

THE VOICE

ChatGPT: The New Friend or Formidable Foe in College Classrooms?

By: TJ Edmund

Launched in November 2022, ChatGPT is an artificial intelligence program poised to alter the dynamics of contemporary society, whether people like it or not. When asked a question, the chatbot can generate near-accurate responses with just the input of a few words. ChatGPT can easily simulate human interaction and readily engage in social media, writing emails, and crafting stories within mere moments; these are tasks that most humans would take hours to complete.

However, as with all technology and human nature, this chatbot comes with some flaws. Perhaps the most obvious downside is that many students might utilize this program to replace critical thinking and problem-solving. They are instead relying on technology to replace individual intelligence. It might still be too early to gauge an appropriate response, but will ChatGPT be a positive way to the future when it comes to students pursuing higher education?

When used correctly, ChatGPT can become a staunch advocate for education, but the bot's abilities should immediately raise alarm, and educators should question its reliability and validity in college classrooms. With chatbot technology, students can more easily craft assignments that are unauthentically theirs, passing them off as their own. The rise in AI-powered programs has led to a trend where students can be in the classroom without actively engaging in peer discussion or paying attention to instructors, because they are relying on bots to give them answers. Still, despite these issues arising from AI, some educators still strongly believe that artificial intelligence can also prove to be a real asset to the advancement of educational opportunities and are

incorporating it into innovative curricular designs.

AI is not excluded when talking about the downsides of technology, and education professionals are genuinely concerned about artificial intelligence and its role in classrooms. Plagiarism has always been a concern for instructors, and ChatGPT creates an area of questionable integrity that higher education professionals are just beginning to try to navigate. Artificial intelligence has the potential to harm the value of the educational system and to lessen the integrity of authentic learning, which many instructors strive to achieve.

Ultimately, there is a potential ethical drawback when it comes to artificial intelligence, there are worries and doubts about its practical uses in many schools. While it could help students enrich their general knowledge of a diverse range of topics, students could also take advantage of the program. In the long run, educators and students will have to identify a clear line between unethical practices and using AI as a legitimate resource in schools. Like it or not, artificial intelligence is not going away any time soon.

It would be a mistake to forget noting that all students are not the same, and not everyone learns the same way. Students have diverse strengths and weaknesses, and, in some cases, AI can help students improve their oral communication, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills. They can ask the bot questions and tweak responses when needed in order to obtain the desired information.

Rather than potentially surpassing or compromising true human intelligence and thought, AI can improve modern teaching methods and bolster previous knowledge. When used correctly, ChatGPT can benefit students in various ways as a progressive technological tool that revamps outdated learning and teaching strategies.

RCSJ Gloucester Campus Union Contract

By: Delaney Bowman and Victoria Strekis

Negotiations are currently underway to enhance the representation and advocacy of RCSJ Gloucester campus staff through their union contract. The current contract lasts until June 30th, 2023, and the new one will begin on July 1st, 2023. During the negotiation process, the faculty representatives engage with administration to mutually agree on terms and conditions of a new contract that will govern staffing matters, such as class allocation, salaries, and other pertinent changes staff can suggest.

The union acts as a representative of the employees and negotiates with the employer on their behalf. The main purpose of a union is to protect the rights and interests of its members by ensuring they receive fair treatment and compensation in the workplace. Additionally, unions may provide support and resources such as training, legal assistance, and advocacy for workers' rights. Some of the benefits of union membership include collective bargaining power, job security, and access to healthcare and retirement benefits.

Oron Nahom, professor, Union member, and approximate 15-year president of faculty membership for the union at RCSJ, describes a union contract as "a voice for the staff" that offers them protection and various benefits, like health insurance, for example. All seven units of RCSJ's union are negotiating currently, and each has a different process. Specifically, for faculty members and advisors / counselors on the Gloucester campus, negotiation can take several sessions. Nahom claims that RCSJ is fortunate to have a cooperative mindset, rather than adversarial, when operating negotiations.

RCSJ Students and Advisors Shine with Academic Excellence and Leadership Accolades at PTK Regional Meeting

By: Ray Milano



From March 10th to 12th, Rowan College of South Jersey's Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society students, from both the Alpha Psi Pi and Rho Gamma chapters, attended the 36th Middle States Regional Convention in Baltimore, Maryland. At the convention, the students received leadership and academic awards. Students' academic success is acknowledged by Phi Theta Kappa (PTK), a group that gives its members the chance to grow their knowledge and to grow as leaders. Students of RCSJ PTK must be enrolled, have at least 12 credits completed, have a minimum GPA of 3.5, and keep a 3.25 GPA in order to be eligible.

The Alpha Psi Pi chapter at the Gloucester Campus won various accolades, including the League of Honor Award, acknowledgment as one of 33 chapters reaching 5-Star status, and REACH Awards for 2022. The advisor for Alpha Psi Pi, Alejandra Valencia, was also commended as a 5-Star advisor and was given the Paragon Award.

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Gilded in Gold: A Glamorous Prom Redo

By: Alysa Serrano

RCSJ's Gilded in Gold Gala roared with glitz and glamour. Being the first semi-formal event offered at the school since the start of the pandemic, the Gala's mission was not just to offer a fun and memorable night for students, but to also help replace what some students had lost due to COVID-19. The event was advertised as the "Prom Redo" that students had been looking for, and though that may seem like it was awfully big shoes to fill, the event succeeded in doing just that.

From the very start, the student government at RCSJ knew they had to make the event as accessible and welcoming for students as possible. Since many students have other obligations outside of school, the SGA, along with Student Life, took those factors into consideration. Tickets were subsidized so they would be affordable for both students and their guests, making the event more inclusive. The goal was to bring about a sense of community for everyone interested in attending.

At the beginning of the event, guests checked in and were led into an open-style venue, where they could stay for as long as they wanted until the event's conclusion, enjoying music, dinner, and the golden atmosphere. Though the theme of the event was a 1920s-style masquerade ball, those who might not have brought masks along with them were able to use the props available at the onsite photo booth to capture that charming feel.



Left to Right: Gianna Lucia, Rebecca Guinup, Cara Cheli, Caitlyn Cheli

Dinner was served buffet-style, with various appetizers and entrees offered, including vegetarian options, so all in attendance would have something to enjoy. The most important aspect of the event was, of course, the music. Guests were able to take to the dance floor, enjoying the lively songs from the DJ as they took pleasure in a successful event held by the students at RCSJ.

If there was one thing to take away from this event, it would be how the inspiration from our students on campus helped create such a fun and memorable night for everyone. While the pandemic may have taken away aspects of the high school experience many students look forward to, the Gilded in Gold Gala brought new memories that students may have otherwise not had. "A lot of us who are going to community college, we don't get big events we get to take away from," shared the executive Vice President of SGA, Kailah Joy-Alford, as she described the thought that went into planning the Gala. Now, when looking back on college experiences, students can proudly say they were a part of something that many community colleges don't even offer.

While some might just view this event as another semi-formal, the stories that drove this event are what ensured its success, and hopefully, the tradition of a semi-formal at RCSJ will be upheld for years to come.

PTK - cont. from pg.1

Meanwhile, the Cumberland Campus' Rho Gamma chapter was also selected as one of 33 chapters to achieve 5-Star rank and received REACH Awards for 2022. Michael Lemon, Cumberland Campus PTK Advisor, was commended as a five-star advisor for his efforts finishing the Phi Theta Kappa Edge programs.

For the upcoming year, Kayla Ortiz, current Executive Vice President of the Cumberland Campus chapter, will become the 2023 East District President. When asked about her experiences, Ortiz stated,

"PTK has helped me grow personally, professionally, and as a student leader. I had the opportunity to hone my leadership, effective communication, and active listening skills. I have been able to strengthen my writing and research skills while working alongside a team of high-achieving and motivated students."

In November 2023, she will participate in a three-day training course in Jackson, Mississippi, led by PTK CEO, Dr. Lynn Tincher-Ladner. Alpha Psi Pi's Executive Vice President, Megan Rinaldo, also spoke about how PTK gave her the opportunity to improve as a person, student, and leader. Lastly, Alejandra Valencia, a PTK advisor for the Gloucester Campus, talked about how PTK has made it easier for her to be engaged on campus, and how rewarding it is to help students advance themselves.

The success of RCSJ's PTK Honor Society members shows their commitment to academic excellence and leadership through their work ethic and dedication. Students have improved their communication, research, and teamwork skills through the chances given by Phi Theta Kappa, preparing them for success in their future. PTK, the national honor society for two-year institutions, has a long history of celebrating and rewarding great student success. Since its beginning in 1918, PTK has recruited more than 3.8 million students, and it continues to encourage and motivate students to reach their full potential.

Commencement 2023

By: Delaney Bowman & Luke Nelson

It's that time of year again! The Cumberland campus Spring 2023 ceremony will take place on Thursday, May 11, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. The Gloucester campus Spring 2023 Commencement ceremony will take place on May 12, 2023 at 11:00 a.m.

The Cumberland ceremony will be held on campus; please use [Parking Lot L](#) and follow signs to the event. Commencement for Gloucester campus will be held in the [Main Plaza](#) on campus.

Worried about number of family members? No problem! All guests are encouraged to attend. Tickets are not required for attendance. Students may invite as many guests as they would like! Guests are advised to arrive a half hour before the start time of their ceremony, as commencement will begin promptly.

Both commencements are traditional ceremonies; graduates will wear ceremonial regalia and march.

There will be photographers taking photos of all graduates as they receive their diplomas. These photos will be available for view and purchase 5-10 days after commencement on the [GradImages website](#) (use 'Rowan College' if searching by school).

