

The Mount Observer

“Voices of the students of Mount Wachusett Community College”

PREVIEWS



Working Together Toward Wellness

Living a healthy lifestyle is beneficial to all individuals, particularly college students seeking better overall health.

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Student Stories

Learn about some of your fellow students.

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Coping With Rising Technology Costs

Between the prices of programs, project materials, computer accessories, books, and the sheer time and effort that Graphic Design classes demand of students, it's no wonder that students can become stressed with college.

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Observer Showcase

Check out the work by photography student and the Observer's own Betsy Torres!

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COVID-19 Coronavirus Threatens Health and Economy

Faculty and staff discuss potential risks and ways to prepare

By *Nicholas Papini*
ASSISTANT EDITOR

The COVID-19 coronavirus may not yet be a medical threat to the average American, but they will certainly feel the virus's effects on the economy.

Katherine Kusza, Health Counselor at MWCC said, “[the] coronavirus is not a concern in Massachusetts according to the CDC or the Massachusetts Department of Public Health.”

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), as of February 26, there have been 18 confirmed cases of the coronavirus in the United States, excluding the passengers aboard the *Diamond Princess*

cruise ship. One of those cases was in Massachusetts. However, on February 25, the CDC announced that they expect an increase in spread of the virus in communities.

COVID-19 is the scientific name given to the coronavirus, according to the CDC. Kusza said that the COVID-19 is a respiratory infection similar to the flu, and the two have very similar side effects.

Kusza said that those most at risk of death by the coronavirus are the elderly and the young, and those with immune systems which have been compromised. Julie Capozzi, Associate Professor of Psychology and

Sociology, said that while she feels the coronavirus can be considered an epidemic medically, it is likely to be a

pandemic economically. Elmer Eubanks, Department Chair and Associate Professor continued on page 2 “Coronavirus” >>>

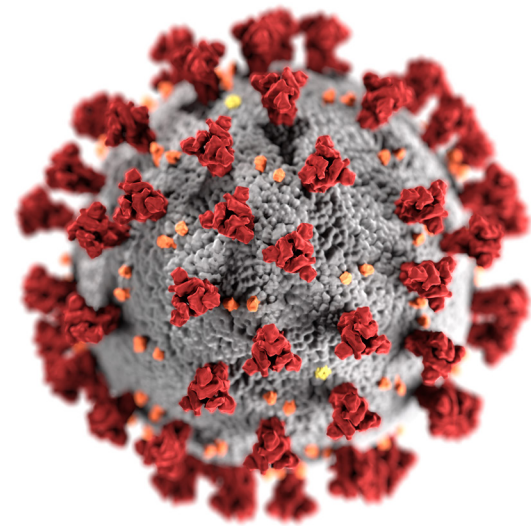


Image source: Public Health Image Library & CDC

An illustration by the CDC representing the COVID-19 coronavirus

Alphabet Soup Panel Highlights LGBTQ Issues

Local advocates discuss public safety, pronouns, and more

By *Nicholas Papini*
ASSISTANT EDITOR

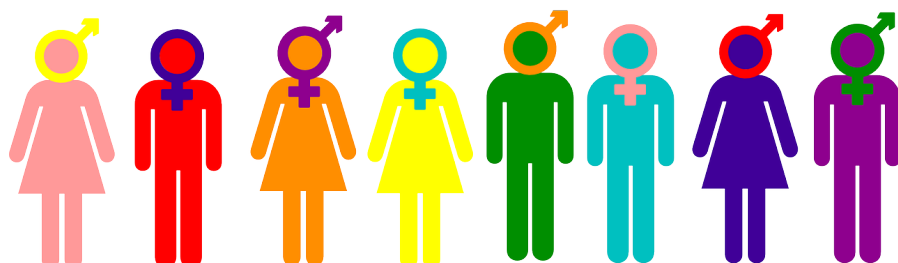
MWCC's Sexuality & Gender Alliance (SAGA) club hosts events and discussion panels throughout the year, including the Alphabet Soup Panel Discussion, which took place last fall. This panel brought to light the lesser known issues the LGBTQ+ community faces, including preferred pronoun

usage and public safety. The panel members included: John Gatto from the Justice Resource Institute; Melissa Manzi, MWCC's mental health counselor; Kate Milligan and Toni Diaz from Youth Opportunities Upheld, Inc. (YOU, Inc.); and Shane Franzen from Fitchburg State University. The event was hosted by the SAGA club and their advisor,

