Wednesday, November 30, 2016

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Stephanie Tan  Winter break is coming
David Raab  Teaching the impossible, Physics style

CAMPUS EVENT

Space veteran visits RPI campus

NASA astronaut Guion Bluford recounts time in orbit and other experiences

Brookelyn Parslow  Senior Reporter

On Wednesday, November 16, former astronaut Guion Bluford shared his 15 years worth of experience in NASA, including 688 hours in space, with his lecture, “Free Fall: Flying In Space.” Bluford was one of 35 selected by NASA from a pool of thousands in 1978. Four years later, he became the first African American in space.

Bluford didn't hold back as he detailed all four of his Space Shuttle flights, including 76 different lab experiments he helped perform in Spacelab, his attempts at making sandwiches, and all of the quirks associated with daily life in zero gravity.

When he opened up for questions, people of all ages lined up behind the microphones placed on both sides of the auditorium. On the topic of Mars, Bluford said, “Humans are explorers; we want to get there because it’s there,” and that it may have to serve as a refuge from Earth, if action regarding environmental issues isn’t taken soon enough.

When asked what it takes to become an astronaut, he explained that in order to be competitive, one should complete a Ph.D. in a science or engineering field, have experience in that field, have a private pilot license, be certified scuba diver, be fluent in Russian, and have a nice personality with a balanced ego.

He also stressed that there are other ways to contribute to space exploration through a variety of roles that extend far beyond being an astronaut, and that these roles are just as important as astronauts themselves.

Throughout the lecture and as a closing sentiment, Bluford claimed that he “made people pay [him] to have a good time,” a goal he urged the members of the audience to keep in mind throughout their education and careers.

EXECUTIVE BOARD

Student employees see wage increase

Elisabeth Ryan  Senior Reporter

The Rensselaer Union Executive Board opened their November 17 meeting with an appeal from the service fraternity, Alpha Phi Omega. APO was requesting to reserve a portion of the McNeil Room for Monday, December 5 where they will be hosting a “de-stress event,” featuring movies and a sundae bar in anticipation of finals. Alternative study spaces will be provided. The motion to allow APO’s reservation of the McNeil room was passed.

Members of the UPAC Lights and Sound committee presented a wage increase plan for their technicians. Currently, they are paid $10 per hour. The minimum wage value in New York is $9 per hour. They are paid slightly over the minimum wage because members of the UPAC Lights and Sound committee are trained technicians. However, the technicians of UPAC Lights and Sound have been making $10 per hour since $5 per hour was the average minimum wage.

Now, the New York state average hourly minimum wage is set to increase to $9.70 at the end of December and to increase 70 cents each year. By the end of 2020, the average minimum wage will be $12.50, which is the value that UPAC Lights and Sound are looking to increase their wage to. Members of the E-Board noted that they would be increasing their wage to minimum wage. It was also noted that UPAC Lights and Sound heavily impact clubs across campus, and a drastic increase in their wage would affect their budgets. The motion to increase the hourly wage of the UPAC Lights and Sound technicians to $12.50 starting next year passed.

Matthew Rand ’19 presented the last of the New Club Classifications policy document alterations to the E-Board. In this latest change, the definition of what a club is was made more clear. The E-Board unanimously passed the motion that allows this change.

A new committee focusing on issues related to student employment and the Rensselaer Union was created. The purpose of the committee is to gather student feedback which will be used and reviewed by Associate Director Joe Campo who oversees student employment in the Union. Issues of focus include whether or not students have filled out tax forms, whether or not students are being treated equally and is the student work environment satisfactory. President of the Union Chip Kirchner ’17 appointed a chairman.

Kirchner announced a plan to advertise somewhere in the Union RPI’s student veteran association. The meeting of Thursday, November 17 marks the final official meeting of the Executive Board for the Fall 2016 semester. Until the end of the semester, members of the E-Board will be working diligently to finalize club budgets. They will resume their meetings next year.

