behind his writing. As he finished, a line from "Beginning With Azaleas" hung in the air. "To live in full from the time being, is never time enough."

To conclude the evening, Dr. Hazo



Samuel Hazo (above) reading his poems

© LAINEY STANDIFORD

took questions and comments from the crowd—most of them praise for the poet and author on his numerous and award-worthy works. His most recent books were available to purchase through La Roche College's bookstore. Dr. Hazo stayed until 9

p.m. signing the books, as the line of his friends and fans dwindled. La Roche College's next Literary Society is in February 2017, and will feature a speaker on the upcoming movie based in Pittsburgh, "Fences."

Weather continued from page 2

Yes, I would.

Mohammad Alobeid
Saudi Arabia

Q: Have you ever seen snow before?

No.

Q: Are you excited about seeing and experiencing your first winter season with snow?

Maybe, I'm not sure as yet.

Q: What do you think would be the best part about winter?

Seeing and playing in it.

Q: Are you prepared for the snow season?

Yes, I bought my winter jacket already.

Q: Do you think you would grow a beard during the winter?

Maybe.

Mohammad Alhmadin

Q: Have you ever seen snow before?

No.

Q: Are you excited about seeing and experiencing your first winter season with snow?

Maybe, I'm not sure as yet.

Q: What do you think would be the best part about winter?

Seeing and playing in it

Q: Are you prepared for the snow season?

Yes, I bought about 10 winter jackets already.

Q: Do you think you would grow a beard during the winter?

Maybe.

Amishah Freeman
Virgin Islands

Q: How was your first Pittsburgh winter?

Since I experienced snow in Washington, D.C. in 2012, my first Pitts-

burgh winter was good because I was very prepared.

Q: What is the best part of the winter?

The best part of winter is experiencing something new since I am from a tropical island and bundling up sometimes.

Q: What activities do you plan on doing during the winter season?

I would like to go snow tubing and go snowboarding down a hill.

Q: How many years now would you be experiencing snow?

Three years.

What advice would you give someone from the Virgin Islands who hasn't experienced snow?

Get a down coat, winter boots, and a lot of scarves to cover up. Also, make sure your head is covered. Experience some snowflakes.

Muath Alotaibi
Saudi Arabia

Q: Do you think you would like the snow season?

Yes.

Q: Are you planning on playing any snow activities?

Maybe.

Q: Do you have any winter supplies yet such as jackets, winter shoes, etc.?

I honestly do not have anything.

Q: What do you think would be the best part about winter?

Seeing it from a warm window because I know it's going to be very cold

Q: Do you think you would grow a beard during the winter?

It doesn't matter.

Vanisha Purohit
Texas

Q: How was your first Pittsburgh

winter?

Absolutely horrible. I didn't have a winter coat and I didn't know where to get one. It was a mild winter and I was so ready to leave and move back home to Texas.

Q: What is the best part of the winter?

The best part of winter is the snow is a blanket over everything and if you wake up before anyone is driving on the roads it's so calm and beautiful. When the sun hits the snow it glitters.

Q: What activities do you plan on doing during the winter season?

Mostly stay inside and watch Christmas movies, drink coffee and take Instagram photos.

Q: How many years now would you be experiencing snow?

Four years.

Q: What advice would you give someone from Texas who hasn't experienced snow?

Stay where you are and if you really need to come here, then get ready. Get waterproof shoes and lots of coats.

Q: What expense does the snow season have on you while driving?

I have to put winter tires on the car and up the insurance since winter season could be a bit dangerous. Be more careful driving on the road and leave home a little earlier since the snow could be such a pain.

Q: What is the worst part about winter?

Clearing the snow off my big car because it's time consuming. I would turn on my car first and the snow on the windshield would fly on top of my car while I am trying to clear it.

Erica Germanoksi
Pittsburgh

Q: What is the best part of the winter?

The best part of winter is how snow looks from the window and hallways. It is very pretty from a distance and it brings in the Christmas season.

Q: What is the worst part about winter?

I do not like how cold it gets and how dirty the snow looks after it was driven on.

Q: What plans do you have over the winter season?

Family oriented stuff such as baking and watching Christmas movies.

Q: What advice would you give someone from Pittsburgh who has not experienced snow?

I would advise them to dress warm and always layer up. Invest in a nice pair of winter boots that will not get your feet wet and keep them warm.

Q: What expense does the snow season have on you while driving?

I have to put winter tires on the car, buy new coats, shoes, shovels, and salt.

*"I'm very excited, but I know it's going to be very cold."
-Jemai Gibbs*

Bellin continued from page 8

said, “really gets deeper into Query’s past, where he uncovers some very important information – you might call it secrets – about who he is, where he’s from, why he can do the things that he can do.”

“Scavenger of Souls” also provides backstory toward the first novel. There will be more about the history of how its world came to be the way it is, referencing the wars mentioned in

the first book. “Scavenger of Souls” clarifies what the wars were and how they started, according to Dr. Bellin.

