

# The Outlook

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## The Neurodiversity Brain Collective hosts its first interest meeting

*New Monmouth student-run club promotes awareness and acceptance for neurodivergent students on campus*

**LAUREN BEVACQUA**  
FEATURES EDITOR

The Neurodiversity Brain Collective (NBC) hosted an interest meeting on Wednesday, Nov. 13, in the Intercultural Center. Held on Zoom and in person, neurodivergent and neurotypical students met to discuss issues regarding the representation of neurodivergent individuals on campus.

Zoe Shvedov, a senior social work major, wanted to start this club to spread awareness and acceptance on campus. She and Dr. Alysson Goodwin, Ph.D., M.B.A., OTR/L, Specialist Professor in the Department of Occupational Therapy, thought this club would benefit the University. Shvedov explained, "While the idea came from Dr. Goodwin as part of a litany of projects she is doing with the goal of furthering neurodivergent access and support on campus, it naturally aligned with my previous experiences and future goals, as well as generally supporting a mission I believe in being neurodivergent myself."

NBC plans to take Monmouth's efforts to create an inclusive campus a step further. Shvedov said, "Monmouth University seems to be an accepting campus

community with huge strides in generally diversifying, though it still has ways to go. While people are more generally aware of neurodivergence due to social media, people may not appreciate the breadth of the specific social and academic issues [neurodivergent people] face, as well as the difficulty of transitional life periods (such as the adjustment from high school or gap year(s) to college)."

During the first meeting, Shvedov emphasized a Peer/Buddy system for incoming students who might have a hard time transitioning to a new campus. Members of NBC would serve as mentors to guide interested students.

**Neurodiversity Brain Collective**  
cont. on pg. 3

## Monmouth offers first-ever Winter Session classes

**ALEXA CLAYTON**  
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Monmouth University is now offering a winter semester from Jan. 2 to Jan. 17. Undergraduate and graduate students can earn up to three credits with asynchronous, hybrid, or in-person class options.

Melvin Kysha, Registration Specialist at the Office of the Registrar, said that the winter semester will offer 15 courses in various disciplines, including elementary Spanish, theater appreciation, and information technology for business. She said, "The courses are offered online or hybrid to provide more flexibility for faculty and students. Students can take up

to three credits, costing \$1,121 per credit. The add and drop dates are Jan. 2 and Jan. 3."

Thomas Bieber, Associate Athletics Director for Academic Support, explained, "Students can register for Winter Session courses via their Self-Service/Student Planning Portal. Registration can occur up until Friday, Jan. 3, a day after Winter Session courses begin on Thursday, Jan. 2."

Rebecca Sanford, Associate Professor of Communication, said, "I've never taught a term shorter than four weeks at MU, but I will say that a semester's worth of materials in four weeks is a whirlwind. Keeping up with reading, assignments, and assessments will be intense for

**Winter Session**  
cont. on pg. 3



**LENS COLLECTIVE**  
PHOTOGRAPHY CLUB

IMAGE COURTESY of Henry Boody.

## Monmouth's newest club: Lens Collective Photography Club

Boody explained, "The current plan is to host events like photo walks, editing workshops, and student photography showcases. These aim to encourage students to feel proud of their work and dive deeper into the art form. We're also considering collaborations with other clubs, like Hawk TV and the Outdoors Club, creating a unique experience promoting student engagement."

Boody assures students that they don't need any photography experience to join Lens Collective, only an interest in photography

and the eagerness to learn about it. "The end goal is for members to leave with a better understanding of photography, regardless of their skill level. Whether it is learning technical skills, like getting the right exposure, choosing the best equipment, or connecting with others who share the same passions, our goal is to make photography as accessible as possible," Boody said.

Lens Collective hosted its first interest meeting on Wednesday, Nov. 20, in Rechnitz Hall. "The first meeting was a total success! About ten people showed up,

which was more than I thought would. This meeting was more of a preface to the club, which included an introduction to our e-board, the purpose of the club, possible future events, etc.," Boody explained.

"Anyone interested can follow us on Instagram @lencollective\_mu, email s1383304@monmouth.edu, or simply stop by our meetings. We're always open to new members, regardless of their skill level or experience," Boody concluded. "I'm excited to meet prospective members and get this show on the road."

**TAYLOR MEMOLI**  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF/NEWS EDITOR

Monmouth welcomed one of its newest clubs, Lens Collective Photography Club. Created by Henry Boody,

a sophomore communication major, with Mark Ludak, Specialist Professor of Art and Design, as advisor, the club aims to teach students about photography and give them a space to explore the creative medium.

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# Monmouth student band The Blackouts travel to London to record album with The Strokes producer, Gordon Raphael

OLIVIA PUZIO  
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

This past September, Monmouth students traveled to Leeds, England, with their band The Blackouts to record their new album with the famous producer of The Strokes, Gordon Raphael. The Blackouts is an alternative rock band consisting of six members: Will Horn, Sam Decencio, David Thomas, Andrew Weir, John Dwyer, and Kyle Noone. Their inspiration for their music was heavily influenced by the band The Strokes, who are famous for their songs “The Adults Are Talking” and “Someday.”

Raphael is an American record producer and musician, who produced The Strokes’ debut EP, as well as their first two albums “Is This It” and “Room on Fire.” Raphael currently works with bands that reach out and catch his interest, and he travels to and from New York and Europe. The Blackout’s trip lasted a week, and they spent around nine hours in the studio each day, working to perfect their new songs.

The Blackouts began by

covering The Strokes and then worked with Blue Hawk Records in Fall 2023 on the club’s twenty-third compilation album in December 2023, which included their original song, “Blackout.” David Thomas, the sophomore bassist, recalled, “I never thought I would’ve been able to see a studio in my life. I just liked playing instruments, but getting the chance to record and see how everything in the studio works is amazing. I would’ve never pushed myself to go and try to experience recording a song in college because of how much work I was expecting it to be, but Blue Hawk Records helps with schedules, recording, and bringing the vibe to the studio. Working with them has shown me how much I actually love music and recording. I would’ve never had this chance if it weren’t for Blue Hawk Records.”

With this experience, the band moved on to hosting gigs at various locations, such as The Stone Pony in Asbury Park, before going on to record their songs on their own. They produced a four-song album titled “Tryouts,” one being a

re-recording of “Blackout,” in addition to new songs “Half-Life of a Dying Star,” “7th Inning Stretch,” and “Love Sick.” They then decided that they wanted a professional producer’s help and settled on reaching out to Raphael since they take great inspiration from The Strokes.

Sam Decencio, Monmouth alumni and guitarist of the band, explained, “In late May, last spring, we sent a very spontaneous email to Gordon Raphael and we did not expect any response, at least within the first few weeks. Gigs don’t get back to us until after at least two weeks. Gordon responded within two days and said he would be more than willing to record our album, except he was currently living in Leeds. We’ve been playing local gigs for a while, but we wanted more and this was a perfect opportunity for us to record with someone we admire.”

With the support of Monmouth’s Music Industry program and Blue Hawk Records, the band prepared for the excursion. They spent nine hours in Eiger Studios in Leeds for four days with



PHOTO COURTESY of Olivia Puzio.

The Blackouts members (left to right) Kyle Noone, William Horn, David Thomas, Sam Decencio, Andrew Weir, and John Dwyer standing behind Gordon Raphael.

Raphael, concluding their trip with twelve songs recorded and ready for the production process. Lead singer and senior music major, Will Horn, said, “Working with Gordon was amazing. First and foremost, he’s our idol, after working with The Strokes. We didn’t expect someone of such stature to be so kind and welcoming. He made us feel at ease recording and that’s exactly what you

want from a producer.”

Horn concluded, “We couldn’t believe we finished twelve songs in four days, and we were really happy with the final product. What we took away from the trip, working with Gordon, was we took away a certain amount of professionalism musically, that we can now put into our everyday lives to help make us better musicians and people.”



PHOTO COURTESY of Lyndsey Buren.

## Members of Phi Eta Sigma (PES) National Honor Society travel to PES National Convention

TAYLOR MEMOLI  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF/NEWS EDITOR

Phi Eta Sigma (PES) is a freshman honor society recognized on campus, and each fall, student representatives from university chapters travel across the country to attend the PES National Convention. This year, Lyndsey Buren, president of PES, and Tara Mahon, vice president of PES, attended the event in Anaheim, California, from Oct. 25-27.

Buren explained, “The convention provided Tara and I with an opportunity to connect with other like-minded peers, exchange ideas, present research, learn from one another.”

Phi Eta Sigma was founded in 1923 and has been rewarding high-achieving students ever

since. The convention provides students with notable guest speakers and a chance to come together with other students in the chapter. This year’s convention had over 100 students and faculty chapter advisors.

This year’s guest speaker was Nastia Liukin, an Olympic gymnast and five-time medalist at the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing.

“The highlight of the convention was hearing Nastia Liukin, Olympic gold medalist from the U.S. women’s gymnastics team, deliver the keynote presentation,” Buren continued. “She shared an inspiring message about persevering through difficult times. Liukin spoke about when she had a tough day at practice and told her parents that she wanted to quit gymnastics. Her parents told her that she could

quit gymnastics, but only after she had a good day of practice. She shared a valuable lesson that we can’t give up when things get tough. We have to keep showing up and pushing forward, both for ourselves and for others.”

Mahon agreed with Buren. “I learned that Nastia Liukin’s most heartfelt moment was when the crowd gave her a standing ovation after she overcame falling off the balance beam and continuing to finish her routine,” she said.

In the aftermath of this event, Buren explained her key takeaways. “Literacy is one of Phi Eta Sigma’s core values, and I learned about the importance of supporting literacy initiatives in our local communities. It is crucial to instill a love for reading and learning in children from a very young age to support their development and education,” she said.

Lyndsey Buren and Tara Mahon attending PES National Convention in Anaheim, California.

# Neurodiversity Brain Collective

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Goodwin said, “Neurodivergent students who attend college campuses report loneliness and lack of connection to be the number one barrier to success. It’s hard to help someone feel a sense of belonging without understanding who they are.”

Goodwin continued, “The Neurodiversity Brain Collective hopes to create peer partnerships to combat loneliness, share experiences, and help each other navigate systems that may not be set up for our success. NBC wants to advocate for ourselves and each other in the name of letting our brains process how they are wired without consequences. I hope to help people see the positives in variety. A diverse society is biologically stronger.”

According to Carolyn Chirichello, M.S., Assistant Director and Learning Disability Specialist, the Department of Disability Services (DDS) is not directly involved with the group. “It is great for this [NBC] to be student-driven. We would promote the club to the students registered with us, we just do not have control,” Chirichello explained. “I also think it is great for students who are also not registered with us [DDS].”

Valentine Miller, a junior Creative Writing major, attended the first NBC interest meeting. She said, “While it is difficult to judge now, because of the group’s very recent formation, I do think that it is possible that they can help make a difference on campus. They are strong advocates who understand the different types of neurodiversity and the struggles that neurodiverse people face in academia, and they seem very willing to advocate for the

community as much as they can.” Those who are neurotypical are encouraged to attend an NBC meeting to learn more about neurodiversity and share issues from their perspectives.

