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Sidney Kochman/The Polytechnic

'Build bridges, not fences'

Brookelyn Parslow
Senior Reporter

"WE DESERVE TRANSPARENCY," chanted students during a peaceful demonstration that began between Amos Eaton Hall and Lally Hall at 4 pm on Friday, October 13, 2017. Earlier that day, the Save the Union organization emailed an invitation to the demonstration, or "lab safety class," to the Rensselaer community. The intended message of the protest was that "the overwhelming majority of the RPI community wants the Rensselaer Union restored to a student-run entity."

The protest originated outside of the fences enclosing the south side of campus. It was initially scheduled to take place next to the Experimental Media and Performing Arts Center, the location of the spring 2016 protest. However, temporary barriers erected by the Institute and entry restrictions enforced by the Department of Public Safety prevented demonstrators from reaching EMPAC. According to an email from Strategic Communications and External Relations, these "event boundaries" were meant to "ensure safety" for the hundreds of various Reunion

& Homecoming event guests; this also included the closing of the tunnel connecting the Jonsson Engineering Center and the Jonsson-Rowland Science Center. In an email to *The Poly*, Vice President of Administration Claude Rounds stated that the tunnel "does not serve as a required fire exit for either [the] JEC or JRSC," "the gate in the tunnel is a security gate that can be closed and locked to restrict access and pedestrian traffic," and that the "locking of the gate in the tunnel is not a fire exiting compliance issue."

Before the protest, Director of Public Safety Jerry Matthews asked reporters of *The Poly* to vacate the area inside the fence, saying that it was restricted to people with credentials from the Division of Institute Advancement. At 4:30 pm, a portion of the fence was moved by demonstrators as they migrated onto the grass on the north side of the Voorhees Computing Center. According to Dan Seel '18, "there were zip ties on that section of the fence, but they had vanished by the time the fence was moved."

See PROTEST, **Page 2**

ADMINISTRATION

RPI launches \$1 billion campaign

David Raab
Senior Reporter

ON FRIDAY, OCTOBER 13, PRESIDENT SHIRLEY Ann Jackson officially launched the public portion of Rensselaer's new capital campaign, *Transformative: Campaign for Global Change*, with an event held in the Experimental Media and Performing Arts Center. During the keynote address, Jackson announced that the campaign's goal is to raise \$1 billion over several years. The Institute has already raised over \$400 million dollars. Assistant Vice President for Student Life and Dean of Students Travis Apgar said in a Union Executive Board meeting on September 7 that institutions typically raise a majority of the money in the "silent phase." *The Polytechnic* reached out to Jackson to determine when fundraising began and why the decision was made to announce the

campaign before it reached the fifty percent milestone, but did not receive a comment. The night's events started with a cocktail hour in the science quad and moved into the Folsom Library for dinner. Though the event was sold out, many of the tables that were set up on the second floor of Folsom had empty chairs. A reception in EMPAC followed dinner. After a concert from the Rensselaer Orchestra, Jackson gave a keynote speech. She outlined many of RPI's accomplishments from her 18-year tenure as president. Specifically, Jackson stated that for the last year's admissions, the Institute had 20,000 freshman applications—a number that is "quadruple what it was 20 years ago." She then reiterated the three goals of the campaign: closing the financial aid gap, expanding the number of tenured and tenure-track faculty to 500 people, and modernizing the Troy campus.

After Jackson spoke, a few members of the Board of Trustees shared how RPI has affected their own lives and the ways through which they personally give back to the Institute. Campaign Co-Chairs Paul Severino '69 and Kathleen Severino gave a few remarks on how they have contributed to Rensselaer through the endowment of the Severino Center for Technological Entrepreneurship. Jackson described him as a serial entrepreneur who has successfully founded and operated several businesses in the technology sector. After the Severinos spoke, Chairman of the Board of Trustees Arthur F. Golden '66 delivered his own brief set of remarks on how he has given back to his alma mater. Specifically, he addressed the many changes that Jackson and her staff have implemented at Rensselaer by saying that "transformation is the new baseline, not the endgame—not by any means."

See CAPITAL, **Page 2**

STUDENT SENATE

Handbook tasked to SLC

Darby Burns
Senior Reporter

ON OCTOBER 16, 2017, GRAND MARSHAL JUSTIN ETZINE opened the Student Senate meeting by welcoming its new members, asking them to introduce themselves by sharing their majors, and reasons why they chose to join the Student Senate.

After a series of brief committee reports, Jennie Miller '19 moved to endorse the revisions to the *Rensselaer Handbook of Student Rights and Responsibilities*. At the start of the queue Hannah Merrow '18 moved to charge that motion to Student Life Committee Chairperson and to the GM with the full authority to act. This means that it would be their responsibility to meet with Assistant Vice President and Dean of Students Travis Apgar to decide if the changes should be endorsed, then report back to the Senate. Joshua Thomas '20 raised the question of whether the revisions could go in effect with or without Senate approval. Etzine responded that this would be just an endorsement and changes could go in effect either way. The new motion passed unanimously.

Another motion was made by the Undergraduate

Council to resolve and enact the amendments to the *Undergraduate Council Bylaws*, which was presented by Stefanie Warner '19. The motion was to open the pool for candidates for vice president and president of a class to the entirety of that class after two separate meetings with inconclusive voting. The motion passed 18-0-1.

Finally, Etzine opened a queue on the *Student Handbook* changes. Recent alumnus Evan Barr '17 expressed concern that one of the amendments did not include alumni in its definition of the Institute community. He said that, "I believe that everyone who has attended this institute has a powerful interest in the direction it takes, and protest is one of the few ways that our voice can be heard." Within the comments section of the Facebook livestream, Alex Norman '18 stated his concerns regarding the limitations the changes place on freedom of speech. Apgar clarified that the two main stages the administration wishes to follow are to, "First, update the handbook as shared with the Senate." and, "Second, work with Student Senate to explore additional updates."

The Student Senate meets Mondays at 8 pm in the Shelnutt Gallery in the Rensselaer Union. ♦

Capital: \$400 million raised

From **Page 1**

After Golden, Secretary of the Board of Trustees Curtis R. Priem '82 addressed the audience and said that "Rensselaer invested in me years ago," so he only saw it fit to give back once he had the means to do so. He was a member of the Rensselaer Orchestra while he was a student. As an alumnus, he wanted to see the Institute have a greater focus on arts and electronic media. Priem also recognized Jackson's donations to RPI specifically for the purpose of expanding student scholarships.

After Priem's remarks, a video was shown on Rensselaer's potential for transformation as it approaches the bicentennial of its founding. It featured the testimony of members of the president's cabinet, dean's council, and a few select students. Next, John E. Kelly III '78, a member of the Board of Trustees and the senior vice president of IBM, recounted IBM's history of contributing to Rensselaer that goes back to the 1960s.

Jackson, her husband, and the Board of Trustees then celebrated the launch with champagne on stage. Many guests went outside to watch fireworks, which were launched from the hill next to EMPAC above 8th Street. ♦

Protest: Student concerns voiced, heard

From **Page 1**

The crowd later transitioned to the grass surrounding the walkway near EMPAC, where they continued to chant, display signs to alumni, and take turns speaking through a megaphone. Chants included phrases such as, "build bridges, not fences," and "our Union, our voice." Concerns raised by speakers covered "RPI's demotion to a tier-two research institution," the "steady increase of undergraduate tuition," the "drop in RPI's credit rating," and the "weakening of the Faculty Senate."

A boundary of police officers separated the protesters from alumni going from the Cogswell Laboratory and the Folsom Library to the capital campaign launch event at EMPAC.

The protest included both undergraduate and graduate students, along with alumni. "I think what students are doing is absolutely the right thing," shared Ted Mirczak '66. "I was here before there was a student union building...and it was in those early years that we taxed ourselves in order to build the Union...The thing that baffles some of us is: what went wrong? The students are doing nothing wrong. They're running a fiscally sound operation, the Union is in good shape. Why would you want to say it needs administration?" he continued.

