History and politics professors host teach-in about Israel-Hamas war

Proponents lead presentations and Q&A session

Maria Silveira
Contributing Writer

Members of the Wake Forest community gathered in Benson University Center on Nov. 8 for a teach-in aimed at creating a space to discuss and learn the context surrounding the ongoing Israel-Hamas war — and the broader conflict between Israel and Palestine from which the current war stems.

The event was led by four faculty members — politics professors Dr. Michaelle Brower and Dr. Charles (Hank) Kennedy, and history professors Dr. Barry Trachtenberg and Dr. Mir Yarifiz. Each professor shared an approximately 12-minute presentation then opened the discussion to attendees questions. The discussion was moderated by Associate Teaching Professor of Religious Studies Dr. Tanisha Ramachandran.

According to Trachtenberg, the event was organized in response to students concerns that they did not have a space on campus to discuss the ongoing violence in Gaza.

"We hoped that by hosting this teach-in we could create that space to normalize conversations about Palestine, Gaza and genocide in our community," Trachtenberg said.

The teach-in is the first event hosted by Wake Forest faculty in response to the Israel-Hamas war. Students have also organized events — including vigils hosted on Manchester Plaza by Jewish students and the Muslim Students Association on Oct. 10 and Nov. 1, respectively.

Trachtenberg noted the importance of being able to discuss violence against Palestinians without the fear of being threatened.

"There is a very strong apparatus that is mobilized in support of this genocidal activity, and to speak out against it means risking one's safety and that risk is different for different people," Trachtenberg said.

I have heard from a number of students on our campus that they have received threatening messages, very often sent to them anonymously either through social media or direct texting, which is obviously contributing to a greater climate of fear.

Yarifiz expressed hope that the teach-in would help diminish this climate of fear and create an open space for questions.

"My hope is that students feel like they have the room — even if it feels uncomfortable or anxiety-provoking — to learn about this, to learn more about this history, to learn more about why it's so uncomfortable and ideally to be able to talk about it with one another, even though it is uncomfortable," Yarifiz said.

The speakers emphasized that tensions between Palestine and Israel have been brewing since the 1800s, acting as a back-drop for this contentious war. The present Israel-Hamas war began on Oct. 7, when the Palestinian militant group Hamas conducted a surprise attack on Israeli towns bordering the Gaza Strip, a Palestinian territory that Israel and Egypt have blockaded for the past 16 years. (Editor's Note: The Old Gold & Black follows AP Style guidance, which is to refer to Hamas as a militant group.) Approximately 1,200 people were killed in the attack. Israel's response, which includes airstrikes and a ground invasion, has killed more than 11,000 people, according to the Gaza Health Ministry.

Trachtenberg opened the panel with a discussion of early Zionism — a movement originally intended to establish a Jewish homeland in Palestine and now is an Arab state and a British protectorate; and providing the territory into a Jewish state, an ideal that focuses on ensuring Israel's continued existence. He also gave a foundational history of Jewish emigration from Ottoman territory that Israel and Egypt have blockaded for the past 16 years. (Editor's Note: The Old Gold & Black follows AP Style guidance, which is to refer to Hamas as a militant group.) Approximately 1,200 people were killed in the attack. Israel's response, which includes airstrikes and a ground invasion, has killed more than 11,000 people, according to the Gaza Health Ministry.

Trachtenberg also explained how Israel came into existence, from the 1917 Balfour Declaration, which expressed British support for a Jewish homeland in Palestine, the 1937 Partition Plan, which recommended dividing the territory into a Jewish state, an Arab state and a British protectorate; and the 1948 Plan Dalet, a military operation during the 1948 Palestine War.

See Teach-in, Page 3

Third annual ‘Sex Week’ goes off with a bang

Virginia Noone
Photography Editor

Last week, the Sexual Health Ambassador Group (SHAG) held Wake Forest’s third annual Sex Week where SHAG reported a record-breaking 567 students participated in sponsored events that promoted sexual health education and destigmatized sex.

"Empowering sexual health can lead to happier, healthier students," senior Jenna Kirsh, one of the founding members of SHAG, said. "It's a really great week that educates people on the importance of sexual health, consent, just makes more awareness and normalizes talking about sex."

The events began Monday, Nov. 5, with “Sex Trivia” in Shorty’s, where students competed in sexual health trivia to win free Sex Week T-shirts and enjoyed free brownies. On Tuesday, students attended a talk where experts shared advice and information about female orgasms.

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Our professors need support

The Israel-Hamas war rages on and death tolls rise as innocent civilians on both sides suffer. Muslim and Jewish communities around the world feel the painful effects of these horrors, including Wake Forest students and faculty who have loved ones in the region.

Regardless of the disciplines they teach, professors must now reckon with the conflict privately and make decisions as to whether they should mention the war in their classes.

It can be difficult to have sensitive conversations when tensions are incredibly high on campus. Professors may think the safest option is to not discuss the war in class whatsoever to avoid retraumatizing students or making them uncomfortable.

If a professor chooses to open discussion, they run the risk of their words being recorded without their knowledge and being misconstrued. They risk doing more harm than good — despite having the best intentions.

Avoiding discussion, however, could also appear as dismissing the war and diminishing the severity of the situation.

Many professors have expressed their views on the war have received pushback from the university community. Professor Laura Mullen resigned after receiving threats in response to an X post, and the professors who hosted a teach-in last Wednesday, Nov. 8, said they were accused of anti-semitism, and a person holding an Israeli flag seemingly planned to disrupt the event before being called out by a panelist. Given these events, it is reasonable for professors to have apprehension on approaching the topic.

As Dr. Barry Trachtenberg expressed at the teach-in event, no one should feel like their livelihoods, careers and status at the university are being threatened due to their views on the Israel-Hamas war.

Some more experienced professors may know where the line of self-moderation and self-regulation typically lies in sensitive conversations, but newer professors, who are often less secure in their jobs compared to tenured professors, may not have enough experience to feel comfortable breaching the conversation and would appreciate guidance or communication.

According to Senior Associate Dean of Faculty Dr. Anthony Marsh, Dean of the College and Graduate School of Arts and Sciences Dr. Jackie Kraras sent a brief email to undergraduate and graduate school faculty early on in the war. The email expressed grief at the devastating violence presented by the Israel-Hamas war, the need to find support from those around us and information about on-campus services if additional support is needed.

While the Old Gold & Black commends this recognition of students’ pain, we implore administrators to also recognize that professors are hurting as well, and may also need guidance as they approach discussion of the Israel-Hamas war in their classrooms. Especially in a time when — as the Old Gold & Black has reported — students are hurting because of this war, it is crucial that professors have ample resources to support students and themselves.

In the meantime, we call on the university community to give professors grace and understanding. After all, they are humans, too, and like all of us, they are reckoning with the immediate and long-term effects of violence. In this time of violence and grieving, it is crucial that we embrace one another in the name of the fundamental principles of respect, compassion and peace.
Teach-in: Faculty members create space for discussion

Continued from Page 1

Kennedy discussed the ways in which Israel has violated the terms of the original 1948 partition as defined by UN Resolu-
tion 181, which created the state of Israel, specifically by creating settlements in the Palestinian West Bank region.

Browers shared maps to visualize where Palestinian and Israeli settlements lie in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. She also provided graphs and statistics showing the total Palestinian versus Israeli death counts since 1988 and as well as the number of deaths of UN employees, healthcare workers, Red Cross and Red Crescent staff members and journalists.

Yarfitz, in his presentation, recounted the history of antisemitism, distinguishing between forms of antisemitism that have existed for centuries and forms that are more specific to certain eras and contexts.

Carolyn Finney is excellent at articulating storytelling abilities and expertise provide important insight about environmental justice. Harris-Perry said. Finney’s research raises interesting questions about belonging and land ownership. Carolyn Finney inverts our notions of who belongs and who the land belongs to,” Harris-Perry said.

Carolyn Finney is an expert at using storytelling to get at the critically important issue of human relationships to the natural world,” Stottlemeyer said. “There are incisive intersections between historically marginalized communities and the environmental destruction that goes on in those spaces. Carolyn Finney is excellent at articulating those issues and allowing the broader conversation about sustainability to be more inclusive of marginalized communities.”

Contact Alexandra Meier at meieram22@wfu.edu

POLICE BEAT

- A Jeep Wrangler driven by an individual collided with a tree behind Palmer Hall. The individual was transported to Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center. The report was filed at 5:11 p.m. on Nov. 6.
- Unknown subject(s) took a victim’s jacket from a women’s locker room in Farrell Hall. The report was filed at 9:27 p.m. on Nov. 11.
- A vehicle struck the individual who was crossing the street in an area behind Angelou Hall. The individual was transported to Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center. The report was filed at 5:11 p.m. on Nov. 6.
- A student was assaulted in an area behind Craig Hall. The individual was transported to Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center. The report was filed at 12:27 a.m. on Nov. 8.
- An individual was escorted out of the stadium after throwing an object. The report was filed at 3:01 p.m. on Nov. 11.
- An individual was struck by a vehicle while crossing the street. The report was filed at 3:17 p.m. on Nov. 11.
- A brother of a freshman student was transported to Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center after having a bad reaction while smoking marijuana in the wooded area behind Angelou Hall. The report was filed at 9:27 p.m. on Nov. 11.

Finney: Research shows how privilege affects conservation spaces

Continued from Page 1

Finney encouraged the audience to think critically about the connection between environmental justice and the suppression of Black and Indigenous voices. She also discussed how her advocacy work is largely inspired by her family’s experiences with environmental suppression.

“Who are we that do the remembering, the archiving, the writing and the speaking about Black people on the land, and what does it cost in order to do that?” Finney asked at the beginning of her lecture.

To illustrate her point, Finney drew heavily upon her family’s history. In 1957, Finney’s parents took jobs as full-time caretakers for a wealthy family’s 12-acre estate in Westchester, N.Y. Finney displayed a photograph of a cherry tree on the estate, which the audience looked at with admiration.