For students interested in the functions and operations of the Union, feel free to attend an E-Board meeting, which have historically been held in the Shelnutt Gallery, on Thursdays at 8 p.m.

EXECUTIVE CLUB REPRESENTATIVES FACE budgeting in the upcoming weeks.
Shoutout to my friends for keeping me sane

Well here we are, the last two weeks of the semester. For the next couple of weeks, we all have term projects, tests, papers, presentations, and, of course, finals, to look forward to. The upcoming weeks will feel like an eternity. This is not an uncommon feeling, but this feeling hits home at RPI more than at other colleges. RPI pushes its students to such an rigorous academic curriculum with incredibly challenging classes that may not necessarily be well taught. This puts extra pressure on us, especially at this time of the year, as this semester comes to an end. As my third semester at RPI comes to a close, I find myself with three tests, three projects, and a presentation during the last week of classes, and I am extremely overwhelmed. However, I find some comfort in knowing that many other students understand the feeling of stress and overwork. With the upcoming two weeks, I just want to remind the student body that no matter what upheavals you have over these next few weeks from projects to finals, we can all work together to the holiday season and four weeks of winter break. Despite the next few weeks not will be easy for anyone, and remain positive as you have made it through a majority of this semester and only have the home stretch left.

Physics II finally clicking

Undergraduate Taing most rewarding experience academically, socially since coming to Rensselaer

One special opportunity I’ve had this semester is that I’ve been able to have an undergraduate Teaching Assistant. The undergraduate TAs staff the room during labs in order to help the students with the lab activities and answer questions. Sometimes, it can be intimidating to directly ask a professor what seems to be a simple question and that is where the undergraduate TA shines in filling in the gap. Also, at least in Physics II, the graduate TA and the professor float between two labs so they may not always be available during lab to answer questions immediately. In addition to being available during lab sessions, many of the TAs also do separate office hours either on Wednesday or Sunday of every week. The undergraduate TAs are also responsible for grading the in-class lab activities. It can be awkward knowing the grades of some of your friends who happen to be taking the course, but you can rest assured that federal law in the form of FERPA enforces us to protect the privacy of anyone who is not on the course staff. Let’s not forget that the labs are the most generously graded part of the course, and if you come to any of the many office hours offered during the week, you can walk out with a perfect score on your lab and half the points back on your post-lab activity. For compensation, undergraduate TAs either get two free elective credits per semester or they can be paid out of their work-study allotment.

Of course, the compensation is the money or academic credits gained is not the reason why any one TA the course. This semester has been my first semester working as a TA for the class, and it has been a very rewarding experience. All of the TAs were once students in the course, so we know firsthand some of the trickier parts and how we were able to do well in them. Some of the best tips on how to succeed in the class is to seek out a student to student basis. I know I enjoy seeing my students do well in the class, and that I would do anything to help them succeed.

We all know that Physics II has a reputation for being one of the harder core courses for most School of Engineering and Science majors. In fact, while taking the course, I found the hardest part of the exam was the multiple choice questions, simply because there is no partial credit given. I think a lot of students would agree with me that short answer questions are great because they allow for partial credit if you can tell the grader what you were thinking at the time of taking the test. If you have the opportunity to TA a course as a student here, I would highly encourage you to do so especially if you enjoy helping people. The secondary benefit is the fact that one of the best ways to learn something is to have to teach it somehow else.

The Poly will like to send condolences to Pauline Oliveros’ family. Oliveros was a professor of music at Rensselaer, who passed away on November 21, 2016.
Budgeting: Finalizing E-Board decisions as school year ends

From Page 2

arts, as well as specific budgets for general club support and intramurals. These evenings will start at 7 pm for the Executive Board and are anticipated to go until 11 pm. The Executive Board has barely begun its budgeting work at this point. On December 10 and 12, the E-Board will be reviewing the club and organization budgets. During this process, the E-Board trials to bring sweeping changes to the government. He is taking great care in choosing highly-experienced, well-respected individuals for Cabinet positions without regard for any personal opinions. The Cabinet was not designed to be the federal bureaucracy to the White House. Rather, it was a movement for Cabinet appointments moving towards much needed reconstruction. Through these picks, Trump voters understood that only through comprehensive reform of our entire government, now known as “draining the swamp,” would America even have a chance to break the ubiquitous hold of bureaucracy over our country and help our economy grow.