Shvedov said, “As well as being a place for neurodiverse students to find connection and support, we are also inclusive of neurotypical students and their perspectives—so this is something the campus community as a whole can benefit from.”

One of the goals of this club is to be a space where neurodivergent students feel safe. Shvedov emphasized, on her personal experience, “I feel that if there was a wider understanding of neurodiversity, as well as a place for me to safely discuss my struggles and seek guidance without judgment, maybe my life path could have been more straightforward and much less bumpy.”

Because students with disabilities are often not thought about in terms of diversity, Miller and Chirichello both believe NBC is a step in the right direction. Miller explained, “I feel the leaders and faculty advisor really care about making a welcoming environment for neurodiverse people, who are often the last people thought of in academia. While it won’t be easy, I think that they will be strong advocates for the neurodiverse community on campus.”

Chirichello concluded, “My hope is that this group continues when the student who started this club graduates. There have always been neurodiverse people, and they do not want to be silenced anymore.”

The next interest meeting for NBC is Wednesday, Dec. 5, at 2:30 p.m. on Zoom or in person in the Intercultural Center Lounge.

# Two students represent Monmouth PRSSA at the national PRSSA ICON Conference

JORDYN ROSEN  
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Two students—Ashley Schumacher, Co-President of Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA) & Shadow PR Firm, and Mya Sexton, Digital Content Creator of PRSSA—recently represented Monmouth’s PRSSA Chapter at the National PRSSA ICON Conference in Anaheim, California, on Oct. 13-17.

According to the PRSSA website, the event is intended to bring students from different chapters together and create networking opportunities with PRSSA alumni and top industry executives.

Schumacher elaborated, “ICON is an annual PRSSA conference that includes students and PRSA (Public Relations Society of America) alumni, featuring speakers from PR, social media, marketing, and top executives. [We] learn how to stand out in careers, improve personal branding, and bring back ideas to strengthen our chapter.”

The national conference aims to better prepare students for the industry once they graduate. Milagros Orcoyen, President of National PRSSA, said, “PRSSA ICON focused on ‘The Future of PR,’ with our primary goal being to provide attendees with valuable learning opportunities that would keep them informed about the latest industry trends and prepare them for what’s next. We also aimed to facilitate networking among peers and professionals from around the globe, recognizing the importance of these connections.”

The agenda included speaker sessions and networking sessions. Orcoyen explained that students were additionally able to learn from professionals who attended such as Damon Whiteside, CEO of the Academy of Country Music, and Suzi Brown, Vice President of Communications at Disneyland Resort. “Additionally,” Orcoyen continued, “they connected with other PRSSA students

and professionals during events such as our Welcome Reception (themed ‘ICON-Chella!’), the Champions for PRSSA Breakfast, the DEI Reception, and more.”

One session speaker Schumacher found valuable was Nicole Dye-Anderson, Senior Vice President and Head of Media Relations at Wells Fargo. “[Dye-Anderson] really took the time to explain how to build meaningful relationships with A-list contacts by treating them as people, not just professional connections,” Schumacher said.

PRSSA, specifically an ICON Conference Committee that is selected, chooses the conference’s location. Alicia Caracciolo, Vice President of Events and Fundraising National PRSSA, said, “This year’s team was made up of students from the California State University at Fullerton Chapter. The Conference Committee spearheads choosing speakers, promoting the event, and fundraising for the event, all while working closely with PRSSA Headquarters.”

Oakley Weddle, previous National PRSSA Vice President of Chapter Development, added, “This year’s conference, set against the backdrop of California, embraced the state’s laid-back yet driven energy, which resonated with attendees... [It] captured the essence of California’s spirit, and I know that the conference committee next year for Washington, D.C., will be equally successful.”

Monmouth’s chapter of PRSSA and their Shadow PR Firm take pride in being active on campus and nationally. Schumacher said, “PRSSA & Shadow PR Firm is a nationally affiliated, student-run public relations firm at Monmouth University that partners with local clients to meet their needs in PR, social media management, fundraising, etc. This year, we’re working with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Coastal and Northern NJ, Asbury Park Tennis Initiative, and Redeem Her.”

Mary Harris, A.P.R.,

Specialist Professor of Public Relations, Journalism/PR Program Director, and Faculty Co-Advisor for PRSSA, explained how Monmouth PRSSA funds sending members to the conference. She explained, “Based on the annual budget PRSSA receives, we are usually able to send two or three students to the national conference. As the leaders of the executive board, the co-presidents of PRSSA are usually given the opportunity first. If a co-president cannot attend, then another executive board member is invited based on interest and availability, and this person is selected in a random drawing in order to be fair.”

Both Schumacher and Sexton believe that sending representatives to the annual conference is important and beneficial for Monmouth’s PRSSA chapter, specifically by allowing members to connect with like-minded individuals. Sexton said, “Being able to make connections with speakers who can then give their expertise and advice to our club is super beneficial. We spoke to Lauren Berger, CEO of Intern-Queen... which is great since she can be very helpful to the general members of the club.” Sexton additionally thought that it was important to meet with national leaders to help support the club financially and get the chapter name out there more since it is a smaller chapter. She argued that this recognition would benefit Monmouth’s chapter in the long run.

Schumacher added that attending the conference also allows the executive board to bring back new information and share it with the other members who couldn’t participate.

Orcoyen looked to the future of National PRSSA and said, “I see us evolving alongside the ever-changing dynamics of our industry. Our top priority will always be our students, and we will continue to adapt to ensure we’re meeting their needs and preferences.”



PHOTO COURTESY of Jordyn Rosen.

# Winter Session

cont. from pg. 1

students and instructors alike. By the same token, that intense focus will pay off with three credits completed in a couple of weeks.”

Kysha said that the University aims to allow students to stay within their anticipated graduation date and successfully complete their credits as needed. She added that students will now have the opportunity to catch up on credits or get a head start on their academics.

Jason Fitzgerald, Associate Professor and Chair of

Curriculum and Instruction, said, “I think that the Winter Session is a benefit to students because it allows them time to catch up on or expand their curriculum in some fun and interesting ways.”

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# Does Monmouth need more health resources?

## EDITORIAL STAFF

Many students know about the University's mental health resources through Counseling and Prevention Services (CPS) and the Health Center on the Residential side of campus. Even though CPS offers eight free sessions to students per semester and the Health Center offers services like STD testing and other health related needs for sickness, are there truly enough resources offered on this campus? Could Monmouth use more?

In regard to CPS's resources, one editor said, "I think the services Monmouth provides to students are good! I've never personally used any mental health resources, but I've heard great things from my peers about them!"

Another editor commented, "The recent US News and World Report ranking has Monmouth at #13 nationally for mental health services. I feel CPS is open and available to all students."

"I believe that the University has pretty good mental health resources. I know where they are located and briefly what kind of services they provide but I don't know a whole bunch about it. What CPS offers students was stressed to me during freshman year orientation but I haven't heard much about it since," one editor emphasized.

Many universities, like The College of William & Mary for example, have built an entire health center dedicated to mental and physical health needs. While Monmouth has a small Health Center, only open during the weekdays, they do not

offer an on-campus pharmacy, student health groups, or 24/7 emergency care. By having a larger Health Center, students do not have to find a way to get resources or care off campus.

One editor thinks, "Considering the tuition at this school is pretty pricey, I don't see why not [adding a larger Health Center]."

"I absolutely think Monmouth should invest in a Health Center with more focused resources on mental health. Mental health is still super forgotten in our society and there's so many stigmas and misinformation in regards to how everyone should be going about seeking guidance," one editor said.

Another editor commented, "It is much easier for students if these [an on campus pharmacy] resources are on their campus. Instead of having to travel and take time out of their already busy schedules to seek help, they can have it provided on campus."

One editor believes the resources on this campus are great for our size, "For our size, having both the Health Center and CPS serve as effective tools for students physical and mental health."

The resources on this campus could be limited due to funding and overall size of the University; however, some editors found that the resources the University has to offer are not said enough throughout their years here.

"I'm not educated enough on the mental health resources provided on campus to speak on that. However, I do think the Health Center is a great resource to students, but it cannot be used to its fullest potential

because of its limited resources," one editor shared.

One editor emphasized, "I think a lot of students are unaware of these services and it only benefits us to be aware of what we have access to."

An editor also believes the University is focusing on other tasks, "I think the school just needs to pay more attention to these resources rather than, let's say, hanging a large banner outside of the student center."

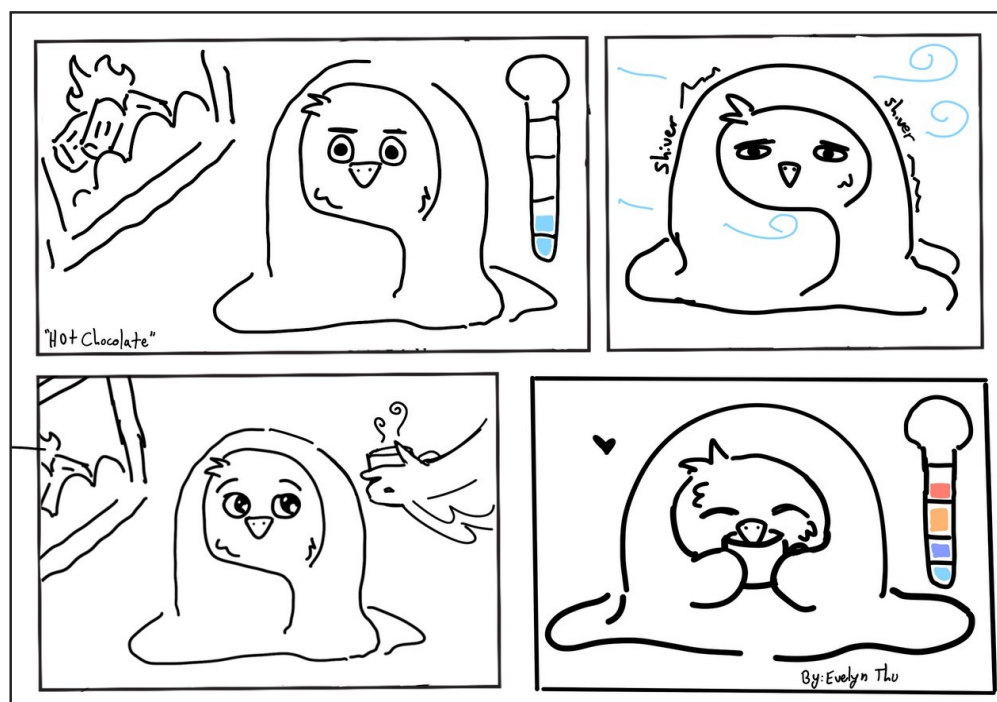
The editors also weighed in on what the University should add in order for students to utilize its resources.

"I would love for Monmouth to add a weekend clinic for students to visit if they need any health-related services on Saturdays or Sundays," one editor said.

Another editor said, "I would like if they [the University] added a bigger Rec center to play sports with friends. For example, I don't understand why the basketball teams often practice on the same courts that students use to play for fun with friends. Often times the courts they offer for students (only 2) are not open."

Another editor commented, "I would like to see Monmouth bring more awareness to the student body of what resources are available. I don't know exactly what services I can receive as a student and I feel like if I knew more, I would be more likely to utilize them."