Finney emphasized the unwavering loyalty her parents had shown to the land, where they worked for five decades maintaining the swimming pool, ponds and many veg-
table gardens that swept across the estate. However, according to Finney, a Conserva-
tion Easement from the Westchester Land Trust sent to her parents in 2003 “erased [her parents] from environmental history” by failing to acknowledge their placement as caretakers of the estate.

“While the letter profusely thanked the new owners for their conservation efforts, there was nothing in the letter that acknowledged my parents for serving the land for over 50 years,” Finney said. “And just like that, they were erased from environmental history.”

Finney then displayed a more recent picture of the estate. In this photo, the cherry tree was notably absent, she says. This sym-

bolic difference between the photographs represents the dilemma Finney and her family faced, as well as the dedication to serving the land.

“Land is never just about land,” Finney said. “It is about economic and political power, and it is about the right to say that you belong.”

Finney said her family’s lost history re-

minds her of the marginalized communi-
ties, such as Black and Indigenous peoples, who had long occupied outdoor spaces in the United States, yet never earned recogni-
tion or a place in the narrative that shapes our understanding of the natural world.

“There are people who have labored and loved and been on the land,” Finney said. “What gets lost beyond simply the story when we do not dig deeper into who they were?”

In the Summer of 2021, Finney was able to return to her family’s land and plant a new cherry tree through a three-week resi-
dency with the New York Botanical Gar-
dens. For Finney, this restoration symbol-
izes the action of creating a new story to which we all are accountable.

“The story might be my family’s, but this is the story of all of us: the conservationists, the people who would afford to buy the land, those who were on the land before us,” Finney said. “It is not simply a Black story — it is a human story that we all have something to gain from.”

Politics professor Dr. Melissa Harris-Perry said that Finney’s research raises interesting questions about belonging and land ownership. “Carolyn Finney inverts our notions of who belongs and who the land belongs to,” Harris-Perry said.

Associate Dean for the Engaged Liberal Arts Dr. Eric Stottlemeyer said that Finney’s storytelling abilities and expertise provide important insight about environmental justice.

“Carolyn Finney is an expert at using story-

telling to get at the critically important issue of human relationships to the natural world,” Stottlemeyer said. “There are incisive intersections between historically marginalized communities and the environmental destruction that goes on in those spaces. Carolyn Finney is excellent at articulating those issues and allowing the broader conversation about sustainability to be more inclusive of marginalized communities.”

Contact Maria Silveira at silvmt23@wfu.edu

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Sex Week: SHAG held events throughout the week to promote sexual health and educate students

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On Wednesday, students competed in “Race to the Finish” where they learned the correct way to put on a condom after racing through an inflatable obstacle course on Manchester Plaza. On Thursday, students stopped by SHAG’s tables in Benson University Center to participate in the “Solar System to Sexploration” where sex-related prizes were given after students completed four sex-education activities to enter a raffle. Finally, Sex Week concluded on Friday with SHAG’s “Sex on Wheels,” in which SHAG members delivered free condoms and supplies around campus.

On Tuesday, 180 students attended an “I Love Female Orgasms” talk in Pugh Auditorium with authors Marshall Miller and Lindsey Fram. Miller and Fram are both involved with the sexual health education organization Sex Discussed Here!, which Miller founded with his partner, Dorian Solot.

The speakers covered areas of sexual health that most high school curriculums leave out, such as sexual pleasure and orgasms, porn’s negative impact on body image, communication with partners, normalization of different sexual preferences, techniques to orgasm with a partner or alone, female sexual anatomy such as the clitoris and the benefits of masturbation.

“Sexuality is a source of a lot of joy for people, but it’s not necessarily a guarantee that people have the education as far as understanding their own bodies and being comfortable communicating with a partner,” Miller said after the talk concluded. “So even if you’re not planning on putting any of this information to use, no harm can come from being educated. [Being educated] is what college is all about.”

Students were able to submit responses and participate in polls that the speakers sent out anonymously. The questions and polls focused on debunking misconceptions and消除 around orgasms and self-pleasure. The conversation was open to people of all sexualities and identities but focused on the importance of gender equity when it comes to the “Orgasm Gap.”

The Orgasm Gap refers to a statistic from the Journal of Sex and Marital Therapy that found that 81.6% of women do not orgasm from penetration alone, whereas 95% of men report usually or always orgasming during sex. Approximately 5-10% of women have never orgasmed, but 59% have faked an orgasm. A recent study also found that a significant orgasm gap exists in college life, as well. Orgasms have impressive physical and mental health benefits such as boosting fertility, heart health and your immune system in addition to releasing hormones that help decrease anxiety and promote connectedness.

“Sexuality is a source of a lot of joy for people, but it’s not necessarily a guarantee that people have the education as far as understanding their own bodies and being comfortable communicating with a partner.”

- Marshall Miller

The Old Gold & Black spoke to two students who attended the event. Both students, who were freshman, requested anonymity, which the Old Gold & Black granted due to the intimate nature of topics discussed at the event.

“I did not expect the [event] to be so informative and so comfortable,” said one anonymous student. “[My sex education] was mostly about infections, abstinence and how to avoid pregnancy and not a ton about actually having sex.”

Another student had a similar experience with their church’s sex education.

“The only education that I received was in sixth grade, and it was essentially he, she, we and God,” the freshman said.

As Miller and Fram pointed out, the lack of thorough sex education in high school curriculums contributes to the Orgasm Gap and is partially what inspired Miller to co-write his book, “I Love Female Orgasms,” as well as travel to hundreds of colleges to give talks and share tips, tricks and information.

According to Kirsh, SHAG believes that prioritizing sexual health will help destigmatize female pleasure and make campus a better place for women.

In only the two-and-a-half-years since SHAG’s founding, she has watched her organization grow from four members to 35 members, and she has seen student participation in Sex Week expand.

“In our first year, we only did one event that was ‘I Love Female Orgasms,’ and we had about 180 people,” Kirsh said. “Last year, we had ‘Sex in the Dark and Sex Toys,’ and we had a total of 400 people at all of our events throughout the week.”

“I Love Female Orgasms” drew a diverse crowd of students with a significantly higher number of male students than the previous year, according to Kirsh. One potential cause is an outreach campaign to Interfraternity Council chapters, National Panhellenic Council chapters, and professional and service fraternities as well as other clubs on campus.

“So, we say if [fraternities] have 20% of their members come, they can write a letter to their nationals saying that they’re promoting sexual health and learning,” Kirsh said of SHAG’s outreach to campus organizations.

“I think that does get an increase of male students. By promoting in those ways and targeting certain groups, I think that does help get us a ton of different students at our events.”

As another incentive to draw students, SHAG gave out 60 sex toys, including vibrators, to students who attended the events. After Miller and Fram’s talk, students were told to reach under their seats to see if they could locate a lucky red ticket that would earn them a free vibrator. The room broke into excitement as students searched below their seats and adjacent seats in their row for tickets.

Participants of the “Solar System to Sexploration” event on Thursday had a chance to win prizes, as they raced to complete four activities that educated them on birth control, STIs, pleasure and anatomy. After finishing, students were entered into a raffle where they had the chance to win “I Love Sober Sex” T-shirts, vibrators, butt plugs, water bottles and other prizes.

Freshman Maddie Smiley, a member of SHAG, helped run the event.

“I went to Sex trivia one of the first weeks of school, and I joined the club after that,” Smiley said. “It’s really exciting to see all of my classmates go to these events and have a great time with them — and in the greater context, of course. I think that it serves a good purpose in terms of educating people as to their own sexual health and how to get people out of their shells.”

As Sex Week comes to a close, SHAG’s work continues. They will continue to run the “Safer Sex Express” program that discreetly delivers free condoms, pregnancy tests and safer sex supplies to students’ PO. boxes. Interested students can fill out an order form that can be accessed through their Instagram, @wfulasafesexexpress.

“We love to have people come to our events and just keep talking about sex,” Kirsh said. These conversations can lead to really great things.”

Contact Virginia Noone at noonevc21@usf.edu
**DEACON PROFILE**

**Quin Wolters**

**JIMENA ELMUFDI**  
Staff Writer

After graduating from Wake Forest last May, Quin Wolters, a former mathematical economics major and environmental studies minor, chose to continue her professional journey right here on campus.

As a full-time sustainability intern for Harvest Table, Wolters has had the opportunity to watch her projects flourish. While focusing on carbon reduction as a student intern in a dual program between Harvest Table and the WFU Office of Sustainability, she has worked toward the improvement of composting at the North Campus Dining Hall’s Hilltop Market.

From sustainable sourcing to dining efficacy and carbon reduction strategies, Harvest Table has worked diligently to set high sustainability standards as the main food provider on campus. Being familiar with all of Harvest Table’s sustainability initiatives before starting her full-time position gave Wolters a good sense of direction.

“I really enjoyed the project I did last year,” Wolters said. “It gave me a great sense of accomplishment, but I knew that there was more work to be done — there’s always more work to be done.”

Encouraged by her team, Wolters used this project to apply for an award from the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) — an organization that rates universities based on different aspects of their sustainability programs. It is a rigorous application process with thousands of influential student projects in the running.

During the summer, Wolters sent out a written case study of her project as a carbon reduction intern and was recently notified that she was selected as a finalist for the Sustainability Leaders on Campus Award. “It was fulfilling for me to be able to reflect on everything that I’d done, write it all up to see the results from where I started and showcase the work that I completed,” Wolters said.

According to Wolters, the composting process at Hilltop Market wasn’t working as effectively as desired. There were constant setbacks with the pulper, a special composting machine that grinds up food scraps and removes almost all water content.

“It gave me a great sense of accomplishment, but I knew that there was more work to be done — there’s always more work to be done.”

- Quin Wolters

“The biggest project that I did was improving the compost project at North [Campus] Dining [Hall],” Wolters said. “I created a video and collaborated with associates and managers to get better utilization of the pulper to diminish cross-contamination and improve the waste stream coming out of North [Campus Dining Hall].”

