

# THE COUNTY COLLEGE OF MORRIS' AWARD-WINNING STUDENT NEWSPAPER

# YOUNGTOWN

# EDITION

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## COLUMN: Why are these kids today so lazy?

**BY RUTH ADAMS**  
*Editor-in-Chief*

If you're anything like me, you have noticed a difference in education expectations and experiences over the past few years. It seems as if students are not able to form solid connections with their professors. In the classroom, some professors look for active student participation, but the energy is dead and students remain quiet. It is almost frustrating to hear, yet I am among these students who are quiet during discussions, not using my time as efficiently as possible, or pushing myself to my greatest potential. Although college coursework and expectations are completely different from high school, professors still admit that their students are not the same since the COVID-19 pandemic.

Consider one professor's view. Jonathan Malesic, a writing professor at Southern Methodist University, after a year of online teaching during the pandemic, explained to the New York Post when everyone returned, "Students weren't turning in homework, and when they were, they were turning in assignments really late," he told the Post. "The quality of the work really had simmered." Attendance quickly fell off, and those who did show up were



falling asleep in classes". I noticed a sort of malaise, a feeling of listlessness hovering in classrooms, which often showed in students' slumped postures and appeared etched on their troubled faces.

The professor's observations resonate with me. During the COVID-19 pandemic, I noticed a change in my social communication abilities, as well as those of some of my friends. Speaking with teachers, counselors, and even peers became more difficult in proportion to the longer we spent time in isolation. What was particularly challenging in my social life was not the isolation alone but having to come back and move on as if nothing ever happened. I felt like I had almost forgotten how to communicate with my teachers and peers. Group discussions were difficult, and my drive to

get to know my community had diminished, which affected my grades as a result. Since my communication skills had dwindled, my desire to ask for help or guidance from counselors and teachers followed. I let myself fall into a trap, which I believed my teachers saw as an act of laziness. Some were kind enough to reach out to my parents; others, allowed me to struggle.

But can we blame it entirely on the pandemic? Did we just get a lot lazier and unmotivated? Is the system failing us, or is our mental health tanking in much higher numbers than ever before? Where is the line between the students themselves either not caring about their education, or just not having the passion and motivation to be able to succeed academically? Many parents like to blame their children's social media usage for these issues, and several school psychologists have noticed a correlation between social media usage and declining grades and disengagement. I mean, how could they not think in such a way? Social media breeds cyberbullying, not to mention a myriad of other consequences, including easy sharing of potentially harmful misinformation, inadequate amounts of sleep, distractions from schoolwork, and many more issues. Is it social media's fault? I use social

media more than I would like to admit, but I have noticed a change on these platforms in the past few years.

In high school, social media platforms such as TikTok were mainly used to share popular songs with correlating trends to their lyrics or melodies, and others such as Instagram and Vine were used to share comedy. Now, I notice these apps still have these trends but also share the personal stories and emotions of their users. What we view as "socially acceptable" changes over time. I see these changes in media outlets' content as a clear example. Now, I get many videos daily of people sharing how they struggle in school, how they are participating in therapy, and what they find wrong with the world or societies they live in. At first glance, these videos seem harmless, if not comforting to those who can relate to what someone else is struggling with. These videos can bring peace to others who can see that they are not alone. On these public forums and comment sections, people can also get advice from someone who has already been through something similar. Social media has gotten much more personal, but I think there are some underlying side effects to engaging in

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# Fusion reactors: The future of clean energy

BY BENJAMIN TOLPA  
Staff Writer

Beginning in the 1940’s, research on the feasibility of fusion reactors has been a long steady road of progress. Fusion reactions occur naturally at the center of our solar system, in the sun. Two lighter atomic nuclei fuse to form a larger particle, releasing large amounts of energy. Recreating this process here on Earth has some key challenges, particularly in maintaining the plasma state, dealing with temperatures around 100 million degrees Celsius, and maintaining control of the fusion reaction. Recently, China’s fusion project called EAST set a new world record for a profound 17 minutes of a maintained high confinement plasma state. This sets a new precedent for the feasibility of harnessing the power of fusion for energy production into the future.



It would provide a nearly limitless source of energy that could be used anywhere from power generation to spaceflight. The previous world record was also set by the same team at 403 seconds in 2023.

“A fusion device must achieve stable operation at high efficiency for thousands of seconds to enable the self-sustaining circulation of plasma, which is essential for the continuous power generation of future fusion plants,” said SONG Yuntao, director and Vice President of Hefei Institutes of Physical Science (HFIPS). “We hope to expand international collaboration via EAST and bring fusion energy into practical use for humanity.”