David Iannaccone. Manzi stated that although rights have made huge leaps in recent times, prejudice certainly still exists. Gatto agreed that they do not feel comfortable holding their husband's hand in some places, and don't believe that feeling safe should come before a person being who they are. “It's a healthy, adaptive thing

to be aware of where we're safe and where we're not,” said Gatto. Manzi noted that the LGBTQ+ community is remarkably resilient in the face of its diversity. They are uniquely supportive of each other. Gatto stated that they feel that the letters of LGBTQ+ in and of themselves don't matter that much. They feel that people get hung up on them or conflate their knowledge of the letters and their meanings to mean that they know everything there is to the community. However, the

continued on page 2 “Alphabet Soup” >>>



Did you wash your hands?



Use soap & water.

Rub hands for 20 seconds.

Rinse.

Dry with paper towel.

Use towel to turn off faucet.

clean
^

Your health is in your hands

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Photo by Nicholas Papini

The most recommended tactic to combat the flu and the coronavirus is to wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, and to touch your face as little as possible.

Coronavirus

>>> continued from page 1

of Business, said that one of the greatest fallouts of the borderline pandemic in China is that many US companies, Apple being one of them, rely on China in their supply chains. Eubanks said he believes there are many products which the USA may have shortages of.

Both Capozzi and Eubanks stated that the fluctuation and large drops in the DOW rating are worrying, with Eubanks stating that it has troubling implications for the future.

Eubanks said he feels that if the situation with the coronavirus continues to escalate, businesses and the government will have to think of ways to adapt.

For businesses, he said that they should have plans for what to do if they encounter an issue in their supply chain or if many of their employees become ill and cannot work for several weeks.

According to Eubanks, the government should begin to consider how to support the citizens who may come down with the coronavirus and require quarantining. If a citizen does not have the support system in place to allow them this leave,

the government should consider how to assist them through that.

Capozzi stated that though there is a large amount of news coverage focused on the Coronavirus, it is not in any way intended to cause a panic.

“When you have facts and you have valid sites that you go to, that prevents panic,” said Capozzi.

Eubanks stated that there are also new business opportunities that he foresees. There is likely to be a shortage of some key items which the USA primarily imports from overseas, such as facemasks and plastic gloves. He said that with the numerous plastics companies in Central Massachusetts, there may be an opening in the industry.

Kusza’s tips for avoiding receiving or spreading a respiratory illness like the Coronavirus or Influenza include: washing hands well, covering the nose and mouth when sneezing, staying home when ill, and seeing a doctor if sick for more than a few days.

“Professors appreciate not getting the flu,” said Kusza.

Alphabet Soup

>>> continued from page 1

people who care the most about those specific letters are those who identify by them.

Milligan believes that the reason new letters keep getting added to LGBTQ+ is that it helps their community to be more inclusive. New members feel more free to express themselves if there is a specific letter they can firmly identify with.

On the subject of preferred pronouns, Milligan feels that they are incredibly important. They stated that trans people already feel like the “other,” and that preferred pronouns help to validate them and make them feel more welcome.

Diaz said that, when uncertain

which pronoun to use, they/them/their are good alternatives. They added that the pronoun a person uses is a part of them. Milligan agreed that using a person’s preferred pronoun validates their identity.

Diaz recognized that it is difficult for some people to use pronouns, and that sometimes mistakes happen. She encourages simple apologies in the case of slip ups.

With the current political climate, the panelists stated that they feel that society is taking the wrong steps with the LGBTQ+ community. Milligan said that they feel a lot of fear within the community, and Gatto

believes that society is moving

in the direction of exclusion and limited rights.

Franzen stated that this is the first time in his career that he has felt a little nervous about rights in colleges. While Franzen stated that he doesn’t believe that their college’s administration would support fewer rights for LGBTQ+ students, he fears for those in less accepting places than Massachusetts.

SAGA plans to host another panel discussion in Spring 2020, where a group of student panelists will discuss some of the other issues affecting the LGBTQ+ community. Details of the time, date, and location will be announced later this semester.

Working Together Toward Wellness

MWCC health professionals’ tips for all-around fitness



Photo by Betsy Torres

Katherine R. Kusza, R.N., has many tips for students looking to live healthier, more active lives.

