



New NAACP chapter chartered at Rider

Josiah Thomas/The Rider News



Greg Anthony Jones, Ashanti Motley, Ayanna Wells-Crudup and Naa'san Carr (left to right) serve as the first executive board members of Rider's chapter of the NAACP.

By Julia Train

In December 2022, Student Government Association President Naa'san Carr had a vision to leave a lasting legacy by building upon the representation of diversity, equity and inclusion on campus.

After over a year of working to establish the new chapter of the NAACP at Rider, the chapter's founding members saw its chartering ceremony on Feb. 7.

Carr started with reaching out to the NAACP chapter of Gloucester County, New Jersey, to get in touch with the state adviser.

In July, Black Student Union President Kayla McIntyre met Trenton NAACP President Austin Edwards which led Carr contact the state adviser.

During that process, Carr was working on getting the chapter approved by the university through meetings with Rider President Gregory Dell'Omo and the Board of Trustees.

In October, he started focusing on the chapter's membership. In order to complete that process, there needed to be 25 members.

Within two weeks, it was officially chartered and approved.

"Things didn't happen the way it was supposed to happen ... I was very persistent with emailing people, but I just didn't get the response back until we finally got it this year," Carr said.

Taylor Tunstall, a senior journalism major, is one of the founding members. She received an email about the forthcoming chapter and signed up.

About a month later, Tunstall received a membership card for her keyring in the mail.

Tunstall said, "Of course, once I leave, it's up to the people after me to keep it going, but just knowing that we made the steps to have it here, especially after hearing from Rutgers New Brunswick alum say how when they went to college, they wish they had it."

There are 25 founding members, but not all executive positions are filled. Carr's goal is to place them within the coming months. The positions include second and third vice presidents, assistant secretary and assistant treasurer, along with 10 committee chairs.

Although there wasn't trouble finding members, with over 100 people expressing interest at a game night event prior, Carr said the biggest hurdle was actually paying for membership and getting it in on time. NAACP state leadership reached out to them about three days before the money was due and scheduled a Zoom meeting to discuss it.

The amount needed for the dues was \$125, which SGA paid, while the advisers paid their own \$75 fees.

"The importance of the NAACP is to combat racial hatred and discrimination ... it goes hand-in-hand with our inclusive excellence plan that we have here," Carr said. "In the grand scheme of the vision, I didn't know we were going to go through all these transitions with the DEI. So I'm happy that I was very persistent on this because this is going to help students use their voices in a way that they weren't able to use them before."

Oct. 7 survivor brought to campus by Hillel

By Amethyst Martinez

On the four-month anniversary of Oct. 7, the recognized start of the latest Israel-Hamas war, Rider's Jewish organization, Hillel, hosted an Israeli survivor to tell her recollection of events.

Since that day in October, at least 28,473 Palestinians have been killed and 68,146 others have been wounded, according to Al Jazeera, and 1,200 Israelis have been killed, according to the United Nations.

As Israeli forces continue to invade Gaza territory, Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has vowed no end to the fighting unless "victory" is achieved.

Campuses across the nation have seen heightened tensions connected to the ongoing war, such as protests, arrests and even the stepping

Eden Gafner speaks about her experiences being in Israel during Oct. 7 attacks.

down of high-profile university administrators.

Just a few exits away from Rider on I-295, a billboard displays "missing" flyers of Israeli people, with another farther down the interstate emblazoned with the words "Don't stop talking about Palestine."

Although Rider has avoided most of the war-related tensions, students have hosted awareness events, such as a vigil for those who died as a result of the war, along with a "Pray for Palestine" gathering.

Hillel, in collaboration with "Faces of Oct. 7," an organization that brings Israeli survivors to U.S. college campuses, brought Eden Gafner, an Oct. 7 survivor who lived in a kibbutz, an Israeli community, within the Gaza envelope, the area along the Gaza border.

Upon arrival, Public Safety workers stood at doors surrounding the room, with Hillel members taking attendance of those who RSVP'd and checking ID before allowing guests to enter.

Ethan Handelman, president of Rider's branch of Hillel, said that it was just a precautionary measure.

"We wanted everyone here to feel safe, because unfortunately, people around the country and other places in the world don't feel safe about being Jewish," said Handelman, a junior elementary education major. "This was for all the people who attended that were

Jewish, that weren't Jewish, because unfortunately, it's become ... a political issue."

As the room filled, royal blue pins embellished with a hashtag symbol were worn by many, representing the "Stand Up to Jewish Hate" organization. Others, including Gafner, wore dark blue ribbons for the Israeli hostages that have not been released.

One attendee, Owen McCarron, a sophomore radio and podcasting major, said that he attended to support Handelman and to educate himself.

"I'm not too educated on quite a lot, so I thought it'd be an interesting subject to come out and just get to know an interesting perspective," said McCarron. "[Handelman] explained a little bit, [but] otherwise, I came in fully empty-handed, but I kind of liked that because it just gives me a chance to take it in at literally level zero."

Survivor's speech

Gafner took the stage, where she painted the scene of her life before the latest Israel-Hamas war: 90% heaven, describing her kibbutz as a quiet, peaceful, beautiful place and 10% of feeling the "constant threat" of living in the Gaza envelope.

Gafner talked about the highs of her childhood: pita bread, bonfires



Maggie Kleiner/The Rider News



SIX-YEAR WRESTLER LOOKS BACK

Graduate student Richie Koehler reflects on his career at Rider.

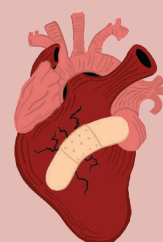
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SEEING 'RED FLAGS' IN RELATIONSHIPS

Toxic relationships are normalized in today's society, but they shouldn't be.

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MEET SCEO MADISON RATTINER

Madison Rattiner discusses her goals as Saxbys' new SCEO.

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SECURITY BRIEFS

BY CAROLINE HAVILAND

Precarious parking

Off-roading. On Feb. 8 at 9:07 a.m., Public Safety was dispatched to the grassy area alongside a gated sorority parking lot for a report of property damage. Once on location, Public Safety met with Facilities Management who reported tire tracks leading through the grass into the parking lot. Public Safety was able to review camera footage of the area and observed a student's vehicle driving from the roadway, through the grass and parking in the gated lot. The incident was referred to the Office of Community Standards.

Impaired exit sign

Defaced frame. On Feb. 11 at 10:28 a.m., Public Safety was conducting a "park, walk and talk," where officers build relationships with the community, of Switlik Hall when they discovered damage to university property. While conducting the walkthrough of the building, Public Safety discovered that someone had taken the faceplate off on one of the exit signs, causing damage to the frame and lighting. Facilities management was contacted to repair the exit sign.

Emergency evaluation

Ambulance rescue. On Feb. 11 at 3:50 p.m., Public Safety was dispatched to the Bart Luedeke Center for a medical emergency. Upon their arrival, they met with a nauseous individual who had been vomiting. After an evaluation, an ambulance was contacted to respond for further treatment. Lawrence Township EMS arrived on location and transported them to a hospital.

-Information provided by Public Safety Capt. Matthew Babcock

Gender-inclusive bathrooms limited on campus

By Jay Roberson

RIDER aims to build an inclusive campus that supports all people, but some transgender students and students with disabilities feel that promise is not being met.

According to Rider's Center for Diversity and Inclusion's resources, a majority of buildings have gender-inclusive bathrooms except for the Student Recreation Center, Lynch Adler, Daly Dining Hall and the Joseph P. Vona Center.

Fine Arts bathrooms

Freshman psychology major Adrienne Bishop, a transgender woman, often avoids using the bathroom when in class. A majority of her classes take place in the Fine Arts building where there is only one gender-inclusive bathroom, located on the first floor.

"It's a pain if you need to use [the bathroom] and you're in a class, then go there between classes when you only have five minutes left and you don't know if you have enough time to make the trip," said Bishop.

Eden Lewis, a non-binary sophomore English major, who uses she/they pronouns, said they felt most gender-inclusive bathrooms were "hidden."

"In the times where I've been in the business building and had to use the [gender-inclusive bathrooms] upstairs, they were really hard to find and that was really the issue," said Lewis. "There's a sign next to it, but nothing else really tells you that it's a bathroom."

Other institutions, such as the University of Oregon, offer gender-inclusive bathrooms, gender inclusive locker rooms and signage directing students to gender-inclusive bathrooms. Gender-inclusive locker rooms are not offered and gender-inclusive bathrooms are often secluded at Rider.

A majority of the dorms do not have gender-inclusive bathrooms with showers, except Kroner Residence Hall. Bishop explained this can lead to health hazards because transgender students

may not feel comfortable showering in bathrooms with an assigned gender.

