

Scepter

The Students' Voice

Kingsborough Community College

APRIL 2020

The City University of New York



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Letter From The Editor

By Saul De Leon



Photo provided by Saul De Leon

Even though Kingsborough has shut down for the remainder of the semester, Scepter will still be pushing forward. We will keep track of what goes on at Kingsborough as we attend our classes remotely. Just like our courses, Scepter has transitioned online as well, utilizing the KCC Wave Wire to reach our student body during

this crisis. As a team, we realize the severity of the situation and are taking the same safety precautions. However, this crisis will not stop us from keeping our fellow classmates informed of what is going behind the scenes. Now that is not to say that this transition has been easy for us. We all have families and loved ones that we are concerned for and are supporting them in every way possible. These are tough times, but letting fear dictate our decisions is the last thing we want to do. Life goes on and we have people that count on us.

I would like to thank everyone on the Scepter team for fighting through this and not letting this crisis stop the circulation of this paper. The resilience that this team has displayed in the past several weeks has kept me encouraged as Editor in Chief and optimistic for the future of this paper. I know that we are all experiencing our own personal hardship being in the thick of this pandemic, but I am proud of the work we have produced and hope that it continues. I urge our team and everyone in the KBCC community to be cautious, take care of one another and remember that we are in this together.

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Odyssey, Kingsborough's yearbook, is looking for graphic designers and photographers. If you are a Kingsborough student and are interested in photography and/or graphic design, please talk to us in M230.

President Schrader: Glass Half Full

Kingsborough President Talks About the Transition to Distance Learning

By Imani Williams

Since the coronavirus began to rapidly spread worldwide, it became evident that certain measures would have to be taken to help contain the spread. These measures included the transition to distance learning, which many people have mixed feelings about. While some are dreading every moment of quarantine, others are looking for the silver-lining.

President Claudia Schrader is a glass half full kind of person. For her, there is light at the end of the tunnel in terms of the coronavirus pandemic. She doesn't think that distance learning will have as negative of an impact as some think. In fact, she sees this as an opportunity that could benefit learning and overall productiveness.

"I don't really think learning ever really gets disrupted. This experience will bring more focus and resolve to individuals earning their degrees," Schrader said. "If anything it will show how important it is to have gainful employment."

In the wake of distance learning and social distancing, students and teachers alike have to adjust to moving the classroom experience online. Schrader explained her point of view.

"This really shows us that teaching and learning doesn't have to happen one way," Schrader said. "We really want to ensure academic continuity. There are so many students who maybe just started or are the first in their family to go to college. Who would want to say there is no more school for the rest of the semester? That puts people back for years and with the uncertainty of the future, academic continuity is very important. We really want to maintain that."

For President Schrader, the sheer fortitude of both CUNY staff and students is a delight to behold. She gave her thoughts about the precautionary measures put into place.

"All this took place in the course of not even 20 days, the university has been outstanding with their response to the outbreak," Schrader said. "They plan, they act, they execute, they put a lot of resources into making it happen online, including getting computers for students; over 50,000 laptops for CUNY students who need it."

President Schrader doesn't think that this should discourage students in terms of their college experience.

"While I know this is not what anyone had in mind, I want students to make the best of it. There may have been students who didn't believe they could do online learning but now realize they can do anything," Schrader said.

She did acknowledge the challenges of this whole situation however. "I know online teaching and learning is a little harder, you have to in fact give a little more of yourself."

While all of this is a boost of confidence and reassurance, what happens afterwards? We don't know what's next, but President Schrader hopes we will take this opportunity to reconnect, decompress and do things we never had time for. For students with the new-found worry of sanitation for the campus, President Schrader is already on it.

"We are in the process, now that the campus is shut down, of looking at some companies to come in and do a widespread cleaning of the college. We have a staff of 84 custodians and we want to make extra sure that everything is sanitary," Schrader said. "But it's also going to take all of us. When we see something, say something. If it doesn't look right we need to say something. The other side is everyone taking personal responsibility for what they are doing. I hope when we get back, everyone will feel they play a part in cleanliness as well."



Photo by KBCC Communications and Marketing

President Claudia Schrader reassures students and looks to the future.

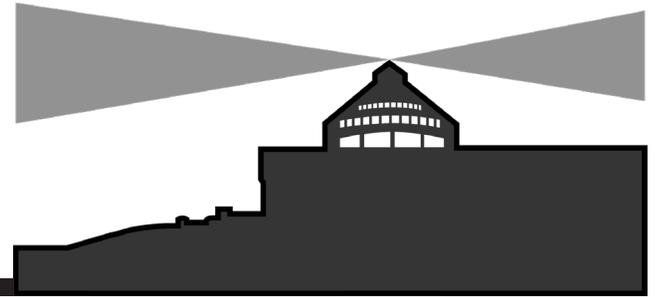
JOIN SCEPTER, BE PART OF OUR TEAM!

Scepter is always recruiting new team members to contribute to monthly editions of the paper.

If you are a Kingsborough student and are interested in writing, photography, layout design, or copy editing, talk to us in M230. You can also email your opinion or letter to the editor to:

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CAMPUS NEWS



Corona Virus Shuts Down KBCC

Professors Reflect on the Transition Into Online Learning

By Saul De Leon

As fear and turmoil ramp up across the city, Kingsborough faculty members are holding steady as they guide their students through the transition into online learning. Following the announcement of the novel COVID-19 Virus being declared as a global pandemic, Chancellor Matos Rodriguez acted swiftly by closing down all 16 CUNY campuses for the remainder of the spring semester. This news did not come as a surprise for many professors. Closing campuses was already mentioned as a possibility towards the next step in fighting the Coronavirus. Yet, the transition came much quicker than expected.

“I sort of felt something brewing, so I remember telling some of my classes, if we close, we would transition to distance learning. The actual closing down was, however sudden and understandable,” said KBCC Sociology Professor, Charles A. Swift Ph.D. “The transition did catch me a bit off guard, I had to relearn the blackboard platform very quickly and think about how I could transition assignments, lectures, etc. to students in a user-friendly way.”

