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GLASE center to improve greenhouse industry



Jack Wellhofer/The Polytechnic

PLANTS ARE GROWN under varried lighting conditions, changing physiology (file photo).

Peter Gramenides
Senior Reporter

ON JUNE 1, NEW YORK GOVERNOR ANDREW Cuomo joined Washington Governor Jay Inslee and California Governor Jerry Brown in creating the United States Climate Alliance—a group of states that are committed to upholding the Paris Agreement following President Donald Trump's pledged departure from the deal. The goals of the accords include reducing emissions by 26 to 28 percent from 2005 levels and limiting the average increase of global temperatures to two degrees celsius by 2030.

The deal was negotiated during the presidency of Barack Obama, under the leadership of Secretary of Energy Ernest Moniz. Moniz led the United States Department of Energy from May 2013 to January 2017 and was an honorary degree recipient and commencement speaker for Rensselaer's Class of 2017.

During his commencement address, Moniz noted President Shirley Ann Jackson's influential nature on both the President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology and the Secretary of Energy's Advisory Board in creating and implementing integrated energy policy, which included a report on the applications of high-performance computing to clean energy problems. Many of the suggestions included in the report are currently being pursued at Rensselaer, which Moniz lauded as "groundbreaking work" and "just a snippet of what is an incredibly broad and deep program in energy-related technologies."

"My basic message is that schools like Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and my home institution, MIT, provide our graduates with the skillset to perform all of these functions, including managing change, if they also continuously stick to the underlying innovation and entrepreneurship framework which is inherent in our core business model of technologically grounded excellence," he said.

One of the many aspects of Rensselaer's environmentally-conscious research enterprise revolves around sustainable

and clean food, water, and energy supplies under President Jackson's research paradigm known as "The New Polytechnic." A new public-private research consortium called GLASE, or the Greenhouse Lighting and Systems Engineering Consortium, was announced at a press conference in the Darrin Communications Center at Rensselaer.

The consortium will be led by researchers at Cornell University and Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute with the goal of transforming the way greenhouses operate in order to reduce electricity usage by up to seventy percent. The seven year, \$5 million project is currently being funded by the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority in order to advance Governor Cuomo's Clean Energy Standard that aims to have 50 percent of electricity come from renewable sources by 2030, satisfying requirements held by the Paris Climate Accords and the federal Clean Power Plan.

Plant physiology expert Dr. Tessa Pockock, senior research scientist at the Center for Lighting Enabled Systems and Applications, will lead Rensselaer's portion of the investigation focusing primarily on systems engineering applications.

"The engineered LED lighting and sensing systems with advanced feedback control are being pioneered at LESA. Integrated with Cornell's advanced greenhouse management technologies, GLASE has the potential to create a more sustainable and profitable greenhouse industry. The systems engineering expertise at LESA and the agriculture expertise at Cornell make this an ideal partnership," said NYSERDA.

Dr. Neil Mattson, an associate professor in horticulture at Cornell's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, will be the principal investigator at Cornell, determining precise LED light conditions needed for tomatoes and strawberries, both commonly grown in commercial greenhouses. Mattson, who directs the Controlled Environmental Agriculture Group at Cornell CALS, said investment in energy-efficient greenhouse lighting will ensure New York's leadership in local food production and that reactive LED lighting, much of which is currently being developed at Rensselaer, will enable optimal lighting conditions in greenhouses. ♦

FINANCES

Standard & Poor's downgrades RPI's credit rating to BBB+

Peter Gramenides
Senior Reporter

ON JANUARY 5, 2017, STANDARD AND POOR'S DOWNGRADED Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute's long-term and underlying debt ratings. S&P, one of the "Big Three" credit rating agencies, discloses credit ratings for the debt of public and private entities. The highest credit rating on the S&P scale is defined as "AAA," while "CCC" is considered vulnerable to non-repayment.

The last time S&P revised RPI's credit rating was in 2014 when the Institute's fiscal outlook was revised to negative, but remained stable at an "A-." The most recent revision downgraded RPI's credit rating to "BBB+." According to S&P, the rating category "exhibits adequate protection parameters," but "adverse economic conditions or changing circumstances are more likely to lead to a weakened capacity" for RPI to meet its financial commitments to debt issuers. As of May 27, 2017, S&P considers RPI's fiscal outlook to be stable.

According to financial documents obtained by *The Poly*, RPI's long-term debt was \$742.37 million as of June 30, 2016, a decrease of roughly one percent from \$749.43 million in 2015. In that same time frame, RPI's total liabilities grew by roughly 1.4 percent from \$1.048 billion to \$1.062 billion. Net assets, concurrently, fell to their lowest point in the past five years to \$373.4 million from \$443.7 million the prior year, a decrease of 15.8 percent. Net assets and the endowment were negatively impacted by a decline in interest rates and flat investment performance, which led to a negative return on the endowment.

The strain on the Institute's finances is also partially due to RPI's minimum pension liability, which rose from \$118 million to \$154 million, an increase of 30.5 percent. The total value of the defined pension plan liability was \$329 million in 2015, rising by 13.4 percent to \$373 million in 2016.