"Before we worry about student union governance, we need to worry about university governance—in particular, better transparency, and better accountability," stated John Krob '78.

Toward the end of the demonstration, Professor of Practice and former Vice President for Student Life Eddie Ade Knowles dedicated a song to students "in the spirit of this event," and expressed that "we are very proud of our Union."

The demonstration ended at 6:15 pm. ♦



Brooklyn Parslow/The Polytechnic



Jonathan Caicedo/The Polytechnic



Jonathan Caicedo/The Polytechnic

ADMINISTRATION

Fence installed, motivation questioned

Brookelyn Parslow
Senior Reporter

ON WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 11, Rensselaer erected a fence around the southwest side of campus. According to an email sent by Strategic Communications and External Relations on October 12, this “event boundary” was to ensure the welfare of event guests.

In an email to *The Poly*, Interim Vice President for Student Life LeNorman Strong wrote that “the use of security barriers is a current standard in event management.” He continued, “The event barrier was as minimal as it could be. Rensselaer determined that a more extensive separation of our student protesters from the event was not desirable. The culture of student expression at universities is an important aspect of student leadership, development, and a part of our community citizenship. At the same time, campus safety was, and is always, our first priority for our faculty, staff, students, and guests.”

Strong also expressed that, while Assistant Vice President and Dean of Students Travis Apgar invited the student who applied for the peaceful demonstration to meet and discuss alternatives, the student declined. According to Strong, an alumni spokesperson was able to describe the intentions of the demonstration,



Brookelyn Parslow/The Polytechnic

RENSSELAER COMMUNITY MEMBERS PROTESTED behind event boundaries for only the first thirty minutes of the demonstration.

but “was not able to discuss alternatives.” Strong stated that “The lack of dialogue between student event planners and staff in the Dean of Students Office only complicated matters. As a major advocate for students, the dean of students is a key resource who can help students determine a path for expressing issues important to them.”

However, there have been concerns that safety was not the administration’s primary motivation. On October 9, the Foundation for

Individual Rights in Education responded to Apgar’s denial to the application for peaceful demonstration. “Apgar’s denial letter is predicated on ‘a decision some time ago that [RPI] would not approve demonstration applications’ whatsoever during the homecoming weekend. That suggests that RPI’s motivation is not safety, but message—and that administrators are seeking to limit students’ ability to protest when their voices may be heard the loudest.”

On October 12, FIRE also published an article in response to the installation of the fence around campus, in which Senior Program Officer Adam Steinbaugh expressed that “Rensselaer promises its students the freedom to express their views. But, that promise apparently comes with a big asterisk: it doesn’t apply on some weekends, when it’s inconvenient, or when the university might be criticized in front of donors.”

Ultimately, the fence only kept the protest out of the restricted area for 30 minutes before it was moved by demonstrators. The email from the Office of Strategic Communications and External Relations said that the boundaries would be enforced by the Department of Public Safety, but no visible action beyond the fence was taken by the officers present to prevent the protest from moving. ♦

ADMINISTRATION

Save the Union poster misleading

Brookelyn Parslow
Senior Reporter

IN POSTERS DISTRIBUTED ACROSS CAMPUS AND online through its website on October 10, 2017, the Save the Union organization drew upon—and misrepresented—information from the Middle States Commission on Higher Education report that was created in 2016.

One poster read, “Middle States accreditation [sic] requirement: Is there a pattern of student complaints that raises concerns? The institution is not in compliance with this requirement.” This quote was attributed to the 2016 MSCHE report, which is available as the “Rensselaer Team Report” at <https://poly.rpi.edu/s/5w6>. This poster included early findings without supporting evidence. By the time of release, the MSCHE team had been given sufficient information to show that the Institute was in compliance with the accreditation requirement.

In June 2014, Rensselaer began the process for reaccreditation through the MSCHE. According to RPI’s website, this is a “voluntary method of self-regulation adopted by the higher education community to strengthen and sustain the quality and integrity of higher education in the United States.”

In November 2016, President Shirley Ann Jackson received a letter from Chairman of the Middle States Commission George A. Pruitt, in which the MSCHE acted “to reaffirm accreditation,” “commend the institution for the quality of the self-study report,” and schedule the next evaluation for the years 2024–25. On December 20, 2016, Jackson sent an email to the campus community in which she shared the contents of this letter and the report’s existence.

In the report, there is a section of tables detailing the Institute’s compliance with certain categories, including “Institutional Records of Student Complaints.” There are three columns titled: “recommended review,” “evidence,” and “findings.” The “recommended review” section poses a question that is then explored by the team. Their findings can either be that the institution is “in compliance” or “not in compliance” with the requirement from the “recommended review,” which is then supported by the “evidence” column.

The question “Is there a pattern of student complaints that raises concerns?” is under the column for “recommended review” in one of these tables. The question and statement about lack of compliance on the Save the Union posters were taken from this portion of the document, without any of the information supplied in the “evidence” column.

However, that “evidence” column included the statement, “No evidence of student complaints was supplied, so no patterns can be discerned from submitted documentation.”

Additionally, in the beginning of the MSCHE report, a *Verification Report* by Tom Gregory was given to the MSCHE team on March 30, 2016. “[Gregory] found Rensselaer to be in compliance with seven of the eight categories, but noted that additional action would be required to verify the institution’s compliance with the category on Institutional Records of Student Complaints.”

In response to this, the team noted that, during its visit in April, additional review was conducted that included the production of additional documentation. The team then decided that “the institution is in compliance with this category.” ♦

EXECUTIVE BOARD

Mueller Center staff hiring recommended

Jonathan Caicedo
Senior Reporter

ON THURSDAY, OCTOBER 12, PRESIDENT OF THE UNION MATTHEW RAND ’19 OPENED THE MEETING of the Executive Board. Consideration of *Statler and Waldorf’s* request for new couches in their office was the first item on the agenda. Due to the recent renovations to the Union’s third floor, in accommodation for the new Student Veterans Lounge, *S&W’s* previous couches were thrown out due to their poor condition. *S&W* specifically requested couches instead of desks and chairs due to the size and shape of their office; the number of desks and chairs they would require wouldn’t be feasible. After discussion, a motion to approve the reallocation of \$1582.40 from the Union’s facilities budget for the purchasing of two couches for *S&W’s* office passed, 15–2–1.

After *S&W*, President Bryan Johns ’19 and Business Manager Anastasia Feraco ’19 of the RPI Players came before the board with two requests. The first was for \$149,255 to purchase scripts for the fall mainstage production of *Arcadia*. All of the licenses and materials for *Arcadia* were originally to be purchased last fiscal year. Due to an administrative error by the Union, only the rights were purchased. A motion to approve \$147.25 from the club contingencies fund for the purchasing of scripts for *Arcadia* passed with a vote of 17–0–1.

The Players’ second request was for \$1770 to purchase the license and materials for their spring musical *A Little Night Music*. Similarly to *Arcadia*, the license and materials for *A Little Night Music* were to be purchased last fiscal year. Due to another administrative error by the Union, the contract expired, and the rights were not purchased as scheduled. A motion to approve \$1770 from the club contingencies fund for the spring musical passed 17–0–1.

Business Operations Committee Chair Kay Sun then mentioned that they have 14 projects in total, the two biggest of which are carpeting for the third floor of the Union and acquiring furniture for meeting rooms.

Director of the Mueller Center Steve Allard then gave the director’s report. He stated that on-campus interviews for Assistant Director for Student Activities are coming up, and that new equipment has been put in the Mueller Center. He also announced plans that the Mueller Center will be hosting a Thanksgiving dinner for students over the break. While this will be aimed primarily at international students, every student who pre-registers will be able to attend. When asked about using the McNeil Room instead of the Mueller Center, Allard stated that they would have to use Sodexo, and it would be seven times more expensive.

Rand then moved on to the president’s report. He outlined all the events happening for Reunion & Homecoming Weekend, including fireworks and cupcakes, and mentioned the ribbon cutting ceremony for the Student Veterans Lounge that will take place on November 8.

