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Sigma Tau Delta hosts “Blind Date with a Book” event

MEGHAN REILLY
STAFF WRITER

Monmouth’s Delta Sigma chapter of Sigma Tau Delta will host their “Blind Date with a Book” event on Feb 14, from 1-3 p.m. in the Student Center Cafeteria.

Sigma Tau Delta, English Honors Society, is encouraging students not to judge books by their covers, a sentiment everyone has heard but may not have put into actual practice. Sigma Tau members and the Monmouth community

helped contribute to the donation of over 150 books during their annual book drive last December. Around 100 children’s and young adult books were given to the Frances Foundation in Asbury Park for children battling pediatric cancer.

“The book drive was partially inspired by my previous dealings with the founder of the Francis Foundation, Robert Heugle,” said Hana Vozzo, M.A. candidate in English and President of Sigma Tau Delta. “This allowed us to donate not only to our philanthropic organization but give back to the Monmouth community as

well.”

Other than Valentine’s Day, Feb. 14 marks International Book Giving Day. Sig Tau aims to blend both celebrations into an engaging and fun event that lets students pick out a free book without knowing the author or title. From science fiction to romance to memoir, each book is marked with a generic label to encourage exploration within a genre of interest or finding something new. Featuring titles from Sally Rooney, Colleen

“Blind Date with a Book”
cont. on pg. 2



PHOTO COURTESY of Instagram @monmouthbsu.



PHOTO COURTESY of Instagram @monmouthbsu.

Valentine’s Day bake sale hosted by the College Democrats

TAYLOR MEMOLI
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF / NEWS EDITOR

The College Democrats will fundraise for their organization on Feb. 14 through a bake sale. Hosted in the Student Center, members will be selling brownies, cakes, cookies, and other sweet treats.

“Valentine’s Day is so important this year more than ever because there is so much hate and lack of empathy being encouraged

by Republicans,” explained Owen Bros, club president. “At the University of Arizona, for example, there were students snitching to federal agents about someone’s citizenship status, just absolutely horrible that someone could have that much hate in their heart to do that. At this event, we are coming together for a holiday about celebrating love of all kinds: platonic love, romantic love, class crushes, and your latest situationship, we want to celebrate it all!”

The College Democrats promote awareness and discuss political issues on Monmouth University’s campus. “Our goal is to raise awareness to students on campus about current events and raise the voices of groups that are consistently silenced,” explained Bros. “In the current federal administration, my goal has been directing and educating my members to become activists against the rise of American fascism. Mutual

Bake sale
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Got a tip?
Tell us.

“Blind Date with a Book”

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Hoover, and Stephen King, there are 80 books available for distribution. Students will also have the opportunity to collect a bookmark for their next new read.

Melaina Carrara, senior English major and Vice President of Sigma Tau Delta, said “Blind Date with a book is one of my favorite

things that Sig Tau does. It’s a great way to get our members involved and such a fun and unique way to be able to give back to students at Monmouth.”

Whether picking up a new hobby or discovering a new title, Sig Tau welcomes all members of the Monmouth community to browse the selection of books on Friday and channel their inner bookworm!

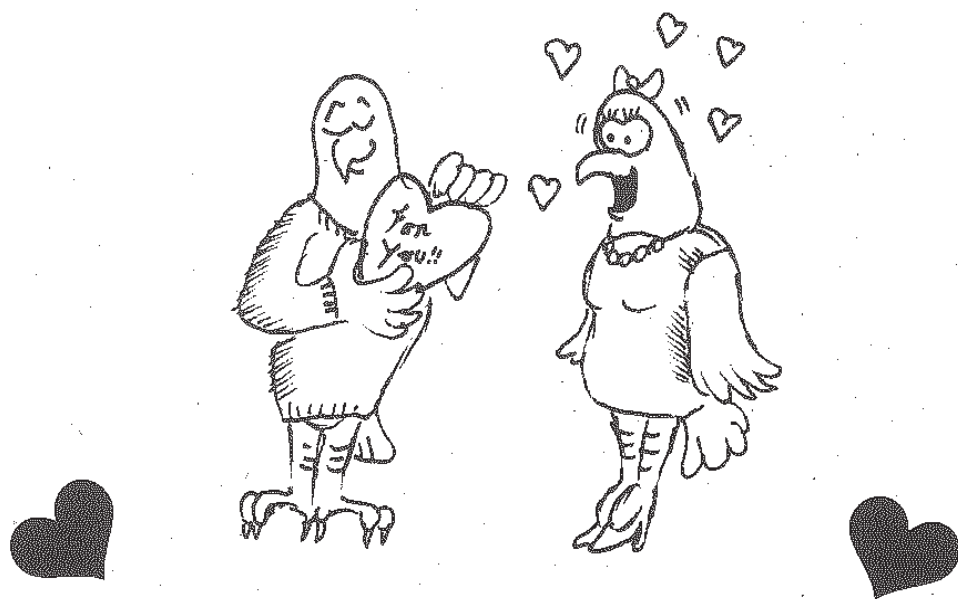


PHOTO COURTESY of Meghan Reilly.

Books available at the Sigma Tau Delta “Blind Date with a Book” event this

Editor’s Note:

The Outlook would like to wish the college community a very special and happy Valentine’s Day. We hope you enjoy the day with your loved ones.



Happy Valentine’s Day!!

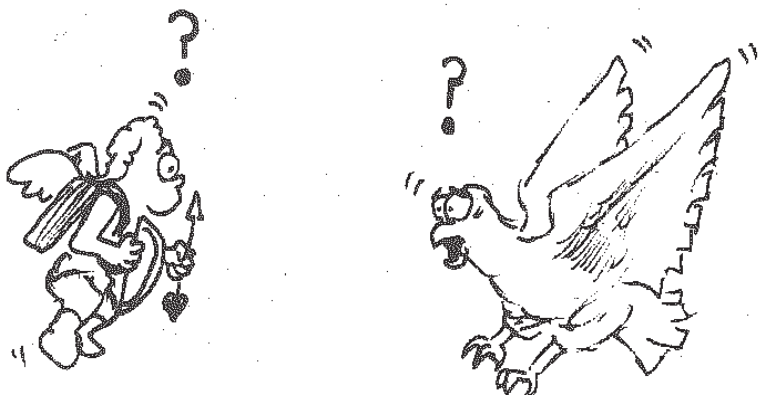


IMAGE COURTESY of The Outlook.

“The Outlook” ad ran on Feb. 11, 1988.

Bake sale

cont. from pg. 2

aid, community, and radical love for one another are the only way we can get through this together.”

Aside from the bake sale, the College Democrats will be hosting various other events throughout the rest of the semester. Bros noted, “On Feb. 11, myself and many of my members are going up to North Jersey for a launch party of a PAC called GenZ 4 NJ that will serve to get GenZ in New Jersey elected to local offices. I am very excited because my close friends founded it and the College Democrats are lucky that we

are involved in it. Feb. 12, we are hosting a virtual forum for the Democratic candidates for governor that all Monmouth students are invited to attend. It is important to be well-informed on who might be the next governor of the state. Then, Feb. 22, many of our members will be volunteering at the Monmouth County Democratic Convention to vote for a primary candidate to go on the ballot! It will be my second convention, and it is always a good time with many high-up Democratic officials in attendance (Governor Murphy is a Monmouth resident!). Our next General Meeting is March 5 at 3 p.m. at the Intercultural Center.



IMAGE COURTESY of Instagram @monmouthdemocrats.

The College Democrats at Monmouth University.

Counseling and Prevention Services (CPS) hosts “Sex & Disability: Navigating Challenges & Celebrating Pleasure” event

TAYLOR MEMOLI
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF / NEWS EDITOR

In celebration of Valentine’s Day, the Counseling and Prevention Services (CPS) hosted “Sex & Disability: Navigating Challenges & Celebrating Pleasure” event over zoom on Feb. 10.

“We decided to host this event because it promotes a healthy, informed and empowered approach to sexuality. Many students have limited or misinformed knowledge about sex and relationships. Addressing common challenges can be helpful and empowering for students,” stated Kimberly Hill, clinical counselor at CPS.

Hill continued, “Attendees gained insights into the intersection of sexuality, disability, and justice in a compassionate, inclusive space.” The focus of this event was to honor diverse identities and lived

experiences through an open, judgement-free space.

The event featured professional speaker Chels Morgan. “Chels Morgan has expertise in trauma-responsive, sexuality education, mental health advocacy and cultural competency. Chels Morgan’s framework is about empowering spaces that honor diverse identities and lived experiences,” said Hill. Morgan is a CSE based in Chicago, IL who specializes in trauma-informed sex education and pleasure activism.

“Transparency about sexuality and sex on college campuses promotes safety, encourages consent and healthy relationships as well as helps reduce stigma and shame. College is a time of exploration and personal growth. Students deserve to be equipped with knowledge and tools to navigate their relationships responsibly,” concluded Hill.



Who or what do you love this Valentine’s Day?

