Gay kiss-in still causing controversy

As LGBTTF considers legal options, Mercer tells them no more kissing

By Matthew White
Senior Reporter

At noon on February 18 the Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender and Friends (LGBTTF) club clashed with security during an SGA approved kiss-in event. The event, which took place in the Student Center, followed a tradition of non-violent awareness-raising actions and was intended to spark discussion of gay issues both on and off campus.

During the event, gay couples kissed as whistles were blown and affirmations were shouted. The first kiss sparked an immediate response from students congregate in the cafeteria. Many cheered and applauded, while others made disapproving remarks or left the room.

Security officers arrived and informed the kiss-in participants that they were blocking access to the cafeteria and that the whistles sounded like a fire alarm. As reported in the Voice’s exclusive online article “LGBT and security clash over kiss-in,” the LGBTTF stopped blowing their whistles and moved out of the way, then continued kissing.

At this point, several eye-witnesses observed that security guards began pulling the kissing couples apart.

“He didn’t say ‘excuse me,’ please move.’ Nothing. He basically just started pulling us apart. When I saw him touch Sarah (my girlfriend), I told him he better not touch her or me. He said, ‘I can do what I want, watch me,’ and started pulling us apart again.” Said Francesca Scirocco, President of LGBTTF and kiss-in participant.

“I don’t sit here and tell you that everything that the security officers did was right. I wouldn’t sit here and just throw that kind of paint over a situation. I won’t say it was wrong either.”

-Bryan Marshall, Director of College Safety

A heated debate between security personnel and LGBTTF members ensued (audio recordings are available at www.mcccvoice.org). According to Professor Alex DeFazio, advisor to the LGBTTF club, Jose Fernandez, Executive Director of Compliance stated that the school has the right to place restrictions on student expression and that political demonstrations must be approved.

In an interview with the Voice Fernandez said, “No school will allow students to do as they wish without approval. That’s common sense. That’s not just true of Mercer; it’s true of all schools.”

The kiss-in itself lasted five to ten minutes, but the argument went on for about twice that long. The three security officers involved were Officers Anthony Mancino, Thomas Rice and John Scheid.

Since the event took place, several meetings have taken place. One meeting was conducted with LGBTTF club officers met with Mercer administrators including Executive Dean of Student Affairs Dr. Diane Campbell and Director of College Safety Bryon Marshall.

At this meeting, administrators focussed on ideas for making LGBT students safer. Among other ideas they suggested that security officers could walk LGBT students to their cars at certain hours. LGBT members suggested that perhaps a more fruitful approach would be to increase sensitivity training for school faculty, staff and administrators.

During the meeting Dean Campbell said: “I always thought that Mercer was a very gay-friendly campus. I always thought that, and that’s because of the people who have always been here.” She went on to say, “I have not seen or heard or had any issues in a very long time, no grievances, no security reports, none of that. So that’s why, when you say the awareness needs to be raised, I was thinking this is a very aware campus. And we’ve been through several exercises in order to make it that way.”

While representatives of the LGBTTF say they were gratified by the administration’s propositions to make the campus safer, they were frustrated by the fact that the administration would not address what they viewed as the inappropriate behavior of the security guards at the kiss-in itself.

The LGBTTF had hoped to explain their grievances and receive an apology. Marshall explained that harassment reports could be filed but the meeting was not intended to address the kiss-in.

Dean Campbell said of the kiss-in, “The event was staged. We see what all the issues are. We come to this table to resolve those issues, but you still want to make the event the issue. We don’t want to make the event the issue. We don’t want to make the event the issue.”

See KISS-IN page 3

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A student press serving
Mercer County Community College
and its neighboring areas
Established 1969

PHOTO | DMITRY GURVITS

Officer Anthony Mancino and LGBTTF club member Caitlyn Nixon during the LGBTTF club’s kiss-in even on February 18 in the Mercer cafeteria and Student Center.

PHOTO | VERONICA FURMAN

Friends Ian Conely and Mark Naprawa kissing during the LGBTTF kiss-in event on February 18.
Starting this summer, Mercer is raising tuition by $8 per credit which works out to about a $240 per year increase for full-time students. On the surface this may not seem like much, but the hike is at the same time as Governor Christie slashes education funding to close a gaping state budget deficit of $11 billion. “I hadn’t heard about the tuition hike,” said second-year Nursing major Anida Ma- suud, “but I have scholarships and grants that are paying for my tuition so it doesn’t affect me financially.”

Depending on what type of grants Masuud has, her funding may not be as safe as she thinks. Governor Christie’s budget makes deep cuts to sev- eral key grant programs including the Education Opportunity Fund (EOF) that funds low-in- come student and Tuition As- sistance Grants (TAG) which are used by nearly one in every three full-time New Jersey stu- dents according to the Higher Education Student Assistance Authority.

Rachel Young, a first- year Education major, said of the increase, “[$8 per credit] is a lot. Good thing I have a scholar- ship. It doesn’t really affect me because I am in the NJSTARS program.”

Although Young may be safe, she is one of the lucky ones. However, the popular NJSTARS program, which pro- vides total tuition remission to community college for high school students in New Jersey who graduate in the top 15 per- cent of their class, is being elimi- nated in the Christie budget. Students like Young will continue to be funded, provided they maintain the needed GPA and course load, but there will be no more NJSTARS.

Not all students are as sanguine about the tuition hike as Young and Masuud. Sara Hicks, a second-year Nursing major, said of the increase, “Are you shittin’ me? That’s exactly why I’m not going to this school next semester.”

Hicks says she hopes to transfer to a four-year school next year. When questioned about the fact that tuition at any four-year school would be much higher than it is at Mer- cer, Hicks said that the costs were offset by the fact that four- year colleges offered more ser- vices, such as a health center. Under the Christie budget, Hicks may end up stay- ing at Mercer, however, as fund- ing for four-year state colleges could drop as much as 17 per- cent.

In justifying Mercer’s tuition in- crease and fee increase request at the board meeting as well as at a public informational meeting on Feb. 15, Mercer President Pa- tricia Donohue said that there is a $650 thousand shortfall in the current operating budget for this year. In addition, the state budget crisis may be expected to result in 10 percent less state funding for next year as com- pared with this year, or an ap- proximately $1 million cut.