Wolters was convinced that the main way to combat this problem was to introduce better training for associates — first to point out what could not be introduced in the pulper and secondly to raise awareness on the overarching benefits of composting. The video was shown to the associates, either at new hire or continuously throughout the year, to make sure minimal errors occur.

“They had been having problems with the pulper getting jammed with avocado pits or bones, and there was a lot of contamination going on,” Wolters said. “So the company that we work with, called Gallins, which picks up the organic waste and then turns it into compost, was rejecting a lot of bins.”

Wolter continued: “It was necessary from an operational standpoint to showcase why the pulper itself is a great feature of the dining hall because it reduces the amount of organic waste coming out. It’s something I want to continue to check up on as I’ve taken on this new permanent position.”

Receiving an AASHE award would not only promote the visibility of Wolter’s composting achievements but also help to encourage further sustainable practices at Wake Forest. Recognizing the efforts that are being taken to address environmental issues on campus is imperative in raising the visibility of sustainability as a whole, and Wolter’s project and its AASHE finalist selection demonstrate that these innovative solutions are not going unnoticed.

Contact Jimena Elmufdi at elmuj20@wfu.edu
Securing an internship in the business world

How Wake Forest students succeed in the increasingly competitive internship search process

BRADEN BOCK
Contributing Writer

If you want to study Business and Enterprise Management (BEM), the most popular major at Wake Forest School of Business, there is no escaping the dreaded internship hunt. That is because all BEM students are required to take BEM 389: Management Internship — a three-hour asynchronous course that sets goals and reflects on an internship experience. Students must first have their internship approved by the School of Business in order to be eligible for the class. But BEM majors aren’t the only business students facing the need to work a job while attending school. Demon Deacons who are going to need an internship, graduation process, companies across the country have continued to push up salaries to a whopping $120 an hour.

In today’s Uber-competitive recruitment process, companies across the country have continued to push up salaries to a whopping $120 an hour. Interns are being given more tasks and working longer hours, and the pay is showing for it. According to a recent Wall Street Journal article, interns at Citadel, one of the world’s most prestigious hedge funds, received a pay boost this past summer that increased salaries to a whooping $120 an hour. In today’s Uber-competitive recruitment process, companies across the country have continued to push up salaries to a whopping $120 an hour. Interns are being given more tasks and working longer hours, and the pay is showing for it. According to a recent Wall Street Journal article, interns at Citadel, one of the world’s most prestigious hedge funds, received a pay boost this past summer that increased salaries to a whooping $120 an hour.

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Serving sustainably, combating food deserts

In a culture of food waste, Campus Kitchen is feeding Winston-Salem sustainably

MIRIAM WOLK Contributing Writer

Every day at 8:45 a.m., a fleet of Campus Kitchen volunteers ventures to grocery stores around Winston-Salem. Instead of browsing the aisles and checking out at the register, they head straight to the back and pick up the food the store plans to throw out.

Campus Kitchen works to redirect food waste in Winston-Salem. Community partners like Lowes Foods and The Fresh Market donate produce that would otherwise be thrown away, which Campus Kitchen then redistributes to food pantries or repurposes into meals for the community.

“A lot of the food that gets thrown out by grocery stores is past a ‘sell by’ date, but that isn’t actually the expiration date, it’s still edible,” said Samantha Martin, a student director of Campus Kitchen. “We get food that wouldn’t be sold at Lowes or other stores and distribute that where we can.”

According to the environmental nonprofit ReFED, the US wastes around 38% of its food supply each year. This presents a huge problem for the environment – food takes a lot of resources to produce, package, transport, and store. When food is wasted, these resources are wasted too. This emits harmful greenhouse gases into the air, so much so that food waste now accounts for around 8% of global emissions, contributing to the ongoing climate crisis the world is facing.

Campus Kitchen is working to ameliorate this. Swooping in just before perfectly edible food is thrown out, volunteers then repurpose the produce to prepare meals for the Winston-Salem community where the need is greatest. Every week, volunteers gather for cooking shifts to turn would-be-waste into nutritious meals.

“It’s honestly a lot of fun,” said Lila Mercurio, a sophomore and regular Campus Kitchen volunteer. “I love cooking, and it’s for such a good cause. We get a lot of the food donated and make the meals based on what they give us. Last week we had a lot of green beans, so that was the main vegetable we used.”

If there is no use for the collected food in the meals they prepare, Campus Kitchen will redistribute the produce it collects to community partners who can. Samaritan Ministries, a ministry group committed to providing food and shelter for people in need in Winston-Salem, receives a lot of the produce Campus Kitchen recovers. The group runs a soup kitchen which serves around 400 people daily.

These efforts are particularly important in Winston-Salem.

“Winston-Salem is one of the top cities in the US for food insecurity,” said Raahim Khan, a student director of Campus Kitchen. “Our efforts give us the opportunity to give communities that don’t even have grocery stores nearby access to meals that are nutritious, whether they come from us or someone else.”

There are currently 21 food deserts in Winston-Salem, which are areas in which access to affordable, nourishing food is extremely limited. This means that a large portion of the city lacks reliable access to nutritious food, contributing to high rates of food insecurity. Redirecting food waste, especially high-quality food waste from the grocery stores Campus Kitchen partners with, helps the environment, contributing in a way that helps out the community and puts food where it’s needed most.

These efforts will be in full effect as Thanksgiving approaches. Each year, Campus Kitchen runs Turkeypalooza, a program dedicated to providing Thanksgiving meals to the hungry. Martin noted the tangible energy and excitement felt during the program, as the kitchen takes on over double the volunteers they do under normal operations. It’s by far the group’s biggest event of the year.

“There are a lot of individuals who usually wouldn’t have access to a Thanksgiving meal, and we’re able to come in as the student population and provide that,” said Khan.

Campus Kitchen will distribute 620 Thanksgiving meals this year, 120 of which will be donated by the Pit. Typical sustainability efforts like composting and reducing food waste will run through Turkeypalooza, with the majority of the produce used being donated or recovered from grocery stores. Some produce will also come from the Campus Garden, an on-campus site dedicated to growing food sustainably.

By growing food directly on campus, Campus Garden ensures resources are not wasted in its transportation. Using the garden’s crops furthers Campus Kitchen's sustainability goals, and the directors say they are working to build relationships between the two groups.

“It’s hard to make big changes, but we do the best we can to not waste resources and operate sustainably,” said Martin. “If we can make even a little bit of an impact and help people eat in the process, I think that’s a really good thing.”

Contact Miriam Wolk at wol2nr22@wfu.edu

Wake Forest’s Campus Kitchen volunteers prepare food for Turkeypalooza, an annual program that distributes Thanksgiving food to Winston-Salem communities in need.
Tucked away in the basement of Salem Hall, the Wake Forest Chemistry Department laboratories might all appear the same. Ventilation hoods, chemicals and glassware decorate the black counters of the rooms, with microscope slides and beakers scattered across each surface.

Dr. Elham Ghadiri’s lab is seemingly no different, with the subtle exception of a doorway leading to a private room where two large metal boxes rest atop a table. While inconspicuous to the untrained eye, these boxes contain state-of-the-art lasers that represent the future of sustainable energy research, made possible by a $650,000 National Science Foundation (NSF) grant.

Ghadiri, Assistant Professor and Principal Investigator within the Chemistry Department, is at the forefront of the global push to generate sustainable alternative energy sources. Her research focuses on harnessing energy produced from photochemical processes as a low-emissions energy source that can be integrated into infrastructure and technology.

In her lab at Wake Forest, which received a 2023 NSF Early CAREER Award grant, Ghadiri, along with her graduate and undergraduate students, uses laser technology to examine photocatalytic reactions — or chemical reactions that derive energy from the sun — to improve the efficiency of energy conversion devices. At a time when the world is in search of emissions-free energy sources, Ghadiri is working to produce one.

“We use ultrafast laser systems because when we make such devices, the process that results [in the] conversion of solar cells into electricity is complex. There are a range of chemical or physical processes that happen... they happen in millionths or billionths of a second,” said Ghadiri. “So, if we want to make a good device, we should have a good understanding of these processes that are actually happening very fast.”

These fast-paced processes occur during photocatalytic reactions that take place within a diverse array of organic and synthesized materials. As Ghadiri described, the ability to use multiple reactants to generate energy makes this technology both versatile and promising.

“The good thing about this platform is that there is not a single source... you could integrate multiple materials into this concept,” said Ghadiri. “Some of them are biomimetic materials, even natural pigments. Some of them are prepared... by chemicals in the lab,” she added.

The lasers that the Ghadiri Lab acquired through the NSF grant are integral in improving the efficiency of energy conversion reactions so that this technology can be implemented in devices within larger-scale applications.

“We use our ultrafast laser lab to understand the mechanisms and the performance aspects of these devices... and to be able to understand them is important so that we can control them and we can design them better,” Ghadiri said.

Dr. Ghadiri’s research could revolutionize the way solar energy is harnessed by enhancing the efficiency of solar panels and decreasing their dependence on rare earth metals, which are generally considered unsustainable materials.

“It’s not like there’s one thing that we’re going to rely on to move to a sustainable energy economy, there has to be movement on all fronts,” said Dr. Stan Meiburg, Executive Director of the Andrew Sabin Family Center for Environment and Sustainability and former EPA Deputy Administrator.

Meiburg not only underscored the importance of Dr. Ghadiri’s work but also the significance of the lab’s research in the context of Wake Forest’s cross-departmental mission for a sustainable future.

“This is a good example of one of the things I hope to do with the Center for Environment and Sustainability,” said Meiburg, “which is to get the knowledge about what’s going on in places around Wake Forest more widely available. There’s great stuff going on all around the campus.”

Ghadiri’s passion for this work is evident in her research and her role as a professor and mentor. Since the beginning of her time at Wake Forest, Ghadiri has worked to strengthen student understanding of this budding field by creating a chemistry course titled Nanochemistry in Energy and Medicine.