"I have a friend who's a transgender man. He used to live in Ziegler and he felt really uncomfortable using either shower, so he would go to Kroner and shower in Kroner because he had friends there," said Bishop.

To make dorm halls more gender-inclusive, Lewis suggested, "At least one [bathroom] per floor of a building, just so the people who live on those floors can actually have a bathroom to go to that they feel comfortable using."

'Killing two birds with one stone'

When these gender-inclusive bathrooms double as accessible bathrooms, it limits resources for both communities.

Junior journalism major Marlene Brockington, who is physically disabled, spoke about her experiences in the Fine Arts building, where most of her classes take place.

"Last semester, myself and another student who has a physical disability had to wait for each other or change up our schedules a little bit," said Brockington.

Finding time to use the bathroom between classes is a struggle for students who are transgender and students with disabilities.

Junior political science major and chair of equity and inclusion committee Cecelia Simon said, "The bathroom gets swamped sometimes."

"Having two separate bathrooms would be better because it allows people who need the bathroom for accessibility reasons to access the bathroom freely, whereas putting two groups in the same space can create some awkward situations because it's the only bathrooms both groups can use," said Simon.

Senior theater major Andy White, who identifies as non-binary and uses they/them pronouns, said that the upkeep of bathrooms is a problem for transgender students as well.

"The maintenance is slacking. For example, the other week the entire toilet paper holder was on the ground for three or four days with no toilet paper ... It just wasn't usable," said White.

Brockington also noted that although some bathrooms may say they're accessible, they aren't, which limits her to the use of only one bathroom in Fine Arts.

"Even the bathrooms that have the accessible sign, they might have a stall that's accessible in there, but when you go to wash your hands... a lot of the sinks aren't accessible because they have a cabinet underneath where somebody with a wheelchair can't pull underneath it," said Brockington.

Lewis said, "You could argue that it's killing two birds with one stone, but at the same time it feels lazy. They'll put money into various other things, but it's like 'Oh, we can just put those two things together.'"

The facilities vice chair, sophomore communications major Justin Getzoff, stated that facilities is aware of this issue and hopes to install more gender-inclusive bathrooms in the next few years.

Bishop said, "The issue is that you're putting these two groups who need these facilities in the same space and you're saying, alright well, we can only serve one of you at a time. So figure it out. How do you do that?"

Students can use the CDI's resources on Rider's website to see a map of where gender-inclusive bathrooms are located in each building under LGBTQIA+ resources.



The only gender-inclusive bathroom in Fine Arts is located on the first floor of the building.



Many gender-inclusive bathrooms on campus double as bathrooms that are accessible to students with disabilities.

Maggie Kleiner/The Rider News

Maggie Kleiner/The Rider News

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University house sold for \$655,000

Kimberly Storcella/Berkshire Hathaway



The university first acquired the house in 2011 and has used it for a variety of purposes until being sold in December.

By Hannah Newman

ONCE a space intended to house administrators, the university-owned home at 3 West Long Drive sold for \$655,000 in December.

Although the property was used as a meeting place and for other miscellaneous purposes in recent years, a long-term purpose for the property was unclear, according to Vice President of External Affairs Kristine Brown.

“It was a valuable piece of property, and without a direct purpose for it ... it was time to think about how to sell it and move on from that,” said Brown.

The university acquired the property in 2011 and used it to house former Dean of Students Anthony Campbell until his retirement in 2016, according to Vice President for Facilities and University Operations Mike Reca.

Rider purchased the 2,517-square-foot home with the intent of housing administration, so that the Office of Public Safety could move into its current location on Route 206, Reca said.

Public Safety resided in the General Service building prior to the 2011 purchase, but was forced to move after the Office of Information Technologies needed the location, Reca said.

“When it was deemed that [OIT] needed to move into the General Services building back then, that forced us to do something with the dean and vice president of student affairs,” said Reca. “It was at that time the house at West Long Drive was for sale ... Over the years, it migrated away from that purpose. We found ourselves using it less and less, so we decided to sell it rather than maintain it.”

In later years, it offered housing for faculty and administrators who had longer commutes to the university.

“We found ourselves using it less and less, so we decided to sell it rather than maintain it,” said Reca.

The house was listed at \$675,000 which was a 69.2% increase over its purchased price of \$399,000 from 2011.

During the August 2023 convocation, President Gregory Dell’Omo said the university anticipated the house selling for \$650,000, just under its final sale price.

According to Reca, the buyer of the four-bedroom, three-bathroom house could not be disclosed.



Courtesy of Naa'san Carr

Joshua Fredenburg stands with the audience after his speech.

Speaker visits Rider for Black History Month

By Benjamin Shinault

In honor of Black History Month, the Student Government Association got a head start on the festivities, hosting a new event titled the “Cranberry Student Leadership Experience” on Feb. 1.

Held in the Cavalla room, a critical chunk of the night was guest and keynote speaker Joshua Fredenburg. Fredenburg can be described as a “dynamic, inspirational, high-energy speaker,” making appearances on various television networks, radio stations and has also performed a TEDx speech.

He has also published seven books based on leadership, motivation, diversity and inclusion.

Fredenburg is the founder and president of the Circle of Change Leadership Experience, a program that transforms the lives of culturally diverse and first generation students.

“It was really big to get Dr. Fredenburg to Rider,” Student Government Association President Naa’san Carr said. “We exchanged information after the workshop and then over the summer I reached out and said, ‘I really want you to come.’”

Fredenburg was eager to come to Rider and lecture those that came to the event.

“I was just excited to go speak to the students about leadership and about leaving a legacy and just helping them to grow and develop into making an impact on the world,” Fredenburg said.

During the event, participants took part in various activities and discussions such as defining what the legacy of leadership is, crafting such leadership and more.

A prominent term throughout the speech was vision, and how to use it to create something bigger.

One of the many participants in the event was Elijah Banks, a member of Black Men Unified and Lambda Theta Phi, a Latin fraternity, who spoke on Fredenburg’s presentation.

“The main point of his speech, in a sense, was actually about legacy,” Banks, a sophomore criminal justice major, said. “There were other topics that went along with that but the main takeaway was legacy.”

The event occurred on Feb. 1, marking the beginning of Black History Month.

“A lot of times within the black community there are several leaders such as Dr. Martin Luther King obviously, Frederick Douglass, Malcolm X,” Fredenburg continued said. “I talked about that their words of wisdom that they left as part of their legacy as far as their words, their wisdom, their knowledge that have helped me to thrive and succeed as a black man in America,” Fredenburg stated.

“Fredenburg talked about his experiences not just as a scholar and a student, but also as a Black man, a person of color,” Banks said. “Going to school and coming from a not so well off household and how he achieved the position he is in right now.”

Carr also took in a good bulk of what Fredenburg implemented into the minds of the Rider students that attended the event.

“Legacy is really something we don’t often talk about but it really influences how our community flows, how student organizations stay afloat,” Carr said. “At a certain point he did tie in Black History Month and to celebrate black excellence.”

Students, as a whole, came away with something profound that Fredenburg helped implant; his goal the whole time.

“After it, everybody had a lot to say, everybody had a lot of questions, some of them followed me on social media, on Instagram and even shared some things they planned to do to leave a legacy at Rider University, so it was a really, really good response,” Fredenburg said.

Carr stated that SGA does not have any upcoming events planned, but he and his committee are hoping to fill the upcoming March calendar.

Set sail with 107.7 The Bronc’s Eggcellent Egg Hunt grand prize

By Kaitlyn Seawood

RIDER’S campus radio station, 107.7 The Bronc, is gearing up to make this year’s “Eggcellent Egg Hunt” an unforgettable experience for one lucky winner who will hop away with an all-inclusive cruise.

As anticipation builds, students and community members alike eagerly await the chance to participate in the annual event, where the hunt for eggs promises more than just chocolate treats.

The event, scheduled for March 25 with a rain date of March 28, features an array of attractions including food trucks, carnival games, a petting zoo and the highly anticipated egg hunt. With 10,000 eggs scattered across the campus mall, the event goes from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. and the hunt kicks off at 12:30 p.m.

John Mozes, general manager of 107.7 The Bronc, highlighted the history and significance of the beloved campus tradition.

Since its inception in 2016, the “Eggcellent Egg Hunt” has become synonymous with Rider’s spring festivities, attracting thousands of attendees from both the university community. Despite facing interruptions due to COVID-19, the event returned in April 2022 after a two-year hiatus.

Mozes highlighted the event’s evolution and its importance in showcasing Rider’s vibrant community spirit.

“Pretty much everything kinda shuts down,” said Mozes. “These events make us stand out from other colleges,” he added.