Use the hashtag: RCSJ2023 on Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok to share your photos and videos from the ceremony to showcase your pride! There are free printable signs available for [download](#) to show your support for your grad!

RCSJ Holds Spring Open House Inviting New Students to Learn about the Many Facilities On Campus

By: Dylan Kedosh

On Thursday, March 23rd, RCSJ held an Open House in the campus's gymnasium to offer information on each of the college's particular majors and facilities to new and upcoming students. Guests were greeted at the door, with some members of faculty directing them to the Open House, as well as answering any basic inquiries about the event. Visitors were also able to come and go at their leisure, with a scheduled tour of the campus available for those interested, alongside free concessions of pretzels and water at the building entrance.

Professor Ryan Hoxworth, one of RCSJ's Business Administration Professors, gave many students a detailed description of what is entailed in the Business Administration Course at RCSJ, such as the necessary requirements needed to succeed at the college, and provided students with class catalogues to help gauge if the course requirements were something they were truly interested in.

Professor Hoxworth went further into detail regarding RCSJ's many degrees, which are applicable to all kinds of students from all walks of life. He mentioned that Business Administration is one of the best courses for students looking to dip their feet in the world of marketing, noting how the 3+1 Program is a viable option for students looking to save money and transfer to a 4-year university.

In his own words, Professor Hoxworth stated that, "RCSJ is the best spot to start, giving lots of options before your final decision."

Throughout the gymnasium, multiple tables were set up in rows, with the intention of allowing guests to line up quickly and move through the Open House smoothly. The tables were organized based on the placement of majors, faculty, and their cohesiveness with one another; the STEM-based majors were located toward the front and back of the gymnasium, with Business Majors focused on the left, Humanities Majors based on the right, and Student Life-based sections placed in the middle of the aisles for easy access.

At each of these tables were professors, students, and other members of staff presenting information for each of the listed majors that students could register for and attend. Items such as course details, mock transcripts, and RCSJ merchandise could be found at a large majority of these tables.

RCSJ typically organizes these Open House sessions at set intervals throughout the semesters, at either the Gloucester or Cumberland campuses. Open Houses at RCSJ involve thoughtful and strategic planning to make both first-time and returning students feel comfortable and prepared for the coming semester.



Another 3+1 Program Launches at RCSJ

By: Angelina Leone

Rowan College of South Jersey offers several 3+1 programs in which students may complete three years at RCSJ and their last year at Rowan. These programs allow students to attend RCSJ for their junior year to save up to \$30,000 on tuition and fees. The 3+1 programs also guarantee transfer admission to Rowan University. Students will then graduate with a Rowan University degree. Through this program, students will learn from Rowan's course curriculum at RCSJ, along with experiencing future internship opportunities to enhance their work experience and career potential. As of the 2022 / 2023 school year, RCSJ now offers an additional 3+1 degree in Applied Professional Communications through the Rowan premiere partnership.

Students can apply to join the 3+1 programs after completing their Associates Degree at RCSJ. Students must complete a minimum of 30 credits in their fourth year at Rowan University. Along with the potential tuition cost savings, the transfer from RCSJ to Rowan is made much easier and less stressful through this program. Transcripts are automatically sent internally, and there are no extra applications students need to fill out. The 3+1 programs currently offered through RCSJ and Rowan University include:

- Business Administration, Global Business / Leadership (B.S.)
- Radio / Television / Film (B.A.)
- Inclusive Education (B.A.)
- Fitness Management (B.A.)
- Nursing (B.S.)
- Psychology, (B.A.)
- Law and Justice Studies (B.A.)
- Disaster Preparedness & Emergency Management (B.A.)
- Computing and Informatics (B.A.)



The Voice student editors and 3+1 Applied Professional Communications Students with Dr. Vinci

"I was initially drawn to the 3+1 option as a way to save thousands on tuition. After learning the curriculum is the same as I would learn at Rowan University in the third year, it was an obvious decision for me. I look forward to joining the Business Administration 3+1 next year," Luke Vinci, Rowan Choice student.

Students interested in learning more about the 3+1 programs can visit the website, or contact the Program Director, Alescia Kennon, at akennon1@rcsj.edu.

Dr. Sylvia Baer: The Reincarnation of Emily Dickinson (Self-Appointed)

By: Kaylie DiStefano

As the Zoom call connects, I see Dr. Sylvia Baer's smiling face through my screen. She waves excitedly, and all my remaining anxiety is washed away. Interviews can be nerve-wracking, except in this case, when my willing subject is the cheerful and inviting Dr. Baer. Before I'm even able to gather my thoughts, she asks me how I am, how my classes are going, what I'm planning to do after graduation, etc. It's not until her third or fourth question that I remember I'm supposed to be interviewing her! This happens more often than I'd like to admit during our hour-long Zoom call; Dr. Baer would break off into an anecdote, and the only thing I could do was turn farther and farther away from my note-taking device, my hands slipping from the keyboard as my focus drifted to the fascinating world Dr. Baer created as she spoke.

This talent for extremely compelling storytelling is something Dr. Baer has been in touch with her whole life. She has experience with a plethora of writing styles, including poetry, stage plays, academic work, journalistic writing, and, most recently, creative nonfiction. Speaking with such an accomplished and skillful writer, I wanted to ask what her favorite genre to write in is. After a long pause to think, she told me that she feels she's "best suited for memoir-writing." In terms of other genres, she jokes, "When I write fiction, it is wretched," and "I'm a good, serviceable poet," (a humble description coming from someone named Poet Laureate of Cape May in 2022). However, it is evident that nonfiction comes naturally to her, based on the success of her memoir, "Learning Life," published in 2022. In it, Dr. Baer shares with the world a collection of deeply intimate stories about her childhood, early adult life, and family history. Through words, photographs, and poems by Emily Dickinson, she shares these moments of connection between herself and those who've guided, influenced, and inspired her. Many of the stories she included in "Learning Life" were originally Facebook posts that had gone viral during the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic, when many people were in desperate need of meaningful interactions and human connection.

Interpersonal connection is not only a reoccurring theme in her memoir; it's a reoccurring concept in her thoughts and behavior. Many of the questions I asked brought us back to discussing the importance of finding commonalities between all people, especially during times of political turmoil that emphasize our differences. This idea was the driving force behind the creation of her "Poet-Tree." In the months leading up to the 2016 US Presidential Election, Dr. Baer recalls feeling overwhelmed in the face of such division. Rather than continue to feel powerless ("I do not like this feeling," she had stated plainly to me), she decided to employ her strengths to counteract this disharmony. She explained, "As a lit teacher, one of the things we understand is that we all have so many connections. We have more in common than we have separately." So, Dr. Baer made use of her vast compendium of poetry, along with some brightly colored paper, twine, and clothespins, and decorated the miniature weeping cherry tree on her front lawn with around 60 unique poems, by all manner of poets, to inspire a sense of commonality and connection.



As an educator of English and literature, Dr. Baer has two main goals to achieve by the end of any class: spark an interest in her students to continue reading and thinking, and help them see the similarities between ourselves and others through stories. "Literature is about humanity," she explains. "It's like gossip about humanity. All of us are human. Well, most of us anyway," she jokes. Dr. Baer says she feels a responsibility to expose her students to literature that makes them think, and encourages them to connect stories from our past to our current lives. Although she's just recently retired from teaching at RCSJ, educating has been an important part of her life for 51 years, and, with these goals in mind, the impact she made on all her previous students will continue to be a testament to her talent for imparting knowledge and inspiring young people.

"Literature is about humanity."

Our final conversation revolved around the main point of her memoir, "Learning Life." I asked her (very unfairly, considering she wrote a whole book about this, and we only had a few minutes left to talk) what she most wanted people to learn from the stories she shared about her family history, and how their experiences affect the way she chooses to interact with the world. She told me exactly what I expected to hear: "I wrote a whole book about that!" She then pauses to think, and graciously gives me a more heartfelt answer. The theme of connection comes up again, as she tells me, "I want to be able to connect to other people's lives. Some people write 'show-off' memoirs— 'Look at all the things I've done, look at all my accomplishments...' What I've done matters to me, of course, but how I present some of this to other people matters to them. No one cares how many degrees I have. Well, I care! It was hard work... but the stories in my own history that connect to other people... I think that's something I really want to do. We're all connected. In telling the stories, I'm not just telling the stories of my life, I'm telling my family's story." She explains how she was inspired to write the memoir when people began reaching out to her on Facebook after reading her posts, so touched by her stories, many of which mirrored situations in the commenters' lives. "We all have stories to tell," she declared, "and they need to be told."

Although she chooses not to brag about her many accomplishments, Dr. Baer has quite the collection of accolades. Among these titles are Poet Laureate of Cape May, successful memoir-writer with a second installment on the way, fellow at Yale University (which is especially impressive, considering that, at the time of her high school graduation in 1967, women were not allowed to attend Yale), briefly the host of a talk show, where she invited all manner of unique guests to share their stories, and director and curator of a non-profit art studio in West Cape May, called Art Space, to name a few.

"We all have stories to tell... and they need to be told."

Even with all these accolades and responsibilities to keep her busy, Dr. Baer still finds time for herself, her friends, and her family; when we spoke, she was in Florida, having just visited Disney World with her husband on a whim, and with plans to go golfing with friends after our Zoom call. She spoke briefly to me about the importance of finding balance in one's day-to-day activities, and how, even with all her life experience, she still struggles to maintain this equilibrium. This simple confession served as a much-needed reminder that people continue to experience bouts of disharmony in their lives well into adulthood, even those who are extremely accomplished and entering their retirement years. She made it clear, however, that these struggles certainly don't define us; they only make us more human, and, when shared with others, even in passing conversation, they can create a sense of commonality. As she explained to me in many ways, creating connections is a mission, goal, and purpose in her life. In writing this and sharing her ideas, I hope to connect with others, the way that Dr. Baer does so effortlessly, reminding people of our shared experiences as humans through stories, and hopefully, inspiring others to do the same.

