

THE

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PSNK Chooses Dance Representatives for THON

President Obama's State of the Union Address

A Look: "Into the Woods"

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Pro-Life Activists March for the Unborn.....	1
President Obama’s State of the Union Address.....	3
PSNK Chooses Dance Representatives for THON Weekend	5
A Look: “Into the Woods”	8
Service-Learning Added to Business Communication Class.....	10
Penn State New Kensington Sports Round-Up.....	12
Post Holiday Health and Fitness.....	13
We Are...Who We Are.....	15
From the Stage to the Screen: “Into the Woods”	17
Queen of Hearts: Date Night Fashion.....	19
For All of Those That Cupid’s Arrow Missed.....	21

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Cover photo features Brooke Churma and Alex Pedder taken by Lauren Blum.

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POLITICS

Pro-Life Activists March for the Unborn

By Sarah Steighner

WASHINGTON D.C. – Gregorian chants, prayers, and enthusiastic pro-life mantras could be heard ringing throughout the streets of Washington from the National Mall to Capitol Hill for the annual March for Life. The 42nd anniversary of the 1973 Roe v. Wade court ruling prompted hundreds of thousands of pro-life activists to rally in protest of abortion.

This year's March for Life theme, "Every Life is a Gift," was reflected on hundreds of signs that read "Defend Life" and "Every Life Deserves a Lifetime."

The rally kicked off at the National Mall at noon. Amongst the speakers were Congressional Representatives including Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-Wash.), Chris Smith (R-N.J.), Daniel Lipinski (D-Ill.), and Tim Scott (R- S.C.).



Pro-life activist marching to Capitol Hill at the 2015 March for Life. (Photo by Sarah Steighner)

After the rally, the streets flooded with protesters as the march began. Along the march route, some groups set up their banners and stood along the sidewalk so that all could see their messages. This included a group proudly flying the Canadian flag with signs reading, "Canada Stands with Pro-Life America." A more somber stretch of the march involved a sign that said, "Genocide Pictures Ahead" followed by large banners displaying the bloody aspects of the abortion process.

More groups were stationed in front of the Supreme Court, which was the last part of the march before crowds dispersed. Amongst these groups were a few dozen pro-choice advocates. While solely a peaceful demonstration, the March for Life was lined with a prominent police presence.

POLITICS

However, the only instance in which police were called to action was when the few pro-choice advocates purposefully moved on to the street and blocked the swarms of pro-life activists trying to march through. Those who refused the U.S. Capitol Police's instructions to move back to the sidewalk, were restrained and arrested.

The day of the March for Life also coincided as Congress voted on two abortion bills. The first bill proposed to prohibit federal funds for most means of abortion coverage. A 242-179 vote by the House, passed. However, a second bill proposing to ban late-term abortions after 20 weeks of pregnancy was not passed.

Pro-life efforts continue across the country, including through organizations such as the 40 Days for Life in Pittsburgh. A kick-off event will be taking place Feb. 17 at 7 p.m. at the First Presbyterian Church located at the intersection of Liberty and Smithfield in Downtown Pittsburgh. This event starts the 40 Days for Life campaign that continues from Feb. 18 to March 29. For additional information, contact Nikki Bruni at 412-926-9413 or nbruni@40daysforlifepgh.com.



POLITICAL OPINION

President Obama's State of the Union Address

By Eric Bennardo

NEW KENSINGTON, Pa. — While President Barack Obama discussed many different issues in his Jan. 20, 2015 State of the Union Address to Congress, three specific issues stood out to me the most. These issues included: the economic statistics mentioned in his introduction, comments on ISIS, and his thoughts on education and new job creation.



President Barack Obama delivers the State of the Union address on Jan. 20, 2015. (Official White House Photo by Pete Souza)

In his introduction, Obama cites several statistics that I saw as successes of the U.S. He talked about how the unemployment rate is lower than it was before the crash of 2007-2008. He also said that the rate of job creation is the highest it has been since the turn of the century. These two statistics say a lot about the state of the American economy as it stands in the beginning of 2015.

Obama also mentions that our presence in Iraq and Afghanistan is the lowest it has been since 9/11, something that I personally applaud him for.

Finally, Obama stated that almost ten million people who did not have health care a year ago now do, which is something else I thought was worth celebrating.

I view these as wonderful achievements that deserve much recognition from Congress. However, judging from Speaker John Boehner's lack of enthusiasm, not everyone felt this way. The lack of applause from Speaker Boehner, as well as the facial expressions from some of the congressmen and women, was in a way appalling to me. After all, everything Obama said, in my view, seemed to benefit people on both sides of the political aisle.

