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SGA election uncontested: Natoli set for presidency

By Caroline Haviland

JUNIOR Christina Natoli will likely be the next Student Government Association president after an unprecedented drop in student participation, leading to an uncontested election and multiple vacancies on the executive board.

Natoli, a political science major, is making history running uncontested for SGA president, which hasn't happened since 2016.

In addition to a forum open to the public on April 4, the Rider News conducted an interview with Natoli to discuss her initiatives and goals for the presidency as well as her thoughts on this year's candidates running unopposed with two vacancies on the executive board.

'The pinnacle of my journey'

Eager to learn the campus culture, Natoli involved herself with SGA her freshman year, jumping right into a position in the senate. She continued to serve in all levels, ranging from a committee chair to class vice chair, with her most recent position as the vice president of university affairs for the 2023-24 academic year, leading to a spot on the organization's executive board.

"This has been the pinnacle of my journey. I've always loved that SGA is an outlet where you can learn about campus," said Natoli. "I have been listening and learning, and now I'm entering positions where I can use that knowledge and put it into things on campus. This has always been my ultimate goal, and it's just really exciting that I can be here."

Natoli's vision for her upcoming presidency revolves around campus engagement, as she plans to work with prominent student leaders and organizations to make students appreciate Rider outside of the classroom.

Current SGA president, senior political science major Naa'san Carr, centered his campaign last year around diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives. With Carr passing the baton within the next week, Natoli is prepared to continue Carr's plans.

"The SafeZone trainings have been really successful, so I'm planning on having them during class times or during the week at night," said Natoli. "I've also had conversations with faculty about implementing more

DEI based training within things like Navigating Rider. Continuing to advocate for those things never hurts."

Natoli also expressed her desire for a closer relationship between the administration and SGA, as the two only meet monthly.

"[The administration] is definitely very open to all of the feedback we present," said Natoli. "I wish we could have more opportunities to meet... We get a lot of updates and we provide a lot of feedback, but we aren't able to see it come to fruition until the next month.... I also want to see more of them speaking at Senate so that we have people that aren't just on the executive board hearing from them and asking questions."

Vacant positions in SGA

Despite the election season being in full swing, two of the executive board positions, vice president of communications and vice president of student affairs, have been left vacant, a possible result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"They just aren't as involved as the rest of the classes," said Carr on the 2025 class. "They spent their junior year and senior year [of high school] in COVID, on laptops and Zoom."

In order to fill these vital positions that lead to meetings between students and faculty, SGA plans on finding candidates to interview early within the summer.

Natoli after college plans

Outside of SGA, Natoli is a tour guide for the admissions office, vice president of membership development and risk reduction for the Rider University Greek Council and vice president for her sorority, Zeta Tau Alpha. She also plans on taking the LSAT on the same day that election results come out.

Natoli shared a sentiment she believed most graduating seniors can relate to: "It's really scary but very exciting to be doing things that I've been thinking of since my freshman year, having these four year plans and seeing them come to fruition."



Maggie Kleiner and Andrew Xon/The Rider News

SGA presidential candidate Christina Natoli aspires to improve communication with the campus community.

Watch Christina Natoli's interview with The Rider News!

Student petitions against egg hunt petting zoo

By Jake Tiger

CONTROVERSY sprouted from "107.7 The Bronc's Eggscellent Egg Hunt" on March 26 when a student launched a campaign against the radio station, claiming that its use of petting zoos was "unethical and unsafe."

Junior graphic design major Maggie Kleiner said she knew there would be petting zoos at the egg hunt, but had no plans to take action; however, once she arrived and saw the prolonged attention the animals were receiving, she began to worry that they may be exhausted and overwhelmed.

"Prior to seeing it, I didn't have any strong feelings about it," said Kleiner, who is also photo editor of The Rider News. "It was only when I walked up and I saw the animals in an enclosure with bunny ears on that I thought to myself, 'Maybe this isn't OK.'"

Before the egg hunt concluded, Kleiner, the photo

editor for the Rider News, said she began creating flyers urging students to take action against 107.7 The Bronc's use of petting zoos.

Later that day, she put up about 100 flyers around academic buildings, the Bart Luedeke Center and the Student Recreation Center, knowingly neglecting to get them approved by the Office of Campus Life for the sake of timeliness, she said.

John Mozes, the general manager of 107.7 The Bronc, described the situation as stressful and surprising, stating that the egg hunt had never received any backlash since it came to campus seven years ago.

Mozes said the unapproved flyers were on the walls outside of the radio station when they returned from the egg hunt.

"I don't think it was handled the way it should have been handled by the student," said Mozes. "[The student-workers] work all this time, and they didn't

even get a moment to enjoy it. They came back and there were flyers all over the Fine Arts building, and I think it deflated them."

According to Mozes, workers for 107.7 The Bronc noticed the flyers around campus and started taking them down, seeing that they were missing Rider's approval stamp.

In defense of the egg hunt's petting zoo, Mozes said the yearly tradition brings happiness to campus and has become a mental health resource for students.

"I'm not saying we're going to decide no petting zoo, petting zoo or somewhere in between, but one of the great things about the egg hunt, and I think was getting lost in all of this, is the mental health of our students," said Mozes. "The petting zoo has also become part of the welfare of our students. ... There's a human element that I believe Maggie's not taking into consideration."



INSIDE **BRONCS CONTINUE HISTORIC STRETCH**
Rider baseball has won 11 straight, the second longest streak in the nation.
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'QUIET ON SET'
A new docuseries revealed the dark reality behind beloved Nickelodeon shows.
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'LEAVING A MARK' WITH RIDER'S DOMINERICANS
A new club was created for representation at Rider University.
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Carr reflects on presidential term and vacancies

By Amethyst Martinez and Jay Roberson

FOR the first time in eight years, the Student Government Association presidential election is uncontested — a stark reality that current SGA President Naa’san Carr blamed on the “COVID class” of 2025.

Along with all positions on the ballot being uncontested for the 2024-25 school year, the roles of vice president of student affairs and vice president of communications were left vacant.

Carr, a senior political science major, said, “I’m disappointed because the university and student body deserve leadership that represents them and advances their student experience.”

He said that many juniors have not stepped up because a majority of their final years of high school were amid the pandemic.

“They just aren’t as involved as the rest of the classes,” said Carr on the 2025 class. “They spent their junior year and senior year [of high school] in COVID, on laptops and Zoom.”

Vacancies

Carr explained the vacancies will be “very chaotic for the university,” as these roles are the ones to lead university meetings including students, faculty and staff members.

In an attempt to fill the vacancies, anyone who is interested in the positions can contact SGA and interview for it.

“The [SGA] president will interview the candidates, go through the list and then appoint the best person for that position,” said Carr. “The interview process is new; we incorporated that this year.”

Though last year there were no vacancies during elections, when the school year started a majority of the senate left its positions.

“I spent my fall with pretty much an empty senate body trying to rebuild my senate body to what it is now,” said Carr. “I spent all of the fall semester sending emails regarding members at large positions in order to set up for the next administration.”

Carr eventually filled the vacancies and noted that “the freshman class is very excited,” to take on leadership roles.

“I wouldn’t say that we were expecting vacancies,” junior political science major Christina Natoli said. “We are going to make sure that those positions are filled as soon as possible, but also protecting the integrity of the election timeline.”

Natoli is the only person on the ballot for SGA president.

Even with vacant positions and a lack of student



Andrew Xon/The Rider News

Current SGA President Naa’san Carr is hopeful that the vacancies in the executive board will be filled.

interest in leadership, Carr looks forward to seeing Natoli and the rest of the executive board lead the student body.

“I picked everybody for their exact position,” said Carr. “They did it, and they won. It was great to handpick the people that you know are going to work well within an administration.”

Carr also believes that he and Natoli share similar values and beliefs regarding the university.

“It’s almost like passing the baton onto a new person. I have no doubt that she’ll continue where I left off on some of the things that I couldn’t accomplish this year because of time,” Carr said.

Some of the unfinished goals Carr hopes SGA accomplishes are filling the accessibility chair and increasing accessibility on campus.

“People know what needs to be fixed, but if you’re not applying the pressure for them to do it, they’re not going to do it. They’re going to find something else to do,” said Carr.

Carr also hopes that the executive board is able to meet with Rider President Gregory Dell’Omo more, as Carr did not meet with him as much as he wanted to.

“We only had three meetings this semester and two last semester. I would just like to meet with the administration more often when it comes to several points in the year.”

Natoli, who also meets with the administration as

part of the executive board, said that she echoes his statement of wishing they could meet more.

Carr’s legacy

Last year, Carr won after a two-day runoff and a difference of less than 10 votes between himself and Joe Tufo, a senior economics major who is no longer involved with SGA.

Carr’s campaign last year revolved around diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives, such as implementing JEDI (justice, equity diversity and inclusion) around campus to enhance the student experience, chartering an NAACP college chapter and adding additional inclusive training such as LGBTQ+ SafeZone and disability awareness.

Carr had prior DEI expertise before his presidency as a member of Black Men Unified and Black Student Union alongside being a student worker for the Center for Diversity and Inclusion.

