NEWS Student, faculty, and

residential voters weigh in on their political choices. PAGE 3



NEWS

The Campus Activities Board works hard to entertain VTSU Castleton students. PAGE 4

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SPORTS

The Alpine ski team finishes up with with two National champs.

PAGE 8



Hammond's contract not renewed in Theater Dept.

By Pearl Bellomo

Castleton Spartan Assistant professor of Theater

Hannah Hammond has been terminated from her position at Vermont State University.

"I knew that there was a possibility with the optimization that they could not renew my contract because it's a year-to-year contract," said Hammond, who received an email revealing the news over Thanksgiving break. "That said, I teach a large portion of the major because I teach all the acting and directing, and I direct the shows.'

Despite Administrative Optimization indicating the future nonrenewal of temporary contracts, Hammond had hoped her position would remain, especially because of the students.

"It really sucks for students, because they're the ones really affected by this. I know I can find another job, but students' only option is to transfer [because of an insufficient program]," Hammond said.

"My first thought when Hannah spoke these words was that it wasn't true," said sophomore film major and theater minor, Carissa Challinor. "It was all some big joke because we had fought for the arts in the beginning of the year, so it would be funny for something to go wrong for the arts again?'

"Why do the arts, specifically the theater program, always have to be targeted?" she posed.

Students reacted in tears and frustration when Hammond shared the news. Despite her connection with students, it also meant uncertainty about the department's future. Challinor described her as a professor who "knows our strengths and weaknesses" and somewho who "has allowed for those in the theater department to shine bright."

Should Hammond's position end after this semester, one or more adjunct professors would be hired to fill the required classes. However, it's unclear who would direct the mainstage productions.

Steven Gross, chair of Music, Theater, Dance, and Technology, was informed that productions would likely run through a club system. An outside director would be hired for the shows, still paid for by the Theater Department.

He has met with Dean of Arts and Education David Kupferman and Provost Nolan Atkins to advocate for Hammond to stay.

"Kupferman fully supports our request to keep Hannah," said Gross. "I've received no concessions from the provost. He has a hard line in the sand about simply not renewing any temporary contacts.'

see "Hammond" on page 6



Hannah Hammond

VTSU students represent Zambia in Model UN

By Camille Jackson Castleton Spartan

"Zambia is present and voting," Vermont State University students said during each committee session as country roll call was taken.

The Harvard National Model United Nations, hosted by Marriott, saw the inaugural VTSU team leave quite an impression during the four-day long conference. The Feb. 15-18 event was marked with late-night committee sessions, intense debate, international cooperation and cultural immersion as university teams took on the national interests and priorities of their represented nation to the model United Nations floor.

Model UN features a series of events that mimic the organization and premise of the United Nations. Held frequently and throughout the country, Model UN provides students the opportunity to taste global diplomacy and experience the cooperation, toleration and collaboration necessary for global governance to thrive. Gathering students from varying majors, countries, and backgrounds allows committee sessions to hear a diversity of opinions and is reflected in multifaceted negotiations that eventually lead to resolution. The VTSU Team was a conglomerate of Castleton, Randolph and Johnson students, who, after only meeting via Zoom, were formally introduced at a Mac-Donald's carpark in White River Junction as they made their way to Boston. "The biggest change was the involvement of club members from three out of our five Vermont State University campuses. If you were to have asked me during the thick of the merger if I thought cross-campus clubs were a good



of action would be to educate the young and vulnerable. Similarly, creating and electing local women into local leadership roles was a vital step for enduring the constant continuation of education programs within rural areas," explained Stone, who sat on the Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural Committee.

"I tried to put aside my own personal opinions and beliefs and really just fight for what I would believe Zambia would argue and would stand for and give its demographics and its culture and just the history of the country," noted Vice-President of the VTSU Model UN Club and Johnson senior Maria Mesquita.

Recognizing a diversity of cultures and interpretations was a central component of the conference, with over 30 countries repesented "Meeting people from different countries and being in an environment where different languages are spoken, I love that," recounted Mesquita. Within the International Security and Disarmament Committee, delegates Anima Mishkat and Camille Jackson joined a coalition of countries concentrated in the global south and passed a resolution to address ethnic conflict.

idea, I would've said no. Today I confidently say the Model UN team will never be the same and we are better than ever! The involvement from other campuses allowed for a diverse team of some of the smartest and most hard-working students the university has to offer," explained Model UN Club President and Johnson student Kaitlyn Stone.

The VTSU students had departed the quiet serenity of Vermont as the expanse of the Marriott hotel's open floor lobby welcomed them to Boston. The space shrunk as it crowded with young business professionals, already networking

before the opening ceremony.

"Someone was standing on a chair, some were talking over each other. There were some

Students at a Model United Nations conference in Massachusetts represent different countries.

egos flaring momentarily. It got pretty loud at several moments within the unmoderated bloc

caucuses, and I was just there to witness and learn,"recalled Castleton freshmen Setty

Provencher, who sat on the World Health Organization Committee discussing artificial

intelligence and its medical applications.

"Once there, I was struck by the level of prestige, the feeling of connectivity and that feeling of whoa, I actually made it to this, because, well, it's Harvard," Provencher said.

The conference consisted largely of lengthy committee sessions punctuated with social

events including trivia, an international bazaar, delegate socials and a career and opportunities

festival. The committee sessions provided a forum for speeches and negotiations among and between countries, mediated by

experiences chairs.

As first-year attendees, The VTSU students' first hurdle to overcome was the complex jargon and acronyms constituting half of all sentences.

The unique challenge of Model UN is to accurately voice and advocate a perspective largely removed from delegates' home countries. Each committee was required to submit a position paper in late January that presents the national interests of their represented country.

SETTY PROVENCHER

The allocation of countries to university teams was based on team size. With a smaller group, the VTSU students were asked to represent Zambia.

"As the delegate of Zambia, I made it a mission to find likeminded countries whose first step

The conclusion of Model UN saw the VTSU team enjoying a pit-stop in Manchester on the return to Vermont.

While slightly skeptical about the ongoings of the United Nations, the conference demonstrated to Stone its potential.

"Fast forward to now, I would argue that the UN is a vital steppingstone in the process of ensuring human rights globally, however, that is just one of the many actions accelerated by the UN, Stone said.

Castleton businesses love the students



GABBY BLANCHARD Birdseye Diner server Dianna Amerio in action.

By Gabby Blanchard Spartan contributor

Believe it or not, many businesses in the Castleton Community enjoy having VTSU Castleton students around.

On a recent afternoon, several businesses were visited, and workers were asked if they prefer Castleton when the students are here or when they're away on break.

Perhaps surprisingly, some readers, workers, and residents at each place said they prefer to have the students in the community.

Birdseye Dinner was first, where Diana Amerio greeted this reporter.

The bubbly waitress chatted about students as the yummy smell of burgers and fries from the kitchen filled the room.

Amerio has been working at the diner for three years, meaning she has experienced three summers without students around.

She said she has some col-

lege student co-workers, some of whom work all year long. She said that the weekends while classes are in session tend to be busier, as she often gets many great kids from the wrestling team here and there for dinner.

In addition, she said the students being in session also brings in business due to visitors, games and recruits.

But Amerio said there is a downside to having students around.

"Sometimes, when the campus is in session, and students are working, it causes my hours to get cut," she said with a smile.

However, in the next breath, she reiterated that she prefers to have them around.

Amelia Harrison is a junior from VTSU who works at the Castleton Pizza Place & Deli. She said most of her co-workers are also students at the campus.

Due to the many students working there, she said locals view having students around as a good thing.

When asked if not having the students around affects business. Harrison said that much of their business does come from us students.

But there's a downside to that,

too. "As you know, college students are not great tippers," she said.

Val Brown, from the Village Store, said she loves getting the chance to work with students. Brown said how fun it is to work with kids from the campus, and she enjoys hearing about their classes and how they are doing in school.

She said she realizes how important school is for students and always wants them to put school before work.

Therefore, she's always happy to cover a shift or two.

"I always tell them that school comes before work, and I, along with others, will always cover a shift if needed," she said.

At the Jiffy Mart gas station-

Dunkin Donuts business, cashier Thom Casey said that they have one student employee, but other than that, they only get a few.

He said the students on campus bring a lot of business, especially for gas sales.

When asked for a funny college student story, Casey shared how some students from out of state come in and ask to buy a lighter but don't realize that the law in Vermont says you have to be 21, leaving them at a loss.

Dunkin Donuts manager Thachary Tate said Dunkin currently employs six workers who are enrolled at Castleton.

Like the other businesses, he said Dunkin benefits from the games that the campus hosts.

More than 50 students filled their store one day after a game, he said.

"When the campus is on break, our sales are cut in half," he said.