Subsequently, CUNY campuses entered into a five-day instructional recess for pedagogical retooling. Professors scrambled to reconfigure their in-person classes to purely online based in just under a week—a task that took the sheer will and support of the entire CUNY system to get done. For many instructors, this isn't their first time conducting an online course. However, it has never been to this magnitude.

“I have taught courses online before, and as most instructors will tell you, the amount of work it takes to set up an online course is enormous. But I had a lot of support from my colleagues in CUNY and elsewhere,” said KBCC Philosophy Professor, Kamili Posey. “People were so generous with their time and so willing to help each other. Also, it helps when people remind you that things do not have to be perfect. We are working on the fly and it is going to be a bit clunky.”

Educators across the city are pulling together to make sure that the students' education does not miss a beat, even in the face of the global crisis. They are working day and night vigorously to maintain this semester afloat. They do have their concern and fears of how this virus will affect everyone as a whole as things progress.

“Personally, it's the constant concern for the health and safety of friends and family as the virus spreads. As a professor, it's the concern that we may lose some students during the transition,” Swift said. “I worry that the transition may interrupt the academic goals/path for some students.”

It has been challenging to make the shift into distance learning with all of the potential technical issues and increased bandwidth traffic across the city. We have to remember that not every student has access to reliable Wi-Fi or even computers to access their assignment. The problems don't just stop there though.

“The most difficult part really isn't the work. It's

learning about all of the other ways in which people are suffering and trying to figure out how to help. Students have lost jobs, kids are at home, friends and family are sick, they might not have regular computer access and so many people are worried about what comes next and how we will get through it all,” Posey said. “I try to be a good listener, but I need to be a better listener. We aren't just faculty, staff, and students. We are part of a larger NYC family and our family is in trouble. For me, that means trying to figure out how to be of service, whatever that means, and whatever that entails.”

As a city and as a country, we are all fearful of what is in store for us. No one is sure how bad the city is going to be impacted or when things will get under control. Everyone is on edge currently, but we have a duty to ourselves and to our neighbors to help each other stay calm and to stay safe. As abnormal as this transition is for all students, it is just as bizarre for professors. All of this is new and will take time to get used to, but until then, life goes on. As long as we support each other through these crazy times, we will get through it.

“I think it helps to try to be of service when and where you can. This includes so many acts of kindness, both big and small, both financial and not, and can help to make a difference as we get through this crisis together,” Posey said. “When I saw my students asking for each other's email addresses and checking in on each other on Blackboard, I almost cried. Okay, I did cry a little. That's service.”



Photo provided by CDC

3D image of the COVID-19 virus.

What Do You Know About KCC Art Journal?

Antheon is a Great Opportunity for Writers and Designers to Be Seen and Heard

By Violetta Brin

If you are looking for a way to show everyone what you're capable of or are tired of routine and want to do something creative, then it's time for you to check out Antheon. A place for anyone who is interested in art or writing.

Antheon is Kingsborough's Art-Journal. It isn't just a typical art book, but a journal founded to publish students' best pieces of art and literature, while also exhibiting the creative visions of our talented designers. Each fall, a new team of student designers and editors are elected to guide a year's worth of submissions. The team's goal is to promote our community's writers and artists by giving them a platform to reach a wider audience. It is a fantastic opportunity to be seen and heard, not only to get published but maybe to be a part of the creative process of the journal itself.

Antheon is a place for students to go outside the box and explore new ideas. You get to be

as creative as you want because your ideas are always welcome and encouraged. You may wonder how you can be a part of it? The answer is simple - be active in class, share your ideas with others and show professors you are interested in being featured or work on the design in the next issue. You can also drop by the Students Publications office in room M-230, where the team meets to work on the journal. However, if you don't have time to drop by, Antheon also has a website where students can submit as many pieces as they want.

Antheon will be publishing their 2020 journal this April, but the team is looking for new work for the upcoming issue. Submissions for 2021 have already started and the last day to submit is Friday, November 27, so you have plenty of time. Hard work always pays off and this is only the beginning. We are all talented in our own unique ways and have a lot to show to this world.



Photo by Violetta Brin

Antheon covers through the years.

Learn From Me: Just Stay Home

Save the World by Watching Netflix

By Catherine Vladimirov

As soon as the news that KBCC was transferring to distance education was in my inbox, we bought a ticket to Columbia. My fiancé and I love traveling, but everyone around us was panicking.

People were stockpiling cleaning supplies, canned foods and toilet paper. Why toilet paper? If anything, you probably need tissues if you catch the virus. Stores ran out of masks which forced store owners to limit sales to three masks per person. A salesman near my apartment explained that before this was labeled a pandemic, people would buy 20 boxes of 100 masks and began to resell them to the same stores for two times the price.

COVID-19 brought out the worst in many people. It became a projector that shined our fears of the unknown and death out to the masses. Once Trump announced a state of national emergency, ticket prices became incredibly cheap. All of this was happening so fast, which we didn't take into account. Our flight was at 6:30AM the next morning. As we were in the airport, Columbia, among many other countries, closed its border. Our layover was in Florida and Florida is where we ended up.

Where do we stay? How do we get home? As we were sitting in the airport, my fiancé's throat started itching. We were able to find an Airbnb, where we thought we would stay for one night and find a way back to New York. By morning, he was coughing, having difficulty breathing and with a fever. Forced quarantining in Florida turned into a gift and a punishment.

Do we stock up on food or not? We urgently needed to find food but the store shelves were mostly empty. One dozen eggs per person. No milk. No cheese. No water. No meat. The beaches were closing. We ended up

finding one open restaurant on TripAdvisor, which ended up being a hospital cafeteria. Worst of all, pharmacies barely had any cough remedies.

