FACULTY SENATE

Virginia Gregg addresses long-term debt

Rensselaer plans for $100 million contribution to pension plan over eight years

Jack Wellhofer
Senior Reporter

VICE PRESIDENT FOR FINANCE AND CHIEF FINANCIAL Officer Virginia Gregg was in attendance at the Faculty Senate meeting last Wednesday to present an update of the financial status of Rensselaer.

“The biggest financial challenge for us is managing this legacy defined pension plan,” said Gregg. The plan has since been closed to new members, but the Institute is still liable for current members.

Prior to the pension payments, Rensselaer is in a “slightly positive” position for 2016, but is “slightly negative” after the pension.

Gregg continued, “It’s always been a bit unusual that Rensselaer had a defined pension plan for everybody.” She said that the Institute plans to put $100 million into the plan over the next eight to 10 years. “The board, the president, and I have plans for how we are going to manage this.”

Gregg outlined the Institute’s $742 million in long-term debt: $134 million is towards the pension liability, $328 million is from new facilities, including the Experimental Media and Performance Arts Center, the Center for Biotechnology and Interdisciplinary Studies, and the East Campus Athletics Village. Additionally, $280 million is for deferred maintenance. “We actually are compliant with the Department of Education financial responsibility requirements,” stated Gregg, regarding the DoE’s requirement that Rensselaer post a letter of credit. The DoE considered the pension liability one which would need to be paid in full, which is not the case. However, “we want zero chance that our programs could be exposed.” Editor’s note: see https://poly.rpi.edu/for more details regarding the letter of credit.

Gregg encouraged the faculty to participate in academic performance planning, participate in Summer Arch and growing research, and “talk up” the school as ways to increase revenue. The Institute estimates that Summer Arch will bring in an additional $15 million.

The Faculty Senate also heard a presentation from Folsom Library Director Andrew White. White recently joined the Rensselaer community and was presenting on his goals for library improvement. He expressed interest in improving the library’s website and how it is used. He also spoke about the protecting the items in the library’s archives, as its current space on the third floor is not climate controlled and close to water mains.

The Faculty Senate concluded with some committee updates before adjourning.

Jack Wellhofer/Photo Editor

PROFESSOR MILDRED DRESSELHAUS POSES for a photo alongside President Shirley Ann Jackson at a banquet in the professor’s honor.

Wednesday, November 16, 2016

Volume CXXXVII, No. 12 • poly.rpi.edu

Nathan Dorer
Empathy in the frame of your vote

Ana Wishnoff
Losing hope with the president-elect
Dresselhaus: Professor discusses challenges in science with new presidential administration

Core requirements receive student feedback removal of the distinction between humanities and social sciences is among the planned changes

