

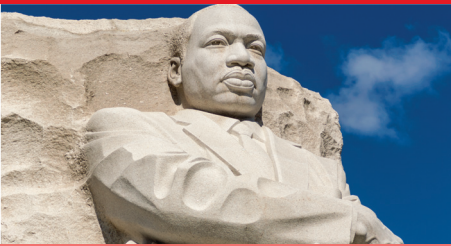
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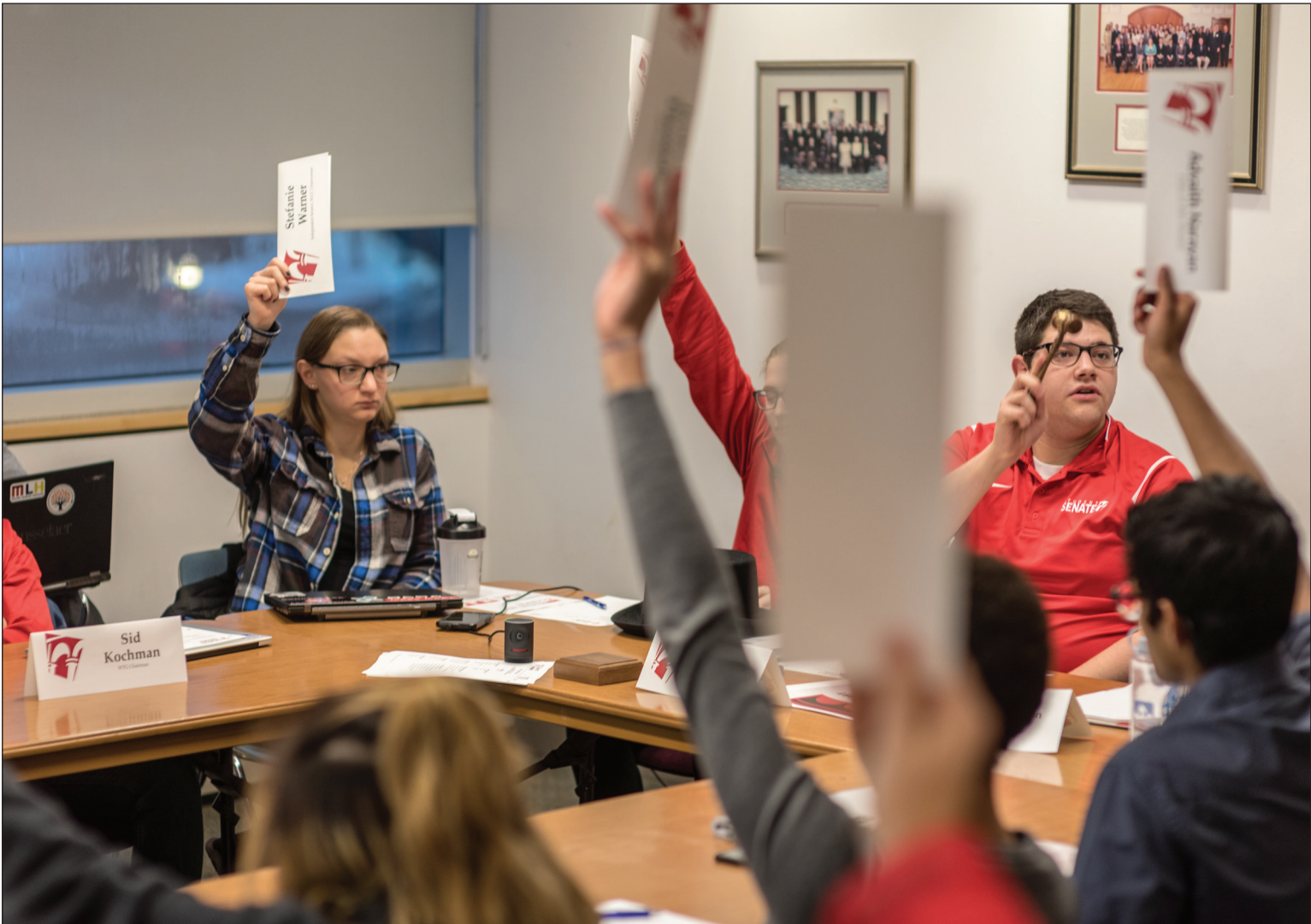
EDITORIAL Page 4

Crystal Vejar Our need to separate doesn't solve problems

Top Hat Importance of involvement in government

STUDENT SENATE

Constitution changes hotly debated



Nicholas Luczak/The Polytechnic

IN HER SECOND TIME COMING before the Senate, Senthilnathan failed to be approved as an E-Board representative by one vote. (file photo)

Jack Wellhofer
Senior Reporter

THE STUDENT SENATE OPENED ONE OF its final meetings with a motion to appoint Deepika Senthilnathan '21 as a Club/ICA representative.

Senthilnathan had come before the Senate the previous week,

where the motion to approve her failed 8-8-3. The day after, Senthilnathan was re-appointed by the Executive Board 12-0-1, to have her serve as a representative for the last four weeks of the term. The E-Board currently has 18 voting members, due to study abroad, co-ops, and resignations.

Much of the same discussion points were brought up from the last time, detailed in last week's Senate article at poly.rpi.edu/s/senover8. Senthilnathan has been working with the Policies Committee and recently joined the Business Operations Committee, and is a member of the Indian Student Association, but is

focused mainly on student government. After some discussion, the Senate voted 14-8-1 for her approval. Approving an E-Board representative requires a two-thirds vote, meaning Senthilnathan was one vote short at only 63.6 percent of the vote.

See SENATE, **Page 2**

EXECUTIVE BOARD

Redesign of proposed Union logo approved in closed Board meeting

Nicholas Luczak
Senior Reporter

ON WEDNESDAY, THE EXECUTIVE BOARD PASSED a motion to approve the proposed redesign of the Union's logo pending approval of Strategic Communications. They also announced the official opening of the Student Veterans Lounge and discussed some points of interest about the new space.

The meeting started off with a few committee reports including the director's report, the Senate report, and the president's report.

In the director's report, Business Administrator Martha McElligott told the E-Board that the proposed *Union Annual Report* was approved by President Shirley Ann Jackson.

After the director's report, Senate-Executive Board Liaison Joseph Venusto '18 reported on what the Senate had worked on that week.



Jonathan Caicedo/The Polytechnic

See E-BOARD, **Page 2** PRESIDENT OF THE UNION MATTHEW RAND GIVES the E-Board his weekly president's report.

Senate: Official start of campaigning

Draft proposals of revisions to Union Constitution presented, discussed, no votes made



Nicholas Luczak/The Polytechnic

SPERAZZA EXPRESSED desire to have Senate review handbook each year. (file photo)

From **Page 1**

Next, the Senate continued with regular business. Grand Marshal Justin Etzine '18 reminded the Senate that campaigning officially starts Monday, February 26. He also encouraged any senators to notify him of any new legislation they plan to bring forward, as the Senate has only four meetings remaining in the semester.

As a last item of business, Steve Sperazza '18 presented draft proposals of revisions to the *Union Constitution*. Sperazza emphasized that these were only draft suggestions, and that no votes would be made during this meeting.

The presentation was broken into three sections, with discussion held after the presentation. The first section was on administrative staffing changes. The proposals included clearing up the approval process for hiring within the Rensselaer Union, requiring E-Board approval to hire candidates, and requiring that the E-Board approve any personnel firing.

The next section concerned the Student Rights and Responsibilities Handbook. Sperazza expressed his desire to have the Senate review the Handbook each year, and to require Senate Approval for any changes to the document.

Last were changes to how the Graduate Council operates. For this section, graduate student Anthony Ashley presented to the Senate. Ashley discussed wanting to increase the number of graduate representatives on their council, currently set at five. He also wanted to remove the need for Senate approval of the Graduate Cohort Fee and changes to GC bylaws.