## THE YOUNGTOWN EDITION

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All students are welcome to contribute articles to The Youngtown Edition either in person or via e-mail. However, students cannot receive a byline if they belong to the organization on which they are reporting. The deadline for articles is the Monday prior to a production.

# Construction on Campus

**Center for Entrepreneurship & Culinary Science:** Exterior framing/sheathing for the new Dining Room will continue into the coming weeks. The installation of windows has started and will continue into the coming weeks. Randolph Township inspections are complete with anticipation of receiving the final CO by the end of this week for the Baking Kitchen. Once the final Certificate of Occupancy paperwork is received, the new Baking Kitchen will be in use. **Parking Lot 6 will be fully closed for the entire Spring 2025 semester.** If you have any concerns, please call Business & Finance at ext. 5012 and they will direct the questions or concerns to the correct department/person. The scope of work includes constructing a 13,000 square foot addition to the Student Community Center (SCC) where the outdoor patio used to reside. The infrastructure will house space for the Entrepreneurship program and expand learning space for the Culinary Science programs. This project is funded through Securing Our Children’s Future (SOCF) Bond Act and the College’s Chapter 12 appropriation.



**Morris County Vocational School District Career Training Center:** Final inspections occurred this week with a Certificate of Occupancy (CO) soon to follow. The new entrance will be paved and vegetative roof installed after the winter months (anticipating the end of March). The new facility will focus on workforce development learning opportunities and will operate on a share-time model for high school juniors and seniors. The project expands and supports the partnership between MCVSD and CCM. This project is funded through Securing Our Children’s Future Bond Act.

**Center for Health Professions:** The permitting process has started with the approval from Morris County Soil Conservation District (SCD) for soil moving on the construction site. Utility relocations and connections will begin on Monday, February 24. This will not cause disruption to the College Campus. Parking Lot 4 will be fully closed for the duration of the construction project. Parking Lots 2 and 3 will remain fully open and accessible for the campus community. The handicap ramp from the upper level of Henderson Hall toward the lower level of Sheffield Hall has been demolished as part of the project. If you need assistance, please contact Public Safety 973-328-5550. This project is funded through the State Higher Education Facilities Trust fund and the College’s Chapter 12 appropriation.





## LAZY

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

this content, especially with the large quantities that teenagers and young adults consume daily.

While I do not think social media is the only factor in why students may be struggling in their academics, I do think that it is a large reason. It runs our lives whether we like to admit it or not. Most of the information and news we receive daily is from social platforms, good and bad. Many people my age, including me, may also not have a set five or 10-year plan for our future careers, but we know our passions and what activities make us happy. We have dream jobs, dream schools, and dream families. We have goals that we want to reach someday and are actively working towards them, but the sides of social media we see include content that can diminish the spark of reaching these goals. Owning a house can seem like a difficult feat, and getting into a highly rated graduate school looks impossible. We see the statistics of students with insanely high marks and plentiful extracurricular activities, but nothing seems to be enough. We watch videos of students being rejected from their dream schools, not being able to afford even rent on their apartments, and many other harsh faces of reality that can take a toll subconsciously on how we begin to carry our lives. Everything is plastered right in front of our faces, with millions of videos being posted every single day. Even when achieving some of our wildest dreams, that can still seem like it is not enough.

What many postgraduate students struggle with currently is the lack of companies and industries hiring and/or maintaining a job. Websites like LinkedIn and Indeed



are saturated with hundreds of thousands of people applying for jobs, which are swiftly weeded out with a “thank you for your consideration” email before they get to the first interview. Many companies list their expectations and requirements to be eligible as even an option for the job, with many listing graduate school degrees and experience. As more people apply for these jobs, the hiring officers need to be more particular in tidying their selections, raising their standards to difficult levels. It is very common now to see these young adults posting about their experiences trying to make a living on social media, including Jacob Cramer, who shares his struggles in finding a job after completing his undergraduate degree and Master’s.

While interviewing Jacob, I asked questions about his educational background, his experiences, and further advice when it comes to academics. He explains how he studied psychology and spanish at Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut, and received his Bachelor’s degree. He then furthered his education at Universidad de Alcalá in Alcalá de Henares, Spain, and received his Master’s in Bilingual and Multicultural Education.

“Right now, I hope to work in children’s media, informal education, or social impact work... I’ve been looking at a lot of multigenerational theaters, children’s museums,

and children’s media production companies. Unfortunately, the current landscape isn’t hiring too often, and I’ve slowly begun to open up my search more”. Even with experience abroad designing and touring his own Pre-K theater curriculum, Jacob Cramer continues to find lackluster results with job applications.