Known for its eclectic music selection and engaging programming, 107.7 The Bronc has decided to take its annual egg hunt to new heights. With the grand prize traditionally being a \$1,000 Visa gift card, this year’s hunt offers an even more extravagant reward: a \$2,000 all-inclusive Royal Caribbean Cruise.

Mozes detailed the cruise package, explaining

that it includes a balcony room and is redeemable at the recipient’s convenience with blackout dates for holidays.

The prize package includes accommodations for two aboard a luxury cruise, complete with meals, entertainment and access to onboard amenities. Whether it’s exploring exotic destinations or lounging by the pool deck, the lucky winner and their guest are in for an unforgettable journey.

Nick Witkowski, junior communications major and student general manager for 107.7 The Bronc, emphasized the sense of accomplishment that comes from seeing a student-run organization create such a massive and beloved event.

“From a worker’s perspective, it is rewarding because it is cool to see how a student-run organization creates such a big event that everyone looks forward to and says ‘Wow, we did that,’” he shared.

Preparations for the “Eggcellent Egg Hunt” begin bright and early, with 107.7 The Bronc’s staff arriving on campus at 5:30 a.m. to scatter eggs across the grounds.

Despite challenges such as last year’s potential shooter threat, which occurred the day before the event, the egg hunt still drew a turnout of about 1,000 people: a testament to the event’s significance within the community. “It goes to show how much the event means to the community,” Witkowski said.

Mozes echoed these sentiments, commenting on the valuable learning opportunities it provides for students. “These events help students get engaged learning opportunities and learn every facet of communications,” he said.

For 107.7 The Bronc and Rider, the egg hunt isn’t just about the thrill of the search; it’s about creating unforgettable experiences and bringing the community together in unexpected ways. And with the promise of a cruise on the horizon, this year’s event is sure to make waves.



Katie Cosentino/The Rider News

Accessibility's impact on the Rider experience

By **Tristan E. M. Leach**

LIKE many university campuses, Rider is made up of a diverse group of people. Students come from different backgrounds, with a variety of interests and unique traits. Rider works to create spaces for every student, but most times it's the bare minimum.

Students are drawn to the university for different reasons: from the small class sizes to a multitude of clubs and organizations. However, students with disabilities may have chosen Rider based on accommodations and what the university promised to provide.

Rider through a different lens

Marlene Brockington, a junior journalism major, is a student who had to look at Rider from an accessibility perspective.

Brockington, who was born with cerebral palsy and is a wheelchair user, had many factors to consider when applying to college. Being a wheelchair user means she needs safe and stable sidewalks to get around, access to elevators and enough time to get to each of her classes. For Brockington, every detail of how the campus is set up and what is available was taken into consideration.

"For the most part, yes, [campus] is accessible for a wheelchair user. I am able to navigate campus if there's flat areas, then I'm able to get around in my wheelchair ... there are obstacles with doors," said Brockington.

Rider's Student Accessibility and Support Services exist to help students with disabilities secure accommodations they need, however some still face obstacles.

Discounting of invisible disabilities

Twin sisters Felicia Roehm, a junior journalism major, and Francesca "Frankie" Roehm, a junior entrepreneurial studies major, were diagnosed with ADHD and dyslexia at 6 years old. While at Rider, they have run into issues with professors when making sure their accommodations are followed through.

When asked if they think faculty, staff and professors are well prepared for disabled students, both Felicia Roehm and Francesca Roehm expressed concerns.

"In my experience professors always make [my accommodations] seem like it's a problem or a burden," said Felicia Roehm. It's not all professors: there have been some who have been really, really great. There have been some who make it seem like 'One more freaking problem.' ... As if [the accommodations] are inconvenient to them ... they're not doing anything about [the accommodations] and they're supposed to be helping you."

Francesca Roehm said, "I've had professors be like, 'You'll finish the exam in time.' I don't care that I'll finish the exam in time. I don't care if you think it should be enough time. I am allotted this time, I'm allowed to have

it. ... It's about me getting the time ... if it's an online test and I'm allotted two hours ... I should get my two hours."

Both Francesca Roehm and Felicia Roehm emphasized how important it is for professors to take the time to learn how to make accommodations in the classroom and on Canvas, a learning management website that hosts Rider's courses. Francesca Roehm pointed out that many professors do not give the allotted extra time because they don't make the effort to figure out Canvas's online test feature.

The fear behind disclosing disability

For many students with disabilities the dismissal of their needs is nothing new. Some students feel that professors, faculty and staff continue this cycle of erasure.

Senior dance performance major Marissa Stellato, who uses she/they pronouns, has Tourette syndrome and an undefined processing disorder that they have learned to manage throughout their life. Stellato was given an individualized education program and kept the plan until sophomore year of high school. When auditioning for colleges, Stellato feared that if someone saw her disability it would mean losing a spot in the program.

"I was worried that somebody would see me tic and the professors would decide they don't want me. It was a big insecurity thing," said Stellato with a sad chuckle.

For activists on campus like Brockington and other students who are vocal about their disabilities, there's hope that Rider will work even harder to accommodate the needs of every student who continues to pass through its doors.

As the campus community grows, so does the stigma around certain words and groups of people. Brockington hopes that more members of the Rider community will learn how they can contribute to the conversation of disability advocacy. She also hopes that people will unlearn the idea that being disabled and the word "disability" are bad.

"I personally define myself as disabled, and I would encourage people with any form of language, when you're referring to anybody, ask the person what they want to be referred to as. I'm perfectly fine with [being called disabled], but the next person may not be," said Brockington. "With me, my disability is very apparent. I'm in a wheelchair. Unfortunately in society any type of difference comes with stigma. Some people don't want the stigma of being labeled as a disabled person. For me, I take pride in it. I prefer the term disabled versus special needs or any words people like to use. I know people mean well ... disabled is not a bad word."

Felicia Roehm is the opinion editor for The Rider News. She had no part in the writing or editing of this story.



Courtesy of Marlene Brockington

Marlene Brockington uses her wheelchair to get around campus, so accessibility was an important factor when picking a college.



Courtesy of Felicia Roehm

Francesca (left) and Felicia Roehm (right) feel like professors see their needed accommodations as a burden.



Tristan E. M. Leach/The Rider News

Marissa Stellato doesn't want her disability to affect her career.

Life in a kibbutz before and after Oct. 7

CONT'D FROM PAGE 1

and freedom, along with the lows of missile strikes, anxiety and fear.

As she moved on to Oct. 7, she described a field next to her kibbutz, bright red flowers covering the ground. On Oct. 8, she said, it had become a "murder field."

"Instead of being all red from [the] poppy flower, it became all red from the blood of the parents and the kids," said Gafner.

A slideshow behind her showed security tapes of people with guns, videos of missiles exploding and photos of her kibbutz before and after Oct. 7.

She then went on to talk about hiding in the attic of her home with her boyfriend and parents, as they held onto the door for hours to keep out Hamas fighters who invaded the kibbutz.

"I really believed that I was going to be murdered," said Gafner. "We didn't do nothing. I didn't do nothing to Hamas ... I believe in peace.... I didn't understand why they wanted to kill me."

Gafner recalled hearing a knock on her home's back door, knowing that her house was "next." A few seconds later, a knock was heard on the front door, followed by glass shattering.

"I can see my father looking into my mom's eyes and saying goodbye from him," said Gafner. "I didn't want to accept it. I said 'No, we're going to survive.' I need to believe that somebody will save us."

She then described how someone pried at the doorknob for a few minutes, her father fighting to keep the door closed. Eventually, the person on the

other side gave up.

After waiting for hours and the family evacuated from the kibbutz, realizing it was no longer safe.

"I felt only guilt because I didn't understand how we got saved," said Gafner, who said 100 people were killed in her kibbutz that day.

Gafner finished her speech with a slideshow of some of those who were killed in the kibbutz, along with her memories of them. One she described as having a "golden heart," another as having an "amazing smile."

"Our story is not going to end, because we have still 136 people kidnapped in Gaza," said Gafner. "This is my people, this is our people and we need to set them free now."

After an ovation at the end of the speech, Gafner stayed to talk to Rider students alongside those not from the campus community.

Dar Halevy Feldman, an organizer for "Faces of Oct. 7," said the initiative's main point was to fight denialism.

"Unfortunately, somehow in North America, supporting terror became the mainstream," said Halevy Feldman. "Seeing all of that, and tackling all that, was very frightening to me. ...I felt like never again is now and campuses are the future."

According to Halevy Feldman, over 55 campuses have hosted Israeli survivors so far.

Gafner, who is 28 years old, said that she wanted to speak at college campuses after noticing how people denied the events on social media.

