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CAMPUS EVENT

FIRST Robotics inspires interest in STEM



Crystal Vejar/The Polytechnic

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS VISIT Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute for a fourth year of action-filled competition at the Tech Valley Regional.

Crystal Vejar
Staff Reporter

LAST THURSDAY TO SATURDAY, 36 TEAMS OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS GUIDED BY mentors, teachers, and parents, competed in the FIRST STEAMWORKS New York Tech Valley Regional competition, held for the fourth year at the East Campus Athletic Village at Rensselaer.

The three-day event allowed students to test and improve the robots they built during the six week “Build Season” while cooperating and competing in a fast paced sport-like challenge. Dubbed the “Sport for the mind,” FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) gives students the opportunity to have fun while applying STEM concepts to a new challenge each year.

The 2017 challenge was announced in January and students had exactly six weeks to design, build, and test a robot that could compete in the game. Named STEAMWORKS, the game involved picking up fuel (plastic balls), from either the floor or a feeder station and shooting them into boilers (goals) for points, as well as picking up gears and dropping them off at the human player station where they were then used to build gear trains to engage rotors. The final way to earn points was to have the robot climb the center tower using a single rope. Points were awarded for each of these challenges with various bonus points awarded for completing sets of a specific challenge.

Of the 36 teams that competed, seven will be eligible to compete in the championships. The first three eligible are, of course, the tournament win-

ners. The winning alliance was made up of team 333 (The Megaladons) from New York, New York, team 2791 (Shaker Robotics), from Latham, New York, and team 5952 (RoBuck) from Montreal, Quebec, Canada. They were the fourth seated alliance with the alliance captain (333) ranked sixth, 2791 ranked 16, and 5952 ranked 27. The alliance played extremely well with extraordinary robots capable of completing the challenges quickly.

The three teams from the winning alliance also received special awards after the competition decided by judges during interviews. The Megaladons won the Innovation in Control award sponsored by Rockwell Automation, Shaker Robotics took home the Industrial Design Award sponsored by General Motors, and RoBuck received the Creativity Award sponsored by Xerox.

Some of these special awards also qualified teams to compete in the championships. These awards were “Rookie All-star,” won by team 6459 (AG Robotik) from Istanbul, Turkey, “Engineering Inspiration,” won by team 5123 (Mechadogs) from Yonkers, New York, and the most prestigious of the awards “Chairman’s Award” received by team 3044 (OXBE4) from Ballston Spa, New York. The tournament also generated a wild card which qualified team 4508 (Steel Stallions) from Schuylerville, New York, the finalist alliance captains, for the championships.

Many of these teams will go on to compete in a second regional which may qualify them for the championship, but regardless, the students all went home with new knowledge, experiences, skills, and friends from around the world. FIRST hopes to continue to inspire students to pursue careers in the STEM field, or at least show them just how much fun robotics can be. ♦

CAMPUS HISTORY

Rensselaer’s ties to slavery revealed

Peter Gramenides
Senior Reporter

RENSSELAER POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE IS simultaneously one of the most prestigious modern institutions of higher learning and is the oldest technological research university in the English-speaking world. Yet many are unaware that the initial funding of the Institute was established through centuries of forced labor and slavery.

In 1824, Amos Eaton, today considered the founder of modern scientific prospectus in education, co-founded the Rensselaer School with Stephen Van Rensselaer III, a slave-owner and patron of the Manor of Rensselaerswyck of the Dutch West India Trading Company. According to the First Census of the United States, it was noted that Van Rensselaer owned 15 slaves on his estate in 1790. That number does not include slaves which were used by tenants of Van Rensselaer’s many estates which contributed directly to Van Rensselaer’s wealth.

Van Rensselaer freed all slaves on the Rensselaerswyck Manor by 1827 in compliance with the Gradual Emancipation Act, but prior to 1827 it is noted in *Scarlet and Black*, a book about slavery and dispossession in the history of Rutgers’ University by Fuentes and White, that “the Manor of Rensselaerswyck relied on slave labor, and the family owned many slaves. Stephen Van Rensselaer inherited Rensselaerswyck in 1785 and became one of the wealthiest Americans of his era.”

However, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute never formally owned or traded slaves. The Folsom Library Special Collections Archive was contacted and we received the following response:

“We are unaware of any information in the Institute Archives, or elsewhere, that documents a connection between the Institute and slavery. Stephen Van Rensselaer did not provide an endowment for Rensselaer School; rather he contributed funds for the initial three years of the school and thereafter contributed about one-half the cost of the school’s maintenance until his death in 1839.

He provided the initial concept of providing education “...for the purposes of instructing persons, who may choose to apply themselves, in the application of science to the common purposes of life.” He also placed the school on a sound legal footing. After Stephen Van Rensselaer’s death the school was supported by the tuition of its pupils.”

Similar histories encompass many of America’s oldest institutions of higher learning, including Harvard, Georgetown, and Rutgers University. In 2016, nearly two centuries after Georgetown profited from the sale of nearly 300 slaves, the university renamed two buildings on its campus, including one after a former slave at the university. Georgetown also began offering scholarships to descendants and a similar “admissions edge” to what the university currently offers to legacy students. That same year, Rutgers University compiled new research on its history involving slavery, and published a book

EXECUTIVE BOARD

E-Board discusses new ambulance, Chromebooks

Jack Wellhofer
Senior Reporter

JUST BEFORE BREAK, THE EXECUTIVE BOARD met with RPI Ambulance, Rules & Elections, and RPI Experimental Music and Media. RPI Ambulance came before the E-Board to discuss plans for replacing their ambulance, which is four years past its seven year recommend lifetime. The club's current reserves are set up to purchase another Ford E350 ambulance van, however, Ford has discontinued the model. Ambulance is looking at purchasing either a Type I or Type III vehicle. Type I and III are similar in that they are both boxes mounted on a chassis, with Type I being a truck chassis and Type III a van chassis. Type II, which is what Ambulance currently operates, is a van fitted with the necessary equipment.