“I’ve sent in around 100 quality applications with cover letters (not including LinkedIn easy apply and quick Indeed and Idealist apps). I’ve sent many more cold emails.” He is two years after graduation and continues to remain positive throughout this time.

“I’ve learned there are so many kind people in the world who want to help others. I’ve also learned that ups and downs in life are complementary”. Jacob shares his journey on his Instagram and TikTok pages @jacobgetajob while also reaching closer to 1 million letters sent to isolated elders for his nonprofit called Love For Our Elders.

Even though Jacob continues to show determination and drive for his passions, I still was taken aback by how his impressive educational background and international experiences are still leaving him little to no options for a career. A bachelor’s and master’s degree is a proud achievement, let alone from an Ivy League institution. It is a common misconception that Ivy League alumni are instantly secured with a high-paying and exclusive job offer, which can make one wonder what all that work is for. Subconsciously, I think many students are attempting to do what is best for their future, but with a mix of interrupted learning and socialization from COVID and being hyper-aware of what can likely be their future that they have worked very hard for, we start to withdraw and lack enrichment.

It can be very disheartening to see people in similar situations to

us fail. If they don’t have a chance, why would we? People my age have a lack of confidence in themselves. College is a very individual experience, where self-sufficient studying and time-management skills are crucial to succeeding well. There are recourses to help you on your journey, but you are the only one who can sit down and absorb the content. You are reliant on retaining information on tests and taking the time to write out well-thought-out essays and discussions. Many professors are teaching multiple classes in different subjects and are not able to individually guide every single student through their different learning styles. Given the change from high school education to college, especially with a global pandemic and all-time high media engagement, you are bound to face struggles handling the workload.

Shaking the habits that form from these negative mindsets head-on can be a game changer for success. While it is easier said than done, limiting or filtering social media usage that diminishes confidence can be a first step. Reaching out to professors if you notice you are behind or not fully understanding the content being taught is also a helpful method. There are plenty of tutoring opportunities available, and many professors urge you to attend their office hours with any questions for a more face-to-face teaching approach. The “learned helplessness” that thousands of students experience each year allows them to fall behind, but it does not have to be this way. Have confidence in your future. We are all on different journeys, with different goals and dreams. Pushing through these difficult times for education, with an understanding of why you may feel helpless and disengaged, just might be the key that unlocks your true potential for a better future.

## “Forever I Wander”, by Dylan Rabe

Away in a wasteland, left to wander.  
Ancient sands flay my skin as I wander.

Mirages, oases, the real and unreal.  
Brief respite, yet I am forced to wander.

A delusion fueled automaton.  
Unable to ponder, only wander.

Why oh why do I cross these lands that harm?  
Why oh why do I come here to wander?

I keep going, my body mauled by winds.  
My feet blistered, bleeding, yet I wander.

I am deconstructed, barely human.  
A walking corpse, a husk left to wander. (Rabe)

Led by illusions, conceived of torment.  
No longer of sound mind, I just wander.

In desolation I feel myself sink.  
Yet in my agony, I still wander.

# REVIEW: *The Silence of the Lambs*

**SARA LIM**

Managing Editor

On Valentine's Day, 1991 {a year characterized by politics, violence, and revolt as represented by the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the Persian Gulf War, and the release of Nirvana's seminal album *Nevermind* respectively} Orion Pictures released the psychological horror film *The Silence of the Lambs*, an ingenious exploration into the inherent brutality of the human psyche. Premiering at the 41st Berlin International Film Festival, it proceeded to win Academy Awards in five major categories {Best Picture, Best Director, Best Actor, Best Actress, and Best Adapted Screenplay}, the first and only horror film to win Best Picture in the history of the ceremony, now considered the fifth greatest and most influential thriller film of all time. There is something viscerally grotesque about the very fiber of the film, something that draws the viewer in bleeding through the cinematography, the acting, and the unflinching, reptilian glare of the film's infamous villain Hannibal Lecter. His presence—an intricate blend of silent venom and precisely poised madness—permeates the film, peeling back layer upon layer of decaying matter in search of the film's bloodied core, simultaneously destroying any and all of the preconceptions held by the viewer. Nothing is entirely as it seems, and, as a silent onlooker, one begins to feel a creeping sense of powerlessness and vulnerability before the enigmatic toying of Lecter's psychopathic {and yet endlessly brilliant} mind. The film envelopes, poisons, and devours its viewer, placing into question the very nature of human psychology, the endless violence of civilization's march toward enlightenment, and the extent to which a human will go to satiate his physical and spiritual appetite.