INTERVIEWED by TAYLOR MEMOLI & BAILEY FREDERICKS



“I love giving tours to prospective student.”
- Sofia C. ‘27



“I love my girlfriend because she makes me feel like myself when I am around her; she just makes me happy in general.”
- Tiago R. ‘26



“Something I love this Valentine’s Day is my cat, Seymour.”
- Michael G. ‘25



“I love forming human connections through my passion of theatre.”
- John T. ‘27



“My friends and family!”
- Mairead S. ‘26



“This Valentine’s Day I love Amy, my beautiful wife of 30 years.”
- President Leahy



“I love my friends and my dog Buddy who just turned 15!”
- Laura F., Office Coordinator for the English Department



“This Valentine’s Day I love my friends, family, boyfriend, and dog! The people who make everyday full of love for me.”
- Angie O. ‘25



“Jmacs pizza.”
- Cat S. ‘25



“I love my friends because they make me laugh and I love being around them.”
- Melania C. ‘25



“My girlfriend makes me a happy man everyday so Valentine’s Day can’t come soon enough so I can celebrate her.”
- William H. ‘25



“I love my perfect puppy Pepper more than life itself.”
- Taylor M. ‘25

Sex & Disability: Navigating Challenges & Celebrating Pleasure

Why Attend:
Gain insights into the intersection of sexuality, disability, and justice in a compassionate, inclusive space.

Expertise Area:

- Trauma-responsive, queer and trans-inclusive sexuality education.
- Mental health advocacy and cultural competency.

Focus:

- Curating justice-centered, empowering spaces that honor diverse identities and lived experiences.

The Event Will Be Held On Zoom:
Monday, February 10, 2025
4:00-5:00pm

Professional Speaker
Chels Morgan, CSE
A Queer, Black, Dominican, and AuDHD writer, educator, and creative professional based in Los Angeles

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Is print a thing of the past?

EDITORIAL STAFF

Arianna Huffington, founder of The Huffington Post, once said, "The future of journalism lies in embracing new technologies while upholding traditional values of accuracy, fairness, and integrity."

How can we uphold the traditional values of print journalism if publications around the globe are ceasing the beloved hand-held papers for the mini-computers in our pockets?

The editors at "The Outlook" were asked about this very topic in the context of New Jersey publications stopping their print publications this month. Those include "The Star-Ledger," "The Times of Trenton," "The South Jersey Times," and "The Jersey Journal," all of which can now be found online on NJ.com.

When asked if print journalism was becoming a thing of the past, one editor replied, "Unfortunately, print journalism is vanishing at alarming rates. This is why it feels so special to be a part of 'The Outlook,' as we still value the importance of print newspaper." Working tirelessly at "The Outlook" certainly presents challenges for us college writers, but our experience here is irreplaceable.

Another said, "This is disappointing as an editor at 'The

Outlook' because I have a deep passion for journalism and to think that the skills I am learning now will slowly be phased out is somewhat discouraging."

The editors believe that the newspaper companies are losing money and not profiting from the physical print copies anymore. With the demographic of readership changing as well as the rise in online news, print copies seem to be approaching their expiration date.

The editors were asked if they believed people would miss the feeling of reading a physical hardcopy newspaper. One said, "I do think people start to miss things when they are gone because they don't appreciate them when they are there. Personally, I hate reading things online and much prefer physical copies. I think we are overall seeing a shift in the younger generations being attracted to older forms of media (records, CDs, vintage cameras, etc.)."

Another said, "Even as a 21 year old, I will miss it and think we are letting a tradition in this profession slip away too easily."

Newspaper publications have been printing hard-hitting news for decades. While online news can be just as valuable there is a level of credibility lost. When you read an online article, you're more likely

to do further research on the topic instead of taking the article at face value.

"The argument can be made that online platforms allow for a real-time news response. With that being said, I also think it leads to more errors within the press because things aren't reviewed as thoroughly as they would be in print. Also, this potentially false information will be spread at an unfathomable speed, making errors much more difficult to correct," an editor said.

While online platforms are a known threat to print media, there is still hope for a comeback. One editor explained how it starts with small steps like supporting the student-run paper here at Monmouth.

"We try so hard to get the student body excited about the physical paper, especially if their story or photo is featured. Getting the community involved in print media is where we must start," the editor said.

One editor said, "I hope that print media does make a comeback. I think there is something so timeless about being able to physically hold the material that you are reading."

Print media can be revived with the sole help of those who want to preserve history and keep tradition. That's what we hope to do here at "The Outlook" each week with our publication.

i would go out
looking for you
anywhere ;)

the outlook

to: you

from: the outlook staff

art by: kiley hubbard

Serving the Monmouth
community
since 1933

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Lionfish are more dangerous than you may think

VICKY O'MALLEY
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

This past January, I had the opportunity to go on a faculty-led study abroad program to the Island School in Eleuthera, Bahamas. During the 10-day Tropical Island Ecology course, we got to explore the local flora and fauna on various different adventures around the island. We snorkeled alongside Caribbean Reef sharks, Southern Rays, and so many different species of fish. However, there was one species of fish that was an invasive species of concern. The Lionfish, *Pterois volitans*, were introduced to the Atlantic waters in the early 1990's.

They came from their native region in the Indian and Pacific Oceans due to the aquarium trade. By the early 2000's, Lionfish were first spotted in the Bahamas. With their release to local waters, these fish had a high competitive advantage for survival comparative to native species.

Lionfish have poisonous spines located on each of their fins. This is a mechanical defense mechanism that protects them from predators. They are also generalist eaters, this means that they will eat any food available to them. They create a vacuum seal to capture their prey and will eat anything they capture. Once the fish on the lower trophic levels are gone, Lionfish will eat their way up the food chain. This is detrimental to reef health as they have a huge impact on lowering biodiversity.

They also have the ability to take over reefs by reproducing fast and in high amounts. Lionfish are able to reproduce year round and the female will release thousands of eggs at once. They have an exponentially growing

population and with no present predators, their populations need to be controlled.

Before exploring our first reef patch, the eco-guides from the Island School warned us about seeing Lionfish. We were told if we saw one, to alert the guides and hover at the surface to keep an eye on the organism. That way, they could jump in the water and capture the Lionfish with a spear. They were then placed on the boat and removed from the ecosystem.

This is a regular practice for Bahamian locals as Lionfish cause a lot of harm to the native ecosystems. Furthermore, there are other implementations and initiatives to help control the invasive population. The Island School hosted a program called "You Slay, We Pay". This was a campaign initiative to provide financial compensation to local fishermen per pound of Lionfish they captured.

This was primarily done during the Lobster closed season to further motivate locals to control the population. This Island School campaign also encouraged people to eat Lionfish! They are simultaneously detrimental to reefs and delicious. There are many ways to eat Lionfish and due to their large populations and fast reproductive abilities, they are currently a sustainable food source. They can be eaten in a range of ways, anything from ceviche to deep fried.

The Lionfish invasion impacts a large range of the warmer Atlantic waters. Both education and action are important to understand why their removal is important and how it can keep reef ecosystems alive and healthy. The health of Bahamian reefs are at risk from the advanced pressures of Lionfish that must be addressed for the longevity of biodiversity in the Bahamas.

Chiefs vs Eagles Super Bowl recap

CHRIS ARP
STAFF WRITER

After another eventful NFL season, the Philadelphia Eagles are officially world champions after defeating the reigning 2-time champion Kansas City Chiefs in Super Bowl LIX by a final score of 40-22. Many thought this would be similar to the 2023 Super Bowl where the same two teams faced off in a back and forth game that ended with the Chiefs winning 38-35 in a thriller. However, that was not the case this time around.

The Eagles offense was stellar from the start, particularly in the first half, as Eagles QB Jalen Hurts scored a rushing touchdown in the first quarter. Eagles CB Cooper DeJean followed with a pick six along with WR A.J. Brown reeling in a 12 yard receiving touchdown, along with a Jake Elliot 29 yard field goal. Going into the half, the score was

24-0 Eagles, as Mahomes and the Chiefs couldn't get anything going on offense and the game felt over then and there.

In the second half, the Chiefs needed to get going in order to have any chances at completing a historic comeback, and it just didn't happen. While Xavier Worthy scored two touchdowns along with a Deandre Hopkins touchdown in garbage time, it wasn't enough for the Chiefs to make the comeback. The Eagles kept momentum with a DeVonta Smith touchdown along with three more Jake Elliot field goals, and finished the game and capped off a historic season for the franchise without a sweat. Eagles QB Jalen Hurts was named Super Bowl MVP securing the Philadelphia Eagles their second trophy in the franchise's 92 year existence.

Regarding the win, Will Snowden, a sophomore student here at Monmouth University

said, "I'm happy the Eagles won the Super Bowl because I have been a fan of the team my entire life. I think they won because they have one of the best offenses in the league and the defense was outstanding today against a great Chiefs offense."

Regarding the loss, Carter Bomersbach, a sophomore Chiefs fan here at MU said, "I think we [the Chiefs] lost because Mahomes was under too much pressure and was trying to do too much. The defense did their job by stopping the run, but the offense was nonexistent until the game was too far out of reach."

I think that the Eagles played a better brand of football tonight and were the best team throughout the season, deserving the win and the Lombardi Trophy. This officially wraps up the 2024-2025 season, as football fans now look ahead to the NFL Draft and what changes their teams will make this offseason.



INTERVIEWED by
MICHAEL GRUSEKE

What was your opinion on the Super Bowl?



"I thought it was a great game and it showed fans what happens when the Chiefs don't get extra calls from the refs."

- Pat Frohn



"That was one of the worst Super Bowls I've ever watched. As a Giants fan, it wasn't fun watching Eagles win and game wasn't close. I had some good food though."

- Thomas Viru



"As an Eagles fan, it was one of the best feelings to smoke the Chiefs and thank you New York for Saquon."