By Ryan Lyesiuk

OBSERVER CONTRIBUTOR

Living a healthy lifestyle is beneficial to all individuals, particularly college students seeking better overall health. Improved overall health often leads to better classroom performance, improved sleep, less anxiety, and better general mood. This is according to Jason Snoonian, Director of the Mount Wachusett Community College Fitness & Wellness Center (Mount Fitness), Katherine R. Kusza, Registered Nurse at MWCC, and Nancy Regan, staff assistant in health services at MWCC.

Inadequate sleep is the number one unhealthy habit amongst college students. Lack of sleep often makes students anxious, tired, and less motivated to study, according to Kusza. “No college student sleeps enough,” stated Kusza. Tips for improved sleep habits provided by Kusza included no technology for

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“Fitness Center” >>>

Fitness Center

>>> continued from page 2

3 hours before bed, avoiding caffeine after 12 p.m., keeping all electronic devices out of the bedroom and maintaining a consistent sleep pattern.

Reiki (a therapy often described as hands-on-body healing in which a trained instructor places their hands lightly on or over a patient's body to help them heal) is another method of improved sleep according to Nancy Regan. "Reiki triggers the body's natural healing abilities, which improves sleep," stated Regan.

Exercise may lead to increased sleep as well, according to Snoonian. "Exercise significantly increases overall health, including better-quality sleep," stated Snoonian. Thirty minutes a day, a few days a week, is all you need to see substantial health benefits from exercise, including improved sleep habits, according to Snoonian.

Keeping the body moving whether that means playing sports, hitting the gym, or going for a walk, is essential to good overall health as well, according

by fifteen minutes of cardio is a perfect starting point," Snoonian stated. Gradually increasing workouts to sixty minutes maximum is a great way to approach fitness, but not needed to reap the benefits of exercise, according to Snoonian. "More than sixty minutes leads to burnout in most individuals, particularly those who are new to fitness," Snoonian stated. Wednesday walks, every Wednesday (weather permitting), is a new idea started by Regan in the Fall of 2019 to get students moving. These thirty-minute walks are geared to get students outside the walls of the campus and out into the fresh air, all while reaping the benefits of exercise at the same time, according to Regan.

"Wednesday walks focus on overall physical and mental health," along with "incorporating healthier eating habits," said Regan.

Finding ways to relax is essential to college students as well. "Releasing stress through meditation, quiet music, or deep



Photo by Thomas Hill Jr.

The Mount Fitness and Wellness Center

Students should try every class, if possible, and if not start with Group Ride, Centergy, Yoga, or Fight. Snoonian recommends these specific classes for two reasons: they are fun and seem to be popular with young adults.

Another opportunity for students to relax and release the stress of finals is Reiki in the

An additional, significant health concern amongst college students is alcohol and drug abuse. According to Kusza, staying substance free is vital for student's overall health. "Be kind to yourself and put healthy foods in your body, not drugs," said Kusza. Soda, particularly ones

whole-body experience will be provided as well," Regan stated.

Snoonian has over 22 years of work experience in the fitness industry. Snoonian received his Bachelor of Science (BS) degree at the University of Massachusetts. Upon completing his BS degree Snoonian worked as a personal trainer in multiple fitness clubs.

Kusza graduated from MWCC in 2007 as Certified Registered Nurse. Kusza began her career at MWCC as an EMT in 2016. In September 2018 she became the Health Counselor/Health Service advisor at MWCC.

Regan received her Associates degree in human services at MWCC in 2018. She recently started online classes at The Institute for Integrated Nutrition (IIN) to become a certified health coach. Regan has worked at MWCC as staff assistant in health services for 5 years, along with advising the hiking club, and the Wednesday walks. Previously, she worked at the Mount Fitness Center for 14 years.

"Four to six exercises for fifteen minutes, followed by fifteen minutes of cardio is a perfect starting point."

-Janet Snoonian, Director of Mount Fitness

to Kusza. "What works for one person may not work for others," said Kusza. Moderation is important as well; students don't want to do too much of a new activity too fast, according to Kusza.

Where will I find the time, you might ask? Between school, work, and other obligations it can be challenging, according to Snoonian. "Four to six exercises for fifteen minutes, followed

breathing is good for all student health," stated Kusza. Engaging with other peers, which is a lost art, may help students relax. "Students need to actually talk to friends face-to-face, and not just through technology," said Kusza.