We started to remember the natural remedies that our parents had taught us, such as using salty ocean water to clear your throat. Once we finally found a beach that didn't have a taped over the entrance and had no people, we ran to the water to fill up a bottle of saltwater and gargle.

Soon after, a police officer was speeding towards us on an ATV to tell us that even this beach is closed and we could face getting a \$500 fine and/or 15 days in jail. We kept trying all of the methods we knew to get rid of this horrible mucus cough that was obviously turning into bronchitis. His nasal canal was so congested he sounded like Donald Duck. So, we tried an old method to decongest your sinuses: putting a cut in half garlic clove in your nose and breathing through your nose for a few minutes. It worked incredibly well and with a bit of online research, we found that people suggest putting it in your ears as well.

A disaster waiting to happen. It slipped into his ear canal, and soon we found ourselves at the emergency room, with a doctor pulling garlic out of my fiancé's ear with all sorts of instruments. Another remedy which ended up costing \$335 more than a nasal decongestant at CVS.

Finally, I woke up feeling just as sick as my fiancé. Quarantining is best done at home and alone. We decided it was time to take the Florida "Less Stress Away" back up the coast. Yes, there's actually a highway in Florida called that. After approximately 19 hours of us driving and coughing our lungs out in the car, we could now isolate properly.

Please: learn from our mistake! Don't

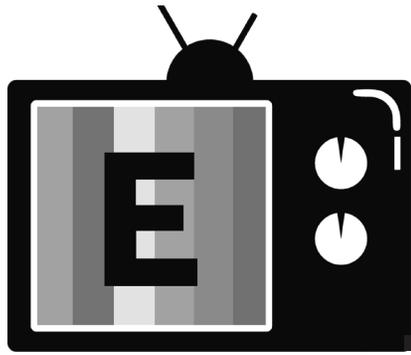
panic, but also don't take this lightly. Don't travel. Don't go out to see friends. Self-quarantine and spend that time at home wisely, we all know we wish we had more of it before this pandemic. Instead of excess buying toilet paper, save it for those who have yet to buy any and may truly need it, like the elderly. Have one box of tissues and one box of paracetamol handy for symptoms in case you do catch it.

Stay home! Stay safe! They say now you can save the world by just watching Netflix!



Photo by Catherine Vladimirov

Stay home to help fight COVID-19.



ENTERTAINMENT

Syd Silvair: The Guidance of Tarot

Taking a Deeper Look Into Her World

By Saul De Leon

A young, driven singer emerges from the streets of New York City with a lush, delicate sound that graces the airways of the music industry. Syd Silvair has arrived with her debut single, "Obsidian," off of her upcoming EP. The single was released on October 25, 2019, after she recently signed to Kobalt music, marking the start of her professional career.

She's a professional tarot card reader and uses her knowledge of the practice to build a world surrounded by the themes of each card in her songs. The cards keep her grounded in this journey of exploring the complexity of the human experience. She conveys interpretations of the cards through her music and embraces her two lifestyles. This merger paints a picture of a woman who is full of life, yet has a deep curiosity for her own purpose in life.

Silvair has granted us access to her unique perspective, an angle on the world that has yet to be explored in music. A view that, along with musical talent, got her discovered in a small restaurant in Los Angeles.

"I was playing a solo show at Genghis Cohen in LA several years ago when I met songwriter Simon Perry, we did a lot of writing together and eventually he signed me to his publishing company with Maria Alonte, Archangel Media, which is administered by Kobalt," She said. "I started working more closely with the NY Kobalt team a couple of years ago, which led to lots of opportunities & co-writes, including my collaboration with Dillon Pace, who co-produced the EP."

Silvair brings an abstract style that displays an array of influences from 1970s disco and art-pop, but with a unique spin to the production, giving it a darker tone to an upbeat style. Her sound is nostalgic, yet original. It gives you some familiarity but still raises your eyebrows. Her delivery is mystical. It submerges us in deep reflection and provides the listener with a profound tense experience.

Obsidian delves into our insecurities and fears buried inside us that dictate many of our decisions in life. A sentiment based on the moon card in the tarot deck. Using a specific card in the deck, Silvair can give her audience a taste of what her world is like. It helps her in being able to relate to her audience and provides insight into who she is as a person.

"Leonard Cohen, Joni Mitchell and Fiona Apple are a few of my songwriting idols. I was lucky to be surrounded by a pretty eclectic mix of music growing up, but those three were consistent lyrical heroes. My parents had a lot

of movie soundtrack CDs in the car, which I've realized in retrospect really shaped my musical taste," Silvair said. "I know the Boogie Nights and Saturday Night Fever soundtracks inside and out--I think that's where my obsession with 70's music began. The Practical Magic soundtrack was also in rotation, which is how I first fell in love with Case of You by Joni (a lyrical favorite) and of course, Stevie Nicks."

Tarot is her compass; it guides her through obstacles and opens her thoughts. It allows her to see the world more holistically and give more meaning to the small interactions we have in life. It navigates her music and is a tool in touching the people in her life and the ones she will encounter.

"I've experienced intense synchronicities for as long as I can remember. So, I was always drawn to the occult. Growing up, I collected divination tools (tarot decks, rune stones, tea leaf reading kits) and eventually started using tarot as a songwriting tool to get my creativity flowing," she recalls. "It wasn't until a few years ago, when I found out my great grandmother Claire was a card reader, that I felt it was time to expand my practice and start reading professionally for others. It's been really cool to carry on her legacy."

A legacy that Silvair hopes to honor through her music as well. She's in touch with the energy of the spirits. They give her insight into what's to come in the future. The cards are an extension between the spirits and human ambiance. The aura is transferred into the cards when touched. She discerns the cards that are drawn and interrupts the possible meanings behind them as the occult leads her to the answer. The cards drawn reflect the person's potential future through the aura that was transferred. Whatever the reader says, they may take it and do with it as they pleased.