- Charlie Peterson

Cold vs. warm showers

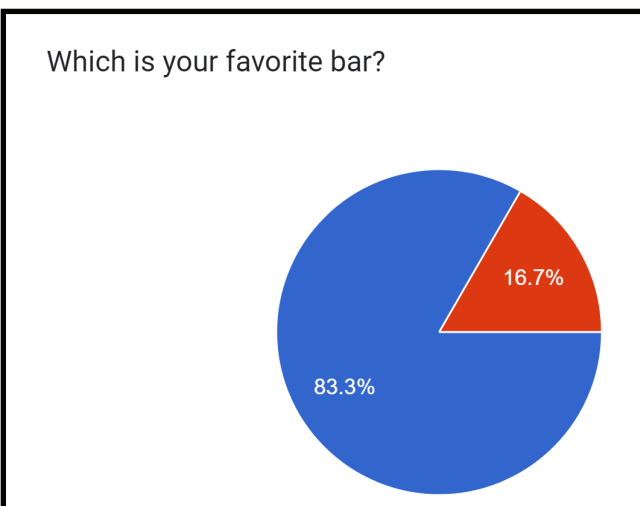
DAN GRUSEKE
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Cold showers are often seen as a challenge or discomfort, but they offer significant mental and physical benefits that make them a better choice for many people. While warm showers are comfortable and relaxing, cold showers provide many advantages that contribute to both mental clarity and physical health.



Scan the QR code to continue reading the article!

Last week's "Battle of the Bars" poll results:



Jmacs (blue) won this edition of "Battle of the Bars", bringing in well over half of the vote.

Last week, students voiced their opinions through social media to vote on which Asbury Park staple bar was better: Porta or Jmacs. Well, the results are in! Jmacs is the clear winner (highlighted in blue) with 83.3% of voters favoring the bar. Porta received only 16.7% of votes, highlighted in red. This landslide victory comes as no shock to "The Outlook" editors (except for maybe Bailey).

Sex education: Resources from the Health Center to help you this Valentine's Day

TAYLOR MEMOLI
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF/NEWS EDITOR

The celebration of Valentine's Day is as best a time as ever to discuss the importance of sexual wellness. Whether you spend it with a significant other, a relationship, or a total stranger, the potential for STIs and unplanned pregnancies still remains. Monmouth University's Health Center provides resources and learning tools to educate students on the subject here on our own campus.

Kristine Kelly, Director of Monmouth's Health Services, emphasizes the importance of spreading information regarding sexual wellness. She explained, "Sexual health education empowers students to make informed decisions about

their bodies, relationships, sexuality, and sexual activity. Education provides them with knowledge about consent and safe practices. College can be a time of sexual experimentation and fluidity therefore students are at a higher risk for STIs and unintended pregnancies. Education about contraception, prevention methods, and STI transmission can help minimize these risks."

Kelly and the Health Center encourage students to utilize their resources regarding the topic. "Our Health Center here at Monmouth provides a judgment-free environment in regards to sexual health counseling," Kelly said. "Students should feel safe coming into the Health Center to confidentially speak to one of our clinicians regarding any questions or needs they may have. We offer STI screening, preg-

nancy testing, contraceptive counseling, and prescription options for birth control pills." As well as these, Health Services provides students with free condoms, located in a basket in their waiting room.

Receiving a screening for sexually transmitted diseases might be worrisome, but Kelly recommends individuals screen for them consistently to ensure maximum safety. "I recommend at least an annual blood test that screens for HIV, Hepatitis C, and Syphilis and a urine test every 3-6 months that screens for Gonorrhea and Chlamydia depending on your risk factors."

Not only does Health Services provide all of these services, but they provide most of them at no cost to students. "Any visit to the

Health Center is always free. Pregnancy testing is at no cost. STI screening entails sending specimens off to the lab therefore we will collect insurance information from the student to send to the lab. If the student is uninsured or prefers not to utilize their insurance for any reason we have options for self-pay as well as referrals to free STI clinics located in the surrounding community.

Kelly concluded, "We have the ability to prescribe birth control pills here at the Health Center [as well]. It would then be up to the student to pay for those pills at the pharmacy through their insurance or self-pay. I just recently applied to a program that would supply us with a free plan B which we would be able to dispense right from here at no cost...more to come on that!"

Senior spotlight: Marissa Alvarez

JEFFERSON GONZALEZ
STAFF WRITER

As graduation approaches, Marissa Alvarez, a senior communication student reflects on her time at Monmouth University. Originally from Manchester, NJ, Marissa's college journey has been one of growth and change.

When Marissa first started looking at colleges, she wanted to stay close to home. Monmouth's location made it a great choice but what really caught her attention was its strong business program. "What made me choose Monmouth University was that it was close to home," she said. "Coming into college, I was a business major, and I saw MU had a really good business program which pushed me to pick Monmouth even more." Like many students, Marissa's path changed once she discovered new passions.

Over time she realized business wasn't the right fit and made the switch to communication where she put her focus on journalism and public relations. It was a big decision, but one that helped her find what she truly loved.

College is a time of transition and for Marissa these four years have taught her important lessons, especially about the importance of

community. "My college experience has changed me since freshman year by helping me understand the importance of having good people around you," she said. "It's important to have a support system that helps you in a positive way." She also learned a lot about herself.

Changing majors wasn't easy and she had moments of doubt, but those challenges helped her grow. "My biggest challenge in college was figuring out what was and wasn't right for me, including my major," she continued, "Over these four years, I discovered a new version of myself and passions I never knew I had. It's been an incredible journey through the good, the bad, and the confusing moments but ultimately, it all led me to where I am today."

Marissa's dedication and talent have led to remarkable achievements. One of her proudest moments came last spring when she received the Excellence in Writing Award from the Communication Department. She also took a significant step toward her career by landing her first internship with VUE Magazine, a premier New Jersey-based luxury publication covering lifestyle, travel, fashion, food, and design. Marissa also later joined mxdown.com, a well-established online entertainment magazine specializing in news, original reviews, features, pho-

tography, and interviews. As an album reviewer, she had the opportunity to cover the Sea Hear Now festival this past September. Her work impressed the team, leading to her current role as mxdown.com's music managing editor.

Like many college students, Marissa had to learn how to juggle multiple responsibilities between classes, internships, and personal life. "I balance academics, work, and personal life by staying organized," she said. "To be honest, it's not always easy. Every week feels different but having a planner definitely helped me throughout these four years and made balancing everything a little easier." She admits that sometimes things felt overwhelming but staying organized and keeping track of her priorities made all the difference.

With graduation right around the corner, Marissa feels a mix of emotions. "I feel nervous and excited!" She shared, "I'm nervous for what's next but excited about the fact that a new journey will begin." That next journey includes big goals. In five years, Marissa sees herself earning a master's degree and working as a journalist at a publication where she wants to report on entertainment and culture. She has a passion for story-

telling and hopes to bring that to the media industry.

Looking back on her college experience, Marissa has learned a lot. If she could give advice to incoming freshmen or underclassmen, she would remind them that change is okay. "Don't be afraid to explore new things and step out of your comfort zone," she said. "You might end up discovering a passion you never knew you had." She also stresses the importance of surrounding yourself with supportive people who encourage you to grow.

As she prepares to graduate, Marissa leaves behind a strong legacy at Monmouth. From her academic success to her contributions in journalism, she has made the most of her time here. While she may be nervous about what's next, she is also ready to take on new challenges.



PHOTO CURTOSY of Marissa Alvarez
Marissa Alvarez holding her Excellence in Writing Award.

Upcoming Events

WEDNESDAY

Australia Study Abroad Launch Party
12:00 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.
Student Center - Anacon Hall

OSE Valentine's Day Pop-Up Event
12:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Student Center - 2nd Floor

Speed Friending
1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Magill Commons Dining Hall

Sigma Pi Sweetheart
9:00 p.m. - 11:00 p.m.
Pollak Theatre

THURSDAY

Gourmet Theme Thursday Galentine's Day
12:00 p.m. - 2 p.m.
Magill Commons Dining Hall

Zumba
6:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.
Boylan Gym

Thursday Night Alternative - Bingo
7:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.
Intercultural Center

FRIDAY

Valentine's Cookies and Desserts
11:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Magill Commons Dining Hall

Flower Bar
11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
Student Center Fireplace Lounge

Blind Date With a Book
1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Student Center - 1st Floor

Valentine's Day Bake Sale
1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Student Center - 1st Floor

BSU and SAB Present: Classroom Concert
3:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Student Center Fireplace Lounge

OSE Valentine's Open Mic Night
6:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.
Student Center Fireplace Lounge

SATURDAY

Blankt Making for Code Blue
4:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.
Pinewood Hall Lounge

A Bronx Tale: The One Man Show starring Chazz Palminteri
8:00 p.m.
Pollak Theatre

Hawkmania Pro Wrestling Night
8:00 p.m. - 11:00 p.m.
Student Center - Anacon Hall

SUNDAY

Sweat It Out Sunday - Zumba
12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.
Pinewood Lounge

Sunday Destress Crafts - Slime Making
1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Magill Commons Dining Hall

Song of the Week!

"Suddenly I See"
by KT Tunstall



A playlist for loving yourself this Valentine's Day



It's that time of year again. You know, the time when every single girl dreads, the 14th day of the month. Okay, maybe not every single girl, but I definitely wanted to sleep through the entirety of Valentine's Day when I was single.

