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Data journalist Betsy Ladyzhets discusses data journalism in the COVID era

By: By Kyle Ross and Stacey Francia- Contributing Writer and Editor-in-Chief

Iona recently hosted a discussion with data journalist Betsy Ladyzhets, who has been analyzing gaps in data and misinformation about the pandemic that have occurred over the past year.

Ladyzhets founded the COVID-19 Data Dispatch (CDD), a private publication whose sole intent is to inform Americans on COVID data and important news on the current pandemic. According to Ladyzhets, the main goal of the CDD is to share information and resources and broadly make data available. At the event, Ladyzhets described her day-to-day activities and the various other organizations that the COVID-19 Data Dispatch works with.

The CDD’s website is used as both a bulletin and forum. It provides visitors with information on hospitalization, antigens and vaccination data for the common person. The website also shares data amongst journalists, which allows them to combine the storytelling of journalism with facts and data backed by research from experts.

During the discussion, Ladyzhets described her process of communicating findings to the public. First, she gets her research either from the field or from interviewing experts. Then she cleans the information, which means she analyzes what she found and does more investigating on this information, in short, double checking her sources. For example, she collected research on populations that are vulnerable to COVID-19 from public health sources including the Centers for Disease Control and obtained solicited advice from the National Association of Social Workers. She took the information she gathered to clean, analyze, organize and pull together data on factors that make individuals vulnerable to COVID-19 such as health and socioeconomic factors, among others. Her research determined 27 factors that can make individuals vulnerable to COVID-19.



PHOTO FROM COVID19DATADISPATCH.SUBSTACK.COM
Ladyzhets has documented data from across the country since the beginning of the pandemic through the COVID-19 Data Dispatch.

Ladyzhets also discussed the COVID Tracking Project, which collected and published COVID-19 testing data in the U.S. and its territories up until March 7. The main cause of this project was to fill in the gaps of information that the CDC had left unfilled due to administrative problems or problems with local and state governments in the past year. While the COVID Tracking Project has since slowed down with the new administration putting out more data about infections, testing and vaccination, the New York-based organization is still accepting volunteers to their cause.

Further, Ladyzhets discussed how there are common settings where COVID-19 may spread more rapidly, such as in factories and food processing facilities. People in these areas are clustered together and may not always be wearing the proper gear or taking proper hygienic precautions.

One organization Ladyzhets highlighted was the Marshall Project, a group that works with the COVID-19 Data Dispatch and focuses on the criminal justice system in the United States. It hosts an investigative project that collects data on COVID-19 infections in state and federal prisons. Ladyzhets also mentioned a more heartfelt organization that has popped up during the pandemic, Missing Them. Missing Them is a New York City project that wishes to honor those who have succumbed to the virus. In New York alone there have been 35,000 fatalities commemorated by Missing Them.

Ladyzhets explained that there will always be people doubting the information coming out about the pandemic. However, people need to show their work, their resources and the experts to support the information they are putting out there. The CDD continues to publish issues every week.

Outside Iona

By: Jocelyn Arroyo-Ariza Assistant News Editor

Throughout our hectic student lives, we should always remain aware of what is happening around us. In this column, I find the most significant things going on in the world and provide you with a small blurb of all the important details. Here are some of the major events that have been happening since last issue of The Ionian:

General coronavirus update

Currently, India is being devastated by a second wave of the COVID-19 virus. The weaknesses of the fragile health care system have been exacerbated with millions affected at an alarming rate. CNN cites that India has only 2% of the population vaccinated and accounts for a third of the world’s recent cases.

Critics claim that Prime Minister Narendra Modi could have prevented the crisis, but failed to respond reasonably by taking immediate action. Many argue that the Prime Minister was not only unprepared for the second wave but encouraged mass gatherings. Modi protested against a second national lockdown and succeeded despite the people’s concerns. Instead, he has encouraged the notion of “micro containment zones,” where each state has jurisdiction in its implementation.

Others assert the variant B.1.617 is accountable for the gravity of the crisis. Dubbed the “double mutant” according to the New York Times, this variant contains “two genetic mutations found in other difficult-to-control variants.” However, there is not enough evidence to definitively prove that the variant is the only contributing factor.

Information from CNN and The New York Times

See **OUTSIDE**
on Page 2

OUTSIDE

FROM PAGE 1

Ma’Khia Bryant

The funeral of Ma’Khia Bryant was held last Friday as family and friends lamented the death of the sixteen-year-old. Those who knew Bryant remember her as a smart girl, who was capable of achieving her dreams. Sadly, she will never get that chance as she was killed in Columbus, Ohio by Officer Nicholas Reardon who shot her after he saw her swinging a knife at a woman.

Bryant’s case brought attention to treatment of Black children in Ohio’s foster care system. In March, Bryant’s fifteen-year-old sister called the police earlier to report that she was not happy with her foster family. The police informed her that they could not remove her from the home. After she said that she would kill someone in the home, she was taken to the hospital for an evaluation. This was only one of many recorded incidents concerning the foster family.

Bryant’s family was presented with an honorary high school diploma by the daughter’s principal. Rep. Joyce Beatty and Breonna Taylor’s mother was also in attendance. The service ended with a rendition of “When It’s All Over” by Patti LaBelle.

Information from The Washington Post and Yahoo News.

Mario Gonzalez

On April 19, callers reported that Mario Gonzalez was standing alone and talking to himself in Alameda, California. They described his behavior as he appeared to be breaking security tags off of two bottles of alcohol in a small park in a residential area.