The club is currently leaning toward the purchase of a Type I because of the medical portion's ability to be remounted. Their current ambulance is only in need of replacement because of rising maintenance costs. While a new Type I ambulance would cost around \$150,000, remounting the box onto a new chassis would only cost between \$30,000–40,000.

RPI Ambulance currently has approximately \$66,000 in reserves, and they estimate that their current van could be traded in for around \$20,000 due to its low mileage and good condition of the medical supplies.

The E-Board determined that Ambulance should come back at a later date with mechanical records of both the van and the chase vehicle used by the club, a

list of benefits of the different types of ambulances, and a detailed plan for fundraising to purchase a new ambulance.

Rules & Elections came before the E-Board to discuss the purchase of Chromebooks for use in the Rensselaer Union. The proposal came up due to a mishap by R&E during Freshmen Elections last fall. R&E had rented laptops from the Voorhees Computing Center to use for electronic voting and neglected to return them on time, resulting in a large overdue fee. R&E would not be the ones to own these laptops. Instead, they would be available for rent in the Union. Union Business Administrator Martha McElligott noted that individuals have previously come into the administration office asking for laptops, so the laptops would get more use throughout the year than just for student government elections. The E-Board approved the proposal unanimously.

Finally, a new club came to the E-Board seeking to become Union recognized. The club is called RPI Experimental Music and Media. They focus on films and music of the "out there" genres. Between 15-20 people come to their meetings, where they enjoy pizza sponsored by the Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences department and listen to music or watch films. The club wanted to be able to utilize meeting space within the Union and further grow its membership through becoming Union recognized. The E-Board continued to approve the recognition. ◇

STUDENT SENATE

EMPAC curators visit Senate

Peter Gramenides
Senior Reporter

GRAND MARSHAL PAUL ILORI '17 OPENED THE Student Senate meeting with committee reports. Those began with Facilities and Services Chairperson Austin Miller '17 who followed up with a meeting with Director of Public Safety Jerry Matthews. Miller is working to get Public Safety on social media and is currently looking at benchmarking for other schools in order to determine the most effective use of integrating public safety with social media. Miller noted that Matthews was greatly receptive of the proposal and Miller also plans to meet shortly with the director for strategic communications to confirm the viability of the plan.

Following Miller, Hospitality Services Advisory Chairperson Joshua Thomas '20 stated that his committee is continuing benchmarking in response to the two year old petition *Do Not Extend Sodexo's Contract*, and is reviewing peer institutions that employ Sodexo, their prices, other food providers, and how these data sets compare to Sodexo at Rensselaer.

Student Life Committee Chairperson Justin Etzine '18 continued by discussing his recent meeting with Assistant Vice President and Dean of Students Travis Apgar. Etzine summarized that the meeting consisted primarily in discussing Apgar's new role in the student life portfolio and the proposed pilot program for multiple points of entry. Etzine anticipates that a pilot program can launch later in the semester, and would potentially include Barton, Hall, and Bryckwyck residence halls.

Following committee reports, curators of the Electronic Media and Performing Arts Center gave a presentation to the Senate about the different arms of EMPAC and their functions throughout the year. Details of the presentation included EMPAC's scheduling in which there is high demand on-campus for EMPAC programming as well as physical space. To conclude this presentation, the curators stated that EMPAC currently hosts 60–90 campus events and has over 525 days of curated events and residencies each year, which could include multiple artists hosting events on the same day. ◇

HISTORY: New strides since 1824

named *Scarlet and Black* to mirror the university's 250th anniversary. Stephen Van Rensselaer was also named as a donor at Rutgers, whose tie to slavery was noted in the report.

Regardless of its initial inception, however, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute has made great strides since its founding in 1824 with an initial dowry built upon slave labor. Rensselaer graduated Garnet Douglass Baltimore in 1881, who was later inducted into the Rensselaer Alumni Hall of Fame and received a lecture series at the Institute in 1990 in his honor. In addition, Rensselaer is the first top-ranked technological research university led by an African-American woman president, Shirley Ann Jackson.

Although 193 years have passed since then, only three percent of Rensselaer's current student population was comprised of African Americans in 2016, while 59 percent were non-hispanic whites. Little is also done to inform the campus community of Rensselaer's early history, including the Rensselaerwyck Manor whose early history is directly tied to slave labor and the founding of the Institute. ◇

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annual
spring
concert

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WARMER
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US THROUGH
MUSIC!
Sat. March 25
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EMPAC

Editorial

Wednesday, March 22, 2017

EDITORIAL NOTEBOOK

Rensselaer needs bold, expansive changes

The Institute must continue to pursue new physical research infrastructure and invest heavily in bringing the School of Science 'up to par' with its engineering disciplines

RENSSELAER WAS FOUNDED UPON THE PRINCIPLE OF THE application of science to the common purposes of life, and the prominence of modern scientific prospectus in education. In 1824, this was a radical, if not momentous, development. Prior to this, education had been largely concentrated to a few small, old, and rich liberal arts colleges in the Northeast, such as Harvard and Yale. The conventional departure from liberal arts to the creation of the first established science program, and later one of the first centers of experiential learning in engineering education, is what led to Rensselaer's rise to prominence in the 19th century; it continues to lead our university through a momentous transformation as we continuously reevaluate our role as a source of research and ingenuity in industry, education, and the future of our species.