Though I have a boyfriend now, I regret the Valentine's Days I spent being unhappy all because I left like I had no one to share my love with. Looking back, that is the silliest thing I ever could have thought. Valentine's day is simply about love. Who cares if society tells us we need a significant other to celebrate? If you're a single lady this Valentine's Day, I challenge you to a day full of self-discovery, self-care, and self-love. Further, below is a soundtrack for this Valentine's Day, all about loving yourself.

"Unwritten" by Natasha Bedingfield:

"I'm just beginning / The pen's in my hand, ending: unplanned." Let the sun illuminate your skin (or feel the rain on your skin, depending on the weather) while you play this early 2000s classic. All about breaking societal expectations, making mistakes, and the excitement of the unknown future, Bedingfield delivers an impeccably inspirational song.

"Brave" by Sarah Bareilles:

"Sometimes a shadow wins / But I wonder what would happen if you / Say what you wanna say." Bareilles urges us to speak our minds and be brave in the face of adversity through bellowing vocals and an upbeat tune. Learning to love yourself includes sticking up for yourself when you feel uncomfortable, disrespected, or confused. Be the brave, remarkable version of yourself this Valentine's day.

"So What" by P!nk:

"I'm still a rock star / I got my rock moves / And I don't need you." Getting over a loser? P!nk is the cure. Being independent, especially after a long relationship can be scary. But remember, you have everything you already need inside of you - let the rock star in you shine!

"Girls Just Want to Have Fun" by Cyndi Lauper:

"Some boys take

a beautiful girl / And hide her away from the rest o' the world / I wanna be the one to walk in the sun / Oh girls, they wanna have fun." Another classic all about independence, Lauper left a cultural mark with this track. Spend this Valentine's day out with your girls having fun (the best form of self-care).

"Pumpin' Blood" by NONONO:

"Cause it's your heart, it's alive / It's pumpin' blood / And the whole wide world is whistling." What a privilege and joy it is to be alive! NONONO gave us a perfect reminder that life is too short to spend the day sulking, go out and thrive.

"She's so High" by Tal Bachman:

"She's so lovely / She's so high / Like Cleopatra / Joan of Arc / Or Aphrodite." Bachman's pop hit encompasses the feeling of being so utterly and irrevocably in love with another human being. Why not bottle up that feeling and apply it to ourselves this holiday?

"It All Comes Out in the Wash" by Miranda Lambert:

"Every little stain, every little heartbreak, no matter how messy it got / You take the sin and the men and you throw 'em all in / And put that sucker on spin." In an unconditionally blunt reminder that no one is perfect (and that's okay) Lambert's song off her 2019 album "Wildcard" is sure to make you smile.

"I Love it" by Icona Pop ft. Charli XCX:

"You want me down on earth, but I am up in space." Icona Pop and Charlie XCX's message to you: don't let anyone hold you back. Who cares what other people think? Be unapologetically you, today and everyday.

"Rain on Me" by Lady Gaga with Ariana Grande:

"Gotta live my truth, not keep it bottled in." Dance through the rain life throws at you. Tomorrow may be an unpredictable disaster, but, as Grande and Gaga put it, "I'd rather be dry, but at least I'm alive."

"Silk Chiffon" by MUNA and Phoebe Bridgers:

"Like life's so fun, life's so fun / Got my miniskirt and roller blades on." A pure bundle of joy, this song makes you view life through rose colored glasses (in a good way).

Don't stop spreading the love this Valentine's Day, but remember to take a moment to appreciate yourself and how far you have come!

Four ways to celebrate Galentine's Day



I have always been a firm believer that Galentine's is way better than Valentine's Day. Seriously, what is more fun than having a girl's night? Galentine's is the perfect excuse to celebrate friendship, and make memories you'll cherish with your favorite people. If you're like me and my friends, you'll be waiting for Feb. 14 all year long with the same hype as Christmas. Here is a list of the best ways to spend your Galentine's this year!

Dressing nice and getting glammed up isn't something most college students get much time to do with our hectic schedules. By the time we finally match up our schedules with our friends (which feels like it takes months), we're ready for a change. No more staying in and wearing sweats everywhere, or eating at the Stu in between classes. A fun way to spend your Galentine's this year could be by dressing up in something you never get to wear, like that new dress sitting in your closet just calling your name, and heading out with the girls. This has been one of my usual Galentine's Day plans with my friends, Carolyn and Marilyn, and it's always so nice to get out of our normal routine and get

glammed! That way everyone gets to put on their best, do fun makeup, and enjoy a nice meal together. It's not just about looking good—it's about feeling confident and celebrating each other for being the best friends you could all have.

On the flip side, sometimes my favorite way to celebrate is the complete opposite. When life has already been way too busy and full, the right way to spend Galentine's can be by staying in. Don't worry—it won't be a typical 'rot' day. This is the Galentine's I'm doing this year with my best friend, Carolyn, and it'll be far from boring. We have planned to wear some Valentine's pajamas (I recommend looking at TJMaxx and Marshalls), some fun headbands and silly jewelry, as well as a bunch of festive decor. Why make it just one night? Turn it into a Galentine's sleepover and you can be watching a rom-com marathon with takeout and sweet treats until the sun comes up or until one of you taps out!

Another great idea is turning Galentine's into a craft day or night. Blanket making, sunglasses bejeweling, or scrapbooking are some of my favorite activities to include in a craft hang out. A quick trip to the nearest dollar store or craft store and you'll find yourself leaving with a bunch of fun heart, pink, red, and candy themed items to put together something you can keep forever as a memory of the day. A pop-

ular trend I've seen on social media is decorating hair clips and brushes with rhinestones and pearls. All of these make for great ways to spend a few hours crafting and hanging out.

If you and your friends love to explore, the previous ideas might not be your thing—and that's okay! That doesn't mean you can't have some Galentine's Day fun, because there are a ton of neat ideas to spend the day outside or somewhere new. A day trip might be exactly what you need if you don't want to be cooped up inside. Having New York so close to us has always felt like such a blessing; I've taken many train rides for a day that felt like I was on vacation! You and your girls might enjoy a museum or aquarium in the city, followed by a nice lunch or dinner at the end of the day. Another fun outdoor option is a food truck tour around NYC.

Valentine's Day doesn't have to just be for couples. Friends are what make our lives full of light and laughter, why not include them on a day that represents love? Galentine's has been a tradition of mine since I've known my friend group, and every year we switch it up and keep it fun for everyone to enjoy. Whether it's dinner, a movie, or a sleepover, the holidays are never boring when I'm with my girls. So don't spend Valentine's Day sitting at home alone. Call up your best girls and make a plan for a day that fits your vibe.



A fun way to celebrate Galentine's Day is by having a self-care night with friends.

IMAGE TAKEN from artoffit.org.

“A Love Letter to You”: Loving what’s in the mirror

LORELAI HILARCZYK
ENTERTAINMENT EDITOR

During this Valentine’s Day season, it’s important to remember that you can’t love another person until you love yourself. Easier said than done, right?

Bella Buono, a junior Interdisciplinary Studies in Elementary Education and Students with Disabilities major, here at Monmouth University, published a children’s book about the very subject of self-love and believing in yourself.

“A Love Letter to You” tells the story of a girl standing in front of the mirror, having one of those days where she doesn’t love the version staring back at her. Buono writes, “You sit there in tears when you don’t like the view, in hopes that the mirror could show something new.” We’ve all been there, haven’t we?

Then, the girl starts embracing what makes her different, like her facial features, body, and personality. “A Love Letter to You” leaves the reader with a sense of closure, as the girl has found her place and understands that she is highly unique and rare. A life lesson that is so impactful, especially for young adults and children.

Buono was inspired by her own struggles as a young girl and how it impacted her in about every aspect of her life. “My insecurities often impacted my academic abilities and performance in the classroom. I never allowed myself to see my full potential. Now, as an adult and future educator, being on the other side of the school system has given me insight into the challenges that children face at such a young age,” she said. She was able to learn from her own personal experiences as well as study them, which has helped her foster new creativity, as in this book.

Buono explained how she never thought she would publish a children’s book in college. The idea randomly came to her one night, as so many great ideas do, and she couldn’t get it out of her head.

From there, she started writing and learned more about how to make her vision come to life. After all, a lot of hard work, time, and dedication go into publishing a book.

Not only did the writing need to come to life, but the illustrations as well. A children’s book is nothing without the artwork to draw in the reader. Amy Tremer, also a full-time student, worked with Buono to give “A Love Letter to You” a heartbeat through her illustrations.

While Buono never wanted to be solely a writer, she was always musically inclined, which can be seen and heard through the rhyme scheme of the book. “Since this book is geared towards children, my writing and the text follow an arithmetic, poetic flow...I never considered myself more so of a deep literature writer, but I think my connections to music and singing over the years helped with the writing process,” she said.

One of my favorite parts of the book is towards the end. The girl finally realizes she is perfect the way she is and her possibilities are endless. Her story is just beginning, and she has so much love to give. Buono wrote, “This girl in the mirror has so much to share, and all of her qualities are so uniquely rare! It shows that you’re perfect in your own special way, and celebrates who you are every single day? So when you look in the mirror, make sure you stop and see that the person looking back is as amazing as can be!”

I think the most special thing about this book is how it’s able to concisely get across the message of self-love. The topic is timeless and relevant not only to the age demographic of the book but also to people from all walks of life. Self-love is a topic that clearly means a lot to Buono, as a person and as a future educator.

“In young children, a lot of bullying and disrespect stems from children not feeling comfortable in their own skin, so they feel the need to take it out on others. When you take



PHOTO COURTESY of Bella Buono.

that extra step to consider the feelings of others, or do an act of kindness, it proves not only to yourself, but to others that you are comfortable enough with yourself to spread love to others because you know it is the right thing to do,” she said.