I also support the president's view on how to deal with ISIS. He stated that we as a nation should go about combating and ultimately destroying the terrorist group.

POLITICAL OPINION

He emphasized cooperating with the rest of the world, as ISIS is more than simply an American problem. Almost every single country has been affected in some way by this group, and it is the duty of these countries to work together in order to dismantle and defeat ISIS.

Finally, Obama discusses education and new jobs for the future. He has stated that he is a large supporter of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Technology (STEM) based industries, and stressed how important it is for the U.S. to return to the top of the list of best-educated countries in the world. This can only be done by hiring more effective teachers who have the ability to innovate and create better teaching methods. The emphasis on the importance of STEM must also become a priority for the United States' education system.

In conclusion, I would like to say how important it is for young people in our college age group to pay more attention to political events such as State of the Union Address'. We are the next generation, and it is our responsibility to invest some of our time and energy to become better informed citizens. This will provide the opportunity for us to effectively lead the future generations and maintain the free society that allows us to partake in the political process in the first place.



President Barack Obama greets 103-year-old Civil Rights legend, Amelia Boynton Robinson, with Rep. Terri Sewell, D-Ala., on the evening of the State of the Union. (Official White House Photo by Pete Souza)

CAMPUS LIFE

PSNK Chooses Dance Representatives for THON Weekend

By Sarah Steighner

NEW KENSINGTON, Pa. – The hard work and enthusiasm of Brooke Churma and Alex Pedder has led to them being the chosen dancers to represent Penn State New Kensington’s THON chapter for the annual THON weekend at University Park.

Believed to be one of the largest student run philanthropies worldwide, THON is an annual 46 hour dance marathon. The main goal of this fundraising event, and all of THON’s efforts in general, is to raise money for children with pediatric cancer. THON takes place this year at the Penn State University Park campus in the Bryce Jordan Center from Feb. 20-22. While the Bryce Jordan Center will be full of people rallying in support, “for the kids,” certain chapters of THON from different clubs and campuses are allowed a select number of “dancers” to represent their THON club on the dance floor.



Brooke Churma and Alex Pedder pose with the Nittany Lion as they generate enthusiasm for the upcoming THON weekend. (Photo by Lauren Blum)

To be a dancer, there are many qualifications that a THON member must meet. These qualifications state that a member must participate in at least 75 percent of the THON events and meetings. Furthermore, they must have raised \$1,000 on their own for THON. Additionally, each candidate must be interviewed by select people on campus. These interviewers include staff and professors from around the campus, as well as alumni. After the board of interviewers review each candidate, they then select who they believe will best represent PSNK. This year’s members that qualified include Cassie Eckenrod, Kelsey Belitskus, Brooke Churma, Alex Pedder, and Zack Wolford. While each candidate has the chance to be chosen, there are only two spots available for the PSNK campus.

Chosen dancer, Alex Pedder is studying Mechanical Engineering in his sophomore year. He has been an active member of THON for a year and a half. He attended THON weekend last year for the first time and described it as “inspiring, moving, and incredible.”

CAMPUS LIFE

Pedder explained the many reasons that he wanted to be a dancer, “I thought it would be an unforgettable opportunity to represent the New Kensington campus. I saw being a dancer as a challenge against myself.”

While participating in numerous fundraising efforts for THON this year, Pedder stated that another reason he wanted to be a dancer for THON was his past involvement in fundraisers that have helped raise money for cancer charities. These fundraisers included bowl-a-thons and competitive shooting matches. “Cancer and cancer fundraisers have impacted my life, and being a part of THON was just the next stepping stone as I continue my journey through life,” said Pedder.

Dancer Brooke Churma is a senior Communications major. Churma has been involved with THON for three years, including being a Moraler at University Park her junior year where her job was to take care of a dancer throughout the 2014 THON weekend.

Churma has wanted to dance in THON since her sophomore year. “I think it’s amazing that people can stand without sleep for 46 hours in order to raise money for such an amazing cause,” she said. “I want to be able to say that I was able to do that and now I finally have the opportunity to.”

One of Churma’s favorite things about THON was canning outside of store fronts to raise money. “I have always enjoyed canning,” she said. “I have met so many amazing people that stop and just want to talk to you and share a part of their life with you, whether it’s related to what you’re doing or not.”

THON advisor, Lauren Blum, shared her perspective on the qualified candidates. “They all dedicated a lot of time, effort and heart to becoming a dancer at PSNK,” Blum said. “Unfortunately, we can only pick two, but we are so excited about all the work everyone did and hope that some of these students who are returning will try to be dancers again next year!”