Post-Pandemic, Beth Beecroft Says eLearning Still Thrives at RCSJ

By: TJ Edmund

A few years after the COVID-19 outbreak was first declared a global health emergency in March 2020, students at RCSJ are still feeling the after-effects. Even in 2023, when many are more than ready to welcome some normalcy back into their lives, Rowan College of South Jersey is still offering a variety of course formats in order to meet the needs of busy students who have obligations outside of their education.

Distance learning and asynchronous courses are not new to RCSJ; in fact, the college has been offering online class options for more than 20 years. The Dean of Online Learning, Ms. Beth Beecroft, mentioned that her department was well established before the pandemic and was poised to provide students, as well as instructors, with a necessary toolkit of essential resources to navigate eLearning and work efficiently each semester.

Beecroft made it a point to note that, especially in the early days of the COVID lockdowns when many students across the nation were forced to transition to remote learning via Zoom, there were many benefits of distance education. Some of these advantages included convenience, flexible class schedules, and critical thinking in online discussions, among others.

"I think having our eLearning Department established well before the pandemic meant that we were able to kind of translate everything to online pretty easily," mentioned Beecroft.

As a result of the lockdowns and health restrictions, Beecroft identified that many students at RCSJ have pinpointed specific preferences as to how they learn best. Having been a student at RCSJ since the fall of 2020, I have noticed that, while I always love traditional face-to-face learning, hybrid classes allow students like me to benefit from the flexibility of being online, while also enjoying the social connection of meeting with peers and professors on a weekly basis.

For Spring 2023, the asynchronous format was the most popular learning method. There were more online than in-person courses offered, because students have been choosing the online courses at a higher rate. The previous semesters saw an increase in online classes during registration, which prompted many divisions across campus to implement additional course sections. Even prior to the global health emergency, there was an uptick in the popularity of distance education. COVID-19 has helped eLearning to evolve into the most popular format at the college. Beecroft commented that there are two instructional designers at both the Cumberland and Gloucester campuses. These staff members are experts in online teaching and online design; they also offer support for students involved in eLearning. As a staff member in the campus community, the Dean of Online Learning acknowledged that RCSJ puts the needs of students before all else, and that questions are greatly encouraged. The eLearning teams at both campuses are willing to meet students face-to-face, schedule a Zoom meeting, or communicate over the phone or via email correspondence.

As well as clear communication with students, Beecroft and her team make sure that faculty are trained to teach online. Many instructors need expertise in the classroom, but this online training is in addition to what is expected of traditional learning methods. "So, all instructors who are teaching online courses at RCSJ have been trained through a four-week online course that they have to take. And really, the goal of that course is to not just teach them how to teach online, but also the ways that it's different than teaching in the physical classroom," explained Beecroft. There is also a large emphasis on instructor presence in the online course, which relates to the connection between students and instructors.

Through this training program, faculty members are also given the opportunity to feel like students in an online course meant to help them navigate and adopt a variety of teaching and learning methods.

Ultimately, a lot of the feedback that Beecroft and her colleagues have received from faculty is that the most useful thing they learned while taking the course is how

to be a student, and how to organize their courses in an efficient manner to fit the needs of all students.

Post-pandemic, many students might be frustrated with eLearning while others see benefits and anticipate no change to what has now become a normality in education across the nation. eLearning was a solution when the world shuttered but still remains an option for students who have other obligations outside of the classroom.

Some may think that eLearning was an idea born out of the pandemic, but Beecroft said that it has always existed especially for those who would not receive education if there was not an online alternative to the physical learning environment.

Years from now if distance learning dwindles in popularity, it will still be available for students who wish to pursue it.

"Yeah, we've been here a long time doing this, and we've always served a specific segment of students. And so those students, aren't going anywhere...that demographic of students still exists and will continue to exist," Beecroft remarked in conclusion.



Left to Right: Erika Strube, Beth Beecroft, Dr. Brooke Litten; Front: TJ Edmund

Ryan Hughes: XC & T/F Coach

By: Alyssa Connor

Ready. Set. Go!

As kids, we've all raced our friends for fun, whether it be at the park, the playground, or in gym class. It's all fun and games...until it leads to a successful career. That's what happened to Ryan Hughes, cross-country and track coach at Rowan College of South Jersey.

"Me and my best friend in middle school were super competitive, so we tried to beat each other in gym class. The track coach said to us, 'You need to do cross-country'." He shared his story with me as I sat on the opposite side of his desk in his athletic office. His walls are covered in awards, pictures, and memorabilia from his past coaching seasons. Hughes has been coaching for 24 years. Initially, he started coaching in 1999 at St. Dominic High School in Missouri. After that, he became the head coach for both cross-country and track at RCSJ. Even after receiving job opportunities at other colleges, he decided to stay at the community college level. Hughes has been awarded National Coach of the Year six times and Regional Coach of the Year 34 times. Much like his successes, he has coached 22-All Americans, 70 Individual Champions, five National Record Holders, and six National Championship Teams.

Hughes is very involved at the meets. The support and effort he puts toward coaching his athletes are noticed through his various accolades. As one of his athletes, I am confident I will see Hughes at every possible viewing spot in a race. He is always yelling my times out, along with some encouraging words. Hughes does this for every individual athlete. He takes on a positive approach to coaching. On top of that, he is also very witty. As I

Hughes cont. from pg. 5

interviewed him, he cracked jokes and behaved sarcastically. His attitude and persona help form great teams that share close bonds with one another. His teams often form great friendships, both with each other and with him, creating a remarkable support system. Of course, I had to ask him how he maintains such good relationships with his athletes. He chuckled and told me it was by, "...having fun, talking to them, and being on their level." All jokes aside, Hughes is a very understanding coach. He told me he shows his support to his athletes by listening to them and being there for them.

Over his 24 years of coaching, the biggest thing Hughes learned is how different everyone is. He says that it's vital to get to know each individual athlete. The impact he wishes to leave on the athletes is a memorable experience and a good time (not literal ...but those too!) "If you have fun, it doesn't matter," he said. Part of his job is aiding athletes in the switch from high school to college sports. For example, race distances change. A five-kilometer race becomes a six-kilometer or eight-kilometer race. As a young runner, it can be overwhelming and anxiety-inducing to switch to a new environment. To help new college athletes, Hughes encourages them not to be afraid and to have faith in themselves. Regarding this transition, he said, "Being a college athlete is not this crazy, unattainable goal." Personally, I can say Hughes has helped me a lot with the transition. His positivity helped me change my mindset while running races.

On his team, Hughes holds a lot of traditions. He does something after every meet called "The Roadrunner Award," in which an athlete is awarded for something positive they did during the meet. Hughes speaks kindly about the recipient in front of the team. It is a tradition that encourages athletes to do their best! Another practice Hughes has is "the journal." The journal is where Hughes logs the athletes' splits, times, and conversions. In the journal, athletes must write something optimistic or positive about the meet. His goal is to make running as enjoyable for the team as it is for him. Encouraging his athletes to set reasonable goals and look for small

improvements in their running is one of Hughes's objectives. As a coach who has a lot to worry about, he always makes sure to check on each member of his team, seeing if they feel optimistic, sick, hurt, etc. In my experience, I've noticed he is always able to offer us a plan or solution to help us get back on track. Hughes says his athletes are like family. Hughes treats us as he would his peers, with respect and kindness. I asked some of my teammates why they like having Hughes as a coach; some responded in a silly way (of course), but they all shared kind words.

Coach Hughes has developed many great teams over the years. His athletes develop long-lasting friendships with each other and with him. Hughes expressed, "Having a successful team doesn't necessarily mean winning, if they have fun, are cared for, and like to run." As someone who has been running for almost 10 years, Hughes is one of the best coaches I have had. I asked if there was anything else he wanted to be included in his interview. I giggled as he counted on his fingers and said, "The ten most powerful two-letter words are: if it is to be, it is up to me."



Career Ready?

By: Delaney Bowman

Are you a current student wondering what your next step will be after graduation? Many students feel lost in college, and can't decide what the best major or career path would be for themselves. Similarly, students can feel defeated when applying for jobs that require experience because they haven't been given the opportunity to gain the credentials to be hired. This is why RCSJ offers the Internship and Career Planning program. Candice Racite, the Dean of RCSJ's Internship and Career Planning program, spoke about the amazing opportunities offered to students looking to narrow down their major and get experience in their field.

The Internship and Career Planning (ICP) program is a division of the college that's available to students in every major, and can begin wherever the student is on their academic and / or career path. The ICP program has around 200 businesses in their network to give students in every division or major the chance to be mentored by employers, and to work on projects in their field of employment.

The first step in the process is the Focus 2 assessment, which is a short, free quiz that will allow you to narrow down your strengths, values, and expectations, and produces for you a set of career pathways based on those results. It also tells you the different job titles available within those careers, what degrees are needed for both application and advancement, other possible licenses or field work that is required, and other logistics of the career. Racite talks highly of the assessment, vouching that "[We] usually want to make sure every student has an opportunity to figure out 'Am I in the right major?'" [The Focus 2] saves time, it saves money, in the long run." Students are also given access to the ICP resume template, which is AI powered. Racite says that it edits and heightens your resume, and "...allows you to actually put a job description that you're applying for next to your resume, and it calculates if you're a good match." Every student, on both campuses, has access to this technology, as it is completely free on the [ICP website](#).