Trump voters knew that President Trump will fully uphold his Oath of Office to “preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States.”

The Trump movement was successful because a majority of Americans are tired with where our country is headed. Voters wanted a political outsider, free of corruption and suspicion, who will answer the call of the American people to be our next President of the United States of America.

Dallon Slegel
CHEG ’20

Professor’s trip out west reaffirms significance of Dakota Access Pipeline civil rights violations

I mosseyed over to Bismarck, North Dakota this past week to find out what was really going on at the Standing Rock Reservation, with this “protest” of the Dakota Access Pipeline. I learned two main lessons. First, this is a classic case of egregious political corruption in which the government, in collusion with private (foreign) corporations, is sending police, sheriffs, and even national guard troops to beat the hell out of citizens in violation of their most fundamental civil rights—this in case, non-violent demonstrators exercising the right of assembly. It’s blatant, constantly one-sided, and entenderless, and experienced it first hand, inquired of it, challenged it, and got confirmation that there is only one side to the story.

Second, the two encampments, Oceti Sakowin especially, are truly prayer sites. They are holistic spiritual enclaves in which a spirit of traditional stewardship for the earth is nurtured and non-violence trained. The Lakota are genuine water protectors. At the Sacred Stones camp, there is a constant drum beat and educational focus to this spirit, designed to “change the hearts” of the mercenaries to re-engage the spirit of stewardship in them. This is by far the dominant tone of the entire operation.

Not since 1845 have so many Native American tribes united in such spiritual enclaves. The pow-wowing around sacred fire of the Seven-Fire Council for many moons, ringed by huge teepees where the chiefs abide. Spiritually, I could have remained by the sacred fire of the Seven-Fire Council and the profuse neighborliness and helpfulness of all gathered bears evidence to this spirit. The place is a home you never knew you had until you arrive and settle in.

“The line” of confrontation is at Backwater Bridge on Highway 1806. I decided to drive south on it from Bismarck first, rather than joining the protectors coming northward, trying to cross the bridge alone. Passing one “road closed” sign after another. I finally met the National Guard post and was stopped.

Guard: “The road is closed.”

Me: “Yes I know, but it said ‘local traffic only’, and what traffic isn’t way out here?”

Guard: “No traffic can go through, the bridge is too damaged, it’s too dangerous.”

Me: “Yes I know, but it said ‘local traffic only’, and what traffic isn’t way out here?”

Guard: “The bridge is severely damaged it’s too dangerous.”

Me: “To walk over? It can’t hold my weight? Don’t you have about 200 police personnel with armored vehicles standing on it? No room for one more 175 pounder? I’ll tread lightly. Tell me, does the National Guard routinely handle road closures?”

Guard: “No, I’m…”

Me: “Tell you what, I’ll walk the bank and wade across the water. Surely the bridge could take that.”

Then simply started out on my walk. They physically prevented it, a force now grown to perhaps a dozen, from two originally, with two vehicles added. “Touching me makes this a police action. The National Guard does not engage in domestic policing except under martial law.” They didn’t seem to care.

Taking the detour and arriving at Oceti camp, I gave my donations, helped with some construction and serving of food, and then had a frank talk with the Red Owl Legal Collective in their tent. This started with, “Why shouldn’t all these police, sheriff department personnel, and the rest be rounded up by US Army forces for trespassing on sovereign treated Lakota land?” Turns out that the crimes we negotiated, then I said I’d walk over. Guard: “The bridge is severely damaged it’s too dangerous.”

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CURLING

Rensselaer slides to third national rank

The team will host a bonspiel this weekend that is open to the entire Rensselaer community.