Regardless of Rensselaer's current financial status, the Institute is currently far from unable to pay off its debt obligations. Increased enrollment and the upcoming implementation of the Summer Arch program will likely have a long-term and significant impact on the Institute's finances. It is currently unclear if enrollment figures will be impacted by the addition of the Excelsior Scholarship, a tuition award for in-state residents attending public schools which eliminates tuition expenses for those with a household income below \$100,000 per year. Rensselaer, along with two thirds of New York's private universities, recently chose not to adopt the Enhanced Tuition Award, which would have granted a subsidized tuition-discount of \$6,000 for in-state residents equivalent to the value of the Excelsior Scholarship.

President Shirley Ann Jackson is planning to launch a transformative capital campaign on October 13, 2017 specifically focused on student aid and faculty resources. Rensselaer's last capital campaign, called "Renaissance at Rensselaer," began in 2004 and surpassed its goal of raising over \$1.4 billion nearly nine months before the targeted end of the campaign.

The last capital campaign led to immense changes on campus with the construction of the Experimental Media and Performing Arts Center, the first phase of the East Campus Athletic Village construction, and the Center for Biotechnology and Interdisciplinary Studies. Rensselaer was also able to hire more than 300 professors since 1999 while steadily increasing enrollment, bringing the student-faculty ratio from 18:1 in Fall 1999 to 13:1 in Fall 2016. ♦

Editorial

Monday, July 17, 2017

EDITORIAL NOTEBOOKS

Python: utilitarian language for everyday life

Programming languages like Python are powerful, yet simple for side projects, professional work

HEY GUYS, I HOPE YOUR SUMMERS ARE GOING well! It's always great to write a notebook for *The Poly*, but I have to say that this one is particularly special. First because I have writer's block and second because I've really learned a lot this summer.



Peter Gramenides
News Editor

The greatest thing I would like to share that I wish I knew earlier is that Python is really frickin' awesome. Hands down, it's made my life so much easier in my current internship and allowed me to do some great work. Rather than using PHP for developing networking solutions, I used Django. Need to make a new database management client for client information? If design doesn't really

matter, EasyGUI or Tkinter are pretty good, leaving more wiggle room to work on more complex tools with greater value. I find that Python is one of my favorite languages. It isn't always the language of choice, but for simple, light-weight solutions and web-based projects Python does a great job of combining ease of use with readability, portability, and powerful libraries made and maintained by a massive open-source driven community.

Many tools available in Python are also surprisingly powerful if used correctly. A great example is Pygame. It is one of the most contributed to Python modules

and a great library for developing traditional 2D games. In a pretty short period of time, you could probably even make simple game-clones of popular releases like Starbound and Terraria.

If you're interested in 2D game development and haven't already looked at it, I'd recommend checking it out. I've had a great time working on personal projects this summer in Pygame, and it's really helped me better understand render buffers, interpolation, and other topics which I previously only half understood.

Django, which I mentioned above, is also really amazing. I learned about it originally from a recent alumni from my fraternity who came back to visit. He spoke very fondly of Django's ability to replace many

of PHP's uses and how it's already being adopted in industry. Django, just like Python, is very easy to use, has great documentation online, and has a pretty easy learning curve.

And the best feature of all about Python—you don't have to configure libraries! This is probably what I love the most and what has saved me the most time. Using Visual Studio and C++, especially with projects that require many libraries like games, it's always a hassle to configure every individual project for the libraries you need. In Python, no matter what computer you're using or what you're doing work on, you can go to the computer terminal and type "pip install" followed by the name of the module to access virtually any Python module. ♦

Arguing for refreshing worn-out, overdone news cycle

THE NEWS—FAKE OR REAL NEWS—IT'S ALWAYS AROUND US. I've tried reading up on more articles, but it's become too difficult.

For inspiration of this editorial, I decided to search the *New York Times*' editorial pieces. I noticed in the last month of the opinion section, the four most talked about subjects are Trump, Democrats, gender equality, and climate change.

Currently, on my phone, I only receive NHL news notifications, while my mom receives CNN notifications and WTNH (a news station in Connecticut). What's the difference with these updates? Mine are exciting to read—what players have been traded to the Rangers, extended contracts for hockey stars, new coaches; whereas, the CNN and WTNH updates are daunting and predictable—car accidents, country interactions—as per usual.

The news has always focused on the tragedies and problems existent in society. Once in a while, you might find an article on an innovative change to the medical field, but that's only once in a blue moon.

I pulled up the CNN news page when preparing this article only to be slammed with seven articles related to the White House and Donald Trump Jr. Why is the news like this these days? Is it for these news reporting companies to make money, keep up a reputation of being able to write nonchalantly over and over again on the same subjects? Whatever the case, I wish it would change, so people like me can read articles and stay informed in a bearable manner.