Buono explained how self-love is not only compassion for yourself but also compassion for others because of that. Of course, everyone has their insecurities, but there are always things to love and explore about yourself. It’s all about what makes us special because that is what makes us human.

With that in mind, “A Love Letter to You” also explores how to have a healthy mind-

set. The practice of affirmations and training your brain to think in a healthy way is so important for both young and old alike. Buono incorporated all of this into the book.

She said, “I think it is important for all to utilize the affirmations in this book because it allows readers to let go of relatable feelings. This book also exemplifies a sense of unity and understanding that your feelings are valid. Healthy mental habits of reassurance that can be shared through this book are emotional resilience and growth.”

“A Love Letter to You” is geared toward ages 4-12, but the themes within can resonate with us college students. College is about learning who you are and where you want to go in life. This is exactly what the little girl in the book thinks about as she finds the courage to be inspired by herself. Discovering yourself and learning to love all your faults is what most of us college students experience. It’s a scary time but the end result is worth it.

Buono offered her advice and said, “Trust the process, be patient with yourself, and remember that growth often happens after trial and error, and when you become your biggest advocate.”

It’s all about creating a

healthy mindset and trying to improve how we view ourselves. I love that Buono is able to articulate all of this so clearly in her book. I can imagine a child reading this book, looking to it for advice, and letting that lead them through being a kid. With over 100 copies sold, Buono is looking toward continuing to advocate and spread the word about healthy self-love habits.

And Valentine’s Day is just around the corner. So don’t let the overwhelming amount of couples on social media impact your view on life. “It is so important to remember that Valentine’s Day, like any day, is temporary; everything passes...It is so easy to feel discouraged, but you can also spend the day of love as an opportunity to spoil yourself!! Keep busy by doing things that make you happy, and surround yourself with people who make you feel loved... Your moment and connection will arrive when the time is right. It will be worth the wait,” Buono said.

So sit back and relax. There’s plenty of time to find the right one, but before then, focus on developing the healthy mindset Buono depicts in her book. It’s not too late to find your love for yourself; you just have to find the courage to love what’s in the mirror.



IMAGE TAKEN from Instagram.

“A Love Letter to You” by Bella Buono is available on Amazon, Target, and Barnes & Noble. Follow Buono’s journey by following @alovelettertoyou.book on Instagram.

10 Taylor Swift songs for Valentine's Day

MELANY MCCANN
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

It's no secret that Taylor Swift's impeccable lyricism and songwriting have garnered her attention. She writes an array of different music, but there's no doubt she's best known for her love songs. With songs ranging from the start of a new relationship, the unease of love, to the euphoria of falling in love, Swift has experienced and written about it all. This collection of some of her best love songs has something for everyone in any state they may be in this Valentine's Day. No matter what your status, the storytelling of these songs are powerful and produce important messages for listeners to enjoy.

1. "Begin Again"—This is the last track on Taylor Swift's album "Red." It explores the bittersweet feeling and consolation of finding love after heartbreak. The song recounts the flicker of hope and relief after months of associating love with pain. It's the perfect track and comfort for anyone beginning to move on from past hardships.

2. "Enchanted"— From her album "Speak Now," Enchanted is one of her most popular songs, rightfully so. This track explores the rush of excitement from meeting someone new, the early stages of a relationship, and the idea of love at first sight. While the song does dabble into the

idea of destiny and dissects the intense emotions that arise from feeling an instant connection, it also addresses the uncertainty of not knowing if the other person feels the same.

3. "Invisible String"— From the album "Folklore," this song ponders the concept of fate and destiny and explores the invisible string theory, which is the notion that an invisible and unbreakable string connects you to a specific person. Throughout the song, Swift names the moments where fate pushed Swift and her person together, ultimately showcasing her belief that they were always meant to find each other.

4. "Daylight"— Made to juxtapose her song "Red" from an earlier album, this hit from "Lover" is about the hardships and toxicity of her past relationships in comparison to the warmth, security, and serendipity of her current one. The lyrics represent Swift's realization that her current relationship is unlike anything she has ever felt before. It's the perfect song for the people who have found the love they deserve.

5. "Labyrinth"— From her album "Midnights," this is a vulnerable track about the anxiety of falling in love and opening up again after being hurt in the past. It's about recognizing the importance of acknowledging past hardships to embrace new love and giving it a chance.

6. "Sweet Nothing"— Another one from her album "Midnights," this track is

about the little moments in a relationship that make it special, and the peace and comfort found within it. It explores a gentle, supportive, and ideal relationship, and it just may be one of her most romantic songs and is perfect for hopeless romantics.

7. "How You Get The Girl"—This upbeat track from "1989" depicts a step-by-step guide on how to win a girl back after making a mistake. It's a track full of advice, excitement, the realization of the love you let go, and the importance of holding on. It's the perfect instruction manual to get that Valentine.

8. "Call It What You Want"— From her album

"Reputation," this track is about ignoring the pressures and gossip of the outside world and finding solace in a relationship. The song explores Swift's partner loving her despite her diminished reputation. It's a very moving song about finding comfort in a person amidst chaos.

9. "Our Song"— From her debut album, this country song is the epitome of teenage love and depicts a couple using normal events in their relationship to write a song. This upbeat and catchy track explores young love and the little moments that make a relationship special.

10. "You Are In Love"— Last but not least

is an extremely touching and romantic song from "1989" about the true, deep connection between two people, and the realization that they are in love. The track details moments in the relationship that led them to know that they are in love. It brings attention to the small moments in a relationship that showcase the connection between lovers, not the large grand gestures. It's about the hum of love in silence.

Love is undoubtedly complex, and its meaning is different for each person. It's anxiety-inducing, beautiful, potentially messy, and indisputably human, and these songs do an excellent job of exploring exactly that.



IMAGE TAKEN from Pinterest.

'90s love songs: The essence of romance

MARISSA ALVAREZ
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The melodies of '90s love songs capture the essence of beautiful romance. The heartfelt vocals and compassionate lyrics intertwine, tugging at our heartstrings and leaving many today yearning for that '90s type of love. These songs sound genuine, embodying what a beautiful relationship should feel like. Whether you're in a relationship or not, the love songs from the '90s inspire you to passionately sing every word for that special someone. The lyrics remind you of your loved one, highlighting why you fell in love and illustrating why love is such a beautiful experience.

"Love Like This" - Faith Evans
What an amazing

experience it is to discover something you didn't know existed, particularly a certain kind of love. It's incredible when unexpected things catch us by surprise and transform into a remarkable experience, different from what we're used to. The upbeat R&B song "Love Like This" by Faith Evans captures this feeling perfectly. The song not only evokes feelings of love but also makes you want to grab your special someone and dance, reminding them just how much they mean to you.

"So Into You" - Tamia
Sometimes, it can be challenging to describe your feelings for someone. The emotions can be so intense that all you can say is, "I'm so into you." Tamia's '90s hit "So Into You" perfectly captures that overwhelming feeling of love that can leave you speechless. The lyrics express a deep affection: "Let's stay together, you and me, boy/ There's no one like

you around, oh baby/ I really like what you've done to me/ I can't really explain it I'm so into you." The chorus repeats, emphasizing how sometimes things feel right, even if it's hard to articulate why.

"My Love Is Your Love" - Whitney Houston
The beautiful aspect of love is having a partner by your side to face life's challenges—someone who ensures that hardships don't drive you apart. Whitney Houston's song "My Love Is Your Love" tells the story of the difficulties some couples may encounter and emphasizes that their love is so strong that these challenges won't tear them apart. The lyrics express sentiments like, "If I lose my fame and fortune (Really don't matter)/ and I'm homeless on the street (Oh the street)/ I'm sleeping in Grand Central Station (Okay)/ it's okay if you're sleeping with me." The repeated refrain, "'Cause

your love is my love, and my love is your love," reinforces the idea that love should be unconditional.

"Always and Forever" - Luther Vandross
Luther Vandross is renowned for his heartfelt melodies and soothing vocals. When discussing '90s love songs, he is an essential artist to mention. The tenderness in "Always and Forever" beautifully defines eternal love. The lyrics illustrate how the person you love can improve your life, while also celebrating the love shared between you, "Every day, love me your own special way/ Melt all my heart away with a smile/ Take time to tell me you really care/ And we'll share tomorrow together (always forever love you)." This love song represents a love that everyone should have the chance to experience.

"Because You Loved Me" -

Celine Dion
Part of love involves appreciating how someone loves, helps, supports, and cares for you. Expressing this appreciation strengthens a loving relationship. Celine Dion's "Because You Loved Me" highlights this message. Her powerful vocals infuse the song with deep emotion, expressing the feeling of love, while the lyrics highlight the message further, "You're the one who saw me through/ Through it all/ You were my strength when I saw weak/ You were my voice when I couldn't speak/ You were my eyes when I couldn't see/ You saw the best there was in me."
These love songs exemplify why people long for a '90s type of love. Filled with passion, emotion, and compassion, these songs beautifully capture what romance should truly feel like. Whether you listen to them with a special someone or by yourself, the love infused in the lyrics can resonate with anyone.

Three weeks in: Reflecting on the second Trump Administration so far

BRENDAN SHEEHAN
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It has been roughly three weeks since President Donald J. Trump was sworn in as the 47th President of the United States. The start of his tenure has been one of the most fast paced and out of the ordinary starts to any presidential term.

