

Photo from Wikimedia Commons



Three students were fatally shot as a result of a shooting on Michigan State University's campus on Feb. 13.

Rider reacts to Michigan State tragedy

By Shaun Chornobroff

WHEN deciding where he was going to attend college, Gabe Kennis narrowed his choices down to Rider and Michigan State University, ultimately decided to enroll at Rider. The reason the senior arts and entertainment industries management major said he chose to venture out to Lawrenceville, New Jersey instead of being the latest member of his family to enroll at Michigan State: scholarship opportunity.

He was alerted on Feb. 13 via email blasts from multiple news organizations that a gunman had opened fire on Michigan State's campus, resulting in the deaths of three students and injuring five more. In addition to immediately worrying about his cousin and childhood friends who attend the school, Kennis had a moment of realization that he easily could have been there.

"That's a pure theoretical from four years ago, but it is very harrowing," said Kennis, who's typical smile and cheery demeanor escaped him multiple times during an interview with The Rider News. "It was kind of one of those reflective things, where it's just the choices we make and where we are at any time. You wonder about things like that."

'An immediate, very visceral reaction'

The gunman, identified as 43-year-old Anthony Dwayne McRae, opened fire on the East Lansing campus before taking his own life once police located him. According to reports, McRae was carrying a note in his pocket threatening two Ewing, New Jersey, public schools. As a result of the threats, Ewing, a town neighboring Rider, closed its public schools on Feb. 14, the day after the Michigan murders. On the same day, Rider Public Safety notified the university of an increased police presence on campus.

Kennis grew up in Frankfort, Michigan, nearly three hours away from Michigan State's campus. If you look at the state of Michigan like it's a hand, Kennis said his hometown is located on the pinky.

In the midst of the shooting, while police were searching for the gunman and Michigan State students were ordered to shelter in place, Kennis said he spent two to three hours in what

he described as states of worry and denial before slowly finding out through updates on social media that friends and family that attend the school were safe.

Normally when tragedy strikes, Kennis said his first reaction is to scurry to the internet.

This incident was different.

"It was an immediate, very visceral reaction as soon as I saw that. I'm a person who checks the news very actively, very regularly when I hear of something happening in the news via an alert or something," said Kennis. "I almost immediately look into it deeper, but this one was not like that. It was like I heard about it and then I wanted to be away from it."

Eventually, in the shielded space that was his dorm room, Kennis' few hours of terror started to subside and his friends and family marked themselves as safe. When he finally mustered the courage to check coverage of the shooting for the first time, he didn't rely on an outlet such as CNN or Fox News, he went to Reuters, "because they're very emotionless in how they report things."

"If I was hearing quotes, if I was looking at images, I don't think I could have done it," said Kennis. "I turned to the format that felt, I guess, the coldest in some ways, just because I don't think I could have been in that emotional moment."

'How can I better prepare'

The first time Rider Spanish professor Maria Villalobos-Buehner said she noticed the conversations change centering around gun violence on college campuses in the aftermath of the Virginia Tech massacre that killed 23 people in April of 2007.

At the time, Villalobos-Buehner had already been teaching for more than 15 years and was a professor at a university in Grand Rapids, Michigan, while finishing her doctorate degree at Michigan State.

"Now it is that layer of how can I better prepare?" explained Villalobos-Buehner. "That becomes part of your living, part of your routine."

Villalobos-Buehner graduated from Michigan State with her doctorate in higher, adult and lifelong education in August of 2009. During the latter

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'Taste of Africa Banquet' celebrates Black History

By Jay Roberson

AS students walked through the golden streamers in the doorway of the NJM Community room on Feb. 16, they were transported into the vibrant continent of Africa filled with upbeat music, the smell of well-seasoned food and a community ready to celebrate their heritage.

Rider's African Student Association (RASA) hosted the "Taste of Africa Banquet" to bring together their community as well as to educate the Rider community on African culture.

Junior political science major Naa'san Carr spoke about the value of culturally-rich events like these at Rider.

"For me, being an African American male, it's great to see events like this because this is our roots. This is like the foundation of our culture here in America, [it] is duplicated from African culture. We just make it our own here in America," Carr said.

Carr introduced RASA President and Vice President, senior information systems major Zeina Ly and senior sociology major Niera Crawford, before they kicked off the event by handing the mic to the Black woman-owned small shop Culture Rocks by Nini. Culture Rocks by Nini sells African-inspired clothing, jewelry, accessories and artifacts.

After a brief lesson about African American history presented by the small shop, the aroma of African food lingered in the air as the guests waited to be called up by their tables, which were named after different African countries.

Junior global studies major Kayla McIntyre discussed her favorite parts of her culture in an interview with The Rider News, which were "most definitely the food, but also the community."

The RASA executive board served the guests jerk chicken, jollof rice, fried ripe plantain and puff-puff, which are all traditional African cuisine. When offered seconds, the whole crowd got back up to get more.

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Food being served at the banquet to guests.

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The glamorous formal tradition returns for another year of fun.



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The Rider News reports theft of hundreds of print copies

By Amethyst Martinez

HUNDREDS of print copies of The Rider News were taken from multiple locations throughout campus over a recent weekend, with The Rider News staff members discovering the thefts. Newspapers were discovered missing from newsstands at four locations on Feb. 12: Sweigart Hall, Bierenbaum Fisher Hall, the Science and Technology Center and Student Recreation Center. Newspapers were also tampered with at locations in the Bart Luedeke Center and Lynch Adler Hall. The Rider News filed a report with Rider Public Safety and the Lawrence Police Department,

requesting a review of security footage surrounding newsstands due to the value of newspapers stolen. In an email to The Rider News on Feb. 21, James Waldon, director of Public Safety, said, “Our investigation did conclude that an employee rearranged and relocated some newspapers, though doing so did not constitute a criminal act. The matter was referred to Human Resources for corrective action.” According to the Student Press Law Center (SPLC), newspaper theft is censorship, and “a serious threat to the viability of the student media

community.” Campus newspaper thieves have been prosecuted across the nation, according to the SPLC. “Newspaper theft is a crime. Even in the online/digital age, theft of physical newspapers continues to be an appalling form of censorship,” The SPLC says on its website. “Each year student publications across the country fall victim to thieves whose intent is to prevent the dissemination of news, information, and opinion in which they disagree.”

Rider presents African culture in unique way

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After the attendees were seated once again, the next guest, Victor Marshall, the director of the Marshall Hand & Drum Ensemble, performed several African Diaspora drumming pieces. In between sets, he explained the significance of drums for Africans as it served as a form of communication while enslaved and silenced. Senior psychology major and treasurer of RASA Daicya Dawson spoke about how multicultural organizations like RASA have helped her learn about different cultures because she is Caribbean and there are no Caribbean organizations on campus. “It just introduced me to a whole new culture ... I just see so many similarities from back home. It just brings a type of comfort for people who aren’t New Jerseyans,” Dawson said. When performances concluded, guests were invited to take pictures in a 360-degree photo booth which was set up by Black woman-owned small business Waters 360 Entertainment. Props like bubble guns and sunglasses were used as participants posed for the camera. To close out the night, junior business analytics major and secretary of RASA, Abraham Ohiokhai-Benson, hosted a friendly competition of musical chairs that turned out to be more competitive than expected. 11 contestants fought for the first-place prize, which was an Amazon gift card. The event proved to be educational as well as an opportunity for Rider to see the beauty of Africa. Carr summed up the ambience of the event when explaining his own favorite parts of his culture: “It’s vibrant, everything about it is vibrant. It’s totally positive, flashy and elegant. There’s always different facets to it. So like I said, there’s never a dull moment in each layer of the culture. It’s just bright, a lot of positivity, a lot of sunshine.”



Abraham Ohiokhai-Benson, Daicya Dawson, Niera Crawford and Zeina Ly, RASA E-board serves guests African cuisine.



Victor Marshall performs traditional African drumming pieces.



11 contestants compete for a gift card in musical chairs.



Small, Black woman-owned shop, Culture Rocks by Nini, sells a variety of accessories.