I'm sick of people always bashing on the same topics. Let's start talking about topics that relate to you and me, such as the progression of rebuilding the bridges of the U.S., which received a D+ grade according to the American Society of Civil Engineers. This topic can be written about in articles without bashing on the White House cabinet or the hostility from the opposing party. Instead, it can be written in a tone and manner that



Maria Kozdroj
Copy Coordinator

makes me want to read it. In terms of an infrastructure article, the current state of the new Tappan Zee Bridge can be discussed as it is important to myself, New Yorkers, and all in the U.S. due to its interesting history and its whopping 3.1 mile length. The new Kosciuszko Bridge and the history of the astounding Polish engineer who the bridge was named after is another great article that would attract the once-informed readers. There's an endless number of articles of enjoyable, pertinent content that seem to go bare and distant in the state, national, and world news.

As you can see, the news found in national newspapers and TV news channels is unbearable. *The Poly* does a good job at keeping my interest in the news at Rensselaer. However, national and world news outlets could do a *much* better job if they actually focused on it. ♦

STAFF EDITORIAL

Advice for incoming freshmen

The Poly shares tips from our personal experiences

MANY OF US HERE AT *THE POLY* REMEMBER HOW OVERWHELMING it felt to be a freshman, and after reflecting on our experiences, we have gathered a few bits of advice we wish we knew before we came to Rensselaer.

First of all, it's okay to be overwhelmed. There's a lot going on here, and it may be difficult to juggle all of the things you want to do; learn what's important to you and how to prioritize accordingly. While doing that, remember to enjoy your independence and take more risks. If someone asks you to go do something, even if it's out of your comfort zone, do it. It might just be worth the perceived risk. You might find a new activity that you enjoy or make new friends, and those are the kind of things you'll remember when you look back at your time in college.

While the first few weeks of your freshman year are widely considered the best time to make friends, the first group of people you meet do not have to be

the people you still consider your close friends 10 years from now. It might take some effort to make those friends, and it might be a little awkward at first, but it's definitely worth it.

Make sure you try new things that seem interesting, even if they're out of character for you. Go to the Troy Farmers Market and try a bunch of restaurants in Downtown Troy (and keep an eye out for recommendations in future issues of *The Poly*). There are also clubs for almost everything here, so go to the Activities Fair to scope them out, and attend a couple of their meetings. At the very least you'll learn something new, and those people could even end up becoming some of your closest friends.

Take advantage of what RPI has to offer. Make sure you're getting enough sleep. Call home once in awhile. And most of all, enjoy your time here while it lasts. ♦

During the semester, *The Poly* prints weekly on Wednesdays. Be sure to pick up an issue to keep up with campus news, events, and other great content!

the polytechnic

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Views expressed in opinion columns provide differing viewpoints to help balance the newspaper and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Editorial Board. These opinion columns, other than those granted to certain student government organizations, are granted on a semesterly or yearly basis by the Editorial Board. Those interested in starting a column should email edop@poly.rpi.edu for details.

TOP HAT

Summer updates, work continues during break

GM provides updates on summer committee projects, encourages students to consider joining student government, welcomes Interim Vice President for Student Life LeNorman Strong

HAPPY SUMMER! FIRST OFF, WELCOME TO THE CLASS OF 2021! My name is Justin Etzine, and I'm the current Grand Marshal, which is RPI's student body president and chief officer of the Union. As you arrive on campus for orientation, and then for Navigating Rensselaer and Beyond in August, I hope you feel the same excitement that I did; if you're feeling nervous, that is completely normal, and I'm sure that nervousness will be replaced with thrill as the semester begins.

In addition to what you already know, RPI is unique in the structure of its student union. The Rensselaer Union is entirely student-run, and is one of the remaining few in the United States. Student-run means that the student body oversees the budgeting, operations, strategic plans, and policies of the Union through an extensive student government. This is a feat we take with pride, and I hope you all will, too.

All students are able to be involved, and you don't even need to run for office to be involved. If you think you're interested, you just want to learn more, or you want to share comments, questions, concerns, or ideas, please always feel welcome to reach out! Elections for

the incoming Class of 2021 will be taking place shortly after the start of the Fall semester, so be sure to speak up if you're interested in participating.

Though we have been spread out for the summer, your Student Senate has still been hard at work making great progress on projects and efforts for you all. The summertime is a unique opportunity for the Senate to pursue meetings and projects with campus partners that are busier during the Fall and Spring semesters.

The Student Life Committee has met with the Health Center and the Counseling Center to continue efforts to revise and complete the report outlining student opinion and recommendations for improvement. The Web Technologies Group has been working on behind-the-scenes updates to the

Shuttle Tracker system to ensure improved stability, with a new, improved user interface to follow soon. The Facilities and Services Committee is continuing its efforts to pursuing a campus-wide sustainability definition, and they have also begun discussions with the Administration Division to resume project efforts related to facilities, parking, transportation, and pub-

lic safety. These are just a few examples of the work being pursued, and the Senate committees are open to all students. I highly recommend you get involved, especially if you have an interest or idea for making your mark on RPI.

Finally, please join me in welcoming Interim Vice President for Student Life LeNorman Strong to RPI! Mr. Strong comes to the Institute with several years of experience of working with students, especially within the framework of a student-run union. I, President of the Union Matt Rand '19, Vice Chairwoman of the Senate Ellie Mees '18, and Student Life Chairwoman Hannah Merrow '18 have already had the opportunity to meet with Mr. Strong, and I am looking forward to the many opportunities we'll have as student leaders to work with Mr. Strong in the coming year.