"Most mornings, I'll pull a card, which gives me a theme to keep in mind for the day. If I'm stuck in the songwriting process, bracing myself for a big change, or looking for clarity on something specific, I'll pull a series of cards and journal my thoughts/interpretations," Silvair said. "Between my own readings and reading very frequently for others (sometimes 15 people a day), I find myself connecting dots between the cards and my daily life. I'll hear a song and feel like it captures the essence of a card (I have a growing list of these that I plan on eventually incorporating into my readings!), or I'll meet someone and think, 'they're totally a page of wands,' etc. It's really fun to make

those connections and it deepens both my understanding of the deck and of my life."

Tarot is something that many people aren't familiar with. Through music, Silvair has given her audience an accessible medium to get lost in. She manages to capture the essence of a card through a methodical orchestrated production, as well as lyrical, which brings the card to life. The meaning of the song morphs as your aura changes through the day giving it replay value. This is Silvair's jumping-off point and she's excited to see what the future holds for her in music. Her creativity has no bounds and she is in a position to take the industry by storm.

"Touring as much as possible and continuing to craft a world around my music that people can escape into," Silvair said. "Music always allowed me to indulge my escapist tendencies and I think being able to enter that dreamy headspace is a sort of medicine. I would love to be able to give people that outlet for escape, the way so many artists have given it to me."



Photo by Syd Silvair

Syd Silvair captures the essence of tarot through her music.

Top 10 Hip-Hop Boom Bap Era Producers

The Geniuses Who Changed the Game

By Saul De Leon

The Boom Bap Era of the mid-1980s to early-1990s is widely known as the Golden Age of Hip Hop, where many iconic artists like Tupac, Notorious B.I.G and Dr. Dre originated from. Its hard-hitting looped snare and kick drum beats layered over soul and jazzy samples gave hip hop a simplistic but accessible sound. The success and legacy of this era have a large part to do with the production of legendary producers who cemented Boom Bap as a staple to old-school hip hop.

10. Havoc

One half of the legendary New York hip hop group, Mobb Deep, Havoc, alongside Prodigy, produced all of Mobb Deep's discography. With hard-hitting drums, heavy bass, offbeat pianos and strings looped, the production helped give the group a rugged sound to match the intense vivid lyrics of life in Queensbridge. Some of their most memorable tracks were: Shook Ones Pt II, Hell On Earth and Quiet Storm. Mobb Deep helped solidify the rough dirty sound that the city was known for in the 90s. Havoc has also produced tracks on Nas's "It Was Written," The Notorious B.I.G's "Life After Death" and Method Man's "Tical 2000: Judgment Day."

9. The Bomb Squad

This group is most notably known for their work on Public Enemy's discography. Presiding in New York City, The Bomb Squad's multi-layered samples, along with Public Enemy's politically conscious lyrics, helped give a voice to the unrest in Black communities across the U.S. throughout the late 80s and early 90s. Some of their best work included aggressive tracks like "Fight the Power," "Rebel Without a Pause," and "Bring the Noise." The Bomb Squad successfully brought socially conscious rap into the mainstream. They are accredited with producing Ice Cube's debut album "AmeriKKKa's Most Wanted," Bell Biv DeVoe's Debut "Poison" and Slick Rick's debut "The Great Adventures of Slick Rick."

8. Organized Noise

This legendary Atlanta trio came on to the scene in 1992 and would become the fathers of the southern hip hop sound that we know today.

They are most known for their production on all of OutKast's Discography, as well as Goodie Mob's. Their unique, funky and spacious style put the south on the map for hip hop. Accredited with producing TLC's critically acclaimed album "CrazySexyLove," Parental Advisory's "Ghetto Street Funk" and Ludacris's first two albums, "Back for the first time" and "Word of Mouf."

7. Q-Tip

Known for his Jazzy and Afro beats, Q-tip is one of the founding members of A Tribe Called Quest. Producing on all of Tribe's discography, he is credited for producing on Run-D.M.C's "Down with the King," Heavy D's self-titled album and Nas's "One Love off of Illmatic."

6. Marley Marl

One of hip hop's finest super producers, Marley Marl was an early innovator in the art of sampling. He developed new techniques that resulted in some of the sharpest beats and hooks in rap's Golden Age. His production work for many artists generally boasted a bright, booming and robust sound that, along with his ear for a catchy sample, helped move street-level hip hop's sonic blueprint into the more accessible territory. His success presented the opportunity to produce for artists like Eric B. & Rakim, Heavy D & the Boyz, LL Cool J, and TLC.

5. RZA

The Wu-Tang Clan Chief produced the group's 1993 debut album "Enter the Wu-Tang (36 Chambers)," which was one of the most influential hip hop records of the era. RZA's lean and menacing production is imitated throughout the rap community to this day. He also lent a hand in producing all of the members' solo debuts. RZA created a dynasty that will never be seen again in hip hop history.

4. Pete Rock

Rapper, DJ and producer Pete Rock emerged in the early '90s as one-half of a rap duo with C.L. Smooth, later going solo. He has solidified his place as one of the most acclaimed hip hop producers to emerge from the East Coast scene. In addition to his recordings, he's also worked with dozens of artists over the decades, including

Heavy D, Kid 'n Play, Doug E. Fresh, Redman, Run-D.M.C., Will Smith, Nas, Talib Kweli, De La Soul and various members of the Wu-Tang Clan.

3. Large Professor

Widely known initially for his work as a producer and MC with the rap group Main Source, Large Professor soon after became a full-time producer working with such acts as Big Daddy Kane and A Tribe Called Quest. He then lent his hand to albums by some of rap's biggest names, including Eric B. & Rakim, Nas, and Pete Rock & C.L. Smooth. For his full-length solo debut, 2002's "1st Class," Large Professor called in favors from friends, including Nas, Q-Tip and Busta Rhymes. 2008's Main Source featured Big Noyd, AZ and Styles P.