The Board then motioned to close the meeting, with a vote of 16–0–1. During the closed meeting, the E-Board passed a motion that read, “I move that the Rensselaer Union Executive Board approve the Executive Search Committee’s recommended candidate for the position ‘Assistant Director Mueller Center and Wellness,’ pending the approval from Human Resources and the Division of Student Life.” The vote was 11 in favor, and two against, with four abstentions.

The Executive Board meets Thursdays at 8 pm in the Shelnut Gallery of the Union. ♦

Sports

Wednesday, October 18, 2017

FOOTBALL

Bombers bombed, Engineers victorious

Jacob Kaplan
Senior Reporter

RENSSELAER WON 27-14 AGAINST Ithaca College after a last-minute surge in the fourth quarter gave them four touchdowns. The victory puts the Engineers at 4-2 overall for the season.

Ithaca scored the first touchdown of the game after driving the ball 75 yards on six plays and completing four passes, the last of which was a 26-yard strike into the end zone in the 13th minute. The game remained at 7-0 until the fourth quarter, despite the Engineers making it to the red zone multiple times.

In the third quarter, Rensselaer began a game-tying drive, going 88 yards on 13 plays. The biggest play was a 33-yard completion from quarterback George Marinopoulos '21 to running back Delano Munoz Whatts '20, bringing the ball to the seven yard line. Marinopoulos found wide receiver Keaton Ackermann '19 in the end zone, putting Rensselaer on the scoreboard in the beginning of the fourth quarter. Kicker Christian Kapp '18 took the kick for an extra point.

The score stayed tied for most of the fourth quarter until, with four minutes left in the game, running back Maleik Kelly '20 made a six-yard run after the Engineers made a four-play, 24-yard drive. The Engineers made it to the 24-yard line after a 10-yard punt return by wide receiver Conor Davies '19. In the next play of the drive, linebacker Alec Hazard '20 intercepted



Evan Barr/The Polytechnic

THE RENSSELAER FOOTBALL TEAM MANAGED a victory against Ithaca this past weekend, bringing them to a 4-2 record for the season.

a pass and returned it the 8-yard line, and running back Mike Tivinis '18 took it to the end zone. Both touchdowns were followed up immediately with kicks by Kapp, bringing the final score to 21-7.

Ithaca made up some ground in the end of the fourth quarter, driving the ball 75 yards on 11 plays and making a touchdown with just 36 seconds left in the game. Ackermann recovered the ball,

but Rensselaer was forced to punt. Ithaca got the ball to their 15-yard line and gained another 10 yards in their first play, but in their second play and the last play of the game, defensive back DJ Stefonsky '19

fell on the ball in the end zone after a series of laterals, putting the final score at 27-14.

Rensselaer will play a non-league away game this Saturday against Alfred University. ♦

WOMEN'S SOCCER

Rensselaer faces two consecutive defeats

Goalie Joey Lyons manages several saves

Jacob Kaplan
Senior Reporter

RENSSELAER LOST 1-0 AGAINST ROCHESTER Institute of Technology on Friday, and 2-0 against William Smith College on Saturday. Both games were away. The losses dropped the Engineers to 6-5-2 overall for the season.

No goals were made during the first half of Friday's game. Rochester made an attempt in the 15th minute, but it was saved by goalie Joey Lyons '20. An attempt by Rensselaer in the 37th minute went wide. Rochester controlled the ball for most of the second half. They made a shot in the 75th minute that was again saved by Lyons, but a few minutes later, Rochester took a shot

20 yards out that made it to the goal before it could be saved. Rochester's defense was too strong for Rensselaer to get through, maintaining the shutout for the rest of the game. Overall, Lyons made five saves, and Jacqui Richard '20 made two shot attempts.

William Smith College scored just five minutes into Saturday's game. They scored again in the 51st minute, after catching a rebound. Dali Alarian '18 almost made a shot in the first minute of action, but it was saved. Lyons finished with 10 saves, and Richard had two attempts.

The Engineers will play two home games this week. The first will be against Mount Holyoke College on Wednesday, October 18, and the second against Ithaca College on Saturday, October 21. ♦

Scores from the Week

Friday, October 13

Field hockey at St. Lawrence	3-2
Women's ice hockey at RIT	3-1
Women's soccer at RIT	0-1
Men's soccer vs. RIT	0-3
Men's hockey at Ohio State	1-1

Saturday, October 14

Women's swimming and diving at RIT	203-97
Men's swimming and diving at RIT	216-84
Football vs. Ithaca College	27-14
Women's soccer at William Smith College	0-2
Men's hockey at Ohio State	1-1
Men's soccer vs. Hobart College	0-1
Women's ice hockey at RIT	4-1

Sunday, October 15

Field hockey vs. Skidmore College	1-3
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Help! I'm trapped in the printing press!

MEN'S SOCCER

Pair of defeats from Statesmen, Tigers



Nicholas Luczak/The Polytechnic

THE RENSSELAER ENGINEERS LOST both games they played this past weekend against RIT and Hobart College.

Jacob Kaplan
Senior Reporter

RENSSELAER LOST 3-0 AGAINST ROCHESTER INSTITUTE OF Technology on Friday and lost 1-0 against Hobart College on Saturday. Both games were at home and part of Rensselaer's Reunion & Homecoming weekend. The losses dropped the Engineers to 7-5-1 overall for the season.

Rochester scored two points in the first half of Friday's game after cutting through RPI's defenses. The Engineers made some attempts in the second half to make up the goal difference, but their one on-target kick into Rochester's goal was saved. Rochester made another goal in the 68th minute, outshooting Rensselaer 12-8.

Goalkeeper Matt LaBranche '20 made four saves and Trevor Bisson '21 made two shot attempts.

Saturday's game was completely scoreless until the 89th minute when Hobart made a corner kick. The Engineers had no time to make up the difference before the game ended. LaBranche prevented the Engineers from losing by a wider margin early in the game, after stopping a few of Hobart's early shot attempts. Captain Steve Collins '18 made three shot attempts. Austin Betterly '20 and Joe DiMiceli '21 each had one attempt. LaBranche had four saves. Hobart ended the game with a 12-5 advantage in shots but Rensselaer had a 4-3 advantage in corners.

The Engineers will be away Saturday to face Ithaca College, and will play Vassar College at home Wednesday. ♦

FIELD HOCKEY

Team falls short of expectations

Loss after preseason victory

Nick Sanchez
Staff Reporter

ON SUNDAY, OCTOBER 15, THE WOMEN'S FIELD HOCKEY team competed against the Skidmore Thoroughbreds. Fans predicted that RPI would have defeated Skidmore after annihilating them in a scrimmage during pre-season. Although they came very close to victory, the Thoroughbreds closed out the game with a 3-1 lead. In the first half, the Thoroughbreds quickly took a 2-0 lead. However, the Engineers wouldn't surrender.

The RPI Engineers constantly put the Thoroughbreds on the defense. As a result, the Thoroughbreds led the game in fouls. In fact, throughout the game, RPI missed several opportunities to score off Skidmore's excessive fouls.

After the Thoroughbreds took a swift 2-0 lead, the RPI offense sprang into action. Skidmore fouled and Mekayla Wakema '18 missed a precious opportunity, hitting the ball too far right of the goal. Then, after a perfect assist, Skidmore's ample defense prevented Mikaela DiBello '18 from scoring five meters away from the goal. Then, after another foul, Christina Hanos '20 missed an excellent longshot in the top right corner of the goal. Lastly, later in the first half, DiBello scored a superb goal after the ball ricocheted off a Thoroughbred. However, the referee called a foul and penalized the Engineers, which dismissed their goal. Nevertheless, DiBello returned with the ball and scored in the top left corner after Jena Dolinar '19's assist, making the score 2-1. Unfortunately, RPI did not score any more goals.