His family contends that Gonzalez died after he was pinned down to the ground for a least five minutes by the police. He was unarmed with apparently only a comb in his possession. According to their lawyer, he was never told why he was being arrested. Body cam footage released on Tuesday displays the officers placing their arms and knees on Gonzalez’s back to keep him restrained.

The case is under investigation with all three officers present at the incident placed on administrative leave.

Information from NPR and Scopes/The Associated Press.

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A farewell to Seniors

By: Aliyah Rodriguez *Features & Lifestyle Editor*



PHOTO FROM PEXELS.COM

Seniors are looking forward to celebrating their academic success at their graduation ceremony.

With graduation just around the corner, seniors are making their last-minute dashes to complete assignments, send out job applications and make plans for their special day. Iona College has been a second home to seniors for the past four years, and so it might be a little hard to say goodbye. Take a trip down memory lane with some of The Ionian’s seniors as they reflect on their four years at Iona.

Senior and Editor-in-Chief Stacey Franciamore says her time with The Ionian was one of the most rewarding experiences of her four years here.

“Not only am I going to miss my amazing professors and the wonderful classes I took with them, but I’m going to miss The Ionian. Some of my best moments at Iona were made in The Ionian office, especially during deadline,” Franciamore said. “It helped me find my passion and taught me that if you do what you love, at the end of the day you’ll always be happy and have wonderful, enriching experiences to look back on.”

Senior and Sports Editor Matthew Chaves will

miss those pre-pandemic times spent on campus with friends.

“I’m really going to miss the times of hanging out on campus at around 12 a.m. Just hanging out with friends down in the Unity Lounge or getting the paper done into the wee hours of the night in The Ionian office,” Chaves said. “On-campus life is truly unique and it’s a highlight in my life. Take advantage of the time you have here everyone! Most likely, it’ll be the only time you’ll be able to experience it.”

Senior and Social Media Manager Frances Hoey wouldn’t be who she is without her experiences at Iona.

“My time at Iona College has been one filled with growth and opportunity that I will forever be thankful for. All of the experiences, both good and bad, have prepared me to enter the real world confidently, and certainly have shaped me into the person I am today,” Hoey said. “Thank you to the best of the math, music and education departments for seeing me to my full potential.”

Senior and Advertising Manager Ciara Serpa is grateful for all the student organizations on campus that welcomed her.

“Iona has given me so much more than just a traditional education. It has taught growth, leadership and the importance of self-love. I’d like to thank my professors and my advisors who have all given me extra nuggets of wisdom, as well as the professional staff for their support and for pushing me out of my comfort zone as a student leader,” Serpa said. “I’d also like to thank my organizations: The Ionian, Finance Club and the National Society of Leadership and Success (NSLS) for being the first to welcome me and provide me with a safe space to express myself.”

The past year has been hectic, and the future may be uncertain for many students, but the soon-to-be graduates of Iona College can look forward to the adventures ahead of them as they take what they’ve learned from the school and move the world.

Gael chat: Summer plans

By: Tiffany Persaud *Assistant Features & Lifestyle Editor*

The pandemic caused students to miss out on last summer’s antics, so they’re not letting anything hold them back from having fun this summer. Making memories with our loved ones was taken for granted in the summer of 2020. With over 7 million New Yorkers vaccinated, Gaels are hoping for a comeback summer.

Iona’s soon-to-be graduates are excited for a summer filled with either their first ‘grown-up’ job or internship, or wailing with uncertainty about what will come next.

Senior Azka Ghaffar is feeling bitter-sweet as she is preparing to graduate Iona and celebrate her hard work at Iona with her family. Before she begins working in July, Ghaffar intends to indulge in the beauty of Manhattan.

“I personally feel that even though I have been living in New York for a long time, I never really visited most places in New York City,” Ghaffar said. “... and I definitely want to rest so I’ll be ready to start fresh with my job.”

Some students may have even nailed their dream job!

Senior Ivianni Castillo will also begin working in July as a cyber security analyst at Deloitte, a brand providing financial services to independent firms in New York City.

“I am really excited to start this position as this is exactly what I wanted to do after graduation,” Castillo said. “Before my job begins, I will also be going on a trip to Disney World with my friends as a last hoorah.”

Sophomore Katherine Ivanchenko is delighted to remain on campus for the summer, researching



PHOTO FROM @MSTARACARTER ON INSTAGRAM

Lifeguarding is a common summer job for college students, as it fits in with their summer break.

online for Project Symphony, a biophysics project.

“I will also be taking Physics 2 during the summer III session at Iona,” said Ivanchenko. “I am planning a for beach trip with a friend in August when I’m done with school!”

As pools and beaches reopen, it’s necessary to provide safety precautions, such as hiring trained lifeguards to prevent drowning and other water-related dangers.

“Learning and experiencing what it takes to be an efficient and understanding [lifeguard] manager is crucial for my future career,” said Newman. “While working, I intend to work on my tan and hope that anyone who cannot swim, uses a floaty at least.”

Even though most Gaels are working or continuing their studies this summer, relaxation should find its way into everyone’s daily lives. It doesn’t take a doctor to affirm that using brain activity on little sleep and nourishment is a disaster waiting to happen. Moreover, the summer’s heat dehydrates your body, so invest in a reusable water bottle to sip on throughout the day.

Being fully vaccinated grants safer travel, so an economic boom is on the forefront as tourists are likely to visit New York City again. Restaurants, hotels, public services, entertainment and retail are patiently waiting for May 17th when capacity restrictions and curfews will be lifted according to Governor Cuomo.

