

Your
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PAYDIRT

Into the Fr...se
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SGA Meeting Rundown: 02/08/2022

- **The SGA is looking at evaluating events of clubs after they wrap up to foster more club-SGA interaction.**
- **A few clubs need to update to official (npe.nmt.edu) accounts to make transfers of club powers a lot easier. Contact Michael Voegerl if you need help if you are a club president that needs to set this up: michael.voegerl@nmt.edu**
- **Monday the 21st is a 'Students and Tech' day to show potential students campus life. At 11:40-1:34 there will be a Club Ad Resource Fair in Fidel. Contact Michael (email above) to get your club involved!**
- **On April 9th Student Affairs, Student Life, and the SGA are attempting to get 500 hours of community service done across the community. The plan is to have groups of 5 students working from 8am to sometime in the afternoon. There will be free lunch, dinner, and entertainment. Keep an eye out for more info!**
- **Due to the increase in the minimum wage and the decrease in student fees, the SGA is lacking about \$10,000 in funding. Luckily, due to saved money, this is not an emergency, but it may affect financial bills in the future.**
- **On the 22nd at 6pm there will be a City Council Meeting for Socorro. Students are encouraged to attend!**
- **We have been informed that the Fidel parking lot section that was recently renovated is being reserved for the administrative personnel that moved into West Hall from Brown.**

he is also thought to be based on the Greek god of love, Eros.

Much later down the road, closer to the middle ages, the day began to be associated with love. In France and England in the middle ages it was commonly believed that the beginning of the birds' mating season was February 14th, and this idea was included in a poem by Geoffrey Chaucer. He was the first to record the day as a day for romance in his poem "Parliament of Fowles."

Written valentines came onto the scene in the 1400's and the oldest known valentine still in existence was written in 1415 by Charles, Duke of Orleans. It is also believed that King Henry the Fifth hired writer John Lygate to write a valentine for Catherine of Valois.

Valentine's Day exploded in popularity in the 17th century across Great Britain, and by the middle of the 18th century, it was extremely commonplace for people of every social class to exchange gifts and tokens of affection with lovers and friends alike. Around 1900, ready-made cards for a more impersonal way of expressing one's feelings also started popping up due to the printing press. It is suspected that a decrease in the postage rates contributed to the increase in popularity of sending these valentines as well.

Americans began exchanging handmade valentine cards in the early 18th century, and pre-printed cards around 1840. The first mass produced valentines were made and distributed by a woman by the name of Esther Howland, the 'Mother of the Valentine.' She would elaborately decorate the cards with ribbons, laces, and colorful pictures.

From there, the transition from handmade and personal to capitalist holiday wasn't too large of a leap. Cadbury was the first chocolate company to decorate a box for Valentine's Day in 1868, named 'Fancy Boxes'. The idea grew in popularity almost immediately and began to be associated with the holiday soon after. Giving jewelry and other gifts in addition to cards and such began in the mid 20th century.

Just how money centric has the holiday become? Americans spend an average of \$142 dollars each Valentine's Day on gifts. A study in 2020 found that Gen X expects to spend the most on average at \$293 and Baby Boomers spend the least on average at \$55. In 2020, it was expected that nationwide Valentine's day spending would reach over \$27 billion dollars. It was also found that 1 in 10 people have gone into debt due to Valentine's Day.

Today, Valentine's Day has several different connotations and meanings to several people, and overall it is still a holiday to celebrate love of all kinds. From hanging out with friends, to going out on a date with one's partner, to a married couple renewing vows, this holiday has room for it all. And hey, if you don't want to celebrate Valentine's Day, Half Price Chocolate Day is just as valid a holiday.



Lupercalia to Valentine's Day

Written By: Emma Nourse

It may be difficult to believe there wasn't a time when visions of roses and heart shaped candy didn't dance around people's brains around the middle of February, but exist it did. While modern ideals for Valentine's Day revolve around flowers, diamonds, and candy, the Pagan festival of Lupercalia revolved around sacrifices and fertility.

While the exact origin of Lupercalia is unknown, there are records of it as early as 6th century BC. It is believed by scholars that the festival began as a way to honor the she-wolf that saved Romulus and Remus and to appease the Roman fertility goddess Lupercus. The actual festival was a bloody and crude affair, involving animal sacrifices of goats and a dog, the use of the skin of the goats as whips, and random coupling of women by drawing their names out of a jar. Many couples stayed together until the next year or got married due to this random coupling. As time went on, the public nakedness aspect of the festival went out of fashion, and the random whipping of women with animal skin morphed into just whipping women on the hands.

So where does St. Valentine play into this, and how does a bloody fertility ritual morph into a holiday surrounding love? There are many reports and legends of different St. Valentine's, but the most widely accepted one is as follows. In around 270 A.D., the Roman Emperor Claudius II (Claudius the Cruel) outlawed marriages and engagements as he believed that men did not want to join his army due to having families.