Coupled with a pos- sible cut in the Mercer county contribution, Donohue says the increase in tuition and fees was needed in order to close the $1.5 million gap, which does not include increases in operat- ing costs for next year.

Donohue also noted that the increase in operat- ing costs for next year, which include health insurance pre- mium increases and negotiated salary contract increases, will be accompanied by cuts in per- sonnel and by delaying expen-ditures for purchases.

When asked if cuts in personnel would include teach- ing positions, Donohue said that they would. According to Donohue, five positions were cut in January, including three vacant faculty positions and two staff positions. There are also now two open faculty posi- tions which will not be filled.

When asked if the re- duction in faculty would result in fewer classes or sections be- ing offered, Donohue said that there were no plans to reduce course offerings and adjunct faculty would fill the gaps.

Enrollment at Mercer has in- creased by 9 percent this fall and is projected to increase another 3 percent next fall. Donohue said the school addressed the surge in enrollment by adding more afternoon, weekend and online classes, and by increas- ing the numbers of adjunct fac- ulty. According to Mercer’s in- stitutional data, adjunct faculty now teach 60 percent of classes at Mercer.

Asked how the increase in use of adjunct staff affects the college, Dean of Liberal Arts Robin Schore said, “We rely far too much on adjuncts. It’s a na- tional trend [but] it changes the atmosphere of the college…. It’s sad to see full-time faculty numbers drop.”

Schore goes on to say of adjunct faculty, “While they are often very good [teachers], they are not as available and shouldn’t be expected to be.” Adjunct faculty generally have other jobs and are only on cam- pus briefly each week. They do not have responsibility for, nor are they paid for, advising stu- dents or campus organizations, or participating in campus ac- tivities.

In an article entitled “Effects of Part-Time Faculty Em- ployment on Community College Graduation Rates” published in the Journal of Higher Education’s November/December 2006 is- sue, Daniel Jacoby describes re- search showing that graduation rates for community colleges in the United States are “adversely affected when institutions rely heavily upon part-time faculty instruction.”

Jacoby goes on to add, “Negative effects may be par- tially offset if the use of part- time faculty increases the net faculty resource available per student. However, the evidence suggests that this offset is insuf- ficient to reverse negative ef- fects upon graduation rates.”

In recent months Mer- cer’s administration has made widely publicized remarks es- tablishing priorities to increase retention of students and suc- cess in advising. In light of the reliance on adjunct faculty, these goals may be particularly difficult to achieve.

When asked about Mercer’s reliance on adjunct faculty, who are currently paid $830 per credit hour, President Donohue said that while col- lege accreditation bodies used to set a guideline ceiling of 50 percent adjunct faculty for ac- creditation, that standard has not been applied to community colleges in recent years.

Guy Generals, Vice President of Academic and Student Af- fairs, says that when enrollment spikes, adding adjunct faculty is the only way to quickly meet the demand for more course sections. He notes that using more adjuncts also avoids the budget commitment of adding full-time faculty who might not be needed when enrollment declines.

Bottom line for stu- dents: 2010 means higher tu- ition, less assistance and more classes taught by part-time fac- ulty.

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Winners will be announced in the Voice’s May issue and will be invited to receive their award at the Voice’s First Amendment Free Food Festival on May 12.
SECURITY GUARD TERMINATED
Two LGBT students file grievances against Security Guard Kevin Larkin Jr.

By Dmitry Gurvits
The College Voice

Mercer Security officer Kevin Larkin Jr., son of Mercer County Sheriff Kevin Larkin, is no longer employed at Mercer. The personnel action followed two incident reports filed by LGBT members against Larkin Jr.

Although there has been no official information from administration that the complaints were the specific reason that Larkin Jr.’s employment was terminated, the University confirmed on March 12, 2009, that Executive Director of Compliance and Human Resources, did inform one of the students who filed a grievance, Joseph “BoBo” Burke, that “action was taken” against Larkin Jr.

The complaints were officially filed on March 11 by Burke, a transgendered student, and Fantasia Hoagland, a bisexual student.

The first incident occurred in early February when Burke, who is afraid of dogs, asked aloud why an unattended service animal was roaming the hallways. According to Burke, Larkin responded by saying “[the dog] serves way more purpose than you in this school anyway.”

Instead of arguing with Larkin Jr., Burke says that with the help of Hoagland and another friend, Alexis Baker, he was persuaded to file a complaint with Mercer Security. “BoBo was going to go off [on Larkin], but he didn’t,” says Hoagland.

Burke reports that the comment made him question his value at the school. “[I thought] Damn, am I really supposed to be in school? Do I really belong here?” Burke says what finally prompted him to respond was a second incident, which occurred on March 10. In that incident Larkin Jr. told Hoagland he would give her a “$100 ticket” for parking beside a curb in the West Lot 2, although such an infraction would usually result in a $25 ticket according to Security Officer John Wambach. Hoagland goes on to say that besides telling her he would ticket her Larkin also asked her why she couldn’t park “like everyone else.” Hoagland alleges that Larkin’s tone was demeaning and appeared to be related to her perceived sexual orientation.

“I was mad. It’s just the way he said it,” says Hoagland in explaining why she filed a complaint.

Burke says he had overheard Larkin Jr. belittling other students, including Hoagland.

“BoBo being too much stuff about him, I’m hearing too much that’s going on. And ain’t nobody saying anything,” said Burke. He added, “Fantasia’s like my little sister, and when she started telling me about her story it upset me.”

Kiss-in turmoil continues

By Matthew White
Senior Reporter

Cont. from pg. 1

to make the event the issue. We want to make the resolutions the issues; that we are coming to the table to resolve at this point. I don’t think there is anything if there are whistleblowing and kissing and what you determined as public display of affection. Isn’t it appropriate for this environment?

Towards the end of the meeting, Marshall said, “I read the newspaper...I know the incident was disruptive as I was here when it happened. I don’t sit here and tell you that everything that the security officers did was right. I wouldn’t sit here and just throw that kind of paint over a situation. I won’t say it was wrong either.”