Blum disclosed that this year, PSNK’S THON goal was to beat last year’s total, which they have already accomplished. She said that, “Our students always strive to beat the highest campus total which was \$52,000 and I am confident that one year soon we will be able to do it!”

While being chosen as a dancer for THON weekend is viewed as a privileged opportunity, it comes with great responsibility. THON dancers are expected to stay awake and on their feet for 46 hours. Attempting to stay healthy, motivated, and energetic will be one of the challenges each dancer faces.

CAMPUS LIFE



Penn State students unveil the final donation amount at THON 2014. (Photo Courtesy of Penn State New Kensington Student Life)

“All of us are going to have to feed off of each other when it comes to energy and making it through the weekend,” said Churma. “Our supporters get to have sleep shifts, but I personally do not think that their job is any easier. We all have to help each other.”

Pedder added that another major goal is to remember those who have lost their battle with cancer while hoping that their memory lives on through some type of message to each person attending THON weekend.

Penn State New Kensington’s THON chapter holds many fundraisers each year. The three canning weekends, where THON members ask for donations outside of local businesses’, generated \$12,000 alone. Canning weekends are typically the biggest form of fundraising for THON. Other fundraising efforts included a THON 5K at University Park and mailing out THONvelopes to people and businesses’ looking for an opportunity to donate directly. The annual Spaghetti Dinner, second annual Basket Bingo Bash, and third annual mini THON at Burrell High School were also held. In addition, PSNK held several fundraisers at Fun Fest in Harmarville.

A send off pot-luck dinner will be held at the Penn State New Kensington campus Feb. 17 at 6 p.m. in the Conference Center. While celebrating all fundraising efforts in preparation of THON weekend, the total amount raised from PSNK’s THON chapter this year will be unveiled.

Since THON was formed in 1977, the organization has raised over \$114 million towards the Four Diamonds Fund at Penn State Hershey Children’s Hospital. Last year, THON raised \$13.34 million. This was a record breaking amount in the history of THON fundraising.

CAMPUS LIFE

A Look: “Into the Woods”

By Paige Owens



Bill Mitas works with students at auditions for “Into the Woods” (Photo by Jon McCabe)

NEW KENSINGTON, Pa. - This spring semester, students in Bill Mitas’ Production Practicum course, the Penn State New Kensington Drama Club, and local Pittsburgh actors and actresses are teaming up to accomplish an outstanding performance of “Into the Woods.” “Into the Woods” made its stage debut in San Diego in 1986 and again on Broadway in 1987. A film adaptation of this musical was released in late 2014 by Disney.

Mitas has been teaching at Penn State New Kensington as the Adjunct Instructor in Theatre Arts for the last seven years. “I have always been interested in Theatre since early in high school,” said Mitas. “I wanted to go to Carnegie Mellon for Theatre Arts after high school, but I could not afford to go.”

Mitas returned to school and received his Bachelor of Science degree from Point Park University, and finally his Master’s Degree in Entertainment

Technology from Carnegie Mellon University. He joined Penn State in 2008. However, he remains at the Art Institute as a full time faculty member.

Auditions for “Into the Woods” were held at the beginning of the semester and were open to all Penn State students and the local community. Mitas explained that after last semester’s production, he took requests from his students for what they would like to perform for the spring musical and “Into the Woods” seemed like a good choice.

“This is a ‘BIG’ production,” Mitas said. “The cast has 22 roles and typically I get around ten students, at most, to audition. This gives our students an opportunity to work with seasoned professionals in the area.”

Last semester, Mitas and the Drama Club put on a performance of “Beyond Therapy,” which included freshmen Jon McCabe and Laura Gensamer as the leads. McCabe and Gensamer have returned and will be hitting the stage again together. Gensamer is acting as the narrator for this production and McCabe is acting as Jack.

Gensamer is a freshmen that is considering majoring in Corporate Communications or Marketing, but has been actively involved with theatre for many years. “I’ve always liked talking in front of people,” Gensamer said. “The idea of getting to play a different person every time you start a new production has always been exciting to me.”

Mitas’ students praise him for his talent, dedication, and inspiration. He encourages his students

CAMPUS LIFE

to push their talent, which brings out the best in each of them on stage and in rehearsals.

McCabe, a freshmen Psychology major, states he has always been interested in theatre. and was involved in the theatre program at Burrell High School. "Bill is the second director I've ever had. He is caring towards his cast and is really great with designing sets," McCabe said.