For returning students, I hope you all have an enjoyable remainder of your summers, and I'm looking forward to seeing you all in just over a month! For incoming students, I hope you have an exciting time at Student Orientation and Navigating Rensselaer and Beyond! As always, if you have any questions, comments, ideas, or concerns, please feel free to reach out to me at gm@rpi.edu! ♦



Justin Etzine
Grand Marshal

DERBY

PU provides insight into his freshman experience

Rensselaer Union, clubs play major role in making the most of your time at Rensselaer

HELLO EVERYONE, AND HAPPY SUMMER! I HOPE that you are all enjoying the warm weather, because we all know that it doesn't last very long once we all return to campus. Summer is a great time for students all across the Institute to relax, to get valuable job experience, and to spend time with friends and family. I wish you all the best and cannot wait to see everyone refreshed once you all return to campus!

Now, I would like to specifically address our newest students who are just arriving to campus for orientation. First off, welcome. Welcome to the newest chapter of your life and to the Rensselaer community. I want to congratulate you all on being accepted to RPI, and to reassure you all that you belong as part of our community.

Right now, each and every one of you will be experiencing different emotions as you transition into college. Some of you may be nervous to live away from home

for the first time. Some of you may be dreading leaving your friends behind and moving to where you know no one. But hopefully, each and every one of you is excited to begin what can only be described as the rest of your life. I want to offer you all a little advice, from someone who was in your shoes only two years ago.

First, remember that Rensselaer is one of the top rated institutions in the nation, and offers limitless potential for academic growth, leadership development, and research opportunities. Second, remember that each of you are here because you belong. RPI is not an easy school. I should know; I've had my fair share of tribulations. There was a time when I didn't know if I was going to stay at RPI. I didn't know if it was right for me. Thankfully, I found a

home. Well, two to be exact. One was in my fraternity. The second was within the Union. I can say, without a doubt, that coming to RPI was the best decision I have ever made. My only hope is that you too find yours.

To help you accomplish this goal, I want to invite you all to attend the annual Activities Fair hosted by the Rensselaer Union and the Executive Board. At the Fair, you will find every club and every organization on campus representing themselves and showing off all the great opportunities you have to get involved in whatever you are passionate about. And if you can't find a club that suits your needs, you can work with the Executive Board to start your own! To see what groups there are on campus before the Activities Fair, you can go to our webpage at <http://union.rpi.edu>

and start browsing. Here, you'll find lists of services available to students, announcements, and a list of all of our student clubs.

I look forward to seeing all that you will accomplish over the next four years, and the ways that you may impact our campus. If you have an interest in getting involved in our Union, or if there is any way the Union can help your transition, please do not hesitate to contact me at pu@rpi.edu or stop by my office in the Student Government Suite on the third floor of the Union. Enjoy the rest of your summer, and I look forward to welcoming you in person come the fall.

All the best,
Matthew Rand '19
128th President of the Union



Matthew Rand
President of the Union

ASK BROOKELYN

I'm an only child who's never had to share a room, and I'm living in Barton Hall with two roommates. Do you have any advice for sharing a room with people?

Having a good experience with your roommates will require all of you to communicate and be considerate toward one another. Since you've never shared a room with anyone else, some of your habits might piss off your roommates. Go through your daily routine at home and try to identify these, since I'll just be covering the basics.

Be conscious of the noise you make, especially if either of your roommates are studying, if it's late at night, or if they seem generally bothered. Talk about your test schedules and just give them a heads up earlier in the week. If you plan on staying up until 3 am studying in your room with the lights on while your roommate is trying to get some sleep, neither of you is going to end up happy.

Don't assume your roommates will be okay with your having people stay over. Ask first. Also, don't have sex while your roommates are in the room, even if you think they're sleeping. They will be awake and they will definitely be able to hear you. If you want some privacy, just ask your roommates. Establishing a knock-before-you-enter policy right when you get to school definitely wouldn't hurt.

To try to prevent any issues from arising, set boundaries at the beginning of the year. Talk to each other before you get to school so you know who's bringing what and what you're comfortable sharing.

On the other hand, if your roommates are really pissing you off, don't let the issue simmer. Bring it up right when it bothers you in a direct, but respectful way. If it continues and you can't tolerate it anymore, bring it up with your RA. Try their suggestions,

and if it doesn't work out, see if you can change roommates. In the meantime, occupy your time outside of your room and try your best to stay sane.

My roommate for the fall and I are both gay. Is it a bad idea to hook up?

I really want to tell you to go for it, but I think you should wait until you've been roommates for a couple months. It could be a great experience and you could just end up living with your significant other, but it could also make your room a very hostile environment for you.

Get to know your roommate first. Spend time with them in a completely nonsexual way and see if you enjoy their company. If you find yourself feeling smothered or uncomfortable, or wanting other people much more than your roommate, slowly distance yourself and let them down easy. If you just want a casual, open relationship with your roommate, make that crystal clear before you start hooking up. Also, if you're ever feeling alone in your sexuality and want to meet new people, don't be afraid to join Rensselaer Pride Alliance!

Ask Brookelyn questions can always be submitted at poly.rpi.edu/ask.