The discussion was divided into three parts, so that the topic could be discussed one at a time. During the administrative staffing discussion, graduate student Michael Gardner pointed out that hiring without Executive Board approval gave rise to issues in the past, and then asked how this might be resolved. Sperazza did not have a specific answer, but felt it was important that something more defined was established.

Ashley noted that the presentation stated that these changes would try to bring the Constitution in line with Institute bylaws, but felt some of these changes would move the Constitution further from that goal.

Vice President and Dean of Students Travis Apgar expressed agreement with Ashley, saying "When I read these suggestions—and I realize these are talking points—I don't see how they comply with the Board of Trustees' resolution."

There continued to be back and forth discussion on how this problem might be resolved, but no conclusion was made. Toward the end of the discussion, Etzine said "the Union Constitution needs to contain the bare minimum for it to operate properly. Like the United States Constitution, it should be a theory guiding document."

Discussion on changes to how the Senate handles the Handbook was short, with only Sidney Kochman '19 asking about why the Senate stopped approving the Handbook in 2009. Etzine, to his knowledge, believed that the requirement was only in the Senate's bylaws, not in the Constitution.

Lastly was the discussion of the proposed changes to how the Graduate Council

operates. Ellie Mees '18 was worried that removing the requirement for the Senate to approve changes to the GC's bylaws would go against traditional checks and balances. Ashley refuted, saying that the GC wanted to update an internal-only document, and that it could never be in violation of the *Union Constitution*, since the GC is a subsection of the Union.

Chris Duffy '20 asked about raising the number of representatives on the Council. Ashley said that it would help keep interest up for both legislative and event planning purposes. The Council has a lot of interest in the beginning of the year, which drops off as the semesters go on. With voting rights, "it makes people think twice about skipping [meetings]," said Ashley.

At the end of the meeting, Sperazza thanked the Senate for the recommendations and stated that he and the Internal Reforms Committee would consider them. Due to a tight schedule and a Constitution clause that requires amendments to be submitted one month before voting, the Senate will be voting on these changes on February 28. ♦



Brooklyn Parslow/The Polytechnic

THE SENATE WILL vote on the Constitution changes on February 28. (file photo)

E-Board: Meeting closed to discuss logo

From **Page 1**

He said that the Senate had once again upheld their decision not to reappoint Deepika Senthilnathan '21

as a non-voting member largely due to a time commitment issue. Venusto also told the E-Board about how the Senate was planning on implementing some changes in the constitution

which—among other things—would change the Union administrative hiring committee process, and how the Graduate Student Council would be organized.

The Board then moved on to the president's report. This included discussion of large club purchases and the upcoming planned unveiling of the Student Veterans Lounge.

President Matthew Rand '19 told members of the Board that there is an upcoming deadline for clubs to make large equipment purchases as allowed in their budget. He then went on to talk about the new Student Veterans Lounge. He announced that there will be a ceremonial opening of the lounge to recognize the contributions of our veterans to the nation and campus. A provisional time for the opening is currently set for 3:30 pm on the Friday of GM Week. The lounge is in the southeast corner of the Union near the Publications Suite on the third floor.

After the president's report, the E-Board voted to close the meeting to non-members for discussion of a redesigned Union logo. When asked why the meeting was closed, Rand told *The Polytechnic* that "The logo reveal is scheduled as an event for GM Week. Until then, the design will be kept secret and discussed in closed meetings to keep the design a surprise." The new student-designed logo will be announced sometime during GM week, upon approval by the Institute's Strategic Communications and External Relations.

The Executive Board meets every Thursday at 8 pm in the Rensselaer Union's Shelnutt Gallery. ♦



Jonathan Caicedo/The Polytechnic

THE CEREMONIAL OPENING OF THE STUDENT VETERANS LOUNGE IS PROVISIONALLY SCHEDULED to take place the Friday of GM Week. (file photo)



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Editorial

Wednesday, February 28, 2018

EDITORIAL NOTEBOOK

Labeling, detrimental to problem solving

IN THE WAKE OF THE RECENT MASS SHOOTING AT MARJORY STONEMAN DOUGLAS HIGH SCHOOL, AND all of the subsequent debate that has risen about gun control and our justice system, I’ve been stuck on a thought that I’ve had for as long as I can remember: why do we have to pick sides?

From being told on the playground by a friend, “Well you can’t keep switching back and forth. If you want to go play with the guys, you can’t come play with us girls tomorrow,” to having to pick between my Latino friend group or my Caucasian friends in high school, and especially while having to identify my party on a voting ballot—the same recurring thoughts often crossed my mind. Why do I have to keep picking a side? Why do I always have to identify as part of a group? Why do humans feel the need to label, categorize, separate, and segregate? When I was younger, I noticed this trend, and the fact that it seemed to cause some of society’s biggest problems. But I never truly understood the magnitude of this human tendency until I tried to research, and took a few sociology and psychology classes—however, this pesky persistence for labeling and categorization will be the subject of a different notebook. In this notebook I’m discussing this problem of separation as it applies to discussing “solutions” to our mass shooting epidemic.

Logically, if there is a problem that is affecting more than one person—for example, the number of mass shootings in our country—then everyone affected, and even those not affected, need to get together and come up with a solution. Coming up with a solution only requires a few steps. In my opinion, the first step is acknowledging the problem and deciding that a change needs to be made, second is the exchange of ideas and discussion, third is reaching a consensus, and last is the implementation, and if needed, revision, of a solution. The idea that is agreed upon can be put into action, and if for some reason it doesn’t work out, then you return to the first step and choose a different idea to try. Why is it then that we can’t get past the first step in our problem solving process with mass shootings?

From what I’ve heard, and read on social media, everyone agrees there is a problem, yet people are getting stuck on the first and second steps: acknowledging that change is needed, and discussing it. If I were to ask the average person, “Would you prevent the death of an innocent person if you had the power to?” I am willing to bet most people would say yes. However, if I ask, “Would you prevent the death of an innocent person if you had the power to by approving a law or regulation?” the answer becomes a lot more complicated, and the response largely depends on one thing: who is proposing the law or regulation?



Crystal Vejar
Contributing Editor

Humans seem to naturally complicate the problem-solving process. Instead of following it as I stated, many of us seem to add an extra step: determine who proposed the solution and what “group” they belong to—if they’re not from our “group,” we skip the discussion portion of the process and go straight to rejection. Or at the very least, we spend a large amount of time and energy trying to discredit the solution’s potential before actually listening to it.

An example of this point I’m trying to make can be found by reading the transcript, or watching the footage of, Obama addressing an audience member’s question on gun control at town hall in Elkhart, Indiana on June 1, 2016. In the Q&A session, Obama was asked, “... why do you and Hillary want to control and restrict and limit gun manufacturers, gun owners, and a responsible use of guns and ammunition ... instead of ...” In his question, the audience member proposed his own solution of gun control, which happened to be the same solution Obama had proposed, the only difference being who proposed it. The audience member interpreted the solution differently based on who it was coming from, and because Obama was the one proposing a process for screening gun buyers, the audience member jumped to believing Obama wanted to take all guns away—which is a very common misconception when it comes to gun control in the United States—as soon as the subject of gun control was brought up. Many people automatically go into defense mode when this topic is brought up. They start thinking of all their comebacks, all their evidence, and all their reasoning before actually listening to what the proposal is, and this prevents the problem solving process from continuing.