The ICP team encourages interview preparation, where you can practice interview questions to guarantee you are ready and confident about the interview and are getting "practice to feel pressure, but in a safe environment."

Once your resume is sent out to employers, it will be reviewed, and they will decide who they want to interview. If selected after your interview, you will be registered for a 3-credit course at RCSJ and start working! The credentials for qualification include: a 2.0 GPA minimum, 24 credits, and a willingness to work 150 hours (as it is required). Your employer will assign you a project and mentor you on the job. A checks-and-balances system is put in place where they "...meet you at midterm and give you an evaluation of where you are and how well you're meeting your work goals, and what else you can do to improve by the end of the semester."

"And that's the design of the program: to give students an opportunity to say, 'Here's where I am, and here's where I want to go.' and we're creating that pathway for you, to make it a little easier. [Our] students are bright ... and we really want to show that to the working community."

When asked if there were any instances of an internship through ICP leading to part / full-time employment, Racite replied, "Lots of them," with a laugh. She says that 60% of the time, students get offered a position, and about 40% of the time, they take it. Students that take the position end up getting a permanent part- or full-time job. Gloucester and Cumberland have a tight-knit set of businesses that are networked, so even if someone is not hiring right now, they may take a resume and send it to a friend, because chances are, someone out there is hiring!

Leadership: TJ's Way

By: Selin Atak

TJ Edmund is the student leader of the Peer2Peer club at Rowan College of South Jersey. He is a communications major in the 3+1 program and is currently focused on completing his bachelor's degree. He has a concentration in journalism and has written 16 articles for *Follow South Jersey*, a local news outlet that focuses on diverse communities. TJ aspires to continue making news content and using his talent to be an advocate for Asian Americans, LGBTQIA+ communities, and people with physical disabilities through a digital publication.

Peer2Peer is a campus club that is meant to bring students together to talk, letting them control where the discussion takes them. TJ likes that the conversations can be "spontaneous and flexible," as he puts it. He has done an impressive job at creating a judgment-free space for students. They also go for walks outside if the weather permits.

TJ has a natural instinct for leadership, and is comfortable with speaking in front of others and leading discussions. Attending one of the club meetings was a very fun experience.

He begins with asking everyone about their weekends and if there's anything they might want to share. He is open to discussing articles they read or stories written by club members. TJ describes the point of the club concisely, saying, "Groups like Peer2Peer are unique, and celebrate diversity in the campus community and also the world."

TJ also prepares introductory agendas and games to start off the meetings, like *Pictionary*, *2 Truths and a Lie*, or *Would You Rather* questions. He is naturally skilled at following up with the members' thoughts and even better at making connections. He has set up a very beneficial formula for an open-minded club.



TJ Edmund

In January of 2023, TJ spoke to the seniors of his high school about change, and how this can sometimes be necessary to succeed in an academic or work environment. He spoke about the impact of the pandemic, and how it forced everyone to change their outlooks in order to succeed in a new world order. TJ had a lasting impression on the students. His words are captivating and honest.

Outside of school, TJ enjoys reading books, playing video games such as *the Sims* franchise, and spending time with family. In the future, TJ would one day like to write a memoir, one of the genres he enjoys reading. With all he's done and will no doubt continue to do to support others and uplift spirits, he's got all the attributes and accomplishments to write a great one.

Gia Unfreed : From Serving Tables to Serving Students

By: Grace Mathiesen

Happy, free, confused, and lonely at the same time," a line from Taylor Swift's single, 22, on her album, *Red*, is exactly how college students these days are feeling, especially when it comes to figuring out their futures. Luckily for the Rowan College of South Jersey students, the school has adopted superstar, Gia Unfreed. Gia works as a Student Recruiter in their Internship and Career Planning Center. She works with both Gloucester and Cumberland students. Her job is to guide and prepare students to embark on internships and careers within their majors.

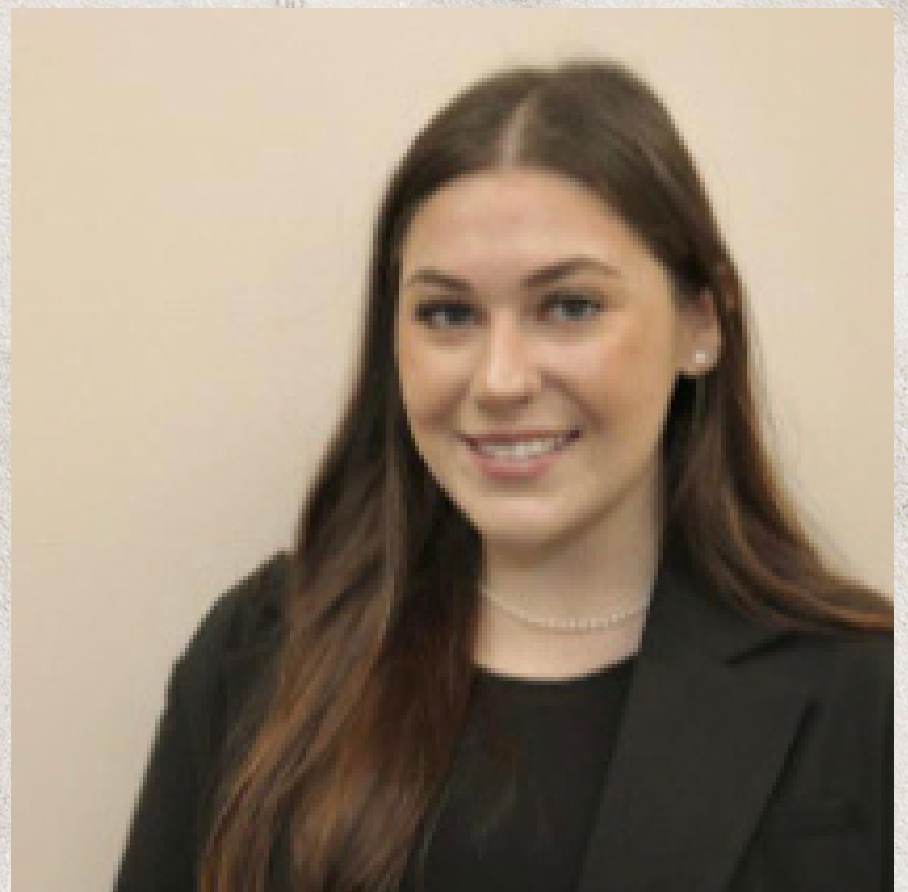
Twenty-one-year-old Unfreed grew up and resides in Elk Township, NJ. She lives with her twin sisters, both enrolled in college, and her two parents. Unfreed graduated high school in 2020 during the pandemic and began classes at RCSJ that September. After entering college as a health science major, she switched her major multiple times before landing in business administration. She received her associate's degree in May of 2022 and is part of the 3+1 program, where she will transfer to Rowan University this May. When she's not in the office, she enjoys skiing in the winter and being on the beach in the summer.

In August of 2022, only months after graduating with her degree, Unfreed landed the position of Student Recruiter. Although her office is at the Gloucester campus, she helps both Gloucester and Cumberland students. On a day-to-day basis, she keeps track of students who apply for internships / careers. She helps these students create strong resumes, send their resumes to employers, and prepare for interviews! Additionally, she meets with students to help discuss their Focus 2 results, and she consults with students on career / major changes if necessary.

Before working as a recruiter, Unfreed was a manager at Friendly's. A former professor encouraged her to apply for the position after she expressed interest in marketing.

She can exercise her marketing skills and learn new skills from this position. Unfreed expressed, "I have learned that I very much enjoy working with students."

You may be asking yourself, why should I apply for internships? How does this help my life? Unfreed has the answer: "Internship experience is one of the best things that you can have on your resume when starting your job search." This is true, when employers are sorting through applications, they are looking for experience.



Gia Unfreed, Student Recruiter

Jerry Green and the Power of Determination

By: Noah Gerstenbacher

Jerry Green is a soccer player on the men's team at Rowan College of South Jersey, where he has been making a name for himself, both on the field and in the classroom. Born in Malaga, New Jersey, Green was a standout student-athlete at Delsea Regional High School, and this has carried over into his college career. Green's dedication to his sport and his studies have earned him widespread admiration from his peers and coaches, and he has become a true role model for young athletes. Green's hard work and determination have gotten him a full ride to RCSJ, and in the future, he looks to achieve the same standards at a four-year college.

His work ethic is second to none. He approaches every practice and game with the same level of intensity and focus, always striving to improve his skills and help his team succeed. This dedication has paid off in a big way, as Green has emerged as one of the team's top players and earned himself a starting role on the team as a freshman. During the season, he also showcased a wide display of talent, which caught his coach's eye as well.

Green's commitment to excellence extends far beyond the soccer field. He has maintained a 3.5 GPA throughout his college career, a remarkable achievement that speaks to his tireless work ethic. He is currently majoring in business administration with a focus on finance and hopes to pursue a career in the field after graduation.

Green's strong will to succeed is evident in everything he does. He understands the importance of setting goals and working tirelessly to achieve them; he never shies away from a challenge. Despite the many demands of his schedule, which includes hours of practice, game time, and rigorous academic coursework, Green remains focused and driven. He refuses to let anything stand in the way of his dreams. He has also stated that he participates in multiple men's indoor soccer leagues. He states that he does this because it helps him, "Stay fresh while keeping my body in good shape for the RCSJ season."