OFF-CAMPUS EVENT

People of Pride



Brookelyn Parslow/The Polytechnic

MEMBERS OF THE LGBT COMMUNITY MARCHED to celebrate gay pride in the New York City Pride March. The march was televised for the first time since it started in 1969.

Activities Fair

THURSDAY, AUGUST 31
6:30 - 8:30 PM
ARMORY/MUELLER CENTER
CLUB REGISTRATION OPEN @ UNION.RPI.EDU



RPI Student Government Wants YOU!

Interested in joining the Freshman Class Council? Here's what you need to do:

- Attend an **Information Session** from 5-6 PM in the Student Government Suite, on any weekday from September 5th to September 22nd
- Start thinking about what **position** you would like to run for. Senator, Officer, or Representative?
- Start **making plans** for what you hope to achieve in the position you hope to obtain. It'll make for good material to talk about once Campaigning officially starts!

If you have any additional questions, send them to rne@rpi.edu!



"The Village Idiom: Empowering Youth through Education, Interconnectivity and Employment,"

**NDABA
MANDELA**

September 19

7:30 PM

EMPAC Theater

**SPEAKERS
FORUM**



Rensselaer

**RENSSELAER
UNION**

Sports

Monday, July 17, 2017

HOCKEY

Changes coming for women's, men's hockey



Sidney Kochman/The Polytechnic

THE RENSSELAER ENGINEERS had an 8-28-1 record last season, resulting in the dismissal of head coach Seth Appert (file photo).

Joseph Lyon
Staff Reporter

THE RENSSELAER MEN'S AND WOMEN'S HOCKEY teams will be facing major changes in the upcoming season. Both teams will be entering the season with new coaches: the men's team with head coach Dave Smith, and the women's team with interim head

coach Bryan Vines. The men's team is also facing a large change in its roster in the upcoming season, with nine new players joining the team.

The hiring of interim coach Vines for the women's team should make for an interesting season. The search for a women's head coach was expedited, with Vines being hired just days after it was announced that the previous hockey coach,

John Burke, would not be staying with the team for this season. Vines should bring an interesting and new perspective to the women's team. He has extensive hockey experience, as a four-year letter winner at the University of Denver, a video coach for the Colorado Avalanche of the National Hockey League, as well as an assistant coach for the Rensselaer men's team for the past eight years. Vines has

experience coaching hockey and a passion for the sport, though it remains to be seen whether the fact that this is a one year interim position will have an impact on Vines' efficacy as a coach. The women's team ended last season with a 10-24-2 record, leaving room for improvement.

The men's team is also seeing drastic changes. It has a new head coach, Dave Smith, nine new players, and dismissed four players, Cam Hackett '21, Alex Rodriguez '21, Sam Rappaport '20, and Liam McBain '21. The new freshmen players include Matthew Harris '21, Billy Jerry '21, Gavin Payne '21, Jon Richards '21, and Troy York '21 from the United States, Jaren Burke '21, Owen Stout '21, and Linden Marshall '21 from Canada, and Emil Ohrvall '21 from Sweden. It remains to be seen whether or not these changes will have a positive outcome for the Engineers. In a statement released on June 26, Smith commented on the diverse skillset and leadership abilities of the new players. "They will join our returning group and add to our program's on-ice strengths of skating, skill and character." The men's team ended its previous season with a 8-28-1 record.

This year's hockey season is shaping up to be interesting, with large roster changes on the men's team and new coaches heading both teams. Sports fans should look out for different playing styles and new plays from the coaches, along with a new range of players. ♦

<p>Upcoming Events</p> <p>Fall 2017</p>	<p>Men's Soccer 9/1-9/2 - (7 pm/5 pm) Union Classic Tournament ECAV Stadium</p>	<p>Women's Hockey 9/1-9/2-(4 pm/1:30 pm) Weekend of Games Renwyck Field</p>	<p>Women's Hockey 9/23 (5pm) Engineers v. University of Montreal Houston Field House</p>	<p>Men's Hockey 10/28 (7pm) Engineers vs Union College Houston Field House</p>
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Comics