A priest by the name of Valentine thought this law was unjust and cruel and so he began marrying young couples in secret. Unfortunately, when what he was doing was discovered he was ordered to be put to death. Another commonly accepted reason for his death was that he refused to renounce his religion.

According to legends, the young couples he wed would visit him in jail and leave him flowers and notes, and he left one for a girl he formed a friendship with. The girl was supposedly his jailer's daughter and his note was signed 'From Your Valentine'. After his death, he was named a saint for his great service. It should be said there are at least three other St. Valentine's that have been recorded in the early martyrologies.

Now back to Lupercalia. It is believed by some that the date of Valentine's death may have become intermingled with Lupercalia, and in 476 AD, Pope Gelasius declared the end of the feast of Lupercalia and that February 14th would be St. Valentine's day. It is unlikely that this was done in an attempt to celebrate love though, rather to honor his sacrifice.

The origin of the colors that are associated with the holiday are thought to have originated with Lupercalia. Red because of the blood that was smeared on the Roman priests' foreheads, and white because of the milk used to clean it off. The depiction of Cupid we see on all of the cards is thought to have arisen during the Hellenistic period, and



Meet the Staff



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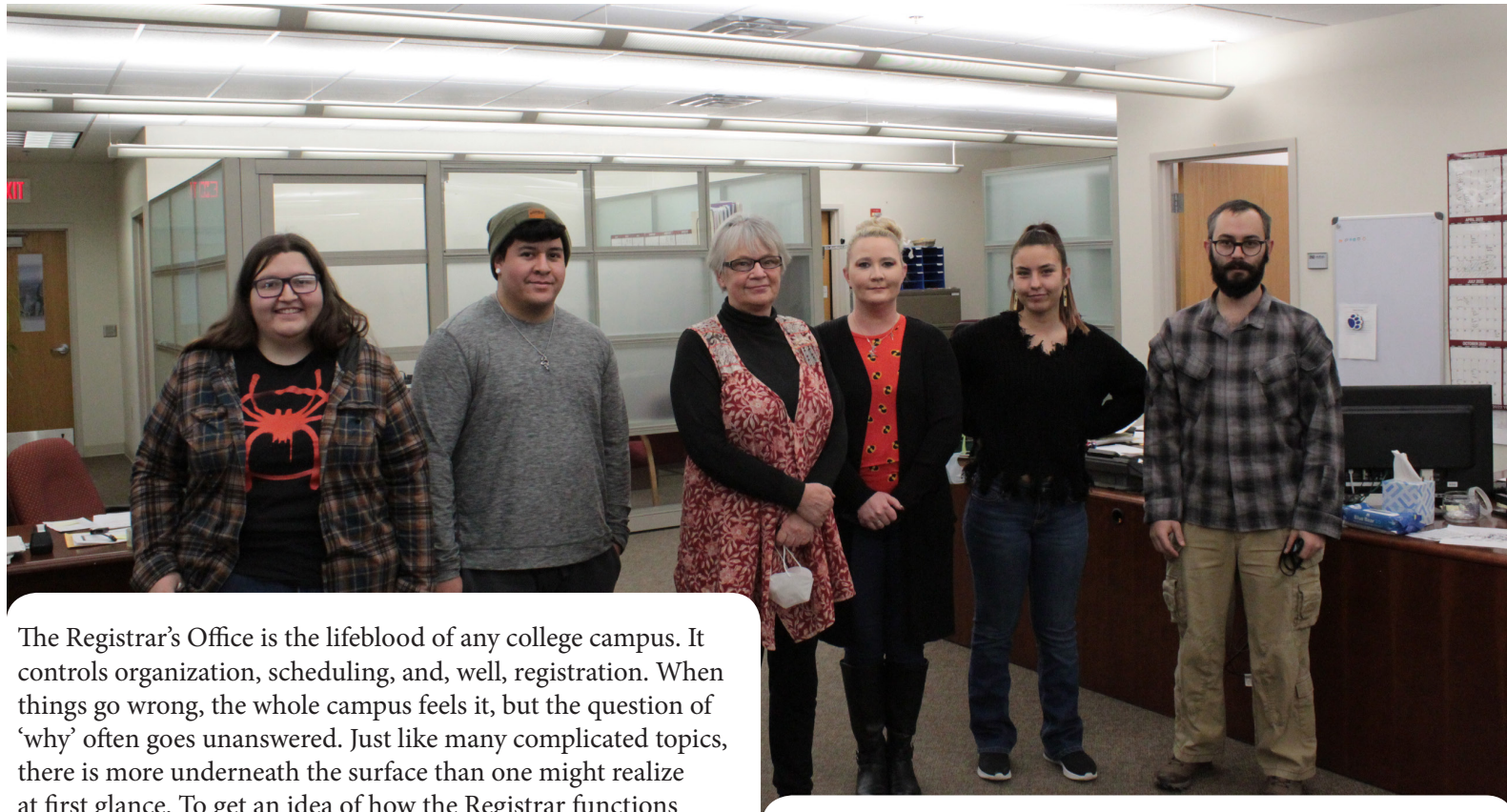
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The Registrar