Correction: A new ad hoc committee was formed to investigate clubs who participate in international travel. This revised budget, however, reallocates $90 to cover the cost of travel to their local clinic, the Whitney Young Clinic, and $270 to cover the cost of travel to the John F. Kennedy airport for their international travel. The full report can be viewed at https://poly.rpi.edu/report.
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<tr>
<th><strong>WEDNESDAY</strong></th>
<th><strong>FRIDAY</strong></th>
<th><strong>SATURDAY</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>November 16</strong></td>
<td><strong>November 18</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Red Cross Blood Drive</strong></td>
<td><strong>USPS Passport Application</strong></td>
<td><strong>RPI PakSA Charity Dinner</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mueller Center; 11:30 am–5:30 pm</td>
<td>Academy Hall 4th Floor; 10 am–2 pm</td>
<td>Academy Hall Auditorium; 6–9 pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>If you weigh at least 110 pounds and have a donor card, driver’s license, or two other forms of ID, you can donate.</td>
<td>Agents will be available for processing applications, passport photos, extra forms, and information. Bring all completed paperwork (available at <a href="https://poly.rpi.edu/s/bbbal">https://poly.rpi.edu/s/bbbal</a>) for faster service, but forms will also be available. Payments can be made with cash or check.</td>
<td>Help orphans in Pakistan by enjoying South Asian cuisines from local restaurants. This year, money will be raised for the Edhi Foundation, in honor of Abdul Sattar Edhi, who passed away earlier this year. Entertainment includes a local cover artist Bilal Mian, rising comedian E’sa Hassan, and a traditional Indian dance troupe. Tickets are $7 presale and $10 at the door.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Open Skate</strong></td>
<td><strong>Food Drive: Class of 2018 Hockey Night</strong></td>
<td><strong>Step Brothers</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Houston Field House; 2–3 pm</td>
<td>Houston Field House; 6:30–9:30 pm</td>
<td><strong>Partial Credit</strong></td>
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<td>A valid RPI ID is required upon entry. Please note that skate rentals are not offered during open skate hours.</td>
<td>Free tickets to the raffle for one of two $50 Bookstore gift cards will be given to those who support the food drive. All donations will be brought to Hope 7 Community Center. Canned soup is the preferred item.</td>
<td>Chapel and Cultural Center; 8–9 pm</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Lally School of Management Seminar</strong></td>
<td><strong>2016 United Way 50/50 Raffle</strong></td>
<td>Fantastic Beats and Where to Find Them featuring Sound Logic and A Sharp Arrangement. The cost of attendance is $5 in advance, $6 at the door.</td>
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<tr>
<td>CBIS Bruggeman Room; 2–3 pm</td>
<td>Houston Field House; 7–9 pm</td>
<td><strong>Union After Dark: Great Gatsby Night</strong></td>
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<td>Harry Kolar Ph.D., IBM Distinguished Engineer and Michael Kelly, Senior Research Engineer, IBM Research will give a presentation titled “Application of the Internet of Things to Advanced Environmental Monitoring and Management: The Jefferson Project Partnership.”</td>
<td>Cheer on the men’s hockey team as they face off against Ohio State University, and purchase a 50/50 raffle ticket while there.</td>
<td>Rensselaer Union; 9 pm–midnight</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Eastern NY Chemical Society</strong></td>
<td><strong>West Hall Haunted?! You won’t believe what was found...</strong></td>
<td>There will be student performances, movies, a costume contest, free food, games, and prizes, and as always, the annual Vermonster eating contest! The roaring twenties!</td>
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<tr>
<td>RSDH 2nd Floor; 5:30–9 pm</td>
<td>West Hall Auditorium; 7–9 pm</td>
<td><strong>Café Society</strong></td>
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<td>Professor Jacob Shelley will speak at the Eastern New York American Chemical Society meeting. The cost of attendance is $10 for current undergraduates.</td>
<td>Join the members of the Tri-City NY Paranormal Investigators as they reveal their findings from an October 6 investigation in West Hall. Does “Betsy” exist? Are we not alone?</td>
<td>DCC 308; 7 pm, 9:30 pm, and midnight</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>THURSDAY</strong></td>
<td><strong>2016 United Way 50/50 Raffle</strong></td>
<td><strong>Partial Credit</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>November 17</strong></td>
<td>Houston Field House; 7–9 pm</td>
<td>Chapel and Cultural Center; 8–9 pm</td>
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<td><strong>Keyence 3D Optical Microscope Demonstration</strong></td>
<td>Cheer on the men’s hockey team as they face off against Ohio State University, and purchase a 50/50 raffle ticket while there.</td>
<td>Fantastic Beats and Where to Find Them featuring Sound Logic and A Sharp Arrangement. The cost of attendance is $5 in advance, $6 at the door.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Materials Research Center; 9 am–noon</td>
<td><strong>West Hall Haunted?! You won’t believe what was found...</strong></td>
<td><strong>Union After Dark: Great Gatsby Night</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Dan Marrash of Keyence Corp. will be conducting a demonstration of their latest 3D optical microscope in MRC-135 (Lenel Student Lounge) for any student, staff or faculty interested. Bring your own specimens if you wish to.</td>
<td>West Hall Auditorium; 7–9 pm</td>
<td>Rensselaer Union; 9 pm–midnight</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Biological Seminar Series</strong></td>
<td><strong>Join the members of the Tri-City NY Paranormal Investigators as they reveal their findings from an October 6 investigation in West Hall. Does “Betsy” exist? Are we not alone?</strong></td>
<td>There will be student performances, movies, a costume contest, free food, games, and prizes, and as always, the annual Vermonster eating contest! The roaring twenties!</td>
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<tr>
<td>CBIS Bruggeman Room; noon–1 pm</td>
<td><strong>2016 United Way 50/50 Raffle</strong></td>
<td><strong>Café Society</strong></td>
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<td>Dr. Kaelyn Sumigray, Duke University, presents a lecture titled “Forming a niche: mechanisms of intestinal crypt morphogenesis.”</td>
<td>Houston Field House; 7–9 pm</td>
<td>DCC 308; 7 pm, 9:30 pm, and midnight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Public Communication Workshop</strong></td>
<td><strong>Join the members of the Tri-City NY Paranormal Investigators as they reveal their findings from an October 6 investigation in West Hall. Does “Betsy” exist? Are we not alone?</strong></td>
<td><strong>2016 United Way 50/50 Raffle</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library Fischbach Room; 4–6 pm</td>
<td><strong>West Hall Haunted?! You won’t believe what was found...</strong></td>
<td>Houston Field House; 7–9 pm</td>
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<td>It is difficult to walk the line between connecting with friends online and maintaining a web presence that you want employers to see. This is one aspect of a phenomenon social scientists call “context collapse” wherein audiences and the presentation of self are misaligned. Participants will learn practical advice about how to prepare their social media presence for potential employers through preparing your social media accounts for the job market.</td>
<td>West Hall Auditorium; 7–9 pm</td>
<td>Cheer on the men’s hockey team as they face off against Ohio State University, and purchase a 50/50 raffle ticket while there.</td>
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**The Polytechnic** will be holding elections for the Spring 2017 term on December 4 from 11 am–3 pm in Mother’s Wine Emporium.
Significance of your vote