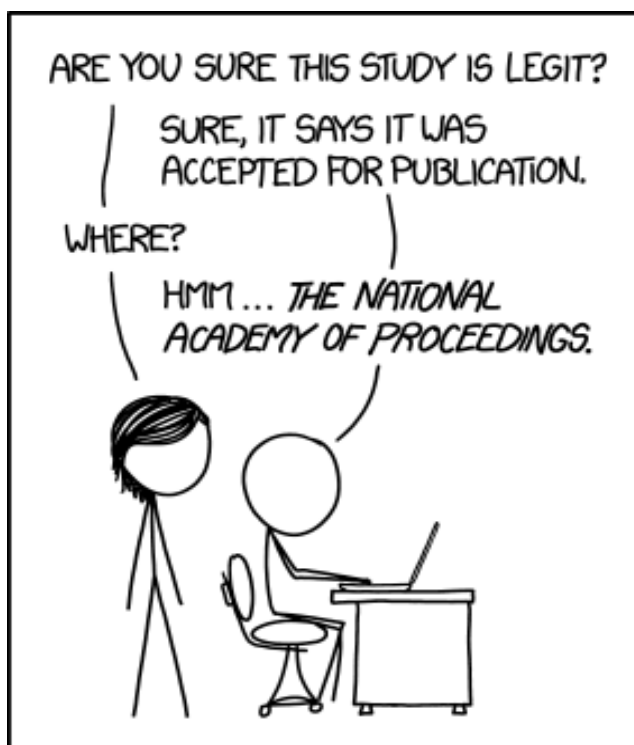
TOP TEN LIST

College Don'ts

10. Don't give up
9. Prepare for Troy weather
8. Your roommate
7. Drink and derive
6. Shower
5. Randi Mogul
4. Sign up for classes before noon
3. Find yourself
2. Leave your room (scary outside)
1. Join S&W

XKCD

by Randall Munroe



IF SOMETHING IS FORMATTED LIKE A SERIOUS SCIENTIFIC PAPER, IT CAN TAKE ME A WHILE TO REALIZE IT ISN'T ONE.

CRYPTOQUOTE

Tvp H.V. cr dyibtcjicia
lpwdpbtok, djbyrpu
ji Vpgotvbgwp, Tge
Bytr Wpdjwm giu
mgik jtpw tvciar. C
vgsp spwk octtop
tcmp djw hgtbvcia
T.S. -Zhtvkz Dlcfa

MOVIE REVIEW

Ambiguity, confusion result in psychological horrors

Serge Piskun
Senior Reviewer

AS A BUDDING HORROR MOVIE FAN, I TEND TO JUDGE MOVIES by their covers. I look at movie posters, and if the poster entices me, or if I've heard good things about the movie, I usually sit down and watch it. *It Comes At Night* was a different story for me, as I had never heard of it and had pretty much zero knowledge as to what it was about. All I knew was the title, and from that I inferred that somewhere, at some time, something would appear, probably in the evening or at night. Surprisingly, I was wrong.

Full disclosure: something did come at night, and that thing did affect the characters in the movie, but it only happened once. Needless to say, this article contains major spoilers, which I implore you not to read if you haven't seen the movie.

It Comes At Night is set in a post-apocalyptic America, with survivors of an unknown great plague isolating themselves from others in an effort to avoid contamination and death. Not much is known about the disease, except that it shows no symptoms at first but then quickly and unavoidably kills its host while remaining lethally contagious. The movie follows a man, Paul, living with his wife Sarah, son Travis, and father-in-law Bud, in the secluded countryside trying to survive on his own and protect his family. In the very first scene of the movie, Bud is shown to have contracted the disease and is killed and buried by Paul. Travis becomes haunted

by nightmares of his grandfather's death, as the family now knows what the virus does to people and must carefully interact with others around them. After his death, a stranger, Will, breaks into the family's house and, after some time, ends up living within and bringing his family over. The movie picks up pace when it is revealed that one of the people in the house is infected, and they must figure out a way to all survive.

The premise of the movie is simple enough, but in my opinion, the execution with which it is done is amazing. The audience only ever knows the bare minimum in order to understand the field; nothing more, nothing less. They are forced to form their own opinions and come to their own conclusions as to what really happened, and who in fact is or is not infected. We, as viewers, never know what started the disease, or if it is curable. We don't even know where the movie truly is set; it can be inferred that it is America but the specific location is intentionally left out. The ending itself is also laced in ambiguity. I won't go into detail on it, but there is no correct interpretation of what happened to the family, only what the future holds for them.

If you're looking for an atypical horror movie, one that looks to unnerve the viewer rather than one reliant on cheap jump scares for thrills, I'd highly recommend *It Comes At Night*. It blends psychological horror with suspense and a feeling of being in the dark, all of which leads to a great movie. ♦

MOVIE REVIEW

Renewed hope for DC Comics



Courtesy of DC Films

GAL GADOT STARS in the hit movie *Wonder Woman*, which introduces the Amazonian's origin during WWI.

Rex Hu
Senior Reviewer

Wonder Woman, Warner Bros. Pictures' latest superhero movie, was released last month, transforming it from a long-awaited retelling of the superhero's origin story for comic book fans, to a pop culture sensation thriving off of word-of-mouth recommendations. The movie illustrates Wonder Woman's rise to prominence in the midst of World War I, but it also proves to be a journey of discovery for all. Longtime fans can rediscover the universe in live action, newcomers can familiarize themselves with her backstory, and even Diana—Wonder Woman herself—can embark on a daunting first adventure in the human world that leads to both self-discovery and worldly understanding.

The plot of the movie itself is rather simple: a sheltered and hopeful Diana endeavors to stop Ares, who she believes is the cause of the war. We follow her through

not-so-humble island beginnings, to industrial England, to the epicenter of destruction in Germany. Though simple in nature, I personally appreciated the literary structure of it—the different stages of the movie loosely reflect Diana's Hero(ine)'s Journey, and her acclimation to her newfound powers and role in the world of men. With both strong ideals and cinematography, I think that there's something for everyone.