This foundation is at the center of the *Rensselaer Plan 2024*, but in the opinion of a science lover, this goal will not continue to be achieved without taking bold steps. The resurrection of the Center for Biotechnology and Interdisciplinary Studies was a revolutionary change—it brought about a swift set of innovations and changes that have helped bring Rensselaer to higher prominence while expanding our global impact. The Experimental Media and Performing Arts Center was also greatly important but, in my opinion, is underutilized in that the number of Humanities, Arts,

and Social Science students at Rensselaer continues to remain amongst the lowest at any university, even given the technical edge of many of our humanities and arts programs. The creation of a music program is a great step in helping solve this problem.

Right now, however, we look to the past. The transformation of Rensselaer, the old capital campaign, and the physical infrastructure noted are all nearly a decade old. The 2000s came to a close very swiftly, and the 2010s are nearing conclusion. Rensselaer must not look back, but forward into the next decade. Rensselaer must achieve further prominence for its School of Science. This is essential to the further growth of applications and the prominence of our university. We cannot just be good at engineering. MIT is not just good at engineering. Harvard is not just good at law.

This is 2017. We are Rensselaer, and we must do more to make this a reality. This can only be accomplished through research and further expansion of faculty. I am aware of the strides that have been made, and that research expenditures will continue to grow, but even more needs to be done.

The Dean of the School of Science Dr. Curt Breneman is correct in stating that Rensselaer must outpace its current strengths in engineering in order to accomplish its goals. The Institute, however, has not yet released a clear timeline on the development of the new Center for

Science. Regardless of whether the administration sees this as an idea or actually wants to pursue new physical infrastructure, I stand by my belief that a physical center for science, as a new place for experiential learning and research, is essential. I also believe the alumni would be greatly satisfied to see that Rensselaer is contributing so much to research, as most Rensselaer graduates studied either science or engineering.

If I were to imagine the center, I would picture a place where data visualization and computer science intersect to help solve the world's most pressing problems, where studio classrooms fuel in-class projects and development, and research accompanies learning in laboratories. This reminds me very much of CBIS and what it stood to accomplish, and has accomplished, over the past decade.

This needs to be done again at Rensselaer. I call on all alumni, graduates, faculty, and administrators to wholeheartedly support the revitalization and bolstering of our School of Science. The capital campaign poses many challenges, but could also potentially serve to change our school yet again. Looking back in a decade, I dream that I can reread this article and see a school which has attained top-25 status amongst all national universities, is within the top 20 programs in the country for all sciences, and is unparalleled in research across all disciplines. This is the true embodiment of the "New Polytechnic," which has been envisioned by Dr. Jackson, and I am both excited and cautiously optimistic about what this serves to contribute to Rensselaer today, as well as over the coming decades. ♦



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DERBY

Be informed for GM Week

HELLO AGAIN, RPI! THIS WEEKEND, THE EXECUTIVE Board played the Student Senate in our annual game of broomball. Our team played hard and gave it our all, but in a year of unexpected upsets, we suffered a 3-0 defeat. Shout-out to the Student Senate for a game well played. Thank you to RPI TV for filming our game—you can stream it on their website if you want to watch an exciting amateur sports event. Thank you to everyone at the Field House and Mueller Center for helping us coordinate the game space and rent our equipment, and to Nate James, chairperson of the Judicial Board, for being our referee for the afternoon. Most of all, thank you to my team for supporting each other, playing hard, and enjoying themselves during the game.

Grand Marshal Week is fast approaching, as you can probably tell from the abundance of campaign posters across campus, and that means that in order to get your mug you'll have to weigh in on who will fill the seats of our next Student Government. Impartiality of our elected student leaders is a proud and longstanding tradition at RPI, so I won't comment on who I think you should vote for. Instead, I will remind everyone how much our student government can affect the lives of students on campus. It was not long ago that the Student Senate worked to bring

Moe's to campus, and now there is a line out the door every Monday night. It was only a few semesters ago when students didn't have the ability to look up syllabuses from previous years to understand courses prior to registration. Today, after hard work from the Student Senate, students have access to a large repository of course syllabuses. On top of the hard work that the Student Senate does, most of the on-campus activities at RPI are, in some way, supported or funded through a branch of Student Government. So choose carefully, and consider what issues matter to you when voting during GM Week.

The Executive Board has a string of policies and decisions coming down the pipeline over the next week. We are working to update guidelines clubs use during budgeting, streamline our existing policies into a single document, and make final decisions regarding a Veterans Lounge, a new conference area, the purchase of new facilities equipment, and upgrades to some of the Union's technology. As always, I will keep club officers and the campus community updated with any changes that occur from the Executive Board, and will ensure that any policies that directly affect clubs have an open review period for feedback.

Happy belated birthday, Tim! ♦



Chip Kirchner
President of the Union

The Polytechnic would like to take the opportunity to remind you of the importance of the Oxford Comma. See <https://poly.rpi.edu/s/comma>.