Editorial

STAGE LEFT

Was Haley's Vermont win a message to Trump?

As most of us now know, former Republican South Carolina Governor Nikki Haley won over Vermont voters, beating Donald Trump 50.2% to 45.9% in the Super Tuesday primary.

Vermont was Haley's only primary win besides the District of Columbia, before she dropped out of the race

So, what is the reason for this surprising turnout among Vermont voters?

According to a recent VTDigger article by Paul Heintz, Independents and Democrats likely made her victory possible.

As there were more ballots cast in the Republican primary in the state of Vermont than any other year since 2000, it seems many voters were hopeful for a new face to represent the United States. Many voters feel that both Joe Biden and Donald Trump are just too old. Both the president and the GOP nominee have sparked conversation about just how competent either is at this point. As a result, even Independents and Democrats alike, at least in the state of Vermont, were pulling for Halev.

"The secret to Haley's success in the Green Mountains appears to have been people like Marley Beers," Heintz wrote in the piece.

Beers is an Independent from Winooski, Vermont "who typically votes for Democrats and expects to back President Joe Biden in November," the article read. On Tuesday, Beers voted for Haley after requesting a ballot for the Republican primary.

"I don't really want Trump to have a very easy path in getting the Republican nomination," Beers was quoted saying in the article.

In another example, Representative Ashley Bartley, a Republican of Fairfax and co-chair and leading organizer of Nikki Haley's campaign in Vermont, said in the piece that the crossover votes in the Republican primary were "huge, huge, huge, huge."

Even Vermont's Republican Governor, Phil Scott, agrees with this sentiment.

"Without the independents in particular coming in and grabbing a Republican ballot, it wouldn't have happened," Scott was quoted as saying. "I don't know how many Democrats, but I'm sure there were some -- more of an

a Trump re-election, why not just vote Democrat? It seems, to me, to make more sense to vote for Joe Biden in the first place. It seems that voting for Haley over Trump as a Democrat is only encouraging a Republican vote.

Our current situation seems like a bit more of an issue with the Republican party as a whole. Now, this may be stepping on some toes here, but our issues with Trump go much further than that. The Trump administration and right-wing mainstream media news played an immense role in the near dismantling of American Democracy.

It is not just Donald Trump we should be wary of, but also radical conservatism. Unless we see some extreme changes from the Republican party, we can expect continued MAGA propaganda and nonsensical "news" stories portraying Democrats and Independents as the "bad guys."

But another, equally plausible reason for not voting Democrat could be discontent with our option.

"This election was not especially exciting on the Democratic side," said Vermont's Democratic party Executive Director, Jim Dandeneau.

Dandeneau gave a "vibes-based assessment" that most Vermonters who cast Republican ballots for Haley are Democrats. While Democrats and Independent voters will likely pull for Biden during the election, it is clear the Democrats were hoping for a better turnout of nominees.

However, if people like Marlev Beers are going to vote Biden over Trump in the end, why waste the vote on Nicki Haley? If we're left with two clear winners, It seems logical to pick from the side we're on.

Dandereau said it appears many voters in Vermont, "would crawl over broken glass to make sure Donald Trump does not get elected president again."

And if the "vibes" are correct, and most of Haley's ballots came from Democrats and Independents trying to stop Trump, then this coming election will be a nail biter for sure. The only thing we can do now is keep our optimism up and stay informed - and vote!

- Amanda Johnson

Fellow students, as an older student speaking from experience I have made my fair share of questionable decisions. At 33 years of age and a junior in college, I have made choices that have held me back and caused some delays in my journey to graduate with a bachelor's degree. For over 10 years, I continuously made the choice to consume alcohol, which resulted in severe alcoholism.



Be careful with alcohol

any length of time. and help as they had tried so many times before to a stubborn, unflinching addict. I started going to A.A, kept a good job with great benefits, and I finally went back to school, seeking my bachelor's degree. I have never felt more proud than I do now. The point I am trying to make is that you are here, continuing your education for a reason. Take it from someone who has experienced it. I have seen too many dreams and ambitions destroyed by drugs and alcohol not to tell my story. You are young, and you have yet to experience so much of what life has to offer. The urge to party it up with friends usually includes drugs and alcohol, and is tempting and hard to resist.

ble even making a job work out for diction. Do not let hard partying interfere with you and your educa-I finally let my family step in tion, your road to success. Use this time wisely.



anti-Trump vote. But, if Democrats and Independents are concerned about

Check us out online at castletonspartan.com



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*The Spartan is the official student newspaper of VTSU Castleton. It functions to inform, educate and entertain readers accurately and responsibly.

The University, its administration, faculty, student body and staff are not responsible for the content of the newspaper.

At first, I had everything going for me.

I took a couple years off after high school to enjoy myself for a bit before I made the jump to college. I attended community college and graduated with a liberal arts associate's degree in Multimedia Communications and Graphic Design.

It seemed like I could not fail.

But, after several dead-end jobs and life struggles with boyfriends and living situations, I started to feel a bit 'stuck' for lack of a better word. I was feeling increasingly anxious and frustrated by my situation, so I turned to something to

Amanda Johnson take the edge off.

I started drinking. At first, it was just occasionally,

as it usually is in these cases. But, as I started to grow increas-

ingly fond of the feeling of 'letting go,' I started to drink a little more, and more, until it became glaringly obvious that I had a problem.

My social life, my relationships with family and friends, they suffered tremendously, and I had trou-

However, it does have a devastating downfall if done in excess and irresponsibly.

So please heed my warning. I was one of the lucky ones. Not everyone bounces back from ad-

By all means, enjoy that occasional drink with your friend on the weekend, but enjoy it responsibly. Know your limit and try not to drink too much. Put your studies first and look out for one another. I would like to conclude with a quote from Chapter Two in the 'big book,' "Alcoholics Anony-mous," titled 'There is a Solution.'

"...an illness involves those about us in a way no other human sickness can. If a person has cancer, all are sorry for him and no one is angry or hurt. But not so with the alcoholic illness, for with it there goes annihilation of all the things worthwhile in life. It engulfs all whose lives touch the sufferer's. It brings misunderstanding, fierce resentment, financial insecurity, disgusted friends and employers, warped lives of blameless children, sad wives and parents-anyone can increase the list."

- Amanda Johnson

Vt. is dealing with neighborly issues over loose livestock

A unique problem is presenting itself in the Vermont Statehouse. This problem is so immense it is causing locals to become very agitated and stressed with their neighbors.

But let's be honest, if you had a 1,000-pound animal making divots in your yard you probably wouldn't be too happy either!

That's the issue, livestock getting out of enclosures and damaging property.

Some are taking the issue to their state representatives with hopes of making changes. They claim that their neighbor's livestock continues to affect their property, even though they negotiate with their neighbors.

Lueders-Dumont, Timothy who serves as a lawyer for the Vermont Department of State's Attorneys and Sheriffs, claims there are already laws on the books dealing with loose livestock.

However, Dumont also states they urgently need to be brought up to date. In a WCAX segment, Dumont explains that this is vital "so that there's penalties involved for the individual because a \$10 fine is not going to be a deterrent in 2024."

In addition to Dumont, Ted Brady of the Vermont League of Cities and Towns, also agrees that the current laws on the books are dated and create an issue when they do hear about these types of incidents.

On WCAX Brady stated "A lot of towns contact us and say how do we handle livestock and domestic animals running afoul?"

The WCAX segment also quot-

ed Sen. Bobby Starr, D-Essex-Orleans counties. Starr is chair of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and said he hopes that the issues between community members can be resolved outside the statehouse.

"I don't think it's going to need a bill," he said, though he added that it may be time to look at old agriculture laws and bring them into the 21st century that we are living in. "We have to go through those outdated laws and at least get them up to where they are meaningful."

Hopefully, these issues can be resolved in the future, and both parties can be satisfied and come to terms. Coming from experience dealing with large animals, I understand how hard it can be to manage their enclosures.

However, I do completely un-

derstand the other neighbor's point of view. Like any other pet owner, we are ultimately responsible for the actions of our pets or livestock. We must do our best to keep them enclosed in their respective areas, however, mistakes are bound to happen.

This is where communication and understanding between both individuals are crucial for a brighter tomorrow. As humans, we are bound to make mistakes, however, it is even more crucial that we have the humility to admit when we are wrong. Large animals are very hard to manage, but sometimes people can be even more stubborn than any other animal!

- Gavin Bradley

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By Maddie Lindgren

opinions and preferences.

impact of their decision.

Biden.

Donald Trump.