In the second half, RPI had a raging offense, and Skidmore was continually counterattacking. After a few foul plays, Skidmore took the ball, sprinted down the open defenseless field, and scored a last-minute goal on RPI, bringing the score to 3-1. The Engineers play against Union College at home on Friday and will play at Ithaca College on Sunday. ♦

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ALBUM REVIEW

Seven Days shows heavy Drake influence



Courtesy of PartyNextDoor

PARTYNEXTDOOR, PICTURED ABOVE, RELEASED his latest EP, after making it in just seven days.

Serge Piskun
Senior Reviewer

RAP HAS NEVER STAYED STAGNANT, and that fact itself makes it a genre worth exploring. From old-school '90s tapes, to mainstream stadium sound, to the more underground era

of SoundCloud rappers, the rap game is constantly evolving, with something for everyone. *Seven Days*, by Canadian artist PARTYNEXTDOOR, is a great look into the more chill, underground scene though the lens of an up-and-coming superstar. PND, whose legal name is Jahron Anthony Brathwaite,

is an artist most commonly associated with cultural icon Drake. Being a frequent collaborator and the first artist signed to Drake's OVO Sound label has let PND enjoy his own brand of success while becoming inspired by Drake's own style. *Seven Days* is the result of PND's creative juices flowing

over the course of half an hour, and the result is absolutely worth a listen.

Every song on the EP is similar, yet incredibly unique in its own right. Consisting of seven songs and two guest features, it flies by rather quickly, but manages to create a lasting impression. For example, take the first song, "Bad Intentions." The most striking thing about it is the irregular drum beat. Not in sync with anything other than itself, it draws the focus of the listener to each clashing note and provides relief when notes match up to it, perhaps by chance. The lyrics themselves are very much inspired by slower Drake songs: it feels like a reworked "From Time" from Drake's hit album *Nothing Was the Same*. PND is talking about how his girl isn't just a one-time deal, but how she's worth all seven days of his week, similarly to how Drake talks about how his current girl might be the one for him. Both, however, end up brooding about how they might be bad influences on the women of their lives.

Another certified banger on *Seven Days* is "Damage," featuring Halsey. The least Drake-like track on this EP trades its similarity to the rest of the tracklist for addictive beats and pop-inspired vocals. A smooth synth is complemented with loud, muted drums, with Halsey and PND singing at the same time about someone who's always on their mind. This is, in my opinion, the most mainstream song on the EP; it replicates success-

ful elements from pop while adding its own twist. Similar to "All Night" from Chance the Rapper's *Coloring Book*, the song is a welcome distraction from the overall chill vibe of the rest of *Seven Days*. Drake's influence is hard to ignore, however, as the break down and additional drum beat toward the ends remind me of "Too Good" off of *Views*.

Continuing through the EP, the song "Best Friends" pops out as PND's take on modern trap music. With ad libs, lower key vocals, and muted drums, the song is something you would want to play in your car while driving at night with the windows down and the bass up. The haunting synth notes throughout the song provide audio peaks that serve as relief from the pure bass that is the drum track. In terms of Drake similarity, I'd venture to say this is more like Drake and Future's joint album, *What A Time To Be Alive*, due to the trap-like vocals and similar drum beats. Specifically, the song "Big Rings" is very close to "Best Friends"—both have similar vocals, similar bass lines, and similar synth notes. Yet, I vastly prefer PND's song, as it is less harsh and more casual than the aggressive Drake track.

In conclusion, *Seven Days* is an EP of songs influenced by Drake's ideas, with PND's own unique style added. That's not saying it's a bad album; on the contrary, I enjoyed most, if not all, of it. I can't wait to see what he has in store for the lyrical world next. ♦

UNION AFTER DARK PRESENTS:

HALLOWEEN

SPOOKYTAGUILLAR

Saturday, October 21
9pm to midnight

Scavenger Hunt, Escape Rooms, All-Ages Trivia,
Scary Movies, Pumpkin Painting, and More!

Come if you dare.

after dark series

UPAC

ALBUM REVIEW

Somber feel, sound

Emma Goldman
Staff Reviewer

AFTER MORE THAN THREE YEARS OF SILENCE following the release of their self-titled album, Alvveys dropped what I believe may be one of the best pop albums of the year. The transition from their original poppy, upbeat style into a more dreamy alternative style is one of the most prevalent shifts in Alvveys' sophomore album, *Antisocialites*, and the grace with which they handled this transition still strikes me on every listen.

This album encapsulates the way it feels to break up with someone all the way through to the end of the relationship, as well as describing the way it feels to get caught up in that end of relationship purgatory that can sometimes arise while working to move forward. This shift in itself was quite dramatic, coming from the stories of their first album with the most popular song, "Archie, Marry Me," embodying a sort of proposal remarkably rhyming "alimony" with "matrimony." Though this new album lacks that same "Archie" musically and lyrically, it still encapsulates the sound that listeners have come to know and love through Alvveys' career.

This new album encapsulates growth and change in more than just style. Beyond the shift toward a more shoegazing, dream pop sound, this band has grown emotionally since their debut. This emotional change is beautifully exemplified through the musical change that premiers in this album, showing the way we

are able to learn from our experiences as we feel their effects. The way their slower songs are presented amidst their more standard fast-paced jams, while still maintaining a sort of excitement might be surprising, considering the stories being told, but follows very well. This can be seen clearly in the album's fifth track, "Not My Baby," which opens with a much slower, certainly more forlorn beach vibe that tells the story of a relationship that ended, and the more immediate moving on that comes with that sort of transition. Through this whole song, however, singer Molly Rankin maintains a more melancholic tune that shows very well that this is not just a feel-good breakup song; there is still some sadness involved in the moving on, something that most people who have been romantically involved at any point in their life will understand. Of course, the following track jumps right back up to their more familiar funky pop sound that reaffirms the necessity to recognize people as they are through all hardships. Rankin sings, "it feels like forever since you've held me like a human being/ and I am a human being," as we're all worthy of love no matter what we're feeling like.

Through their whole album, a more ethereal, dreamlike sound is maintained, that fits beautifully with the story they're telling. Growing from the more standard, excited love songs of their first album into the fuller sound found in *Antisocialites*, Alvveys curates a sound that exemplifies a sharpening of focus in their music without losing sight of what they've worked to define themselves as. ♦



Courtesy of David Lee

ALVVAYS PLAYS at the Sasquatch! festival. They evolve their sound in their new album.

MOVIE REVIEW

Laughable thriller

Crystal Vejar
Senior Reviewer

HAPPY DEATH DAY IS A FUN MASH-UP OF COMEDY, THRILLER, AND PARODY ALL PULLED TOGETHER in 96 minutes by a hint of romance. I would rate it a three out of five in the "scary" department, only because of its maturity rating. Overall, it really only had two or three jump scares, but not much horror, which could be expected of a PG-13 movie.

The movie starts out by running through Tree Gelbman's (Jessica Rothe) day and introducing us to all the main characters in the first ten minutes. She wakes up on the morning of her birthday in Carter Davis' (Israel Broussard) room—a random guy from the previous night of drinking, and does the walk of shame back to her sorority house. There, we meet Danielle—Rachel Black—the star of most of the comedic plays on stereotypical sorority girls, followed by Tree's roommate, Lori Spengler, played by Ruby Modine.

As you see from the trailers, *Happy Death Day* is about Tree being stuck in a loop where she is forced to relive the day she dies, over and over and over again. Tree's character is, at first, extremely ill-mannered, which leaves little room for sympathy from viewers. Throughout the movie, however, her character is deepened by an added back story, ultimately giving her time to improve every time she revives. Throughout the film, viewers also get a sense of the sweet character that Carter is, and eventually find themselves rooting for him as the movie adds a little bit of romance to the mix.

After Tree realizes she is stuck in a Groundhog Day-like loop, she decides the only way to break it is by finding out who her killer is and stopping them before she is murdered again. This allows for a fast-paced middle section in the movie where lots of suspects are proven to be innocent while Tree dies repeatedly.