“Putting all this into a lecture and developing a new course was something that I love [and] that I initiated since the day I joined here,” said Ghadiri. “I immediately started proposing this new course to the university, and I am grateful that it got approved.”

In addition to teaching the course, Ghadiri has several graduate and undergraduate student researchers who work alongside her in the lab. As the students expressed, this research represents hope for a more sustainable future.

“This process will take time, but in the future, it can be used at a very large scale,” said Maha Sharif, a graduate student researcher in the Ghadiri lab.

John Skelton, an undergraduate student researcher, echoed this sentiment.

“As younger people, we have higher stakes in this field of research. The earth is not doing too hot right now — or doing really hot, is maybe the problem — so we need to consider the future,” said Skelton.

For Ghadiri, this statement rings true.

“I have passion for this type of research. And it has been my long lifetime dream to have my own laser,” Ghadiri said. “I am very grateful for having this platform, to provide this to my students and now train the next generation — so the research is going in a very rewarding direction.”

Contact Natasha Heisenberg at heisng20@wfu.edu & Ben Lane at lanebg20@wfu.edu

NATASHA HEISENBERG & BEN LANE
Features Editor & Staff Writer

Lab views solar future with laser-sharp vision

Dr. Ghadiri’s chemistry lab turns photosynthesis into the future of sustainable energy

Dr. Ghadiri’s lab uses novel ultrafast laser systems to convert the energy generated by solar cells into electricity.
Respect the turkey

Settling the debate on when Christmas starts

MATTIE STILLERMAN
Contributing Columnist

It’s the most magical time of year when festive music echoes through decorated stores and beautiful lights bring the streets to life. You feel a warm nostalgic feeling in your chest, and a smile creases your face. One minute you’re walking on air, and the next minute, you realize it’s still October, and you’re in a Costco.

What ever happened to Thanksgiving! I get it. Christmas is the time of year when everything feels extra wonderful and warm. Everyone and everything feels a bit magical — Christmas shows some of the best sides of humanity. However, the reason Christmas feels so special is because it is a time to look forward to celebrating.

Am I Just a Grinch?

Alright — maybe I’m just a Grinch for not wanting to kickstart the jolly season early. But I’d like to start by saying that my perspective is scientifically proven. I posted a poll on Fizz asking Wake Forest Fizz users, “When does Christmas start?” I gave them the following options: Nov. 1, after Thanksgiving or Dec. 1. Out of 1,153 votes, the overwhelming majority at 68% said that Christmas starts after Thanksgiving. 23% of Fizz users argued that Christmas starts Nov. 1, and 9% said Christmas starts Dec. 1. So there you have it. I am backed by serious academic research.

Okay, but seriously, a study called “The Christmas Effect on Psychopathology,” done by Dr. Randy A. Sansone and Dr. Lori A. Sansone, explains the psychological justification for not celebrating Christmas too early. The Sansones observed a study from 1980 done by college students in the Chicago area. The results of the study suggested that celebrating Christmas too early can lead to higher levels of stress as the expectations for how Christmas is supposed to feel are too high. The failure to meet these high expectations can lead to feelings of loneliness or depression. Furthermore, high expectations of Christmas lead to feelings of emptiness and longing on Dec. 26.

The Hard Truth: Slow down and wait till the 24th

It is easy to use Christmas as an escape from school and seasonal depression because Christmas makes the cold, dark winter a little more cheerful. However, what makes Christmas time feel special is that it is a month of the year, not all year. While Christmas deserves to be as big and bright as it is, so does Thanksgiving. It’s not just a holiday during Christmas time — it’s special.

Instead of rushing to get to Christmas, take the time to slow down and think about what you’re grateful for this Thanksgiving. It’s a time to not only celebrate with your family and friends but also to eat amazing food. The pumpkin and chocolate pie always vanish quickly, followed by my grandfather’s favorite Thanksgiving tradition. Every year since I was born (I’m the oldest grandchild), my grandfather has gotten each of the four families a Christmas lawn inflatable to put in our yards.

“Respect the turkey.”

When I was younger, the lawn ornaments would only last for one or two Christmas seasons. With the advancement of festive technology, the lawn inflatables last years! Today, my household has 12 lawn inflatables to put up plus the one we will receive this year.

On the drive back home to Charlotte, N.C., my parents, brother, and I pick out our Christmas tree. Hence, the Friday after Thanksgiving marks the start of the Christmas season.

Family Traditions

So where does this debate come from? Why is it that we can’t all agree on one date? Well, whenever you believe it’s appropriate to start celebrating is likely based on when your family started celebrating Christmas.

You may have grown up picking out your Christmas tree while throwing out your pumpkin on Nov. 1. Or maybe your family believes the Christmas season begins on Dec. 1 with Fozzy’s 25 Days of Christmas. And then there’s my family, who goes all out for Thanksgiving day.

Since I was born, my big family has upheld the same tradition. There are 20 other people on my dad’s side of the family with whom I celebrate Thanksgiving. My grandmother, grandfather, parents, brother, three uncles, four aunts and nine cousins.

On Thanksgiving morning, we wake up bright and early at my grandparents’ house here in Winston-Salem for the annual Turkey Strut 5k. After the winner wears out their bragging rights (which is never), we head to the original Krispy Kreme for dozens of original glazed donuts that are “hot now.”

Once we’re done stuffing our faces with donuts, we head back to my grandparents’ house to play a basketball tournament in the driveway. Since every Stillerman was born with extreme (and sometimes concerning) competitive spirit, basketball gets real.

After hours of basketball and different combinations of four-on-four, we all get dressed up to enjoy the amazing dinner my grandparents have put together. My grandmother cooks a giant turkey, mountains of rolls, trays of stuffing and more casseroles than you can imagine. There’s sweet potato casserole with marshmallows, corn casserole, potato casserole, squash casserole and green bean casserole.

Krispy Kreme for dozens of original glazed donuts that are “hot now.”

On the drive back home to Charlotte, N.C., my parents, brother, and I pick out our Christmas tree. Hence, the Friday after Thanksgiving marks the start of the Christmas season.

In the wise words of my dear friend Caroline Gottsman, “So turn on ‘A Charlie Brown Thanksgiving,’ the Macy’s Thanksgiving Day parade, a football game or ‘Friends’ Thanksgiving episodes and spend time with the people you love.”

In the wise words of my dear friend Caroline Gottsman, “Respect the turkey.”

Contact Mattie Stillerman at stilmk23@wfu.edu

Respect the turkey.

Mattie Stillerman (right) with (from left to right) her cousins, Ben, Jack and Henry, and brother, Will getting ready to compete in the 2016 Winston-Salem Turkey Strut 5k — a family tradition that precedes Christmas.
Will the real environmentalists please stand up?

The progressive left’s abandonment of clean energy has put climate change efforts at risk of failure.

JACOB GRAFF  Contributing Columnist

On Wednesday, Nov. 1, Orsted, a Danish company specializing in offshore wind production, announced that it was canceling two planned development projects off the New Jersey coast. While New Jersey Gov. Phil Murphy criticized the firm for abandoning its business commitments, local New Jerseys on the Jersey shore celebrated after their years-long campaign against offshore wind power succeeded.

Concentrated in former Democrat-turned-Republican Congressman Jeff Van Drew’s constituency, these concerned residents had mobilized under a banner of local opposition. Concerned about home value depreciation, impact on tourism and, most famously, an old-school, tear-jerking Save The Whales campaign that promoted unfounded concerns about wind turbines’ fatal impact on local whale populations, residents of Ocean City, N.J., waged war on the project from the start. Orsted did not officially pull out due to resident opposition and their campaign of legal delay, but the efforts of locals to oppose wind farms should not be viewed as an example of a successful, organic grassroots movement.

This example of popular mobilization against a relatively uninvasive, clean, unlimited energy source had the backing of major energy companies, hidden through donations to legal advocacy organizations, think tanks and major Republican foundations.

While this example was egregious in masquerading its policy goals with an emotional, manipulative call for whale conservation at the expense of much-needed clean energy, it wouldn’t have surprised anyone who has been paying attention. The conservative right, with its allies in the fossil fuel industry, have used this playbook time and again to rally against clean energy development. The surprising and more critical fact, though, is that the progressive left does the same thing, too.

As a result, there is a vacuum of willing and politically-motivated clean energy actors, allowing the conservative right to chart the long-term pathway of domestic energy development.

Theoretically, the Democratic environmental coalition would have developed a parallel set of political and environmental institutions composed of renewable energy corporations, progressive think tanks, political actors and civilian activists. Their aim would be to promote clean energy solutions that can meet and even exceed this country’s growing energy needs, which are projected to grow up to 15% by 2050 from current levels, according to the U.S. Environmental Information Administration.

If clean energy solutions cannot meet current or future needs, dirty energy will predominate and climate change will continue to wreak havoc on the planet — disproportionately on low-income, vulnerable people.

Unfortunately for the health of the Earth, the American left refuses to acknowledge this fact and the scale of the response necessary to combat it. To combat the right’s powerful, well-funded, inertia-driven climate denial, the left needs dynamic coalitions dedicated to bringing cheap and abundant clean energy to market. This would crown out aging coal producers and stimulate further technological innovation that would make clean energy more accessible.

This positive feedback loop can be achieved — the rapid development of solar panel technology and its cost efficiency is evidence of this. But it will not move forward unless the actors blocking its progression are removed. But it is not the political right who offer the greatest threat to the deployment of renewables. Their opposition is well-known and could be countered with an equal and opposite political force. Instead, it is clean energy’s ostensible allies, the so-called “progressive environmentalists,” who should be working toward its propagation and yet are not, that put this project at risk.