The Student Government Association (SGA) also held a meeting with LGBT members and noted that they had not understood what the event was going to involve.

The President of SGA said, “We never hold controversial events; this was a controversial event. We could have informed security and told them about the situation so they wouldn’t think ‘What the hell is going on’” said Nick Bella, Public Relations Officer on the SGA executive board. The LGBT notes that security was the party that made the situation contentious.

Currently the LGBT club has been in contact with both the American Civil Liberties Union’s New Jersey chapter and with and Lambda Legal Defense. Scirocco says she hopes that one of the groups will help the LGBT and will make it possible for another kiss-in to be held with the full support of the school, something Dean Campbell has maintained will not be allowed.

photography

By Dmitry Gurvits
The College Voice

Transgendered student Joseph “BoBo” Burke and bisexual student Fantasia Hoagland. Both students filed grievances against Security Officer Kevin Larkin Jr. based on disparaging comments he made that they feel were based on their gender and sexual orientation.

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A source of hope for those struggling with self-injury
To Write Love on Her Arms is an organization that helps cutters recover

By Lisa Olson
Reporter

Whether intricately drawn or simply written, the word "love" was scraped across the forearms of many students on November 13, the goal being to bring awareness to the issue of suicidal thoughts, self-mutilation and addiction, and its sufferers. The support movement is lead by the non-profit known as "To Write Love On Her Arms" (TWLOHA).

TWLOHA was started by a group of Christian friends, headed by founder Jamie Tworkowski. In February 2006 Tworkowski and his friends united in an attempt to help their friend, Renee, a 19-year-old who abused drugs, had constant thoughts of suicide and cut her arms with razorblades to help ease her internal pain. Tworkowski and his friends provided support to Renee and later founded TWLOHA to help others like Renee.

According to the organization's website, the vision of TWLOHA is to "provide hope and find help for people struggling with depression, addiction, self-injury and suicide. TWLOHA exists to encourage, inform, inspire and also to invest directly into treatment and recovery."

Tworkowski has received much praise in his efforts to fulfill that vision. This past year Rolling Stone magazine featured an article on Tworkowski, calling him a "surfer turned savior." MTV showed their praise by awarding the founder a Good Woodie, which MTV defines as an award given to "the artists whose commitment to a social cause has effected the greatest change this year."

What sets TWLOHA apart from other recovery groups is its focus on giving people very direct ways to express support. In addition to having people write "love" on their bodies, TWLOHA has set up blogs on social networking sites like Facebook and MySpace. They encourage story-sharing.

"[The online blogs] are used as sort of a newspaper or magazine, if you will, to give updates and information on their movement," says second-year Rider student Karen Burton. Burton is an active supporter of TWLOHA who attended the recent Rolling Stone photo shoot. When asked about his experience with TWLOHA and his feelings on being close to Tworkowski during the shoot, he said, "it's not about me... Whether it be a meeting or photo to shoot it's all about the message and that's something that I noticed while there and really hit home for me."

The photo shoot was held in New York City and consisted of Tworkowski and some "friends" posing, wearing signature TWLOHA hoodies.

The movement has gathered support from indie rock bands like Switchfoot, Anberlin and Jimmy Eat World. Band members have shown their support by wearing TWLOHA hoodies and t-shirts while performing on stage and directing fans to check out the movement's website.

TWLOHA aims to inspire and uplift people who need help. Although TWLOHA was started with a Christian influence, the movement is open to people of all faiths, races and beliefs. TWLOHA also lends support to family and friends of suicide victims. The organization welcomes volunteers, donations and thoughts of encouragement.

Slam poetry thrives in Trenton
Café International presents Ghandi’s Poetry Spot

Raul Cortes Jr., a regular at GPS and the host of a local open-mic night himself, said, "It is always a positive venue with a crowd that has open arms and I think it is remarkable that artists come from as far as Texas just to perform there." He goes on to say, "You never know what to expect and that's what makes it so entertaining."

GPS runs every other week from 8:30 PM until all those who have signed up have participated. Beyond poetry, GPS offers conscious rap, blues, soul, beat boxing and hip-hop performances, and a band is always present to provide back up or live accompaniment to an act.

The café offers a menu consisting of a variety of dishes inspired by flavors from around the world. Some house specialties include: curry chicken or goat, orange glazed chicken and meatloaf.

As attendance at GPS increases, Ghandi praises the poets: "Without the artists and people who come in as well as the café, having this poetry spot would not have been possible. For their contribution I am forever thankful."

Ghandi says he hopes to one day become owner of his own poetry club. In the meantime, GPS continues to draw crowds at Café International. The next open mic at GPS will be held May 7. For more information check out the Ghandi’s Poetry Spot link on mccvoice.org.
Faculty Profile
Prof. Lucas Kelly

“People have an idea of what art is and it usually involves this blessed group of people that have been gifted this magic that no one else can learn. I don’t believe that; [art is] a learned skill,” says Lucas Kelly, art professor at Mercer. Kelly carries this concept into his approach to teaching: “When my students say, ‘I can’t do it, I’m not an artist,’ I tell them, ‘Of course you’re not. That’s why you’re in an art class.’”

Kelly spent almost 9 months in the Center for Art and Culture in Aix-en-Provence, France in a graduate-style program which allowed him to work and be critiqued on a regular basis. Outside of the educational portion of his time spent in France, what struck him most about his general exposure to French culture was the European “attention to quality of life.” After his experience in France, Kelly incorporated this attention to quality into many of his pieces. He says, “[I] started making work that tried to slow things down and pay attention to things that are usually missed,” referencing as an example an installation that highlighted a single floorboard and a plaque reading, “This moment means everything.”

Back in the States, Kelly’s work has been displayed in numerous exhibits every year since 2000, everywhere from New York City to Seattle, Washington, out of which the most well-known venue was the PS1 (MoMA) Institute of Contemporary Art. “I thought I was going to blow up and I didn’t,” says Kelly regarding his participation in PS1’s “The Painted World” exhibit in 2005-2006. The exhibit was curated by Bob Nickas and included works by Steven Parrino. “[Parrino’s] one of my faves and I was psyched to be in a show with him,” says Kelly.