Near the end, the movie adds a few small twists which keep the audience interested and allows Tree's character to make a complete U-turn. Ultimately, though advertised as more of a horror film, *Happy Death Day* is a fun comedy and mystery movie for October, but lacks what it takes to become a Halloween classic. ♦



Chapel + Cultural Center

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

FALL 2017

OCTOBER

10/28 – Saturday, 5:15

Wine and Cheese Reception

The Catholic Community at Rensselaer invites you to join us for Mass followed by a wine and cheese reception.

10/29 – Sunday, 10:30am

Family Weekend - Coffee Hour

Join us for coffee and refreshments immediately following Mass

10/31 – Tuesday, 10:00pm

Halloween Party

Join us for an evening of frightful fun and feasting. Mass for the feast of All Saints starts at Midnight.

NOVEMBER

11/10 – Friday, 8:00pm

Rensselyrics Invitational

The Rensselyrics will be hosting their semesterly invitational on Friday, November 10th at 8 PM in the C+CC.

11/15 – Wednesday, 7:00pm

Religion and the Arts

Times Union Journalist Joe Dalton will moderate a panel discussion. Please check our website for more information

11/16 – Thursday, 7:00pm

Capital Pride Singers Concert

Join the Capital Pride Singers at the C+CC for their fall performance

11/22 – Wednesday, 6:00pm

Celebrate Thanksgiving

Mass at 6:00pm will be followed by a soup and salad dinner. No Mass on Thanksgiving Day.

DECEMBER

12/5 – Tuesday, 7:00pm

Why get so Religious about Star Wars

A special talk led by Alissa Wilkinson '05 grad from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. Associate Professor of English, Kings College.

12/24 – Sunday, 10:30pm

Christmas Eve

The University Parish of Christ Sun of Justice at the Chapel + Cultural Center invites all of God's people to join us as we celebrate the Christmas Season. Mass at 5:15pm will focus on children. Prelude of Carols will begin at 10:30pm followed by the Mass of the Deepest Night.

All Are Welcome
ChapelandCulturalCenter.org

Editorial

Wednesday, October 18, 2017

EDITORIAL NOTEBOOKS

Competitive materials

AS A MATERIALS SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING STUDENT IN THE MATERIAL ADVANTAGE CLUB, I HAD THE opportunity to attend the Materials Science & Technology Conference in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The conference attracted materials students and professionals in academia and industry from around the world. Held in the David L. Lawrence Convention Center between October 8 and 12, it featured technical lectures, student competitions, industrial tours, and an exhibition with companies in the field, available to all who register. MS&T is one of the largest student-friendly conferences, attracting nearly 3,000 attendees—of which 27 percent are students.

This year, the Rensselaer Material Advantage student chapter funded three materials science and engineering students to attend the conference, myself included. Students participated in the Geodesic Dome Design Competition—Domes Day competition—hosted by the American Society for Metals, the Undergraduate Student Poster Contest, and the Undergraduate Student Speaker Contest. The Domes Day competition—a contest in materials selection—is designed to challenge students to create a dome that meets various criteria, such as high mechanical strength and general aesthetics. In the previous years, students from RPI presented domes built out of wood and steel, placing fifth and fourth, respectively, in the competition. This year, Justin Weinstein '19 and I participated as Team RPI and designed a geodesic dome out of PVC pipes for the competition. I also presented a poster on my research in glass for the Student Poster Contest. Monica Mazur '18 presented on biomimicry in materials science in the Student Speaker Contest. Finally, Material Advantage received "Chapter of Excellence" for the 2016–2017 academic year, chosen among 101 competing chapters, after having received "Most Outstanding Chapter" last year.

MS&T has been yet another packed conference for RPI Material Advantage, and the chapter hopes to bring success in the years to come. Student competitions at the conference allow students to challenge themselves and apply the skills they have learned thus far to real-life design problems. The poster competition pushes students to become involved in research and present their findings to fellow members in the industry, while the speaking contest pushes students to practice their presentation skills. Ultimately, MS&T is a wonderful opportunity to network with professionals in academia and industry while exploring a new city. I would highly recommend taking advantage of such an opportunity, especially while in college.

For more information, visit <https://poly.rpi.edu/s/1can5> for the conference, and <https://poly.rpi.edu/s/t4jtc> for the RPI Material Advantage Student Chapter on campus. If interested, be sure to contact the chapter to learn about how to participate next year! ♦



Anahit Hovhannisyan
Associate Features Editor

Campus compost

THE COMPOSTING SITUATION IS LACKING at RPI. Commons composts the food waste produced during meal prep and leftovers that aren't served. However, all the food scraps left at the end of our meals are tossed into the trash. If RPI establishes a composting program, all the food waste and napkins could be put in composting stacks that could take 6–8 months to fully decompose. The end product is "finished compost," which is basically soil that is extremely rich in nutrients. That finished compost could be used to fertilize our campus' landscaping.

There are many cool ways to use compost. For my Nature and Society class, I have a service learning project that requires me to visit the Radix Center in Albany. The Radix Center is an urban farm that promotes sustainability in the community through educational programs and demonstrations. On Wednesdays, my groupmates and I take the bus down to Radix to learn about sustainability. Last Wednesday, co-founder of Radix Scott Kellogg, showed us a biothermal heater made by a group of RPI environmental engineers and professor Yuri Gorby in 2015. The biothermal heater uses heat given off by a compost pile to heat parts of Radix's greenhouse.

The compost pile was 10 feet in diameter and six feet high. As the material in the pile decomposes, it gives off heat. To harness this energy, polyethylene tubing comes out the greenhouse's water heater, spirals through the pile, and goes back into the water heater. The only drawback is that the pile will decompose and needs to be built back up every year. Regardless, this is a really hot topic.

Composting is important because it reduces the amount of waste going to landfills. Waste in landfills is tightly packed together, and anaerobic processes occur that produce methane as a byproduct, which is then released into the atmosphere. In 2015, methane accounted for 10 percent of the United States' green house gas emissions. Though methane's lifetime is shorter than carbon's in the atmosphere, methane is more effective at trapping heat. The majority of methane comes from landfills. One way to decrease methane emissions would be to decrease the amount of waste that goes to landfills. In short, you can reduce waste and save the environment by: buying less items, buying reusable items, avoiding unnecessary packaging, repurposing items instead of tossing them, and composting (of course)! ♦



Elena Perez
Photography Editor

STAFF EDITORIAL

Constructing fences not at all constructive

Prohibiting student self-expression by physically fencing them off shortsighted, counterproductive

ON WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 11, RENSSELAER established a perimeter surrounding a large portion of the south side of campus. The capital campaign launch event was held inside these boundaries, which included the Experimental Media and Performing Arts Center, the Folsom Library, and the Jonsson-Rowland Science Center, on Friday, October 13.

The approximately four foot tall fence prohibited students from approaching most of the area where capital campaign events were held. This move was, ostensibly, to ensure "the welfare of our community and guests" who were attending Reunion & Homecoming events. Regardless of the publicized intent, the fence undeniably served to suppress the planned demonstration. It was to keep protesters' voices from being heard by alumni and donors attending the launch of the capital campaign—people whose financial contributions to Rensselaer ensure that they have the attention of administrators.

Preventing students from entering such a large portion of campus is unprecedented. Although this is not the first time that the Institute has attempted to prevent a demonstration, it has never before taken action as rash and senseless as setting up a literal perimeter in an effort to restrain dissenting opinions.

The fence only served to further alienate the student body during a time when sentiment toward the administration is already strained. If the motive was to prevent students from expressing their concern regarding overbearing administrative power, it failed stupendously. It served as an expensive and highly-visible, campus-wide advertisement for the protest, reaffirmed concerns

for those who already planned to protest, and very clearly established a dichotomy between students and administrators. If one of the main missions of the campaign is to "attract the brightest and most deserving students," then why belittle those very same students by fencing them off from the campus which they are to be representative of?

On Friday, October 13, a significant portion of the student body made their feelings toward the recent actions taken by the school very clear by gathering en masse between the Amos Eaton and Lally buildings, and breaking through the fence despite of all of the "security measures." The energy of the movement was palpable as alumni, students, faculty, and staff gathered in support of their cause. Its resounding success was emphasized by the demonstrators' orderly and peaceful dissention.