"He embodies the ideals of hard work, dedication, and perseverance, and he serves as inspiration to everyone to achieve great things."

In many ways, Green is the quintessential student-athlete. He embodies the ideals of hard work, dedication, and perseverance, and he serves as inspiration to everyone to achieve great things. His achievements are a testament to the potential that can be unlocked through hard work and determination, and he is sure to continue making a positive impact in the years to come. During his time at RCSJ, he has found that "balancing school with practice, work, and life can be difficult, but it's never impossible." Green has proven this statement to be true time and time again and hopes to continue to have a healthy work-life balance.

Green is an exceptional student-athlete whose achievements on the field and in the classroom are a product of his incredible work ethic, intelligence, and unwavering determination. He is a role model for young athletes everywhere, demonstrating the power of hard work and the importance of setting and achieving goals. We can only imagine the great things that he will accomplish in years to come and are excited to see where his passion and drive will take him.

Unfreed cont. from pg. 7

How can you gain experience? Through internships! Internships are a fantastic way to gain experience, knowledge, and gain credentials for a resume. The best part is that every internship at RCSJ is paid, and you can even earn college credits. Not only can you find them in person, but you can find ones that adopt a hybrid model as well.

When asked if there is anything she wants students to know about the ICP Program, she stated, "As a student, I can also tell you to make sure you are using all your resources. These things are here for you, and it is so important that you use them."

The RCSJ ICP Program also has an Instagram page, @rcsj-icp, many students might not know about. Its goal is to reach students, but Unfreed states that they are always looking for feedback as to how they can be reached better. Just recently, Unfreed and her team put together Valentine's Day treat bags, including treats and information about the program, and they were handed out to students on campus.

"As a student, I can also tell you to make sure you are using all your resources. These things are here for you, and it is so important that you use them."

When Unfreed was asked about what her dream career would be, she stated, "I have always really enjoyed marketing and social media.... My current dream is to work in the marketing department at Glossier—my favorite makeup brand." How has this position helped her prepare for a role like that? She answered, "I have been able to learn and explore what my marketing style is and what kind of pieces I like to create. This is something that I definitely want to do forever."

If a student is interested in pursuing an internship or career, Gia states, "ICP is here to help you with anything you may need regarding internships, resume help, personal branding, interview prep, and major and career exploration. You can reach us the best via email - icp@rcsj.edu. My email is aunfrel@rcsj.edu. One of us is always quick to respond."



Jerry Green, Roadrunners Men's Soccer Player

“Woman Of The Year” Emily MacGibeny

By: Travis Kelleher

Emily MacGibeny, a name synonymous with softball excellence, has been awarded the prestigious title of “Woman of the Year in Sports” for her outstanding contributions to the sport. From her humble beginnings in East Greenwich Township to the field at Rowan College South Jersey, her journey has been remarkable. Emily’s father introduced her to the game of softball at the young age of seven, and she never looked back. Emily’s softball career kicked off at seven years old, playing coach pitch for her town’s local league. As Emily grew older, she played for many different travel teams, progressing her skills while making many new memories and sharing incredible experiences with her teams and coaches along the way.

Throughout Emily’s softball career, she has faced many challenges, from in the batter’s box to out in the field. The challenge that Emily has faced the most in her softball career revolves around experiencing lows, pushing through these struggles, and remembering why she plays; in an interview, she stated, “The challenges I have faced throughout my career mostly involve forgetting why I play softball. When we lose a game, or I make a mistake, it can become stressful. Stepping back and looking at the bigger picture helps me realize that the only reason I go through the hard times is because they can never outweigh the love I have for the game.” Softball, like any other sport, comes with its share of challenges and failures, but Emily believes that having fun and working hard are the keys to success.

Her own experiences have taught her that maintaining a positive outlook and persevering through tough times are crucial to achieving one’s goals. When it comes to her accomplishments, Emily is modest, but her achievements speak volumes. Playing college softball and achieving success on and off the field is a dream come true for her. Representing her school and taking pride in her accomplishments is a testament to her hard work, determination, and skill as a softball player.

Emily’s training routine is focused and disciplined, with a combination of fielding, hitting, and weightlifting to prevent injuries. Her motivation comes from wanting to be the best version of herself for her teammates and contributing to their success on the field.

Emily MacGibeny’s journey in softball is a testament to her unwavering passion, dedication, and talent. Her ability to



Emily MacGibeny - “Woman of the Year”

overcome challenges, inspire others, and achieve success on and off the field has earned her the well-deserved title of “Woman of the Year in Sports.” Emily’s impact on the sport of softball and her role model status make her a trailblazer in every sense of the word, and her future in the sport looks incredibly bright.

Emily’s current focus is on winning the National Title with her team. She also envisions herself being involved in softball even after the conclusion of her final season, through coaching younger generations of softball players in the coming years. Her love for the game is unwavering, and she sees herself continuing to contribute to the sport even beyond her playing years.

RCSJ Student Field Day

By: Travis Kelleher

RCSJ’s Gloucester campus hosted a Field Day event on April 26th to encourage engagement within the RCSJ community and raise funds for student scholarships. The Student Government Association, which hosted the event in conjunction with the Gloucester Faculty Senate, aimed to bring students and faculty members together. The event was accessible and welcoming to all participants, regardless of their backgrounds and abilities.



The intent for this event was to provide a diverse range of activities to encourage as many people to participate as possible. Even if attendees preferred spectating, the fun that unfolded was a blast to be a part of. Many of the games required little to no experience, which made the field day very inclusive to the community. Activities ranged from giant inflatables, blindfolded face-painting contests, and relay races. Mister Softee also provided free treats for those in attendance as a delicious added bonus.

While students and faculty were able to take away some cheerful memories, the overall goal was to build community within our campus. Many students only feel connected when they are part of an athletic program, a student club, or another organized group. The RCSJ Field Day event put traditional clubs to the side, and formulated a new tradition that helped bring everyone together on campus in a fun and familiar way.

Contrary to other community colleges, the students at RCSJ truly have a sense of pride for their school and campus. This year’s Field Day event was proof that taking the time to step outside the classroom and come together as a student-body creates an experience like no other!

Finding Success in Versatility at Rowan College of South Jersey

By: Mackenzie Cochran

Rowan College of South Jersey's very own student-athlete, Alyssa Connor, is taking the college by storm. As a newly elected captain of the college's successful cross country and track team, Connor is seen as an inspiring mentor and figure to her peers. Helping guide the team to numerous awards with her friendliness and leadership, the Rowan College of South Jersey Women's Cross Country Team captured the title of Region 19 Champions in their most recent season. Fellow teammates view Connor as a well-disposed and sociable teammate who is willing to make the team feel like they belong, while competing against the best in the region. Head Coach Ryan Hughes and Assistant Head Coach Leyna Ambrose took immediate notice of her role model behavior, awarding her the coveted Coaches' Award at the 2022 Fall Sports Awards Banquet.

With success on the track comes great responsibility in her studies. Connor is a Presidential Scholar Student-Athlete at Rowan College of South Jersey. She is currently in her junior year of college, and will finish her last year at Rowan University under the 3+1 program for communications. Academics have always been Connor's top priority; she started taking college classes in high school! Her success in academia achieved her an associate's degree in digital photography during her first two years of college. Unanimously voted by Rowan College of South Jersey professors Eoin Kinnarney and David Coates, she was the only student to receive The President's Award for Digital Photography at the 2022 Rowan College of South Jersey Gloucester President's Award Ceremony.

Balancing the time between athletics and academics is not an easy task for people; although for Connor, it comes naturally. Her key to success is to find a routine that is easy to stick to. "I always try to keep myself on a set schedule so I can get everything done that I need to. I work the same hours three days a week, go to school two days a week, and do my homework in between classes and practice." Even with a busy schedule, Connor still finds time in the week for herself. "I like to dedicate free time on Saturdays and Sundays to photography. Photography is something I like to do for fun. It gives me an outlet to be creative and it is a great way for me to relieve my stress when life becomes difficult."

Connor is the perfect example of an outstanding student-athlete at Rowan College of South Jersey. Not only has she received accolades in both academia and athletics; she also takes the time to care for others and focus on her passions outside of school and sports. Most important to Connor is her impact on the world. Describing herself as a "pretty



Alyssa Connor – Women's Cross Country and Track and Field Star Student-Athlete

empathetic person," she incorporates empathy into her everyday interactions with others. Connor wants to be seen as a friendly peer to everyone around her. Growing up in South Jersey, she loves to give back to the community that she calls home. Connor hosts seasonal free photography giveaways with her self-established photography business, SolarEyes Photo, and actively participates in her community as a volunteer coach for the Washington Township Youth Track and Field Team.

She continues to spread positivity throughout her South Jersey community by making her two passions in life, photography and running, an enjoyable event for people of all ages. "I love photography and being a volunteer coach in my community so I can spread light onto the hobbies that are so important to me." As much as she is proud of all the success she has accumulated during her time at Rowan College of South Jersey, seeing the South Jersey community around her with smiles on their faces is truly Connor's favorite.

Track & Field Recap

By: Alyssa Connor

The Rowan College of South Jersey Roadrunners Track season is coming to a close. The team has traveled to seven meets to prepare for Nationals. The NJCAA DIII National Championship is a three-day meet held in Utica, New York by Mohawk Valley Community College from May 11th to 13th. The Roadrunners currently hold 35 National Qualifying Marks.

In the final week, the men and women both rank 2nd for the East Region. Out of all regions, the Roadrunner men sit in 4th place, while the women are in 8th place. The Roadrunners are in good positions.