Dr. Bellin said that even though he wanted to complete the story, he will not be providing a third sequel involving Query Genn. “What I might do, if again, there’s an interest in this,” Dr. Bellin added, “I might write a prequel which would take the plot back 50 years to the time right when these

wars started and right when the Skaldi first appeared on the planet.”

Dr. Bellin noted that if he were to create a prequel, he would use an unnamed, elderly woman already present in the two books as the protagonist. “She’s old enough that she would have been a teenager at the time when [the wars] went down and she would be a logical narrator if I were to write another teen novel,” he said. This pre-

quel has not been 100 percent confirmed and remains untitled.

Having been released a few months ago, “Scavenger of Souls” is available online through Amazon, Barnes and Noble, and can be downloaded onto a Nook, Kindle, or to one’s own mobile device. It can be physically bought at independent book stores and Barnes and Noble.

GMO, continued from page 9

to eat,” Dr. Rowe said.

“Scientists started developing genetically engineered technology for plants in the 1980s, and the first commercial genetically engineered crop – the Flavr Savr tomato – showed up in grocery stores in 1994,” she said.

The professor said, the product did not last long, especially since the tomatoes did not have much flavor.

Dr. Rowe added that genetically altered corn and soybeans were released a few years after.

However, she said not all genetically engineered crops and foods are the same.

There are two different types of genetically engineered crops: transgenic and cisgenic crops and foods, the professor said.

“There are some transgenic crops and foods – those that have one or more ‘foreign’ genes from a different plant or non-plant species added to their genomes,” Dr. Rowe said. “And

then there are cisgenic crops, which contain added genes that come from within that crop of a very similar species of that crop.”

Dr. Sproull said, most of these changes to genetically engineered crops and foods would not happen evolutionarily. It depends on a specific type of technology called CRISPR.

Dr. Rowe said, “CRISPR is a technology that creates gene-edited crops, in which scientists can make surgically precise changes to the native genes of an organism’s genome.”

She said, the technology uses RNA to guide a protein to a spot in the genome.

“Depending on the protein,” the professor said, “researchers can nick the DNA at that spot to either disable the gene or cause a one- or two- nucleotide change to alter the gene. In these cases, the change is made without adding any DNA.”

Dr. Rowe added that scientists can

also use a different type of protein and a DNA template to “rewrite” a particular stretch of genomes.

In the end, the RNA guides and proteins are broken down and recycled by the cell, she said.

CRISPR is a very innovative technology, the professor said. Scientists did not have a way to change a gene in its natural site.

“It’s a great precision tool to have in the genetic engineering toolbox,” Dr. Rowe said.

She also mentioned an important question: if you alter a plant’s genome without adding any DNA does it count as genetic engineering?

The federal rules and regulations say no, the professor said.

“The U.S. Department of Agriculture has been treating CRISPR edited crops that don’t have any added DNA the same way it treats conventionally bred crops,” Dr. Rowe said.

“However,” she said, “many peo-

ple believe that all new crops – no matter how they are made – should be looked at individually.”

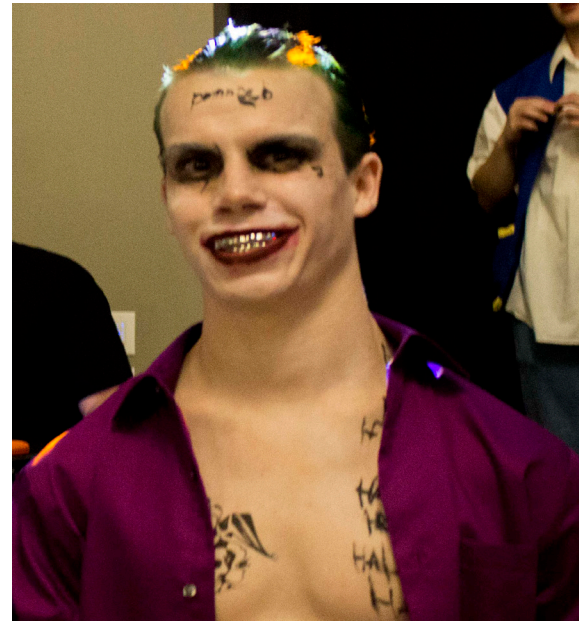
The professor said, this is important because many of us use and are eating transgenic foods daily.

“The main crops and foods are genetically engineered cotton, which we wear, and genetically engineered corn and soybeans, which we eat – in great quantities,” Dr. Rowe said. “They also show up in cornmeal, cornstarch, corn syrup, dextrose, soybean oil, and many other ingredients in processed foods we consume.”

She said genetically engineered crops are also in the meats we eat; the animals we eat are largely fed on genetically engineered grains.

“It is very difficult to avoid eating genetically engineered foods, unless you are extremely careful with ingredients,” the professor said.

Students did the monster mash, it was a graveyard smash



Winner of single’s costume contest, the Joker, also known as Johnny Nicholson

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From left to right: Lexie Wijnen-Riems, Susie Remaley, Lyric Harper, and Shawnshirae Brown-Kirby paint pumpkins for the bash

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