Two alumni lifetime commitment to the university

By Shaun Chornobroff

A LOVE that blossomed at Rider’s campus more than eight decades earlier has paid the school back and then some. James H. McGordy ’39 and Elsie Varga ’39 saw their romance bloom on the streets of Lawrenceville, and, more than 80 years after receiving their diplomas, the couple has given the university a \$2.35 million gift through a trust, according to a Feb. 13 press release. The couple were routine donors to Rider’s annual fund, and its latest donation is the 19th gift of more than \$1 million since Rider’s Transforming Students - Transforming Lives campaign was started nearly five years ago. The fundraising crusade began in July 2017 and was publicly revealed on Oct. 29 during Homecoming Weekend, where Rider President Gregory Dell’Omo said the university raised more than \$76 million of its \$80 million goal. Rider’s Director of Communications Rachel Stengel said, “The success of the campaign is due to several factors, including the University’s mission and the direct way that Transforming Students - Transforming Lives supports that mission. ... The plan resonates with donors, the majority of whom were Rider students themselves and felt their own lives had been transformed thanks to their Rider experience.” McGordy and Varga eventually married and

stayed together until October 2005, when Varga died, followed by her husband in August 2020. The couple’s only child died in August 2022. As a result, the remainder of the couple’s trust was split between Rider and Rutgers University, where both earned postgraduate degrees. The gift will endow a scholarship toward commuter students within the College of Education and Human Services (CEHS), as well as partially endow a \$2,000 annual scholarship for incoming undergraduate education majors starting in fall 2023. The scholarship is part of an effort to increase the amount of qualified teachers as Rider tries to combat a national educator shortage, according to the university press release announcing the scholarship. “Rider has a demonstrated track record of

nurturing outstanding teachers,” said Jason Barr, dean of Rider’s College of Education and Human Services in the press release. “This scholarship is designed to help students who are passionate and dedicated to the field of education. As future educators, they will have an incredible impact on generations of students during this challenging time for the profession.” The release states that 100% of 2021 graduates from the education department are employed full-time or are continuing their education. “They give us a lot of work in the field that makes it really easy to know what you’re doing when you have to interact with students,” said sophomore elementary education major Rowan Mickley. Varga was involved in Rider’s education department during her time at the school, earning a Bachelor’s of science of education. She last worked for Ramapo Indian Hills Regional High School, according to the press release. Her husband received a Bachelor of Accounts and was a member of the Accountants Club while at Rider. He went on to be the chief financial officer of Ingredient Technology Corp., eventually became one of the original partners of Ernst and Young, which is one of the big four accounting firms, according to the release.



Alumni James H. McGordy '39 and Elsie Varga '39 donated \$2.35 million to Rider through a trust.

Rider members reflect on Michigan State memories post-tragedy

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part of her time at Michigan State, she made an hour-long commute from her teaching position in Grand Rapids to finish her degree in East Lansing, the campus where the Feb. 13 fatal shooting occurred.

When the Columbine High School shootings occurred in April of 1999, Villalobos-Buehner said it “shook the sense of safety” for her as she was preparing to be a mother. It was the first time the idea of a school shooting had occurred to her. Twelve students and one teacher were killed in that Colorado school shooting, and the two gunmen took their own lives.

Villalobos-Buehner said she was at her home on Feb. 13 when she received a notification turning her attention to the campus that had once been a haven of education, conversation and most importantly, safety. Flipping on her television and following the live coverage brought Villalobos-Buehner “closer to that repetitive, senseless loss of lives.”

“As soon as I knew, I said, ‘oh my gosh, Michigan State’ and then hearing the names of places where for me were places that were almost like a sanctuary, that never crossed my mind,” said Villalobos-Buehner, whose daughter graduated from Rider in 2022. “Not even a thought, right? Campuses, university campuses are normally free and normally spaces where there is that freedom, right? To navigate that you feel safe, and that’s how I felt every time I went.”

Before a question could be asked, Villalobos-Buehner opened up her interview with The Rider News by stating her prayers and condolences to the families and students at Michigan State. Seeing the students of a campus that holds an abundance of positive experiences for her be stripped of a sense of guaranteed welfare struck a different chord.

“To see those places that meant collegiality, meeting, safety, security, talking about everything. The place in which you enjoy a really good meal, a cup of coffee or a cup of tea, just turn into this space, that shouldn’t have happened,” said Villalobos-Buehner.

As an educator, Villalobos-Buehner has seen American society evolve from one that was blissfully unaware of violence at schools to one that has elementary school children preparing for the possibility of on-campus violence. She remains aware that she has no way of knowing if she will ever have to help preserve the lives of her students, but remains mentally prepared for the day she might.

“I know that there are these things that I can not control, right? Then I say, ‘What can I do?’” said Villalobos-Buehner. “So I try to bring it to a place in which I can have some control. And what it is, is to inform, ask and see what I can do in that place, and that, in a way, gives me some sense of control.”

Shootings at Rider

Gun violence is far from a normality on Rider’s campus where the Student Code of Social Conduct prohibits possession of weapons on campus, but it has seeped its way onto the university grounds in the past.

On Nov. 9, 2003, a New York Times article headlined “When Campus Violence Flares” described an influx of violence at New Jersey colleges, citing two Rider shootings in the previous month. On Feb. 12, 1980, shots were fired at the Phi Sigma Epsilon fraternity house, leaving two students injured, although both survived and returned to classes, according to a memo sent to faculty and administration nine days after the incident. In March of 1993, Kenneth Bernard McBride died at 21 as a result of being shot in the chest at a party sponsored by the Phi Beta Sigma fraternity in the parking lot outside the student center. A 17-year-old high schooler was charged with the crime. Neither McBride or the teen charged with the crime were Rider students.

“You hear about stuff like this and you realize you’re lucky. You realize that there’s so much that can happen in just a moment, and it’s harrowing,” said Kennis. “At our age we don’t like to dwell on our own mortality and stuff like this makes it very,



Courtesy of Maria Villalobos-Buehner

Rider professor **Maria Villalobos-Buehner** and her daughter.

very abundantly clear.”

Since 2008, Rider has reported three weapons incidents, according to the university Fire Safety Reports. The Fire Safety and Security Report is released in compliance with the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act that requires colleges and universities nationwide to release three years’ worth of statistics annually. Rider has had two arrests for weapons law violations, one in 2011 and another in 2021, and in 2019, one weapon violation handled by campus officials. The reports include all weapons violations, and do not specify when the cases involve firearms.

On its website, Rider has a page dedicated to active shooter responses. The page lists five actions if an active shooter is at the university: figure out, get out, hide out, take out, call out. It explains to assess the situation to see if there is a gunman. If possible, exit the building “away from the immediate path of danger.” Hide if not possible to escape the building and as a last resort, to take out the shooter, using “physical aggression, total commitment and absolute resolve.” Lastly, it says to report the events to authorities when safe to do so.

In the event of an emergency, call 911 or Public Safety at 609-896-7777.

Professor releases Oxford University Press publication

By Kaitlyn McCormick

STUDENTS and faculty gathered in Fine Arts room 321 on Feb. 16 for a special installment of “English Matters” where they were able to applaud one of Rider’s own after an idea that once originated as English professor Kelly Ross’ Ph.D. dissertation has evolved into a published book from Oxford University Press.

English professor Jack Sullivan introduced Ross as well as the program in which the department presents “significant outside speakers” to Rider and, in this case, “a beloved insider.”

“Slavery, Surveillance, and Genre in Antebellum United States Literature” links the genres of the fugitive slave narrative and detective fiction, drawing from works of authors of color. Attendees were able to learn more about the publication, released in England in November 2022 and the United States in January, from the author herself in a Q&A style talk hosted by English professor Matthew Goldie.

Sullivan, who was on the hiring committee that brought Ross to the university, recalled being “blown away” by the idea Ross had for this book at the time. “I’m so gratified that it’s in its fruition now in this publication from Oxford University Press,” he said.

Ross, after expressing her own gratitude for the faculty and students that filled the classroom and took advantage of the free pizza offered to attendees, explained that the “germ of the project” originated from a class she took in graduate school, in which she read Edgar Allen Poe’s only novel, “The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket.”

While this work is a travel narrative and what Ross would describe as “fantastical,” she also noticed Poe “essentially making Pym into a detective,” three years before what would be generally acknowledged as the first detective story. This then led to the major connection in her work: “Why in this novel about race is Poe talking about the way that this man, or

Photo by Evelio Contreras



Author and professor **Kelly Ross** poses with her book.

this character, observes, investigates, deduces, pursues, tracks. ... I came to realize, after thinking about it, in 1830s and 1840s America, those skills are extremely tied to the pursuit and recapture of fugitive enslaved people,” Ross said.

A large portion of the work deals in the distinction between surveillance and sousveillance. Sousveillance, meaning to watch from below and often from a position of vulnerability if perceived.

Senior English majors Shamiya Ford and Omotara Dairo shared their takeaways and reasons for attending Ross’s presentation.

“Anything that supports, especially what other professors are doing, like the work they do outside of classes, is something I feel like a lot of students should participate in more,” Dairo said.

Ford, who took a class on Poe with Ross and is in the process of working on her thesis, expressed interest in the professor’s views on genre and said that she

wants to be an academic, so hearing what distinct members in the field like Ross have to say is beneficial and provides insight to be emulated in her own work as a student.

The book takes on a chaptered structure to explore fugitive slave narratives from the 1820s and 1830s and how they influence what is now known as detective fiction, slave rebellions, where according to Ross the “watching and the surveillance becomes visible and violent,” as well as slave speculation of the 1850s, where the original meaning of the word speculate was to spy.