At its core, *The Silence of the Lambs* presents a battle of wits between the cunning, manipulative Lecter and the determined, intelligent Starling. The film uses this dynamic to explore how power {granted or denied through age, academic qualification, and gender} operates in human interactions. Lecter, an imprisoned psychiatrist, and cannibalistic serial killer, embodies a cold, calculating intellect and an insidious

form of control—as a psychopath, he presents a terrifying level of attention to human details, reminiscent of Nabokov's *Humbert Humbert* or McCarthy's *Anton Chigurh*. His manipulation of those around him—particularly Starling—demonstrates how individuals in positions of power can subtly dominate others, exploiting vulnerabilities and desires for personal gain while remaining morally unaccountable. Lecter is an unsettling paradox—cultured and courteous yet utterly ruthless. His incisive intellect allows him to manipulate those around him with surgical precision, though he harbors a peculiar sense of twisted morality, respecting Starling for her courage and integrity. At the heart of *Silence of the Lambs* lies an intricate exploration of duality and the dark recesses of the human psyche. The relationship between the two central characters is a study in contrasts, a game of psychological chess between predator and prey, captor and captive, and yet far from black-and-white—the viewer is never entirely sure of who has the power in a scene. Their exchanges, marked by a twisted intellectual intimacy, serve as a mirror, reflecting the darker impulses that lurk within us all. Yet, Lecter is not merely an antagonist; he is a mirror for Starling's own growing understanding of power, fear, and identity. Through her interactions with him, Starling is pushed to confront her vulnerabilities, notably her trauma from childhood. In contrast, Starling is characterized by her resilience, intelligence, and vulnerability, embodying both determination and a deep-seated need to prove herself in the male-dominated world of law enforcement. Her past trauma, particularly the loss of her father and her haunting childhood memory of lambs screaming, adds emotional depth to her character, making her pursuit of justice deeply personal. Their interactions form the heart of the film, as Lecter guides Starling through psychological riddles, testing her resolve while simultaneously revealing her inner strength. This complex relationship blurs the lines between hunter and hunted, mentor and monster, elevating both characters beyond mere archetypes into fully realized, deeply compelling figures.

The symbolism of **The Silence of the Lambs** also plays a crucial role



in the film's impact. The most notable symbol is the lamb itself, which appears throughout the narrative, particularly in Starling's memories. The lambs, representing innocence and vulnerability, are tied to Starling's childhood trauma, and are further explored through art—following their first meeting Lecter draws a portrait of Starling, depicting her holding a lamb in the foreground with three crucifixes looming behind her, an unmistakable allusion to religious iconography. It is fascinating that, while his psychopathic nature prevents him from feeling emotions of guilt or caring, Lecter genuinely perceives the depth of Starling's emotional wound... if only for his nefarious purposes. Starling's desire to silence the lambs—both in the figurative sense of overcoming her past trauma and in her literal pursuit of Buffalo Bill—becomes a central motif. The juxtaposition of the lambs' mournful cries with Hannibal's refined, almost lyrical manner of speaking underscores the primal nature of the evil that he embodies, a savage beast cloaked in the veneer of civilization. Moreover, the repeating leitmotif of Acherontia styx, or death's head moth {named for Hades' two rivers, the Acheron and the Styx} provides a thematic exoskeleton to the film's exploration of transformation and metamorphosis—moths are representative of a death {artistically displayed through their natural skull-like markings} and recall the Greek Mœra or Fates that have intimate links to the thread and fabric of human life, thus endowing them with a certain prophetic air. The camera is enraptured by the con-

structed or imagined value of these insects, their transformative, destructive, mutative, and indomitable qualities as a group, not as individual animals, thus mirroring the obsession of its central villain. Furthermore, the film's distinguishing mixture of atrocity and aestheticism is evoked through the film's publicity poster which displays Starling's face, physically muted by the image of a death's head moth—Demme's choice to integrate Dali's 1951 symbolic painting *Women forming a skull* drawing explicit parallels between the moth and the women whose deaths are imprinted forever upon its thorax.

Visually, the film uses close-ups and shadows to enhance its psychological tension, often focusing on the characters' eyes or faces in moments of confrontation or realization. The unsettling, intimate shots add to the sense of claustrophobia and emphasize the characters' inner turmoil. Demme's direction and Fujimoto's cinematography submerges the viewer directly into the scene—while the camera begins at a physical distance from the actors, oftentimes placed behind a character's right shoulder} it slowly steps forward into its role as a physical stand-in for the characters themselves. Characters speak directly into the camera, unflinchingly gazing into the audience's soul, making for a uniquely chilling viewing experience. In terms of its genre, *The Silence of the Lambs* transcends the typical thriller or horror film, integrating elements of psychological drama, horror, and crime, while also examining the moral complexity of its characters. Lecter's chilling charisma is not just that of a villain; he is a philosopher, articulating complex ideas about human nature, evil, and control. In contrast, Starling's heroism is not defined by overt physical action but by her intellectual resilience and emotional depth. Neither is entirely what they seem, and both transform and interact with their narrative. *The Silence of the Lambs* is a masterful exploration of human nature, power dynamics, and identity. Its tension-filled narrative, in combination with a nuanced portrayal of gender, vulnerability, and psychological trauma, makes it not simply a thriller, but also a profound commentary on the complexities of the human intellect and its capacity for both darkness and redemption.