The Troy Police Department officers on campus handled the protest admirably; they allowed the demonstration to continue as long as the group stayed a reasonable distance from and did not interfere with the event.

This protest is a symptom of an underlying issue. If President Shirley Ann Jackson and her cabinet wish to prevent future protests, they must address the concerns and demands of the protesters through compromise and clear communication, not by denying demonstration applications and erecting physical barriers. Additionally, it is the responsibility of Save the Union's leaders to use their platform to make honest, sincere attempts to work with administrators to resolve their stated issues. ♦

the polytechnic

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The Rensselaer Polytechnic is published weekly, except during holiday and examination periods, by the students of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute as authorized by the Rensselaer Union. Opinion pieces in this newspaper do not necessarily reflect the views of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute or the Rensselaer Union. All submitted material becomes the property of The Rensselaer Polytechnic. The Editorial Board reserves the right to edit for reasons of space, clarity, libel, or style and to compose headlines for all articles printed. "Letters to the Editor" must be typed, signed, and fewer than 500 words in length. "My Views" must be typed, signed, and between 500 and 700 words in length. The telephone number of the author is required for letter verification. All letters are due by 5 pm on the Friday prior to publication, and can be sent in a Word document attachment via email to edop@poly.rpi.edu.

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.

Editorial and Business offices are located in Room 3418 of the Rensselaer Union, Troy, New York, 12180-3590. Subscription and advertising rates can be forwarded upon request. Subscriptions are sent via first class mail. Address correction requested.

TOP HAT

Students' passion, respect unparalleled

Concerns regarding Union's student-run nature relayed, plan potentially forthcoming

"HERE'S TO OLD RENSSELAER; SHE STANDS TODAY WITHOUT A PEER." RPI, I am proud. I'm proud to call myself a part of a student body that expresses, with utmost respect, their opinions and their passions. On Friday, a number of you chose to make your voices heard. On Friday, you once again validated the above line of our alma mater. I am hard-pressed to find another institution with a student body that is capable of the same level of simultaneous passion and respect. On Friday, I was awed by how respectful, calm, and lawful you were, and I assure you that your voices were, in fact, heard.

As I have shared before, many of you have expressed your reasoning for why the Union has lost its student-run distinction. I have relayed these concerns to the administration, and we are working to relay how we believe the tradition



Justin Etzine
Grand Marshal

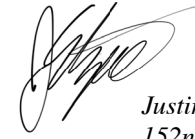
could be restored. I hope to meet with administrators in the coming weeks to share our ideas for a plan forward.

The essence of a student-run Union can be mostly simplified as follows: if the student body resolves to pursue an idea that is legal, ethical, financially responsible, and safe, they should be able to. There are, of course, checks outlined in the *Rensselaer Union Constitution* to ensure that ideas not meeting those criteria are corrected appropriately. The Executive Board also established student activity resource person roles to assist clubs in considering risk management when planning activities and events.

On a separate note, on Monday, October 16, the Student Senate discussed whether to endorse proposed changes to the *Rensselaer Handbook of Student Rights and Responsibilities*. The Senate

decided to task Student Life Committee Chairperson Hannah Merrow '18 and myself to investigate. The Student Life Committee will be meeting on Wednesday, October 18, to discuss the *Student Handbook* and the proposed changes. The meeting is open to the public, and I invite you to attend if you have thoughts you'd like to contribute! Alternatively, Hannah can be reached by email at merroh@rpi.edu.

As always, please feel free to reach out to me at gm@rpi.edu. I am looking forward to hearing your thoughts and passion as student government continues to advocate for the student body.



Justin Etzine
152nd Grand Marshal

DERBY

'Save the Union' not Union-affiliated

HELLO EVERYONE! I HOPE THAT YOU ALL ENJOYED your weekend. I know that it was a very busy time on campus, filled with old friends, extravagant events, and, hopefully, many laughs and memories. I know that I had a great time at all of the events on campus this weekend and enjoyed the opportunity to catch up with some of our distinguished alumni. Though I didn't get to spend as much time as I would have liked catching up and filling people in on all the exciting events happening throughout the Union, it's always good to see a friendly face.

This week on campus is Greek Week! For the members of our Greek community, we will host daily events to celebrate and show our support for the Greek community. Though the ice cream social on Monday, October 16 on the lower deck of the Union will have passed by the time this article is printed, I do want to point out all the events still on the schedule. On Wednesday, we will be having our annual Greek day of service, where members of the Greek organizations perform community service projects to better our Troy community. On Thursday, be sure to head

down to Darrin Communications Center 324 from 8–10 pm to watch Greek Family Feud! There will be no limit on team sizes, so be sure to stop by and test your trivia knowledge! On Friday night, an outdoor dinner and awards presentation will begin at 5 pm back by the lower deck of the Union. Lastly, though not specifically a Greek Week event, LifeNets hosted Lip Sync at 6:30 pm on Tuesday, October 17. Hopefully, all of you reading this had a chance to stop by!

I would like to take a moment to address some of the events of this weekend, as I have been asked to do as the president of the Union. However, I would like to clarify a few points in doing so. The Rensselaer Union Executive Board, since its inception, has acted as the budgeting body of the Rensselaer Union. The Board is not a group of elected student leaders and given the nature of its financial decision-making, the Board remains an unbiased organization. One of the duties of the Executive Board, as outlined in the *Rensselaer Union Constitution*, is to classify new organizations on campus. As the organization that publicly sponsored

the student demonstration outside of the capital campaign launch has not chosen to become an officially recognized or affiliated organization. Per the Union's outlined processes, "Save the Union" is not classified as a Rensselaer Union organization and the Executive Board is therefore not affiliated with any of the actions and activities of the organization. However, like all groups of students on campus, the organization may choose to pursue recognition or affiliation, in compliance with all of our policies and procedures, to receive resource support from the Executive Board as an organization.

However, I will comment as an elected student leader, and as myself. I am extremely proud to have been elected, in part, to lead a campus of such vocal, passionate students. I applaud the demeanor of everyone who attended the student demonstration. The level of respect that the students showed for their campus community was awe-inspiring, and the level of passion by which they expressed

their opinions is to be lauded. While I do not feel comfortable expressly condoning the act of blatantly disregarding the denial for the right to protest, I will always support the freedom of speech on our campus for our students. Campuses around the nation should look to RPI as an example for how students should be conducting themselves in the pursuit of peaceful discourse. I urge our students to continue to act with respect for all members of our campus, to refrain from personal attacks, and to continue to be passionate leaders.

Thanks for everyone who gave this a read, and as always, be sure to reach out to me with any questions, comments, or concerns!



Matthew Rand
President of the Union



Matthew Rand
128th President of the Union

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Students deserve respect, recognition

IT IS WITH GREAT INTEREST THAT I HAVE FOLLOWED THE UNFOLDING story of the "hostile takeover" of the Rensselaer Union by the administration, in particular the head of the administration. I can understand the desire for oversight by the university—after all, their name is on it and they may or may not have ultimate legal responsibility over what happens.

But that is oversight—not being a "helicopter parent," or worse, one that tells the child exactly what to do. You might do that if the child is 10 or 12, not when they are 127. Not when they have demonstrated over that span of time an exceptionally high degree of responsibility and success. Not when they showed the ability to forego short term gain and instead tax themselves for years in order to be able to move to their own home and out of their parents' house, now Lally Hall.

I, like many (if not all) alumni received an email from Arthur F. Golden '66, chairman of the Board of Trustees. I have profound disagreements with many of the statements and assertions he makes on behalf of the Board of Trustees and President Shirley Ann Jackson.

He views the Union as an "exercise" for the students. I assert that the Union is no more an exercise to allow students to run a business than Rensselaer is an exercise to allow the Board of Trustees to run a university. There is grading involved, where a bad decision yields a "B" instead of an "A"—a bad decision has financial and possibly legal real-world consequences.