The discussion opened up to a lively forum, where fellow professors posed questions about Ross’s redefinitions of genre and the ways in which these themes and influences of surveillance, sousveillance and the American penal system are evident today.

In an interview after the discussion, Ross dove deeper into the roughly collective eight-year undertaking that was authoring this book, specifically the care she felt necessary in crafting a discussion around race and slavery as it related to literary genre.

“I gave a lot of thought to even things like word choice,” Ross explained; “I use the word enslaved and enslaved person to make sure that I am constantly recognizing the humanity of the person rather than the condition they were being put in.”

The linking of genres in this book also highlights Ross’s specialties under the umbrella of English and literature. “I am trained in both African American and American literature, and so I can bring those conversations together,” she said, while maintaining the importance she felt in citing people of color and women of color in her work.

“I am very aware that...this topic is full of trauma and violence, and it still is traumatic for our country and the people in our country today. It’s not a subject to be taken lightly,” Ross said.

Rebovich Institute highlights speaker's fight to end hunger

By Jake Tiger

On Feb. 16, the Rebovich Institute welcomed New Jersey Assembly Speaker Craig Coughlin to Lynch Adler Hall for a discussion of politics and how his statewide fight against food insecurity has directly affected Rider University.

The evening was part of an ongoing series of guest speakers that aimed to solidify and enhance the Rebovich Institute's teachings.

"One of our main goals is to connect Rider's students with New Jersey's public officials," said Micah Rasmussen, director of the Rebovich Institute and organizer of the discussion. "We're the closest campus to Trenton, so we have a unique ability to bring people here. ... Our little, tiny corner of the world has so much to do with all of these decisions that are changing people's lives."

Before Coughlin stepped to the podium, Rasmussen introduced him to the audience of students, faculty and staff as the state's "fiercest fighter against hunger," with one of the Democrat's main legislative focuses being the all-too-common issue of food insecurity.

"I was privileged to go to the White House food-insecurity conference back in October, and the things that other states are talking about in aspirational terms are things that we have in our rearview mirror," said Coughlin. "We gave [food insecurity] the priority that it deserves, because I think it's closer to a moral obligation than it is to a governmental function."

After becoming assembly speaker in 2018, Coughlin played a major role in the recent restructures of New Jersey's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Hunger-Free Campus Grant Program.

Starting in March 2023, New Jersey's minimum SNAP benefits will be increased from \$50 to \$95 monthly in an effort to combat increasing grocery prices. The reformation will also allow more college students to qualify for SNAP.

New Jersey's expanded Hunger-Free Campus Grant Program provides monetary assistance to schools throughout the state to ensure that nutritious and affordable food is always within reach for college students who infamously struggle with food security.

On Feb. 9, the state Office of the Secretary of Higher Education awarded Rider with a grant north of \$18,000 to aid in maintaining the university's food and resource pantry, and to raise awareness of food insecurity throughout the campus, according to a press release from Rider.

"I didn't realize how many people on college campuses struggle with food insecurity as well. Shame on me for that," said Coughlin. "I do know it now, and we've done things to make [food security] a reality for students. Every campus has to have a food pantry. Every campus has to help students with SNAP benefits."

Rider's pantry provides food, clothing and other essentials to students in need and can be found in room 23 of the Joseph P. Vona Center, beside Daly's Dining Hall. Operating hours and more information can be found on Rider's website under the office of service and civic engagement resources tab.

"If any of you are out there and are hungry, please make sure you take advantage of those benefits," said Coughlin. "We all know that nobody performs as well as they can if they have to worry about whether they're going to eat or not."

The Rebovich Institute plans to have more speakers later in the semester, with future guests including New Jersey Rep. Mikie Sherrill and Ian Millhiser, a political journalist for Vox.

Exact dates for the upcoming discussions are yet to be scheduled.

Photo from @RiderMockTrial on Instagram



The Rider Mock Trial Team and adviser pose with their trophy.

Mock trial team makes mark at regionals

By Sarah Griffin

RIDER'S mock trial team announced their involvement in their first ever regional competition hosted at Princeton University on Feb. 19. The team made up of seven women took to Instagram to share that "[They] are tiny! But [they] certainly are mighty!"

Micah Rasmussen, the director of the Rebovich Institute for New Jersey Politics, took to Twitter to report the same. He said, "Rider University's brand new Mock Trial team earned an incredible 7-1 record ... this weekend, including a 2-0 win over a top 25 team nationally. Our students won a bid to the national semifinals and shocked the mock trial world."

Throughout the academic year, the team participated in competitions which, according to the American Mock Trial Association (AMTA), "are held around the country to allow teams to practice and prepare for AMTA-sanctioned tournaments in February through April."

The Rider team is led by former New Jersey trial lawyer Alan Y. Medvin.

Medvin said the team's performance in their first two invitationals of the year made him "so proud." He continued by saying that he "couldn't ask for a greater group in terms of the people who are competing with us on the team."

Medvin reached out to Andrew Bernstein, a senior political science major, in Spring 2022 asking Bernstein to help start the mock trial team for Rider.

Bernstein described Rider being invited to their first invitationals as a "big deal." Bernstein also said the new mock trial team filled a void the university had before its inception.

Michaela Smith, a sophomore communications major and co-captain of the team, said the first competition of the season was "really eye-opening."

Smith added, "We were definitely very intimidated and a little nervous going in, but I feel like we came out with a lot of experience and takeaways that we can use to get ready for regionals in February."

Camryn Curnuck, a senior musical theater major and competition captain of the mock trial team,

called being on mock trial "a beautiful blend of theater and academics and strategy."

Curnuck, who is considering going to law school, said that in the next few competitions of the season she is going to work on "appearing more confident," something she got practice with the weekend before Thanksgiving when she stepped in to play an attorney instead of a witness when a few of her teammates called out sick.

Amanda Steele, a freshman political science major on the team, said not having all of her team members caused a disadvantage at the first competition of the season. Despite this, Steele said the competition went really well.

"We were expecting to get absolutely trashed by other teams that had all their members, but we didn't, and we did significantly better than expected," Steele continued.

Bella Frost, a sophomore acting for film, television and theater major, plays a witness in Rider's mock trial cases.

"Last year, I was in my acting for the camera class and our teacher started talking about [the mock trial team] and how it was a great opportunity to learn about and play a character in a high-pressure circumstance ... so I figured it would be a good opportunity to practice some acting skills," Frost said.

The Rider Mock Trial team shocked everyone, including themselves, by how well they placed in their competitions over winter break: the team won seven out of the eight possible ballots, something unheard of for a team as new as the Rider team.

"When Alan told us we went five and one, and were probably going to be seven and one, that was when I felt like I won," Curnuck said. She continued as tears started to fall down her face, "I'm getting emotional, but it wasn't about the trophy for me. I just wanted to feel proud of my team and the work we put in because we worked so hard all year and to just be able to be so proud of the performance we put on and all the work we put into this, getting something out of it is the best feeling in the world. I really can't even describe it."

Photo from @RiderMockTrial on Instagram



Award-winning team members **Emily Paruk** (left) and **Camryn Curnuck** (right).

Photo from @RiderMockTrial on Instagram



Rider's mock trial team is made up of seven women.

Freshman cabaret gives musical theater program ‘Momentum’

By Zachary Klein

ACOLD February evening warmed up quickly when 30 freshman musical theater students entered the stage of the Bart Luedeke Center (BLC) Theater wearing brightly colored yet mismatched outfits. None of these students had performed on a Rider mainstage before, so the nervous energy filled the room’s capacity. But over the next 75 minutes, that energy faded as they did what they loved to do – perform.

Directed by Adjunct Assistant Professor Louis Goldberg, the freshman cabaret “Momentum” played the BLC Feb. 17 and 18 to mostly full houses. The program’s repertoire spanned from American musical theater pop and rock genres, all connecting to a common theme relating to the event’s title.

“The idea [of “Momentum”] came from the notion of actually coming out of the pandemic and that these students probably spent a year or a year and a half of high school at home,” Goldberg said. “They just got thrust into the college environment ... gaining speed in a quick way.”

Most of the songs Goldberg chose had to do with coming and going. Many dealt with transportation, including portions of the show strictly dedicated to trains, planes and sailboats. All related to the theme of “Momentum,” it pertains to the push or pull of arriving and departing. Because of the wide variety of selections, it is likely most people in the audience knew at least one song.

Being part of a cabaret like this is extremely important for freshman students because it gives them their first opportunity to perform on the Rider stage, somewhere that they will call home over the next four years. Goldberg stressed the importance of how this will prepare them for future productions.

“I think it gives everybody a chance to have a little feature, a little solo and get their feet wet in terms of being on stage in a college atmosphere,” Goldberg said.