We, as Americans, have the problem of letting our need for separation prohibit our progress in solving even bigger issues. One of these big issues is that innocent people are dying, many of which are children, due to gun violence and mass shootings. We need to come together to form a solution. In order to solve the first problem, I ask one thing: it doesn’t matter if you’re a Republican and your neighbor is a Democrat or vice versa. If your neighbor proposes a solution, listen to it. That’s all I ask. Just listen to it. Before making assumptions, before deciding they’re wrong, before trying to propose your own better idea, please, just listen and try to understand. Try to find where they’re coming from and then discuss your thoughts. If we’re going to make it past step one in our journey towards solving the second problem, we all have to push past our need to separate and work together. ♦

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Governmental oversight in recent changes

Change to Executive Board Special Rules of Order inconsistent with New York State law

TWO WEEKS AGO, THE RENSSELAER UNION EXECUTIVE BOARD adopted the following changes to the *Rensselaer Union Executive Board Special Rules of Order*, limiting the rights of individual people:

“Any party who intends on doing so must make it known to everyone present at the start of the recording and must immediately stop recording when asked to by the President. The President may also request that all copies of an audio or video recording be deleted in front of the President if there is reason to believe the recording captured sensitive or confidential information. The Executive Board does not condone livestreaming of meetings of any kind. The Executive Board or its members will not actively take part in or allow livestreaming meetings. These policies are adopted to ensure the privacy of any party presenting sensitive financial or personal information to the Board and to allow the Board to freely express its opinions without interruption from biased parties.”

In a sentence, this decision by the Executive Board was illogical, excessive, and is an affront to anyone who cares about government accountability.

The first sentence is contradictory to New York State law. The changes made by the Rensselaer Union Executive Board require that you have to announce your recording and that the president of the Union can tell you to stop at any time. New York State allows one-party consent for recordings, meaning you must only have the consent of one interested party (i.e. you, the recorder) of a conversation to legally record the discussion (<https://poly.rpi.edu/s/reclaw>). You are not required to make an announcement or seek consent to record at any point.

The second sentence violates your rights letting by the president of the Union dictate your use of personal property without your consent. This policy states that the president of the Union can, at any time, request for you to delete any audio or visual recording if they believe it captured “sensitive or confidential information.” Your phone is your property, which means you have the right to prevent others from searching through it. There is also a lack of definition for “sensitive or confidential information,” giving the president of the Union jurisdiction to decide the extent of said information. If the Executive Board believes something is confidential or

sensitive, they should not discuss it during a meeting with the public. This passage gives the president of the Union the unnecessary power of controlling what is published from an open meeting—something a closed meeting already solves. Rensselaer Union procedure dictates that closed meetings are when all parties not involved in the running of the meeting are asked to leave the room until the end of the closed portion of the meeting. There is a provision by which select parties can be invited back into the closed meeting. If there is any sensitive or confidential information, the information gets discussed in this closed portion and there’s no need to worry about anyone recording it. The new Executive Board policy itself says that the public should feel comfortable recording during “open portions of the meeting,” so there’s no need for this section.

The third sentence of the policy impedes students from participating in Executive Board meetings. With this new policy, no one is allowed to livestream a meeting, under any circumstances. The only reason I can come up with for why the Executive Board decided to completely ban livestreaming is due to the fact that, once you livestream something, it’s out there for the world to see. Since the data is already out there, there’s no good reason to delete the video after the fact just because it’s a livestream. It’s alright for anyone to come watch the meeting, to be involved in their campus and community, but you deny the ability to get involved, learn, and take part in what’s going on just because they couldn’t make it to a meeting at that specific time?

The last sentence on privacy is a farce: to expect privacy during an open meeting is to expect rain on a sunny day. As I previously discussed, and this is a newsflash for the Executive Board, if you’re running a meeting correctly you’re already maintaining the privacy of any party presenting sensitive financial or personal information. *Robert’s Rules of Order* and specific policies regarding procedure exist for this reason: so you don’t misstep and release information that shouldn’t be released. Furthermore, how would people watching a meeting on a livestream, or recording a video of the meeting, get in the way of freely expressing opinions? Some people I’ve talked to have said they’re worried

about being taken out of context or being misquoted. If anything, having a video that you can pair with the Executive Board meeting minutes helps make what was said that much more clear.

We’ve seen students become more engaged during past meetings due to the availability of livestreamed videos. Multiple students asked questions during the town hall meeting hosted by the Student Government on October 3, 2017, and the recent livestream of the Executive Board meeting on January 18 was viewed by almost 300 people. We know that livestreams are effective in engaging students and fostering participation; why wouldn’t you encourage this? Right now, there is only one comprehensive publication a year (the *Union Annual Report*), that lets students know what is happening with the money that they had to pay as their Activity Fee. People have a right to transparency when it comes to their money.

To any Executive Board members who might be reading this, you have a responsibility to the students of RPI to make the right and moral decisions. As members of the Rensselaer Union Student Government, you are accountable for your decisions, and your decisions affect the whole campus. If you face backlash for a decision, you have to ask why the backlash exists. If you made a moral decision, then the detractors don’t matter. However, if you made the wrong decision, you need to recognize, learn, and move forward. At the end of the day, having recordings and livestreams of meetings increases student involvement and improves transparency, and there is no reason that you or any other representatives should ever be against it.

To my fellow RPI students, never stop advocating for transparency. The Student Government at RPI answers to you, and you can build it up or tear it down as much as you desire. You have a right and duty to participate, to elevate the just, and to cast out the corrupt. Never forget that you are in charge and that you can drive change for good.

Bryan Johns
CSCI/BMGT ’19

TOP HAT

Grand marshal encourages participation

RPI, I WANT YOU TO RUN FOR STUDENT government.

When I tell people this, I have those who are quick to say yes or no, but the vast majority seem undecided, perplexed, or shy. Today’s Top Hat is dedicated to those in the middle.

One of the biggest drawing points for participating in student government is the ability to make a difference, both for their current classmates and for future students. Imagine being able to come back to campus as an alumnus, to see something you helped bring to campus, and to see the benefit students get from their contribution. The feelings of pride and satisfaction are indescribable, and they are for some—myself included—the primary motivators for serving in student government.

Well, what about how much time it requires? Positions vary greatly in the level of time commitment. If you are only looking for a few hours a month and have a knack for planning events for your class, try going for a class representative position. Same goes for graduate students; if you are not sure how much time you can take away from research,

the graduate representative role allows you to get involved and make your voice heard with just a few meetings per month. For those who want a larger role with more commitments, try running for a senator seat! The senator role, which has representations of each class of undergraduate students, graduate students, Greek students, and non-Greek students, attends a few meetings per week and averages around six to eight hours a week of commitment. If you’d like to lead your undergraduate class council, you can also run for president and vice president roles!

The other rebuttal I hear is, “I’m not experienced enough to run.” Many of these positions do not require any prior experience. If anything, the student government thrives off of new ideas, perspectives, and enthusiasm to keep our progress moving at a meaningful pace.

I alluded to them above, but there are five bodies of student government—the Student Senate, the Executive Board, the Judicial

Board, the Undergraduate Council, and the Graduate Council. The Student Senate is the chief legislative and policymaking body of the Union, and it consists of 26 elected members and is presided over by the elected grand marshal. The Executive Board is the chief financial body of the Union, and it is presided over by the elected president of the Union and consists of 15–20 appointed members. The Judicial Board is the chief judicial body, and it consists of an appointed chairman, six appointed regular members, and five appointed alternate members. The Undergraduate Council is presided over by the

Undergraduate President and is made up of class councils for each undergraduate class, each of which have elected and appointed opportunities. Finally, the Graduate Council consists of the five elected graduate senators (who also sit on the Student Senate) and six representatives, and it is presided over by the appointed Graduate Council President.

So, with this information, please give your involvement some consideration. At the very least, please get out and vote during Grand Marshal Week in April. If you are interested in running, be sure to attend a candidate information session, read the handbook at <http://elections.union.rpi.edu/handbook>, and contact Elections Commission Chairperson Caleb Caraway ’19 if you have any further questions at carawc@rpi.edu!

And, of course, if you have any questions, suggestions, concerns, or ideas, please feel free to reach out to me at gm@rpi.edu!



Justin Etzine
Grand Marshal

Justin Etzine
152nd Grand Marshal

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Poly
Snapshots

Photos and interviews by Crystal Vejar

The Question:

What is your favorite movie quote?