"Yes, I was in Oct. 7," said Gafner in an interview with The Rider News after the speech. "My home was attacked."

She said that some of the places she spoke at included Rutgers and communities in New York City, and that she had plans of going to Philadelphia and back to New York after her Rider speech. After she is done in the United States, she plans to return to Tel Aviv, Israel, where her family is currently living.

Hillel's plans at Rider

This is only the beginning of a new era of Hillel at Rider, an organization that plans to have a bigger influence on campus.

Rachel Seigerman, a Hillel E-board member, said that the goal of the organization is to bring Jewish members of the community together.

"We want to bring more people out and get them connected, and really bring more of it to our campus," said the senior arts and entertainment industries management major.

Handelman said more events are in store for Rider from the Jewish organization before the school year ends.

The hope of the "Faces of Oct. 7" event was to bring the Jewish perspective to the campus community, according to Seigerman.

"We want to make people aware of the impact that it has on us and the constant threat we feel, and bringing people together like this makes them feel like they're not alone."

The Rider News

FUTURE FEATURE — SPOTLIGHTS —

A circular graphic divided into several colored segments: green, red, orange, and black. The text "Black History Month" is centered in white with a black outline.

**Black
History
Month**

A circular graphic divided into several colored segments: pink, purple, and red. The text "Women's History Month" is centered in white with a black outline.

**Women's
History
Month**

A graphic featuring a black graduation cap with a gold tassel, set against a background of blue and purple wavy shapes. The text "Senior Spotlight" is centered in white with a black outline.

**Senior
Spotlight**



**Scan to nominate yourself
or someone else!**



Photo courtesy of Madison Rattiner

Sophomore marketing major **Madison Rattiner** (center) wears a gray hat and poses with staff members of Rider's Saxbys. **Rattiner** and her staff beat the sales goal of \$2,500 in her first week as SCEO.

Saxbys welcomes new SCEO Madison Rattiner

By **Madison Lewis**

SOPHOMORE marketing major and Student CEO of Saxbys Madison Rattiner exceeds expectations while juggling multiple jobs, activities and clubs all while attending classes at Rider.

Not only does her work ethic speak for itself, but Rattiner goes against the grain by having profound experience and knowledge of the business world at a young age.

"I'm definitely the youngest [CEO] we've had at Rider," Rattiner said. "That definitely sets me apart."

Rider has a program where students who are involved in the Norm Brodsky College of Business can apply to become the student CEO of the university's location of the chain restaurant Saxbys.

SCEOs prepare for the job ahead by embarking on a two-week intensive training course at Saxbys headquarters in Philadelphia, where the SCEOs are required to participate.

Being an SCEO at Saxbys is more than serving breakfast delicacies and managing staff. Rattiner revealed that the job entailed controlling finances, ordering and preparing products, making schedules for staff, taking training courses, calculating cost of goods sold and an abundance of other important roles.

Rattiner divulged that she worked about 32 hours at the cafe and 10 hours of administrative work at home weekly.

On top of the hours she devotes to Saxbys, Rattiner is also a community assistant for Hill Hall and has worked with the Rider Student Theater Company.

With Rattiner always being on the clock, she struggled to allocate time for leisure; however, she intends to run a business of her own in the future.

Rattiner has a past of entrepreneurial endeavors, as she won second place in a concept competition where she innovated mechanical technology to prevent vehicles from colliding with the rear of trucks.

Sustaining success

In her first few weeks as SCEO, Rattiner saw impressive outcomes of her managerial style at Saxbys, as she beat her first-week sales goal by \$2,500 with that number increasing since.

In order to sustain success, Rattiner proposed plans

to revolutionize her workplace. She wanted to reduce wait times, a consistent complaint with the student body.

Rattiner had already increased her staff numbers by two for each shift, which is sometimes difficult with overlapping schedules.

Despite the challenges, Rattiner is optimistic about her goals to improve wait times and morale at Saxbys.

Rattiner said she is even coordinating a "Saxbys sing-along" open mic night for the students. She added that there is no date for the event, but that they will "definitely be doing it."

The SCEO motivates her staff by encouraging friendly competition. Rattiner said they made predictions about the first song to play for the Super Bowl halftime show.

As for advice for future SCEOs, Rattiner urged them to continue and persevere through the ups and downs.

"Don't give up ... it's ... tough in the beginning, but it's rewarding. There are some good days ... and there are some bad days where I feel defeated," said Rattiner. "When you have those bad days, they're going to end. You are going to have another day."

Karin Torchia, the senior associate director of athletics for external operations and development at Rider, endorsed Rattiner wholeheartedly and was slightly disappointed to lose her as a member of the marketing and promotions staff.

Rattiner's responsibilities in the athletics department included posting to social media, rolling T-shirts to be thrown at basketball games, coordinating with 107.7 The Bronc and conducting small competitions on the court during basketball games.

"She has a calm manner to her ... things don't stress her out," said Torchia. "Maddy was always very cool, calm and collected. That's going to ... translate well for her at Saxbys."

Though she was disappointed to lose such a level-headed student worker, Torchia was not surprised that Saxbys saw the same potential in her.

"Of course [she became SCEO]. ... [She is] one of the most incredible students that I have ever come across and I've been at Rider for 23 years," said Torchia. "I am just thrilled for her that she got that position, and I know she is going to have just an

incredible career ahead of her when she graduates from Rider."

Rattiner, with an onslaught of support behind her, found that she was no stranger to the stress that came with such an imperative leadership role.

"It's very easy to just want to give up," said Rattiner. "A lot of it is very stressful. It gets easier as you go."



Photo by Sandra Addison Photography

Sophomore marketing major **Madison Rattiner** is the youngest SCEO so far of Rider's Saxbys.

Shining Light on Black Excellence: Romel Cruz Easton

By **Tristan E. M. Leach**

FOR sophomore music production major Romel Cruz Easton, music has always been a driving force in his life.

From a young age, Cruz Easton was surrounded by the joy and connections that music brings. Growing up, his mom, dad and older sister all played instruments, and eventually Cruz Easton decided to start learning the violin.

“My sister played violin previous to me ... so I was like ‘This classical music is hitting different.’ Tchaikovsky, Mozart, Beethoven, some of the greats. I love to incorporate [classical music] into my own music,” said Cruz Easton.

Cruz Easton played the violin until he graduated high school. He briefly considered majoring in architecture; however, Cruz Easton decided to pursue a major he would love and that would bring him joy.

This decision continues to pay off for Cruz Easton. He currently has at least 20 songs in the works, all of which are passion projects. Cruz Easton credits Justin Burton, an associate professor for the music production major, for motivating Cruz Easton

and keeping him in the creative headspace no matter what.

“Coming into Rider I didn’t know anything about production at all. I was kind of fresh [to producing]. Burton took us step by step, giving us the best advice and making sure we wrote everything down,” said Cruz Easton, “He’s an educational support and an emotional anchor for people. He says, ‘Put your mental health first, above school.’”

Burton said, “My experience of [Cruz Easton] is that he tends to be really engaged with the students around him and gets along well with others. He is just a generally positive presence in the classroom.”

For Cruz Easton, music is how he relaxes and maintains his mental health. He emphasized the joy and pride that he feels when listening to one of his finished songs.

When he isn’t making music, Cruz Easton is hard at work as a community assistant for Lincoln Hall. The job was a no-brainer for Cruz Easton who has always had a knack for leadership.

“To become a CA, for me, is in my blood. I’ve been leading since I could remember. I was a Boy Scout, Eagle Scout and then did work that was equivalent to the Eagle Scout work. Leading has just been second nature,” said Cruz Easton. “Being a CA I get these benefits with housing, and I get paid, but also I get to help people be themselves and be comfortable on campus. It’s all positive.”

Cruz Easton’s positive impact and passion is felt all over campus. Jay Johnson, a senior sports media major, is a CA with Cruz Easton and collaborates with Cruz Easton on his music. Johnson is one of several Rider students that is featured on and has worked with Cruz Easton on musical projects.

Johnson said, “I’m rapping on the album. I’m on two or three songs, which is very exciting.”

Johnson expressed his excitement at the opportunity to work Cruz Easton, emphasizing that Cruz Easton has given Johnson a space to develop his skills.

“I found out I could rap in elementary school. I found out I could freestyle and since then I kind of used it as a party trick, and now every time someone needs someone to freestyle, I’m there,” said Johnson.

While he still has a couple of years until graduation, Cruz Easton is looking toward the future. Cruz Easton hopes to someday have his own studio and music for Grammy Award-winning artists and win a Grammy. After establishing himself in the industry he wants to open a space where kids from impoverished backgrounds can learn how to produce music.