Kelly’s sculpture, “Space Cowboy,” debuted at the Bill Maynes “Off The Top” art show in 2003 and gained the attention not only of pop star and Kelly’s roommate at the time, Ben Jelen, who broke the piece in an attempt to sit on it, but also of a homeless man who got in a verbal altercation with the piece during a Travel Channel interview with Kelly. The show was a “kind of Rutgers past, present and future,” says Kelly. Among the artists whose work was featured was Roy Lichtenstein.

One of Kelly’s goals as an educator at Mercer is to change the common “provincial” perception of art. He says, “there is an idea of what art is, what it looks like, what an artist is...most of my students’ notions of art are aged by at least fifty years, that’s just not the case anymore.” Kyle Stevenson, a colleague of Kelly’s, confirms this approach, saying, “Lucas’ strengths are definitely with contemporary critical theory; he’s got a great eye.”

Another goal of Kelly’s is to tear down the myth “that only dead people get famous.” “The notion that you can’t live off your work [as an artist] is a travesty,” says Kelly.

His classroom atmosphere is both fun and serious. He jokes around with his students but makes sure they’re working hard. "Hands and mouths, hands and mouths, they should be moving at the same time," Kelly tells two students who are chatting in his Two-Dimensional Design class. For one of these students, Jonas Verheyen, a third-year Photography major, 2-D Design is his second class with Kelly. "He pushes you to go above and beyond," says Verheyen. “[He] makes you feel like you should put your all into it,” Verheyen adds.

Chris Moore, a former student of Kelly’s, says, “[Kelly] goes beyond the academic level, and honors students’ work outside of the classroom. He loves seeing personal art work so much; he really wants us to grow as people and artists outside of school. Lucas is always willing to go beyond the boundaries of just what is taught in the classroom and likes to help cultivate the students’ talent on a one-to-one basis.

Professor Lucas Kelly has a sculpture showing at the upcoming NJ Arts Annual at the State Museum from May 8 to November 14. He also plans to rent a larger studio than his current one and start working more on sculpture, which he identifies as his strength.

Sara Gatling
The College Voice

Kelly’s tattoo sleeve was designed by Jessie Nucifora of Revolver Tattoos in New Brunswick. Kelly gave her some ideas to work with but also “gave her free reign to free style.”

CROWS: “I think of crows as peasant birds, vagrants, the bird that’s looked down upon but travels in packs...like me and my friends.”

ROSES: “I’m the youngest of five, and the [tatoos] roses go from a bud all the way to one that’s dying and falling apart.”

BANNER: The banner reads, “Won’t quit, won’t break” – a lyric taken from the chorus of “West Coast” by local band Roadside Graves. The “West Coast” line holds meaning to Kelly and his friends as they are all artists (all but Kelly are musicians) and “it’s a career that kicks your knees out...It’s nice to feel that there’s hope.”

DEAD TREE: This started off as a vague idea but when Kelly mentioned it to Nucifora her eyes lit up and she said “Dead tree?? I love doing dead trees!” And then I couldn’t say no,” says Kelly.
Mamma Flora’s Trattoria in Ewing
Excellent food meets community service

By Kevin Genovario
Reporter

Mamma Flora’s Trattoria, a locally owned Italian restaurant provides an exceptional dining experience for residents in Ewing, New Jersey and the surrounding areas while supporting its local community. Located off Olden Avenue, Mamma Flora’s serves generous portions matched with reasonable prices.

Like the typical local Italian restaurant, Mamma Flora’s is very family oriented. But, instead of dry Italian music, a wide variety of popular music can be heard over the low murmur of its diners. The walls are lined with mirrors, giving the illusion that the restaurant is bigger than it actually is and is decorated with murals and paintings of New York City, bringing its Little Italy to a small town.

Customer service is superb. From the moment of entrance it is clear that their customers are the main priority. I was seated at a small table, but the waiter was very friendly if I would rather prefer a booth. The moment of entrance my waiter was very friendly and punctual and a huge plus was that my drink glass was never empty.

The food is simply mouth-watering. Available on the menu is ordinary Italian food such as vodka rigatoni, chicken Alfredo, pizza, etc. However, if you are feeling like you want to try something different and maybe like treating yourself, Mamma Flora’s offers entries comparable to an upscale restaurant. On the list to choose from includes chicken or veal portofino, marsala, fra diavolo and much more. “I got the chicken francese. It was a lot, but it was good!” remarked Tyrone Michaels, 20, a diner at the restaurant.

What makes Mamma Flora’s Trattoria stand out from most Italian restaurants is its support for local events and establishments. Although the restaurant attracts a variety of customers, young and old, it was a surprise to see how many college students were present. Ewing is home to The College of New Jersey (TCNJ) which many of the customers attended. Mamma Flora’s made an agreement with TCNJ to help fundraise for the sophomore class. For every group of students that dined at the restaurant with a valid TCNJ ID, 15% of the check was donated to the sophomore class of 2012. “We try and help in any way we can,” remarked restaurant manager, Gary Guuck. “If that means giving back to the students and having a little fun, so be it!”

Surrounded by fellow TCNJ students sat Emma Harri

security guard Larkin terminated following two student complaints

By Dmitry Gurvits
The College Voice

Cont. from pg. 2

This is us going at this thing again. And he’s not gonna talk to her like that. I had to do what I had to do.”

Burke goes on to say “I have a real thing with authority, but I tried to handle it the adult way.”

Bryon Marshall, Director of College Safety, indicated that, in this case, the incident reporting mechanism functioned as it was designed to.

“The people actually produced themselves...right to Chief [John] Raimondi...I said, Chief, just investigate it.” He did. He took the information down. We investigated it. We back checked it.”

Marshall adds, “We’ve fully investigated [the incident], turned the matter over to HR, and there was action taken against that employee.”

Initially Burke said he expected that Raimondi would ignore Larkin’s comments. However, according to Burke safety was respectful and accommodating in taking the complaint.

“When I first was going in...I felt like [Raimondi] was just going to say, ‘I’ll handle the situation,’ but nothing would be done...but when I got in there...[Raimondi] gave me the information, gave me the incident report, turned it, wrote it up, and then he gave me a copy of what I wrote down. I really was appreciative of that.” Burke said.