One of the students who participated in the cabaret was freshman musical theater major Lilli Doll, who uses they/them pronouns. A native of Columbus,

Ohio, Doll was already used to musical theater from their previous experience in high school. They were exuberant to have performed in their first Rider show.

“I got to work on so many different things,” Doll said. “It was just a nice, well-rounded opportunity that you don’t quite get from a [traditional] show when you’re doing all musical theater songs.”

Doll soloed “Freedom” from the 2017 musical “The Unauthorized Biography of Samantha Brown” along with freshman musical theater major Abigail Westers. Like all of the cast members, their performance was welcomed with loud cheers from an audience filled with upperclassmen musical theater students, parents and supporters.

Goldberg’s selection of songs and their designation to each student were right where they needed to be, as it felt like every participant had the right number to fit their vocal tone, complexion and ability. Choreography for the show, which was utilized both in big group numbers and background dancers, was created by upperclassmen students in conjunction with recent musical theater graduate John Viggiano.

Although they were deep in the choreography, Doll admitted that one thing they wanted to learn in their time here at Rider was to be a better dancer, making them a more well-rounded performer.

“Rider has such an incredible dance program and making connections with people and improving the craft will make me a smarter and better performer,” Doll said.

Goldberg said that the one thing he wanted these students to take out of this experience was building a better community. He hoped that by working together over a four-week period, the class would become tight-knit, and he believed they got exactly that.

“We really hoped that they bonded as a class,” Goldberg said as students screamed of joy in the background. “And they had a really positive experience!”

The future of Rider’s musical theater program looks bright, providing that forward momentum is given to propel the freshman class to roles in

mainstage shows over the next four years. As freshman musical theater major Dominic Trivigno kept singing throughout the cabaret, they will “Go the Distance” to reach their ultimate goals.

Peter Borg/Rider University



The freshman musical theater class strikes a pose at the end of a heartfelt number.

Peter Borg/Rider University



The cast of “Momentum” end their song with a look of excitement.

‘Talk Back’ on new ‘Black Panther’ movie empowers Black community

By Julia Train

ALMOST five years after the release of the first “Black Panther” movie, 150 students from Rider, The College of New Jersey (TCNJ) and Mercer County Community College (MCCC) attended a private screening of the sequel. Three buses were loaded with students and filled two screening rooms of a Princeton theater.

Barbara Lawrence, vice president for diversity, equity and inclusion and chief diversity officer, said she received a call from a TCNJ connection about partnering up for an event. So, the Center for Diversity and Inclusion (CDI) collaborated with the diversity equity and inclusion (DEI) officers from TCNJ and MCCC to send their students to see the movie.

“One of the things that I talked about was that the film really accentuated women’s leadership in running a nation. They also had an elite army military that was all women. So that’s something that we don’t often see,” said Lawrence. “We still have a long way to go. But we are seeing an increase so it’s always good to see that on the big screen.” Part of her job is to oversee CDI.

When Rider Assistant Professor of History Nicholas McLeod saw an announcement asking for chaperones for the trip, he immediately volunteered.

A week prior, McLeod wrote and published his thoughts on the original film for a friend’s history website, historifans.org. Although he had an abundance of thoughts about the movie when it first came out, he was in the middle of graduate school and never got around to writing about it until now.

“She kind of tricked me into it, actually. She asked me my thoughts about a scene and what I thought about the movie and we’re just texting back and forth, and she’s like, ‘OK, great. So write that into an article for me. All right, bye,’” said McLeod. “That was it. I was like, ‘Alright, you know what, you’re my friend. I’ll do it.’”

Graphic courtesy of Rider University



The promotional poster for “Talk Back”: “Black Panther Wakanda Forever.”

After seeing the film, Dr. Pamela Pruitt, executive director of CDI, had the idea to host a talk back event about the film and get McLeod to tie in his article’s analysis on the first film during Black History Month.

“When I wrote this article last fall, these were my final thoughts on the first “Black Panther” after the movie coming out in 2017 and I sat with it for a while,” said McLeod. “I had a lot of thoughts to process. The cultural impact of this film was earth shaking.”

The “Talk Back” event was held on Zoom with a panel of DEI officers from TCNJ and MCCC. Each speaker talked about a theme from both films that resonated with them.

Lawrence talked about women empowerment. Marvin Carter, the inaugural director of diversity, equity and inclusion at MCC talked about dealing with Black grief.

McLeod focused on “pan-Africanism,” a term he

wrote about in his article and said is used to describe the movement to create a sense of collaboration between all people of African descent.

“This was the first time that we brought three schools together to see a movie, particularly one that focuses on African history,” said Lawrence. “This is the beginning of such partnerships and we want to see more collaborations with our students and the three schools particularly around justice, diversity, equity and inclusion, so we’re going to have more cross-educational events.”

Kaitlyn D'Alessio/The Rider News



A group of students pose for a photo in their best formal wear.



Kayla Faynor (front) a sophomore psychology major, poses for a selfie with alumni Kayla Plunto (back).

Kaitlyn D'Alessio/The Rider News

Students gather for the annual 'Cranberry and White Affair'

By Madison Lewis

WHAT do you call a homecoming dance for a college with no football team? The "Cranberry and White Affair!"

The event is an annual tradition at Rider where students can mingle, unwind and dance to music like nobody's watching.

The event is sponsored by the Rider University Greek Council (RUGC) and the Office of Campus Life, and co-sponsored by Student Government Association (SGA), Student Entertainment Council (SEC) and Residence Hall Association (RHA).

On Feb. 18, students and guests sauntered into the Cavalla Room, showing off their most impressive suits and dresses they owned, as they were visually transported to a Las Vegas casino.

The party-goers filtered in and were met with music provided by DJ Iron Mike. They passed purple, yellow, red and green dice at the entry way.

Some guests used the oversized game pieces to their advantage as they posed in front of the die, hoping for the perfect shot.

Other guests made a break towards the left side of the Cavalla Room, as there were chocolate fountains, a hot chocolate bar and a table full of baked goods for the taking.

After the party-goers had their photo-ops and retrieved their poker chip shaped cookies, chocolate covered fruits and other delicious casino-themed delicacies, they went to their tables, which were embellished with large, decorative feathers.

It took a while to motivate people to migrate to the dance floor; however, when the first notes of "No Scrubs" by TLC started playing, a crowd formed.

The attendees continued to dance the night away, participating in line dances, and even performing their own unique moves to their favorite songs.

One of the most memorable moments of the night was when Michael Jackson's "Billie Jean" provoked the start of a dance circle where students passed around a fedora, took turns in the center of the circle and replicated some of Jackson's renowned dance moves.

The event was a smash hit, as party-goers raved at its success in all aspects.

Senior marketing major Jade Hodgkiss said, "This is the best year yet; better food and a good mix of music for everyone."

Some students compared this year to previous one's, noting some positive changes.

Senior elementary education major Angela Rizzo said, "My freshman year there was no seating, it was all standing tables which was kind of hard ... but this year they had food. The DJ was really good, they had nice seating ... they stepped up their game a lot in terms of overall atmosphere."

Rizzo made a suggestion for the next "Cranberry and White", as she mentioned that at last year's event there was an outdoor tent where students could get fresh air and listen to jazz music.

Some attendees appreciated the event, as it provided them with a much needed outlet after

managing the inevitable stresses of college life.

Freshman health sciences major Dylan Sack said, "["Cranberry and White"] provides community engagement. It gets more people to come out here and it ... gives people something to look forward to after a stressful week."

The event coordinators took a gamble when hosting this year's "Cranberry and White," but this long-awaited celebration was one to remember.

Tristan E. M. Leach is an editor for The Rider News and an executive member of RHA. Leach had no part in the writing or editing of this story.

Kaitlyn D'Alessio/The Rider News



A chocolate fountain at the "Cranberry and White Affair."

Kaitlyn D'Alessio/The Rider News



A group of friends is all smiles at "Cranberry and White Affair."

Kaitlyn D'Alessio/The Rider News



Friends pose for a photo while sporting the traditional colors of the "Cranberry and White Affair": cranberry, white and black.

Shedding Light on Black Excellence: Taylor Tunstall

Photo courtesy of Taylor Tunstall



Senior broadcast major, **Taylor Tunstall**, is general manager for 107.7 The Bronc.

By **Tristan E. M. Leach**

1 07.7 The Bronc is an integral part of Rider University; The music, the shows and the involvement in the community draws people to the station. At the center of it all is a dedicated executive board that keeps everything running smoothly. For senior Taylor Tunstall, this is the place to be.

Tunstall, a broadcast journalism major, is the general manager of the station. When Tunstall toured Rider she wasn't sure if she wanted to be a journalism major or a broadcast journalism major; however, one conversation would help place Tunstall on a path she had no idea was there.