According to Snoonian, there's several group classes offered at Mount Fitness that students can take to help release stress and relax the body and mind.

hall, according to Regan. These events are free to all students and will take place outside the library, with dates and times announced throughout the semester. Reiki helps bring about inner peace and harmony, along with maintaining good overall health, and, according to Regan, "It is amazing the positive energy you feel from Reiki. The experience is unbelievable, the stress just completely goes away."

with caffeine, are included on the list of substances to avoid. After all caffeine is a drug as well,

according to Kusza.

According to Regan, the inaugural Wellness Fair 2020 on April 8 will provide guest speakers offering several tips on healthy eating. Free healthy breakfast snacks and a nutritional lunch will be provided to all who attend as well. "A healthy

Let Your Voice be Heard!

Send your stories, poetry, artwork, photography, or other content to
mountobserver@mwcc.mass.edu



Profile: Dylan Quigley

By *Jayden Hooper*
OBSERVER CONTRIBUTOR

Dylan Quigley, age 21, a Liberal Arts major at MWCC focusing on Professional Writing, said that music has impacted and shaped some of his memories.

Quigley spoke of how he enjoys listening to Nirvana's album *In Utero* as it brings forth feelings of nostalgia and reminds him of how, in his first car, he owned that CD and it had gotten stuck in the CD player. He said that he had no choice but to listen to it until he got a new car.

Quigley also said that his father and brother's taste in music influenced his own. He humorously reminisced about how his brother put him to sleep with tracks by Rage Against the Machine, a band known for their hard rock and metal songs.

Quigley said that he has been playing the guitar for approximately 10 years and enjoys playing songs by Nirvana and Soundgarden. He also plays Blues songs because they have a calming effect. He said that he hopes to keep playing music even after finishing college.



Profile: Peter Edwards

By *Velhelmina Akosa*
OBSERVER CONTRIBUTOR

Peter Edwards, an Engineering and Physics major, seeks to become a climate scientist after completing school at MWCC.

Edwards said his interest in becoming a climate scientist started at a very young age when he went hiking, fishing, mountain climbing, and spent time with nature. Some of his favorite subjects in school are physics, weather, climate, and competitive math courses.

Edwards hopes to transfer to either UMass Lowell or the University of Colorado in Boulder. He also said that he hopes to have the chance to study abroad and that his career choice permits him to travel around the world.

Photos by Betsy Torres



Profile: Jan Troche

By *Abbi Rameau*
OBSERVER CONTRIBUTOR

Jan Troche is a first-year student who enrolled at the Mount after living in Puerto Rico for most of his life.

Troche considered mechanical engineering as a career path but has since switched to writing. He finds that his writing is greatly impacted by the music he listens to. He listens to "a little bit of everything," and said that depending on the beat of the song, his writing will be upbeat or slower and more pensive.

Troche lives with his immediate family here, but visits his grandmother in Puerto Rico who has taken over care of his cat. Troche said his cat was a stray and very skittish but has since warmed up to people, even sitting on his grandmother's lap at times. His grandmother has two cats and four dogs, including his cat. He hopes to visit again soon.



Profile: Jayden Hooper

By *Dylan Quigley*
OBSERVER CONTRIBUTOR

Jayden Hooper, a 20-year-old Biology major, is in his second semester and is taking Journalism as an elective.

Hooper said he listens to all kinds of music and doesn't really have a favorite. He has multiple playlists and most of them have a variety of genres; each playlist is made to reflect Hooper's mood. He likes varieties of Rock and Hip-Hop/Rap and has even gotten into violin music.

Hooper has been to a few concerts. He saw ZZ-Top and Godsmack with his dad, and said that the crowd at ZZ-Top were just "a bunch of dads in cargo shorts." Hooper also went to Warped Tour 2019 to relive his "middle school days."

Student Stories
Learn about some of your fellow students

PROFILE

Profile: Professor Susan Blain

Retiring professor gives insight into her long career at the Mount

By Kristopher Madden

OBSERVER CONTRIBUTOR

From tutoring, advising, and teaching, recently retired Professor Susan Blain is a familiar face to many students.

"I'm headed to San Diego, where I have a family of five, including three of my grandkids," said Blain. "I'll be starting part time in K-12 in a private school... As well as volunteering with human rights organizations, of course."

Blain's time at the Mount began as a student in 1983, attending classes as a Business Technology major. She continued to Worcester State College where she earned her Bachelor of Science degree in Mathematics.