With countless hours of studying, mental and physical health is crucial to any college student. It is extremely important that students put our mind and body first. By having more resources, or bringing awareness to what the University has to offer, college students can thrive.



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## Is Thanksgiving break too short?

INTERVIEWED by  
MICHAEL GRUSEKE



"I do think Thanksgiving break is too short, but honestly we do get a lot of time off for Christmas so I can't complain."

- Lorelia Hilarczyk



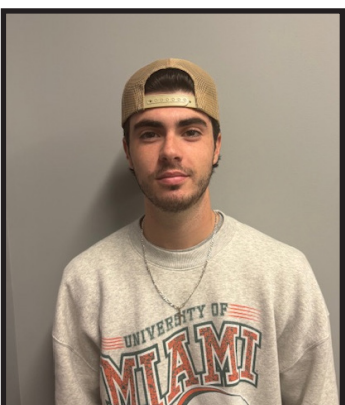
"I think Thanksgiving break should be at least a full week long."

- Hailey Sanchez



"Thanksgiving break is too short considering some students do not live close to the school."

- Dan Gruseke



"I think Thanksgiving break is the right length because winter break is right around the corner so I don't think it would make sense to have a lengthy break for Thanksgiving."

- Bayden Delaney

## Does Consumerism Put a Damper on the Holiday Season?

HAYDEN KELLY  
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Thanksgiving has ended, and my email inbox has been suffocating under the weight of endless holiday deals and advertisements. Black Friday, Cyber Monday, Christmas deals, commercials, and jingles have flooded my TV, social media apps, radio, and more. Even the chips at the grocery store are red and green.

Don't get me wrong—I love celebrating Christmas, and in past years, I have

been someone who enjoys decorating before Thanksgiving even begins. However, with each year that passes, I find it harder to find the holiday season as blissful as I did as a child. I think our society's inclination toward excessive consumerism is partially to blame.

I won't deny that much of my distaste toward holiday shopping is rooted in my resentment of now having to participate in purchasing gifts (my stance on shopping was a lot more positive when I was not footing the bill). Nonetheless, I miss how delighted I used to be-

come in response to the simplest elements of the holiday season, like when my family drove around the neighborhood to look at Christmas lights or when my classmates and I decorated gingerbread houses in grade school. I think these simple things are what the holidays are really about—spending time with friends and family.

The reason the Christmas season is not as much fun as it was when I was a kid is not just because Santa isn't real (sorry to break the news). The lens many children have is particularly joyful, regardless of their participation in

the holiday season, usually because kids are completely immersed in the present moment. Our society's collective interest in obtaining top deals or getting the next best items water down the true meaning of the holiday season, which, at its core, is about connection.

Whether that be through spending time with loved ones, expressing gratitude, reflecting on memories, or forming new ones, great gifts can only add to the joy of the experience—not replace it.

## NEW YORK JETS FANS HAVE THE WORST FAN EXPERIENCE OUT OF ANY NFL FANBASE

MICHAEL GRUSEKE  
OPINIONS EDITOR

If you know anything about the National Football League (NFL), odds are you know that the New York Jets are consistently known as a bad football team year in and year out. Some other fanbases complain about their team's lack of success, but at least they are not New York Jets fans.

Fans of other teams complain about making the playoffs and not winning the championship, but imagine not even reaching a first-round playoff game. This is the reality the New York Jets have known for way too long. The Jets have been historically one of the worst franchises in the NFL. They are the league's laughingstock, not making the playoffs since 2010. This means that the Jets currently hold the longest playoff drought out of any team not only in the NFL, but in North American professional sports. Sitting at a record of 3-9, it looks like the Jets will continue their streak with 14 seasons in a row of not even

making a single playoff game.

To make matters worse, fans of the team truly thought that things would change for the better this season after getting star players such as quarterback Aaron Rodgers, wide receiver Devante Adams, and defensive end Hasson Reddick. To sum it up, the Jets have a stacked roster this year on paper that was supposed to contend for a Super Bowl, but instead, they have played like the "same old Jets."

Die-hard New York Jets fans at Monmouth University are fed up with the team they have supported all of their lives. When asked how it feels to be a fan of the organization Dan Gruseke, senior communication major, said, "Every single weekend I am always enraged by this pathetic organization."

Ben Vandenaeker, senior business major, described being a Jets fan as, "Pure chaos." He continued to say, "If I ever run an organization in the future, I know where to look on how to NOT run one."

Junior Ortega, Monmouth alumnus, said, "I've been a Jets fan all of my life and I had to suffer watching my favorite



IMAGE TAKEN from Wordpress.com

team suck every year. There are times that I feel proud to be a fan though. This offseason we stacked our team, but eventually did nothing with it. Overall I hate it, but somehow I am still a Jets fan."

Obviously, Jets fans are not happy with the current state of the organization. No other fan base has been waiting 14 long years to simply watch their team play in a singular playoff game. The NFL team with the second-longest playoff drought is the Denver Broncos, who haven't made it in 8 seasons. Notably, the Broncos are likely to end this drought and make the playoffs this year since

they are currently sitting at a record of 8-5. This gives a perspective that Jets fans have been waiting much longer than any other fan base in the league to see just a small sliver of success.

Every year Jets fans are given false hope and it is simply not okay anymore. Jets fans are some of the most diehard fans in the NFL, but get nothing rewarding in return. At a point, people have to wonder if the Jets are scripted as the "comedic relief" of the NFL for other fanbases to make fun of because watching this team absolutely stink year in and year out just seems too insane.

## SHOULD THANKSGIVING BREAK BE LONGER?

RILEY MCGEE  
STAFF WRITER

I believe that we should have the opportunity to have a longer Thanksgiving break. Many other college university students have a week break when it comes to Thanksgiving. They come home the Friday before Thanksgiving and leave the Sunday after, this is

something that I believe many of us college students could benefit from.

With finals right around the corner, a longer break is something that would be helpful for students at Monmouth. This year, Thanksgiving fell very late, leaving us to come back on Sunday the first when finals start on the 11th. That's just about two weeks between

Thanksgiving break and Winter Break, so I understand why we wouldn't necessarily need a longer break. But in years where it falls a bit earlier, I believe break could be a bit longer, even if it's just by a day or two, meaning maybe just have classes the Monday before leaving us off from Tuesday to Sunday or giving us a whole week Friday to Sunday.

Scan the QR code to keep reading!



# Lauren Bevacqua's Senior Goodbye

**LAUREN BEVACQUA**  
FEATURES EDITOR

All good things must come to an end! "The Outlook" has been a very influential part of my life since I transferred to Monmouth in Fall 2022. Originally, I had the intentions of joining Yearbook (back when the University still had a yearbook), but I decided I wanted to invest some of my time in "The Outlook" instead. Being involved on a college campus was something I always wanted. In my first two years of community college, I could not get involved due to COVID-19 still being very new and classes being mostly hybrid or fully online.

When I stepped foot on campus, and at the semester's Involvement Fair, I went around to all clubs to find my new passions. I stumbled upon "The Outlook," especially since I was completing a journalism minor, and wrote my name on the list, along with some sections I'd be interested in. I checked Lifestyles, Features, and Sports. I heard from each editor, but really only gravitated towards Features. To this day, I am still unsure why. It was something about Fea-

tures that had a grip on me.

The first article I wrote was titled "The Transfer Student Experience" and this reflected on the Transfer Student orientation and what it may like being a newcomer to a school. Ever since then, I've stuck to Features and really enjoyed the topics that were suggested to me.

After I began writing even more, almost weekly, I knew I wanted to take my time at "The Outlook" to the next level. Since I knew the Features editor at the time, Shannon Smith '23, was graduating, I wanted to start copy editing for her. I wanted to get a feel for what could be my future position.

As she began showed me the ropes with editing in APA and "The Outlook" standards, I began to get more comfortable editing other people's work. After all, I am an English student and my minor is in journalism.

Once the Fall semester wrapped up, and a short break from writing, Smith approached me with an idea. This was to make me Assistant Features Editor for the Spring 2023 semester in order to prepare me for the editor position in the Fall. Ecstatic, waving my hands in the air, and pretending I got the promotion of a lifetime, I graciously said

yes...as professional as possible.

I was eager to start in the Spring. I started coming into the newsroom weekly to get used to InDesign and Smith showing me what to do. Confused was an understatement because InDesign is no joke. Shoutout to all the graphic design students because that is probably light work for you!

Her leaving was the scariest part of the semester. I had no idea who I would ask questions to or get help from. I started to feel alone in my own section.

When the Fall 2023 semester started, I went into the newsroom with joy; however, I looked at my computer and had no idea where to begin. I tried inserting a text box and deleted the entire page; I selected an image, but I came up blurry, I had many, many issues. It took me almost three hours to lay Features for the first time.

Luckily, I had more time to practice and get everything right. That semester was rough for me and my section though. Some issues I would have to cover two stories a week, and no flexibility when it came to me writing for other sections.

Once I got my foot-

ing, and a consistent group of writers, I felt way more comfortable in my position that ever before. When this happened, I also had to think about who would take over Features in the future. Since I am not technically graduating until May, but must complete student teaching, I could not continue being editor. As sad as it is to say goodbye to Features and "The Outlook," I knew exactly who I wanted to ask to be my Assistant editor this semester.

Ava McGinty, a sophomore communications student, shared the same passions as I did when I first joined "The Outlook" staff. I knew I had to ask her to be Features editor when I leave. I remember my heart racing when I sent her that text. I was not only scared of rejection, but I didn't know what was going to happen if she did say no. Was Features going away? Who else could take over?

Fortunately, she said yes! I was thrilled and I knew Features would be in good hands. For this semester, her and I have been working together. I've been walking her through InDesign, giving her tips, and preparing her for success.

Each editor has their own station in the newsroom; usually filled with pictures and collages of things we like. At

my station, I have a quote from Billy Joel's song "Vienna" saying "Slow down, you're doing fine." This has been a theme for me during this semester as this is my last as a full time college student with five courses.

While this semester has flown by, it is important to slow down and realize that I am okay. I am doing all the right things. I am going into my dream career. I wouldn't be where I'm at with journalism if it weren't for "The Outlook," our trip the Associated Collegiate Press (ACP) conference in La Jolla, California to enhance our skills as editors, and the friends I have made along the way.

I am forever grateful for "The Outlook" for giving me an outlet to be creative and express my journalistic ideas. While I will miss it dearly, I hope one day I can teach my future students about journalism and share why college journalism is important for exemplifying their voices.



PHOTO TAKEN by Gabrielle Sangatardo

Lauren Bevacqua poses on the La Jolla Cove beach.