Michael Baird
Senior Reporter

**THE CURLING TEAM, PICTURED ABOVE, IS RANKED** third nationally and hopes to extend their winning season this weekend. (file photo)

Finishing in the runner-up position at the Rochester Institute of Technology Bonspiel at Rochester Curling Club on Sunday, November 13, the RPI Curling team emerged the third-ranked team in the nation, trouncing only No. 1 University of Oklahoma and No. 2 State University of New York Polytechnic. The team maintains its ranking as it ventures into its home event this Saturday and Sunday, the RPI Bonspiel, held at Schenectady Curling Club in Schenectady, New York.

Two teams were formed and sent to Rochester on Saturday, November 12. RPI 1, consisting of freshman Evan Mullaney as skip, senior Jenny Amador as vice, junior Anthony Naslas as second, and senior Dana Stevens as lead, defeated four of the five teams they challenged. Their first game against Bowdoin College ended in a clean sweep, 24-0. Their success continued to resonate in a close win against Yale University, 8-7. The final game on Saturday against RIT 2 again ended in a Rensselaer victory.

In the A event semifinals, SUNY Polytechnic lost to RPI on Sunday, 7-9, moving Rensselaer up to the finals against the University of Pennsylvania. The team lost 1-7 to the challenger to finish second overall.

In RPI 2, senior Kirsten Cardinal served as skip, senior Jeremy Katz as vice, sophomore Gideon Bartlett as second, freshman Luke Weinkam as lead, and freshman David Dawkins as fifth. The team placed seventh at the tournament, winning three of their five games. "Luke and David are both freshman first-year curlers, and did really well in the spiel," said Stevens. This weekend, Rensselaer will host the largest collegiate level bonspiel ever held, with 20 teams registered to attend. Five four-person teams from RPI will be competing. All members of the RPI community are invited to attend the tournament in Schenectady to support our curling team this Saturday, when they will be guaranteed to play. Those teams playing in the semi-finals, and finals on Sunday will not be chosen until after play on Saturday.

CROSS COUNTRY

Runners close out season

Michael Baird
Senior Reporter

The record-setting men’s cross country team raced on the 8000 meter course at the NCAA Division III National Championship in Louisville, Kentucky, on Saturday, November 19. They finished the race in 13th overall out of 32 teams, the highest position ever earned by the team in the Rensselaer’s history. The Institute’s only other appearance at the NCAA meet was in 1996, when they took 17th.

"Reaching NCAA has long been a goal for our team," said sophomore Grant O’Connor. "After our results from track this spring, we knew we had the potential for something big this season. Personally, I’m proud that I can play a part in leading the team to new heights. We take our training very seriously, so racing well certainly reaffirms our faith in the process."

In spite of tripping during the race, held at Tom Sawyer Park in Louisville, Kentucky, O’Connor led the Engineers with his 25th place time of 24:47.2, averaging a 4:59.2 mile pace. His spot in the 278-person field earned him his first National All-American honor.

"I discussed strategy with Coach Lynch before the race with goal of finishing in the top three individually," said O’Connor. “My plan was to run at the front of the race for three miles, then be prepared to make or defend a strong acceleration as we neared the finish. Ultimately, Ben (Fazio) and I were able to move up with strong fifth miles to finish 2-3.”

Only seven male athletes continued training after the NCAA Atlantic Regional meet for the National meet. There were five scoring members in the race, including O’Connor and his teammates senior Ben Fazio in 70th with a time of 25:15.6, sophomore Sean O’Connor with a 107th place time of 25:24.6, senior Garrett Davis in 25:44.3, and junior Matthew Stewart in 25:51.2. Seniors Matthew Cecchi and Brian Crowley were also on the field for RPI.

"Despite only our top seven runners competing in post-season meets, everyone on our roster has helped move the team forward," said O’Connor. "Having teammates to look up to, train with, and ultimately race with is invaluable to our success. This year’s senior class is phenomenal in that regard, and they will leave a strong program behind."