He states, "The goal is enhancing the educational development and business experience of the students—a kind of "lab course" in acquiring and applying business skills that I believe is offered nowhere else." I assert that Rensselaer students' goal is not merely that, but to actually provide a service to their fellow students. The student union is a place to learn those skills and apply them, but it is hardly a "lab course"—it is real life. Again, the decisions they make don't result in a pass/fail in a computer simulation—it results in real dollars and cents being made or lost.

He continues, "Dr. Jackson and I expect that to continue and we spend many hours discussing ideas (mainly her ideas) for continuing the broadening and improvement of the student experience." I assert: isn't 127 years of mostly success a great block to build on and allow those who have been part of that building to continue unfettered until such time as they prove they cannot do it? Why not spend many hours discussing ideas for continuing the broadening and improvement of the student classroom educational experience—isn't that essentially the mandate of the trustees and president of the university? Isn't that where their expertise is supposed to lie? Aren't the students themselves the best judges of how to improve the non-classroom educational experience, and haven't they demonstrated their good judgement over these last 127 years?

"But today's Union is a much different entity than it was 50 years ago, when I and others of my generation were students." I assert it isn't at the fundamental level: the Union exists to improve student life outside the classroom. The scale may be different with respect to the money involved, but that is true anywhere. The Union budget has grown over the years—but so has Rensselaer's in general. I would be more concerned if the leaders of the Union were still trying to do everything on a 1960s budget.

"With respect to the hiring (or firing) of the director of the Union—as is true for any important position at RPI—that is the ultimate responsibility of the President, and I and the Board want and expect Jackson to make that decision." There is an important word missing in this sentence, and that word is student, as in student union. If you want Jackson to make that decision, then you are seizing control by making the decision. What is wrong with the idea of letting the students do the hiring and firing (a system that has worked well over the past 50 plus years) and, for just cause and with due process, allow Jackson and the Board of Trustees be able to review that decision?

"She and I have also discussed our shared desire for involvement of student leaders in that process to make sure their voice is heard. In that regard, Curtis Powell (our VP for Human Resources) has been key to this effort and proposed the innovative idea of involving student leaders in the interview process but first providing training to them in how to conduct such interviews—creating an educational event that will help them in their future careers." My question is—is the current process broken? Does the Board of Trustees receive training in how to interview a potential new president? A new trustee? A new faculty member? A new buildings and grounds person?

Most disconcerting is that there is no promise that the students will continue to have any say in the running of the Union, just an "expectation" that it will happen. What is the trigger that will invoke full presidential takeover of the Union—a bad director of the Union hiring? Missing an income goal by 50 percent? 10 percent? 1 percent? Will the students even know ahead of time where that line is?

What it comes down to, in my opinion, is that the Board of Trustees and Jackson do not trust the students they have selected to have the privilege of attending Rensselaer to make well-informed, educated decisions, even though they tout each class as the "best of the best" and "better than any incoming class before." What does that say about their ability to make good assessments of people? What does that say about how they feel about the student body in general, and the respect and esteem they hold them in?

So I say to the Board of Trustees—stand with the students, show your faith in them and show that you respect all they have done over these last 127 years to build the Union into what it is today, and keep the Union run by students, for students.

Victor Vitek '77

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Protesting for bigger things

“WHY DID YOU PROTEST?”

My answer was originally two parts: first, to fight for the student-run status of the Rensselaer Union, second, to make my voice heard as a student on campus at a time when the RPI administration seems hell-bent on silencing it. But it wasn't until Reunion & Homecoming weekend that other reasons were realized.

We hear the word “misinformation” frequently from the administration, yet when I had the opportunity to speak with countless alumni during Reunion this past weekend—including those who chanted and cheered alongside me during the peaceful demonstration—I learned that they were victims of misinformation. Most had no idea the school was even in debt, much less that the debt outweighed the endowment. Others were shocked that students view campus morale as low, fueled by the very culture of fear that has gripped this campus under an authoritarian regime for decades; causing freshman and sophomores to be afraid to speak their minds. In speaking with alumni, I truly empathized; students have been misinformed time and time again by the administration, while attempts to clarify situations, provide student input, or even express constructive discontent were met with doublespeak, bait-and-switches, and censorship.

The RPI administration carefully chooses their words, claiming they never had, nor will have, plans to “do away with the Union.” This is partially true, as they plan to keep the building and semblance of student leadership; however, the Union is more than just a building, and student leaders once had real power, influence, and respect. The Union is a complex student organization of services, as well as student government, which represents students' interests through legislation, taxation, and allocation of money toward activities, events, student-created student programming, and adjudicates

civil cases as well as student judicial matters. Doing away with a student-run Union makes these experiences impossible for current and future students. This removes the opportunity for students to participate in any meaningful way, make memories, and learn.

Protesting and calling to withhold donations to our school are last resorts. “Money talks,” and it's the only thing that seems to speak to the corrupt and unethical administration at this point, so I will withhold direct donations until this issue is resolved to the students' satisfaction. I've spoken to several students who are concerned that scholarship funding will be hurt. While I recognize the good that donations can do for students directly, I must also recognize the Union's substantial contributions when it was student-run—especially when so many alumni have regaled me with tales of how much their Union-related experiences helped in their careers, as well as acknowledging the spending habits of the Institute are ones that value lavish dinners and large mansions over refurbishing laboratories and constructing new dormitories with rooms bigger than broom closets.

So why did I protest? I protested because some things are worth fighting for; some things are bigger than me. Students of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute deserve to experience all the opportunities a student-run Union has to offer, because it is much more than just another building on campus. Hundreds of students and alumni supported this viewpoint as they protested with me on Friday evening, passionately shouting, “Save our Union!” I couldn't agree more.

Michael J. Gardner II
CSE/CS '17, TCE G '18

Patronizing misjudgments

PRESIDENT JACKSON, BOARD OF TRUSTEES, AND THE RPI Community,

As an alumnus of Rensselaer, I'm writing to express my deep concern with the Institute's plans to wrest control of the Rensselaer Union away from the students. As a student, I found the opportunities for leadership presented by involvement in student government and the activities of the Union to be one of the most important parts of my undergraduate education.

As a small business owner today, I draw on the real-world leadership and management skills I learned through my participation in the student life of the Institute—and would not want future graduates to miss out on those opportunities that I benefited from.

Most alarmingly, I've also detected a condescending tone in the communications about this issue from the Board of Trustees and President Jackson—this implies that students are incapable of appropriately managing the responsibility of stewarding the future of the Union, when the reality is that students have done so for decades.

I sincerely hope that you reconsider this course of action.

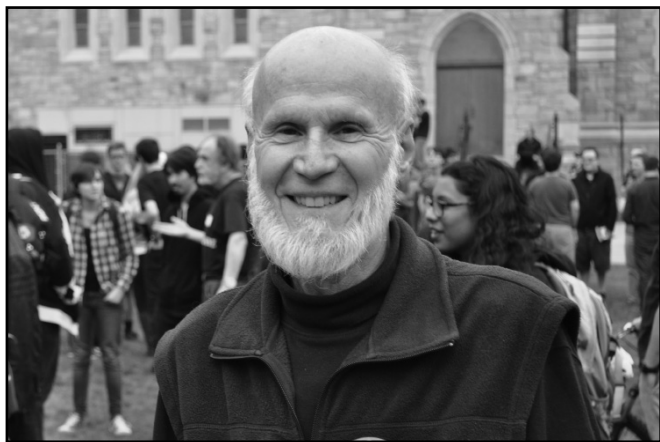
Thank you for your consideration,
Nathan Woodhull, ITWS/STSO '05

Poly Snapshots

Photos and interviews by Crystal Vejar and Nicholas Luczak

The Question:

Why are you at the protest?