As a gay American, I had everything at stake in this election. I don’t just mean African American, Hispanic Americans, women, and especially every other minority group in this great country. For me, there was so much at stake in this election. For a presidential candidate who stands for two values, a vote for him is also a vote for me. I’m not just voting for Muslims, end marriage equality, deport Mexicans, and “grab women by the pussy,” it’s voting for an entire group that wasn’t straight, white, and male had something to lose over the course of a Trump presidency. At this point, I’m dumbfounded that so many Americans voted in a way that condones bigotry at worse and passivity at best. I accept it at best. I’m dumbfounded that so many Americans would signify that my civil liberties are less important than their tax breaks.

Over the last ten years, the United States has made leaps in terms of LGBTQ inclusivity, and I was optimistic for the future. When Donald Trump began his presidential campaign, I had quietly hoped that America would have my best interests at heart and vote accordingly. I believed in an America that was empathetic and progressive enough to understand the gravity of this election for minorities. It is clear to me now that I was wrong.

A vote for Donald Trump is a vote for everyone in the dimension of the word—either deliberately or implicitly. If you voted for this man because you want to build a wall, deport Mexican Americans, or register Muslims in the United States, you stand for an America where xenophobia and racism are a conscious norm. If you voted for this man because you like his economic or health care reforms, then you have given implicit consent for legislation targeting minority groups for the sake of your own economic gain. Frankly, if you voted for Donald Trump, it is because you had nothing to lose by voting for Donald Trump; your lack of empathy for minority groups is representative of an American ignorance that I had thought long since moved past.

Over the last few days, I’ve seen people saying that it is our job as a country to accept the results from the election and move on as a unanimous body. You are naive to think that I will accept you for spitting in the face of the last 50 years of social progress in voting for Donald Trump. You voted for a man who wants to ensure that people like me can’t get married, and I will not forgive you for picturing the face of the Trump presidency and rebuild the progress that we’ll lose over the next four years. But I do not believe in an America where you shouldn’t be held accountable for the repercussions of your vote. You do not get to avoid the responsibility of Donald Trump’s social impact simply because you don’t identify as homophobic, racist, or sexist. As a marginalized person, I was relying on you to maintain an America where my sexuality was accepted, and you failed me. I can, and will, take that personally.

Losing hope for United States

When the election results came out, I felt numb. Everyone I spoke to that morning felt numb. All of the anger, the sadness, the disappointment, and the hopelessness from last night is in my stomach, and every thought of the fact that Donald Trump will be our next president, I felt physically sick.