Eventually, she earned her Master of Science degree in Mediation and Applied Conflict Studies from the Woodbury Institute of Chaplain College in

Burlington, VT.

In 1984, Blain was asked to start a tutoring program, which still exists in the Mount's library today.

"I was doing very well in all of my classes, especially math, so I was asked to tutor," she said. "As the demand for tutoring went up, we had to create a

and environmentalism. She has worked as a teacher in a residential school, a Florida juvenile prison, and volunteers with human rights organizations. Blain is also an avid hiker and walker. Students may have even passed her, on at least one morning, on her diligent walks to school: rain, shine, or snow.

advanced algebra, and her favorite, Statistics.

"Because it's the class where I saw a great percentage of students come in terrified of this bad word, this Statistics thing, and actually get a handle on it, and actually get some confidence," Blain said. "I saw it in basic math and basic algebra,

how big or small the issue is," said Professor Shawn Case, Chair of the Math Department. "If she can have a hand in it or if she can touch somebody's world in a good manner, she will be that light. Not only as a math teacher was she incredible, but even as an advisor I knew that Sue would take care of anyone I sent her way."

In her absence, Blain reminds students that there are many resources at MWCC for students struggling through courses.

"Take advantage of all your resources: tutors in Math Lab and at the Library. Don't give up. Trial and error are key because there are different kinds of teachers and different kinds of students. Use all the tools in MyMathLab, and if you can get together a study buddy or a study group to work on things together, that's a good thing."

"I saw it in basic math and basic algebra, but where you see it the most is Stats. And that's what you want as a teacher, to see the students grow, and that's where I grow myself as a teacher."

- Professor Susan Blain

program to accommodate. I also coordinated short-term exchange programs for business students from Saint Nazaire, France, through the Division of Continuing Education (now Lifelong Learning)."

Blain devotes most of her free time to education, activism

"I don't own a car," she said. "I try to leave as little of a carbon footprint as possible."

Sue is best known to many students as the teacher that helped them through their class the most. She has taught everything in the Math Department from Intro Level 092, to the more

but where you see it the most is Stats. And that's what you want as a teacher, to see the students grow, and that's where I grow myself as a teacher."

Blain has also been a student advisor. "Sue is the person who will do anything for anybody in such a positive light, no matter

OPINION

Coping with Rising Technology Costs

Pricey software and lack of access could leave students underwater

By Samantha Sykes

OBSERVER CONTRIBUTOR

Between the prices of programs, project materials, computer accessories, books, and the sheer time and effort that Graphic Design classes demand of students, it's no wonder that students can become stressed with college.

Finding less expensive alternatives to the programs and even program related books, which can easily climb over \$100, can lessen the stress a student must face.

The GID (Graphics Interactive Design) program at the Mount takes the lack of varied software programs into consideration for students and has a computer lab



Photo by Betsy Torres

One of the Graphic & Interactive Design computer labs at MWCC, stocked with the Adobe Creative Suite of programs

available for student use. The lab has all of the required programs already downloaded onto the computers, so all a student has to do is plug in a flash drive and get to work.

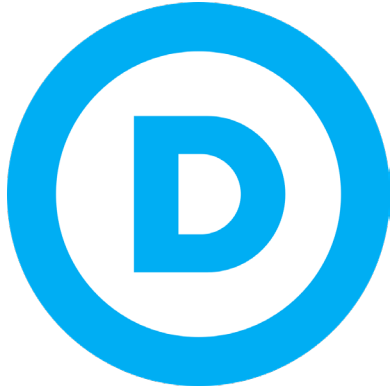
This doesn't always help, however. The lab doesn't open until around 10 a.m. and closes at 4 p.m. The only time a student can access the lab before 10 a.m. is if a graphics class is currently being held so the student can get in through the classrooms.

The assignments that are given for GID classes can be time consuming, and as the lab itself is only open 6 hours a day and a student usually has class time during these hours, the problems

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"Technology Costs" >>>

Is the Democratic Nomination for Sale?

A student's opinion on Bloomberg's campaign ethics



By **Nicholas Papini**
ASSISTANT EDITOR

The newly instated democratic presidential debate format instituted by the Democratic National Convention (DNC) is highly flawed and blatantly favors wealthier candidates.