Take the Sierra Club, the preeminent preservationist society in America and one whose foundation has a stated goal of “promoting climate solutions.” One could reasonably expect that they are committed to solar energy production as a supplementary clean energy source for energy-poor communities with high exposure to sunshine. Yet in Puerto Rico, a poor territory attempting to sustainably rebuild its electrical grid to mitigate exorbitant energy costs and high petroleum dependence, the Sierra Club filed a lawsuit against plans to build solar fields.

Ignoring the needs of the people for abundant, inexpensive energy and the elected government’s determination that solar energy developments outweigh ecological costs, the Sierra Club sued to stop. Their reason: potential damage to ecological preserves and agricultural security.

The Puerto Rican government prioritized clean energy as a “climate solution” and economic stimulus to an island suffering in the aftermath of a major hurricane. Yet the Sierra Club managed to deny its “climate solutions” tenant in favor of its “conservation” tenant. These values can be contradictory in the context of clean energy development. The foundational member of the progressive movement, weaponizes their differences to fit its inconsistent goals.

The modern progressive environmental coalition is based around these contradictory opinions and misrepresentations. By denying governments the right to build clean energy where and when it suits their constituencies, environmental groups hasten the effects of climate change rather than delay them. Bogging clean energy projects down in costly and timely litigation only increases the energy needs of the present and future generations that will be met by fossil fuels instead of wind, solar and nuclear power.

Environmental groups on the progressive left have also waged a long, costly and ultimately self-destructive campaign against nuclear power, which can achieve clean energy at a large scale and low cost to consumers. As a bonus, its emissions are nil — only water vapor.

The Office of Nuclear Energy of the U.S. government stated that existing nuclear plants contributed the non-release of more than 471 million metric tons of carbon dioxide emissions in 2020. This sum was more than all other clean energy sources combined, and it is used, or less-intensively than competing clean energy sources, with wind farms requiring 360 times as much land and solar farms requiring 75 times as much land to produce an equivalent amount of clean energy.

A product this clean with minimal waste (60 years of used nuclear fuel can occupy a space as small as a football field only 10 yards deep) would seem to be the future of renewables in America and abroad, eliminating demand for heavy pollutants like coal and natural gas. Yet, once again, leftists contravene their mission because they don’t understand opportunity costs and pragmatic considerations.

In Germany, after a long-run battle with left-leaning environmental groups, the government announced they will abandon their last remaining nuclear plants by 2022. Germany as a nation has led the world in environmental engineering, paving the way for mass adoption of solar panels and innovative electrical grids. But here, they retrograded progras and their national environmentally progressive ethos. The consequences were predictable. Reuters reported that “recent nuclear shutdowns... means that coal is making a comeback as the most viable option for German power producers to generate stable and affordable electricity.

Without abundant, zero-emission nuclear power, German environmental activists succeeded only in increasing the amount of carbon emissions in the atmosphere. Germany’s increasing need for energy could not be met by other renewable energy sources, so they turned to coal — the deadly pollutant whose effects spurred the clean energy revolution, to make up for the available renewable energy they physically destroyed.

“The modern fight for clean energy is a paradox of dizzying proportions. The right should not be spared in condemnation for their bizarre, continuing attachment to fossil fuel expansion. But the left facilitates the same ends goal through their ironic advocacy efforts denying that clean energy sources can achieve the widespread abandonment of existing clean energy facilities.

Energy needs will be met by an energy source. Unfortunately, if the left continues to proceed down a path of failure and self-defeat, prioritizing anything but the Earth and the energy needs of the people who inhabit it, they risk enhancing and advancing the dangers of climate change.

Real environmentalism, where existing fossil fuel sources are rapidly and cheaply replaced by renewable sources, puts the future first and the past last.

Contact: Jacob Graff at graffje20@wfu.edu

The Emsland nuclear power plant in Lower Saxony, Lingen, Germany is one of the final three nuclear power plants in Germany which was taken out of service on April 15.
It's simple: Everything is really complicated

The oversimplification of political issues by the left discredits its message

ADAM COIL
Arts & Culture Editor

One of the biggest weaknesses on the left-leaning side of the political aisle today is a tendency to oversimplify issues. This weakness is partially due to the increasing rapidity of digital "journalism," which has primed Americans to expect their political content to be portioned out to them in bite-sized doses. Regardless of the intentions behind people who make Instagram infographics, YouTube-explained videos or even politically charged TikToks, they inevitably fail and misinform their audience when they purport their work as conclusive and all-encompassing.

I don’t criticize these attempts to combat journalism because I think that they are intentionally misleading, but rather because I think that they enable a certain smugness or complacency in their audience. The truth is, it takes a great deal of study and learning to come to an educated conclusion on any given issue. And, even ing and learning to come to an educated I think that they enable a certain smugness or complacency in their audience. The truth is, it takes a great deal of study and learning to come to an educated conclusion on any given issue. And, even 

The reason that these efforts have failed and will continue to fail is that they carry implicit ad hominem. To say that an issue is not complex — that the facts are plain and obvious — can allow interlocutors. It implies that the other person is either stupid or has pernicious intentions — there is no other reason why they would not agree.

It is lazy to say that things are simple. It is lazy to say that things are simple. It is not complex — that the facts are plain and obvious — can allow interlocutors. It implies that the other person is either stupid or has pernicious intentions — there is no other reason why they would not agree.

Moreover, there are ways to combat climate change, for example, it must arm itself with an armada of facts, critiques, anecdotes and arguments. Just quoting NASA by saying that 97% of scientists agree that climate change is real is not going to cut it. It has no impact on the doubter’s mind, confronts no biases and, most importantly, carries no emotional weight. It will continue to fail in a big way every time.

In lieu of emotion, this simplification connotes a sense of jaded superiority — a holier-than-thou aversion to engaging with the political Other. Maybe climate change, gun control, etc. are simple issues, or maybe they are not. That is not important. What matters is that left-leaning individuals tend to be more college-educated than their conservative counterparts, and thus, it is their responsibility to use that knowledge and learning to the best of their ability. That means respecting ambiguity, asking thoughtful questions and admitting shortcomings. It does not mean talking down or turning away from the other side, and it certainly does not mean ponting the intellectual work to them by saying they have to read/watch/listen to something if they want to be taken seriously.

If there is any explanation as to why some on the left have become so hesitant to engage deeply in controversial topics, it is likely due to our ultra-divisive, unforgiving political climate in America. This is a phenomenon that runs deeper than the exaggerated effects of “cancel culture.” Rather, it emerges from the tension between anonymity and permanence on the internet, where venom can be splayed at will with no repercussions for some, and misinformed, rash opinions can be career-ending for others. With so much anxiety floating around in the breath of political discourse, it can be difficult to put oneself in another person’s shoes or to entertain an idea that someone else has already deemed idiotic or problematic. But that is exactly what has to be done in order to combat those ideas. If the left wants to defeat Trump, slow down climate change, etc., it is going to take a polis that is both engaged and enthusiastic without being dogmatic or closed-minded. It will require genuine empathy and conversations not designed to ensnare or embarrass, but to come to a greater understanding.

Contact Adam Coil at coilak21@wfu.edu

The images above are examples of the left’s perceived lack of engagement with complex world issues by simplifying their solutions.

LOURDES LOPEZ
Staff Columnist

In today’s digital age, it has become commonplace to hear peers decry social media as a time-wasting, harmful distraction. There are enough scientific and psychological studies certifying the negative side effects of social media has on its users — especially college students.

Because of its negative effect on mental health or the decrease in students’ attention spans and sleep quality, social media has been deemed a destructive digital tool. However, there exists evidence that social media offers an invaluable sense of connection.

As we transition from the virtual world to the real world, it is important to become more mindful of the effects of social media. Try to become more mindful of the effects of social media.

The effects of social media on college students can be positive

How to approach using social media

These benefits can be reached if you carefully manage all of the downsides. The key to this is moderation. College can be a bewildering and isolating experience, with students often grappling with unfamiliar surroundings and daunting challenges. Social media — when approached with moderation and intention — can provide an invaluable sense of connection.

You don’t want to fall into the rabbit hole of social media as you navigate these accounts, which is why it is imperative that you limit your screen time when making these virtual connections and watching entertaining content. Extremes tend to not be good, and this 100% applies to social media. Try to become more mindful of the way you use it, so it ends up being a beneficial tool rather than a harmful and anxiety-inducing instrument. A study done by Queensland University School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences researcher associate professor Asan Khan showed that there are some benefits, like improved social and communication skills, during the first hour of daily screen use, but detrimental effects of recreational screen use on mental wellbeing kick in after 75 to 105 minutes.

Something that helps me become more mindful of how much time I spend on social media is by following accounts that have a positive impact on me. I try to trick the algorithm, so my feed is filled with funny and good-vibes kind of content. Instead of seeing all of the toxic and draining content that keeps you hooked for hours, try to deviate from that and look for some meaningful and motivating content that will leave you feeling replenished rather than drained.

I believe in social media’s ability to promote a feeling of community among college students, despite the conventional narrative that it is harmful. There are ways to mitigate the risks and use social media in a way that positively impacts your everyday life. Social media may help students connect, share and validate their experiences, thereby improving their overall college experience when used intentionally and with mindfulness.

Contact Lourdes Lopez at lopelm22@wfu.edu
NC State dismantles Wake Forest on Senior Day

Wolfpack blows out Demon Deacons 26-6 in home finale

Julien Cheek
Contributing Writer

An emotionally-laden game with bowl aspirations on the line should have resulted in a do-or-die, hair-on-fire performance by Wake Forest. Unfortunately, this did not come through. Wake Forest (4-6, 1-6) never led, and, quite frankly, never looked like they belonged in the same stratosphere with NC State (7-3, 4-2). In all four quarters, the Demon Deacons were outplayed by the Wolfpack. This was a game tape worth burning.

“I just want to apologize to our fans and students,” said Head Coach Dave Clawson after the game. “We were flat, we had no energy, and that is 100 percent on me.”