Trump made his first priority signing a slew of executive orders, actions he does not need Congress to approve. Many of them roll back executive orders issued by President Joe Biden, including Biden's orders to lower the cost of prescription drugs and implement gun safety measures.

Another one of Trump's executive orders mandated the federal government to rename the Gulf of Mexico to the Gulf of America. However, the Gulf of Mexico is still the official name recognized by the United Nations. Another executive order touted by the White House was one to, "bring back plastic straws," that Trump signed this week.

Another major action taken by the Trump administration has been the closing of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). Elon Musk's unofficial Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) has been making the rounds at federal agencies to supposedly find areas to cut government spending. The administration has recalled thousands of overseas USAID officials and placed those who worked in the agency's headquarters on leave. One USAID official in Africa told ABC News, "it breaks their faith in America. We are going to lose thousands of our best friends and allies." The closing of USAID is a move praised by Russian President Vladimir Putin's closest allies, Hungary's authoritarian leader Viktor Orban and now has China pouncing on the opportunity, sending their "CHINA AID" to areas in Africa where the USAID has left.

Trump and his team are now taking aim at the Department of Education (DOE) and Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB). Last week, Democratic members of the U.S. House of Representatives were stopped from entering the Department of Education's headquarters in Washington, D.C. as Elon Musk and his DOGE team worked to cut spending from the department. In addition to the DOE, Trump fired the head of the CFPB and his administration directed the agency to halt its work. The bureau is an independent government agency that guards consumers from predatory banks, lenders and other financial markets while enforcing federal law in the financial world. The bureau's website was shut down.

Another move in his first month has been blocked by a federal judge. In their effort

to reign in spending and end funding for diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) related programs, the Trump administration halted all federal agencies from funding grants, loans and federal assistance programs. The funds in question had already been appropriated by Congress, and thus illegal for the president to halt. According to Mark Kantrowitz, a financial aid expert, the pause does not apply to federal student loans directed at individuals, but if enacted could disrupt federal work study recipients and those who have Supplemental Education Opportunity Grants.

Another unprecedented action taken by Trump during his first month has been the pardoning of roughly 1,500 people who were involved in the insurrection at the United States Capitol on January 6th, 2021. The sweeping pardons granted freedom to more than 600 who resisted or assaulted law enforcement, and some serving sentences as long as 22 years. More than 170 pardoned were charged with using a deadly weapon on an officer. Vice President JD Vance was asked about the pardons before Trump's action and said, "if you committed violence on that day, obviously you shouldn't be pardoned."

In late January, American Airlines Flight 5342 collided with a U.S. Army Black Hawk helicopter as it was coming in to land at Ronald Reagan National Airport. It was the first major aviation disaster involving an aircraft in the United States since 2009. The next day, Trump gave a press conference where he cursed, blamed the Obama and Biden administrations and said DEI initiatives were the cause of the crash. When pressed for evidence DEI caused the crash, Trump replied, "we don't know," and, "it just could have been." Nearly 70 people in the airplane and helicopter died as a result.

During the first two weeks of his term, the U.S. government removed and deported 5,700 illegal immigrants after Trump vowed to carry out the largest deportation operation in American history. However, if the Trump administration continues at this rate, it will deport less than half of those deported during the last fiscal year of the Biden administration. Trump's administration has deported roughly 2,847 people per week in the first month. In November 2024, the Biden administration deported roughly 12,200 per week, highlighting a sharp slowdown in the number of deportations.

In the international affairs realm, Trump inherited a fragile ceasefire deal between Hamas and the Israeli government. During his first month, he unveiled a plan for the United States to takeover the Gaza Strip, oust the roughly two million Palestinian's living there, and redevelop Gaza into "a big real estate site" that the United

States would own. When asked during a FOX News interview whether Palestinians would be able to return to their homes, he said, "No, they wouldn't...I'm talking about building a permanent place for them." According to war and human rights experts, the forced deportation or removal of a civilian population is a violation of international law and a war crime.

Following a tense standoff over tariffs, Trump agreed to delay additional tariffs against Canada and Mexico in exchange for the two nations working with him on border security and drug trafficking. Trump threatened the trade war, with America's two largest trade partners, over what he felt was a lack of cooperation to slow the flow of illegal immigrants and fentanyl into the U.S. Trump has vowed, however to continue to use economic pressure to push Canada to become America's 51st state, an idea just 13% of Canadians support according to a Canadian government survey.

Also on Trump's horizon is Denmark's island of Greenland. In fact, Trump and Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen had a "fiery" phone call in January where Trump pushed for the Danes to cede the island to the U.S.

Trump has also made it a priority to remove the visual presence and security of his former officials who have criticized him. In January 2020, the U.S. military killed Iranian General Qasem Soleimani. Iran then put a priority on assassinating Trump, and his officials that carried out the hit. Trump's national security advisor during his first term, John Bolton, who said it was, "a danger to the United States" if Trump were re-elected, got his Secret Service protection revoked by Trump. General Mark Milley, the man Trump appointed to lead the Joint Chiefs of Staff during his first term, who called Trump, "a fascist to the core" got his portrait removed from the walls at the Department of Defense and his security was also removed by Trump. Trump also removed the security for Dr. Anthony Fauci, who helped lead America's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

According to a CBS News/YouGov poll published on Feb. 9, Trump has an approval rating of 53% for his first month in office. However, roughly 66% of Americans say his administration has not focused enough on lowering prices, including half of Republicans surveyed. The poll included 2,175 adults.

Trump is set to work with the Republican majorities in Congress to pass a multi-trillion dollar tax break package in the coming months. On March 4th, Trump is set to deliver the first State of the Union address of his second term. The State of the Union is given to the U.S. House, U.S. Senate, Cabinet, Supreme Court, Joint Chiefs of Staff and other government officials and special guests to allow the president to lay out their agenda for the year.

Trump's confirmed Cabinet nominees

BRENDAN SHEEHAN
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The U.S. Senate is tasked with confirming the Cabinet nominations for President Donald Trump. Below is a look at who has been confirmed by the Senate, and who is yet to be.

The Senate confirmed their fellow Senator Marco Rubio of Florida to be the Secretary of State in a 99-0 unanimous vote.

The Senate voted to confirm former Director of National Intelligence John Ratcliffe to be the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in a 74-25 vote.

Controversial nominee for Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth was narrowly confirmed 51-50, with Vice President JD Vance casting the tiebreaking vote after three Republican Senators voted against him. Hegseth served as a combat veteran and FOX News host.

The Senate then voted to confirm South Dakota Governor Kristi Noem to be the Secretary of Homeland Security in a 59-34 vote. Noem was a potential vice presidential pick for Trump's 2024 campaign until she revealed she killed a family dog, drawing mass backlash.

The Senate confirmed hedge fund manager Scott Bessent of South Carolina in a 68-29 vote. Bessent's net worth is estimated to be \$521 million.

After, the Senate confirmed former U.S. Representative Sean Duffy of Wisconsin to be the Secretary of Transportation. U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin, a Democrat of Wisconsin, voiced her support for his nomination and he was confirmed in a 77-22 vote.

Former U.S. Representative Lee Zeldin of New York was confirmed to lead the Environmental Protection Agency in a 56-42 vote. Democrats voiced concern over his previous votes against clean air and clean water legislation.

North Dakota Governor Doug Burgum was confirmed by the Senate to be the Secretary of the Interior in an 80-17 vote. The Secretary of the Interior manages federal lands and conservation.

Chris Wright, an energy executive who has denied the existence of climate change, was confirmed to be the Secretary of Energy in a 59-38 vote.

Doug Collins, a former U.S. Representative from Georgia and staunch Trump ally was confirmed to be the Secretary of Veterans Affairs in a 77-23 vote.

Former Attorney General of Florida Pam Bondi was confirmed to be the U.S. Attorney General in a 54-46 vote. She faced criticism over refusing to acknowledge President Joe Biden's 2020 election win.

The Senate confirmed Scott Turner to be the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development in a 55-44 vote. Turner is a former NFL player, motivational speaker and businessman from Texas.

The Senate confirmed Russell Vought to be the Director of the Office of Management and Budget. Vought was one of the co-authors of The Heritage's Foundation "Project 2025" playbook.

Yet to be confirmed is Trump's controversial pick to lead the Department of Health and Human Services Robert F. Kennedy Jr. Tulsi Gabbard, the former Democratic U.S. Representative has not yet been confirmed as Director of National Intelligence. The nominees for Secretary of Agriculture, Secretary of Education, Secretary of Commerce and Secretary of Labor have still yet to be confirmed by the Senate. In addition, Trump's nominee for U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, U.S. Trade Representative, Small Business Administration Administrator and others have also yet to be confirmed.

Some Republican Senators have expressed anger with Senate leadership over the lack of Trump nominees confirmed nearly a month into his presidency. Republicans hold majorities in both the U.S. House and U.S. Senate, and have talked about the need for unity in passing Trump's agenda through Congress.

Votes for Robert F. Kennedy Jr. and Tulsi Gabbard are expected this week, and moderate Republican senators Susan Collins and Lisa Murkowski have expressed their support for the more controversial candidates yet to be confirmed, a sign that Trump could get every nominee he wants installed by his State of the Union address on March 4th.



IMAGE TAKEN from SKY NEWS.

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!

-Bailey Fredericks, Managing and Lifestyles Editor



Real Estate Club

Hello everyone! The 19th of this month is a career night in the Bey Hall auditorium at 6:30 p.m. If you have any questions, please feel free to email me at s1322694@monmouth.edu.