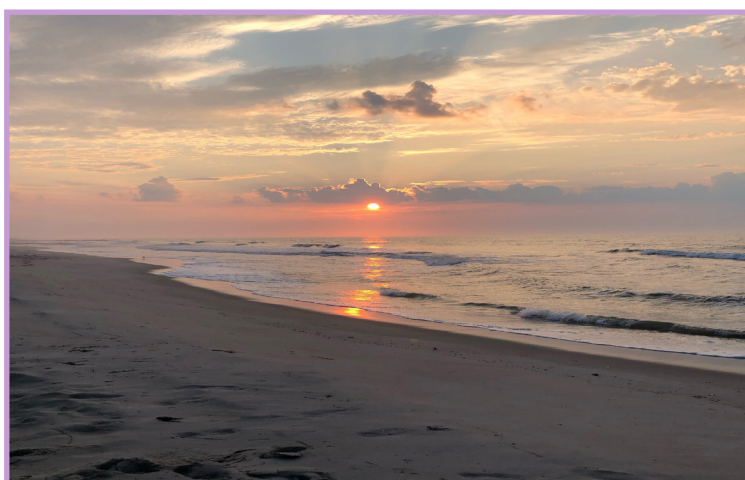


PHOTO TAKEN by Lauren Bevacqua



PHOTO TAKEN by Matthew Boyle



PHOTO COURTESY of Emma Griffiths

From left to right: Lauren Bevacqua, Cindy Bevacqua, Ashley Bevacqua, and Patrick Bevacqua in Wildwood, New Jersey.



PHOTO TAKEN by Ashley Bevacqua



PHOTO TAKEN by Ashley Bevacqua

## Upcoming Events

### WEDNESDAY

**Gourmet Dining Winter Wonderland**  
12:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.  
Magill Commons Dining Hall

**Orientation Leader Information Session**  
3:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.  
Student Center 202A

### THURSDAY

**Neurodiversity Brain Collective Interest/Group Meeting**  
Starting at 12:00 p.m.  
Intercultural Center Lounge

**Monmouth University Women's Basketball vs. Rider University - Hoops & Pups**  
7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.  
OceanFirst Bank Center

### FRIDAY

**Food Truck Friday - Cocoa and Desserts**  
11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.  
Great Hall "O" Circle

**Monmouth Review Early Bird Submission Party**  
4:30 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.  
Rechintz Hall

**Snow Board Into Winter Break**  
6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.  
Anacon Hall

### SATURDAY

**SGA Holiday Bingo**  
7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.  
Anacon Hall

## Song of the Week!

"Papercuts" - Landon Conrath



# A holiday gift guide

## for the most unique people on your list

**BAILEY FREDERICKS**  
MANAGING EDITOR /  
LIFESTYLES EDITOR

The 2024 Christmas rush, filled with equal amounts of stress and happiness, is officially in full swing. If you spent your Black Friday “gift shopping,” but surprisingly only returned home with items for yourself, don’t panic. Below is a gift guide to help you purchase gifts for every type of person on your list.

### The gym queen:

If there is a girl on your list who loves fitness and wellness, keep reading. If you’re willing to splurge, buy her a pack of pilates or yoga classes at a local studio or gym. For more moderate items, I’m sure your gym queen would love a new pair of sneakers, a cute workout set, or stylish fitness watch band. If you’re buying on a budget, browse Amazon for adorable and affordable yoga mats, resistance bands, or weightlifting straps.

### The “dude”:

Dads, grandpas, brothers, boyfriends, and guy best friends, this one’s for you. Most dudes are simple creatures, meaning they already own pretty much everything they need. This is why many people default to buying their dudes underwear and socks – because they are guaranteed to actually use these items as opposed to the more creative gifts we spend hours deciding on. But, this year, we will not default to undergarments. This year, we will give them a gift they are sure to never forget.

I noticed that the dudes in my life tend to appreciate experiences more than physical presents. So, buying tickets to a game for their favorite sports team, the movies, a concert for their favorite band, or what the heck, a trampoline park, will definitely put a smile on your dude’s face. The best part about this gift is that it is an experience you can share together, cultivating life-long memories of joy, happiness, and the Christmas season – yay!

### Consumerism’s final boss:

We all know someone who owns it all, and if they don’t, they definitely already added it to cart themselves. Which begs the question, what do I buy for someone who already has everything? The answer is buying them something that is not available on every influencer’s Amazon storefronts. Finding customizable gifts is key to getting your lovable overconsumer something that they definitely didn’t purchase on their own.

Little Words Project, an amazing jewelry brand all about spreading kindness through little words, offers a number of customizable bracelet options. Not only can you choose the pattern of the piece, but you can choose a word or short phrase to add onto the bracelet, making this gift extra special and heartwarming. If you want to take it

a step further, you can actually go to one of Little Word’s storefronts (there is one right in Pier Village) and make the bracelet yourself. Once again, this adds an additional level of care and thoughtfulness that your consumer is sure to appreciate much more than a fast fashion item wrapped in a beaten up cardboard box.

If you don’t want to go the jewelry route, you can pretty much customize anything these days, from cutting boards to key chains. So, do your research and spend a little time creating the perfect gift for your obsessive purchaser.

### The picky one:

We all know that person who is picky about food, fashion, and everything in between. So, let’s bring it back to basics for this one. A simple white or black tee, long sleeve, or tank top is a staple for every closet, so one of these items is a safe bet for your picky princess. If you want to buy this individual a jewelry item, a dainty gold or silver chain necklace is perfect. Overall, just remember to keep it simple and stick to staple items that pretty much everyone needs. And, when in doubt, gift card it out.

### Debbie the downer:

Does anyone else have that one person on their list that they feel like they can never please? Well, we are going to turn their holiday around this year by not defaulting to everyone’s (least) favorite candle and fruitcake combo. For this individual, think luxury on a budget. Investing in a silk pair of pj’s or sleep mask should put a smile on your Debbie’s face. A cashmere scarf, super comfy socks, or an extremely fluffy blanket are also great options.

### The music lover:

The music lover on your list probably already owns three pairs of headphones and too many music site subscriptions, but that doesn’t mean you can’t still get them an awesome gift that revolves around their favorite thing in the world. Vinyl records are super in right now, which not only means it will probably be easy for you to buy an actual vinyl, but there are vinyl inspired items hitting the shelves everywhere. Vinyl shaped coasters, wall art, and desk plaques are all the rage and some can even be personalized to feature special songs or artists. Speaking of custom plaques, Amazon also sells a version of these where you can customize a Spotify code onto the plaque. So, when your music lover receives this gift, they can scan the code and their phone will start playing whatever song you chose. This gift is so meaningful and unique; you may even give your music lover a new favorite song!

### The book lover:

I know you may be tired of always getting the bookworm in your life the same gift for every occasion – a book. So, instead of a book, here are some other ideas that he or she will appreciate just as much as a good story. If your book lover

enjoys displaying their collection, consider getting them a book end or book nook inspired from their favorite series. Etsy has tons of handcrafted, niche pieces that encapsulate the essence of “Harry Potter,” “A Court of Thorns and Roses,” and more. Another great idea is giving gifts to your reader that make diving into a good book an experience. Buy a pretty mug, a calming herbal tea mix, and a lush face mask to create a bundle of joy for your loved one to use during their next read-along. Lastly, if you know that this person is a highly active member of Goodreads, think about buying them a pre-made book log or reading journal. These can be super fun, featuring five star scales and sections to input summaries, reviews, and recommendations. Check out Target, Papier, and Amazon for some great deals.

### “I don’t want anything”:

“I don’t need anything,” but yes, you do. Most people will say this because they don’t like clutter or unnecessary items. So, my best advice is getting this person something that they will eventually throw away, not because it’s taking up space, but because it’s used to its fullest potential. Rather than buying Ms. I Need Nothing a piece of clothing or jewelry, consider buying a bottle of wine, a luxurious body lotion, or cute lip balm. Mr. I Need Nothing would also surely appreciate a fancy cologne, a flavorful hot sauce, or a bottle of whiskey.

### Your club rat bestie:

We love our friends whose motto in life is “sleep when you’re dead.” For the fun-seeking, party-goer on your list, consider purchasing a personalized hangover kit. First, hydration is essential; pick out a cute water bottle or cup, or, throw in some liquid IV for a cheaper option. Next, add in a much-needed form of skincare; an ice roller, cooling under eye patches, or some makeup wipes will do the trick. Lastly, help your bestie recharge with a gift card to their favorite fast food restaurant (the best cure to all hangovers, obviously).

### The chef:

Please do not get the exquisite cook in your family an apron with a cheesy saying on it this year – you’re better than that. Start the chef’s Lenox Spice Village collection (and obsession) this holiday season by purchasing a few of these rare and unique spice jars. Or, peep Amazon for a bunch of cool gadgets your chef is sure to appreciate; from bluetooth heat thermometers to customizable oven mitts, you have no excuse to be uncreative this year. Other fun gift ideas include a portable neck fan for the grill master, “From Crook to Cook,” Snoop Dogg’s recipe book, and electric salt and pepper grinders.

Hopefully this list gave you a little inspiration on what to buy for your friends and family this holiday season. “The Outlook” staff wishes you all a very Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays!

# The holidays around the globe

**FAITH MOLITOR**  
STAFF WRITER

Many cultures have their own ways of celebrating the holidays. There are often traditions and celebrations that mark the start of the holiday season, with many holidays and traditions being variations of one another, manifesting in different ways throughout different cultures. In the article “14 Winter Holiday Celebrations from Around the World,” written by Emily Williams for “Better Homes and Gardens,” the author describes how Kwanzaa, for example, is another extension of the theme of rebirth and renewal for the Caribbean, the United States, and Southern Africa.

To start, the Christmas tree stems from solstice celebrations, like Midsummer. Many countries also have specific flowers dedicated to the holiday season, such as the poinsettia. In the article “Christmas Season Superstitions,” written by Barbara Mikkelson for “Snopes,” yule logs are supposed to be kept in order to keep life and love abound, and when the flame goes out, this act is said to predict bad omens for the new year.

Diwali traditions, which lasts five days, also mirror this kind of superstition that light manifests new beginnings. In the article “25 Christmas Traditions Around the World That Will Surprise and Delight You” by Micaela Bahn for “The Pioneer Woman,” Bahn discusses a variety of cultures that celebrate the holidays in all different ways. First, Bahn explains how light and color, in October and November, has major significance. The symbolic act of light can be seen in the lanterns that light the sky and engage in rangoli, which is sand or rice art.

Williams also applies these themes of brightness when elaborating on how pinatas are frequently used to express a commitment to God in the form of a seven-point star, which represents the deadly sins.

In England, there is a tradition where crackers are used in order to ring in the holiday season. Bahn continued to explain how when the crackers are split apart, a toy or paper crown is revealed; the winner is one still holding “cracker” at the end of the game.

She also explained how, in Poland, people must see a

Christmas star in the sky in order to begin dinner. Interestingly, in Norway, there is a tradition where mops are hidden in order to keep away Krampus and demons, as they may use them for a holiday escape.

Bahn continues her discussion into holiday figures through Germany’s St. Nicholas. She confirms that St. Nicholas is a separate entity of Santa Claus. Santa Claus is a joyous, gift-giving entity that delivers presents (or coal) to children on Christmas eve. Whereas, St. Nicholas traditionally visits on Dec. 5, and leaves coins and fruits in children’s shoes; if they were naughty, they might find sticks instead! There are also parodies of Santa and St. Nicolas through Russia’s Father Frost, who visits on Jan. 7, and the Czech Republic’s Santa, who delivers presents on Dec. 5, or St Nicolas Eve, Bahn explained.

In Latin cultures, there are celebrations and traditions on Jan. 6, or Three Kings Day. Traditionally celebrated by Latin cultures.