The DNC relaxed its previously stringent participation requirements for former New York City mayor Michael Bloomberg. Bloomberg, due to funding the entirety of his campaign with his rather exorbitant wealth, would not meet the requirement of a minimum amount of grassroots

donations from a certain number of districts. It is my belief that the DNC very specifically withheld that requirement so that Bloomberg could qualify for these debates.

It is my belief that Michael Bloomberg, with the help of the DNC, is attempting to buy

February 21 *NPR* article, spent over \$452 million in advertising. Compared to former president Barack Obama, who spent \$383 million in advertisements throughout the entirety of his 2020 campaign, those numbers become increasingly concerning. Bloomberg has spent an

The only still-prominent candidate with a moderate estimated net worth is former South Bend, Indiana Mayor Pete Buttigieg, at a mere \$100,000. This demonstrates the versatility of his support and the ability of his grassroots campaigning.

According to a December 14,

which would have likely harmed the campaigns of former presidents Bill Clinton and Jimmy Carter.

Booker said, "and to have some artificial rules that would've cut out Jimmy Carter, that would've cut out Bill Clinton likely, that even Obama, who was 20 points behind Hillary Clinton at this point, in terms of what the polls say is viability, the polling has never predicted who would go on and win from our party."

Booker also stated that the current structure employed by the DNC would cut out candidates from nationalities which aren't Caucasian. The fact that the final remaining candidates are entirely Caucasian with entrepreneur Andrew Yang now dropped out of the running as of Feb 11 is shocking. However, it is more likely that the debate structure and the DNC merely targeted those with less wealth.

It is my belief that Michael Bloomberg, with the help of the DNC, is attempting to buy his way into becoming the victor of the 2020 Democratic primaries.

-Nicholas Papini

his way into becoming the victor of the 2020 Democratic primaries. The DNC has bent the rules in a rather telling manner to allow Bloomberg to appear as legitimate a candidate as possible, and that is all the more concerning when taken into account with all the less wealthy candidates that they had trampled on along the way.

Bloomberg has, according to a

exorbitant amount of what is strictly his own wealth to get his name out to as many citizens as possible and, through the use of that wealth he managed to meet the polling requirements for the Feb 19 debate.

A February 19 article by *Business Insider*, using statistics collected from *Forbes*, estimated the overall net worth of the current presidential candidates.

2019 article by *Buzzfeed*, New Jersey Senator Cory Booker, the now-withdrawn 2020 presidential candidate, agreed that he believed that the debates deliberately allowed billionaires like business mogul Tom Steyer and former New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg to remain in the running.

Booker also called out the current structure as something

Technology Costs

>>> continued from page 5

quickly become apparent.

The lab itself is incredibly useful and important to students who lack the programs themselves, but for students who want to use the programs on their own devices so that they can work on their projects on weekends, there is an additional alternative.

Barnes & Noble has recently offered a sale for college students where students can save up to 95% on many popular software and programs that students are likely to use for their classes. Deals like these can be lifesavers for students who can't easily get them due to financial reasons. And the companies of those programs offer sales of their own for students as well.

The Adobe Creative Cloud suite, which requires monthly subscription payments to use regularly, is available for \$19.99 a month to students and teachers

for the first year. After the first year, the costs go up to \$29.99; it should be noted, though, that the price is known to increase or decrease at times depending on Adobe's current situation. And the free trial that Adobe offered that used to last a month has also been reduced to a mere week.

Without the student discount, however, the monthly cost increases to \$52.99. This causes many problems for recent graduates who are trying to make a name for themselves. If the subscription is suspended for a month, users can no longer work on their creations as the programs they made them in are no longer usable until payments resume.

Adobe has begun offering an "Adobe Master Collection" download that operates as a one-time fee, which is great for individuals who might not be able to afford the alternative. The flat fee for permanent access

to Photoshop alone, however, is around \$700 to \$1000, and the program is already considerably outdated.

College graduates who have to take out loans to cover the costs of college could easily find themselves struggling to pay off those loans along with the price of day-to-day living expenses. Adding the cost of nearly \$50 a month for a program required for their livelihood seems almost unnecessarily cruel. Especially considering that in the past, those same programs could be purchased at a store for a flat rate and be used without any additional charges.

There are many other programs unaffiliated with Adobe that can be purchased through a flat fee or are even free to download and use. Krita, for instance, is an art program that is funded by donations and charges a flat rate to download their animation program.