"He inspired me to audition for the theatre program at University Park and I auditioned this past week. He is a great director who can make the smallest cast and crew put on a really great performance. That's what it takes to be a good director, using what you have to make things remarkable."

The leading female role for "Into the Woods," the Baker' wife, is played by Klase Danko, who graduated from Point Park University. Danko auditioned as a member of the community and is an experienced actress. Mitas is hoping that having students, trained actors, and the community involved will create, "a wonderfully, magical production."

"I would hope to have a positive effect on our students, as well as the community, sharing my experiences performing on stage, as well as working back stage," said Mitas. "I have made a strong effort to integrate the community into our campus productions."

Another freshmen involved in the Drama Club, Wati Kumwenda, is studying Biomedical Engineering Technology. She explained that she loves sing-

ing and acting, which is why she first became involved in theatre. She continued to state that she performed throughout her high school career, and naturally, wanted to perform in her college career.

"Bill is very eccentric and open-minded," Kumwenda said. "He encourages us to express ourselves fully not only in the roles we play on stage, but also as a cast and crew in our down time. He is very professional and considerate of us and goes out of his way to ensure we perform to the best of our abilities."

The cast and crew will work diligently throughout the semester to prepare for their production of "Into the Woods," which will open at the Forum Theater at Penn State New Kensington April 16th, 17th, and 18th at 8 p.m.

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CAMPUS LIFE

Service-Learning Added to Business Communication Class

By Ryan McLaughlin

NEW KENSINGTON, Pa. – Service. Learning. Team. Project. Four words that can make any college student cringe. However, any student taking Business and Professional Communication with Dr. Wood this semester, will experience these new additions to the course.

Dr. Jennifer Wood, who has taught at Penn State New Kensington since 1999, decided to add this project to her Business and Professional Communication class as a means to help her students learn. “Students learn by doing,” she said. “The community gets its needs met.”

Dr. Wood also says that the campus is focusing on the issue of poverty in the community. To this end, Dr. Wood sought out the Bridges program at Westmoreland Community Action, to see about a service-learning opportunity for her class.

For a true service-learning project, Dr. Wood said that the project needs to both benefit the class and the community. “Service-learning has a hyphen between it,” she said. “And that’s because both of those things have to happen.”

The project will both fit the needs of the class and help parts of the community. The students will work in teams to create materials based around the employment process. Additionally, they will create materials based around interviewing skills, resume writing, and numerous topics all revolving around obtaining a profession.

Bill Connolly is the Director of Community Support Programs for Westmoreland Community Action (WCA), and is Dr. Wood’s contact for the service-learning project. He explained that the materials are part of their Bridges program. The materials will be used in the classes the WCA has to help their low-income clients. “We are really excited about how our relationship with Penn State has come about in recent years,” Connolly said.



Dr. Jennifer Wood addressing her Business and Professional Communication class. (Photo by Ryan McLaughlin)

CAMPUS LIFE

The students are also excited about the opportunity for the class. Darren Myers, Junior Corporate Communications Major, said that he likes the idea behind the project and that, “(It’s) preparing us for the actual corporate world.”

He explained that students have to apply and interview for their positions on the project, which will help students in the future. Myers is in charge of the interview process of his work at Aéropostale and said that he has employed some of the techniques as an interviewer that were brought up in the course. Myers noticed the format of this class is different from previous courses he has had with Dr. Wood.

Dr. Wood also admitted that the project is an experiment for the course. “It could be a complete disaster,” she said. “I’m expecting a number of bumps along the way.”

She explained that she hopes her students produce something worthwhile that can be used for the WCA. She will be taking notes along the way and plan changes and adjustments for the next time she teaches this course. Both Dr. Wood and Connolly want to continue the service-learning project for years to come.

Service-learning is not the only new experience for Dr. Wood. Last year, she became the Discipline Coordinator for the Arts and Humanities in University College. Essentially, she provides a perspective for the evaluations performed by the Director of Academic Affairs for faculty in the Arts and Humanities.

“If the Director of Academic Affairs has a background in mathematics and is evaluating a language professor, the Discipline Coordinator can say these are the norms of the discipline or these are the expectations in terms of teaching, researching, or service,” Dr. Wood said.

“I’m new to administration,” Dr. Wood said. “It’s kept me busy.” Her new position has required more of her time. She has to travel to the various campuses that fall under the University College and provide that perspective during evaluations.

Despite Dr. Wood’s new challenging position, her and her Business Communications class are looking forward to the semester.