Bahn continues to go into specific, small holiday moments in other countries, including Iceland’s book exchange on Christmas Eve where people typically read aloud and give each other some sweet treats. In Germany, they hold an annual Christmas market. Other holiday traditions, such as Boxing Day, celebrated in Canada, New Zealand, Australia, and the United Kingdom, are meant to serve as a Thanksgiving for holiday employees, explained Williams. It is typically celebrated on Dec. 26, through money and minor gifts.

The Italians have the Feast of Seven Fishes, which represent the Christian faith, often engrained in Italian culture. The holiday season also marks the beginning of Hanukkah, a Jewish holiday, and Advent, a Christian holiday. The Advent Wreath is made up of three purple candles, a pink candle and a white candle, whereas the Menorah is traditionally seven candles.

Mikkelson elaborates on other Christmas history, exploring how animals are supposed to be good omens due to the ones that kept Christ company in Bethlehem on Christmas Day. This can be seen through the “Yule Goat” that has become the mascot for Swedish Christmas.

Regardless of how you and your family celebrate, it is important to remember our past, present and future in order to bring with us the traditions of our ancestors for the generations to come.

## How to decorate your dorm for the holidays

**RILEY MCGEE**  
STAFF WRITER

Being in a dorm room can really limit your abilities to decorate for the holidays, but there are still many ways to make it feel fun and festive.

Scan the QR code to keep reading!



# MONMOUTH UNIVERSITY'S THEATRE FEST

LORELAI HILARCZYK  
ENTERTAINMENT EDITOR

Monmouth University's theatre department kicked the first of five nights of Theatre Fest with the Fresh Faces of 2024: A Showcase of Monmouth's Talented Theatre Freshman on Wednesday, Nov. 20. The following days would feature Spark Sessions: A Night of Original Works by MU Players, Music and Theatre Collaboration: Celebrating Stephen Sondheim, Alpha Psi Omega Presents: To Be or Not to Be: "Hamlet," an Abridged Staging, and the Musical Theatre Majors and Minors Showcase.

I was lucky enough to see two of the performances of "Theatre Fest" and was blown away by the talented group Monmouth has. The first night I attended was the Fresh Faces of 2024: A Showcase of Monmouth's Talented Theatre Freshman.

The first performer, Madison Johnson, performed "For Better or Worse" from "The Great Gatsby," a show inspired by F. Scott Fitzgerald's 1925 novel. Because this Broadway musical is niche and new, you could tell the audience wasn't familiar. Nonetheless, Johnson carried herself as if she were the character of Daisy Buchanan. Her high notes were the shining savors of the song and where Johnson felt most comfortable. I know a soprano when I see one, or should I say hear one?

Up next to take the stage was Caroline Bader, who sang the beloved classic, "I Can Hear the Bells," from "Hairspray." Bader was undoubtedly passionate about musical theatre, and I feel that this was a great song choice for her. I only wish she held onto some of the bigger notes longer. We definitely heard the bells, maybe even a bit too much, but as they say in show business, go big or go home.

The next performance was a scene from the hit Netflix TV show, "Better Call Saul," performed by Frank Dige and Andrew Shuberda. Dige played the iconic character of Jimmy (Saul Goodman), and Shuberda played Chuck, his brother. If you're unfamiliar with the show, this could have felt misplaced in the showcase. Looking at the actors individually, their scene work was anything but and indeed showed their acting skills. The beginning took some time to settle into the plot, but once the climax of "You're not a real lawyer!" happened, the two dug into the scene. Dige's entire monologue rant to his brother was certainly a highlight.

Jumping back into singing was Allison Spinelli with her rendition of "Maybe" from "Annie." An A+ choice, considering our very own Great Hall was the primary filming location for the 1982 musical movie. Spinelli seemed nervous but her vocals were beautiful. I'm unsure if it was a microphone issue or doors closing in the middle of her performance, but it was hard to hear her at times. The parts I could hear sounded good, especially the ending.

Alexis Finkelstein and Katherine Grone performed "Chiquitita" from "Mamma Mia!" The audience's collective smile filled the room at the mention of the musical. Who doesn't love "Mamma Mia!"? They sounded so great; I only wish they added some harmonies to showcase them together. I absolutely loved their touch of wearing white knee-high boots, very on-brand for the characters of the show.

"I'm Not That Girl" from "Wicked" was performed by Emily Fiorenze. Her voice was perfect for this arrangement, and I was relieved when she opted for the higher note at the end. I know how hard it is to hit Idina Menzel's low E note, and she handled it beautifully.

Shuberda took the stage again to sing "Gethsemane" from "Jesus Christ Superstar." His commitment to the craft was known

instantly when he stepped out on stage in Jerusalem cruisers and a white dress shirt. His dedication to the rock opera score of the song was insane. The entire audience was stunned (me included) when he nailed the ending note.

Performing "Pretty Funny" from "Dogfight" was Chloe Garcia. Her vocal ability was so impressive, especially her vibrato. Garcia will thrive in the department with the help of the music faculty, learn to overcome her nerves, and let her stage presence shine.

Taylor Wichterman performed "Maybe This Time" from "Cabaret," a Liza Minnelli showstopper. I was stunned by her rendition. Wichterman's vocals were so smooth and crisp. I only see her improving more and more as her career here is just beginning.

Finally, Emily Stein, the director of the event, performed "As-

tonishing" from "Little Women." She had good control over the pacing and dictation of the song and projected confidence onstage. Her presence reminded me of Rachel Berry from the show "Glee" in the best way possible. I noticed Sheri Anderson's smile was beaming from ear to ear at the end of her performance. The whole audience was rooting for her.

It seems the fresh faces have immense talent, and with help from the upperclassmen and department experts in theatre, they will continue to improve and wow us on the Woods Theatre stage.

The second night I attended was the Music and Theatre Collaboration: Celebrating Stephen Sondheim, directed by Antonia Bongiorno. As a Sondheim fan, I immensely enjoyed this night, and even those unfamiliar with

his work loved these performances.

The first performer was Chloe Garcia, who sang "What More Do I Need?" from "Saturday Night." Garcia was humorous and let the character-driven song heighten her talented vocals. It was a great start to the show.

Next, Mary Jodry performed an "Into the Woods" classic, "On the Steps of the Palace," which is Cinderella's big solo in this show. I couldn't help but smile as Jodry hit every single note and even added little acting bits, like her shoes getting stuck in the stuff on the steps.

Kira Fisher performed "I Remember" from "Evening Primrose," a musical based on a short story written by John Collier in 1951. Fisher's smooth voice filled the entire theatre, surrounding the audience with sound. She made every vocal twist and turn seem effortless, putting her entire soul into the performance.

"The Miller's Son" from "A Little Night Music" was performed by Timothy Pakrad. The entire setup of this song was incredible. Evan Schuett played an acoustic guitar, which transported the audience into what felt like a Sondheim coffeehouse. Pakrad's vocal control and little dance moves carried straight into the back row.

Next was Julianna Chesla performing "Being Alive" from "Company." I don't say anything lightly, but this performance truly moved me. Chesla's voice struck the audience so hard that there were tears, maybe even some from me.

Mary Jodry and Kira Fisher took the stage again, but this time to duet "Johanna" from "Sweeney Todd." The pair complimented and blended so well. The harmonies were to die for, making me question why this song isn't dueted more often.

Jack West performed "Finishing The Hat" from "Sunday In The Park With George." West has the picture-perfect male Sondheim vocals for this song.

Another "Into the Woods" song, "Last Midnight," was sung by Joleen Amer. Only Amer was completely transformed into the witch; her musical identity was unrecognizable. Her voice was so haunting yet inviting that you couldn't help being locked into the performance.

The final solo performance was Antonia Bongiorno singing "Not A Day Goes By" from "Merrily We Roll Along." Bongiorno's voice radiated throughout the entire space. I could've listened to this one for hours. Her control and out-of-this-world vocal mix had jaws on the floor (mine was, at least).

The entire company joined onstage to perform "Our Time" from "Merrily We Roll Along," closing out what was a beautiful event, not only showcasing Monmouth's talented theatre students but the work of musical genius Stephen Sondheim. To this writer, Theatre Fest was a showcase success and I cannot wait for next year.



IMAGE TAKEN from Instagram.

The cast of "Music and Theatre Collaboration: Celebrating Stephen Sondheim," performing the final number "Our Time" on Friday, Nov. 22 at Woods Theatre.

## "HIS MIDDLE NAME"

TAYLOR MEMOLI  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF / NEWS EDITOR

Thursday night of Theatre Fest hosted Spark Sessions: A Night of Original Works by MU Players at 8:00 p.m. in Woods Theatre. The night consisted of four original productions created completely by Monmouth students. One of the original productions of the night was written by Timothy Pakrad, senior English major, titled "His Middle Name."

"His Middle Name" follows a conversation between two friends Jason and Patrick in a tide pool in Acadia National Park, Bar Harbor, ME. The play explored human connection and the consequences of unclear intentions.

"It comes from a road trip a friend and I went on in

2022," Pakrad explained. "The tide pool was a place where we didn't speak at all, so I thought it subversive to make it the setting of the entire play/all the dialogue. That actually became the thesis of the entire work; the best words are the ones we don't say."

Pakrad continued, "'His Middle Name' was my final project for EN-254 Creative Writing: Drama that I took with professor Joel Stone in the fall of 2022. I did a lot of editing and revising for Theatre Fest as we rehearsed which led to more creative liberties than before."

Jason and Patrick were portrayed by Olivia McGlone, sophomore Social Work major, and Sara Nelson, sophomore Biology major, respectively. "My good friends Olivia and Sara stepped up to act in 'His Middle Name.'

Most rehearsals were spent on the book work and they were so gentle with the characters. The performance was amazing and I'm honored they appreciated the work."

Pakrad admits that this experience taught them personal lessons as well as creative ones. "[I learned to] speak your truth and make it art. (Think Lady Gaga 'Marry The Night' monologue.) Getting to direct my own work taught me that creativity is about letting go rather than attachment."

"I am so grateful for all my experiences in theatre and this was quite special. Thank you to Spark Sessions' director Nora O'Roarke ('25), technical director Rusty Carroll, actors Olivia and Sara, professor Joel Stone, and a very special Scorpio for the life in my breath," Pakrad concluded.



# Party 101: Freaking the freak out with Matt Bennett

**BAILEY FREDERICKS**  
MANAGING EDITOR / LIFESTYLES EDITOR

**LORELAI HILARCZYK**  
ENTERTAINMENT EDITOR

Hey now, hey now, we had a night of what dreams are truly made of. A night of partying with your friends and a Nickelodeon icon to the songs we grew up on in an iconic Jersey Shore location set the bar high for going out (at least it did for Lorelai). “The Outlook” editors, Bailey Fredericks and Lorelai Hilarczyk, dressed in sparkles, took to Asbury Park Lanes for the ultimate 2000s kid dream for Party 101 with Matt Bennett.

The show kicked off with Erin Constantine, better known as DJ Const, spinning absolute bangers. Being a New Jersey native, DJ Const knew exactly how to play to the crowd, getting everyone amped before Bennett hit the stage. From playing Taylor Swift to classic club music, DJ Const sent the crowd into overdrive; we were drenched in sweat before Bennett even reached the stage. So, here is our plea to have DJ Const at the next Porta Friday.