There are too many things to say. There are far too many things to think. The things above are real. They’re happening to my friends from high school who are worried to hear their hijab in public. They’re happening to my aunt’s second grade students, one of whom asked if her parents were going to get deported. It’s happening to the sons of a gay family friend who was fired after the election and asked if his daddies were going to have to get divorced. So many children in this country will grow up thinking that they’re inferior. They’ll be surrounded by an atmosphere of recrimination that is considered as less than others and feel helpless to do anything about it. They will grow up knowing that the country they grew up in didn’t care, didn’t care about them, didn’t care about their parents. They will grow up thinking that their parents consider their fathers rapists or drug dealers, and the rest of their family lazy, as they sit at home and wait for their parents to return after a 16 hour work day. All little girls in this country will grow up feeling like men have control over their bodies, and even if you think it’s not a big deal because the president says it’s okay.

These situations are not just speculation or political fodder. The things above are real. They’re happening to my friends from high school who are worried to hear their hijab in public. They’re happening to my aunt’s second grade students, one of whom asked if her parents were going to get deported. It’s happening to the sons of a gay family friend who was fired after the election and asked if his daddies were going to have to get divorced. So many children in this country will grow up thinking that they’re inferior. They’ll be surrounded by an atmosphere of recrimination that is considered as less than others and feel helpless to do anything about it. They will grow up knowing that the country they grew up in didn’t care, didn’t care about them, didn’t care about their parents. They will grow up thinking that their parents consider their fathers rapists or drug dealers, and the rest of their family lazy, as they sit at home and wait for their parents to return after a 16 hour work day. All little girls in this country will grow up feeling like men have control over their bodies, and even if you think it’s not a big deal because the president says it’s okay.

When I was in sixth grade, and President Obama had recently delivered his first State of the Union address, I vividly remember trying to get everyone at my school to call the president because it was the closest on the Hope Line. I couldn’t help but think that it was never the end—with hope comes change and a better tomorrow. While that message still stands true, it has gotten beaten down again and again by the decisions of his presidency. But hope is not enough. Saying everything will be alright is not enough. Getting angry is a start, but that’s not enough. Taking action is what we need. Use it for good, use it for, change. Donate to services that will get defunded, fight Planned Parenthood. Volunteer at places that help human beings in this unprecedented change. Don’t just hope.
I recently read Curtis Powell’s “Post-Election Message” of 11/10/16 to the RPI community, and it compelled me to write. His message was, simply put, repugnant.

I found RPI to be a relatively freethinking and normal home for education, research, and camaraderie. Different points of view could be shared and students could handle the world around them without the need for intervention or counseling. RPI has never struck me as a school like Vassar, where “special snowflakes” are kept in “safe spaces” from opinions and news that might damage their delicate sensibilities.

My message to RPI administrators such as Mr. Powell—you get paid in large part to train young men and women to be emotionally prepared for the real world. My message to RPI administrators such as Mr. Powell—you get paid in large part to train young men and women to be emotionally prepared for the real world. RPI lowers its standing among its alumni when we hear about this sort of contagion infect our campus as it’s done to so many others.

There are no grief counselors where I’m writing from (my office). There are no safe spaces in company boardrooms. Let’s not let the millennial-entitlement syndrome infect the campus as it’s done to so many others.

RPI lowers its standing among its alumni when we hear about this sort of contagion infect our campus as it’s done to so many others. I’ve always found RPI to be a relatively freethinking and normal home for education, research, and camaraderie. Different points of view could be shared and students could handle the world around them without the need for intervention or counseling. RPI has never struck me as a school like Vassar, where “special snowflakes” are kept in “safe spaces” from opinions and news that might damage their delicate sensibilities.

As always, if you have any questions or concerns, feel free to reach out to me at ps@rpi.edu.

Michael Bruce, CIVL ’08, MBA ’10

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Unneeded message sent out to RPI community

I recently read Curtis Powell’s “Post-Election Message” of 11/10/16 to the RPI community, and it compelled me to write. His message was, simply put, repugnant. I’ve always found RPI to be a relatively freethinking and normal home for education, research, and camaraderie. Different points of view could be shared and students could handle the world around them without the need for intervention or counseling. RPI has never struck me as a school like Vassar, where “special snowflakes” are kept in “safe spaces” from opinions and news that might damage their delicate sensibilities.