Skinny dipping in crystal-blue Caribbean beaches may sound nice, but you’ll surely miss the city that never sleeps.

Where you can volunteer this summer in Westchester

By: Tiffany Persaud

Assistant Features & Lifestyle Editor



PHOTO FROM @ASPCA ON INSTAGRAM

ASPCA volunteer saves three kittens from the wildfires in Northern California.

Bettering our society is a collective effort. Most worldly crises are caused by people, so everyone should be dedicating their time and money to humanitarian causes if they have the means to do so.

During the summer break is when most students dedicate their time to charitable causes and volunteer work. Whether it be for philanthropic or referral reasons, students should volunteer within a field they genuinely enjoy.

There are countless opportunities abroad, but most college students might not be able to afford room and board, so they seek volunteer work within their community.

New York is known for being a state of opportunity but behind the façade is a homeless population of over 90,000 people..

Feeding Westchester, a member of Feeding America, is a food bank in Elmsford, New York that Westchester residents can rely on for fresh produce, meat and all other groceries. Although they are not accepting volunteers at their main location due to COVID-19, there are still off-site and at-home projects you can help with.

Visit <https://feedingwestchester.org/> to sign up.

People are not the only beings who need care and love. What about the fluffy kittens and wide-eyed puppies waiting to be adopted?

Humane Society of Westchester, Mt. Vernon Animal Shelter and Paws Crossed Animal Rescue are all superb animal shelters that are always in seek of volunteers to feed, clean and comfort the animals who've been abandoned or given in.

For those who love children, Maria Fareri Children's Hospital in Valhalla, New York and GiGi's Playhouse, a Down syndrome achievement center in Ardsley, New York are childcare centered. They heavily rely on volunteers to keep their non-profit programs afloat to progress the health, well-being and learning of the children who visit them.

Visit: <https://www.mariafarerichildrens.org/volunteerhome> or <https://gigisplayhouse.org/volunteer/>

The Westchester Women's Agenda, an anti-racism, pro-feminism organization, works to ensure that the social and economic climate in Westchester County offers women equal access to opportunity. Volunteers are mostly needed for social media marketing and content creating.

Visit: <https://wwagenda.org/>

volunteer-opportunities/

Besides making local change that can develop into larger-scale change, students themselves also benefit from volunteer work. Developing social skills, making emotional connections and learning to work with others will help students prepare for a job setting.

Your mental health is also positively affected through volunteer work, especially in times of a pandemic when in-person contact is limited. According to the CDC, more than a third of Americans reported feeling symptoms of anxiety and depression in 2020. Volunteering is intrinsically rewarding, so relief of anxiety, depression or loneliness may be possible if you dedicate some time to help those in need.

Do not feel as if you are not doing enough if you follow in a small volunteer trek. Anything helps – whether it be a random act of kindness, donating clothes or creating your own fundraiser, e.g. having a bake sale and donating the profits. They are all as fundamentally equal as large-scale volunteer work.

Five ways to make money from home

By: Aliyah Rodriguez

Features & Lifestyle Editor

Summer is normally an easy time for college students to find seasonal work, but that might not be the case this year since so many people are struggling to find employment. The pandemic has changed the way people think about employment, and many people would prefer to work from home. With hopes of having a great summer with friends, students may be looking for ways to make some quick cash. Here are some ways to make money from home this summer:

1. Selling clothes online

If you have lightly used or untouched clothes taking up space in your room, consider selling them on websites like Depop, tredUp or Poshmark. Sustainable fashion is on the rise and people are growing to prefer this online version of thrifting over going into fast fashion stores and shopping the latest trends. If your clothes still have the tags on them, you could get away with selling them for full price. Selling your clothing online also means that you could make a couple bucks every time you want to get rid of old clothes.

2. Selling household items online

If you have something in your house that you aren't using anymore or furniture that you want to get rid of – maybe it's a gaming console, a bedside table, a coffee table or a lamp – consider selling it on eBay or Facebook Marketplace. With the rise of people getting into Do-It-Yourself (DIY) projects during quarantine, it should be easy to sell old furniture to people looking to bring a little personality to their homes.

3. Become a freelance transcriber

Transcriptions are necessary for people with disabilities to listen to audios online – but not every website offers it. With an uptick in YouTube channels and podcasts, you might be able to find work as a freelance transcriber. If there's one thing college students do a lot of, it's typing. As a college student, you're probably most qualified to type quickly and efficiently, so this job may be perfect for you.

4. Start your own small business

During the pandemic, people took up hobbies that could easily be monetized such as making lip glosses, resin art, jewelry, sewing and other small crafts. If you're a crafty person, this might be the route for you. You can create your own website to sell your crafts, create an Etsy account or even sell on your social media platforms like Instagram and Facebook.

5. Tutor

You may have heard it on the news or read articles talking about the negative impact online learning has had on children's information retention. If online learning was hard for college students, you could only image how hard it was for grade-school children to learn online. A lot of parents are hoping to get their children's education back on track this summer, providing a great opportunity for college students to make some extra money. With Zoom still at our fingertips, arranging safe tutoring sessions should be a breeze.

If you're looking for options to keep you paid on a part-time basis, or just a side hustle, then these jobs are definitely for you. Don't limit yourself – the world is changing and there's always an opportunity to make money creatively.



PHOTO FROM PEXELS.COM

Even the smallest of hobbies, such as crafting, can become an at-home business.