2. Dr. Dre

Dr. Dre was responsible for moving away from the Avant-noise and political stance of Public Enemy and Boogie Down Productions as well as the party vibes of old-school rap. Dre pioneered gangsta rap and his variation of the sound, "G-funk." Along with production credits on one of N.W.A's records, his 1992 solo debut album, "The Chronic," is considered a classic. Dre would go on to producing critically acclaimed albums with artists like Snoop Dog, Tupac, 50 Cent and Eminem.

1. DJ Premier

Active since 1987, the year he debuted behind Guru as one-half of Gang Starr, DJ Premier is one of the most crucial figures in hip hop. Aggressive and raw, a Premier track is an instantly recognizable sound-clash of battling loops and heavy scratching. All of them have perfectly aged and have a vibe that evokes the sound of Brooklyn better than anyone. Besides helming albums for Gang Starr, Premier's productions appear on many of the East Coast's most important records of the '90s, including Nas' "Illmatic," the Notorious B.I.G.'s "Ready to Die," Jay-Z's "Reasonable Doubt," Jeru the Damaja's "The Sun Rises in the East" and Mos Def's "Black on Both Sides." In the following decades, Premier attained his highest level of pop success while continuing to power the nationwide rap underground.



10. Havoc.



9. The Bomb Squad.



8. Organized Noise.



7. Q-Tip.



6. Marley Marl.



5. RZA.



4. Pete Rock.



3. Large Professor.



2. Dr. Dre.



1. DJ Premier.

Final Fantasy VII Remake Demo Review

What Die Hard Fans Have Been Waiting For

By Matt Hirsch

There isn't much that could be said about Final Fantasy VII that hasn't been said already. Originally released in 1997 for the PlayStation, FFXVII is held by legions of fans as one of the greatest, if not the greatest JRPG of all time. Though, thanks to the limitations of the hardware it was released on, on a technical level, the game struggles against the test of time. Graphically, the polygonal character models and flat textures make the game hard to lose yourself in, these days. It's this fact that made this classic a prime candidate for a remake, and now that the demo is out, the world got a taste of what's to come and it leaves players salivating for more.

The demo follows the same exact path that the demo disc for the original that came with Playstation Magazine back when it originally released in '97. You lead the assault on Mako Reactor One in Midgar. Immediately you'll notice just how pretty this game is. The grungy steam-punk aesthetic of Midgar is recreated and updated perfectly. The dark and industrial colors of the plant make the bright and flashy neons of spells and attacks pop right off the screen. The game is a treat for the eyes. Though, there are times when there is too much happening on screen and it can become cluttered and hard to follow, but sparingly so.

What begs the most attention, however, is

the new combat system. The demo does have a "classic" mode to simulate the turn-based style of the original, but it feels like playing the game on autopilot. The new action-oriented combat is intuitive, and feels great to use. They pay homage to the old turn-based days of yore with the combat menus. When you access them, time slows down so you can think and plan out your moves, and then get right back into the thick of it.

Like in the original, you control your entire party, so you have access to different play styles. Cloud is the op anime swordsman that you've always dreamt him to be, dishing massive damage with his Buster Sword. In this demo, you also get to play as Barret Wallace, who has a prosthetic minigun for an arm to deal ranged damage to the enemies that Cloud can't reach. The two characters offer distinct strengths and weaknesses. You juggle them to exploit an enemy's weak spot, and then defending your own feels amazing. It almost comes off as Kingdom Hearts on steroids, but your party members are actually useful.

It should come as a surprise to no one that the demo is just as easy on the ears as it is on the eyes. It sounds perfect. The noise that the Buster Sword makes along with Cloud's grunt when he swings is visceral. It feels and sounds weighty. It goes without saying that the music is

incredible, as it's well known at this point that the Final Fantasy series has beautiful musical scores. The composer for the original game, Nobuo Uematsu, even created an all-new theme song for the remake and it is haunting.

Frankly, if you're a fan of the original game, chances are you'll probably love this demo too. It pays homage to the old but stands on its own as well. Though it is just a sliver of what's to come, the bones of the game are there. And it's got good bones for sure. Three of the most important things in any game are visual design, sound design, and combat design and this demo definitely nails all three. April 20th can't come soon enough.

The Good:

The Sound Design: Though you would be hard pressed to find anything wrong with the other two key aspects mentioned earlier, what stood out the most is the lively and immersive nature of the sound design.

The Bad:

Screen Clutter: The one nitpick worth mentioning, the on-screen action can get a little too busy at times, but with a few strokes of the Buster Sword, it's cleaned up no problem.

Final Thoughts:

This is what FFXVII die-hards have been waiting for. The full release is so close and the demo only made the hype stronger.



Photo by Square Enix

April 20th can't come soon enough for Final Fantasy fans.

What are KCC Students Watching?

Students Talk About Their Favorite Netflix Shows

By Saul De Leon

With dozens of streaming platforms at our fingertips nowadays, there are a plethora of television shows to choose from that range across hundreds of genres. KBCC students across campus spoke about the shows that left an impression on them. Their experience with each program varies from pure entertainment to a profound connection with the writing.

"I would say All American because not only it is based on a true story, but how he is working so hard to become a great football player, didn't have a father and took his coach in as his mentor. I can relate to that because when I was playing football in high school, I did the exact same thing. I used my coach as a mentor and he showed me the way." **Brian Augustin, 18, Criminal Justice.**

What is your favorite Netflix Show and why?

"My favorite Netflix Show is Stranger Things because I love how it portrays 80s pop culture. I love how creative it is and also love how great the child actors are even though they're so inexperienced." **Matt Hirsch, 23, Journalism & Print Media.**

"My favorite show right now is Friends. The reason why is because for me it is a great union of people who are absolutely different in their characters and lives and somehow are able to be together and share their stories with us." **Violetta Brin, 20, Graphic Design.**

"I would go with Lucifer because you never really know what people describe heaven and hell to be. That show [is] what hell is really like and what I believe. Who's ever known the devil to help somebody and to be a detective." **Tionne Greenidge, 19, Social Work.**

"The Taco Chronicles because I love tacos, everybody should love tacos. If everybody loved tacos then there would be no wars, sadness or anything dark because tacos are little pockets of sunshine." **Billy Cochran, 37, College assistant.**



Photo by Saul De Leon

Matt Hirsch, 23.