Written By: Skyler Matteson



The Registrar's Office is the lifeblood of any college campus. It controls organization, scheduling, and, well, registration. When things go wrong, the whole campus feels it, but the question of 'why' often goes unanswered. Just like many complicated topics, there is more underneath the surface than one might realize at first glance. To get an idea of how the Registrar functions in hopes to uncover the metaphorical submerged iceberg, I interviewed Heather Juarez, the current Acting Registrar for the department.

Heather was born in California, but she grew up in Socorro and has lived here since. After graduating from high school, she was a stay-at-home mom for a while before coming to work at NMT. She has worked in the Registrar's office "pretty much [her] whole employment career; since August of 2011." She took online classes whilst working, and received a Bachelors in Organizational Leadership from Southern New Hampshire University. Although originally an Administrative Secretary, she is now, as of recent events, the Acting Registrar.

This leads us into the primary topic of our interview: the state of affairs for the Registrar as of late. We started at the beginning, and Heather ran me through the various events that had taken place: "We came back from Winter Break, and that's when the overturn started. Both Brittany Webb, Assistant Registrar, and James Scott, [Head] Registrar, left at the beginning of this semester. It was the first week of school at NMT, we were left in a period of heavy registration, [and] we were just rolling through it pretty much, trying to get through student inquiries as efficiently as possible.

We can only do so much with heavy processing time and having so many people leave. It [is] a drastic impact when you lose just one person in this office."

With both Brittany and James gone, their duties fell not only onto Heather's shoulders, but onto the shoulders of her staff: "You're picking up the responsibilities of both of those positions and you're placing that onto either yourself or other staff members that are already pretty burdened with their work. It's a big impact, [but] everybody tries to come together and help each other as much as [they] can. 'Just try to get through it until the heavy processing time has passed and we can formulate a new plan going forward and keep functioning.' That's all you can do in this office. It's pretty much the heart of the institution whether people are here or people are leaving."

"There's a number of working items in this office that each person is responsible for, and when they leave, you don't really know the full context of what they [did] until you work through their thought process and their work. It seems that work is being magically done, when really it's that person who has just run it so fluidly for so long, it seems like an automatic process, and not like someone is behind the scenes."

The Silence of the Clams

Written By: Ella Eleven

When's the last time you saw a clam?

Excluding the dinner table, it's probably been a while. Freshwater mussels (which are not, in fact, exactly clams) are bivalve mollusks who line the bottom of many a midwestern river. (For the record, mussels have rouger, more oblong shells than clams). They're modest filter feeders, processing organic particles in the water at a rate of 15 gallons a day. While not the most outwardly charming, they're quite exciting once you get to know them. You've probably never heard of the purple wartyback, tubercled blossom, or narrow catspaw. Sugarspoons and forkshells, now extinct, can sadly never again be the world's cutest utensils. Who named these mussels? Can we get together and discuss band names?

North America has the highest diversity of freshwater mussels in the world with over 300 native species, yet over three-quarters of them are endangered or at risk: 30 have already gone extinct over the last century. This is incredibly important because mussels are the filters of the natural world. They remove sediment, fecal bacteria, heavy metals, and even flame retardant and medicine which seep into the water; the presence of mussels indicates good water quality. Their bodies process tiny microscopic life into hearty portions of meat. Herons, otters, turtles, and raccoons all feed on mussels. You can too, though they're not as tasty as their saltwater counterparts.

A stream cobbled with mussels is a healthy stream. That's why scientists are especially concerned that more and more streams are lined, instead, with dead mussels.

In the 1900's, mussels were extensively harvested to make pearl buttons. Uncontrolled industry rolled through the waterways until we developed plastic substitutes in the 60's. Populations have recovered since then, though now mussel shells are exported as 'seed pearls'. By placing a bit of shell inside of an oyster, the oyster will naturally surround the irritant with calcium carbonate, creating a pearl. The pearl trade means even an organism as modest as the mussel has to be protected from poachers.

Many freshwater mussels depend on a certain kind of fish to reproduce. The mother mussel will extend a lure designed to mimic or attract a specific species, then pounce once they get close enough. Infant larvae are injected onto the fish's gills and hang on until they're mature enough to drop down and become an independent little shell. Some rely on only one fish species (which itself might be vulnerable to changes in habitat size and quality). By building dams, fish are cut off from entire areas. Some areas go dry. Others flood and stagnate, which prevents the current river-based species need. Colonies of mussels, devoid of babysitters, slowly decline.