Led by junior Jaime Lord, seven runners from the women’s cross country team also traveled to Nationals, where they finished in 18th place overall out of 32 teams. Lord improved by 25 seconds over her time at last year’s NCAA Championship, crossing the line of the 6000 meter race in 19th place with a time of 21:35.9 and earning her second National All-America in the process.

Sophomore Karina Bolton and senior Maddie Derry crossed in second and third for the Engineers in 22:17.0 and 22:18.0 respectively. At 22:31.0, senior Mary West finished, with senior Allison Thayer only four seconds behind.

Fifth year coach John Lynch and assistant coaches Kaulin Balzano and Nick Marcanuto received recognition as the Coaching Staff of the Year for their work in helping mold RPI students into strong endurance athletes. Lynch will return as distance coach of the men’s and women’s track teams in the spring.
Things to Do With All of the Free Time You Don’t Have

10. Do your homework
9. Read all of Wikipedia
8. Eat Hi-Chew
7. Count paper clips on your desk
6. Call home
5. Refresh Reddit
4. Clean the house, twice
3. Get lit
2. Consider liberal arts
1. Read The Poly

WORD FIND

Words can be found forwards, backwards, up, down, and in both diagonals.

Patterns

G H T A I L C H M A E R T D L
H C T A H S S O R C E R A O
D F G H E R A E R T Y K L O D
T M A H G N I G O P C A C B O
A H H S S O R C W E T Y S N T
C T L B R I T E H C N T I M S
H O A Y T R E C A V R O L R E
S O P U Y E R C F I A L R E A
C T Y E L S I A P D S W T A S
F S G H J R A E U D I A L P
H D C Y R T S L O P I A R T
O N B N E F U T O D R O T M N
J U E R I L P O N G O A D A
A O L N I O L E P A I P N L P
R H Y A A R N T I Z P B A K
G S G U P A R Y T I A G T E F
V T R R E L D T R L H C I S E
S R A C L A T T I C E H P Z R
A I A S L O P D A L W O U L L

Argyle
Checked
Crosshatch
Dots
Floral
Gingham
Grid
Houndstooth
Lattice
Paisley
Plaid
Stripes
Tartan
ZigZag

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.

Last Week’s Solutions

Serving the Rensselaer community since 1885
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: BACOIBBHZ = ENGINEERS

“Gpf runb obba jbvcrbm, gpf runb obba xbuzfhbm, uam gpf runb obba tpfam juaevac. Va jrue jphqm kpfqm gpf ypzzvoqg obue xb?”
-Umrbxuh

CRYPTOQUOTE

XKCD

I ALWAYS FORGET TO LABEL MY MOVING BOXES UNTIL THEY’RE SEALED UP AND I’VE FORGOTTEN WHAT’S IN THEM.

HAY, TURN ON THE NEWS, I CAN'T DOWNLOADING A CD ONTO MY PHONE.

WHY? SO I CAN USE IT TO FIX MY COMPUTER'S OPERATING SYSTEM ENOUGH THAT I CAN TEACH IT TO TALK TO MY TV SCREEN.

BUT THEN YOU’LL BE ABLE TO WATCH THE NEWS?

NO.

DON'T YOU HAVE A COMPUTER SCIENCE DEGREE?

THAT JUST MEANS I UNDERSTAND HOW EVERYTHING WORKS SO WRONG.

MONDAY PUNDAY by Matthew Broussard

MONDAY PUNDAY PRESENTS WINTER SMALL GROUPS CONCERT

Chapel + Culural Center
December 10, 2016 @ 7 PM
Free Admission

We hope you will celebrate the holiday season with us!

Gpf runb obba jbvcrbm, gpf runb obba xbuzfhbm, uam gpf runb obba tpfam juaevac. Va jrue jphqm kpfqm gpf ypzzvoqg obue xb?”
-Umrbxuh

U Lavcre’z Euqb
**Features**

**Wednesday, November 30, 2016**

**MOVIE REVIEW**

**Wizards, witches, beasts take New York City**

Serge Piksun  
Senior Reviewer

Let’s get this out of the way: if you haven’t seen Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them, go do it as soon as you can, because it is a fantastic movie and this article will contain spoilers.