Most qualifying marks were obtained at the Widener University Invitational held on April 21st and 22nd. Combined, the men's and women's team found themselves producing 23 qualifying marks and 41 seasonal bests.

The team holds high standings in the nation. Many athletes are ranked in the top 5 for their events. They can be found below:

Women

- A team consisting of Mackenzie Cochran, Alyssa Connor, Ally Campo, and Ashton Wiseley ranks 3rd for the 4X800M (11.19.09)
- Mariella Farrell ranks 1st for Discus (38.58M) and 2nd for Hammer (36.47M)

Men

- James Coleman ranks 3rd for 400M (50.93)
- Anas Bensaoud ranks 3rd for 800M (1:58.72) and 4th in 5K (15:54.01)
- Giorgio Bruno ranks 2nd for 400M Hurdles (56.94)
- A team of Giorgio Bruno, James Coleman, Khalif Horton, and Zach Wileczek ranks 2nd for the 4X100M (43.61)
- Chris Guerrieri ranks 1st for Shot Put (15.57M) and 3rd for Hammer (41.86M)
- Michael Taylor ranks 5th for Discus (38.90M) and 1st for Hammer (46.25M)

Last year, the RCSJ women placed 2nd at Nationals. The men got 4th place.



The track team has been working tirelessly since January. Many athletes have qualified in their respective events, placing themselves in a good position for the Track & Field Championship.

Roadrunner Highlights for the 2023 Season

By: Luke Nelson & Delaney Bowman

As the Roadrunners' sports season come to a close, it can be declared that this year's teams were truly successful. Read below for highlights of some of the standout Roadrunner athletes for Spring 2023:

Standout Team: Roadrunners Golf

An absolute monster hole-in-one from Alaina Villari at the LBI National Golf Resort and the Roadrunners Men's Golf team handed County College of Morris their first team loss in four years at the GSAC competition gave the Women's and Men's teams a phenomenal start to their season.

Standout Athlete: Quan Rogers

Recent Roadrunner Spotlight Athlete of the Month, Rogers, has been an absolute beast in the scoring brackets this season for Men's basketball. With a sophomore average of 11.8 points per game and contributing an impressive 3.5 assists per game, he has flourished into an impressive player and an even better teammate. Coming off of an injury from last season, Quan has remained a huge contributor to the team, and looks poised to become an even more dominant force this season.

Best Team Performance: Roadrunners Men's Baseball

The men's baseball team at RCSJ is a staple of the school. They have often dominated, and this season was no different. The team sits at an impressive 12-4, 3rd in all of NJCAA Baseball Division III rankings, and looks to continue their upward trend to the top of the board. We cheer them on, and highlight their impressive achievements!

Team To Watch: Roadrunners Men's Tennis

The Men's tennis team finished as National Runner-up last year, and returned with a solid veteran roster this spring. The team looked to make a big comeback this year, opening their season with a triumphant win of 9-0 over Brookdale Community College. Returning legends Rockland Caselli, Kyle Deacon, & James Keenan have lead the entire team to the promise land this year. The Men's Tennis team is our highlight team to lookout for!

Track & Field Recap cont. from pg. 10

These are the current Qualifiers:

100M (Men)

Khalif Horton (11.36)
James Coleman (11.46)

200M (Men)

James Coleman (22.41)
Khalif Horton (22.49)
Zach Wileczek (23.58)

400M (Men)

James Coleman (50.93)
Khalif Horton (51.54)
Giorgio Bruno (52.32)

400M (Women)

Hailey Hartwyk (1:05.03)

800M (Men)

Anas Bensaoud (1:58.72)

800M (Women)

Ashton Wiseley (2:28.93)

1500M (Men)

Anas Bensaoud (4:13.99)

1500M (Women)

Ashton Wiseley (5:39.01)

3000M Steeplechase (Men)

Charlie Hepler (10:45.60)

5000M (Men)

Anas Bensaoud (15:54.01)
Charlie Hepler (16:44.79)

10.000M (Men)

Mike Abate (36:19.58)

100M Hurdles (Women)

Susana Serrano (19.08)

400 Hurdles (Men)

Giorgio Bruno (56.94)

400 Hurdles (Women)

Susana Serrano (1:14.54)
Avonna Anderson (1:24.04)

4X100M Relay (Men)

Coleman, Bruno, Horton, Wileczek (43.61)

4X100M Relay (Women)

Anderson, Cochran, Hartwyk Serrano (54.55)

4X400M Relay (Women)

Cochran, Hartwyk, Serano, Wiseley (4:36.05)

4X800M Relay (Men)

Bensaoud, Kellum, Wylie, Hepler

4X800M Relay (Women)

Cochran, Wiseley, Campo, Connor (11:19.09)

Pole Vault (Women)

Hailey Hartwyk (2.20M)

Triple Jump (Men)

James Coleman (12.71M)

Triple Jump (Women)

Hailey Hartwyk (9.59M)

Shot Put (Men)

Chris Guerrieri (15.57M)

Discus (Men)

Michael Taylor (38.90M)
Chris Guerrieri (38.70M)

Discus (Women)

Mariella Farrell (36.58M)

Hammer (Men)

Michael Taylor (46.25M)
Chris Guerrieri (41.86M)

Hammer (Women)

Mariella Farrell (36.47M)



Ant-Man and the Wasp: Quantumania Review Major Spoilers Ahead

By: Selin Atak

The Marvel Cinematic Universe has introduced another third installment, *Ant-Man and the Wasp: Quantumania*. After the emotional sequel to *Black Panther*, this movie brought some humor back to the MCU through Paul Rudd's charming deliveries.

Now that Scott has helped save the world with the Avengers, he's decided to write a book about it while enjoying the perks of being a superhero and father. Taking no interest in his newfound fame, his daughter, Cassie, cares more about contributing to the community and learning about the quantum realm. With help from Hope, she builds a device to send signals to the quantum realm, getting never-before-attained data. Janet has been hiding some ugly truths she discovered through her time there. She hints at this when she asks Hope to shut their project down, but, by trying to destroy the device, they all get sucked into the quantum realm; Scott, Hope, Cassie, Janet, Hank, and the ants. They meet beings of this tiny world, and Janet ends up facing her past through Krylar and Kang the Conqueror.

As part of the MCU, this movie did not feel cohesive to the storylines we're used to, but as a stand alone movie, it held its own fairly well. Kang's development as a villain was captivating, and his views often seemed like they were justified through its portrayal. His performance was raw, and humanized an epic villain. He spoke with confidence and sadness about his mission to clear out all of the timelines in the multiverse, because he knows what's going to happen. The audience doesn't, but based on the fear in Loki's eyes in the end credit scene, it can't be good. The affection that Jonathan Majors carried for Kang's characterization shows a lot when he and Janet are trying to fix his ship 30 years ago. He is sincere and honest when Janet sees the vision while touching the energy core. Janet can't let him escape the quantum realm, but Kang is determined to wipe out the timelines in order to prevent the bad event we don't know about yet.

Scott and Cassie's banter was refreshing; it brought back the humor that fans loved in the first *Ant-Man*, although their relationship could've been more developed. Cassie's development as an activist for people in need was a driving force in her contribution to stop Kang. She wasn't confident, but her intentions were clear. Her consideration as part of the heroes club was fun, but not as groundbreaking as it could have been.

Separating the Ant-Man and the Wasp's journeys in the quantum realm was a poor choice, considering their names are together in the title of the movie. Although the location that Kang was transported to wasn't made clear, and was foreshadowed not to be anywhere good, the fact that Scott was able to beat him on his own at the top of the tower was lacking in continuity. Kang has defeated multiple versions of all of the Avengers, so it doesn't make sense that Scott was able to subdue him on his own. I'm torn on this aspect, since more powerful characters exist in other films. The fact that Hank was able to use the now-genius ants made up for that when considering the movie as separate from the others.

A fan of Marvel and a fellow classmate at RCSJ, Dylan Kedosh, had some thoughts on the movie as well. In the past few years, Marvel has "lost the spark that makes it so incredibly loved," and exchanged it for storylines with lesser value in order to make more in sales. Scott and Cassie's characterizations were lacking, and did not undergo any significant growth that enhanced the plot. Dylan also brought up Janet and her reluctance to speak up about what really happened 30 years ago. In doing so, she risked the lives of the others, because they didn't fully understand what they were getting into.

With Scott and Hope making it out of the quantum realm in the end, Dylan says, "their growth could have been so much better and more evident, but there are effectively no coherent consequences from the film itself, aside from all the Kang variants." Even though it was a resolution to the problem throughout the film, the characters lost the opportunity to go through a valuable arc. Dylan enjoyed the post credits scene with Loki, Jonathan Majors' "stellar performance," and the worldbuilding. Some of Dylan's thoughts that resonated with me were his hopes of Marvel one day returning "to the status that reminds us that just because we don't have powers, we are more super than we think." This is a good message that was once regularly portrayed in MCU movies.

Everything introduced about the multiverse in this movie opened up unlimited possibilities for the next movies. The epic CGI introduced new characters and settings, creating a multitude of opportunities for future storylines. These may be explored in upcoming movies, like *Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 3*, *Loki* Season 2, and *Avengers: The Kang Dynasty*.