Photo by Saul De Leon

Violetta Brin, 20.



Photo by Saul De Leon

Billy Cochran, 37.



Photo by Saul De Leon

Tionne Greenidge, 19.



Photo by Saul De Leon

Brian Augustin, 18.

The People's Thoughts on COVID-19

People Along the East Coast Share Their Thoughts on the Deadly Virus

By Catherine Vladimirov

Since the COVID-19 pandemic has reached the United States people have been panicked and cautious when they step out of their homes. Citizens in Florida and South Carolina were asked their opinion about the current state of the country based on what they've seen so far.

What is something you've realized during this COVID-19 pandemic?

"People tend to panic more than just think out the situation, you know? Just calm down, rethink it. Just say 'Trump is just trying to protect us because he cares' so calm down and relax. A lot of people, and now I'm not saying I believe this, but a lot of people are believing that [this pandemic] is man-made." said **Rachel, Airbnb Host, Miami Florida.**

"People are going crazy and they don't handle things well. I think it's very exaggerated and I think we're going to be okay." said **Melody, Waitress.**

"All I think is how we have to be careful. We have to keep washing our hands and watching out for each other. Caution and caution, that's all." said **Marisuel, Cashier, Taqueria Sanchez, Florida.**

"Everybody's wearing gloves. Everybody. And even if they have gloves on, they're opening the door with their elbow. I'm doing the extra precautions and stuff like that but I say leave it up to God." said **Samantha, Gas Station Clerk, Shell, South Carolina.**



Photo by Catherine Vladimirov

Rachel, Airbnb Host.



Photo by Catherine Vladimirov

Samantha, Gas Station Clerk.



Photo by Catherine Vladimirov

Marisuel, Cashier.



Photo by Catherine Vladimirov

Melody, Waitress.



SPORTS

Does Anyone Still Trust Rob Manfred?

The MLB Blew its Chance to Make a Statement Against Cheaters

By Ellis Santoro



Photo via Wikimedia Commons

Manfred fails to make the Houston Astros an example.

Nobody knows when the sports world will end its hiatus. It is a literal nightmare for fans across the globe. Baseball, along with every other sport, is losing revenue as Covid-19 claims days off their seasons. It was only March 12th that baseball was last played, yet it seems like an eternity ago.

All of the offseason storylines are lost for the time being. Teams like the Cincinnati Reds, Chicago White Sox and Texas Rangers added players to become threats to win their divisions. Gerrit Cole and Mookie Betts turned their new teams into juggernauts. Do you remember the Astros cheating scandal? The unforeseen circumstances of the ongoing global pandemic got Rob Manfred and the Houston Astros out of a slew of criticism.

Rob Manfred handled the punishments abhorrently. Almost everyone other than those with “Houston, Texas” as their location in their twitter bio agrees. The loss of 4 draft picks hurts, but that does nothing to the immediate future and the players who actually cheated. The \$5 million fine is nothing to their owner, Jim Crane, who’s

net worth is estimated to be around \$2.5 billion. It’s basically like they signed a bench player to a 1 year \$5 million deal who then tore his ACL and is out for the year. The suspensions of their Manager A.J. Hinch and GM Jeff Luhnow for one year each was unsatisfactorily too short—that is until Crane fired them both shortly after their suspensions were announced. No players got suspended despite it being a player-driven cheating scandal.

No championship has ever been stripped in the history of the four major sports leagues. The 2017 World Series should have been the first. Manfred decided against it, however.

“Once you go down that road, as for changing the results on the field, I just don’t know where you stop,” Manfred said at a public press conference on February 16th, 2020. “The 2017 World Series will always be looked at as different, whether or not you put an asterisk or ask for the trophy back, I don’t think it makes that much of a difference.”

There are plenty of reasons why Manfred didn’t strip the title. The most talked-about reason is

that if it’s revealed that other teams cheated to win championships (the 2018 Red Sox), Manfred would have to strip every single one. They can’t take away every World Series from the late 1990s to the early 2000s just because certain players were on steroids. You can make your own argument for the steroid era, but the MLB absolutely should have stripped the 2017 title. By not doing so, they are enabling any team to cheat their way to a World Series and not have to worry about severe consequences. The GM and Manager would be suspended for one year each, but winning a World Series might make it worth it to them and might be more valuable to them than integrity; it was for the Astros.

Another reason Manfred didn’t void the 2017 championship is likely because he wants people to forget about this stain on baseball. 50 years from now, someone scrolling through the list of previous championships would see that the Astros won in 2017 and wouldn’t think twice. If they see an asterisk and “championship voided,” they would begin to read about why it was vacated. The scandal would never die.

At a public press conference on February 18th, where he also apologized for calling the world series trophy a “piece of metal,” he tried to redeem the tainted image of the MLB.

“I think that trust is something that has to be earned, or earned back,” Manfred said. “I think that we have tried to send our fans the message that no matter who’s involved, if there is an allegation that involves a violation of the rules, we’ll investigate it. We’ll investigate it with tremendous vigor and effort.”

Cool, except that’s completely untrue.

The Oakland Athletics went on record to Susan Slusser of the San Francisco Chronicle, stating that they filed a complaint privately—before the cheating scandal became public—yet the MLB didn’t take it seriously. It was only until Evan Drellich and Ken Rosenthal broke the story on November 12th, 2019 that the MLB launched their investigation. Maybe there wasn’t enough evidence in the accusation to take it seriously, but they’re definitely was no display of “tremendous vigor and effort.” Earning back the trust of the fans isn’t helped by Manfred being exposed for not caring until public scrutiny goes his way.