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“When are you getting a ‘real’ job?”

By: Ciara Serpa *Advertising Manager*

Anyone who has attended college is familiar with the popular question, “So, when are you getting a real job?” Most of us tend to feel that no matter what we accomplish during our academic career or how noble our ambitions are, our family, friends and even professors only care about when we will become “real” adults. We also recognize that when they refer to a real job, they mean a traditional 9-5 position, preferably behind a desk or crunching six-figure numbers. What they fail to understand is that all employment, research, graduate school, retail and even consulting is all valid work.

Because of this lack of understanding, it is important for us as students to validate ourselves and to be able to express that to others when they ask what our future holds. Our present and past accomplishments are just as, if not more, important as our future ones. Your Honors thesis, years-long research project, capstone paper and presentation at Scholar’s Day are all proof that even if you don’t immediately find work after undergrad, you will still prevail and can have an impressive future.

If you, like countless others, are afraid of what the future holds, then consider other options such as professional tutoring, working on other certifications from reputable institutions and exploring other career paths. You may find more comfort in a position like consulting or contracting, which offers flexibility and the ability to travel. Tutoring in a subject that you excel at can remind you why you have a passion for that subject in the first place. I tutor various students (mostly reading comprehension in elementary and middle school students) and can’t even describe the feeling I get when my students are excited to read our book or complete our weekly exercises. Even



SERPA

parents are excited to see the change and confidence that their children feel after working with a tutor. Another option that you may have already considered is graduate school. Now, it is important to note that this is obviously easier said than done and can pose major financial hurdles for students. However, you can always complete this in the future and research your best options for financing. If you feel that you need more training or education or have a passion for your subject matter, then consider pursuing a master’s or doctoral degree. Many PhD programs can be completed without a master’s (as you obtain the necessary credits along the way) and are fully financed by the institution. This is also a valid career path! We wouldn’t be able to obtain our own degrees without our professors and advisors, many of whom have PhDs or a master’s degree. You may be the next professor, advisor or even dean of a university. It can be helpful to analyze every career that you interact with daily and see if they fit your current objectives: barista at a coffee shop, manager at a Target, bank teller and many more. Remember, very few people become millionaires right out of undergrad, and everyone must start somewhere. No one is “too good” for a job, because we all rely on those jobs in some aspect of our lives. Most importantly, follow your passions and what your heart tells you to do because if you work in a job you love, you’ll never work a day in your life.

Interested in contacting The Ionian’s Ciara Serpa? Email cserpa1@guels.iona.edu.

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QUESTIONS

‘Shadow and Bone’ is strong television adaptation of fantasy novel series

By: Katherine Daly *Staff Writer*

If you’re looking for the newest fantasy series to watch, look no further. Netflix definitely has your back with “Shadow and Bone,” a new show with eight episodes filled with tons of action, magic and drama.

“Shadow and Bone” is a loose adaptation of Leigh Bardugo’s “Grishaverse” series, that will jump right from the pages to the screen. Despite the story having a few tweaks made to it, the show still remains faithful to fans of the series. With an endearing group of characters brought to life by decent casting and stunning visuals, “Shadow and Bone” is definitely worth the time.

At the center, we follow a young soldier named Alina Starkov (Jessie Mei Li). Her one mission is to survive and stay close to her best friend Mal (Archie Renaux). Alina also hides secrets that will put her on the path of con artists Kaz (Freddy Carter), Inej (Amita Suman) and Jesper (Kit Young), who chase lucrative and not-totally-legal gigs.

While occasionally the multiple storylines can be hard to keep track of, Alina is the clear main focus of the story. Throughout the story, Alina discovers her Chosen One abilities and rises up the ranks of a magical army, becoming a hero who must face her destiny. Having not read Bardugo’s books before watching the series will not be a problem as the writers do a good job of bringing the audience up to speed. The material



PHOTOS FROM NETFLIX

“Shadow and Bone” combines action, magic and drama with storylines that will keeps audiences entertained.

certainly benefits from an episodic format and would likely have felt rushed and convoluted in a movie.

With many of our characters being kept apart for several episodes, things take a dramatic turn with deep narration that puts us inside the characters’ minds. It exceeds expectations in its attempt to feel grounded in the reality of its otherworldliness. The show’s fast-paced and realistic editing will keep you on the edge of your seat.

There are a few hiccups, however, that are hard to ignore. For one, some of the performances took time to get used to. Jessie Mei Li was truly stiff in her acting when she tried conveying emotion. Her connection with other characters is what saved her performance even though it

felt unnatural and unearned. Another problem is the sequel-baiting. “Shadow and Bone” has plenty of small mysteries that are introduced, creating questions for the audience to get invested, yet at the end of the season we do not get any answers. This is an annoying problem with many Netflix shows as they try to hook you in for more.

The difficulties and frequent failures of adapting beloved books to suit the silver screen are plenty, yet this story does not fall victim to that. “Shadow and Bone” is truly a fun show with an obvious purpose, creating a deep storyline that follows a simple flow for everyone to enjoy.

Netflix’s ‘Mitchells vs. the Machines’ is energetic, emotional adventure from makers of ‘Spider-verse’

By: Joseph Ferrer *Arts & Entertainment Editor*

When Sony Pictures Animation released “Spider-man: Into the Spider-verse” in 2018, the studio showcased its talent, and the film was a breath of fresh air for animated films which can at times feel all too safe and serialized. With their newest film “Mitchells vs. the Machines,” the studio once again showcases their prowess for unique and vibrant animation, eccentric humor and emotional storytelling.