“I just have a wide variety of being with our identity-based clubs or faith-based clubs here on campus to really gauge on what the community needs and what it has to offer for everyone here at Rider,” said Carr to The Rider News last April.

However, plans shifted this summer when three top DEI officials left the university: past Chief Diversity Officer Barbara Lawrence, former CDI Director Pamela Pruitt and Vice President of Student Affairs Leanna Fenneberg.

After their departures, the CDO and CDI director positions were combined and given to Heeyoung Kim, who undertook the task along with her previous job as director of the Teaching and Learning Center.

“It did put a little damper on what I wanted to do, as far as training,” said Carr. “Everything else I accomplished.”

Carr is a part of the CDO Advisory Committee, which is working on an “Inclusive Excellence Plan 2.0.” Other accomplishments include holding the first annual Cranberry Student Leadership Experience, creating a group of diverse student leadership that is representative of the student body and infrastructure projects.

“If I had more time, I would run again and again and again,” said Carr. “It’s about making an impact for students.”

Carr said that he would be using this experience for future endeavors in the NAACP and beyond, and plans a career in politics.

“You’ll be seeing me around,” said Carr. “As far as the future of SGA, I think it’s in good hands.”

Venture Magazine brought back after four-year hiatus

By Hannah Newman

A REALM of creative freedom, a chance to bring ideas to life and the chance to learn the ins and outs of publication are among the elements of Venture Magazine, a student-run publication that came back to life after a four-year hiatus due to COVID-19.

Venture Magazine was a club birthed through an English class, Editing for Literary Publishing, which gives students experience in editing for publication.

Although the magazine was offered as an extracurricular activity to students who are looking to pursue more opportunities within the literary publication industry, students who took the class wanted to demonstrate their passion by continuing to work for it.

Junior English major and editor in chief of Venture Magazine Maura Corman said, “A majority of us wanted to stay on after class ended because we all had a genuine passion for it. Just to read other people’s work, get a better insight and really uplift and bring out the really great work that people are doing.”

The magazine’s first official issue has not been dated, however the earliest physical publication in the English department has been tracked back to the early 2000s. Now, due to budget constraints, it’s only digital.

According to senior English major and web editor Ashley Morales, “I think right now, [a printed edition] is a long term goal. WordPress has been pretty effective for us,” said Morales. “Right now our goal is just to

make sure things...run more smoothly with new people coming in.”

The magazine features poetry, fiction and nonfiction pieces written by students; however, the editors are looking to expand submissions far beyond the student body, according to Corman.

“We really wanted to focus on the different perspectives of not only the students, but we also want to include alumni, faculty and staff in our submission process,” said Corman. “Our submissions are open to anyone who has been part of our community at some point.”

Corman mentioned that their first issue in four years had roughly 70 submissions and around 20 works made it into the magazine.

Pieces are chosen by groups that have a strong understanding of every genre submitted.

“We essentially broke up a lot of members into smaller teams based on how many submissions we had,” said Corman. “We had five poetry editors because that was our largest volume of submissions. We had four fiction editors, three nonfiction editors, and essentially, they were just supposed to go through everything and pick out what they thought was most interesting and what they really wanted to push.”

An element to choosing submissions that Corman stressed to editors was to give a brief description of what to look for so writers can have the chance to shape

Photo courtesy of Venture Magazine



Members of the Venture Magazine team display past volumes of the literary magazine.

that narrative. The writers’ names were also removed from their submission to keep entries unbiased.

The submission window was from mid-November to mid-February.

Although the Venture Magazine staff hopes to grow into a club again, the strength of the team will take priority as of now, according to Morales.

Read
Venture
Magazine:



LGBTQIA+ students struggle to connect, data shows

By Tristan E. M. Leach

A CAMPUSWIDE poll of Rider students yielding 348 responses shed light on student satisfaction with campus involvement. The ability to make and maintain friendships was significant to the data found by the Computer Assisted Reporting class that conducted the survey.

A factor that seemed to have an impact on a student's ability or capability to make friends is sexual orientation, which may lead to self-isolation or denying their authentic selves.

In a poll conducted in 2023 by College Pulse, 22% of students that identified as LGBTQIA+ said making friends was somewhat difficult. This is in stark contrast to Rider's data, in which 8.91% of LGBTQIA+ Rider students reported it was somewhat difficult to make friends.

Lianne Litchfield, a junior film and television major, identifies as a lesbian and uses she/they pronouns. For Litchfield, getting involved on campus was a way to make connections and friendships. Joining Greek Life became a goal of Litchfield's who is now a sister of Phi Sigma Sigma.

"Living in my sorority house helps. Even if I don't want to go to something, my sorority sisters will see me and go, 'You're going, you don't have a choice,'" said Litchfield with a laugh.

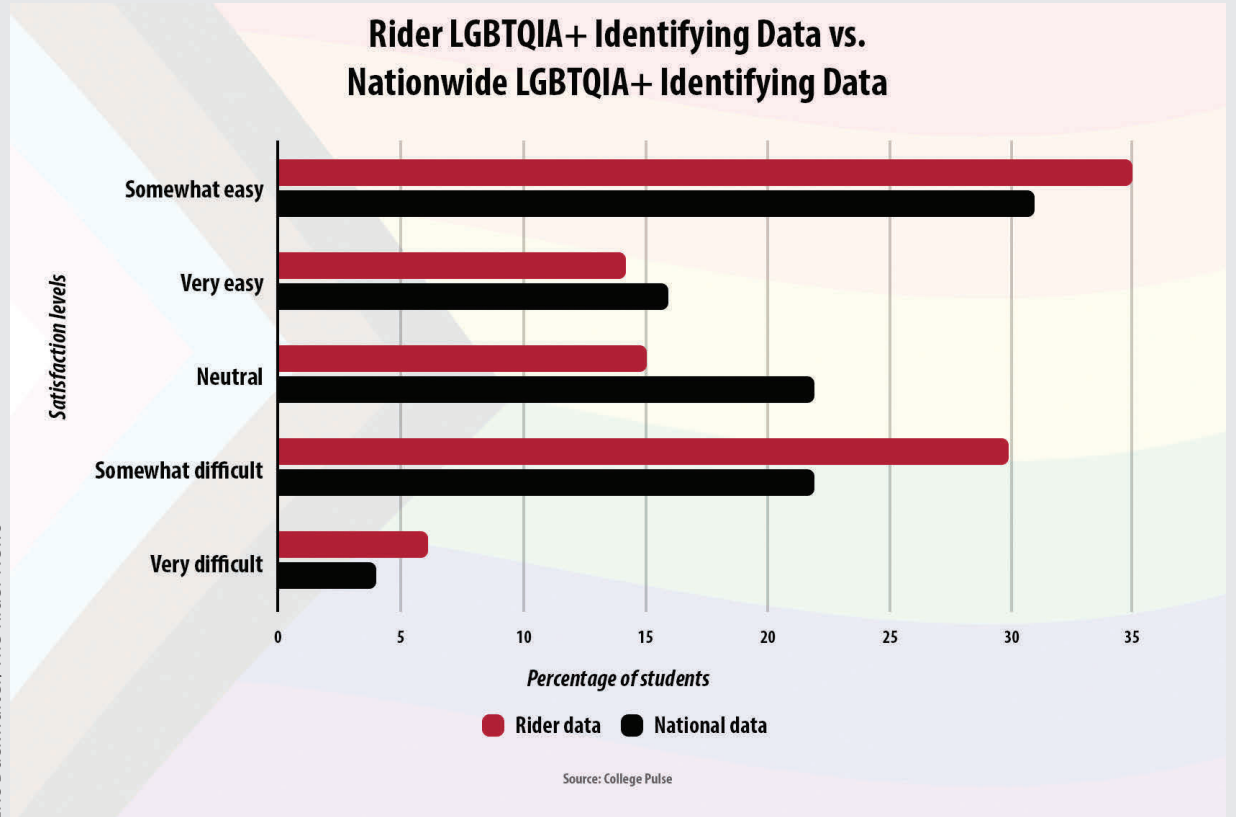
However, when making the move to Rider, Litchfield was careful of what personal information she shared, including her pronouns and sexuality.

The comfort of disclosing one's pronouns and sexuality is based on each person and how much they want to share. In a poll conducted by Gallup in 2023, 22.7% of Generation Z, a large portion of the current college population, self-identified as LGBTQIA+. As these students go through college, the chances for involvement is also based on what their institution can provide for them.

When colleges put an emphasis on diversity, equity and inclusion, it can encourage students to become more involved on campus and feel safe to participate in organizations that are often seen as heteronormative.

Nick Smith, who uses he/they pronouns, is a freshman political science major who emphasized that living on campus and having a community that he was already a part of helped boost their confidence. Just like Litchfield, Smith found community in several organizations, including as a brother of Theta Chi.

"I feel like I'm very involved on campus with all the organizations that I'm in and the leadership



A recent poll of Rider students shows that many LGBTQIA+ students find it difficult to make friends and meet new people.

positions I have," said Smith.

Smith has involved himself in several clubs that have a focus on diversity and inclusion, but said they wished Rider made it easier to host events instead of having to jump through hoops to get something as simple as a tabling event set up. Smith feels that if this could be done, more students would get involved on campus and make friends.