As the nation gears up for the

With the high likelihood of a

2024 Presidential Election, the po-

litical landscape is buzzing with

rematch between former President

Donald Trump and incumbent

President Joe Biden, voters from

all walks of life are contemplating

their choices and considering the

In a small local sampling, there

was one strong vote for Biden, one

for Trump, three for the indepen-

dent candidate Robert Kennedy

Jr., two undecided votes, and one

for an unlikely candidate - Kanye.

she will be supporting President

I voted for him because it would

scare me if anybody in the Repub-

lican Party won. I also like having

a female vice president," she said.

the ballot, Stephanie Burkenham-

er, a nurse at Rutland Regional

Hospital, says she's voting for

a Republican. We saw the best

economy under his presidency,

"I'm voting for Trump. I am

On the complete other side of

Emma Ezzo, a sophomore, said

"I'm voting for Mr. Joey B.

Castleton Spartan

News

The best and worst of early college

By Jaylena Haley Castleton contributor

There are only 400 schools in the United States that give high school seniors the chance to start college early and Vermont State University Castleton is one of them.

Early College gives seniors an opportunity to become a fulltime student at college; an opportunity that has many advantages but also disadvantages.

When taking classes at college, seniors can can still play sports at their high school and take part in their activities such as dances and Spirit Week.

Although it may be difficult, it is manageable.

"It was difficult having to stay on top of my work to pass my classes, as well as juggling trying to stay in touch with my high school," said Kiersten Hanselman, a senior at Fair Haven.

This may seem like a sacrifice missing out on some high school life, but early college students say there are many advantages that people may not even think about.

Students can learn if college is right for them, and some say they use this experience to see if they want to continue in college or maybe go a different path.

"This past year there were over 100 students in the early program across our university. We have seen the numbers quadrupling in size," said Maurice Ouimet the vice president of Admissions and Enrollment.

Many Early College students. like fellow Fair Haven senior Emilee Higgins, say they have enjoyed this experience and would encourage upcoming seniors to investigate it.

"Early College is such a fantastic opportunity for students from all backgrounds. I love that you have more time to focus on yourself, studying and doing your schoolwork to the best of your abilities and you can choose your own classes and work towards your goals faster," she said.

And if students don't have a major in mind yet, they can take several types of classes to see what they have an interest in. Or if students do have a major in mind, they can take classes that will help them and use those credits as they continue along

along with an increase in employment, decrease in unemployment, decrease in homelessness and the most secure borders," she said.

While Ezzo and Burkenheimer say they are sure of their votes, Andy Weinberg, a professor at VTSU Castleton, expresses disappointment with the choices of candidates.

"I have many concerns with this upcoming election and concerns with each candidate. I'm disappointed that this is the best we can do," he said.

Weinberg's sentiment echoes the frustration of many voters who believe the current political landscape falls short of expectations.

Along with Weinberg, Rich Clark, a political science professor at VTSU Castleton and experienced pollster, talked about the uncertainty surrounding the election. Clark also emphasizes the importance of professors staying impartial to encourage voting engagement among students, irrespective of their ideological affiliations.

"While the probability is extremely high that the two major party candidates will be Joe Biden and Donald Trump, neither has officially won their party's nomination," he said.

Gary Boyle is a 56-year-old Castleton resident who has voted in many elections in the past, is

supporting the independent candidate, Robert Kennedy Jr.

The battle of ages: Vermonters share election thoughts

"He's gonna avenge his brother and his father. I believe what he talks about in his speeches. I like that he calls bullshit on people," Boyle said.

Boyle is not the only one putting trust in Kennedy. Abby Astbury will be a first-time voter in this presidential election and said she too will be voting for the independent candidate, Kennedy.

"I don't know much about any of the candidates, but I do know both Trump and Biden are getting old. It will be beneficial to have a fresh face in office," she said.

Alexis Rodgers, a sophomore, though not registered to vote, offered a similar perspective to Boyle and Astbury.

"I'm not registered to vote, but if I were, I would be voting for the independent candidate. I feel that I would not be confident in voting either democratic or republican."

There are even some voters that have no confidence in any party on the ballot, and plan to write in another person. Junior Jess Heinrichs is taking a very unique stance that doesn't involve Biden or Trump or Kennedy.

"I'm voting for Kanye, strictly because he's a genius," Heinrichs said.



COURTNAY SPAULDING A Donald Trump sign adorns a VT mechanic shop. Campaigns signs are popping up as the election nears.

Letters from London Some study abroad struggles



Laysha Cervantes and Jess Emery exploring Amsterdam.

Reilly Tennis and Jess Emery posing in front of London's Big Ben. well as the amount of free time I VTSU Castleton student Reilly are ways to manage them.

and places with my friends has

JESS EMERY

that path.

Depending on what college you go to, all the credits that you earn from early college courses can transfer. If students stay at Castleton, all of the credits you earn count.

Professors say they love to have Early College students in classes.

"I've always enjoyed having students in class from a variety of backgrounds, which is difficult in Vermont, said Sociology professor Phil Lamy. "Last year I had 2 or 3 early college students in my class, and they were about the best in the class!"

By Jess Emery Castleton Spartan

Studying abroad is often described as a "life changing experience."

Students can immerse themselves within a culture for an extended period of time while also continuing to receive their education.

While the experience comes with incredible lifelong memories and friends, it's surely not without its day to day struggles.

"I think the most difficult aspects for me have been trying to get into a routine because of how different the course load is here as

have," said Laysha Cervantes, a student from Hendrix College in Arkansas studying at the University of Roehampton in London.

"I also think it's been a bit difficult to manage spending money while I've been here. Having to buy groceries every week as well as going out into the city, traveling and doing things was difficult to manage at first," she said.

The money struggle that comes with life abroad is one that crosses continents.

"My card was frozen like two times within the first month and I couldn't spend any money because my Discover credit card wasn't even accepted anywhere," said

Tennis, who is studying abroad in Northern Ireland. "It was quite a stressful first few weeks."

JESS EMERY

And that can likely be said for most study abroad students. The first few weeks of adjusting are always the hardest.

"Remember that most humans need 30 days to grow accustomed to big change so give yourself some grace for at least that first month," recommends India David, an abroad Roehampton student from Beloit College in Wisconsin, studying Creative Writing and Journalism.

Study abroad students say it's important to know that no matter the struggles and hardships, there

"I think learning how to prioritize things for me has been key with the amount of spending I do as well as my daily routine," Cervantes said. "I think at first I was a bit harder on myself about not doing enough every day, but I also think apart of being here for me has been being able to have more time for myself and enjoying my own company with the little tasks that I do."

Cervantes said it's so important for people to go easy on themselves when they're thrown into new and unexpected environments.

It's not always easy breezy, but it's most definitely memorable.

"Exploring different countries

been so cool and have become the best memories by far," Cervantes said. "I also find that the some of the best memories I have made have been the random trips to the grocery store with my friends, or walking through the parks and listening to music, or even walking into places that we chose to walk into for fun."

At the end of the day, you live, and you learn as you go.

"Take the leap! It was so scary, but it's the most amazing experience and if the opportunity presents itself, take it!" Dennis said of the study abroad opportunity.

Sharing My Favorite Reads: An 'Expert' opinion



Jess Emery enjoying a read on the train.

By Jess Emery Castleton Spartan

I have come to the conclusion that I have read some really great books.

And you should read them too, because I have great taste.

A quick disclaimer is that this is not an official or professional book review, these are just my thoughts on some books I've read.

I just finished my first Eve Babitz book called "Sex and Rage," and this woman is a phenomenal writer and beyond captivating.

It follows Jacaranda in as a beach bum growing up in 1970s Southern California and how she evolves into a writer, navigating relationships and struggles with substance abuse.

Eve Babitz, the '70s L.A "It" Girl writing about a '70s L.A. "It" Girl.

"It made her question why human beings always appeared to be coming along so nicely as a whole when the bottom would fall out once again and they began collecting ears and filings from each other's heads," Babitz wrote in one narrative passage.

There is just something about a boss woman who is funny and intelligent and also dresses well.

The affect Jacaranda's female friends and companions have on her mindset was so comforting for a reader in her 20s who also finds great comfort in female friendships.

I think this is a great read for anyone who doesn't know what the hell they're doing in any aspect of their life.

I read this other book called "Anna K." by Jenny Lee and I have never heard anyone talk about this book.

It's a modern retelling of Leo Tolstoy's "Anna Karenina" set in New York City.

I read this long before I had the guts to stomach all 838 pages of dense Tolstoy.

If you've seen the show "Gossip Girl," this book reminds me of the show, with its huge cast of characters and their high Manhattan Society status.

And of course, there's plenty of drama following similar themes as the original "Anna Karenina."

"I used to only care about what everyone thought of me, but not anymore. Now I only care about what the people I love think of me, and everyone else can rot in hell!" Lee wrote.

This book is labeled "Young Adult."

I know that turns a lot of people away because it's not seen as sophisticated literature.