Jared Fredette
AERO '20

"I am a leaf on the wind—
watch how I soar."
-Hoban Washburn, *Serenity*

Luke Withy-Berry
CIVL '20

"No. I am your father."
-Darth Vader, *Star Wars: Episode V - The Empire Strikes Back*

Geoff Warne
ELEC '20

"My name is Jeff!"
-Jenko, *22 Jump Street*

Ryan Smith
BMED '18

"Gretchen, stop trying to
make fetch happen! It's
not going to happen!"
-Regina George, *Mean Girls*

Dina Zaslavksy
CSYS '18

"He touched the butt"
-Tad, *Finding Nemo*

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ON-CAMPUS EVENT



Poets, performers share experiences at BSA’s open mic

Crystal Vejar/The Polytechnic

THE BLACK STUDENTS ALLIANCE HOSTED students and professionals in the community as part of Black History Month, featuring motivational speeches, poetry, and music.

Jacob Kaplan
Senior Reviewer

RESILIENCE, DIGNITY, AND SELF-WORTH DOMINATED THE NIGHT of Free Expression on Friday. Poets, singers, and dancers of different backgrounds performed in the McNeil Room to a supportive and enthusiastic audience. RPI’s Black Students Alliance hosted the event as part of their continuing celebration of Black History Month and all underrepresented cultures on campus.

Cordell Davis ’20, events coordinator of the BSA and M.C. of the show, started things off. He introduced Lidia Remache ’19, who performed “You Need to Let It Go,” a poem on love and self-respect. After Remache was Eighth Wonder, RPI’s large diverse hip-hop and K-pop dance team. Eighth Wonder’s energy resonated with the audience. People standing around the edge of the room danced along.

Jon Gilroy, a traveling poet and motivational speaker, read original poems about living with cerebral palsy and being gay. RPI’s Chinese American Student Association performed a mesmerizing fan dance. Shannon Alexander, from the University of Albany, sang “Broken-Hearted Girl” by Beyoncé. Navpreet Singh, also known as Nav the Poet,

spoke on being Indian American and Sikh. Singh discussed underrepresentation and misrepresentation of Indians in American media. “Going from Apu from the Simpsons to Raj from the Big Bang Theory is not an improvement,” Singh said before reading a funny but poignant poem on the topic.

Albany poet, Poetik, read from her book “Labyrinth of a Melaninated Being: A Collection of Poems.” Charles O’more performed a passionate song of his own composition on Black identity. RPI Bhangra and Bollywood, a North Indian dance team, gave an energetic and well-choreographed routine. Nedyah Alexis, a University of Albany student, read an untitled poem on the intersection of love and faith. Alexis punctuated the sentence “I found God in this black boy” throughout her poem. The scheduled performances ended with author and poet Alysia Harris. Harris read several pieces. The topics covered love, Black identity, pain, sexuality, and religion.

Davis thanked the artists and gave the stage to open mic performers. Ashley Sierra read her original piece, “Poem for my unborn son.” RPI student Seretsi Khabane Lekena ’18 beatboxed. University of Albany student Kyra sang, and the audience waved their cell phone

lights. Maya read original poetry on young love and heartbreak. Justina, a new RPI student, talked about discovering a supportive cultural community at RPI and read a poem. The open mic ended with Carlos, who read original poetry on Mexican history and identity. He ended the show with “If” by Rudyard Kipling, a poem, he says, that gives him strength during difficult times.

Davis thanked the open mic performers for their courage and UPAC for managing the lights and sound. President of the BSA Talei Moore ’20, shared some of the goals of the BSA and details on upcoming events. The BSA will be hosting “Hold Your Grit: Step and Stroll Competition” from 7 to 10 pm on Saturday, March 3 at EMPAC. Tickets are still available.

Overall, everyone had a good time. The poetry dealt with painful topics and had a lot of raw emotion. Yet, a sense of optimism, courage, and strength underscored all of it. It was a departure from cliché dark defeatist poetry. The songs and dances dealt with similar themes and conveyed the same sense of hope. Today, it is easy to despair over the stagnation of moral and civil progress. This night was a reminder that the communities pushing for change are not gone but are growing stronger. ♦

CLUB SPOTLIGHT

UPAC Cinema highlights student interests through recent, classic film selections

Pragati Pant
Senior Reviewer

TWO WEEKS AGO, I WENT TO SEE *THOR: RAGNAROK* AT THE UNION PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES Committee Cinema on campus. While I was going to see this movie for the first time, I noticed that a lot of people around me were there to experience this movie for the second or even third time. I would say that I am definitely a newbie to superhero movies and maybe don’t care as much about them, but that is not the case for the majority of our campus. Having an on-campus theater offering relatively new movies means a lot to the students.

The UPAC is a collection of student-run clubs, which all serve the greater purpose of providing students with a variety of entertainment. One club associated with UPAC is UPAC Cinema, which maintains a theater in the Daren Communication Center on the weekends. They showcase a variety of movies: Friday movies are newer and based on box office reviews, while Saturday movies are more artsy and sometimes requested by other clubs on campus.

When I go to see a specific movie at UPAC Cinema, I don’t think about everything it takes to put that movie on. UPAC Cinema Chairperson Peter Straub ’19, gave insight on what takes place in the background. They hold weekly meetings to decide what movies to show and determine a schedule. Then, they must see if the distributors they know can give them the rights to these movies. Obtaining movie rights is more expensive than I would have expected. On average, the Friday movies UPAC Cinema shows cost about \$950, while the Saturday movies, which are less popular, cost around \$600. In addition, sometimes the club has showings of movies before they are released in theaters; these are generally sponsored and lesser known movies that are attempting to widen their demographic.

As part of movie preparation, UPAC Cinema has trained members who know how to work the projector. This training involves shadowing a current projectionist and going

through three disaster sessions. A disaster session is a scenario in which chaos is intentionally introduced to the trainee, and they are expected to handle the situation. While this sounds intimidating, it is necessary for the projectionists to be trained so they can correctly use the equipment. Straub emphasized the many interesting things they can do with their equipment, which is his favorite reason for being part of UPAC Cinema.

A The second half of their semester viewings starts off on the weekend of March 16 with *I, Tonya* on Friday, as well as the classic *Animal House* on Saturday, March 17. Throughout the rest of March, they will be showing other great movies, including *Mean Girls* and *Fargo*. One particular movie to look out for is *Star Wars: The Last Jedi*, which will be showing on April 12. With such a central location on campus, watching a movie at UPAC Cinema is definitely a great way to spend your weekend nights! ♦

Do you have opinions about events that you want to express?
Join *The Poly* press.

OFF-CAMPUS EVENT

Les Mis production falls short in acting

Anna Koenig
Senior Reviewer

SINCE ITS BROADWAY DEBUT IN 1987, *Les Misérables* continues to be culturally significant both in and out of the musical theater industry. Set during the French Revolution, the opera challenges the audience to think about themes of love, redemption, and sacrifice, and how it relates to our own world. Due to the musical’s exceptional themes and messages, as well as the undeniable talent the show demands, I was excited to get my own ticket for the performance at Proctors Theater in Schenectady, New York. Prior to seeing *Les Misérables*, I had only watched the 2012 movie and the 25th anniversary concert of the show. Regardless of my limited exposure to the stage production, I still had high hopes for this performance. Overall, I was considerably disappointed in the choices made in this specific show.

One of the problems was the overtly theatrical acting. Throughout the show, there were several scenes involving physical altercations between characters. Also known as stage fighting, these interactions are designed to look real by giving off the illusion that it is a genuine fight between actors. In this version of *Les Mis*, the fighting was incredibly planned out and melodramatic to the point of it being unbelievable. These moments made me laugh a little during the show because they seemed so ridiculous. There was even a moment when a character was shot, turned around to face the audience, and just fell behind a set piece. Another instance of this involved the show’s comic relief characters: Thénardier and Madame Thénardier, best known for their big number, “Master of the House.” The pair are a bit outlandish in the way they run their inn and interact with other characters, which makes for good humor. Despite this, sometimes their efforts felt excessive. At times, I wasn’t sure if the actors were improvising some of their lines for quick laughs, because most of those moments just seemed unnecessary. In the versions of the musical that I’ve seen, the Thénardiers are eccentric, but not overbearing, which makes me rather disappointed in the acting abilities of the cast.