Taylor Swift | *Midnights* Album

By: Kaylie DiStefano

Coming off the heels of two fan-favorites, *folklore* (2020) and *evermore* (2021), Taylor Swift's newest album, *Midnights*, had a lot to live up to. As she does with most new releases, Taylor reinvented her sound and style, moving from the hushed tones and acoustic instruments of the preceding albums to the more performative singing style and synthesized tracks in *Midnights*. Although many fans were disappointed with this shift, I feel the need to come to *Midnights*' defense. It's not my favorite of Swift's ten albums, but I do enjoy the liminal, dreamscape aesthetic she created, and it has some undeniably great songs. It's hard to ignore, as well, how dramatically chart-topping *Midnights* was, taking up the top ten spots in Billboard's Hot 100 for the first time in the magazine's history.

The intro track, titled "Lavender Haze," sets the scene for the whole album. It's a classic example of Taylor Swift-style pop songs, with a high-energy beat, strong vocals, and confident lyrics. The light-heartedness of "Lavender Haze" contrasts wonderfully with the second track, "Maroon." This track is distinctly grittier than the opener, and shares a much more intimate story.

Transitioning into the third track, "Anti-Hero," the listener gets a break from the seriousness of "Maroon." This is great for some, and a bit jarring to others. Tonally, it calls back to Taylor's singles from previous albums, such as "Blank Space" from *1989* and "Look What You Made

Me Do" from *Reputation*. Thematically, it reminds Swift fans of a popular track from *Lover*, "The Archer," in which she similarly admits to "being the problem" in many of her relationships. Combining two of her successful songwriting elements, vulnerability and sarcasm, one might think "Anti-Hero" is the perfect song. However, where "Anti-Hero" shares the sarcastic tone of "Blank Space" and "Look What You Made Me Do," it lacks these tracks' perfectly executed melodies. It shares a theme with "The Archer," but the overall silliness and theatrical performance on "Anti-Hero" overshadows this vulnerability, and the lyrics lose their appeal. To me, this song missed the mark a bit, as does the fourth track, "Snow On the Beach," featuring Lana Del Rey.

Fans of both Swift and Del Rey created a lot of excitement on platforms like Tik Tok and Twitter when the feature artist of this track was released. Unfortunately, it seemed to fall flat for many listeners. Lyrically, I think it's one of her weakest songs; it's extremely repetitive, and it depends heavily on the use of the f-bomb. Swift has a tendency to place too much emphasis on profanities as she sings, giving the whole song an immature, juvenile tone.

The mediocrity of the third and fourth tracks is completely overshadowed by track five. "You're On Your Own, Kid" is a highlight on *Midnights*. Here, Swift reminisces on a few major struggles she encountered as she matured into the independent woman she is today, and describes times in her life when she felt truly alone. As is true for many Swift songs, the leading moment of this track is the bridge.

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It's the kind of bridge that makes listeners lose their breath as they try to sing along, dancing, waving their arms, and screaming at the sky. As the song crescendos, Taylor shares some of her most personal lines regarding her rise to fame: "I gave my blood, sweat, and tears for this | I hosted parties and starved my body | The jokes weren't funny, I took the money | My friends from home don't know what to say." Immediately after these lines, her story takes a turn for the better, as Taylor shares how she overcame these struggles and focused on the good: "There were pages turned with the bridges burned | Everything you lose is a step you take | So make the friendship bracelets, take the moment and taste it | You've got no reason to be afraid | You're on your own, kid | Yeah, you can face this | You're on your own, kid | You always have been." She ends the song here, by restating the title, this time in a new light. It's a perfect resolution to the buildup from the verses and the crescendo of the bridge. "You're On Your Own, Kid" is one of the most emotionally satisfying stories Swift has ever told.

Following this masterpiece are two skippable tracks, "Midnight Rain" and "Question...?" The former is the better track of the two, but the heavy synth production and voice effects disrupt and distract from the meaningful lyrics. Next is a much better track, the dark and smoky "Vigilante Shit." Swift employs just enough of her charmingly awkward storytelling to once again, as she did for her 2017 *Reputation* album, convince us that she's the villain we should all be rooting for. Unlike many of the songs on *Reputation*, however, this track has minimal post-production effects; it remains quiet throughout, almost as if she's whispering the story to her listeners, letting us in on a secret. It ends abruptly, perfectly transitioning into the next track, the much louder and flashier "Bejeweled."

This song starts and ends strong. Swift pulls listeners in with the first beat and subsequent lines, "Baby love, I think I've been a little too kind | Didn't notice you walking all over my peace of mind | In the shoes I gave you as a present." The lyrics become a bit clunky in the chorus, but it's not too distracting, and it doesn't take away from just how fun the song is. The production effects can only be described as sparkly- and twinkly-sounding, creating the feeling of strutting through an arcade inside a dream, or being dropped into a video game you've just beat the final level of. The song comes to a satisfying conclusion as Taylor harmonizes with herself for the final line: "Best believe I'm still bejeweled | When I walk in the room | I can still make the whole place shimmer!"

The following track, "Labyrinth," blends in perfectly with the album's sound and aesthetic. It incorporates twinkly production sounds that don't distract from the vulnerable lyrics, creating that "middle-of-the-night, spiraling thoughts" feel that Swift wanted to convey.

Midnights' 11th track, "Karma," is a personal favorite of mine, although I can understand why it's not so loved by others; it's extremely silly, but in a way that just works



for me. As she runs through a list of pleasant things in her life that she considers to be her good karma, the lyrics can come across as a bit lame to some listeners: "Karma is my boyfriend," and "Sweet like honey, karma is a cat, purring in my lap 'cause it loves me | Flexing like a goddamn acrobat, me and karma vibe like that," are a few of these playful lines. However, I think this song deserves a bit more respect, at least for being as fun as it is. The quick tempo, strong synth beat, and upbeat vocals encourage all listeners to skip around the room and dance along, or else suffer the consequences of bad karma!

"This is a collection of music written in the middle of the night, a journey through sweet dreams and terrors. The floors we pace and the demons we face. For all of us who have tossed and turned and decided to keep the lanterns lit and go searching - hoping that just maybe, when the clock strikes twelve... we'll meet ourselves." --

Taylor Swift

The next track, "Sweet Nothing," wraps the listener in a warm blanket and tucks them in for a beautiful bedtime story about true love. In this track, Taylor employs the same gentle tone she used to tell fairytales in *folklore* and *evermore*. Here, however, Taylor tells us her own love story, through the most mundane activities, like humming in the kitchen, driving home, and collecting rocks. It's a short, sweet, and perfectly executed delivery of its message.

The final song on the original release, "Mastermind," was an early fan favorite. It opens with some fast-paced, short, beeping notes that sound almost like machinery, with lights flashing and dials spinning, as if codes are being run through an analyzer. This was surely intentional, because, here, Taylor tells us something she's never said before: she's the mastermind behind her life, career, and relationship, successful in each aspect because she planned out every step along the way. In "Mastermind," Taylor admits that all her songs about fate were fabricated in an attempt to make her elaborate plans appear serendipitous.

Like many of Taylor Swift's albums, *Midnights* had to grow on me. For those expecting a third installment of the previous acoustic-folk albums, I do understand why *Midnights* would've been disappointing, but, once you release that unrealistic expectation and listen to *Midnights* for what it is, I think you'll find her return to pop to be a refreshing and triumphant success. If you give it a chance, I promise you'll uncover a few gems... or "Bejeweled" tracks (wink).

On Your Summer Break, Check Out Art, Culture, and More in South Jersey!

By: Alysa Serrano

Collingswood May Fair

If you're looking for a way to expand your horizons this summer and experience local traditions that you may have previously overlooked, then look no further than the heart of South Jersey.

Taking place May 27th, The 42nd Annual Collingswood May Fair will kick off the summer season with art, music, vendors, and activities for all age groups. The historic downtown Collingswood will transform into a bustling cultural exhibit, featuring local artists eager to display and sell their work in a juried show. Along with the displayed art, live music will be featured across multiple stages, varying from rock, folk, blues, and more.

Not interested in art? No problem. The event also features several food courts that will complement the local restaurants and cafes, with everything from savory, southern-style barbecues to rich, decadent desserts.

Kids will also be able to experience some fun of their own, as the event offers a "KidZone" that features carnival games, rides, and crafts specifically catered to a younger audience.

If that isn't enough, there's also the accompanying antique car show at the May Fair, where dozens of classic cars are showcased for hobbyists to share their passion and learn from others in the community.

Hammonton Italian Festival

Another South Jersey tradition that's sure to please is the Hammonton Italian Festival. Centered around the celebrated procession every July 16th, the Hammonton Italian Festival is the longest-running Italian Festival in the United States. It began in 1875, when the founder of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Society, Antonio Capelli, celebrated a small group of Italian immigrants' safe journey to America.

The large influx of immigrants to the town of Hammonton helped the festival to become a tradition, and the Our Lady of Mount Carmel Society has continued to share and preserve the cultural significance of the event within the community. Mass is held each day of the festival, and all are welcome to attend. Post-procession events include vendors, live entertainment, a beer garden, carnival rides, food stalls, and, best of all, nightly fireworks. While admission to the carnival grounds is free, attendees should expect to pay \$30 per night for unlimited access to the rides.

The post-procession also includes live music and DJ entertainment, so bring your friends and *danza* the night away.

There's no better opportunity to get out of your comfort zone than exploring our area's local culture. This summer, be sure to visit a local fair, and make one of these New Jersey traditions a new tradition of your own!

Click on the Links Below for More Summer Fun Ideas!