But it reminded me of my younger teen years, like when I realized I could say the word "fuck" and not get arrested.

The world was my oyster. Now, "Pride and Prejudice."

Jane Austen.

Janey, if you will, is my girl. I absolutely love everything this woman has graced our existence with.

I love everything about the characters and their relationships with each other.

The women are strong and feminine and funny and perfect.

She had this genius commentary on men and patriarchy and society that was woven throughout the story so meticulously.

I assume a lot of people of the time didn't even catch it or Austen would've been a more controversial writer.

God, I love her.

"Pride and Prejudice" basically follows the Elizabeth Bennet and her older sister Jane and their relations with the rich aristocrats Mr. Darcy and Mr. Bingly.

There are also some banger quotes in this book, I mean come on.

"In vain have I struggled. It will not do. My feelings will not be repressed. You must allow me to tell you how ardently I admire and love you," Austen wrote in the book.

Are you kidding? Be still, my cynical heart!

My last rec is "Where the Crawdads Sing" by Delia Owens.

I first picked up this book one summer morning in July to read 50 pages over the course of a month and then I set it back down for about a month.

I picked it up for the second time in the dead of winter, when I was desperate for summer. Desperate to peel off patches of sunburnt skin and play hours of Spit with sticky playing cards with my cousins.

The story follows the "Marsh Girl," Kya Clark as she grows up abandoned by family and making friends with the birds and trees, basically shunned by her community.

Flash forward years later when the town favorite, Chase Andrews, is killed. And guess who the main suspect is?

"She knew the years of isolation had altered her behavior until she was different from others, but it wasn't her fault she'd been alone. Most of what she knew, she'd learned from the wild. Nature had nurtured, tutored, and protected her when no one else would," Owens wrote.

This book was beautiful and mysterious and left me feeling filled with sweet nostalgia of a simple life.

Campus News

Maddie on Cutting off my nose to spite my face the street

By Maddie Lindgren Castleton Spartan



If you could change one thing in the country, what would it be?

By Will Smith Spartan contributor

Spite is a powerful tool. The majority of the time, if I do anything, it is out of spite. Tell me I cannot do something and bam, I will do it just to watch you suffer

I got into standup comedy after someone once told me I wasn't funny. I then performed a show with that person in the audience.

And I had the pleasure of watching them look uncomfortable while I made everyone around them laugh.

In fact, the reason why I am applying to grad school is out of spite. I know this person who, throughout my entire life, has always said I am unworthy, a failure, and a complete piece of shit.

Ever since I have known this guy, he has done nothing but bring me down and try to hurt me. He has been there for every bump in the road and told me it is what I deserve.

When I applied to college this time around, he said to me, "You are just going to fail out of school like you did the first time.

This moment stuck with me.

By Madelyn Noni

Spartan contributor

livered.

events.

CAB.

Bingo Night.

As VTSU Castleton students

gather at campus events and ac-

tivities, there is a dedicated group

working behind the scenes to en-

sure the best quality is being de-

members might operate quietly,

but their hard work and influence

on student life is felt throughout

the Castleton campus. CAB mem-

bers work diligently throughout

the year to plan, prep, and execute

ahead, they attend regional and na-

tional conferences at the Associa-

and lunch showcases where the

performers will step on a stage and

give us a five-minute showing of

what they bring to our campus and

why we should bring them," said

Thomas Kehoe, vice president of

Bringing in outside perform-

ers, including musicians, poets,

magicians and comedians, allows

students to attend, relax and watch

the show in front of them. During

the semester, these events are com-

bined with more interactive activi-

ties like Tie Dye nights or give-

away events, like Casino Night or

events, CAB aims to be interac-

tive with student body ideas and

While planning homegrown

tion for Campus Activities.

In preparation for the semester

"We have dinner showcases

Campus Activity Board (CAB)

I knew that I was a different person than I was 20 years ago. Hell, they say that every seven years, all your cells are completely replaced by new cells, which means that I was a new person twice over and then some.

But those words still stuck with me, pushing me not to make the same mistakes I did.

Now that I am graduating, presumably, and applying to grad schools, this jackass has resurfaced in my life to tell me I am going to fail. And it's because of him that I will not.

I will not let this cretin ruin what should be an achievement that I have been striving to complete for what feels like an eternity.

I am going to get into graduate school. So that I can rub his nose in it, much like the Timbuk 3 song, "The Future's So Bright, I Gotta Wear Shades.'

I wish I could get rid of this asshole. I have tried. But it is impossible; he is not going anywhere. Mainly because I look at him every time I look in the mirror. Yes, I am the bastard that brings me down.

I am the one who tells myself I am not worth it.

And it is this doubt and fear that keeps me going. I am not giving up on myself out of spite for myself. I know that I am my own worst enemy, but I'm not going to let that voice in the dark recesses of my head win.

I am going to succeed just to prove myself wrong.

Behind the scenes with CAB



Will Smith



Leah Smith Sophmore

"I know saying discrimination is broad but less discrimination is what I would say."



Kaylen Stevenson Freshman "Definitely would make

the food in our country healthier."



with hosting events like Dining with CAB in Huden, which allows members to speak to students directly.

"We try to manage events through the seasons. We have a lot of scavenger hunts and we don't want to have people outside in the cold, so we try to do it in the spring or we do it inside," said Alex Kehoe, Thomas' brother and assistant to the vice president.

CAB also partners with different clubs across campus to ensure the events going on are related to what students are involved in. Engaging with clubs allows CAB to understand the variety of interests that students have.

"A lot of students are involved in clubs. Those are the ones we really want to reach out to because those are the involved students. It's a lot harder to reach out to the non-involved ones," said Thomas Kehoe

Castleton students have a lot of interest in attending CAB events, especially the ones where they can spend time with their friends - and win prizes in the process.

"We love going to super bingo. Last year I actually won a jacuzzi," said sophomore Chance Jaquin.

Ensuring students are aware of events happening is a big component of getting them to attend. Social media is how CAB best reaches students. They do this through their Instagram posts, and stories, as well as posting on Tik-Tok. Reaching students through

pictures of CAB events is crucial. "We also do posts with pictures from all of the events ... it's so people see what the events look like



Magician Peter Boie performs a trick with playing cards.

and engage and gain interest of the event. We do bingo every semester. People see bingo pictures and see how many other people go," said Jenna Robinson, chair of Social Media for CAB.

Within CAB, every member has different responsibilities. Each person's jobs allow CAB to operate as a whole entity, letting the group flow easily.

"Campus Activities is where I put my heart and soul into ... I do what I can to better the campus in

an overseeing position."I'm very fortunate to have amazing board members, who are very good at their job... they just get it done, which is wonderful," she said. Alex Kehoe explains his responsibilities as trying to "help out people when they need it.""They can come to me if they have any issues with members, officers, or even the vice president. I won't judge, I won't be biased. I can help them

straight up," he said. His roles also include stepping AVERY BOUCHARD

help the VP.

"Everybody has different skill sets, which is what's wonderful about being human. We're different people we have different skill sets and we can enhance the group by being able to give those skill sets. It is really awesome to see how CAB changes every year with a new group of people," Robinson said. "We love seeing your faces."

CAB meets at 12:15 every Tuesday in the SGA Office. Stay up to date on CAB events on Insta-

Erin Ricks Graduate "I would decrease the number of homeless people in this country."



Devon Riggio Sophmore

"I would change the political enviorment. Two sides are in constant competiotion, it draws away from actual issues that matter."



"I would make health insurance more afforadbale for all."

opinions. They send out surveys to get an idea of what kind of activities students want to attend, along

every way," said Thomas Kehoe. Robinson explains that as So-

cial Media chair, she has more of

up in the absence of the vice president at meetings, CAB events, and other ways to help take tasks to gram and Tik-Tok @castleton.cab



MADELYN NONI





Shannon Maldonis Student

I love it here, but Czechia is home

By Joe Vyvial

Castleton Spartan

Would you like to live there eventually, or not? That is a question I've received countless times. The answer is no. Maybe for a little bit, not permanently. I might change my mind one day, who knows, but for now, it's a no.

Ever since I was a child, I dreamt of visiting and living in America. I saw all the amazing cities, places and sports leagues. I thought America is the greatest place on earth. Everything seemed pink. It does not anymore.

This is my second year living in United States and my first one being here as a student. My first year, I spent in Willkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, where I lived with this amazing family and played junior hockey. Over the nine months I stayed with them, I got to visit nine different states.

The most memorable ones were definitely California and Colorado. It's almost like a different country. So, it's hard for me, and maybe not fair to be judging America based on my experience from living mostly on the east coast. But the culture here in general, is just different, and for me honestly, it's not good different.

One of the biggest reasons for me to not live here permanently is my family and my friends. This has nothing to do with this country, but it's a fact. The connections I have back home are just too strong to leave them for good.