Rob Manfred had a chance to set an example to the rest of Major League Baseball. He blew it. The Astros get to play for a championship this season (assuming there is a season at this point). They get to keep their trophy. Luhnow and Hinch will find their way back into the MLB once their suspensions are up. Their already poorly ranked farm system will take a hit in the future, but the players who actually cheated will not be affected. They got off lightly and the precedent in the MLB is now that cheating is a legitimate way to win a championship.

A Player's Perspective on the Lost Season

Abner Victor of the KCC Wave's Baseball Team Shares his Thoughts

By Ellis Santoro

The Kingsborough baseball team had been preparing for months for their season to start. Now the players and coaches have to just accept that it's canceled. Scepter sat down with the KCC Wave's center fielder and team captain, Abner Victor, to discuss his feelings on the canceled season and his future.

Scepter: So what made you come to Kingsborough?

Abner: The reason why was for the baseball team. I was recruited by my coach and then everything went well and I liked it. So that's why I decided to go here.

Scepter: When did you start playing baseball?

Abner: I started playing when I was eight, when I was back in my country, living in [The Dominican Republic.] So basically my whole life playing baseball.

Scepter: Do you have a favorite team and player?

Abner: Not really. I like a lot of people, a lot of players. One of them back then was Alfonso Soriano. I was watching, looking up to him.

Scepter: How was the season going up to the cancellation?

Abner: How was the season going? It was going bad man. Every athlete right now is crying because they want to play. Every athlete right now, we don't even know what to do. We have like two months right now that we're doing nothing. Literally like, we want to play. We just want to play.

Scepter: What have you been doing since campus closed?

Abner: I went to work out, cause I have nothing to do. I went to work out in the morning, you know, to stay in shape for if something happened this season, hopefully. He said we can play hopefully.

Scepter: What was your initial reaction to the news of the season being canceled?

Abner: I was shot. I couldn't speak for like a few hours. I couldn't believe it. I started believing it when my coach, he started talking to us that the season really got canceled. That's when I started believing it.

Scepter: Now that you've had time to reflect since the news, have your feelings about the cancellation changed?

Abner: Yeah, just like the other athletes you know, we [shouldn't] take every single practice, or games for granted you know. We just have to play every game 110% 'cause you never know when it could be the last one we could be playing.

Scepter: Have you been in touch with your teammates and coaches since?

Abner: Yeah, we have a group chat and we talk. We make jokes.

Scepter: What are your plans for next year?

Abner: My plan right now, I'm really not sure enough. Because they say this year is not gonna count, so I don't know if I'm gonna come back, not yet. I've been thinking about it.

Scepter: Are you planning on transferring after you finish Kingsborough and playing baseball and playing baseball wherever you end up?

Abner: Yeah. That's my plan. I don't know how it's gonna end up though right now.

Scepter: Where do you see yourself in five and 10 years?

Abner: In the leagues. And you know, taking care of my family.



Kingsborough's Baseball Season: Canceled

Coach Brian Dowd Speaks on the Hole it Leaves in the Players and Coaches Lives

By Ellis Santoro

The coronavirus has completely ruined so many people's fun. Kingsborough, just like every other CUNY school, is shut down for the rest of the semester. Athletics aren't able to be continued. The Kingsborough baseball team and Coach Brian Dowd are trying to figure out the next steps after the announcement that their baseball season, something that they spent months preparing for, has been canceled.

"It's not easy. I'll tell you that. Trying to figure out what we're going to do for the next two months. We had baseball planned," said Dowd, followed by a hollow laugh.

The season was supposed to go until early May, but it had only gotten three games in before the cancellation, their last game being a 9-5 loss to SUNY Sullivan on March 9th. Despite their slow 0-3 start, Coach Dowd had optimism about this season.

"This season was going ok. We were 0-3, but we played [all three games] against D2 teams. We're a D3 team. We played them well and it was looking in the right direction," Dowd said. "I think our plan, our big expectation was to win the region. I think this season was heading in a really good direction to tell you the honest truth. With the work our guys were putting in, the goal at hand was in front of us."

Everything they had planned is now canceled. That's the harsh reality the team will have to face. Dowd recounted his initial reaction to the news.

"I kind of knew it would be canceled for a couple of days before, like 48 hours. It was a waiting game until it actually came down and happened," Dowd said. "I can't say I was shocked because I guess the shock kind of left me within the 48 hours that was leading up to it."

For the players, there was more emotion.

"They were definitely much more shocked," Dowd said. "I said something to them that it was a possibility, but you can tell.... the shock value was definitely much higher for them."

The team isn't allowed to practice to prepare for next year. With gyms being closed and gatherings being banned for the time being, it's hard for the student-athletes to even get out and stay in shape. Dowd shared his view of the impact the cancellation will have on the players.

"I think right now their mindsets are what's going to be affected the most. Whatever's going on in there, you have to figure out how to retune and refocus and readjust for whatever implants the next two months of baseball and school, and then figure out a new plan," Dowd said.

The players' mentalities and morales will be hurt. They were all looking forward to this season. For some, they've played their last game at Kingsborough. All of them will lose a year off of their development as a player. It sucks from every way you look at it.

Although the cancellations will prevent the team from accomplishing their goals for this

season, Coach Dowd shared his confidence level for next season.

"Our expectations are still alive for next year," said Dowd. "Absolutely. No question."