DILBERT

by Scott Adams

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MONDAY PUNDAY by Matthew Broussard

mondaypunday.com

XKCD by Randall Munroe

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- U+1F920 U+1F93F VOMITING COUBOY
- U+1F5FD U+1F93F VOMITING STATUE OF LIBERTY
- U+1F594 U+1F93F VOMITING DOVE
- U+1F31B U+1F93F VOMITING MOON
- U+1F680 U+1F93F VOMITING ROCKET SHIP
- U+270B U+1F93F VOMITING HAND

SUDOKU

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Instructions

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

Solutions from March 8 Issue

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1	6	5	0	3	2	7	8	4
5	4	2	8	7	0	3	6	1
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6	7	8	1	2	3	4	5	0
3	5	4	7	0	1	8	2	6
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Sports

Wednesday, March 22, 2017

LACROSSE

Men and women off to mediocre start

Joseph Saulsbery
Senior Reporter

RPI MEN'S LACROSSE STARTED THEIR SEASON with a win against Keene State College at home and a loss to Ithaca College on the road. However, their first Liberty League game of the year came against the Rochester Institute of Technology Tigers. The teams played on March 10 at the Carrier Dome in Syracuse. The game was tight early on, as the Engineers took a 6-5 lead early in the second quarter thanks to two goals each by sophomore attackmen JT Kelly and CJ Kigar. But then RIT scored four consecutive goals and finished the game on a 9-3 run. The Tigers won 14-9. Kelly tallied four goals, while Kigar got three. Senior attackman Breanainn McNeally assisted on three goals, and both junior attackman Zach Lukas and junior midfielder Oliver Kaija scored their first goals of the season. Senior goalie David Gibbs arguably had his best game of the season thus far, saving 21 of 35 shots that came his way to help keep the game close.

On March 16, the Engineers traveled to California to face the Whittier College Poets. This time the Engineers outscored the Poets 10-3 in the first half in route to a 16-9 road victory. McNeally scored a whopping eight of Rensselaer's goals and assisted on two more, including senior midfielder Jake Weidner's third goal of the afternoon. Lukas followed up his impressive showing against Rochester with another great game against Whittier, scoring two goals and dishing out two assists.

Next up for 2-2 men's lacrosse is a road game at Montclair State University today,

and a home game against Bard College on Saturday at 1 pm.

RPI women's lacrosse started their season with an opening day 9-5 win against the State University of New York at Oneonta. But then they lost two straight to Williams College and Montclair State University heading into spring break. During break they traveled to Florida to take on Roger Williams and Denison University.

In the first game, against Roger Williams on March 13, Rensselaer scored the first six goals of the game and took a commanding 9-2 lead midway through the second half that the Hawks could not come back from. Senior attacker Sophie Hager scored three goals and assisted on freshman midfielder Casey Clarke's second goal of the season. Sophomore midfielder Abbey Salvon scored twice, the second of which was RPI's ninth and final goal of the game.

Roger Williams didn't score until almost 19 minutes had gone by in the first half. RPI quickly responded after that score with a goal by senior midfielder Carly Kirchner assisted by sophomore midfielder Maddy Aslansan, which put the Engineers up 7-1 at the half. After the Engineers scored two of the first three goals in the second half, the Hawks rallied to the tune of four consecutive goals, but it was too little too late as the Engineers hung on for a 9-6 win.

In the second game, two days later, it was Denison that took an early lead with the Engineers fighting from behind the entire afternoon. Denison scored the first five goals of the game, all in the first ten minutes of play. Then, junior attackers Allie Claroni



Jack Wellhofer/The Polytechnic

JUNIOR MIDFIELDER MATTHEW GILMAN CRADLES the ball around a defender. (file photo)

and Hager each scored to cut the deficit to three. Hager scored once more in the first half and once early on in the second half to keep Rensselaer within arm's length of the Big Red. But then Denison scored four more unanswered goals to open up a 12-4 advantage. The Engineers fought back, scoring four unanswered goals of their own, two by Claroni to make the score 12-8. But the Big Red were simply too much to overcome, and RPI lost 13-8.

Following spring break, women's lacrosse went on the road to face number one-ranked Middlebury College on March 21. Rensselaer struggled to keep the undefeated

Panthers out of their net, allowing four Middlebury goals in the first two minutes of the game. The Engineers improved their defense following the early onslaught, but could not stop the potent Panthers attack. The Engineers also struggled to score. Claroni scored two goals and Hager scored once and assisted on one of Claroni's goals, all in the first half. The Panthers held RPI scoreless in the second half, though. The final score was Middlebury 17, RPI 3.

Next up for 2-4 women's lacrosse are home games against RIT and the University of Rochester on March 31 and April 1, respectively. ♦

BASEBALL

Spring break training

Engineers go 2-3 in preliminary set of games

Jack Wellhofer
Senior Reporter

OVER SPRING BREAK, RENSSELAER'S BASEBALL TEAM TRAVELED TO LAKE MYRTLE, FLORIDA for five spring training games. The team played against Becker College, Knox College, William Paterson University, and twice against Fitchburg State College, ending the week 2-3.

The Becker Hawks picked up two early runs, both in the third, against the Engineers in their first Florida game. Rensselaer chipped back in the following two innings to tie the game at two apiece. But Becker ran away with the game in the sixth, scoring four runs. The Engineers only picked up one more run that game, which ended 6-3 in favor of the Hawks.

The following day against Knox was much better for RPI. Although Knox scored two runs in the top of the first, and held that lead for the first few innings, the Engineers were determined. RPI scored one in the bottom of the third, but broke the game wide open in the fourth. With the bases loaded, junior Christian Spagnuola singled to left. A fielding error by the left fielder sent all three men on base home. Two more runs were also acquired in that inning, a huge break for the Engineers. They won the game 8-5.