Mussels are responsible for cleaning a lot of water, but once the quality gets bad enough, even they can't hold on (literally and metaphorically). Erosion can bury the rocks mussels need to attach to. Industrial, agricultural, and septic discharge accumulates ammonia and mercury. But not every species of mussel is dying, like we would expect with

severe pollution. It suggests something else: disease. Since not that much is known about healthy mussels, it's that much harder to see what makes them sick. A newly discovered virus along with a bacterial species are 'statistically implicated' in mussel deaths. We can't be sure without more research.

Great die-offs have been occurring for years. Thousands of open, pale shells lay shining on riverbeds. Considering all the factors at play, biologists are having a hard time preserving these delicate animals.

Extinction has a way of creeping up on niche species. Many go completely unnoticed. While more popular species get large campaigns supporting their preservation, there is no such hubbub for the pink mucket. Or the higgins eye pearl mussel, or the fat pocketbook, or the snuffbox. (Really, who's naming these things?).

However, legislation to protect wild areas, waterways, and endangered species has contributed to the recovery of certain populations. Biologists have begun to set up mussel nurseries beside fish hatcheries. Rare clusters of mussels settle in pans of sand. When their young mature, they'll be released back into the rivers, boosting wild populations. It can be very hard to get a male, a female, the right fish, and the right water all in one place. But one successful breeding can produce hundreds of offspring.

Individuals can also assist in this recovery process. One easy way for a single person to make an impact is to be vigilant about zebra mussels. They're a species native to Russia. Counterintuitive as it may seem, putting any old mussel into our rivers doesn't help. Quick-breeding and hardy, zebra mussels outcompete native species and have cascading effects on water quality and biodiversity. An excess of mussels can cause a process known as eutrophication where the water is so clear that algae and plants grow to such an extent that they suffocate animal life. Notify your local fish and wildlife agency if you notice any suspicious small, striped clams. Inspect and clean boats thoroughly. Don't put anything back in the water if you suspect contamination. (Luckily, at the moment, zebra mussels are more of a northeast problem).

A local mussel NM citizens can share some love for is the Texas hornshell. It's the last freshwater mussel in New Mexico. It once populated the Pecos and is now only found for a short stretch past Carlsbad. Habitat fragmentation and livestock grazing put the Texas hornshell on the endangered list in 2018. It's unlikely you'll see any of them, but that doesn't mean you can't proclaim your love for our very own New Mexico mussel.

It's because mussels are so undervalued that our support is so vital. In the coming years we're going to miss the species we didn't save. Although the mussel is not the prettiest creature, it's one of the most critical. But you never really know how important something is until it's gone.

Relax and Unwind

Pink Side of the Moon

Written By: M. Dixon

The Covid 19 pandemic has robbed a lot of young adults of many experiences. Sadly, live music has been one of them. The gathering, dancing, and community that comes with live performances are not suitable to prevent the spread of disease. But with more people getting vaccinated and as we hopefully move away from the worst of the pandemic, live music is returning and will be accessible to all of us again.

The show that Pink Freud put on as part of the performing arts series is part of this return. We are all experienced with recorded music, with the produced sound that is widely available on streaming platforms like Spotify, YouTube, band camp, etc, but live music is something entirely different. The culture of trading recordings has had a big hold on the music community for years. From jam-bands like the Grateful Dead giving one of a kind performances to legendary stories of rock stars like Jimi Hendrix going on long improvised solos and embellishing songs based on the crowd's mood, different recordings contained different experiences.

Bands like the Alan Parsons Project, Dream Theater, Radiohead, MGMT, and more were all touched by the influence of Pink Floyd and the culture of live music. Recently NMT's campus was graced with a Pink Floyd Tribute band, Pink Freud. To be able to experience firsthand some of the impact Floyd has on popular culture, with their messages of mental health, depression, PTSD, environmentalism, anti war sentiments, and so much more, Pink Freud brought up topics just as relevant now as they were over 50 years ago. People have argued that the same can be said about their studio work, but the albums are not the full experience.

Live music is so much more: it's the presence of the stage, the vibrations felt in your chest from the rhythm section, the melody ringing through the whole crowd, and the fellow members of the crowd all having come from different perspectives, all enjoying the music in different ways. No other band benefits from this feeling quite as much as Pink Floyd. Famous for their "hippie dippie bullshit," the environment of having other people around you, experiencing this live music is an incredible event; it's the way this music was meant to be experienced. Additionally, there is something to be said for the imperfection, the human element, the slight mistakes that give the music so much more character.

Pink Freud is a group of experienced and seasoned musicians that understand this power of live performance. Every performer has been part of and is a member of other impressive music groups such as Innastate, The Jir Project, Hello Dave, Rico!, Gertrude, The Core, and the Chuck Hawley Group. They have come together to perform the music of Pink Floyd, who is one of the most prolific and influential bands of the twentieth century. The songs and arrangements created by Pink Floyd are renowned for the talent that went into both their music and their performances. And this influence and inspiration is what leads to the creation of tribute bands, as a labor of love for the work that inspired them to make music.