I would like to start my own family eventually and I want my future kids to have their grandparents beside them. I want them to experience the country

childhood like I had. To grow up and go to school in a safe area, which I think is not as easy to accomplish here

VTSU Castleton students huddle together filling stuffed animal dinosaurs and lambs (left) and enjoy a poker tournament (right).

What is also harder for me than I thought it was going to be is the food. Don't get me wrong, I've had some great food here; steaks like I've never eaten before, great seafood, and burgers.

But in general, I have a big problem with the food. Everything is pre-made, the flavors are not what I'm used to and I don't really like them. There's a lot of fast food, sandwiches, pizzas and subs. This is my experience so far from what I have eaten in the dining hall, on the roads with the hockey team and what I see most of the American families are used to.

You could say, why don't you cook then?

I know, and I do sometimes, but I don't really have the time to cook for myself every day. Another issue is, everything is twice as - if not more expensive - as it is in Czech. It is not worth it.

Not to sound overcritical, I've had and I'm still having a great time here. I've visited some beautiful places, cities, and there is so much more to see, and I want to see it. I definitely want to travel all across the states.

I've created some great memories and friendships and I feel very welcomed here. In a perfect world, I would like to be fortunate enough to have my own place somewhere in the United States. To be able to keep visiting this country for the rest of my life, to keep and build up my connections here and explore more

But my home will always be back home, in Czech Republic.



COURTESY JOE VYVIAL

Joe Vyvial is pictured with his grandmother enjoying a Czech delicacy, cottage cheese pie.

Arts & Entertainment

International Film Festival kicks off with 'Flee'

By Rosa Kehoe

Castleton Spartan

The 2024 International Film Festival at VTSU Castleton started off with the wonderful animation film "Flee."

This film is about the story Amin Nawabi was never able to tell before. He details his journey fleeing from Afghanistan to Denmark. Amin did around 15 hours of interviewing to make sure they got every piece of the story that they could. As it had been years since it happened, it was very hard for Amin to remember and talk about.

Jonas Poher Rassmussen directed this film, though Kenneth Ladekjaer did the animation. Everything was so detailed that it took them eight years and \$4 million dollars to make this film, which was released in 2021. They hand drew the whole film digitally and they put so much detail in it to match what Amin said it was like you were really there.

You could tell the whole audience at the international film festival felt the same way. As certain scenes came on, you would hear a big gasp, or laugh come from the crowd. Most of the time it was unanimous, you could tell that everyone was perceiving the same message at that time. Looking around, you saw people on the edge of their seats waiting to see what would happen next. It's a very hard film to watch but definitely worth it as it shows us what refugees had to go through, what Amin and his family had to go through.

Sam Davis-Boyd, the professor in charge of the festival, also thought it was a hard film to watch.

"I think that the animation is absolutely beautiful, and the types of animation that they used throughout enhanced it. The story is hard to watch as it is very heroic, but I think it is an important story to tell, especially with our current climate. I think what I kind of talked about at the beginning I think, again this idea of the director and the producers wanted to get across is that refugees are people. We see all of these things in the news and on social media talking about refugees and it's like this vague concept or idea. Like these are real people, and I think they really wanted us to empathize with Amin in this case. But refugees as people," she said.

Even though this was a hard film to watch, it did have a powerful meaning and Davis-Boyd had been wanting to screen it for a while.

"It was the first time I screened this film and I really wanted to screen it last year, but it didn't

work out, so I'm so excited to finally screen it. I love it. I was trying to figure out when to show this film. Do I show it first, or do I show it last, as it is such an amazing film," she said.

"Flee" has won many awards in the past couple of years.

One of the larger ones it won was the top grand jury prize for World Cinema in the documentary category, which is huge," she said. Soundings students like Alan Baird, said they enjoyed the film

Baird chose to go to this film as his third required Soundings event. He said he just wanted to get it out of the way, but he was glad he chose this film.

"It ties into our immigration discussion in my Connections class," he said.

He said he was not sure if it was a coincidence or if it was meant to be like that, but he appreciated it a lot as it helped him with schoolwork.

"I enjoyed it and would call it good. It was a little slow but good," he said.

He said he was expecting it to be another event he just had to go to and was not expecting the great quality of the film.

"I was not expecting an animated documentary that's for sure," he said.

He goes to talk about his favor-

ite part of the film.

"When the brother gave his money and said have fun in front of the club, just funny," he said.

Another student, Kendra Smith, also found this to be one of her favorite parts of the film.

Smith found it funny, but also wholesome.

"The whole time he thought his family was going to be against him, and in the end they were not. It was just really heart-warming, especially after everything Amin had been through. You could tell he was really scared to tell them," she said.

Smith is not a Soundings student, but heard about the film and wanted to go.

"I heard about it through my friends that were going for Soundings, and it sounded really interesting, so I went. I'm glad I did as it was an amazing film," she said.

Smith knew it was an animation film having watched the trailer, but she was not expecting it to go into such detail.

"There was so much detail in the animation it was stunning! I was not expecting it. It felt like I was really there in the moment with Amin. It felt like I could feel his emotions as well as some of the other characters' motions,' Smith said, adding that she hopes to attend other films in the festival too!



The International Film Festival, hosted by professor Sam David Boyd, began last week with the animated documentary "Flee." The festival will continue in Herrick Hall through March 19.



Fighting Fish

Artist Q&A w/ Crystal Bean

By Pearl Bellomo Castleton Spartan

Crystal Bean is a McNair Scholars student and senior Studio Art major with a concentration in Sculpture. She sat down to chat about her passion for her work.

Q. How long have you been an artist?

A. I started when I was in pre-school. When I was 9 years old, I walked into Campbell Plaster and Iron, I was one of the extras in a film for Giancola's, and it was full of sculptures. Glen Campbell gave me modeling wax and I went home and made my first piece. He put investment around it, which is plaster and sand, put it into a kiln, and poured liquid metal in. The wax melts away and you're left with a metal piece identical to the piece you started with.

Q. From high school to college, what type of art did you do?

A. I did a lot of portraiture, miniature bronze pieces, musician replicas, and jewelry made of bone or modeled after the Maui tradition. I've also done casting and gauges.

I'm focusing on right now.

Q. What artists inspire you?

A. Auguste Rodin because of his work with the human form, Odaffer Eliassen for his installations with light and Alex Gray because of his focus on coloring and the connectedness of the universe

Q. What are you currently working on?

A. I'm working on a series of hallowed sculptures. One is made from screen covered with a plaster bandage called "Bronze Implosion.'

Q. What's your favorite step of the artistic process?

A. Just being in the mode of building. I love adding the plaster bandage onto a piece because it's going from just the armature, which is the internal structure, and around it you build your sculptural form. It's a transformative step that I like doing around screen because it keeps it hallow while not being too heavy.

Q. What's been the key to your success?

A. These wonderful professors I've



By Azur Wood

Spartan Contributor

This work was done using acrylic, natural materials, mixed media and was 14 x 14.

It represents the different parts of myself that do not get along.

The struggle of being someone who cares so much for others but has their own pain they do not prioritize.

My fishbowl of a brain has swirling thoughts of hopes, situations, worries, and what-if's that overwhelm me.

I'm much too hard on myself.

I long for calm and a thriving healthy inner ecosystem.

I represent these feelings by the beta fish, notorious as the "fighting fish" as they do not get along with even their own species.

They tear me apart, as my own ideology does. Because how can I be so grounding for others and so nurturing, yet I attack myself for feeling?

It becomes a bloody battle.

Q. What's your favorite piece you've done to date?

A. There's a self-portrait I did of my eye that's 3 feet by 3 feet, called "Eye of the Beholder," done with acrylic on stretched canvas. It's a photorealistic piece. I had my fiancé take macro images of my eyes, and because I have pigmentary dispersion syndrome, my eyes are pretty unique looking. It turned out accurate, and it's hard to get proportions correct to where it matches reality. I did that one in under a week's time.

Q. What piece has taken you the most time?

A. The TV, called "Emergence." The idea is that there's a being, or life-form that's trying to emerge from a dimensional portal into our reality through our electronics. I broke down two Xboxes, two laptops, the TV itself, and made the screen out of plexiglass. I used pipe hanger on the inside and metal tape to make it reflective. I used wires to make the muscles, red wires for the veins, and zip ties for the tendons. I wanted it to represent anatomy while also embellishing it.

Q. What subjects or themes inspire you?

A. Psychology, emotional states and scientific phenonium. Those are the three

had. At CCV, Susanna Colby taught me about color theory and painting. Here, Phil Whitman and Oliver Schemm didn't just teach me how to do art, they taught me the theory behind art. The reason why you do it and how to interact with viewers. Art history. Before college, I thought art was just about producing something [aesthetically] beautiful. Now, it's about communication with the viewer and sharing a message.