Overall, *Wonder Woman* is visually solid. The scenes and settings are varied, with island scenery, ocean sailing, bustling England, and war action. The movie covers a diverse range of cinematography that's largely enjoyable, and it doesn't become tiresome to watch—though I confess that the special effects were awkward at times, such as the lack of coordination between a supernatural attack and body movements. Each of those phases also projected

a different atmosphere. Diana's home island of Themyscira was peaceful, inviting, and familial; the ocean created a slight sense of wandering anticipation; her time in England was rather upbeat and whimsical; and the fight scenes and action shots brought the usual rush of adrenaline.

More importantly, I'd like to sing glowing praise for Wonder Woman's strong ideals. The movie draws on hefty themes, such as altruism (helping those who can't protect themselves), the human experience ("everyone's fighting their own battle, Diana. Just as you're fighting your own"), the rotten cruelty of humanity (the desire for war), and the idea of righteousness itself ("it's not about [what humans] deserve, it's about what you believe"). What sets Diana apart from other superheroes is that, in addition to having these themes incorporated in her story, she also lives by them. Her motivation to be

PODCAST REVIEW

Exciting economics



Courtesy of Planet Money

PLANET MONEY TRANSFORMS economics into enjoyable listening.

Jack Wellhofer
Senior Reviewer

I WAS PONDERING WAYS OF STARTING THIS PODCAST REVIEW, DEVISING A WAY TO convey how a podcast about economics is one I actually look forward to listening to. I think *Planet Money's* about page sums it up: "Imagine you could call up a friend and say, 'Meet me at the bar and tell me what's going on with the economy.' Now imagine that's actually a fun evening. That's what we're going for at *Planet Money*." I'm going to tell you right away, I took Economics I, and it turns out I didn't like it that much. *Planet Money*, though, I like.

Planet Money does biweekly, roughly 20-minute podcasts on economics, money, and just about anything that can broadly fit into that category. My favorite episode was the one titled "Libertarian Summer Camp." When I saw that name pop up on my podcast player, I was quite excited to see what kind of summer camp Libertarians go to. As it turns out, there is a place in the forests of New Hampshire where believers of the free market gather to stick it to a strong central government. Laminated gold and silver filings serve as the currency, and the market regulates what businesses live and die at the "summer camp."

As a production of National Public Radio, one can guarantee that *Planet Money* will be a high quality listening experience. NPR has the best of the best audio journalists, and their team of writers, producers, and narrators truly know how to put together an enjoyable experience. I think that's one of the major reasons I always look forward to a new episode of *Planet Money*. It always sounds like the hosts are having a blast, like they can't believe they get paid to do this. They keep just enough of the laughs, jokes, puns, and silly bits that happen during recording so that it does feel like you're at a bar having fun discussing economics. The episode length is perfect to understand the story, delve into it a bit, but not drag on to the point of boredom.

So, when you're driving home from Student Orientation and your parents are trying to talk to you about how it went, how are the dorms, did you make any friends, etc., queue up a few episodes of *Planet Money*. Tell them you're trying to get ahead on your studies and need to focus on this podcast. It might get them to stop pestering you about college for just one minute, and you'll have a great podcast to enjoy on the way home. ♦

a hero and the way that she handles situations are both facilitated by her deep sense of morality. Wonder Woman also happens to be a paragon of feminism—and not the petty social justice sort. It features a relationship that doesn't overshadow the plot; that means more harmless eye candy for all! This leaves room for feminist subtext that healthily normalizes women as equals to men. Diana pulls her own weight, and her interactions with other characters are balanced. Even if she is met with slight surprise at first, she carries on so freely that she redefines the female role.

The movie built up to a classic Hero's Journey climax that was narratively and emotionally intense. Though Diana does hesitate in a very human way, she presses on with her physical strength and ideals when she is needed most. And although it mellowed out, I thought the end was riveting. It brought tears to

my eyes, which is essentially my equivalent of a full-on cry.

For a first installment, *Wonder Woman* set an excellent precedent. It brought just what was needed: boldness in many places, a sliver of doubt, a struggle that is universally relatable, and a sense of hope... for both viewers and DC's box office performance. (I'm looking at you, *Suicide Squad*.) It may have had a plot that lacked depth, and the effects weren't the smoothest I've ever seen; but in a few years people will say, "What were you expecting? It's from 2017!" and it still serves as an enjoyable viewing experience in many ways. It's varied, literarily sound, exciting, touching, and meaningful. Best of all, the Wonder Woman has become an exemplar for children who want to be her and have lunch boxes with her on it, boys and girls alike. I've watched it twice now, and one thing is certain: I can't wait for more. ♦

Features

Monday, July 17, 2017

OFF-CAMPUS EVENT

Memories of Thiers '99 aids student pilots

Anahit Hovhannisyan
Staff Reviewer

ON APRIL 29, THE RPI FLYING CLUB HOSTED ITS SIXTH ANNUAL Thiers Memorial Fly-in & Car Show at the Empire State Aerosciences Museum in Glenville, New York. The Fly-in & Car Show, created in memory of Lawrence Thiers '99, collected donations for the Thiers Fund in honor of their former president who passed before graduation. This fund supports RPI Flying Club members' private pilot licenses as

two North American T-6 Texans, a North American P-51 Mustang, and four Yakovlev Fighters. Members of the Air National Guard allowed visitors to enter the aircraft and sit in the cockpit of the C-130 Hercules. Special for transporting cargo to Antarctica throughout the year, it was equipped with skis for safe landing on ice. Adjacent to the Hercules was a space designated for smaller aircrafts, the first of which were two North American T-6 Texans, known for training pilots in the United States Army Forces. To its

AS-350 LifeNet helicopter gave visitors the opportunity to learn about rescue procedure, and a Robinson R44 from Independent Helicopters offered helicopter rides around the venue. If these aircrafts are not enough to spike curiosity, the event showcased both the old and the new in automobiles. Ranging from Ford Model T to modern Corvette models, the field was lined with thousands of vehicles for show and competition.