My message to RPI administrators such as Mr. Powell—you get paid in large part to train young men and women to be emotionally prepared for the real world. There are no grief counselors where I’m writing from (my office). There are no safe spaces in company boardrooms. Let’s not let the millennial-entitlement syndrome infect our campus as it’s done to so many others.

RPI lowers its standing among its alumni when we hear about this sort of coddling. Fact, not opinion.
CROSS COUNTRY

Michael Baird  
Senior Reporter

For the first time in 20 years, the now No. 9 nationally ranked Rensselaer men’s cross country team received an invitation to compete at the NCAA Division III Championship Meet, the top meet in the country for Division III schools, following their second place victory at the NCAA Atlantic Regional Meet on Saturday. The meet will be held at Tom Sawyer Park in Louisville, Kentucky, this Saturday, November 19.

The women’s cross country team, after being selected as an at-large team for their third place performance at Regional’s, will be making their third appearance in school history at Saturday’s National Championship. The women tied with Ithaca College in points, each team earning 121. Never before have both teams competed together at National’s.

Out of 303 runners from 49 different schools, four-time 2016 Men’s Cross Country Performer of the Week senior Ben Fazio led the Engineers in second place overall in the 8000 meter race, finishing five seconds behind the winner from the State University of New York at Geneseo, Isaac Garcia-Cassani, in an average mile pace of 4:54. Sophomore Grant O’Connor crossed in third in 24:23.6, just three seconds behind his teammate.

Also helping the Engineers earn 87 points were sophomore Sean O’Connor and senior Garrett Davis, third and fourth for their team, and 24:50.5 and Davis clocked out at 25:13.0. Both athletes earned collegiate career personal records that day.

Junior Jaime Lord headed the No. 16 ranked women’s team on Saturday, running the 6000 meter course in 20:46.8, a 5:35 average mile pace, to earn third out of 304 racers from 50 schools. Next for the Engineers was the pack of senior Maddie Dery, senior Mary West, and sophomore Karina Bolton, each finishing within a second of each other and placing 23rd, 24th, and 26th respectively. Dery crossed nearly one minute after Lord.

Both the men’s team and the women’s team from SUNY Geneseo triumphed over the competition to earn first place regional trophies, earning 51 points on the men’s side and 90 points on the women’s side. The second place women’s team was the State University of New York at Oneonta with 112 points, while the College of New Jersey won the men’s team third place honor with 169 points.

THE MEN’S AND WOMEN’S TEAMS WILL COMPETE alongside each other in the National Championship this Saturday. (file photo)

Basketball home openers

WOMEN’S BASKETBALL OPENED their season with a 77–45 win against Southern Vermont College at home this past Tuesday, November 15th. The Engineers held control over the game from the opening tip-off, never trailing by more than a point. Both sophomore Eliza Eckhardt and senior Lauren Young scored career-high baskets of 22 and 15 respectively.

Eckhardt, pictured above, made four of seven shots from three-point range and also had four rebounds and a steal. The women’s team will continue their season at home on Tuesday, November 22 against Russell Sage College.

MEN’S BASKETBALL DEFEATED SUNY Cobleskill 84–53 in their season opener this past Tuesday November 15. Senior Brian Hatcher, pictured above, was one of the six players on the team to score in the double digits. Hatcher and sophomore Andreas Kontopidis both scored 13 points.

The Engineers began their lead with a three-pointer by sophomore Tom Horvat and held their lead for the entire game. The men’s team will be back at home on Tuesday, November 22 against Sage College of Albany.
Men's football

The RPI Engineers played the Union College Dutchmen to compete for the Dutchman's Shoes trophy. The Engineers won the game 21–12. The total record in the series is now 30–80–4. Union has won the series historically; however, RPI has won eight of the games in the past decade.

The Shoes contest is also traditionally RPI's last game of the season, and this year it was also senior night. Before the game, Director of Athletics Lee McElroy and President Shirley Ann Jackson congratulated seniors on their accomplishments in the football program during their four years here at Rensselaer.

WOMEN'S HOCKEY

Rensselaer trumped twice

Two losses bring season to 4–9–1

Jacob Kaplan
Senior Reporter

RENSSELAER LOST 4–1 AGAINST SAINT LAWRENCE UNIVERSITY ON FRIDAY, November 11. After travelling to Potsdam, NY on Saturday, November 12, Rensselaer also lost to Clarkson University 8–3. The two losses dropped the Engineers to 4–9–1 overall for the season.