I would like to thank the performing arts series for putting on the show at the Macey Center that hosted Pink Freud. Every week they have another performance that students can attend for free, and it's recommended that as many students as possible go. The more students attend, the more the school notices, and the bigger acts can grow.

Despite the setbacks, Heather and her team received support. She was able to hire 2 student workers, and she is currently planning to call on offers of help from various secretaries from other departments. This is slated for after registration is completed as training at the same time could be difficult. Heather also mentioned Elaine DeBrine, the Associate Dean of Student Success, and Titia Dons Barham, the Transfer and Articulations Specialist, both by name, for their assistance: "Everybody from the different offices stepped up to help us when we needed it. We made it through without having to bring in extra-extra help."

Considering that they left during the beginning of the semester, arguably when the Registrar is needed most, I asked Heather why Brittany and James might've withdrawn from their positions: "There's a lot of history as to why they left. The office atmosphere had become quite difficult and there were some tensions. But the ultimate reason as to why they resigned: it's unknown. Brittany would've given her reasons to James, and James would've given his to Academic Affairs. James did leave a letter to the faculty, but I'm not sure what was given to them either. [But] if the reasons aren't given to me, I take that as 'it's none of my business.'"

"I think a lot of [tension] came from the pressures working under the COVID situations. It made it difficult and stressful. Ultimately we're people and it affects us. It causes people to bicker at each other, and bickering sometimes leads to other things. You never know what a person is going through that day, and if you add a bit of stress, they may crack."

Regardless of what their reasonings might have been for leaving, the department still needs to function. I inquired as to how the office is recovering, and what plans might be in store for the future with the lack of a Head Registrar: "We are trying to make the best out of a bad situation, and in doing so the office has come together. We want to work as a team and build the office back up. It creates an opportunity to bring some changes you would have liked to have seen earlier or would like to see in general. Because we've already been colleagues for a couple years now, it's easy to talk about the change we would want to see rather than somebody coming in right at the moment to bring in more change." Without a Head Registrar, the office is akin to a crew without a captain; the department can still function, but the lack of definite leadership creates opportunities that were not apparent before.

As for the future, Heather said that the department is looking to improve response times, hire additional staff, and "move towards fully paperless processes, which is going to be a lot more efficient

in providing service to students." However, she is unsure of when a new Head Registrar will be hired: "I think [Academic Affairs] is just trying to sort through [everything] at the moment as well. They'll probably do a registrar search within the next 6 months, that's typically as long as it takes. This is my second time being an Acting Registrar in this office, and yes, we will be okay."

There was more to be discussed regarding the complications and conflicts surrounding the departures and the start of the semester, but Heather had this to say: "There's more behind the scenes that's not allowed to be expressed. You and I both would have liked to know more about the overall changes. I don't necessarily know what was going on underneath the surface. There were a lot of changes, and a lot of it was COVID, and it's a hard world to navigate through for anybody. [But] even if I had something I could point at, would that make anything better? So why do it?"

After speaking with the temporary head honcho, I talked to three of the Registrar's staff members: Augusta Edwards, Alicia Romero, and Lloyd Tosier to get their perspective of the situation. Augusta originally worked for the office in the Spring and Summer of 2021, but left to work for Residential Life from August to November. She stated: "We're definitely happy. From last Monday to now, everyone is actually willing to be here. It's looking pretty bright because this period of not having a Registrar will give us a time to build a backbone and then put our head on top to make the final adjustments."

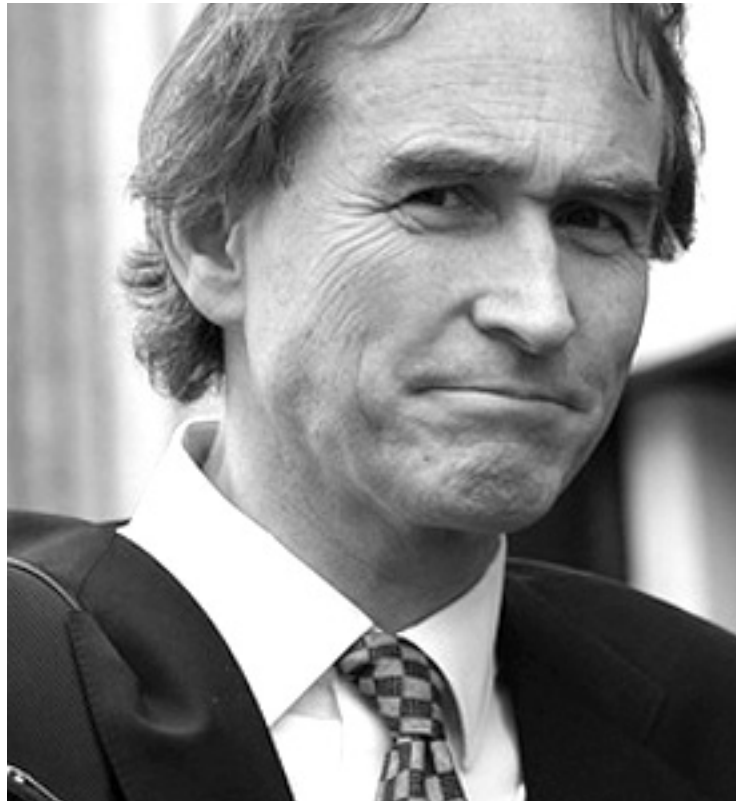
Alicia, a Socorro native that has worked in the office since November 2020, had this to say: "Losing a big person like [Brittany] or [James] - a lot of their workload falls on us. When it happened we had registration going on so we had [both] students and emails coming in. [But] in the long run, it helps us work. We learned a lot about each other and how we work as a team."