A serious lack of physicality defined Saturday’s game on a sleepy afternoon at Allegany Federal Credit Union Stadium. The offense that had shown flashes last week against Duke was completely comatose until a garbage-time touchdown snag by freshman receiver Deuce Alexander (1 rec, 19 yards, TD). The ground game was non-existent. Wake Forest ran the ball 18 times for a whopping total of seven yards. The first three drives all resulted in three-and-outs, which was why Mitch Griffs (2-3, 19 yards, 5 carries, -9 yards) was pulled after just over a quarter.

His backup Michael Kern (14-26, 157 yards, 1 TD, 1 INT) didn’t do much better over a larger sample size. In the fourth quarter, when the game was decided, the offense struggled together a strong drive led by young wide receivers Horatio Fields (3 rec, 31 yards), Wesley Grimes (1 rec, 9 yards) and the aforementioned Alexander. However, the two-point try was promptly intercepted by NC State linebacker Jaylon Scott and returned 100 yards to add two points to the Wolfpack’s total.

On the defensive side of the ball, it was pretty clear what the result would be after just the first play. The Wolfpack ran a reverse through Kevin Conception (3 rec, 19 yards, 5 carries, 85 yards) for 65 yards, and a touchdown pass from two plays later set the tone for the rest of the game.

NC State also operated two methodical touchdown drives in the second quarter, where they punched in one-yard runs with Armstrong and Delbert Mimms III, giving the Wolfpack a 21-0 lead going into halftime. NC State’s offense slowed down in the second half, only registering three points off a Brayden Navaroson (1-5) 45-yard field goal in the third quarter. It didn’t matter, as NC State’s second-half gameplan of churning clock put the game to bed.

“I’ve got to do some soul searching and look at our team,” Clawson said. “This is two games at home in a row — against Florida State and NC State. They are both two teams we’ve had a lot of success against the last few years. We were basically non-competitive against those two programs.”

He continued: “That was not even a competitive football game. We’re not a very good football team right now. I don’t know how else to say it. We’re not very good.”

Wake Forest travels up to South Bend, Ind. next Saturday, Nov. 17 to take on Notre Dame (7-3) and former quarterback Sam Hartman at 3:30 p.m.

Contact Julien Cheek at cheekjt23@wfu.edu

BREANNA LAWS
Print Managing Editor

The term “Demon Deacon” was coined by this very publication, with its first official reference in a fall 1923 edition of the Old Gold & Black.

At this time, the Old Gold & Black was under the direction of James “May- on” Parker (class of 1924) — and the “Demon Deacons” title took off, being published in over a dozen articles under his direction.

The title came out while the football team was headed by Coach Henry “Hank” Garrity, who led the previously lackluster team to three winning seasons. Parker decided that the team was in need of a fiercer name following their victory against Trinity College, now known as Duke University.

Before this, Wake Forest’s mascot had undergone several changes. The first mascot was a tiger, originally designed by a student while the university was still named Wake Forest College. The tiger was the symbol of the university for about two decades, according to a 2010 article on the evolution of the Demon Deacon, written by Dr. Betsy Chapman.

After being the Tigers, Wake Forest Athletics went by “the Baptists” — an ode to the university’s denominational roots — until the 1920s.

Once “Demon Deacons” was coined, the mascot came to follow about 20 years later. Jack Baldwin (class of 1943) dressed in a tuxedo and top hat for a football game in 1940 on a dare from his Kappa Sigma fraternity brothers. From this, the traditional dress of the Demon Deacon was born. Baldwin’s top hat and coattails are now on display at the Wake Forest Historical Museum.

In 1948, the Demon Deacon was given a lead role in The Howler yearbook, which described him as “a human being in the real sense of the word,” and he has been the star of the university since.

This long sequence of events led to the creation of the Demon Deacon we all know and love today. Whether you see him at a football game, Pitts giving or other campus events, he brings with him copious amounts of school spirit. As we look back on the last 100 years, let us also look forward to the next chapter of Wake Forest. Here’s to the next century.

Contact Breanna Laws at lawsbh21@wfu.edu

With Murray Greason, the 130-pound, daring, elusive halfback of Wake Forest, leading the attack with two sensational runs for touchdowns Coach Garry’s Demon Deacons fought their way to a 16 to 6 victory over the Trinity Blue Devils in Winston-Salem last Saturday before an estimated crowd of 4,500 enthusiastic fans.

Entering the game with several members of the team still crippled...

The first mention of the “Demon Deacons” in text, first published on Nov. 16, 1923. The story was about a football victory over the Blue Devils.
Sports betting strikes lucky at Wake Forest

Online sports betting at Wake Forest likely to become more popular once it’s legal in N.C.

LUCY ROBERTS
Social Media Manager

Whenever a sporting event is happening anywhere in the world, it is safe to assume that somewhere, somehow, someone is betting on it — and this rings true at Wake Forest University.

“If we’re watching it, we’re betting on it,” said a senior sports bettor whom the Old Gold & Black granted anonymity due to the fact that sports betting outside of casinos is illegal in North Carolina.

In 2018, the U.S. Supreme Court struck the Professional and Amateur Sports Protection Act of 1992, a federal law that prevented the majority of states from legalizing sports betting. The effects of this decision have reverberated across the country as more than 30 states have now legalized sports betting in some form — including online gambling. In 2019, sports betting at two casinos, Harrah’s Cherokee Valley River Casino and Harrah’s Cherokee Casino Resort, was legalized in North Carolina, and due to a law passed earlier this year, online sports betting sites will be legalized by an unspecified date in 2024, the latest possible being June 15, according to WFDD.

In the five years since the Supreme Court’s decision, Americans have bet more than $220 billion on sports through legal gambling services. There is a palpable buzz of excitement that surrounds this newly legal form of entertainment, but there is also a more sinister side of gambling. The Old Gold & Black spoke to students who bet on sports, and who shared their experiences with sports gambling — the good and the bad.

Senior Braden Bock said that sports gambling at Wake Forest is widespread.

“All my friends bet,” said Bock. “Most people I run into bet in some way or form.”

Just because it isn’t legal in North Carolina doesn’t mean that students haven’t found ways to bet on sports outside of casinos. Bock said that underground gambling operations are widespread at Wake Forest, with illegal online sports books being relatively easy to access.

“A lot of times it’s a much bigger scale than just one person betting on you,” Bock said. “Let’s say I wanted to open up a sportsbook — I’d pay the website minimum bets they’re going to accept. They’re essentially paying for, which is just that website.”

According to 2023 National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) survey, among 18 to 22-year-olds, 67% of students living on campus bet on sports — with 35% having used a student bookmaker, or “boobie.”

There were times I ghosted my bookie three weeks in a row for 300 bucks,” the anonymous bettor said.

Bookie is a slang term for a bookmaker — someone who bets on sports, and who shared their experiences with sports gambling — the good and the bad.

“Some of these resources include limits on how much bettors can spend on deposits and wagers, as well as how much time they can spend playing.

The support services are there, but whether college students can recognize problematic habits and are willing to seek out those tools is an additional uncertainty within this complex issue.

“It’s tough — there’s always gonna be people who misuse it and cause problems, and it really impacts their life in a negative way,” Bock said. “But I guess the question is — is that enough to justify not letting everyone else do it? And that’s not really a question I have an answer to.”

If you are struggling with a gambling addiction, you can call the national problem gambling helpline at 1-800-GAMBLER (426-2537) or the North Carolina Council on Problem Gambling helpline at 1-800-522-4700.

Contact Lucy Roberts at roble26@wfu.edu

Come 2024 — what then?

If sports betting was already widespread across campus before legalization in North Carolina will magnify its influence. Bock said that when DraftKings, an online sports betting site, goes live in North Carolina, he expects that more Wake Forest students will bet on sports.

“I would expect the uptake of students betting on campus for sure — especially because DraftKings makes everything so easy and convenient,” Bock said. According to the International Journal of Mental Health and Addiction, the speed at which someone can pull out their phone and place a bet can also make it much easier for bettors to become addicted. Online sportsbooks, such as DraftKings and FanDuel, have resources on their website dedicated to addressing the dangers of gambling in any form.

“I genuinely believe FanDuel has done a really good job of taking responsible gaming really seriously, as opposed to just sort of trying to sweep it under the bridge and turn a blind eye to it,” said Charlie Frankel, a Wake Forest alum who currently works for FanDuel.

Some of these resources include limits on how much bettors can spend on deposits and wagers, as well as how much time they can spend playing.

A fun way to watch sports

For students who know their limits, responsible sports betting can be an exciting avenue through which they can engage with sporting events that they otherwise may have ignored.

“We used to bet freshman year on Russian ping pong during COVID,” Bock said.

Sports betting has had a significant presence on campus for years. Groups of friends crowd around TVs in their dorm rooms and compare how their bets are faring. Seemingly obscure sports suddenly become relevant when $20 hinges on the outcome of the game.

“The main thing actually is betting on the same stuff with your friends and kind of trying to ride it out together,” senior Nick Zuga said. “I think it also...helps you still enjoy parts of sports when your favorite teams aren’t playing.”

For students who know their limits, responsible sports betting can be an exciting avenue through which they can engage with sporting events that they otherwise may have ignored.
'Killers of The Flower Moon' haunts the American West

A&C editor James Watson reviews Martin Scorsese’s long, American nightmare

James Watson
Arts & Culture Editor

"As far back as I can remember, I always wanted to be a gangster," the late Ray Liotta’s Henry Hill announces in Martin Scorsese’s 1991 feature film "Goodfellas." The line bursts with romantic nostalgic ooze, telegraphing to the audience in big, neon letters that the subsequent 146 minutes are a gritty distillation of what was the "Good 'Ol Days." But we can also surmise that this high has peaked… though not exactly sure how or where.

Scorsese rectifies his lifelong regret of not making "The Searchers" before John Ford with "Killers of the Flower Moon," though the almost four-hour-long text is absent of such romanticization. There is no nostalgia to be found on the oil-stained lines of the American West. Ford knew this, too.