On Friday, after an uneventful first period, the Saints scored two goals within the first four of the second period. Junior Whitney Renn scored towards the end of the second period. However, the Saints scored early in the third period, and once more during the end, ensuring them a comfortable victory against the Engineers. Despite the loss, sophomore goaltender Lovisa Selander made 30 saves for Rensselaer over the course of the game.

Saturday's game started with a disappointing first period for the Engineers, with Clarkson University scoring three goals. During the second period, the Engineers scored twice with goals by sophomore Makenna Thomas and junior Maresa Raspa, but the Golden Knights also scored twice during this period. Sophomore Jaimie Grigsby scored an additional point for the Engineers during the third period. However, this was followed by three goals made by the Golden Knights, giving them an overwhelming victory against the Engineers. Sophomore goaltenders Selander and Kira Bombay, combined, made 42 saves throughout the game.

The Engineers will host Mercyhurst College this coming weekend.

Wish everybody a safe, happy Thanksgiving Break.
Things Trump has Ruined
10. The word “great”
9. Two marriages
8. Swamp reclamation
7. Spray tans
6. Nathan’s friendships
5. Jeb Bush
4. Thumbs-ups
3. Political Integrity (wait, no)
2. Making things great
1. This timeline

Thanksgiving Foods

Carrots
Casserole
Com
Combread
Cranberries
Gravy
Green Beans
Ham
Pie
Potatoes
Rolls
Squash
Stuffing
Turkey
Yams

SUDOKU

Instructions
Fill in the grid so that each row, column, and 3-by-3 subsquare contains exactly one occurrence of the numbers 1 through 9.

Solution from 11/2 Issue

Step Brothers

Do you like drawing comics? Draw comics for The Poly!
Email us at comics@poly.rpi.edu
A Cryptoquote is a simple substitution code where each letter that appears may stand for a different letter. The substitutions are consistent throughout the puzzle. Punctuation is not translated.

For example: SIVOISSWC = ENGINEERS

"Frs gipm wsdcgi mgb’ws poloiv rsws oc qsudbcs js dik jm kdk ksuoksk frdf mgbw jgj edc wsdppm rgf, dik jdmqs es crgbpk hbcf qgfr qdiv rsw, dik es’pp abf ba eofr frs wsfdwk oi frs jsdifojs."

-Kdps Kgqduz Cfsa Qwgfrswc

The November 2016 Guide to Making People Feel Old

If they’re [age], you say:

"Did you know ______ has been around for a majority of your life?"

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<td>Aqua Teen Hunger Force Colon Movie Film For Theatres</td>
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<td>Deep Blue’s Victory</td>
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<td>Tupac’s Death</td>
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<td>40</td>
<td>The Last Calvin and Hobbes Strip</td>
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<td>41</td>
<td>Toy Story</td>
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<tr>
<td>&gt;41</td>
<td>[Don’t worry, they’ve got this covered]</td>
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A Talk on Combining your Training in Engineering or Science with Law: A Path to Success

Some students may wish to work in areas that represent the interface between science and technology and society at large. There are some excellent career opportunities for engineering and science students as lawyers. Some representative areas are patent, environmental and product liability law.

Adjunct Professor David Aker of the Touro College Jacob D. Fuchsberg Law Center will make a presentation on these subjects. Professor Aker will tell the story of his background in electronics and physics, his work in the aerospace and other industry on Long Island, his decision to attend law school, and his career as a patent attorney and an adjunct professor of law. The law school admission process will also be discussed. Questions from students will be answered.
**TELEVISION REVIEW**

TV’s dark, twisted fantasy

Serge Piskun  
Senior Reviewer

The hit TV show *Black Mirror* is like none other. Drawing themes from old Twilight Zone episodes and mashing them with this generation’s general distrust for technology, Charlie Booker created a disjointed yet extremely interconnected TV series. Each episode is stand-alone, yet ties in with others, even those not necessarily in the same season. Constantly changing, even those not necessarily in the same season. Constantly changing, ever accessible to many more people, which will only serve to heighten its popularity.