Smith's idea may not be too far off. In the same poll conducted by College Pulse, 31% of LGBTQIA+ students said that making friends was somewhat easy. In a similar poll conducted by the CAR class in February and March, 10.63% of polled LGBTQIA+ students said it was somewhat easy to make friends.

The same data found that students who identify as straight have an easier time making friends. The College Pulse data reported that 23% of straight-identifying students nationwide found it very easy to make friends. In the Rider poll, 9.48% of straight identifying Rider students polled that it was very easy to make friends.

When asked the same question, 4.31% of LGBTQIA+-identifying Rider students said it was

very easy to make friends at Rider.

Looking to advance her professional connections, junior entrepreneurial studies major Francesca Roehm joined the Women's Leadership Council and became an executive board member of Circle K International, a community service organization. Roehm has also made an effort to join diverse organizations, such as Spectrum Pride Alliance.

"I actually think I'm involved in too much, but I'm involved in about four clubs, and it's usually on a higher level," said Roehm.

The data found by the Rider poll evaluates a small fraction of the university's population, just as the College Pulse data only evaluates a small fraction of the national population of college students. Both sets of data are promising when it comes to making friends and being involved on a college campus.

When asked how they would rate their involvement on a scale of one to 10, those interviewed reported their satisfaction to be a six or higher. Each student expressed that their friendships were integral parts of their college experience and emphasized the importance of Rider making sure there are ways for students to make connections.

Student proposes petting-zoo alternative

CONT'D FROM PAGE 1

The flyer features a photo of an animal in a cage, and text that claims petting zoos are "unethical and unsafe." It also contains information sourced from PETA, but Kleiner said she has no affiliation with the group and disagrees with some of their views on animal rights.

"[PETA thinks] that in order to advocate for animal rights, you should be vegan, and I think that choosing to be vegan is an independent choice that should not be forced on anybody," said Kleiner. "There's always been a controversy with PETA. ... That's not something that I want to be associated with personally, which is why I only used them as a resource."

On March 29, Kleiner had a second round of about 70 flyers approved by the university, and she distributed them around campus in similar locations. The newer version featured a QR code that led to both a petition and a drafted email that could be sent to 107.7 The Bronc.

She mentioned that along with the bulletin boards, she taped her materials to undesignated walls where they were more visible. Campus Life contacted her about the infraction and the out-of-place flyers were taken down.

Mozes said the radio station alerted Campus Life of Kleiner's error.

Junior communication studies major Nick Witkowski, who is the assistant general manager of 107.7 The Bronc, said, "People were definitely just disappointed that not everyone was OK with the result of the egg hunt."

Kleiner's petition, titled "Stop 107.7 The Bronc from hosting petting zoos at Rider University," began on March 28 and amassed 167 signatures as of April 9, but Mozes believed the number did not accurately represent the community, as the form does not require a Rider email address and could be signed anonymously.

Kleiner responded to Mozes' claim by saying that the petition was almost solely publicized via flyers around campus, and that students were signing anonymously to protect themselves from judgment.

"A lot of people don't realize that petting zoos are unethical and unsafe, probably because they are a lot of fun," said Kleiner. "We tend not to think about what their living conditions are when they're not being put on display in some way."

Kleiner met with 107.7 The Bronc on April 4 to discuss the issue and claimed the meeting went well, with both sides being considerate of the other.

"I viewed them as an entity rather than an organization made up of individual people," said Kleiner. "When I did start the campaign, it did hurt people's feelings. They took it personally and that's something that I didn't anticipate. If I could change my approach, I would have started with a conversation with executives from The Bronc."

In place of petting zoos, Kleiner offered the alternative of animal-shelter adoption fair, where rescued pets could mingle with students and potential adopters.

"She came in with an amazing proposal," said Witkowski. "The dog shelter proposal ... was

brilliant and we did take that into consideration."

Kleiner mentioned the university already has connections with EASEL Animal Shelter, based in Ewing, New Jersey, who hosted a "Pet-A-Pup" event at Rider the past two springs.

However, Mozes said 107.7 The Bronc has had poor experiences with adoption and dog-therapy organizations in the past.

The radio station will consider all options moving forward and is undecided on if it will have a petting zoo next year, according to Mozes.

"A lot of people didn't agree with me, and that's OK. I think most of all, I wanted to start a conversation about it," said Kleiner. "Next year, when they begin planning the egg hunt, I'm going to sit down and have a conversation with them, and if they still plan on having a petting zoo, I will organize something."

Maggie Kleiner is the photo editor of The Rider News. Kleiner had no part in the writing or editing of this story.

Section editors Julia Train, Benjamin Shinault, Jay Roberson, Logan VanDine work for 107.7 The Bronc. They had no part in the writing or editing of this story.

Meet the trustees.

James "Jim" Bush

By Julia Train

AFTER graduating from Rider in 1980 with a Bachelor of Science in accounting, Rider Trustee James "Jim" Bush had 14 jobs in 13 locations within 40 years.

Although Bush's college experience started off rocky, with his father passing away on his first day of his freshman year and no full-time job in his field upon graduation, he was able to foster a fulfilling profession for himself.

Without knowing his career's trajectory when he received his diploma, he worked hard to find a starting point.

About two months after graduation, Bush started working for Western Union in auditing, which he said provided him with exposure to roles in financial supervision, credit operations, operating environments and collaborating with people working on the unions.

He relocated three times while working for the company, moving from northern to southern New Jersey, then to Chicago and Dallas.

In 1987, he moved on to work at American Express, where he worked for 32 years until he retired.

During the course of his time at the bank holding company, he held a plethora of positions, including senior adviser to the new chief executive officer, president of Global Network and International Card Services and executive vice president of World Service, to name a few.

"I had a terrific career. I enjoyed every minute of it," said Bush. "Rider provided the foundation that was a springboard to any success that I've had."

Throughout his career in financial services, Bush has had an opportunity to engage and work with people from all different walks of life, especially students.

When he was working at American Express, he invited Rider classes to the company's New York City building to spend the day so he could give them a business perspective and hold a discussion around marketing and financial services.

Bush was impressed by the students, but surprised that many of them hadn't been to the city before. Inspired by his time with the students, Bush and his wife donated \$250,000 to Rider's International Immersion Endowment in 2018 to help business majors afford short-term travel abroad.

The fund, which is now named after him as the James P. Bush International Immersion Endowment, totals \$1 million, and students of any major can apply. It has allowed Bush to hear about a variety of students' trips and what travel means to them.

"I've been pleased to see the students take advantage of it and get some feedback from them on trips," he said. "In my mind, life is an adventure. You seize the opportunities when they're presented."

Lydia Diekmann, a junior musical theater major, received the scholarship after being placed on a waitlist.

She used it to visit England and Croatia in January, right before the spring semester began.

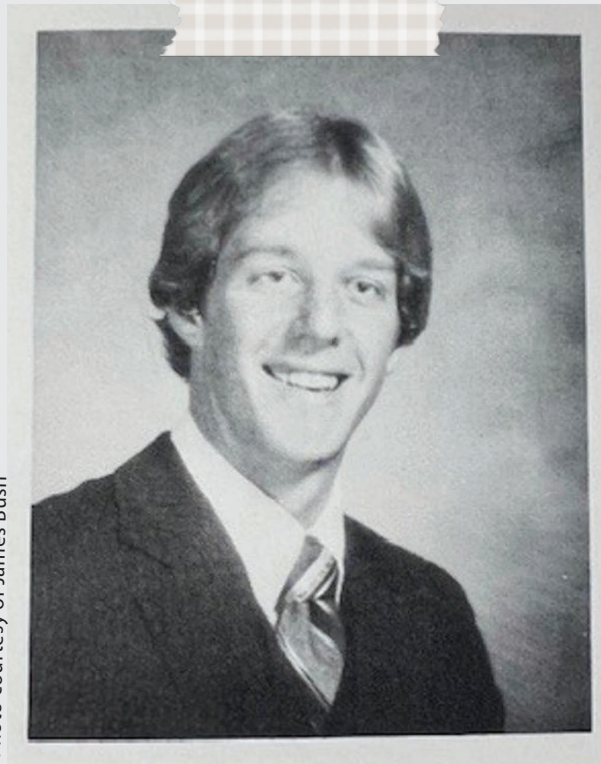


Photo courtesy of James Bush

James Bush in his senior picture. He graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Accounting in 1980.

She and 12 other students stayed a week in London, seeing "Guys and Dolls" in the West End and Shakespearean plays at the Globe Theatre. The group also saw the Adriatic Sea and Buckingham Palace.

"I love Shakespeare, so that was really cool to see where it all started and get to actually see a show there," said Diekmann.

In Croatia, they saw two puppet shows in Croatian.

"It was very difficult to understand, but it was really cool to see how different countries do theater and the similarities and differences," she said. "It was a dream of a trip. I got to see so many shows. It was just so wonderful."

Bush invested into the endowment because he wanted students to be able to partake in traveling abroad opportunities, which he never was able to do until 2001, when he had to relocate to Asia after becoming the regional president of Japan, Asia Pacific and Australia for American Express.