Lloyd was the newest hire, having started January 20th. He stated: "We were going full tilt with everything we could do when I got here. There was tangible stress because everything was out of array to some degree. Now as we are coming into the end of the 3rd week of school, things are on an even playing field; things are coming together so that we don't have future problems."

I hope that this small glimpse into the Registrar's office and their plights this semester's start has been useful to you. However, if you would like to find out more, as there is almost always more to learn, you can contact the Registrar at registrar@nmt.edu, or you can visit their office on the second floor of Fidel.

The Talk Formerly Given by David Healy

Written By: Emma Nourse



tend to focus so intensely on whether the drug does what it is supposed to, side effects can be ignored. As an example, he talked about the fact that SSRIs (selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors) can cause sexual dysfunction and lowered libido.

This is where the problems with the talk began. The lecture was held on Zoom with no password, making it extremely easy for hackers to come in and take over. Dr. Healy had just begun to finish talking about the differences and outcomes of Randomized Control Trials and Treatment Trials for drugs when a few people joined the zoom call and started hijacking the meeting.

They started by blaring a cover of Payphone done by Stable Ronaldo on YouTube and using the corresponding YouTube video as their camera. They also had another person use the annotate function to draw phallic objects and write phrases such as “Covid is a hoax” and “F*** You”. Yet another person copied and pasted into the chat box over 50 times an obscene, racist statement that I am not comfortable repeating or referencing. Due to the commotion, the meeting was ended by the host, Yulia Mikhailova, and restarted.

The hackers simply rejoined. It was impossible to tell who was doing what the second time around, but the racism and chaos perpetrated by the hackers continued. A few helpful guests started pointing out who the problem participants were, and they responded in two ways. One of the hackers appeared to be a young girl and she started trying to convince the host to make her a co-host. Another one accused the meeting of trying to kick them out due to racism.

It was at this point that the entire zoom lecture was scrapped and Dr. Healy recorded his lecture separately and uploaded it to his website. To Dr. Healy’s credit, he also tried to continue his lecture during the beginning of the hacker’s attack, and he has not thrown New Mexico Tech under the bus for the hackers.

According to scientist and author Dr. David Healy, science is a fundamental part of our daily lives and it is intimately interlinked with democracy and with love. This was supposed to be the message of his talk “Who’s Afraid of Science.” Unfortunately for the audience and for Dr. Healy, hackers had other plans.

The talk went smoothly at first. One of the interesting topics was the discussion of the fact and the acknowledgment by Goldman Sachs that curing diseases is not good for businesses. How can a company continue to make money if all of their patients are cured? For companies, it makes much more sense to treat the risk factors continuously and generate a steady stream of income.

Shortly after this, Dr. Healy transitioned to talking about how during a clinical trial of a drug, researchers

Get your clubs here!! Get some delicious NMT clubs.

Adventurer’s Guild

Boards, cards, and roleplaying for fans of tabletop gaming.

Lunabotics Club

A student-run design team to produce mining robots that can go on the moon! Cooooool.

Newman at NMT

Offers weekly meetings for the Catholic Campus Ministry.

QuASAR

For increasing awareness, pride, and security for the LGBTQ community in Socorro.

Stitch and Bitch

Twice a week meetings dedicated to any art involving a needle! Indulge in a new, soft hobby.

Smash Club

Sign on to Super Smash Bros tournaments to earn eternal bragging rights.

Society of Creative Anachronism

Preserve pre-seventeenth century skills and wear cool new (old) clothes.

Along With...