“I want to start a non-profit building where kids from not-so-well maintained communities come out to learn about music and then possibly work around the area in music so they don’t have to do things that shouldn’t be talked about in public,” said Cruz Easton.



Photo courtesy of Romel Cruz Easton

Sophomore music production major **Romel Cruz Easton** mixes a song

For now, Cruz Easton is producing all of his music out of his room in Lincoln Hall and in the Fine Arts building. He is pushing himself to get his EP, “R and R,” which can stand for either “Rebounds and Rejects” or “Relaxation and Rest,” out by the end of this semester. The album will feature eight or nine tracks of original music.

“These are something special,” said Cruz Easton when talking about the songs. It is all about the music and leaving a positive impact for Cruz Easton. When talking about advice he would give Cruz Easton emphasized finding support and trying everything.

Cruz Easton said, “Go for it. Find people who will always support you. You might think you’re not doing great and then someone else will say that you’re doing amazing. Always push forward.”

This article is part of the Shining Light on Black Excellence series by The Rider News to showcase impactful Black figures on campus.



Photo courtesy of Romel Cruz Easton

Sophomore music production major **Romel Cruz Easton** juggles being a community assistant and producing his own album.



Photo courtesy of Romel Cruz Easton

Sophomore music production major **Romel Cruz Easton** with friend and collaborator **Omar Francis**, a junior marketing major. **Francis** will be featured on a few of **Cruz Easton's** songs.

Dating violence: when 'toxic' goes too far

It seems like almost everyone these days has a juicy story about a “toxic” ex. We throw the word around to describe any unhealthy behavior, from ignoring texts to name-calling, but I believe that our normalization of “toxic” behavior hides a very real and very dangerous threat: dating violence.

Marisa Leib, a counselor at the Rider Counseling Center, defines dating violence as “physical, sexual, emotional or verbal abuse from a romantic or sexual partner.” The term may sound outlandish to some, especially since we rarely discuss dating violence alongside other forms of violence. However, Leib believes that we constantly see dating violence in the media and everyday life. We just don’t know it.

“What happens especially with the media is that there is a lot of normalization and even romanticizing toxic and abusive behaviors,” Leib said. “This results in people really accepting these behaviors, trying to rationalize them or even providing excuses for acts of violence.”

Every time we come across a video flaunting a “toxic” relationship, what we are really watching is an example of dating violence. The more that we make these behaviors normal, the less likely we are to speak out against them, creating a dangerous habit.

Watch out for red flags

When we hear the word “violence,” we might automatically think of physical violence. However, dating violence can take many forms.

To make the behavior easier to distinguish, Leib pointed out some warning signs to watch out for: acting overly jealous toward their partner, being controlling, putting them down, blaming them for the abuse, refusing to take responsibility, having a quick temper and not allowing them to end the relationship.

Leib also explained digital abuse, which persists as a form of violence in our digital world.

“In the realm of digital abuse, this can look like repeated unwanted calls or texts, harassment on social media, pressure to send nude or private pictures, using text or social media to check up on you, insult you, or control who you can be friends with, as well as demanding your passwords to social media.”

Across both the social and digital sphere, these are red flags that should not go unnoticed.

“None of these behaviors are okay,” Leib said. “Even if [just] a few of them are happening, it’s still abuse.”

‘You’re not alone’

As a person who has experienced dating violence myself, I know how confusing and painful it can be to admit that your partner is the person hurting you. We might assume that violence does not occur in relationships, but this is often wrong. Anyone is capable of committing violence regardless of race, gender, sexuality or identity, and we need to recognize that.

Leib said, “The first step is awareness. I think the other piece of it is knowing you’re not alone. There are people that can help you and support you.”

Leib outlined the numerous resources that Rider students can access for support. In the event of immediate physical concern or a threat to safety, Leib suggested calling 911 or Public Safety. Other forms of support are the Rider Counseling Center, the center’s supportive space called “The Me in We” and Womanspace, an external resource for survivors of domestic and sexual violence. All of the contact information for these organizations, along with others, are listed on the back of many bathroom stall doors around campus.

It can feel difficult or even inappropriate to voice concerns about someone else’s relationship, but I believe that it is critical in the event of dating violence. The consequences of staying silent are too dire.

Leib also believes that it is our responsibility to say something when we observe signs of dating violence. She advises that the best way to approach the conversation is with empathy and compassion.

“One of the things we are focusing on for prevention is this idea of ‘upstander’ training, so if you see something, say something,” Leib said. “Especially on a college campus there are definitely peers or other people noticing what’s happening, and being able to stand up and say something and bring that concern up is really important.”

Say goodbye to toxicity

In the spirit of Valentine’s Day, maybe it’s time to take the word “toxic” out of our vocabulary. The more we use it, the more we normalize dating violence. Instead, we should bring attention to healthy relationship behaviors and point out any red flags we see. As college students, we have the responsibility to eliminate dating violence on Rider’s campus.

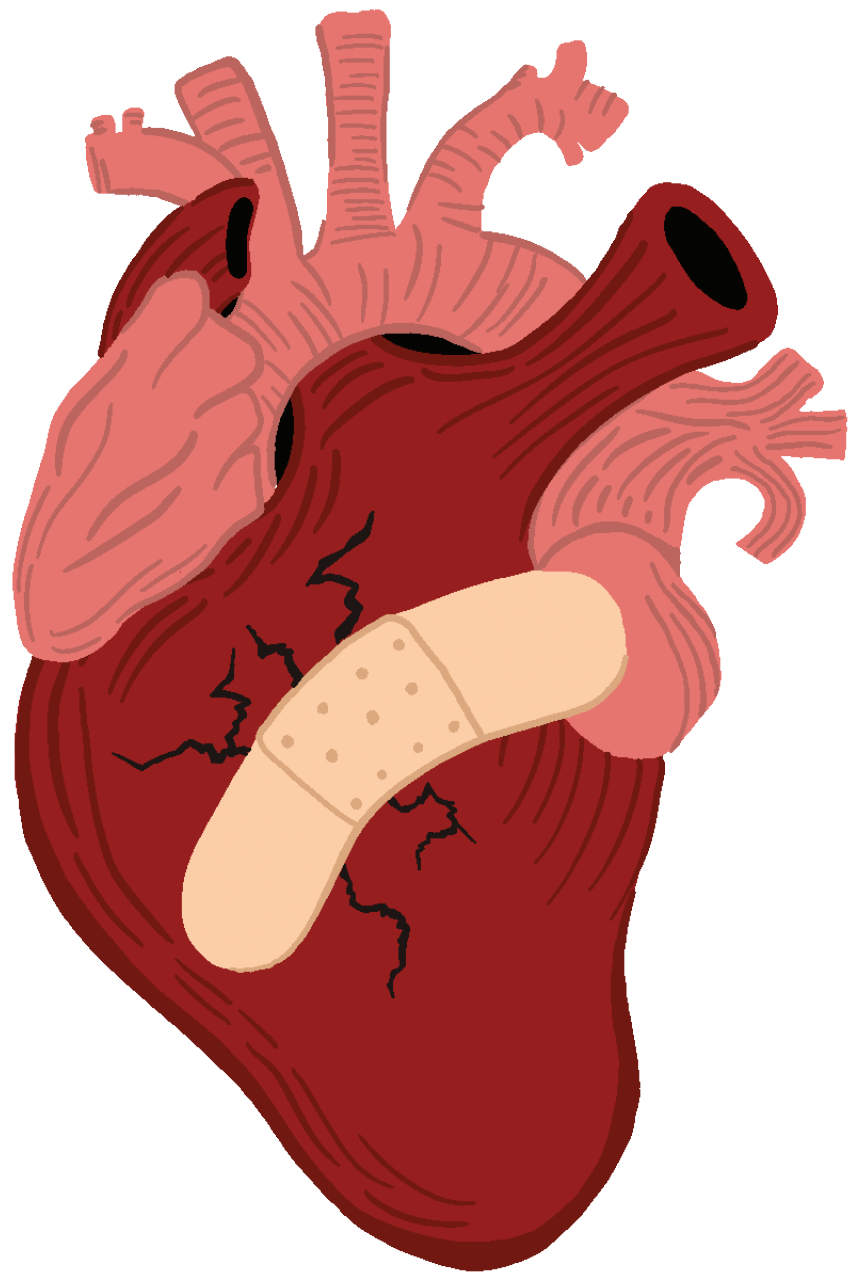
If you or someone you know has experienced dating violence, the following resources are available:

Counseling Center
(609) 896-5157
counseling@rider.edu

Mercer County Womanspace: Domestic violence & sexual assault hotline
(609) 394-9000

National Domestic Violence Hotline
(800) 799-7233
Text START to 88788

Maggie Kleiner
junior graphic design major



Rashe Mishra/The Rider News

Knowing the signs of abuse can help yourself and others.