"I remember I went on the tour, and when the open house was over my parents were like 'Let's go

into the radio station, just talk to somebody' and I talked to an alum and it was really cool," said Tunstall.

Tunstall started doing a show for The Bronc her freshman year called "Tay Talks." Although she was a bit nervous at first, Tunstall embraced her new found passion; however, the COVID-19 pandemic interrupted the show, and both Tunstall and The Bronc were put on pause.

As life began to return to campus, Tunstall started to do her show again little by little. This involvement caught the attention of general manager, John Mozes.

"I was talking on air and John said, 'I want you to get more involved.' So, since my sophomore year, I've been on executive staff," said Tunstall.

Tunstall and her fellow executive members were voted on by the student staff involved at the radio station. Mozes encouraged Tunstall to run for promotions director, which she would be for her junior year, and that's just what she did.

For a year, Tunstall made sure that there was music at all the big events on campus such as open houses, admitted students days and more student exclusive events such as "Midnight Breakfast." The dedicated executive member worked hard to make sure that the energy was good and that everyone felt welcome.

After a year in the position, Tunstall moved up to assistant general manager, where she excelled. When it was time for the previous general manager to depart for Rider's Semester in Los Angeles program, Tunstall stepped up to the challenge.

"It's [the responsibilities] a lot. I'm the liaison between John and the students. I'll send emails. I schedule all the student shows, all the training. If people have issues they can come to me to fix it or our chief student engineer to fix it," said Tunstall.

"My job is to know every role of the station. If someone steps out, I can go in to fix it."

On top of everything else, Tunstall is a face for The Bronc. Tunstall and her fellow executive board members make sure to be present at every open house and admitted students day. Meeting people and

getting to know them makes Tunstall's job even more enjoyable.

"As a senior and seeing freshmen come in and they're nervous and I'm like I was there before too. Building their confidence and telling them 'You can do this! It's really fun!' A lot of people get stage fright but no one sees you, it's just talking," Tunstall said with a chuckle.

Tunstall's kindness and encouragement is noticed by all of her fellow staff members. Naa'san Carr, a junior political science major, is the programming director. Carr has his own show entitled "Black Love, Inspiring Black Culture." Carr has been with the station since his freshman year.

Tunstall and Carr met during Carr's freshman year, but did not become close friends until they both ended up on the executive board.

"I was new to the radio station and she was new to the radio station and we were listening out for each other," said Carr. "She was my first listener. It's kind of a bittersweet moment."

Since that fateful moment, Tunstall and Carr have kept their shows going and continue to build up the reputation of the station. Tunstall makes sure that the station is in a perfect condition and hopes to see some awards for The Bronc this semester.

After graduation, Tunstall hopes to work for a major radio station or broadcasting company. Her end goal is to have her own show someday and hopes that her work will allow for more young people to break into the world of broadcasting. Tunstall is ready to use her voice to make the world a better place.

This article is part of the Shedding Light on Black Excellence, a February series by The Rider News to showcase impactful Black figures at Rider University.

Logan VanDine and Caroline Haviland are copy editors for The Rider News and works for 107.7 The Bronc. Neither had no part in the editing and writing of this story.

Photo courtesy of Taylor Tunstall



Tunstall poses and smiles happily at the 2022 NAB Marconi Radio Awards.

Should ChatGPT be considered plagiarism?

CHATGPT, an artificial intelligence (AI) chatbot that can chat in a conversational way, has been affecting academic settings and more specifically, has the ability to write essays for students. A student can ask ChatGPT to write an essay about a particular topic and request the length of the paper as well. Although this tool could be a helpful resource for collecting information, The Rider News editorial board believes that ChatGPT should be considered plagiarism if it is used to write the entirety of an essay. It is not the students own words, and defeats the purpose of learning about the subject they're writing about. A lot of different careers require writing, and most students after graduation won't be able to escape writing, no matter how hard they try in a university setting.

Some students use the AI program because they don't feel confident writing and want to get a good grade, but it devalues the intense preparation students undergo to enter into their chosen fields. ChatGPT could be used as a reference for essays in a world where information is constantly being updated. It could help students create an outline for essays or get some helpful pointers, but it shouldn't be used to write an entire paper. It could be used to help find synonyms or ideas, but the essay should still be written by the student. Students who have used the program explain that the chatbot uses a lot of sophisticated words, and the sentences are usually very advanced; the AI continues to become smarter as more people use it.

ChatGPT should be used as a learning tool instead of a cheating tool. If anyone has writer's block or needs help coming up with a plan for an essay, then the AI program could be a good place to start. Using ChatGPT like Grammarly, a typing assistant which reviews grammar, spelling and punctuation, could also be a solution for writers. It can provide suggestions for synonyms and helps the flow of a paper. ChatGPT can give recommendations on how to make a paper stronger and advise better vocabulary; however, it won't complete an essay for the student. ChatGPT can also be a risk to use in educational settings. Some have been caught using it, and there have also been reports of inaccuracy. Each student has their own writing style and voice, and when using ChatGPT, the essay won't have the same writing style as the student.

Richard Zdan, a sociology professor, agreed that ChatGPT should be considered academic dishonesty, as it is similar to any other essay written by someone else or taken off the internet. He explains that all tools can be useful if used correctly.

"I could see something like ChatGPT being potentially useful in a composition class or in the writing center as a tool to help students improve their writing skills and to learn proper grammar and style by," said Zdan in an email with The Rider News.

He assigns numerous papers to his students throughout the semester and said he can tell when something is written in the students' voice. Zdan said that he could catch when a student is plagiarizing because it won't sound like the student, but he can't catch every student who plagiarized. "Will I catch every student? Certainly not. But I will catch enough of them to hopefully encourage students considering cheating to think twice," said Zdan.

Zdan encouraged students that don't feel confident writing an essay to practice writing but not by writing more. He explains that if a student does not meet the expectations of an essay, looking at the feedback and what to improve on could be helpful for future papers. Zdan said that the feedback, "can help even weak writers develop the skills they need to become stronger, more confident writers."

A poll was on The Rider News Instagram on Feb. 17 asking students, "Is ChatGPT a tool that helps you as a student?" The leading answer was "No" with 60% and 40% saying "Yes." The results show that most students who answered the poll agree that using ChatGPT isn't actually helpful for them. Students are encouraged to always do their own work and grasp what they are learning about, as it will help them in their future careers and make them a stronger student.

This editorial expresses the unanimous opinion of The Rider News Editorial Board. This week's editorial was written by Opinion Editor Felicia Roehm.

Felicia Roehm



Angelina Fierro/The Rider News

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JUNIOR JOURNALS

Why was 'The Laramie Project' banned in a Kansas school?

There is nothing like theater: The emotions, the stories, the artwork and the people. The actors and their stories are what make it special, whether it is the story that each character has made up for themselves, the story of the actors or the true story unfolding in front of an audience.

There are many true stories that have been adapted for the stage, "Bonnie & Clyde", "Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson," "Hamilton" (give or take some parts) and many more. Among these stories is a show called "The Laramie Project." This story is not nearly as light hearted as some shows. It is the true story of the murder of Matthew Shepard.

Shepard attended the University of Wyoming in 1998 when he was murdered. The reason? Shepard was a gay man who was out of the closet in a small college town. Ultimately, the crime was denounced as a hate crime. Two years later, Moises Kaufman and members of the Tectonic Theater Project created "The Laramie Project." The show was put together through a series of interviews with people in the town, personal diaries and published news articles.

The production has struck a chord with thousands of people who have seen the play or the movie version that was released in 2002. It has been performed and taught all across the country. That's where the issues begin.

Earlier this month a school in Lansing, Kansas, banned The Laramie Project. The play was to be studied in a senior English composition course. Along with "Should All Be Feminists," an essay by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and "13th," a 2016 documentary that tracks the racial inequality in the U.S. since its founding. The unit was labeled Social Justice Expository and was petitioned by a mother to be banned.

So what is the big deal? For starters, it is the erasure of diversity. All three of these works are extremely impactful and teach important lessons. "The Laramie Project" was created to bring attention to the senseless hate and violence members of the LGBTQ+ community face. By taking away diverse works, people are deprived of seeing themselves represented.

These students also face the consequences of not having a well-rounded education. We have seen the banning of books and curriculum more and more in the past few years. These actions directly affect how students develop. When history is erased we are doomed to repeat it. When representation is erased a person is left in the dark for even a longer period of time.

So what's the solution? Taking matters into your own hands and that's what the Tectonic Theater Project did. The group has offered free copies of the play to any student from the school.

The story of Matthew Shepard is a true one and it is not an easy one to hear. But it is for that very reason that his story and others like it must be told. Shepard suffered, his death was not quick or swift. His story deserves to be told and heard.