All episodes in season three are worth a watch, as even the weakest link is still a strong one. From the parody of social media and cellular culture in “Nosedive,” to the exploration of the consequences that come from creating the ultimate horror game in “Playtest,” the seemingly outlandish episode plots are, upon further consideration, very much possible on the near horizon.

Nothing can compare to the shock I felt during “Shut Up and Dance” as it wove its tale of cyber logical havoc, or the confusion-turned-anticipation as “San Junipero” unfolded across 61 short minutes. A fitting end to *Black Mirror* as it is now the last episode of season three. “Hated in the Nation” is a tale of technology gone wrong. It touches on many familiar problems, such as government spying and ecological disasters, as well as the overarching cloud of anonymity. Throughout the episode, the consequences of remaining purely anonymous are explored in great length.

Black Mirror has you covered. In short, if you’re looking for a break from the monotony of college life, I recommend watching Black Mirror. It will make you forget about the problems that you’re facing now and focus on existential questions that will keep you up all night. Scratch that—watch *Black Mirror* when you have plenty of free time to consider your own existence. Trust me. Also, start the Christmas Special. It’s a great way to ease yourself into the twisted realm of *Black Mirror*.

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**THE BEST AND ONLY IMPROV COMEDY SHOWS:**

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THE DYNAMIC FOLK-ROCK DUO OF Lewis Del Mar is based just three hours south of Troy, New York, their humble beginnings originating in a Queens basement. Danny Miller and Max Harwood dropped their sonically strong debut album last month, and its compelling indie rock aesthetics prove to be worth a closer look.

Miller and Harwood power past simple pop antics, reaching instead for a Latin-fused, percussion-soaked sound that brings each guitar strum and bold lyric to a vibrant life. Miller offers vocals and guitar; Harwood handles drums and production. The two grew up together as childhood friends, and claim their success as a duo stems from their bond and belief that friendship comes before fame. The two have experienced a steady rise in the alternative music scene recently, trading basement sessions for festival appearances.

It wasn’t always easy for the two. They moved to Brooklyn and worked service jobs, throwing themselves into their music after hours. They began to discover and build upon their sound. Their vibe is essentially a blend of opposites; the familiarity of their culture and community, and the bold experimentalist rock-pop they hone so precisely. You can feel the Latin flavor in the sensory lyrics, and the bursts of percussion strike you with the heat of a habanero pepper. Oceanic vibes simultaneously flow in crashing chorus waves. Such brash and inventive sounds from this low point led the duo to their first break. The release of their first single, "Loud(y)," garnered immediate positive feedback. It earned the coveted top spot on Hype Machine, a music aggregator blog that calls out the best new acts and predicts future successes. The hype built instantly and lasted until the release of their self-titled debut album last month.

The track that brought them a chance, "Loud(y)," opens with simple strings, then gains some courage as it progresses into a bold, bass-punched first line. The chorus bursts into a lush percussion arrangement that sighs and screams to Miller’s vocal "you got a semi-automatic mouth." It descends into descriptive spoken-word sections and keeps surprising with its constant twists and turns. The next standout track feels like it was sung sideways. The lyrics are direct, the arrangement winding and reflective. "The party’s alive at 5 am/But who’s counting? Dance around like skeletons/cause we forgot what we wanted," strikes a different chord than their lead single. The vocals start to strain as the verses darken and chorus thickens, and you feel as if you’re in the same dark room haze. The first track of the LP, "Such Small Scenes," opens in disarray before funneling into vocal synths and sharp-tuned percussion. This one is particularly candid, starting with a confession of “never felt at home in my hometown,” then a brutal “I promise I’m fine, I’ll call you if I cave in.” The production is key here; the song progresses in waves, from the first descending synths to the final bass cutouts. Lewis Del Mar’s debut exhibits massive talent and promise. They own their signature sound from the first track on, and it feels as if they’re ready to take on all that’s coming their way. The two have been working hard, and with passion, to make their dreams a reality. Their eagerness to share their passions, and the ingenious honesty that flows from it, makes them uniquely likeable.

Crossdressing monarchy takes RPI main-stage

ARTIST SPOTLIGHT

From humble origins to breakthrough success

Tanner Vargas
Staff Reviewer

Lewis Del Mar

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