Another one of my main issues with the performance was with how characters were introduced. On multiple occasions,

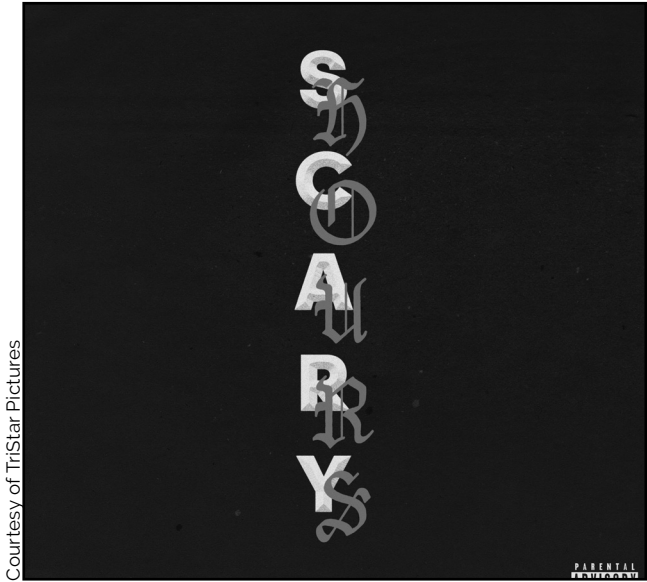
I had trouble separating the leads from the ensemble. During “At the End of the Day,” for example, the audience is introduced to the hardworking single mother Fantine as she works in the factory. Although the actress was positioned apart from the rest of the ensemble, I didn’t realize she was Fantine until she started singing solo sections that I recognized from the movie. During the scene, I even had difficulty picking out the soloists out of the crowd of people on stage. Usually, in a production, the director uses different stage elements—such as the lighting or costume design—to uniquely emphasize certain characters; sadly, an essential feature that was extremely lacking in this production. In regards to the leads, I also was disappointed with how they handled each lead’s big solos. “On My Own” is Éponine’s power ballad as she comes to terms about her feelings for Marius. Ignoring the clear vocal talent of the actress who played Éponine, I felt this rendition did not adequately execute the emotion or intensity of the song. A similar situation occurred during “Javert’s Suicide: Soliloquy.” This number is a character-defining moment for Javert as he sings about his relationship with ex-convict Jean Valjean; I felt this version of *Les Misérables* didn’t do the character justice.

However critical of the performance I may be, I do believe it was vocally one of strongest shows I have seen in recent years. Yet, I felt that it had lost some of the original production’s dimensionality. I find this a little bothersome considering *Les Misérables*’ messages of social condemnation and redemption are still prevalent today. They had a chance to capture the audience by alluding to some of these current social ills through their storytelling; but sadly, they didn’t meet my expectations. Most people look forward to these national tours of musicals because most people cannot afford to go to New York City to see the original cast and show. That being said, these tours should make a greater effort to maintain the excellence of the original show, giving it and the audience sufficient value through each performance. ♦

MUSIC RECOMMENDATIONS



Psycho
Post Malone
Recommended by:
Hallie Metzger



Scary Hours
Drake
Recommended by:
Nicholas Luczak

RESTAURANT REVIEW

The Placid Baker offers tasteful pastries, cheerful customer service, wide variety

Aurora Freedman
A Special to The Poly

IN TROY, THERE ARE MANY SMALL, NICHE SHOPS WITH UNIQUE AND appealing features. One of my personal favorite spots to go to in Downtown Troy is a little artisan bakery called The Placid Baker. Located on Broadway, this little bakery is a mere ten minute walk from campus and well worth the journey.

Walking into the bakery, you can immediately smell flour, chocolate, and freshly baked bread. You can almost taste the aromatic flavors permeating off the display of treats they have waiting for you. Starting from the one corner, is the beautiful display of croissants, each looking as mouthwatering as the next. Then, there is the assortment of danishes, muffins, and cornbread; each uniquely filled with a burst of savory flavor in each bite. The cookies and sablés lie next to it all: smaller but no less elegant or shy of delight. The cooled display box holds French macarons; tasting creamy, soft, and baked to perfection. The flavors of the macarons change per day, but consistently have a fruiting and nut flavor.

Below the colorful array of macarons lie the creamy, chocolatey, and ever so smooth brownies. There are other treats on display within the store, all of which are just as sweet, light, and heartwarming as the last.

While being distracted by the display of food, customers are primary greeted by the wonderful staff of The Placid Baker. Each staff member has a wonderful and friendly smile on their face, and greets you with a warm “Hello, can I help you with anything?” To this, I am generally too taken back by the amazing display of food that I can only laugh and ask for more time to look at everything; they are very understanding and patiently wait for me to decide what I want. They always serve with a smile, and say “have a nice day” to every customer that orders.

The Placid Baker also has a small menu of a sandwich or two, salad, soup, tea, and coffee. They also sell baguette, ciabatta bread, and other freshly baked bread products. On Wednesdays and Saturdays, The Placid Baker makes pizzas for lunch, one that is vegetarian and one with meat. Not traditional New York style, the pizzas are baked on thick, freshly made ciabatta-like

bread. Each bite of pizza has bursts of flavor in sauce, toppings, and bread—all come together and create a masterful symphony that is pizza.

The Placid Baker always has a stand in the Troy Farmer’s Market, for both indoor and outdoor markets. Each farmers market, they bake a new item that is not found in the everyday day store selection. So, to keep having a new Placid Baker treat, it is always best to go to the farmer’s market and stop by their stand. They are open from 8:30 am to 3 pm every Tuesday to Friday, and 8:30 am to 2 pm on Saturday.

Everything in the store is moderately priced and well worth the brief walk down from campus to go buy a treat and make your day better. Every time I walk in, I leave with a big, satisfied smile on my face. It is both a wonderful delight to eat, and a nice therapeutic walk to relax in the midst of being at RPI. The Placid Baker is one of my favorite places in Troy. It never ceases to live up to my expectations and leave me walking away as a very satisfied customer. ♦

MEN’S LACROSSE

Renewed hopes for upcoming season

Madison Wagner
Staff Reporter

FOLLOWING THE MEN’S LACROSSE TEAM’S SUCCESSFUL PRESEASON AND FOURTH PLACE ranking in the 2018 Liberty League Men’s Lacrosse Preseason Poll, Head Coach Jim Townsend is excited and enthusiastic for the season to begin. When asked his opinion about the upcoming season, Townsend said that, with “big things, returning players,” as well as some fresh feet on the field, the team is looking to have a strong start. Carrying 44 student athletes on the roster, Coach Townsend has tasked the team with earning an average GPA of 3.1, no doubt only one of the challenges that the team will overcome this season.

Following the disappointing ending to last year’s season at 10-5 and being ranked 15th in the NCAA Northern Region, the team is hoping to “learn from their mistakes” and come back even stronger. With a “fast-paced game and drive to score,” RPI’s lacrosse team is sure to leave it on the line. Two big games to keep your eyes peeled for are the games against RIT, the number two seed in the Liberty League Conference, at home on April 7, and the away game versus Union College on April 18. Coach Townsend is looking forward to seeing the team tackle a challenging schedule which began on Saturday, February 24 at Keene State.