Tristan E. M. Leach
junior journalism major



Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

JUNIOR JOURNALS

Internship provides first-hand experince in student's field

With 'searching for an internship' season creeping up for college students, it can become extremely intimidating and difficult for those looking to find internships and fellowships that fit their interests, but also their resume.

I hear my peers say it all the time: "Why do we need to do internships?" or, "This just feels like a waste of time and my summer."

One thing I learned last year is that I certainly didn't waste my June, July or August.

I remember getting the email saying the editor of the biggest internship I applied to, NJ Advance Media, who owns NJ.com and The Star-Ledger, wanted to speak on the phone with me after our interview a few weeks prior. I couldn't help but think the worst: maybe they wanted me to apply next year, or I wasn't the right fit. I knew amazing journalism students across the Northeast applied, some who may have had stronger resumes or more writing experience than me. I was terrified.

I went outside of The Rider News newsroom, took off my sandals and put my feet in the grass. At this very moment, I needed to feel grounded and connected. I dialed his number and waited for his answer. It rang up until the last ring.

"Hi, this is Amethyst Martinez. I'm just calling you to follow up on your email sent to me today."

As soon as I got off the phone, tears rolled down my cheeks. I couldn't fathom the news I just got: I was going to spend the summer covering my home, New Jersey, for the biggest newspaper in the state.

This was the biggest turning point of my life. I nervously anticipated June, spending my last month in school constantly thinking about how I was going to do during my internship. I hoped every night that I was going to make my family, friends and mentors proud of me. I saved up my money to buy professional clothes and a new pair of loafers. After what felt like the longest month of my life, I was finally ready to start what I didn't know would be the most rewarding three months I've ever had in my 21 years of life.

Due to COVID-19, my internship was hybrid, but I tried not to let that affect me too much. I knew this was my chance to prove myself to those in my life who thought being a journalist wouldn't be a good career path for me, and I had to take full advantage of that.

Joining the Zoom call named "Newsroom Hour," I remember being so amazed hearing about all of these incredible reporters speak about their experiences and the stories they were working on. It made my entire perspective on journalism change, from the inside out.

Across my three month internship, I traveled across the state covering elections, writing features and more. I never thought that I could learn so much just by doing a more applicational method of education versus sitting in my three-hour-a-week classes that made me feel like journalism might not have been for me. With the internship, it proved to me that I was able to do this, without fear of

being thrown out into the 'real world' after college.

I think that's the most important thing to take out of internships; I know it may seem pointless and a waste of your free time, but it gives you the opportunity to work in the real world with real professionals. It gave me the realization that I needed to continue pursuing my degree in journalism, and showed me how rewarding being a reporter can be. Every journalist I worked with during my time at my internship was nothing but an immense help, and showed me tips and tricks that I still am able to apply to things like my campus job at The Rider News as the managing editor. When you're thinking about applying for internships and if it's a right fit for you, you have to realize that real-world experience is fundamental to the learning process outside of the classroom. Not only can you build your resume, but you can also gain the assurance that this is where you want to take your career, and ultimately, your life.

Amethyst Martinez
junior journalism major



Felicia Rochm/ The Rider News

Amethyst Martinez, junior journalism major, poses with her front page byline in The Star-Ledger.

MEN'S BASKETBALL

Back-to-back losses end eight-game winning streak



Ben Rowe for The Rider News

Senior guard **Dwight Murray Jr.** conducts the Rider offense. Murray had 26 points against Canisius, his most in MAAC play this season.

By **Carolo Pascale and Jake Tiger**

It was bound to happen at some point.

After a fantastic stretch of eight-straight wins, the Broncos' winning streak was shockingly broken by the last place Canisius Golden Griffins on Feb. 17, falling 81-78, which was followed by a double-overtime heartstopper on Feb. 19 against Quinnipiac, where Rider was eventually edged out by the Bobcats 90-88.

'It was uneasy all week'

As expected, the Broncos' Zoo was jam-packed and filled with excitement heading into Rider's game against Canisius. The Broncos were on fire and looking for their ninth straight win, and with the last-place Golden Griffins coming to town, they were poised to make it so.

However, for the second week in a row, Canisius shocked the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC) by taking down another top-five team, and slamming the door shut on Rider's precious winning streak.

"It was uneasy all week. Their record doesn't indicate how good that team is and how well coached they are, how hard they play, how smart they are,"

said Head Coach Kevin Baggett. "Everything that we didn't do today, they did."

Baggett hit the nail on the head with his description of uneasiness, as something felt off despite the Broncos having an overall good first half. The superb defense that the Broncos had shown over the winning streak had become a little discombobulated.

Rider garnered a lead as large as 13 points twice in the half, but Canisius stuck around and was able to keep the deficit under 10 as the Broncos left the first half leading 49-40. Even though they were only up by nine, the Broncos shot with video game-like accuracy, making an absurd 80% of their attempts from the field and 50% from the three.

"[We] thought it was gonna be easy because we could score, but we weren't stopping them. We gave up 40 points at halftime," said Baggett. "That's not the team that's been defending in this eight-game winning streak."

The second half proved to be the blow to the winning streak, as the Broncos came out flat while Canisius dominated, taking the lead off the back of a deafening 19-8 run.

The Griffins took the lead with 12:17 left to go, and never gave it up. Rider thought it had tied the game off a 3-pointer from senior guard Allen Powell with three seconds left, but a controversial foul on Canisius was called just as Powell took the shot. The shot didn't count because the foul was called before it, and Rider lost the streak.

"I definitely passed it. It was out of my hands before they fouled me," said senior guard Dwight Murray Jr., who got the ball to Powell just as the foul was called.

Murray finished with a game-high 26 points, while three other Broncos chipped in double-digit points in the loss.

'Everybody was frustrated'

The law of averages has reared its ugly head to strike down the once-streaking Broncos with vengeful fury.

After an eight-game win streak fizzled out against

Canisius, Rider was given another reality check in the form of a 90-88, double overtime defeat courtesy of both Quinnipiac, and depending on who you ask, the referees.

"I'm not sure if half of them were fouls," said Baggett. "I don't know until I go back and look at it. I'm not sure. I know the last one was not a foul. You can't throw the ball backwards when your back is turned and get a foul. It's not possible."

The 50-minute debacle featured a total of 45 personal fouls and 58 free throws, but the Bobcats were by far the main beneficiaries of the stop-and-go officiating with 41 combined free throws.

"[The fouls were] a big factor, huge," said Baggett. "We had no answers. And then the [free throws] are [41-17]. You tell me."

At one point, Rider accrued a 16-point lead with just over 12 minutes remaining, thanks to a strong 13-3 push to start the second half.

Murray led the late charge en route to a 19-point, 12-rebound performance for his first double-double of the season.

But fouls began to pile up.

Quinnipiac was awarded 31 free throws after the first half, slowly inching its way back point by point.

The Bobcats eventually erased Rider's advantage, and the Broncos could only watch as an 88-88 tie was broken with an emblematic free throw.

The double-overtime loss was Rider's longest game since Dec. 10, 2002, when it lost 85-82 to Harvard in triple overtime.

"Everybody was frustrated," said Baggett. "I didn't say anything to our team right now. It's not the time to say anything."

The dizzied Broncos now turn their attention to Siena, as they face off in what may be their biggest game of the season. With both teams at 11-5 in conference play, the winner of the Feb. 25 feud will move into sole possession of second place in the MAAC, only behind 13-3 Iona.

The pivotal matchup tips off at 7 p.m. in Lawrenceville, New Jersey, and will be broadcasted nationally on ESPNU.

WRESTLING

Broncs win fifth straight as regular season ends

By **Logan VanDine and Trey Wright**

In three consecutive home matches, Rider wrestling finished off the season emphatically with the Mid-American Conference [MAC] Championships just weeks away. The Broncos were able to win their final contests of the regular season, taking down George Mason, Cleveland State and Drexel to bring their winning streak to five.

Patriots pinned

In another strong performance, the Broncos extended their win streak to three, taking down the George Mason Patriots 27-9 in the first of three weekend matches.

"They picked up right where they left off with the Edinboro and Clarion weekend and were emphasizing that, it's going out and putting a lot of energy forth and giving a lot of pressure to the other team," said Head Coach John Hangey.

The match started off strong for the Broncos, as junior Tyler Klinsky once again won the first bout for the Broncos by a slim margin of 3-0.

After back-to-back wins in their respective bouts by redshirt senior Richie Koehler and junior McKenzie Bell, it was redshirt junior Quinn Kinner winning his bout by fall in dominating fashion, taking down his opponent early, putting the Broncos up 17-0 and in a good position to take control of the match.

"It feels great to get a pin, a lot of points for the team and that's the goal right, you go out there with a pin in mind that's what you're looking for and anytime you're wrestling hard," Kinner said.

Senior Day sweep

Capping off the regular season with a tri-meet at Alumni Gym, the Broncos stayed hot with victories over MAC rival Cleveland State University and Drexel

University, beating the Vikings 25-9 and slaying the Dragons 26-12.