After that move, Bush traveled to every continent except Antarctica while filling different roles at the company.

Bush said his education at Rider laid the foundation for him to pursue opportunities of travel, like moving to Singapore, where his youngest son was born.

Bush was one of the inaugural inductees into the Norm Brodsky College of Business Hall of Fame in May 2018.

Bush retired in 2019 and since then, he has kept himself busy with hobbies like golf, chess and pickleball, along with spending time with his three sons and wife of 32 years. Now, he remains involved with his alma mater through his personal endowment and being on the Board of Trustees, which Rider President Gregory Dell'Omo asked him to join in 2020.



Photo courtesy of Lydia Diekmann

Lydia Diekmann in front of a scenic Croatian view.

He is also the vice chair of the Board and chair of the Organizational Sustainability Committee and serves on the Governance Committee, the Investment Subcommittee and the Audit and Risk Subcommittee.

As he sat in his home office reflecting on his career, he mentioned his gratitude for Rider's role in his journey, although it started off shaky.

"I believe that you need to be reflective and be appreciative of how you get to where you get to," Bush said. "I felt it very important to give back ... [with] financial resources [and] personal time, and the board allows me to do that."



Photo courtesy of James Bush

James Bush and Rider President Gregory Dell'Omo after the inaugural Rider School of Business Hall of Fame honor. Bush was one of the first recipients.



Photo courtesy of James Bush

James Bush working hard during his college days.

Double the dogs, double the smiles

By Marissa Spencer and Bridget Hoyt

TWO clubs at Rider, Active Minds and Nonprofit Connections each hosted different dog-related events on campus this week. Active Minds' Dog Therapy event occurred on April 8 in the Student Recreation Center with the intent to help students destress before finals. Nonprofit Connections had students pay \$5 to pet dogs on the Campus Green on April 9.

As the treacherous week of finals approaches the Rider student body, a cure for the madness comes in the form of floppy ears, panting tongues and wagging tails.

Pausing for paws

Rider Active Minds held its annual dog therapy destress event on April 8 to help those needing some tender loving care.

Members of the Rider community could grab their two-legged friends and join some four-legged ones in the Student Recreation Center to engage in some joint unwind-time.

The mission of Active Minds is to promote a safe zone for students and their mental health on campus. The group also aims to promote friendship through coordinating events where students can meet like-minded peers.

Sophomore biology major and president of Active Minds Chloe Bacsik shared her passion for the club and why dog therapy, the club's most attended event, is so successful.

"Goat yoga is always so popular, and who doesn't love a dog," she said.

Sophomore communications major Matt Malec, vice president of the club, elaborated on the future of the program's events.

"We plan to do more dog therapy and many other events," Malec said.

The furry friends featured at the event included Lady, Layla, Axel, Luca and Buttercup, and students lined up, grinning widely at the prospect of playing with the animals.

Some students jumped at the chance to watch the dogs enjoy Puppuccinos, a Starbucks special of whipped cream in a 3-ounce cup.



Grace Bertrand/The Rider News

Two of the therapy dogs at the Active Minds event enjoy a "Pupcup".

All the dogs present were certified therapy dogs, each aided by their respective owners. The volunteers hailed from Morris Plains, New Jersey, where Bright and Beautiful Dog Therapy is located.

The mission to alleviate school-related anxieties was seemingly achieved, as students were giggling and petting the pups with appreciation and enthusiasm, with no trace of stress.

Paws for a cause

After an afternoon of being comforted by dogs, students got the opportunity to return the favor at the new Nonprofit Connection club's "Pet-a-Pup" event, where fluffy puppies from EASEL Animal Rescue sat on the Campus Mall and received lots of attention from adoring participants.

Volunteers from the Ewing shelter brought these cuddly canines to campus, raising both money and awareness for the organization. To meet the puppies, students added their names to a ten-minute time slot in a spreadsheet and made a \$5 donation to EASEL as an attendance fee. Each window had room for 10 names.

Among the puppies receiving plenty of attention were three labrador mixes — one brown and two black — named Blossom, Bubbles and Buttercup after the titular characters of the children's series "The Powerpuff Girls," and a black terrier mix named Bear. The curious cuties were not shy of new people, sniffing hands and even sparing the occasional face lick.

The event ran from 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m., and by the afternoon, the soft and sleepy pups were dozing off on the grass and in the laps of attendees, who fawned over the loveable animals, with some even expressing interest in adopting one themselves.

To these excited students, EASEL volunteers encouraged getting involved at the shelter, especially through dog walking, and commented on how beneficial events like these are for socializing the puppies.

This is the second year the "Pet-a-Pup" event has taken place at Rider, both dreamed up and organized by junior supply chain major and Nonprofit Connections president Valentina Laguado, originally as part of last spring's Management Skills class.

"That whole class project became more than just a class project. It became something that we actually cared about," said Laguado. "By getting to know the people at the organization ... it just became something bigger."

According to junior entrepreneurial studies major Francesca Roehm, who is the treasurer of Nonprofit Connections, most participants were more than happy to make the \$5 donation, but the club, who checked students in at a small table, did have some trouble explaining to passersby that this was an RSVP-only event that required a fee to participate.

"People just came up without acknowledging the table," said Roehm. "We had to be like, 'oh, you have to pay for a pet,' ... We had to be the bad guys."

Laguado said that both last and this year's iteration of the event raised over \$500 for EASEL each. Her leadership in this event is what led her to start Nonprofit Connections.

"I want to help, and I feel like partnering with this kind of organization is a way to create an impact on the community," Laguado said.

Grace Bertrand is public relations chair for Active Minds and incoming features and entertainment editor for The Rider News. Bertrand had no part in the writing and or editing of this article.

Felicia Roehm is a member of Nonprofit Connection and opinion editor of The Rider News. Roehm had no part in the writing and or editing of this article.

UPCOMING EVENTS

APRIL

11

THURSDAY

Cavalla Room

Asian American Student Association's: BOBA NIGHT

APRIL

11

THURSDAY

LYNCH ADLER Rm. 205

NEDA Campus Warriors: Make Body Positive

APRIL

11

THURSDAY

AREOBICS Room 7 P.M.

Zumba with Eve

APRIL

13

SATURDAY

JENKINSON'S BOARDWALK, POINT PLEASANT BEACH

Beach Sweep

'Leaving a mark' with Rider's DominiRican club

By Grace Bertrand

DESPITE being one of the largest minorities on campus, Latinx and Hispanic students often feel like they lack adequate representation at Rider.

Noticing an absence of Hispanic and Latinx culture as an incoming freshman, creator and president of the newly founded DominiRican club Liz Ortiz set out on a mission to change that.

Rider's new Dominican and Puerto Rican club promises to provide a safe space for Hispanic and Latino students on campus, especially fellow Dominican and Puerto Rican students, as well as anyone interested in their cultures.

"I just really wanted this club to unite the community of Hispanics and Latinx people and anyone else who is interested in having a big family at Rider," said Ortiz, who comes from a big family herself.

The club was thought up as an idea back in the fall semester, but wasn't set in motion until this spring after recruiting her friends and peers to join the executive board with her.

Ortiz explained that she debated about actually starting the club for a while, struggling with whether or not she should bring her ideas to one of the other Latinx clubs on campus instead, like Rider Latinas Unidas, which Ortiz is also on the e-board for, doing public relations.

Ultimately, Ortiz decided to start her own club because she wanted to "leave her own mark" on the school and had hopes of making the club bigger than just an organization.

"This club is my legacy," Ortiz said.

The organization has become the first Dominican and Puerto Rican club on campus, starting a movement bigger than the club.

Due to the increase of potential clubs in the past

year, the club wasn't able to present in front of the Student Government Association until March 6 and was officially approved the same day.

In recruiting people to join the e-board, Ortiz explained that it was imperative to her that they were just as passionate about Hispanic culture as she was.

Treasurer Rosandry Rodriguez, who was the first member to join the e-board, said that her desire to join the club stemmed not only from her Hispanic heritage but also "from the recognition of the strong unity within the Hispanic community."

Rodriguez called the opportunity to serve as the club's treasurer "a rewarding experience," explaining her need to join as soon as she found out about the club.

The club is still missing a vice president, but Ortiz said she plans to fill the role quickly and hopes to have an even bigger e-board in the fall.

This time next year, Ortiz said she hopes to have more people in the club and collaborate more with other organizations on campus.

"While our club's name may imply a focus on Dominicans and Puerto Ricans, inclusivity is paramount to us," Rodriguez said.

On April 1, the club had its first meeting where members introduced the club and presented what kind of events they plan to host with their newly approved budget.

Inspired by Rider African Student Association's "Taste of Africa," the club plans to host one last event

Photo courtesy of Liz Ortiz



Members of the DominiRican club provide a community and space for Hispanic and Latinx students.

this semester called "Gusto de las Islas," translating to "Taste of the Islands."

The event is in collaboration with multiple multicultural and ethnic organizations on campus like the Black Student Union, the Indian Association and the Asian American Student Association.