The film follows the Mitchells, a greatly eccentric family with Katie Mitchell (Abbi Jacobson) excited to leave home and pursue her dreams at film school. Her father Rick (Danny McBride) doesn’t understand her passions and the tension between the two creates unease with the whole family including Katie’s mom Linda (Maya Rudolph) and her brother Aaron (Michael Rianda). The family’s plans to bond on a road trip before Katie leaves become interrupted as the world’s technological devices begin a revolution, leaving them as the only humans left uncaptured. The film follows their adventure as they try to stop the robot uprising and save humanity while learning to become more of a family along the way.

The unique animation style immediately stands out and emphasizes the film’s colorful, over-the-top nature. The blend of 3D with 2D animation techniques makes the already bright art style even more vibrant and dynamic. Similar to how “Spider-verse” applied comic book-style effects to its animation, “Mitchells” fills its movement with 2D drawings to highlight motions both big and small throughout the entire film, giving the animation a distinct look

The animation directly contributes towards the action and comedy of the film as well. “Mitchells” is wildly witty and frenetic, and the film’s humor plays a big part of it. The film isn’t afraid to be as ridiculous as possible, and nearly every joke and gag memorably lands. Nearly every scenario in the film is wild and entertaining; words almost can’t describe the hilarity behind scenes such as the Mitchells running from a giant, laser-shooting Furby doll. Given the film’s focus on technology, the comedy also plays into internet humor but does so in a way that captures the craziness without directly referencing or using trends that will make the film feel dated in only a few months.



PHOTO FROM COLUMBIA PICTURES AND NETFLIX

“Mitchells vs. the Machines” infectious energy and emotion makes it one of the most memorable modern animated films.

Each member of the family is unique, expressive, and incredibly quirky, which gives each one of them a distinct charm. Even with their eccentric personalities, the characters are all incredibly relatable which greatly helps the emotional beats of the story. Each family member plays a distinctly different role that gives almost every viewer someone that they can directly relate to, which emphasizes the film’s theme of family. The movie surprisingly depicts real flaws and issues that families deal with, especially through Katie and her dad’s journey towards trying to understand one another. When the movie slows down to highlight these moments, you can truly feel the heartfelt sincerity in its message on how important and valuable family is.

“Mitchells vs. the Machines” is an unforgettable and thoroughly entertaining trip from start to finish, and its uniqueness and vibrancy help make it an absolute highlight in animation.

‘Mortal Kombat’ violently continues trend of questionable film adaptations of video games

By: Joseph Ferrer

Arts & Entertainment Editor



PHOTOS FROM WARNER BROTHER PICTURES.

“Mortal Kombat” has some enjoyable moments for fans but is far from a quality film.

Film adaptations of video game franchises have notoriously been subpar at best, and obscenely awful at worst. Mortal Kombat is a series that has experienced widely varying levels of quality with its two late-1990s installations ranging from admirably cheesy to unbearably hard to sit through. 2021’s “Mortal Kombat” on HBO Max follows this pattern, and while the film has a handful of standout moments, it also suffers from an inconsistent plot, bad performances and a wide range of other issues.

The film primarily follows MMA fighter and family man Cole (Lewis Tan), a descendant of the ninja warrior Scorpion (Hiroyuki Sanada). Cole’s life quickly takes a turn when he and his family are hunted by Scorpion’s rival and murderer Sub-Zero (Joe Taslim) and Cole learns that he has been chosen as one of Earth’s champions to fight to save humanity in the Mortal Kombat tournament. The rest of the film follows his training as he meets other characters from the games and they take on otherworldly enemies in brutal action.

“Mortal Kombat’s” narrative tone is widely inconsistent throughout the entire movie. The film initially begins with a serious, legitimately great scene showing the dark and saddening beginning of Scorpion and Sub-Zero’s eternal rivalry. Afterward, the film switches to an extremely cheesy, over-the-top tone as it focuses on Cole, and the actors’ performances and the script don’t help. Most actors play their extremely exaggerated roles straight and take themselves extremely seriously, which makes the nonsensical circumstances of the plot harder to enjoy as the film desperately wants to be taken seriously. The plot moves extremely fast and oftentimes events happen for no logical reason, making it hard to look at the film with a serious mindset.

Most of the action in the movie isn’t stellar . The film does live up to the video game series’ infamously bloody and gory action sequences, but the actual quality of the fight scenes widely varies. There are a handful of fights with legitimately engaging dynamics, set pieces and ideas, but the majority of the film’s encounters are generic, poorly paced action movie fights. The visual effects range from decent to almost laughably bad and the film’s editing is extremely shoddy with certain scenes clearly missing important shots that featured important actions. Aside from a few scenes, fight scenes for the most part don’t take full advantage of the characters’ abilities from the games, making flights even more unimpressive.

As a Mortal Kombat-inspired film, there are a handful of elements that could make it enjoyable for fans. Some references to the series are clever, such as city graffiti having special inputs and phrases from the games, as well as one scene that makes fun of specific tactics that fighting game players have used throughout the series. Other references however are ham-fisted as characters after fights say out loud phrases from the games such as ‘Fatality!’ and ‘Get over here!’ in an extremely forced manner.

“Mortal Kombat” is by no means a good film, but it isn’t completely without merit. Fans of the video game series will be able to find some aspects of the film enjoyable, but for the handful of small positives that the film has, there are large numbers of flaws that come alongside it.