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SOPHOMORE SIGHTINGS

Why the book ban promotes censorship in New Jersey

CENSORSHIP has crept into spaces from classrooms to libraries, belittling marginalized voices and under-represented identities. The privilege to pick up a book on any topic is a liberty that has been stripped from students all over the United States. Banning books in the U.S. can be traced back as early as 1637, but in just this past year, New Jersey specifically has seen 13 attempts at restricting access to 28 books ranging from topics on race, gender, sexuality and religion from school curricula and public libraries.

PEN America, a nonprofit organization committed to raising awareness for the protection of free expression in the U.S., released an “Index of School Book Bans” for just the first half of the 2022-2023 school year, where they found that 30% of the unique titles banned are books about race or racism, or “feature characters of color,” while 26% of the 1,500 unique titles banned cover LGBTQIA+ characters or themes.

The undermining of the stories waiting to be told by disempowered parties has not only been an issue in classrooms, but in libraries as well. As promoters of knowledge, librarians have a duty to protect the freedom to read for all. The American Library Association released a “Freedom to Read Statement” that affirms “libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.”

What can we do in this clash of censorship? While Rider itself has no issues, our librarians are involved in several state organizations that combat book banning in New Jersey public and school libraries, including the New Jersey Chapter of the Association of College and Research Libraries.

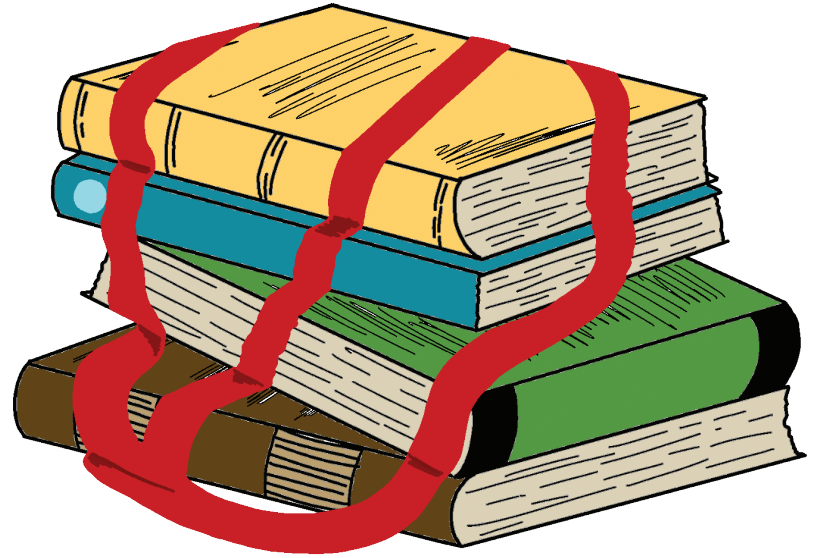
On the legislative side, a bill was introduced last month to create a law against book banning in New Jersey called The Freedom to Read, sponsored by Senator Andrew Zwicker, Senator Teresa Ruiz and Assemblywoman Michelle Drulis. Librarians across the state are calling for valuable voices from New Jersey students to submit written testimonies on the matter, simply by emailing pastpresident@njasl.org. A state hearing in front of members of the Education Committee will be held on Feb. 15.

Rider education professor Heather Casey said, “Universities are places where free and open access to information and ideas is key to learning. When access is removed to different perspectives and points of view, it limits learning.”

The banning of books is an issue unfolding in real time that not only has immediate impact, but also future consequences on how children are taught and what information is disclosed to them in their most impressionable years.

In attempts to shelter the younger generations from being easily shaped by the information out in the world, state-level policies end up denying them the ability to think for themselves and draw conclusions based on the whole truth.

Grace Bertrand
sophomore journalism major



Rashe Mishra/The Rider News

Book bans in New Jersey can limit stories that inspire and educate others.

JUNIOR JOURNALS

Why has concert etiquette disappeared?

ONE of the great things about being so close to New York City is being able to see Broadway shows, performances and concerts without having to travel too far. The arts are all around us and they are full of creativity and fun; however, when at a concert it is important to remember to be respectful of the performer, yourself and others. Over the summer, performers were being hit on stage from fans throwing various items such as phones, bracelets and even chicken nuggets.

On June 18, Bebe Rexha, was hit with a phone near her eye while performing in New York causing her to be hospitalized. A man from New Jersey was later charged with assault. Drake was also hit by a phone on his arm while performing in Chicago on July 5. On June 28, Kelsea Ballerini had to stop singing while performing in Idaho when she was hit in the eye by a bracelet. Harry Styles had a chicken nugget tossed at him while performing at Madison Square Garden on August 27. Singers having items thrown at them is risking their safety. At many concerts singers encourage interaction with their fans, but can it go too far?

Nick Barbati, the assistant vice president of student affairs at Rider, believes that although there is a connection between the performer and the fans, there is still an expectation of respect. Barbati created “R Factor” 12 years ago and has been a judge for the entirety of the annual show. “R Factor” includes a lot of audience interaction, however, that can also cause some frustration.

“The audition round of the ‘R Factor’ lends itself well to audience interaction, but it got to the point when we were at the finals we actually had to repeatedly ask the audience to not shout out during performances and also to keep the energy positive, because that’s just the nature of the show,” said Barbati. “It’s supposed to be uplifting and also allow the performers to not be interrupted.”

Barbati shared that 10 years ago there was a performer at “R Factor” that was just getting ready to sing and someone from the audience yelled out at them causing the performer to forget the words.

“This is someone who really should have done well all things considered and was completely thrown off. And that sticks out to me ten years later because it was so memorable for the wrong reasons,” said Barbati.

He is also one of the chaperones when students go to Broadway and he explains that often this is the first time these students are seeing a performance. Broadway is different from a concert because there is an expectation that the audience will sit, watch and listen whereas in a concert there is usually more noise and conversation. Barbati recalled a time he took students to see “The Lion King” and some students took their phones out in the middle of the performance.

“It was mortifying in the moment for me as the chaperone as everyone’s looking around at you. Many times, [it is] the students’ very first time seeing a Broadway show and they just didn’t know,” said Barbati. He explains that students are used to always having their phones out to capture a moment that now a disclaimer might have to be implemented so students know about show etiquette.

Barbati recently went to a Madonna concert at Madison Square Garden and had floor seats, but the woman sitting in front of him stood on her chair for the entire concert covering his view. The man sitting next him politely asked her to get off her seat so those behind her could see the show but the woman ignored him.

“I was in an awkward position multiple times asking the security guard to come and take her down. Then it creates such an uncomfortable environment for you as an audience member. You can never fully ease into the show once etiquettes been breached,” said Barbati.

He explains that concert performers are also very vulnerable when on stage and are performing in front of thousands of people. They are more likely to hear negative comments said about them while performing and have items thrown on stage.

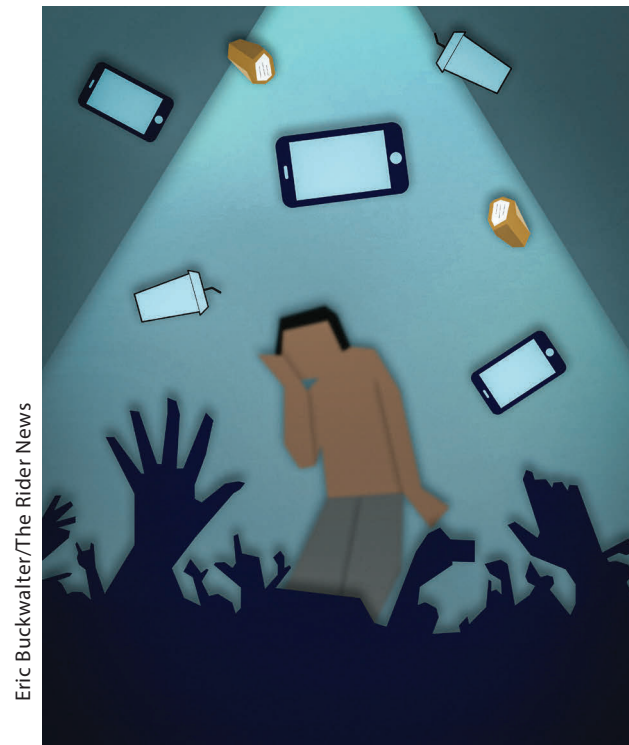
“Over the years that invisible barrier that exists between the audience and the performer has disappeared. Now to me, that throw of the items is like a symbolic breach of the relationship between artists and audience,” said Barbati. “It’s just horrible we went from throwing flowers at people to throwing phones.”