[See a Phillies game!!](#)

[Free Movies On the Beach in Avalon](#) - Tuesdays at 8:30

[Atlantic City Beer and Music Festival](#) - June 3rd

[Barefoot Country Fest](#) - June 15-18th

[The Ben to The Shore Bike Tour](#) - July 23rd

[Ocean City's Night in Venice](#) - July 23rd

[Tidal Wave Festival](#) - August 11-13th

South Jersey Theatre

By: Joey Destra

12 Angry Jurors

As part of their Play Reading Series, Cumberland county presented the 12 Angry Jurors. This took place on Thursday, February 23rd, and was directed by Deborah Bradshaw. *12 Angry Jurors* tells a very real story, as 12 ordinary people are faced with a huge responsibility: deciding whether a teenage boy was guilty of murdering his father. Each juror brings their own opinions, prejudices, and biases into this room, which makes it one heck of a debate. After a heated discussion, the votes are 11-1, deciding that the boy is guilty. However, United States law requires that a vote be unanimous in order to sentence the accused. After a long day, tempers soar as the 11 jurors try to convince the opposing juror to agree with the condemnation. When they re-evaluate the evidence presented, however, more and more jurors begin to rethink their stance on the trial. After another vote, it flips completely to 11-1. The final juror wants to hold out to make a hung jury, which would result in the case being tried again. In the end, they settle on a Not Guilty verdict. The play ends with everyone returning to their normal lives. It shows that, even after all these heated discussions, they can simply return to normalcy with no hard feelings. That is the whole point of the play; life ultimately just goes on.

Damn Yankees

A 1955 musical comedy based on the novel, *The Year the Yankees Lost the Pennant* by Douglass Wallop, in which baseball super-fan, Joe Boyd, trades his soul to the devil for a chance to lead his favorite team to victory against the New York Yankees. He transforms into young baseball star, Joe Hardy, leading the Washington Senators to become a winning team. It's only after this that he appreciates the life he left behind, and realizes the sacrifices he ultimately made. *Damn Yankees* is a light-hearted American comedy, destined to please all audience members. *Damn Yankees* will run from May 5 - May 20 at Burlington County Footlighters. Tickets are \$20 per person.

[Title of Show]

No, I didn't forget to insert the show's name. *[Title of Show]* is the name of this 90-minute, one-act musical. Jeff and Hunter are two struggling writers who hear about a musical theatre festival that piques their interest. The only problem is they have just three weeks to craft a musical. With the limited frame and a severe case of writer's block, will this group of friends be able to create a show in the three-week span? *[Title of Show]* will run from June 16 - June 18 at Haddonfield Plays and Players, and tickets start at \$30.

Grease

Take a trip back in time to Rydell High School's senior year. The 1950s musical is an explosion of rock 'n' roll told through the eyes of the T-Birds and the Pink Ladies. The budding love story between rebel Danny Zuko and the new girl in town, Sandy Dumbrowski, becomes an issue when their summer fling turns into high school drama. Can two kids from such different walks of life find a way to be together? Find out at the Broadway Theatre of Pitman! *Grease* will run from July 7 - July 30, and tickets start at \$40.

The Wedding Singer

Travel back in time to the 1980s with this crowd-pleaser. The plot revolves around Robbie Hart, a well-known wedding singer who aims to make every wedding as disastrous as his own, where he was left at the altar. Robbie finds love in Julia, and is surprised when he is booked to sing at her wedding. He enlists the help of his bandmates to put on the performance of a lifetime, hoping to stop this wedding from coming to completion. Will Robbie be able to convince Julia not to marry this Wall Street snob, or will he have to lose another girl? *The Wedding Singer* will run from August 4 - August 13 at the Levoy Theatre, and tickets range from \$20 to \$25.

Spongebob the Musical

Grab your scuba gear and dive to Bikini Bottom this summer, as Spongebob, Patrick, and Sandy team up to try and stop a volcano from destroying their beloved town. Will this unlikely team be able to save Bikini Bottom, or will they lose everything? This childhood classic cartoon hits the Ritz stage this July 14 - July 30; tickets are starting at \$27 dollars.



By: **Joey Destra & Victoria Strekis**

Aries (March 21 - April 19)

All year long, Aries, you will experience advances in your love life, and this summer is no exception. Expect sparks on May 20th as Mars, your ruling planet, enters Leo, the 5th house of pleasure. This is the time for adventures with your partner; you will be open to new experiences. On August 27th, your ruling planet will enter Libra. This is the sign of relationships, and it is associated with the 7th house of partnership. You could feel empowered to finally cut off a toxic relationship, or it could propel you even deeper into a blossoming partnership. Make sure you are leaning on your support system during this time, as it may be challenging. Remember to focus on your goals.

Taurus (April 20 - May 20)

This summer, relationships are in your cards, Taurus. Some of you may find yourself committing to people in the coming months. Beware—Venus is in retrograde from July 22nd to September 3rd. This should not have a massive impact on your life, but it could disrupt partnerships, so don't be disappointed if your love life feels stagnant for the duration of Venus retrograde. During this time, make plans with friends and family while your love life is at a standstill. Venus also has influence over money. Use this time to progress your career; maybe seek a raise you feel you deserve.

Gemini (May 21 - June 20)

This summer is your time to reset and recharge, Gemini. On July 5th, Mars will enter your fifth house of spirituality. During this time, your energy will be at its lowest. Use this to your advantage—take this time to reconnect to the earth, rest spiritually, and become grounded in your mind and body. On July 22, your time of rest will be up; a new moon in Leo will spark up your social life. New opportunities to connect with friends, both old and new, will appear.

Cancer (June 21 - July 22)

June 21st is the first day of summer, which also happens to be the start of Cancer season. A new moon in Cancer on June 28th will provide opportunities to start fresh in your personal and social life. This summer, you'll experience a full-circle moment with an important person in your life. This could be a significant other, friend, or family member. Whether this is a turning point for better or for worse, you will confront an interpersonal issue head-on. Transitioning from Cancer to Leo season, you may enter a period of self-indulgence. Use this time to treat yourself, you deserve it.

Leo (July 23 - August 22)

Summertime is always when a Leo thrives; it's your time of year! Use this upcoming summer season to have fun, avoid all potential stressors, and focus on yourself. Celebrate your birthday as much as possible, and be sure to spend time with your friends. Leos are great at bringing groups together because people tend to follow your lead. As Mars enters your sign on May 20th, you might feel some aggressive energy. You may be tempted to pick a fight with a romantic interest, but try to use this energy in a different way, channeling it into something that can be progressive for you.

Virgo (August 23 - September 22)

This summer, Virgo, it's time to face some tough decisions you may have been avoiding. On July 28th, Mercury returns to your sign. This is the best time of year to tackle tough conversations, as communication will be at its peak. July 3rd will provide a full moon in Capricorn. Feel free to explore your love life during this time, as this will be a time for fun. As summer turns to fall, however, you may start to experience anxiety about the stability of the relationships in your life. To ease this growing anxiety, try to remember what you want. If you're craving a relationship, fight for it; if you'd rather be single, don't let outside forces propel you into something you know you're not ready for.

Libra (September 23 - October 22)

As an air sign, you crave balance, harmony, and social connections, Libra. This summer, you will be provided with opportunities to change your public perception. When the Sun enters Cancer on June 21st, you will feel a push for change in your life, specifically in your career. With the Sun on your side, you will have the energy to make changes to your career path that better suit your passion.

When Venus enters Gemini on June 22nd, you'll may long for adventure; use this time to self-reflect and travel solo. The best way to discover yourself is to experience the world alone.

Scorpio (October 23 - November 21)

The most important thing you should do this summer, Scorpio, is remain open to all opportunities. The summer solstice on June 22nd means that the Sun will be entering Cancer. You may feel a shift that leads you toward a new adventure. You might plan a summer trip, or it could signal the start of a summer fling. Don't be afraid to take a leap of faith when new experiences are presented to you. Toward the end of July, you may be confronted by an important person, forcing you to have conversation you've been avoiding. Though you may be wary, know that, once the topic is resolved, peace will re-enter your life.

Sagittarius (November 22 - December 21)

This summer is pointing strongly towards evaluation of your career, Sagittarius. On May 17th, your ruling planet, Jupiter, will be opposite Pluto. This may sound intimidating, but it just means that there could be unexpected changes coming your way; a job opportunity may fall into your lap, for example. You can be startled, but don't be afraid to accept it. On July 3rd, the full moon in Capricorn will also further your career aspirations, as Capricorn rules your second house of possessions. This is all pointing to good news for you, Sagittarius. Be ready to fight for what you want as Mars enters Virgo on July 10th.

Capricorn (December 22 - January 19)

Bad news, Capricorns: your ruling planet, Saturn, will be in retrograde from June 17th to November 4th. Saturn controls the standards you place on yourself and onto others. During this time, you may find that you're being extra hard on yourself. Don't fret, though, because Saturn is in retrograde for 1/3 of your life, anyway. Use this time to help progress your life, rather than holding yourself back. Learn how to shake bad habits that are preventing you from making great changes in your life.

Aquarius (January 20 - February 18)

You're known for your innovative and independent spirit, Aquarius. This summer, you may be feeling excited to explore new ideas and experiences that challenge the status quo. You may be drawn to outdoor activities that allow you to connect with friends and loved ones in meaningful ways, whether it's through travel, social events, or simply spending quality time together. Overall, this summer promises to be a time of growth and exploration for you as you embrace new opportunities and push yourself outside of your comfort zone.

Pisces (February 19 - March 20)

As a water sign, you thrive during the summer season, Pisces. This is the time when you can fully embrace your creative and intuitive nature, and pursue your passions with enthusiasm. You may feel a strong desire to explore new places, learn new things, and connect with like-minded people who inspire you. Your spiritual side may also be heightened this summer, as you seek to deepen your connection with the universe and tap into your inner wisdom. Make sure to take time for self-care and relaxation, as you may become overwhelmed by your emotions.