March 16 marked a double header against the Fitchburg Falcons. The Engineers held the lead for the majority of the game, but the Falcons chipped away at the lead and managed to tie the game 4-4 in the bottom of the ninth. In the battle for the winning runs, Fitchburg emerged the winner in the bottom of the ninth, not giving Rensselaer the chance to rally morale and attempt to tie, or win, the game.

Confident in their ability to defeat the Falcons, the Engineers returned to their second, late-afternoon game with renewed hope. Fitchburg put runs on the board in the first three innings, setting up a comfortable 6-0 lead. One can only imagine that the Engineers chuckled and said "watch this" at the bottom of the third. Bats came alive, and hit after hit after hit sent the Engineers around the bases like a revolving door. The team would add eight runs to the board before the Falcons managed three outs. RPI held onto the lead for the rest of the game, winning 11-10.

Rensselaer's last game of spring training would be the hardest. The William Paterson Tigers rounded the bases every inning up through the fifth, to give them six runs to the Engineer's one. By the time the bats came alive in the sixth and seventh, the Tiger's lead was too great for the Engineers to overcome. They lost the game 11-5.

Baseball is off this coming weekend, but will have its home opener the following weekend on April 1 against Rochester Institute of Technology. ♦

TRACK

National champions

Michael Baird
Senior Reporter

FIVE RENSSELAER STUDENT ATHLETES WERE INVITED TO COMPETE AT THE NATIONAL COLLEGIATE Athletic Association Division III Indoor Track and Field Championship Meet held on Friday, March 10, and Saturday, March 11, in Naperville, Illinois.

The men's distance medley relay team of senior Colin Smith, sophomore Jason Hall, freshman Noah Falasco, and senior Ben Fazio earned the Institute's first national indoor track relay title in school history on Saturday, winning the event in 9:56.42.

Running the first leg of the race, Smith championed 1200 meters in 3:04, which placed RPI in the lead. The team fell back to third place in the second leg: a 400 meter dash by Hall. Falasco maintained third place in the 800-meter-long third leg with a time of 1:55.

With 1600 meters remaining, Falasco passed the baton to Fazio. In a strategy that played out in the best possible way, Fazio dropped back to fifth place for two laps, then burst to the lead in the remaining two laps, holding off the competition and taking Rensselaer's second-ever NCAA indoor title.

"The guys who ran before me did everything expected of them and more," said Fazio. "Colin especially ran one of the most tactically smart races I've ever seen, and was rewarded with the lead in the last 50 meters. Jason had the hard task of running from the front, but kept the team in good position. Noah did a great job holding position as well and keeping the Middlebury team, whose 800 meter leg was exceptionally strong, within reach.

"By the time I got the baton, the field was thinned out, but we weren't too far behind the leader. I kept my eye on him while relaxing in the pack, waiting until the second half of my leg to catch up. I spent the fifth lap catching up and decided to go around him rather than waiting any longer.

"I held off an attack from him with 400 to go, and spent the rest of the race running from the front and hoping I was putting distance between myself and the other teams. It was definitely exciting on the track, both before and after, but I think our coaching staff did a great job keeping us level-headed, and that really helped to keep us relaxed and focused on the task at hand while racing."

Also on Saturday, sophomore Grant O'Connor competed in the 5000 meter race, crossing in 13th place with a time of 14:45.66. The winning time of 14:25.08 went to a senior from Tufts University.

On Sunday, Fazio returned to the track, posting a fourth-place time of 8:21.86 in the 3000 meter. Fazio remarked that, although his performance wasn't as strong as he hoped, it was great experience for him, as he plans to contend for another national title in the outdoor 5000 meter race.

With the indoor track and field season officially over, the Engineers are conditioning for their first outdoor meet of the season: the Tufts University Snowflake Classic on April 1. The meet will begin at 10 am. ♦

PRESIDENT'S Spring Town Meeting

The New Polytechnic: Nationally Competitive, Globally Recognized



Wednesday, March 29
3:00–4:00 p.m.
EMPAC Theater

FEATURING:
Institute Update | Q&A | Refreshments

rpi.edu to watch the live stream



Album: Seen as playlist, not album

FROM **Page 8**

A bit later on *More Life* comes the song “Passionfruit.” Blending the upbeat and hopeful drum line from “Hold on We’re Going Home” on *Nothing Was the Same* with the fade in-fade out background of “With You” from *Views*, “Passionfruit” is unmistakably Drake. As the smooth melody washes over the listener, Drake tells a story of a faltering long distance relationship. His common themes of love and trust are evident here, as he pleads with a girl not to fall apart. Although light on rapping, “Passionfruit” stands as a testament to Drake’s singing abilities. This is the type of song I’d love to play on a road trip, as it’s music to think and feel to.

That isn’t to say there’s no rap in *More Life*. On the contrary, it’s evident that Drake has been working on his flow. “Gyalchester” is the other story of Drake: ominous backgrounds, overbearing bass, and nothing else but his commanding voice to keep listeners in awe. There isn’t much to this song that meets the eye at first: personally, I had no idea what the title even meant until I looked it up, but the rhythm and general vibe of the song was enough to keep me interested.

Notably, *More Life* features a number of “unknown” artists, and even gives two of them, Jorja Smith and Skepta, interludes on the album. “Jorja’s Interlude” is more of a rap by Drake, with her smooth vocals taking precedence on the next song in the album: “Get It Together”. It’s not at all in Drake’s style: a more background-heavy track with sparse vocals and more emphasis on exotic instruments and an islander-esque drum line. Piano notes and the droning of a sitar-like stringed instruments drifts by as Jorja sings of love. By contrast, “Skepta’s Interlude” is much more of a Drake emulation. A more typical hip-hop beat accompanies Skepta’s British accent as he speaks of wealth. It’s a breath of commonality in an otherwise directionless album.