- Margaret McNeil, President



WMCX

Here at WMCX, there is so much space to grow and use your voice! With opportunities such as broadcasting Monmouth University's home basketball games, having weekly talk shows on a variety of topics surrounding sports, music, pop culture, or politics, or becoming part of the E-board, there's a place for you at WMCX! If this sounds like something for you, come to one of our weekly meetings every Wednesday at 2:45 in Plangere 236. Our doors are always open if you want to come and visit us upstairs. And stay tuned for some exciting events happening later this semester!

- Beyonce Carranza, Program Director (VP)

HAWK TV Hawk TV

Hawk TV is excited to be back for this semester! We are the student run television station on campus, and it is a great opportunity to meet new people and get involved! Our studio is on the first floor of Plangere, and we currently have four shows. Hawk TV News shoots biweekly on Tuesdays starting at 7 p.m. and alternates with the Creation Corner that starts at 7:30 p.m. On Wednesdays we film our sports show called the Extra Point and Thursdays, our pop culture show called Triple Scoop, and both of those begin at 7 p.m. We hope to see you this semester!

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



LASO

The Latin American Student Organization (LASO) brings students together to celebrate Latin American culture. The club is open to everyone and hosts events like Día de los Muertos and their annual Outdoor Movie Night where they show a movie from latin american and have latin american cuisine. LASO also supports minority representation and encourages leadership. It's a great place to meet new people, learn about different traditions, and be part of an inclusive community.

- Jeff Gonzalez, general member



"College Core" - WMCX

Tune in every Wednesday from 1-2 p.m. to gossip with me and listen to funky music. *Potential guest hosts are on the horizon.*

xoxo - Bailey

PRSSA PRSSA

Hi Hawks, welcome back! 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



College Republicans

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

-NJFCR Chair Jacky Bruno and MUCR Chair Giavanna Cangialosi



Lens Collective

We will be hosting a Great Hall photo walk Feb. 12 @ 6:30 p.m. Come and let your creative mind explore th Great Hall basement and more!

- Henry Boody, President



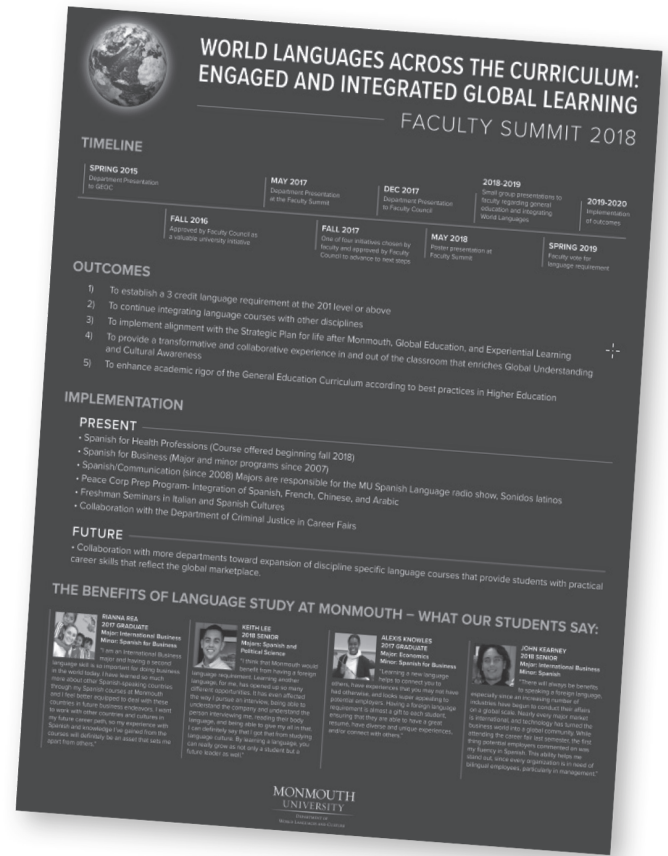
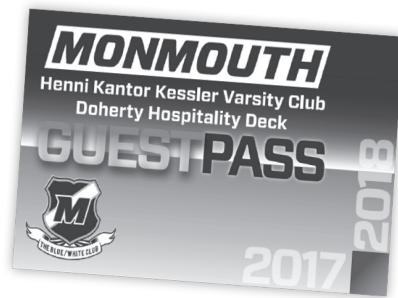
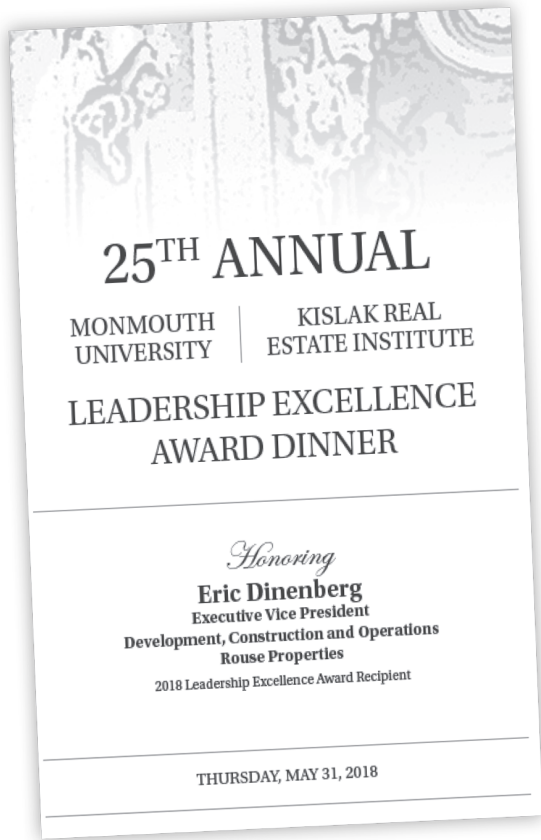
College Democrats

Love is love! Come to our Valentine's Day bake sale in the Student Center on Feb. 14.

- Owen Bros, President

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COLLEGE DEMOCRATS

Valentine's Day
bake sale!

February 14th

1-3 pm @student center

Show your support to
the freedom to love!

HAWKMANIA
PRO WRESTLING NIGHT
FEBRUARY 15, 2025 8 - 11 P.M.
FREE IN ANACON

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ **FEATURING** ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Monmouth University Alumni Biggie Biggs, Former WWE Superstar Enzo Amore, Impact Wrestling Star Fallah Baah, Former WWE Superstar Tank Toland, Former ROH star Brian Johnson, ECW Original Jim Molineaux, World Wrestling Grand Prix Champion David Goldy, Dangerous Adrenaline Wrestling Gladiators Champion Breaker Morant, DAWG Tag Team Champions Dave Doll & Dylan Mesh & the top professional wrestlers of Dangerous Adrenaline Wrestling Gladiators

MONMOUTH UNIVERSITY | STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

FLOWER BAR

FEBRUARY 14, 2025 | STUDENT CENTER CAFETERIA
11 A.M. - 2 P.M.

FLOWER BOUQUETS, SNACKS, & MUSIC!

MONMOUTH UNIVERSITY | RESIDENTIAL LIFE | BLUE HAWK Records | MONMOUTH UNIVERSITY | STUDENT ENGAGEMENT | MONMOUTH UNIVERSITY | COUNSELING and PREVENTION SERVICES

SWEAT IT OUT SUNDAY

JAN 26 YOGA	MAR 9 ZUMBA
FEB 2 YOGA*	MAR 30 YOGA
FEB 2 ABS, LEGS, AND BUTT TRAINING~	APR 6 YOGA
FEB 9 YOGA*	APR 6 ABS, LEGS, AND BUTT TRAINING~
FEB 16 ZUMBA*	APR 13 YOGA
FEB 23 YOGA	APR 27 YOGA
MAR 2 YOGA	APR 20 ZUMBA
MAR 2 ABS, LEGS, AND BUTT TRAINING~	* OFBC TRACK * PINWOOD LOUNGE - BEGINS AT 6 P.M.

MONMOUTH UNIVERSITY | STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

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SIGNING UP IS RECOMMENDED!
SEARCH MONMOUTH UNIVERSITY AND VIEW ALL AVAILABLE SESSIONS

Hawks go 3-1 in four game homestand

MICHAEL GRUSEKE
OPINIONS EDITOR

The Monmouth Hawks (8-17) defeated the Hampton Pirates (12-13) this past Thursday (2/6/25) at the Ocean First Bank Center by the score of 68-63. Everything seems to be clicking for the Hawks right now as the gutsy victory stretched Monmouth's win streak to 3 games in a row just before losing to Towson. The Hawks continue to be dominant on their home court, winning 19 of their last 21 games at the Ocean First Bank Center.

Junior guard Madison Durr led the charge for Monmouth, putting up a team-high 18 points and went 8-10 from the free throw line, ending his consecutive free throws streak at 35 in a row, which is a program Division 1 record.

Sophomore forward Cornellius Robinson made a very significant impact, putting up 16 points and

making 70% of his field goals attempted (7-10). Robinson also had 8 rebounds.

Junior guard Jack Collins played a key role defensively, tying a season high of 4 steals and also managed to put up 10 points.

Although the game was a tough battle throughout, Monmouth held the advantage for most of the game as Hampton only had a lead for

1:19.

The game started off neck and neck until the Hawks went on an 8-0 run after sharp shooting sophomore guard Abdi Bashir sank a three pointer with 13:21 left in the first half, giving the Hawks an 18-10 lead. Bashir scored 6 points in a row on this run.