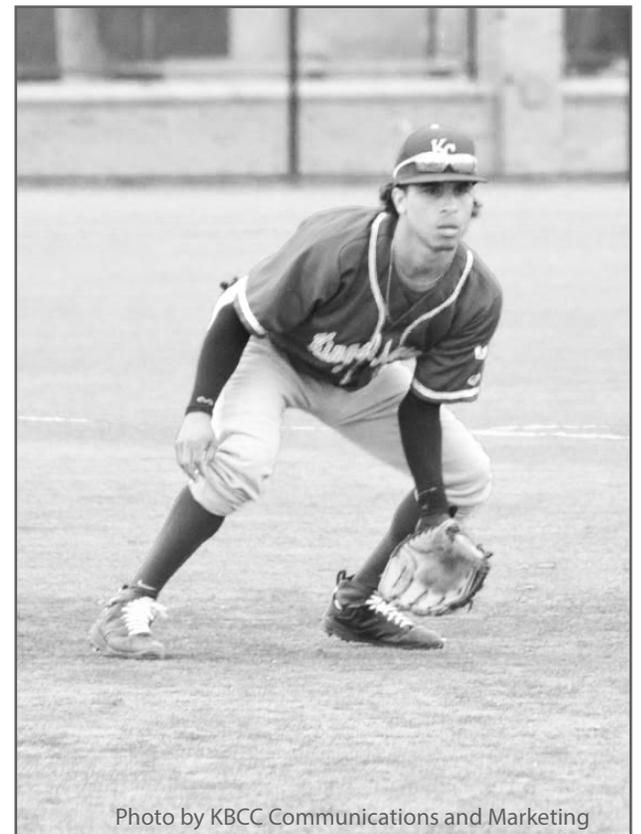


Photo by KBCC Communications and Marketing

With the season over, all that's left is what-ifs...

Competitive Call of Duty From the Eyes of an Analyst

An Analyst Dives Into the Past, Present and Future of His Scene

By Ellis Santoro

Arran Francis isn't known to his viewers by that name. His nearly 17,000 YouTube subscribers know him by his online alias and youtube channel name, "TacticalRab." He's known as the guy who makes daily videos recapping the events of the Call of Duty League (CDL) from the day prior. He doesn't use much emotion, but he provides a ton of information to CDL fans looking to get filled in from the previous days events.

Having made a 10-20 minute YouTube video almost every single day since December 2018, Francis is also a busy college student in Essex, England. Despite being occupied with school, he doesn't feel burdened by daily uploads.

"It's good fun actually. It doesn't feel as if it's work since I like Call of Duty anyways," Francis said. "It only takes about an hour really. 10-20 minutes of recording, 20 minutes to edit it and 20-30 minutes for the video to render."

Francis first got recognition in the Call of Duty competitive scene when NickArts from CoD Gamepedia contacted him. CoD Gamepedia is basically Wikipedia for the CDL.

"At the start of 2018, I had been making videos about the competitive scene and putting them on reddit." Francis said. "Nick[Arts] actually saw it and asked me to write some articles for them."

Despite having "Lead Journalist @CoD_Gamepedia" in his Twitter bio, Francis said that he doesn't actually write for the CoD Gamepedia often.

"I wrote a few articles for CoD Gamepedia over the summer, but that was pretty much it," Francis said about his role. "I started making videos for them though around the time of [Call of Duty] Champs (mid-August, 2018)."

Those videos turned into the basis of the TacticalRab YouTube channel. The 17,000+ follower twitter account, @CoD_Gamepedia,

tweets out a link to his videos often.

Francis made Call of Duty "Tips and Tricks" videos years ago, but those never got any real traction. He took a break from YouTube starting on December 26th 2016, before he returned on August 6th of 2018 to upload a video titled: "Black Ops 4 Competitive Verdict | BO4 Beta Analysis | 5v5?" The video is 40 minutes long and is mainly about his opinions on the new beta for the at-the-time upcoming Call of Duty game.

"I primarily made that video for my friends. But the video actually did well so I continued to make more videos," Francis explained about his return to YouTube. "I wasn't planning on the channel growing to what it is today."

He continued to make videos about the competitive Call of Duty scene. He continued to gain viewers and subscribers as well. Now, the TacticalRab YouTube channel gets anywhere from 5,000 to 20,000+ views on each daily video.

His videos are essentially the CDL equivalent of SportsCenter. SportsCenter recaps all of the sports games from that day or the previous day, which provides the viewer with highlights and a box score of statistics. Francis does something similar, only with Call of Duty. He doesn't show many highlights, but he breaks down each game one by one, and shows the hard-to-locate box score as well. The concept of daily recaps hasn't been done in the past with the CDL.

Francis feels he was in the right place at the right time however.

"Everything I talk about is available online. Like I recap things that people are already watching," said Francis. "So I really feel like I got lucky."

Although he has had great short term success in the Call of Duty community, there is a harsh reality to it. This isn't a career. At least not at the

moment. Francis is well aware of this.

"The ad revenue from these videos aren't exactly great. Like I'm getting paid, but it's not a living wage," Francis said. "A lot of these guys who make videos on the CDL are working other jobs. The content they make isn't their main job."

Francis has a plan ahead of him. He has completed two years of college and had an internship set up for him at Intel in digital marketing. It started in July of 2019 and ended in August of 2020. He doesn't plan to leave eSports however.

"My long term goal would be to work in eSports. I don't know if I would necessarily stick with Call of Duty though," Francis said about his vision for his future. "I'm looking to take a more top-down approach and network with people at Intel who might have contacts in the eSports scene."

His plan of networking is similar to his thoughts on how someone should build themselves up as a smaller journalist in eSports.

"I would try and get in contact with journalist organizations in the eSports scene and network with them," Francis said. "You have to find someone lucky pretty much who will give you a chance."

Although Call of Duty isn't one of the biggest eSports, the TacticalRab youtube channel gets a large number of views on each video. The CDL has the potential to grow in viewership, especially with city-based franchising just having started with the most recent Call of Duty title. This will essentially make it a much bigger focus by the game developers in terms of advertising. The CDL has the potential to become a big enough eSport where a journalism job can become self-sustaining.

Francis has a message for aspiring content creators and really just anyone in general: "The first thing you make may be bad. But you have to keep going to make it to the 50th one."



Call of Duty is just getting started in the franchised eSports world.