Drake called *More Life* a playlist rather than a typical album, and I tend to agree. There’s much more variance in this than in his other works: from the recorder background of “Portland” to the rap-sing fusion of “Fake Love”, there’s no common theme to the album. It’s a sampler pack of Drake and his styles, and I really enjoyed it. *More Life* was an all-around good playlist—both an excellent introduction to Drake for newcomers, and a breath of something new to grizzled veterans of Aubrey Graham. ◇

CAMPUS EVENT

EMPAC hosts RPI Players

Elisabeth Ryan
Senior Reviewer

ANXIOUS THEATER ATTENDEES clustered in the lower lobby of the Experimental Media and Performing Arts Center, awaiting entry to the RPI Players’ performance of *Our Town*. The excited crowd was led into EMPAC Studio 1, where they were seated nearly beneath a screen that wound about the performance space in a nearcomplete circle. There was no stage, and the props were limited to a series of gray boxes and a few ladders kept in the back.

Our Town was written by Thornton Wilder in 1938. Its story focuses on the calm and simple life of the citizens of Grover’s Corners, a small New Hampshire town set in the year 1901. The play’s stage manager and—at certain times—members of the cast are aware of the audience. The stage manager offers exposition of the characters and town, interacts with audience members, acts as some background characters, and even brings in a “professor” to discuss Grover’s Corners history. Rob Stewart did an excellent job as the stage manager, calling upon old-fashioned mannerisms and speech to create a sincere performance.

The story itself is uncomplicated and follows the Gibbs family and the Webb family, along with other townspeople. Doc Gibbs, played by Zachariah Spurrier ’18, is a well-meaning and yet stern father to his

son, George, played by Barnabé Bouchenoir ’18, and daughter, Rebecca, played by Imani Taylor ’20. Mrs. Gibbs, played by Monica Hoh, is a hard-working mother of two with a dream to see Paris, or at least some place beyond the town limits. Just across the way live Mr. Webb, played by Kyle Johnson, with his wife Mrs. Webb, played by Taylor Turner ’17, son Wally, played by Mark Blum ’19, and a daughter who he dotes upon, Emily, played by Rachel Ruller.

As the commonplace, everyday events occur, an innocent romance begins to bud between George Gibbs and Emily Webb. As neighbors and classmates, they naturally become friends, and eventually become lovers. The two get married and live their life on the farm that George inherited from his uncle. The third and final act of *Our Town* opens up on a graveyard. After some time has passed, citizens of the town have died and their characters dressed all in white sit upon their graves. Emily joins them after she dies giving birth. In the afterlife, she confides in her mother-in-law, who has also passed away, that she wants to relive a happy day from her life.

This proves an ill-advised course of action. Emily realizes as she relives her twelfth birthday that she didn’t hug her father tight enough, or enjoy the breakfast her mother made her enough, or really appreciate enough the life she had while she had it. The

entire meaning of the play culminates in these moments of realization; life, either simple or complicated, is precious, and that there is much for which to be thankful. The play ends with George sobbing at his wife’s grave and the stage manager bidding the audience goodnight.

This timeless play was done justice by the talented cast and crew of *Our Town*. I cannot rave enough over the well-done acting which transported the audience to another era. The immersive experience, a tremendous feat brought on by the collaboration of the Humanities Arts and Social Sciences department, EMPAC, the Rensselaer Union, the Rensselaer Choir, Seattle 4Culture grant program, and of course, the Players, delivered. The 360-degree screen above the heads of the players displayed a series of ink drawings and some paintings made by Seattle visual artist Clare Johnson. With an Xbox Kinect placed beneath one of the platforms, the stage manager was able to move his arms in such a way that would manipulate what was being displayed on the screen. It rendered such a powerful impact, sending across that message of the simplicity of life with such satisfying definition.

This was an incredible performance by the Players. I hope to see more usage of the facilities at EMPAC by them. 10/10 ◇