CAMPUS SPORTS

Penn State New Kensington Sports Round-Up

By Casey Cavanaugh

NEW KENSINGTON, Pa. -- Penn State New Kensington's (PSNK) spring 2015 semester comes in with an action packed lineup of sporting events.



Freshman Guard, Dorian Broadwater, attempting to convert a free throw after being fouled. (Photo Courtesy of PSNK Athletics)

PSNK's Basketball team clinches its first playoff berth since 2008 with a win over Penn State Dubois, 70-57, on Saturday Feb. 7th. Penn State Dubois came into Penn State New Kensington's gym with tempo on their side after easily sliding past Penn State New Kensington earlier in the season, 93-76, at home.

PSNK came out on fire, thanks to the help of Junior Shaquille Hager, who had a game high of 25 points. Lou Payne, Jordan Williams, and Dorian Broadwater recorded 18, 11, and 10 points each, respectively. Payne also finished the game with nine assists and six rebounds. Penn State New Kensington's Basketball program has earned the most championships of all the other Penn State branch campuses and hopes to add to that record this year.

PSNK men's wrestling program hired The University of Pittsburgh graduate, Francis Healy, as this year's head coach. Healy prepared this recently new program and continues to grow off of last season's individual successes. Healy wrestled at Pitt and is also a professional Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) fighter. This year's 10 man roster has a strong outlook for the season after last year representing nationals with three wrestlers from New Kensington.

Finally, to wrap up this spring's sporting lineup is PSNK's softball team. The lady lion's softball team is looking to come out for another strong season after narrowly missing the playoffs last season by one game. The ladies will start on March 7th in Kentucky for their spring training. The girls are in for a change of pace as they have gone to Orlando prior to this year for their spring training. Their season starts March 22nd against Westmoreland County Community College.

FITNESS

Post Holiday Health and Fitness

By Darren Myers



NEW KENSINGTON, Pa. – Face it, you ate a little too much over the holidays – everyone did. But the weather is warming up and rather than hiding behind baggy T-shirts and oversized towels all day, now is the time to start thinking about your summer body.

The biggest cause for neglecting to workout is lack of time. College life is busy for everyone, there's homework, jobs, social life: each of them seeming to happen one right after another, with free time being something of an anomaly. Despite the times of confusion and chaos in a college-life schedule, even the slightest workout can make a difference come time for warm weather.

Working out at home is a simple thing to do; all it takes is some initiative and motivation. (Photo by Jimmy Meyers)

In order to succeed in anything, particularly, anything pertaining to fitness, having a plan is the most crucial step. Having a plan helps

better understand what goals you are striving for and how high of a priority you are going to make shedding those unwanted pounds. A plan should have an overall “end” goal with several “small” goals in between. The “small” goals are what help keep you motivated as you go along. Without the “small” goals, people tend to lose interest and find that their overall goal is unattainable. The “small” goals help provide a sense of accomplishment along the way that will fuel you to keep progressing forward.

After creating a plan, that plan has to be implemented. A busy college life can create difficulty in executing this plan, but prioritizing your schedule is an easy fix for that problem. Thirty minutes (the same time it takes to watch an episode of “The Big Bang Theory”) a day is all you need to make a difference in your fitness level. Set a time each day where you will stop whatever it is you are doing and dedicate 30 minutes of your time to fitness.

Another concern with working out is price. Gyms can be fairly expensive depending on the facility and what it offers. If going to a gym is your preference, ask about student discounts. By simply flashing a student ID, many gyms in the area offer student discounts on a monthly or yearly basis and the savings can be extraordinary.

Sometimes a gym's hours of operation do not coincide with a student's schedule, which is very understanding and can oftentimes be a legitimate excuse for not working out. Although, many gyms in the area are open 24/7, therefore that excuse is inadequate.

FITNESS

On the other hand, some people do not like to leave their house – you know who you are. If that is the case, there are simple solutions. Bodyweight exercises can work just as well as weighted exercises, if not better, when trying to lose weight. Bodyweight exercises include: push-ups, pull-ups, squats, wall squats, various ab exercises, and cardio moves: such as high knees, jumping jacks, burpees, and mountain climbers. None of these exercises require you to spend a dime of your hard-earned money and they can be done in any open room of your home.

In this day and age, everyone is searching for the “magic” way to lose weight when the reality is that the only way to lose weight is to burn calories. Studying is important, maintaining a job is crucial, and hanging out with friends is a necessity, but taking 30 minutes per day to help yourself accomplish something you want, is an obligation you should hold yourself to. If something is important enough to you, you will make time for it.