# Mardi Gras!!!!

**Chaine Induction and Dessert Reception**  
**March 4, 2025: 1-3 PM**  
**Dragonetti Auditorium**

**“Cafe du Monde” Coffee & Beignets:**  
Deep Fried French Doughnuts  
Topped with Confectioner's Sugar  
**Bourbon Street Bread Pudding**  
with **Vanilla Ice Cream**

**Warm Bread Custard Flavored with Bourbon and**  
**Fresh Made Vanilla Ice Cream**

**“Chaine” Layer Cake & King Cakes**  
Sweet Cinnamon Flavored Pastries  
Covered in Vanilla Icing and Sugar Decorations  
Honor our Students as they are inducted into the  
Largest Food and Dining Society in the World!

**AND**  
Enjoy a brief tour of our New Teaching Kitchen  
and Professional Baking Equipment!





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# Sophomores Honored!

The Jack Martin Gymnasium was hopping Tuesday as the CCM Men's Basketball Team took on Prestige Prep. At halftime the CCM Athletic Department honored second season participants from the Women's Volleyball and Men's Basketball Team. Also, in cooperation with the CCM Foundation - the Terry Ryan and Jack Martin Scholarship recipients were awarded.

Tuesday evening during halftime of the Men's Basketball Game vs. Prestige Prep, Sophomores from the Women's Volleyball and Men's Basketball Team were honored. We take great pride in thanking this wonderful group of student/athletes for their dedication and commitment to the County College of Morris. We are extremely proud of their efforts, success and leadership.

## Women's Volleyball Sophomores:

Evalynne Boyle  
Ashley Eng  
Sarah Shortino

## Men's Basketball Sophomores:

Zahir Carter  
Jagger Ruiz  
Osa Osaruese  
Matthew Niedermaier  
Matthew Mancini  
David Joseph





# Did the Titans find their stride on the hardwood?

**BY PROFESSOR  
KENNETH A. SHOULER**  
*Moderator for the Youngtown Edition*

Imagine the following wager being offered. Someone wants to bet you a sandwich. They're offering a two-part proposition: that a certain college basketball team with a record of 10-14 is going to win their next two games and trounce the opposition by a nutty margin of 74 points. You would probably jump at the offer. You'd be tasting your favorite sandwich in advance. Except you hadn't planned for the unexpected. The team in question is the CCM Titans and they did rise from the ashes of a subpar season.

First up was Northampton Community College, the Titans' stalwart opponent on February 14. The Northampton Spartans were a slick 22-5, subduing their rivals at an .815 clip. Their road mark was especially impressive. Away from their home gym, the quintet from Bethlehem, Pennsylvania showed steely resolve with a 10-3 mark. The scoreboard lights shone 46-36 at halftime. While the Titans staged Sophomore Night celebrations, the Spartans, trailing by only ten, must have thought they still had a decent shot.

Not on this night. The Titans offense found a new gear in the second half, scoring 51 points to the Spartans' 42. The 97-78 final score was no Valentine's Day peck. The Titans drained 18 three-pointers, accounting for nearly 60 percent of their overall tally. Five of the 18 long balls came courtesy of Jagger Ruiz—a sophomore guard with the greatest-ever frontman's flashy name—finished with 21. U-Tyci Brown singed the nylon for 17, and Justin Henry chipped in 16 of his own. Zahir Carter, a fourth man in double-digits, added 11.

True, you can say that you can't tell much from one game. So, four days later they were back at it, playing again in the friendly confines of Jack Martin Gymnasium. The oppo-



Outrageous verticality: Guard Osagie Osaruese spins free for a jam

nent was Prestige Prep. The Titans held a commanding 38-26 halftime lead. Then, for the second consecutive game, they ran and hid in the second half. They nearly tripled the

output of the Linden, New Jersey squad, 66-23, to win going away, 104-49. Contributions came from starters and reserves, including Zahir Carter, Osagie Osaruese, Mat-

thew Niedermaier, and Dishon Herrera.

The Titans' record stood at 12-14, but the outlook, once dim, was bright again.