The club plans to host more collaborative events in the future and hopes to become the base club for bigger collaborations that foster a sense of community among Rider students.

"I just want people to see that this is an upcoming club and for people to definitely come to one of our events to see how excited we are about inclusivity," Ortiz said.

Time to shine: Rider cheer team takes on nationals

By Katherine Sukunda

THE Rider cheer team will head to Florida this week, concluding its season at the College Classic National Championship in Orlando.

The group said goodbye to fellow Rider students, family and friends with a rehearsal routine hosted in Alumni Gym Sunday evening.

This will be the team's first national competition in five seasons, according to Head Coach Vicki Trucksess.

The routine consisted of impressive stunts, as flyers were lifted high into the air, often balancing on one leg, and flipping into the arms of their teammates below.

The cheerleaders beamed as they formed a pyramid with friends and family cheering them on from the stands.

The national championship allows athletes from colleges and universities around the country to compete and showcase their skills head-to-head, according to the College Classic website.

The voyage to nationals is only possible with a crowdfunding effort that accumulated 61.81% of its \$10,000 goal.

"They killed it," said Trucksess after Sunday's performance.

Trucksess acknowledged the immense progress the team has made since the beginning of the season and the resiliency that got it there.

"It is a totally different team," said Trucksess. "You're always going to have setbacks, but they've been able to recover from all of those setbacks this year, which is the most important thing. We've continued to grow with every practice."

The coach's main hope for nationals is to see the team hit a solid routine, regardless of the outcome.

"Just getting down there is a huge accomplishment for them, for the program and for the university," said Trucksess.

Senior cheerleader Rachel Seigerman said that she was thrilled by the opportunity to compete at nationals with her teammates.

"I am super excited to get to nationals, I have



Grace Bertrand/The Rider News

Rider's cheer team raised 61.81% of its \$10,000 goal.

wanted to compete with this team since I first learned about Rider cheer," said Seigerman.

However, being a senior means her time on the team is ending after three years, which Seigerman described as devastating.

Trucksess has worked with many of the seniors since they started their first season, which was set back due to COVID-19.

"When any of your seniors leave, it's really sad because they've helped build that program," she said. "I will miss them all dearly, they are some of the funniest people that I have gotten to work with," said Trucksess with a smile.

Despite Seigerman's disappointment about her final season coming to an end, she said that she is ready to knock the routine out of the park at nationals.

"Our goal for this season is to hit a nice, clean routine," she said. "There are big things to come for Rider cheer, and we are just excited that it's our time to shine."

Junior cheerleader Daija Wilson expressed her pride in being a part of the first team in several seasons to attend nationals.

"It's really exciting to be the first team since COVID to go to nationals, it's just really cool to be that team," said Wilson.

Wilson's hope for Florida is simply to land a polished performance.

"I don't think I want to expect to get first place or second place, because we are coming from a break," she said.

Wilson pointed out that the Rider cheer team is bouncing back from a significant break, unlike other teams who will be competing, which may contribute to variations in technique and difficulty.

Assistant coach Stevi Irwin said that she would be proud of the team no matter the competition's results.

"We're super proud of them already," said Irwin. "From all they have grown throughout the season, we'll be proud of them either way."

Photo courtesy of Cissie Brotzman.

Senior AEIM major **Cissie Brotzman** (center left) next to AJ the Bronc with her fellow tour guides.

Senior Spotlight: Cissie Brotzman

By **Grace Bertrand**

COMING from an artistic family, senior arts and entertainment industries management major Cissie Brotzman grew up surrounded by creativity.

Straying away from art for a few years of her life, she always figured she would eventually find her way back.

“My grandfather was very artistic and musical. I think he definitely helped shape not only me, but my entire family to be on the more creative side,” Brotzman said.

As an incoming freshman, Brotzman was undecided her first year before going into journalism. A year later she changed her major to arts and entertainment industries management. Brotzman first struggled with deciding whether or not she should add it as her minor, but after speaking with her mother, Brotzman’s decision was final.

Brotzman specifically called to mind her mom telling her over the phone that the major was perfect for her saying, “That is so you.”

Coming into the major late has not stopped Brotzman from putting her all into her work by completing all 54 credits in the major and even scoring two internships in the past two years.

Brotzman’s academic adviser and professor Linda Lorence-Critelli has been with her through all two years and emphasized that she has definitely seen her grow as a student and as a person.

“I’ve seen her refine her interests in the arts and she’s developed really great skill sets in marketing,” Lorence-Critelli said.

Brotzman currently takes on duties as the social media officer for the admissions of AEIM, where she runs its Instagram account.

As an AEIM major, finding an internship was another requirement Brotzman had to get started on sooner rather than later.

Last year, Brotzman had the opportunity to do a small informal internship with the Music Managers Forum that was completely virtual.

Landing an internship at an independent new talent agency in New York that takes her to the city three times a week, Brotzman revealed she has a full plate on her hands.

While she doesn’t see herself continuing the internship once she graduates, Brotzman opened up that doing this internship at Bramante Artists Talent Agency has allowed her to meet with new people and get a taste of different personalities, which is an aspect of the industry that she feels really drawn to.

Describing herself as indecisive, Brotzman said “What I really like about this major is we kind of get a glimpse of every different part of the entertainment industry. That’s really unique and something rare that you can’t really find anywhere else.”

Apart from being a hard-working arts enjoyer, Lorence-Critelli described Brotzman as having “a really pleasant personality.”

That revelation is hard to ignore right when meeting Brotzman, with her wide-eyed smile, welcoming blue-gray eyes and contagious laugh.

Breaking out of her shell, Brotzman has been using her bright personality to show people around campus as a tour guide since her sophomore year, before moving up to become the lead tour guide this year.

“Going into college, I would have never thought I would have been a tour guide because I was so shy in high school and I never would have thought that I would be a leader,” Brotzman said.

For Brotzman, being a tour guide is something that has really shaped who she is now and given her the confidence she needed for her work and personal life.

“If I wasn’t a tour guide, I would probably still be that shy little girl,” Brotzman said.

Her boss at the Office of Admissions, Senior Assistant Director of Undergraduate Admission Hannah Ford described Brotzman as someone everyone in her office, including staff, can depend on.



Photo courtesy of Cissie Brotzman.

Cissie Brotzman poses in front of the London Bridge

“She always brings a positive attitude and smile on her face,” Ford said.

As a lead tour guide, Brotzman has gained more hands-on responsibilities that include being in charge of her own team of tour guides, having meetings with Ford and coming up with activities for staff meetings.

When it comes to her plans after college, Brotzman currently has nothing lined up for the summer but has accepted an offer for next year at the Disney College Program, a United States national internship program run by the Disney Programs division of The Walt Disney Company.

The program is offered to graduates up to two years after graduating and is an internship Brotzman has been keeping an eye out for since her sophomore year.

“I’m feeling very bittersweet about leaving Rider but I’m super excited for the future,” Brotzman said.

Looking ahead, Brotzman remains thankful for her time at Rider and how it has helped in building her confidence, acquiring necessary skills and growing as a person over all.

“I really think Rider has helped me become the person I am today. I’m super excited to see where I go after this, but I do owe a lot to Rider,” Brotzman said.

Photo courtesy of Cissie Brotzman

**Cissie Brotzman** with a view of New York City in the back, where she travels to three times a week.

Dark reality revealed in 'Quiet on Set'

In light of the shocking information revealed by the new documentary series "Quiet on Set," the public has been forced to confront the dark underbelly of children's programming, particularly within the Nickelodeon empire.

At the center of the storm is Dan Schneider, a figure once celebrated for his contributions to kids' TV in the '90s. Schneider's journey from a beloved showrunner to a controversial figure is dissected through the lens of his early career at Nickelodeon. While he brought laughter and mentorship to the screen, behind the scenes, many faced a toxic and sexist environment.

The testimonies from former writers Christy Stratton and Jenny Kilgen shed light on the troubling dynamics at play. They recount instances of gender discrimination, harassment and an atmosphere rife with inappropriate jokes and behavior.

"They were getting two for the price of one and have them share a salary, and I never saw it happen to any of the men," said Stratton as she described her working conditions alongside Kilgen.

Stratton described the working environment with Schneider as "being in an abusive relationship," where calling something like massages intrusive could cost you your job.

Moreover, the documentary reveals disturbing incidents involving child actors, including Amanda Bynes and Drake Bell, who were subjected to uncomfortable situations and power dynamics. Schneider's close relationship with Bynes and his alleged manipulation of Bell raise serious questions about accountability and the exploitation of young talent in Hollywood.

The subsequent episodes delve even further into the darkness, uncovering the predatory behavior of individuals like Brian Peck, who was sentenced to 16 months in prison for various sex offenses to a minor in 2004.

In episode three, titled "The Darkest Secret," Bell opened up for the first time about his abuse from Peck, stating that it wasn't a one-time thing and progressively worsened until the ensuing investigation.

"The investigation was brutal," said Bell. "I had to be excruciatingly detailed about everything that had happened. The worst part was I had to make a phone call to Brian and he had to admit to everything."