Moving forward, Barbati shares that security must be very present and some performers have stopped performing to help take control of the crowds, alongside implementing rules to prevent harmful incidents from happening again.

“It’s up to venues to announce what etiquette is expected and then enforcing it,” said Barbati.

At a concert, remember to stay in your own space, don’t block anyone, take care of your belongings and don’t throw anything on the stage.

Felicia Roehm
junior journalism major



Eric Buckwalter/The Rider News

Fans and performers are at risk of being hurt due to a lack of etiquette.

WRESTLING

Six-year Bronc reflects on Rider tenure



Graduate student **Richie Koehler** smiles on Senior Day for Rider wrestling's match on Jan. 28.

By **Logan K. VanDine**

RIDER wrestling has brought in many talented wrestlers over the past few years, with Ethan Laird '23, junior David Szuba, senior Quinn Kinner and graduate student Jake Silverstein to name a few.

Graduate student Richie Koehler, who has been wrestling as a Bronc since 2018, is closing his tenure with Rider as his sixth and final season comes to an end.

'A lot of things have changed'

Koehler reflected on his six-year tenure with the final home match of his college career slated for Feb. 16.

"I definitely can't believe that I have been here for a full six years. Coming back here six years ago, being that little 18-year-old walking on campus, and a lot of things have changed during my time here," Koehler said.

Despite the ups and downs Koehler has dealt with during his time at Rider, through injuries and the COVID-19 pandemic, he is still grateful for all the opportunities the team gave him.

"It's been pretty awesome," Koehler said with a smile on his face. "Coming onto campus I was the third string at 133 pounds. I had to beat out a six-year senior and a kid who was on a full ride and was recruited over me, and now being a six-year senior and the captain on the team, it has kind of come full circle."

'Great influences on me'

Koehler also spoke very highly of Head Coach John Hangey and noted one of the assistant coaches, Nic Bedelyon.

"[Hangey] has been more than just a coach," Koehler said. "He's been a role model, a mentor and someone who I really look up to and inspires me to be better in every facet of my life, and Nic, too. They have both been role models and great influences on me."

Hangey, who's in his seventh season as head coach, was touched by Koehler's words.

"I'm humbled by that comment. I try to guide each member of the team like a second father with expectations and provide them with the means to be successful," Hangey said.

Koehler started wrestling when he was in second grade. Some of his fellow members from his first wrestling club would also go on to wrestle at Rider.

'I just had success'

Despite playing baseball and soccer in high school at Christian Brothers Academy in

Middletown, New Jersey, Koehler still always knew wrestling was going to be his sport.

"I just had success in high school, and that's when schools started to reach out to me ... and I started to think that I can wrestle past high school," Koehler said.

Looking back on when he decided to wrestle at Rider, Koehler spoke about his initial takeaways from the school, the wrestling program and the coaches.

"When I did my walk on campus with my mom and Coach Hangey, you knew what you were getting with Coach Hangey ... he's a really good man, a really good leader, and Nic was very nice, and little did I know when I got into that wrestling room, they were going to mold me into the man that I am today," he said.

Koehler took the great coaching he had and put up an incredible resume for the Broncs by being a Mid-American Conference runner-up during the 2020-2021 Season, being an NCAA Qualifier at 133 pounds during the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 seasons and finishing third at the Keystone Classic.

Despite Koehler's impressive resume, he is still looking to become an even better wrestler with the last few months he has left.

Even though Koehler feels that he has more to accomplish and more energy left in the tank, Hangey said he has seen growth and leadership in Koehler.

"Richie has grown into one of our team leaders. During his first few years, he kept quiet, worked hard and earned the respect of his coaches and peers while watching how the upperclassmen went about their business. Richie leads by example on and off the mat and always puts the program first," said Hangey.

With the Broncs' last regular season home match against Clarion set for Feb. 16 at noon, Koehler was asked if he or his other senior teammates will be emotional in their last match at the Alumni Gym.

"I don't think it's really set in for all of us yet because all eyes are on March, but it does feel a little weird thinking about how in about five or six weeks, it's all over ... so you just have to be grateful for every moment," he said.



Rider lacrosse handily defeats FDU in its first-ever game on Feb. 10.

Maggie Kleiner/The Rider News

LACROSSE

Broncs earn decisive win in first-ever game

By **Logan K. VanDine**

RIDER lacrosse debuted with its first-ever game, starting the program off with a convincing 19-7 win at Fairleigh Dickinson on Feb. 10.

If there was any worry that the Broncs may show some nerves at the start of the new era, Rider proved any doubters wrong as three minutes into the game's action, junior attacker Selena Carrington scored the team's first-ever goal to take a quick 1-0 lead.

For Carrington personally, this goal was equally important.

"It's a really cool thing to have experienced," Carrington said. "It was also my first collegiate goal, so it made it that more special. I'm grateful for all the support I have from my teammates and coaches."

The Broncs not only dominated the first quarter but the entire first half, scoring 13 points to give them a 13-4 lead.

Despite only scoring six points in the entire second half, Rider handily defeated the Knights to start the lacrosse era for Rider Athletics with a win.

"For the first game we looked good," said Head Coach Evan Mager. "As with any new team and most first games, there are areas of improvement. ... For many of our girls this was the first time back in an official game since the '22 season, so getting through the buildup and having the success we did is something I am really happy with."

Three Broncs scored at least a hat trick, with Carrington scoring three goals, graduate student attacker Anna Devlin scoring four and sophomore midfielder Katie Walsh leading Rider in scoring with five.

Rider had eight different scorers overall.

Walsh credited her teammates with her strong offensive performance: "I wouldn't have been able to play such a dominant game today without my teammates. They have faith in me to do the things I am capable of on the field, and I will always give them credit for it."

The Broncs will have an eight-day break before their first home game, which is set to take place on Feb. 22 against Saint Francis at 1 p.m. The game can also be streamed on BroncVision.

MEN'S BASKETBALL

Broncs extend skid to three games

By Richard Saile

RIDER men's basketball's defense struggled the past two games, losing 84-67 at Fairfield on Feb. 8 and at home against Marist 77-62 on Feb. 10. The Broncs extended their losing streak to three and fell to 5-8 in Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference play.

A tale of two halves

When the Broncs traveled to Connecticut on Feb. 8 to take on the Stags, the Broncs struggled on both ends of the floor to start the game as their offense had multiple sloppy possessions. The mishaps included a couple missed layups and 3-pointers combined with four turnovers in the first five minutes of the game.

The Stags opened the game on an 11-2 run thanks to Fairfield's Jalen Leach, who had five of the Stags' first 11 points. The Broncs had their hands full on the defensive end between Leach and Fairfield's Caleb Fields, who began the game with 13 points in the first 12 minutes.

The Broncs, down 10 at one point in the first half, slowly clawed their way back into the game. Over the last six minutes of the first half, the Broncs went on a 17-3 run that gave them the lead going into halftime.

Senior forward Tariq Ingraham made a pair of free throws and a layup along with two 3-pointers by redshirt senior guard Allen Powell, which helped give the Broncs their first lead of the game and the Broncs went into the locker room up 39-35.

Coming back, the Broncs and Stags both exchanged baskets for the first six minutes of the second half. Redshirt senior forward Mervin James had six points that helped the Broncs stay close with the Stags as both teams exchanged buckets and lead changes.

The Stags outscored the Broncs 17-5 for the final



Josiah Thomas/The Rider News

Head Coach **Kevin Baggett** crosses his arms as the Broncs take on the Red Foxes.

six minutes to win the game 84-67.

"We just started the game plan sluggish," said Head Coach Kevin Baggett. "We finally started to pick it back up, take the lead. Then the first four minutes (of the second half), again like the last game, you don't come out ready to play and the next thing you know, they have a lead and they never relinquished the lead."

Attacked by the Foxes

Two days later, the Broncs returned to Alumni Gym to host the Red Foxes. The first five minutes of the game had players on both teams start the game well, with Ingraham and graduate student guard T.J. Weeks combining for eight of their first 11 points.

The Red Foxes had an answer with a 12-5 run that put the Broncs in early trouble. The first half for the Broncs was also sloppy with possessions that ended up being missed shots, turnovers or fouls that put the Red Foxes at the free throw line.

The Broncs cut the lead to five thanks to a pull-up jumper from senior guard Corey McKeithan, but the Broncs struggled to stop the Red Foxes and went into the locker room down 37-29.

In the first half, the Broncs' offense had seven turnovers and shot 1-6 from beyond the arc.