After an anxious wait, Matt Bennett proudly took center stage at 9 p.m on Saturday Nov. 23. This was an hour after he was set to come on. Still, we appreciate the delay, considering the line to get in was wrapped around the block

up until 8:45 p.m. Bennett opened the show with the classic holiday jam, “It’s Not Christmas Without You” from “Victorious,” getting everyone into a very holly jolly mood.

After his opening number, Bennett energetically introduced himself to the crowd by stating, “I’m Robbie from the show.” We love that he didn’t specify

which show, because we all obviously already knew, you had to be living under a rock or dragged to the show against your will if you didn’t.

Bennett set the tone of the night right from the get-go by playing “Beggin’ On Your Knees” and “Best Friend’s Brother” by Victoria Justice back-to-back. We’ll never get over the

loud screams of the crowd chanting, “B-F-B, B-F-B/My best friend’s brother/My best friend’s brother,” at the top of their lungs.

Throughout the duration of the show, Bennett highlighted songs from just about every Nickelodeon and Disney Channel show or movie, along with songs from ex-Disney and Nickelodeon stars like Ariana Grande, Olivia Rodrigo, Selena Gomez, and Miley Cyrus. We, along with the rest of the sold-out crowd, knew every song he played. Songs such as “Into You,” “get him back!” “Who Says,” and “7 Things.” This made us nostalgic of our childhoods, but also confused about why more bars and clubs don’t play these obviously popular songs. Who wouldn’t love that? We can confidently say we have never felt safer than being in a room full of Disney Channel and Nickelodeon fans.

After a few more tracks, the lights turned low, and the only sound was Dr. Bridgit Mendler’s haunting vocals on “Determinate” from the “Lemonade Mouth” soundtrack. This was Bailey’s absolute favorite part of the night as Bennett hopped off stage to dance with the crowd right after the beat dropped. Bennett sprinted around the dance floor, giving audience members a chance to sing their hearts out in his microphone, take pictures, and build unforgettable memories. It was a crazy experience, having someone who only existed

on our childhood TV screen, standing so close, singing the lyrics of “Determinate” with us.

Aside from the iconic Disney Channel movie hits Bennett played, he took us back to prime 2000s moments, not just music but overall pop culture. Lorelai’s heart nearly dropped (in a good way) when “Baby” by Justin Bieber started to play. It was not the Bieber track, but the hilarious scene from “Diary Of Wimpy Kid: Dog Days” where Rodrick goes “full diaper.” Bennett then cut to the original music video of Bieber, and the crowd absolutely ate up the transition.

Some of our favorite moments were when we moved towards the exit and got to have our very own moment with Bennett as he pointed and sang with us at the side of the stage. We will truly never recover from singing Miley Cyrus classics, “See You Again,” “The Climb,” “Lemonade Mouth’s,” “She’s So Gone,” and “High School Musical’s,” “Gotta Go My Own Way.” Bennett is the absolute life of the party, and his energy is unmatched. Taking the time to point us out and jam with us like we were the only people in the room certainly made our century. We’ll be thinking about that one until the “Year 3000”. If you know, you know.

We’re crossing our fingers that Bennett will take the party back to New Jersey in the future. When and if he does, you can count on these two writers to be there, ready to rock on.



IMAGE COURTESY OF Scarlett Pizarro.

Bailey Fredericks (left) and Lorelai Hilarczyk (right) outside of Asbury Park Lanes for Party 101 with Matt Bennett on Nov. 23, 2024.

## Get into the holly jolly spirit: Holiday watchlist recommendations

**ANA CARVALHO**  
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

In the words of Mariah Carey, “It’s time!” With the semester coming to a close and finals just sneaking around the corner, some of us may have forgotten that we are in the first week of the best holiday season ever. Every December, I make myself a list of must-see movies to get me in the spirit of the holidays. I recommend that all of the Monmouth University community start December off correctly. Grab a cozy blanket, your Christmas pajamas, hot cocoa, and sit down for my holiday watchlist picks.

How can one have Christmas without the “Home Alone” series? The 1990 family comedy, “Home Alone,” directed by Chris Columbus, is always the first movie I watch to get me in the Christmas spirit. This is also the perfect film to watch with the family that will certainly leave everyone laughing so much their cheeks hurt. For those unfamiliar with this classic

film, it stars Macaulay Culkin’s character, Kevin McCallister, and his extended family as they are about to leave for their holiday trip to Paris. With 15 people residing in their family home, being one of the youngest made it entirely possible to get forgotten on the day of the hectic travel plans. You can watch the full movie anywhere from Disney+, Youtube, Apple TV, Amazon Prime, Google Play Movies or Fandango at Home.

This next suggestion may sound like it has no place on this list, but I humbly beg to differ. In the Harry Potter films, the movies that came from the popular series by J.K. Rowling, several scenes are winter and holiday-themed. Snowy days or holidays are mentioned or shown in almost every film in great cinematic scenes. Specifically, in the 2001 film, “Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone,” also directed by Chris Columbus, this is the very first Christmas at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. Harry, the young, famously known wizard, experiences his first

true Christmas, surrounded by decorated trees, large lit fire pits, and a snowy outside with his best friend, Ron Weasley. In the scene, Harry gets the “H” knitted sweater Mrs. Weasley kindly made him, and both exchange “Happy Christmas” with one another by the fire. Hermione Granger shares Christmas at Hogwarts with Ron and Harry in the second film from 2002, “Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets,” directed by Columbus, and they open gifts as the snow-filled winter awaits outside the castle walls.

In both the third film from 2004, “Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban,” directed by Alfonso Cuarón, and the 2007 film, “Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix,” directed by David Yates, Harry is invited to spend Christmas with the entire Weasley family at their home full of fun and festivities. Even in the last two movies, Harry and Hermione share a bittersweet moment as they notice what day it is, walking through the snow-covered Grodic’s Hollow. The pair of friends exchange

the words, “Merry Christmas, Hermione” and “Merry Christmas, Harry” to each other.

Moving along the line, I find many people also do not see this as a particularly festive film, and a majority even say it is strictly Halloween. One of my favorite films of all time, “The Nightmare Before Christmas,” a 1993 family musical directed by Henry Selick and created by Tim Burton, is not just for the Halloween season. The entire plot of the film follows how Jack Skellington, voiced by Danny Elfman, wants to bring Christmas to Halloween Town. There is nothing better than getting to watch this movie twice a year with my best friend, Carolyn, and I find I never get tired of rewatching it. If you would like to watch this movie with your family this holiday season, you can find it on the same apps as previously mentioned.

Don’t worry film fans, I have not forgotten the most important holiday must-watch. “The Polar Express,” the 2004 classic film by Robert Zemeckis, can be found on Hulu, Max, YouTube,



IMAGE TAKEN from top250.tv.

Disney+ and others. It follows an unnamed young boy on this magical train ride that changes his perspective on whether Santa Claus is real or a myth told to children. I recommend making hot cocoa in your favorite holiday mug for the classic song “Hot Chocolate,” which the entire family will enjoy. I bet you won’t be able to watch the movie without smiling and feeling that warm holiday joy.

Whether you’re in the mood for laughter, magic, or a heartwarming holiday adventure, these films will surely bring festive cheer to your season. So grab your blanket, cozy up, and let these holiday classics remind you of the joy and magic that Christmas brings to all. Happy holidays, hawks.

# Meet Trump's Cabinet nominations

BRENDAN SHEEHAN  
POLITICS EDITOR

President-elect Donald J. Trump has announced his nominees to serve in his Cabinet. The Cabinet are the top officials for the executive branch's fifteen departments as well as the leaders in national security, intelligence and representatives on the world stage. These nominations must be confirmed by the United States Senate, which has two elected members from every state. Come January, Republicans will have 53 seats to Democrats' 47. A confirmation requires a simple majority. If Trump's nominees lose just three Republican votes, Vice President-elect JD Vance can cast the tie-breaking vote. If a nominee loses more than four Republican votes with complete Democratic opposition, they will not be confirmed to take their position. So, who are these nominees and what experience do they have?

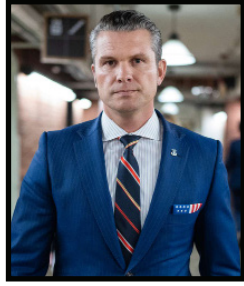
IMAGES TAKEN from POLITICO.



Marco Rubio, a U.S. Senator from Florida, has been nominated to be Trump's Secretary of State. He serves on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and was a Republican candidate for president in 2016. Many Democratic Senators have voiced their support for his experience and qualifications.



Pam Bondi is Trump's nominee to be the next Attorney General. She served as Florida's first female Attorney General from 2011-2019 and then represented Trump at his first impeachment trial. She has faced criticism for ending an investigation into Trump after he donated to her campaign.



Pete Hegseth, a veteran and FOX News host, has been nominated to be Secretary of Defense. He has faced scrutiny for his lack of experience, financial misconduct when running two veterans non-profits, and a credible sexual assault allegation where he paid his accuser a cash settlement.



South Dakota Governor Kristi Noem has been nominated to be the Secretary of Homeland Security. She is a Trump loyalist who would have a leading role in Trump's immigration plans but has faced criticism after she revealed she shot and killed a family dog.



Lori Chavez-DeRemer is Trump's pick to lead the Department of Labor. A Republican congresswoman who lost her seat this cycle, she was one of just three House Republicans to support the PRO Act, a bill supporting unions and workers rights to organize and bargain.



Trump has nominated Robert F. Kennedy Jr. to be the Secretary of Health & Human Services. Kennedy has no health or medical degree and has spread misinformation and conspiracy theories on vaccines. He wants to promote nutrition and remove additives in food.



Trump nominated Linda McMahon to be the next Secretary of Education. McMahon, the founder of the WWE, is a Trump megadonor and previously served as the head of the Small Business Administration. Trump has pledged to eliminate the Department of Education if elected.



North Dakota Governor Doug Burgum has been nominated to be the Secretary of the Interior, a position focused on natural resources, energy and Tribal communities. Burgum is close to the fossil fuel industry while also promoting green energy, pledging to make North Dakota carbon-neutral by 2030.



Former Republican congressman Doug Collins of Georgia has been nominated to lead the Department of Veterans Affairs. An Air Force veteran, Collins is a staunch Trump loyalist and has pledged to, "ensure every veteran receives the benefits they've earned."



Scott Bessent is Trump's nominee to be the Secretary of the Treasury. Bessent, a former Obama supporter, has extensive history in finance and monetary management and has been a major philanthropist during his time in the private sector.



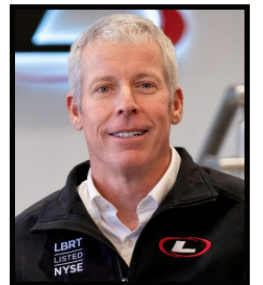
Brooke Rollins is Trump's pick to lead the Department of Agriculture. Rollins previously worked in the Office of American Innovation and while a conservative, has embraced bipartisanship to deliver results. Rollins leads the America First Policy Institute.