- American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics
- Astronomy Club
- American Association of University Women
- Alpha Sigma Kappa Sorority
- American Institute of Professional Geologists
- American Institute of Chemical Engineers
- American Indian Science and Engineering Society
- American Society of Civil Engineers
- American Society of Mechanical Engineers
- Bladesmithing
- Ballroom Dance
- Christian Challenge
- Cooney Mining Club
- Cybersecurity Club
- Chess Club
- Diversity and Equity in Computer Science
- Embedded Tech
- Engineers without Borders
- Environmental Engineering Club
- Gardening Club
- Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers
- Intervarsity Christian Fellowship
- Kappa Sigma Fraternity
- Materials Club
- Physics Club
- Pre Med Club
- Sci-fi Movie Watching
- Socorro Search and Rescue
- Society for Technical Communications
- Society of Women Engineers
- Society of Automotive Engineers
- Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers
- Society of Allied Weight Engineers
- Turning Points USA
- Tri Beta Biology Club
- Tech Amateur Radio Association
- Tea Club
- Waffle Club

Structural Art and the Beauty of Efficiency

Written By: M. Dixon



Fun fact: if you walk into a civil engineer's office and ask them to talk about bridges, they are happy to do so, especially Dr. Morris. "Everyone should take a class on bridges, they're really cool." When I walked into Dr. Morris's office to ask if she would be interested in helping me with an article on bridges, she was more than happy; she even suggested the main topic of this article, Structural Art. "Structural art is the idea that when engineers are given complete freedom to make the best possible thing they can it is a piece of art."

When talking about infrastructure it's important to note that functionality is the most critical aspect; it doesn't matter how nice an overpass looks if it isn't structurally sound. But this functionality in itself can be considered art. There are several aspects that go into deciding whether or not a structure is art. "[In structural art] there's the three E's, Efficiency, Economy, and Elegance. According to this idea, if a structure archives all these things, it's art," as described by Dr. Morris.

Expanding upon this definition: Efficiency refers to the functionality of the structure. This involves factors like how resilient the structure is, its general performance in relation to its peers, and how it has improved the general area since its implantation. The Economic factor is based on the monetary impact that the building has. There's many ways for money to factor into this: the outright cost of construction, the value that the structure adds to

the economy, the maintenance costs, etc. Elegance in this context is strangely the opposite of how we usually think of it. Instead of beauty for the sake of beauty, elegance here refers to the structure visually expressing the forces it sustains in its visual design. Think the cables on a suspension bridge or the bricks of the Paris sewers.

When asked what some examples of this are on campus, Dr. Morris responded: "I like to tell my students to go and look at that sky bridge between Jones and Jones Annex, it's not a perfect example but it has a lot of the elements we look for."

Let's look at this bridge from the perspective of structural art. For Efficiency the sky bridge scores full points, it is a direct path between the two buildings and has plenty of room for students to walk on. As for Economy, the bridge is made of steel and concrete, relatively common and cheap materials. Additionally the bridge saves a bit of time, allowing direct access between the two buildings. While a few minutes here and there may not seem big, it can quickly add up over a semester. Lastly there's Elegance, and I will let Dr. Morris explain this one: "The reason I like to suggest my students take a look at the sky bridge is because it's very easy to see where all the forces are going."

Dr. Morris recommends doing additional research into Structural Art if you have any interest in architecture: "It's a good general interest subject, in fact I think it would be a cool class." While it's unlikely, keep an eye out for such a class from the civil engineering department. But in lieu of this, you can take a look at the different buildings on campus and around town. For example, the bridge over the duck pond is another great structure to analyze. Additionally, general infrastructure like the onramp onto the interstate or the drainage canals also reflect elements of structural art.

"I'm probably biased, but this stuff is really cool. Like, everyone understands we need bridges, that's why they make a great metaphor."

This incident is not an isolated one; across the country, several colleges and universities have been hit by occurrences of 'Zoom Bombing'. In fact, it got bad enough in early April 2020 that the FBI had to issue a statement advising people on how to stay safe. Zoom also released enhancements to help with the privacy and security of the platform. These enhancements included: a higher level of encryption, "report a user" function, having a password, limited screen sharing, and a waiting room as default meeting settings.

These measures have not prevented these occurrences from happening though, and while Zoom has continued to try and improve security, new issues continue to pop up. In early February, a town hall for the Greater Houston Black Chamber of Commerce was also hacked by people who spewed vicious racial slurs and displayed pornographic imagery. While they were able to regain control of the meeting in the end, it was still a horrific few minutes.

Another attack happened during a scheduled presentation by the Buffalo County Department of Health and Human Services. The hackers took over the presentation and overrode the host's controls completely. They then began to engage in acts of nudity and deface the slideshow.

While no one is sure, both in Dr. Healy's or the Black Chamber of Commerce's case, how the hackers got in, in the vast majority of cases there is a simple answer: they had the password. In a study done in September of 2020, researchers found that most of the 'Zoom Bombing' is done by people who have legitimate access to the zoom meetings (people who have access to the passwords such as high school/college students) as opposed to people who brute force their way into them.

Despite the study's findings, brute forcing still does happen. In August, Zoom reached an \$85 million dollar class-action lawsuit regarding the privacy of its users

and 'Zoom Bombing'. The lawsuit claimed that Zoom violated its users' privacy by selling their data to third-party companies and allowing the hacking to take place. In addition to the money, Zoom also had to agree to bolster its security measures.