ENTERTAINMENT

We Are...Who We Are

By Paige Owens

PITTSBURGH, Pa. - Fans and Pittsburgh locals gathered into the upstairs of The Smiling Moose bar and music venue located in Southside on Jan. 29, eagerly awaiting the performances of Camp Element, Awake & Create, and Palisades. Members from each of the bands buzzed around the hot, dimly lit room preparing for their set and interacting with fans and friends that had come out to support them that evening.

Zachery Urbanek, a sophomore studying Criminal Justice at Penn State New Kensington, sported black skinny jeans, a white graphic T-shirt, and his signature black faux leather jacket with a hoodie underneath. Urbanek was not only a member of Awake & Create, a band which broke up in late August 2014 and reunited for this particular show, but he is also a member of the highly anticipated local band, Who We Are.

Who We Are is a post-hardcore band, made up of five members originating out of Pittsburgh. Who We Are first formed in late 2014 after Awake & Create decided to part ways. However, four of the former Awake & Create members joined forces with viral YouTube video vocalist, Chris Barna.

Who We Are is made up of Chris Barna (vocals), Nicholas Fike (guitar), Anthony McMillan (guitar), Zachary Urbanek (bass guitar), and John Harrison (drums).

Prior to Awake & Create's demise, the band played various venues in the Pittsburgh area, including Vans Warped Tour (2014), one of the largest post-hardcore travelling festivals in the United States, at the First Niagara Pavilion.

According to McMillan, Urbanek's brother, "Zach didn't know how to play bass guitar. We needed someone to fill in on bass for a show in late August. So we taught him how to play all of our songs and he played one show with the band before we broke up."



Zach Urbanek plays at The Smiling Moose on Jan. 29. (Photo by Chucky Dombrowski)

ENTERTAINMENT

Who We Are is currently an unsigned band, sponsoring and networking themselves. The band is working to create a fan base through social media such as Facebook and Twitter, which is their most active sources of communication. The band posts updates on their fan pages in order to stay connected with the fans they have already gained. Currently their ever growing fan base has over 2,000 "likes" on their Facebook page and over 4,000 Twitter followers.

According to the band's Facebook page, "Who We Are is looking to bring something different to the music industry and is currently working on their full length album, which is yet to be decided on a release date."

A teaser video for the band's debut single, "#apt69" was released prior to the band's original release date of Jan. 16. However, according to a Facebook and Twitter post, the release of "#apt69" was postponed indefinitely.

"My brother and I are working on rewriting some of the music and writing new music. That first song probably won't be released at all," said Urbanek, while sharing a cigarette outside of the Nittany Highland Apartment building adjacent from the New Kensington campus the day before the show.

Despite Who We Are not able to play the Jan. 29 show at The Smiling Moose as planned, the former Awake and Create, was able to captivate the audience with their energy, dedication, talent, and an overall outstanding performance.

As Who We Are continues their writing and recording process throughout 2015, it is evident that the music they produce will connect with the audience and bring something new and exciting to the music industry.

<https://www.facebook.com/officialwwa>



<https://twitter.com/officialwwaband>



ENTERTAINMENT

From the Stage to the Screen: Into the Woods

By Ryan McLaughlin

"The cow as white as milk. The cape as red as blood. The hair as yellow as corn. The slipper as pure as gold." These are the central items that bring all of the characters together in "Into the Woods" (Dec. 2014), a musical that has been adapted by Disney from the book by James Lapine and directed by Rob Marshall with screenplay by Stephen Sondheim.

The main characters include the baker (James Corden) and his wife (Emily Blunt). The baker's father (Simon Russell Beale) stole magical beans from a witch (Meryl Streep) years ago, and then his family incurred her wrath. The witch cursed the baker and his family, making them unable to have children. In order to reverse the curse, the witch tells the baker to gather the specifically identified items: a cow, a cape, a strand of hair, and a slipper before three midnights pass.



Photo courtesy of Walt Disney Productions

The items are in the possession of other characters, who, quite noticeably, come straight out of fairy tales. Jack (Daniel Huttleston) must take his cow, Milky White, into the market because she is unable to produce milk. Red Riding Hood (Lilla Crawford) goes to visit her grandmother, (Annette Crosbie) who lives through the woods, with her infamous blood red cape. Rapunzel (Mackenzie Mauzy) is locked away in a tower by her mother, the witch, and must use her long, yellow hair to lift people in and out of the tower. Cinderella (Anna Kendrick) wants nothing more than to go to the ball, but her wretched step-mother (Christine Baranski) and step-sisters won't allow her.