The world of J. K. Rowling’s Harry Potter has remained barren for some time now. The last movie in Harry’s epic journey, Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part 2, was released five years ago, and Harry Potter and the Cursed Child is neither a book nor a movie, but a play. With Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them, the team behind the magic of Hogwarts is back in the movie game, and I can see them staying in the spotlight for a while. The movie was excellently done, with a family friendly story that appeals both to children seeking awe-inducing visuals, and adults seeking their latest fix of a magical-centric movie that does not disappoint.

Set in New York before the time of Harry Potter, Fantastic Beasts follows Newt Scamander as he travels to America in search of magical creatures. Almost immediately after he steps off the boat onto American soil things go south: one of his creatures escapes, a muggle notices his magic, and he is arrested and taken in by the magical version of the FBI. This ultimately culminates into a hunt for his growing number of missing creatures, which gets him further and further tangled into magical politics as New York is ravaged by a sinister force.

The sheer variety of magical creatures alone makes this film worthwhile to watch. Whereas the Harry Potter series featured a few key magical creatures that progressed the plot, Fantastic Beasts exponentially increases that number. From the simple days of hippogriffs, dragons, and centaurs comes a new age of animal. I can’t even fully describe: a young salping that picks locks, a bird with two sets of wings and talons, a giant hippo that sets things on fire, the list goes on. They are all beautifully animated, with clear personalities and an almost-believable realism that makes me wonder if they may do exist after all.

Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them features a diverse and reliable cast, which strives to make everyone relate with one of the cast members. Newt himself is a stereotypical nerdy hero, full of quirks and attitude, yet with a heart of gold that tries to do the right thing on his own moral compass. Jacob Kowalski, the muggle who is thrown into the world of magic without much say in the matter, is a “lovable idiot” and watching his struggles and triumphs serves as its own experience within the film. Rounding out the cast are the Goldstein sisters: Tina, the demoted Auror, who strives for redemption and justice, and Queenie, whose fascination with the muggle world draws her closer to Jacob. Each character has his or her flaws that are explored and overcome throughout the film.

In short, J. K. Rowling creates a new world within the Harry Potter universe that is worthy of carrying the torch. I’m eagerly awaiting the new Fantastic Beasts movie. I cannot wait to see where Newt Scamander’s travels take him.

**ON-CAMPUS EVENT**

**A night of Gatsby-erad extravaganzas**

Joey Lyon  
A Special to The Poly

On Saturday, November 19, the Rensselaer Union and UPAC hosted Union After Dark: Great Gatsby night. Many different groups hosted several activities, ranging from a spaghetti and marshmallow tower building contest, to juggling, to a 1920s costume contest. At each activity you participated in, you received a raffle ticket, which could be used to enter the contest to win one of a number of prizes, including an Amazon Echo Dot, a battery bank, a Lego set, a Bluetooth speaker, a Cinema Bulk pass, and a free dinner with Assistant Dean of Student Living and Learning Randy Mogul. There was also a selection of free food, including pizza, desserts, and a root beer keg to open those who came.

The moment I entered the Union, the excitement hit me—performances by the Crippled Pimp, Eighth Wonder, and the speaker, a Cinema Bulk pass, and a free dinner with Assistant Dean of Student Living and Learning Randy Mogul. There was also a selection of free food, including pizza, desserts, and a root beer keg to open those who came.

**ARTIST SPOTLIGHT**

**Justice’s Woman falls short**

Nathan Dorer  
Senior Reviewer

**FRENCH MUSIC GROUP JUSTICE ATTEMPTS to infuse modern EDM with old-school disco elements.**

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**FRENCH MUSIC GROUP JUSTICE ATTEMPTS to infuse modern EDM with old-school disco elements.**

ON SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 19, THE RENSSELAER UNION AND UPAC HOSTED UNION A BIG GROUP OF FRIENDS ATTEMPTED the Vermonster competition.