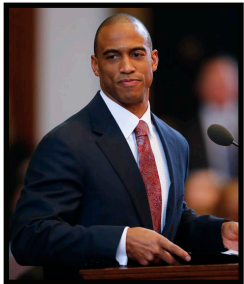
Trump nominated Howard Lutnick to lead the Department of Commerce. Lutnick has worked as a finance executive in the private sector. On 9/11, Lutnick lost his brother and hundreds of employees. He then financially supported their families after the attacks.



Trump has nominated former Republican congressman Sean Duffy of Wisconsin to be the Secretary of Transportation. After resigning from Congress in 2019, he served as a FOX News host with his wife, but has no experience in transportation.



Chris Wright has been nominated to be the Secretary of Energy. A fracking company executive, Wright has made appearances on FOX News often and has denied the existence of climate change. Wright has no experience in government.



Trump nominated Scott Turner to be the Secretary of Housing & Urban Development. He previously served on the White House Opportunity Council and has done private sector work to lift children out of poverty and turning abandoned spaces into learning centers and housing.



Dr. Janette Nesheiwat has been nominated to be the Surgeon General. She is an emergency and family health doctor who led disaster relief missions to Ukraine and Haiti. She supports banning social media for teenagers and unlike other nominees, she urged Americans to get the COVID vaccine.



John Ratcliffe has been nominated to be the Director of the CIA. Ratcliffe served as Director of National Intelligence during Trump's first term and was a Republican in the U.S. House from 2015-2020. He took on China over election interference efforts in 2020.



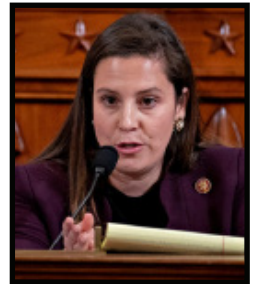
Trump has nominated former Democratic congresswoman Tulsi Gabbard to be his Director of National Intelligence. Gabbard endorsed Trump in 2024 and has been criticized for meeting with dictators and spreading Russian disinformation.



Trump has chosen Mehmet Oz to lead the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid. Known as Dr. Oz, he lost a 2022 bid for the U.S. Senate and has pushed debunked medical advice on his show and pushed cures for COVID-19 that medical experts disputed.



Lee Zeldin, a former Republican congressman and 2022 nominee for Governor of New York, has been nominated to lead the Environmental Protection Agency. As a congressman, Zeldin voted against clean air and clean water legislation at least 18 times.



Trump has chosen Republican congresswoman Elise Stefanik of New York to be the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations. Stefanik was a major proponent of Trump's false claims he won the 2020 election and has little experience in foreign affairs.



Trump nominated Dr. Martin Makary to lead the Food & Drug Administration. A surgeon and researcher, Makary opposed COVID-19 vaccine mandates and spread misinformation during the pandemic. The FDA is overseen by the Department of Health & Human Services.



Trump has chosen Matthew Whitaker to be the U.S. Ambassador to NATO, America's strongest military alliance. Whitaker served as acting Attorney General for three months and has no experience in foreign policy. He is an outspoken Trump loyalist and defender.



Dr. Dave Weldon has been nominated to lead the Centers for Disease Control. Weldon previously served as a Republican congressman from Florida and has pushed false claims on vaccine safety. Weldon was a medical doctor and Army veteran. The Department of Health & Human Services oversees the CDC.



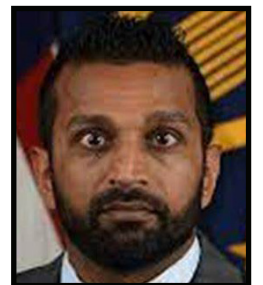
Trump has chosen Russell Vought to lead the Office of Management and Budget, which oversees federal agencies and sets the federal budget. Vought served in the position from 2019-2021 and was a co-author of "The Heritage Foundation's Project 2025," a conservative playbook for Trump's second term.



Dr. Jay Bhattacharya has been nominated to lead the National Institutes of Health (NIH). He is a Stanford physician who railed against lockdowns during COVID-19 and published a manifesto arguing COVID-19 should be allowed to spread among young people to create herd immunity, a plan widely criticized by health officials.



Trump has picked John Phelan to be the next Secretary of the Navy. Phelan is in the finance industry and is a Trump campaign megadonor with no experience or background in the military. Phelan is an art collector who hosted Trump at his \$38 million dollar Aspen home for a fundraiser.



Kash Patel has been nominated to be the Director of the FBI. Patel has little experience in law enforcement management. Patel promised to shut down the FBI headquarters and turn it into a, "museum of deep state." He has also promised journalists that, "we're going to come after you," while falsely claiming the 2020 election was stolen.

## TO/ The Outlook

Hello, everyone! My name is Taylor Memoli and I am so honored to be this year's Editor-In-Chief and News editor! I can't wait to work with each of you. I am so passionate about The Outlook, and I hope all of you will want to share that passion with me. Student journalism is incredibly important. As students, you have the right to know what is going on within your campus, and at The Outlook, we promise to promote honest and informative articles that educate students on what is going on around them here at Monmouth University. If anyone has any questions or story ideas for The Outlook, please feel free to reach out to me at any time! My email is s1321538@monmouth.edu. Happy reading!

- Taylor Memoli, Editor-in-Chief and News Editor

Hi everyone! My name is Bailey Fredericks and I'm this year's Managing Editor & Lifestyles Section Editor. I'm so excited for this year & to read all the awesome articles everyone writes! If you would like to write for the lifestyles section or have any other questions about The Outlook, please email me at s1321296@monmouth.edu! I look forward to a great year. :)

-Bailey Fredericks, Managing and Lifestyles Editor

Day & Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
00:45-01:00					
01:00-01:15					
01:15-01:30					
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## Real Estate Club

Hello everyone! We will be having our meetings on the following Wednesdays from 2:45-4:00 in Bey room 222: 9/25, 10/30, 11/13, 2/19, and 3/19. These meetings will be similar to last year, our goal is to have guest speakers at all of them. Can't wait to see you all there!

- Margaret and Kaitlyn, President and Vice President



## "College Core" - WMCX

Tune in next Monday, December 9th from 7-9 for our holiday special! Plus, its Sarah's last show - EVER!!!!

xoxo - Bailey & Sarah



## College Republicans

We are so excited to see you all and work to preserve your freedoms on and off of campus this year! Get out and vote!

-NJFCR Chair Jacky Bruno and MUCR Chair Giavanna Cangialosi



## College Democrats

We have 34 reasons you should join the College Democrats. Join Team Freedom today!

- Owen Bros, President



## PRSSA

Hi Hawks! Join the Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA) & Shadow PR, Monmouth's student-run and nationally affiliated PR firm, for meetings every Wednesday at 3 p.m. in Plangere 234. PRSSA gives students the opportunity to gain real experience in the PR world through hands-on work with local clients and guest speaker events. All majors & grade levels are welcome!

- Bailey Fredericks, Co-President




## HAWK TV Channel 12-1 Hawk TV

Hawk TV is the student-run television station here at Monmouth and we are currently working on our Halloween special titled Hawktober. It will premiere on our YouTube channel @HawkTVMU on October 31st. This episode is one you don't want to miss! The special is a spooky take on Monmouth that includes investigating the possibility of ghosts residing in the Great Hall. The episode will feature recreations of famous horror movie scenes and fun Halloween themed competitions. This episode will surely get you in the spooky mood just in time for Halloween night. Next week, we will be back to our regularly scheduled shoots with Hawk TV News filming on Tuesday, Triple Scoop on Wednesday, and Extra Point on Thursday. Follow our Instagram @HawkTV12 to never miss an update on the club!

- Ava McGinty, Hawk TV Secretary and Executive Producer of Hawk TV New


# COME MEET SNOOPY!



IT'S THE GREAT PUMPKIN, CHARLIE BROWN! OOPS, IT'S ACTUALLY JUST ANOTHER CUTIE IN OUR PATCH...SNOOPY! ONLY 7-MONTHS-OLD, HE'S A 51 POUND PITTIE MIX WHO IS STILL VERY MUCH GROWING. SNOOPY IS A FRIENDLY, SOCIAL CHARACTER WHO LOVES HIS TOYS, WALKS, AND PEOPLE. BUT, SOMETIMES HE GETS OVERWHELMED AND OVERSTIMULATED. HE'LL NEED AN EXPERIENCED, PATIENT OWNER COMMITTED TO GUIDING HIM THROUGH THESE BEHAVIORS WITH POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT TRAINING. TRAINING WILL BE A GREAT BONDING TIME AS HE ENJOYS LISTENING AND LEARNING NEW TRICKS. LIKE THE NAMESAKE, HE LOVES TO GO ON ADVENTURES SO KEEPING HIM BUSY WITH PLAY, EXERCISE, AND ENRICHMENT IS BEST. JOIN THE PEANUT CREW! YOU'LL BE THE WOODSTOCK TO HIS SNOOPY!

THE MONMOUTH COUNTY SPCA IS OPEN FOR WALK-INS EVERY DAY, STARTING AT NOON!  
FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL (732)-542-0040, OR EMAIL [INFO@MONMOUTHCOUNTYSPCA.ORG](mailto:INFO@MONMOUTHCOUNTYSPCA.ORG)

# COME MEET CASHMERE!



IT'S CASHMERE! I'M 3 YEARS OLD AND CAME TO THE SHELTER IN NEED OF A LOVING FAMILY, AND I KNOW THAT'S JUST WHAT'S COMING. I HAVE LOTS OF LOVE TO GIVE AND ENJOY GETTING IT BACK JUST AS MUCH. PLEASE GIVE ME PLENTY OF PETS SO THAT I CAN NUZZLE YOU BACK AND ROLL OVER WHILE I MAKE THE MUFFINS! I'LL THRIVE IN A MELLOWER HOME WHERE I HOPE CUDDLES AND PLAYTIME AWAIT! THE BLOOD TEST THE SHELTER DOES ON ALL KITTIES SHOWED THAT I WAS EXPOSED TO FELV (FELINE LEUKEMIA VIRUS). THE 2ND BLOOD TEST THEY DID SHOWED THAT I AM NOT INFECTED WITH IT AT THIS TIME. I DO NEED TO BE RETESTED IN 3-6 MONTHS AND FOR NOW, I SHOULD BE YOUR ONLY CAT. I DO LOVE THE SPOTLIGHT, SO I DON'T MIND BEING THE ONLY CAT. BRING THIS BEAUTIFUL SOFTIE HOME TODAY!

THE MONMOUTH COUNTY SPCA IS OPEN FOR WALK-INS EVERY DAY, STARTING AT NOON!  
FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL (732)-542-0040, OR EMAIL [INFO@MONMOUTHCOUNTYSPCA.ORG](mailto:INFO@MONMOUTHCOUNTYSPCA.ORG)



# SGA BINGO NIGHT

Looking for an exciting way to spend your evening before final exams begin? Join SGA for a night of Bingo in Anacon Hall! A total of \$1,500 in prizes will be awarded to game winners!