Based on David Grann’s award-winning book “Killers of the Flower Moon: The Osage Murders and the Birth of the FBI,” Scorsese’s latest film is seemingly the second installment following "The Irishman" (2019) in a potential trilogy of sorrowful meditations on American evil. Grann’s novel and Eric Roth’s screenplay adaptation recalls the horrific and true story of the systematic murder of dozens of Osage Native Americans in the early 1920s.

The Osage people, who had become enriched during an oil boom in the area, were targeted and murdered for their wealth by their white neighbors. Many of the murders went unsolved. The most heinous and public of these plots involved a concerted effort by William “King” Hale (Robert DeNiro) to seduce his nephew Ernest Burkhart (Leonardo DiCaprio) into marrying Mollie Kile (Lily Gladstone) in order to kill off Kile’s sisters, so that she — and by extension Burkhart and Hale — assumes full headrights to the family fortune.

The bulk of Scorsese’s stories have always been of paranoia, boisterous men expanding their enterprises however they could, whether at the billiards table or in the streets of 19th-century Manhattan. But "Killers of the Flower Moon" is a far more merciless, straight-up evil picture than what he’s conjured before. Perhaps this is because it isn’t a product of his imagination or passion for organized violence — it’s re-white-and-blue American history.

There are many stories like the Osage murders in America’s long, sordid history, such as the Tulsa Massacre, Wilmington coup and the 1985 MOVE bombing, to name a few. But none have been given such vivid attention in cinema before. The depiction of the organized conspiracy to destroy the Osage nation makes for one of the most confrontational films in recent memory.

By all means this is a phenomenal picture — sweeping in its drama and relentless in its brutality. There is so much art on display — nearly all levels of craft feel as if they are at the top of their game. The blocking, costume design, set design and cinematography are effortlessly of the highest caliber.

Much has been made of its runtime — most of said discourse has been in poor taste — but there is not a single frame wasted. The thought of needing some sort of set intermission, as some theaters have gotten in trouble for doing, is laughable. All hail Thelma Schoonamker, the breathless editor who has been creating order from chaos out of Scorsese’s mountains of celluloid since the ‘80s.

It will serve you well to remember the name Lily Gladstone. Her performance as Kile will be studied and applauded for years to come. Awards are guaranteed. DeNiro’s ferocious portrayal of Hale is a force to be reckoned with, as he plays a certain kind of lingering evil that requires a post-movie shower to get off your consciousness.

With that being said, DiCaprio’s mopey Burkhart is a letdown, especially given that he has come off of some recent career highs. He can’t seem to pick an accent and misses a lot of the quiet, confused rage that supposedly consumes his character. But even on his worst day, DiCaprio is still miles ahead of his peers — especially Brendan Fraser, whose performance I only reference because of its vitality. It is distracting and out of place and, worse yet, still seems to be situated in the annoyingly overacted “The Whale” mode.

Few historical dramas have ever featured a guiding creative voice laden with such guilt and sorrow. Scorsese correctly uses the film’s nearly 200-minute runtime to wrestle with his own complicity in the story, cleverly using his two most utilized players DiCaprio and DeNiro as analogs. To do so, Roth’s screenplay re-centers the story on Burkhart, a decision that has been met with criticism from some in the Osage community.

Many such critiques lament that it’s Kile’s story, not Hale & Co. — doing so makes the Osage purely victims in this story, lacking agency. This criticism is not without narrative or ethical validity. As a result, the mystery of the conspiracy is “revealed” all too soon — in spite of the movie’s procedural flow.

Slowly revealing the full scope of the conspiracy the way Kile or her family would have discovered it would have affected the dramaturgy enormously. But I suspect that’s because Scorsese’s intention is illustrative of the role he thinks he or the audience would have played in the ordeal during the period — that of either silent or active complicity. After all, why would he make the viewers’ perspective of the events 1:1 with Burkhart? He wants the viewers to be unwitting accomplices in order to grasp the sheer violence and terror inflicted on the Osage.

This thematic concept is furthered through the questionable, love-ambiguous relationship between Kile and Burkhart — almost as if the director used their romance to mirror the relationship between the artist and their subject. We don’t really know if Kile and Burkhart love each other. We know why the relationship started in the first place and can imagine its inevitable tragedy, but there is no dividing line between agenda and feelings.

The audience is shown gestures that demonstrate a level of affection, but it’s seemingly more transactional than anything (at least to Burkhart). Scorsese’s care for the subject will not save him. It will not redeem genealogical crimes. It will not salvage the American experiment from its genocidal foundations. He can tell the story correctly, involve all the right consultants and have the best intentions, but the damage was done a century ago. There will be no justice for the Kile family. And he knows it.

Contact James Watson at watjw22@wfu.edu

In one of the films most memorable sequences, Director of Photography Rodrigo Prieto conjures horrific visions of the oil-rich plains of Oklahoma in Martin Scorsese’s 2023 masterpiece "Killers of the Flower Moon."
Past and present with Debbie Allen

A conversation with the pioneering inaugural recipient of the Maya Angelou Artist-in-Residence award

CHRISTA DUTTON & JAMES WATSON
Editor-in-Chief & Arts & Culture Editor

While Forest welcomed Debbie Allen to campus this week to receive the inaugural Maya Angelou Artist-in-Residence Award, the award recognizes accomplished artists who reflect Angelou’s commitment to creating, performing, teaching and striving to improve the lives of others.

Allen is an Emmy award-winning director and producer perhaps best known for her roles as Lydia Grant in the musical-drama television series “Fame” (1982–1987) and as Dr. Catherine Avery in the ABC medical drama “Grey’s Anatomy.” These days, Allen is teaching at her own dance academy in Los Angeles and continuing to work as a director and producer.

Arts & Culture Editor James Watson and Editor-in-Chief Christa Dutton spoke with Allen during her visit to campus. Allen shared how she was inspired by young people to create change that must be fueled by the arts and storytelling.

James Watson: In a lot of ways, your legacy is now intrinsically tied to Maya Angelou, but also Wake Forest’s. Like Maya Angelou, what are some lasting impressions that you would like to make on this place?

Debbie Allen: We’re trying to do something that opens. She was all about inclusion, diversity. It was what she worked so hard for, and it was part of our relationship. When I was rejected by the Los Angeles County High School of the Arts, she found out about that, and she joined the board to make sure that it never happened again. It’s a different place now. Yesterday, I met the [UNCSA] President and they’ve offered me a studio and to do an opera there — and I think I’m gonna do it.

What can we do here with your students? I taught a class today, and they were all ballerinas. It was good because I was not teaching a ballet class, but it was very technical, and I pushed them. It’s just about opening a conversation through the arts, and that can help people start to see themselves differently.

Christa Dutton: I think you’re doing a lot of that in your career now with your dance academy. Tell us more about your teaching and why that work is so meaningful.

DA: I’m always teaching because I think knowledge is part of the creative process — understanding what you’re doing, and where it’s coming from.

I took my daughter away to dance with the Kirov Academy, and she was one of two Black students. I was very proud that she was there, and she was getting something I never had an opportunity to have when I was her age. One day, the teacher basically ended her in front of the class, I said, come home, we’re starting a school here.

She’s been my muse for a long time, and I have created many many Ballerinas. It was a very technical, and I pushed them. It’s just about opening a conversation through the arts, and that can help people start to see themselves differently.

JW: Stepping back in time a little bit to the show, “A Different World.” It was such a boundary-breaking show for the way it engaged with challenging subjects. There are laws going on the books in states to prevent talking about gender and sexuality in both governments and schools as well as school boards banning books for the ways they tackle race. A lot of people feel like we’re regressing. Do you think that “A Different World” could be received by an audience today? Or what’s in the air that you’re saying and what you’re teaching?

DA: We had a huge following then, and it wasn’t just Black kids. Everybody was watching it, and it made everybody want to go to college. I think now is a great time for it to have a reboot. The episodes that we did 15 years ago are still relevant now. It was about what you’re saying and about satirizing the presidential campaign. And we made them women that were running, and it was funny, it was “Jill Blynto,” instead of Bill Clinton.

JW: We’re in a hospital, which makes it very interesting because we’re dealing with cutting edge, real medical situations. We did a whole season about COVID. At first, the head writer at the time, Mimi Leder, was going to make us deal with COVID. I was like, “really?” Then she thought about it and turned around.

It was one of the best seasons we ever had. Meredith [Gray] went into a coma. We didn’t know she was going to wake up. You never know. Storytelling in the arts is for us to address all these things. It’s for the artists to do it — uncensored and unfettered.

JW: There’s anyone that you think is doing similar work in the field and trying to engage audiences in a similar way currently?

DA: A show that I really like is “Yellowstone.” The stories they are portraying are about Native Americas and how they’ve been mistreated by the church, and these are true stories. I’m looking forward to seeing [Martin] Scorsese’s new movie, “Killers of the Flower Moon.” And [Christopher No- lon] “Oppenheimer,” you know, because here we are with the nuclear threat right now.

I asked [former] President George Bush when I was his cultural ambassador of dance, “Do you think that the situation in the Middle East could put us to the third World War?” And then Sept. 11 happened. Here we are on the cusp of more horror. It’s a nightmare — however you look at it. We need art.

JW: Well, let me ask you then because activism has been such an important part of your art for so long, especially with gun violence. How is it that you stay encouraged or what discourages you?

DA: Last night, I was watching a documentary about toys that made America, and they’re talking about all these innovative toys like Barbie. They thought nobody was going to buy a doll with breasts, but she stuck with it — you have to stick with things. You have to know that you have a purpose. “Amistad” took me 18 years to get done. I never gave up, and that’s why I got done.

What is this chaos that’s going on right now in Washington [D.C.]? Talk about draining the swamp — it’s beyond a swamp, it’s an ocean. And I’m looking forward to seeing [Martin] Scorsese’s new movie, “Jill Blingston’s” — instead of Bill Clinton.

CD: Tell us about that experience moving to New York after graduation. What are you feeling, and what advice would you give students moving to pursue the arts?