Crystal Bean (left) is an artist at VTSU Castleton who experiments with multiple mediums, set to earn her degree in Scultpure this semester. Two of her prized pieces are "Eye of the Beholder" (top) and "Emergence" (bottom).

Book of the Fortnight

By Camille Jackson Castleton Spartan

"The Little Prince"

Sophomore Ines Robres points to "The Little Prince," or El Principito in her native tongue of Spanish, as a highly recommended book. The delightfully short story of a young man travelling the cosmos can be brought back to earth in its central themes and messages.

The overarching theme of innocent love flows through the adventure and Robres found the theme in conjunction with the easy-read style to be ideal.

ANTOINE DE SAINT-EXUPÉRY The Little Prince 20

"The White Crow"

Senior Petra Veljkovic highlights this fantastical adventure as a must-read for fantasy lovers. The breadth of themes covered in this trilogy, the Half Bad series, keeps the pace high and the reader's attention captured.

Although a fantasy series, its tie to reality allows readers to engage heavily in the material while enjoying mystical aspects. Although for Veljkovic, the characters deserve praise, "the book amazed me because of the character development and relationship development."

"It was such an intimate and intense experience that was a privilege to read," recounts Veljkovic, who encourages all to relish the series



"The Percy Jackson Series" This iconic book series has recently been adapted (for the second time) into a TV series, however it reminded me of how much I enjoyed the book in my youth. The series intertwines Greek mythology with a teenage-adventure in such a way to both educate and engage readers.

The series follows Percy Jackson, who, after learning of his unique heritage, is thrust into a world of mystery, adventure, and epics. Themes of adventure, romance, friendship, and challenge is suitable for all ages to enjoy.

Before indulging into the TV adaptation, I highly recommend enjoying the easy read of the book series.



Front & Back



MATTHEW STODDARD The above artwork is entitled "Shadow work." The artist said "Shadow work is a type of psychotherapy that focuses on the parts of the psyche that people often keep hidden, such as trauma and resentment, some people may refer to this as the shadow self." Stoddard chose piece to accompany his poem below entitled "Chronesthesia."

My poem entitled Chronesthesia

Matthew Stoddard Spartan contributor

I am more than this, More than the sum of my

fears, A thousand strings pull me, Hands of puppeteers unseen, The propaganda of invisible

masters Culminating in a large body of molecules

Our voices like ripples in this ocean.

A primal scream to provide release.

Lips move without a voice, Struggle against the waves, Energy passing through water, This movement through or-

bital paths, Swirl in chaos electromagnetic.

Touch of pure white aura Healing frequency, electrical

being. Neutralize the negative anomaly.

They cannot stop our words, As if our hearts are not strength,

As if our minds cannot touch, Shared experience through truth,

Rays of light permeate the darkness,

Lift your eyes to the bright heat.

Technology to keep your head down,

but souls will illuminate and enlighten,

You cannot see me,



A woman is pictured in a scene from "The Bridge" documentary climbing over the rail on the Golden Gate Bridge. The woman was saved by a passerby before she jumped.

Opinion: The ethics of "The Bridge"

Emily Ely Spartan contributor

The goal of professor David Blow's Media Ethics course is to have greater understanding of the various ethical dilemmas that media workers deal with on a daily basis and the implications of their decisions.

One assignment in this class was to watch a documentary titled "The Bridge," produced by Eric Steel, and react to what was seen. After this was done, the class had a chance to talk to Steel over Zoom and discuss the documentary.

As the documentary begins, a scene is painted. It's a beautiful day at the San Francisco Golden Gate Bridge. People underneath are boating in the water, families are taking photos together, birds are chirping, and the sun is shinıng

As the scene progresses, seemingly out of nowhere the camera pans over to a man looking over the bridge. If you blinked, you might have missed what happened next. The man instantly climbs directly over the bridge's railing, stumbles off the ledge, and plummets 250 feet down into the water. This was the first of six live-footage suicides Steel captured in "The



But I am there with you, Spirit is not myth, This energy can travel, If we can lift each other. Why would we not, If you cannot take my hand, Please take my words, To dance without music, A spiritual embrace, Unaffected by time. Past and future collide, This gift through evolution, Timeless and magnificent, Some kind of magic. Will bring me to you....

Read The Castleton Spartan online at castletonspartan.com

Instagram -

Thecastletonspartan

Facebook-Castletonspartan Bridge" from start to finish.

Steel recorded The Golden Gate Bridge for an entire year, Jan. 1 to Dec. 31, from sunrise to sunset. Steel and his crew witnessed and recorded 23 out of the 24 suicides that occurred during that period.

After watching the documentary, I felt distressed. During the first suicide, I instinctively covered my eyes and subconsciously held my breath without thinking twice about it. But, as the documentary progressed and as more suicides were shown, I troublesomely grew more desensitized watching these individuals jump to their death. As bad as it sounds, as I witnessed more and more of them commit suicide, they started seeming like a characters on screen.

When I brought this idea up in class, many students agreed with

Desensitization is becoming more of a problem especially in the media these days.

This begs to ask the question, is Steel doing his viewers a service by shedding light onto the issue of suicide? Or are the viewers of the documentary becoming more desensitized, so the impact that was intended isn't lasting.

Steel made it apparent that he and his crew wouldn't just let people jump off the bridge. He noted that he and his crew saved six people while filming "The Bridge" by calling authorities if they felt a person was going to jump. There was footage in the documentary of one woman who was a frequent visitor of the bridge and Steel said he and

Steel said that he and his crew are "all human beings first and

indicators that they were thinking

about jumping like "taking off their shoes, or watch" they would

running his hands through his hair several times in a clearly anxious manner. To record someone for 90 minutes and clearly see the signs of Gene's distress that were presented in the documentary, and not call anyone seems unethical to me. You can't help but think that whoever recorded Gene might have been content with the final shot of him flying off the bridge.

It was a great opportunity to talk to Steel about his thoughts regarding the documentary. But, some of his answers did seem disingenuous and somewhat robotic while talking to my Media Ethics class. He appeared almost bored when discussing the suicide documentary which left some members of the class with a bad taste in their mouth. It is important to note Steel probably went through media training to coach him how to handle backlash on the documentary, and because this documentary aired 20 years ago, he has had to repeat the same story to a great

All in all, I don't think that this documentary was necessary. Steel says that suicide is a taboo topic, but in gen-z he believes its "less taboo." Do we want suicide to become less taboo? There needs to be an awareness regarding this darkness that many struggle with, but recording living humans jumping to their death appears voyeuristic and unnecessary in my opinion.

There are ways to educate and to bring awareness to this topic without taking advantage of someone who's in a vulnerable state.

Hammond:

Atkins addressed his position in an emailed response.

"This position was hired as one-year terminal for the past couple years pending the outcome of the program consolidation work," he said. "If you look at the number of programs and related activities in this area and associated expense to run them relative to enrollments, adjustments are needed to help ensure fiscal sustainability."

VTSU's \$22 million deficit has been the driving force of program and administrative cuts outlined in

the Optimization 2.0 and Administrative Optimization plans. However, faculty, staff, students, and alum argue that cuts to the Fine Arts Center are going overboard.

"Eliminating a full-time professor position on the only campus that has the theater degree program does not serve our students, current or future. It is setting us up for failure, especially when we are losing such an incredibly talented and dedicated individual," said FAC Director and Soundings Manager Marisa Valent-Altland.

She said now that Theater at Johnson is being eliminated and the program is condensing to Castleton, it's vital to maintain the department's strengths. Short-lived professors would make it "difficult for students to relearn [their] comfort zone of experimentation, she said.

As well, it is less effective to teach students one way in the classroom, and an entirely different way during their productions, theater students said.

"Without the same person be-

ing our director and professor, there won't be the same personal connection...it would be hard for theater students to progress in their studies and improve in areas they want to improve in," added Challinor.

"[Hannah] is a professional who cares for every individual she teaches. [Adjunct professors] will never give us that personal training or connection that Hannah did," she said.

"It would take four to five adjuncts to replace her."

In addition to student, faculty, and staff opposition, alumni are potentially backing up their stance.

"The biggest hope we have right now is the office of alumni relations have contacts with large donors who are willing to donate the funds necessary for Hannah's salary. But that would only be a temporary solution," Gross said.

Former English professor Jennifer Bagley and her husband, Fred, have generosly donated time and money to Castleton.

Bagley recently wrote VTSU

President David Bergh to advocate for Hammond's renewal of contract.

To lose a person who has such an important impact on this very successful program at Castleton, to replace her with a collection of part time instructors who by definition can only teach a few credits per semester, and would have a difficult time offering a coordinated curriculum for the theater students, is a mistake," she said.