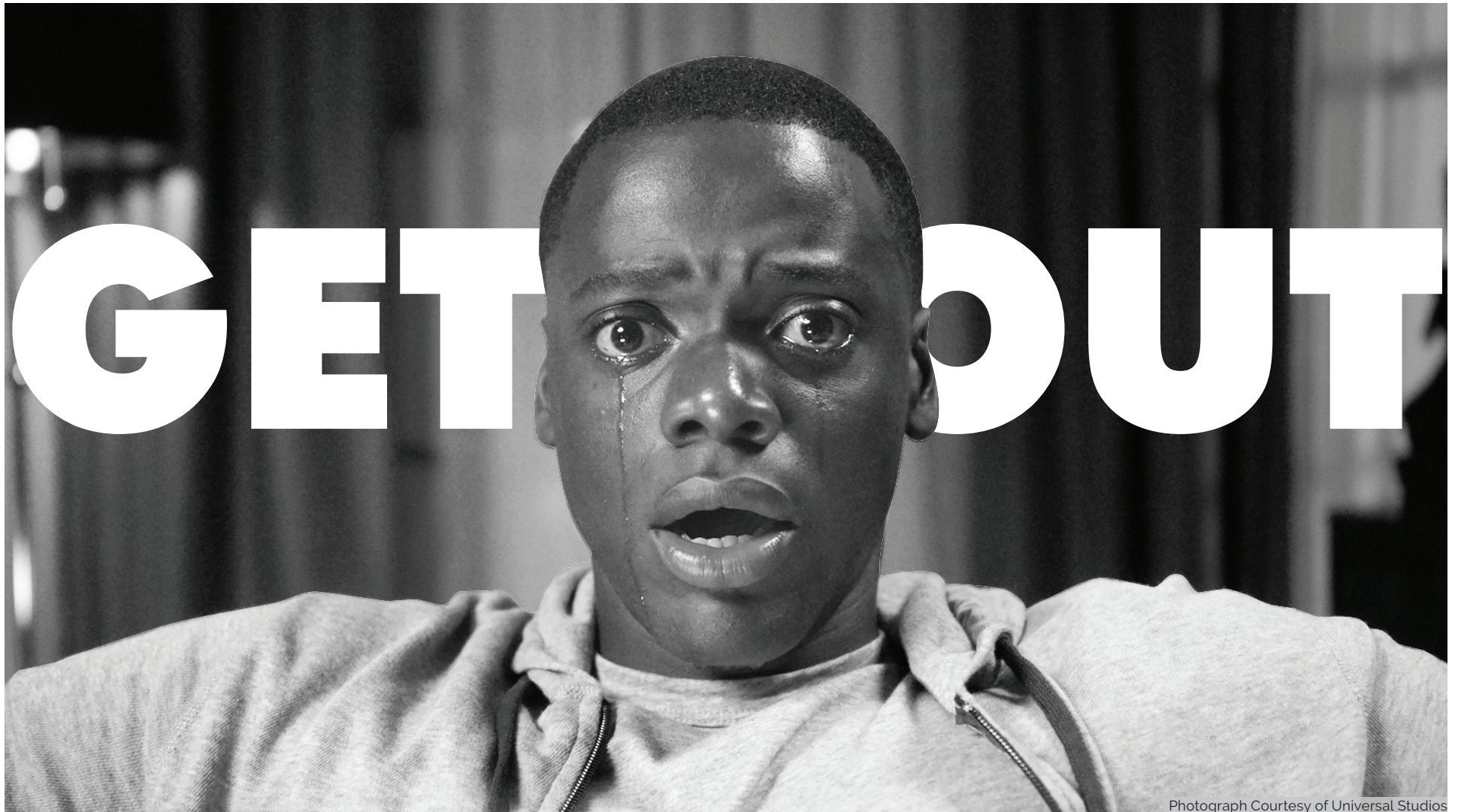
Sidney Kochman/The Polytechnic

SPOT SPECIALIZES in desserts that come in many different shapes and sizes.
Brookelyn Parslow
Staff Reviewer

OVER SPRING BREAK, A FEW MEMBERS OF *THE POLYTECHNIC* ATTENDED THE COLLEGE Media Association Spring National College Media Convention. While we were in New York City, we visited Spot Dessert Bar on St. Mark’s Place. On the way there, Composing Editor Ana Wishnoff explained that this restaurant specializes in “Instagram-worthy” desserts. The line was out the door, and the four of us waited twenty minutes just to be seated at a two-person table. We ordered the Love Fondue, the Chocolate Forest, and The Harvest—the most “extra” dish, which included berries and Oreo crumbs arranged in a pot to look like a plant, along with a small pitcher of black rose milk tea meant to “water” it. While the dishes were diverse and pricey, we all agree that Spot is a place worth trying at least once. ◇

Features

Wednesday, March 22, 2017



Photograph Courtesy of Universal Studios

Crystal Vejar
Staff Reviewer

JORDAN PEELE, FROM THE POPULAR Key and Peele comedy duo, has been receiving a lot of attention for his newest film *Get Out*. Many good things have been said about the film, as well as Peele as a director, including remarks by Olly Richards in a recent review that described Peele as “one of the most exciting new directing voices we’ve seen in a while.” His directorial debut has been well-received by audiences and has done extremely well in the box office. Reviews of the movie range from “funny with a good plot,” to the much deeper with a

comment by *Observer* film critic Mark Kermode, referring to it as a “chilling satire of liberal racism in the U.S.” It has received very positive reviews and ratings with an 8.3/10 on IMDb and 99 percent on Rotten Tomatoes.

The movie was released on February 24 and has now earned more than \$100 million at the box office, making Peele the first African-American writer-director to pass that threshold with a debut feature film. It is also currently ranked as the sixth highest-grossing film of 2017, putting it right above *La La Land* on the list. With over 15 million tickets sold, these ratings are not

a small feat, especially because it was all achieved on a \$4.5 million budget and without any big names in the cast.