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 7 7:00 PM TO 9:00 PM ANACON HALL 2ND FLOOR OF THE STUDENT CENTER



NURTURING BODY & MIND

# DESTRESS FEST



Chill out, interact with the therapy dogs, play some games and discover ways to reduce your stress to help get you through your final exams.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 9, 11 AM TO 2 PM ANACON HALL, 2ND FLOOR OF THE STUDENT CENTER

MONMOUTH UNIVERSITY | STUDENT ENGAGEMENT | MONMOUTH UNIVERSITY | COUNSELING and PREVENTION SERVICES



Presented by RHA & SAB

# The GRAND Masquerade

Saturday, February 1st  
7 pm - 10 pm @ The Great Hall

Pre-sale: Fall 2024  
\$15 Student \$20 Guest

General sale: Spring 2025  
\$20 Student \$25 Guest



PLEASE JOIN US FOR



## LATE NIGHT BREAKFAST PAJAMA PARTY

Wear your best pajamas, we'll have music playing and all of your late night breakfast favorites.

Late Night Breakfast is **FREE** to all Monmouth students.

**TUESDAY, DECEMBER 10 (AT) 9 PM**  
**MAGILL COMMONS DINING HALL**



ASBURY PARK  
**Holiday Bazaar 2024**

GIFTS · FOOD · MUSIC · LIBATIONS  
KID'S ACTIVITIES · HOLIDAY PHOTOS  
PHOTOS WITH SANTA



JOIN US FOR OUR BLACK FRIDAY BAZAAR LAUNCH! NOV 29, 12-8 PM!

CONVENTION HALL  
NOV 29 - SUN DEC 22  
FRI 3-8 PM & SAT/SUN 12-5 PM

ASBURY HOTEL  
SUNDAY, DEC 1, 8 & 15  
12-5 PM

[ASBURYPARKBAZAAR.COM](http://ASBURYPARKBAZAAR.COM)



### Winter Holiday Bazaar Shuttle

Asbury Park Convention Hall  
Saturday, December 7 - 12-5 pm  
Pick Up and Drop Off Behind the Student Center

MONMOUTH UNIVERSITY | STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

# PLAYER SPOTLIGHT OF THE MONTH: LAUREN BRUNO

**MAIREAD SPELLACY**  
SPORTS EDITOR

**L**auren Bruno, a two-time CAA defensive player of the year and a member of the 2022 CAA Regular Season Champions, wraps up not only her season but her career as a member of the Monmouth University women's soccer team.

On Nov. 15, I had the opportunity to sit down with Bruno and take a look back on her soccer career and what made her fall in love with the sport.

Surrounded by soccer at a very young age, Bruno's love for it started around 5 years old. While she grew up playing alongside her

made it here and how it's now a cool story considering her mom was a Hawk as well.

Bruno attended Manalapan High School where she was a four-year varsity letter winner and all-shore conference selection. She grew up as a midfielder but was recruited to Monmouth as a defender. "I had to adapt to a new style of play with new coaches," Bruno explained. Therefore, it wasn't just the transition and style of play that Bruno had to adjust to, but also a new position.

Bruno certainly took on the task of adapting to a new style of play, as she earned her second consecutive year as CAA defensive player of the year on Oct. 30. Bruno shared, "It really means a lot to me, and it meant a lot to



PHOTO COURTESY of Aari Flippin.

**Lauren Bruno** earned CAA defensive player for the second year in a row.

MAAC to the CAA, Bruno said it was "scary, honestly, to think about the potential of not being as competitive." However, they defeated the odds and the Monmouth women's soccer team claimed the regular season championship title in just their first year (2022) in the CAA. This was a win that Bruno expressed as one of the best moments in her career. Bruno said, "I remember that game with my teammates, we played Northeastern. It was raining and it was such a great win. It felt like we really fulfilled our season-long effort." Making that transition from the MAAC to the CAA, Bruno explained that a lot of people doubted their ability to maintain the same competitiveness. "We proved really early on, our first season, that we were able to win the regular season and that meant so much to me," Bruno commented.

This wasn't the only time Bruno was a part of winning the regular season title. Just this year the Hawks secured the CAA Regular Season Title, which sent them to the semi-finals and ultimately the championship. Bruno said what gets them so far each year is the expectation, "We train all year with that in mind and obviously the end goal is to win every single year." Despite the loss in the championship game it still meant a lot to Bruno to lead

her team there. She added that the expectation is what pushes them all.

Bruno shared that her teammates have pushed her and influenced her with their competitive nature. As competitors, they are constantly pushing each other on and off the field, even in practice, and that's what translates onto the field.

As Bruno looked back on the many people who made an impact in her career at Monmouth, she made sure to highlight her coaches Krissy Turner, Monmouth women's soccer Head Coach from 1998-2021 and current Head Coach Kylee Flynn, as well as two former captains, that have served as role models, Lauren Karabin and Sarina Jones. Bruno said that her teammates have taught her so much. As a freshman she learned from her older teammates and now

as a graduate student she is able to be that leader for the freshman. With that being said, Bruno has also taken things away from her younger teammates. Bruno explained, "This year, some of my younger teammates have reintroduced a love for the game to me and shown me what it's like to be a freshman again and feeling excited for the future...that's something I am going to remember as I advance my career."

Bruno hopes to continue her soccer career and shared, "I don't feel ready, I don't feel done. Especially after that ending of our CAA Championship game I definitely have a lot more I want to give to the sport if the opportunity presents itself."



PHOTO COURTESY of Monmouth Athletics.

**Lauren Bruno** against Hofstra in the 2022 CAA Championship.

two brothers, Bruno gave her mom the credit for giving her the passion and love she has for the sport. "I can thank my mom for that," Bruno added.

Bruno's mom, Jamie Bruno, played soccer for the Hawks from 1989-91. Bruno said, "Growing up I never wanted to come here [Monmouth], I didn't want to necessarily follow in my moms footsteps." Bruno certainly made a name for herself over the years as she has accumulated numerous accolades due to her hard work. She followed up by adding that she's so grateful to have

me last year because I always felt like I was overlooked. From a defender perspective I'm short and not as physically intimidating. Growing up I felt like even in the recruiting process I was overlooked a lot." Going from the MAAC and earning second-team honors to moving up to the CAA and earning first team honors and CAA defensive player of the year twice is something that means a lot to Bruno and what she described as, "Something that proves my efforts were worthwhile."

When going from the



PHOTO COURTESY of Mairead Spellacy.

# Men's basketball picks up first win vs. Seton Hall after three losses in Axe 'Em Classic

**FRANK HOARLE**  
STAFF WRITER

After losing three games in the Axe 'Em Classic to fall to 0-8 on the season, the men's basketball team upset Seton Hall at the Prudential Center on Saturday Dec. 31 to pick up their first win of the season.

For the second time in the last three seasons, the Hawks picked up their first win in their ninth game of the season. Prior to the victory, the Hawks played three games in three days at the Axe 'Em Classic in Texas.

The first game was played on Thursday, Nov. 21 against Youngstown State. After controlling the game for most of the first half, Monmouth held a 42-31 lead early in the second half. However, Youngstown State went on a 12-0 run to take a 43-42 lead, and control the game from there. The Penguins outscored the Hawks 29-20 the rest of the way and take a 72-62 come-from-behind victory. Forward Jaret Valencia led the way for Monmouth, as he scored a season-high 18 points in the loss. Guard Abdi Bashir Jr. scored 14 points, and guard Madison Durr scored 11

points.

The next day, the Hawks took on the hosts of the event, Stephen F. Austin. Once again, Monmouth jumped out to a quick start, as they took a 12-2 lead over the Lumberjacks early. However, this was the largest lead either team had all game. Stephen F. Austin had the lead halfway through the first half, setting up a back and forth affair. The Hawks and Lumberjacks exchanged the lead multiple times throughout the game, but in the end, Stephen F. Austin pulled out a 72-67 victory. Bashir finished with 30 points, his second game of the season finishing with 30 or more points. Valencia scored 10 points, while guard Aric Demings scored a season high 9 points off the bench.

On the final day of the event, Monmouth would play their third game in three days against Presbyterian. For the first 15 minutes of the game, no team led by more than five points. However, the Blue Hose went on a 14-4 run to finish the first half. After that run, Monmouth trailed by no less than nine points for the rest of the game. Presbyterian won the game by a final score of 71-61. Guard Jack Collins had his best game of the season for the Hawks, as he finished



PHOTO COURTESY of Monmouth Athletics.  
**Abdi Bashir Jr.** is ranked 24th in the entirety of Division I men's basketball averaging 20.4 points per game.

with 25 points. Guard Justin Ray scored 12 points, tying his career high which he set in the season opener against Michigan State.

After going 0-3 in the Axe 'Em Classic, the team had a week off before returning to action Saturday against Seton Hall in the Prudential Center. Prior to this game, the Hawks were 0-14 against Seton Hall all-time. However, things were different on

this day. The first half was mostly back and forth, with the largest lead being a 26-18 Hawks lead with approximately five minutes left in the half. However, the Pirates finished the half on a 9-3 run. Monmouth entered the second half with a 29-27 lead, and they did not look back. The Hawks started the half on a 12-2 run and took a 39-29 lead. Seton Hall bounced back and responded with another 9-3 run to cut the lead to four, but that was the closest the Pirates got for the entire game. Monmouth pulled away and solidified a massive 63-51 victory over Seton Hall, claiming their first win of the season against a school from a power conference. The upset was led by Bashir, who scored 28 points. The sophomore is now averaging 20.4 points per game on the season, which is ranked 24th in the entirety of Division I men's basketball. Collins scored 13 points, and Valencia finished with 11.

Looking to build off momentum from the Seton Hall win, the Hawks return to action on Wednesday, Dec. 4 as they travel to Lehigh. They will then travel to Princeton the following Tuesday. After eleven days off, the Hawks have their home opener on December 21st against the Fairfield Stags.



PHOTO COURTESY of Monmouth Athletics.

## Derek Robertson is named Finalist for Walter Payton Award

**MAIREAD SPELLACY**  
SPORTS EDITOR

After leading the FCS in total passing yards (3,937) and passing yards per game (328.1) this season, Monmouth University football quarterback Derek Robertson has been named one of the 35 finalists for the 2024 Stats Perform Walter Payton Award. Robertson is one of eight Hawks that have been finalists for this honor that is given to the top offensive player in the Football Championship Subdivision (FCS).

Robertson had a record breaking season, as he set Monmouth's single-season records for passing yards and touchdowns, with 31. This touchdown total topped the CAA and ranked third nationally. Robertson threw at least one touchdown pass in every game, six games throwing three or more touchdown passes. Robertson completed 65% of his 435 passes this season.

Robertson had numerous outstanding performances, two standout performances against ranked teams. His performance against No. 8/9 Villanova on Nov. 16 set the season's FCS single-game completion percentage mark as he completed 22-of-23 passes (95.7%). Robertson finished the season off throwing for a program-record 536 yards and three touchdowns against No. 20/18 Stony Brook on Nov. 23.



PHOTO COURTESY of Monmouth Athletics.

**The Hawks** picked up their first win this season and first in the all time series against Seton Hall.

THE OUTLOOK



# ***BASHIR DROPS 28 POINTS IN FIRST WIN OF THE SEASON***



Abdi Bashir Jr. led the Hawks with 28 points as Monmouth men's basketball picked up their first win of the season at Seton Hall.

SEE STORY ON PAGE 15

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