Raymond Parker '77

“I was a member of the E-Board, Student Senate, *Polytechnic*, WRPI, ESA. I'm outraged that the Institute would attempt to take the Union over. I'm very bothered by Shirley's arrogance; I believe that the spirit of a student Union being student run should continue. As a patrol member, I will no longer give to the school, except directly to the student Union. And if there's anything else that I could do to be of assistance, I am an attorney, and would be available to help the students... I'm glad that there's the same level of activism, that students are willing to come out and voice their opinions. They need to find more ways to reach out to alumni, and to their parents. I don't think that they realize that, when you're paying 70 thousand dollars to go to a school, if you're a customer, you have more say, as a customer. Here, it's almost as if you're treated as an employee, just doing what the president wants you to do. I think that the student Union and the opportunities that people have had in student government have really been transformational in the education of students here, in ways that that opportunity does not exist in other schools.”

Ted Mirczak '66
“I think what the students are doing is absolutely the right thing. I mean, I was here before there was a student Union building, but we had a very strong organization in, as you know from history, what is now the Lally Center, and it was in those early years that we taxed ourselves in order to build the Union. I never got to see it finished, because I graduated in '66, but it was all students, students did it all, and continue to do it all. The thing that baffles some of us is: what went wrong? The students are doing nothing wrong. They're running a fiscally sound operation, and the Union is in good shape, why would you wanna say it needs administration? I have a hard time understanding this from an alumni perspective... In 1966, students didn't do this. We were noses to the grindstone, shoulders to the wheel; we didn't have time for this kind of thing, which probably we should have... And the other thing that I'm really impressed with is, this is a peaceful demonstration. And that's what they said it would be. So what's with the fences, and the jackbooted police, and the police dogs, and all the other damn contrivances? I mean, why? What did they think was gonna happen?”

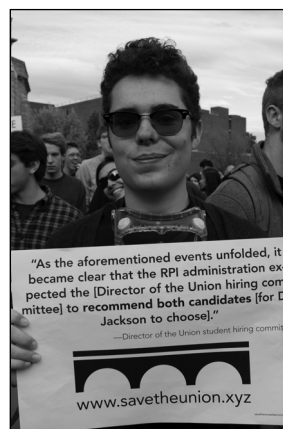


Dalton Towers
CHME '19

“I'm the manager of Pep Band, and I'm concerned about the future of the club.”

Curran Kalia
CS/MATH '18

“To learn about what specifically is happening to the Union and why students are so upset.”



Liam Bartley
PHYS '21

“Because it's my duty to stand up for what is right.”

Samantha Doles
IME '17

“I support free speech, the Union, and students' rights to have fun at their school.”



DILBERT

by Scott Adams

CRYPTOQUOTE

A Cryptoquote is a simple substitution code where each letter that appears may stand for a different letter. The substitutions are consistent throughout the puzzle. Punctuation is not translated. For example: SIVOISSWC = ENGINEERS

Ldmox nvg easw zlp
 lfvbk, nvgx pvp, wio wlas
 wvpomiabk mv po A botox
 hgamo gbsoxwmvvs. Wio
 wlas, "Bvq, qo'xojgwm ioxo mv
 co popvxaow dvx vgx easw."
 A miabe bvq A gbsoxwmlbs
 qilm wio polbm. Vbzo nvg'xo
 l ylxobm, nvg'xo mio kivwm
 vd nvgx ziafsxob'wdgmgxo."

Zvvyox,
 Abmoxwmofflx

XKCD

by Randall Munroe

SUDOKU

	5		6				3
			3	9			
	9					8	4
8			1	6		7	9
			4				
9	2		3	7			5
2	3					8	
			4	8			
7			9				6

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.

Last Week's Answers

5	9	8	7	1	2	3	6	4
2	6	3	9	8	4	7	5	1
4	1	7	5	3	6	9	8	2
1	4	9	3	2	5	8	7	6
3	2	5	6	7	8	1	4	9
8	7	6	4	9	1	2	3	5
6	3	2	1	5	7	4	9	8
7	5	1	8	4	9	6	2	3
9	8	4	2	6	3	5	1	7

Features

Wednesday, October 18, 2017

STUDENT PERFORMANCE

Sheer Idiocy cast welcomes back alumni

Chris Leong

A Special to The Poly

AS AN UNDERGRADUATE, I LOVED GOING TO Sheer Idiocy shows. The troupe's on-the-spot humor, combined with their ridiculous games, always made for a hilarious display. Not only that, but their jokes are clever (and usually PG), which is difficult to accomplish in an improv setting. By no means am I a professional

improv actor, but as an avid improv observer, I give applause where applause is due. And this was probably my favorite show—not just of Sheer Idiocy shows—of all improvisational comedy shows I have attended.

For their 20th anniversary, Sheer Idiocy invited their alumni to perform at the Saturday show. In preparation, on Sunday afternoon, the current troupe held a workshop to refresh everyone on old games and elaborate on new ones. Though many of the



Courtesy of Chris Leong

SHEER IDIOCY CELEBRATES 20 years of performing with a show featuring recent alumni.

alumni were out of practice since graduation, they all picked it back up seamlessly. Their performance in the show reflects that; I guess improv never left their lives.

Although the age range was wide, the troupe's camaraderie was unmistakable throughout the show. Over 20 people performed in the show and, instead of overwhelming the audience, the sheer number of the diverse group gave the production a lively dynamic. No one acted selfishly, and everyone

played their hilarious parts. From what I have seen, the best improv shows are those that embody the idea of “yes and...” and that's exactly what happened last Saturday.

There were a total of 15 alumni in attendance, with an additional two who could not make the show, but supported the group during the Sunday afternoon workshop.

Visit <https://poly.rpi.edu/s/ek6oa> to view the performance. ☒

RESTAURANT REVIEW

Food shines at cafe

Joseph Lyon

Senior Reviewer

AS I WALKED UP TO THE ILLIUM CAFE & BISTRO, LOCATED ON BROADWAY IN DOWNTOWN TROY, I was greeted by an older building similar to others in the area. As someone who is from the area, Illium is one of those places that is frequently referenced in local media stations. I had been hearing about it since I was young, so it carried a lot of clout. I decided to visit Illium on a whim after hearing about it and walking past it so many times.

Walking into Illium, the first thing that caught my attention was the older decor in the cafe. Everything feels and looks old, from the antiques behind the glass, to the display case for the various desserts. The different elements of the decor give the store a cozy and authentic feel. Overall, it gives off more of a diner vibe than that of a coffee shop. This makes sense, as Illium is a restaurant and cafe, first and foremost. I took a seat at the bar, which faces the dining area, and ordered a latte and bagel, and began to listen to the music.

After settling in, it was immediately clear that this is not a place to sit down and finish work; the atmosphere didn't lend itself to this. Overall, the cafe just didn't feel designed to allow for laptops and notebooks, and instead felt like it came from a time before people brought computers everywhere. It is also not the place to grab just a coffee and bagel, unless you happen to bring cash, as the \$10 credit limit makes smaller purchases difficult for those who only carry cards.

Moving past this, however, Illium has its own authentic feel, which while very pleasant, does not necessarily cater to my taste. Despite the atmosphere, the bagel was exceptional. This is where Illium shines. The food is above average, and the coffee is cheap, which makes it a great spot to visit with friends and catch up after a week of hard work, or to simply decompress. If anyone is looking to visit a new cafe, I would recommend giving Illium a try. ☒



Jonathan Caicedo/The Polytechnic

 Rensselaer | LALLY SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT

Are you interested in co-term or the Lally MBA?

Join us as the Rensselaer Lally School of Management hosts a co-term program information session for current Rensselaer students. At this event, you can learn more about the Lally MBA and the five M.S. graduate business programs, and how you can earn your business graduate degree in your fifth year!

Eng/Sci+MBA Info Sessions:

9/19, 2-3, Fishbach Rm, Library

9/20, 10-11, Union 3511

10/17, 2-3, Fishbach Rm, Library

10/18, 10-11, Union 3511

Co-Term Info Sessions:

9/19, 3-4, Fishbach Rm, Library

9/20, 11-12 Union 3511

10/17, 3-4, Fishbach Rm, Library

10/18, 11-12, Union 3511

If you're interested in attending, please RSVP:
Email lallyms@rpi.edu.

Contact: Shari W. Quinn 518-276-6947