Interested in writing for Arts & Entertainment? Contact Joseph Ferrer at jferrer3@gaels.iona.edu

Iona softball surging throughout season

By: Giovanni Paolo Tagliafierro *Assistant Sports Editor*

The Iona College softball team has accomplished a 10-3 record in their last 13 games. The team is also recently coming off a five-game winning streak in April to push their overall record to 20-10.

This is not the first time this season that the Gaels have won five games in a row. Going back to late-March, the Gaels took one game against Niagara and four-straight wins against rivals Siena.

The new COVID-19 format for baseball and softball includes playing double-headers, two games in one afternoon, against a given team. This can make the play more difficult, as the teams have a good idea of what the other can do and how they play within the day.

The past month of winning softball shows a rebound from a shortened, eight-game 2020 season. Looking back to the team’s last full season shows the leap of improvement, going from 19-27 in 2019 to now 10 games over .500.

Iona is currently third in the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference as of time of writing, behind Monmouth and Canisius with two games left in the regular season.

A massive key to the Gaels’ winning streak has been their pitching, evident by the team’s +19 run differential over the past 13 games.

The pitching staff for the Gaels has been reliable all season long, given the amount of close games the team has played in, even if their 4.05 team earned-run average seems less than impressive.

The term “workhorse” does not do justice to the season that junior pitcher Kara Zazzaro has had in Maroon and Gold. The righty has appeared in 23 of the team’s 30 games and started 15 of them. She has thrown all seven-innings in all but one of her starts, pitching to the tune of a 2.27 earned run average with an 18-2 record.

Zazzaro has struck out 161 batters this season, which leads the MAAC by 55, compared to only 47 base-on-balls.

The other side of a positive run differential is the bat’s ability to get runs across the plate, and the Gaels have been doing just that over the last month of softball.

While the team’s batting average sits

at .260, the team is fourth in the MAAC in slugging percentage, illustrating the team’s ability to put the ball in play with hard contact. This is reflected further in their 25 team home runs and 47 doubles.

Junior catcher and outfielder Jessica Chilcott has been a fundamental piece of the Gaels’ offense, as she currently sits at fifth in the conference in batting with a .387 average this season.

Freshman catcher Jamie Sheeran has put together a very encouraging rookie season with 31 runs-batted-in, which is second-most in the MAAC. She and her teammate Chilcott are both tied for the conference lead in home runs with nine a piece.

Iona softball finished up their regular season with a double-header win against longtime rivals Manhattan. Score lines were 7-0 and 4-3 respectively.

The Gaels begin their postseason when they play the quarterfinal of the MAAC Championship on Saturday, May 8.



PHOTO COURTESY OF ICGAELS.COM

The 2021 season has been the best for the Gaels since 2017.

Iona Women’s Water Polo Wraps Up Season

By: Giovanni Paolo Tagliafierro *Assistant Sports Editor*



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The team gathers around coach Brian Kelly during their Sunday double-header against VMI and LIU. The team’s defense had trouble getting stops, surrendering 28 points between the two games.

Iona women’s water polo concluded their spring campaign on Sunday, April 25 with a 13-9 loss to Long Island University at the Hynes Center.

The season was a difficult one for the Gaels water polo team. The team’s season only lasted for a little over three weeks and featured only nine matches. After winning their opening two games, the Gaels dropped the next seven to bring the season to a close.

In the first game of Sunday’s double-header, Iona took on Vermont Military Institute. The first period saw a back-and-forth affair between the two teams, with junior Maeve Ellen Wydan putting the Gaels up 3-2 with her second goal of the period with a little over two minutes left on the clock.

VMI pulled away in the second, making it a 7-4 match until freshman Kaya Hart connected on a five-meter penalty opportunity and Wydan followed with another score, cutting the lead to 7-6.

The Keydets found the net three times early in the third period, but senior Erika

Wimmer scored and Hart followed up with her second goal to close the gap at 10-8. VMI added two more goals to their lead, and scored with three seconds left in the period to go up 13-9.

The Gaels would rally in the fourth period, with goals from Wydan, Hart, senior Danielle Hernandez and freshman Amanda Gonzalez, but VMI scored at the 2:11 mark to make it 15-13 and was able to run hold on to the win.

Possession was an issue for the team, as they turned the ball over 19 times. The team was also not able to cash in on their advantages, while the Keydets converted on 6-13 nine-man up opportunities.

The loss for Iona meant that the team did not qualify for the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference Tournament for the first time since 2003.

Game two of the day’s doubleheader pitted Iona against the Long Island University Sharks.

Both teams matched each other in the first period, which featured four lead-changes and was capped off by Wydan’s tying goal with under three minutes on the clock. LIU scored with 35 seconds in the period to give them a 4-3 lead.

The Sharks proceeded to score eight unanswered goals until Wydan’s score with 2:53 left in the third period sparked a small rally for the Gaels with goals from senior Laura Rockett and freshman Jori Aventurado to make it 11-6.

LIU would maintain a big enough cushion to sustain Iona’s comeback attempt though and seal the victory, 13-9.

The Gaels look to next season in hopes of having a full schedule of games and improving with the young talent they have on the roster.