These characters constantly cross paths, as the baker and his wife scour the woods to find the items before the witch's deadline. Along the way, the characters frequently burst into song, one of which entitled "Agony" is performed by Chris Pine and Billy Magnussen.

"Into the Woods" has remained true to its roots from the stage to the theater. Only a few story elements have been changed, but otherwise the dark themes and comedy are still present. Meryl Streep portrays a menacing witch, who becomes a more complex character than her part implies.

ENTERTAINMENT

Part of what made "Into the Woods" so enjoyable was the conviction each cast member put into their roles. Streep had a lot of emotion with each song, even cracking her voice with some of her emotional pieces, such as "Stay with Me." Some may criticize her voice during the song, but I felt that it added that extra emotional weight.

I felt that she had good intentions and wanted to repent for her past infractions. She wanted to have the curse lifted on herself and the Baker's family. She and everyone become happy by the end of the first act, but that happiness is ruined in the second act. This leads to her other emotional song, "The Last Midnight," where she sings about how she wants to sacrifice one life to save all of the other's. The curse has been reversed, but now everyone is in danger. The rest of the characters just want to place the blame, but she wants to end the danger and go back to her life. All of these emotions are piled up into one song, and I believe that Streep pulled it off.

"Into the Woods" is an interesting experiment for Disney. The transition from stage to screen is not as well executed as Sondheim produced in "Sweeney Todd" (2007). However, "Into the Woods" had a more complex story to tell. "Into the Woods" has more characters and storylines than the "Sweeney Todd" story does. These storylines get more complicated, and it was difficult to translate all of the stories to a film format. Additionally, "Into the Woods" has conflicting moods and themes, going from comedy to tragedy multiple times and vice versa. Movie audiences are not always as receptive to these changes, especially in such a small time frame.

I highly recommend "Into the Woods" if you like musicals, twisted fairy tales, and complex stories. The songs truly help set the stage and describe the events occurring, and each one is fantastic. The production values are high, and they helped make "Into the Woods" one of my favorite films I have seen in 2015.

FASHION

Queen of Hearts: Date Night Fashion

By Paige Owens



Laura Gensamer is photographed in a lace Valentine's Day, date night outfit. (Photo by Paige Owens)

NEW KENSINGTON, Pa. — Date nights and Valentine's Day do not necessarily mean a gal needs to lavish herself in girly, and semi-cliché, reds and pinks. Although the classic, dangerous feel of wearing red and the soft, feminine look of pink never go out of style; up and coming trends create sexy, and chic styles that are redefining date night attire.

One of the biggest, but not necessarily new looks that is currently trending, both on the red carpet and on the streets, are classy jumpsuits. Jumpsuits are repeatedly either on the "in" or the "out" of fashion, but recently this look has reappeared and is redefining the sexy, chic world of fashion. This versatile piece can be worn in a number of ways: long-sleeved, sleeveless, a solid color, patterned, belted, or form fitting. Yet, it never loses its charm, elegance, and sex appeal.

This recently re-embraced style allows for gaudy accessories, sleek or vibrant heels, and the perfect shade of lipstick. This look is a great way to ditch the typical dress and heels and show off a style that will have your guy's jaw drop to the floor.

A great way to keep the sexy, girly look on a date is by wearing a classic, lace dress. Lace is an intriguing and down-right beautiful style that captures the elements of intimacy and poise. A dress that is accented with lace or with a lace overlay, creates an outfit that is simple, yet elegant. Although lace can be accessorized, the sheer beauty of this timeless fashion trend needs no assistance.

Lace can be worn in a variety of soft colors such as: white, cream, or powder blue. However, black, navy blue, or grey also create an everlasting elegant date night look. Lace easily makes an outfit feminine, sexy, and polished without even trying.

Stray away from the feminine look for a date by pairing a soft, cotton T-shirt with a faux leather skater skirt. This punky style adds class and sass to any look and is easily paired with Vans sneakers, cute ballet flats, or studded combat boots. The leather creates an edgy, risky look that says, "Yeah, I read 'Fifty Shades of Grey'."

FASHION

The perfect, assembled outfit isn't always about the dress, the skirt, or the fabric, but rather about the jewelry, the lipstick, the nails, and the heels. These accessories are entirely dependent on color, style, and the overall presentation of an outfit.