Student Voices Hands-Free Driving Law

Ryan Belliveau

By **Dylan Quigley**

OBSERVER CONTRIBUTOR

Ryan Belliveau, a paralegal and Business graduate who is taking classes at MWCC for extra credit, has strong feelings about the new hands-free driving law.

Belliveau admitted that people on their phones while driving is a problem that needs to be dealt with, but he questions if this law is the right choice.

Belliveau pointed out that the law allows for more money to go to insurance companies and towards the state because more people will be getting tickets. Furthermore, it may be used as an excuse by police for search and seizure and/or racial profiling.

Belliveau also stated that this could lead to other driving restrictions, adding, "if you let the government take an inch, they will take a yard or a mile."

Kolby Ellis

By **Abbi Rameau**

OBSERVER CONTRIBUTOR

Kolby Ellis, an Interdisciplinary Studies major, supports the law completely. Ellis said that he has only been in the car with one person who has used their phone when driving, but "the stories are in the death count."

"You save a bit of time for the risk of your life," he elaborated. Ellis thinks that the repercussions for the law should be more severe, as even changing songs in your playlist can risk an accident.

Puzzle Corner

THE MOUNT OBSERVER
VOLUME 14, ISSUE 6,
March 4, 2020

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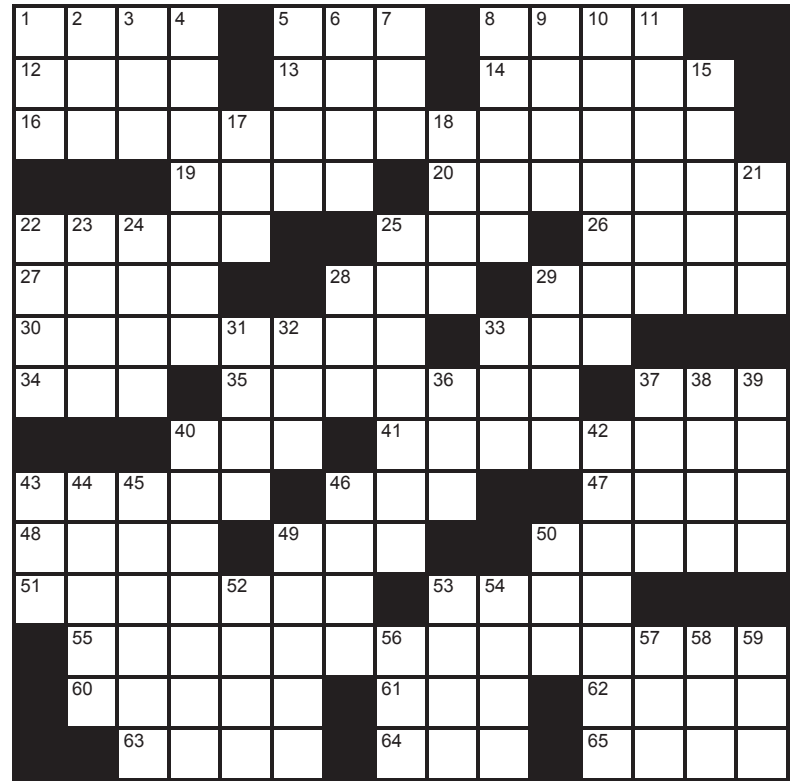
Printer:
 Graphic Developments Inc.

Meeting Times:
 Wednesdays
 12:30PM – 1:30PM

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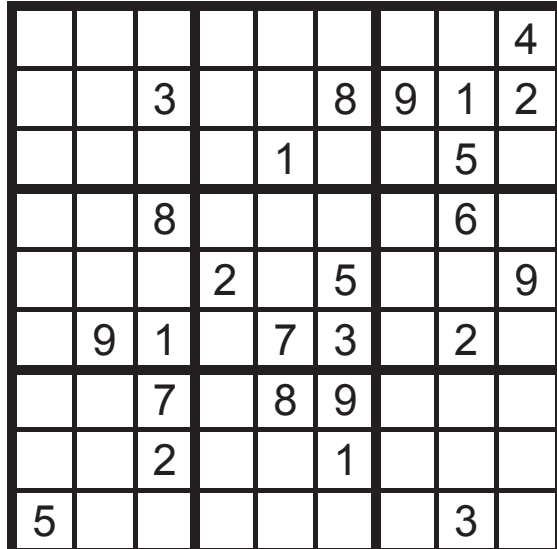
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| | | 25 Dying | 54 Golf aim |
| | | | 56 Body of water |
| | | | 57 Crete mountain |
| | | | 58 Lance |
| | | | 59 Fr. summer |



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To solve the Sudoku puzzle, each row, column and box must contain the numbers 1 to 9. There is only one possible solution.