As the series progresses, it becomes evident that the abuse and misconduct were not isolated incidents, but symptoms of a larger systemic issue. The complicity of Hollywood in enabling abusers, as seen in Peck's courtroom filled with supportive figures, reflects a culture of silence and impunity.

Worst of all, Schneider does not take accountability for anything that happened. In an interview with actor BooG!e, who played the character T-Bo in Schneider's "iCarly," he sat down with Schneider following the release of the documentary.

Countless times, Schneider admits to feeling "embarrassed" for his actions and for what many individuals experienced while at the hands of manipulative power dynamics within the company. He also emphasized that the jokes were made for a kid audience, despite threatening Kilgen with being blacklisted from the industry if she ever spoke about the true meaning of inappropriate innuendos.

While listening to the testimonies, I couldn't help but feel a deep sense of betrayal. Here was a man who wielded immense influence over the minds of impressionable young viewers, yet behind closed doors, he fostered an environment of fear and manipulation. The juxtaposition of Schneider's public persona with the reality of his actions left me questioning the authenticity of the entertainment industry.

As we reflect on the revelations brought to light by "Quiet on Set," it's imperative to address the broader ethical implications for the future of children's television. The lack of accountability, oversight and ethical guidelines within the industry must be rectified to prevent further harm to young performers and creators.

Institutions like Rider, as highlighted by film and television professor Scott Alboum, have a role to play in shaping the ethical standards of future media professionals.

"Should we teach it? Yes. Are we teaching it? Not exactly. But I think case-by-case as those situations come up, I've seen faculty members give that kind of guidance," said Alboum.

The implementation of a film and production ethics course and proactive guidance can equip students with the tools to navigate complex moral dilemmas in their careers.

As I grapple with the aftermath of "Quiet on Set," I'm reminded of the profound responsibility we also hold as consumers of media. Our choices and actions have the power to shape the cultural landscape and demand accountability from those in positions of power.

It's time to shine a light into the darkest corners of children's television and ensure that the voices of survivors are heard, respected and believed.

*Kaitlyn Seawood
junior journalism major*



Angelina Fierro/The Rider News

New docuseries "Quiet on Set" shocks viewers by unvailng unsettling behind-the-scenes details.

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SENIOR SPOTLIGHT

Disturbing truth behind family vloggers

IMAGINE for a moment that you have recently had a baby. You bring this baby home, put the child to sleep and nurture them everyday. Now, imagine one day looking out your child's window and seeing a person staring in, watching your child's every movement. You'd be terrified and most likely disgusted. This is your child and you will do anything to protect them.

Now imagine you are putting your child on camera for millions to see, including that creepy person who looks through the window. Would you stop if you knew who was watching? Or would the money, the PR packages and the fame outweigh the safety of your child? This is one of the latest trending topics of concern, specifically with family vloggers.

Recently a woman named Ruby Franke was arrested and sentenced to four consecutive prison sentences, each lasting one to 15 years, for the abuse of her six children. What makes Franke's case even more disturbing? Countless hours of video evidence where Franke admits to abusing her children.

Franke and her family rose to fame after she started a YouTube channel named 8 Passengers, which chronicled the life of Franke, her husband Kevin and their six children. The once extremely popular channel had 2.5 million subscribers and a billion views. Many regarded the Utah-based family vlog as one of the best and most entertaining out there.

That was until the escape of her 12-year-old son from Franke's business partner's home. The boy appeared to have been bound and malnourished. Police found Franke's youngest, a 10-year-old girl, also inside the business partner's home. Both Franke and the partner, Jodi Nan Hildebrandt, were arrested. The four children who still lived with their mother and father, Kevin Franke, were placed in custody of the state and thus began a worldwide conversation about family vloggers.

The goal of family vloggers is to show the day in the life of everyone in the home. While the intentions seem pure, the actions are anything but. Popular TikToker Caroline Easom created a video series about family vlogging and the harmful effects of living life for the camera. Easom's characters are known as The Sandwich Family and follows the youngest child "Little Sandwich" as she discovers that she doesn't have to comply with her "Mama Sandwich" and her demands for endless content from her daughters.

While Easom's series is a wonderful commentary on the harmful effects of family vlogging, there is another part of the story to be discussed: pedophilia.

One child who is at the center of this conversation is Wren, a young girl whose

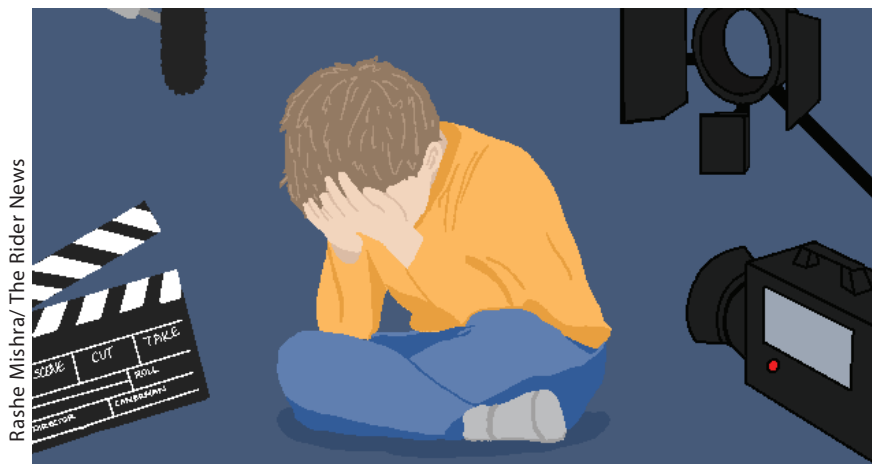
mom, Jacquelyn Paul, dresses her daughter in outfits that many have deemed as too old for the young girl. Many commenters raised concerns for Wren and her online safety. Comments from people, especially older men, read disturbing things such as "I like them young" and "That skirt is the perfect length on her."

Jacquelyn, Wren's mom, responded to multiple comments claiming that Wren was not subjected to pedophiles and that there was no way videos of the little girl could be on the dark web. There is no way to truly know this unless Jacquelyn went searching for her daughter's content in places unknown to the average person.

So what can be done by us as viewers? Well, not much aside from no longer consuming the content from family vloggers. These children are not yet old enough to consent to constant exposure, and just because mom or dad does it, doesn't mean their child has to also.

At the end of the day, children are still human beings. That means that just like adults, the youth of our country deserves to feel safe in their home and online. A child who wants and needs quality bonding time with their parents doesn't need their first time walking filmed and put on the internet for millions to see. What they need is to be able to feel safe with their parents until they can consent to public exposure.

*Tristan E. M. Leach
senior journalism major*



The dangers of family vloggers exposed after arrest of Ruby Franke.

ALBUM REVIEW

Conan Gray's 'Found Heaven' evokes '80s nostalgia

CONAN Gray's new album "Found Heaven" belongs in an '80s action movie with its synth-filled songs featuring electric guitar and layered vocals alongside lyrics in each track guiding listeners through a heartbreak.

Gray is mostly known for his indie-style, instrumental ballads revolving around unrequited love and jealousy. His third studio album "Found Heaven," released on April 5, breaks him out of that stereotype as he sings about a lost love, but in a way that makes you want to get up and dance.

Opening up the album is the title track where he reassures the listener that all forms of love are beautiful despite those who demonize it, referring to his identity as an LGBTQIA+ person. Gray says, "You're no demon ... Don't be scared, little child/Of that feeling/You're in love/You found heaven." Gray sees love as a form of heaven bringing serenity and bliss.

One of his singles and the next track on the album is "Never Ending Song," which is reminiscent of the sound of The Killers; he sings about a connection with someone that is never ending, although he has tried. Gray says, "Tried to turn the page, but our story wasn't stoppin'/And it goes on, and on, and on/ Like a never ending song." As much as he tries to move on, he stays stuck in this relationship.

A majority of the album is spent settling for a love that is less than what Gray deserves. In "Alley Rose" Gray says, "You told me, 'I'm just so nervous, dear'/ Well, how the hell do you think I feel?/I waited all year at your feet/Like, maybe you'd love me."

"The Final Fight" follows as he says, "Tried to bite back, but I couldn't, I just stood and cried/For the lost time, for the hurting, for the love that died." In this song Gray wishes he could've gotten in a last word with his partner whose love faded away.

One of my personal favorites was "Bourgeoisies" which mirrors the song "Affluenza" on Gray's first album, but from a different perspective. In "Affluenza" he judges the higher class, but "Bourgeoisies" mocks them by singing about wanting that lifestyle. Gray sings, "The men at war, they draft the poor/No time to mourn, I'm on the dance floor/Mom and Dad got my back/But I don't need that, I need a Maserati." He critiques social structures and the priorities of those who are rich.

In "Boys & Girls," Gray makes references to '80s icon David Bowie when talking about the person he's admiring. He sings, "Ch-cherry hair, so super Bowie/Kissed me but swears that you don't know me/You wouldn't care if I fell over and died." Gray explains an almost parasocial relationship he has with the person. Gray raises tensions again when reflecting on a toxic relationship in "Killing Me." The percussion builds up to the chorus as he sings, "You're killing me (Killing)/I just want you to free me (Ah-ah-ah)/And though I'm cryin' and bleedin' and barely breathin'/I can't let go of your heart." Though this relationship is killing him, he doesn't want to let go of it.