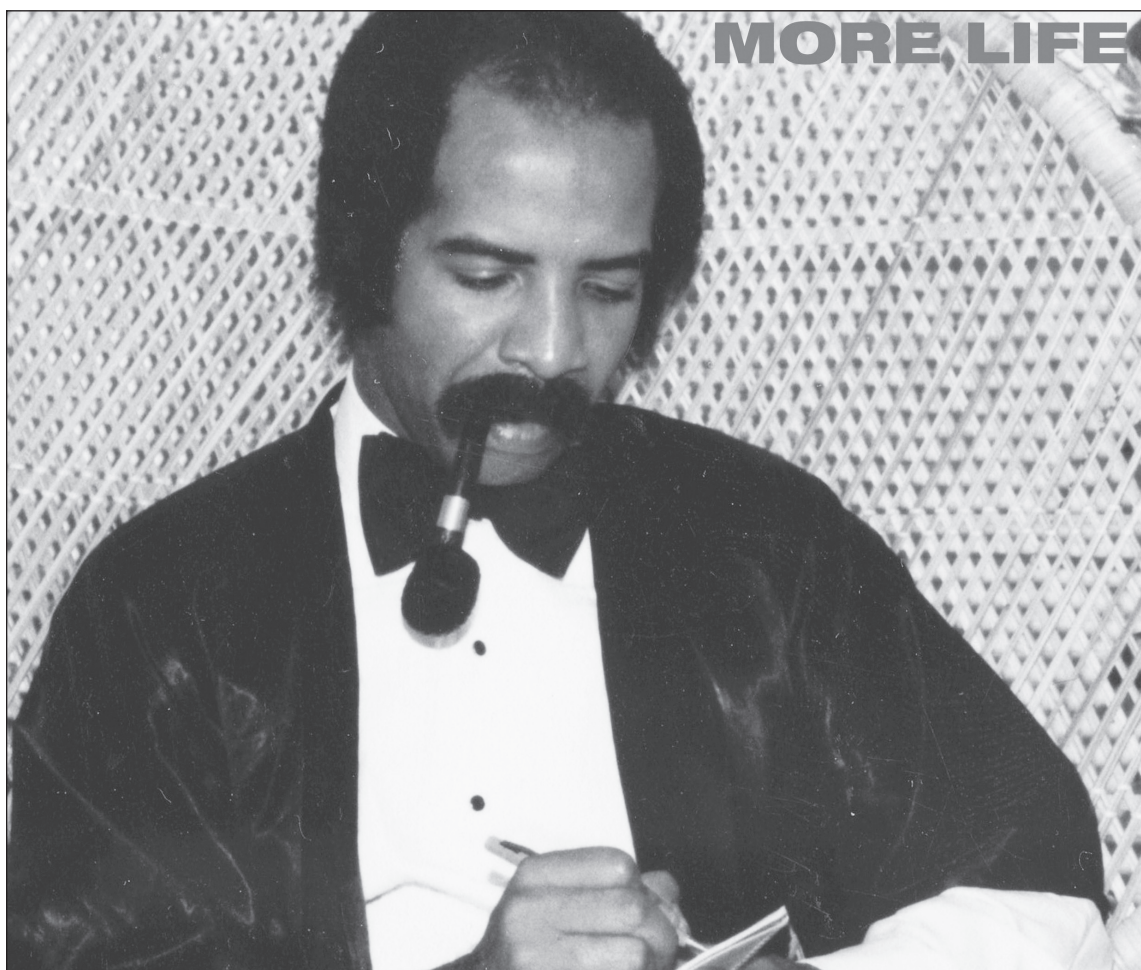
I had the opportunity to watch the movie in the Darrin Communications Center through a pre-screening put on by UPAC Cinema on February 7. I hadn’t even heard about the movie until the day of, as I had been focusing on school pretty intently, and had no expectations set. My first impression of the film was extremely positive. The environment definitely added to the fun with the audience clapping, cheering and laughing throughout the various plot twists and intense

scenes. It made it easy to get sucked into the story and the jokes without giving much thought to the deeper, underlying themes.

When the movie was about to end, the final plot twist is what really snapped the picture into focus, for me, about the message Peele was trying to portray. The “twist” seemed a very subtle hint at media coverage of inequality in the U.S., specifically with police interactions. The movie had two scenes involving this specific reference, which is what got me to think deeper into the film after I had watched it.

Although my original thoughts on the movie did not revolve around race or satire, when I

had time to process it more and thought deeper into the motifs, I noticed a few messages, especially in the few scenes when Chris is introduced to his girlfriend’s family and her family friends. Many of the reviews on the movie cover these “messages” that Peele may have been trying to send, and I encourage everyone to read these. But, if you don’t want to read between the lines, the main text is equally satisfying. *Get Out* as a whole can be enjoyed by almost anyone, whether you want to just watch a “comedic thriller” or a thought-provoking “social thriller.” I encourage you to take the time for this one. ♦



Courtesy of OVO Sound

ALBUM REVIEW

More Life curates Drake's talents

Serge Piskun
Senior Reviewer

DRAKE’S NEWEST ALBUM—OR RATHER “PLAYLIST,”—TITLED *MORE LIFE* DROPPED on March 18, and by all metrics was worth the absurd wait it brought with it. The wait was longer than most people would have liked: first announced for late 2016, then pushed back to early 2017. Finally, a cryptic tweet teasing a March 4 release date all served to get fan hopes up and create hype. When the album finally came out, I, along with a record-breaking amount of people, rushed to Spotify and Apple Music to stream it. 61.3 million people got to experience *More Life* together, and I’m pleased to report that it was an enjoyable experience.

The very first notes of the opening single, “Free Smoke,” were taped directly from a Hiatus Kaiyote song, which brought the listener to a calm and peaceful place. However, disjointed synth lines and a omnipotent snare line announced the arrival of Drake himself. With pulsating bass and his signature flow, Drake began talking about his life, about his money, and about how he’s simply the best rapper around. With lines like “I drunk text J-Lo / Old number, so it bounce back” and “Women I like was ignoring me / Now they like “Aren’t you adorable?” / I know the question rhetorical” Drake brags about the many women in his life, and how far he’s come since starting out. Plugs to his label OVO, and references to Lil Wayne and Steph Curry serve to remind the listener that Drake has connections and knows people as great as him.

MORE LIFE COMPILES Drake's many different styles in one place; rapping and singing share the stage.

See ALBUM, **Page 7**