Francesca Scirico, LGBT President, said, “I think these guards need better training, I guess kudos to the school for handling it, but shame on them for not training them properly...”

As employee personnel files, the Voice cannot confirm if other incidents may have contributed to Larkin’s termination.

Want to weigh in on the debate? You can! Log in to www.mcccvoice.org!
The CMA (College Media Advisers') spring convention in New York City is an annual pilgrimage for hundreds of student journalists from two- and four-year colleges across the nation. Every March student reporters and their media advisers gather to attend workshops and panels on topics from Covering Campus Crime to finding employment in the Convergence Media world.

This year a six person cohort of College Voice staffers not only attended CMA but also gave an interactive workshop designed to help participants cultivate strong interviewing and reporting skills. The well-attended session included a role-playing activity followed by a lead-writing seminar including critique provided by College Voice adviser, Prof. Holly Mathews. Due to the success of the event, CMA's spring convention organizer, Michael Koretzky of Florida Atlantic University, has asked that the panel be given again next year.

**WHAT IS CMA?**

The College Voice

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**WHAT LIES AHEAD AT CMA?**

By Dmitry Gurvits
The College Voice

While at CMA, The College Voice conducted an interview with incoming CMA spring convention director, Michael Koretzky, media adviser at Florida Atlantic University. The following are excerpts from that interview:

VOICE: What changes are in store for CMA 2011?
MK: [I hope to add] Something called CMA Lounge...[it will have] couches and tables and chairs...and most importantly Wi-Fi. Maybe if you are at a convention of urologists you don’t need Wi-Fi, but if you’re a convention of media people, it is as necessary as oxygen...The other thing we are going to do is have less convention...This convention there are about 300 sessions. We will cut that down to somewhere between 200 and 250...We are going to figure out which sessions hit the mark on both information and presentation and kinda let the others fade away.

VOICE: Anything else you would change?
MK: I even want to change the students. I would like to construct a convention that has community colleges, some weeklies and some of the bigger papers...When I looked around I saw precious few daily newspapers.

VOICE: What worked well that you won’t change?
MK: There are a number of presenters that are really good. Frank LoMonte, Executive Director of the Student Press Law Center—the guy gave like 15 sessions...but all of them are good.

VOICE: What about next year’s keynote speakers?
MK: We don’t pay them, so it is really tough to get a keynote...I will do my best to get someone of color or someone without a penis.

VOICE: If you had to describe CMA 2010 and CMA 2011 each in just one word what would it be?
MK: Pleasant...and...twisted.
WHAT HAPPENED TO MEGAN?

It was a warm afternoon in late July, 1994, when a seven-year-old girl named Megan Kanka was beheaded across the street by her neighbor, a 33-year-old man named Jesse Timmendequas. He asked her if she wanted to see his new puppy. Once she was inside his house, he raped her, then slammed her head into a dresser, strangled her to death with a belt, then put two plastic bags over her head to prevent blood from getting on the carpet and raped her again. Finally he shoved her body into a toy box and dumped it next to a portable toilet in Mercer County Park.

The murder-rape of Megan Kanka inspired local and national outrage that ultimately lead to the creation of “Megan’s Law.” The law requires that a database of registered sex offenders be maintained and that when a dangerous sex offender moves into a community, its residents be informed. In 1996, then President Bill Clinton passed a federal law that required every state to follow New Jersey’s lead.

Fifteen years later, New Jersey, like many states, is out of compliance with its own law. The problems are many: maintaining the sex offender registry and notification system is expensive, trying to find locations for sex offenders to live is increasingly difficult, many psychologists who specialize in sexual behavior believe that many sexual offenders are not able to change, and the premise of the law—that informing people of danger will help them keep safe—has been criticized by legal experts and law enforcement officials alike.

MEGAN KANKA
A seven-year-old girl from Hamilton, NJ who was raped and murdered by her neighbor in 1994. Her parents fought to have a law passed that would inform communities of sex offenders living among them. “Megan’s Law” was passed within months of her murder and was later adopted by numerous other states.

HOW DOES THE LAW WORK?

“Megan’s Law” sorts sex offenders into three different tiers. After psychological evaluation, a judge assigns offenders into a tier. Tier one determines that the sex offender is at low risk to re-offend; tier two determines that they are at moderate risk to society and tier three include those individuals who are assessed as being a high risk to society.

The information available on the registry website (www.state.nj.us/njisp/info/reg_sexoffend.html) includes a photo, the name of the sex offender, any aliases the offender has used, descriptions of marks such as tattoos and scars, description of the vehicle used by the offender and its license plate number, the offender’s current address and the nature of offense including victim’s age at time of crime.

Maureen Kanka, Megan’s mother, in a recent interview with the VOICE stated that the picture is a great element of the registry. “Parents can sit down with their children and show them the picture of who the offender is, to better help protect their children,” Kanka says.

On the New Jersey registry website, however, some are out of date by as much as two years. This can be uproar as sex offenders can lose or gain weight, change their hair style, or otherwise modify their appearance.

The registry lists offenders who have committed a sex-related crime against an adult, molested a child or been found not guilty for reason of insanity. However, the registry does not list every person who has ever committed a sexual crime, including some juvenile offenders.

Once individuals are classified, the prosecutor’s office starts the notification process based on the risk assessment. In the case of moderate to high-risk offenders, the prosecutor’s office notifies the public by posting information on the state’s Internet registry. In addition, law enforcement officials go door to door and post flyers to let people know that a sex offender is moving into their area.

CAN THE LAW BE ENFORCED?

Even if Governor Christie was able to find the funds to bring New Jersey back into compliance with “Megan’s Law,” a growing body of evidence suggests it is difficult for the police to ensure total enforcement of the law.

The logistical complications of enacting sex offender notification and registry laws have been highlighted in recent weeks through a series of incidents in California which operates under a variation of “Megan’s Law” known as “Jessica’s Law.”

The law is named after a nine-year-old girl from Flor- ida who was raped and then buried alive by her 47-year-old neighbor, John Couey, in 2005.