Hampton fought back and went on a run of their own,

taking a 21-20 lead over the Hawks with 8:59 left in the first half after a made free throw from junior guard George Beale.

In the last 3:44 of the first half Monmouth took control, going on a 9-2 run which allowed the Hawks to go into the half with a somewhat comfortable 42-34 lead over the Pirates.

Early in the second half

a 7-0 run helped the Hawks take a 12 point lead setting the score at 57-45 with 12:02 left in the game.

Hampton would not be able to recover after putting themselves in this hole, but fought back and made things interesting after graduate guard Noah Farrakhan hit a three point shot that narrowed the Hawks lead to 67-63 with 1:03 remaining in the game.

Key defense in the final minute, including a clutch steal from Bashir with 20 seconds left, ultimately sealed the 68-63 victory for Monmouth.

After taking a tough 73-67 loss from the Towson Tigers (16-9) this past Saturday (2/8/25) the Hawks finished their four game home stand with a solid record of 3-1.

The Hawks will look to get a road victory on Thursday (2/13/25) when they travel to Long Island to take on the Stony Brook Seawolves (6-19) at Island FCU Arena at 5 p.m.



PHOTOS COURTESY of Monmouth Athletics.

Monmouth students filled the student section as Ocean First Bank Center drew in the largest crowd this season with 2,756 fans.

Softball concludes opening weekend at Spartan Classic

MAIREAD SPELLACY
SPORTS EDITOR

The Monmouth Hawks returned back to West Long Branch looking for their first win of the season after going 0-5 at the Spartan Classic in Spartanburg, South Carolina.

Monmouth began their weekend in a double header matchup, first facing Akron at 10 A.M. on Feb. 7, and Bowling Green at 5:30 P.M.

Junior infielder/outfielder Mackenzie Bloss's RBI double plated a run, getting Monmouth on the board in the first inning. This was Monmouth's one

and only run of the game, in the 7-1 loss for the Hawks. Akron got their first two runs of the game in the second inning and added five more in the fifth. Sophomore pitcher Izzy Bonaccio made her season debut, pitching four innings, while junior pitcher Jayla Cadena threw for the other three.

The Hawks went on to face Bowling Green later in the day, showing their resilience in a one point game. Monmouth had an impressive offensive performance with 10 hits. Freshman outfielder Kylee McLain started it off for the Hawks as she went 2-for-4 with a double and two runs. The Hawks continued to battle until the very last inning where they plated two runs in the final inning but came up short one run to finalize the score at 5-4.

The Hawks went head-to-head with Akron and Bowl-



PHOTOS COURTESY of Jerry Coli.

Monmouth showed resilience in Spartan Classic but were unable to find a win.

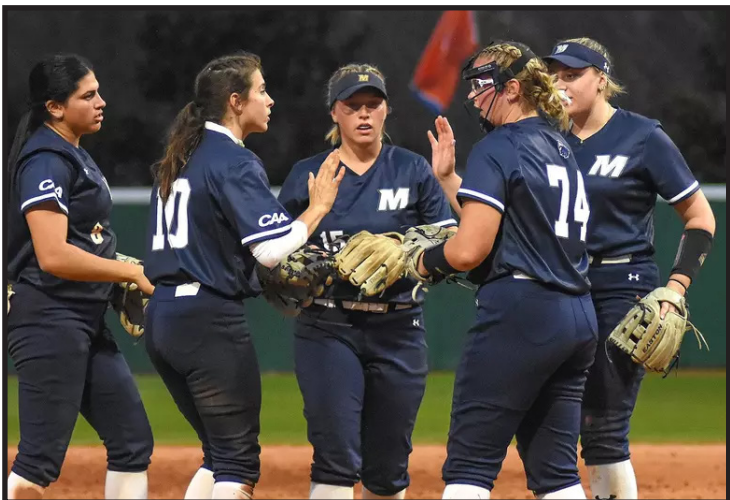
ing Green for a second time on Feb. 8. Six scored runs in the first inning and five in the fourth inning solidified Akron's strong offense that Monmouth was unable to shut down. The game was called after five innings and the final score stood at 11-2.

Sophomore infielder Giana Scotti scored Monmouth's lone run of the game against Bowling Green, as Bowling Green scored nine in total.

The last game of the clas-

sic fell on Sunday Feb. 9 against USC Upstate where Monmouth's offensive output was strong with nine hits but were unable to put any runs on the board. USC Upstate were able to capitalize on certain opportunities, capturing the win 8-0.

The Hawks will travel to Las Vegas, Nevada this weekend Feb. 14 for the UNLV Rebel Classic.



PHOTOS COURTESY of Jerry Coli.

Monmouth looks ahead to the UNLV Rebel Classic Feb. 14 in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Women's basketball pick up win against Drexel

MICHAEL GRUSEKE
OPINIONS EDITOR

The Monmouth Hawks (12-10) narrowly defeated the Drexel Dragons (12-9) by the score of 50-47 this past Friday (2/7/24) at the Ocean First Bank Center. The Hawks have advanced to an impressive 7-4 record in CAA play and are now 8-3 when playing at home. Graduate center Belle Kranbuhl made her pres-

ence known on the court, leading the team with 15 points. Kranbuhl also played a key role on defense, putting up a statline of 8 rebounds and 5 blocks.

Fifth year forward Taisha Exanor had a stellar day, putting up 13 points and 11 rebounds, which was her 6th double-double of the season.

The Hawks were dominant in the paint, which helped them secure victory. They out rebounded Drexel 44-32

and scored 22 points in the paint compared to Drexel's 16 points.

Monmouth started off the game well, taking a 7-0 lead with 5:23 left in the first quarter after Exanor hit a three pointer.

Drexel finally found some offense late in the first quarter, but the Hawks did not let up, resulting in the Hawks finishing the first quarter with an 11-6 lead.

The Hawks took control

once again in the start of the second quarter as they went on a 9-0 run that ended after a layup from sophomore forward Divine Dibula that put the score at 22-11 with 5:01 before halftime.

Drexel fought back late in the second quarter and cut the Hawks lead to a score of 24-18 going into halftime.

Once the third quarter began, the Dragons went on a run of their own and eventually took a 32-30 lead with 3:19 left in the third quarter after a made jumper by junior guard Grace O'Neill.

The Hawks quickly took the lead back and were up by 3 points with less than a minutes left in the third quarter, but Drexel's O'Neill sunk a three point shot with 0:41 left in the third quarter, which made the two teams all knotted up at 37-37 going into the 4th quarter.

Monmouth's offense had a slow start in the 4th quarter which Drexel took advantage of, taking a quick 47-41 lead over the Hawks with 3:34 remaining in the game.

The Hawks proved that they have the ability to thrive in clutch moments, as their-

impressive defensive play would not allow Drexel to score a single point in the final 3 minutes of the game.

Along with their great defensive play, the Hawks went on a 9-0 run in the last 2:42 of the game, which included a clutch jumper made by fifth year guard Damaris Rodriguez to take a 48-47 lead over the Dragons with 1:11 left in the game.

Kranbuhl extended the Hawks lead to 3 points after a successful layup with 8 seconds remaining in the game, putting the score at 50-47.

Drexel would have a chance to tie the game in the final seconds, but was unsuccessful thanks to a great defensive stand by Monmouth, which sealed the 50-47 victory for the Hawks.

The Hawks will look to stretch their 2 game winning streak to 3, when they travel to the University of Delaware in a matchup versus the Delaware Blue Hens (7-14) on Friday (2/14/25).

The game will be played at Bob Carpenter Center at 6:30 p.m.



PHOTO COURTESY of Troy Fenton Jr.

Belle Kranbuhl had five blocks in the contest, contributing to the 10 total blocks the Hawks recorded, its highest total in a game this season.

Men's lacrosse loses to Manhattan in season opener

HENRY BOODY
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

The Monmouth men's lacrosse opened the 2025 season with a tough 9-7 loss to Manhattan Saturday Feb. 8 at Kessler Stadium.

Monmouth took control early, jumping to a 2-0 lead behind goals from junior attack Connor Gorman, senior midfield Luke Cole, and junior attack Ty Cafarelli.

In the third, the Hawk's extended their lead to 6-3 with goals from sophomore attack Brendan Dundas and senior midfield Nick Teets. However, Manhattan responded with a 4-1 run.

Despite leading at halftime, the Hawks could not hold off a second-half surge from the Jaspers.

The Jaspers sealed the win with fourth quarter goals from Manhattan's Sean Shelko and Kelly DuPree, while Monmouth was held scoreless. Graduate student and goalie Tommy Heller made 14 saves, but allowed two extra to get by him.

Gorman led Monmouth with three goals and an assist, while junior midfielder-Ryan O'Rourke added three assists. Manhattan's Drew Hiner and Shelko each netted two goals, with Connor Engel scoring a goal with an additional two assists.

The Hawks (0-1) will look to rebound when they face Boston University on Feb. 14.



PHOTO COURTESY of Troy Fenton Jr.

Tommy Heller had 14 saves in the matchup against Manhattan.

THE OUTLOOK



WOMEN'S BASKETBALL WIN BY THREE POINTS IN LATE COMEBACK



Monmouth women's basketball improve to 7-4 in conference play after a 9-0 run just under three minutes in the final quarter.

SEE STORY ON PAGE 15

PHOTO COURTESY of Troy Fenton Jr.