The day was highlighted by match-clinching wins by No.6 senior Ethan Laird, and two pins from sophomore heavyweight David Szuba.

The tilt against Cleveland State began with four straight wins for the Broncos, including a 13-0 major decision for freshman McKenzie Bell at 141, who has outscored opponents 49-0 in his last five bouts, yet to surrender a point since Jan. 28 against Bucknell.

"McKenzie's a competitor, and he's really gritty," said Hangey. "I liken him to putting a piece of tape on your finger and trying to shake it off: It doesn't go very far."

Cleveland State responded with back-to-back decisions of their own, and brought the score to 16-9 late in the match.

However Laird stopped the Viking invasion with a 3-1 decision at 197, and Szuba sealed the win at heavyweight with his first pin of the day 62 seconds into his bout, leading the Broncos to a 26-9 victory.

After a two-hour intermission in which Drexel bested Cleveland State, the Senior Day festivities preceded the final match at Alumni Gym this season, with eight seniors being honored by the program.

Just as they had in the previous match, the Broncos roared out of the gate with a 16-6 major decision from Tyler Klinsky at 125, giving Rider a 6-0 lead before another four win procession propelled the Broncos to a massive 17-0 advantage.

The early lead was crucial in Rider's path to victory, as the Dragons reciprocated four straight wins, including a down-to-the-wire bout at 184 between Issac Dean and Drexel's Brian Bonino, in which Dean held the 26th-ranked wrestler in the nation to a 1-1 tie, the decision going to the Dragon via riding time.

But just as they had in the Cleveland State match,

Laird and Szuba came in to finish things off, both securing their third wins of the weekend, Laird an 8-2 decision at 197, and Szuba getting his second pin to wrap up Rider's regular season, a 27-12 triumph over Drexel.

"I couldn't be more proud of that kid," said Hangey of Laird, who has been with the Rider program as long as Hangey has coached. "Now it's my job to get him to be a national champion."

Laird, who has a 21-1 individual record this season said, "It's been pretty cool to grow with Coach Hangey and have him there as a mentor that's there for me."

The Drexel victory was also Hangey's 50th win as Rider's head coach.

Finishing the regular season with a 9-5 record, the Broncos enter playoff competition on March 18 for the 2023 MAC Championships, located in Fairfax, Virginia.



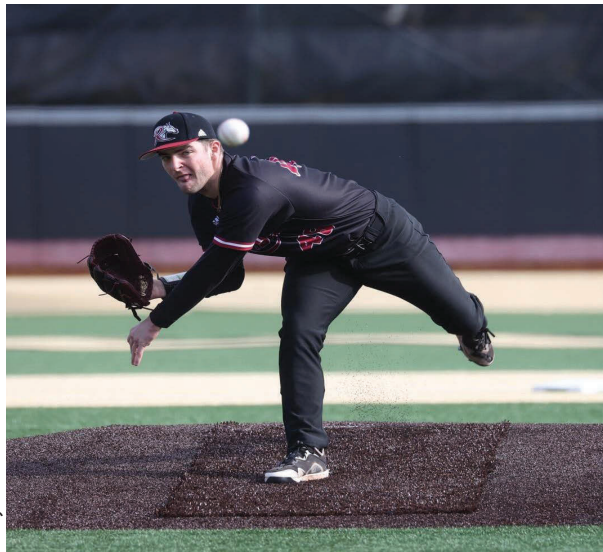
Peter G. Borg/Rider Athletics

Senior **Ethan Laird** buries an opponent. Laird finished the season undefeated in MAC duals with a record of 7-0.

BASEBALL

Broncs open up season with 3-1 series win

Andy Mead/Rider Athletics



Graduate student pitcher **Frank Doelling** whips the ball toward home plate. Doelling had 63 strikeouts in the 2022 season.

By Benjamin Shinault

FOLLOWING an anguish-filled ending to their 2022 season where the Broncs came up just short of being repeat Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC) champions, the Broncs baseball team had a successful start to its 2023 season, winning its opening series game against the Gardner-Webb Runnin’ Bulldogs.

Game 1

Rider pulled into Shelby, North Carolina, on Feb. 17 and got right to work against the Bulldogs. The weather was perfect for baseball, as it was in the 60’s with bright blue skies. Gardner-Webb was held scoreless through the first three innings by senior pitcher Dylan Hiene who finished with a statline of 5 1/3 innings pitched, three hits, one earned run and two strikeouts.

The Broncs scored the game’s first run thanks to junior infielder Brian Skettini, who singled to right field and allowed senior catcher Socrates Bardatsos to score from second base.

That was the only run that the Broncs were able to get across, as pitcher Bobby Alcock of the Bulldogs was seemingly pulling the strings on the mound for Gardner-Webb.

After tying the game in the bottom half of the

fourth inning, it was all Bulldogs after that, as they poured on three more runs in the bottom of the seventh to take the lead. The final score of the opener of the four-game set was 4-1 in favor of Gardner-Webb.

Game 2

Roughly 24 hours after pristine baseball-playing conditions, the weather dropped by 20 degrees for a brisk game-time temperature of 41 degrees. But the Broncs had no problem with the weather, shutting out the Bulldogs in a 2-0 win on Feb. 18, their first victory of the season.

Graduate student pitcher Frank Doelling was the man on the mound for the Broncs in the second game of the series. After two scoreless outings last season for the Broncs, Doelling got right back into his groove for the game, finishing with a line of 5 1/3 innings pitched, four hits and three strikeouts.

The only two runs by the Broncs came from 2023 Collegiate Baseball Third-Team Preseason All-American team honoree, senior outfielder Brendan O’Donnell. After locating a ball he could turn on, he sailed it over the left-field wall scoring him and senior outfielder Scott Shaw each a run.

“I knew going into that at-bat that they weren’t going to give me much to hit with first base open and two outs,” said O’Donnell. “After getting to a full count and still not seeing a fastball, I knew another off speed pitch was likely coming. I was able to stay through it long enough to get it out to left.”

Graduate student pitcher Danny Kerwin came in at the top of the ninth and got the save for the Broncs, sealing a much-needed victory.

Game 3

Post-victory, the Broncs slipped back into their all-black uniforms for the third game of the series, the second of a double-header.

One of the 15 freshmen on the Broncs this year, pitcher Clayton Poiley of Ringwood, New Jersey, got the start on the mound for the Broncs.

Poiley went 5 1/3 innings, allowed just two hits and one earned run all while striking out five helpless Bulldogs.

The offense was stellar, as they ripped right through the Bulldogs starting pitching through the first three

innings scoring five runs. The scoring started in the second inning with a sacrifice fly to left field which allowed O’Donnell to score. Fast forward one inning after that, the Broncs put up four more runs. Senior first base Luke Lesch doubled, which allowed two runs to score, and O’Donnell and senior infielder Jack Winsett both penciled in a run themselves.

A four-run third inning helped the Broncs finish the game with a 7-3 victory over the Bulldogs.

“We put together a big inning early, giving us a chance to attack the zone with our pitchers. It’s much easier to pitch with a four or five run lead,” said Head Coach Barry Davis.

Game 4

The Broncs came into the final game of the series with a smile on their faces as they just swept out the double-header the day before and were anxious to get back on the clay, but the Broncs looked plenty comfortable, putting the Bulldogs on a leash, defeating them 17-2.

Before discussing the 17 runs, the two runs the Broncs allowed is also something worth analyzing. Left-handed pitcher, sophomore Brian Young, was the starter for the Broncs on Feb. 19 and was solid. He did give up seven hits, two earned runs and a walk in only 3 2/3 innings, but it was more than enough for the Broncs on Sunday. After pulling Young out of the game in the third, the Broncs allowed only one hit thanks to stellar pitching from senior Alec Sachais, and three freshmen: PJ Craig, Colby McNeely and Jared Greenzang.

Now, the 17 runs, where to begin?

Most of the runs were scored in the fifth inning when the Broncs laid into the Bulldogs by scoring seven runs. Bardatsos was the star as he scored four of the teams 17 runs as well as contributing four hits to the teams total of 19 with one of them being a solo shot to right field.

The embarrassment did not stop there in the fifth inning, as the Broncs went on to score four in the eighth, cementing a win for the Broncs and closing out a successful opening weekend.

The Broncs will now get ready to face off against a powerful Oklahoma squad in a three-game series from Feb. 24 to Feb. 26. All three games will be streamed on ESPN+.