Iona golf caps off rocky season with championship

By: Matthew Chaves

Sports Editor

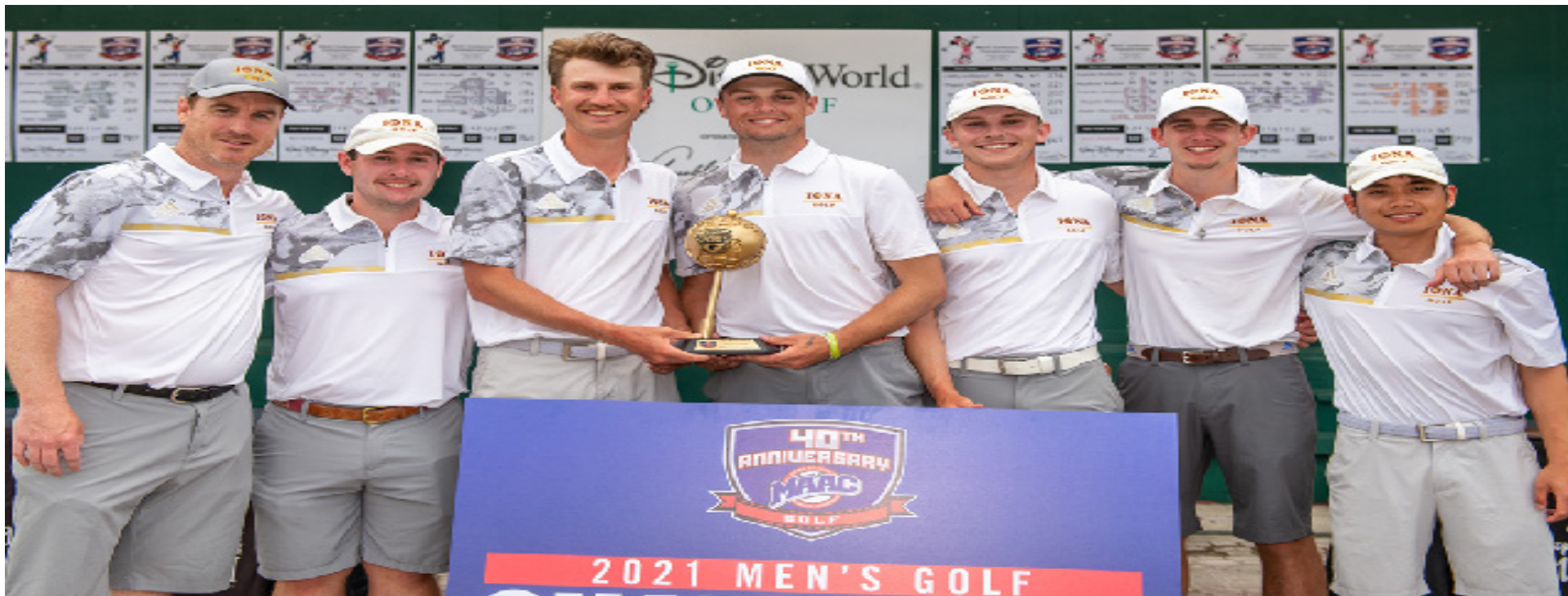


PHOTO COURTESY OF ICGAELS.COM.

Iona finished their championship performance with a +5 score, their best in the three-year championship run.

The Iona College golf team won the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference championships for the third time in a row after nearly a year off the green.

The tournament was able to take place despite the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Plans were put into place in the fall to get all of the spring sports together and ready to play during the pandemic with preventative measures put in. These included consistent COVID-19 testing, quarantining from programs if anyone got COVID-19 and working around an almost-week-by-week basis, playing it by ear for each tournament.

Iona's golf team started off their season rough. In March, they finished fourth out of five both days in the MAAC Spring Kickoff, an event they hosted. They improved a bit at the Saint Peter's Invite, finishing fourth of 16. The competition was tough though as they moved to

The Carpetbagger, where they finished tied-eighth out of 10 the first day and sixth out of 10 the second. In the last event of March, Battle at Rum Pointe, they finished tied-fifth out of 11 and seventh out of 11.

April was the month the Gaels needed to get it together, and fast. The March mood followed them into the early days of April, as they finished tied-ninth, tied-eighth, and sixth out of 12 respectively during the three-day Connecticut Cup event.

Iona finally started to build up some momentum, even if it was a little, at the Red Storm Invite, where they finished second of four. It was stopped suddenly the next day, when they played only one other college in St. John's and fell to the Red Storm. Just three days later, the Gaels finished tied-fifth of eight at the Hartford Tumble Brook Invite.

Momentum started to solidify in the next two events

as Iona finished fourth of 11 at the Sacred Heart Spring Invite. Next, at Doc Gimmler, Iona finished tied-second and third of nine respectively over the two-day event.

Come MAAC Championship time, Iona made sure to show up. At the first day of the championship, Iona took first of eight, their first time all season finishing at the top of the list in an event. The second day wasn't as good, but it was still a quality performance from the Gaels as they finished second. The third day, Iona dotted their I's and crossed their T's as they wrapped up their season with a championship-winning performance, finishing first once again and taking home the title of MAAC Champions.

The Gaels find out who they take on in the NCAA Regional on Wednesday, May 5. The selection can be viewed on the Golf Channel.

Lopez-Silvers Named Arthur Ashe Jr. Scholar

By: Giovanni Paolo Tagliafierro Assistant Sports Editor

Iona College swimmer and senior Willow Lopez-Silvers received the 2021 Arthur Ashe Jr. Sports Scholar award for women's swimming by the Diverse: Issues in Higher Education magazine on Monday, April 26, according to the organization's website.