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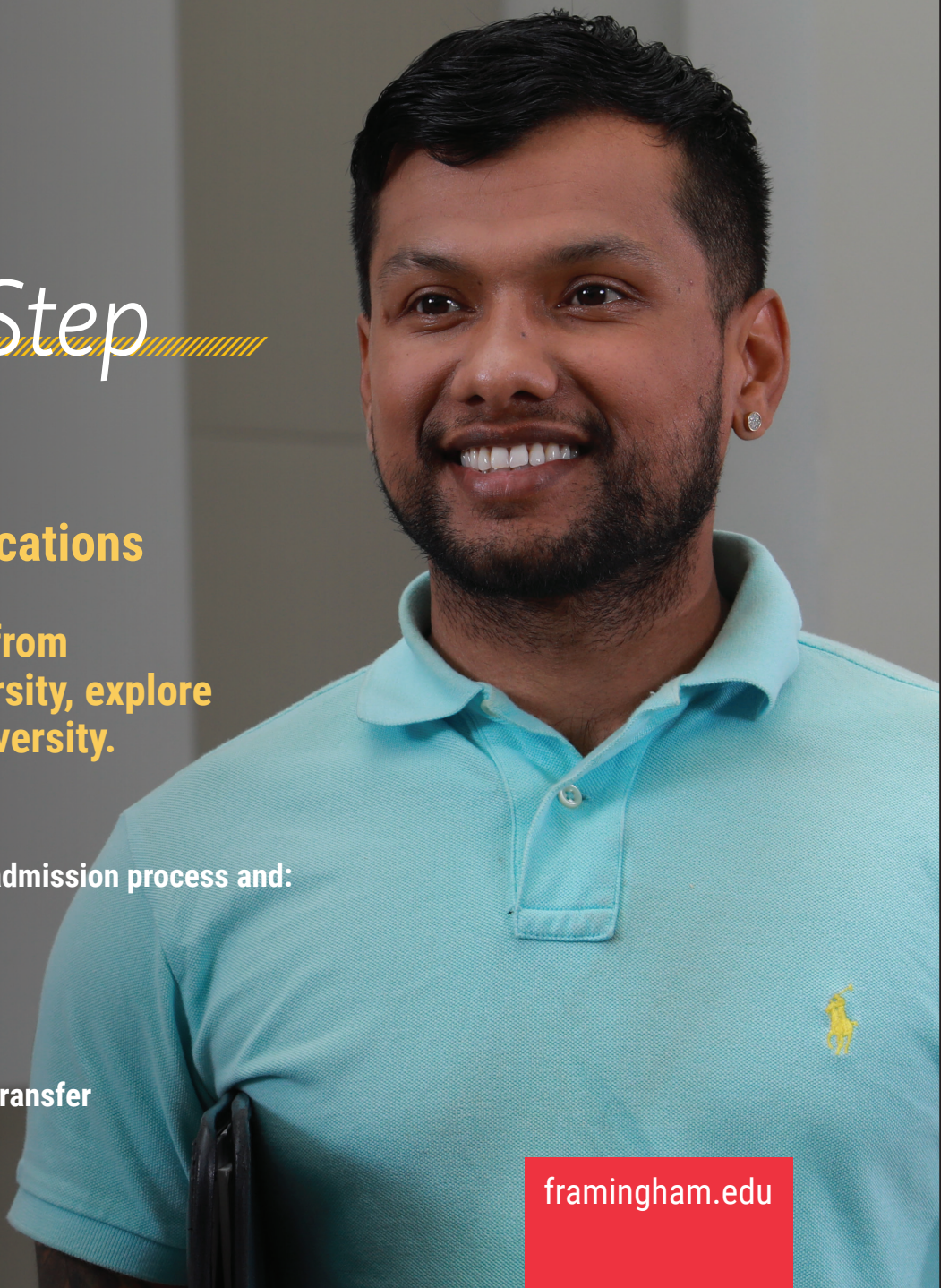
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