Once individuals are classified, the prosecutor’s office starts the notification process based on the risk assessment. In the case of moderate to high-risk offenders, the prosecutor’s office notifies the public by posting information on the state’s Internet registry. In addition, law enforcement officials go door to door and post flyers to let people know that a sex offender is moving into their area.

Parents complained to local law enforcement, but the Police Chief, John Hunt, was informed by the Alameda County district attorney and the California attorney general that there were no provisions in “Jessica’s Law” for removing or punishing Donnelly.

Shih’s article notes that, “For Mr. Donnelly’s housing decision to be considered a violation of state law, ‘there has to be a punishment attached,’ according to Nancy O’Malley, the Alameda County district attorney. She went on to say that “Jessica’s Law never assigned a punishment.”

Shih quotes Police Chief Hunt as saying: “I was amazed. You have this law that was overwhelmingly voted in and determined to be a constitution, and then you find out there’s no bite to it. It’s all bark and no bite.”

In some situations, Donnelly’s actions could amount to a parole violation and land him back in jail, but as the Rutgers University 2008 study points out, “Only 32 percent of sex offenders were parole whereas 68 percent maxed out, leaving the prison with no post-incarceration supervision requirements other than those imposed by Megan’s Law.”

A recent report conducted by Administrative Offices of the Court shows that as of June 2009 in the state of New Jersey, 5,102 individuals failed to register with local police.

Maureen Kanka says she thinks there needs to be better education of judges and better enforcement of the law. “Too many times I hear that an offender will fail to register, and once they catch him they will slap him on the hand,” Kanka says.

In 1994, the body of 7-year-old Megan Kanka was dumped in Mercer Park.

As “Megan’s Law” turns 15, New Jersey is currently out of compliance with the law named after slain Hamilton girl, Megan Kanka.
The Rutgers University and New Jersey Department of Corrections study published in 2007, suggested that "Megan’s Law" did nothing to reduce rates of recidivism among sex offenders, but the researchers noted that "New Jersey, as a whole, has experienced a consistent downward trend of sexual offense rates per 100,000 residents." The average sentence served by sex offenders is five years. Forty-six percent of those released are arrested for a sex crime) and 40 percent believe that treatment will not change the way citi- zens behave is supported by substantial evidence. Victoria Beck, Ph.D. led a group of re- searchers who published a series of articles in The Jour- nal of Psychiatric & Law that when a community is notified of a sexual offender’s presence in their neighbor- hood, their fear of victimiza- tion increases as does their likelihood of taking some self- protective measures, such as buying a dog or firearm or seeking a job. This paper concludes with a review of the same research indicates these behaviors have no im- pact on whether or not of- fenders reoffend.

A research study in Washington state that exam- ined the behavior of sexual offenders released prior to the enactment of registry and notification laws, and those released after the laws went into effect also showed no difference in recidivism rates, but did find that new offenses were detected more quickly once they had been commit- ted.

Jesse Timmendequas was sentenced to death in January 2001 for the murder and rape of seven-year-old Megan Kanka. In 2007, New Jersey abolished the death penalty. Timmendequas is now in prison for life without the possibility of parole. He has not given an interview in 15 years and denied an interview request from The Voice.

Beyond questions of whether “Megan’s Law” protects citi- zens or not, there is no doubt that it is expensive to carry out. Furthermore, the costs of compliance far outweigh the penalties for being out of compliance. According to Jus- tice Policy.org and a recent press release by David T. Schneider Law Offices, “New Jersey’s first-year outlay of $14,088,206 would vastly exceed the $16,071 it stands to lose in federal funding if it fails to implement” current sex off-ender registry and notifica- tion laws. A 2007 study con- ducted by Rutgers University and The New Jersey Depart- ment of Corrections, through a grant from the National Institute of Justice, found that “the cost for Megan’s Law implementation during the calendar year 2006 was esti- mated to be $1,557,978 [per county], whereas implemen- tation costs during calendar year 2007 totaled $3,973,832 for responding counties. This change represents a 155 per cent increase in ongoing ex- penses from calendar year 2006 to calendar year 2007.” The report concluded that the sudden increase was likely linked to the new use of Glob- al Positioning Satellites for the most dangerous offend- ers and the increased costs of surveillance.

Current New Jersey is facing an $11 billion deficit on a $33 billion budget and Governor Christie is making up the difference without in- creasing taxes, a position he campaigned on. The result has been a long list of budget cuts. College tuition assis- tance has been slashed, while prescription drug fees for se- niors has been doubled. In such an economic climate, it is perhaps not surprising that the state would choose to re- main out of compliance with costly sex offender laws.

WHAT ARE THE COSTS?

The Rutgers University and New Jersey Department of Corrections study published in 2007, suggested that "Megan’s Law" did nothing to reduce rates of recidivism among sex offenders, but the researchers noted that "New Jersey, as a whole, has experienced a consistent downward trend of sexual offense rates per 100,000 residents." The average sentence served by sex offenders is five years. Forty-six percent of those released are arrested for a sex crime) and 40 percent believe that treatment will not change the way citizens behave is supported by substantial evidence. Victoria Beck, Ph.D. led a group of researchers who published a series of articles in The Journal of Psychiatric & Law that when a community is notified of a sexual offender’s presence in their neighborhood, their fear of victimization increases as does their likelihood of taking some self-protective measures, such as buying a dog or firearm or seeking a job. This paper concludes with a review of the same research indicates these behaviors have no impact on whether or not offenders reoffend.

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Sgt. William P. Baste- do who is currently in charge of the "Megan’s Law" unit of the West Windsor Town- ship police says that the law is valuable to law enforcers, because “We know who the offenders are and where they are located.” Knowing who to talk to when a child goes missing or is found dead, however, does not appear to be the original intent of “Meg- an’s Law” and may not be what community members expect it to offer.

The fact that “Megan’s Law” turns 15 this year is particularly significant because one of the provisions of the law allows offenders to petition to have their name removed after 15 years. The law allows offenders to petition to have their name removed after 15 years. Local Public Defense Attorney Michael Buncher said in an interview with The College Voice that so far he has worked with ten regist- ered sex offenders who have sought to have their names removed from the registry that trea- ters of Michelle’s clients have been denied, but six have been successful. One of Buncher’s cases is still pending.