SOFTBALL

Revamped Rider sets sights on MAAC Championships

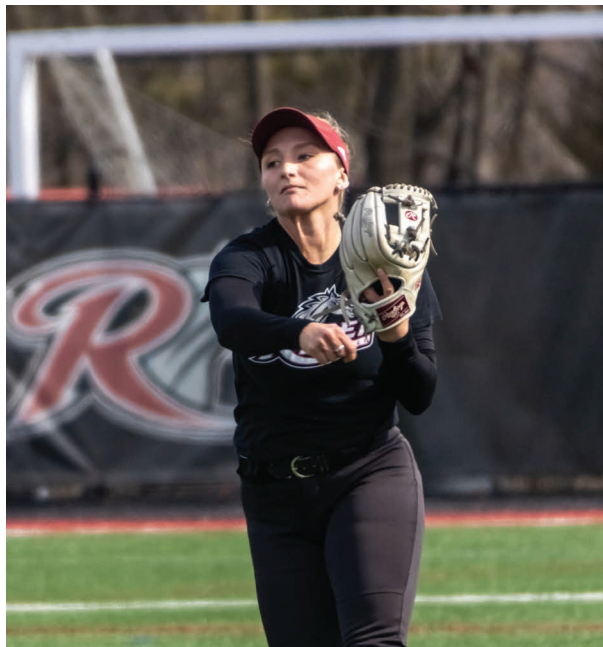
By Rebecca Taylor Bludgus

RIDER softball is back for the 2023 season and is ready to make a run at the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC) title, last season placing fourth in the MAAC with a conference record of 11-9 and an overall record of 28-25-1.

To qualify for the tournament this season, the Broncs need to place at least sixth in conference.

“I think that in order to stay there and actually take it to the next level and actually win in the MAAC Tournament, we need to figure out how this team stays together,” said Head Coach Davon Ortega. “I

Carolo Pascale/The Rider News



Graduate student infielder **Gianna Epps** warms up her arm at practice. The veteran hopes to take on a leadership role this season.

think with the experience of being in the tournament now, having those returners come back, they bring that level of experience, so we should be able to take it to the next level.”

Graduate student infielder Gianna Epps had faith that the Broncs could make it back after they lost to Marist 3-0 in the first round of the tournament last year.

“We’re looking good for the upcoming preseason and going into our conference games,” said Epps. “I believe we have a very good chance to make it back to the MAAC like we did the past two years.”

In the offseason, Ortega and her staff worked ways to move past the adversity and internal struggles the team faced a year ago that caused them to “fall off” around the midseason mark.

“You can have the most talented team out there, but if they aren’t working together as a team or there’s breakdown amongst them for whatever reason, it keeps you from that championship,” Ortega said. “I really think the pitching is what’s going to carry us.”

Six of Rider’s nine starters from last year return, including a two-way star in junior pitcher Jessie Niegocki.

In the 2022 season, she had a 2.09 ERA with 127 strikeouts all while having a .359 batting average.

When she’s not on the mound, Niegocki is playing second, “I know what it’s like to be in the circle, so I think that gives me a different kind of edge of second base,” she said.

Niegocki was named to the All-MAAC and the All-Region First Teams in 2022.

Junior ace Anna-Marie Groskritz had a 2.59 ERA

last season with 22 starts which included four shutouts.

Last year’s starting first base Grace Stansfield graduated, leaving a hole in the lineup.

“We’re working a couple of people in ... Olivia Burroughs, who was one of our stronger hitters last year as a freshman, so she’s been working into that spot ... [it’s] ultimately going to come down to hitting to replace that bat that Grace brought to the table,” Ortega said.

Seven freshmen are new additions to the team: pitcher Katie Brunner, utility Lilly Feltenberger, utility Julia Harsache, outfielder Maddie Luedtke, pitcher Jadeyn Merrill and pitcher Fallyn Stoeckel.

Stoeckel is one to keep an eye out for. “She’s a lefty pitcher, she might see some time in the outfield as well when she’s not pitching,” said Ortega. “From the pitching perspective, I think that she has a potential to kind of work away into a starting role,” said Ortega.

Stoeckel managed a 1.12 ERA in her senior year of high school and made First Team New Jersey All-State Group 3.

Also, be on the lookout for Harsache. “She’s kind of working in and out right now with multiple positions for us and I think with her bat and she gets a little experience, she might find her way to get that lineup as well,” said Ortega.

Games start this weekend at the Campbell Camel Stampede tournament in Buies Creek, North Carolina where they will be facing Duke for the first time in the first game of the season.

The first home game for the Broncs will be March 15 at 2 p.m. against Monmouth University.

Sports

ONLINE

'BACK TO WORK'
Women's basketball's weekend split yielded some promising results, but exposed some glaring weaknesses.

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TRACK & FIELD

Rider track teams win Indoor MAAC Championships



Sophomore jumper **Mariah Stephens** (left) and graduate student sprinter **Jerome Boyer** (right) both won gold medals at the MAAC Indoor Championships. (Photos courtesy of Stockton Photo and MAAC Sports)

Women claim second title in four years

By Jake Tiger

WITH 17 medalists and three Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC) champions, Rider women's track and field captured the 2023 MAAC Indoor Championships on Feb. 19, winning it last in 2020.

The Broncos totalled 193 team points across the two-day meet, enough to beat out Quinnipiac, who took second with 179 points.

"The women really fought hard for this win," said Head Coach Bob Hamer. "Quinnipiac was outstanding and made it incredibly hard. I am really proud of how the women kept fighting and picking themselves back up after any setback. Championships are really hard to win and they worked for this one."

Rider's trio of MAAC champions consisted of sophomore jumper Mariah Stephens, senior thrower Natya Glasco and graduate student captain and distance runner Teagan Schein-Becker all winning their events.

Stephens won the triple jump and the 60-meter hurdles, as the sophomore continued to impress in her young collegiate career. At last year's indoor championships, Stephens was the long jump and triple jump champion, and named MAAC rookie of the meet.

"Stephens was great today," said Hamer. "She wins the hurdles in commanding fashion, runs great in the 60 and then wins the triple jump. She was huge for us today."

In the field, Glasco claimed gold in the shot put, and placed second in the weight throw with a new personal record of 17.54 meters.

Schein-Becker helped the Broncos to a first place finish in the 4x800-meter relay, and her solo efforts earned her first place in the one-mile run. The performance built off of a strong 2022 season for the distance, Schein-Becker winning both the 800-meter and 1500-meter events last spring.

"It was really awesome a few years ago and I knew that I wanted all the teammates who never got to experience that to be able to be a part of something big," said Schein-Becker in an email to The Rider News. "To be able to have both sides of the men's and women's win on that same night was just a great feeling."

Schein-Becker said that she plans on returning to Rider next season for her sixth year of eligibility, and hopes to bring home another indoor championship in 2024.

Until then, women's track and field heads to the Fastrack Last Chance Invitational in Staten Island, New York, on Feb. 24.

Men win first indoor title since 2017

By Carolo Pascale

RIDER men's track and field dominated at the 2023 Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC) Indoor Championship, securing its first indoor title in six years on Feb. 19 with an otherworldly 207 team points.

The Broncos were the only team to surpass 150 points at the championships and had four MAAC Champions at the meet, with sophomore thrower Jayden DuBard, junior jumper Zach Manorowitz, junior distance runner Tamrat Snyder and graduate student sprinter Jerome Boyer, each collecting gold medals. Rider had a total of 16 medalists overall. The indoor title is only the second in program history.

"The men were outstanding this weekend. We were very good in all event areas and that made a huge difference in the end result today," said Head Coach Bob Hamer. "Our top athletes from this season really stepped up and delivered today. I am really proud of their efforts. They have put a lot of time and effort into this day and it is very exciting to get this win."

DuBard secured the shot put gold medal with a new personal record of 16.37 meters while also collecting a bronze medal in the weight throw.


Manorowitz notched his third-straight MAAC title in the long jump. He won in the long jump in the last two MAAC Championships and has continued his long jump success this year.

Snyder continued to have a fantastic season by adding the indoor 800-meter gold medal to his trophy case with a time of 1:49.71. It is his second gold in the 800-meter this year, his first being in the 2022 outdoor season.

Boyer added to his already impressive championship resume by winning a gold medal in the 400-meter with a time of 48.47 and finishing third in the 200-meter. He also was part of the 4x400-meter relay team that placed second over the weekend.

"To win the indoor championship in my final year at Rider was a bit of a relief honestly," said Boyer in an email to The Rider News. "There were times I felt like I wanted to quit but I didn't allow myself to stop reaching for my goals. I wanted to inspire those to keep fighting for what you want because eventually it will truly become yours."

The Broncos still have more indoor events this season with the Fastrack Last Chance Invitational coming up on Feb. 24 in Staten Island, New York where Rider looks to continue its indoor momentum.



RIDER TRACK & FIELD: MAAC CHAMPIONS

WOMEN'S

- 3 MAAC CHAMPIONS
- 17 TOTAL MEDALS

MEN'S

- 4 MAAC CHAMPIONS
- 16 TOTAL MEDALS