To close out the album, Gray goes back to his roots beginning the song with soft piano and reflecting on the hardships of his childhood in "The Winner". The synthesizers and drums begin to pick up comparing this trauma to "The Winner"

who is the person that hurt him the most. Gray says, "'Cause there's no one/Who has ever done better/At makin' me feel worse/Now you really are the winner (Winner)." Gray almost doesn't want to admit to this truth and repeats, "You don't really want to hear the truth, do you?"

Though it was unexpected, "Found Heaven" made me want to dance along the whole time, despite the themes being tragic. Gray finds a way to take this pain and heartbreak and turn it into a nostalgic, pop album that anyone would want to sing along to.

*Jay Roberson
junior education major*



Conan Gray released his third studio album which is full of heartbreak.

MEN'S SOCCER

Coach's culture fosters maturity, championship

By Jake Tiger

FOUR months removed from a gutsy championship victory over Iona, Rider men's soccer filed into another weekly March meeting, this time greeted by a slideshow with an image of an alluring mansion – fountains, columns and all.

“How many of you guys want to buy this?” asked Head Coach Chad Duernberger, prompting most of the team put up a hand. “How many of you guys know the process to buy this?”

Each hand trickled down.

The presentation, aptly titled “How to Buy a House,” was one of five offseason meetings in a series Duernberger dubbed “Culture Fridays,” each session teaching the burgeoning adults a lesson about both soccer and maturity.

Duernberger's team-building philosophy is the foundation of what players described as a “brotherhood,” as the coach believes culture is the key to constructing fearsome teams, and successful individuals that continue to win long after they leave Rider.

“I feel like I failed them if it's just soccer,” said Duernberger. “It's not a four-year decision; it's a 40-year decision if you're going to come play for me, because I want to set you up for life.”

'He's onto something'

Rider announced Duernberger as men's soccer's next head coach in January 2023 following the retirement of Rider's former head coach, Charlie Inverso, who led the Broncos to three Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference championships during his 36-year stint.

In Inverso's final season, Rider finished 3-8-6 and it appeared that Duernberger was inheriting a team tumbling toward a rebuild, but Duernberger, a perennial winner, lifted the Broncos to a 12-4-4 en route to a gritty victory in the MAAC championship in his first season.

Duernberger's coaching journey began in 2008 – two years after he graduated from college – when he landed his first head coaching job at his Division II alma mater, the University of Charleston.

He took over a squad coming off a dismal 0-17 season; just two seasons later, Duernberger's Golden Eagles were 19-4-0 with a perfect record in conference play.

When Duernberger was an assistant coach at Penn State in 2014, he helped the Nittany Lions to a 10-0-1 start, the best in program history.

“Coach Chad's philosophy is something that should be studied,” said sophomore midfielder Luke Kirilenko. “He's onto something.”

Duernberger has always found ways to win, and he does so by being both a coach and mentor to his



Graphic by Eric Buckwalter/The Rider News, Photos by Kaitlyn D'Alesio/The Rider News

Head Coach **Chad Duernberger** led the Broncos to a MAAC championship in his first year.

players, and he believes a team's environment is the difference-maker.

“From my experience at the Division I level, everybody's good, every team is talented,” said Duernberger. “The biggest difference is who's playing together, who has the culture.”

'Our culture was our advantage'

Duernberger wants his guys to win at everything, be it on the pitch or in the housing market.

Since he took over for Inverso, Duernberger has treated his new squad to a number of unique bonding activities, including mini golf, bowling and a pool party at the home Duernberger purchased after taking the job at Rider (and after teaching himself how to buy a house).

He was sure to point out that he crushed everybody at mini golf.

“Those are the little things that I feel help grow the culture of brotherhood,” said Duernberger. “They go a long way with these guys connecting and being together ... and being able to win a MAAC championship.”

The other four “Culture Fridays” explored ways the team could build healthy habits, be a better teammate and overcome adversity.

Junior midfielder Kevin Pephrah recalled a moment from one “Culture Friday” where Duernberger compared the team to a pit crew changing the tire on a Formula One car, dozens of people working together with airtight unity.

“It's just been a big emphasis on brotherhood

and how close we are together as a group,” said Pephrah. “The lessons and what we gain from it, it goes deeper than just soccer. You can apply it to life itself.”

Duernberger said the final “Culture Friday” was particularly impactful on the team, as it asked them to consider everything soccer had given them.

The team came together as they all acknowledged how much the game had afforded them, whether it be lifelong friends, an education overseas or a coveted MAAC championship.

Kirilenko said, “We were a much tighter group than a lot of the teams that we were playing. ... Our culture was our advantage.”

Up 2-1 on top-seeded Iona with 16 seconds left in the MAAC final on Nov. 9, Rider sophomore goalkeeper Adam Salama prepped for perhaps the most important penalty kick of his life, as a save would make his Broncos champions after completely missing the postseason a year prior.

The opposing Gael fired a perfectly placed shot toward the bottom-right corner of the goal, but with outstretched arms, a diving Salama deflected the ball up and over the goal, sending the ball out of bounds as time expired.

“I had full confidence in Adam,” said Duernberger after the match. “I knew he'd be up for it.”

As the Iona players collapsed onto the turf, fingers gripping their hair in despair, Duernberger's brothers piled on Salama in a victorious, screeching heap of cranberry.

Teams can't get much tighter than that.

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SOFTBALL

Broncs take three of five from MAAC rivals

By Kadie DiGiuseppe

It's more than halfway through the season for Rider softball and the wins are starting to roll in.

The Broncs continued conference play when they traveled to Manhattan on April 5 and 6, then traveled to Iona on April 9 to pursue another MAAC opponent bringing their season record to 12-20.

'We bounced back'

The Broncs and the Jaspers stayed scoreless until the third inning, when junior catcher Kristyn Gardner hit a home run to center field, putting Rider up 1-0.

Manhattan tied the game in the fourth inning, but Rider took the lead right back from the Jaspers following a double by freshman infielder Kiersten Buchanan that drove in sophomore outfielder Maddie Luedtke.

With no runs scored at the top of the seventh, the Broncs let up a home run to tie the score again, this time at two apiece.

In the last inning, the Broncs went 0-3 at the plate in extra innings and allowed the Jaspers to score the winning run after a single to center field.

"No matter who we play, we have to come out strong and give every game our best," said Luedtke.

In the following game, Rider started off scoreless in the first inning but quickly changed that in the second due to freshman catcher Kendall Reda-Fehsal's solo home run to left center.

Sophomore pitcher Fallyn Stoeckel added another home run to the board for the Broncs in the following inning and two innings later, Luedtke's two run home run scored Stoeckel once again.

Leading 4-0, the Broncs let up an unearned run in the sixth but quickly scored following Luedtke's single that scored junior infielder Olivia Burroughs.

Rider let the Jaspers score two more runs in the seventh, but still managed to end with a 5-3 win.

Stoeckel had two strikeouts during the game.

The following day, the game was slow from the start but finally, after a scoreless five innings, Gardner went yard scoring the first run of the day.

After three groundouts in the bottom of the sixth, sophomore pitcher Jadeyn Merrill's single in the seventh drove in freshman infielder Olivia Smith and Luedtke to put the Broncs in front by three.

"I think the energy that our team brought in the last two games helped us get those wins," said Groskritz. "We have come together a lot as a team and our defense has really been our strong suit."

'We put enough on the field'

On Tuesday, the Broncs traveled to New York against another one of their MAAC opponents, the Iona Gaels.

Once again, Rider came out in the first inning swinging away and jumped to an early 2-0 lead after Merrill's double to right field scored Gardner as well as freshman outfielder Tristen Wren.

The next three innings stayed competitive between the two teams yet was scoreless until Rider put up three more runs.

Luedtke scored the first run of the inning after Buchanan's single to the pitcher.

Buchanan and Merrill also scored later in the fifth but the Gaels offense started to pick things up, scoring three runs as well in the inning.

But the Broncs weren't done yet because Luedtke smacked a ball to left field in the sixth inning and then again in the seventh.

Rider let Iona score two more runs during the sixth inning but were able to hold on in the last



Maggie Kleiner/The Rider News

Sophomore pitcher Fallyn Stoeckel fires one in the box.

inning to secure the 7-5 win.

In their following game, the Broncs let the Gaels score first before scoring two runs in the second inning courtesy of sophomore pitcher Fallyn Stoeckel's single to left.

Rider let Iona score another run in the third but extended their lead after Reda-Fehsal's single scored Wren and senior outfielder Laneya Wright putting the Broncs in front 4-2 going into the fifth inning.

The next two innings stayed stagnant between Iona and Rider but unfortunately, the Broncs couldn't stop the Iona offense from driving in three more runs in the last inning to give the Gaels the win.

"We're actually starting to come together and we're starting to make things happen. We have been working really hard in practice and it's been paying off," said Reda-Fehsal.

The Broncs will stay in conference play next week when they rematch against Iona on April 10 and will be back at home against Siena on April 13 and 14.