Only certain people qualify to have their names removed from the registry. "Convictions such as sexual assault, aggravated sexual assault and offenses to more than one victim or more than one offense, automatically qualifies an offender for being on the list for a lifetime, regardless of the tier they were placed on,” says Buncher.

Public defense attor- ney Duffy states that the group most successful in having their names removed are those who committed their offense as juveniles. Yet even for low risk offenders, he adds, “It is possible that someone on tier one may not qualify for name removal.”

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According to Richard Tewskbury in his 2005 article “Sexual Murder: Catathymic and Compul- sive Homicides” Schlesinger seeks to differentiate the vari- ous types of sexual murders, pointing out that not all mur- derers that appear sexually moti- vated are and vice versa. A for a sample of Mercer students shows that while few are aware of “Megan’s Law,” 40 percent believe that “Megan’s Law” is ineffective for sexual offend- ers. Research suggests this may be true for sociopathic offend- ers and killers like Ted Bundy and Jeffrey Dahmer, but is not necessarily the case for all sex- ual offenders, including the 54 percent who do not re-offense as described in the Rutgers report. Of those sexual offend- ers who do not re-offense data suggests that sexual regis- try and notification laws may make them even more likely to seek contact with children simply as a result of being ostrac- ized by the adult community.

CANS THEY GET OFF THE LIST?

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JESSE TIMMENDEQUAS

was sentenced to death in January 2001 for the murder and rape of seven-year-old Megan Kanka. In 2007, New Jersey abolished the death penalty. Timmendequas is now in prison for life without the possibility of parole. He has not given an interview in 15 years and denied an interview request from The Voice.
Men’s basketball makes nationals

By Brendan Belluscio

The Mercer Vikings’ men’s basketball team is competing for the school’s first men’s basketball national title since 1974 in the NJCAA Division II National Championship in Danville, Ill.

The team has been chasing a national title since they last made it in 1974, and fans and players alike are hoping this year will be their year. Derek Williams, a sophomore Liberal-Arts major and guard for the Vikings, said in the beginning of the season, "We started 2-7, which can be at the beginning of the season. Two of our best players were injured and we managed without them. After the rough start we were on an eight or nine game streak. We kept working hard and we are going to keep working hard," said Williams.

The team’s season began long before games started with summer workouts. Multiple players credit the running and summer workouts with bringing the team together and helping the players get through the grind of a long season. The season did not start well for the Vikings. They started 2-7, which can be attributed to injuries to Derek Williams and Uros Kovacevic. "We’ve come a long way since the beginning of the season. Two of our best players were inured and we managed without them. After the rough start we were on an eight or nine game streak. We kept working hard and we are going to keep working hard," said Williams.

During the losing streak, the team had the opportunity to play a game against Frederick College at the Verizon Center in Washington, D.C., home of the NBA’s Washington Wizards and Georgetown University men’s basketball team. Even though they lost a close game 80-74, playing in the arena left a profound impact on the players. "It was a big deal, overwhelming. We tried to soak everything in. It really showed us the reason why we are all here," said Kovacevic.

Now that the regional tournament is over, the team faces a long layoff between March 2 and March 16 before the beginning of the national tournament. During the break, the players have been practicing hard. "We have over two weeks...we have to use this period to rest up and then work hard. We are going to be competing with the 16 best teams in the country," said Kovacevic.

"With a game coming up we have to focus, get healthy, and mentally prepare," said Andrew. "We have to realize that we are all we got," said reserve sophomore guard Marcus Jimenez. "It takes five guys to talk defense. We have to get the mindset that there is no tomorrow...and do the little things," Jimenez added.

Merce’s first determined opponent will be sixth seeded Kishwaukee College (26-6) who advanced to the tournament by beating Black Hawk (Ill.) College 64-60 in the Region 4 tournament final. Kishwaukee is led by 6’6” sophomore forward Lavonette Douglass who is averaging 18.7 points and 11.7 rebounds on the season.

The team is not worried about going up against Kishwaukee’s star player. According to Andrews, "We are going to deal with him no differently than anybody else. We just need to pressure the ball and continue to do what got us here." Derek Williams put it plainly, "The big guy is gonna lock him up. If Paco (Boussougou) comes to play, we are gonna lock him up."

Running down a dream

By Veronica Furnace

Mercer will be introducing a women’s cross country team in fall 2010. The team will be coached by Erin Cahill, an administrator and specialist in the athletics office at Mercer. Cahill holds a Master’s degree in Physical Education from TCNJ, where she ran on the varsity cross country team.

Cahill says she intends to recruit runners by contacting cross country coaches at local high schools. Mercer’s Athletics Director, John Simone says, "Initially we’re gonna grow slow but we think that our participation will be from new students who will come to the college who normally wouldn’t come to this college."

Cahill says a few students have already expressed interest and they hope to entice a few recruits from other community colleges in the area that don’t offer cross country by offering them in-county tuition rates. Simone says that he has entertained the idea of adding another women’s sports team for a while. "We wanted to grow to one more sport, which keeps us more closely aligned with the other community colleges in the state of New Jersey in terms of growth...cross country was the one we studied and felt that was the best since seven or eight other community colleges already have cross country...we felt this would align beautifully," Simone said.

The addition of another women’s sports team will also serve to help Mercer’s standing under Title IX, which requires that runners have the opportunity to play a game against Frederick College at the Verizon Center in Washington, D.C., home of the NBA’s Washington Wizards and Georgetown University men’s basketball team.

According to Simone, for every 20 male athletes to a sports team at Mercer, the corresponding women’s team has about 16; the new women’s cross country team will aid the Mercer athletics department’s “quest to increase women’s participation in sports on campus.”

Cahill says, “Our male teams have a few more athletes than the female teams...so we’re just trying to get that ratio of male to female athletes as close to 50-50 as possible. So we’re hoping that if we could add six to ten women [to sports teams] we could be close to that 50-50.”

To be eligible for the team Cahill says she is not requiring that runners have high school cross country experience, but that they must meet basic fitness requirements and appear capable of managing the busy competition and training schedule in addition to maintaining their course work.
Amrit Aburmad

By Anthony Willis

Amrit Aburmad, a Viking men's soccer mid-fielder will transfer to Boston College in the fall. A survey was taken of 30 Mercer Students that asked "If you initially don't like an activity, would you give it up on it?" A full 90 percent of students said yes. Nick Hivasta, 19, is among the other 10 percent.