At the game on Saturday, what seemed to be a strong start soon became a hard-fought loss against Keene State College. However, the Engineers made it clear that they are willing to put in the hard work to overcome adversity on and off the field. Goalkeepers Parker Smith ’18 and Brian Doughty ’21 worked hard to earn 15 defensive saves, and Captain Zach Lukas ’18 leads the team with five goals, one assist, and seven shots on goal. The most impressive play of the game was midfielder Lucas Bastarache’s ’19 rallying goal right before halftime, which brought RPI to within one goal of their opponent. Ending in an 11-18 loss and being outshot 34-49 on goal, the Engineer’s efforts to learn from their loss is going to make for an interesting season. ♦

SWIMMING & DIVING

Liberty League swept



Brookelyn Parslow/The Polytechnic

THE SWIMMING AND DIVING TEAMS END the season with wins at the Liberty League Championships. The women’s team also went undefeated. (file photo)

SOFTBALL

Team, coach eager to beat future challenges

Randi Mogul
A Special to The Poly

WOMEN’S SOFTBALL HEAD COACH AMBER MAISONET RETURNS for her 10th season at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, with this year being her eight as head coach, and she is looking for another winning season. Last season, the team made it to the National Collegiate Athletic Association championships, and her women are hungry for another exceptional time on the diamond.

“We set the bar high last year, and the majority of our players are coming back. They don’t know anything else but making it to the NCAA,” Coach Maisonet shared with me. “We will have a good defense and offense, and as long as our pitchers hold it together, we’ll be good.”

Coach Maisonet knows what she is talking about—an all-star in her own right while playing outfield at her alma mater, University of Albany. Coach Maisonet began at Rensselaer while working on her master’s in educational administration with a concentration in higher education. She played soccer while in graduate school for her first year, and then was a graduate assistant for her second year, and has been the head coach at RPI ever since.

Coach Maisonet has had winning seasons the entire time she has been at Rensselaer, consistently winning 25–30 games in a 40-game season. Last year’s team that made it to the NCAA finals won 27 games and are looking just as strong this year. When Coach Maisonet started, there were only five teams in the Liberty League, and currently there are eight, with Ithaca College being on the schedule

this year as their toughest competition. In only her third year as head coach, the women won the Liberty League.

Every season, they begin during Spring Break and have several games in Florida there before they come back to New York. Some of the teams they play in Florida include Wheaton College, Westfield State University, and Framingham State University. When they return to New York, they play teams including Union College, RIT, and Ithaca College. Some of the players to look for are short-stop Cam Caswell ’20, 2nd baseman Tori Greco ’18, 3rd basemen Allie Hunt ’20, pitcher Jaime Cleasby ’19, and outfielder Maddie Provencher ’20.

Coach Maisonet has high hopes for this team and summed up their feelings perfectly saying, “they want it.” ♦

MEN’S HOCKEY

Men’s hockey loses at Big Red Freakout



Brookelyn Parslow/The Polytechnic

DURING BIG RED FREAKOUT, MEN’S HOCKEY LOSES to Colgate University 2-5 in contentious struggle largely due to a risky late game strategy.

Scores from the Week

Saturday, February 24

Men's tennis at University of Rochester	8–1
Women's swimming at Liberty League	1st
Men's swimming at Liberty League	1st
Men's track at Liberty League	2 of 6
Women's track at Liberty League	4 of 6
Men's lacrosse at Keene State	11-18
Women's tennis at RIT	2-7
Men's hockey vs Colgate University	2-5

Sunday, February 25

Men's tennis at RIT	9–0
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DILBERT

by Scott Adams

TOP TEN LIST

FROM NOW ON, YOUR COMPENSATION WILL BE A FUNCTION OF YOUR BASELINE HAPPINESS.

WE DON'T WANT TO WASTE MONEY GIVING RAISES TO EMPLOYEES WHO WON'T GET ANY HAPPIER NO MATTER WHAT WE DO.

THIS PLAN MAKES ME UNHAPPY.

NICE TRY, BUT YOU WERE ALREADY UNHAPPY.

I DIDN'T ACCOMPLISH ANYTHING THIS WEEK BECAUSE I MADE THE MISTAKE OF TALKING TO A MILLENNIAL.

IT SUCKED THE AMBITION OUT OF ME. NOW I'M NOTHING BUT AN EMPTY HUSK OF PAIN AND POINTLESSNESS.

I NEED A JOB THAT PAYS ME FOR LISTENING TO MY FAVORITE MUSIC.

WALK IT OFF.

I GOT MILLENNIAL FEVER FROM TALKING TO A MILLENNIAL.

NOW I SEE MY JOB AS A MEANINGLESS SERIES OF EMPTY TASKS.

WHAT DO YOU EXPECT ME TO DO ABOUT THAT?

I WAS HOPING FOR SOME PRAISE.

I HAVE THE RESULTS OF YOUR DOGBERT PERSONALITY PROFILES.

BASED ON YOUR QUESTIONNAIRE ANSWERS, ALICE IS ANGRY, WALLY IS LAZY, AND DILBERT IS BORING.

HOW ARE WE SUPPOSED TO USE THIS NEW INFORMATION?

WAKE ME UP WHEN HE'S DONE TALKING.

WE ALL TOOK THE DOGBERT PERSONALITY TEST, BUT IT'S NOT CLEAR HOW WE'RE SUPPOSED TO USE THE INFORMATION.

I MEAN, HOW DOES IT HELP ME TO KNOW YOU'RE A FORGETFUL MORON WHO CAN'T KEEP A SECRET?

WHO SHOWED YOU MY PRIVATE TEST RESULTS?

YOU DID.

DID YOU TAKE THE DOGBERT PERSONALITY TYPE TEST?

YES. I'M A DISGRUNTLED PSYCHOPATH WITH A BLINDING HATRED OF AUTHORITY.

I'LL BE IN MY OFFICE.

GOOD! STAY THERE!

- # Green Things
- Eggs and ham
 - Nuclear energy
 - Thumbs
 - The Hulk
 - Building
 - Money
 - Leaf clovers
 - Trees
 - Eagles
 - SafeRide Honda Fit Electric Vehicle

WORDFIND

by Weston Brousseau

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

Car Companies

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

Audi

Chevy

Chrysler

Ford

Honda

Jeep

Maserati

Nissan

Porsche

Royce

Suzuki

Tesla

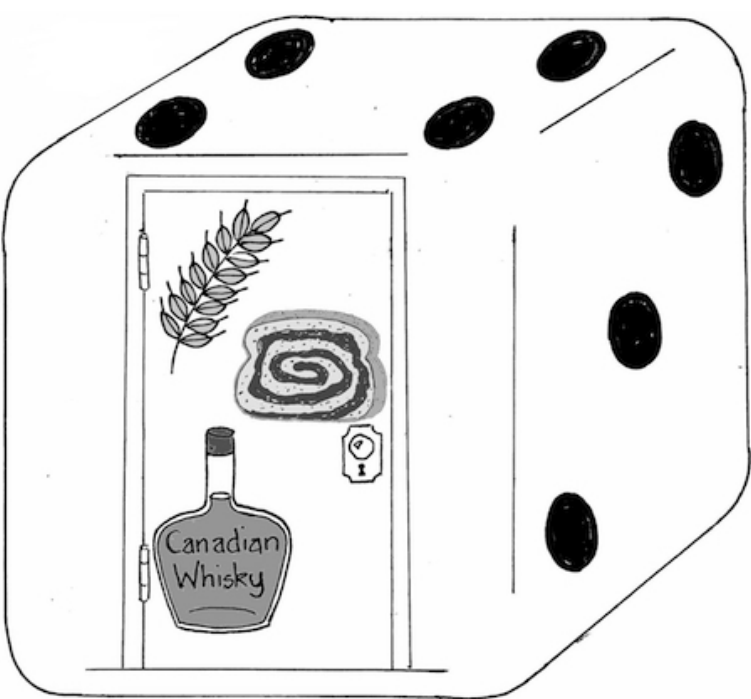
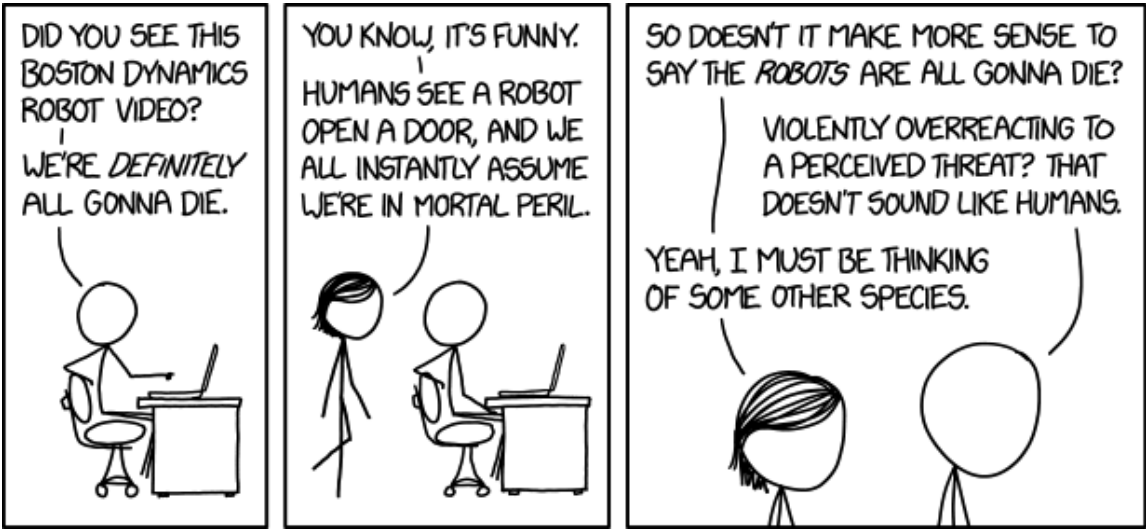
Toyota