With Valentine's Day approaching, rather than dressing head to toe in pink or red, accentuate these colors in an outfit by picking accessories in that color scheme. The right heels can either make or break an outfit. However, if paired with a look that is simply chic, a flashy, chunky, or dazzling pair of heels can be the highlight of any outfit. Take Carrie Bradshaw's advice, and obsess over your shoe choices for a bit.

We use our hands over 90 percent of the time each day, and you do not want to be caught with unfiled nails or chipped nail polish. Getting your nails done professionally is not only a pampering treat for yourself, but it also brings that extra oomph that any outfit might crave. Not to mention that you can get chic colors, patterns, and jewels that will last when you get your nails done. Perhaps, a heart patterned nail design will be your perfect accessory for the evening.

Lipstick is an essential for every occasion, whether it be date night with your boyfriend or drinks with the girls. Rather than accenting your lips with a soft pink or nude, bold and vibrant colors, such as: purple, red, or a hot pink, are going to be what make your lips, and overall look, stand out in a crowd.

Jewelry is key when it comes to any outfit. The simple, little black dress can turn into a jaw dropping look instantly when paired with the right necklaces, bracelets, or rings. More is not necessarily better with jewelry, sometimes one showy piece can be enough. However, multiple intricate, glamorous rings is a trend that is not going anywhere anytime soon. A simple black dress highlighted with haute red jewels will keep any girl looking like a Valentine's Day sweetheart this year.

Many of these great items and styles listed can be found at stores such as Forever 21, Charlotte Russe, Macy's, or online at yerdle.com, where all things are free.

OPINION

For All of Those That Cupid's Arrow Missed

By Paige Owens

NEW KENSINGTON, Pa. – Valentine's Day is the one day of the year that couples think they have the privilege to crowd at restaurants taking up tables that are reserved for "couple's only," and pack themselves into the movie theatre.



Photo courtesy of flickr.com

Valentine's Day often feels like "Single's Awareness Day," and perhaps is only most real to the greeting card companies. Don't get me wrong though, I'm not bitter about Valentine's Day. I just strongly dislike annoying couples and red, frilly decorations hanging in every restaurant, supermarket, and clothing store.

While I tend to enjoy the life of being a single gal and having no one around to try and impress or please; Valentine's Day is a reminder that you don't have any "special someone" in your life to spend your time with. Part of being single entails not having to share a bed with anyone at night or having to compromise what TV series to watch on Netflix. Perhaps, the best part though, is that you do not have someone that you have to spend every waking, breathing, and living moment with. That, to me, deserves a sigh of relief.

If you love your significant other so much, than is it completely necessary to have a holiday that is entirely dedicated to showing off your love for them? After all, Halloween celebrates the wicked and undead, and St. Patrick's Day celebrates how fast you can get wasted. Then there is Valentine's Day. What are all the singles supposed to celebrate?

Personally, I blame Cupid and his arrows of love for missing me and the rest of the great singles I know. Dating can be flat out exhausting. Relationships require communication, energy, and, occasionally, too much time.

Instead, I'd rather spend my time with my friends, and if I really need to cuddle, that is what my cat is for. Besides, he can't argue with me about how much bed space I take up or what I like to watch on television at night.

So don't be afraid to curl up on the couch alone this Valentine's Day. After all, who says you have to share the remote or your bottle of wine?

Valentine's Day Cake Pops

One rather quick and easy treat to make for Valentine's Day are cake pops. Cake pops can provide you with your chocolate or dessert fix for the holiday. Even better, this treat can be a fun and on the go dessert for any important event or occasion!

Ingredients

- * A box cake mix and ingredients to make the cake
- * A can of frosting
- * Candy melts
- * 4 large eggs
- * Lollipop sticks
- * A styrofoam block or cake pop stand



Photo courtesy of pixabay.com

Directions

1. First start by following your boxed cake instructions to bake a cake.
2. Once your cake is done cooling, place chunks of the cake in a mixing bowl and crumble into small pieces using your hands.
3. Add a small dollop of frosting into the cake crumbles and mix with your hands. Continue adding small amounts of frosting into the crumb mixture until it feels like a clay-like consistency.
4. Taking the dough, roll in the palm of your hand until each cake pop is the same size.
5. Place the cake balls onto a plate and put into the refrigerator for a few hours until chilled.
6. Microwave the candy melts for about 30 seconds at a time, stir in between. Repeat until all the coating is melted.
7. Next, take a lollipop stick and dip it into the melted coating then into a cake ball. Place about halfway into the cake pop.
8. Place the cake pops back in the refrigerator to chill, take each cake pop and entirely dip into the melted coating.
9. Add sprinkles or other decorations of your choosing, and enjoy!