On January 10, former Mercer student and Lawrence Township resident Nick Hivasta won the Classic League championship. Hivasta defeated opponent Christopher Yolen 266 to 230 and was awarded the $5,000 grand prize which he used to help pay for his tuition for the singles league "The Classic League" which features one-on-one matchups between players.

Along with winning a championship, the perfect game Hivasta rolled in September of 2009 is among his proudest moment. "The pressure didn't hit me until about the seventh or eighth frame," said Hivasta. "I was on the verge of perfection and I could feel people starting to look on."

Christopher Yolen, whom Hivasta beat for the Classic League Championship says, "(Nick) is a tough opponent but one that is very knowledgeable and respectful of the sport. He always shows good sportsmanship. Whether win or lose, he'll walk over after every game and give you a solid handshake."

Hivasta's statistics have peaked in his league with letting his GPA suffer. He plays at both Curtis Lanes in Ewing and Colonial Lanes in Lawrence, playing for the singles league "The Classic League" which features one-on-one matchups between players.

Showana Paul

By Matthew Nelson

Showana Paul joined the women's Viking's basketball team this year after playing for Trenton Central High School, which has had one of Mercer County's top girls basketball teams for the past three seasons.

Paul, who is only 5'2" helped the Vikings finish the regular season with a record of 21-8. They hosted the Region XIX tournament and lost in their first-round game against Burlington 64-58.

Playing the point guard position, Paul averaged 3.2 points, 1.1 rebounds, and 1.5 assists per game this season. She shot 38.3 percent from the field and 26.3 percent from the free throw line while averaging 15.6 minutes of play per game.

"Those are the best things," Paul said. "He is very talented and has great vision on the field. He always did good work and worked hard that time, "I played for my club team national under-18 team. He says of school he was playing on the Israeli school even started, then between that time, "I was kicking balls from the second that or not depends on how much time she puts in and how much understanding she gets out of it.""
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On September 30, Adam Goldstein, a lawyer at the Student Press Law Center in Arlington, Virginia, hit a milestone. He answered his 10,000th phone call request for help since he came on the job in 2003. At least three of those calls came from The College Voice to check on matters of policy and public records access.

The Student Press Law Center, turns 35 this year. The SPLC serves high school and college level student publications with press law resources and advice. The Center is a politically neutral, non-profit organization that is funded entirely by donations from individuals, foundations, and corporations.

An issue that is constantly voiced to the SPLC is the difficulty in accessing information that is legally available to the public.

"People are constantly telling us that they can’t get timely or accurate information on crime statistics on campus," says First Amendment lawyer, and former journalist, Frank LoMonte, Executive Director of the SPLC.

When trying to access information available under state or federal open records laws, a formal request is often necessary. The SPLC website tries to make this process simpler by providing a State Open Records Law Request Letter Generator. This tool allows student journalists to simply select their state, fill in blanks, and have an information request letter generated automatically.

LoMonte also notes that the ever-expanding use of off-campus websites, blogs and social networking sites has created some unique first amendment and privacy challenges.

"People are more and more using Facebook and other social networking sites as a library for source material," LoMonte says. He explains that if such content was accessed without permission, the content owner’s privacy may have been violated.

"It’s not entirely unlike someone’s own home, you must be invited in," LoMonte says, adding, "If I gain admission through the inducement of a friend, there could be an invasion of privacy."

Part of the issue is an ethical matter. Once published online, information can reach further than any hardcopy paper ever could, and inaccurate or libelous statements could haunt someone for years.

Another area of particular concern to the SPLC is use of school judicial boards in lieu of filing formal civil charges for alleged student misconduct.

"The public is often surprised to hear that student boards are deciding things that carry possible felony charges and jail time in the criminal justice system," LoMonte said. Unlike actual court proceedings that are normally open to the public, these on-campus trials are often closed sessions, and records of the disciplinary action are often unavailable to the public.

When criminal matters are handled like academic misconduct, schools can claim that the proceedings are protected under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, FERPA.

The SPLC suggests that student privacy law must be reformed. "FERPA is widely abused" Frank LoMonte said, adding, "Schools may hide behind FERPA to withhold embarrassing information."

In several workshop and seminar sessions of the College Media Adviser’s Convention in New York City on March 14-16, LoMonte addressed hundreds of college journalists and their advisers (including six VOICE staffers) on the shortcomings of FERPA and the best ways student journalists can work with college administrators to ensure that private information is kept private and public information is provided to journalists.

The SPLC maintains an extensive website that is a one-stop repository for press law issues such as libel, privacy, source protection and Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests.

The organization recently released a third edition of Law of the Student Press, a comprehensive resource for school publishing. The 20 chapter, 400+ page volume contains newly updated sections to cover fair use of online media and the effect of recent Supreme Court decisions on censorship.

For more information about the SPLC visit the SPLC link on www.mcccvoice.org.
PRINCETON SPORTS & FAMILY MEDICINE, P.C.

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Why We Write

Sara Gating, Editor in Chief

Amidst the buzz about the closing of The College VOICE this year, the staff and administration of the college have expressed concerns about the impact this closure will have on student life. In an interview with The Sentry, President Brian Edgeworth stated that the decision to end the newspaper was made after a thorough review of the college's financial situation. He added that the newspaper faced increasing costs and was no longer sustainable financially.

In response to these concerns, The College VOICE has developed a plan to transition its content into an online platform, where it will continue to provide students with content on campus life, student activities, and news.

In addition to this, the college has announced the creation of a new student organization, The College Voice Online, which will be responsible for producing content for the online platform. The organization will be composed of students who are passionate about journalism and want to continue contributing to the college community.

The College VOICE is committed to providing students with a platform to share their stories and perspectives. We believe that this online transition will allow us to reach a wider audience and continue to serve our community.

We encourage all students to get involved in the new organization and contribute to the online platform. Together, we can continue to provide valuable content to the college community.

Thank you for your support and we look forward to continuing the important work of The College VOICE online.