RPI Flying Club President Stephen Hansen '18 commented, "It's a community-based event that brings together everyone who likes cars, planes, and helicopters. The Flying Club taps into [aviation] interests which may often be overlooked on college campuses." Andrew Sit '19, on the planning committee for the event, added, "What makes Thiers different is that the event is not just for com-



Courtesy of RPI Flying Club

well as the annual representation of RPI in NIFA SAFECON. The event did not fall short of remembering a fellow RPI Flying Club member, with an abundance of vehicles and an attendance of thousands including RPI students, RPI alumni, and members of the upstate New York community. Attracting aviation and car enthusiasts in the area, the event showcased six aircrafts, two helicopters, and more than 100 cars.

Featured aircraft included an Air National Guard C-130 Hercules,

right were a North American P-51 Mustang and Yakovlev fighter aircrafts. These aircrafts, famous for flying during World War II, flew in from the East Coast and Montreal, Canada in formation.

In addition, the event featured helicopters and motor vehicles. An

munity outreach—the money raised from Thiers helps support our unique passion of flying."

Does the Fly-in and Car Show sound interesting? "Consider joining the flying club!" Hansen encourages. RPI Flying Club members welcome all participation and volunteering for the event. In fact, planning for the 2018 event is already underway. Sit reflected, "Overall, we had a great event this year. We hope to bring back great food, unique cars, the WWII aircraft, and the sunny weather!" For more information, visit the Thiers Memorial Fly-in & Car Show Facebook page. ♦

SONG REVIEW

Hit summer song brings unexpected benefits



Courtesy of Luis Fonsi

LUIS FONSI AND DADDY YANKEE SHOW the hidden sides of Puerto Rico in the music video for "Despacito."

Crystal Vejar
Senior Reviewer

IF YOU HAVE YET TO HEAR THE SONG "Despacito," just tune the radio to a station playing today's top hits and you'll hear it within 15 minutes, I promise. "Despacito" by Luis Fonsi and Daddy Yankee has been blowing up around the world, with their

music video hitting a remarkable 2.6 billion views in just six months. In comparison, the "Gangnam Style" video has around 2.9 billion views since its release over four years ago. While the song had steadily been burning up the charts in the U.S. and abroad, it was catapulted into the mainstream and even history after a remix was made featuring

Justin Bieber. Since then, the song has managed to score a spot on Billboard's Hot 100 list for nine weeks straight, a feat made even more notable because it's the first Spanish language song to do so since the "Macarena" in 1996.

Since the sensual song became a global smash, it has aroused a positive interest in Puerto Rican culture

and an interest in foreign tourists knowing the place where the superstars were born. Just two months ago, Puerto Rican Governor Ricardo Rosselló declared the commonwealth bankrupt, needing to restructure a \$70 billion debt. However, it seems the song, along with the video which is full of provocative visuals and beautiful shots of the island, has managed to spike interest in tourism. According to daily *Un Nuevo Día* and *CNN*, tourist interest in travel to the island has increased 45 percent since the song's debut. Some tour operators in Puerto Rico have even been including some of the areas that were used in the production of the music video, such as Club La Factoria in Old San Juan and La Perla.

When Fonsi wrote "Despacito" two years ago, it didn't make the cut on his album, but he still believed the song was special. The song showcases Fonsi's ballad pop style with a bit of reggaeton from Yankee, and it's all accented by Justin Bieber, leaving us with the biggest song of the summer, and possibly the biggest Spanish song in the United States for a while.

While Fonsi and Yankee weren't specifically aiming to help Puerto Rico with their song, they are more

than pleased with the effects it has had. After learning the news, Luis Fonsi reacted on Instagram, writing, "What a joy it is to read this in international media. Puerto Rico is the true protagonist of this song and this video." When filming the music video, Fonsi wanted to show a more realistic side of the island rather than all the touristic areas that are often seen in the media. His choices pleased the locals and brought some much needed attention to some of the areas. However, collaborating on the song was more of a business move for Bieber, and it seems he's being strategic in transforming his brand away from that of a child star.

While I was pretty amazed the first time I heard Justin Bieber singing the Spanish chorus—very well I might add—I was even more shocked when I saw videos of him mocking the language and lyrics, making a borderline racist show out of rhyming "Dorito" and "burrito" while singing the song in public. The videos went viral and brought some bad publicity to Bieber's name, but overall, the song has been an all-around success and definitely one on my summer playlist this year. ♦