Join us at our closing nights in RU 3418 on Tuesdays at 7 pm.

XKCD

by Randall Munroe

MONDAY PUNDAY by Matthew Broussard



FUN FACT:

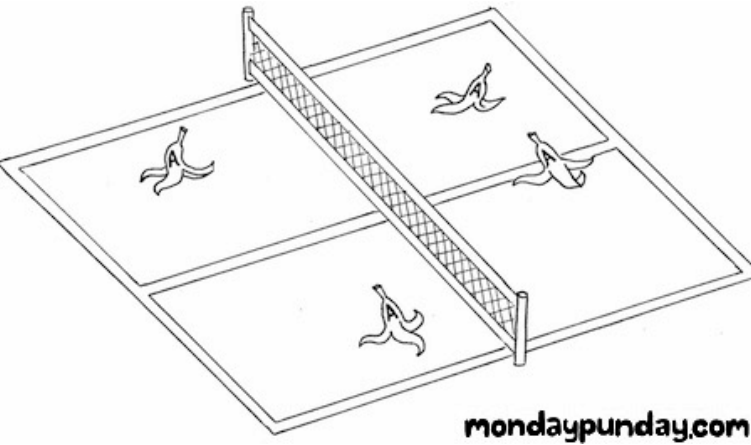
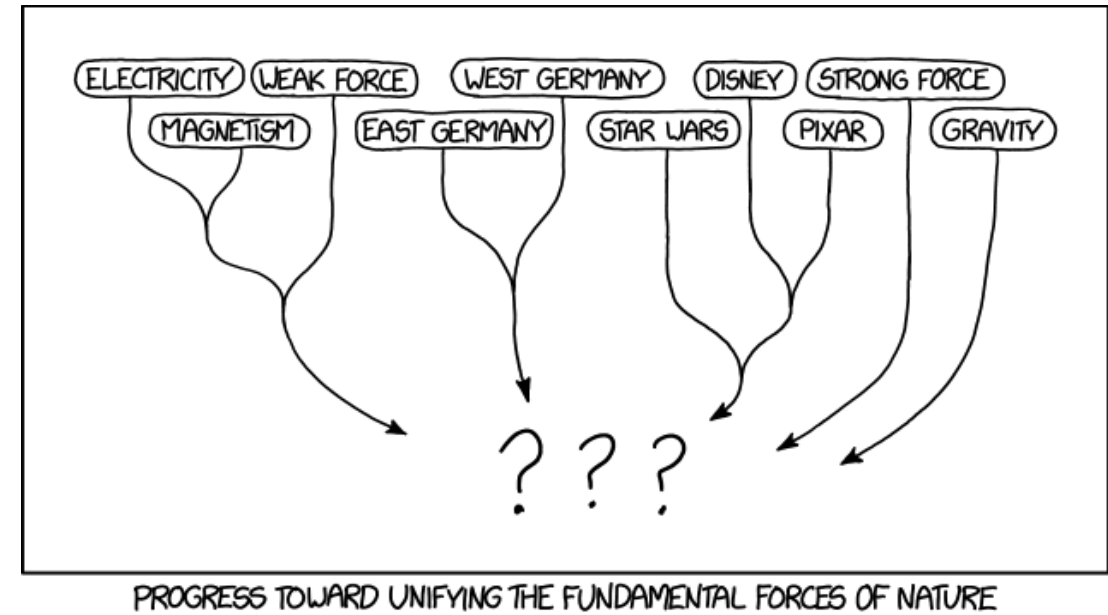
	1990	2018
LISA	8	36
BART	10	38
HOMER & MARGE	36-15H	61-15H

IF YOU WERE BART AND LISA'S AGE DURING THE FIRST FEW SEASONS OF THE SIMPSONS, THIS YEAR YOU'RE THE SAME AGE AS HOMER AND MARGE.

WELL, TECHNICALLY, FOOD IS A "DRUG," SINCE IT'S A SUBSTANCE THAT ALTERS HOW YOUR BODY WORKS, SO YES, I'M —

HEY, LOOK AT THAT WEIRD BUG!

MY LIFE IMPROVED WHEN I REALIZED I COULD JUST IGNORE ANY SENTENCE THAT STARTED WITH "TECHNICALLY."



PLP

Application for Fall 2018 & Spring 2019 is open to all undergraduate sophomore or junior students. Please submit the following materials in person at the Archer Center located in Academy Hall or scan and email to archercenter@rpi.edu by **March 9, 2018**:

- Resume
- Cover letter
- Completed faculty/professional reference form
- List of campus involvement activities

For more information, contact Christine Allard at bondc@rpi.edu

PROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

- Fall or spring semester, two-hour, co-curricular seminar series.
- Practice becoming a strong, resilient person who can translate that to a professional workplace.
- Students engage with *corporate professionals, alumni/ae* and *community partners*.
- Topics include *communication, workplace ethics, understanding corporate culture, leadership, effective decision making, networking and negotiating, and managing change and more*.
- No grades, no homework and no tests.
- Mondays from 6-8 PM in the Student Union.