The Red Foxes were up 24 with 11:58 left in the game after the Broncs gave up a 26-10 run, as Rider failed to limit the Marist offense in any area. "We were poor. Too many breakdowns," Baggett said on the Broncs' defense. "We were trying to double the post because we've been struggling guarding the post. ... We left the shooters open. Give them credit for finding guys and making those shots."

The Broncs eventually cut the Red Foxes lead down to 15 but never got back into the game, as they lost their third straight game and dropped to 8-16 on the season.

"We still got seven games. We have to learn from this game and we just have to keep playing for the rest of the season," Ingraham said.

The Broncs will hit the floor again on Feb. 16 when they host Mount St. Mary's. The game begins at 7 p.m. and can be streamed on ESPN+.

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

Bruised Broncs pick up a needed win

By Kadie Diguseppe

It was a hard couple of weeks for Rider women's basketball, but the Broncs managed to pick up their first win since Jan. 13, with a much-needed win over Manhattan on Feb. 10.

Mount malaise

On Feb. 8, the team tried to snap their six-game losing streak on the road against Mount St. Mary's, but instead, added another tough loss to its record with a 64-43 defeat.

After the first 10 minutes of play, the score was 13-12 in favor of the Broncs with help from their starting lineup, including senior forward Sofie Bruintjes and freshman center Kaylan Deveney, the Broncs' leading scorer in the game, both getting points in the paint.

The Broncs' defense slowly started to fall apart during the second quarter, letting the Mountaineers outscore them 33-21.

Rider gave up 21 more points before the end of the first half, and then surrendered 18 more points during the third quarter.

Ultimately, the Broncs were not able to pull off the road win, making it their 10th road loss so far this season with a final score of 64-43.

Getting a big win

The Broncs were right back at on Feb. 10 in Alumni Gym against Manhattan, who they had previously lost to by 34 points.

After the team's loss to Mount St. Mary's, graduate student guard Taylor Langan admitted that Rider strongly focused on defense.

"Today was the first game where we kind of put offense as a second hand and we put defense as our number one priority," Langan said.

Langan was on a roll with nine points in the first quarter. She was joined with senior guard Molly Lynch, shooting 100% from the 3-point line and also

scoring nine points in the quarter to help the Broncs lead 22-15 in the first 10 minutes.

At the break, the Broncs scored almost the same amount of points that they had scored in the entirety of their last matchup against the Jaspers where they scored 39 points. The score was 36-24 in favor of Rider at halftime.

Rebounds and steals came up big for the Broncs with help from senior guard Makayla Firebaugh, who had two steals during the first half. Junior guards Sanaa Redmond and Mariona Cos-Morales got rebounds on both sides of the court assisting in the effort.

The second half for the Broncs was back-and-forth, due to Manhattan finally getting shots to go its way, and the Rider defense struggling to catch up.

The Broncs led for the entirety of the game until the last five minutes when the Jaspers cut the game to two points after a 3-pointer.

With 40 seconds left, Rider went up by one point after Langan made 1-of-2 free throws, but Cos-Morales got a clutch steal to send Redmond to the free throw line with 30 seconds left.

Firebaugh was sent to the free throw line 15 seconds later for two extra points to secure the hard fought win.

Langan ended the game with 15 points and eight rebounds while Lynch ended with a career high 13 points and three steals.

After the game, Head Coach Lynn Milligan praised her team and said, "I'm happy that we got this win at home. I'm happy that we are off this little stretch we were on."

The Broncs are 6-16 on the season and will travel to New York to matchup against Iona on Feb. 15 at 6 p.m., hoping to add another win to their record.



Josiah Thomas/The Rider News

The Broncs huddle during a timeout to discuss the plan moving forward.

Sports

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BASEBALL

PREVIEW: Broncs reload after championship run



Rider baseball poses with its 2023 championship banner. The Broncs have won two of the last three MAAC Championships.

Graphic by Eric Buckwalter/The Rider News

By Benjamin Shinault

ALL the way in the back of Rider's campus stands a dormant baseball stadium. Over the harsh winter season, it has collected snow and rain atop the tarp. It used to be home to clouds of dirt, chewed-up bubble gum and sunflower seeds and baseballs being bashed by rattling, metallic bats.

Alas, the time is almost here for Sonny Pittaro Field to come alive again. Baseball has returned to Rider's campus and the team is ready and eager to win another Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference Championship.

Rider's season begins on Feb. 16 as it heads south to face off against the nationally ranked East Carolina Pirates.

Breaking down the Broncs

The Broncs have had their fair share of departures with some of their top contributors nestling into new programs, including starting pitcher Dylan Heine, who made his way to Arkansas State, and slugging outfielder Brendan O'Donnell, who took his bat to James Madison.

Last season, O'Donnell led the Broncs in home runs, RBIs and slugging percentage.

Another Bronc that has left Sonny Pittaro Field was 2023 All-American closing pitcher and MAAC reliever of the year Danny Kirwin, who now plays for the Oakland Ballers, a professional baseball team within an MLB Partner League.

With all this considered, the Broncs had to refuel the talent lost to graduation and the not-so-forgiving transfer portal.

Entering the ensuing season, Rider will have two new graduate students: outfielder Justin Costanzo, pitcher Christian Coombes and six freshmen added to the roster.

Costanzo, coming in from Widener, brings veteran leadership and some pop to the plate. Last season he had a .318 batting average, hit a team-leading seven home runs and led Widener in walks with 25.

"Great kid, a left-handed hitter with some power, and he has a chance to be a great player for us," Head Coach Barry Davis said of Costanzo. "He'll probably be our designated hitter [in] game one, and he is very capable of playing left field."

On the mound, Coombes, coming in from MAAC

rival Saint Peter's, can definitely help the Broncs with their depth, as they had some key losses to their starting rotation. Last season for the Peacocks, the southpaw pitcher struck out 36 batters over 50 innings and had a career-low in batting average against with .261.

"He's a strike thrower ... and he's an innings eater," Davis said of Coombes. "He's not going to be pitching in non-quality situations, he's going to be pitching in competitive situations ... and he's another piece to the bullpen."

Returning Broncs

Despite the constant turnover of names in Rider's baseball program, some still sport black and cranberry. First baseman Luke Lesch and infielder Jack Winsett are returning to Rider this season. Both Broncs are graduate students and have taken a leadership position in and out of the dugout.

"Jack didn't play as much in his first couple years but slowly developed into a great player for us," Davis said. "Luke has essentially played since he was a freshman ... for Luke, this will be his fourth straight year at first."

Davis described what he is expecting from Winsett and Lesch as they take bigger leadership roles as graduate students.

"They have certainly experienced the failure and the success that comes with a season," Davis explained. "They can certainly be more vocal off and on the field trying to develop relationships with the young guys ... we are expecting them to play at a high level every time we go out."

Winsett, who has been with the Broncs since the 2020 season, has been to three MAAC Championship games and won twice. Winsett is expecting the same this spring.

"I feel like just being in the championship the last three years puts a target on our back, and I feel like the end goal is always winning the MAAC championship," Winsett said.

Winsett's last season with the Broncs was one of his most successful. He batted .289, had 59 hits, brought in 46 runners and only committed four errors at the hot corner.

Lesch also had one of his better slugging years, as he put eight balls over the wall and landed on

the MAAC All-Tournament team after his electric performance to help the Broncs win it all.

Lesch had similar feedback when it came to putting up another banner on the outfield fence at Sonny Pittaro Field.

"It was definitely a great feeling to win the MAAC, especially with the senior class we had last year and the expectation for this year we are going back and winning it again," Lesch said.

Another Bronc that turned heads last season was senior catcher Brian Skettini, who was recently ranked the 39th best catcher in the nation according to D1Baseball.com. That honor comes as no surprise, as Skettini was one of the most productive Broncs last season and is expected to replicate that performance this season.

"It honestly was a great honor, but I'm more focused on going into the season, as I do every year, just as a team," Skettini said.

Skettini last season was second team All-MAAC, led the Broncs in batting average at .313 and had 67 hits to go with 49 RBIs.

The road ahead

The Broncs will open their season at East Carolina, who is coming off an NCAA Tournament appearance.

"It's the first game so we are always excited, and I don't know if we've opened up with a tougher opponent than East Carolina ever," Davis said. "We have played two teams like them ... but as far as opening the season ... we are just excited to go out there and play."

The following weekend, the Broncs will continue their southern road trip as they take on East Tennessee State, a program that finished with a losing record at 26-29, so Rider has a chance to collect some early wins in the first couple weeks of the season.

"Every opening weekend we get matched up with someone down south, so the odds that we play somebody good is pretty high," Winsett said.

The Rider bus will park at Sonny Pittaro Field to play Fairleigh Dickinson on March 6, when green leaves color the outfield and fresh paint lines the dirt-filled diamond.