The Arthur Ashe Jr. Scholar award recognizes a male and female collegiate athlete of color every year for their commitment to being a scholar athlete. The award also values student-athletes' commitment to their school and surrounding community.

The award was named after storied tennis star Arthur Ashe Jr., who fought through racial constraints as a Black athlete in the post-segregation era of the 1960s and 70s. The

award embodies his commitment to activism and education.

Besides the overall female and male award winners, the program recognizes a winner for each individual sport, both men's and women's. Lopez-Silvers took home the women's swimming and diving spot.

To be eligible for the award, student-athletes need to be of at least sophomore standing, be active in their community, and maintain at the minimum a 3.5 grade-point average.

A native of Washington, the Class of 2021 valedictorian has collected a number of accolades for her academics over her four years at Iona. She was selected to the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference All-Academic Team in both her sophomore and junior seasons and is due for a repeat of that accomplishment when the teams are announced later this year.

She was also named to the MAAC Academic Honor Roll in her junior season.

Lopez-Silvers found success not only in the classroom, but in the water too throughout her Iona career. As a freshman, she was an integral part of the women's third-place finish in the conference in the 2017-18 season.

Since then, Lopez-Silvers was named MAAC Swimmer of the Week twice, both awards occurring during her sophomore year.

Outside of the sport, the education major is part of Best Buddies, the Red Cross and Iona Singers clubs on campus. She looks forward to pursuing a graduate degree and eventually teaching and coaching high schoolers, according to her bio on the icgaels.com webpage.

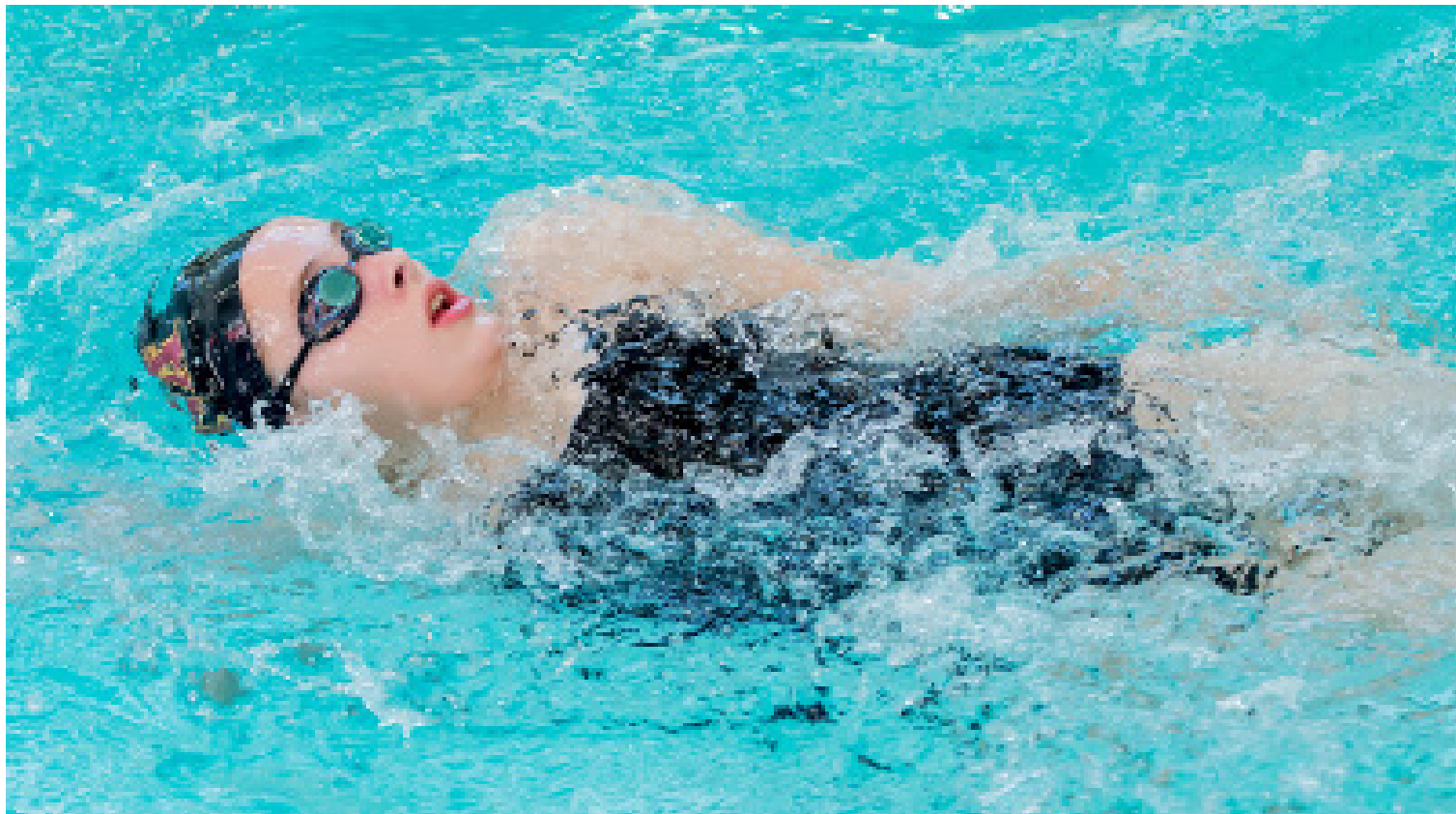


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Willow Lopez-Silvers has also spent her time as a tutor for the Samuel Rudin Academic Resource Center.