Men's lacrosse team off to a shaky start to season



Castleton #7 Carter Frankenhoff lines up a shot.

CASTLETON ATHLETICS

By Stone Stelzl

Castleton Spartan

The Castleton men's lacrosse team is looking to have a bounce back season this year under the new reigns of head coach Ed Stephenson.

After a season that had its fair share of ups and downs last year, the Spartans ended with a 4-13 record and missed out of playoff action.

However, this season the team looks to make strides in the right direction and has started the season 1-1 with a handful of more games to play before they kick off conference play March 19.

"I have only been with the team for three weeks now after coming over from hockey and I feel as though the entire team has bought in to what coach Stephenson has been preaching. Coming off a few tough years, this team is hungry for success, and I think a change of leadership has been what we needed to light a spark under us and make the changes we need," said senior Hunter Sarro. The team kicked off the sea-

son against SUNY Delhi where they fell 16-6. But the Spartans bounced back three days later against New England College taking the victory 12-10 on the road.

The team followed that up against Utica University in which they lost 8-6 which is an improvement from their previous meeting with Utica last season where they fell 10-5.

As the Spartans continue to try and find the success on the field, Stephenson has had a plan since the beginning with the team for what he wants the team to be built on.

"I want them (the team) to learn how to play selflessly with discipline and toughness. My mission is to develop a team culture based on these core values," Stephenson said.

Sophomore Carter Frankenhoff echoed what Stephenson said about getting the team to build a proper culture.

"Coming in at the start of the

fall, there was a lot more structure and having a new coach allowed our team to adjust by changing the culture of the team," Frankenhoff said.

As the team prepares to improve on the field under the new head coach, it also has much more experience at the college level having only five first-year players out of the 26 on the team.

"I think we have a great group of guys this year with a strong group of leaders as well as a group of young guys hungry to make change. I think we will find success this year by playing with more trust in each other and playing the game at a faster pace," Sarro said.

Moving forward the team faces off against Massachusetts Maritime for their first Little East Conference matchup of the season on what day?

"Finding success this season is going to be getting better as a team and focusing more on the process than the results," Frankenhoff said.

Wrestling ramps up for nationals

By Justin Gitto *Castleton Spartan*

As the hard-fought wrestling season is near its end, the VTSU Castleton wrestling team is sending six stars to compete in the NCAA National Championships.

James Rodriguez, Gavin Bradley, Sampson Wilkins, Nate Camiscioli, Nick Roeger, and Darby McLaughlin will all represent the school.

Rodriguez, a senior and twotime All-American, is making his third straight trip to nationals.

"He leads by example and has been the road map for our guys on the team to see that they do belong on the national scene," said head coach Scott Legacy.

Despite not having "the greatest of draws" in his nationals runs, "he has proven that the draw doesn't matter to be able to fulfill your dreams," Legacy added. "James is good at keeping the mindset of keeping your feet in the moment and wrestling one match at a time,"

In the case of Bradley and Wilkins, this will be the second national appearance in a row.

"Experience at this level is huge. All of our team members have been exposed to the bright lights, however having this little extra experience can go a long way to your national success," Legacy said. "They have high expectations of themselves," he added.



fied. He is always trying to find ways to get better every minute of every day," Legacy said. "He strives to be the best at everything he does, with no shortcuts."

Bradley is modest about hearing the praise.

"Like always, I attribute everything to my coaches and support group, and I wouldn't be anything without them. I also attribute everything to my drill partners and awesome teammates," Bradley said. "Also, as always, I give everything to my God and my savior Jesus Christ. Ultimately, I work for them and do everything that I can to honor them and their meswhich is already at its peak," Legacy said. "They have been grinding daily since October," Legacy added.

Camiscioli, Roeger and McLaughlin will all be making their first appearances on the national scene, and they also see the value of prior experience at the national level.

"I have learned so much from all my teammates," McLaughlin said. "Having teammates that have had this experience before is a great feeling."

Despuite this being their first trip to nationals, Legacy isn't worried about them at all. "Nate, Nick and Darby are all familiar with the highest levels of competition. They all come from top high school programs that competed on the national level," Legacy said. "For this tournament, qualifying has fulfilled half of their dream. The other half is becoming a national champion or getting on the podium as an earned NCAA All-American." not put them in situations that will get them injured. These guys have to train year-round to get to this point, so their bodies are nicked up. Nobody is 100 percent at this time of the year," Legacy said.

A huge part of this is focusing on not tiring out their legs, which means making the switch from sprinting and long-distance running to biking.

Even though the coaches are making sure they are staying healthy, they're still putting in all the work that it takes to be a national champion.

"If you don't get outworked day in and day out, you won't get outworked when it's showtime," Wilkins said.



Bradley said he's ready for the opportunity Nationals presents.

"I am preparing by really just staying in the moment and working on all the adjustments my coaches are instructing me to make," Bradley said. "I learned a lot from last year, and I am very excited to go back."

Bradley, a sophomore, is making his second Nationals appearance in just his second year in the program, a feat that isn't lost on Legacy.

"Gavin's ceiling has no limits. That's because he's never satissage in this world."

When Wilkins was asked about how he's feeling heading into nationals, he only had two words come to mind: "ecstatic," and "confident."

"The biggest plus about this being my second trip is I know I belong here," he added.

He also attributed this confidence to the team being "prepared unlike any other team in the country for this moment."

"Staying in routine is very big at this time of the year. We are maintaining their conditioning, As much as Legacy is trying to keep them in top shape, he also knows it's important to prioritize health and wellbeing.

'We are being extra careful to

At the end of the day, these six wrestlers aren't just representing themselves – they're representing their team.

"It took every member of our team to get Gavin, James, Nate, Nick, Sampson and Darby to the National Tournament. They could not have done this without their entire team," Legacy emphasized.

The wrestlers will travel to La Crosse, Wisconsin, to compete on March 15 and 16.

@CASTLETONSPORTS AND @CASTLETON_WRESTLING From left to right, top to bottom: Gavin Bradley wrestles an opponent to the mat; James Rodriguez matches up with his opponent; Sampson Wilkins gets pumped up.

Castleton baseball struggles down south

By Carly Centeno Castleton Spartan

The Castleton baseball team this past break went down south for their season opening games, and had a rough start.

The Spartans played a total of eight games in several different states and won only one. Going into the season 1-8 is rough, but the trip gave the team a chance to see what they must improve on and other ways to make them stronger.

"The travel was fun and it definitely brought the team closer together. Yes, the games didn't go as well as we wanted them too, but it allowed us to figure out what we need to work on the most and how to fix it," sophomore Mikey Raby said.

In their first game against Huntingdon College, they lost 12-3, which players said was not the best start for the team.

They then played against Sewanee, Mount St. Joseph University, Millsaps College, LeTourneau University, and Louisiana Christian University and struggled to score in all of them.

They closed out their trip with a win against a tough Texas Lutheran University team, winning 5-3. The team played strong and players left confident that they had made some sort of improvements



CASTLETON ATHLETICS

Sam Crawford, who got the lone win in the trip south, gets ready to throw a pitch. Hunter Perkins gets ready to hit (right).

while on the trip.

"The travel down south was a bit stressful, but overall it was amazing to be able to play at some great facilities. The games were good and the record obviously doesn't show how much we grew during our trip," said Sophomore Kevin Hewlett.

Players said the trip was ben-

eficial to the team no matter what the record shows. They were given the chance to bond and become a closer-knit team, especially giving new players a chance to get to know everyone a bit more.

"As much as the trip was long, it was a lot of fun and I believe the team came out the other end better. Being able to get on baseball fields and play games were great. The competition was very strong and it toughened us for the rest of the season. The team is still pretty young, so as the team continues to grow through the season, we will keep getting better," said Dylan Hedler.

Players said the competition was rough due to the opportunities these teams get for preseason when Castleton deals with winter. The schools down south don't have those types of issues typically to worry about. Many may say we had a disadvantage against many of these due to the type of facilities they have versus ours.

"Most of the teams we played already had ten or so games under their belt, while it was our first time on the field. I think the team is coming together nicely as we start to find our roles where we belong," Hewlett said.

Although games didn't always go as planned, players said the team is ready to get into the season as a strong, competitive, aggressive team. This trip was just another chance for them to get to improve and get used to playing with new players.

"Coming into this season, we all realize that everyone is counting us out and we believe we have the potential to prove everyone wrong," Hewlett said.

Sports

Shortage of players for womens lacrosse

By Carly Centeno Castleton Spartan

The Castleton women's lacrosse team is on the lookout for new players to help improve the team. The team is competing under new head coach, Bella Ferraro, and is hoping for a strong season, yet the lack of players has caused a few bumps.