DA: It was so exciting to go to New York. It was scary. I grew up in Houston, Texas, which is a big Metropolitan country town — wide open spaces and floods and hurricanes. And I just had never seen buildings so close together, living like that. It was new. My first trip to Broadway — [it] was pretty amazing to see a Broadway show. I knew I wanted to be a part of that world. You set your sights on where you want to go, and then you gotta go there. Find your way. That’s what I did.

Sometimes my sister and I had a can of tuna fish to eat between us and our two cats. Sometimes we got some chicken. Sometimes we just better drink soda. We’d lie to our parents and tell them we were doing so good. But you know, you got to stick it out. New York was a lesson in what it is to be in the world. I encourage any young person that has these kind of aspirations to go because it’s different from Holly...

JW: Being a Black woman in this industry, in regards to the future, how are there signs that the arts are becoming more equitable and diverse in meaningful ways? If so, what encourages you or what discourages you?

DA: I’m totally encouraged because when I came, there was no one that looked like me anywhere. I was always the only one in the room. Everywhere — in “Fame,” the Oscars, just name it. Getting “Amistad” done, I was surrounded by some wonderful people. Now I look, and I see a field of people from Lena Waithe to Shonda Rhimes to Mara Brock Akil to Issa Rae. There’s a lot of black women who are movers and shakers, and they’re bringing people along with them. People are listening.

But, we know that, the window, it can change. There’s still some doors that are starting to close now. You know, it’s the “All right, we let you all in, with enough you already.” We made such great progress, and then all just went back down the hill. This universe is a cycle, it keeps going around. Hopefully we just keep going round and round till we get it right. That’s what we have to do. You can’t give up, though. You get tired sometimes, but you have to get back in it.

To read the rest of the interview, visit wfuogb.com

Contact Christa Dutton and James Watson at dutton20@wfu.edu and watson.22@wfu.edu

Photo courtesy of Authors & Artists Magazine

Lywood. In Hollywood, you can’t get on the lot. In New York, you could gangster your way into an audition. If you have the right smile and the right personality, you might be able to get in the building. You can’t even get on the lot if your name isn’t out there. It’s a different thing. New York is grassroots in a way that’s really cool.

JW: It was so exciting to go to New York. It was scary. I grew up in Houston, Texas, which is a big Metropolitan country town — wide open spaces and floods and hurricanes. And I just had never seen buildings so close together, living like that. It was new. My first trip to Broadway — [it] was pretty amazing to see a Broadway show. I knew I wanted to be a part of that world. You set your sights on where you want to go, and then you gotta go there. Find your way. That’s what I did.

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Artistry unveiled: A conversation with Wake Forest alumni

Observe art’s transformative power as Wake Forest alumni unravel the nuance of their creative evolutions

LYDIA DERRIS
Staff Writer

The Hanes Gallery, positioned on the ground floor of Scales Fine Arts Center, is seldom entered by non-art majors. However, on Nov. 7, students across various disciplines joined Professor Yan Cheng (’19) and Caroline Perkins (’16) at the opening of the Art Talk. The discussion took place in the gallery against the backdrop of Arlington White’s (WILL ’18) Balance exhibition.

Both Cheng and Perkins majored in art at Wake Forest — Cheng opted for a double major in accounting and studio art, while Perkins went the art history route with a minor in mathematics. A unifying experience that the staff enjoyed was when he failed his introductory chemistry exam. Cheng described it as “a real, consuming echo chamber that reverberates the works — and the myriad emotions elicited by those works — for weeks, months and years to come.”

Upon returning to Wake Forest, Cheng completed an honors exhibition — a messy, abstract, mixed-media installation featuring a strew of Chinese lanterns, oil-paper umbrellas and suspended green yarn. This project solidified for Cheng that working in the art world was the end-all, be-all. In an interview with DeaLink, he describes how Wake Forest faculty and alumni helped him get his job at David Zwirner, a blue-chip gallery in New York City featuring artists such as Ruth Asawa and Josef Albers. He advises current students to take extra credit for networking and connections.

“Be active in your professional associations [at Wake Forest] and tap into the networking that is available,” Cheng said.

Cheng detailed how his most recent works are highly geometric and mathematical, emphasizing his current focus on time and space relativity. He goes on about the fluidity of art, implicating the Chinese system of “guānzi”: the invisible relationship between everything, leaving the audience to wonder not only “how much we can trust what we see, but how much we can feel that of which we cannot see.”

A shift from the exploration of the abstraction, Caroline Perkins takes the stage. Perkins commended the art department at Wake Forest, crediting her entire career evolution to Dr. Bernadine Barnes’s course, “Art in the Age of Giotto, Dante and the Plague.”

“Conceptualize art as a game with players,” Perkins said. “I want to be constantly surrounded by people who are interested in always questioning, how objects, people and concepts come alive in art.”

Perkins also credits Wake Forest for inspiring her to integrate her analytical, mathematical brain with art through the joint Art-Business course: “Management in the Visual Arts.” Like Cheng, Perkins participated in the abroad program in Venice, and attended the Biennale, which changed the way she viewed art and opened up a new spatial plane for her to ask questions. The Biennale seems to be a catalyst for Wake Forest students’ creative potential, inviting them to consider exceedingly topological concepts, such as in the works of non- Euclidean geometry are present in the works of Marcel Duchamp or how the golden ratio appears in Seurat’s Bath at Asnières.

After graduating from Wake Forest, Perkins held a master’s in NAS’ MoCA, but felt too confined in the small town. She contacted alumna Cristin Tierney 93 via DeaLink, expressing her desire to move to New York. Cristin offered her a job at her gallery, and Perkins fell in love with the New York gallery scene.

Perkins experienced a degree of dissonance as she worked in the business realm of the art industry. She began working at Artsy, the world’s largest online art market, where she has dealt in high-caliber private sales for the past seven years.

“The scene] is ultra-small when you’re involved in it — everyone knows everyone,” Perkins said about the New York gallery scene. “It’s hard to remember that you have to make money. There was some guilt — there’s the impulse to pursue something academic — but those opportunities just weren’t available.”

Both alumni emphasized the enduring opportunities and connections that abound at Wake Forest and encouraged students to foster those connections as early as possible. While these bonds, ambitions are redefined, and collaborative artistry is born.

Contact Lydia Derris at derrf23@wfu.edu

Dean Family Speaker Series event befuddles students

“What Aesthetics Matter?” sparks questions about accessibility in academia

ADAM COIL
Arts & Culture Editor

On Oct. 19, The Dean Family Speaker Series welcomed Dr. Christopher Freeburg and Dr. Michael Snediker to the Z. Smith Reynolds Library for “What Aesthetics Matter.” Many students found it difficult to follow along with the talk given by the two professors, prompting discussion about the accessibility of literary events like these.

“The two were invited by Dr. Jennifer Greiman, a professor of English at Wake Forest with a special interest in the works of Herman Melville. ‘[Freeburg and Snediker] are finding ways to shake loose the predetermined narratives of “death, domination and marginalization” that are deeply entrenched in specific literary and cultural studies,” Greiman said. Through studying aesthetics, both scholars are finding ways to produce literary events like this.

In speaking with Greiman, the work that the two scholars are doing really came alive for me in exciting and illuminating ways. Freeburg and Snediker explore how literary studies are held to an accessibility standard that physicists or mathemati- cians aren’t. They are finding ways to produce literary events like this.

Unfortunately, I found it difficult to piece all of this together during the event, and from conversations with peers afterward, it seemed this was a rather common sentiment. From what I gathered, most were able to pick up on some of Freeburg’s main arguments, but Snediker was almost entirely indecipherable.

While I am no stranger to incompetence and confusion, I think that the event inherently lends itself to a high degree of difficulty, given that it is a verbal presentation of highly academic, highly dense writings that are deeply entrenched in specific scholarly fields.

I wanted to speak to Greiman to determine where this obfuscation comes from and whether or not it is necessary.

“Literary scholars,” she said, “are often held to an accessibility standard that physicists or mathematicians aren’t. But literature is about communication, and so there is an expectation that it will be transparent, but sometimes we are doing really technical things.”

While acknowledging that Freeburg and Snediker, for example, are deliberately working with difficult subject matter, Greiman also argues that there are ways for students to find value in them.

“What I want to do with my English majors is get them to the point where, even if they don’t understand every move of an argument, they can at least understand why an argument is being made and what the stakes are,” Greiman said.

I find myself sifting through deeply ambiguous, mixed feelings about this issue. On the one hand, I am revere to the seemingly infinite potential of language and the great reward that accompanies learning material that was once thought ungraspable. On the other hand, I want to see literature studies thriving, and I want to see events like these attract students without the incentive of extra credit.

Indeed, my biggest fear, as an English major, that the terminus of this field is a self-imposed muteness or illegibility, in which our unique passion for literature becomes the very thing that keeps us from sharing it with others.

As Greiman and I were wrapping up our conversation, I think we began to approach a solution. I asked her what might be lost in converting academic language into a more colloquial form, she said that we do not have to look at it that way. Instead, there is a way in which casual and academic language can support each other.

In mathematics, for example, we think of even numbers simultaneously as \(2, 4, 6, 8, \ldots \) or “as all numbers of the form 2k for some k in the set of all integers.” Both of these descriptions have their pros and cons, but when we use the former to better understand the latter, a perfect conception of even numbers arises. There is a lot of potential in the interplay between abstract, rigorous concepts and their more lucid examples or shorthand.

As Greiman said, “In conversation, you can think through a concrete example and then go backward and funnel that back into the more difficult reading.”

Like training wheels on a bike, examples and anecdotes play a vital role in our mastering of difficult concepts. What I think events like the Dean Family Speaker Series could greatly benefit from moving forward, then, are more training wheels.

Contact Adam Coll at colla21@wfu.edu

Dr. Christopher Freeburg (left) and Dr. Michael Snediker (right), read from their respective scholarly works in ZSR 404.

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