Features

Wednesday, February 28, 2018

OFF-CAMPUS EVENT

Excursion to D.C. fosters connections

Students given opportunity to travel, learn more about their culture through sponsored trip

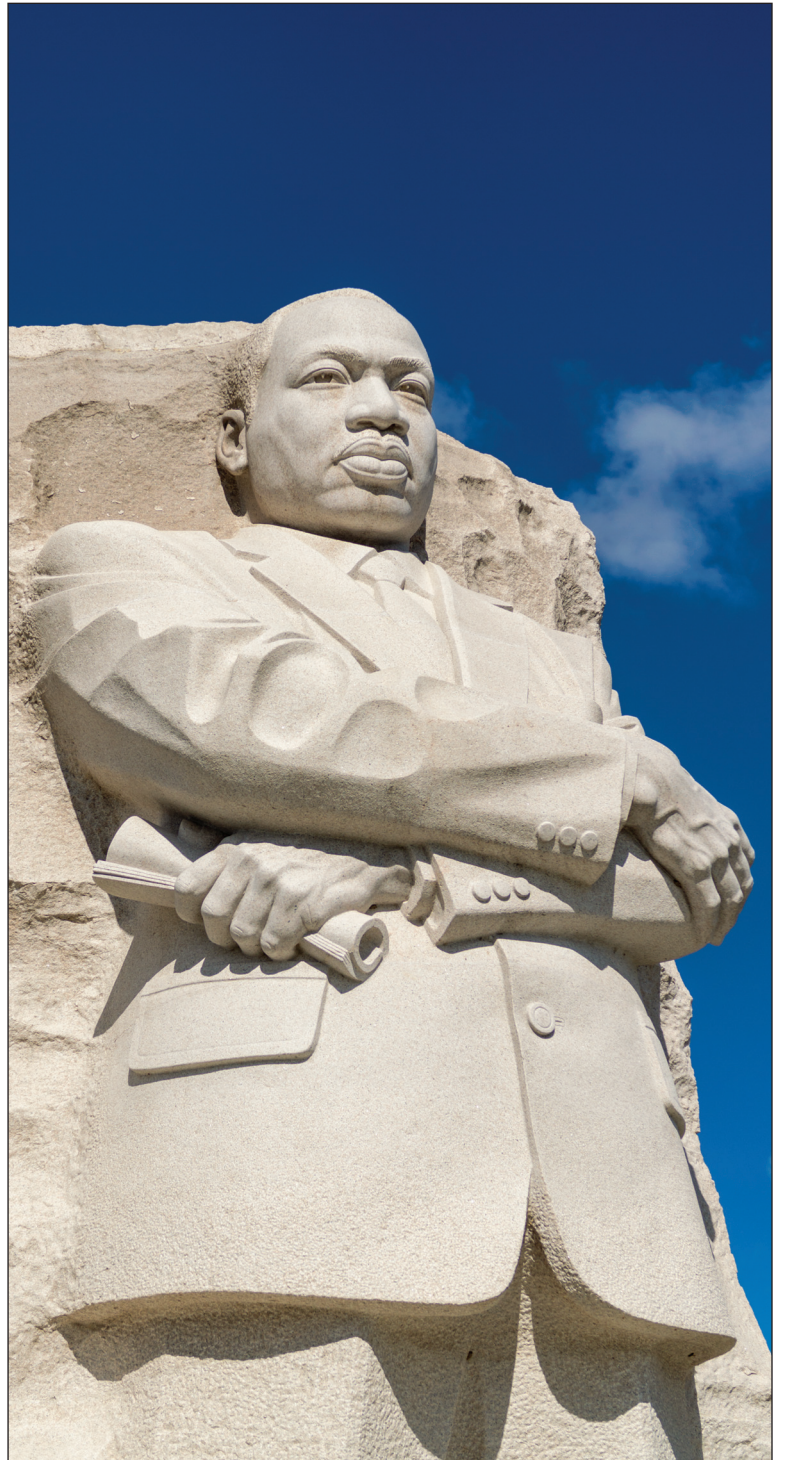
Tatyana Fortune

A Special to The Poly

AS WE STEPPED INTO THE LOBBY OF THE NATIONAL Museum of African American History and Culture, I was struck with awe by all of the attention to detail in every inch of the room. Looking around, it really felt like the museum was crafted especially for me to experience, and I realized just exactly where I was. Each point of the museum was fully interactive—I could hear and touch and feel the atmosphere change in each room, in addition to just being able to see the images and artifacts of my history. There was no glossing over the graphic details of the African American experience and everything about it was extremely eye-opening. I cycled through many emotions in that building, from anger to embarrassment, to pride in my heritage and all things that had to occur in order for me to end up where I am right now. I felt represented in every sense, especially when I gazed upon the leader of the Haitian rebellion, Toussaint L'Ouverture. I cannot remember a time when I felt closer to my ancestors, or moved by their resilience.

Saturday night, our group went to see *Black Panther*. I can't even begin to describe how hyped I was to see a superhero movie with a talented black cast. It was more than a movie. It was a whole political statement without leaving anything out—from the precarious relationship between Africans and Black Americans today, to the idea of giving back to your community when you get the chance to make it out. It's a fictional story that imagines a time and place where black people were untouched by white colonization and systems of institutionalized racism. It was refreshing to escape reality for a few hours and see people with the same skin color as you portrayed in a positive light, and not in the repetitive roles that black people are cast in—the criminals, the thugs, the villains, the slaves, or those struggling to be happy in this country during any part of our history or present. Many people were anticipating this movie and celebrated by dressing up in traditional African dress to express their pride, and many left feeling touched and inspired.

There are so many other great experiences in D.C. that I am so glad I got to



Brookelyn Parslow/The Polytechnic

THE RENSSELAER UNION SPONSORED a trip for Black History Month to offer students opportunities to see the National Museum of African American History and Culture and various other D.C. sites, all while growing closer as a group.

have. We visited Adams Morgan, the White House, the Lincoln Memorial, the Washington Memorial, saw statues of important American figures, and got to listen to D.C.'s famous Go-Go music. We took pictures with the portraits of

President Barack Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama. We walked along the walls of memorials dedicated to veterans who fought for us. We grew closer as a group and got the chance to celebrate the birthdays of two of our freshmen by

planning a surprise. This weekend helped me feel more connected to all aspects of humankind—my past and present, my ancestors and friends—I had the chance to delve deeper into what it means to be a Black American. ◇

ON-CAMPUS EVENT

Discussion challenges thoughts on faith

Anahit Hovhannisyan

Senior Reviewer

A CONVERSATION CENTERED AROUND FAITH, HUMANITY, AND the intersection between identity and work sprouted at the Veritas Forum last Friday. Sponsored by the Rensselaer Christian Association, the Graduate Christian Fellowship, Alpha Sigma Phi, and Sigma Gamma Tau, "Is Science Enough?" facilitated an open discussion between two professors of differing faiths: Christian Professor Cullen Buie from MIT and agnostic Professor Amir Hirsra from RPI.

The forum began with brief introductions from each guest, speaking to his personal journey of faith. Buie described a turning point while picking up his brother from football camp at Ohio State University, which led to his discovery of engineering and a summer program by Multicultural Achievement Committee Scholars. After graduating high school, Buie enrolled in Ohio State, and became exposed to Christianity as a result of interacting with his roommate.

Buie grew inspired by his roommate's way of life and shortly thereafter converted to Christianity. He describes, "It seemed like an easier way to live," and "Any success I've had is because of God." Later, Buie narrated the day his sister suddenly passed away, and attributed his perseverance to his faith in Jesus, ultimately stating his strength in faith developed that day as a result of a family tragedy.

Following Buie's emotional presentation, Hirsra presented his journey of faith in PowerPoint slides and light humor. He displayed a circle, representing roughly a hundred years of life expectancy and colored a quarter in to represent his faith as a Muslim. Next came a family tragedy, and another quarter piece to represent his faith as an atheist. In contrast to Buie's response to a family tragedy, Hirsra reacted by retracting his faith. Following a rough estimate of 50 years, came a miracle, which Hirsra suggested was the birth of his children. The second half of the circle was labeled as "blissfully agnostic," "hopefully optimistic," and a question mark.

With a better understanding of the guest speakers, the conversation moved into various topics such as who you are versus what you do, money versus greed, and politics.

As these topics were discussed, the speakers provided agreeing answers. On the first topic, regarding how society values human beings, both professors agreed that society values individuals by their career, instead of who they are and what they have to offer. Hirsra continued with the idea that money is the cause of human corruption, as it defines human value. Buie clarified, "The love of money is the root of all evil," quoting the Bible.

To conclude the forum, questions were collected from the audience and directed to the guest speakers. Questions fell along the lines of "Is human suffering justified," and "What life event would cause a change in your faith?"

Both professors offered words of wisdom to the audience. Most notably, Buie noted, "We don't have tomorrow guaranteed," and Hirsra stated, "Constantly question what you think or what you believe... [it is the] only way to grow." ◇