However, as we can see by what happened to Dr. Healy and by the numerous other 'bombings' that have occurred over the past few years we have been online, the attacks haven't stopped even with the continuous improvements to security. Going back to the study mentioned earlier, they posed a potential solution: individual join links for each participant. Using this method, 'Bombings' caused by insiders giving their information to attackers can be mitigated as only one person could join per link and unauthorized users could not. Other methods of avoiding a potential 'Bombing' are to avoid posting meeting links in public places, vet each participant, and limit the amount of privileges participants have.

Unfortunately for Dr. Healy, this advice is too little too late to save his talk. The lecture and slideshow are available on his website, and he is planning to post a prerecorded Q&A session at some point. The presentation and the prerecorded video are under the blog post "Who is Afraid of Science." Here's hoping the rest of the online lectures this semester are hacker-free.

Into the Furrniverse

Written By: M. Dixon

Fur-ry /'ferē/
adjective

covered with fur.

Noun - INFORMAL

an enthusiast for animal characters with human characteristics, in particular a person who dresses up in costume as such a character or uses one as an avatar online.

- Definitions from Oxford Languages

When I first started this article, I didn't know much about the Furry community, much less the one here on campus. I sought out a lot of help in order to get good information for this article, and I'd like to thank those people. Through the journey of making this piece I've found that if you look at a community objectively, as opposed to making fun of them outright, you can see that they are just normal people.

One thing that I've been asked by every member of the furry community I've talked to, on and off-campus, is to be as truthful and unbiased as possible. The best way I can do this is to put aside all and any prior knowledge from before doing the proper research into this article, and I'd like to ask you, the reader, to do the same.

It's no secret that furrries have garnered a bad reputation. From online horror stories, sensationalized news reports, hearsay, and anecdotes, all have led to the generally negative opinion that many people have of the community. But is this a fair and reasonable assessment of this community, or is this an example of the media cycle latching onto the worst parts of a community in order to drive sales?

Several of the people I interviewed for this article politely asked to stay anonymous due to the stigma and cultural discourse that surrounds the community. One person had stated quite bluntly: "Don't put my name anywhere near this, employers are assholes, and they'll snuff me, it happens all the time." This was a common thread through the writing of this article; people wanted to stay anonymous for fear of the repercussions of being associated with the furry community.

In the broadest sense, a furry or member of the furry community is a person that likes anthropomorphic characters, usually animals. An anthropomorphic animal is any animal that shows human-like features, this can include walking on two legs or talking. Anything more than this is optional and isn't necessary to be included in the community; not all furrries have fursonas (an original character that they role play as), wear fursuits (an elaborate cosplay of the person's original character), or engage in the fandom on any level more than liking characters that combine human and animal characteristics. One interviewee stated "Furrries aren't an inherently sexual group but are portrayed as such [in the media]" It has been pointed out that the grouping of all of these individuals and then prescribing to them all the negative connotations of the label "furry" is reminiscent of how groups have been oppressed and silenced in the past. This cultural narrative of "furry" therefore "degenerate" is not an uncommon one, and I've encountered it many times on campus.

What does this mean for Tech? In talking to the members of the community on campus, they have expressed that there is a high level of acceptance of the furry community here; there is an openness to where members of the community have been able to meet each other casually and feel comfortable to do so.

A manifestation of this acceptance is the new Discord server in the school's directory for the furry community on campus. The creator of this server is Roddy Mayes, a student here at Tech: "I noticed there were a lot of furrries and I was curious to see how many of us there are." When



asked if he has had any negative experiences with being part of the community on campus, he said "no, not really, everyone here has been really cool."

This shows a high level of on campus acceptance of the community, but this is far from reflective of a professional setting. There have been many examples of various corporations, from Disney to Amazon, letting go and refusing to hire people because of their association with the furry community. They often give various reasons and explanations but it generally appears to be an attempt to distance the brand from a community that is not perceived in the best light.

One of the people I interviewed had this to say on the subject: "Being furry doesn't seem like it would have an impact on employability. It sure has crossed worlds and most furrries usually use aliases and emails with aliases in order to cover their tracks." They asked to remain anonymous and explained that they felt association

with this article could lead to being perceived as less employable. "The CSI [episode] Fur and Loathing was the first time [the American public] saw furrries and it portrayed it in a BDSM club. Which isn't exactly the picture of a stellar employee you would like to have. Its not uncommon for sexual based communitities to be targetted by employers."

There is no furry community on campus, there are members of the furry community. And the furry community itself is a group of people who have a common interest. Coming into this article I expected to find the sensationalism and horror stories that I've read and heard, but what I've found is more reminiscent of the fandoms of metal music or science fiction: people who are simply passionate about a niche topic.