GOLF

Rider finishes 12th at Princeton Invitational

By Benjamin Shinault

With countless days of pouring rain and overall miserable conditions all during the week, the melancholy weather finally subsided and the Springdale Golf Club was ready to host the Princeton Invitational.

Rider has gone through a rough patch entering the tournament to put it simply, as it finished in the top five only three times this season, those being at the Temple Invitational back in September, and most recently in October when Rider took part in the Lehigh Invitational.

After the finish at Princeton, it looks like the Broncs are still in that funk, as on April 6 and the 7, Rider finished 12th out of the 14 teams that participated.

Let's go golfing

The Broncs headed out on the green on Saturday morning with brisk weather and northern winds at around 13 mph. The weather the whole weekend was tough for the Broncs to handle, and overall played a big part in what Rider has been able to do this season.

"It's been a brutal spring," Head Coach Jason Barry said. "We've had very little time to get outside and practice in decent conditions, and each tournament we've played it has been cold with massive winds."

Despite the adverse weather conditions, especially the breeze present on the greens, graduate student Connor Bekefi had a good performance, as he shot one over the par-3 holes, earning him the third-best score on the day. Bekefi also had six birdies on the day.

"Connor has been very solid all spring. He's averaging a shade over 73.5 in absolutely brutal conditions," Barry said.

Outside of Bekefi, a couple other Rider golfers followed close behind him, those being sophomore Ben Ortwein, who finished the day at 75, and graduate student Joey Lostumbo with 76. Overall, the Broncs had trouble navigating the course at Springdale Country Club.



Josiah Thomas/The Rider News

Freshman Pelle Ahlqvist playing at the Princeton Open.

"I was playing good leading up to it," Bekefi said. "Springdale is a short little course but with tough greens, fast greens ... along with the weather, it was tough, it was cold and windy, so we had to dial in."

At the conclusion of the two rounds on April 6, Rider was trailing and was slotted in at the twelfth spot. Howard was the leader of the tournament at 285-281-566 (-2) only two strokes ahead of the local Princeton group.

Another tough finish

The tournament's second day dawned upon Rider

as it was looking to improve from its previous day on the course, but it finished in 12th once again to close out the tournament.

On day two, Ortwein led the way for Rider, cementing his performance at the Princeton Invitational as a solid one. Ortwein shot even-par 71 and Ortwein's 32 pars led the way for the Broncs. With those numbers, Ortwein closed out the tournament slotted in at 32nd overall. Bekefi was able to translate some of his elite swings to day two as he finished the day with a 74 as the Rider's top performer and slipped into the 26th spot.

As a team, the Broncs shot 300 on the seventh and 904 overall for the tournament. With the tough finish, Rider is still searching for that breakthrough.

Looking forward

Bekefi, the captain of the team, is hoping for a switch in the weather, which he believes can directly translate onto the green.

"The weather hasn't been great this spring. It's been cold and windy, but hopefully over the span of the next couple weeks, we can get some better days and get out there and really dial in our game," Bekefi stated.

Despite the Broncs struggling this season, Barry has full confidence in his squad that they pull off the late-season turnaround, something they have done before.

"This team has a ton of talent and a lot of potential," Barry said. "We have a week and a half before our conference championship to turn things around... These guys play with a lot of heart, the fight for every stroke, and will not give up."

Rider won the 2022 MAAC championship and according to Barry, who took over for the team back in 2013, it's only a matter of time until Rider can cut down on its numbers and really do damage in the upcoming MAAC championship down in Florida.

"It wouldn't surprise me to see us turn things around and give it a run," Barry said.

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BASEBALL

Winning streak reaches 11, unbeaten in MAAC



The Broncos have won 11 straight games, the second longest streak in the nation.

Graphic by Destiny Pagan/The Rider News, Photos by Josiah Thomas/The Rider News

By Benjamin Shinault

POWER and influence, otherwise known as dominance, can be used to describe Rider baseball's Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference play so far this season.

The Broncos welcomed the Siena Saints to Sonny Pittaro Field for a sunny weekend of baseball and swept them right out after putting up 26 runs over three games.

Following the sweep, the Broncos have yet to lose a MAAC game as they sit at 9-0 in conference play. Still riding the high of sweeping yet another conference rival, Rider remained home and welcomed in Lehigh for the semi-final round of the Liberty Classic. With their dominant win over the Mountain Hawks, they are now on a 11-game winning streak, the second longest in the nation, only behind the Ragin' Cajuns of the University of Louisiana.

'We count on him'

Rider got right to work on April 5 when it welcomed the Siena Saints for yet another home stretch. Sophomore right-hander PJ Craig was the one to open the series. Craig, making his seventh start of the season, might have had his best one yet as he finished with career highs in innings pitched, walks allowed and strikeouts. Craig now leads the MAAC in innings pitched.

"He dialed the zone, struck out eight and didn't walk anybody," Head Coach Barry Davis said. "[Craig] had a strong command of his pitches straight from the get-go, and when you have that, it's a good sign."

Craig locked all windows and doors for the Saints as they were shut down until the eighth inning when Siena got one to drop down for an RBI single, but by then, the Broncos were already up by nine. The Saints were able to take two more runs on, but they couldn't complete the vigorous rally.

Rider's offense scored over 10 runs for the seventh time this season alone. Senior catcher Brian Skettini had three RBIs on the day stemming from a single to center, which scored two, and a muffed throw to first base, which allowed junior catcher Matt Shepherd to cross the plate. Contributions came in from all around the diamond, ultimately leading to the weekend series starting out with a resounding 10-3 win.

Rider riding high

Fresh off a day of sheer sovereignty, Rider continued that power with a 10-1 win over the Saints. The southpaw junior pitcher Brian Young took to the mound for the Broncos and didn't look back. Young pitched eight innings, allowed just one earned run and struck out seven Saints.

Over Young's last three starts, he has struck out 23 batters and has only allowed five earned runs and four walks. Young has missed some time this season due to an elbow injury, but since his return to the mound, has been one of the top pitchers in the MAAC based on statistics.

"B.Y. [Young] was good today, he pitched well," Davis said.

The only run that emerged for Siena in game two of the series was an RBI double in the first inning, but after that, it was an offensive ghost town for the Saints at Sonny Pittaro Field. On the contrary, Rider's offense was alive and well as it put up 10 runs once again, the second time in as many days.

A lot of the Broncos' scoring this season has come through small ball: lots of singles, sacrifice flies and taking advantage of any defensive mistakes. Graduate student first baseman Luke Lesch got the scoring started for Rider when he reached on a fielder's choice that allowed Shepherd to score.

Lesch, two innings later, got bat on ball once again and singled in graduate student third baseman Jack Winsett to make the score 3-1. From there, the Broncos started to pour it on. Junior outfielder Richie Sica had a good day at the plate as well, as he finished with two RBIs on the day coming from a single to right field.

'It's hard to sweep'

It was a sunny, 50-degree day with a slight breeze when Rider and Siena wrapped up their series. Right-handed sophomore pitcher Clayton Poliey, who is seventh in the MAAC in ERA and fourth in runs allowed, stepped to the mound looking to finish off the Saints. Poliey and some bullpen assistance were indeed able to finish the sweep, defeating Siena, 6-1.

Poliey got off to a rough start, as he allowed a single, threw a wild pitch and hit a batter, but after that, he was coasting, going four more innings, striking out five batters and only allowing five hits.

The offense wasn't as explosive as it was the previous two games, as it only totaled six runs, but it was more than enough due to the Broncos' ever-impressive bullpen play. Much of the scoring came from Skettini and freshman infielder Matt Leahy, as both of them had two RBIs on the day.

Skettini on the day had three hits, which extended his hitting streak to 10 games and his on-base streak to 19.

"It feels good and I feel pretty confident in the box, and it helps having a bunch of older guys like Jack, Luke and Matt and everyone around me," Skettini said. "I'm just seeing the ball really well and putting the ball in play, and when you put the ball in play, good things happen."

Off to Philadelphia

For the second straight year, the Broncos are headed to Citizens Bank Park, home of the Philadelphia Phillies, to play in the Liberty Bell Classic. In order to get there, the Broncos had to take down the Lehigh Mountain Hawks and they did just that, winning 12-4.

It was a warm day for the Broncos when they threw on their cranberry uniforms and jogged out onto the diamond. Sophomore pitcher Chris Montone was given the rights to start it off for Rider, but he had a rough go at it as he couldn't get through three innings, walked four and allowed three runs.

Luckily for Montone and the rest of the Broncos pitching staff, Rider's offense was putting some paint on the baseballs as they totaled 12 runs and 11 hits. Rider couldn't rummage anything in the bottom of the first but were able to score in every other inning, especially in the fifth when they put up five runs on the board.

The scoring started in the second inning when Leahy hit an infield fly to shortstop with the bases juiced to get the Broncos first run across. From there, the flood gates opened. Skettini hit a solo homerun in the next inning and Leahy put one over the fence as well in the sixth inning, giving Leahy three RBIs on the day.

Rider will now hit the road for the first time since March 24 to take on the NJIT Islanders in a single game set. First pitch will be on ESPN+ on April 10 at 6 p.m.