The team is currently competing with 13 players – down from 17 last year.

"I am very excited to dive right into the season. The team is really dialed and ready to grow. That has been one of the biggest topics of conversation with us in the short time I've been here, being vulnerable towards growth," said Ferraro.

With games starting up, players have prepared themselves over the short preseason and managed to gather two walk-ons for this season.

"It was pretty scary to walk on at first honestly. I didn't know anyone, and it was my first sport, but after hanging out with some of the girls, I felt very included and loved," sophomore goalie Liv Cormier said.

"It's been fun, everyone is super fun and nice, coaches and players both. Everyone is willing to help me learn and always seems to be positive. It's a fun time and I'm glad I did it," said fellow walk-on Katie Stager said.

The team does not have a recruitment system in place, so they rely mainly on walk-ons for needed players. Players are working hard to make every new player, even if they have never played before, feel welcome and put extra work into helping their new teammates understand the game.

"We're trying our best to recruit but it's been very difficult. We unfortunately have a reputation that has built over the years, and we are trying to change that. We are a different team than we were the past couple years, and we want Castleton to know that. We've only been able to recruit one girl, but our goal is to recruit three or more," said sophomore Gretel Seaman.

With the new coaching, things have been starting to look up for the team. The women have been working extra hard on the recruiting process to find potential incoming freshmen from their hometowns and many other places.

Many players didn't know much about the sport or the technicalities behind it, yet they still were allowed to strive on the team.

"I walked on to women's lacrosse last year with no prior experience. The girls were all super helpful and friendly last year and taught me a lot of what I know now. When our old coach left, it was hard to hear as I was just figuring out the sport and starting to enjoy it more, but now with Coach Ferraro, she's made our team come closer together and is teaching us new plays and new tactics, which I think is going to help our team in the long run," senior Kailyn August said.

Ferraro has built up a brandnew environment where everyone can succeed. Many players are extremely pleased with the way she has taken over, even though she has only been here for a short amount of time.

"With Coach Ferraro leading our team, I can already see a lot of improvement in our team as well as myself. I think the season has been way different than last but, definitely for the better," August said.

"Our season has been a struggle from the start. Our Awesome GA Cassie had to step up and take the role as our coach for the last few weeks. Due to a lack of players and a lack of coach, we had a hard time with our team dynamic. Since Coach Ferraro started, we've improved a lot. Our dynamic is much better. Intensity at practice has increased. Communication and motivation have been good," Seaman said.

The women are ready to head into the season and are prepared for the challenges they are going to face ahead. They continue to hope for more women to become interested and want to play, but for now, they will continue with the team they have.

"The squad has been working hard and we are ready to establish a strong, competitive presence in the LEC this year," Ferraro said.

on March 9.

The Spartans currently sit 0-2 after falling to Russell Sage 12-6



PHOTO FROM CASTLETON SPORTS Tien Conner with the ball against Russell Sage.



PHOTOS PROVIDED FROM CHRISTOPHER EDER

Lorenzo Mencaccini (top left) and Aksel Stroem-Hanson (top right) skiing down Whiteface Mountain during their Nationals runs and both recieving their All-American honors. Mencaccini (middle), Stroem-Hansen (right).

We are the champions

By Stone Stelzl Castleton Spartan

After a slushy finish atop Whiteface Mountain in the Adirondacks, the Castleton Alpine Ski Team saw two members walk up to stand in the first-place spot on the podium receiving the title of national champions.

Both Emilie Stene and Lorenzo Mencaccini became the fourth and fifth national champions that the Spartans have produced in program history.

"It has always been my goal since I was a freshman and several times I came close to winning a title but never the win. It is very satisfying and makes clear to understand that our group has worked well both on the slopes and in the gym," Mencaccini said.

The race that gave Mencaccini the label of national champ consisted of one run due to the condition of the course being considered unsafe by officials.

However, even with the conditions being rough, all five Spartan skiers placed in the top-25 in their one heat.

Mencaccini lead the way with a 1:07.86 and had a substantial lead for his victory finishing 1.58 seconds ahead of second place. Raphael Fischer crossed the line five spots behind the national champ with a time of 1:11.21 and Filippo Collini was right behind him for the seventh spot. After those three,

Aksel Stroem-Hansen placed 17th and Elliot Perretta finished in the 21 spot.

"I have to say that I'm really pleased with everyone's attitude in interpreting the race, which then led to the team's first victory at the giant nationals, it's a great satisfaction," Mencaccini said.

Mencaccini also came out on top in the slalom to make him a champ in both events. His teammate Aksel Stroem-Hanson followed in right behind him taking the second-place spot giving the Spartans a one-two finish and grabbing the team crown for Castleton.

On the women's side, Stene became the second women to become national champion in program history. She came in with a time of 2:15.85 in her second run allowing her to take the crown after being slightly behind by a half-second in her first run.

"To be a national champion doesn't feel any different than before I was, to be honest. I'll say it's more like great motivation for me and my teammates to continue the work we did this season. I think some of the factors that made me successful this season are a positive head space and being patient. Throughout the whole season and even before I got to this college, I have put in a lot of work and been patient with the result," Stene said.

On top of Stene finishing as a national champion, the team also had a podium finish in the slalom

race from Petra Veljkovic, who finished with a time of 1:46.24 which landed her second place. Behind her was Ginevra Trevisan, who placed fourth after finishing with a time of 1:47.19.

Aksal Stroem-Hanse

"Going in, we knew Lorenzo and Emilie both have the talent to win. In skiing, anything can happen, so a lot of things had to go right for both of them to take it home. It's always good to see good things happen to good people. Although skiing is an individual sport it was awesome to see everyone work together as a team to bring home the hardware. I couldn't be prouder of Lorenzo, Emilie, and the team as a whole," said junior Kevin McDonough.

This concluded the Spartans ski

season in which they will graduate two women and four men next year. Included in those graduating is newly crowned national champ Mencaccini and podium finisher Velikovic.

"I am so proud of our studentathletes and the success they have earned this week at the USCSA National Championships. Their hard work throughout the season has really paid off. To have so many of our student-athletes rise to the occasion is awesome. Words can't explain how proud I am to be the coach of these student-athletes," said head coach Christopher Eder.

All-Star games are pathetic now

By Stone Stelzl Castleton Spartan

All-Star games are a joke now-adays.

Simple as that.

I remember growing up when the All-Star games in the four major sports were the coolest thing ever, but now they are all about the show and the money.

I used to get excited for the games and skills competitions, but now it's just a week break of games that actually matter and it seems like the players could give a shit about the games.

One that hits home for me is the

NHL All-Star game. As a hockey player and fan all my life, watching the game and skills competition was awesome as a kid because you got the see the best players that season go head-to-head in a showcase of their skills and watch them play with players from different teams.

Now it's all about making the game an experience and involving anyone who could draw attention to the game. Like, it's cool that they get people like Justin Bieber and Tate McRae to show up, but they are just there to bring in fans and it takes away from what the All-Star game really is.

I miss the days watching and

hearing guys like Rick DiPetro talking to the broadcaster midgame while making a crazy glove save and batting the puck back into play.

Now it looks like guys are just there for the vacation and look absolutely uninterested in the game.

And don't get me started on the NFL Pro Bowl.

The Pro Bowl used to be so cool. One memory I vividly have is Sean Taylor absolutely decapitating someone in the game and players actually gave a shit to play in it and try to make it a fun game to watch.

Now it's a damn flag football game.

If I wanted to watch flag football I'd go outside and get some buddies to play two hand touch because it would be the same thing intensity wise. The NFL needs to bring back the old Pro Bowl where it was an actual football game not football that we all used to play in elementary school.

The NBA All Star weekend has always been kind of a letdown in my eyes besides the dunk contest, but now it's just getting out of hand. Mac McClung is the only reason the dunk contest was relatively entertaining again this year. Like give me Zion, LeBron, and some guys that can dunk the ball like menaces, then I would be hyped to watch it again.

And don't even get me started on the actual game. 200 points scored by one team in an All-Star game is a damn joke. Talk about not playing any defense, it was embarrassing to watch because players just don't try on defense and just pull up to shoot from anywhere or they have a free lane to dunk. It's so boring to watch.

The only sport that had some relevance for the All-Star game was the MLB, but they took that away too, so now the only thing to get excited for is the Home Run Derby. The MLB used to do it right, with the winning team getting home field advantage in the World Series. It actually gave the players something to play for and some motivation, unlike other sports where guys show up to the All-Star break guzzle some beers and go out with zero care for the actual games.

At the end of the day, All-Star games just aren't the same as they were when I was growing up and it is all about the show and not about showcasing the highest level of competition in the league for that season. The big four sports need to figure it out and make these games meaningful, so the players actually care. And make it a true battle of the best.